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Sacred, Epic and Picaresque:  
Violence and Genre in Cervantes

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
in Hispanic Languages and Literatures

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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University of California, Los Angeles, 2012

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This dissertation analyzes selected texts from Cervantes and his classical and early modern sources, focusing on his treatment of violence. It aims to respond to Nabokov's famous indictment that *Don Quixote* was 'the cruelest' book ever written. Building on a critical framework that includes the work of René Girard, Steven Pinker and Frederick de Armas among others, my study looks at violence specifically from the perspective of genre - primarily the chivalric, the epic and the picaresque - emphasizing how the author's thinking about violence was inevitably colored by pre-existing fictional paradigms. Instead of approaching violence by bringing ethics and philosophy to bear upon literature, such as the debate over the role of humor in the early modern period, I am more interested in examining how various literary categories inflect and nuance the author's treatment of sacred, chivalric, epic or picaresque violence. To this end I examine 1) the particularly quixotic conjunction of chivalry and hagiography manifest in the episode of the saints in *Don Quixote* Part II, 2) Cervantes' frequent, conflicted and evolving use of Virgilian formulas for the purpose of epic characterization, and 3) the tendency of the picaresque genre to feature prominent facial and bodily scars on its protagonists, a marker for social stigma that the author adapted quite cleverly in his Prologue to the *Novelas ejemplares*. This analysis ultimately concludes that Cervantes worked within well-established classical and early modern traditions, infusing new life into them with often brilliantly unexpected results.

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## DEDICATION

To the memory of Carroll B. Johnson, former Professor of Golden Age Spanish Literature at UCLA, a great role model and mentor in academia who is dearly missed.

I would also like to dedicate this work with heartfelt gratitude to the many people in my family, friends as well as everyone at UCLA who have helped and encouraged me to pursue this goal despite a few setbacks along the way.

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Chapter 1 of this dissertation is a translated, updated and revised version of an article in an edited volume: "*Santos y quebrantos: auge y ocaso de la violencia sagrada en Don Quixote II: LVIII,*" in *Estas primicias del ingenio: jóvenes cervantistas en Chicago*. Ed. Kerry Wilks and Francisco Caudet. Madrid: Castalia (2003): 155-184.

Chapter 2 of this dissertation is an updated and revised version of an article in another edited volume: "Epic Violence: Captives, *Moriscos*, and Empire in Cervantes," in *European Literary Careers: The Author from Antiquity to the Renaissance*. Ed. Patrick Cheney and Frederick A. de Armas. Toronto: University of Toronto Press (2002): 286-301.



## VITA

Alvaro Molina completed his B.A. in Classis/Latin at the University of Dallas in 1994, a Masters of Arts in Spanish Literature at New York University in 1996, and received a C.Phil from the University of California, Los Angeles in 1999, in Hispanic Languages and Literatures. He has taught Spanish language and literature at New York University, the University of California, Los Angeles, the University of Dallas and the University of Mary Washington in Virginia. He has a few publications and multiple conference presentations to his name over the years, all of them on his specialty field of Golden Age Spanish literature, but especially on Miguel de Cervantes and his classical and early modern sources.

## Introduction

Given how important it is to narrow the scope of a dissertation right from the start, it may be all the more so when writing on a topic like violence, a field of criticism that has grown rapidly in recent years and continues to be the object of an increasing amount of scholarship. Thus, I should clarify from the beginning that the present study focuses on just a few representations of violence in the work of Miguel de Cervantes, as well as a few of his contemporary, early modern and classical models. Further, my study limits itself primarily to what can be learned from the point of view of genre. More specifically, it looks at three types of genre, or perhaps even more narrowly at three elements of genre. The first is the particularly quixotic conjunction of chivalry and hagiography manifest in the episode of the saints in *Don Quixote* Part II; the second is the frequent use of Virgilian formulas for the purpose of epic characterization throughout Cervantes' career; and the third is the tendency of the picaresque genre to feature prominent facial and bodily scars on its protagonists, a marker for social stigma that Cervantes adapted quite cleverly in his Prologue to the *Novelas ejemplares*.

But before offering a rationale for my focus on those passages - their link to violence, how they fit together or the critical theories I use to analyze them - it would be useful consider what is perhaps one of the most notable debates on the question of violence to have arisen in

the field of Cervantes studies. That discussion may help foreground the different concerns that I do and do not aim to address in this thesis. In *The Cambridge Companion to Cervantes* (2002) Adrienne Martín has a chapter on the question of "humor and violence" in *Don Quixote*, a dichotomy whose logical connection she defends with these words, among other reasons:

To concede that humor is heterogeneous in human nature and in its literary representation is not discovering critical gunpowder. However, one discovery that merits amplification is the fact that much of *Don Quixote's* humor is often paradoxically linked to violence. (174)

This statement is indicative of where the conversation about violence in Cervantes has converged since Nabokov pronounced his lectures on *Don Quixote*, first delivered in 1952 but not published until 1983. The Russian novelist notoriously disliked the Spaniard, not only discounting as "nonsense" the honorific title often proposed for his novel as "the greatest book ever written," but going so far as to call it the "cruellest" one instead, affirming that "both parts of *Don Quixote* form a veritable encyclopedia of cruelty" (52). Nabokov recalls the anecdote of when King Philip III looked down from his balcony at a student who was laughing hysterically with a book in his hands, noting that he was probably either crazy or reading *Don Quixote*. Sure enough, it was *Don Quixote*. Nabokov then asks rhetorically what this young man might possibly be laughing about, only to launch into a dirty-laundry list of violent incidents from Part I, culminating with the blows that the protagonist received in just "one day and one

night: (1) wallops with pack staves, (2) a punch on the jaw at the inn, (3) sundry blows in the dark, (4) and a bang on the pate with an iron lantern" (65). On the next day of the narrative the poor knight loses most of his teeth and Sancho is tossed up and down with a blanket, after which they vomit on each other. But the physical assaults and disturbances of Part I only turn into more cruel types of violence and mental torture in Part II, when the protagonists suffer a long series of humiliations at the Ducal castle. Nabokov concludes: "the whole thing is very medieval, coarse and stupid fun" (65).

The vehemence of such statement has elicited a no less emotional response from Cervantes' scholars, especially in a scathing review by Francisco Márquez-Villanueva (2000), who may have been all the more emboldened in his capacity as member of the Harvard faculty, where Nabokov originally threw down the gauntlet. With respect to the topic of violence and cruelty, Márquez-Villanueva denounces what he sees as nothing short of Nabokov's intellectual fraud:

Da grima pensar en la clase de fraude perpetrado, a fuerza de aquel diluvio de ignorancia y de crudos prejuicios, en la cátedra de una universidad prestigiosa. ...El utillaje metodológico del expositor es anticuado y deleznable. ...Su *ritornello* de la crueldad representa un último eco vergonzante del lloriqueo romántico (Byron, Heine) sobre el *Quijote*. Lo más asombroso de todo esto es, sin embargo, su absoluta cerrazón para gozar del humor cervantino, por entero inesperada e indigna en un escritor de su talla, cegado esta vez por el prejuicio vengativo bajo el cual ha tenido que

prepararse aquellas clases. (348-9)

Thus, Márquez-Villanueva traces part of Nabokov's dislike for Cervantes to the fact that he was given no choice but to include him in a class syllabus, so some sort of *ressentiment* colored his entire reading of *Don Quixote*. This is an important factor that may even qualify as a keen psychoanalytic insight. The core of the objection against Nabokov, however, lies in exposing his outdated attachment to 19<sup>th</sup> century notions of the novel, and above all to his inexplicable inability as a great writer (he does get credit for something) to grasp Cervantes' fine sense of humor.

This is where Martín's analysis of humor and violence perhaps offers a more nuanced approach to what is at stake in this debate, namely, whether the violence in *Don Quixote* is actually funny. She believes that Nabokov's misjudgment lies not so much in his lacking a sense of humor but in his failure to recognize that humor "ages rapidly," that it is "perishable," and that nowadays we are in fact "reluctant to laugh at the less fortunate, the mad, and those who suffer practical jokes, beatings, and humiliation at the hands of others" (175).

Nonetheless, Martín concludes that Cervantes' violence and sense of humor could be reconciled with our own if we were able to appreciate its early modern context and see it as a manifestation of the Carnavalesque, i.e. the "grotesque realism" that Mikhail Bakhtin rightly associated to the ritualized "practical jokes, humiliations, profanations, comic crownings and uncrownings," at play in several works from this period, including *Don Quixote* (168, 181).

If one were to highlight the main rebuttal to Nabokov from this debate, then, it could be summarized in the idea that humor is a mitigating factor in the context of early modern violence, and this dynamic applies to Cervantes just as it does to his contemporaries, so one should not be particularly shocked or surprised to it see represented in his literary work. I would suggest, however, that both sides of the debate still share something in common that is worth pondering. Just as Nabokov's lectures, Martín and Márquez-Villanueva tend to view violence in Cervantes in a global way, as a single, unchanging phenomenon that is ultimately judged on whether it rises to the level of humor or, on the contrary, remains more or less offensive. The question over how or why our sense of humor has changed so much that it creates a pronounced divide between us and this work does not seem as important as the fact that we (Cervantists) should or (Nabokov) should not try to bridge that divide, on principle.

My approach in this dissertation, on the other hand, seeks to draw attention to different types of violence in Cervantes' work, introducing nuance into a category that has been too easily regarded (or disregarded) as a heavy-handed plot device. To understand violence more in the way that Cervantes did, I suggest, one must consider the different genres, each with its own laws and logic, that inform the various aggressions represented in the text. Violence, from this perspective, does not have a single value that we should approve or reject from whatever vantage point we stand on four or five centuries later. Rather, violence takes on different meanings and inflections

depending on the literary system within which it was inscribed. By adopting a generic approach, at the same time, I do not mean to ignore the bigger cultural issues that violence raises in the work of Cervantes. I just intend to raise different types of question beyond the mere binary over whether a particular incident is funny or not.

In fact, the present study could be broadly understood as an attempt to move beyond that dichotomy in two ways. First I should mention the second half of this thesis, chapters 3 and 4, where I explore Cervantes' ultimately humorous reception and manipulation of a form of picaresque violence from *La Celestina*, *El Lazarillo* and the *Guzmán de Alfarache* - i.e. *cuchilladas* and bodily scars - that was not primarily perceived as funny in its own time so much as shameful and stigmatizing. Making use of Steven Pinker's theory on the historical decline of violence and its connection to the rise of empathy experienced after the success of the epistolary novel, I would say that violence in the picaresque genre is not just something that we view differently today because of our modern, more sophisticated or compassionate outlook. Rather, the fact that this type of genre attained wide popularity in Cervantes' lifetime is what set in motion our more modern outlook in the first place. As I hope to show, Cervantes not only followed in the footsteps of his predecessors by elevating everyday picaresque violence to a high level of artistic complexity, but also he may have surpassed them by adding his own twist to the generic convention of the *pícaro's* first-person narrator. This particular turn of the picaresque screw, however, can only be

appreciated after a careful look to a contemporary source of Cervantes that has hitherto been ignored in regards to his 1613 Prologue, that is, Gian Battista Della Porta and his compilation of classical theory on physiognomy from 1586.

To introduce the first two chapters, on the other hand, I think it would be useful to return to two of the terms frequently used by Nabokov in connection to the violence in Cervantes, i.e. his charge that it is nothing but "cruel" and "medieval." There is in fact a sense in which the violence depicted in *Don Quixote* can be understood as cruel or medieval, and Nabokov was quite right in thinking that there was nothing funny about it.

