

Shameful Bodies, Shameful Nation:  
Embodied Affect in the Ducal Palace in *Don Quixote* (Part II)

by

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## **CURRICULUM VITAE**

Carmen C. Granda was born in Amityville, New York. She graduated *magna cum laude* from Middlebury College with a bachelor's degree in French and music. She received a Master's degree in Spanish literature from the Middlebury College School in Spain. At Brown University, she received a Master's degree in Hispanic Studies. As a graduate student she was awarded the Aaron David and Kossoff Prize for Leadership in Teaching. From 2008-2013, she worked as both a Spanish instructor and Assistant Language Director at the Middlebury Monterey Language Academy. She currently works as a Lecturer at Amherst College, where she teaches Spanish language and culture courses. Since 2014, she has been the On-Site Director for Brown University's Global Program in Segovia, Spain.

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## INTRODUCTION

Nous parlons avec notre corps et notre corps parle. Notre corps parle aussi à travers nos émotions qui au sens propre sont des “mouvements” de notre organisme: on tremble de peur, on rougit de honte, etc.; et ces réactions physiques dans lesquelles s’exprime ce que nous ressentons traduisent, par le langage, la façon dont nous concevons y nous représentons ces phénomènes.

Pierre Guiraud, *Le langage du corps*

In one of the most unforgettable episodes in the first part of Miguel de Cervantes’s *Don Quixote*, Sancho Panza defecates in the presence of his master after hearing a loud noise in the forest:

En esto, parece ser o que el frío de la mañana que ya venía, o que Sancho hubiese cenado algunas cosas lenitivas, o que fuese cosa natural—que es lo que más se debe creer—, a él le vino en voluntad y deseo de hacer lo que otro no pudiera hacer por él; mas era tanto el miedo que había entrado en su corazón, que no osaba apartarse un negro de uña de su amo. (I, 20, 181)

The squire’s urge to defecate may produce laughter from the readers, but it also stresses the link between fear and excretion (the emotional and the bodily). The sonic affinities between *miedo* and *mierda* point to a deeper connection between the physiological and the emotional. According to Enrique Fernández in his recent monograph *Anxieties of Interiority and Dissection in Early Modern Spain* (2015), an individual’s subjectivity/interiority exists at the intersection between the physical (the material) and psychological (the immaterial) (19). In Sancho’s case, the relationship between these planes might seem elemental. Sancho has a “leaky” peasant body: he belches, passes gas,

and vomits. These bodily processes, however, cannot be reduced to the merely physical; in fact, they belong to the blurred intersection of the material and emotional, the external and internal, and finally, the public and private.

Although Cervantes's novel includes members of the aristocracy, the majority of the characters, including the protagonist, come from the lower and more middling classes. As an *hidalgo*, Alonso Quijano belongs to the impoverished ranks of the lower rural nobility. However, unlike most of these characters who remain in their social classes, Don Quixote crosses, or at least attempts to cross, boundaries of class as he jumps blithely from adventure to adventure on the roads of La Mancha. In part II, he becomes a supposedly distinguished guest in the palace of the Duke and Duchess. These two textual and physical spaces expose readers to the different manifestations of the shamed body. More importantly, this change from a public to a private space gives readers access to the secretive world of the upper class for the first time in the novel. The present study focuses on this latter space, the ornate palace of the Duke and Duchess, where Don Quixote and Sancho spend a significant amount of time interacting with the noble couple.<sup>1</sup> In this restricted space, Cervantes urges readers to dissect characters' bodies to reveal their complex interiority: a concealed early modern body that nonetheless barely keeps hidden profound contemporary anxieties linked to Spain's military, aristocracy, and overall morality.

As all readers will recall, in the first pages of part I, Alonso Quijano attempts to transform himself from an *hidalgo* into a knight-errant as he dons his grandfather's rusty armor, creates a makeshift helmet out of cardboard to complete his makeover, and finally

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all citations are from Francisco Rico's edition (Instituto Cervantes) of *Don Quijote de la Mancha* (2015).

gives himself a new name: Don Quixote de la Mancha. As the poor accoutrements of knighthood and absurdly incongruous name already announce, Don Quixote will fail miserably in his attempts to right the world of wrongs, frequently causing more harm than good and injuring himself in the process.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, part I of the novel takes him from one to another misfortune. Emerging from the porous interior borders linking affect to the somatic realm of materiality in the period, these mishaps in turn often cause him to blush, one of the many visual manifestations of shame.

In “The Social Dimension of Shame in Cervantes’s *La fuerza de la sangre*” Elena Carrera draws on Aristotle, Juan Luis Vives and Juan Huarte de San Juan to divide early modern shame into two categories: anticipatory and retrospective. In cases of anticipatory shame the person is primarily concerned with his or her reputation. Retrospective shame surfaces when a person believes he has committed a misdeed (20-21). In several episodes of part I, Don Quixote manifests a retrospective shame. For example, in his first adventure, Don Quixote “rescues” Andrés from his master’s beating. The protagonist threatens to kill the master if he does not pay the young boy for his labor. Although the master agrees to pay Andrés, when Don Quixote departs, he severely beats Andrés and fires him. When Don Quixote later discovers how badly Andrés was beaten and how he no longer has a job, “quedó corridísimo” (I, 31, 319). In fact, his blush prohibits him from standing up to defend himself against the angry threats of Andrés: “Íbase a levantar Don Quijote para castigalle, mas él se puso a correr de modo que ninguno se atrevió a

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<sup>2</sup> In addition to wearing old armor, Alonso Quijano takes eight days to invent a name to complete his transformation into a knight. He uses *don* to promote himself from a *hidalgo* to a *caballero*. Of course, this promotion is an allusion, as Alonso Quijano does not have the financial means to justify the use of such a distinguished title. Moreover, as Alonso Quijano greatly admired Amadís de Gaula, he imitates the medieval knight by incorporating his homeland into the new name: Don Quixote de la Mancha. La Mancha, however, is not a country, but rather the name of a region in Spain with no particular history or site of prestige. Alonso Quijano’s thoughtful name change is an attempt to confirm his new social status; however, this transformation, like his physical makeover, represents yet another absurdity.

seguillo” (I, 31, 319). The scene ends in silence, as Don Quixote’s blush takes over his entire body, paralyzing him. He is left speechless while those watching stifle their laughter “por no acaballe de correr del todo” (I, 31, 319). In the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries *correrse* was one of the many words used to describe shame, frequently deployed by Cervantes and other authors. Sebastián de Covarrubias defines the term in *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española* (1611): “Correrse vale afrentarse, porque le corre la sangre al rostro. Corrido, el confuso y afrentado. Corrimiento, la tal confusión o vergüenza” (363).<sup>3</sup> Notably, Covarrubias’s definition calls attention to the nature of shame as an embodied emotion, revealed in blushing: the blood rushes from other parts of the body to the face, specifically the cheeks. Shame becomes legible through the presence of blood. Cervantes constructs a shamed body in which the exterior and the interior boundaries are breached. Within this rupture Don Quixote’s silence confirms both the realization of his mistake and the presence of shame. The shamed body “speaks” in the place of silence, and it becomes visible precisely because it emerges in silence. Nevertheless, the shame that emerges in part I does not have a lasting impact on Don Quixote. For the most part, the knight-errant insists on his duty to serve others, carrying on with his adventures, seemingly unaffected by the bystanders’ cruel reactions. After all, he has nothing to lose. Don Quixote’s short-lived shame may be attributed to the fact that the high aristocracy does not play a role during the first part of his journey. He does not ever catch himself in the gaze of individuals with considerably superior social standing the way he will in part II.

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<sup>3</sup> The link between *correrse* and blushing first came to my attention in Paul Michael Johnson’s article, “Salido a la vergüenza”: Inquisition, Penalty, and a Cervantine View of Mediterranean ‘Values’” (2013).

The link between the material and the emotional bodies proves more difficult to discern among the aristocracy, who moved in the more enclosed spheres of the court. Indeed, in the early modern period an emphasis on dissimulation purposely tried to foreclose visible manifestations of the interiority of the aristocratic body. Manners became the focal point of attention, hence the publication of numerous conduct manuals, like Baltasar de Castiglione's *Cortesano* (1528), translated into Spanish by Juan de Boscán in 1534.<sup>4</sup> Those of the upper class were expected to strictly control their bodies and emotions, especially in the presence of those of equal or higher social standing. As a result, bodily reactions and emotions were "privatiz[ed]," that is, upper class members were expected to force these reactions into the "'inside' . . . into 'secrecy'" (Elias 121). Norbert Elias attributes this focus on decorum to a brief treatise, *De Civilitate Morum Puerilium* (*On Civility in Children*) published by Erasmus of Rotterdam in 1530 (Starkey 43).<sup>5</sup> In this text, Erasmus concerns himself with specific techniques to control bodily reactions, like the importance of repressing gas or sneezing the correct way. For Erasmus, the strict restriction of one's affective expressions led to the formation of a noble class and a society in which social mobility largely depended on refined behavior, among other characteristics. Such emotional and physiological control minimized the possibility of shame related to the body (Paster 14). At the same time, this privatization provoked

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<sup>4</sup> While most of these treatises were aimed at aristocrats, others were intended for a general audience. See Álvarez-Ossorio ("El cortesano discreto" 83-4) for a list of well-known early modern Spanish conduct treatises.

<sup>5</sup> Erasmus's influence on Cervantes, particularly through *The Praise of Folly*, has been established since Américo Castro's *El pensamiento de Cervantes* and has been pointed out by other scholars like Francisco Márquez Villanueva.

curiosity, that is, a desire to penetrate the body and expose that which had been previously hidden: the body's interior.<sup>6</sup>

Whereas Don Quixote is not fully conscious of his actions in part I, his behavior changes drastically in part II, particularly when he and Sancho arrive to the Duke and Duchess's palace. Part II is notably marked by the knight's heightened conscious of his esteemed public. As philosophers and theorists from ancient times understood, social status is key to the functioning of shame. In the *Rhetoric*, for example, Aristotle argues that "the people before whom we feel shame are those whose opinion of us matters to us" (6:1384b). Such notions allow us to appreciate the more deliberate nature of Don Quixote's actions in the ducal palace, where he attempts obsessively to control his squire's every move. For example, after dinner with the Duke and Duchess, Don Quixote critiques Sancho's rustic manners and language: "No adviertes, angustiado de ti, y malaventurado de mí, que *si veen que tú eres un grosero villano o un mentecato gracioso, pensarán que yo soy algún echacuervos o algún caballero de mohatra?*" (II, 32, 787; my emphasis). When dealing with issues of shame, it is not only how one appears to others that matters, but also how one imagines he or she appears, as Don Quixote reminds his shameless squire. Don Quixote's concerns are tied to how Sancho Panza's body reflects on him as his master. This may directly relate to the fact that by part II the protagonist knows others have read his story: the Duke and Duchess have read the first part of the novel, published in 1605, while others have read the apocryphal version. The shamed bodies of part II are thus embedded in an unsettling social matrix

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<sup>6</sup> Fernández argues that the detailed descriptions of Don Quixote's injuries and cures constitute examples of self-dissection (169).

that situates knight and squire as the objects of contemplation precisely by those whose opinion, to borrow from Aristotle, “matters to us” (6:1384b).

Despite his efforts to control Sancho’s behavior and jokes in front of the Duke and Duchess, Don Quixote frequently fails and as a result experiences an intense shame that differs from the first part of the novel. He deeply blushes, for example, after hearing Sancho share an inappropriate joke with the Duke and his wife: “Púsose don Quijote de mil colores, que sobre lo moreno le jaspeaban y se le parecían; los señores disimularon la risa, porque don Quijote no acabase de correrse” (II, 31, 791). While the Duke and Duchess refrain from laughing, Don Quixote reacts in the only way in which he knows how: he turns “mil colores” of red, partially from anger, partially from embarrassment, and promptly scolds Sancho for his wrongdoings. Don Quixote’s angry reaction is telling: the embodied shame and subsequent emotions that he feels in the Duke and Duchess’s palace differ from the ephemeral shame he experiences in part I. The self-conscious aspect of shame makes it one of the most intimate and complex emotions; it can provoke other emotional reactions, like anger, for example. Don Quixote’s preoccupation with his appearance and that of his squire’s in the presence of the nobles replaces his much less self-conscious persona of part I. Moreover, as we shall see in chapter 2 of this study, when Don Quixote suffers a serious injury in the palace, he does not quickly recover, as he tended to do in the first part; instead, the knight-errant isolates himself in his room for several days, mentally and physically paralyzed by shame. Shame, therefore, plays a more integral role in the courtly setting of the Duke and Duchess’s palace, that is, in the presence of two nobles, than in Don Quixote’s

adventures in part I which are mainly comprised of encounters from people ranging from the peasantry to more educated middling classes.

Given this distinction, it is significant that Cervantes designates thirty-one chapters to Don Quixote and Sancho's stay in the Duke and Duchess's palace, the longest amount of time that the knight-errant and squire spend with any set of characters in the entire text or in any single space. In this setting, Cervantes, I argue, exposes the interiority of an aristocratic body set on its own concealment. I will focus on three body parts in particular as *loci* in which the author obliquely breaks the interior/exterior binary and connects the planes of physiology and social behavior: Don Quixote's beard, Altisidora's female genitalia, and the Duchess's legs (specifically the *fuentes*, or sores on them). The novel endows these physical body parts with social and psychological charge as well as cultural meaning. The bodies in the palace episodes of *Don Quixote* diverge from prescribed codes of behavior, established models of comportment, and ideal notions of gender. In what follows I contend that through these body parts, Cervantes interrogates the integrity of Spain's moral and social order.

### **Inside the Early Modern State**

In order to approach the embodied sociopolitical problematics on display in the ducal palace, it is essential first to understand the deep interconnection of individual disposition and affect, fundamental to the Hippocratic-Galenic doctrines still driving early modern medical theory across Europe in the period. First proposed by Hippocrates and later developed by Galen, humoralism was a model for understanding the workings of the human body. According to the theory, the body was thought to be composed of

four humors (*chymos*), or bodily fluids: blood, yellow bile, black bile, and phlegm.<sup>7</sup> One of the most influential physicians of early modern Europe, Juan Huarte de San Juan argued in his widely-read *Examen de ingenios para las ciencias* (1575) that each of these four substances determined a person's temperament: sanguine, choleric, melancholic, and phlegmatic, respectively.<sup>8</sup> For ancient as well as early modern medicine, healthy bodies should optimally display a balance (*krasis*) of these four elements. This balance in health is also linked directly to questions of emotional and moral disposition; following Aristotle's idea of the 'golden mean,' humoral equilibrium can in fact be tied to virtuous character and behavior. *Diskrasis*, or humoral imbalance, on the other hand, produces not only physical illness but also disruptions in the patient's ideal emotional and moral qualities. An imbalance of humors in the body can explain both changes in behavior, such as sluggishness for the melancholic, and changes in one's appearance. It was believed, for example, that an excess of black bile in the body caused melancholy. Those suffering from melancholy, like Don Quixote, were frequently described with a yellow complexion: "en camisa, flaco, amarillo y muerto de hambre" (I, 2, 291). Likewise, for a patient with dropsy, the illness which Cervantes supposedly had, the stomach would swell, as described in *Viaje del Parnaso* (1614):

La enfermedad llamada hidropesía  
así le hincha el vientre, que parece  
que todo el mar caber en él podía. (vv. 127-129)

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<sup>7</sup> For an overview of the historical development of humoralism, see Vivian Nutton ("Humoralism" 281-291).

<sup>8</sup> For more on Huarte's influence on Cervantes, see Rafael Salillas, *Un gran inspirador de Cervantes: El Doctor Juan Huarte y su Examen de ingenios*; Mauricio de Iriarte, *El doctor Huarte de San Juan y su 'Examen de ingenios': Contribución a la psicología diferencial*; and Chester S. Halka, "Don Quijote in the Light of Huarte's *Examen de ingenios*: A Reexamination."

According to Huarte de San Juan, a complete balance of the four humors was impossible to attain due to the climate and people's demanding lifestyle: "todos hombres que vivimos en regiones destempladas estamos actualmente enfermos y con alguna lesión, aunque por habernos engendrado y nacido con ella, y no haber gozado de otra mejor templanza, no lo sentimos" (419). Any disturbance or perturbation of what ancient medicine called the six 'non-naturals' (sleep, rest, or wakefulness; exercise; diet—both food and drink—; climate or environment; evacuations—such as urination, defecation, vomiting, ejaculation, menstruation, as well as clinically induced evacuations, such as blood-letting and purging—; and, notably, the emotions or affect) would result in an imbalance of the humors.<sup>9</sup>

Even as humoralism remained prevalent in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, physicians also began to study human anatomy. The serious interest in the study of the human body in the early modern period paralleled the enterprises of exploration so characteristic of the era: the inside of the body was considered a "new world" waiting to be discovered by anatomist-voyagers (Camporesi 98). It was not enough, however, to merely open the body; understanding the body's interior was equally as important, if not more important, than the act of dissecting. The Baroque body was a fragmented, complex, and conflicting space that needed to be seriously studied (Marshall 48). Many professors of medicine in Spain had studied anatomy at the University of Padua as early as the beginning of the sixteenth century (Fernández 23). Moreover, more

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<sup>9</sup> As imperial expansion put Christian Europe in contact with territories and peoples whose climate, diet, social organization, and physical appearance differed from their own, an Hippocratic-Galenic understanding of physical and moral character as the result of (im)balance was also put to work legitimizing ideologies of conquest and oppression, particularly in justifying Aristotle's doctrine of natural slavery on 'scientific' or 'natural' grounds. The broader connection of such ideas to astrology and climate are explored in Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, "New World, New Stars: Patriotic Astrology and the Invention of Indian and Creole Bodies in Colonial Spanish America, 1600-1650." Also see Rebecca Earle, *The Body of the Conquistador: Food, Race and the Colonial Experience in Spanish America, 1492-1700*.

than five hundred medical books, many of which included anatomical illustrations, were published between 1475 and 1599 in Spain, while studies of medicine from other parts of Europe also made their way to the peninsula. Among the most important of the latter was *De corporis humani fabrica* (1543) by Andreas Vesalius, who himself spent time in Spain employed both by Emperor Charles V and later his son Philip II (24). Vesalius's masterpiece promoted scientific advances in human anatomy and physiology, primarily through dissection, even leading to what some critics have called the 'Vesalian Revolution'.<sup>10</sup> Nicolaus Copernicus's *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* also appeared in 1543, thereby prompting scholars to label that momentous year as the start of the so-called 'scientific revolution' (Okholm Skaarup 9).

Cervantes's fascination with this field may have stemmed from his father's profession as a barber-surgeon. Considered the lowest rank in the medical profession, barber-surgeons were ultimately responsible for blood-letting and handling the mechanical aspects of dissection, while the role of the doctors was to identify the organs once the body was open (Fernández 107).<sup>11</sup> As Daniel Heiple suggests, Cervantes had a strong interest in medicine: "Criticizing the chivalric novel for its lack of realism, Cervantes set out to correct such abuses, and he based his hero's madness and actions on the firmest scientific knowledge that was known" (70). Cervantes was thus inevitably

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<sup>10</sup> See Chapter 1 of Bjørn Okholm Skaarup's *Anatomy and Anatomists in Early Modern Spain* for a summary of the Vesalian Revolution in early modern Spain.

<sup>11</sup> From a Hippocratic perspective, the purpose of blood-letting was to correct imbalances; it was a non-natural method to evacuate excess humors.

exposed to both anatomy and humoral medical theory from an early age, even in his very home.<sup>12</sup>

Indeed, Cervantes's numerous mentions of the word "anatomy" in the novel attest to his knowledge of this field, although sometimes he uses the term metaphorically in the text to refer to a skinny person or animal, a common meaning in the period (Fernández 108).<sup>13</sup> Cervantes's basic familiarity with anatomy may also have come from his experience as a soldier. Doctors often accompanied armies on the battlefield, so soldiers experienced firsthand the treatments that they implemented. During the battle of Lepanto, for example, Cervantes famously suffered three gunshot wounds (two in his chest and one in his left hand). The violence the author suffered on the battlefield perhaps explains the serious traumas Don Quixote suffers throughout his adventures (107).<sup>14</sup> In the first part of the novel alone, the knight-errant loses half an ear, almost loses an eye, suffers a serious injury on his shoulder, and is repeatedly punched, tripped and flogged.<sup>15</sup> Even his

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<sup>12</sup> Cervantes's own plight with illness towards the end of his life may also explain his apparent experience or knowledge of medicine. Most critics have postulated that the author suffered from dropsy due to a reference in the prologue of his last work, *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda* (1617): "Esta enfermedad es de hidropesía, que no la sanará toda el agua del mar Océano que dulcemente se bebiese. Vuesa merced, señor Cervantes, ponga tasa al beber, no olvidándose de comer, que con esto sanará sin otra medicina alguna" (48). Although this diagnosis has yet to be confirmed, it would appear that Cervantes had at least some basic scientific knowledge given the plethora of medical terms and illnesses dispersed throughout several works, including this last one he wrote on his deathbed.

<sup>13</sup> Cervantes describes the scrawny and scared Rocinante in part II: "dio a correr por el campo con más ligereza que jamás prometieron los huesos de su *notomía*" (II, 11, 627; my emphasis).

<sup>14</sup> As María Antonia Garcés argues in her book *Cervantes in Algiers: A Captive's Tale* (2005), writing from a psychoanalytic perspective, Cervantes's life experiences as a soldier, and later a captive, indelibly marked his fictional universe.

<sup>15</sup> Agustín Redondo's "De vapulamiento y azotes en el *Quijote*" (Chapter 1) of *Otra manera de leer el Quijote: historias, tradiciones culturales y literatura* (1998) focuses on the violent scenes, namely, the beatings, whippings, and *burlas* dispersed throughout the novel, which suggest the abundance and constancy of such practices during the early modern period. For a more detailed analysis of the stonings that Don Quixote suffers in the novel, see David Karl Ulrich, "Las piedras y la construcción psicológica de don Quijote."

teeth suffer major blows. The numerous attacks on Don Quixote's body are attempts to penetrate the protagonist's body (Fernández 169)—both physically and figuratively.

As early as the medieval period, Spaniards, like other Europeans, saw a strong link between the individual body and the body politic in the political and social realms. They inherited their understanding of the body politic from such classical Roman writers as the historian Tacitus. As translated in Baltasar Álamos de Barrientos's *Tácito español*, Tacitus explained the importance of this concept in the following terms: “es vno solo, y no se pueden apartar sus miembros sin daño irreparable suyo; y por esto ni dividirse, ni dares a muchos: y assi se rige mejor por el ánimo y entendimiento de vno solo: y por esto es mejor gouierno el de la Monarquía” (qtd. in Marshall 13). The king in the early modern period became the “head” of the state, which was regarded as an organic whole. The state was not one superior being, but rather made up of individual members who constituted its body: “the hierarchical organization of the political community is as natural and well ordered as that of a human body, which, in turn, is a reflection of the perfect ordering and harmony of the celestial bodies” (Cañeque 21). The power of the government to control and punish those who did not follow the rules was reflected in this same body.<sup>16</sup>

Within this metaphorical political body, one of the ways in which civic and ecclesiastical authorities exercised their control was by regulating what people did with their actual bodies. Starting in 1570, stricter laws and more severe punishments were created to limit or eradicate the sexual relations of adultery, bigamy, fornication, and

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<sup>16</sup> Corporeal metaphors were also commonplace for conceptualizing the removal of infectious members from the political body, as is the case with the abundant allusions to the *morisco* expulsion as amputation or cauterization in the period. See Julio Vélez-Sainz, “Amputación o ungimiento?: Soluciones a la contaminación religiosa en el *Buscón* y el *Quijote* (1615).”

sodomy.<sup>17</sup> As mentioned previously, the early modern period marks an explosion in the publication of conduct manuals, which encouraged concealment, primarily through the control of one's gestures and words.<sup>18</sup> In addition to controlling people's behavior, the government also tried to regulate the clothing and fabrics people wore according to social position and gender (Fernández 30).<sup>19</sup> For example, in a study of clothing worn by female syphilis patients entering the Hospital de Santiago in Toledo for treatment in the mid-seventeenth century, Cristian Berco points out that although women frequently arrived to the hospital dressed in expensive clothes, they may not have been wealthy. As image was closely tied to behavior, women dressed elegantly for hospital visits, so as not to be confused with or considered a prostitute, "the most common insult that could sully a woman's reputation" (790).

Repeated bankruptcies, religious tensions between Old Christians and *moriscos* in Andalucía, the defeat of the Spanish Armada, and the plague (1596-1602) were all symptoms of an ill political body in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Growing tension and anxieties within Spain and with other countries made it easy to treat the body politic as a metaphorical space that needed to be dissected and scrutinized in order to cure its growing ailments. Early modern economists (*arbitristas*), many of whom were

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<sup>17</sup> *Queer Iberia* (1999) has a section with a few articles dedicated to "The Body and the State" in relation to early modern Spanish texts. In this anthology, see E. Michael Gerli, "Dismembering the Body Politic: Vile Bodies and Sexual Underworlds in *Celestina*" 369-393; Mary Elizabeth Perry, "From Convent to Battlefield: Cross-Dressing and Gendering the Self in the New World of Imperial Spain" 394-419; and Israel Burshatin, "Written on the Body: Slave or Hermaphrodite in Sixteenth-Century Spain" 420-455.

<sup>18</sup> Two conduct manuals for married women widely circulated in Spain were Juan Luis Vives's *La formación de la mujer cristiana* (1523) and Fray Luis de León's *La perfecta casada* (1584).

<sup>19</sup> For a general discussion on the link between appearance and social status in early modern Europe, see Sara F. Matthews Grieco, "The Body, Appearance, and Sexuality" 46-84, and on the role of clothes in Renaissance culture, see Peter Stallybrass and Ana Rosalind Jones, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory*.

surgeons and doctors, regularly used vocabulary related to the body to describe the state of the country in their texts and to offer remedies.<sup>20</sup> As Francisco de Contrera's *Advertencias políticas del estado en que están e Patrimonio Real y el Reino, Actas de las Cortes de Castilla* (1623) confirms:

Y así, en el mismo alivio de los vasallos, viene a consistir su más cierta ruina y destrucción, y por estas complicaciones viene a hallarse esta república en el estado a que dice Galeno suelen llegar algunos cuerpos cuyos malos humores, que les corrompen despacio les sustentan, y entretienen la vida, y así no se atreven los médicos a evacuarlos, por no acelerarles el fin. (qtd in Marshall 36)<sup>21</sup>

Titles of other *arbitristas*'s works, like Cristóbal Pérez de Herrera's *Curación del cuerpo de la República o remedios para el bien de la salud del cuerpo de la República* (1610), further demonstrate the widespread concern with Spain's putatively diseased "body" at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The health of the body politic would continue to preoccupy intellectuals well into the middle of the seventeenth century and beyond.<sup>22</sup>

### **Shame in Cervantes's "Funny Book"**

Similar to illnesses, which first develop inside the body and can form symptoms that are manifested on the body, inner processes like anger or shame are made visible indirectly or directly through gestures, speech, and actions (Fernández 12). Scholars often refer to such processes as affects, considered biological or physiological responses to any

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<sup>20</sup> As mentioned previously, in order to cure a sick body, one had to consume particular foods and medicine that would supposedly restore the body's four humors.

<sup>21</sup> *Advertencias políticas del estado en que están el Patrimonio Real y el Reino, Actas de las Cortes de Castilla*, t. xxxviii, 1623, 46.

<sup>22</sup> For example, in *La vida de Marco Bruto*, printed in 1644, Francisco Quevedo wrote: "Del rey, que es cabeza, son miembros los vasallos. Cuando los vasallos se quejan, el rey les duele. Apodérase una apoplejía del cerebro; muérense los pies y tiemblan las manos" (qtd. in Fernández 77).

stimulus. In contrast to affects like anger or fear that produce obvious bodily reactions (shouts or tears), shame is a relatively hidden emotion. A quick blush or an averted gaze frequently indicates shame; but just as these signs are revealed, the emotion is internalized. During the internalizing process of shame, feelings of inadequacy strike and generate a feeling of nakedness. Exposed to others, a shamed person attempts to hide the source of his or her shame by covering him or herself, embodying the meaning of the word from the Low German *scheme*: shade or concealment. Shame prompts an urge to disappear altogether in order to battle the “inner torment, a sickness of the soul” (Tomkins 118). The connection between shame and bodily coverings is as ancient as the Bible and the very origins of humanity in the Judeo-Christian tradition. We need only recall the story of Adam and Eve, who in their initial nakedness are free of shame. However, once the first man and woman taste the forbidden fruit from the Tree of Knowledge in Genesis 3, they are ashamed. The affect itself is made explicit through the Latin verb *erubescabant* meaning to turn red: “Erat autem uterque nudus . . . et non erubescabant” (Gen. 2:25).<sup>23</sup> The Bible makes the connection between the internal (affect–shame) and external (the physical action of blushing). Ashamed for having ignored God’s order to not take fruit from the tree, Adam and Eve sew fig leaves together and cover their private areas. This cover, however, proves to be an insufficient method of concealment. When Adam and Eve hear the voice of God walking in the garden, they “abscondit,” or hide themselves in the bushes in an attempt to further conceal the shame of their misdeed (Gen. 3:10). Shame, therefore, not only has a moral implication. It is

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<sup>23</sup> All quotations of the bible are from the *Vulgate*, which is the standard biblical text used throughout the early modern period in Catholic lands.

bodily—so much so that it prompts Adam and Eve to first cover themselves, which only occurs when they have knowledge, and hence see their nakedness.

Secrecy and silence, the hidden components of shame, make the affect challenging to decipher. Perhaps this explains why the overtly humorous moments in Cervantes's novel, particularly in part I, stand out more among readers and scholars than the shaming he experiences in part II. Don Quixote's numerous falls from his horse, his attack on innocent animals, his general appearance (wearing the shaving basin-helmet on his head, for example) and archaic speech, to name a few examples, have prompted one of the most debated questions about the novel: Did Cervantes intend for *Don Quixote* to be read as a funny or serious book? Is Don Quixote a comical character or a noble figure? Do readers laugh at Don Quixote wearing a shaving basin on his head, or do they sympathize with the protagonist as a man growing mad? Do they consider his intentions to "save" others heroic? Do they cringe in embarrassment for him? Although many of these examples produce laughter from readers and onlookers, those laughing do so at the protagonist's expense.<sup>24</sup>

For approximately two centuries, Cervantes's greatest masterpiece was indeed considered a funny book. As reported by Baltasar Porreño in *Dichos y hechos del Sr. D. Felipe III*, possibly written in 1626, upon hearing a student laughing very loudly, the king

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<sup>24</sup> Following nearly two centuries of largely comic readings, nineteenth-century Romanticism launched a major shift in approaches to the novel. Although many readers endlessly laugh at Don Quixote's actions and Sancho's antics, there are some scholars who, once the laughter subsides, sympathize with the protagonist's behavior. Believing that the *hidalgo* suffers from madness and melancholy, these readers find themselves pitying Don Quixote and identifying with his flawed character. The novel, therefore, has been read through a psychological lens and as a profound philosophical study on human nature. As Anthony Close demonstrated in his important study, *The Romantic Approach to 'Don Quixote': A Critical History of the Romantic Tradition in 'Quixotic' Criticism* (1978) readers and scholars began to see Don Quixote's idealism and drive for adventure in spite of injuries, illnesses, and his advanced age in heroic terms. These readings naturally diminished any interest in the character's bodily aspects, focusing instead on their symbolism.

claimed: ““aquel estudiante, o está fuera de sí, o lee la historia de *Don Quijote*”” (qtd. in Russell 318). Cervantes himself invites this reading in the novel’s prologue, in which he insists on making his readers laugh, the ultimate sign of pleasure: “Procurad también que, leyendo vuestra historia, el melancólico se mueva a risa, el risueño la acreciente, el simple no se enfade, el discreto se admire de la invención, el grave no la desprecie, ni el prudente deje de alabarla” (58).<sup>25</sup> As Peter Russell and other scholars have shown, early modern readers saw Cervantes’s work as a parody of the novels of chivalry, popular in the late medieval period through much of the sixteenth century.

Even some of Don Quixote’s injuries are tinged with humor. When the knight-errant kills several herds of sheep that he mistakes for armies in the first part of the novel, two shepherds throw stones at him with such force that he loses some of his teeth: “llevándole de camino tres o cuatro dientes y muelas de la boca, y machucándole malamente dos dedos de la mano. Tal fue el golpe primero, y tal el segundo, que le fue forzoso al pobre caballero dar consigo del caballo abajo . . . creyeron que le habían muerto” (I, 18, 162). Despite the pain and the physical disfiguration caused by the missing teeth in Don Quixote’s mouth, Cervantes transforms this violent episode into a grotesque, comical spectacle by adding a bodily excretion.<sup>26</sup> While Sancho inspects his master’s damaged mouth, Don Quixote vomits on the squire after having ingested some of the infamous *bálsamo de Fierabrás* that he claimed would cure his ailments. The

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<sup>25</sup> Besides pleasing people, laughter also has a curative force. As Cervantes’s prologue states, laughing can successfully dispel melancholy and help people recover from illness. The idea was widespread. François Rabelais, himself a doctor, concludes the first prologue of *Gargantua* by similarly establishing a link between laughter and the therapeutic power of reading: “Or esbaudissez vous, mes amours, et guayement lisez le reste, tout à l’aise du corps et au profit des reins!” (37; my emphasis).

<sup>26</sup> As a type of expulsion or excretion, vomit, therefore, directly impacts balance (*krasis*) for good or for ill. Perhaps, then, the *bálsamo de Fierabrás* acts as a type of *purga*, which, in addition to bloodletting, helped treat humoral imbalances.

presence of the vomit disgusts Sancho, who in turn vomits on Don Quixote. Instead of directing their attention to the stone throwing that left Don Quixote half-dead, scholars have focused on the grotesque humor of the vomit spectacle.

The famous scene emblemizes the carnivalesque spirit that pervades other parts of the novel, including Sancho and Don Quixote's stay in the Duke and Duchess's palace. Having read the first part of *Don Quixote*, the Duke and Duchess expect the knight-errant to continue his role as "funny man," and thus prepare pranks whose sole purpose is to entertain themselves—and the reader. The narrator sets up the palace episodes preparing the reader for laughter: "atiende a saber lo que le pasó a su amo aquella noche: que si con ello no rieres, por lo menos despegarás los labios con risa de jimia, porque los sucesos de don Quijote o se han de celebrar con admiración, o con risa" (II, 44, 879).<sup>27</sup> The entertainment is designed for the Duchess's own cruel pleasure ("la duquesa, prosiguiendo con su intención de burlarse y recibir pasatiempo con don Quijote" [II, 50, 929]) and for the merriment of both the bystanders within the text and the readers outside.

For some scholars, these pranks are harmless; Cervantes "imbues the hoax with a sportingly playful, even altruistic, spirit instead of a malicious one" (Close *Cervantes and the Comic* 330). In "Fiestas palaciegas en la Segunda Parte del *Quijote*," Close compares the masquerades put on by the Duke and Duchess during Don Quixote and Sancho's stay at their home to the courtly festivities that were taking place in that time period, specifically those occurring around the feast of St. John. Building on Close's argument, Augustín Redondo interprets the palace episodes as a type of Carnival, in which social

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<sup>27</sup> For a more detailed analysis of the Carnavalesque laughter in the palace episodes and Don Quixote's role as buffoon, see Augustín Redondo's "Fiestas burlescas en el palacio ducal: el episodio de Altisidora." For a more general analysis of the comic aspects of the novel, see, for example, Adrienne Martín (*Cervantes and the Burlesque Sonnet*).

hierarchy and gender norms are temporarily suspended, and Sancho and Don Quixote take on the roles of buffoons.<sup>28</sup>

Certainly much of what happens in the palace scenes is in keeping with Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of the carnivalesque as an inversion of social hierarchies: a squire openly critiques the nobility, female servants ridicule a knight by washing his beard, and women actively organize and participate in pranks against the men. However, when the laughter provoked by the reversal of gender and social roles has subsided, a drastic divide emerges between the poor and wealthy, that, of course, ultimately favors the upper class. Beneath the carnivalesque laughter is frequently a serious intention. As James Iffland explains in *De fiestas y aguafiestas: Risa, locura e ideología en Cervantes y Avellaneda* (1999), the "funny" element ultimately depends on who is laughing, who is being laughed at, and for what reasons:

Muchos de los defensores de la escuela *funny book* parecen creer que la risa es un fenómeno inocente, desinteresado, hasta tal punto que si se acepta la noción de un Don Quijote esencialmente cómico, no podemos aceptarlo también como libro crítico, inconformista, etc . . . Lo cómico puede encarnar proyectos ideológicos radicalmente distintos, dependiendo en gran medida de quién se ríe de quién y por qué razones. (34)

At the end of each prank, Don Quixote is left injured—psychologically and physically—, and all thanks to the nobles, or their accomplices. As Iffland affirms, the humor has deep social implications.

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<sup>28</sup> Laura Gorfkle's *Discovering the Comic* in Don Quixote (1993) also relies on Bakhtin's theories of carnival and heteroglossia. Rather than solely focusing on the "funny" moments that play a key role in the Carnival theme, as many of her contemporaries have already pointed out, Gorfkle argues that Cervantes's novel is also subversive.

In one of the most original readings of Don Quixote's bodily injuries, Vladimir Nabokov's famous series of lectures at Harvard University in the 1950s saw the novel as a relentless display of "hideous cruelty—with or without the author's intent—which riddles the whole book and befouls its humor" (52). Although Cervantes scholars continue to challenge the content of Nabokov's lectures, one cannot dispute the fact that there are instances of real cruelty in the novel in which Don Quixote is seriously injured. Take, for example, Don Quixote's erroneous attack on a group of penitents towards the end of part I that caused them to "reír muy de gana, cuya risa fue poner pólvora a la cólera de don Quijote" (I, 52, 525). The knight-errant becomes angry because he has an excess of choleric humor; body and affect remain connected. Furious, Don Quixote takes out his sword, but the penitents retaliate against him and badly injure his shoulder: "y recibiendo en ella una gran cuchillada que le tiró don Quijote, con que se la hizo dos partes, con el último tercio que le quedó en la mano dio tal golpe a don Quijote encima de un hombro . . . que el pobre don Quijote vino al suelo muy malparado" (I, 52, 525). Seeing his master motionless on the ground, Sancho assumes he is dead, which quickly changes the tone of the episode from scornful to somber.

While groundbreaking, Nabokov's argument failed to take account of the humor that goes along with the violence in *Don Quixote*. To date, the only study of which I am aware on the relationship between the novel's cruelty and comedy is Adrienne L. Martín's chapter from *The Cambridge Companion to Cervantes*. As Martín rightly observes, there is a paradoxical relationship between the two: Why does violence elicit laughter? In the early modern period, daily violence was common (Martín 179). Violent attacks, such as fistfights or stonings, were read as comical for both the characters and

Cervantes contemporaries. The link between humor and violence therefore fulfills the novel's carnivalesque function (179). Yet for all the laughter provoked during Don Quixote's stay in the palace, there are also moments, unexplored in Martín's work, where it is completely absent or when the laughter is stifled. Sometimes there is no or barely any audible laughter at all; the partner to cruelty and violence is simply silence. Instead of evoking laughter, many of the interactions between the knight-errant, the squire, the aristocratic couple and their servants take place in silence and become violent—literally and metaphorically. Using Martín's chapter as a point of departure, in what follows I will examine the silence with which the episodes frequently conclude. Such silence reveals the characters' embodied shame and lays bare early modern Spain's ill body.

This dissertation is organized into three chapters centered on three episodes in the palace in the second part of *Don Quixote* that end abruptly in violence and are void of hearty laughter. In chapter one, "Slippery Beards: Manipulating Masculinity in *Don Quixote*," I examine the episode in which four female servants wash Don Quixote's beard. Though the protagonist's beard washing may seem absurd, I situate it in the combative setting of late sixteenth-century Europe, when countries defined masculinity by heroic acts carried out through warfare. Weaponry, the male genitalia, and the beard were all closely linked in the cultural imagination of the period, forming a composite metonymy for manhood. Touching or playing with another man's beard, especially by a member of the opposite sex, was considered a serious affront in the early modern period. The servants' fondling of Don Quixote's beard, I argue, constitutes an act of symbolic violence as they assert their sexual power over the knight-errant, stripping him of his manhood. Facial hair does not function as a fixed sign of masculinity, but rather as a

reflection of destabilized gender roles in early modern Spain. Confirming this power play and exposing the shame is the silence that pervades most of the beard-washing scene and leaves Don Quixote immobilized in his seat.