In chapter 1 I look at the officially sanctioned violence against infidels represented by the epic genre. Specifically, I look at the religious conflicts between Moors and Christians in 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century Spain and Cervantes' treatment of topics such as the Spanish Empire, Algerian captivity and Moorish characters with conflicting allegiances to two enemy worlds. I suggest that in various passages taken from different points in Cervantes' career one may find a similar Virgilian rhetoric that defines the Spanish Empire as the continuation of the Roman Empire, and the violence generated in this context is portrayed either as infidel "cruelty" or as Christian heroic "virtue." Further, I see a discernible development from Cervantes' early to his later works in the representation of those epic formulae. This evolution sheds light not only on the author's



changing perception of the political battles of his day but also on his shifting attitude toward the classical epic genre. As his views on Spanish imperial conflicts became increasingly ironic, his treatment of the epic shifted from eager emulation to something more akin to parody.

I Chapter 2 I turn to the episode of the four portraits of saints encountered by Don Quixote in Part II: 58, and the different notions of medieval religious and chivalric violence that they represent. To this end I draw on a careful philological analysis of the term "violentos" in that passage, but also on René Girard's theory of sacred violence and what it can reveal about the image of Santiago Matamoros. Although Cervantes scholars have delved into Girard's ideas before, they remain too anchored on the model of triangular and mimetic desire that first attracted the French thinker's attention to Cervantes at the beginning of his career, in 1961. They also tend to examine figures such as the lovers of the Sierra Morena or the characters of *El curioso impertinente*, rather than Don Quixote himself. So there is still the need in my opinion for a specific study of the central character Don Quixote that is based on the complete evolution of Girard's theory on violence, that is, a phenomenon arising from mimetic crises that goes from imitation, desire and rivalry to violent conflict, but which in the Christian narrative then leads to conversion and ultimate renunciation of that violence. This part of Girard's theory was only fully articulated later in his career, by 1999, but I consider it crucial to show how Cervantes makes his

protagonist evolve from a sacred type of violence - legitimated by codes of chivalry and modeled upon Amadis de Gaula and the myth of Santiago Matamoros - toward a final renunciation of violence and aggression, modeled upon the conversion of Saint Paul.

In short, my thesis takes into account a range of violence that includes both high and low culture, from the grand genres of the epic, the deeds of heroes, saints and knights, to the low genre of the picaresque and the violence encountered by swindlers, cheats or vagrants.

## Chapter 1. Epic Violence: Captives, *Moriscos* and Empire in Cervantes

If Cervantes gets away with [his brutal humor] in the long run, it is only because the artist in him took over. As a thinker [however], Cervantes shared lightheartedly most of the errors and prejudices of his time - he put up with the Inquisition, solemnly approved of his country's brutal attitude towards Moors and other heretics, believed that all noblemen were God-made and all monks God-inspired.

- Vladimir Nabokov, *Lectures on Don Quixote* (111).

### Introduction: Virgilian *cursus* and Virgilian violence

The above quote exemplifies one of the mistakes in Nabokov's reading of *Don Quixote*, which is to draw lapidary conclusions about Cervantes as a thinker based on just one of his works, albeit his most famous one. In this case, a further mistake is to assume that Cervantes' position toward infidels and Moors, for example, shares "lightheartedly" in the prejudices of his time. In this chapter I intend to focus on a few selected passages that span the length of Cervantes' career with a view to analyze precisely the writer's representation of such figures as Moors/Moriscos, captives and renegades during the Spanish Empire. To this end, I will use the connecting thread of the epic genre and what it can reveal about Cervantes' thought on the question of violence between Christians and infidels.

While it would probably take volumes to fully trace the shape of Cervantes's literary career, a relatively short essay by Frederick de Armas (2002) successfully illustrates the author's efforts to imitate Virgil's career model - known as the Virgilian Wheel or *cursus* - through a few revealing examples from *La Galatea* (1585), *Don Quixote* (1605) and the *Persiles* (1617). He shows a progression from pastoral to epic in Cervantes' writings that reflects Virgil's own progression from his *Eclogues* to the *Georgics* and the *Aeneid*.<sup>1</sup>

My analysis assumes De Armas' thesis by looking at a few Cervantine texts that imitate typically Virgilian epic devices, although to narrow my focus I am mostly concerned with the epic phase of the *cursus* and not with its pastoral beginnings. What I find in these Virgilian formulas, which revolve around the themes of Spanish Empire, Algerian captivity and the Spanish Moriscos, is how they all share the same characterization of violence as originating in either infidel "cruelty" or Christian heroic "virtue." But instead of a more or less explicit parallel to the ancient *cursus* I would say that these passages reveal a conflicted stance on their Virgilian model, one that shifts from eager emulation in the early works to something more akin to parody in the later ones.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Critics have long established how early modern authors like Chaucer, Spenser or Marlowe attempted to imitate the ancient *cursus*. De Armas proposes his essay precisely to remedy the lack of interest on this

<sup>2</sup> Though I am singling out a specific study on Virgil and Cervantes by De Armas (2003), it will be important to consider later in this chapter two of his other books that include specific references to Virgil by the Spanish author (1998, 2011).

One of the discourses of violence most readily available to Cervantes was the long-standing military and religious rivalry between Christians and Muslims. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century this confrontation took center stage in the Mediterranean thanks to the Spanish and Ottoman empires. As we will see in the next chapter, Girard's theory of mimetic rivalry may be useful to explain the origin of this particular clash of civilizations, with the rise of Santiago and the Reconquest of the Iberian Peninsula after the Muslim invasions of the 8<sup>th</sup> century. One of the corollaries to Girard's theory of mimetic "crises" is that in most civilizations the State and/or official religion often promote violence if for no other reason than as a means of survival, which is perhaps the most acute form of crisis.<sup>3</sup> And this is precisely what the two super-powers of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Turks and the Spanish, thought of themselves and their conflict, i.e. that they were in a battle not only for supremacy but also for their very survival.

This life or death clash escalated in the last few decades of the fifteen hundreds, notably at the battle of Lepanto in 1571, and it also led shortly thereafter to such collateral damage as the expulsion of the Moriscos from Spain in 1609. The impact of these events on Cervantes's life and work, his well-known list of Morisco characters and his possible authorial positions on the subject is a topic that has received a great deal of critical attention, most extensively

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<sup>3</sup> See Chapter 2 of this thesis for a more detailed formulation of Girard's theory.

perhaps by Francisco Márquez-Villanueva (1975, 1991, 2010) and Carroll Johnson (1980, 1995, 2000, 2005), and quite incisively as well in recent years by Frederick de Armas (2011), Barbara Fuchs (2001, 2009), Eric Graf (2007) and William Childers (2006). Issues worthy of study such as national or transnational identity, maurophilia, Moorish anxieties, feminism, materialism or cultural studies, however, do not tend to leave much room for finer subtleties of literary genre, let alone literary career.<sup>4</sup> For that reason I would like focus in the following pages on some well-known Cervantine texts about captivity and the Moriscos from the prism of the epic genre.

The epic certainly would have been a more unavoidable subject had Cervantes written a classical saga devoted to the Infidel/Christian rivalry, or had he followed the Homeric or Virgilian models in a more strict or tangible way, like his contemporary Alonso de Ercilla endeavored in *La Araucana* (1570/1578/1587), based on the Spanish conquest of the Indians of Chile. At any rate, the lack of a

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<sup>4</sup> A notable exception to the either/or trend of cultural vs. literary studies would be De Armas' latest monograph (*Don Quixote Among the Saracens*, 2011), which combines a deep and extensive reflection on classical genre with a rather original theory of *Don Quixote's* Moorish anxieties, by making a strong Straussian argument that Cervantes went as far as to portray his Christian Knight as harboring a secret Morisco identity.

Graf's work is also rather unique in how it combines such topics as the study of Neoplatonism and Apuleius' picaresque influence on Cervantes along with a serious consideration of feminist theory, materialism and other questions of modernity.

For a classic literary study of Cervantes' revolutionary posture towards neo-Aristotelian theories, see Alban Forcione's *Cervantes, Aristotle and the Persiles* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1970).

classically shaped epic poem did not stop Cervantes from attempting to broach the topic and methods of the epic at various times. Namely, in *La Numancia* one can see the makings of epic triumphalism. In the *Información de Argel* (1580), and in Diego de Haedo's *Diálogo de los Mártires de Argel* (1612), one also finds ingenious constructions of the author as an epic hero. The story of the captive in *Don Quixote* (1605) captures a mini-Virgilian episode of heroism and romance. Finally, in *Los Trabajos de Persiles y Segismunda* (1617), the episodes of the counterfeit captives and the prophecy of the Morisco Jarife reveal an epic theme in a shockingly humorous tone, something that illustrates Cervantes' conflicted posture towards the full-length classical epic.

#### Towards a Definition of the Epic

But what does epic, or more specifically Virgilian epic, mean after all? David Quint's insightful *Epic and Empire* outlines some fundamentals on this question. In a detailed analysis of a passage from Book VIII of the *Aeneid* - the description of Aeneas' shield and the battle of Actium it portrays - Quint affirms: "the struggle between Augustus and Antony pits West vs. East, continuing a pattern of epic confrontation that Virgil found in the *Iliad*" (24). Part of this Virgilian project is the ability to create sharply drawn sides and attribute a negative image of otherness to the enemy. Among other things the East represents the cruelty and violence of warfare, plus an unmeasured wealth that breeds corruption, while the West stands for

order, sobriety, and warfare as pacification (28). The woman as seductress also comes from the East (Cleopatra, Dido) trying to divert the Western male soldier (Antony, Aeneas) from his mission (34).

Another crucial aspect of the Virgilian epic for Quint is narrative teleology, whereby "winners" are the ones who get to write history and thus have the ability to "join beginnings purposefully to ends" (46). For instance Aeneas' victory over the Etruscans is foreshadowed in his shield by Augustus' future victory at Actium, showing how "the struggle had all along been leading up to its victory" (45). Another good example of epic teleology is the sixteenth-century parallel drawn between the battles of Lepanto and Actium by both Ercilla in the *Araucana* and Juan Rufo in his *Austriada*, (1582). These poets represented Juan de Austria at Lepanto surrounded by symbols of his late father, Charles V, just as Virgil's Augustus had fought Antony with the blessings of his father figure, the deceased Julius Ceasar. Charles V's title of Holy Roman Emperor thus lends to the winning side of Lepanto, the 1571 alliance of Christendom against the Turks, the aura of an Actium waiting to happen: a "second Actium" (49).

#### Double-Edged Teleology in *La Numancia*

Turning to Cervantes, one is struck with his rather Virgilian ability at recreating in a few strokes the same type of rhetorical "shields" or images that celebrate an imperial ideology like that of the Habsburgs. Cervantes himself - though shortly lived - was trained as a



"winner" in Lepanto and served under the command of Juan de Austria. He was also well acquainted with Ercilla's and Virgil's epics. At the outset of his literary career he wrote a tragedy - *El cerco de Numancia*, also known as *La Numancia* - which contains a great deal of epic nationalism. Several critics have written about this play's studied ambiguity towards the Spanish Empire, or even its anti-epic character.<sup>5</sup> It is indeed arguable that the nationalism of the play may have been somewhat conflicted, a question to which I shall return in a moment. Yet superficial or not, Cervantes's artistry at that most visible layer of representation seems perfectly capable of recreating a narrative teleology worthy of Virgil's:

¡Qué envidia, qué temor, España amada,  
te tendrán mil naciones extranjeras,  
en quien tú reñirás tu aguda espada  
y tenderás triunfando tus banderas! (521-4)

Thus prophesizes the allegorical figure of the river Duero in Act I, after lamenting the present inevitable fortune of the Numantians, or as he declares them "españoles," who commit collective suicide rather than surrender to the siege of the Romans. And for all the ambiguities that besiege the play itself, one still senses the rhetorical force of the Duero's prophecy. Just as the City of Troy defeated by the West in the *Illiad* became for Virgil the birth of a new West - the Roman

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<sup>5</sup> See the following studies: Johnson, "The Structure of Cervantine Ambiguity," *Ideologies and Literature*, 3 (1980): 75-94; Frederick de Armas, *Cervantes, Raphael and the Classics*, especially pp.116-135 for the passage relevant to the Duero's intervention; Barbara Simerka, "'That the rulers should sleep without bad dreams': Anti-Epic Discourse in *La Numancia* and *Arauco domado*," *Cervantes* 18.1 (1998): 46-70.