In chapter two, “Victorious *vagina dentata*: Altisidora’s Body and the Castration of Don Quixote,” the bodies of the cats with which Altisidora identifies metonymically converge in the image of the *vagina dentata*, the “toothed vagina.” Repeatedly rebuffed in her advances towards Don Quixote, Altisidora, a female servant, lowers a bag of cats into Don Quixote’s window in the middle of the night. Unlike previous jokes in the palace that never seriously injure Don Quixote, this prank leaves deep wounds on the knight-errant’s face. Details about the cats Altisidora unleashes and the description of her own mouth associate this character with the fabled figure of the toothed vagina. Altisidora metaphorically castrates Don Quixote, shaming him into silence as she erodes his masculinity. As a female servant, Altisidora has no recourse to direct physical violence. Instead she uses felines as a surrogate vehicle to express her anger and humiliation, and to perform a metaphorical castration on the protagonist. Altisidora is not only acting out of her own thirst for revenge to the man who has rebuffed her; I contend that she also operates as a proxy for the Duke and Duchess themselves. The episode thus serves to question ideal notions of both gender and class. Altisidora’s shaming and destructive behavior graphically reveals a rupture of the larger social body.

Chapter three, “The Duchess’s *Fuentes*: Shameful Secrets and Population Decline in Imperial Spain,” focuses on the Duchess, one of the masterminds of the numerous tricks played on Don Quixote and Sancho in the palace. I argue that she ridicules others as a cruel distraction from her own suffering and shame for the *fuentes*, or drains, on her

legs, presumably used to combat infertility. With some notable exceptions (Mercedes Alcalá-Galán and Anne J. Cruz), few critics have paid much attention to the *fuentes*, perhaps in keeping with the wishes of the Duchess, who tries to silence onlookers and keeps the wounds—shameful indicators of her infertility—covered underneath her skirt. In this chapter, I claim that through the Duchess's incisions, Cervantes comments on aristocratic idleness and the social and political problems infertility posed for Spain's future at a moment of rural depopulation. Through the childless Duke and Duchess, the author generates a powerful critique of the consequences of ignorance and lack of productivity in carnal and imperial bodies.

There has been a significant amount of scholarship dedicated to the humorous antics and violent exchanges that take place in *Don Quixote*, which are frequently connected to Sancho's gluttonous behavior and his bodily excretions. However, the role of shame, a hidden and silent bodily affect, has rarely been a central concern. As I demonstrate, though, the palace episodes of *Don Quixote* beg a sustained examination of the relationship between shame and the body. Cervantes's bodies are not strictly physical. The body—both exposed and unexposed—communicates and triggers shame. The planes of the physiological and psychological converge in three different bodies in the palace episodes of *Don Quixote*. These bodies invite dissection as symptoms of contemporary social and political ills.

## CHAPTER 1

### Slippery Beards: Manipulating Masculinity in *Don Quixote* (II)

A la barba la hermosura del hombre.  
*La vengadora de las mujeres*, Lope de Vega

What should I do with him? Dress him in my apparel  
and make him my waiting-gentle-woman? He that  
hath a beard is more than a youth, and he that hath no  
beard is less than a man.

*Much Ado About Nothing*,  
William Shakespeare

#### 1.1 “Singeing of the King of Spaines beard”: Spanish Masculinity in Crisis

Turmoil and tension characterized most of the second half of the sixteenth century in Europe, especially between the two powerhouses, England and Spain. During this period, national anxieties were often represented in gendered terms. Spain, a wealthy country after successful conquests in the New World and in Europe, represented itself as strong and masculine, while it cast its enemies as inferior and weak, and thus, likening them to females (Donnell 42). This particular gendering of the enemy was literalized in the case of England, which was ruled by a female monarch, Queen Elizabeth I, for over half a century. It was against her England that Philip II devised his plan “the Great Enterprise,” which aimed to conquer the increasingly powerful island and set up a new Catholic government (Broome 6). Queen Elizabeth I, however, was anything but weak. Before Philip II could carry out his plan, she sent Sir Francis Drake in 1587 to attack the port of Cádiz, resulting in a prequel to the disastrous defeat of the Spanish Armada the following year. England’s victory against the Spanish Armada a year after the attack on Cádiz undermined Spain’s exalted image of itself, as John H. Elliott recounts:

[T]he psychological consequences of the disaster were shattering for Castile. For a moment the shock was too great to absorb, and it took time for the nation to realize its full implications. But the unthinking optimism generated by the fantastic achievements of the proceeding hundred years seems to have vanished almost overnight. If any one year marks the division between the triumphant Spain of the first two Habsburgs and the defeatist, disillusioned Spain of their successors, that year is 1588. (288)

The defeat in the Cádiz harbor, followed by the underhanded attack on the Spanish Armada in 1588, caused Spain to suffer financial ruin, stemming from both an aggressive imperialism with insufficient resources and an unstable political agenda. England's consecutive victories over Spain in the latter part of the sixteenth century as well as ongoing debt to foreign banks crippled the Spanish economy, gravely weakening the former powerhouse. The country's international prestige suffered a humiliating blow. By the end of the sixteenth century, writers of both literary texts and reformist treatises in Spain cast enemy attacks as a threat to Spain's masculinity; thus, when defeated, Spain was transformed into a feminized country.<sup>29</sup>

In *Considerations Touching a War with Spain* (1619), Francis Bacon recounts Drake's words after the defeat of the Spaniards in Cádiz: "I remember Drake in the vaunting rile of Souldier would call this Enterprise the singeing of the King of Spaines beard" (qtd. in Peterkin 142). The now infamous historical incident and aphorism, "singeing of the King of Spain's beard," takes on a deeper meaning when considering the

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<sup>29</sup> Cervantes wrote two *canciones* dedicated to "La Armada invencible" (*Poesías sueltas*), one of which (XXI) depicts a clear image of Spain as a maternal, feminized country and the defeated soldiers as children: "¡o España, madre nuestra!, / ver que tus hijos buelben a tu seno, / dejando el mar de sus degraçias lleno, / pues no los buelbe la contraria diestra" (vv. 8-15).

symbolic and social significance of men's beards in early modern Spain.<sup>30</sup> In a military context, such as the 1587 attack, a country's "beard" signaled power or lack thereof, represented in this particular case by the many ships that were burned in the Cádiz harbor. By gaining access to its waters, England, governed by a female monarch, symbolically emasculated Spain.

Bacon's metaphor of "the singeing of the Spanish king's beard" strikingly resonates with the episode in part II of *Don Quixote* in which four female servants in the Duke and Duchess's palace unexpectedly wash Don Quixote's beard with their bare hands. Of course, Cervantes could not have heard Francis Bacon's vivid metaphor for Spain's defeat since Bacon published his history of the Armada three years after the Spanish author's death. However, I argue that the beard episode, in which the knight-errant is stripped of his manhood and left temporarily paralyzed, refracts a deep sense in Spain that the nation's masculinity was under siege. Cervantes, I will show, deploys facial hair not as a fixed sign of masculinity, but as a reflection of destabilized gender roles and social anxieties that pervaded Spain during the early modern period. Before turning to a detailed analysis of the main episodes, in which facial hair plays a large role, I will provide a brief background on the history of facial hair in early modern Spain, including its many transformations and connotations.

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<sup>30</sup> Richard Knolle's *The Generall Historie of the Turkes* (1603) describes the defeat of the Ottoman forces during the battle of Lepanto in 1571, in which Cervantes participated as a soldier, as a temporary shaving of the "beard." The defeat did not destroy the "beard" altogether, but rather caused a delay, much like the one the Spanish fleet endured after England's surprise attack. Ultimately, however, this temporary "shave" helped make the Ottoman fleet grow thicker, or stronger (qtd. in Parker 214).

## 1.2 A Brief History of the Beard in Spain

Since the Middle Ages beards have been the main and most obvious physiological feature that distinguished men from women, primarily due to their noticeable location on the face. As Alonso López de Corella's *Secretos de filosofía y astrología y medicina de las cuatro matemáticas ciencias* (1547) confirms:

la naturaleza, la cual siempre es curiosa en dar la forma del cuerpo conveniente a las costumbres, dio al hombre la barba; la cual es indicio de cuánta más veneración sea el hombre que la mujer. Esto dice Galeno. Lo cual en la edad presente puede ser mejor admitido que en otra; porque es uso más común de criar barbas que muchos años ha sido. (258)<sup>31</sup>

Beards not only differentiate men from women, but also distinguish men from boys, who have not yet experienced puberty. Although the beard's significance may vary from culture to culture, in general for Europeans and other men prone to having facial hair, the ability to grow a beard is a key sign of masculinity.<sup>32</sup>

As signs of virility,<sup>33</sup> the Spaniards' beards came to represent all the qualities embedded in said gender identity, such as strength and honor. Even the act of growing a beard was associated with power. If a man did not wear a beard or worse, was unable to

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<sup>31</sup> For more information on the lasting influence and relevance of the Hippocratic-Galenic corpus for understanding the body, see Nutton.

<sup>32</sup> Conversely, as Rebecca Earle discusses in *Body of the Conquistador...* the perceived lack of facial hair among the indigenous peoples of the Indies confirmed Spanish characterizations of their 'nature' as passive and effeminate, a perception grounded in the same Hippocratic-Galenic humoralism cited by López de Corella above.

<sup>33</sup> The link between beards and virility was not universal in the early modern period. In Italy, for example, a man's long, overgrown beard could symbolize sorrow. Julius II began to grow a beard while ill and during a war to regain the Papal States. Similarly, Clement VII started to wear a beard after the sack of Rome in 1527. More than a symbol of manhood and conquest, the beard in Italy at one point represented shame or mourning (Biow 185-86).

grow one, he was considered effeminate. The verb, *barbar*, to get a beard, was used as a metaphor to describe the beard wearer's strength or boldness, as seen by Clarín in Pedro Calderón de la Barca's *La vida es sueño* (1635): "A costa de cuatro palos, / Que el llegar aquí me cuesta, / De un alabardero rubio / Que *barbó* de su librea" (II.2; my emphasis). Only the strongest and most masculine bearded men fought on the early modern battlefield. Beards served a practical purpose in combative settings as Galen had noted: "the hair of the beard . . . protects the cheeks [from danger]" (qtd. in Bautista 13).

The shape of men's facial hairstyles further emphasized their masculinity, defined in early modern Europe by heroic acts carried out through warfare. Mark Johnston, author of *Beard Fetish in Early Modern England* (2011), points out that the most popular styles of early modern beards were linked to soldiers and were given shapes and names associated with weapons, including the *pique-devant* (sword-shaped), the Roman T, the bodkin, and the spade beard (54-55). Although historians like Johnston have claimed there was a beard fetish in early modern England, it emerges that Spain, France, and England were constantly competing against each other to create new facial hairstyles (Peterkin 172). One such style was the "stiletto," which referred to the pointed and elongated shape of Charles I's beard (Fisher 158-59) that was patterned after the dagger for which it is named.

Johnston further emphasizes the connection between weapons and masculinity by pointing out that the word "weapon" in the *Oxford English Dictionary* has been used colloquially to refer to a penis (55). Indeed, in the combative setting of early modern Europe, weaponry stood as an analogy for male genitalia. This association is a recurring theme in Spanish literature. For instance, Francisco de Quevedo in one of his satires

describes the groom's impotence by comparing the penis to a closed knife, a type of weapon: "a las armas del bajón / la barba fue empuñadura / cuando en contera de tiple / trae envainada la punta" (350).<sup>34</sup> A number of terms associated with battle and arms are cited in the index of Pierre Alzieu, Robert Jammes, and Yvan Lissorgues's *Poesía erótica del Siglo de Oro: acero, acometer, adarga, cortar un jubón, escudo, arcabuz, armadura, asalto, bala, ballesta, cañón, carga, dardo, degollar, espada, estoque, herir, justa, lanza, pelear, pica/o, puñaladas, soldados, and tercio*, among others. Weaponry, genitalia, and facial hair are all metonymies for manhood. Simply put, men's beards—often shaped like phallic weapons—signified early modern men's virility on the battlefield and in bed.

A beard could also represent a man's strength, legitimacy, and control, as seen in medieval epics, such as the anonymous *Cantar de Mio Cid*.<sup>35</sup> Beards that had not been touched or altered by another man, through force, were seen as signs of the wearer's strength. The Cid, described with a "barba florida," (v. 274) promises not to trim his beard during his exile from Castile until he returns to the King and Queen's graces. As numerous critics have pointed out, pulling out the hairs from another man's beard was considered a serious affront to the noble warrior's masculine identity, and was severely penalized (Conde 215). At the beginning of the epic, the Cid seeks revenge on García Ordóñez, the King's friend, and insults his honor by shearing his beard. It is no doubt in imitating the Cid that Don Quixote, upon departing on his first adventure, in a claim of invincibility, reassures his niece that no one will touch his beard: "tendré peladas y quitadas las barbas a cuantos imaginaren tocarme en la punta de un solo cabello" (I, 7,

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<sup>34</sup> On the link between weaponry and genitalia, see Herrero 145.

<sup>35</sup> For a thorough analysis of the various meanings behind the Cid's beard, see Conde, 211-42.

72). At the same time that he protects his own beard, Don Quixote threatens to destroy those of others.

If beards operate as symbols of masculinity, then in an honor-driven society like that of early modern Spain, having one's beard altered, shaved, or otherwise removed by another man was equivalent to losing one's honor, regardless of social status.<sup>36</sup> High-ranking nobles and lowly squires, such as Sancho, could all be victims of beard removal. Sancho's beard, for example, is singed from the explosives that detonate and cause Sancho and Don Quixote to fall from the wooden horse, Clavileño, constructed by the Duke and Duchess, one of the many pranks carried out in the palace: "Que me maten si no estamos ya en el lugar del fuego, o bien cerca, porque una gran parte de mi barba se me ha chamuscado, y estoy, señor, por descubrirme y ver en qué parte estamos" (II, 41, 860). In addition to his beard-singeing, the way in which Sancho sits on his horse (side-saddle) is emasculating.

Often, however, Sancho is humiliated and emasculated because of his master's own actions. Given the recent defeat and humiliation during the windmill episode in the first part of the novel, Don Quixote attempts to redeem himself and reassert his masculinity when a wagon with two friars transporting a noblewoman passes by. Don Quixote attacks the moving vehicle because he is convinced that the two men have kidnapped the woman. Unable to fight off the group of men, he requests Sancho's help. For helping his master attack the innocent men, Sancho is beaten severely by the friars'

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<sup>36</sup> Changes to one's beard could take many different forms, and could occur unintentionally. As noted earlier, after drinking the infamous *bálsamo de Fierabás* in the first part of the novel that would supposedly cure his wounds, Don Quixote vomits on Sancho's beard: "Llegóse Sancho tan cerca, que casi le metía los ojos en la boca, y fue a tiempo que ya había obrado el bálsamo en el estómago de Don Quijote, y al tiempo que Sancho llegó a mirarle la boca, arrojó de sí, más recio que una escopeta, cuanto dentro tenía, y le dió con todo ello en las barbas del compasivo escudero" (I, 18, 163).

servants, and his beard, in particular, receives the brunt of the attack: “arremetieron con Sancho y dieron con él en el suelo; y, *sin dejarle pelo en las barbas*, le molieron a coces y le dejaron tendido en el suelo sin aliento ni sentido” (I, 8, 80; my emphasis). Sancho is left weak, unable to breathe, and sprawled out on the ground; his horizontal position, along with the loss of his beard, signals defeat and powerlessness.

Later Sancho gets an opportunity to show his strength and inflict the same punishment on another group of men. In the Cave of Montesinos, one of the most important episodes in the second part of the novel, Montesinos apologizes to Don Quixote for having said that Lady Belerma’s beauty did not compare to Dulcinea’s. As punishment for Montesino’s “blasphemy” against Dulcinea, Sancho proposes the same violence inflicted on him by the friars in part I, including “moli[r] a coces todos los huesos, y [*pelarle*] *las barbas, sin dejarle pelo en ellas*” (II, 23, 729; my emphasis). For Sancho, *pelar las barbas*, and by extension, touching another person’s face, is one of the worst punishments that a man could suffer.

Touching and pulling one’s beard is such a serious affront that it only becomes acceptable when it is self imposed, as Sancho’s actions suggest. For example, when Don Quixote mistakenly attacks a herd of innocent sheep, Sancho watches the fiasco while “arrac[ándose] las barbas” (I, 18, 162). Moments later, when Sancho loses the letter Don Quixote had painstakingly composed for Dulcinea, he reacts aggressively to his failure to carry out such an important task for his master: “y sin más ni más se echó entrambos puños a las barbas y se arrancó la mitad dellas” (I, 26, 253). Unlike the previous examples (with the friars and Montesinos) that consist of two or more men attacking him, Sancho plucks or pulls out his own facial hair to show his frustration and despair, and he

essentially punishes himself for his mistakes or those of his master. By looking around to make sure no one sees him (“tornó a echar de ver que no le hallaba” 1, 26, 253), Sancho seems to be reinforcing the shame behind the pulling of one’s beard or that of another man. Although it is more acceptable to pull out your own hair, the action itself continues to be shameful, precisely because it leads to a loss of facial hair. Instead of denoting a serious infraction, however, Sancho’s symbolic self-castration provokes laughter from bystanders and readers alike as he singlehandedly emasculates himself through his own beard pulling.

When men swore by their own beards, facial hair took on a spiritual dimension. Instead of promising something to a god, men would often use their beard to take an oath. Various times, for example, the Cid strokes his beard when taking a vow or thanking God: “Entonces alzó la mano, / de la barba se cogió: / Aquí doy gracias a Cristo, / que del mundo es el Señor ” (vv. 2476-77). When the Holy Brotherhood comes across Don Quixote barely moving and breathing at the inn in the first part of the novel, he tugs at the knight-errant’s beard in an attempt to resurrect him, and as if in a trance, continuously repeats: “Favor a la justicia” (I, 16, 145). The Holy Brotherhood’s repetitive stroking of the knight-errant’s beard and desperate pleas to a higher authority finally revive Don Quixote. The beard in this context, therefore, seems to carry superior powers.

The inverse of shaved or plucked men, women with facial hair, although rare, existed in the early modern period just as they do today. It was believed that external factors, such as food, medicine, bodily waste, smells, sounds, sights, activities, and environments could alter bodily humors, and lead to hirsute women (Johnston 25). According to Huarte de San Juan, all women have facial and body hair, but in different

quantities, depending primarily on the temperature of the humors. While men's dry and warm complexions were ideal for growing beards, women's cold and moist complexions prevented the growth of facial hair. In Alonso de Fuentes's *Summa de philosophia natural...* (1547), Vándalo responds to Etursco's question as to why women and young boys do not have beards:

Como ya le dixe atrás / el hombre es muy más caliente que la muger y por ser /  
caliente su complexión, también por los genitivos / tienen aquellos agujeros de las  
maxilas abiertos / y la muger, por ser fría y húmeda tiene aquellos / agujeros muy  
cerrados y por aquesto no puede / aqueste humo salir y assí no pueden crescer /  
estos pelos. (fol. 86)

However, it was believed that some women possessed a drier and warmer complexion that enabled hair growth. That belief found echo in figurative language in the period. For example, in Pedro Calderón de la Barca's *El alcalde de Zalamea* (1636), Chispa asserts her own virility over Rebolledo, a half-noble soldier with little tolerance for pain or suffering: “. . . yo / barbada el alma nací” (I, v. 68). Although she does not wear an actual external beard, Chispa shows her inner “masculine” strength with the image of a bearded soul.

Whereas early modern treatises on women such as Juan Luis Vives's *The Education of a Christian Woman* (1524) and Luis de León's *La perfecta casada* (1583) discuss the use of cosmetics, they do not address hair removal.<sup>37</sup> Early modern fiction,

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<sup>37</sup> Fray Antonio Marqués's *Afeite y mundo mujeril* (1617) is one of the only well-known early modern manuals that strongly encourages women to pay less attention to fashion, hair, and makeup, but at the same time advises them to remove unwanted facial hair: “Es cosa de espantar ver lo que sienten las mujeres cuando, o por enfermedad o por otro suceso, se hallan despojadas de los cabellos de la cabeza, que carecer de [cabellos] en la cara, manos y en las puertas de las narices lo alaban, y si tienen, con pinzas los arrancan con presteza . . . que hacía bien en arrancar los pelos de las narices para parecer mejor” (62). Likewise, Cervantes's Condesa Trifaldi and her *dueñas* mention several methods that they have tried that resemble

however, provides evidence that depilation was common among upper class women. The Condesa Trifaldi refers to those women who “andan de casa en casa a quitar el vello y a pulir las cejas y hacer otros menjurjes tocantes a mujeres” (II, 40, 849), like Lozana from Francisco Delicado’s *La Lozana andaluza* (1528), an expert in plucking eyebrows, among other trades. On the other hand, it seems that poorer women did not undergo hair removal. In fact, in *Don Quixote* the abundant facial hair of several peasant women becomes a marker of their lowly status. For example, Sancho describes Torralba, a goatherd in Part I as “una moza rolliza, zahareña y tiraba algo a hombruna, *porque tenía unos pocos bigotes*” (I, 20, 179; my emphasis). Similarly, Don Quixote’s supposed lover, Aldonza Lorenzo, is described with “de pelo en pecho” (I, 25, 242), that is, with hair on her chest. It is also notable that Aldonza could “sacar la barba del lodo a cualquier caballero andante” (I, 25, 242), meaning to remove one’s beard from a mire, or difficult situation, further alluding to her unusual strength and bravery.

Paintings from the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries suggest that hirsute women in early modern Spanish society were a source of visual fascination. The two most famous examples are Juan Sánchez Cotán’s *La barbuda de Peñaranda* (1590) and José de Ribera’s *La mujer barbuda* (1631). *La barbuda de Peñaranda* (Figure 1) is a portrait of Brígida del Río, a famous figure from the end of the sixteenth century mentioned in various early modern texts, including Mateo Alemán’s *Guzman el Alfarache* (1599 and 1604) and Sebastián de Covarrubias’s *Emblemas morales* (1610). Paul Julian Smith comments on one of Covarrubias’s emblems dedicated to “la barbuda de Peñaranda,” an androgenous figure—neither masculine nor feminine

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today’s form of waxing: “hemos tomado algunas de nosotras por remedio ahorrativo de usar de unos pegotes o parches pegajosos, y aplicándolos a los rostros, y tirando de golpe, quedamos rasas y lisas como fondo de mortero de piedra” (II, 40, 849).

(“soy varón, soy muger, soy un tercero, / que no es uno ni otro, ni está claro”)—but nonetheless, “siniestro y mal agüero” (9).<sup>38</sup> Taking advantage of her anomalous condition, Brígida earned money from visiting palaces and the homes of nobles. Because of her fame, Cervantes may have met her; at the very least, he must have known of her (Sanz Hermida 465).<sup>39</sup>



**Figure 1:** Juan Sánchez Cotán, *La barbuda de Peñaruda*, 1590.  
Museo del Prado, Madrid, Spain

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<sup>38</sup> For more on Brígida del Río and the various ways she was interpreted by her contemporaries, see Velasco “Marimachos, hombrunas.”

<sup>39</sup> On the presence and influence of other early modern ‘monsters,’ including androgynous figures, see Río Parra and Soyer (Chapter 1).

Forty-one years later, Ribera painted a portrait of the bearded Magdalena Ventura (Figure 2), who breastfeeds a baby in her arms. Her engorged breast is what first draws a viewer's attention, especially since the light falls directly onto the baby's lips. Gradually the spectator's gaze moves upwards towards the shadowy, dark beard on the woman's face. Despite Magdalena's masculine features, her feminine traits prevail: the bright and abnormally positioned breast stands out in the portrait.



**Figure 2:** José de Ribera, *La mujer barbuda*, 1631,  
Hospital de Tavera, Toledo, Spain

The Latin epithet on the righthand side of the painting further emphasizes the figure's predominant gender by using feminine pronouns (Seagraves 8-9):

Look, a great miracle of nature. Magdalena Ventura from the town of Accumulus in Samnium, in the vulgar tongue Abruzzo in the Kingdom of Naples, aged 52 and what is unusual is when she was in her 37th year she began to go through puberty and thus a full growth of beard appeared such that it seems rather that of a bearded gentleman than a woman who had previously lost three sons whom she had borne to her husband [...]. (qtd. in Seagraves 8-9)

Although Magdalena's beard is shocking, Ribera highlights the feminine and maternal aspects of the bearded woman. At fifty-two years old, Magdalena would be unable to nurse a child; however, Ribera wishes to emphasize her underlying female features through the simple act of breastfeeding. Likewise, the spool of thread located on top of the stone tablet, illuminated by the light, alludes to the woman's sewing skills, a sign of domesticity. Moreover, the bearded woman does not stand alone. Magdalena's frail and aged husband stands to the left and slightly behind the main figure, in the shadows, revealing his submissive attitude and secondary position. Nevertheless, his presence reinforces Magdalena's role as wife and mother to this newborn child. Such paintings engage fundamentally with anxieties and codes surrounding the representation and social performance of gender, with the intimate identities of subjects either reaffirmed or destabilized through the external somatic markers of facial hair. These same anxieties and codes inform Cervantes's manipulation of the facial hair of both men and women throughout *Don Quixote*.

Viewed as "monsters" for their facial hair and a threat to early modern gender norms, hirsute women such as Magdalena frequently assumed evil roles in literature, like Fernando de Rojas's *Celestina*, "una vieja barbuda." Witches and *trotaconventos* both

blur and transgress boundaries of gender and sex, as is evident in Celestina's ability to play matchmaker and set up a sexual commerce among the characters. Juan Ruiz's *Libro de buen amor* (1343) warns readers about hairy women and their diabolic tendencies: "Guárdate que no sea vellosa ni barbuda / ¡que el infierno de ti a tal mujer sacuda!" (130). Moreover, women with facial hair could be considered lascivious according to Jerónimo Cortés's *Fisionomía natural y varios secretos de naturaleza* (1601): "La mujer que tiene muchos pelos en las quijadas y junto a la barba, es de fuerte naturaleza, y de condición terrible, y es cálida en sumo grado, por lo qual es muy luxuriosa y de varonil condición" (32). Because hirsute women broke with gender norms established in the period, society also classified them as evil figures.

On the other end of the spectrum, a loss of hair was also considered grotesque. In Cervantes's *La española inglesa* from his *Novelas ejemplares* (1613), which takes place during the sacking of Cádiz by the English and the defeat of the Spanish Armada at the end of the sixteenth century, Isabela, a young beautiful woman, loses all her hair and body hair and transforms into a grotesque figure, a "monstruo de fealdad" (269) after the mother of a scorned lover poisons her: "Finalmente Isabela no perdió la vida, que el quedar con ella la naturaleza lo conmutó en dejarla sin cejas, sin pestañas y sin cabello, el rostro hinchado, la tez perdida, los cueros levantados, y los ojos lagrimosos" (269).<sup>40</sup> The two extremes—hirsuteness and hairlessness—were perceived negatively, a reminder that moderation, achieved by the balance of bodily humors, was fundamental.<sup>41</sup> In fact, the loss of hair was often a symptom of syphilis, as seen in the soldier infected by the

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<sup>40</sup> There is no doubt that this story is indicative of Cervantes's interest in England, as in so many other parts of his contemporary world.

<sup>41</sup> On balance and humoral composition, see Nutton.

prostitute in Cervantes's *El casamiento engañoso* (Herrero Ingelmo and Montero Cartelle 12, 48n).<sup>42</sup> Essential notions of masculinity and femininity, of military and political authority, of perverted morality or social marginalization, are all filtered through the problematic of facial hair.

In *Don Quixote* alone, there are at least two proverbs or sayings in which the beard plays a central role. Both come from Sancho, who is well versed in sayings. At the end of the first part of the novel, Sancho uses what appears to be a proverb: “Vuestra merced mire cómo habla, señor barbero, que no es todo *hacer barbas* (I, 47, 489); that is, “not everything is shaving beards” (Lang 77-8).<sup>43</sup> At the beginning of the second part of the novel, Sancho once again refers to beards while talking to his wife, Teresa: “que ate bien mi dedo con vuestra merced, y *que hablen cartas y callen barbas*, porque quien destaja no baraja, pues más vale un toma que dos te daré. Y yo digo que el consejo de la mujer es poco, y el que no le toma es loco” (II, 7; my emphasis). As recorded in well-known collections of proverbs going back to Sebastián de Horozco's *Teatro universal de proverbios*, the saying “hablen cartas y callen barbas” refers to the idea that written evidence is more valuable than oral testimony (Redondo *En busca del Quijote* 139). Clearly, the beard was such a basic part of daily life that it made its way into oral folk language.

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<sup>42</sup> Carruzano, the protagonist in Cervantes's *El casamiento engañoso*, describes his hair loss in the following terms: “Mudé posada y mudé el pelo dentro de pocos días, porque comenzaron a pelárseme las cejas y las pestañas, y poco a poco me dejaron los cabellos, y antes de edad me hice calvo, dándome una enfermedad que llaman *lupicia*, y por otro nombre más claro, la *pelarela*. Halléme verdaderamente hecho pelón, porque ni tenía barbas que peinar ni dineros que gastar” (287).

<sup>43</sup> This particular refrain is not included in Gonzalo Correas's *Vocabulario de refranes y frases proverbiales...* (1627). However, his monumental work contains many references to refrains associated with beards, including one that reinforces the connection between masculinity and weaponry mentioned earlier: “Cuando vieres la barba de tu vecino pelar, echa la tuya á remojar, ó en remojo” (372).

### 1.3 Beards in *Don Quixote*

There are key beard scenes that merit particular attention as explorations of impersonation and gender breakdown within the context of the larger critique of the Spain of Philip III that the palace episodes themselves represent. Even before arriving at these key scenes in the palace, several episodes in *Don Quixote* point to the fundamental nature of beards as a site for the inscription of anxieties surrounding sexuality and identity. For example, the barber from the first part of *Don Quixote*, by definition responsible for cutting and shaping beards and assisting doctors and surgeons, fashions a beard using a red oxtail to transform himself into a squire who will lure Don Quixote out of his penance in the Sierra Morena.<sup>44</sup> More than a mask, this beard becomes an erotic symbol when the barber returns to the inn, where the group stops on the way to Don Quixote's house. The innkeeper's wife, who had lent the tail to the barber, quickly recovers it and returns it to its use as a hanger for her husband's combs. As Javier Herrero and David Quint point out, the reader would not fail to grasp the inevitable connection between the *peine* as penis (*pene*), on the one hand, and *cola/pelo* as genitals/pubic hair, on the other (Quint 140). Used to untangle and arrange hair, the comb brings to mind sexual penetration.<sup>45</sup> The innkeeper's wife complains that from the time that the men had been using her husband's oxtail, she essentially has not been intimate with her husband. The tail, now missing a substantial amount of hair, will no longer "servir para lo que la quiere mi marido" (I, 35, 369). That is, the husband will no longer be able to put his

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<sup>44</sup> For more on Cervantes's references in Part I of *Don Quixote* to barbers, detachable beards, and the sexual overtones of the beard/tail, see Fuchs 23-30.

<sup>45</sup> "Para peinar te en razón / sobre tu cama te peina, / y estarás como una reina, / que es gusto peinar a son; / y cuando con el punzón / te partieres el cabello, / mira, mira y ten acuerdo / que te toques de medio a medio" (*Poesía erótica del Siglo de Oro* 97).

“comb” into her (Herrero 148). Given its erotic undertones, the fake beard made out of an animal’s tail provokes laughter from readers. By using an ox tail, which covers the animal’s anus, the barber’s aesthetic beard is ridiculous and humiliating, not only to the barber but also to the innkeeper and his wife.

The barber’s prosthetic beard calls to mind other infamous false beards that represent a break with gender norms in the second part of the novel: those of the Condesa Trifaldi and her servants. The colorful beards are a result of their roles as victims of a revenge plot in the second part of the novel. A princess named Antonomasia had become pregnant after engaging, thanks to the Condesa Trifaldi’s encouragement, in sexual relations with the knight Don Clavijo. She ended up marrying the knight despite her mother’s disapproval, and the latter, grief-stricken, dies three days later. To avenge the mother’s death, a cousin of hers, the giant named Malamburno, transformed the couple into animals and placed a curse, in the form of beards, on the Condesa and her maidens. It turns out, however, that the Condesa is not a woman at all, but rather one of the Duke’s stewards dressed as a bearded woman. As if to make his performance more convincing, the Condesa expresses great distress and shame over the beards with which they have been cursed: “¿adónde podrá ir una dueña con barbas? ¿Qué padre o qué madre se dolerá de ella? ¿Quién la dará ayuda?” (II, 39, 848). Indeed, society and families often marginalized hirsute women. Moreover, men were less inclined to engage in sexual activity with bearded members of the opposite sex: “Pues aun cuando tiene la tez lisa y el rostro martirizado con mil suertes de menjurjes y mudas apenas halla quien bien la quiera, ¿qué hará cuando descubra hecho un bosque su rostro?” (II, 39, 848). Chances at

finding a husband, therefore, were also slim, if not impossible.<sup>46</sup> Henry Sullivan has compellingly argued that the episode functions like a mirror of Don Quixote, holding up for him “a grotesque and distorted image of his own inability to relate as a sexual being to a real woman” (*Grotesque Purgatory* 139).

The manipulation of Don Quixote’s own beard in the ducal palace itself represents a cruel mockery of that inability. While the opening description of Don Quixote makes no mention of a beard (“frisaba la edad de nuestro hidalgo con los cincuenta años, era de complexión recia, seco de carnes, enjuto de rostro; gran madrugador y amigo de la caza” [I, 1, 28]), it is safe to assume that the character dons a long one given that this was a popular style for most of Philip II’s reign. Indeed, the narrator makes subtle references to the knight-errant’s facial hair at subsequent points in the text. For example, after the chaotic bout at the inn with Maritornes in the middle of the night (I, 16), the narrator recounts how the leader of the Holy Brotherhood, who was staying in the inn, clumsily comes across Don Quixote in the dark room: “echándole a tientas [a Don Quijote] mano[s] a las barbas” (I, 16, 145). Clearly, the knight-errant’s beard is long enough for others to pull. Similarly, during the episode with the Knight of the Woods at the beginning of the second part, Don Quixote is described as “entrecano, de bigotes grandes, negros y caídos” (II, 14, 646). Although the narrator does not mention a beard in this example, it is worth noting that his moustache, like his previously mentioned beard, is significantly long. It would appear that while Don Quixote embraces

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<sup>46</sup> Although the *dueñas* lament their inability to marry, several bearded female saints, such as Saint Galla and Paula of Ávila, grew beards to avoid marriage. The most famous bearded female saint, Wilgefortis, referred to as Librada in Spain, removed her veil during the wedding ceremony, revealing a long curly beard. The sight of her facial hair put an immediate end to the wedding (Velasco “Marimachos, hombrunas” 72-3).

a way of life out of step with his contemporary world by dressing as a knight-errant and embarking on adventures, his facial hair conforms to the norms of the period established by Philip II.

From all the tugging and pulling at Don Quixote's beard, there is no doubt that it is frequently left messy. When Sancho shares Don Quixote's physical description with the supposed Dulcinea, he comments on his master's unkempt beard. The protagonist's disheveled appearance, however, has a greater significance. Don Quixote's shaggy beard and overall messy appearance attest to the extreme measures he will go to in order to express his love for Dulcinea—a love of pure fantasy. Although Sancho does not explicitly mention an oath, Don Quixote's unkempt appearance (overgrown beard) and fasting in the Sierra Morena in the first part of the novel show his absolute devotion to freeing his beloved from the supposed spell that made her ugly: “metido entre estas sierras como si fuera salvaje, durmiendo en el suelo, sin comer pan a manteles ni sin peinarse la barba, llorando y maldiciendo su fortuna” (I, 31, 311). His overall appearance and wild man behavior as he pines for Dulcinea reflect his melancholic state.<sup>47</sup>

While a shabby beard, like that of Don Quixote in the Sierra Morena, could suggest a more rustic and humble background of the beard wearer due to a lack of means to wash and trim it, a well-kept beard conversely signals affluence. For example, in the description of the captive in part I of *Don Quixote*, plentiful facial hair goes hand-in-hand with wealth and virtue: “Era el hombre de robusto y agraciado talle, de edad de poco más

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<sup>47</sup> Unkempt beards offer an alternative representation of masculinity. For example, the messy beard of Cardenio from part I of *Don Quixote* does not stand as a symbol of manhood. Rather, it embodies all the physical characteristics of a wild man gone mad: “Desnudo, la barba negra y espesa, los cabellos muchos y rabultados, los pies descalzos y las piernas sin cosa alguna; los muslos cubrian unos calzones, al parecer, de terciopelo leonado, mas tan hechos pedazos” (I, 23, 216). On the image of the wild man in seventeenth-century literature, and Don Quixote's role in the Sierra Morena episode, see Dudley 115-139.

de cuarenta años, algo moreno de rostro, largo de bigotes y la barba muy bien puesta. En resolución, él mostraba en su apostura que si estuviera bien vestido, le juzgaran por persona de calidad y bien nacida” (I, 37, 389). In part II, Doña Rodríguez describes her bearded husband: “Hombre ya en días, barbudo y apersonado, y sobre todo, hidalgo como el rey” (II, 48, 913). If in practical terms, members of the upper class had the financial resources to keep their beards clean, trimmed, and fashioned into the popular styles of the period, such assertions also clearly engage with the topical notions of masculinity, authority, and power with which this chapter began.

Although there are only a few references to Don Quixote’s beard in the first part of the novel, his facial hair becomes the center of attention when he stays in the Duke and Duchess’s palace. What takes place in the palace merits our full attention, as this episode emblemizes the problems of the physical embodiment of affect that I argue are central to the entire palace narrative, particularly as a prism for broader social and political critique. Here in the palace, for the first time in the novel, the narrator lingers on the protagonist’s body part for several pages, and these pages indeed require a careful reading.

After Don Quixote’s first dinner with the Duke and Duchess, four maidens approach the knight-errant to wash his hands. However, when they place the water basin underneath his beard in preparation for the washing, Don Quixote stretches out his neck, as if washing a man’s beard were a typical custom in that region of Spain. The women take advantage of Don Quixote’s actions and vigorously wash his beard with soap. Don Quixote’s beard emerges as particularly important in this part of the novel because whereas other moments in the palace are noisy, Don Quixote’s beard washing unfolds in

complete silence: as we will see in later chapters of this dissertation, silence often serves to eloquently proclaim a mute presence. It signals an essential space beyond language wherein the body itself communicates in a move that conflates the registers of the corporeal and the affective. The noiseless episode, especially at first as the protagonist extends his neck and the maidens quickly respond, appears to add a serious tone to the beard washing. Readers and spectators, however, realize that the episode's humor and irony emanate from Don Quixote's immobile position and the ceremoniousness of the beard washing:

y en levantando los manteles llegaron cuatro doncellas, la una con una fuente de plata y la otra con un aguamanil asimismo de plata, y la otra con dos blanquísimas y riquísimas toallas al hombro, y la cuarta descubiertos los brazos hasta la mitad, y en sus blancas manos —que sin duda eran blancas— una redonda pella de jabón napolitano. Llegó la de la fuente, y con gentil donaire y desenvoltura encajó la fuente debajo de la barba de don Quijote; el cual, sin hablar palabra, admirado de semejante ceremonia, creyendo que debía ser usanza de aquella tierra en lugar de las manos lavar las barbas. (II, 32, 796)

The beard washing that takes place at the dinner table mesmerizes *Don Quixote* readers, the immediate onlookers, the maidens carrying out the prank and, especially Don Quixote himself. The basic ingredients of Don Quixote's beard washing, however, were typical of the period, as described, for example, in Juan de Zabaleta's chapter "El galán y su barbero" in *Día de fiesta por la mañana* (1654). Here, the barber's washing and trimming of the *galán's* beard includes the use of "jabón por la cara" (24) and perfumed water, as in Don Quixote's washing. What is strange, however, is that the knight-errant's beard

washing occurs at the dinner table, in the presence of important guests, and that the women mockingly carry it out. That is, while the beard washing is an unexpected prank, the maidens stage it as if it were a grand courtly ritual for a highly esteemed guest. The women use the Duke and Duchess's finest silver, and the whitest and richest towels to carry out the knight's beard washing with great finesse—all with the sole intention of mocking the protagonist.

The scene is so enchanting that Sancho wants to have his beard washed as well, believing it to be a pleasant experience: “pasar por un lavatorio de éstos antes es gusto que trabajo” (II, 32, 798). When Sancho does not receive the same treatment as his master, however, he realizes he has been mistaken. Instead of a group of women washing his beard, male servants attempt to wash Sancho's facial hair with dirty soap and water, which greatly angers him and prompts him to change his mind about the whole affair (II, 32, 804). According to Pierre Ullman, the washing ritual alludes to concerns about *limpieza de sangre*. Specifically, the beard washing puts into focus the early modern social hierarchy: the common people, the *hidalguía*, and the aristocracy (5). Throughout the novel, Cervantes makes several references to Sancho's status as an Old Christian: “cristiano viejo soy, y para ser conde esto me basta” (I, 21, 197). In doing so, he pokes fun at the widespread notion in early modern Spain that peasants were more likely to be “pure-blooded” Old Christians than people of noble status. Cervantes, himself possibly a *converso*, frequently attacks the idea of *limpieza* through the use of jokes. As a squire, Sancho does not receive the same attention and treatment as Don Quixote, yet he is considered “pure” according to society's standards. He therefore responds with indignation:

Yo estoy limpio de barbas y no tengo necesidad de semejantes refrigerios; y el que se llegare a lavarme ni a tocarme a un pelo de la cabeza, digo, de mi barba, hablando con el diablo acatamiento, le dare tal puñada, que le deje el puño engastado en los cascos; que estas tales ceremonias y jabonaduras más parecen burlas que gasajos de huéspedes. (II, 32, 804)

Although Sancho is merely a squire, as an Old Christian he expects to be treated with respect, like his master. Moreover, although others frequently mock Sancho for his silliness, he, unlike his master, realizes that the beard washing is a prank and not a typical aristocratic “ceremonia” (I, 32, 796) as perceived by Don Quixote.

The beard is not the only body part that the narrator mentions during Don Quixote’s washing. Equally important to the scene are the pale hands and arms of the women responsible for carrying out the beard washing: “la otra con dos blanquísimas y riquísimas toallas al hombro, y la cuarta descubiertos los brazos hasta la mitad, y en sus blancas manos -que sin duda eran blancas- una redonda pella de jabón napolitano” (II, 32, 796). Pale female body parts had an erotic connotation in the Middle Ages and early modern period, and are a recurring motif in *Don Quixote* (Quint 63); for example, Dorotea’s pale ankles and Zoraida’s wrist attract the barber and priest, and captives, respectively. In the beard-washing scene, the narrator’s aside “que sin duda eran blancas” (II, 32, 796) emphasizes the performative aspect of the scene: to play the seductive damsel of literary fantasy, the servants’ hands must surely be white.

The staged eroticism of the scene is unmistakable. While the women-barbers lather Don Quixote’s face with soap, the knight-errant stretches his neck to facilitate the washing. Contemporary readers would not have missed the suggestive overtones of Don

Quixote's outstretched, stiff neck.<sup>48</sup> With his eyes closed during the entire washing scene, Don Quixote would seem to be in a state of bliss as the women massage his neck.<sup>49</sup> As critics have noted, the water adds to the sensuality given the element's association with the feminine (Reguera 110). The heavy weight of the water that lengthens the wet beard and the knight-errant's face during the washing further reinforces the highly charged scene.

Finally, the women's "ojos bajos" as they rigorously wash and massage the lower part of the knight-errant's face, confirm the apparent eroticism of the scene unfolding at the dinner table (II, 32, 797). The servants' downward-cast eyes may be associated with the external markers of the affect of shame. Given the socially-loaded semiotics of the beard, the very act of touching and massaging Don Quixote's beard, particularly in the public company of spectators, constitutes an infraction of social codes that quite understandably might be linked to the affective register of shame. In consonance with this reading, the women also avoid eye contact with their masters, thus perhaps embodying in an external way the interior awareness of having surpassed their responsibilities as servants in having assumed the role of fooling Don Quixote unbeknownst to their masters, the Duke and Duchess. Unlike the cat attack studied in my next chapter, carried out in the palace and designed by the Duke and Duchess, the royal couple has no idea that the servants are carrying out such a prank. Nonetheless, the Duke and Duchess, with no shame, observe in awe the sexualized beard-washing scene, taking on the role of *voyeurs*.

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<sup>48</sup> For Fray Luis de Granada, the neck is one of the most praised body parts, especially a woman's: "es como una hermosa columna, aunque compuesta de diversas piezas" (384).

<sup>49</sup> As Zabalata explains in "El galán y su barbero," the man who goes to a barber to trim his beard sits immobilized "en una silla y, en sentándose, pierde el dominio de su cuerpo porque no se puede menear sino hacia donde el barbero le manda" (23).

For contemporary readers, Don Quixote's slathered beard might have brought to mind semen, which Aristotle and Galen had described precisely as a white "foam, so that if ever it is emitted into the outer air, there soon appears to be much less of it than when it was first emitted" (641).<sup>50</sup> Vigorous motion, such as the rubbing of the maidens' hands on the knight's neck would have been understood to increase his internal heat and thus stimulate the production of semen (Simons 6),<sup>51</sup> perhaps causing an ejaculation.<sup>52</sup> The connection implicit in the beard-washing scene between the semen-soap and the penis-neck may draw on the medical treatise, *Nueva Filosofía de la Naturaleza del hombre* (1587).<sup>53</sup> This text is considered noteworthy for its critique of Galenic and Hippocratic doctrines concerning the body. In one of the many dialogues dedicated to medicine, the author examines the origin of semen. Unlike Hippocrates, who believed it came from all parts of the body, Sabuco claims that semen comes from the "raíz, que es el cerebro"

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<sup>50</sup> For more examples of the use of "espuma" as semen, see Alzieu, Jammes, and Lissorgues.

<sup>51</sup> Renaissance medical books tied facial hair growth to the production of semen. According to Huarte de San Juan, if a man had an abundant amount of thick, black facial and body hair, it was an "indicio infalible de tener los testículos mucho calor y sequedad . . . Pero cuando el cabello, y la barba, y el vello, es castaño, blando, delicado y no mucho, no arguye tanto calor ni sequedad en los testículos" (326). Heat is precisely what differentiates men from women according to Huarte. Following Galen and Hippocrates, the Spanish physician comments that the male genitals are external and the females are internal because of their different temperatures (men-hot; women-cold). *The contemplation of mankind, containing a singular discourse of physiognomie* (1571), by English physiognomer Thomas Hill, confirms Huarte's ideas by associating the beard with reproduction, and considering the "genitours," or genitals, where sperm is produced, as the main source of facial hair growth (qtd. in Fisher 174).<sup>51</sup> In other words, the beard was not just a symbol of virility; it was considered a specific type of excrement, or what Johnston has coined, "facial ejaculate," (45) that was ultimately a by-product of the semen first produced in the genitals.

<sup>52</sup> According to Galen, all human beings have evil humors that need to be regularly eliminated by the body. For San Alberto Magno, these humors "forman la barba en los hombres [y] hacen los menstrosos en las mujeres, que fluye dos o una vez por mes" (qtd. in Sanz Hermida 466). While beards symbolize masculinity, menstruation denotes femininity.

<sup>53</sup> The authorship of this important early modern text remains inconclusive. It was first published in Spain under the name of Olivia Sabuco de Nantes Barrera, but was later claimed to be the work of her father, Miguel Sabuco Álvarez.

(321).<sup>54</sup> Using the image of a root, the author compares the semen's trajectory and structure to the different parts of a tree, from which the roots are ultimately connected.<sup>55</sup> This trajectory coincides with Aristotle's notion of semen, which the Greek philosopher believed was stored in the head because "the nature of the semen is similar to that of the brain; its matter is watery whereas its heat is a mere supplementary acquisition" (*Generation* Bk II, vii; 747a). According to this theory, semen travels from the male's head,<sup>56</sup> specifically, his brain, through the spinal column, and finally settles in the seminal vessels. This pathway resembles the downward flow of soap and water in Don Quixote's beard, a metonymic displacement of the genitals.<sup>57</sup> Following Aristotle and Galen, Huarte argued that the retention of semen could cause death: "Porque de la manera que la mucha urina irrita la vejiga para que la echen de allí, así la mucha simiente molesta los vasos seminarios . . . cuenta muchas enfermedades que padecen los hombres continentes por la mesma razón" (312). The female servants' vigorous washing of Don Quixote's beard, as we have seen, stimulates a blissful reaction in the knight-errant. The

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<sup>54</sup> To add to this argument, seed (*sēmen*) and semen (*sēminium*) share the same etymological root: sem- (*Collins Gem Latin Dictionary* 318-319), meaning "half, or small, thin, and light," and act as agents of procreation.

<sup>55</sup> Sabuco Álvarez describes the semen's trajectory in detail: "Sy va por su caule, o tronco, que es la médula espinal, y en su cogollo, que son los vasos seminarios, echa su fruto y simiente como en las plantas, y aquel mismo jugo blanco de la raíz que había de ser corpulencia en el hombre, y hojas y ramas en la planta, ese mismo en los cogollos se hace simiente y fruto" (Sabuco Álvarez 321).

<sup>56</sup> Several theories exist as to what type of liquid was found in the head. According to the ancient Greeks, the body contained a vital liquid, *aiōn*, which would only be secreted by tears, sweat, and semen. Aristotle extends this notion, believing the richest area of semen was found in the head, specifically, near the eyes (Bk II, vii; 747a).

<sup>57</sup> Don Quixote is not the only character in the novel with an excess amount of semen in the head. Cardenio, a scorned and lustful lover, frequently cries over Luscinda in part I. With an unsatisfied sexual appetite and thus, an excess of semen stored inside his body, Cardenio's tears-semen are evacuated through his eyes.

overflowing soap suggests the ejaculation of semen, or a kind of ersatz semen. Instead of producing actual semen the beard washing produces a comic semblance of it.

The servants and Don Quixote enjoy the beard washing for different reasons. The women are first and foremost entertained by Don Quixote's behavior. They spend most of the washing scene stifling their laughter and guiltily diverting their eyes from the Duke and Duchess. Moreover, by performing this washing on Don Quixote, the women transgressively assert their sexual power over the knight-errant. No dialogue is exchanged between them, contrasting with the amount of conversation that goes on during Sancho and Don Quixote's stay in the palace. Both parties are receiving some type of satisfaction, mostly sexual in nature. In addition, the women interrupt their teasing foreplay-washing, a strategic gesture that further torments Don Quixote. Once the women have achieved the goal of stimulating their houseguest, with no intention of full consummation, the parodic erotic "ceremonia" ends. Don Quixote remains quiet, unresponsive to the washing he just experienced.

The protagonist's silence and immobility at the end of the beard washing are telling. They confirm the presence of shame, which as an embodied affect can lead to symbolic or literal paralysis of the self, immobilizing the person and making him or her feel insignificant. Scholars such as Concha Zardoya have classified the various moments of silence in Cervantes's novel, one of which is "el silencio patético" (316-17). For Zardoya, this type of silence manifests itself in the memorable scene at the end of the first part of the novel, in which Don Quixote's friends tie up the knight-errant and enclose him in a cage to bring him back home—all "con grandísimo silencio" (I, 46, 480). The beard-washing scene produces a similarly "pathetic silence," although here the onlookers'

laughter interrupts it, rendering Don Quixote's shamefully public and incomplete erotic spectacle even more pathetic.

As the center of attention in the Duke and Duchess's palace, Don Quixote is often uncharacteristically concerned with his appearance. Although he attempts to conceal his shame after the beard washing by remaining quiet and passive, the Duke makes it worse by ordering his own beard to be washed. Instead of minimizing the knight-errant's shame, which is the Duke's intentions, the second beard washing only serves to mock Don Quixote further. The Duke pretends that beard washing at the dinner table is a common practice, when in reality, it is jeering. Unlike Don Quixote's elaborate and unhurried beard washing, the maidens hastily wash and dry the Duke's beard: "dándose prisa, le lavaron y jabonaron muy bien, y dejándole enjuto y limpio, haciendo reverencias se fueron" (II, 32, 797). The rushed beard washing is a humorous affair, especially since it takes place immediately after Don Quixote's intricate beard washing. Ironically enough, a member of the high class receives a hasty, informal beard washing, while an *hidalgo* becomes the center of attention and experiences a lavish washing with the finest soap and towels. Additionally, it is the male noble who orders the women to wash his beard, stressing his power over the maidens in contrast to Don Quixote's abject submission. The haste with which the servants wash him may further harmonize with the discourse of shame. Particularly if we accept the overtly erotic nature of the washing ceremony, the scene would imply an intimate, sexualized exchange between the Duke and his wife's female servants, all in his wife's presence. Such connotations might explain the servants' reluctance to overplay their hand here in publicly lavishing the same attention on their mistress's husband as they had earlier granted to the object of their

mocking stimulation, Don Quixote. It almost goes without saying that from this angle, Sancho's own unpleasant washing with dirty water at the hands of male servants acquires a tacitly homoerotic connotation that only further serves to degrade the already perverse mockery inscribed in Don Quixote's shame-inducing heterosexual ceremony.

While the respective washings of the Duke, Sancho, and Don Quixote may tacitly render the scene a veritable collective orgy of beard washing, as a whole the scene clearly works ultimately to ridicule Don Quixote's manhood. Shame here derives from the public performance of a negated erotic act. Instead of asserting Don Quixote as a chivalresque figure in the throes of ecstasy, consummating his love through penetrative acts of phallogocentric conquest, the scene presents an emasculated and feminized character, passively robbed of agency, prematurely interrupted before being fully satisfied. The knight-errant is shamefully subjected to the inversion of hierarchies of gender and class, and put on display in a way that turns what should be private (sexual intimacy) into the object of public spectacle, worthy of laughter. The exact color of Don Quixote's beard is never specified, but given his age, we can assume that he sports a white or silver-colored beard.<sup>58</sup> In this particular episode, Don Quixote's beard is completely white thanks to the soap that has formed bubbles on his aging face. According to many ancient philosophers (Johnston 75), white, grey, or silver beards could signal wisdom and authority. But, as Johnston points out, they could also represent physical degeneration (75). Men's life

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<sup>58</sup> For readers today, Gustave Doré's illustrations for a French edition of *Don Quixote* in 1863, which depict Don Quixote with a black and white beard, are among the most widespread portraits of the famous knight-errant from the Mancha, and along with works by Honoré Daumier, Pablo Picasso, and Salvador Dalí, may contribute to our image of Don Quixote with a silver-colored beard. Perhaps a self-portrait from the prologue of the *Novelas ejemplares* inspired Don Quixote's ageing beard: "Este que véis aquí, de rostro aguileño, de cabello castaño, frente lista y desembarazada, de alegres ojos y de nariz corva, aunque bien proporcionada; las barbas de plata, que no ha veinte años que fueron de oro, los bigotes grandes, la boca pequeña . . ." (51).

expectancy in the seventeenth century, after all, ranged from forty to fifty years, roughly equivalent to eighty years today.

From this angle, the knight's degrading erotic lathering acquires further hints of shame and absurdity, as it is protagonized by a geriatric figure whose soapy beard shows its age, again rendering visible through the materiality of the body the essential secrets of its interior. William Shakespeare underlines the link between reproduction and beards in the pun on "hairs-heirs" in *Troilus and Cressida* (1602) (Fisher 108). Referring to Helen's ability to spot a white hair on Troilus's chin, Pandarus quotes Troilus's response to Helen's observation by comparing the whisker to procreation, an important component of virility: "That white hair is my father, and all the rest are his sons" (1.2.150-62). Troilus's white hair in his beard, however, is an ambivalent sign. The lone white whisker on Troilus's chin denotes an impending physical degeneration or impotence, both sexual and general in nature, which would indicate emasculation. The white whiskers, which denote reduced heat, left men "mollified" (Johnston 76), and, thus, closer to the female spectrum. Similar to Troilus's white whisker that places in question his ability to procreate, the whiteness of Don Quixote's beard indicates his advanced age and suggests impotency. After so many adventures, not only is Don Quixote's health in decline, but his manhood is as well. Emphasizing the protagonist's declining virility, Cervantes refers to the bubbles in Don Quixote's beard as "copos de nieve," or snowflakes, a natural phenomenon that occurs in cold temperatures (II, 32, 796). The snowflake reference coincides with the belief that the white beard, as Johnston points out, is associated with the cold and dryness of winter, itself linked to old age (76).<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> It was believed that each season and, thus, temperature, corresponded to a particular age: Spring-infancy; Summer-adolescence; Autumn-manhood; and Winter-old age (Classen 377). This theme is frequently

Even though this episode does not occur in the winter, dryness plays a fundamental part, as a white beard can connote “diminished heat” (76). According to the religious visionary and medieval German composer Hildegard of Bingen, phlegmatic men, who lacked semen, were weak, sterile—in short, lacking virility (75). Don Quixote, in this brief episode, can be considered phlegmatic, especially for his passivity in the Duke and Duchess’s presence and during the washing.<sup>60</sup> Reinforcing his “snowy” beard, phlegm, like the other three humors, is associated with a particular element: water, the main catalyst in this scene. The image of the water-beard/phallus also calls to mind male sterilization.<sup>61</sup> Although the protagonist’s beard should confirm his masculinity, Don Quixote’s dry, white beard alludes to his physical and mental degeneration—not to mention that its dryness in particular reinforces his madness; as we recall, his quest to become a knight began precisely with his “dried up” brain.

To counterweigh this dryness, the female servants moisten Don Quixote’s dried-up head. The knight-errant’s beard and dried-up brain, however, are only momentarily soaked. The female servants pretend to run out of water during the washing so the knight-

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repeated in Petrarchan poems, like Garcilaso de la Vega’s “Soneto XXIII” “En tanto que de rosa y azucena,” which points out this metaphorical seasonal opposition (youth stands as a symbol of spring and beauty, but also potential for sex; winter is depicted with snow, old age, and the impossibility of sexual relations and love).

<sup>60</sup> Don Quixote’s silent reaction throughout the beard-washing episode coincides with Huartés’s description of passive, phlegmatic men, who “que estando en paz no aciertan a hablar” (144).

<sup>61</sup> There is a brief symbolic castration, which deprives Don Quixote of his manhood, both socially and sexually. Castrated men lost their beards and body hair and became weak, taking on more miserable conditions than those of women. Readers may recall the Biblical tale of Delilah and Samson (Judges 16). After being mocked by Samson, Delilah has a male servant cut Samson’s hair, which in turn, leaves Samson powerless. Quevedo once again provides a clear example of the connection between beardlessness and powerlessness/castration, this time in his poem, “A una mujer que viéndole enamorado se casó con un capón,” where the poetic voice mocks his rival’s lack of virility by describing him as a beardless castrated man: “el capón que cacarea / hisopo-largo de aldea / *sin barbas* y todo palo” (109; my emphasis). The overt lack of sexual threat of castrated men also explains the role of the eunuch in guarding Leonora in Cervantes’s *El celoso extremeño*.

errant “wears” his white beard a longer time, extending the mockery and adding more white to his graying hairs and, apparently, years to his already advanced age. The women are not simply pulling or tugging at Don Quixote’s beard while lathering it, actions that, as we saw above, constituted an affront to a man’s honor. Rather, by covering his entire face with water and soap and pretending to run out of water mid-wash, the women are *playing* with the knight-errant’s beard. This idea is reinforced by “manosear,” the verb to describe the women’s handling of Don Quixote’s beard, which has an erotic connotation, as scholars have noted (Torres 99).

The maidens’ erotic prank involving Don Quixote’s beard resembles the cruel trick that Maritornes and the innkeeper’s daughter carry out at the inn in the first part of the novel. These two lower-class women convince Don Quixote to put his arm and hand, often perceived as a phallic symbol (*Poesía erótica* 343), through the hole of a hayloft “por desahogar con ella el gran deseo que a este agujero la ha traído, tan a peligro de su honor” (I, 43, 453). Throughout the novel, the narrator makes various ironic references to “la fuerza” (I, 43, 453) of Don Quixote’s arm: “fuerte brazo” (I, 29, 453); “su invencible brazo” (I, 29, 453); “invicto brazo” (I, 30, 301); “valeroso e invenerable brazo” (I, 37, 387); “incansable brazo” (I, 46, 476); “la fuerza invencible dese poderoso brazo” (II, 26, 757); and “poderoso brazo” (II, 54, 959) (Cull 38, n2). As John T. Cull and other critics have pointed out, the arm serves as a metonym for the masculine qualities of a knight, namely, his strength and power, and for the male genitalia (38). Mary Malcolm Gaylord confirms this association by focusing on Cervantes’s use of the definite article, “la” in “la fuerza,” which has two meanings in the context of the trick in the inn. First, Cervantes could be referring to Don Quixote’s hand, which is a feminine noun in Spanish (*la*

*mano*). At the same time, however, the author could also be alluding to the deflowering of the daughter (*ella* or *la*) that would take place should the knight's hand successfully penetrate the hole and the daughter finally grasp it (125).

Similar to the beard-washing scene in which the four maidens reverse the social norms for seduction by taking the initiative and washing Don Quixote's sexualized beard to stimulate and mock the knight-errant's supposed masculinity, the innkeeper's daughter reverses gender roles and asks to hold Don Quixote's hand. At least as represented in literature, it was much more often the man who seduced the woman by asking for her hand in marriage.<sup>62</sup> Through her request to grab his hand, the innkeeper's daughter mocks Don Quixote's masculinity and attempts, at least in Don Quixote's mind, to take his virginity.

Don Quixote understands the women's maneuvering of his arm into a hole as an act of sexual penetration, and he insists on his chastity to avoid it (Cull 39): "Tomad, señora, esa mano, o, por mejor decir, ese verdugo de los malhechores del mundo; tomad esa mano, digo, a quien no ha tocado otra de mujer alguna, ni aun la de aquella que tiene entera posesión de todo mi cuerpo" (I, 43, 453). The women tie a loop around Don Quixote's wrist, and he is left hanging precariously, a pitiable image that provokes their giggles. With his hand entirely useless, Don Quixote is left powerless and in so much pain that he believes that his "muñeca le cortaban, o que el brazo se le arrancaba" (I, 43, 456). Cull rightly likens Don Quixote's near mutilation to castration (40). Thus, both episodes at the inn and in the palace flirt with masculine tropes of penetration and sexual

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<sup>62</sup> A classic example is Don Juan in Tirso de Molina's *El burlador de Sevilla* (1630), who seduces the poor fisherwoman Tisbea (his first victim in the play) by promising: "Ojos bellos, mientras viva / yo vuestro esclavo seré; / *ésta es mi mano y mi fe*" (vv. 990-92; my emphasis).

conquest, only to thwart them, leaving Don Quixote powerless and the women in control. In both episodes, the hands become the medium through which the women find titillation at Don Quixote's expense.<sup>63</sup>

The humor of both scenes is also crucial to the dynamics of gender, class, and power that they put into play. Unable to move or to defend himself against the women's *burlas*, Don Quixote seems to accept their stifled laughs and ridicule, thereby fulfilling his role as an emasculated entertainer. Summarizing the ideas of paradigmatic philosophers such as Aristotle, Plato, and Hobbes whose works have been associated with the field of superiority theory, John Morreall explains that those who laugh at others under such pathetic circumstances manifest feelings of superiority over other people (6). That is, the person telling the joke or leading the prank feels empowered, often at another person's expense, and those who laugh alongside the leader share or feed off this person's power. The Duke, Duchess, and servants are responsible for setting up and acting as accomplices to situations that provoke "superior" laughter and ridicule Don Quixote. Through their tricks, they have the proverbial upper hand, upstaging both the knight-errant and, in the case of the beard washing, the Duke as well.

The purpose of these *burlas* is to provide enjoyment to all the spectators, but this pleasure, as Friedrich Nietzsche would confirm, stems from being able to exercise "power freely upon one who is powerless" (196). Through the servants, who are socially inferior to *hidalgos*, Cervantes subverts traditional social roles in order to mock the knight-errant. This is not the first time that servants carry out a beard-themed prank to which an *hidalgo* falls victim. In Luis Zapata's *Miscelánea* (1592), the servants burn the

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<sup>63</sup> To be clear, in one case the organ by which he is victimized is his hand; in the other case, the hand of these women victimize the organ of his beard.

beard of a Portuguese *hidalgo* as part of a cruel prank: “llega un paje por detrás con una hacha encendida; pégale fuego al pastel que era todo de pólvora, y vuela al dicho todas las barbas, y si le alcançara toda la pólvora no le quedara pestaña” (74). As with Don Quixote’s beard washing, which is void of upheaval, Zapata’s scene ends with little commotion, despite the gravity of the servant’s actions. In both cases, the servants have the upper hand. Moreover, in line with Sigmund Freud’s theories of humor, a propensity for humor entails gender differentiation, with women typically the receivers of jokes, and not the producers (Simons 96). Here, as we have seen, the joke is on Don Quixote. That the perpetrators of the prank are all women of low status is all the more humiliating to the man who fashions himself as the savior of women.

#### **1.4 Elizabeth I and the Spaniards’ Beards**

Evident in both early modern fiction and history, the primary qualities of virility—strength and power—can be transferred to women. Queen Elizabeth I’s organized attack against Cádiz at the end of the sixteenth century undermined Spain’s strength. Early modern authors such as Lope de Vega expressed their aversion to England’s monarch by depicting her as a grotesque monster. In his epic poem “La Dragontea” (1598), Lope recounts the last expedition and death of Sir Francis Drake and describes Queen Elizabeth I as cruel and bloodthirsty, a stark contrast to the heroic and Herculean Spanish king:

Sangrienta Jezabel, nueva Atalia  
quedó de tronco tal, reinó en Bretaña  
dura esfinge Isabel, cuya porfia  
en sangre el mar de Calidonia baña;

incestuoso parto de la arpia  
que el Hércules católico de España,  
pudiéndola matar, perdonó presa,  
para manchar la sacrosanta mesa. (231)

Although the female servants in Don Quixote's beard-washing episode are not described in such monstrous terms, their boldness as they manhandle Don Quixote's beard ultimately challenges and disrupts gender roles, aligning them in a sense to England's monarch. As Augustín Redondo points out, there is a "desvirilización del héroe y de virilización de la dama" (*En busca del Quijote* 52) in *Don Quixote*, which began in part I with strong female characters, such as Maritornes, and continues into part II where it climaxes with the four maidens in the palace. Moreover, since the Duke and Duchess are unaware of the servants' intentions (that is, it is a surprise), their behavior resembles that of the Spaniards caught by surprise by the English attack organized by Queen Elizabeth I. Manhood is, after all, not fixed.

On August 9, 1588, Queen Elizabeth I delivered a speech to the troops at Tilbury in which she famously confirmed her dual nature, that is, her femininity and manhood: "I know I have the bodie, but of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and Stomach of a King and of a king of England too" (qtd. in Johnston 160). Elizabeth recognized her body's female constitution, but in terms of military and political prowess, the Queen aligned herself more closely with men. England's victories over Spain, culminating with the successful attack of the Spanish Armada in 1588, prompted the creation of *Elizabeth I – The 'Armada' Portrait* (Figure 3), attributed to George Gower.



**Figure 3:** George Gower, *Elizabeth I – The ‘Armada’ Portrait*, 1588.  
Woburn Abbey.

On the left-hand side of the portrait there is a crown, which represents the monarchy, and the globe on which she is resting her hand, which reinforces the power typically denoted to males. Art historians compare Elizabeth’s hyperbolic body dimensions, particularly her broad shoulders and large arms, to the portrait of Henry VIII (1536-37) by Hans Holbein, which depicts the King in majestic attire and with an equally imposing upper body (Belsey and Belsey 11). Historians also go so far as to read the large stiff lace collar that frames Elizabeth I’s face as a patriarchal beard; these ruffs served the practical purpose of accommodating and framing the men’s beards (Johnston 160). Despite the elegant dress adorned with bows and the strings of pearls around the queen’s neck in Gower’s portrait—all of which emphasize the monarch’s feminine side—the elaborate and stiff

collar that frames the queen's delicate face stands out and suggests the presence of a phallic beard. Moreover, the stiff collar makes the Queen's neck appear longer and more erect, and thus, more phallic. Through her collar, the Queen of England metonymically appropriates the male beard. Similar to England's sneaky naval attack against Spain in 1587 that left the Spanish king's beard "singed," unwanted and unpredictable factors can eradicate a beard's intrinsic qualities, leaving it devalued. Don Quixote's beard washing leaves him subordinate and vulnerable, like Spain in the hands of England's monarch towards the end of the sixteenth century. Don Quixote's fragile masculinity is a reflection of the destabilizing gender and social roles that were in evidence in early modern Spain, emasculating the nation itself.

Don Quixote's beard-washing scene can indeed be read as a broader critique of the place of Spain as an imperial power in crisis, or as a social body suffering diverse ailments filtered through the narrative of bearded masculinity. Consequently, it is essential to acknowledge the specific mechanisms by which Cervantes articulates such critiques. As we have seen throughout this chapter, the beard operates as a potent locus for the interrogation of gender norms and sexual identity in early modern Spain. I suggest that of particular interest is the role that the beard plays here as an extension of the body. Rather than stand as a depersonalized metonym for the knight-errant, the beard is an embodied projection of Don Quixote's inner self. The affective registers both of desire and of shame are given voice through the knight's beard, and particularly through the public display and treatment of that part of his body. The beard as embodied essence of Don Quixote communicates much about his age, his desires, and his place in the world, and the physical treatment his beard receives at the hands of the palace servants similarly

indicates much about the relationship of Don Quixote as a character and as an idea to the wider social world in which he is immersed in the ducal palace. His graphic public stimulation at the hands of the palace maidens constitutes an affront to the discourses of masculinity, authority, and chivalresque prowess in the fields of love and war. It is his beard itself that embodies the challenged identities of who Don Quixote wants to be, and who his public wants him to be. His shaming public seduction renders absurd everything that he stands for, just as the very scandalous act of endorsing such a procedure within the presence of the Duke and Duchess constitutes a grave criticism of the social, political, and moral bankruptcy of an aristocracy willing to acquiesce to such perverse ceremonies. The Duke himself submits to his own public treatment at the hands of his uncomfortable servants while in the presence of his wife. As we shall see in chapter 3 of this dissertation, subtle implications of the Duchess's own sexual and reproductive deficiencies may be inscribed in this mortifying ceremony.

What is central to my argument is that when the beard washing is read as an allegory of political, social, and moral decay, a scathing critique of an empire in decline and of a social hierarchy in upheaval, this is only possible through the carefully cultivated use that Cervantes makes of the body as a tool for the exploration of such problems. The beard itself, along with the treatment it receives, becomes a space on which are written such anxieties. The affective essence of the knight—his longings and also his frustrations, and most importantly his profound shame at the perpetual interruptions and failures to which he is subjected both in the ducal palace and beyond—are embodied affectively in the beard as an extension of himself. The embodiment of affect, and the manipulation of discrete body parts as the materialization of complex emotional and social processes, as

we shall see in subsequent chapters, constitutes a constant within the ducal palace. If Don Quixote's beard can indeed be read as a space for the shameful exploration of the limits of the moral and social decay of imperial Spain, the toothed vagina of Altisidora and the oozing sores of the Duchess's legs are no less fruitful sites for opening up what is hidden and pointing to the intimate connection between the registers of the affect and the body in *Don Quixote*.

## CHAPTER 2

### *Victorious vagina dentata: Altisidora's Body and the Castration of Don Quixote*

It is one of the most basic notions underlying men's fear of women. The *vagina dentata* visualizes, for males, the fear of entry into the unknown, of the dark dangers that must be controlled in the ambivalent mystery that is woman. The teeth must be removed! If the teeth are not removed, the male fears that his penis or testicles, or both, will be sheared away.

"The *Vagina Dentata* and the *Immaculatus Uterus Divini Fontis*," Jill Raitt

La mujer y el gato se acicalan cada rato.  
Popular refrain

Ahí estaba el gato, dormido. Pidió una taza de café, la endulzó lentamente, la probó (ese placer le había sido vedado en la clínica) y pensó, mientras alisaba el negro pelaje, que aquel contacto era ilusorio y que estaban como separados por un cristal, porque el hombre vive en el tiempo, en la sucesión, y el mágico animal, en la actualidad, en la eternidad del instante.

"El sur," Jorge Luis Borges

#### 2.1 "y Altisidora me llaman": The Female Servant's Self-Portrait

The four maidens who vigorously wash Don Quixote's beard are not the only aggressive women the knight-errant encounters during his stay in the palace in the second part of the novel. In fact, when compared to the women who carry out a symbolic castration during the knight-errant's beard washing, Altisidora, the boldest female servant in the palace, takes on devil-like qualities. At first, she attempts to seduce Don Quixote and distract him from the enchanted Dulcinea. For example, she offers to massage the knight-errant's tired feet and remove his dandruff, common methods of seduction among early modern women.<sup>64</sup> Nevertheless, only a particular type of woman could carry out such activities. Indeed, *desenvoltura*, defined by the *Diccionario de autoridades* as "desvergüenza con liviandad" and "desembarazo," is one of the many traits Cervantes

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<sup>64</sup> According to Francisco Márquez Villanueva, commenting on a scene between Grima and her husband in *El caballero Cifar*, dandruff removal "funcionaba como una sugerencia de máxima sensualidad para la tradición medieval" ("Doncella soy" 317).

uses to describe Altisidora. Her flirtatious proposals and attempts to woo Don Quixote, including a feigned faint, however, have no effect on the knight-errant, for he remains faithful to his beloved Dulcinea. Thus repeatedly scorned by Don Quixote, Altisidora seeks vengeance for the humiliation he has caused. Her revenge becomes the cruelest prank played on him during his stay in the palace: she lowers a bag of cats wearing bells into Don Quixote's bedroom during the night. When several cats escape from the bag, one in particular attacks Don Quixote's face. Although the knight-errant uses his sword to defend himself from the aggressive cats, his actions are futile, and he is so badly injured that he must rest in bed for six days.

The feline attack on Don Quixote, while narrated in only a few pages, has received significant attention from critics, largely due to the role of the small animals and the severity of the protagonist's facial injuries.<sup>65</sup> First and foremost, there are bells attached to the cats. Cervantes's decision to use belled cats in this particular episode recalls the popular medieval and early modern tradition of *cencerradas* or *charivaris*,<sup>66</sup> in which pans, kettles, and animals were used express public disapproval of a socially unacceptable marriage due to differences in class status, ethnicity or age among the newlywed couple as the *Diccionario de Ayala* (1693) describes:

En el reyno de Valencia, quando un viejo se casa con una niña o un moço con una vieja, o dos sumamente viejos, o alguna aunque no sea muy anciana, ha tenido muchos maridos y se casa tercera o quarta vez, la gente popular acostumbra darles

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<sup>65</sup> In the following pages I have taken into consideration the contributions of Redondo, Joly, Márquez Villanueva, Murillo, and Martín.

<sup>66</sup> For more information on the tradition of *charivaris*, see Caro Baroja 54-70, Usunáriz 235-60, and Pettigrew Alfieri.

chasco la noche de boda haziendo ruido con sartenes y hierro viejo o cencerros, de donde tomó el nombre y a esto llaman cencerrada. También se usa en Francia y lo llaman charivari. (qtd. in Caro Baroja 55)

Through the clamor of the bells and household objects, the community censored and humiliated those who failed to conform to social expectations. As a result, these socially ostracized couples frequently fled or worse, committed suicide (Pettitt 25-26). Scholars like Francisco Rico have pointed out that Cervantes may have drawn inspiration for Altisidora's cat attack from a scene in Joanot Martorell's *Tirant lo Blanch* (1490) (Pettigrew Alfieri 113). On Estefanía's wedding night, Placer de mi Vida places meowing kittens (without bells) in the newlyweds' room and later convinces the Emperor to listen outside the door to accuse the groom of wrongdoing. Similarly, in the Duke's palace, the narrator describes how Altisidora lowers the bags into Don Quixote's open bedroom window: "descolgaron un cordel donde venían más de cien cencerros asidos, y luego, tras ellos, derramaron un gran saco de gatos, que asimismo traían cencerros menores atados a las colas" (II, 46, 897-98). Yet, there is a fundamental difference. The traditional *charivari* was carried out primarily for couples; therefore, its use in Don Quixote's solitary bedroom mocks and at the same time, emphasizes his status as a single man. Don Quixote is not married nor has he had sexual relations with a woman. Moreover, he rejects all female advances, no matter how aggressive. By remaining single and celibate his entire life, Don Quixote does not fulfill his role as a male in early modern society, giving sufficient reason for Altisidora to carry out a different, albeit humiliating *charivari*.

In recompense for his countless rejections, Altisidora creates a “región infernal” (Márquez Villanueva “La locura emblemática” 32) within the walls of the Duke and Duchess’s palace. In the female servant’s hands, the cats operate as intermediaries, key players to carry out her planned retaliation. This hell-like atmosphere subjects Don Quixote’s body to constant agony and deception intended to have a purgative effect on him, which will eventually lead to a cleansing of his illusions, specifically, his devotion to the enchanted Dulcinea and his status as a knight-errant. This all-important cleansing forms part of what Henry Sullivan has described as Don Quixote’s experience in purgatory, which begins in the Cave of Montesinos and ends with Sancho’s fall into the pit in chapter fifty-five (xxii) of the second part of the novel. In between these two pivotal moments, the squire and master’s bodies are temporarily tortured, an essential component to their cleansing and thus, salvation.

The torture that Don Quixote endures in the palace comes to a climax during the cat attack. Cervantes describes in detail the physical pain that the knight-errant endures as the cats leave deep scratches on Don Quixote’s face and severely disfigure his nose:

Y volviéndose a los gatos que andaban por el aposento les tiró muchas cuchilladas. Ellos acudieron a la reja y por allí se salieron, aunque uno, viéndose tan acosado de las cuchilladas de don Quijote, le saltó al rostro y le asió de las narices con las uñas y los dientes, por cuyo dolor don Quijote comenzó a dar los mayores gritos que pudo. Oyendo lo cual el duque y la duquesa, y considerando lo que podía ser, con mucha presteza acudieron a su estancia y, abriendo con llave maestra, vieron al pobre caballero pugnando con todas sus fuerzas por arrancar el gato de su rostro. Entraron con luces y vieron la desigual pelea; acudió el duque a

despartirla. (II, 46, 898)

His shouts of pain are so loud that the Duke and Duchess run into the room to pry the aggressive cat off of Don Quixote's face and save him. Altisidora cleans his wounds and bandages his face with special oil.

Unlike the other pranks in the palace that produce chuckles from bystanders and little harm to the victim, the knight-errant's wounds in the cat attack have a gravity that makes this joke far more cruel and less comic. According to book five of Aristotle's *Poetics*, once pain emerges the comic element disappears:

Comedy is, as we have said, an imitation of characters of a lower type, not, however in the full sense of the word bad, the Ludicrous being merely a subdivision of the ugly. It consists in some defect or ugliness which is not painful or destructive. To take an obvious example, the comic mask is ugly and distorted, but does not imply pain (9).

Although Don Quixote is frequently injured during his battles and adventures, he often ignores the pain and quickly recovers, or receives immediate help from his squire. For example, in the infamous battle against the windmills at the beginning of the novel, Don Quixote flies off his horse and Sancho comes to his aid to help him off the ground: “a volvió el viento con tanta furia, que hizo la lanza pedazos, llevándose tras sí al caballo y al caballero, que fue rodando muy maltrecho por el campo. Acudió Sancho Panza a socorrerle a todo el correr de su asno” (I, 8, 76). Altisidora's cat attack is one of the only episodes in the novel in which Cervantes gives his readers a play-by-play of Don Quixote's defeat and most important, lingers on the protagonist's recovery. The episode loses its hilarity precisely because of the serious injuries that befall Don Quixote. As the

narrator points out: “Porque no son burlas las que duelen, ni hay pasatiempos que valgan si son con daño de tercero” (II, 62, 1021). Moreover, Cervantes insists on the protagonist’s solitude. With Sancho governing Barataria, this is the first time that Sancho and Don Quixote have spent a significant amount of time apart from each other. The knight-errant is helpless in the Duke and Duchess’s palace. He is left with no choice but to rely on Altisidora for his recovery. The pranks cause both physical and psychological pain that are revealed through a shamed silence.

In their zeal for reading the marks on Don Quixote’s body, scholars have overlooked the body of the woman ultimately responsible for his wounds. This omission is all the more notable given that Cervantes in fact provides a detailed description of the female servant’s body:

Niña soy, pulcela tierna;  
mi edad de quince no pasa:  
catorce tengo y tres meses,  
te juro en Dios y en mi ánima.  
No soy renca, ni soy coja,  
ni tengo nada de manca;  
los cabellos, como lirios,  
que, en pie, por el suelo arrastran.  
Y aunque es mi boca aguileña  
y la nariz algo chata,  
ser mis dientes de topacios  
mi belleza al cielo ensalza.

Mi voz, ya ves, si me escuchas,  
que a la que es más dulce iguala,  
y soy de disposición  
algo menos que mediana.  
Estas y otras gracias miras:  
son despojos de tu aljaba;  
desta soy doncella,  
y Altisidora me llaman. (II, 45, 885-86)

Altisidora's self-portrait clearly deviates from Petrarchan tropes of feminine beauty. While Altisidora's hair is long and blond like that of many poetic muses in the Renaissance, she is far from perfect. Readers need only to focus on the narrator's representation of her nose and mouth to appreciate the female servant's ugliness.<sup>67</sup> In the medieval and early modern period, the nose was associated with different character types: straight and prominent noses indicated beauty and gentility, while flat noses were considered horrid and characteristic of someone of low birth (Fajardo 201). According to Redondo, a wide nose was also a sign of lewdness: "Put a y chata, con lo segunda basta" (56). It is no coincidence, therefore, that low-class women, with wide and flat noses, like Maritornes ("nariz roma" [I, 16, 138]) and Altisidora ("nariz algo chata" [II, 44, 886]), are described unfavorably in Cervantes's novel. In addition to Altisidora's ugly nose, the narrator lingers on another unique and downright unflattering body part: the mouth.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Garcilaso de la Vega describes this type of muse in his well-known "Soneto XXXII": "Del oro se escogió, con vuelo preso / Por el hermoso cuello blanco, enhiesto, / El viento mueve, esparce y desordena" (vv. 6-8).