Empire - so the sacrifice of the Numantians according to the river god would in time give birth to the Spanish Empire: the new Western super-power with the ability to narrate its own history and its own epics, exactly as prophesized and performed in the first Act of this play. The historical beginnings and the fruition of Spain's victory thus appear in a perfect teleological fashion.

But teleology regarding the final causes of epic victories or newborn empires is not the only rhetorical device in the Virgilian toolbox. As a type of "Western" genre where winners congratulate themselves in their victories, the self-congratulatory effect of the epic extends beyond specific battles down to the more basic level of personal characterization. Thus, epic heroes are not just those who win at Actium, Lepanto, Numantia or wherever it may be, but also and foremost they are honorable heroes, morally superior to their enemies and thereby justified in the righteousness of their martial exploits. And yet here is where careful readers of the classical epic, like Quint, would point out that in Virgil, Augustan ideology often conceals an undercurrent that "criticizes" and "complicates" (23) its official party line. So, for every sharply drawn contrast between the magnificent Augustus on the one hand and his depraved Cleopatra-addled antagonist on the other, their conflict could also be seen as nothing but an internecine battle between two self-serving Roman factions in civil war, rather than as a universal fight between good and evil.

This type of complexity in epic characterization has been best

analyzed by De Armas (1998, 116-35) in regards to the scene of *La Numancia* mentioned above, where the river Duero appears before a young and sorrowful female Spain to encourage her through a difficult time.<sup>6</sup> De Armas details the extent to which Cervantes succeeds in drawing on Virgilian textual models, but also and more importantly the degree to which an undercurrent of criticism against the future Spanish Empire flows under the main thrust of the Duero's rhetoric. And this type of duplicitous Virgilian prophecy may be arguably as important as Quint's emphasis on teleology when one considers the role of the epic in Cervantes.

De Armas identifies the *locus classicus* for the prophecies of a river god in Book VIII of the *Aeneid*, where the Tiber comforts a battle-weary Aeneas to "lighten his sadness." The role of prophecy in Virgil was of course best known in the early modern period through his *Fourth Eclogue*, where the birth of a child was said to usher in a new imperial era of peace, renovation and prosperity. This text was widely interpreted by Church Fathers to be a Messianic prophecy about Christ. So the prophecy of Act I of *La Numancia* falls in line with these uplifting visions of a prosperous future empire, in this case for Spain. And yet perhaps the more significant reference to a Virgilian prophecy dropped by Cervantes's Duero is his reference to Proteus, who is said to have special knowledge "from heaven" about how Spain will

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<sup>6</sup> This is a moment, I might add, that also represents a genuine Girardian crisis of survival for the incipient nation, since a mimetic crisis is usually triggered when two rivals fight over the same object of desire, in this case the town of Numantia.

succeed in oppressing the very Romans who are besieging her at the present time.

Proteus was a minor Greek sea god with the ability to prophesy who appeared in Virgil's *Fourth Georgic*, and who was a famously shifty character unwilling to tell the truth except under duress, while captured and bound. Proteus' invocation by Duero then signals that something is amiss with his sympathetic consolation of Spain and his promise of her future greatness under the Habsburgs. The key, according to De Armas, is in the Duero's choice of what epic Spanish victory to highlight and which to ignore. The river god focuses on the oppression of Rome itself, i.e. the sack of Rome in 1527 during the reign of Charles V, while ignoring the more quintessential Spanish epic battle against the Turks - the true archrivals of Spain - at Lepanto during the reign of Phillip II. The sack of Rome in fact went down in history as a shameful episode for everyone, yet the Duero strangely praises it as a courageous victory, almost as an act of retributive justice:

Y portillos abriendo en Vaticano  
tus bravos hijos, y otros extranjeros  
harán que para huir vuelva la planta  
el gran piloto de la nave santa (vv. 485-9).

The pope as a captain fleeing his own ship, run out of town by a coalition of Spanish Catholics and foreign Lutheran mercenaries ("extranjeros"), is not the most endearing example of Spanish power. It also highlights a negative quality in the aftermath of epic

victories that the Roman general Cipión mentions elsewhere in Cervantes's play. That is, the Romans were willing to pardon and forgive the life of the Numantians if they would only give up their town. The immediate context and tragedy of those words is of course that the Numantians chose the path of honorable suicide in the face of subjugation rather than the shame of life after defeat. But the subtext may well be the fact that Spain's Habsburg army did not pardon but rather completely ransacked a weakened and vulnerable Rome in 1527. The winners did not gracefully spare the losers, a fact that rendered them far from magnanimous and morally deficient. The Duero's unusual choice of enemies for the future Spanish empire also contrasts with his complete omission of the Moors, a fact that may signal a desire to cleanse any trace of non-Visigoth blood from his imperial vision, since the Moors had stubbornly morphed into the Moriscos and were the cause of great anxiety for the State at the time of Cervantes.

De Armas' analysis of the double-edged use of Virgilian prophecies in Cervantes will be useful to keep in mind when looking at the other examples of Virgilian rhetoric in this chapter. Especially when dealing with the construction of an individual heroic identity in *La información de Argel*, or of a heroic national identity in *La historia del capitán cautivo* and in the *Persiles*, it is clear that Virgil's epic formulas can cut both ways, either by propping up or by undermining the character of the winners.

Another conclusion to be drawn from De Armas' analysis is that

Cervantes was very consciously aware of the various classical epics and at certain points he chose specifically to emulate Virgil's model, something he succeeded in doing with the best of them. As Michael Murrin shows in his study on epic warfare during the Renaissance, authors like Boiardo, Tasso, Ercilla and Zúñiga were all to some degree in open competition with each other and with their classical models, Virgil being high among them. One of Murrin's premises is how these early modern writers held Virgil's Aeneid as a distinct type of epic that favored total war "a sangre y fuego," including the eradication over the pardoning of enemies. The idea was that Virgil specifically presented the messy and deadly fall of Troy in Book II of the Aeneid - or his hero's wrestling with his rage but finally killing Turnus at the culmination of Book XII - as inevitable turns of Fate on the road to establishing Roman hegemony. So in this scenario there were no limits to the violence allowed to survive as a nation and achieve an empire. Such as specter of total war in a battle for survival is precisely what the beautiful Virgilian poetry of *La Numancia* evokes with the life and death choice of its inhabitants, and the birth of an entire people and a national ethos.

It is also important to remember that while Virgil may have been held up as a prophet of sorts since early Christianity on account of his *Fourth Eclogue*, neither the Roman poet nor his hero Aeneas were precisely considered saints during late Antiquity, the Middle Ages or the Renaissance. Augustine in particular utterly despised classical mythology and considered all things Roman as the work of the devil.

His *City of God* is full of invectives against the gods and goddesses depicted by the poets, while in his *Confessions* he specifically repudiates the bad influence of such Virgilian episodes as the love affair between Dido and Aeneas. And it was Dante himself, a much closer influence in time to the European Renaissance, who placed Virgil in the outer-most ledge of Hell, in a pantheon with the other great pagan poets. Thus, while Virgil may have served him as a guide through the *Inferno* and *Purgatory*, one should recall how he quickly vanishes when they both reach the top Mount Purgatory, Dante catches a glimpse of Beatrice and instantly falls in love with her all over again. She stands in metaphorically for the divine science of theology as opposed to the pagan pursuit of poetry embodied by Virgil. So Cervantes was well aware of this tension between the vices and virtues of pagan poetry vs. the strict demands of Christian theology conjured up by the Roman poet.

#### Virgilian Heroism in *La información de Argel*

Even before *La Numancia*, c.1581, we know of an earlier text that bears the authorial mark of Cervantes, *La información de Argel*, written in 1580, which clearly trades on some of the same "official" values as the classically inspired play. It had the format of a lengthy questionnaire for various witnesses, and it is generally assumed by now that Cervantes himself prepared the questions after his return from Algiers, for the sworn deposition of key witnesses to his captivity from 1575 to 1580. Thus, it had the format of an Inquisition

document though not an official one since the questioning was conducted in private. Carroll Johnson reads it as Cervantes' first work of fiction, arguing that the author constructs an image of himself in Algiers no differently from how he constructs the character Don Quixote in his later novel (1995, 25).<sup>7</sup> The questions and answers that plot this "Serbantes" character seek to establish among other things his *linaje*, that is class and ethnicity, and his exemplary Christian behavior as a *cautivo*. So for example, Johnson quotes from *La Información*:

Serbantes ...vivió siempre como católico y fiel cristiano, confesándose y comulgándose en los tiempos que los cristianos usan y acostumbran, y que algunas veces se ofrecía tratar con algunos moros y renegados, siempre defendía la fé católica posponiendo todo peligro de la vida, y animaba a algunos que no renegasen, viéndoles tibios en la fe, repartiendo con los pobres lo poco que tenía, ayudándoles en sus necesidades, así con buenos consejos como con las buenas obras que podía. (59)

This description could well be compared to the narrative of a saint's life, such as the *Vita Sancti Martini* that we saw in chapter 1; that is to say, as the perfect credentials for the canonization of a "cautivo." But if Cervantes indeed was the author then the whole exercise would be a saint's autobiography, to follow the analogy, and one might expect perhaps a humbler version, with reference to God's

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<sup>7</sup> Also note Johnson's more recent piece on the topic, "The Algerian Economy and Cervantes' First Work of Narrative Fiction" (2005), a thought provoking extension of his argument to which I shall return in Chapter 4 of this study.



mercy, temptations and struggles, falls and victories, etc., like those of Saint Augustine's *Confessions* or the very conversion of Saint Paul that we saw so clearly referenced in *Don Quixote* in the previous chapter. But instead one gets "Serbantes," a duty-bound and "pius" Aeneas-type, an epic hero of the Virgilian mold without a single tragic flaw. Cervantes clearly intended to impress, or as appears in the prologue, to obtain "merced" from the king.<sup>8</sup> The document then seems closer to being another Virgilian "shield" than anything else. In this case, chances are Cervantes was quite literally seeking to shield himself from any suspicions of having wavered in the faith as a captive, or of being a renegade, something not at all rare among captives at the time.<sup>9</sup>

Historically, Cervantes had ample reason to seek the protection of a document like the *Información*. In 16<sup>th</sup> century Spain Christian beliefs were being imposed on former Jews and Muslims - now Conversos or Moriscos - who after 1492 had been effectively forced either to convert or to pretend they were Catholic. To adjust within the new Spanish Empire required from everyone, not only from Conversos or

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<sup>8</sup> Robert Folger has an interesting legal analysis of other documents submitted by Cervantes to the king for a position in the Spanish American colonies that he never obtained (2009, pp.40-43ff.). I shall return to this topic in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

<sup>9</sup> For an insightful study of Spanish and Muslim "renegados" around the Mediterranean, in connection to the concurrent problem of British pirates and the enduring stigma attached to double allegiances, see Barbara Fuchs' chapter 5 in her *Mimesis and Empire* (2001). Márquez-Villanueva's most recent monograph of *Moros, Moriscos y Turcos de Cervantes* (2010) also offers a classic approach to the issue of the renegades, for instance in two early plays of the author that I am not analyzing directly in this chapter, *El trato de Argel* (1580) and *Los baños de Argel* (1615). See his chapter 1, pp. 15-75.

Moriscos, to follow certain rules of religious observance and to stay away from heresy. From the mid-fifteen hundreds onwards there was also the added variable of legally complying with statutes of *limpieza de sangre*, purity of blood, if one wanted to enter Military Orders, *Colegios Mayores*, travel to the New World, or enjoy a meaningful public recognition. Having been a recent captive - and considering the possibility that he was himself born to a Converso family - Cervantes at this point felt he had to come to terms with a *limpieza de sangre* status and a Christian exemplarity status in the eyes of the authorities.