<sup>68</sup> This is not to say that Cervantes does not mention other body parts in Altisidora's description. Her exalted "cabellos tan largos," for example, are also considered a negative attribute and thus a parody of the beautiful damsels in distress in novels of chivalry (Redondo "Fiestas burlescas" 56).

She has an aquiline (phallic, beak-like) mouth, yellow-brown teeth, and as readers learn from a subsequent chapter, bad breath: “no está muy sana: que tiene un cierto aliento cansado, que no hay sufrir el estar junto a ella un momento” (II, 48, 915). On the one hand, readers may doubt this last piece of information—her halitosis—since Doña Rodríguez, another female servant who is angry and seeking revenge on the Duke and Duchess for not helping her restore her daughter’s lost honor, divulges her shameful condition possibly out of spite.<sup>69</sup> On the other hand, given the dark yellow-brown color of Altisidora’s teeth, readers can assume that Doña Rodríguez’s statement is accurate and that she suffers from bad breath.

In comparison to other, more concrete smells in the novel, like that of “ensalada fiambre y trasnochada” (I, 16, 142) emanating from Maritornes’s body, there has been little said with regard to Altisidora’s bodily flaw. For Márquez Villanueva, both Altisidora’s halitosis and the Duchess’s *fuentes*, discussed in the following chapter of my dissertation, shed light on the females’ unusually hostile conduct towards the knight-errant and squire, and later towards Doña Rodríguez: “dan traslaticia fe de la corrupción moral que una y otra llevan dentro de sí” (“Doncella soy” 324). This stems from the early modern idea, implicit in the analyses of embodied affect explored throughout this dissertation, that the body was a reflection of one’s soul, or interior. As Baltasar de Castiglione confirms: “en el cuerpo de cada uno es imprimida, en los unos más y en los otros menos, una cierta gracia casi como un carácter o sello del alma, por el cual es conocida por de fuera, como los árboles que con la hermosura de la flor señalan la bondad de la fruta” (490). Altisidora’s exploitative and dishonest behavior, in addition to

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<sup>69</sup> Besides sharing Altisidora’s halitosis secret, Doña Rodríguez also tells Don Quixote that the Duchess has *fuentes* on her legs.

her halitosis, point to a deeper internal bodily truth. Altisidora's bad breath is not simply due to poor hygiene after eating a particular food, which can be easily managed. It is most probably chronic, and thus a symptom of a more serious illness (de Riquer 213, n45). Doña Rodríguez herself confirms to Don Quixote: "[Altisidora] no está muy sana" (II, 48, 915). Her halitosis indicates an underlying humoral imbalance (*dyskrasis*) that according to the dominant Aristotelian and Hippocratic-Galenic medical theories of the day would imply both a physical malady and consequent excess or disproportion in moral qualities.<sup>70</sup> Sarah Pomeroy also suggests, following Hippocrates, that bad breath in women may be associated with the idea of a connection between the mouth and the vagina (136).<sup>71</sup> In this context we may also recall the common Hippocratic diagnosis for infertility, still prescribed by contemporaries of Cervantes like Huarte de San Juan, which consisted of inserting garlic in the vagina of a woman suspected of infertility. If her mouth smelt of garlic in the morning, the patient could be considered fertile. While such connections are not made explicit in the Cervantine text, it is evident that Altisidora's oral stench is indicative of an underlying pathology, real or perceived, that may also

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<sup>70</sup> Her illness is made public not only by Doña Rodríguez's revelation to Don Quixote and the readers, but also by the offensive smell every time she opens her mouth, which is frequently. As Bénédicte Torres points out, any emanation from the body, such as a foul odor coming from one's mouth, was considered repugnant as is confirmed by Lucas Gracián Dantisco in *El Galateo español* (187): "[. . .] y hanse visto algunos que quando están hablando con otro, se le pegan tanto, que le dan con el aliento en el rostro, pues es cierto, que todos aborrecen el olfato de otros, puesto que no sientan en él mal olor. Pues ¿qué sería, señores, si este tal no tuviesse buen olor de boca o rociasse quando habla, como hazen algunos que salpican a todos los circunstantes?" (187, 79n).

<sup>71</sup> It was believed that a tube connecting the nostrils and the vagina allowed the womb to move freely throughout the body. A blockage was declared when garlic was placed underneath a woman to check her fertility and no smell emanated from her mouth. In order to clear the blockage, pessaries were often inserted. During this period, these were made from various ingredients, including cuttlefish eggs and dung beetles. It is possible that this tube connecting the mouth to the vagina also explains the cure that was used for bad breath: the head of a hare and three mice or rats (with the insides removed) were mixed with other ingredients and then smeared on a woman's gums for several days (Pomeroy 124).

relate to her morality and her sexuality. Such somatic indicators are essentially impossible to keep hidden.

The appearance of other low-class female characters in the text reinforce the idea that Altisidora's teeth are rotten and that she suffers from bad breath. Many of the lower-class women in Cervantes's novel tend to have visible bodily imperfections that distinguish them from the rest of the female characters, especially those of the higher class. For example, Maritornes, the female servant from the inn in the first part of the novel, is described as "ancha de cara, llana de cogote, de nariz roma, del un ojo tuerta y del otro no muy sana" (I, 16, 138). The country woman whom Sancho chooses to take on the role of the original Dulcinea also has unique bodily markings: "no de muy buen rostro, porque era carirredonda y chata [ . . . y] un lunar que tenía sobre el labio derecho, a manera de bigote, con siete o ocho cabellos rubios como hebras de oro y largos de más de un palmo" (II, 10, 622). As we shall see in the next chapter, upper-class women also had bodily imperfections, but as in the case of the Duchess's *fuentes*, or drains, these frequently remained hidden from others.

Altisidora's unattractive mouth, however, stands as more than a mere signifier of the topical ugliness of lower class female servants. Building on the metonymic relationship that Henry Sullivan (148) establishes between the claws of the cats (or the pussies) that symbolically represent Altisidora, I maintain that the female servant's mouth evokes the classical image of the *vagina dentata*. Altisidora's toothed vagina metaphorically castrates the knight-errant, reproducing an important narrative of *Don Quixote* itself as a meditation on masculinities in crisis. In addition to destabilizing gender roles in this episode, Altisidora, a servant-princess, operates as a noble proxy for

the Duke and Duchess themselves. They are, after all, responsible for devising the prank; yet, she carries out the entire attack without their help.<sup>72</sup> I contend, therefore, that this episode serves to question ideal notions both of gender and of class, ultimately revealing a rupturing of the social body itself, expressed graphically through Altisidora's shameful, voracious, and destructive cupidity. This move, I suggest, again places a keen focus on the body—in this case, claws, face, mouth, vagina—as a critical site for instrumentalizing the intersection of the material and the affective as a means of approaching broader cultural problems in the palace episodes.

## **2.2 Domestic, Diabolic, and Lustful: The Various Transformations of Cats**

In order to understand the importance of cats and their function in this episode, a brief introduction to the importance of animals in general in the early modern period is necessary. According to Adrienne L. Martín, rural families in early modern England and Spain would often live with dogs, cats, horses, chickens, goats, pigs, and cows (“Zoopoética quijoteca...” 448). The close proximity in which these animals and owners lived frequently created a close bond between the two. The connection among animals and people was also strong among the aristocracy and royalty as evidenced in portraits where they appear together, such as the dog in the foreground of Diego de Velázquez's *Las Meninas* (1656), alongside the young Infanta Margaret Theresa, surrounded by her maids, dwarfs, and in the distance, King Philip IV and his wife.

The perception of animals as closely connected to humans was not limited to visual art. Cats and dogs in particular played an important role in early modern literature. Although less popular than dogs in the Middle Ages and early modern period, at least as

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<sup>72</sup> The couple waits from the other side of Don Quixote's locked room, listening to his screams and shouts as Altisidora lowers the bags of belled cats into the protagonist's room, and several escape from the bag.

household companions, cats have always been considered symbolic creatures. Several of Lope de Vega's works reveal his preference for cats over other domestic animals. The small felines, for example, are the protagonists of *La Gatomaquia* (1634), a burlesque poem that depicts a love triangle between two male cats and a female cat. In this literary work, the cats take on human qualities, showing the dual nature of the animal, or "lo felino y lo humano," as Martín points out in "Erotismo felino: las gatas de Lope de Vega" (409). Three other works by Lope, including *La dama boba* (1613), *Las almenas de Toro* (1620), and *El castigo sin venganza* (1631) integrate cats into various episodes. In this latter drama, Lope recounts the transformation of a feline into a woman: "¡Plega al cielo que no sea, / después destas humildades, / como aquel hombre de Atenas, / que pidió a Venus le hiciese / mujer, con ruegos y ofrendas, / una gata dominica, / quiero decir, blanca y negra!" (qtd. in Greer *María de Zayas* 74). Whereas Lope clearly favored cats, Cervantes's works more frequently depicted dogs—most famously, in *El coloquio de los perros*. Therefore, his insertion of cats and larger felines at any moment in *Don Quixote* is hardly casual.

One of the most memorable scenes in the first section of the second part of Cervantes's novel involves Don Quixote and a lion. The knight-errant challenges a caged lion to battle, but in response to the knight-errant's prodding, the lion demonstrates sheer indifference if not contempt as he yawns, shows his rear end to Don Quixote, and simply walks away: "Lo primero que hizo fue revolverse en la jaula donde venía echado y tender la garra y desperezarse todo; abrió luego la boca y bostezó muy despacio . . . y se lavó el rostro [ . . . ] volvió las espaldas y enseñó sus traseras partes a don Quijote" (II, 17, 675). Battles with lions form a crucial part of epic poems, medieval novels of chivalry, and

chivalric romances, such as the anonymous *Cantar de Mio Cid*, Chrétien de Troyes's *Yvain* or *Le chevalier au lion*, and Montalvo's *Amadís de Gaula* (Mancing 437). Unlike the lions that appear in other fictional texts, however, Cervantes's lion is caged. Given the lion's general disinterest in Don Quixote, even after he opens the cage, it is evident that the animal is domesticated. Unlike other chivalric knights who successfully confront dangerous animals, Don Quixote repeatedly fails to show off his masculine side by losing battles, or worse, when his opponent, who in this case happens to be an animal, snubs him. The lion, typically represented as an aggressive feline, is depicted as a passive figure in Cervantes's novel.<sup>73</sup>

In assigning a primary role to cats in the palace scene, the narrator frequently associates them with the domestic sphere of women and their household activities. In ancient Egypt, cats were perceived as a positive symbol of fertility and maternity; women, in fact, believed cats were their protectors (Greer *María de Zayas* 172). Given this intimate connection, cats were frequently represented alongside women. Restricted to the interior of the house, the role of the domestic cat was to accompany housewives. The connection between domestic space and the feline is visible in sixteenth and seventeenth-century paintings such as Federico Barocci's *The Madonna of the Cat* (1575), where the cat catches the attention of one of the children, and the *Annunciation* (1592-96), also by Barocci, which shows sleeping cats (Rogers 101). Cats had a particularly strong association with sewing and weaving. Martín references Diego de Velázquez's *Las hilanderas* (1657) (Figure 1) to further illustrate this connection: a small cat sits at the

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<sup>73</sup> Covarrubias describes the lion as aggressive, yet regal: "Es tenido por el rey de los animales, siendo el más fuerte y animoso de todos, y así es símbolo del rey" (1183).

feet of the spinners with a ball of yarn (“Zoopoética” 448).<sup>74</sup> Altisidora is herself a seamstress.



**Figure 1:** Diego de Velázquez, *Las hilanderas*, 1657, Museo del Prado, Madrid

Approximately two centuries later, Impressionist painters such as Max Liebermann and Pierre-Auguste Renoir continued to represent the link between cats, the home, and housework specifically through sewing. Liebermann’s *Girl Sewing with a Cat* (1884) depicts just that—a young girl diligently sewing while a cat appears to drink from a bowl at the girl’s heels. Renoir’s *Geranium and Cats* (1880) portrays two cats: one sits in a

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<sup>74</sup> Many critics interpret Velázquez’s painting as a strict representation of Ovid’s Fable of Arachne; others analyze the handiwork of the spinners, and study the painting as an allegory for art. However, Martín uses Velázquez’s famous painting to stress the little attention given to the small animal at the bottom of the painting that is essential to killing mice and acting as a pet for the women (“Zoopoética” 449).

sewing basket and the other plays with yarn. Although there is a different tone between the Impressionist paintings that associate cats with nineteenth-century bourgeois domesticity and Cervantes's representation of cats as menacing, voracious, and destructive creatures, the animals' connection to sewing and women remains continuous.

In part II of the novel, Don Quixote desperately needs a seamstress. During his first night in the palace without Sancho, who is governing the island of Barataria, Don Quixote discovers while undressing that much to his horror his stockings contain approximately two-dozen holes: “¡oh desgracia indigna de tal persona! se le soltaron, no suspiros ni otra cosa que desacreditase la limpieza de su policía, sino hasta dos docenas de puntos de una media, que quedó hecha celosía” (II, 44, 881). Perhaps this sumptuary mishap would not have moved Don Quixote as much if he had been elsewhere. The poor condition of his old armor and makeshift helmet, for example, did not, after all, affect him when he assembled his knightly costume at the beginning of the novel:

Y lo primero que hizo, fue limpiar unas armas, que habían sido de sus bisabuelos, que, tomadas de orín y llenas de moho, luengos siglos había que estaban puestas y olvidadas en un rincón. Limpiólas y aderezólas lo mejor que pudo; pero vió que tenían una gran falta, y era que no tenía celada de encaje, sino morrión simple; mas a esto suplió su industria, porque de cartones hizo un modo de media celada, que encajada con el morrión, hacía una apariencia de celada entera. (I, I, 31)

Similarly, when he comes across the famous *yelmo de Mambrino* (I, 21), which is a barber's basin, he proudly wears it on top of his head despite the onlookers' uncontrollable laughter.

In the palace, however, Don Quixote grows increasingly conscious of his appearance and behavior in the presence of his distinguished hosts, the Duke and Duchess, who are socially superior to him, a lowly *hidalgo*. Don Quixote's self-awareness points to the social dimension of shame. Those of a lower class feel more embarrassed when committing a shameful act for they fear dishonor and disapproval from those of a higher class. The narrator's use of the word *celosía* to describe Don Quixote's stockings further stresses the protagonist's shame at his clothing mishap. *Celosía* refers to the structure's latticework, that is, the wooden boards that are interwoven or intersecting that form small openings, similar to those on the knight-errant's stockings. The function of a *celosia* is equally, if not more important in understanding Don Quixote's reaction to his ripped stockings. According to Covarrubias, these architectural frameworks usually covered windows and permitted those inside to look out without being seen: "En lengua castellana vale el enrejado de varitas delgadas que se pone en las ventanas para que los que están a ellas gocen de lo que pasare a fuera, y ellos no sean vistos" (496). Often associated with the enclosure of women, *celosías* were mechanisms of sexual control in the early modern period, as depicted in *El celoso extremeño*, a house with *celosías* to enclose and protect Carrizales's wife from his *celos*, or extreme jealousy. Throughout the novel, as I have mentioned, Don Quixote remains loyal to Dulcinea. Just as men enclose women behind *celosías* in the period in order to guard them from the danger of aggressive men, he keeps himself guarded from the predations of all the sexually voracious women who harass him. Such extreme measures of enclosure, however, usually spark a strong desire to reveal what is being concealed. In early modern literature, the enclosed subject is routinely a beautiful woman; in the case

of *Don Quixote*, it is the protagonist who is closely monitored. If Don Quixote is literally behind *celosias*, or wearing a symbolic *celosía*, then he embodies an inversion of traditional and proper gender roles.

Don Quixote's ripped stockings trigger so much anxiety and torment him to such a degree that he is unable to sleep. His misfortune reinforces the absence of a woman in his life and in particular, in his bedroom, where he first notices the rip. To remedy the problem and cover the source of his shame (the holes), the knight-errant puts on tall boots. This solution, however, is only temporary. Don Quixote's desire to have his torn stockings mended and to eliminate his social shame becomes so pressing that he is prepared to accept thread that does not match his green stockings, despite the fact that stockings repaired with a different colored thread is "una de las mayores señales de miseria que un hidalgo puede dar en el discurso de su prolija estrechez" (II, 44, 883).<sup>75</sup> This willingness to accept any color thread reveals the knight-errant's desperation to fit in among the nobles and disguise his poverty. Fortunately, Altisidora is dexterous with a needle and thread. She does, after all, offer to sew Don Quixote several articles of clothing, including a cap, socks, breeches, and a short cape: "¡Oh, qué de cofias te diera, / qué de escarpines de plata, / qué de calzas de damasco, / qué de herreruelos de holanda!" (II, 44, 885).<sup>76</sup> Sewing was a common activity among early modern women regardless of

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<sup>75</sup> In "La locura emblemática en la segunda parte del Quijote," (*Trabajos y días cervantinos*) Francisco Márquez Villanueva has pointed out the link between the color green and madness in the early modern period. In this monumental work, the Cervantes critic provides a list of "mad" characters dressed in green, including Don Diego de Miranda, Sancho, and the Duchess, and others from early modern Spanish authors, like Lope de Vega and Góngora (23-57).

<sup>76</sup> As Amy Pettigrew Alfieri has pointed out in her dissertation, "Burlas and Burladores in *Don Quixote*," which examines the role of tricks in various key episodes in the novel, including those involving Altisidora in the second part, women of the middle and lower classes usually wore a *cofia*, a head covering. Thus, readers can assume that through this feminine adornment Altisidora mocks Don Quixote's masculinity and his humble origins (128).

class, and it was passed on from generation to generation. Early modern mothers were expected to teach daughters certain skills, including spinning, weaving, sewing, how to work wool, and other domestic affairs (Alvarado Sánchez 62). Moralists recommended that women keep themselves busy with these activities to avoid improper behavior. Don Quixote echoes their sentiment when he encourages Altisidora to stay busy by sewing: “Suele *el coser y el labrar*, / y el estar siempre ocupada, / ser antídoto al veneno / de las amorosas ansias” (II, 46, 896; my emphasis). By encouraging Altisidora to remain busy, he attempts to halt any amorous advances towards him.

More than a pastime to combat idleness, sewing, spinning, and weaving often had a *double entendre* in the early modern period. Ian Macpherson has traced an entire semantic constellation around stitchery as evocative of the male reproductive organ, through terms like *aguja*, *agujeta*, *alfiler*, *hilado*, *huso*, and *lanzadera* (183). He cites an example from Francisco Delicado’s *La Lozana andaluza* (1528), which foreshadows the relationship between Aldonza and Diomedes: “Señora tía, yo aquí traigo el *alfiletero*, mas ni tengo *aguja* ni *alfiler*, que *dedal* no faltará para apretar” (183; my emphasis).<sup>77</sup> Manuel Fontes has documented the image of thread as a euphemism for semen (7). Similarly, words like *agujero*, *ajuar*, *alfiletero*, *dedal*, *ojal*, *tela* and *telar* referred to the female organ, while phrases like *arcar la lana*, *coser*, *hilar*, *labrar*, *tejer*, *tramar*, *urdir*, and *zurcir* captured heterosexual intercourse (Macpherson 183). Cervantes reinforces this double meaning by using the verb *labrar*, which not only means, “to work,” but also signifies *bordar*, “to embroider” or “to perform anything prettily and artistically,” which

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<sup>77</sup> For an exhaustive list of Aldonzas in early modern literature that are classified as “mujeres libres,” see Augustín Redondo’s “Del personaje de Aldonza Lorenzo al de Dulcinea del Toboso” and Gonzalo Correas’s *Vocabulario de refranes* also reinforces the connection between the proper name and promiscuousness in the following refrain: “A mengua de moza (a falta de moza), buena es Aldonza” (qtd. in Zafra 96).

according to Fontes suggests fellatio (9). The female servant's seemingly innocent offer to sew several items of clothing for Don Quixote is thus charged with sexual undertones that would not have escaped early modern readers.

Since Don Quixote ignores Altisidora's advances, the female servant becomes more insistent. Her sly, sexually provocative, and aggressive behavior has led critics such as Márquez Villanueva to refer to Altisidora as a "sex kitten" ("La locura emblemática" 49). The association that the Cervantes critic makes between the sexual nature of cats and Altisidora concurs with Aristotle's description of cats in *History of Animals* (translated in the fourteenth century) as "lecherous" since they "lure the males on to sexual intercourse" (qtd. in Rogers 19). Martín has further brought out the association of female cats with lustful behavior in citing veterinarian José Herranz Martínez on their intricate mating process: "el gato no se aparea con una hembra determinada, sino que es la hembra en celo la que acepta al macho más fuerte tras duras peleas bien acompañadas de maullidos insistentes con sus competidores, que suelen tener lugar de noche y por los tejados de las casas como si fueran canciones de amor" (qtd. in "Zoopoética" 453).<sup>78</sup> Once the female and male cats have mated, the female cat can copulate as many as eight times in a twenty-minute period (Piper 5). In addition to anthropomorphizing cats, humans also turn natural feline behavior into pejorative terms referring to women. A promiscuous or malevolent woman is often described as catty (sly or spiteful), feline (stealthy), and cat (malicious) (Rogers 1). Words like *gata*, *chat/chatte*, and *pussy*—all of which have sexual connotations—handsomely complement the transformation of Altisidora's cats from innocent domestic animal to lustful creatures.

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<sup>78</sup> For the original quote in its context, see Herranz Martínez 180.

Despite Don Quixote's numerous rejections of Altisidora's lascivious advances, the female servant persists, determined to get what she wants—for Don Quixote to fall victim to her seduction and that the spell on Dulcinea never be broken: “porque nunca salga de su encanto esta tan amada tuya Dulcinea, ni tú lo goces, ni llegues a tálamo con ella, a lo menos viviendo yo” (II, 46, 899). Her expressed desire to consummate her love with Don Quixote, even if false, resonates with the intense eroticism attributed to cats. When her flirting has no effect on Don Quixote, Altisidora becomes more aggressive. She strategically waits for Don Quixote to pass her while walking and then she faints. Her “calculating and coy” (Murillo 208) actions again harmonize with the sly behavior often associated with cats. And just as cats “are equally clever and artful in getting their way” (Rogers 166), Altisidora's steadfastness and manipulation similarly align her with felines. As in the well-known game of “cat and mouse,” which consists of the stronger party (the cat) toying with the weaker party (the mouse) by pursuing, capturing, and regularly letting the mouse escape for the sole purpose of torturing it again, Altisidora stealthily hunts and torments her prey for sport under the cover of dark.

In addition to her sneaky, cat-like behavior, Altisidora's mouth, and particularly her bad breath, further reifies her symbolic connection to the small animal. According to Edward Topsells's *The History of Four-Footed Beasts and Serpents* (1658) small felines have “[a] breath . . . [that] consume[s] the radical humour and destroy[s] the lungs . . . [and] venomous teeth” (1:83). Topsell's description coincides with that of John Swan's *Speculum mundi* (1671):

because the savour and breath of Cats destroy the lungs, and consume the radical humour. Wherefore it is a means to bring any into a consumption, who shall

suffer these creatures to lie with them upon their beds, for their breath (especially in a close chamber) infecteth the aire: therefore they be also dangerous in time of pestilence, and apt to bring home venomous infection. (464)

Viewed as dangerous carriers of infection, the early modern cat could also be considered an evil creature. Given their fierce claws and teeth, cats often turn against human beings, showing their ability to “viv[ir] una vida doble, mitad doméstica y mitad salvaje” (Serpell 189). Outside the context of female sexuality and domesticity, cats have also been associated with witchcraft. According to Gaspar Navarro’s *Tribunal de superstición* (1631), the Devil could appear in many forms, including “en figura de gato” (fol. 47v<sup>o</sup>). The same animal frequently accompanies witches, as Topsell points out: “the familiars of witches do most ordinarily appeare in the shape of cats, which is an argument that the beast is dangerous in soule and body” (1:83). Cats also appear in paintings depicting the Last Supper, and they are usually seated near or at the feet of Judas, further stressing their evil associations.

Such negative associations have concrete ramifications, as in the example of French Inquisitorial cases in which cats were sometimes burned when their owners were prosecuted (Greer *María de Zayas* 172). Robert Darnton’s *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History*, which recounts the murder and horrible treatment of cats in the late 1730s in Paris, France, provides an explanation of the horrific process in which cats were tortured and killed for their link to witchcraft. Darnton presents one particularly notable method for protecting oneself from sorcery by cats: “Cut its tail, clip its ears, smash one of its legs, tear or burn its fur, and you would break its malevolent power. A maimed cat could not attend a sabbath or wander abroad to cast

spells” (173). In addition, Darnton mentions several torture methods used on cats, two of which coincide with the palace scene in the second part of Cervantes’s novel: the tying of cats in bags and the suspension of cats from ropes (83-85). In *Don Quixote*, noisy, foreign objects are attached to the cats’ tails, and they are tossed into a bag that readers can assume is small because Altisidora singlehandedly lowers it into the knight-errant’s open window. Although readers typically focus on Don Quixote’s pain—both physical and psychological—the cats also suffer horrible treatment at the hands of Altisidora. So, too, by extension, are they victims of the Duke and Duchess who act as accomplices in this adventure, fully aware of Altisidora’s prank in contrast to that of the four servants in the beard washing scene.

Not just victims of torture for their connection to the devil, cats themselves also acted as torture instruments. For example, Piper discusses medieval cases of disobedient servants being subjected to “cat-hauling,” which consisted of the victim being tied down to the ground while a cat was dragged along his or her bare back. In a traditional ritual of St. John’s Day that lasted until the end of the eighteenth century, cats were placed into sacks and burned in bonfires (Piper 5), a technique that resembles that which was implemented by Altisidora. In this case, however, in yet another gesture of Cervantine inversion, the servant is not the victim, assuming rather the problematic position of socially superior punisher.

Although the narrator does not explicitly call Altisidora a witch or an *alcahueta*, Don Quixote refers to the cats as enchanted and wicked figures—“demonio,” “hechicero,” and “encantador” (II, 46, 898)—all of which stress the servant’s diabolical behavior, in consonance with the associations outlined above. According to the infamous

fifteenth-century manual on witchcraft, *Malleus Maleficarum*, by Heinrich Kramer's (also referred to as Heinrich Institor), "all witchcraft comes from carnal lust, which is in women insatiable" (Kramer 47). With her desire thwarted after numerous failed advances, Altisidora turns against Don Quixote fueled by the unholy alliance of her maliciousness and her 'natural' cupidity. She resembles those medieval and early modern women, discussed by Moira Smith, who were unable to seek revenge for wrongdoings and sometimes turned to occult means, such as magic and witchcraft. Given that witches were often accused of a perverse sexuality, their magic was thought to echo their twisted behavior (Smith 117), and such associations are certainly latent in Altisidora's cat attack.

The practice of *praestigium*, or a demonic illusion that deceived the victim's senses, for example, was one method utilized by witches: "[witches] take on the semblance [specie] of a brute beast, such as a wolf or a cat" (Stephens 302). More often than not, this practice was carried out in the nighttime, "territorio inquivoco del Mal" (Padilla 202). The time of Altisidora's attack—late evening—, therefore, further points to the workings of the devil or witch masquerading as demonic animal. Of particular relevance here, during *praestigium*, many men believed their sexual organs were entirely amputated, when in reality, their genitalia remained intact (Stephens 302). Don Quixote's painful screams as his nose and face are attacked point to a deeper type of injury: a symbolic castration that can only be stopped by the Duke and Duchess. On the same day of the attack, Don Quixote walks out of his room with "un gran rosario," a small, yet significant detail as a rosary acted as a defense against the Devil. Despite holding on to his rosary *qua* sacred talisman, Don Quixote suffers serious lacerations from the devil-like felines that assault him, although in the end, thanks to the Duke and Duchess's

intervention, he is saved. Ironically enough, the same characters that devised the cat prank ultimately save the victim, perhaps suggesting that the excesses of this particular prank are too extreme even for the notably unscrupulous couple. In conjuring the symbolic forces of voracious sexuality wrapped in the diabolical trappings of feline aggression, Alitisidora has crossed a line, again recalling Aristotle's observation in the *Poetics* that comedy is fundamentally inimical to true pain (9).

Altisidora's attack is not the only episode in the novel that associates cats with evil. Several chapters earlier during Sancho's governorship of Barataria, Sancho questions a peasant woman who was attacked by an aggressor to verify that the assailant had stolen her purse, which triggers a lively response from the victim:

¿Cómo quitar? Antes me dejara yo quitar la vida que me quiten la bolsa. ¡Bonita es la niña! ¡Otros gatos me han de echar a las barbas, que no este desventurado y asqueroso! ¡Tenazas y martillos, mazos y coplos no serán bastantes a sacármela de las uñas, ni aun garras de leones. (II, 45, 893-94)

This aggrieved woman holds on to her purse tightly and insists on the seriousness of the matter by confirming that cats and lions are "common instrument[s] for inflicting pain" (Piper 4). Nevertheless, neither the pain from nor the strength of the animal's claws would release the woman's grip on her purse that had already been wrongfully stolen from her.

In his role as judge, Sancho is ultimately adjudicating this woman's claims as a victim of sexual violence. Leaving aside the particulars of her own experience of real or feigned assault, this scene resonates with Alitisodra's own assault on Don Quixote in so far as both cases invoke the aggressive attacks of cats with the action of violent sexual

conquest. The plaintiff in this case is of course insistent on her abilities of self-defense, affirming her ability to triumph over the predations of both purse thieves and voracious cats and lions. Sancho unpalatably takes this affirmation to imply that she should also be more than equipped to defend herself in the terrain of sexual violence. In the case of Altisidora's own attempted assault on Don Quixote's sexuality, the use of cats as a stand-in for the servant woman's own diabolical and castrating cupidity completes the humiliating inversion of gender and class dynamics at play throughout the palace episodes. Don Quixote's status as powerless and voiceless victim of the servant's aggression is materially embodied in the feline surrogates she sends to do her dirty work.

### **2.3 The Myth of the *Vagina Dentata*: A Castrating Tool**

In light of Altisidora's aggressive advances and cat-like behavior, Don Quixote proceeds with caution when in contact with her, regardless of proximity or distance. In fact, the first time that Don Quixote encounters Altisidora, it is outside of his bedroom window, which is covered by a *reja* that limits his vision, much like the previously mentioned *celosía* that symbolically encloses his own tenuous sexuality. He can only sense movement and hear noises below: “y al abrir [la ventana] sintió y oyó que andaba y hablaba gente en el jardín” (II, 44, 883). Showing no signs of self-restraint, especially when professing her “love” for Don Quixote, Altisidora dedicates a song to the knight-errant: “¡Oh, quién se viera en tus brazos / o, si no, junto a tu cama, / rascándote la cabeza / y matándote la caspa” (II, 44, 885). Altisidora's voice, which Don Quixote hears through the open window, is what first catches the knight-errant's attention. Her excessive talkativeness can be read in the same manner in which Georgina Dopico Black reads Fray Luis de León's *La perfecta casada* (1583):

The homology between closure of anatomical openings . . . on one hand, and between the sensual and the sexual openings of woman's body, on the other, suggest that female garrulity (the open mouth) in *La perfecta casada* can be equated with harlotry (the open sex). (94)

Altisidora's loquaciousness unquestionably stresses the female servant's promiscuity.<sup>79</sup> Moreover, her singing represents a total and complete inversion of the standard trope of male conquest from the street directed at enclosed women (Joly 145). Altisidora yet again upsets the dynamic by assuming a 'male' role in order to conquer the enclosed subject. It is through this same window that Altisidora will enter figuratively as a cat that growls, hisses, and attacks the protagonist. These details—a singing voice and a hissing cat—bring Altisidora's oral-vocal organ to the fore. The mouth is not only the body's main vehicle for producing sounds but the tongue, the main instrument of Altisidora's chattiness, is also the organ responsible for producing language and, coincidentally (or not), is also the location of her aforementioned halitosis.

The tongue's relation to the mouth calls to mind the lips or labia, integral parts of the female genitalia. In Charles Estienne's *Dissection of the Parts of the Human Body* (1546), one of the first early modern medical descriptions of the female genitalia describes the clitoris as "a little tongue" (*languette*) (Mazzio 60). The similarities of the mouth and vagina are not limited to the lips. The head and genitals also have a neck (cervix) and mouth (mouth of the womb or uterus) (Blackledge 214).<sup>80</sup> This connection

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<sup>79</sup> Fray Luis de León dedicates an entire chapter (XVI) of *La perfecta casada* to the importance of keeping women silent: "Cuanto importa que las mujeres no hablen mucho..."

<sup>80</sup> The physical form of women's reproductive system itself was understood as precisely equivalent to men's reproductive systems, with the particular difference that women's 'penises' and 'testicles' are largely inside their bodies, due to the cold and damp humors that are natural to women's bodies, causing their

between the mouth and the female genitalia evokes the image of a *vagina dentata*, or toothed vagina. From ancient folklore, mythology, and literature, to movies like the popular horror comedy, *Teeth* (2007), many cultures have associated the *vagina dentata* with a fear of male castration.<sup>81</sup> According to the Yanomami of South America, for example, one of the first human beings on Earth was a woman who possessed a vagina with teeth that mutilated her partner's penis (Blackledge 165).<sup>82</sup> Other tribes, such as the Navajo and Apaches, characterize toothed vaginas as detached organs (166). This idea of an independent, personified sexual organ that could freely move throughout the female body extends beyond indigenous cultures. Since the classical period, male and female organs were considered ambulatory. The interlocutor of Plato's *Timaeus* recounts:

This is why, of course, the male genitals are unruly and self-willed, like an animal that will not be subject to reason and, driven crazy by its desires, seeks to overpower everything else. The very same causes operate in women. A woman's womb or uterus, as it is called, is a living thing within her with a desire for childbearing. Now when this remains unfruitful for an unseasonably long period of time, it is extremely frustrated and travels everywhere up and down her body . . . and visits all sorts of other illnesses upon her until finally the woman's desire and the man's love bring them together. (91b-d)

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genitals to be drawn inside of them when they are still in utero (Huarte 316-320). Anatomical drawings from the period, like Juan Valverde's, mentioned in the epilogue of this dissertation, suggest very clear analogies between male and female genitalia. The female labia, for example, are represented very much like a female version of the male glans and frenulum.

<sup>81</sup> Other movies, like *Jaws* and *Tremors*, in which the monster devours with sharp teeth, gaping jaws, and bloodied lips also evoke images of the *vagina dentata*. Moreover, female vampires who use their bright red lips and fangs to suck blood from their victim further suggest male castration (Creed 107).

<sup>82</sup> For more examples of the *vagina dentata* myth, see Blackledge (165-210) and Raitt (415-31).

Although Timaeus examines the mobility of both male and female organs, his work dedicates considerably more attention to the female body.<sup>83</sup> His description of the movable uterus is one of the first references to the *mal de la madre*, or wandering womb, which was believed to cause feminine diseases such as hysteria.<sup>84</sup>

Similar to females' wandering wombs, which triggered great panic for their volatility, the myth of the *vagina dentata* stems from men's anxiety over the unfamiliarity and unpredictability of the female body. Though teeth or fangs are exclusive to the *vagina dentata*, carnivorous fish, snakes, vagina spirits, crabs, and dragons were also believed to inhabit the vagina (Miller 314). These animals and so-called spirits could not only cut off the penis but also poison and kill the man to whom it belonged. As Catherine Blackledge's *The Story of V: A Natural History of Female Sexuality* (2004) reveals, women with *vagina dentatae* or some type of devouring element were often considered half women (above the waist) and half beast (from the waist down) (168–69). A significant section of Sarah Alison Miller's chapter, "Monstrous Sexuality: Variations on the *Vagina Dentata*" in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Monsters and the Monstrous* (2012) focuses on the ancient Greek sea-monster, Scylla, a hybrid creature frequently represented as a woman above the waist, and below, a beast with toothed

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<sup>83</sup> Hippocrates's treatise, *Diseases of Women*, from the late fourth and early third centuries BCE, also comments on the mobility of the womb: it could move toward the liver, head, heart, hip joint, and breast for many reasons (Miller 314).

<sup>84</sup>One of the most famous cases of wandering wombs occurs in Fernando de Rojas's *Celestina*. Areúsa visits Celestina in the hopes that she can cure her: "Mal gozo vea de mí si burlo, sino que ha cuatro horas que muero de la madre, que la tengo subida en los pechos, que me quiere sacar deste mundo" (Act VII; II, 133). As we shall see in chapter 3, which deals with issues related to the female reproductive system, strong odors were used to relieve symptoms and restore the mobile womb. As Celestina explains to the young woman: "Todo olor fuerte es bueno: assí como poleo, ruda, axiensos, humo de plumas de perdiz, de romero, de moxquete, de encienso: recebido con mucha diligencia, aprovecha y alfoxa el dolor, y buelve poco a poco la madre a su lugar" (Act VII; II, 134). For a more detailed explanation on *mal de la madre* and the failure of maternal influence in *Celestina*, see Burke.

genitals such as those of snarling dogs (316). As Miller points out, in Homer's *Odyssey* (around eighth-century BCE), Circe warns Odysseus of a hungry, monster-like creature with teeth, Scylla:

She has twelve legs, all writhing, dangling down / and six long swaying necks, a hideous head on each, / *each head barbed with a triple row of fangs, thickset, / packed tight – and armed to the hilt with black death! / Holed up in the cavern's bowels from her waist down / she shoots out her heads, out of that terrifying pit.* (317; my emphasis)<sup>85</sup>

At the same time that Homer emphasizes Scylla's toothed vagina, he stresses the mystery and treacherousness of the dark, unfamiliar vagina.

Manifested by the six necks with toothed mouths, the voracious appetite of Homer's Scylla is in keeping with monsters' cravings for food and drink. Although toothed mouths could satisfy bodily and erotic desires,<sup>86</sup> female monsters sometimes also possessed teeth in another lipped organ to appease their sexual desires: the vagina. Represented by dangerous toothed genitalia and thus considered a source of conflict, female sexuality and by extension, the female body, were perceived negatively. On the one hand, the vagina is responsible for giving birth; on the other hand, with a snap of its teeth, the vagina could be destructive. Endowed with such a negatively charged reproductive organ, women were frequently depicted as evil in early modern literature. For example, Blackledge cites William Shakespeare's *King Lear*, who links women's wickedness to the area below their waist: "Down from the waist they are Centaurs, /

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<sup>85</sup> Homer, *The Odyssey*, 12.99-104, 274.

<sup>86</sup> The vampire, for example, is a type of monster whose bite is a symbol of violence, eroticism, and fertility. Once bitten by the vampire's teeth, women use their own teeth to satisfy their needs (Miller 312).

Though women all above: / But to the girdle do the Gods inherit, / Beneath is all the fiends': / There's hell, there's darkness, there is the sulphurous pit, / Burning, scalding..." (169). Through these examples—all of which come from male authors—readers can conclude that the devouring female genitalia, a displacement of the woman's mouth, embodies a physical and psychological fear of castration that triggers anxiety among men.

Although castration by a toothed vagina is clearly figurative, in the medieval and early modern periods castration became a method of execution or bodily punishment for crimes such as rape and sodomy, and in legal cases against homosexuals and other marginalized groups (Murray 259-60). Medieval law codes, including Alfonso X's *Fuero real* from the thirteenth century, provide a detailed account of the punishment such sinners had to endure:

Maguer que nos agrauie de fablar en cosa que es muy sin guisa de cuydar e muy con más sin guisa de fazer, pero por mal peccado alguna uez auíen que un omne cubdiciaua a otro por peccar con él contra natura, ma[n]damos que qualesquier que sean que tal peccado fagan, que luego que fuere sabido, que sean amos a dos castrados ante todo el pueblo, e después a terçer día que sean colgados por las piernas fasta que mueran e nunca dent sean tollidos. (Lib. IV, tí. 9, ley 2)

Castration produces a radical physical change in the male's body, and this transformation also carries profound psychological implications for gender identity. Castrated men experienced a complete loss of identity. Similar to the removal of a man's facial hair by shaving or by force, which was considered a sign of effeminacy as discussed in the previous chapter, the excision of a man's testicles altered the male body

dramatically. After castration, the male body resembled that of the woman's, whose main reproductive organs are located inside the body. In fact, with the removal of the testicles, men lose their sex drive and become sterile. Moreover, castration among pre-pubescent boys also affected the development of their larynx. Young men castrated at an early age did not undergo puberty and had higher-pitched voices and in general a wider vocal range that further aligned them with women.

Out of fear of the vagina's castrating potential, men sought ways to combat this powerful and volatile female sexual organ. To conserve their genitalia and at the same time, to neutralize women's power, men had to remove, or "pull" the teeth from the vagina (Raitt 418).<sup>87</sup> Blackledge's methodical text on the female sexual organs provides a list of excision instruments or objects used to remove the genital teeth. They include pincers, flints, string, medicinal fruit, tongs, rocks, and rods (167). It is no coincidence that the majority of these tools are phallic-shaped, which emphasizes the man's power over the woman and contrasts with the soft, small female genitalia. As Jill Raitt points out, if the woman is finally dominated, the *vagina dentata* is transformed from a powerful Other capable of destroying male genitalia into a domesticated being no longer feared and now considered safe as sexual partner (421).

While the myth of the *vagina dentata* has been widely studied, Hispanists have primarily analyzed the toothed vagina imagery in the sexually aggressive *serranas* in medieval Spanish works and in more modern literary works from the twentieth century, such as José Eustasio Rivera's *La vorágine* (1924) and Rómulo Gallegos's *Doña Bárbara*

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<sup>87</sup> These alleged teeth are dermoid cysts, which commonly occur in the ovary and can frequently mature into teeth, bones, or hair. If the cyst ruptures, the teeth migrate to the vagina (Vural, Vural, and Paksoy 757).

(1929), or Pablo Picasso's art.<sup>88</sup> Other forms of genital mutilation, such as hymen stitching, tend to take precedence over the toothed vagina in literary analysis (Velasco 363). Hymen menders are, after all, some of the most important protagonists in medieval and early modern literary works, including Fernando de Rojas's *Celestina* (1499), Francisco de Quevedo's *El buscón* (1626), and Cervantes's *El coloquio de los perros* (1613) and *La tía fingida* (1606). The *vagina dentata* and *restitutio virginitatis* (hymen mending) are closely related to each other, for both trigger castration anxiety. Through hymen stitching women could create the illusion that their virginity was intact (Velasco 363).<sup>89</sup> In the early modern period, an untouched hymen proved a women's chastity, which was essential in preserving one's honor.

Sherry Velasco's chapter, "Buñuel Goes Medieval: From Sewing to Cervantes and the *Vagina Dentata*" in *A Companion to Buñuel* (2013), centers primarily on Luis Buñuel's films but also touches on images of female genitalia and genital mutilation in early modern Spanish literature. She specifically comments on Cervantes's *Don Quixote*, *El celoso extremeño* and "El curioso impertinente," an intercalated story in the first part of *Don Quixote* (chapters 33-35) (364-65). According to Velasco, in the battle with wineskins, readers can interpret "Don Quixote's dream-state skirmish with the blood-

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<sup>88</sup> Lisa Splittgerber's dissertation, "Uroboric Figures: A Genre of Female Characters in Medieval Iberian Literature" (1997) focuses on the *vagina dentata* as a metaphor for verbal castration by the *soldaderas* in Alfonso X's *Cantigas profanas* (thirteenth century), the *serranas* in Juan Ruiz's *Libro de buen amor* (1343), and the nun Na Lebra in Francesc de la Via's *Libro de fra Bernat* (early fifteenth century). The *vagina dentata* was a common trope in many Surrealist paintings, such as Pablo Picasso's *Bust of a Woman with Self-Portrait* (1929), *Nude on a White Background* (1927), and *Large Nude in a Red Armchair* (1929)—all of which depict a tooth-filled mouth on a woman's face that closely resembles the opening of a vagina (Markus 35).

<sup>89</sup> In Luis Buñuel's *Él*, however, it is the male protagonist who, driven by jealousy, attempts to sew his wife's vagina while she sleeps. According to Velasco, at the crux of men's envy lies a fear of women's sexuality, specifically the castrating effect women's prowess may have on men's identity and behavior (363).

gushing enemy as a symbolic enactment of castration . . . or perhaps a desire to break the teeth of the snapping vagina” (370). This is evident in Cervantes’s description of the protagonist, who thrusts his sword in the air: “y en la derecha, desenvainada la espada, con la cual daba cuchilladas a todas partes, diciendo palabras como si verdaderamente estuviera peleando con algún gigante” (I, 35, 367).

Besides Velasco’s suggestive readings of these scenes as conjuring images of the toothed vagina or castration in general, the most significant analysis of *vagina dentata* imagery in Cervantes’s masterpiece is found in Carroll Johnson’s *Madness and Lust: A Psychoanalytical Approach to Don Quijote* (1983). Johnson notes the *vagina dentata* and castration imagery during Don Quixote’s descent into the Cave of Montesinos in the second part of the novel through Belerma’s erotic mouth:

Her [Belerma’s] sensual red mouth surrounding white teeth suggests the classic *vagina dentellata* of the castrating female, and this in combination with the emphasis on daggers and dirks – the instruments of mutilation – reiterates our hero’s fear of castration and simultaneously suggests the most probable childhood cause of his chronic inability to interact successfully with women. (167)

One of Johnson’s central (and provocative) arguments is that the protagonist has a profound fear of women and that his creation of the idealized Dulcinea is a defense against real erotic possibilities.

Unlike the episodes that Johnson and Velasco analyze, in which the protagonist is sleeping or in a dream-like state during the symbolic castration, during Altisidora’s cat attack Don Quixote appears alert. The dark room and the cats’ agility nevertheless work against him. Indeed, in the midst of the chaos, the cats “apagaron las velas que en el

apuesto ardían” (II, 46, 898), making it difficult for Don Quixote to defend himself with his sword.<sup>90</sup> The author’s mention of the dark room may appear to be a trivial plot detail. However, there is a fascinating link between poor sight and castration: early modern historians, like Jacqueline Murray, have demonstrated that blinding a man after castration was fairly common (258). Although Don Quixote does not permanently lose his vision, the temporary change from light to dark and the cat’s piercing claws on his face suggest the protagonist’s figurative castration. Judging by Don Quixote’s screams and injuries, Altisidora successfully asserts her strength over the protagonist and through her *vagina dentata* figuratively mutilates the protagonist’s manhood, both by her loquacious vaginal mouth and via the demonic cats that operate as her violent castrating surrogates. Cervantes confirms this two chapters after the incident: “A demás estaba mohíno y melancólico el mal ferido don Quijote, vendado el rostro y señalado, *no por la mano de Dios*, sino por las uñas de un gato, desdichas anejas a la andante caballería” (II, 48, 908; my emphasis). As Francisco Rico points out, “por la mano de Dios” refers to “un defecto congénito” (908, n1). That is, Don Quixote does not have an inherent bodily issue born of inheritance or genetics. Rather, the cat’s claws-*vagina dentata* have produced a traumatic injury: a mutilated body that, given the sexual tones of the entire episode, refers ineludibly to the knight’s penis. Altisidora uses her sexuality to assert her power over Don Quixote, destroying his masculinity first through her socially problematic vocal entreaties from outside Don Quixote’s window, and subsequently through the metonymic

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<sup>90</sup> For more on the symbolism of the dark room, see Fernández (“La función del azar”194-201). Readers and bystanders, like the Duke and Duchess, are mere spectators, listening to the howls and hisses of the cats and Don Quixote’s screams as he participates not only in a physical battle, but also a spiritual and moral one: “Porque en realidad la lucha física que contra los gatos está manteniendo el caballero es sólo expresión de otra lucha interior y espiritual entablada en su alma: ser fiel a Dulcinea” (198).

action of her wild cats. Alitísidora's role throughout these episodes clearly disrupts the proper order of social and sexual relations, proposing yet another critical reflection on masculinities in crisis and disordered social and political bodies. Such moves, fundamentally, are manifested through the embodied language and imagery of desires expressed or disrupted, and of irrepressible violence enacted.

Besides appearing in *Don Quixote*, the *vagina dentanta* imagery makes its way into Cervantes's *Novelas ejemplares*. Critics such as Alison Weber have pointed out that Carrizales's house in *El celoso extremeño* evokes images of the female genitalia, or the "maternal womb," not only for the overwhelming abundance of women residing there, but also for their ravenous sexual appetite (44). The women enclosed, against their will, in Carrizales's house, satisfy their physical hunger by frequently eating. They express their sexual hunger by examining Loaysa, one of the only males they have seen during their time in the house, from head to toe through a small hole:

Lo primero que hicieron fue barrenar el torno para ver al músico, el cual no estaba ya en hábitos de pobre, sino con unos calzones grandes de tafetán leonado, anchos a la marineresca, un jubón de lo mismo con trencillas de oro, y una montera de raso de la misma color, con cuello almidonado con grandes puntas y encajes, que de todo vino proveído en las alforjas, imaginando que se había de ver en ocasión que le conviniese mudar de traje . . . y como había tanto tiempo que todas tenían hecha la vista a mirar al viejo de su amo, parecióles que miraban a un angel. (117)

Their vision is limited because the house–vagina has been sutured shut (Velasco 371). In fact, Carrizales is the only one who has a copy of the master key (read: phallus) to the entrance of the house, which he keeps hidden underneath his bed. Moreover, he has

constructed the space in such a way that the women have no visual access to the streets outside: “cerró todas las ventanas que miraban a la calle y dioles vista al cielo, y lo mismo hizo de todas las otras de casa” (103). In other words, they are enclosed in the house, prohibited from looking through the windows to the outside world.

Like a delicacy that must be admired before consumed, Loaysa is studied in great detail before he is granted access to the interior of the house, which in this case represents the women’s most private space, the vagina that has been closely monitored by Carrizales. The mouths of these women that are constantly eating food, therefore, are transformed into vaginas once they are in contact with Loaysa. These vaginas, however, have been in contact with few men while in Carrizales’s house. Loaysa’s presence sparks their interest, and thus there is no reason for the metonymical female organ to act violently towards the male. After subjecting him to their own objectifying erotic gaze, the women take pleasure in Loaysa’s arrival and permit him to enter the closely guarded house. We note then that in a dysfunctional inversion of such roles, Altisidora attempts to assail Don Quixote’s sexuality, penetrating the closely guarded enclosure of his body, earlier compared explicitly with a *celosía*, only to be met with a cold resistance that leads her to pursue an act of symbolic sexual violence on the knight, penetrating his window with her castrating vaginal clawed cats.

Quite the opposite of the young Loaysa, the aged Don Quixote to begin with is already extremely uneasy with women, and as stated above, remains a virgin throughout the entire novel. Don Quixote’s own sexual persona throughout the novel renders Altisidora’s attack all the more salient. Cervantes confirms the importance of Don Quixote’s celibacy at the end of the first prologue in *Don Quixote*: “fue el más casto

enamorado . . . que de muchos años a esta parte de vió en aquellos contornos” (14). Refraining from sexual relations could have serious implications on the body. From Antiquity to the eighteenth century, doctors were convinced that sexual abstinence was one of the causes of melancholy and that one could die “por ser demasiado casto” and vice-versa (Mestres 13). Cervantes was most probably aware of at least one such case that was well known at the time, Michael Verino, an eighteen-year-old poet who died from priapism (13).

Although Don Quixote’s abstinence does not produce the condition that plagued Verino, his rejection of Altisidora during his stay in the palace exacerbates his melancholic state and anxiety. Don Quixote suffers from deep sadness when Sancho leaves the palace to govern the island of Barataria. Don Quixote, however, insists that his squire’s absence has nothing to do with his depression. He attributes his sorrow to other causes: “siento la ausencia de Sancho; pero *no es ésa la causa principal que me hace parecer que estoy triste*” (II, 44, 880; my emphasis). In effect, the “causa principal” of Don Quixote’s melancholy is Dulcinea’s perpetual absence. Family members, friends, and bystanders attempt to alleviate Don Quixote’s emotional pain. The Duchess in particular offers him several remedies—not least of all, four virgins:

Conoció la duquesa su melancolía y preguntole que de qué estaba triste, que si era por la ausencia de Sancho, que escuderos, dueñas y doncellas había en su casa que le servirían muy a satisfacción de su deseo. En verdad – dijo la duquesa –, señor don Quijote, que no ha de ser así, que le han de servir cuatro doncellas de las más, hermosas como unas flores. (II, 44, 879)

Fearful of women in general, Don Quixote continuously rejects their sexual offers and at the end of each day, returns alone to his bedroom, lost in his thoughts.

Some critics, such as Iluminada Amat, have argued that Don Quixote's ability to snub women's advances indicates strength of character, an idea that many scholars have denied (42). A closer analysis of the protagonist's behavior in the palace reveals his fragility. When he retreats to his room alone for the first time, he ensures that no one enters with him: "se retiró en su aposento solo, sin consentir que nadie entrase con él a servirle: tanto se temía de encontrar ocasiones que le moviesen o forzasen a perder el honesto decoro que a su señora Dulcinea guardaba" (II, 44, 881). For this same reason, Don Quixote is never alone with Altisidora or any other woman in the novel. The only woman who comes close to him in bed is Maritornes in the famous inn scene in part I of the novel. As readers will recall, she had made prior plans with another guest staying at the inn, but the room's darkness led her to the wrong bed, creating a commotion that left Don Quixote unconscious.

Unlike Maritornes's accidental bed mix-up at the inn that brings her in close proximity with Don Quixote, Altisidora's attempts at intimate interactions with the knight-errant are strictly intentional, and it is indeed significant that her feline surrogates make significant contact with the knight's body, particularly given their erotic resonances. Against what Blackledge calls "the genital teeth of the castrating woman" (167), Don Quixote struggles in vain to defend himself from the depredations of Altisidora and her bedeviled cats using his phallic and totally ineffective sword. Further emphasizing Altisidora's power over Don Quixote is the female servant's location during the attack. Her elevated position—a floor above—stresses her role both as principal

trickster and as empowered subject whose control over her victim is manifested through a literal vertical hierarchy.<sup>91</sup> Taking advantage of her location, Altisidora more easily carries out the prank and at the same time reasserts her control over the *hidalgo*. Altisidora's incursion into Don Quixote's private space aligns with the topically masculinist phallic imagery evident, for example, in Loaysa's penetration of Carrizales's house. From this angle, the verticality inscribed in the attack itself might symbolically encode Altisidora's sexual violence as a gendered gesture of penetration, once again exposing the ridiculed masculinity of the *hidalgo* while highlighting the moral and social perversions so often tied to the palace episodes.

The cord that Altisidora uses to lower the bags of cats into Don Quixote's room is also noteworthy because of the bells that are attached to it, which increase the noise and add to the episode's general mayhem. The latter detail recalls a popular type of whip used in the medieval and early modern period and referred to in English as a cat o'nine tails. Used for severe punishments, the whip usually had nine knotted lines or cords fastened to the handle that were designed to break the skin and cause intense pain. The cat o'nine tails appears in part II of the novel with reference to Sancho's self-flagellation. According to Merlin, Dulcinea will be disenchanted only after Sancho whips himself 3,300 times on his rear end. For the Duchess, however, Sancho's self-whipping is not enough; he should use a cat o'nine tails to lacerate the skin and shed some blood: "menester será que el buen Sancho haga alguna disciplina de abrojos, o de las de canelones, que se dejen sentir; porque la letra con sangre entra, y no se ha de dar tan barata la libertad de una tan gran

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<sup>91</sup> Coined by anthropologist Edward T. Hall, proxemics is "the interrelated observations and theories of man's use of space as specialized elaboration of culture" (1). It can include personal space, the organization of space in private (houses) and public (cities, towns) domains.

señora como lo es Dulcinea por tan poco precio” (II, 36, 830; my emphasis).<sup>92</sup> Sancho, of course, did not deserve this type of punishment, so the fact that the Duchess even suggests it, further ridicules the squire. Furthermore, such a whip would probably leave *cat-like* scratches on the victim’s body. The Duchess in effect wants to castrate not only Don Quixote but also Sancho. However, the squire’s castration would be self-inflicted, which is more absurd than that of his master, who is unexpectedly attacked. Both flagellations are tied to issues relating to Don Quixote’s sexual identity, not his squire’s. To the surprise of the Duke and Duchess, Sancho does not carry out the whipping; his manhood remains intact.<sup>93</sup>

The Duke’s participation in the cat battle adds to the metaphorical mutilation of the protagonist’s genitalia. Don Quixote uses all his “fuerzas por arrancar el gato de su rostro” (II, 46, 898), but the cat will not budge from his face. Attempting to avoid humiliation in the Duke and Duchess’s palace, Don Quixote refuses help at first, determined to remove the cats on his own and show off his strength as the strongest and most valiant knight-errant of the Mancha: “¡No me lo quite nadie! ¡Déjenme mano a mano con este demonio, con este hechicero, con este encantador, que yo le daré a entender de mí a él quién es don Quijote de la Mancha!” (II, 46, 898). His cries for help, however, are so loud that the Duke and Duchess instantly regret their prank and unlock

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<sup>92</sup> The *Diccionario de autoridades* defines *canelones* as: “[e]l azote, compuesto de seis o ocho ramales, que rematan juntos, y son mas gordos, duros, y desigualmente labrados, con que castigan los Maestros a los niños, y con que se disciplina el virtuoso y penitente.”

<sup>93</sup> Altisidora’s knotted cord also recalls a famous medieval method of magically inducing impotence via ligature. Instead of a knife or other tool, using a cord of string tied in knots was the most common method to carry out castration (Smith “The Flying Phallus” 93). Thus, Altisidora’s location and props set the stage for the symbolic castration.

the protagonist's door and come to his aid.<sup>94</sup> The Duke tries to remove the cat from the protagonist's face, but at first he, like Don Quixote, struggles: the cat—*vagina dentata* is powerful. He finally removes, or in keeping with the theme of the *vagina dentata*, “extracts” the cat from Don Quixote's face and gets rid of it, proving his own manhood in front of his wife and Altisidora, who by now have entered the room. Don Quixote is grateful that the couple finally intervened, but he is overwhelmed with humiliation. The Duke wields the gendered power sufficient to conquer unruly vaginas. Don Quixote, on the other hand, is unable to defend himself against both humans and animals, and he will subsequently bear the embodied marks of his emasculating shame.

#### **2.4 Cat Got Your Tongue: Altisidora, Hymen-Mender and Witch**

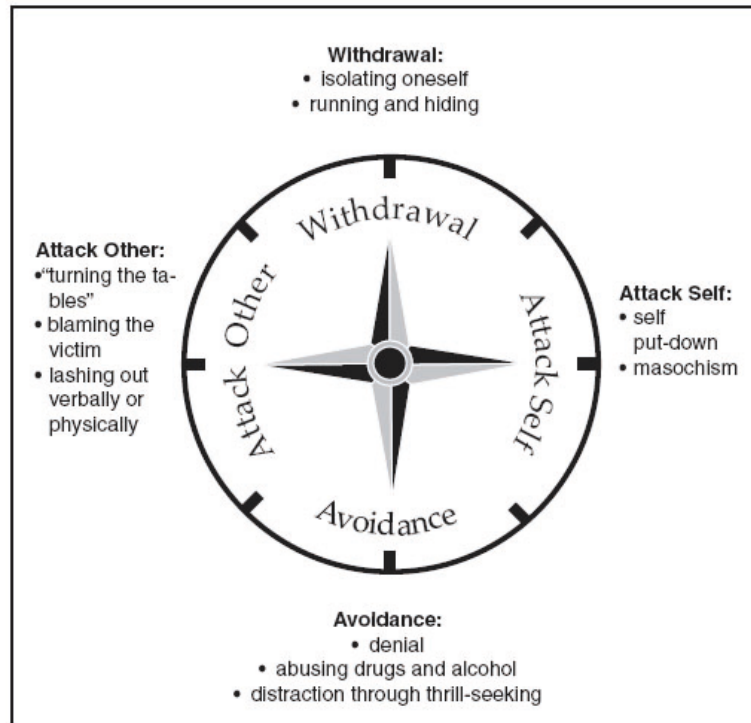
No less noteworthy than the attack of the cats itself is Don Quixote's reaction after the battle is over. His “profundo suspiro” (II, 46, 899)—yet another embodied manifestation of profound affective processes—contrasts sharply with the loud meowing and hissing of the cats, as well as with Altisidora's verbosity leading up to the attack. The overwhelming silence after the chaotic bout suggests a lingual dismemberment not dissimilar to the silence provoked during Don Quixote's shameful beard washing. In the attack studied in the present chapter, the cat has definitely got Don Quixote's tongue. Altisidora, along with her clawed surrogates, has explicitly taken away his voice: “A todo esto no respondió don Quijote otra palabra” (II, 46, 899). What starts out as another deliberate scheme devised by the Duke and Duchess and carried out by Altisidora, ends in a shamed silence that again fuses the body and the affect as interconnected sites of

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<sup>94</sup> It is worth noting that Don Quixote tries to enclose himself like Carrizales encloses his wife, but he is penetrated from outside through the window by Altisidora's toothed vaginas-cats, and through the door by the Duke's penis-key. In the end, Don Quixote's room is about as effective as his holey stockings at keeping himself enclosed, or at keeping those from outside from entering.

critical activity in the text. The respective moral and social disorders of Altisidora and Don Quixote as embodied perversions of topical masculine and feminine stereotypes ultimately provoke an attack enacted concretely on the body of Don Quixote through symbolic emanations of the body of Altisidora. This attack produces feelings of shame as it demarcates the limits of Don Quixote's own virility, and even provokes the regret of the Duke and Duchess as they recognize the extremes to which the prank has gone in the hands of their disordered servant. These affective reactions to the destruction of Don Quixote's body result in the short-circuiting of linguistic function. Silence is again the language of the shamed body here, just as the body itself is the motor driving shame.

Don Quixote's prolonged stay in bed further points to such shaming-bodily processes. His wounds, primarily located on his face, should not affect his ability to walk or to continue his adventures. Rather than a form of recovery, Don Quixote's decision to remain in bed operates as a cover. He withdraws from his usual stance as the center of attention, preferring to assume a passive, secondary role. Withdrawal represents one of the four ways in which people react to shame, according to Donald Nathanson's "Compass of Shame" (Figure 2). At the Withdrawal pole, those who have been shamed sever all ties with others to avoid further scrutiny. Don Quixote is clearly ashamed of his inability to fight off the cats and his reliance on the Duke and Duchess to save him. The protagonist's subsequent surrender to bed stresses his feelings of powerlessness and pain at failing to meet the expectations of his idealized self image, that is, that of the most well-known knight-errant of the Mancha. He temporarily disconnects from the world of knight-errantry through an act of his own will, yet continues to struggle with feelings of inadequacy.



**Figure 2:** Donald Nathanson, *Shame and Pride: Affect, Sex, and the Birth of the Self*. New York, NY: Norton, 1992.

Don Quixote’s need for Altisidora to stitch the deep wounds on his face, particularly his nose, which receives the brunt of the attack, further underscores his vulnerability. Cervantes’s fascination with the nose, the most prominent body part on the face, seems to take precedence at other moments in the novel, most probably for its symbolic meaning in the period. As Henry Sullivan (*Grotesque Purgatory: A Study of Cervantes’s Don Quijote Part II*) and Salvador Farjado (“Don Quijote Wins by a Nose”) have pointed out, the nose is a common symbol for the male genitalia (Bakhtin 316). The size of a man’s nose could reportedly predict the dimensions of his penis.<sup>95</sup> By

<sup>95</sup> In a sonnet, Quevedo depicts how a man’s nose deceptively did not correspond to the size of his genitalia: “A consentir al fin en su porfía / vino una dama con su enamorado, / porque por su nariz había juzgado / que tanto a buena cuenta metería. / Mas al revés salió su profecía / porque él tenía poco, ella sobrado, / de suerte que él quedaba tan holgado / que ni sabía si entraba o si salía. La dama dijo muy turbada y triste : ‘Qué mentirosa la nariz me ha sido!’” (*Obras* vv. 1-11). Like Cervantes, Quevedo seemed to have an obsession with noses. He wrote another satirical sonnet, “A una nariz,” for his rival, Luis de

representing the male genitalia, the nose takes on an erotically charged connotation. The nose has traditionally been associated with manhood; thus any alteration or attack on it, especially by females, might be read as a threat to a man's sexuality, as it diminished the man's power. In the cat episode, Don Quixote's nose becomes the center of action. The successful illusory amputation of Don Quixote's genitalia-nose is well portrayed in an etching by Bartolomeo Pinelli, in which the feistiest cat is seen biting the tip of the protagonist's nose (Figure 3).



**Figure 3:** Bartolomeo Pinelli, Plate 59. *Le azioni piu celebrate del famoso cavaliere errante Don Chisciotte della Mancia*. Rome, Italy: Gentilucci and Co., [1834?].

Góngora, satirizing his alleged *converso* identity. The association between nose-male genitalia is repeated in the first *tratado* of *Lazarillo de Tormes* (1554). When the *ciego* thrusts his nose down Lazarillo's throat in an attempt to retrieve the sausage, the "cumplidísima nariz", also "luenga y afilada" takes on phallic-like qualities: "[la nariz] medio cuasi ahogándose, todas estas cosas se juntaron y fueron causa que el hecho y golosina se manifestase y lo suyo fuese vuelto a su dueño. De manera que, antes que el mal ciego sacase de mi boca su trompa, tal alteración sintió mi estómago, que le dio con el hurto en ella, de suerte su nariz y la negra mal maxcada longaniza a un tiempo salieron de mi boca" (40). This vomiting spectacle is reminiscent of famous episode in part I of Cervantes's novel, in which Don Quixote vomits on Sancho (see note 36).

The nose forms part of what Mikahil Bakhtin has coined the grotesque body (26).<sup>96</sup> Open body parts are vulnerable to outside forces that can act upon them, causing them to change their appearance. The cats' teeth and claws break Don Quixote's skin, producing blood, but the castration is ultimately figurative. Don Quixote's sword in Pinelli's etching, pointed downwards instead of its usual upright position, further stresses the protagonist's defeat and emblematic dismemberment.<sup>97</sup>

By covering the knight-errant's face with bandages, Altisidora conceals his wounds, which, interestingly, are described as holes, probably teeth bites, similar to those found in a sieve: "Quedó don Quijote acribado el rostro" (II, 46, 898). The numerous holes call to mind the dozen holes in his stockings, which as readers recall, also materialize the knight's notable sexual anxieties. These holes on his face, however, are far worse than the rips in his stockings that he succeeds in covering up with his tall boots. Because of the wounds' visible location on his face, Don Quixote remains in his room for six days, ashamed to go out into public. Covering his injuries proves to be a useless solution, as the bandages are located precisely on the spot where shame commonly manifests itself on the face: the cheeks. In *Blush: Faces of Shame* (2005), Elspeth Probyn describes shame's physiological manifestations on the face, like blushing and fluster. According to Probyn, "shame demands acknowledgement" (xii). That is, although the shamed individual wishes to cover him or herself, the affect precisely calls attention to

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<sup>96</sup> The open mouth, the genital organs, the breasts, the phallus, and the potbelly are also considered grotesque body parts (Bakhtin 26).

<sup>97</sup> Moreover, the conical, hollow shape of the bells attached to the cats in Pinelli's etching is very 'feminine.' Altisidora's bells both materially evoke the image of the whole attack as a symbolic extension of her own vagina. The broken jar on the bottom left calls to mind the use of "vaso" to describe both male and female organs. Huarte, for example, refers to seminal vesicles as "vasos seminarios" (312). The broken "vaso," therefore, may symbolize Don Quixote's emasculation.

that which one wishes to hide. At the same time that they mask the cause of Don Quixote's shame—that is, his wounds—the bandages paradoxically exacerbate his shame, materializing it in a way that makes it even more impossible to hide. Moreover, physiologists have identified biochemicals that are released in the body as manifestations of shame that ultimately affect the victim's muscles in the neck and shoulders, causing the face to slump (George 3). Thus, the numerous dental injuries that Don Quixote endures during his adventures may not be the only reason Sancho refers to him as *el Caballero de la Triste Figura* at the beginning of their adventure (I, 19, 172). More than old age and exhaustion, the shame that Don Quixote experiences in Part II after seeing his own inability to act or effect change surely contributes to the protagonist's woeful appearance.

As a result of his sagging face, Don Quixote's moustache droops: “y el rostro y los bigotes vendados –el rostro, por los aruños; los bigotes, porque no se le desmayasen y cayesen” (II, 48, 909). There is no doubt that a violent cat attack will badly injure a person. Don Quixote's moustache, a sign of masculinity is neither completely attached to his face nor has it been entirely removed after the cat attack. The knight-errant's facial hair is in a precarious state, delicately held together by a bandage strategically placed by the female servant. That Don Quixote's facial hair is not a permanent entity can be easily removed, likens the moustache to a prop, similar to the makeshift helmet and armor Don Quixote constructs at the beginning of the novel to give the illusion that he is a true knight-errant. While Altisidora's ability to remove and affix Don Quixote's moustache with her bare, pale hands reveals yet again her control over the knight-errant and his

masculinity, the very fact that the health of his mustache itself is in doubt points anew to the problems of sexual identity undergirding the entire episode.

The narrator's allusion to Altisidora's "blanquísimas manos" (II, 46, 899) recalls the seductive, pale hands of other strong female protagonists of Cervantes's fiction, such as doña Estefanía in *El casamiento engañoso*. The protagonist describes her as having "manos de nieve que había visto y muerto por el rostro que deseaba ver" (284). Doña Estefanía's hands, however, are less directly harmful than Altisidora's because they fail to establish physical contact with the man. As we have seen, touching, destroying, and recomposing a man's facial hair were a serious infraction in the early modern period. Altisidora has succeeded in paralyzing Don Quixote, "thwart[ing] or delay[ing] the hero from accomplishing his mission" (Murillo 211). Pale hands were also a sign of nobility or upper class, as opposed to the brown, suntanned hands of laborers. That Altisidora has pale hands, therefore, may be another sign she wishes to cross social strata, just as she does in attempting the sexual conquest of a socially-superior *hidalgo*.

Similar to the aforementioned medieval and early modern hymen-menders who would sew women's hymens to give the illusion that the woman was pure despite having engaged in sexual relations, Altisidora, a pseudo-mender, sews Don Quixote's facial hair, a symbol of the knight-errant's shaky manhood. Ironically enough, the same character responsible for inflicting harm on Don Quixote is also placed in charge of nursing him back to health. Altisidora both destroys and "restores" Don Quixote's masculinity. In both giving life and in taking it away, she gestures toward the dual essence of the vagina as a productive source of maternal nurturing and a destructive source of castrating violence. She is responsible for mutilating Don Quixote's manhood; yet, at the same

time, she treats his wounds carelessly. Taking on the simultaneous yet conflicting roles of both attacker and nurse, as Martín points out, Altisidora also embodies the double life of cats, that is, the wild and domestic side of the animal (“Erotismo” 407). Critics disagree as to whether Altisidora’s actions suggest that she has some inner goodness despite her behavior up to this point. Some, like Doreen O’Connor, emphasize that she is responsible for Don Quixote’s transformation, specifically his final renunciation of madness and death (502), while others, like Piper, see Altisidora’s initiative to “help” Don Quixote as part of her vengeance. To wit, when the attack is over, Altisidora remains heartless. While carrying out this apparently nurturing gesture of bandaging his face, she curses Don Quixote under her breath:

Todas estas malandanzas te suceden, empedernido caballero, por el pecado de tu dureza y pertinacia; y plega a Dios que se le olvide a Sancho tu escudero el azotarse, porque nunca salga de su encanto esta tan amada tuya Dulcinea, ni tú lo goces, ni llegues a tálamo con ella, a lo menos viviendo yo. (II, 46, 899)

The female servant shows no compassion towards the knight-errant; according to Altisidora, his stubbornness is the root of the problem. Yet, for Don Quixote, remaining faithful to the woman one loves is a sign of manhood. Obviously, however, since Don Quixote invents his lover, so too is his masculinity also a fabrication as fragile and dubious as the health of his own mustache.

Regardless of Altisidora’s intentions while helping Don Quixote, it is evident that her cat attack deeply affects him. He appears more nervous, physically and mentally disturbed by Altisidora’s actions. For example, he has difficulty falling asleep as thoughts of Altisidora, or more specifically, of her “persecuimiento,” continue to haunt him (II, 48,

908). When he hears a key unlocking his door, the first person he imagines is Altisidora: “imaginó que la enamorada doncella venía para sobresaltar su honestidad y ponerle en condición de faltar a la fe que guardar debía a su señora Dulcinea del Toboso” (II, 48, 909).<sup>98</sup> Don Quixote’s paranoia translates into fear as he anxiously stands on top of his bed and conceals himself with a bed sheet, dreading an unexpected visit by Altisidora to his bedroom or that of a “bruja o maga” who was going to do “alguna mala fechoría” (II, 48, 909). We note again the associations, real or imagined, between Altisidora and the registers of the demonic and the sexually disordered.

Unlike other episodes, in which Don Quixote prepares to defend himself, here he hovers over the bed. Don Quixote does not throw himself into battle: “mejor es huir que esperar la batalla” (II, 48, 911). When a woman enters his room, he not only jumps on top of his bed but also conceals himself, “envuelto en la colcha, con las vendas, galocha o becoquín” (II, 48, 911). Covered entirely by a bed sheet, Don Quixote resembles a “fantasma,” or ghost (II, 48, 909). Interestingly, this representation is a harbinger of the protagonist’s death at the end of the novel, since he passes away in a bed. However, instead of acting as a menacing ghost, Don Quixote seems more like a small child wearing a costume, especially when he “se acorrucó” (II 48, 912), unsure of how to react but clearly terrified by the unexpected visitor who has arrived to his room. Like the Duchess’s *fuentes* that are kept hidden by her overflowing skirt, discussed in the next chapter, Don Quixote attempts to conceal his facial wounds paradoxically revealed by the bandages that cover them. He further operates in a passive role as victim of sexually motivated violence, far removed from the gender roles associated with masculine identity

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<sup>98</sup> Once again, Cervantes’s mention of the key carries phallic undertones.

in the period. We also note that such affective processes again lead Don Quixote instinctively to obscure the very body that is the source of his shame.

When the sheet covering Don Quixote falls, he turns his back in order to avoid eye contact with the visitor, further stressing the shame that he feels. Emphasizing the danger of the witches and his desire to ward off any potential evil spirits, Don Quixote repeatedly crosses himself and pleads with his visitor to not harm him:

Conjúrote, fantasma, o lo que eres, que me digas quién eres, y que me digas qué es lo que de mí quieres. Si eres alma en pena, dímelo, que yo haré por ti todo cuanto mis fuerzas alcanzaren, porque soy católico cristiano y amigo de hacer bien a todo el mundo; que para esto tomé la orden de la caballería andante que profeso, cuyo ejercicio aun hasta hacer bien a las ánimas de purgatorio se estiende. (II, 48, 910)

As readers discover, Don Quixote is mistaken; it is not Altisidora who visits him, but Doña Rodríguez, another servant in the palace. She comes to seek his help in redressing a wrong committed against her daughter. Peculiarly enough, when Don Quixote is at his weakest state, a woman treats him as a genuine knight-errant and requests help for a true wrongdoing. He hesitates to help her, thinking that “el diablo, que es sutil y mañoso, querrá engañar[le] agora con una dueña” (II, 48, 911). Regardless of the confusion between Altisidora and the *dueña*, it is clear that Don Quixote’s fear is the direct consequence of the cat attack. Emotional wounds match the physical marks left by Altisidora’s cats.

Besides imitating cats’ double personality, Altisidora simultaneously assumes two different social class positions and gender roles. She acts as one of the enamored damsels

in distress in the novels of chivalry. But, as we have seen, Altisidora reverses early modern gender roles and actively courts the knight-errant by reciting poetry and playing music for him. In fact, it appears that seducing Don Quixote is one of the only activities of which Altisidora is capable. Embedded in this gender disruption is a further social disruption. While she is one of the servants in the Duke and Duchess's palace, she never acts like a traditional one. Her work ethic in the palace is highly problematic. She is frequently depicted being idle, a fundamental characteristic of an aristocracy that was by definition opposed to labor. Although she offers to sew different clothes for Don Quixote, which may be one of her jobs, she is never described with a needle and thread in her hand nor does the narrator refer to a final sewn product. The only moment in which readers witness Altisidora at work is when she mends Don Quixote's facial wounds, and judging by her previously described reaction, she is far from thrilled at performing her job. If she isn't offering to sew clothes or mending wounds that she had caused, she is pretending to faint—all to catch the attention of Don Quixote.

In operating as a pawn for the Duke and Duchess, Altisidora is more than happy to carry out the attack on Don Quixote because it gives her some illusion of power. For a brief moment, as an instrument of ducal power the servant girl becomes socially superior to the *hidalgo*, that is her victim, thereby coupling the inversion of gender roles inscribed in the cat attack with a further troubling of class positions. Through such turns, Altisidora succeeds in scarring him both physically and emotionally. The masculine fear of castration evident in this episode can ultimately be extended to include general anxieties in the early modern period surrounding female sexuality, anxieties manifested by motifs like the *vagina dentata* or by other figures, such as witch-cats, that leave the male

protagonist–victim shamed. And at the center of such moves lie the affective bodies of subjects like Don Quixote and Altisidora.

With such power, Altisidora appears to fulfill one of the many proposed meanings of her name. Scholars have suggested several interpretations of the character's name that contribute to her image as a superior, powerful being. Johnson, for example, believes her name to be a combination of Latin (*altissimus*) and Greek (*doron*), meaning, "Gift of the Most High" (147). According to Márquez Villanueva, Altisidora is a *nom de guerre*, that is, a pseudonym or alias ("Doncella soy" 306). During France's *Ancien Régime* (fifteenth century to late eighteenth century), the military used *noms de guerre* (literally, war names) to identify and protect soldiers' identities. The significance of Altisidora's name coincides with her controlling and authoritative demeanor; she is a powerful female protagonist who carries out malicious tricks against Don Quixote thanks to the special relationship she has with her masters. Although Altisidora is a servant, the Duke and Duchess use her as a vehicle to carry out the pranks, so that, on the other hand, it appears that they "save" the protagonist. In reality, they are the masterminds of the prank. Not only are the nobles lazy but also during this episode, Cervantes critiques their maliciousness, which is closely tied to shamelessness. While the blatantly amused reactions of the nobles at these jokes may suggest that they are incapable of experiencing shame, members of the high class are not, in fact, exempt from shame. Unlike chapters 1 and 2 of this dissertation, which have focused on the exposed and flawed bodies of low-class characters, the next chapter will center on the embodied affect of the Duchess herself, an aristocrat whose shameful bodily secret, once discovered, points to perturbing contemporary issues of depopulation and infertility in Spain's early modern period.

The body lends itself to the construction of politically charged narratives. Throughout *Don Quixote*, the narrator describes in detail the physical attributes of several characters in ways that render their bodies sites for the negotiation of power, particularly as they relate to questions of class and gender. Frequently these physical characteristics are obvious, as is the case of Altisidora and her yellow teeth, which at first glance appear only to emphasize her ugliness. Her rotten teeth, however, do not just paint a horrid portrait of the female servant, nor do they simply confirm her halitosis. In *Don Quixote*, as we have seen, Altisidora's *vagina dentata* is responsible for performing a metaphorical castration of the knight. Such an operation places the body—here the vaginal mouth—at the center of a potent inversion of social and political norms, challenging the proper roles and functions of men and women, servants and nobles in the Spain of Cervantes. By such moves, *Don Quixote* physically projects and embodies a telling commentary on an imperial social and political body in crisis. Through strong, independent women, like Altisidora, who reject gender norms, Cervantes reveals the changing roles of women in the early modern period, especially those of the lower class. These women's bold actions, in turn, further stress Don Quixote's inability to meet the social expectations placed on him. His frustrated masculinity exposes the limits of social control and the disintegration of traditional hierarchies in the period. Such critical interrogations are explored in and through the embodied affectivity of the subjects that populate Cervantes's novel. Altisidora's vagina-mouth is just one more disrupting organ that speaks the sinister and carnal language of a world gone awry.

## CHAPTER 3

### The Duchess's *Fuentes*: Shameful Secrets and Population Decline in Imperial Spain

Que en mi tierra faldas y colas, colas y  
faldas, todo es uno.

*Don Quixote*, II, 37

#### 3.1 Spain's Barren Land and Infertile Nobility

Barrenness is one of the main issues that *arbitrista* Martín González de Cellorigo discusses in the preface to his *Memorial de política necesaria y util restauración a la república de España y estados de ella y del desempeño universal de estos Reynos* (1600):

España siempre fue habida por fértil y abundante Provincia, y lo es, para todos los que procuran gozar de su fertilidad, con lo que la industria humana debe hacer de su parte. Y si parece estéril es por no le dar el tributo con que Dios la dio a los hombres . . . Es tan alabada de esto, que la tienen todos los que escriben, por la más fértil y rica Provincia de la Europa, hasta decir que sus caballos son más veloces que el propio viento. (7)

In the first pages of the text Cellorigo alludes to Spain's fertile and abundant soil as a precious resource that needs to be regularly cared for in order to maintain the nation's wealth. The author's repetition of the word "fertility" three times in the first paragraph of his work attests to the pressing nature of the issue. He reminisces about the fruitful soil that the country's inhabitants had previously enjoyed, but that by 1600, the date of *Memorial's* publication, had become "estéril" (11).