Towards the end of the questionnaire of *La Información* it appears that a certain Dr. Juan Blanco de Paz has threatened to accuse Cervantes to the Inquisition for behavior improper of a Christian, something the witnesses label as envy and fear that Cervantes would tell of Blanco's own irregular behavior while in Algiers. The details may not be as relevant as the fact that the document functions as both shield and weapon for Cervantes, in a rhetorical attack that spares no efforts to destroy his enemy and to make the strongest possible case for himself. Such use of rhetoric shows again in my opinion that the author relied on methods of epic and Virgilian characterization. Not only does he project an image of conformity to established norms and distance from heterodoxy, but he becomes the exemplar and the embodiment of those norms: "...siempre defendía la fe, ...se ofrecía tratar con moros y renegados," etc. His heroism is made to stand out against the foil of his peers' misfortunes in captivity, but also of their vices and

hostilities.

#### Cervantes the Martyr and Epic Triumphalism

Another text that portrays Cervantes as a hero among captives is Diego de Haedo's *Topografía e Historia General de Argel*, published in 1612 and over whose authorship there has been some debate. Daniel Eisenberg argued as recently as 1996 that Cervantes himself was the author, while most scholars continue to attribute the work to his friend Antonio de Sosa, a fellow captive.<sup>10</sup> Either way we learn in volume III that a plan by several captives to escape from Algiers was headed by "Miguel de Cervantes - un hidalgo principal de Alcalá de Henares" (163). Yet they are betrayed by another Christian who was supposed to help them secure a boat, but instead renounces his faith and turns them in to the Algerian king for a profit, as the text says, "como otro Judas" (163). The renegade then brings guards to arrest the captives while they are hiding in a cave off of a nearby garden. So the "Judas" role suggests that there must also be a Christ figure. The scene in the garden reinforces that image, as it is reminiscent of the passion narrative in the gospel - the betrayal and seizing of Christ in the garden of olives. The narrator continues to expound on the captives' plight, their illnesses and misfortunes, only to highlight

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<sup>10</sup> It is generally accepted that Haedo simply published but did not write it. Most Cervantists attribute it to Antonio de Sosa, a benedictine monk who was captive along with Cervantes. For the controversial case of attribution to Cervantes himself see Daniel Eisenberg, "Cervantes, Autor de la *Topografía e historia general de Argel*, publicada por Diego de Haedo," *Cervantes* 16.1 (1996): 32-53.

Cervantes' heroism:

...[estuvo] sustentándolos Miguel de Cervantes con gran riesgo de su vida; la cual cuatro veces estuvo a pique de perderla – empalado o enganchado o quemado vivo – por cosas que intentó para dar libertad a muchos. Y si a su ánimo – e industria y trazas – correspondiera la ventura, hoy fuera el día que Argel fuera de cristianos, porque no aspiraban a menos sus intentos (164).

Cervantes thus becomes a central Christ figure for the narrative, since not only would he gladly die for the salvation of his own people but also for that of his enemies the infidels. After such hyperbole there is yet another remark of his heroism: "de las cosas que sucedieron, ...y del cautiverio y hazañas de Miguel de Cervantes, se pudiera hacer una particular historia" (164). This statement may also be construed as an allusion to Christ, from the well-known gospel passage of Saint John: "But there are also many other things which Jesus did; were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books" (John, 21:25). Not only does Haedo's history seem to build the character of Cervantes as an exemplary captive-cum-Christ-figure, but it also suggests that this particular hero deserves an exclusive "historia" in praise of his "hazañas." And history-as-triumph, implied by "hazañas," could be seen as the fundamental "narrative shape" of the epic, as Quint observes (33). Thus, both Haedo's history and *La Información de Argel* contribute to the construction of an epic hero and to his insertion into a Spanish/Christian epic narrative.

All this epic heroism, moreover, would not be truly tested without the explicit background of hostility and violence. Quint points out how the cruelty of the enemy is a characteristic aspect of the representation of violence in the epic. In Haedo, Cervantes is threatened with being "*empalado o enganchado o quemado vivo*," a mere hint at what Muslims and renegades regularly did to Christian captives. In this text cruelty acquires its full meaning in the light of a Christian/Muslim confrontation, as the title of this section bears out: "*Diálogo de los mártires de Argel*." Martyrdom becomes the quintessential sign of heroism for those who suffer violent death. One may see then the formation of an official rhetoric in regards to Algiers, to the enemy, and to the type of captivity that was routinely experienced by Christians.<sup>11</sup>

This type of discourse, which we have so far termed epic, Virgilian, loaded with triumphalism and depictions of warfare and violence, pervades Cervantes' writings about captivity, just as it does Haedo's *Topografía*. The story of the *Cautivo* in *Don Quixote* I: 39-41, lays out rather clearly the political and cultural war between the Spanish and the Ottoman empires, with a host of epic literary devices.

#### A Captive's Audience: Epic as Rhapsody

As one may recall from *Don Quixote*, Zoraida and Ruy Pérez de Viedma

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<sup>11</sup> As I briefly noted in the previous chapter, martyrdom is only one side of the two-way street of sacred violence. The other side would be the exemplary violence of the crusades against infidels and heretics.

arrive at the Inn where the main characters of the novel have slowly gathered in the previous chapters and the innkeeper proceeds to prepare them dinner: a perfect Virgilian device on the part of Cervantes to get everyone to listen to a tale of travel and adventure, reminiscent of the hero's arrival at Dido's palace in Book II of the Aeneid; but also reminiscent of the performances by Greek rhapsodes who first transmitted the epic genre orally in the days of Homer.

But before "el cautivo" has had a chance to narrate anything significant beyond Zoraida's name and her wish to be a Christian, Don Quixote feels moved to launch into a full-length discourse on arms and letters. As Cervantes's readers know by now, Don Quixote's pearls of wisdom on such matters punctuate the novel with unexpected bursts of eloquence, as during his encounter with the goatherds (I: 11) or after he and Sancho emerge from a dark forest in the episode of the fulling mills (I: 20). The gist of his dissertation this time is that the end of arms, peace, is greater than the end of letters, distributive justice (466).<sup>12</sup>

Henry Higuera has read closely this passage as Don Quixote's project to bring about a new Golden Age by means of arms and the profession of knight-errantry. Higuera notes how in the speech at the Inn there is a "tension between praising peace and loving [military] glory," (63) a tension which comes up every time Don Quixote elaborates on that topic (see DQ 1:11, 1:20, 1:37, 2:1, 2:16). In the process, Don Quixote

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<sup>12</sup> Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, trans. J.M. Cohen (London: Penguin, 1950).

gradually turns away from peace as the highest good in favor of glory and military virtues (65). So, one might say, Don Quixote reflects on the usefulness of the military as a way of introducing the Captive's war stories, and everyone in the audience seems very receptive: "*El cura le dijo [a Don Quixote] que tenía razón en todo cuanto había dicho en favor de las armas, y que él, aunque letrado y graduado, estaba de su mismo parecer*" (471). The priest in particular may not be the most trustworthy interlocutor of Don Quixote, given his frequent manipulations of and lies to the poor knight. But in any case their exchange leads to Fernando's request that the newly arrived Ruy tell his story, and we finally learn that the captive is involved in a project very similar to that of Don Quixote, i.e. shameless military glory.

He begins with a short biography that reassures us of his old-Christian *linaje* and his family tradition in the military - the stuff heroes were made of at that time. As he recounts adventures at sea with the Spanish Navy and how he came to be a captive in Algiers, the audience seems most supportive. They are made up after all of a room full of Spaniards, culturally shaped by centuries of war against Muslims. So the captive does not proceed directly to the story of how he met Zoraida, which is what sparked their curiosity, but instead he dwells for several pages on particular dates and events, with explicit indications of who is "*el enemigo común,*" which the glorious battles, who the noble military figures, the despicable Muslim leaders, etc. (475-86). Of special interest is the fact that he ends by mentioning

"un soldado español llamado tal de Saavedra" (486), whose heroism and extraordinary status among captives made him capable of standing up to the cruel king Azán Aga without being tortured, killed or maimed. This is none other than Cervantes again, appearing as a historical figure just as he had done in *La información* or *the Diálogo de los mártires de Argel*. Ruy Pérez continues:

si no fuera porque el tiempo no da lugar, yo dijera ahora algo de lo que este soldado hizo, que fuera parte para entreteneros y admiraros harto mejor que con el cuento de mis historia. (486)

This remark sounds again like an announcement for a possible epic in praise of its hero. This whole part of the Captive's tale could in fact be seen as a mini epic pep-rally designed to enthuse and entertain the audience, as a rhapsodic performance. In this instance the entertainment becomes interactive when a nobleman from the audience is able to recite two elegiac sonnets that Ruy mentions were composed by a fellow captive, Pedro de Aguilar, who turns out to be this nobleman's brother - one of those amazing coincidences so characteristic in Cervantes.

Ruy's narrative acquires even more serious epic undertones as he speaks at length about specific battles and soldiers on each side, stressing the kind of differences suggestive of the West/East dichotomies that Quint observed in his analysis of Virgil. Ruy takes us through every major battle that took place in the Mediterranean in the early 1570s: starting with the "*felicísima jornada*," of Lepanto, in 1571; the failed operation at Navarino in 1572; the capture of the



galley *La Presa* by *La Loba* that same year (rather interesting symbolism on that one); the taking of Túnez in 1573; the loss of *La Goleta* in 1574, and some other minor episodes. In all these cases the heroism of "*el serenísimo Don Juan de Austria*" and other generals shows forth in the victories, while in the losses we are told that "*el cielo lo ordenó de otra manera*" (478), or that losing "*fue particular gracia y merced que el cielo hizo a España*" (480). Nothing reveals better the teleology of victory than saying heaven ordained it so, and nothing redeems a lost battle better than saying God wanted it that way, even while Ruy is forced to admit, "*el cielo lo ordenó ...por los pecados de la Cristiandad, y porque quiere y permite Dios que tengamos siempre verdugos que nos castiguen*" (478). So the losses become expiation for sins, which in the end is Christ-like and therefore heroic.

The insistence in pointing out the cruelty of every Muslim character introduced in this brief history also represents, again, a typical epic device. The story of the son of Barbarroja is particularly shocking, with him being bitten (that is right, not beaten) to death by galley slaves as punishment for his own cruelty (479). The kings of Algiers as well, Uchalín and Azán Agán, are described almost only in terms of their cruelty: "*Azán ...el más cruel renegado que jamás se ha visto*" (485). Uchalín's violence shows particularly in how he reneged his Christianity: "*renegó, de despecho de que un turco, estando al remo, le dio un bofetón, y por poderse vengar dejó su fe*" (484). These clear-cut distinctions of good and evil characters appear to continue

into the story of Zoraida, although at this point and upon closer inspection they become more complicated.

#### Zoraida's Romance and the Limits of the Epic

The enigmatic Zoraida materializes at the Inn as a fervent convert to Christianity, even though she does not yet speak "*cristiano*" (462). Her voice can be heard rather forcefully however in the letters she first sends to Ruy when they meet back in Algiers, while he's a captive. In those short and compelling messages she claims to have seen the Virgin Mary in an apparition, and feels called by God to live in Christendom, yet severely threatened should this information be known. In the very first letter she explains: "*Desto tengo mucha pena ...que quisiera que no te descubireras a nadie; porque si mi padre lo sabe, me echará luego en un pozo, y me cubrirá de piedras*" (490). These are severe words and draconian terms for treating anyone, let alone a daughter. Whether she is exaggerating or creating any drama at all, at the very least her words reveal a complete lack of trust in her father. And on this point she may be proven right by a subsequent incident. Agi Morato's reaction when he learns of her conversion seems to be rather out of proportion. He insults her and calls her a prostitute, in so many words, declaring her a "*mala hembra*" who knows that "*en vuestra tierra se usa la deshonestidad más libremente que en la nuestra*" (507). This invective could confirm Zoraida's earlier fears for her life, or it could be construed simply as a father's frustrated but natural reaction to his daughter's radical betrayal of

filial and religious oaths, and her plans to run away. It also offers a representation of the enemy from an Eastern perspective, with an accusation of immorality, "*deshonestidad*," that corresponds to the literature regarding mutual suspicions between East and West, as Quint would put it.