In the same preface, Cellorigo draws on two additional uses of the word "fertility": economic productivity and biological reproduction. A declining population and lack of productivity are signs of something unnatural. And just as imbalance in the

body yields excess and illness, so, too, is there something wrong in a land that is naturally abundant but that cannot produce. As Huarte de San Juan points out:

Y vemos que si la tierra no está fría y húmida, los labradores no osan sembrar, ni se traba la simiente; y entre las tierras, aquéllas son más fecundas y abundosas en fructificar que tiene más frialdad y humedad, como parece por experiencia considerando los lugares del Norte (Inglaterra, Flandes y Alemania) cuya abundancia en todos los frutos espanta a los que no saben la razón y causa. (317)

According to the *arbitristas*, the only way to maintain the country's lush land was to promote production among society.

Cultivating this land, however, could be difficult, if not impossible, due to a shortage of people in Spain.<sup>99</sup> According to Cellorigo and other *arbitristas* such as Sancho de Moncada (*Restauración política de España*, 1619), Pedro Fernández Navarette (*Conservación de monarquías y discursos políticos*, 1626), and Miguel Caxa de Leruela (*Restauración de la abundancia en España*, 1631) depopulation was one of the most crucial “symptoms” of Spain's economic crisis (Kamen 233). Spain's population fell from 6.5 million inhabitants in 1600 to about 4.5-5 million in 1620, and even less by 1700 (Phillips 21). The sudden change in population in Spain affected the economy. As Giovanni Botero confirms in book VII of *Reason of State* (1589), a large population provided the basis of wealth and power: “if Spain is accounted a barren land [it] is not due to any deficiency of the soil but to the sparseness of the inhabitants” (145). In similar terms, Cellorigo and Moncada repeatedly attribute the social ills of the country to the

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<sup>99</sup> Unlike Spain, which suffered from depopulation, there were no issues related to reproduction in “los lugares del Norte”: “en tales tierras como éstas, ninguna mujer, casándose, jamás dejó de parir, ni saben allá qué cosa es ser estéril: todas son fecundas y prolíficas por la mucha frialdad y humedad” (Huarte de San Juan 317).

“falta de gente” (Moncada 100). For Moncada, depopulation was one of the principal reasons for Spain’s “esterilidad de frutos”: “se despueblan muchos lugares en Castilla, y otras partes de pura abundancia de frutos” (99-100).

Like the *arbitristas*, Cervantes makes several, if more subtle, references to infertility and depopulation in the second part of *Don Quixote*. Words relating to production and reproduction abound, for example, in the depiction of Sancho Panza’s famous *ínsula*, Barataria. The Duke describes in great detail the physical features of this make-believe island: “Lo que puedo dar os doy, que es una ínsula hecha y derecha, redonda y bien proporcionada, y sobremanera fértil y abundosa, donde si vos os sabéis dar maña, podéis con las riquezas de la tierra granjear las del cielo” (II, 42, 866).<sup>100</sup> Drawing on ideals associated with the New World itself, the depiction of the island as an expansive, round territory emphasizes the fertile and abundant resources it offered its inhabitants. In fact, “las riquezas del cielo” suggests that the island is a blessing from God. The allusion to the heavens suggests that the territory obeys what were considered optimal conditions in terms of natural climate, geography, astrological disposition, and latitude.<sup>101</sup> As such, this territory is by nature, fertile and abundant. Described as “redonda” and “fértil,” the island also calls to mind a pregnant woman. The connection between an expectant woman and wealthy land is further highlighted moments before Sancho leaves Don Quixote to govern the island: “Atentísimamente le escuchaba Sancho

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<sup>100</sup> In order to convince Sancho to accompany him on his adventures, Don Quixote promises his squire an island to govern. The opportunity for Sancho to transform himself from a lowly squire into a wealthy and powerful governor becomes an obsession. In both parts of the novel, Sancho frequently reminds his master of the promise and insists on his ability to successfully take on the new leadership role: “—Mire vuestra merced, señor caballero andante, que no se le olvide lo que de la ínsula me tiene prometido, que yo la sabré gobernar, por grande que sea” (I, 7, 74).

<sup>101</sup> For more on Sancho’s economic utopia, see chapter five (“Sancho Panza and the Material World”) of Myriam Yvonne Jehenson and Peter N. Dunn’s *The Utopian Nexus in Don Quixote*.

y procuraba conservar en la memoria sus consejos, como quien pensaba guardarlos y *salir por ellos a buen parto de la preñez de su gobierno*” (II, 43, 871; my emphasis). Moreover, if Sancho takes Don Quixote’s advice and governs the island well, the squire’s success will be exhibited through his family, the ultimate sign of fertility: “serán luengos tus días, tu fama será eterna, tus premios colmados, tu felicidad indecible, casarás tus hijos como quisieres, títulos tendrán ellos y tus nietos, vivirás en paz y beneplácito de las gentes, y en los últimos pasos de la vida te alcanzará el de la muerte” (II, 42, 870). It is also worth noting that among the pieces of advice Don Quixote gives to his squire as he leaves for his governorship are dietary restrictions similar to those given to pregnant women, especially ones giving birth for the first time: “Come poco y cena más poco, que la salud de todo el cuerpo se fragua en la oficina del estómago” (II, 43, 872).<sup>102</sup>

The representation of Barataria as a fertile territory, in terms of both agricultural and biological production, is certainly idyllic. It is also deceptive. Just as Barataria is unreal, a well-governed nation that produces a strong economy and generates a large population is absent in Cervantes’s novel.<sup>103</sup> The island’s non-existence and the ridicule that it entails—including a false governor—leaves no doubt to the readers that Barataria is a mock utopia (González Echeverría 290). The false island is yet another prank devised by the Duke and Duchess, representatives of an idle aristocracy, to deceive Sancho and

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<sup>102</sup> Much of the advice on healthy pregnancies from the early modern period is still recommended today. According to Merry Wiesner-Hanks, early modern pregnant women were advised to eat and drink moderately; avoid spicy food or food that made them nauseous; and regularly exercise (79).

<sup>103</sup> Indeed, drawing on Thomas More’s *Utopia* (1516), José Maravall’s *Utopia and Counterutopia in the Quixote* (1991) views Barataria as a counterutopia, and Diana de Armas Wilson’s *Cervantes, the Novel, and the New World* (2000) regards the fictional island as a dystopia. Run by a false king (Sancho), Barataria is anything but a functional example of government. With Sancho as the laughingstock-leader of the government, it is only natural that the economy, and consequently, population suffer. Although as governor of Barataria Sancho exceeds the Duke and Duchess’s expectations as governor of Barataria, during his brief reign crimes are committed and mayhem ensues.

Don Quixote for their own amusement. Barataria is anything but productive. Readers need only to examine the name Barataria, which calls to mind “barato,” or cheap, referred to explicitly by Cervantes: “Diéronle a entender que se llamaba ‘la ínsula Barataria’, o ya porque el lugar se llamaba ‘Baratario’, o ya por el barato con que se le había dado el gobierno” (II, 45, 888). According to Joseph R. Jones, “baratar,” means “to swindle” and “baratería” signifies bribery, possible allusions to the early modern nobles’ wastefulness or moral-economic dissolution (139). Moreover, Sancho makes several references to his symbolic nakedness during and after his time in Barataria: “digan al duque mi señor que, desnudo nací, desnudo me hallo: ni pierdo ni gano; quiero decir, que sin blanca entré en este gobierno, y sin ella salgo, bien al revés de como suelen salir los gobernadores” (II, 53, 957). Sancho’s figurative nudity recalls the image of a newborn, reinforcing the fertility imagery associated with the fictitious island. This allusion to reproduction, however, is false. As Sancho points out, he experienced no financial gain as governor, nor has he used his position to get rich through corruption. The fact that he has the same amount of money as when he first entered Barataria further stresses the island’s misleading image and Don Quixote and the Duke and Duchess’s empty promises to improve Sancho’s financial and social situation.

Allusions to infertility run rampant in *Don Quixote*, starting with the characterization of the protagonist himself and his seemingly asexual life.<sup>104</sup> Don Quixote has never married and has no children; nor does he ever intend to marry: “no es posible

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<sup>104</sup> In *The Individuated Self: Cervantes and the Emergence of the Individual* (1979), John G. Weiger argues that Don Quixote’s impotence is a result of his timidity and disinterest. In *Madness and Lust: A Psychoanalytic Approach to Don Quixote* (1983), Carroll Johnson proposes various reasons for the knight-errant’s lack of sexual activity, including a fear of castration. John T. Cull (“The ‘Knight of the Broken Lance’ and his ‘Trusty Steed’: On Don Quixote and Rocinante”) considers some of the symbols that emphasize Don Quixote’s impotence, like the knight’s lance and arm.

yo arrostre, ni por pienso, el casarme” (I, 30, 306). Unmarried, Don Quixote would have been considered a symptom of and contributor to Spain’s waning fortunes. Other characters repeatedly remind him of his social expectations. Thus, for example, the ecclesiastic from the second part of the novel urges Don Quixote and Sancho to “volveos a vuestra casa, y criad vuestros hijos” instead of “vagando por el mundo, papando viento y dando que reír a cuantos os conocen y no conocen” (II, 31, 792). The clergyman encourages Don Quixote to recognize and accept reality: he is not a true knight-errant, and his place is at home with children. Similarly, as Don Quixote enters the streets of Barcelona towards the end of the novel, a Castilian spectator urges the knight-errant to return home: “Vuélvete, mentecato, a tu casa, y mira por tu hacienda, por tu mujer y tus hijos, y déjate destas vaciedades que te carcomen el seso y te desnatan el entendimiento” (II, 62, 1025). During the early modern period, other than a merely physical space, the home stood for family, and by extension, one’s rightful submission and incorporation into society.<sup>105</sup>

Don Quixote’s childless house stands in contrast with that of Don Diego de Miranda’s, another *hidalgo* in the second part of the novel. The narrator decides to omit a detailed description of Don Diego’s large estate because “no venían bien con el propósito principal de la historia, la cual más tiene su fuerza en la verdad que en las frías digresiones” (II, 18, 680). In the end, these details are indeed unnecessary, for the presence and active role of Don Lorenzo, Don Diego’s son, in the episode gives readers a

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<sup>105</sup> Don Quixote longs for a freedom and autonomy that clashed with the expectations placed on early modern men. Despite the public shaming that Don Quixote experiences because of his asexuality and his transformation from *hidalgo* to knight-errant, he does not react negatively to the critiques. See Carroll Johnson’s discussion of *mayorazgo* in *Cervantes and the Material World* 72-74.

clear image of the importance of family in that particular household as well as of what constituted a balanced, virtuous early modern home. When Don Quixote and Sancho arrive at Don Diego's house, the wealthy *hidalgo*'s wife and son immediately greet them at the door, a detail that further reinforces the image of Don Diego as a true "family man." Unlike the sterile Don Quixote, Don Diego embraces, among other things, the joys and challenges of fatherhood: "paso la vida con mi mujer y con mis hijos" (II, 16, 664). Although Don Lorenzo prefers to study poetry rather than science and law as his father prefers, Don Diego loves him nonetheless. After all:

los hijos . . . son pedazos de las entrañas de sus padres, y así, se han de querer, o buenos o malos que sean, como se quieren las almas que nos dan vida; a los padres toca el encaminarlos desde pequeños por los pasos de la virtud, de la buena crianza y de las buenas y cristianas costumbres. (II, 16, 666)

Don Diego conforms to contemporary ideals of the *hidalgo*, and, in fact, to those of an emergent middle class (Quint 113). His behavior even prompts Sancho to promote him to the status of "santo" (II, 16, 665). Because an early modern man's appropriate place in the world was with his wife and children and both are missing from Don Quixote's life, it is not surprising that Sancho, who is close to his wife and children, feels comfortable in Don Diego's house. After four days, "triste y aciago," Sancho reluctantly departs with Don Quixote, leaving "la abundancia de la casa de don Diego" (II, 18, 688). This "abundancia" refers not only to the *hidalgo*'s wealth, made apparent in the narrator's detailed description of his clothing, but also to the good fortune of having such a close-knit family, therefore fulfilling his role as an early modern man whose wealth,

possession, and status will be perpetuated in embodied form through those “pedazos de las entrañas” that are his biological descendants.

Although his protagonist is sterile, in the prologue to the first part of the novel, Cervantes, drawing on an ancient trope, gives birth to a novel-child. However, even this child is problematic:

Desocupado lector: sin juramento me podrás creer que quisiera que este libro, como hijo del entendimiento, fuera el más hermoso, el más gallardo y más discreto que pudiera imaginarse. Pero no he podido yo contravenir al orden de naturaleza; que en ella cada cosa engendra su semejante. Y así ¿qué podrá engendrar al estéril y mal cultivado ingenio mío sino la historia de un hijo seco, avellanado, antojadizo y lleno de pensamientos varios y nunca imaginados de otro alguno. (7)<sup>106</sup>

He adds a twist to the trope of “fathering” his literary work. Cervantes declares himself the novel’s “step-father;” the “real” author of *Don Quixote* is Cide Hamete Benengeli. Perhaps the novel’s questionable paternity further alludes to issues of childlessness clouding early modern Spain.

Infants and young children are also largely absent from *Don Quixote*, as they were in most imaginative literature of the period. There is no question that contemporaries of Cervantes would have considered the absence of children in the novel, including in the Duke and Duchess’s household in part II, as indicative of the crisis in economic

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<sup>106</sup> The linkage between intellectual creativity and biological procreation was far from unique to Cervantes. At the beginning of *Tristia*, Ovid includes an apostrophe in which he personifies the book to go to the city to find its lost brothers. Like *Don Quixote*, which was written in a prison, *Tristia* was also “conceived” in a dark place, and thus it is less than perfect (de Armas 142). On the trope of the book as child, see Ernst Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*.

productivity and biological reproduction that concerned the *arbitristas*. The few offspring mentioned in *Don Quixote*, including Zoraida, Sancho's daughter, Clara de Viedema, Luscinda, Dorotea, Doña Rodríguez's daughter, the innkeeper's daughter, and Don Lorenzo, are old enough to marry, yet they remain in the socially dangerous position of being single.<sup>107</sup> Additionally, only one parent, usually the father, has an active role in these children's lives and is worthy of mention.<sup>108</sup>

Readers may be caught off-guard by the absence of children in the Duke and Duchess's household, particularly because the Duchess seems to embody perfection. When Don Quixote first meets the Duchess in the forest adjoining her estate, she appears dazzlingly emblematic of the power of her social class:

y entre ellos vio una gallarda señora sobre un palafrén o hacanea blanquísima, adornada de guarniciones verdes y con un sillón de plata. Venía la señora asimismo vestida de verde, tan bizarra y ricamente que la misma bazaría venía transformada en ella. En la mano izquierda traía un azor, señal que dio a entender a don Quijote ser aquélla alguna gran señora. (II, 30, 779)

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<sup>107</sup> Perhaps the small number of children in the text, as in others of the period, alludes to another issue running rampant in early modern Spain: abortion. According to Eduardo Behrend-Martínez, early modern women were aware of contraception methods and medicines that could cause abortions or could limit fertility ("Abortion, Illicit Sex" 276).

<sup>108</sup> In *Rapture Encaged: The Suppression of the Feminine in Western Culture* (1994), Ruth El Saffar attributes the absence of mothers in early modern literature not only to their inactive roles in family life but also to the patriarchal structure that required them to be silent and obedient (67-68). For more studies on the relationships between mothers and daughters in early modern literature, see Ruth El Saffar's *Beyond Fiction: The Recovery of the Feminine in the Novels of Cervantes* and Patricia E. Grieve's "Mothers and Daughters in Fifteenth-century Spanish Sentimental Romances: Implications for *Celestina*." Given this observation, as we shall see in the third section of this chapter, the narrator's focus on Teresa Panza and the relationship with her daughter, Sanchica, particularly in the second part of the novel, is all the more noteworthy. Through the unique bond between mother and daughter, often neglected or entirely obliterated in early modern Spanish literature, Cervantes comments on the changing social realities that make up early modern Spain.

Don Quixote is drawn not only to the Duchess's beauty but also to the wealth of her husband reflected in her lavish attire and the sumptuous adornment of her horse. A precious emerald and a rich diamond are not mere decorative adornments that enhance the woman's beauty or outfit. Such jewels serve as a reminder that the Duchess is no ordinary woman; she is a member of early modern Spain's upper aristocracy. Don Quixote's fixed gaze on the Duchess almost freezes her into a painting or portrait, like those from the early modern period of royalty posing on horseback, such as Diego de Velázquez's representation of Isabel of Bourbon or King Philip IV on horse.<sup>109</sup>

Don Quixote immediately wants to meet the mysterious high-ranking woman and her husband who are hunting in the woods. Introductions of Don Quixote, Sancho, and the nobles, however, are unnecessary. The couple is already familiar with the characters from having read the first part of the novel. In the hopes of being further entertained, they invite Don Quixote and his squire to reside in their palace for several days. It is a invitation that the two characters cannot refuse. However, what they take to be a gesture of hospitality turns out in fact to be a sham given that the couple, as we have repeatedly seen, means only to make the characters playthings for their own pleasure. Similarly illusory is Cervantes's initial description of the Duchess's flawless beauty. Eighteen chapters after the first encounter between Don Quixote and the Duchess in the woods that left the knight-errant entranced by the noble woman's appearance, Doña Rodríguez, a servant in the palace, invokes the old proverb, "no es todo oro lo que reluce" (II, 48, 915).

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<sup>109</sup> McKim-Smith and Welles's "Material Girls—and Boys: Dressing Up in Cervantes" focuses on the Duchess's hunting outfit. Given the Duchess's hunting attire and aggressive behavior during the wild boar hunt, McKim-Smith and Welles compare her to a wood carving of Judith by Pedro de Mena and Salomé in Ambrosio Martínez's decapitation of St. John the Baptist (96). Using their article as a point of departure, I would view Cervantes's portrait of the Duchess as a further masculinization of the aristocrat, as her position resembles that of a king or other male aristocrat from the time period.

Angry at the Duchess for not helping restore her daughter's honor, the servant betrays the aristocrat's deepest secret and offers readers a detailed and intimate portrait culminating in a description of the two *fuentes*, or drains, on her legs:

la hermosura de mi señora la duquesa, aquella tez de rostro, que no parece sino de una espada acicalada y tersa, aquellas dos mejillas de leche y de carmín, que en la una tiene el sol y en la otra la luna, y aquella gallardía con que va pisando y aun despreciando el suelo, que no parece sino que va derramando salud donde pasa? Pues sepa vuesa merced que lo puede agradecer, primero, a Dios, y luego, *a dos fuentes que tiene en las dos piernas*, por donde se desagua todo. (II, 48, 915-16; my emphasis)<sup>110</sup>

Medieval and early modern literature abound with examples of characters with physical blemishes and bodily disfigurements. One might think of the scar on the face of Fernando de Rojas's *Celestina*, the syphilis-eaten nose of Francisco Delicado's eponymous *La Lozana andaluza*, or the women of Francisco de Quevedo's burlesque, anti-Petrarchan sonnets "Una dama bizca y muy hermosa" and "Una dama tuerta y muy hermosura." As mentioned in the previous chapter, from *Don Quixote* itself, the hairy mole on the upper lip and thigh of the countrywoman that Sancho takes for the enchanted Dulcinea comes to mind. In these examples, the women are from the lower class, and their blemishes are immediately apparent.

Aristocratic women are rarely described with such imperfections or deformations.

Could Doña Rodríguez's portrait of the Duchess with two *fuentes* on her legs be an

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<sup>110</sup> Doña Rodríguez seeks help from Don Quixote because her daughter has had sexual relations with a noble whose father is a personal friend of the Duke and Duchess. The young man, however, has not kept his word to marry her daughter, thus tarnishing her and her family's honor. The Duke and Duchess have refused to help Doña Rodríguez because they have borrowed a significant amount of money from this wealthy family, and have accrued a serious debt.

exaggeration? The servant is, after all, upset with the Duke and Duchess for not helping her repair her daughter's tarnished honor. However, the Duchess's enraged reaction on overhearing her servant-seamstress reveal her secret to the knight-errant make clear that Doña Rodríguez's statement is true. Given the Duchess's violent response, I claim that it is not the bodily imperfections on her legs that provoke such a hostile reaction, but what those shameful incisions symbolize.

In the last decade or so, critics have provided a plethora of diagnoses to better understand the Duchess's mysterious drains. David Quint, for example, claims that the Duchess's incisions are a sign of dropsy, a medical condition in which an accumulation of liquid causes extreme swelling of an individual's skin and organs (140). José Manuel Reverte Coma argues that the incisions on the Duchess's legs hide her fistulas, abnormal connections frequently between organs or vessels (39). Others, like Francisco Rico, have proposed that the drains help to treat ulcers (916, n47).

Putting an end to the confusion and incorrect diagnoses, Mercedes Alcalá-Galán's "Las piernas de la duquesa: Praxis médica y claves hermenéuticas en el Quijote del 1615" (2013) proposes a new reading of the mysterious drains on the Duchess's two legs. With supporting evidence from various important medical manuals from the seventeenth century on *fuentes*, including Cristóval Umfry's *Sobre el abuso de las fuentes* (1635) and Mathías de Lera Gil de Muro's *Práctica de fuentes* (1657), and the third section of Luis Mercado's *De mulierum affectionibus earumque curatione* (1597), one of the most influential gynecological treatises in Europe, Alcalá-Galán explains that *fuentes* were a common medical treatment that the upper-classes of early modern society used to combat

infertility (16-17).<sup>111</sup> Prior to this article, critics like Roberto González Echeverría had attributed the childless marriage to the supposedly advanced age of the Duke and Duchess, while Anne J. Cruz has argued that the couple is not as old as readers have assumed (370). I contend that the reason for the absence of children in the couple's marriage lies not in their age, but underneath the Duchess's skirt.

Whereas Alcalá-Galán recognizes that the two drains were created to treat a serious medical condition, Cruz reads the drains as a metaphor of the dire social, political, and economic situation at the end of the sixteenth century and beginning of the seventeenth century: "el cuerpo llagado [de la duquesa] . . . simboliza la decadencia de la nobleza. La maniobra usurpadora de la aristocrata ante la autoridad de don Quijote sobre Sancho y su relación salaz con el escudero advertida sutilmente en el texto aluden al abuso del campesinado por los nobles" (383).<sup>112</sup> It would appear that the drains underneath the Duchess's skirt are telling of the overall "health" of early modern Spain.

Building on both Alcalá-Galán's and Cruz's arguments, this chapter explores how Cervantes uses the Duchess's body to critique the idleness of the aristocracy. He specifically pinpoints the Duchess's shameful *fuentes* and her infertility in the novel to

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<sup>111</sup> Infertility is just one of the many illnesses that were believed to be cured by *fuentes*. De Lera also mentions hearing loss, the common cold, heart palpitations, leprosy, melancholy, gout, and headaches to name a few. See de Lera's Chapter VI for more examples, specifically page 24. Although less common than the use of arms, legs were often used to create incisions for illnesses other than those related to the female reproductive system. For illnesses associated with the liver, for example, surgeons would create an incision on the patient's right leg; for those who were suffering from *bazo*, or splenic disease, surgeons would create an incision on the left leg (59).

<sup>112</sup> Ricotes's support for Philip III's expulsion of the *moriscos*, which he compares to cautery, an extremely painful medical procedure, is another, more obvious example from the second part of the novel: "como él vee que todo el cuerpo de nuestra nación está contaminado y podrido, usa con él antes el cauterio que abrasa que del ungüento que molifica" (II, 65, 1052). The *moriscos* in early modern Spain were viewed as a sort of infection or contamination that needed to be either amputated or sterilized for the country's advancement. See Julio Vélez-Sainz, "¿Amputación o ungimiento?: Soluciones a la contaminación religiosa en el *Buscón* y el *Quijote* (1615)."

argue more broadly that they may be taken as allegories for Spain's ailing body politic. In what follows, I examine the Duchess's incisions and the idleness and infertility she and her husband both embody in relation to deep anxieties in early seventeenth-century Spain about depopulation and economic decline. Through the childless couple, I argue that Cervantes generates a powerful critique of the consequences of ignorance and unproductivity in carnal and imperial bodies. The couple's inability to procreate is a sign of failed patriarchy during a time when men (able bodies) were needed the most in Spain to fight in the wars and fix the country's upheaval. Children were a means by which the country could secure a future. At the same time, Anne J. Cruz and Grace Coolidge have noted that Cervantes's decision to include a childless aristocratic couple in the novel hints at the tension between an older, feudal society and a rapidly changing early modern Spanish society (Coolidge 14). To this, I would add that through the Duchess's shamed body Cervantes reflects on the early modern problematic that grappled with exterior expression and interior consciousness, the public and private spheres, and the subsequent exposure and concealment of bodies, emotions, and beliefs. As Norbert Elias pointed out, shame became a control mechanism through which people, particularly those of the upper class and feudal court, suppress their bodily needs as part of the "civilizing process." In this regard, early modern society is forced to 'privatize,' (121) that is, to silence their affects and the source of their bodily shame, as with the Duchess's *fuentes*. By inscribing shame on the Duchess's body, Cervantes succeeds in presenting a yet more complex vision of this affect as it is linked to issues of identity and secrecy.

### **3.2 The Duchess's Furtive *Fuentes***

Before examining how the Duchess' *fuentes* relate to larger issues of infertility

and depopulation in early modern Spain, it is necessary to examine how they would actually have been employed and understood in clinical practice and theory in the period. Surgeons or *barberos* artificially created small incisions on the patient's body in order to drain fluids from the legs; the incisions were located as close as possible to the area on the body where there was believed to be a buildup of liquids or humors that required evacuating (de Lera 23). For problems affecting the female reproductive system, as is the case with the Duchess, the surgical incisions were formed on the thighs. The drains were kept open for months and occasionally years in order to prevent scarring, and they needed to be cared for on a regular basis (Alcalá-Galán 15).<sup>113</sup> Every two or three days the drains were checked to ensure that the discharge, and therefore, the infection, was evacuating and healing properly. Even with regular care, however, complications like gangrene, amputation, and even death often arose (15).<sup>114</sup>

According to various medical treatises from the period, forming *fuentes* on women's thighs was not the only method by which women could treat their infertility.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Summarizing Umfry and Lera's monumental texts on *fuentes*, Alcalá-Galán provides a detailed description of the maintenance of the *fuentes*: "Las fuentes se curaban cada varios días, y se tapaban con una lámina de plomo o de plata, o un naípe nuevo y doble, o una tablilla con una hoja de yedra fuertemente vendados para impedir que la carne creciera hacia arriba, dejando una cicatriz abultada. Se les ponían gasas con diversos ungüentos que las mantenían húmedas y por lo tanto incapaces de cicatrizar. Luego se ceñían con cinchas de cuero o de lienzo trenzado a las piernas y brazos para que no se movieran de sitio y la herida no se expandiera hacia abajo, lo cual era muy común" (16).

<sup>114</sup> Mathías de Lera's *Práctica de fuentes* (1657) cites the case of Doña Isabel de Montalbo, a nun who died due to complications caused by the drains: "sufre de una enorme hinchazón y dolores, primero en la pierna y luego en todo el cuerpo, muriendo en pocos días. Esta muerte por septicemia, es explicada por tres médicos y un cirujano como consecuencia directa de la fuente" (qtd. in Alcalá-Galán 15, 5n).

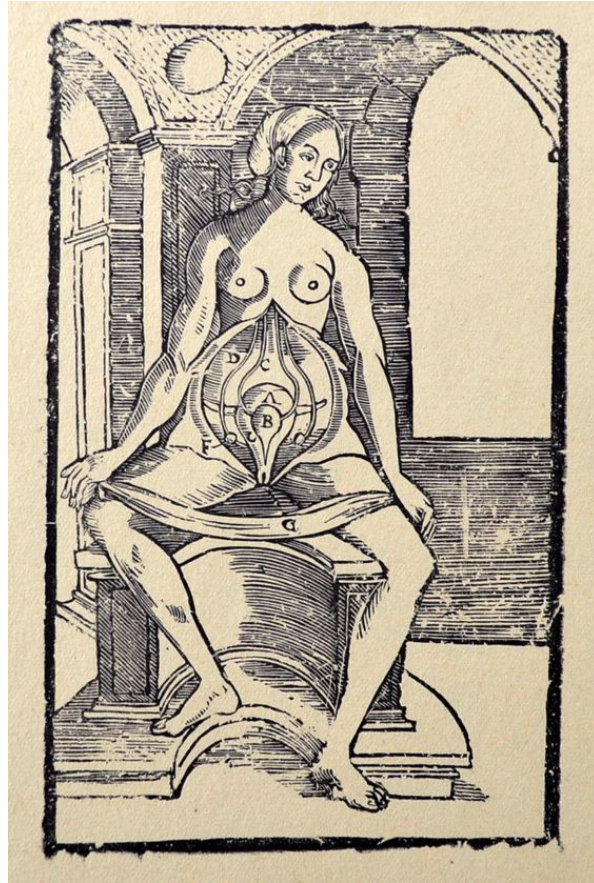
<sup>115</sup> The majority of early modern medical treatises dedicated to women's health dealt strictly with obstetrics and gynecology, which cover not only reproduction but also problems related to the reproductive organs (Alcalá-Galán 19). These include Luis Lobera de Ávila's *Vergel de sanidad* (1530) and *Libro del régimen de la salud, y de la esterilidad de los hombres y mujeres, y de las enfermedades de los niños, y otras cosas utilísimas* (1551); Damián Carbón's *Libro del arte de las comadres o madrinas* (1541); Luis de Mercado's *De mulierum affectionibus* (1579); Francisco Núñez de Coria's *Libro del parto humano* (1580) and *Tratado del uso de las mujeres* (in *Regimiento y aviso de sanidad*, 1586).

In the one and only chapter dedicated to men and women's sterility in *Libro del régimen de la salud, y de la esterilidad de los hombres y mujeres, y de las enfermedades de los niños y otras cosas utilísimas* (1551), Dr. Luis Ávila de Lobera, often drawing on the works of Galen and Hippocrates, proposes several remedies to verify and combat the problem.<sup>116</sup> For example, aromatic tests were believed to validate a woman's potency: "dándoles sahumerios con una caña o embudo metido en el orificio de la madre, y si sintiere la mujer el olor de los aromáticos y sus fumigios subir por dentro de su cuerpo a la boca y las narices, es señal que el defecto de engendrar no está en ella" (174). Similarly, as mentioned earlier, according to Huarte de San Juan, if the woman could smell the scent of a perfumed substance, like garlic, rise through her body and reach her mouth and nose, she was considered fertile: "tomar una cabeza de ajos mondada hasta lo vivo y ponerla dentro del útero al tiempo que la mujer se quiere dormir; y si otro día sintiere en la boca el sabor de los ajos, ella es fecunda sin falta ninguna" (327).<sup>117</sup> An image of a nude woman with her abdomen exposed from Mondino de Luzzi's *Anatomia Mundini* (1541) (Figure 1) appears to allude to this popular method of testing women's fertility. The shape and multiple layers of the figure's insides resemble those of a garlic. Moreover, according to the artist's description, the woman sits on a birthing chair.

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<sup>116</sup> Alcalá-Galán refers to Lobera's treatise, only to explain the serious effect that sterility had on a married couple (26, 18n).

<sup>117</sup> As mentioned previously, most of Don Quixote's advice to Sancho before he leaves the palace to govern Barataria has to do with dietary restrictions. In particular, Don Quixote urges his squire to avoid garlic and onions, for they do not "saquen por el olor tu villanería" (II, 42, 872). That is, only people from the lower class eat such foods. Given garlic's function in testing and affirming a woman's fertility, Cervantes appears to suggest a connection between peasantry and (re)productivity, a theme that he further develops through the juxtaposition of Duchess and Teresa Panza.



**Figure 1:** Nude woman sitting on a birthing chair with her abdomen exposed for anatomical analysis from Mondino de Luzzi's *Anatomia mundi* (1541) (Fernández 146)

To treat the illness, Lobera mentions the use of *sangrías*, or bloodletting, in the right ankle and arm in combination with the ingestion of strong syrups.<sup>118</sup> Other methods include warm herbal baths and particular foods and beverages, such as tea and oregano

<sup>118</sup> It is interesting that Lobera specifies a particular side of the body. Huarte de San Juan proposes that the right and left kidneys are each linked by tubes to the right and left 'testicles' of men and women, respectively, and that the seed coming from each side corresponds to distinct humoral balances (cold and wet on the left, hot and dry on the right) that leads to the conception of either boys or girls: "procurar que ambas simientes, la del marido y la de la mujer, caigan en el lado derecho del útero. Porque en aquel lugar dice Hipócrates que se hacen los varones, y en el izquierdo las hembras. La razón trae Galeno, diciendo que el lado derecho del útero es muy caliente por la vecindad que tiene con el hígado y con el riñón derecho y con el vaso seminario derecho, de los cuales miembros hemos dicho y probado que son calidísimos . . . Lo cual hará la mujer fácilmente recostándose sobre el lado derecho después de pasado el acto de la generación" (341-2). Bloodletting performed on the woman's right ankle was not only a way for women to treat a possible case of infertility, but perhaps the method also had the intention of correcting the issue of depopulation in early modern Spain by focusing on producing male children, and thus, ensuring that "el linaje de los hombres no se acabe" (331).

(180).<sup>119</sup> Whereas the list of methods to combat women's infertility is exhaustive, for men, Lobera only recommends light dinners, such as three or four egg yolks (191).

In addition to Lobera's natural remedies to treat a woman's infertility, Juan Luis Vives encouraged women to undergo more spiritual methods to deal with the problem or "curse" (267), of barrenness in *The Education of a Christian Woman* (1524). In a section dedicated to the care of children, Vives cites examples of several women from the Bible (including Hannah, Elizabeth, and Sarah) who ended up giving birth despite fertility problems either because they prayed to God or because God simply intervened without warning. Vives frequently insists on the "burden" and "fatigue" that come with having children; however, he recognizes that infertility is a "stigma" (265) resulting from expectations established by religion and society, or what he calls "mankind" (266). Spiritual help or ingesting certain foods was a less invasive option than forming incisions on a woman's body, especially because the cuts were painful and released liquids. It would appear, therefore, that *fuentes* were a last resort to remedy the problem of infertility.

The liquids expelled from the Duchess's body from these incisions could include a combination of one or more of the four humors—bile, phlegm, black bile, and blood—which could transform themselves into a different humor under certain conditions, as is the case of milk and semen (Wiesner-Hanks 36). Following the period's doctrines of Hippocratic-Galenic humoralism, physical and mental illness indicated that an imbalance of these bodily fluids had occurred. Certain foods or temperatures could help in reestablishing one's humoral balance, but for more drastic cases, surgeons used purgative

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<sup>119</sup> For an extensive list of natural methods to cure a woman's infertility, see *Libro del régimen* (179-191).

procedures in order to evacuate the excessive humors.<sup>120</sup> For example, in his *Tratado breve de Medicina y de todas las enfermedades que a cada passo se ofrecen* (1591) Fray Agustín Farfán claimed that a headache was produced by too much phlegm or melancholy and could be eliminated by bloodletting, (qtd by Torres González 227). Indeed, medical theory attributed many illnesses to an excessive amount of blood or malign humors in the blood itself. To combat this anomaly of imbalance, *barberos* would extract blood from veins or arteries, usually in the afflicted person's arm. Bloodletting became so popular that people started to abuse the practice, and it became the solution for all types of bodily pains and fevers (Chul 245). Cervantes mentions bloodletting at least twice in *Don Quixote* (I, 4 and I, 21), without specifying the characters' illnesses, perhaps in allusion to the practice's overuse at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

Similar to bloodletting, the *fuentes* had a secretory function. As Umfry points out, the drains were regarded as a form of excrement:

[Las fuentes crean] otra enfermedad nueva en parte sana y sin culpa, sugetando al pobre paciente a mil vayvenes y peligrosas tempestades, que suelen seguir sin

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<sup>120</sup> Along with incisions, more natural purgative methods to restore the equilibrium of the body's humors, such as sweating, existed in the early modern period. Considered excrement, sweat was believed to treat syphilis—one of the most shameful and contagious sexually transmitted diseases. Treatment for syphilis was quite severe and consisted of placing the patient “abrigaba fuertemente en una habitación pequeña, cerrada y calentada con braseros, mantas y esteras” and expose him/her to “guayacán (o palo de Indias), recomendarle el sueño y la quietud, todo ello durante unos treinta días” (Amezúa y Mayo 412-416). This regimen left patients weak, as Cervantes demonstrates in *El casamiento engañoso* (1613), which begins with a description of the protagonist, Campuzano, who had entered the Hospital de la Resurrección: “suda[do] catorce cargas de bubas que [l]e echó a cuestras una mujer que escogí por [suya]” (282; my emphasis). Campuzano attributes his lanky figure and yellow complexion to the effect of his continuous sweating, part of his battle to get rid of syphilis: “mostraba bien claro que, aunque no era el tiempo muy caluroso, debía de haber sudado en veinte días todo el humor que quizá granjeó en una hora” (281). Although this procedure was less painful than bloodletting, profuse sweating over an extended period of time taxed the patient's body. Francisco de Quevedo similarly describes the treatment of a young prostitute who is suffering from venereal disease in his poem “Tomando estaba sudores”: “Tomando estaba sudores / Marica en el hospital: / que el tomar era costumbre, / y el remedio es el sudar” (*Obras* vv. 1-4; my emphasis). If left untreated, excess buildup of a humor could alter one's physiological function and have a negative effect on the body.

aprovechar a la enfermedad: para que se hizo, en especial la continua evaporación de los excrementos que cría. (qtd. in Alcalá-Galán 21)

The openings, usually about two centimeters long, permitted the expulsion of humors or pus and were thus likened to fountains. Frequently, Cervantes's description of the *fuentes* has a double meaning. For example, Cervantes humorously, perhaps even mischievously, puns on the term when he likens the Duchess's drains to the fountains in the royal gardens of Aranjuez: "cuando oyó la duquesa que Rodríguez *había echado en la calle el Aranjuez de sus fuentes*, no lo pudo sufrir, ni menos Altisidora" (II, 50, 928; my emphasis).<sup>121</sup> As a grotesque Aranjuez, the Duchess's own fountains operate as the dark underside of the aristocratic magnificence the royal palace displays.

To describe the painful process of expelling liquid or pus from the Duchess's legs, Cervantes chooses the verb *derramar*: "y aquella gallardía con que va pisando y aun despreciando el suelo, que no parece sino que va derramando salud donde pasa?" (II, 48, 916). On the one hand, by using this verb in particular, Cervantes emphasizes that the secretions released from the *fuentes* were incredibly painful. He makes very clear the Duchess's discomfort while walking: "va pisando y aun despreciando el suelo" (II, 48, 916). The drains cause such pain that she scorns the floor, the pressure of each step exacerbating the agony, most probably making it difficult for her to walk steadily. On the other hand, according to the *Diccionario de autoridades*, *derramar* also signifies "repartir, distribuir entre los vecinos buenos y llanos los tributos que algún Lugar ha de pagar al Rey, o otras cargas." This latter meaning further resonates productively with the financial corruption often blamed on the aristocracy that was plaguing Spain.

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<sup>121</sup> Eventually the fountains dried up, like "la fuente de la plaza [que] se secó" in Sancho's *pueblo* (II, 52, 952). It would appear that Cervantes plays with the image of the fountains in the text to illustrate both the Duchess's infertile body and the country's barrenness.

In relation to this latter meaning of *derramar*, it is significant that upon learning about the Duchess's bodily secret, Don Quixote refers to the drains as *desaguaderos*. As defined by the *DRAE*, the term refers at the most literal level to a conduit for the secretion of liquids: "Boca, canal o compuerta por donde se da salida a las aguas superfluas, para que no hagan daño." There is, however, another definition of *desaguaderos* in the *Diccionario de autoridades* that relates to the draining of wealth from Spain: "Por extensión se toma por el motivo o causa de sacar o salir de los Reinos el caudal de oro y plata para otros Países." This latter definition points to the potential of the *fuentes* as a hidden and shameful commentary on the economic unproductivity, wastefulness, and sterility of an aristocratic class responsible for draining the Spanish economy, as through a *desaguadero*, leaving the country dry and barren, like the Duchess's infertile body.

### **3.3 Skirting around the Duchess's Bodily Shame**

The Duchess's inability to conceive is more than a biological defect. A childless marriage had psychological and social repercussions, staining a woman's reputation and producing feelings of shame. According to the moralist Fray Juan de Pineda, physical disabilities like barrenness were a shameful stain that gave outward manifestation to inward sin: "Los defectos corporales son figura de las mancillas o pecados del alma" (qtd. in Torres 186). When the biblical mother Rachel, for example, finally gives birth to her first child, she immediately declares: "God has taken away my shame" (Genesis 30.23). Conduct manuals for married Christian women, like Vives's *The Education of a Christian Woman* and Fray Luis de León's *La perfecta casada* (1583), explained that women's bodies were made to bear children and, thus their main responsibility in the family was materially inscribed in their bodies, constituting a form of identity and a way

in which women could establish a relationship with their culture (Coolidge 14). From an economic standpoint, a childless marriage represented a fracture in generational linearity and meant the couple would have no legitimate heirs for passing on their wealth (and status). Because of her barrenness, Cervantes's Duchess fails to fulfill her prescribed role as a married woman. She would have been deemed sexually unfit in a society that valued male virility, manifested, among other ways, by the presence of a family as a vehicle of social reproduction.