Whichever meaning we assign to their words, the father/daughter relation gone amuck remains one of the most striking features of the story. Agi Morato's categorical "*vuestra tierra*" vs. "*la nuestra*," delineates the conflict in an epic fashion, West vs. East. Zoraida does indeed move West, but only after leaving her father injured, desolate and threatening suicide in the East. Some have seriously questioned how "Christian" could Zoraida be when she treats her father that way.<sup>13</sup> One could defend her by pointing out how she conforms to the gospel: "No one who prefers father or mother to me is worthy of me ...I have come to bring the sword" (Mt.10: 34-38). But the Bible also speaks of honoring your father, and Saint Paul exhorts continually to family unity in his epistles. Thus the dilemma is set: is Zoraida a hero and a Christ-like figure like Ruy, "Cervantes," etc., or she a cruel, self-interested Muslim woman who does not care for her own kind?

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<sup>13</sup> See Márquez Villanueva, "Leandra, Zoraida y sus fuentes franco-italianas." *Personajes y Temas del Quijote*. Madrid: Taurus, 1975. 77-146. For a thoughtful critique of the figure of Zoraida as a symbol of hypocrisy and general lack of principles, see Barbara Fuchs' treatment of this episode in her chapter 6 of *Mimesis and Empire* (2001), pp. 158-161.

The text, to my mind, may raise the question of Zoraida's consistency with Christianity, but mostly for dramatic appeal, to show her inner conflict. Meanwhile the narrative makes a strong case for her having to leave Algiers in order to pursue her new religion. So she is most clearly cast as a hero, not a cruel and ungrateful daughter. In the process, both listeners and readers of this tale receive a powerful endorsement of their prejudices against Muslims, i.e. people like Agi Morato hate Christians, make captives, and display cruelty towards their own daughters. This is why Ruy and Zoraida have to act very cautiously, e.g. pretending they don't know each other when they meet in the garden in front of Agi Morato, if they want to save their lives.

Zoraida's "violence" against her father and her culture thus becomes an emblem Spanish imperialism, with a perfectly consistent religious justification, and as such constitutes heroic virtue. In the end, however, the violence of this part of the story - as opposed to the historical introduction narrated by Ruy - is far tamer. The body count is zero and there is no bloodshed or grave physical injury. A happy ending instead is served at the social level, with a marriage, at the religious, with a new convert - or two, counting a repentant renegade that travels with them - and at the literary level with a closure that brings together the two Pérez de Viedma brothers, Juan and Ruy. The ending thus ties with the beginning while glorifying the West, Christendom, and by adding a beautiful new citizen to the Spanish Empire.

David Quint's remark about how the epic portrays women from the East as seductresses is also significant here. In his study he speaks of the difference between the Epic as teleological narrative of power vs. Romance as the episodic diversion from that epic plot line. Epic has a clear finality, whereas Romance is open-ended or it seems to lead nowhere, thus threatening to destroy the epic plot (34). Aeneas and Dido's romance becomes the *locus classicus* for this dynamic. But Cervantes' take on the seductress theme seems a little more complicated. Zoraida does seduce Ruy and she does indeed end his career in the military, if they are to marry and settle down. But on the other hand her diversion takes him away from the bigger diversion of captivity, and as we just saw, back on track where the narrative of official values can properly close. So it becomes hard to say whether the encounter with Zoraida represents "a subversion to the epic," as Quint would have it in the classical examples, or rather a subversion of the idea of open-ended and distracting Romance instead. Then again, the possibilities here are even more complex, when one considers that the story of Ruy and Zoraida within the novel at large is a rather diverting and divergent "interpolated" episode. One could even say that it represents a mini-epic within the larger story of *Don Quixote*, but then of course one would have to decide whether *Don Quixote's* story is epic or not, and whether the tale of the *Cautivo* is subversive or not.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> This sort of question is explored in great detail by Fred de Armas' latest book, *Don Quixote Among de Saracens* (2011), for example in connection to the Marcela episode of Part I and the use of Virgil as a role model for her unfortunately deceased admirer and writer

Another problem arises from the historical context, if one asks whether the official values have actually been well served. Cervantes wrote this story sometime shortly before 1604, as the public debate on the expulsion of the Moriscos was raging. The *Moriscos*, baptized yet culturally and linguistically autonomous, had been responsible for uprisings and civil wars in Granada, 1568-70, after which many were sent in a diaspora around the peninsula. Their definitive expulsion was decided in 1609, starting with Valencia. Michael Gerli explains this historical fact as a type of Spanish "manifest destiny," which is another way of explaining epic teleology. That is to say, 1609 represented the fruition of the Reconquest that had taken over Granada in 1492. Politically, at least, it was accomplished in 1492, but the Peninsula had yet to be cleansed of the last Arab, something which Philip "Hermenegild" the Third finally realized. The name Hermenegild actually merges his identity with the patron saint of the Reconquest (Gerli, 45). So, as others have done, and as we saw with *La Numancia*, Gerli expounds on deeper meanings, and on the implications of Zoraida's role. He concludes Cervantes meant to "rewrite ...Spain's foundational fiction of Reconquest," and to turn it into "a parable of and a plea for racial, cultural, and ideological tolerance" (42). That may well be, and the literary, social and religious order brought about by the end of Cervantes' *Cautivo* may be in consequence more an illusion than an expression of imperialistic values and authority. But

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Grisóstomo. See his chapter 4, "An Arab's Audacious Pastoral," pp. 59-77.

as literary illusions go, I would say, this one works remarkably well.

To be sure, it might help to determine whether a new Christian like Zoraida, coming to Spain in 1588 and marrying into an old-Christian family, would have been forced back to Algiers more than twenty years later, after 1609. It seems "assimilation" alone did not keep many Morisco communities in Castile or in the south from deportation. Yet the assimilation in Zoraida's case seems to suggest she might well have been able to stay in northern Spain as part of the Pérez de Viedma family. Such hypotheticals are obviously difficult to answer.<sup>15</sup> It would provide an interesting study to compare with the situation of Ricote and his family in *Don Quixote* part II. In any event, the case for Cervantes' tolerance of Moriscos who wished to assimilate seems to have been made quite strongly already.<sup>16</sup> What seems less emphasized about this story, in my opinion, is the systematic rhetoric of violence found at the literal level against the Muslim religion and culture.

Parody of the Virgilian Epic in the *Persiles*

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<sup>15</sup> Barbara Fuchs' study offers a more definitive response on this point, which is where her argument against Zoraida becomes the strongest. See pp. 160-1. For a take on this episode that deals more specifically with the debate over Cervantes' feminist credentials, see Eric Graf's chapter 2 of his *Cervantes and Modernity* (2007), pp. 56-103.

<sup>16</sup> For a detailed discussion of the morisco issue in Cervantes, see Márquez Villanueva, "El Morisco Ricote o la Hispana Razón de Estado." *Personajes y Temas del Quijote*. Madrid: Taurus, 1975. 229-237. For a specific discussion of the political events leading up to the expulsion, see Márquez Villanueva, *El problema morisco, desde otras laderas*. Madrid: Libertarias, 1991.

The two remaining passages I wish to highlight in Cervantes that bear the mark of Virgilian epic rhetoric are in his last published work, the *Persiles*. The first one is a rather brief rhapsodic moment of entertainment, the episode of the false captives in the *Persiles* (III: 10). Two young men appear in a small town to perform in the public square and beg for money, providing in return juicy anecdotes of their time at sea when they were captives in Algiers. They even have a "lienzo" (343), a canvas that portrays the sequence of their misfortunes. They emphasize the cruelty of their Muslim captors, who supposedly beat them up with the torn arm of a dead slave, and other such horrors. But their identity is quickly unmasked and their story discredited by one of the elders in town, who had really been a captive himself and realizes they are making up key geographic details about the city of Algiers. The episode provides comic relief, and for that reason it has been compared to an "entremés," a one-act farce.<sup>17</sup> However there is also the serious theme of military glory and epic triumphalism. As it turns out, the enraged elders end up leaving the youth's fraud unpunished, even after a severe sentence was handed, when the students explain that they were trying to join the military and wage war against the Muslims. Somehow, then, this comic and quasi-picaresque interlude turns into yet another potential epic, with two potential heroes in search of a glorious victory.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> See Forcione, *Cervantes, Aristotle and the Persiles*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1970. 170-187.

<sup>18</sup> Barbara Fuchs also seems to consider this brief episode as remarkable for irony: "the performance of the false captives -



Right after witnessing this performance Periandro, Auristela and company make their way into a small Morisco community on the coast of Valencia (III: 11). Here a young lady named Rafala, a young and fervent Zoraida-esque character, warns them that they should not spend the night, as they have been deceived by her father and they will be taken captive to Algiers along with the entire town that night. So they quickly escape into the fortified Church of the village, where they meet another truly Christian Morisco, Jarife, "*moro sólo en el nombre*" (355), who spontaneously declaims an elaborate epic prophecy on the imminent expulsion of the Moriscos. Critics have looked at this intervention either as further evidence of Cervantes' position on the whole Morisco issue, or to determine its date of composition.<sup>19</sup> It is nonetheless a beautiful piece of Virgilian rhetoric, even if somewhat short and isolated, where Jarife exhorts King Phillip III to carry out the expulsion and conform to God's will for Spain: "*¡Ea, pues, vuelvo a decir; vayan, vayan, señor, y deja la taza de tu reino resplandeciente como el sol y hermosa como el cielo!*" (359) The entire speech is filled with praises for the Monarchy, allegories where the king is seen as a Messiah or even a Moses figure who has been "*profetizado*" to fulfill this mission and lead his people in this "*rincón del mundo donde está recogida y venerada la verdad de Cristo!*"

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presumably improved by the mayor's teachings - undoes the authenticity of a resistant Spanish identity by suggesting that it can be successfully pirated" (pp. 161-2).

<sup>19</sup> See Márquez Villanueva's chapter on "El Morisco Ricote" in his *Personajes y temas* (1977). For a discerning discussion on this text and his possible composition *vis-à-vis* the actual expulsion of the Moriscos, see Osuna, "La expulsión de los moriscos en *El Persiles*." *NRFH*, XIX (1970): 388-393.

(356). So Spain appears as some kind of Promised Land, a chosen vessel, "taza de tu reino," etc.

Nonetheless, two main ironies undermine this vision. One is often pointed out, when Jarife explains that "nuevos cristianos viejos" (356) will populate the deserted lands where Moriscos used to live. The choice of words could not be any more confusing, since Moriscos were already that, "nuevos cristianos." The other is somewhat less transparent but it still represents a jarring inconsistency. Jarife compares the expulsion of Moriscos to the biblical expulsion of the Jews in the Old Testament: "Que si los pocos hebreos que pasaron a Egipto multiplicaron tanto, ...¿qué se podrá temer de estos, que son más y viven más holgadamente?" (359). Spain had of course already expelled the Jews, but when the biblical expulsion is recalled in this particular context, the Spanish king's Messiah-Moses image quickly turns into its exact rival the Pharaoh of Egypt, a contradiction which provides some food for thought, to say the least. It would be interesting in this sense to compare Jarife's arguments with those made by ecclesiastical figures like the Arch-bishop of Valencia, the Patriarca Ribera, on the eve of the actual expulsion in 1609.<sup>20</sup> They reveal, in my opinion, the same epic rhetoric of extreme antagonism that makes both sides in the classical epic fear for their survival. The strongest argument in Ribera's homily is that Moriscos are really an enemy within Spain, a fifth column plotting to bring about the

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<sup>20</sup> The famous 1609 sermon by this bishop Ribera can be found appended to the last chapter of Márquez Villanueva, *El problema morisco* (1991).

destruction of the realm by inviting an army of Turk invaders. The expulsion then is justified as the more lenient alternative to complete extermination.

So, in the *Persiles* we have Jarife's Virgilian prophecy immediately preceded by the episode of the false captives, both of which cut two ways by propping up and undermining their heroes and their principles. One could say that in that regard they are no different from the elaborate prophecy by the river Duero in *La Numancia*. But whereas in that earlier work Cervantes took pains to conceal the counterfeit nature of Proteus as prophet, in the instances of the *Persiles* the undercurrent of criticism against official values seems far more transparent. One might say that the elaborate anti-Morisco sentiments of Jarife's or the false captive's speech is marred by inconsistencies too superficial that make Cervantes not the eager and careful emulator of Virgilian rhetorical strategies, but rather a more mature and skeptical writer who indulges in a bit of parody of those classical models.

## Conclusion

We notice therefore an evolution in Cervantes' epic rhetoric of violence. Virgilian celebration appears unscathed in the surface early in his work, as in the prophecy of El Duero in *La Numancia*. An elaborate historical narrative of power and military glory around the dinner table makes the episode of the *Cautivo* in *Don Quixote* another

close imitation of Virgil. The romance of Zoraida and Ruy becomes its own endorsement of official values, despite the Morisco element and the issues of assimilation it conjures by association. But in the episodes of the false captives, and to a great extent in the prophecy of Jarife in the *Persiles*, the seriousness and elevated tone of Virgil are abandoned in favor of some clear complications and humorous subversion of epic forms and ideology. The demands of a long and serious epic poem, it seems, with its constant reaffirmation of archetypes and heroes and national triumphalism, would not have kept the required minimum of generic identity in the creative yet unorthodox hands of an author like Cervantes.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> For a presentation of other issues in regards to Cervantes and the epic, such as a consideration of *Persiles* as a prose epic, see Mary Anne O'neil "Cervantes' Prose Epic," *Cervantes* 12.1 (1992): 59-72.

Chapter 1. "Santos y quebrantos": Rise and Fall of Sacred Violence in Don Quixote, II: 58.

On the road the two meet a group of workmen eating in a meadow, with objects beside them under white sheets. Don Quixote correctly identifies each warrior saint and discourses on his deeds. He regrets that Dulcinea's enchantment prevents him from better fortunes and a sounder mind than he has, a consciousness of his madness that prepares the mood for the final chapter. Nevertheless, his meeting with these images seems to Don Quixote a happy omen, and Sancho Panza also appreciates the sweet adventure.

– Vladimir Nabokov, *Lectures on Don Quixote* (199).

## Introduction

In this chapter I basically agree with Nabokov's assessment of the episode of the saints in the quote above: namely, that Don Quixote correctly identifies each image while missing their status as an omen that points to the novel's final chapter. I believe moreover that this insight ultimately undermines the Russian novelist's thesis about the unrefined medieval violence of the book, since Cervantes' episode of the saints actually reveals a highly nuanced critique of medieval and sacred violence.

But let us begin with a detailed look at this episode. Towards the end of *Don Quixote* Part II, Cervantes narrates the face-to-face encounter

of what we might call two parallel myths. One of them is the Spanish medieval belief in Santiago Matamoros (Saint James the Moor Slayer) and the other is the equally deep and sincere belief of Don Quixote in books of chivalry.

The encounter no longer takes place in "some place of La Mancha" but rather near Barcelona, the last major location of the novel. It happens when the knight and his squire cross paths with a group of laborers who are carrying four portraits of saints back to their town, reliefs on wood meant as a tableau for an altarpiece. The images are those of Saint George, Saint James (Santiago), Saint Martin of Tours and Saint Paul.

Don Quixote launches into an ekphrasis and commentary of the sacred images, apparently intended to reinforce the link between sainthood and knight errantry. But his words also mark, in a twist of irony, the beginning of the end of his career as a knight-errant. For it is here that he first expresses doubts about his future in the profession of arms.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Martínez-Bonati points out this doubt in Don Quixote's mind and interprets the image of Saint Paul as a "suggestive emblem of transformation" for the protagonist. He even speaks of *anagnorisis* and *peripeteia* as "equally applicable" to this episode (111). Allen also points to the importance of "doubt" in the development of the protagonist in the Part II, linking his famous words in Ch. 34, "ya no puedo más," with this passage in Ch. 58, "yo hasta agora no sé lo que conquisto a fuerza de mis trabajos," and with the final surrender after his defeat in Barcelona, "me han salido a gallarín mis presunciones," Ch. 76 (v.1, p.43).

As I will discuss in more detail later in this chapter, that doubt portends a series of events that make up the end of the novel: the tragic fall of Don Quixote from his horse in the beach of Barcelona, with the corresponding victory of his opponent; the subsequent and downcast return of the protagonist to his home town, following his oath to the "law of the duel"; and finally his illness, his sudden conversion, the renunciation of knight errantry and his premature death.

But getting back to the saints' images, the brief episode stands out for the way in which Don Quixote manages to merge two distinct beliefs rather casually. On the one hand are the conventions of the books of chivalry, and on the other the spirit of holy war that he attributes to the apostle Santiago and the tableau of saints, figures who appear to him equal parts knights and venerable Christians. One might say that the common element in those two beliefs, knight errantry and holy war, is a violence that has been elevated to the plane of the sacred, thus fulfilling the pattern of what French intellectual René Girard has theorized over the past few decades.

Girard and sacred violence

Cervantes scholarship based on the thought of René Girard tends to favor the model of triangular and mimetic desire that drew the attention of this writer toward *Don Quixote* at the beginning of his career, with the publication of *Mensonge romantique et vérité*

*romanesque* (1961); *Deceit, Desire and the Novel* (1965). Thus for example, Bandera (1975; 1994), El Saffar (1984), A. Rushdy (1993) and Gorfkle & Wlliamsen (1994) have dealt eloquently with the application of that model to various love triangles and female characters in Cervantes' writings.

While such critics take into account Girard's thought in his best known works - notably in *La Violence et le sacré* (1972) and *To double business bound* (1978) - there is still need in my opinion for an analysis of *Don Quixote* from the perspective of the latter part of Girard's theory. That is, not only from the viewpoint of imitation, desire and rivalry, but also from the resolution of that rivalry and its resulting violence through conversion and renunciation. This last element has not garnered Girard as much attention in literary criticism as in religious studies circles, and in any case it was not fully articulated to a wider audience until his book *Je vois Satan tomber comme l'éclair* (1999), *I See Satan Fall like Lightning* (2001).<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> A notable exception would be Girard's early book on Dostoevsky, *Dostoievski, du double à l'unite* (1963), only translated into English decades later: *Resurrection from the Underground* (1997). In an epilogue written especially for the occasion Girard reaffirms his view on how Christian conversion provides the only effective solution to mimetic desire, rivalry and violence. In a nutshell, Dostoevsky's novels such as *Notes from the Underground*, *The Idiot* or *Demons* all constitute more or less negative examples of mimetic desires and obsessions. Girard claims that Dostoevsky views these obsessions with obstacles/models/rivals - usually in romantic entanglements - as a form of demonic possession, so his psychology of the "underground" becomes a type of "demonology." These obsessions however can be exorcised and become stages on the way to spiritual healing, as exemplified by the Legend of the Grand Inquisitor in *The Brothers*



In this chapter I wish to follow Girard's initial intuition from *Deceit, Desire and the Novel* on the relation between Don Quixote and his role model - the Knight Amadis of Gaul - by exploring Cervantes treatment of the four saints in Part II as another example of role-modeling, figures to follow or imitate but also as figures who become obstacles or *skandalon* in the latter Girardian sense that they foster sacred violence. What I find most significant about this episode is how Don Quixote's saintly/chivalric models ultimately lead him to a conversion away from violence in the style of Saint Paul, rather than to a self-perpetuating violent myth like that of Amadis or Santiago. Girard himself uses the narrative of the conversion of Saint Paul as a universal emblem of the renunciation to sacred violence and he even

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*Karamazov*. The Inquisitor's indictment of Christ is exposed as the voice of the devil himself, and its ultimate rejection by Alyosha provides the key to freedom from the underground psychology of previous characters, a step that signals redemption and resurrection.

While the full analysis of Dostoevsky may be more complex and nuanced, it serves our purpose nevertheless to see how it fits with Girard's next book - *I See Satan Fall like Lightning* - which continues some of the same themes he had started in *The Scapegoat* (1986) and delves into the Gospels more deeply. Girard sees a fundamental difference between mythological and biblical texts, with the latter being the only ones capable of exposing rather than promoting sacred violence. The gospels introduce the term *skandalon*, stumbling blocks or obstacles that Satan or those under the spell of mimetic desire continually place in each other's way as part of their rivalries. The opposite of this *skandalon* is the work of the Holy Spirit or Paraclete. The Bible is thus unique in so far as it inspires true "concern for victims," from the prophets all the way up to Jesus. Myths on the other hand mainly function as supporting narratives for sacrificial systems that inexorably lead to mimetic crises and violence.

A good starting point to review Girard's main intellectual contributions can be found in *The Girard Reader* (1996). Also, a recent edition of his book on Dostoevsky (2012) includes in the introduction by his long time translator and editor James G. Williams an outline of Girard's most important contributions of the past decade, including a book in dialogue form on Carl von Clausewitz, *Battling to the End: Politics, War, and Apocalypse* (2007).

chooses that image for the cover of his book (*Je vois Satan tomber comme l'éclair*, 1999). I hope to show that Girard would fully agree with my analysis of Cervantes' episode of the saints in Part II.

But it may first be useful to briefly consider Girard's theory from the beginning. In his original words on Cervantes, the French writer said that all the ideas of the Western novel are "present in germ in *Don Quixote*," and that one of these basic ideas is triangular desire (49-52; 1965). Girard considers this type of desire the origin of all violence between communities and individuals. Whether it takes the form of envy, unbridled jealousy or conflicts between "doubles" - i.e. rivals who compete for the same person or object - triangular desire soon leads to confrontations or what he calls "mimetic" crises.

These mimetic crises, furthermore, can easily turn "contagious" for individuals and entire communities and at that point they can only be resolved by sacred violence, i.e. ritualized sacrifice or the execution of victims, be they specific rivals or groups of enemies. Absent the ability to eliminate a rival, however, mimetic crises may also lead and they often do to the execution of scapegoats.

Such ritualized violence has the quality of becoming more effective the more resolved or unanimous are those who perpetrate it, and the more accepted and deeply rooted is the myth that enables the sacrificial system. In fact, the perfect myth - the perfect crime of sacred violence to put it that way - is the one that remains hidden, codified not as legend or mythology but as legitimate law. And the

transformation of myth into law is often achieved through a legitimizing victory at war, something that can make sacred violence into a self-perpetuating myth.

*Don San Diego Matamoros*

That part of Girard's theory may be useful when reviewing the role and the history of the apostle James - a.k.a. Santiago - in the Spanish collective imagination, and when considering how Cervantes uses this character. The fundamental aspects of the hagiography about Saint James, or "don San Diego Matamoros" as Don Quixote calls him at one point, have been studied by Américo Castro in his chapter "Cristianismo frente al Islam" (104-180), in his influential *España en su Historia: Cristianos, Moros y Judios* (1948).<sup>24</sup> A more recent and exhaustive study of the topic is Francisco Márquez-Villanueva's *Santiago, trayectoria de un mito* (2004), which traces the development of the myth from its origins up to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Both Castro and Márquez-Villanueva show in great detail how the belief in the presence of Santiago in the Iberian Peninsula followed a

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<sup>24</sup> In a brief essay that commemorates the fiftieth anniversary of *España en su historia*, Juan Goytisolo considers Castro's controversial study as surprisingly fresh and up to date: "A diferencia de tantos platos recalentados y repeticiones vendidas por novedades, *Judíos, moros y cristianos* conserva su carga explosiva y justifica el apiñamiento de los misoneístas relegados por Castro al gremio de Los anticuarios. Pues lo que, según sus adversarios, eran meras 'intuiciones' o 'corazonadas' —la cultura mozárabe de Juan Ruiz, el origen judío de Vives, etcétera— son hoy verdades establecidas y apoyadas en documentos y hechos fehacientes" (1998).

pattern of rise and fall that coincided with the medieval period. Some oral traditions from the time of the early Christians held that the apostle James had arrived to Roman dominated Spain to preach the gospel, although they differed on exactly which James it was: James the Great, son of Zebedee, or James the Less, son of Alphaeus.