Of course, a woman's inability to have children might well have had nothing to do with her but rather with infertility on her husband's part. Drawing on Galen's numerous works on the subject such as *De semine contra* and *Defectus natura*, Lobera lists a series of conditions that contribute to a man or woman's ability to conceive a child, most of which focus on the body's internal constitution:

son por defecto de buena complexión en los miembros principales, así como en el hígado o en el corazón, o por demasiado calor y humedad en aquellos miembros, o por grosura o por flaqueza grande de virtud que hay en todos, o porque el uno tiene calor demasiado, entrambos, o frialdad demasiada o en alguna mala complexión en la madre, de calor o de frialdad o de humedad, ahora de sequedad, aunque por la mayor parte es mala complexión fría que amortigua y congela la madre y hace muchas vascosidades en ella . . . o por beber mucha agua fría. (170-171)

The composition and temperature of a man or woman's body and what he or she put into the body was therefore considered fundamental in determining one's ability to procreate.

Although the causes of a man's infertility are attributed to the body's interior, the inability to conceive, especially among male nobles, was an issue that had clear exterior repercussions for the larger metaphorical (social and political) body of the State. For example, Carlos II, the last Habsburg ruler of Spain (1661-1700), is most known for having died with no heir despite several failed attempts to conceive in two marriages. The king's inability to procreate has become one of the most defining features of his reign, and not only because it put an end to the Habsburg dynasty. Coolidge has noted that Carlos's failure to take on the role of father, that is, to maintain the ideals of the patriarchal system that made up early modern Spain, precipitated the War of the Spanish Succession that reshaped Europe (15). The absence of children among the nobility had consequences that extended far beyond the household.<sup>122</sup>

Although a man could be infertile, men frequently blamed women for their own childlessness.<sup>123</sup> The man, however, also suffered social and psychological shame. If a

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<sup>122</sup> The Kings' tendencies to marry within their families had an adverse effect on their health and in extreme cases caused infertility. The Habsburg Kings' consanguineous marriages, implemented to maintain power, created a "diseased" body, or nation. Cervantes indirectly critiques this unnatural union between relatives in the episode with the galley slaves in part I of the novel. One of the slaves had been arrested for the multiple relationships he pursued with family members: "me burlé demasiadamente con dos primas hermanas mías, y con otras dos hermanas que no lo eran mías. Finalmente, tanto me burlé con todas, que resultó de la burla crecer la parentela tan intrincadamente, que no hay sumista que la declare" (I, 22, 204). Until recently, research on the Habsburgs' inbreeding has been limited to historical data. Thanks to Francisco Ceballos, Celsa Quinteiro, and Gonzalo Alvarez's "The Role of Inbreeding in the Extinction of a European Royal Dynasty" (2009), the dynasty's downfall has also been examined from a genetic perspective. Although Ceballos, Quinteiro, and Alvarez's research is still speculative, by looking at the family tree, particularly the shortage of offspring and Carlos II's infertility, it is clear that the monarchy's inclination to marry family members was detrimental not only to their health but also to the nation. Each marriage with a family member triggered serious health issues that in turn were passed on from generation to generation, that is, when the children did not die prematurely as most did. Between 1527 and 1661, the royal marriages produced thirty-four children. Of this number, ten (29.4%) died before the age of one and seventeen children (50%) died before the age of ten (Ceballos 2).

<sup>123</sup> Although impotence in the early modern period was usually associated with males, it also affected women, as seen by the numerous trials carried out against impotent spouses documented by Edward Behrend-Martínez in his book, *Unfit for Marriage: Impotent Spouses on Trial in the Basque Region of Spain* (2007).

wife could not produce children, Spanish society often viewed the husband as weak, or emasculated. The dishonor of one spouse inevitably contributed to the dishonor of the other. Marriage at the time, especially between nobles, was generally based on motivations other than love. Lobera de Ávila and others considered a spouse's sterility or difficulty to conceive sufficient reason to divorce or annul a marriage:

La esterilidad o dificultad de empreñarse es un defecto que suele ser causa de divorcio . . . o al menos que no se tenga aquella afición que es menester, pues, como dice Aristóteles . . . que es naturalísimo a cualquiera viviente engendrar, y no menos es gran trabajo entre personas y señores que tienen mayorazgo o haciendas careciendo de legítimos hijos; para esto principalmente casan, para haber hijos de bendición con quien en la vida se deleiten y después de sus días les dejen lo que tienen. (qtd. in Alcalá-Galán 18n)<sup>124</sup>

The Duke and Duchess do not divorce, but there is little direct communication between the couple in these chapters. When they do speak to each other, the dialogue is tense. For example, the Duke chastises his wife for asking Don Quixote an obvious question (“¿Qué quiere decir *demostina*, señor don Quijote[?],” [II, 32, 799]), later referring to her as “deslumbrada” (II, 32, 799). As Alcalá-Galán points out, the Duchess's barrenness would make it difficult for the Duke to express continuous interest in his wife (27). The only sign of the Duke's affection towards the Duchess is when he jealously reacts to Don Quixote's incessant praise of her by warning the knight-errant to keep his sights on his beloved Dulcinea: “¡Pasito, mi señor don Quijote de la Mancha! —dijo el duque—, que adonde está mi señora doña Dulcinea del Toboso no es razón que se alaben otras

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<sup>124</sup> Annulments were often based on the sterility of either the husband or wife. A biological imperfection, witchcraft, or malpractice by a midwife were typically blamed for a couple's impotence (Behrend-Martínez “Abortion, Illicit Sex” 273).

fermosuras” (II, 30, 782). It would appear that in this example jealousy triggers the Duke’s affection towards his wife, although here, in line with the many jokes and pranks he and his wife play on the knight, the Duke’s clearly mocking adoption of Don Quixote’s own chivalresque codes of expression neutralizes the affection. Moreover, it seems that the Duke takes out his frustration at his own childlessness by refusing to offer financial help to Doña Rodríguez and her child. It cannot be coincidental that he directs his anger and irritation towards one of the only mother-daughter relationships mentioned in the second part of the novel. In fact, by not helping Doña Rodríguez restore her daughter’s honor, the Duke is in part responsible for breaking up his servant’s family. Despite several attempts by Doña Rodríguez to communicate with the Duke, he refuses to help: “aunque el duque mi señor lo sabe, porque yo me he quejado a él, no una, sino muchas veces, y pedídale mande que el tal labrador se case con mi hija, hace orejas de mercader y apenas quiere oírme” (II, 480, 915). The servant’s resentment towards the Duke prompts her to seek help from Don Quixote, an action that exposes her desperation to mend the family’s tarnished honor.

The strained relationship between the Duchess and the Duke may also stem from fear on the part of the Duchess that her husband might produce an illegitimate offspring, which would only exacerbate her shame at failing to produce a legitimate heir. While men could test their fertility outside of marriage without receiving any form of condemnation, barren wives could not. If a wife was unable to produce children, adultery on the part of the husband was rarely punished (Wiesner-Hanks 83). Meanwhile, an infertile woman underwent various medical examinations in which she was poked and prodded with phallic instruments and other objects, such as candles (Behrend-Martínez

*Unfit for Marriage* 66). It is probable that these uncomfortable and often painful medical examinations to test the woman's fertility would produce feelings of shame, as the woman's illness was made public for the first time.

The foul odor that *fuentes* could produce were also shaming, as Umfry affirms in *Sobre el abuso de las fuentes*:

[y que] detenidos se atraen por boca, y narices, y otras partes con el ayre de que se crían los espíritus del cuerpo, que es fuerca no salgan buenos, luego el mal olor, que causan al mismo paciente, y en especial en la cama, y a los con quien conversare. (qtd. in Alcalá-Galán 21)

Cervantes does not make any overt textual references to a stench emanating from the Duchess's pus-incisions, but in light of contemporary accounts of *fuentes*, it is plausible that their presence in the text does implicitly signal some type of odor in association with the Duchess's painful incisions and secret secretions. This bad smell might simply indicate the body's attempt to rid itself of the corruption. However, more likely the foul smell would point to the cause of the decayed matter, that is, the concealed imperfection.<sup>125</sup> Any bodily defect, including foul odors, that did not follow the cultural feminine norm was considered an illness "and treated as deviant and aberrant" (Johnson and Moran 12), and thus, shameful. The foul-smelling incisions would make it difficult for someone to hide her imperfection; nonetheless, the full skirt in this case helped the Duchess mask the stench, perhaps explaining Cervantes's omission of the odor from the text.

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<sup>125</sup> Foul odors abound in *Don Quixote*, and the Duchess is not the only woman who experiences shame associated with a bodily imperfection: Altisidora's medical condition (halitosis), like the Duchess's infertility, is sufficient reason for the servant to join the Duchess in violently attacking Don Quixote and Doña Rodríguez.

As much as women concealed intimate body parts or imperfections with layered clothing, matters related to reproduction and sexuality were often made public. The early modern representation of the female body is deeply paradoxical. On the one hand, an aristocratic or royal woman's biological functions—her menstrual periods and pregnancies—were made public. On the other hand, her body was kept covered to avoid any carnal temptations (Quintero 35). A plethora of documentation on mostly royal women's menstrual periods and childbirths from the early modern period attests to the public nature of these issues (35). For example, in the Spanish court, announcements were made when the queen's menstrual cycle began and when a king and queen were reunited after a significant amount of time apart due to an illness or after childbirth (Alcalá-Galán 24). According to María José Rubio, early modern Spain was “un reino pendiente de los embarazos reales” (qtd. in Quintero 35). When Charles II married Maria Luisa of Orléans, her ability to conceive was such a public affair that it was recounted in a popular quatrain: “Parid, bella flor de lis / que en aflicción tan extraña / si parís, parís a España / si no parís, a París” (qtd. in Quintero 36). As the last verse confirms, if the queen did not produce an heir, she should not only return to her country, but as a result of her barrenness, Spain would lose an important successor (Quintero 36).

In the years prior to the composition of the second part of *Don Quixote*, royal fertility was of such concern that it became a subject of visual representation. Queen Margaret of Austria (d. 1611), who gave birth to no less than eight children, commissioned several portraits of herself, like *La Reina doña Margarita de Austria embarazada con su hija Ana Mauricia* (1609) by Bartolomé González y Serrano (see

Figure 2).<sup>126</sup> In this portrait, the queen is heavily pregnant with her second child, Ana, who unfortunately would pass away at a young age, as so many children often did during the early modern period. Margaret of Austria commissioned several portraits, not only of herself pregnant but also individual portraits of her children.



**Figure 2:** Bartolomé González y Serrano, *La Reina doña Margarita de Austria embarazada con su hija Ana Mauricia*, 1609, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Viena

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<sup>126</sup> See, for example, Cruz de Carlos Varona 151-174, which provides a detailed analysis of several early modern paintings depicting motherhood.

Pantoja de la Cruz's *Virgen de la Expectación* (1604), painted after the birth of Prince Philip in 1604, and *Anunciación*, which depicts the queen and Ana, her older daughter, are two such paintings that emphasize the themes of maternity and fertility (de Carlos Varona 156). Many of these portraits were sent to Margaret's relatives, a detail that further emphasizes the value of family-fecundity. Following in her mother's footsteps—Maria Anna of Bavaria, who gave birth to fifteen children (Cruz and Stampino 13)—, Margaret married Philip III of Spain, had eight children over ten years, and was, thus, considered extremely fecund.

Given her numerous pregnancies, there is no doubt that Queen Margaret was fulfilling her role as an early modern married woman. Bartolomé Bennassar observes:

[E]l oficio de la reina consistía en tener muchos hijos: era preciso que una reina de España trajera al mundo a numerosos príncipes y a una gran cantidad de infantas para asegurar la sucesión y para ofrecer abundantes posibilidades a la estrategia matrimonial del monarca y sus consejeros. (qtd. in Quintero 37)

Producing heirs to preserve the monarchy was of utmost importance. Hence, it is believed that Margaret was chosen to marry Philip III, the only son of Philip II, for her probable fertility (Quintero 13). Aside from the function of pregnancy as a means of protecting certain social structures, like inheritance, class, and lineage, pregnancy also became a tool through which early modern women could manifest their own authority.

Interestingly enough, this very fertile queen of Spain had died just four years prior to the publication of the second part of *Don Quixote*. A highly visible public model for nobiliary fecundity, the queen's overtly publicized pregnancies bring the Duchess's own secret inability to conceive into shameful relief. As Gail Kern Paster has noted, it was

important for early modern nobles to place their social position before any bodily need. A woman's inability to control her body (both inner and outer) could lead to exposure and subsequently push her into a precarious social state (29). By keeping her infertility a secret from the rest of the society, the Duchess attempts to retain an illusion of power, aided by the clinical mechanism of her *fuentes*, here operating as the secret and futile instruments of science working underneath the Duchess's skirt. In this regard, her shameful secret also operates as a vehicle of control in harmony with what Elias has identified as "civilizing process" that first occurred in court societies when subjects were expected to control their emotions, their body, and bodily functions, particularly in the company of others.

This shameful silence, however, eventually overwhelms the Duchess. The Duchess's concealment of bodily deformities aggravates the shame associated with them by preventing self-reflection on her part. Patients' fears of looking at the body's interior and thus acknowledging their injury or disability explains why medieval and contemporary doctors tried to keep patients' wounds covered. As Jonathan Sawday points out in *The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture* (1995): "a set of taboos [ . . . ] prohibits the contemplation of one's own body-core. Too active an interest in gazing into the interior of one's own cavities, even within the diagnostic context, may be held to be a morbid enterprise" (12). From this angle, I would assert that after keeping the sores hidden and a secret from all, the Duchess erupts into violence once they are brought out into the light.

The rage that the Duchess directs towards Doña Rodríguez emphasizes the shame her handicap prompts. Eavesdropping from the other side of the door, Altisidora and the

Duchess abruptly enter Don Quixote's private room after the noble woman's secret is revealed and reacts violently against the servant:

Apenas acabó don Quijote de decir esta razón, cuando con un gran golpe abrieron las puertas del aposento, y del sobresalto del golpe se le cayó a doña Rodríguez la vela de la mano, y quedó la estancia como boca de lobo, como suele decirse. Luego sintió la pobre dueña que 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, que era una compasión . . . no fue vano su temor, porque, en dejando molida a la dueña los callados verdugos (la cual no osaba quejarse), acudieron a don Quijote, y, desenvolviéndole de la sábana y de la colcha, le pellizcaron tan a menudo y tan reciamente, que no pudo dejar de defenderse a puñadas, y todo esto en silencio admirable. Duró la batalla casi media hora. (II, 48, 916)

The Duchess acts out her feelings of shame through aggression. It is at this moment—when the servant leaks the Duchess's secret to others—that the noble's bodily shame is made public for the first time, forcing her also to recognize it.<sup>127</sup> Although the Duchess's legs remain covered under her skirt, the shamed body has become an object of another's gaze, simply by word. Instinctively, others will direct their attention to the spot that the shamed person is deliberately attempting to conceal, even if that area remains covered. And these tacit furtive gazes inscribed within the text are reified at the level of narrative in the very act of naming. Just as Doña Rodríguez makes the *fuentes* visible to Don

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<sup>127</sup> An essential component of the shame process, according to Jean-Paul Sartre, is the shamed person's recognition by the Other: "Je reconnais que je *suis* comme autrui me voit" (qtd. in Dawans 34).

Quixote by verbally unveiling her mistress's secret, lifting her skirt with words, so too does the Cervantine narration itself lay bare the shameful secrets of an aristocracy embodied by the Duchess. In this sense, the Duchess's rage reads as the justifiable response to being stripped naked and her very private secret given a public name.

Equally noteworthy in the Duchess and Altisidora's aggressive attack against Don Quixote and Doña Rodríguez is the overwhelming silence that permeates the episode, thereby reinforcing the Duchess's shameful secret. For Alan Trueblood, the silence during this fight has a comic function: "el silencio se transforma, exagerándose, en elemento cómico, y convierte el episodio entero, en este caso, en una pantomima ridícula" (167). However, I would claim that although Don Quixote's inability to defend himself once again may be ridiculing, there is nothing comical about this attack. In fact, the unusual hush during the violent battle creates a serious, somber tone that is an ideal setting for processing the Duchess's mortification. The shameful silence and violence in the scene unfolds piece-by-piece, character-by-character. Altisidora strangles Doña Rodríguez with her bare hands, preventing the servant from speaking or shouting in retaliation; the Duchess has effectively disabled Doña Rodríguez from further communicating her secret. Meanwhile, from his bed, Don Quixote silently observes and listens to the scene unfold next to him until he, too, becomes a victim. The two women, or "los callados verdugos" (II, 48, 916) as Cervantes refers to them, remove the bed sheets that had been covering Don Quixote since the cat attack and pinch the knight-errant with such force that he uses his fists, rather than his usual lance, to fight off the women. Although no words are exchanged throughout this entire scene, the characters' silence speaks loudly, confirming the previously unspoken and shameful truth about the

Duchess's body. Once named, the Duchess's shamed imperfect body is contained in an expressive void beyond language, a void that can only be filled here by the kinetic violence of other bodies bent on ensuring that the unspeakable remain unspeakable.

After strangling Doña Rodríguez, the Duchess, without uttering a word, turns to the item of clothing that covers her own handicap. She pulls up the betrayer's skirt and beats her with a slipper: "sin hablar palabra, *le alzaba las faldas*, y con una, al parecer, chinela, le comenzó a dar tantos azotes, que era una compasión" (II, 48, 916). The Duchess shames Doña Rodríguez by lifting up the latter's skirt and hitting her in the equivalent spot to where her incisions, visible signs of her infertility, are located. This symbolic displacement seems to confirm that her violent attack operates as an attempt to eliminate or at least retaliate against the source of shame. While the verbal silence that permeates these violent interactions confirms the presence of shame, at the same time the shamed body becomes visible precisely because it emerges in this silence. That is, the act of erasure signals its opposite: absence comes to reveal presence.

Adding to the Duchess's anger is Doña Rodríguez's story of her own fertility, which the noblewoman certainly overheard while eavesdropping on the servant and Don Quixote: "*No tratamos tan secretamente nuestros amores*, que no viniesen a noticia de mi señora, la cual, por escusar dimes y diretes, nos casó en paz y en haz de la santa madre Iglesia Católica Romana, de cuyo matrimonio nació una hija para rematar con mi ventura" (II, 48, 913; my emphasis). Instead of being a joyous occasion, however, the birth of the daughter "remata [...] con [su] ventura": shortly after his daughter's birth, Doña Rodríguez's husband dies "de un cierto espanto" (II, 48, 916). Cervantes does not explain this "espanto" in the novel; regardless, the couple does not view the baby's birth

in favorable terms. It is the Duchess who discovers Doña Rodríguez's secret by the simple act of eavesdropping; meanwhile, the servant later reveals the Duchess's secret. In an ironic twist, whereas Doña Rodríguez procreates and links her child's birth to a bad omen, the Duchess is unable to conceive, and thus reacts aggressively against a woman who describes her child's birth as a bad sign. Both the representation of the Duchess's *fuentes* and her failed efforts at concealment and containment point glaringly to the troubled limits of unruly shameful interiors in *Don Quixote* and in early modern culture more broadly. The Duchess's embodied shame, which erupts in a frenzy of violence and silence once revealed, is a shame that ultimately cannot be contained. Doña Rodríguez has named it, and Cervantes's readers, along with the knight himself, can no longer look away. Readers have glimpsed the leaking corruption hidden under the metaphoric skirt of an entire aristocratic class.

### **3.4 Lifting the Duchess's Skirt: From Aristocratic Idleness to Peasant Productivity**

In contrast to Don Quixote and the Duke, Sancho Panza is the quintessential *pater familias*. Through Sancho, Cervantes makes several references to domestic life, starting with the image of the squire's home. Sancho repeatedly threatens to abandon Don Quixote and return to his house, the domestic space associated with his wife and daughter whom he misses. After being repeatedly beaten, blanketed, and left helpless, Sancho invokes his God-given duty as father and husband to claim that he would rather return home than meander aimlessly with Don Quixote seeking adventures that do not exist: "no haré nada que bueno sea en toda mi vida, harto mejor haría yo, vuelvo a decir, en volverme a mi casa y a mi mujer y a mis hijos, y sustentarla y criarlos con lo que Dios fue servido de darme, y no andarme tras vuesa merced por caminos sin camino" (II, 28,

768). It is evident that Cervantes uses Sancho and his family to develop the themes of marriage and children in *Don Quixote*. The squire repeatedly expresses his concern for the well-being of his family, satisfying his wife's wishes moments before he resumes his adventure with Don Quixote at the beginning of the second part: "si por ventura os viéredes con algún gobierno, no os olvidéis de mí y de vuestros hijos" (II, 5, 582). Indeed, while governing Barataria, he constantly thinks about his daughter, Sanchica, and wife, Teresa, and sends them letters and gifts that greatly please the women. Moreover, he quickly becomes disenchanted with the *ínsula* and less interested in the money and fame it once represented than in his rustic life in the company of his family. The women in his household reciprocate the affection Sancho expresses towards them. When Sancho departs the second time with Don Quixote, Teresa has a tender moment: "comenzó a llorar tan de veras como si ya viera muerta y enterrada a Sanchica" (II, 6, 587). Furthermore, as Sanchica reveals, Teresa becomes overjoyed when she receives a letter from Sancho as governor "por no haber sabido muchos días ha de mi señor padre" (II, 50, 929). Both Teresa and Sancho are equally invested in the marriage of their daughter, a pressing issue that is brought up several times in the novel.<sup>128</sup> Teresa, for example, insists that her daughter marry someone of equal class rank. As "hija del destripaterrones" (II, 5, 583), Sanchica would not understand a man from a higher social class (nor herself): "adonde ni ella la entiendan, ni ella se entienda" (II, 5, 584). Teresa's input regarding her daughter's future continues to emphasize not only the importance of family within that particular household but also the equal footing that husband and wife share in their domestic community.

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<sup>128</sup> Marriage is such an important matter that in her response to Sancho's letter, Teresa shares gossip with her husband: the marriage of a young woman from their town.

During Sancho's stay in the Duke and Duchess's palace, a special relationship between the squire and the Duchess emerges as a displacement of the tenderness and female contact proper to Sancho's own household. Namely, the noblewoman takes on the role of mother and Sancho becomes her child. Unable to conceive, the Duchess accepts this new position happily. From their first meeting in the woods, the Duchess takes a liking to Sancho, whom she calls "gracioso" and "donairoso" (II, 30, 783). Most of Sancho's stay in the palace is spent with the Duchess. She coddles him, requesting that he stay at her side when they ride their horses back to the palace or when picking seats at the dinner table (II, 31 and 33). She also greets him with a warm hug after his brief stint governing the island of Barataria and immediately orders that he be pampered: "Abrazóle la duquesa asimismo, y mandó que le regalasen, porque daba señales de venir mal molido y peor parado" (II, 55, 974). Through this relationship, readers catch a glimpse of what the Duchess's maternal side would look like if she were able to bear children.

In the context of these performances of surrogate maternity, the Duchess provides warmth and protection with her skirt.<sup>129</sup> Startled by the loud noise of the trumpets, horns, and carts announcing the arrival of the demons that would tell Don Quixote how to disenchant Dulcinea, Sancho, like a child, "vino a tierra, y dio con él desmayado en las faldas de la duquesa, la cual le recibió en ellas, y a gran prisa mandó que le echasen agua en el rostro" (II, 34, 820). Unlike his master, who faints several times (mostly from pain), Sancho loses consciousness from fear of the strange and ominous clamor that

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<sup>129</sup> The instances in which Sancho finds comfort in the pleats of the Duchess's skirt contrast with a previous episode (I, 18) when a group of muleteers blanket-toss Sancho. A blanket, usually used to cover someone and in the case of a child, provides protection, is used not to cover Sancho, but instead, to throw him in the air, a custom used during Carnival, particularly for animals (González Echeverría 68). This context renders Sancho's actions in the palace understandable: the Duchess's skirts act as a type of blanket, providing protection from strange noises and possible enemies—an opportunity to "cover up," which is not typical for the squire.

signals the arrival of someone menacing and mysterious. Similarly, when the clamor of drums announces Trifaldín's arrival, Sancho returns to his safe spot in the Duchess's skirt: "no hay que decir sino que el miedo le llevó a su acostumbrado refugio, que era el lado o faldas de la duquesa" (II, 55, 833). As Bénédicte Torres points out in *Cuerpo y gesto en El Quijote* (2002), Sancho's reaction to the unexpected noise reveals his "sensiblería" (178), an oversensitivity that is characteristic of a young child.

Nevertheless, the Duchess's skirt is more than a convenient article of clothing that shields Sancho from danger. The Duchess's full skirt also encodes problems tied to reproduction, early modern Spain's depopulation crisis, and the role of the (sterile and unproductive) aristocracy in precipitating the country's barrenness. Cervantes does not specify the type of skirt the Duchess is wearing; however, given the large pleats that are capable of covering and protecting such a heavy man like Sancho, readers may assume that it is a *verdugado*, a Spanish farthingale (Wunder 136). Popular from the late fifteenth century and well into the seventeenth century in Spain, especially at court, *verdugados* were cone-shaped skirts, narrow at the waist, with a series of circular hoops that widen the skirt at the base (136). Towards the mid-seventeenth century, this style eventually evolved into the *guardainfantes*, a much wider skirt with a vast, bell-like shape, formed by hoops tied around the waist, rather than stitched directly into the skirt. One need only to recall the various portraits of the Spanish monarchy spanning much of the seventeenth century, like that of Margaret, the daughter of Philip IV and Mariana of Austria, depicted as a young girl in Diego de Velázquez's *Las Meninas* (1656), to confirm the longevity of this trend (Wunder 170).

Unlike men's clothing, which showed off their strong figures, often ostentatiously, skirts—worn by women and children from all social classes—concealed their bodies. As we have seen with the Duchess's violent reaction to having her shameful drains exposed, dissimulation and maintaining an idealized image greatly preoccupied the aristocrats: "Given the overriding importance of appearances at court, it was perhaps no wonder that courtiers were reviled or praised as experts in the art of hiding their true thoughts and feelings behind localized displays of etiquette, conversation skills, and rituals of power" (Snyder 22). Analogously, it was unusual for the public to catch a glimpse of women's flesh. In the introduction to *Gendering the Crown in the Spanish Baroque Comedia* (2012), María Cristina Quintero recounts an anecdote about Mariana of Austria, who upon arriving in Spain to marry Philip IV was given a basket with several pairs of silk stockings. The *mayordomo*, however, returned the gifts, stating: "Habéis de saber que las reinas de España no tienen piernas" (35). Viewed as objects of conquest, women's bodies needed to be guarded and their sexuality controlled; ironically enough, it is these same concealed body parts and fuller clothing styles that sparked desire among males (Quintero 23).

Emphasis on the concealment of early modern women's bodies ironically made it easier for them to cover up secrets. The *guardainfante*, for example, was known precisely for what the name suggests: it supposedly hid shameful pregnancies. In the early modern period, women were to fulfill their primary duty and produce legitimate heirs, not pursue illicit relationships. Consequently, the *guardainfante* was outlawed in 1639.<sup>130</sup> The ban,

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<sup>130</sup> More than a hundred *guardainfantes* were hung on balconies of the court jail in Madrid in July 1639, during the ban, a shameful reminder to society of the skirt's problematic function (Wunder 134). Wunder compares these public humiliations to the *cencerradas*, described in the previous chapter, experienced by

however, lasted only briefly. Royalty were encouraged to continue wearing this fashion, thereby showing how ineffective the law had become in the early modern period (Wunder 134). The Duchess would not have worn a *guardainfante* since this style began in the 1630s, nearly two decades after Cervantes wrote the second part of *Don Quixote*. Nevertheless, her skirt is full enough to hide something, yet that something is anything but a child.<sup>131</sup> The Duchess hides a truth far more shameful, the body beneath the fabric unable to bear children. Interestingly, Bartolomé Jiménez Patón, early modern humanist and writer, compared women who wear *guardainfantes* to sirens or harpies, that is, a half woman (top), half monster (bottom) (Wunder 144). They have the power to seduce men and to kill them. In this light, the Duchess's skirt resembles Altisidora's *vagina dentata*, for both break with gender norms and subvert male authority. Playing further on the metaphor of monstrosity, one might argue that the Duchess herself is monstrous in that her body stands as a sign of the disruption of the natural order. She constitutes a woman living in the naturally temperate land of Spain who nevertheless cannot fulfill her biological and social destiny.

The Duchess's infertility in Cervantes's novel, materialized in the skirt, contrasts with Sancho's peasant family that puts fertile eggs to their proper and natural use, which suggests a movement from aristocratic sterility to peasant productivity.<sup>132</sup> Sancho carries

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Don Quixote through Altisidora's cat attack (148). Both Don Quixote and the Duchess would thus have something in common – both violate gender norms through their infertility and sterility, respectively.

<sup>131</sup> As Wunder has noted, the *guardainfante* appears in many early modern texts as a piece of clothing that hid guilty secrets, like illicit pregnancies (139). González Cañal cites several examples including Quiñones Benavente's *Entremés del Doctor Juan Rana* (1645) and Rojas Zorrilla's *Los tres blasones de España* (1645) to name a few texts (79-80).

<sup>132</sup> Not only can the skirt stand for sexual productivity, but in the case of a raped woman who approaches Sancho during his time as governor, the article of clothing can also represent monetary reproduction. In compensation for the woman's lost honor, Sancho gives the woman a purse full of money, which he had

his fascination with the Duchess's skirt to his own daughter when he accepts one of the Duchess's hunting outfits so that after the hunt he can send the material to his wife, who can then sew Sanchica an outfit. Sancho does not want his wife, Teresa, to sew just any article of clothing, however. In a letter, he instructs her to sew their daughter a "saya," or skirt, and "cuerpos," that is a bodice: "Ahí te envío un vestido de cazador, que me dio mi señora la Duquesa; acomódale en modo que sirva de saya y cuerpos a nuestra hija" (II, 36, 832). Later in the episode, in the middle of a discussion between Teresa, the priest, and Sansón Carrasco, Sanchica suddenly appears with "un halda de güevos" (II, 50, 934). Cervantes's description refers to the way in which the daughter carries the eggs that she is preparing for breakfast: the skirt and its folds become a basket full of eggs in the hands of Sancho's daughter. There is no denying the maternal symbolism of eggs, quite literally the reproductive fruit of laying hens, but eggs also resonate here thanks to their perceived benefits during pregnancy and after labor. Based on Juan Alonso de los Ruyzes de Fontecha's *Diez Privilegios para mugeres preñadas...* (1606), María Cruz de Carlos Varona explains the effects eggs were understood to have on women.<sup>133</sup>

[e]ggs frequently were fed to women during pregnancy and after labor, recommended as a nutritional source of new energy while being mild on the stomach. Women whose amniotic sac would not break were given raw eggs to

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taken from the man who had raped her. However, after the woman leaves, Sancho gives the man permission to steal back the purse. When the two figures return to see Sancho, the woman tightly holds onto the money in an unusual way: "ella la saya levantada y en el regazo puesta la bolsa, y el hombre pugnando por quitársela" (II, 45, 893). The skirt stands as a metonym for productivity—monetary and sexual—both of which had to be safeguarded.

<sup>133</sup> Cruz de Carlos Varona comes to this conclusion by analyzing Francisco de Zurbarán's "Nacimiento de la Virgen" (1627), which depicts the Virgin post labor surrounded by women offering her different types of food, including a cup of broth and a plate of sweets. On the far right stands a pregnant woman. The woman's noticeable belly and the basket of eggs that she carries make it difficult for viewers to miss this figure (165-66).

drink, and women who lost consciousness were given cooked eggs served with aromatic herbs. Eggs also were recommended as an aid in expelling the placenta, a crucial step given that failure in this regard could lead to serious infection and death. (166)

That these eggs should be linked to Sancho's humble peasant daughter is, of course, not insignificant given the associations frequently made both by *arbitristas* and medical thinkers like Huarte de San Juan characterizing Spain's rural classes as fertile and productive, in contrast to the idle governing elite.<sup>134</sup> The reading is rendered even more poignant in light of the fact that in the Duchess's palace the same symbol of the skirt is deployed precisely as a means to hide the aristocracy's shameful incapacity to reproduce or to be productive.<sup>135</sup>

The skirt worn by Teresa, when she receives the news of Sancho's letter, further reinforces the connection between fertility and peasantry: "salió Teresa Panza, su madre, hilando un copo de estopa, con una saya parda –parecía, según era de corta, *que se la habían cortado por vergonzoso lugar*–, con un corpezuelo asimismo pardo y una camisa de pechos" (II, 50, 930; my emphasis). According to Covarrubias, *parda* may describe clothing typically worn by "gente humilde" (1345), which would be fitting for Sancho's

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<sup>134</sup> Besides their link to fertility, "huevos" also call to mind the colloquial term for testicles. Sanchica's "eggs," therefore, become a symbol of masculinity, made worse in this case because a female and a peasant hijack them. Sanchica's "halda de güevos," like Don Quixote's *baciyelmo*, the prostitutes-princesses in the *venta*, and the cross-dressed Dorotea, to name a few, add to Cervantes's slippery text –all objects and images that offer multiple interpretations and, thus, problematize stable notions of truth.

<sup>135</sup> Beyond preparing food for the unexpected visitor, Sancho is productive in other ways. Cervantes, for example, points out the daughter's work productivity in the letter written from Teresa to Sancho: "Sanchica hace puntas de randas; gana cada día coho maravedís horros, que lo va echando en una alcancía para ayuda a su ajuar" (II, 52, 952). As a member of low-class society, Sanchica works hard to earn and save money. For Teresa, this is no longer necessary since Sancho is governor: "pero ahora que es hija de un gobernador, tú le darás la dote sin que ella lo trabaje" (II, 52, 952). Through Teresa's change of attitude, Cervantes critiques the aristocracy's tendencies to squander money and failure to produce.

wife. What is most interesting about the description, however, is the style of the skirt. Unlike the long, full skirts worn by most women of the period, Teresa's skirt is noticeably short. As scholars have pointed out, the cutting of a woman's skirt "por vergonzoso lugar" refers to a medieval custom in which prostitutes' skirts were cut short to shame them in public (Rubio 433). Teresa's low-cut blouse and revealing bodice appear to reinforce the image of an overtly sexual woman. Although Teresa is by no means a prostitute, it appears that Cervantes uses the image of the prostitute-short skirt to emphasize, in an exaggerated way, her sexuality, which contrasts with the abundantly clothed Duchess. The clothing of Sancho's wife exposes and reveals her natural essence as (re)productive woman, while, conversely, the Duchess's clothing operates to obscure, mask, and hide her own shameful incapacity to conform to natural and social expectations. Teresa is anything but ashamed: she proudly takes on the dual role of mother and wife, while the Duchess remains barren and keeps her illness a secret.

Teresa's clothing style changes after she receives the news that her husband is governor and has become wealthy. She plans to take on the role of an upper-class woman by purchasing a "verdugado redondo," that is, a bell-shaped skirt (Rico 935, 42n). She wishes to ascend socially and honor her husband's position, and she believes altering her skirt is the solution. Teresa's artful manipulations of vestuary suggest a critique of the shallowness of class mobility in early modern society. Sancho is not a real governor and, therefore, is not as rich as Teresa thinks he is. In donning a new skirt, Teresa can hardly alter the hidden essence of her formerly half-exposed breasts and thighs. Likewise, the apparently flawless Duchess is anything but perfect, as her skirt serves to mask the foul-smelling drainage of a dysfunctional body, a symbol of broader social, political, and

economic ills ailing Spain. Cervantes drives home the point that appearances are deceiving. Sancho's wife is a peasant with or without a full skirt; the Duchess, too, is unalterably an aristocrat, whether or not she tries to hide the ugliest implications associated with such a label beneath the folds of her fabric.

The numerous references to hazelnuts and acorns in the second part of the novel, especially in the presence of Teresa, described as “fuerte, tiesa, nervuda y avellanada” (II, 50, 930), further highlight the tie between productivity and peasantry. Today *avellanada* primarily refers to the nut's dark brown color. Yet, according to the *Diccionario de autoridades*, *avellanada* describes the gaunt and wrinkly skin of a person, perhaps someone as old as Teresa. At the same time though, Teresa is also associated with acorns, a symbol of fertility (Tresidder 109).<sup>136</sup> In a letter to Teresa, the Duchess requests that she send approximately two-dozen acorns, since the squire's village is notorious for harvesting large ones. It is not surprising that the Duchess requests acorns from Teresa, one of the only fertile females, and thus mothers, in the entire novel. However, as Teresa regretfully admits at the end of her letter to the Duchess, “[p]ésame, cuanto pesarme puede, que este año no se han cogido bellotas en este pueblo” (II, 52, 950). Not only are there few acorns, but as Teresa shares with Sancho in another letter: “Hogaño no hay aceitunas, ni se halla una gota de vinagre en todo este pueblo” (II, 52, 952). This shortage is alarming, as olives and vinegar are essential products of Spain. Given these references,

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<sup>136</sup> Part II, Chapter 42 mentions hazelnuts with mustard seeds, which calls to mind the parable told by Jesus in the New Testament that compares the creation of God's kingdom to the growth of a mustard tree. The mustard seed is one of the smallest among the plant seeds, yet, when it grows it is the largest plant. By mentioning the acorn alongside the mustard seed, Cervantes emphasizes the plant's fertility. Of course, acorns are also tied to the myth of the Golden Age, where they emblemize the earth's natural fertility and abundance in freely providing everything necessary for survival. It is, in fact, the acorn that leads Don Quixote to launch into his famous speech on the spontaneously productive utopia of the Golden Age in part I.

especially that of the acorns, Cervantes alludes to the Iberian Peninsula's agricultural crisis, both among its inhabitants and the crops.<sup>137</sup>

Despite the shortage, Teresa is able to send the noblewoman a few small acorns, which she wishes were “como huevos de avestruz” (II, 52, 950). According to Covarrubias, ostriches are unique birds because “no puede[n] echarse sobre los huevos como hacen las demás aves porque cargándose sobre ellos los quebraría, y dióle naturaleza tal instinto que, cavando en la arena, hiciese un hoyo, y los pusiese allí cubriéndolos después con ella” (qtd. in Vila 434). Like the defective ostrich, the Duchess “nunca puede saber qué es empollar y alumbrar . . . nunca tendrá una hija propia” (Vila 434). Similar to Sanchica's egg-wearing skirt, the link between fertility and acorns-eggs in this episode is not accidental. The barren Duchess requests acorns from a peasant woman who, as a mother, represents the essence of fecundity, and therefore what the Duchess aspires to be but will never attain.<sup>138</sup> It seems the gift of fertility cannot be given so easily.

The Duchess and Sancho's wife are the literary embodiments of what Huarte de San Juan classifies as the essential humoral characters of their respective social classes.

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<sup>137</sup> In Part I, Chapter 11 Don Quixote is presented a platter of acorns that make him reminisce about Spain's Golden Age, “[d]ichosa edad y siglos dichosos” that was described as harmonious and fertile: “Las claras fuentes y corrientes ríos, en magnífica abundancia, sabrosas y transparentes aguas les ofrecían. En las quiebras de las peñas y en lo hueco de los árboles formaban su república las solícitas y discretas abejas, ofeciendo a cualquiera mano, sin interés alguno, la fértil cosecha de su dulcísimo trabajo” (I, 11, 97). The acorns bring Don Quixote back to a time when the country was fertile and productive. It is important to note, however, that the acorns that inspire Don Quixote's speech are shriveled (“bellotas avellanadas”); that is, they are old, tasteless acorns that are served alongside a “medio queso, más duro que si fuera hecho de argamasa” (I, 11, 97). These emaciated acorns remind one of the problems in agricultural productivity that bothered the *arbitristas*.

<sup>138</sup> When the Duchess regretfully states in her letter to Teresa that she does not have “perlas” to send, Cervantes hints at the noble woman's infertility (II, 50, 931). Teresa also sends the Duchess “celemín,” which according to Covarrubias, refers to a “medida de granos, *semillas* y otras cosas” (my emphasis), that reinforces the peasant woman's fertility.

When the early modern nobles do produce children, they tend to be girls because the couple do not eat in moderation: “Por esta razón, la mayor parte de la gente noble y rica padece este trabajo de tener muchas más hijas que los hombres necesitados; porque comen y beben lo que su estómago no puede gastar” (335). In addition, lack of exercise affected the nobles’ chances at producing offspring:

[hacer ejercicio más moderado] consume la demasiada humedad de la simiente, y la caliente y deseca. Por esta razón se hace el hombre fecundísimo y potente para engendrar; y por lo contrario, el holgar y no ejercitar las carnes es una de las cosas más enfría y humedece la simiente. Por donde la gente rica y holgada cargan de más hijas que los pobres trabajadores. (336)

In contrast, Huarte de San Juan argued that the more active lower class members of society tended to produce boys: “dándoles a comer mucha carne cocida con muchos ajos, puerros y cebollas, y haciéndoles trabajar de aquella manera, hacían la simiente caliente y seca, con las cuales dos calidades se irritaban más a la generación y siempre engendraban varones” (338). It is clear that for Huarte the country’s reproductive problems stem directly from the lifestyle of the aristocracy.

### **3.5 The Duchess, the Huntress**

Aside from her frustrated attempts at exercising control over the narrative of her own infertile body—be it through the exercise of violence, acting as a surrogate mother to Sancho or by exchanging missives with Sancho’s fertile wife—, the Duchess manifests her strategies of control in fashioning a gendered public self linked to the activity of hunting. Despite the physical and social limitations imposed by her drains, the Duchess is a consummate master of the hunt. Hunting requires a high level of movement, for in

order to avoid being killed by the wild animals, hunters must constantly move their bodies, either on a horse or directly on the ground, and the Duchess is anything but idle while in the forest. In fact, even among a group of male hunters, the Duchess, mounted on a horse, stands out as an exemplary huntress. The Duchess's strategic position waiting for the wild boar indicates that she has significant hunting experience: "se puso en un puesto por donde ella sabía que solían venir algunos jabalíes" (II, 34, 814). Her eagerness to participate in the hunt and her knowledge of this activity contrast with the men's attitudes. She is the first of the hunting party to take action when the wild boar appears and moves more quickly than her male companions: "y en viéndole, embrazando su escudo y puesta mano a su espada, se adelantó a recibirle don Quijote. Lo mismo hizo el duque con su venablo; pero a todos se adelantara la duquesa" (II, 34, 815).

Don Quixote's alleged affinity for hunting is not as apparent. Although described at the beginning of the novel as an "amigo de la caza" who owns a "galgo corredor" (I, 1, 28), the protagonist does not kill a single animal in the novel nor participate in any hunts, other than the one initiated by the royal couple. In addition, he rejects the hunting outfit the Duchess offers, preferring to continue wearing his armor: "diciendo que otro día había de volver al duro ejercicio de las armas y que no podía llevar consigo guardarropas ni reposterías" (I, 34, 814).<sup>139</sup> During the boar hunt, the protagonist at first stands alongside the Duchess. He then abandons the hunt altogether to help Sancho, who, fearful

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<sup>139</sup> In "De los osos sea comido: Sancho Panza, Intruder in the Discourse of the Hunt," Michael Hammer focuses on the social discourse of the hunt and argues that Don Quixote's refusal to wear the hunting outfit reflects Cervantes's views on the nobility. The protagonist rejects the affluent, selfish aristocratic lifestyle associated with hunting. The conclusion will discuss the nobles' exorbitant, idle lifestyle that eventually triggers Don Quixote and Sancho's exit from the palace: "Ya le pareció a don Quijote que era bien salir de tanta ociosidad como la que en aquel Castillo tenía; que se imaginaba ser grande la falta que su persona hacía en dejarse estar encerrado y perezoso entre los infinitos regalos y deleites. . . y parecía que había de dar cuenta estrecha al cielo de aquella ociosidad y encerramiento; y así, pidió un día licencia a los duques para partirse" (II, 57, 980).

of the boar, sought shelter in a tall oak tree. Don Quixote repeatedly fails to show off his virility at key moments, which in turn undermines his masculinity. His decision to steer away from action, especially in front of the Duke, whom he constantly tries to impress, and the Duchess, a noble woman, is a sign of Don Quixote's subordination. The hunt essentially represents a choreographed performance of power, an embodiment not only of aristocratic leisure but also a controlled *mise-en-abyme* of the struggle between the strong and the weak. This struggle may connect to the assymetric dynamic of the hunter and the hunted, but it also points to the assymetries of hierarchy traced between those who are excluded from participating or who refrain from participating. Don Quixote's lack of participation places him in a subordinate position in terms of gender and of class, locating him outside of the symbolic codes that the dominating noble masculine group uses to define itself.

The knight-errant's passive stance during the hunt greatly differs from the Duchess's fierce drive. Her commanding role in the wild boar hunt is reminiscent of that of María in Lope de Vega's *La varona castellana*, whose hunting skills are compared to Diana (v. 187) and cause her brothers' envy: "tres una tarde maté, / que, de espuma y sangre llenos, / metí por esos umbrales, dando envidia a mis hermanos" (vv. 369-372). Although the actions of Cervantes's Duchess are not as impressive or as explicitly stated as those of Lope's María, both women show unfaltering courage and strength when in contact with the wild boar. Hunting in the early modern period was, after all, primarily reserved for men like Don Fernando in *Don Quixote* (part II) and likened to war, as they often had to confront challenging situations:

el ejercicio de la caza de monte es el más conveniente y necesario *para los reyes y príncipes que otro alguno*. La caza es una imagen de la guerra: hay en ella estratagemas, astucias, insidias, para vencer a su salvo al enemigo; padécense en ella fríos grandísimos y calores intolerables; menoscábase el ocio y el sueño, corrobóranse las fuerzas, agilitanse los miembros del que la usa, y en resolución, es ejercicio que se puede hacer sin perjuicio de nadie y con gusto de muchos; y lo mejor que él tienes es que no es para todos, como lo es el de los otros géneros de caza, excepto el de la volatería, que también es sólo para reyes y grandes señores. (II, 34, 816; my emphasis)

In line with the representation of other notable *mujeres varoniles*,<sup>140</sup> or masculine women of the period, the Duchess as confident and masculinized huntress defies early modern social expectations that tended to push women to be submissive and contained within the enclosures moralists of the convent and the domestic sphere prescribed.<sup>141</sup> For Fray Luis de León the “perfect wife” not only needed to stay home and avoid the public eye, but she also had to remain silent: “Porque así como la naturaleza, como dijimos y diremos, hizo a las mujeres para que, encerradas, guardasen la casa, así las obligó a que cerrasen la

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<sup>140</sup> Melveena McKendrick’s *Woman and Society in the Spanish Drama of the Golden Age: A Study of the Mujer Varonil* (1974) categorizes the different types of *mujeres varoniles* in various Spanish dramas between 1590 and 1660. As McKendrick points out, the definition of virile women covers a broad spectrum: “She can take the form of the *mujer esquivia* who shuns love and marriage, the learned woman, the career woman, the female bandit, the female leader and warrior, the usurper of men’s social role, the woman who wears masculine dress or the one who indulges in masculine pursuits” (ix). The female leader and warrior, also known as the *bella cazadora*, is the beautiful huntress whose strength, hunting skills, courage, and horsemanship, caught men’s eyes (242).

<sup>141</sup> As noted earlier, in other works of Cervantes, like *El celoso extremeño*, efforts at female enclosure and control tend to collapse. For example, the incredibly jealous Carrizales shuts the windows of his house to prevent his new bride, Leonora, from seeing the outside world: “cerró todas las ventanas que miraban a la calle y dióles vista al cielo, y lo mismo hizo de todas las otras de casa” (13). Despite the severe measures he takes to contain his wife and keep her from other men, Loaysa, a younger man enters into the house and seduces Leonora. For more on the discourses and social practices of control of female bodies in the early modern period, see Georgina Dopico Black, *Perfect Wives, Other Women*.

boca” (334). The Duchess’s actions make clear that despite the defect that causes her pain and shame, she will not be confined to the domestic enclosure of the palace, which incidentally is also the physical space symbolically linked to the rearing of the children that she will never have. On the contrary, she is capable of leading the hunt.<sup>142</sup>

The Duchess’s attire in the hunting scene, minutely studied by Carmen Bernis in *El traje y los tipos sociales en El Quijote* (2001), further reinforces her image as a *mujer varonil*.<sup>143</sup> The Duchess wears an ornate *vaquero*, a popular garment of Turkish influence worn by several female hunters in other early modern texts. The ensemble was often shorter than the cloak or full skirt worn underneath. This, along with the loose sleeves allowed for easier mobility (Bernis 309). *Vaqueros* were also used in more combative settings than hunts. For example, female literary characters often dressed in *vaqueros* to avenge their own honor or to take on dangerous adventures (309). In Pedro Calderón de la Barca’s *La vida es sueño*, Rosaura is often dressed “con vaquero” and holds a sword and dagger, weapons usually restricted to males in that time period, to avenge her lost honor from Duke Astolfo (Acto III). Although provisional, these outfits permitted female characters to embody masculine roles and consequently to stray from the feminine norm of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

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<sup>142</sup> Cervantes includes several single and overtly barren female characters, like Don Quixote’s housekeeper and Marcela. The latter, in particular, is adamant about remaining single. She does not wish to pursue marriage—or any man for that matter—and becomes a shepherdess. By refusing to marry, Marcela destabilizes the institution of marriage, defying societal expectations for a beautiful young woman. However, unlike the Duchess who fails to fulfill her gendered role due to a biological defect, Marcela willingly defies her role as an early modern woman. Cellorigo accused women of “extremos vicios” instead of “fertiliz[ando] nuestra República de buena gente, habida y procreada de legítimos y honrados padres” (58). These “vicios” could refer to sexual promiscuity, but also to women’s decision to remain single and childless, which negatively affected the population.

<sup>143</sup> There are so many costume changes throughout the novel that Elane Bunn likens Cervantes to a “talented costume designer,” for his awareness of the power of dress in manipulating, deceiving, and delighting other characters and readers-audience (7).

The Duchess's interaction with the wild boar during the hunt further touches on issues of reproduction, thus reinforcing the noble's failure to fulfill her role as early modern wife. With their thick, sharp tusks, boars have been recognized universally as extremely aggressive and dangerous animals. What is less common knowledge, however, is that boars have a high level of sexual activity (Raber 194). According to Edward Topsell, boars copulate more than other animals due to a superfluous amount of seed (qtd. in Raber 195). The association of boars with heavy sexual activity may be attributed to the animals' tusks, described by Raber as "phallic identifiers of its sexual excess, and instruments of its vicious temper" (196). Despite the danger such an animal posed, the Duchess prepares to attack the boar, a symbol of lust (Morales Muñoz 254). The Duchess who cannot have children is eager to kill an animal strongly associated with libidinous energy.

As the boar approaches, the Duke intervenes and stops the Duchess from attacking. As a male aristocrat, the Duke cannot allow his wife to upstage him in the hunt, especially in front of the group of male hunters. Hunting was a popular activity among the nobility, adding a socio-economic dimension to the activity (Greer "Diana, Cupid" 202).<sup>144</sup> *Arbitristas* severely critiqued the high cost of hunting. This costly activity may explain the Duke's financial problems for, as mentioned previously, he has accrued a large debt with the father of the young man who has seduced Doña Rodríguez's

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<sup>144</sup> As hunting became more popular among men, books dedicated to a particular type of hunting, such as falconry or the chase, began to appear in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. For example, Luis Barahona de Soto's late sixteenth-century Spanish treatise, *Diálogos de la montería* was likely familiar to Cervantes and other early modern authors. Although a multitude of treatises on hunting and falconry were circulating in the beginning of the medieval period, for the most part the texts do not differ greatly. *Los paramientos de la caza* (1180), penned by Sancho of Navarre, may be the earliest hunting treatise produced in Spain that included legal and diplomatic decrees as well as hunting observations (Seniff iii).

daughter.<sup>145</sup> By hunting, the aristocrats could show off their wealth, even to the point of reckless consumption.

The end of the wild boar hunt leaves no doubt that the Duke and Duchess's activity is for leisure rather than a practical purpose. Once the animal is killed, the hunters adorn it with herbs in preparation to eat it. However, as the narrator points out, when the hunters arrived at the place where they were to dine, the tables were already set with "comida aderezada, tan sumptuosa y grande, que se echaba bien de ver en ella la grandeza y magnificencia de quien le daba" (II, 34, 815). That is, the killing of the wild boar was entirely gratuitous. Through the mouth of Sancho, Cervantes criticizes the couple's excessive devotion to leisure:

el buen gobernador, la pierna quebrada, y en casa. ¡Bueno sería que viniesen los negociantes a buscarle fatigados, y él estuviese en el monte holgándose! ¡Así enhoramala andaría el gobierno! Mía fe, señor, la caza y los pasatiempos más han de ser para los holgazanes que para los gobernadores. En lo que yo pienso entretenerme es en jugar al triunfo envidado las pascuas, y a los bolos los domingos y fiestas; que esas cazas ni cazos no dicen con mi condición, ni hacen con mi conciencia. (II, 34, 816-17)

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<sup>145</sup> Moreover, hunters were compared to those who engage in war; hunters, in fact, were referred to as "gente de Guerra": "¿quién sois, adónde vais, y qué gente de guerra es la que por este bosque parece que atraviesa?" (II, 34, 818). Hunting, like combat, became a medium through which men could test their power against other men. Through hunting, the nobility were trained, and learned to fight and defend the monarchy (Greer "Diana, Cupid..." 203). Commenting on the literary tradition of hunting and war in her book *Masculinity and the Hunt* (2013), Catherine Bates compares the hunting of a wild boar, the animal that the Duke, Duchess, Sancho, and Don Quixote hunt, to human combat, for the similarities between a human and animal's teeth (arms), heavy weight (strength), and ability to stand his ground (determination) (1). The boar's attributes resemble those of a human, and therefore, hunting it proves to be the closest to a man's fighting skills.

Sancho's critique of hunting as an idle pastime differs from elite defenses of the sport, which themselves diverged with the criticism of the *arbitristas* mentioned above. For example, Barahona de Soto's *Diálogos de la montería* promoted hunting as a form of leisure necessary for the strength and health of the ruling classes: "reservado tan solo á príncipes y magnates; . . . el más útil y conveniente á la salud del hombre, siempre resultará la diversión de la caza la más antigua, honesta y deportosa de todas las recreaciones corporales (qtd. in Uhagón V). In contrast, the hunting episode in part II of *Don Quixote* suggests that hunting had become more damaging than beneficial to the society at large. More problematically still, pointlessly and fruitlessly exploiting the bounty of the land for no reason other than sport points to a type of social lack of utility that parallels the Duke and Duchess's own biological lack of productivity, as well. In the latter case, the Duchess may attempt to treat her pathology with *fuentes*, hide it with skirts, suppress it through violence, or displace it through her relationships with Sancho and his wife. However, in hunting, she embraces a distinctly unfeminine activity. It may underscore her social status but it also points glaringly at the fact that as she wanders beyond the domestic sphere and clearly is not busy childrearing, she is doing nothing useful or productive, either. And in both cases, she is operating far beyond the optimal means of balance and harmony Hippocratic-Aristotelian epistemology prescribes. Rather than physical, social, and moral equilibrium, her entire existence in fact constitutes a grand performance both of excess (hunting and consuming food that is not needed, living in a general passive state of aristocratic *ocio*) and of lack (biological infertility, stemming most assuredly from the humoral imbalances that her own excessive lifestyle as a noblewoman generate). The Duchess in this sense embodies genuinely shameful

Aristotelian and Hippocratic extremes. The shamed body of the Duchess may attempt to control, suppress, displace, and neutralize these extremes, but the Cervantine text serves precisely to expose the Duchess's trappings. Her coverings and fabric, her social behavior and interactions, her medical treatments and pastimes all point to the shameful body that these things are intended to obscure or silence.

Cervantes contrasts the Duchess's shamed body, hidden behind her full skirt, the couple's barrenness, and Don Quixote's sterility with the more productive, fertile peasant family, manifested by Sancho Panza and his wife. Through these characters from different social classes, Cervantes provides a critique of early modern Spain's general unproductivity, both in terms of reproduction and economic and agricultural production. This lack of productivity led to ignorance, which is evident in the *dénouement* of the Duchess's *fuentes* in the novel. Neither Cervantes nor the characters refer to the Duchess's *fuentes* after the attack, and more importantly, nor does the Duchess herself seem to come to terms with the drains or her illness. Issues related to depopulation are disregarded and pile up, like the abundance of humors in the Duchess's body that impedes her ability to conceive, and affect Spain's capacity to reverse the corruption that marked a large part of the early modern period.

## EPILOGUE

### Corpse to Corpus: Embodied Affect and Literature

De aquí sacarán mis huesos, cuando el cielo sea  
servido que me descubran, mondos, blancos y raídos,  
y los de mi buen rucio con ellos, por donde quizá se  
echará de ver quién somos...

*Don Quixote*, II, 55

Nearly thirty chapters after Don Quixote and Sancho first witness the Duke and Duchess hunting in the forest, they bid farewell to the noble couple. The incessant “ociosidad” of the “infinitos regalos y deleites” that keeps those living in the palace “perezoso[s]” (II, 57, 980) triggers Don Quixote’s desire to ask permission from the Duke and Duchess to leave. Don Quixote goes as far as to compare his stay in the palace to a “cautiverio” (II, 58, 985), a familiar topic that marked Cervantes’s life.<sup>146</sup> Like a captive puppet, Don Quixote repeatedly suffers physical and psychological attacks at the hands of Altisidora and the Duke and Duchess. The couple’s behavior comes as a result of living in such an unproductive, closed space, a hellish chronotope whose essential purpose in the text is to torment Don Quixote through a series of dubious pranks. At best, these jokes might be described as uncharitable, at worst, as morally perverse, motivating Henry Sullivan to label the second part of Cervantes’s novel a “grotesque Purgatory” (63). The palace’s extravagant way of life is both emotionally damaging and challenging for Don Quixote, in part because the “abundancia” of the palace, and specifically “aquellos banquetes sazonados y de aquellas bebidas de nieve,” are perceived as unnatural in their excessive extremes, condemned by contemporary medical thinkers like

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<sup>146</sup> For more on Cervantes’s captivity in Algiers, and its representation in his work, see Garcés.

Huarte de San Juan (335). The lavish lifestyle also imposes on the recipient a burdensome and ultimately impossible obligation to return the favor: “me parecía a mí que estaba metido entre las estrechezas de la hambre, porque no lo gozaba con la libertad que lo gozara si fueran míos *que las obligaciones de las recompensas de los beneficios y mercedes recibidas son ataduras que no dejan campear al ánimo libre*” (II, 58, 985; my emphasis). In electing to leave the palace, thereby rejecting the lifestyle that the Duke and Duchess emblemize, Don Quixote implicitly echoes the criticisms of contemporary moralists and *arbitristas* who bemoaned aristocratic laziness and unproductivity as grave social ills plaguing the sickly body politic of early modern Spain. Abandoning the vicious monotony of a palace life dedicated to unhealthy, useless, and morally bankrupt pastimes, Don Quixote resumes what he sees as his primary duty of serving others. He rejects his “cautiverio” for “la libertad . . . uno de los más preciosos dones que a los hombres dieron los cielos” (II, 58, 984).

In addition to encoding a blistering critique of aristocratic productivity, or more precisely, the lack thereof in early modern Spain, Don Quixote and Sancho’s departure from the palace permits Cervantes to revisit, one last time, the themes that constitute the essential concerns in the palace episodes demonstrated throughout this project: masculinity (chapter 1), gender inversion (chapter 2), and depopulation and infertility (chapter 3). By way of an epilogue, I would like to examine how Cervantes further reflects on these themes in three crucial episodes centered around the bodies of Altisidora and Don Quixote. First, as a coda to the central arguments of this dissertation relating to the representation of embodied affect, I offer a brief reflection on the role of Altisidora in Don Quixote’s final farewell from the ducal palace, paying particular attention to the

maiden's intimate garments. From Altisidora's garments, I would like to broaden my assessment of embodied affect in specific body parts—beards (chapter 1), toothed vaginas (chapter 2), *fuentes* (chapter 3)—and look at the body as a whole in its strangest and most abject form, the corpse.<sup>147</sup> In order to view the body from this perspective, we will turn our attention first to Altisidora's mock death at the close of the palace episode and then to Alonso Quijano's own death surrounded by loved ones at the end of the novel. Together, these two pivotal scenes underscore the intimate link between the physical and the emotional explored at various moments in the dissertation, representing through the inert materiality of the deceased subject the broader problematic of shame as a vehicle for contemplating national, social and political pathologies. This epilogue concludes with a brief meditation on the possibilities that the reading of embodied affect has for the continued assessment of the legacy of Cervantes and *Don Quixote*.

Before Sancho and Don Quixote can leave the ducal palace, Altisidora plans one final prank that prompts her dramatic death scene a few chapters later. Unlike the prior incidents that often left Don Quixote physically injured and psychologically scarred, this joke consists strictly of an allegation. In the form of a *romance*, Altisidora accuses Don Quixote of stealing various items:

Tú llevas, ¡llevar impío!  
en las garras de tus cerras  
las entrañas de una humilde,  
como enamorada, tierna.  
Llévaste tres tocadores

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<sup>147</sup> On corpses and abjection, see Kristeva (Chapter 1: "Approaching Abjections").

y unas ligas de unas piernas  
que al mármol paro se igualan  
en lisas, blancas y negras. (II, 57, 981)<sup>148</sup>

In the end, Altisidora falsely accuses the knight-errant of stealing the garters; she had them all along. Sancho, however, does admit to taking the three “tocadores,” or nightcaps.

Altisidora’s striking complaints concerning the theft of some garters and three nightcaps has not escaped the attention of Cervantes scholars. Francisco Márquez Villanueva, for example, points out the importance of these “ropas femeninas,” and particularly the garters that are placed around women’s legs (326). Made of different types of materials with varying degrees of ornamentation, garters were usually tied below or right above the knee to keep a woman’s stocking from falling. Readers can assume that the only opportunity a man had to see a woman’s garter was during a sexual encounter. The nightcaps that mysteriously go missing also have an intimate connotation, as they are typically used in private, when one sleeps—an activity that Altisidora and Don Quixote never do together. It would appear, therefore, that Altisidora chooses the garters and nightcaps as missing items in the palace to both emphasize and mock Don Quixote’s sterility and impotency. Her accusation in a sense reprises both the beard-washing episode and Altisidora’s vicious cat attack. As we saw at the beginning of his stay in the palace, female servants wash, stroke and mock Don Quixote’s facial hair, an extension of the body that was key in the social construction and performance of masculinity and

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<sup>148</sup> According to Márquez Villanueva, these ridiculous robberies were common in the “*mester bufonesco*,” citing as an example Fray Antonio Guevara’s *Libro primero de las Epistolas familiares*, in which the author complains that the Duke of Nájera wants to steal a mule that the archbishop of Sevilla had given to him (“Doncella soy” 326, n50).

therefore considered untouchable. As I argued earlier, Altisidora's figurative toothed vagina, in the form of angry cats, severely injures Don Quixote, leaving him metaphorically castrated. The women's shaming behavior, both in the castrating cat attack and in the emasculating beard washing, undermines Don Quixote's manhood in a gesture that challenges ideal notions of the proper and natural order of gender and class relations.

The mention of garters most certainly leaves a vivid impression on readers due to the sensual imagery the delicate article provokes. Just as vivid, is Altisidora's description in the *romance* of the legs to which these garters are attached: "y unas ligas de unas piernas / que al mármol paro se igualan / en lisas, blancas y negras" (II, 57, 981). The legs are not pure white, but streaked with black, as was the marble from the Greek island Paros ("que al mármol paro se igualan") to which they are compared (Osuna 101, n27).

The unusual color of these legs permits a new reading of this passage that proves essential in determining the identity of the garters' bearer. Since Altisidora first calls attention to the garters' mysterious disappearance, albeit through a false accusation, readers may assume that they belong to her. Her growing desperation to recover these lost items reinforces this idea yet Altisidora does not use a possessive adjective when announcing the lost garters. Rather, she describes both the garters and legs ambiguously, using the indefinite article "unas." It is plausible that the darker color refers to bruises or sores, which often appear after an injury or medical procedure, such as that of the Duchess's *fuentes*. If this were the case, then the supposedly stolen garters may conceivably belong not to the maiden Altisidora but to the Duchess, whose legs the

reader might very reasonably assume to be visibly marked by the medical pathologies and surgical interventions directly associated with her earlier in the text.

Immediately after Altisidora's accusation, Cervantes draws readers' attention to the Duchess's reaction, which confirms that the legs that boast these garters are anything but ordinary. At first, the Duchess remains "admirada" (II, 57, 983).<sup>149</sup> Not unlike the uncomfortable and pained silence that accompanies the Duchess's initial reaction to the mortifying revelation of her ailment, and the subsequent silent yet violent attack she carries out in the darkness of Don Quixote's room, this "admiración" silences the Duchess, leaving her again uncharacteristically without language while the Duke, Don Quixote, and Sancho sort through the mishap. The Duchess marvels from the sidelines, an unusual spot since she typically stands as vocal protagonist in the palace episodes. Her silence once again affirms the unspoken truth related to her bodily shame: the sick legs Altisidora describes are those of the Duchess, as are the garters. The Duchess's body on display continues to communicate its interior secrets of infertility, encoded in her blemished legs. Before Altisidora puts an end to the matter by nonchalantly claiming that she had forgotten that she had been wearing the garters ("en Dios y en mi ánima que las tengo puestas, y he caído en el descuido del que yendo sobre el asno le buscaba" [II, 57, 984]), the Duchess breaks her silence by encouraging Don Quixote to leave the palace as quickly as possible: "Y andad con Dios, que mientras más os detenéis, más aumentáis el fuego en los pechos de las doncellas que os miran" (II, 57, 984). Her eagerness to push Don Quixote out the door, combined with her earlier silence, points to the continuous

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<sup>149</sup> Many early modern writers and authors aimed to provoke *admiratio*, that is, wonder, admiration, or shock, from readers. This concept became one of the fundamental principles of Baroque literature and art. For an in-depth study of the origin and evolution of wonder, see Merrim. On *admiratio* and *El Quijote*, see Edward C. Riley's article (173-83). For a study on the grotesque and *admiratio* in *Don Quixote*, see Eduardo Urbina's article (18-33).

embodied shame connected to her infertility. While rushing Don Quixote's departure, the Duchess also promises the knight-errant that she will punish the servant for her wrongdoings: "la castigaré de modo que de aquí adelante no se desmande con la vista ni con las palabras" (II, 57, 984). On the one hand, "palabras" can simply refer to Altisidora's loquaciousness, her "fecundidad verbal" (Ruta 510); on the other hand, in light of the prior cat attack against Don Quixote, the term "palabras" invites readers to recall Altisidora's destructive mouth/*vagina dentata*, which castrated the knight-errant. The female servant continues to act as the vehicle that carries out pranks in the palace, channeling many of the embodied and hidden truths laid bare in these chapters in the second part of *Don Quixote*.

After Altisidora's dramatic and hateful goodbye to Don Quixote, it would seem unlikely that the two characters would be reunited. However, only a few chapters before the knight-errant's own death at the end of the novel, Cervantes transports Don Quixote and Sancho to the ducal palace one last time for Altisidora's mock burial. Altisidora lies still on a funeral bier, supposedly dead "por la crueldad de don Quijote" (II, 69, 1071). Her motionless body, a stark contrast to her prior chattiness, immediately silences Don Quixote and Sancho: "todo esto callado y dándoles a entender con señales a los dos que asimismo callasen; pero sin que se lo señalaran callaron ellos, porque la admiración de lo que estaban mirando les tenía atadas las lenguas" (II, 69, 1070). Don Quixote and Sancho's entry into the palace and Altisidora's funeral initially consist of nonverbal communication. They merely acknowledge the Duke and Duchess with a bow and a subtle nod: "Al subir el duque y la duquesa en el teatro, se levantaron don Quijote y Sancho y les hicieron una profunda humillación, y los duques hicieron lo mismo,

inclinando algún tanto las cabezas” (II, 69, 1070). Through the gestures and muteness of the knight-errant and squire, the affective registers of silence and fear permeate Altisidora’s mock funeral.

The only way to bring Altisidora back to life is for Sancho to receive various pinches, slaps, and pinpricks from the female servants. Ironically enough, he must endure physical torture on his own body in order to revive a cadaver that is supposedly incapable of any feelings—both in the emotional and physical sense of the word. Sancho breaks his silence and the lull of the funeral to defend himself, refusing at first to undergo physical pain. Despite his initial protests, the squire finally agrees to stand as a punching bag. The squire’s acquiescence is telling. It is the first time he willingly permits the female servants to inflict serious physical harm on him. Consistent with the theme of embodied affect this dissertation has explained, his bodily torture signals the limits of language. Painful memories and emotions coalesce in the body to produce a sort of lingual dismemberment, similar to Don Quixote’s after the cat attack: “no se hallaba en disposición de hablar mucho, porque los dolores de los martirios pasados los tenía presentes, y no le dejaban libre la lengua” (II, 70, 1075). It is in the midst of this very display of physical torture, public shaming, and linguistic impairment that Altisidora suddenly grows tired of her immobility and resuscitates herself. Her actions disrupt the hush of the funeral and more importantly, confound the proper place of the corpse as a mute entity upon which to project private and collective sentiments. Indeed, once she has risen from the bier, the solemn funeral changes to a joyous celebration. Unified shouts of “¡Viva es Altisidora! ¡Altisidora vive!” (II, 69, 1074) break the silence. In an interesting twist, the corpse recovers and projects her own emotion—a mix of anger and gratitude—

onto those attending her mock funeral. She thanks Sancho for his brave actions (enduring such painful physical torture) by promising him six of her shirts, and she severely scolds Don Quixote for his unrequited love, the apparent cause of her death: “¡Vive el Señor, don bacallao, alma de almirez, cuesco de dátíl, más terco y duro que villano rogado cuando tiene la suya sobre el hito, que si arremeto a vos, *que os tengo de sacar los ojos!*” (II, 70, 1080; my emphasis). This reference to his eyes recalls the female servant’s cat attack that left Don Quixote’s face badly scratched. Altisidora’s mock death, therefore, becomes a means for the audience to project its feelings onto the corpse, primarily through silent, nonverbal communication, no less than for the revived body to recount her experience at the gates of Hell and express her own emotions, particularly her revulsion towards Don Quixote. Here, as in other parts of the novel, Cervantes insists on the value of the corporeal nature of emotions or affects in moving, that is, prompting a reaction—either from the recipient, the holder, or both.

As distinct from the cries of joy that meet Altisidora’s (mock) resurrection, Alonso Quijano’s last breaths at the end of the novel’s second part are met with “lágrimas de los ojos y mil profundos suspiros del pecho” (II, 74, 1102) from his niece, the housekeeper, and Sancho. Such reactions present the corpse of the *hidalgo* as an object upon which both the novel’s internal characters and we, the readers, can write our own stories of grief and regret. In dying, Alonso Quijano loses the ability to speak; as a result, Cervantes turns to the few remaining bystanders, or witnesses, who attempt to take control of the protagonist’s legacy through written words at the end of the novel. For example, Sansón Carrasco’s epitaph for Alonso Quijano begins with a fitting final image of death:

Yace aquí el hidalgo fuerte  
que a tanto extremo llegó  
de valiente, que se advierte  
que la muerte no triunfó  
de su vida con su muerte.  
Tuvo a todo el mundo en poco,  
fue el espantajo y el coco  
del mundo, en tal conyuntura,  
que acredió su ventura  
morir cuerdo y vivir loco. (II, 74, 1105)

Typical of epitaphic verse, Carrasco's poem suggests that in the end, death did not triumph. The story of Don Quixote—both as literary figure and the novel itself—will live on. Likewise, at the very end of the novel, Cervantes, directing his attention to Alfonso Fernández de Avellaneda, the author of the apocryphal *Don Quixote*, orders that Alonso Quijano's body be left alone:

que deje reposar en la sepultura los cansados y ya podridos huesos de don Quijote, y no le quiera llevar, contra todos los fueros de la muerte, a Castilla la Vieja, haciéndole salir de la fuesa donde real y verdaderamente yace tendido de largo a largo, *imposibilitando de hacer tercera jornada y salida nueva*. (II, 74, 1105; my emphasis)

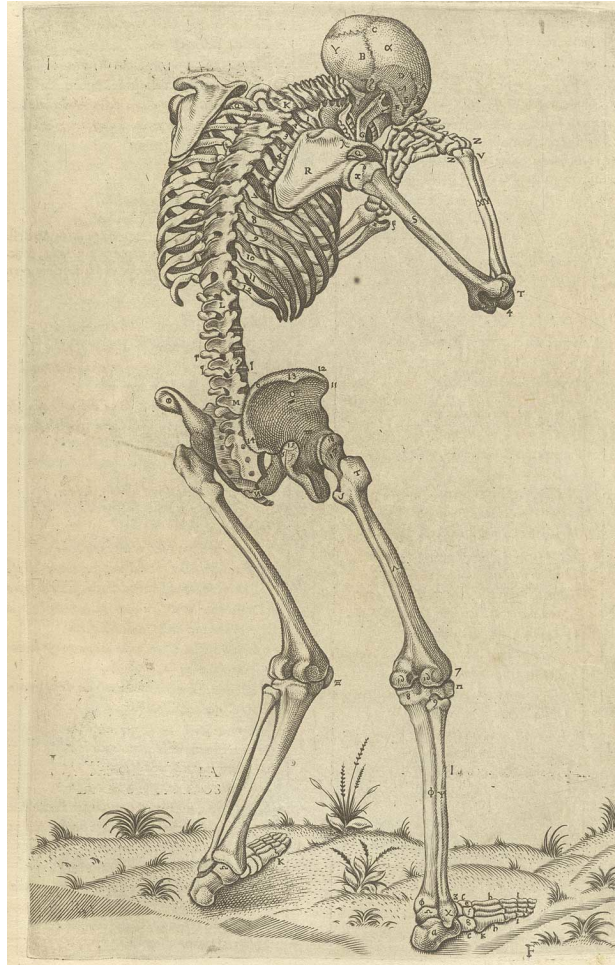
Unlike Altisidora whose body is restored in the ducal palace, in the last page of the novel, Cervantes leaves no possibility for Don Quixote or Alonso Quijano's resurrection. The protagonist's corpse should and will rest in peace, rendered incapable of the sort of

slandorous discourse that accompanies both Altisidora's resurrection and Avellaneda's spurious incarnation of the knight, and leaving the re-embodiment of Don Quixote's story to the individual affective experiences of his readers. His corpse is left dead so that Cervantes's corpus may continue to provoke the emotional reactions that will subsequently keep the text alive.

Through Altisidora's apparently lifeless body and Alonso Quijano's failing body, Cervantes explores the connection between the physical and the emotional in a particular type of body, the corpse.<sup>150</sup> A dead body is just that: a body whose organs have completely shut down, an entity incapable of sensation or emotion. However, emotions remain as extensions of the bodies both of the living and of the dead. As Julia Kristeva suggests, the corpse is experienced as a sign of one's own interior emotional processes: "corpses *show me* what I permanently thrust aside in order to live" (2, italics in the original). But the physical and emotional continue to coexist in and through corpses in the ways that individual living subjects interact with cadavers, writing on the dead body the stories of their own internal processes. Corpses, too, can sometimes tell their own stories. Illustrated anatomical texts from the time period, like Juan Valverde's *Historia de la composición del cuerpo humano* (1556), for example, routinely represented the dead body as a site of affective activity. They depicted shamed, pensive, melancholy, thoughtful, repentant, or proud corpses. All clearly express their emotions through their bodies, despite their condition as corpses (Figure 1).

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<sup>150</sup> In part I, Don Quixote attacks a group of men transporting a corpse to Segovia. Don Quixote's reaction to the cause of the man's death ("unas calenturas pestilentes," that is, fever) links the physiological and the emotional through the act of shrugging one's shoulders in a sign of resignation: "pero, habiéndole muerto quien le mató, no hay sino callar y encoger los hombros, porque lo mesmo hiciera si a mí mismo me matara" (I, 19, 170).



**Figure 1:** Valverde, *Historia de la composición del cuerpo humano*, Figure III (1556)<sup>151</sup>

Leaving Valverde's exquisitely emotional corpses aside, the dead body by definition is unable to produce a particular emotion within the body itself, but by the same token, living beings are quite adept at projecting specific emotions and reactions onto dead bodies. We might recall here the beautiful corpse of "El ahogado más hermoso del mundo" by Gabriel García Márquez, upon which an entire society inscribes its own deepest hopes, anxieties, and desires. They write their own affective and social story on the corpse of Esteban, which unexpectedly washes up on shore. The town people create

<sup>151</sup> For this particular figure, Valverde includes a detailed description and list of the different parts of the skull, naming the cuneus in particular. Neurological studies have confirmed that this lobe is located in a region of the skull that is related to vision (Bush 140). Shame here may induce a voluntary impairment of vision by way of covering one's eyes.

an identity for the man by giving him a name, clothes, and a proper burial. In this sense, bodies—both dead and alive—demand a reaction: a reaction manifested affectively, affectivity manifested through the body.

Embodied affect, both provoked by and projected on dead and living bodies in Cervantes's novel, makes a renewed appearance on Cervantes's own body nearly four hundred years after the author's death. In March 2015, newspaper headlines all over the world announced that the author's body had finally been found. Using historical documents and archaeological evidence to guide their work, a research team determined that a set of bones they found in a crypt beneath the convent of the Trinitarios Descalzados in Madrid were the remains of Cervantes himself. Also discovered in the crypt were fragments of a coffin bearing the initials "M.C." which provided further indication that the bones belonged to Cervantes.

This discovery produced mixed reactions from historians and scholars intent on writing their own stories on the body of Cervantes. Those opposing Cervantes's rediscovery and post-mortem public celebration claim that the then-mayor Ana Botella, a representative of the conservative municipal authority (the People's Party, or PP), the Catholic church, and the military, was appropriating Cervantes's body for political gain in her last act in office: "el Ayuntamiento de Madrid ha utilizado (y utilizará) al escritor de *El Quijote* como arma política y económica" (García). In a similar vein, critics have viewed the project to unearth Cervantes's body in the first place as a diversionary tactic during a time of high unemployment, general fiscal collapse, and the abdication of Juan Carlos I (Stavans). While the monumental and monumentalizing recovery and burial of the elusive corpse of Cervantes may have boosted Spain's economy and morale, many

scholars denounced the scientific evidence supporting the researchers' claims.<sup>152</sup> In fact, we are left not with the integral remains of Cervantes but with a body as ruptured, fragmented, and exposed to subjective inscriptions as those of his greatest novel. Moreover, they did not just find one corpse, but several, adding to the challenge of determining which body likely belonged to the author of *Don Quixote*.<sup>153</sup>

The authenticity of Cervantes's remains has stirred debate and provoked heavy criticism from serious Cervantes scholars. Yet rather than focus on the reasons behind these heated reactions, I prefer to draw readers' attention to the responses themselves. The bones' questionable validity is what permits scholars to propose hypothetical readings. These include designating a meaning to the uncertain bones or simply projecting a personal emotion and opinion onto the metaphorical and material matter of the author's real or imagined corpse. The alleged discovery of Cervantes's remains, therefore, drives home the point that, as with the bodies explored throughout this dissertation, bodies are contested sites. Cervantes ascribes social, psychological, and cultural meaning to different characters' physical body parts. In turn, for centuries Cervantes scholars have proposed different readings of the body in *Don Quixote*. By doing so, they fulfill one of the many objectives of the novel as stated by Cervantes in the prologue of the first part: "Procurad también que, leyendo vuestra historia, el melancólico se mueva a risa, el risueño la acreciente, el simple no se enfade, el discreto se admire de la invención, el grave no la desprecie, ni el prudente deje de alabarla" (14). Dead for

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<sup>152</sup> According to historian Fernando de Prado, the crypt containing Cervantes's remains will draw many visitors and thus have a positive effect on the Spanish economy: "si los 8 millones de turistas que recibe la ciudad [Madrid] cada año dedican una hora de su estancia para visitar la tumba de Cervantes, se podrían recaudar 160 millones de euros más" ("Por qué buscar los restos").

<sup>153</sup> Several Spanish periodicals, like *El país*, have mocked the uncertain excavation by penning amusing headlines such as: "Es Miguel de Cervantes, seguro, seguro, seguro...bueno, casi seguro" (Alvarado).

more than four centuries, Cervantes continues to be a master of *burlas*. Bodies reveal or register a truth, but that does not necessarily mean that they are easy to read or that they yield a singular interpretation. As Cervantes repeatedly demonstrates in the ducal palace episodes that make up the majority of the second part of the novel, there is more than meets the reader's eye, or "no es todo oro lo que reluce" (II, 48, 915).

Both the textual bodies of Cervantes—those bodies exposed or hidden by various means throughout *Don Quixote*, especially in the chapters examined here relating to the ducal palace—and the physical body of the historical Cervantes himself are spaces that serve to embody affective processes. These are bodies covered or revealed that produce and project emotions, begging to be explored, giving voice through the flesh to the political and social anxieties of their respective contemporary worlds. More than four hundred years after Cervantes's death, the living and deceased body continues to bear meaning as a vessel of social and moral issues, embodied affectively and expressed through the silent language of material forms. The process of exploring the physical and figurative bodies that populate *Don Quixote*, of subjecting them to acts of reading and inscription and interpretation, in many ways might be seen as the surest route to keeping alive the memory of the author whose bodily remains may be elusive but whose textual corpus continues to speak to us today.

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