The more learned tradition was inclined to favor James the Great, also boasting about the fact that he was the first martyr from among the twelve apostles - even before Saint Peter, as described in the *Acts of the Apostles*. This primacy of James over Peter was also bolstered by some apocryphal accounts of the gospel scene of the Transfiguration, in which James alone, without Peter or John, would have been witness to Jesus' revelation on Mount Tabor. Centuries later, when the Cathedral of Santiago was in its apogee of power and influence throughout Christendom, its archbishops came to call themselves Pontifex and some even ordained their own cardinals, something that nevertheless did not take hold or threatened to become schismatic from the See of Peter.

Folk tales about the apostle James in Spain were often creative in their variations from the synoptic gospels. Some thought that Santiago was the actual brother of Jesus, a term that is used in some of the synoptic gospels, but in connection to the younger James, son of Alphaeus. This confusion of homonyms got even more apocryphal by claiming that it was not just any brother of Jesus, but rather his twin brother who had personally come to convert Spain to Christianity.

It is no coincidence in that sense that the feast of Santiago during the Middle Ages was celebrated on March 30th, a date always close to Holy Week and the Passion of Christ.

In any case this Santiago - whether the Great or the Less, or perhaps Medium size - was now according to legend buried in Galicia. Tradition had it that after his martyrdom in Palestine some of his disciples, or perhaps some guardian angels, transported his body back to Spain, by boat, crossing the Strait of Gibraltar and arriving at *finis terrae*, a.k.a. Finisterre, "the end of the earth." His remains were buried near an old Roman town, Iria Flavia, in a place later known as Compostela, which some think derives from *campus stellae* while others think it comes from *compostum*,<sup>25</sup> tomb or burial ground.

To the Christian Church in the times of Visigoth Spain these popular and inconsistent tales were not too credible, and as proof of it Saint Julian, archbishop of Toledo, discredited them further in the year 686 by not accepting the coming of the apostle to the Iberian Peninsula. However this position changed drastically after the Muslim invasion of 711.

The 8th and 9th centuries witnessed the accelerating rise of the belief in Santiago: his coming to Spain, his evangelization, the sudden return of his mortal remains, his enigmatic tomb and now also

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<sup>25</sup> In Latin *compositio* or *compostum* could mean "that which is buried," and from there tomb or cemetery (Mullins, p. 7).

his military support for the cause of Christendom. This was no longer the peaceful apostle that preached the good news of the Gospel, but rather a warrior mounted on horseback, on a white horse to be precise, who would rally Christians by decapitating Moors, memorably in the battle of Clavijo in 822.

This story appears in the *Crónica General* of Alfonso X in the 13th century, but it had already received official sanction much earlier, when Alfonso III (866-910) ordered the construction of a stone temple in Compostela in honor of the Saint.

The belief in Santiago remained solid like the stones of his temple for centuries; stones that incidentally grew and expanded into a major Cathedral and pilgrimage site. The first cracks on that belief, so to speak, started to show more visibly by the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century:

"*Algunas personas doctas y graves, estos años, han puesto dificultad en la venida del apóstol Santiago a España, otros, si no los mismos, en la invención de su sagrado cuerpo*" (120). That was the Spanish version in 1601 of what Jesuit father Juan de Mariana had previously published in Latin in 1592, in his voluminous *Historia de España*.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Mariana had previously framed the problem somewhat more subtly: "Sería largo cuento tratar esto de propósito, y no entiendo sea expediente con semejantes disputas y pleitos alterar las devociones del pueblo, en especial tan asentadas y firmes como ésta es" (*Historia de España*, 1601, lib. VII, cap. V). That is an oblique statement against the opinion of "personas doctas" and in favor of the "devociones del pueblo," supposedly preferring the latter but in fact making them highly questionable. In his edition of Castro's *El Pensamiento de Cervantes* (1925), Rodríguez-Puértolas comments on this passage by Mariana to note its counterreformation style, pointing out

For eight centuries Santiago de Compostela had enjoyed cultural and military prominence in Spain during the Reconquista against the Moors, a symbol of national unity and power. A rich pilgrimage route from France to Santiago blossomed during that time and put a remote corner of the Spanish Atlantic coast in contact with the rest of Europe. It had provided moral support for a crusade against the infidels, it had created its own military order, and as Castro and Márquez-Villanueva point out, it had become a true "mythomachia" that matched and rivaled the Muslim belief in Mahoma and their peregrinations to the Kaaba of Meca.<sup>27</sup>

It appears rather obvious that Santiago's sudden revival and his reincarnation as a "Moor Slayer" prove Girard's insight about how sacred violence often turns into a contagious phenomenon. The Christians, displaced from their land by the invasion of Islam, mounted a counter offensive that was most effective when it was religiously inspired. Such elevation of violence to the level of the

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that Cervantes knew perfectly how to capture the same tone in Part II, Ch. 58, when Don Quixote refers to the "verdaderas historias españolas" about Santiago (n. 53, pp. 310-311).

<sup>27</sup> Márquez-Villanueva points to another interesting parallel between the two mortal enemies. Whereas early Christian saints had been predominantly martyrs - on the receiving end of sacred violence or state sanctioned repression - the shift that took place with Santiago reflects instead the practice of early Islam. The Koran states that the Prophet Muhammed was aided militarily by hosts of angels in red and white turbans who rode black and white horses, as in the battles of Bedr and Honeim. At the battle of Giber the archangel Gabriel apparently aided Mohammed with 3,000 angels, and his horse there was named Hiazum. See Márquez-Villanueva (pp. 199-200) and Charles Lincoln Phifer's *Annals of the earth* (p. 221, n. 442).

sacred would further strengthen with support by successive kings, military orders and other authorities. Castro summarizes thus:

Santiago fue una proyección de la guerra santa musulmana, y un apoyo para la guerra santa que hubieron de oponerle los cristianos; con lo cual el apóstol [...] se convertía en el sumo maestro de las órdenes militares mucho antes de que éstas tuviesen existencia legalizada (127).

The rise of the myth of Santiago may be seen therefore as a direct consequence of the holy war with Islam. This war became an ever more legitimate and well-funded institution as time went on, with the big three military orders (Santiago, Calatrava and Alcántara) and the strengthening narrative of royal decrees, laws, chronicles, etc., that contributed to the perpetuation of the Reconquista.

The decline of the cult to Santiago, on the other hand, took place in a subtler manner throughout the Spanish Golden Age, and it lasted for centuries after the official end of the reconquest of Granada.<sup>28</sup> The most enthusiastic support for the Jacobean myth still came from the military, through the various Spanish conquests of the New World.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> On this point Márquez-Villanueva prefers to speak of an earlier and slower ideological decline or degradation, begun sometime after the 12<sup>th</sup> century when the religious dimension of the apostle's return to Spain became practically lost to its militarization and its transformation into a cash cow by various church factions. He also notes the rapid shift to Marian devotion and pilgrimages in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, especially to the Sanctuary of Guadalupe (pp. 201-202, 271-284).

<sup>29</sup> Morreale points to the *Historia Verdadera* of Díaz del Castillo, in which Hernán Cortés rallies his men with the words "Santiago y a ellos," as in the battle of Tehuacacingo of 1519 (ed. Sáenz de



Santiago's patronage of the holy war against Muslims thus adapted perfectly to the various fronts open by the Spanish imperial project. And yet the reformation that Christianity went through during the 16<sup>th</sup> century eventually started to make a dent on unreformed figures like the holy Christian warrior.

Jesuits and Carmelites managed to dethrone Santiago for some time as official Patron of Spain, in a movement begun at the turn of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Saint Teresa of Avila was proposed as a more appropriate patron for the counterreformation era.<sup>30</sup> After all, the time for

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Santamaría, LXIII, p. 161); Castro (1948, p.160) also notes what Inca Garcilaso wrote in his *Comentarios Reales* about an event in 1535 where Santiago made an apparition "visiblemente delante de los españoles, que lo vieron ellos y los indios, encima de un hermoso caballo blanco" (II, II, 24). Direct references to Santiago are abundant in the chronicles of the conquest of America. The city of Antigua was originally founded in 1524 with the name of "Villa de Santiago de los Caballeros de Guatemala," and its founder Pedro de Alvarado was received into the military order of Santiago shortly thereafter in 1527. Another prominent example can be found in the words that open the founding act of the capital of Chile: "A doce del mes de febrero, año de mil quinientos y cuarenta y un años, fundó esta ciudad a nombre de Dios y de su bendita madre, y del Apóstol Santiago, el muy magnífico señor Pedro de Valdivia. . . y púsole por nombre ciudad de Santiago del Nuevo Extremo" (Morales, 179, 258). In the Castilian mind of the 16th century Santiago continued to be considered a faithful intercessor against all types of infidel enemies, whether they were Muslim, Aztecs or Araucanians.

<sup>30</sup> The debate over the official patronage of Spain went back and forth for some time, and there was even a period of co-patronage by Saint Teresa and Santiago between 1617 and 1629. The matter was ultimately decided in favor of the apostle, a fact that was partly due to the intercession of Francisco de Quevedo - a knight of the Order of Santiago himself - who wrote a letter about this to king Philip IV in 1628. (Castro, pp. 176-179). For a detailed blow by blow account of this debate of the official patronage see Márquez-Villanueva and his close reading of Quevedo's writings, along with previous apologists of

slaying Moors seemed to have passed and all that was left were the *Moriscos*. And in the end these were not to be killed or persecuted so much as expelled. Santiago de Compostela as a pilgrimage site would also see a gradual decline in popularity that carried important economic repercussions.<sup>31</sup> Christian spirituality appeared to go through an internal evolution that threw into imbalance the perfect equilibrium between myth and sacred violence that had made politically viable the Spanish Reconquest and Empire. The new era was thus one of crisis and decline that became the ultimate fate of the Habsburgs.

#### Saints and Knights

The relevance of this historical evolution to Cervantes can be seen in the fact that the myth of Santiago was being openly debated at the time the author wrote his masterpiece *Don Quixote de la Mancha* (1605, 1615). If we return now to the path to Barcelona we may see more clearly the use that Cervantes made of the encounter between the illustrious Don Quixote and the "illustrious don San Diego."

The laborers who carry the four wood reliefs kindly agree to uncover them before the inquisitive Don Quixote. So one by one there appear before his eyes Saint George slaying a dragon, Saint Martin of Tours

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Santiago, and the official response from the crown and the ecclesiastical officials in Compostela and in the Carmelite order (2010; pp. 335-355).

<sup>31</sup> Castro, 148ff. and 167ff.

splitting his cape with a beggar, the apostle James on horseback and the apostle Paul fallen from his horse. The medieval fame of Saint George as patron of England and Aragon followed a trajectory of popular belief and fable not unlike that of Santiago.<sup>32</sup> The commentary by Don Quixote is brief, but praiseful: "este caballero fue uno de los mejores andantes que tuvo la milicia divina: llamóse don San Jorge y fue además defendedor de doncellas. Veamos esa otra." (1096).

Saint Martin, patron of France, receives a similarly brief though significant review. Don Quixote describes him first and foremost as a knight, even though he omits this time the title of "don." Meanwhile Sancho trivializes and mocks the halfhearted charity of a saint that is only able to part with half of his cape. But it would be more appropriate to analyze this passage in the context of the following two portraits. The narrator continues:

Riose don Quijote y pidió que quitasen otro lienzo, debajo del cual se descubrió la imagen del Patrón de las Españas a caballo, la espada ensangrentada, atropellando moros y pisando cabezas; y en viéndola dijo don Quijote. - Éste sí que es caballero, y de las

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<sup>32</sup> The *Legenda Aurea* by Jacobus Voragine (1265) inspired a great deal of devotion in Saint George during the Middle Ages. The biography of the saint in that collection describes how he rescued a princess from the clutches of a dragon and then slew it (vol. III, ch. 58), a scene that henceforth became iconic in pictorial representations, including in this passage from Cervantes. The text by Voragine was considered the most widely and influential of the Middle Ages, only second to the Bible. Its quasi-fantasy style and unsophisticated, rude Medieval Latin later made it an easy target for reformists and humanists during the Renaissance (*Columbia Encyclopedia*). This reference by Cervantes could thus be considered one of the many humanist approaches to Saint George and the *Golden Legend*.

escuadras de Cristo: éste se llama don San Diego Matamoros, uno de los más valientes santos y caballeros que tuvo el mundo y tiene agora el cielo.

Luego descubrieron otro lienzo y pareció que encubría la caída de San Pablo del caballo abajo, con todas las circunstancias que en el retablo de su conversión suelen pintarse. Cuando le vido tan al vivo, que dijeran que Cristo le hablaba y Pablo le respondía. - Éste, dijo don Quijote, fue el mayor enemigo que tuvo la Iglesia de Dios nuestro Señor en su tiempo y el mayor defensor suyo que tendrá jamás: caballero andante por la vida y santo a pie quedo por la muerte, trabajador incansable del Señor, doctor de las gentes, a quien sirvieron de escuelas los cielos y de catedrático y maestro que le enseñase el mismo Jesucristo (1096).

Cervantes scholars since Américo Castro have observed the juxtaposition of the three saints on horseback, in a military posture and ready for battle, with the figure of Saint Paul fallen from his horse, disarmed and in a contemplative ecstasy.<sup>33</sup> In this scene, as tradition has it, Saul of Tarsus was on his way to Damascus when he was struck by a vision and fell off his horse. Cervantes dwells on this detail as one of those "circunstancias" that "en su retablo suelen pintarse," i.e. the expression of the apostle "cuando le vido tan al vivo, que dijeran que Cristo le hablaba y Pablo le respondía." This is the moment when Saint Paul claims he heard the famous

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<sup>33</sup> Castro (1925, p. 294; 1974, p. 141) emphasizes the fundamental difference between the first three saints and Saint Paul. Morreale among others continues on the same line (ed. Rico, v.2, p. 212), as well as Márquez-Villanueva (1975, p. 168), and Pressberg (p. 221).

question: "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" (Acts, 9:4; Gal, 1:13,23; 1 Cor, 15:9).

The implication drawn from Cervantes' ekphrasis is similar to those typically made about this image of Saint Paul fallen from his horse. That is to say, the former "son of Pharisees" who showed pride in his persecuting career against the early Christians - notably during the stoning of St. Stephen - would now radically abandon those slaughters and begin a new career as a preacher of the gospel.

But we will return to this point further ahead. What stands out the most in this passage and appears to catch the eye of Don Quixote is Saint Paul's different brand of Christianity - "*caballero andante por la vida*" and "*santo a pie quedo por la muerte*" - as opposed to Santiago - "*caballero... de los más valientes... que tiene agora el cielo.*" That is to say, Pablo remains dead once he is dead, and having fallen from his horse he stays put, "*a pie quedo,*" he doesn't start walking again, mounting any horses or cutting off anyone's head. Besides the contrast with Paul, Cervantes' use of Santiago and Saint George in this passage could be seen from the perspective of the reformist and Erasmian trends of the 16<sup>th</sup> century as pertained to popular pilgrimages and public veneration of relics. In particular there is one of Erasmus' dialogues entitled *Peregrinatio reliogionis ergo*, in which two friends - Menedemus and Ogygius - discuss on their way to Canterbury the pilgrimages that one of them has been doing throughout Europe.

Erasmus always had great interest in Greek culture, and it was common for him to introduce the names of characters with some specific Greek meaning, something that at the time would only be available to a small number of erudite intellectuals who knew Greek. The name Menedemum means "he who stays home," while Ogygius means "simple mind" or even "stupid." Ogygius has just returned from Santiago de Compostela, where he has been several times before, and he is carrying rosary beads and pilgrim's shells hanging from every piece of garment. The tone of irony by Erasmus conveys the idea that trips to Santiago had come to be seen by many as equivalent to theme parks nowadays, that is, an almost pure form tourism and entertainment.

The cynicism of the main character centers around his friend's "simple mind" beliefs and in particular on the "relics" that they find in Canterbury, among which the most celebrated was the head of Saint Thomas Becket, and the arm - still bloody - of Saint George. Menedemus stands back in disgust from the latter when somebody offers it for him to kiss.<sup>34</sup>

### *True Spanish Histories*

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<sup>34</sup> See Thompson about the names of these two characters, in *Ten Colloquies of Erasmus* (intro. Ch.VI). As Hayden White has noted, many relics had become during the early modern period an important source of revenue for Cathedrals, abbeys and local parishes, and therefore had attained the status of high value commodities: "The emperor of Germany, on one occasion, asked as collateral for the construction of an urban market the arm of Saint George" (ch. XIII, IV).

Another detail worth pointing out is the irony with which Cervantes highlights the figure of Santiago a few lines ahead. Sancho insists on the topic of the apostle and wants to know about the popular expression said in connection with the Matamoros:

– Santiago y cierra, España. ¿Es por ventura España abierta y de modo que es menester cerrarla, o qué ceremonia es esa?

– Simplísimo eres, Sancho, respondió don Quijote, y mira que este gran caballero de la cruz bermeja háselo dado Dios a España por patrón y amparo suyo, especialmente en los rigurosos trances que con los moros los españoles han tenido, y, así, le invocan y llaman como a defensor suyo en todas las batallas que acometen, y muchas veces le han visto visiblemente en ellas derribando, atropellando, destruyendo y matando los agarenos escuadrones; y desta verdad te pudiera traer muchos ejemplos que en las verdaderas historias españolas se cuentan (1098-1099).

This passage might sound especially humorous to the readers of Part I of the novel, as it recalls the heated debate in which Don Quixote engaged with the priest (I, 49-50), when the latter denounced vehemently the historical truth of the books of chivalry. Don Quixote responded indignantly but smartly, asking how could these revered books ever have been full of lies, when they appear “impresos con licencia de los reyes y con aprobación de aquellos a quien se remitieron” (568).

The reputation of Santiago as a Moor Slayer, it should be noted, had been chronicled in “true Spanish histories” for centuries, and not

merely approved by kings but even written by some of the kings themselves.<sup>35</sup> There is also the matter of the words "verdadera historia" and how they evoke a particularly Cervantine style, given that they also constitute the explicit guarantee given by the "editor" at the beginning of the novel, and by its main "author" Cide Hamete Benengeli.<sup>36</sup>

The most common accusation against books of chivalry tended to focus on that fundamental issue, i.e. whether they were written about real people, as they would ostentatiously claim, or about fictitious and fabulous characters as was most often the case, thereby degrading their own title as "histories." In any case, what needed to be protected was not just any true history but the sacred history of the Bible. Books of chivalry were prejudicial precisely because they could confuse simple people - for instance the Native Americans in the New World - who would not know how to distinguish between the true miracles of Scripture and the fantasy filled adventures of knights in

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<sup>35</sup> These chronicles had been widely disseminated by the time of Cervantes and of the Second Part of Don Quixote. Ever since the now famous *Crónica General* de Alfonso X the Wise.

<sup>36</sup> Not only does the first author/editor repeat ad nauseam the topic of "verdadera historia" after the first chapter, but also Cide Hamete continues the conceit, first at the end of Part I, Ch.15. Various other characters mention at special moments of their story telling those same words: Dorotea (I, Ch.29), Don Quixote (II, Ch.8), and perhaps more significantly the puppeteer in that unforgettable episode at the Inn (II, Ch.26). So by the time the reader gets to Don Quixote's mention of "verdaderas historias" in connection with knights and saints of Part II, Ch. 58, that phrase alone sounds alarm bells.



the books of chivalry.<sup>37</sup>

Besides the lies of chivalry as an affront and abuse of real miracles, this was a genre of literature that had fallen in disrepute from a classical viewpoint. Critics disregarded it as poorly written on account of its lack of Aristotelian unity, decorum and verisimilitude. For all those reasons, the phrase "verdadera historia" coming from Don Quixote in this episode of the saints should give us pause to consider the Cervantine irony and his approach to the myth of Santiago. The saint appearing in the midst of battle constituted for many a true miracle and not a fantastic episode from a book of chivalry.

Likewise Saint George slaying a dragon, an actual fire-spitting dragon, and rescuing a princess from its clutches was considered real and sacred truth. By qualifying these scenes and characters as "verdaderas historias" and "defendedor de doncellas" respectively, Cervantes seems to undermine the credibility of those saints, and the sacralisation of

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<sup>37</sup> Eisenberg provides a very complete and annotated monograph on the literary and social role of the books of chivalry (ch. 1), and Hahn deals explicitly with the topic of false miracles as an abuse of religion (pp. 10-24 and passim).

On the topic of knights of chivalry as a real historical phenomenon one should also note the recent study by Teófilo Ruiz, *A King's Travels: Festive Traditions in Late Medieval and Early Modern Spain* (2012), where he follows and expands on the classic study of Martín de Riquer, *Caballeros andantes españoles* (1967). Ruiz details the very tangible impact that chivalry continued to have through the Spanish Golden Age, such as the influence of the *Amadis* on Philip II's martial displays at court and other festivities, in what he calls the exercise of "fictional warfare" (see chapters 6 and 7).

violence that they represent.<sup>38</sup>

*Miles Christi*: Soldier of Christ

What has not yet been studied in depth in connection with this episode is how the figure of Saint Martin (c. 316-397) does not really fit so much with Santiago or Saint George, but it does instead with Saint Paul, and in that sense it could be taken as a transitional figure. The biography of the saint is based mainly on the work of his contemporary and disciple Sulpicius Severus (c. 360-420), whose elegant classical Latin and historical chronicles gained him the title of "Christian Salust." The work of Sulpicius was very well known from its origin and during the Middle Ages,<sup>39</sup> and it is through him that we learn of the anecdote with the beggar, a major point of inflection in his life between service to war and the military vs. service to God alone.

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<sup>38</sup> The Church still continued for three centuries and through various general councils before it officially adopted a more skeptical view of Saint George. The liturgical reformation of the Calendar of saints that originated in Vatican II finally produced this new *Calendarium Santorum* issued by Paul VI on February 14<sup>th</sup>, 1969. As it was expected, this project found serious difficulties in corroborating the existence of various saints, and in cases like that of Saint George they also could not determine any concrete facts about his life. Even though the veneration to the saint was not outright abolished, it was permanently relegated to the lowest possible rank in the Calendar, as a local and optional commemoration. Much time had passed since the days of the *Golden Legend*, or since the establishment of the papal order of Saint George under Paul III (1534-1549), who reigned during the year in which Cervantes was born (Gleason, 145).

<sup>39</sup> Petrarch was, among others, a great admirer of the *Vita Sancti Martini*.

This is precisely the moment chosen by El Greco for his famous painting of 1597 that Cervantes would have been able to see in Toledo. The *Vita Sancti Martini* frames the episode by explaining that as an adolescent Martinus discovered the Christian religion right before going into the Roman military, so he never had the chance to receive baptism. During that time of transition, or catechuminate, he was in Amiens with the army one afternoon when he saw and helped a beggar that needed something to keep him warm, so he split his cape and gave him half. This act of charity prompted a vision that very night during his sleep, in which Christ himself wrapped in his cape thanked him for the favor.

The significant part of this episode in the life of Martin is how it finally pushed him not only to receive baptism, but also to decide to leave the military.<sup>40</sup> The narrative of his dream and conversion then give way to some drama, as Sulpicius tells of the moment when Martin decides to ask for a discharge, right in the middle of a barbarian invasion of Roman Gaul. There was a meeting of soldiers with the general who would later become emperor Julian. During the traditional payment to soldiers, Martin rejected his salary from the hand of

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<sup>40</sup> This pattern of radical conversion stemming from a random occurrence is similar to Augustine's episode where he hears a child singing the words "tolle, lege" in his *Confessions*, a work written in the years 396-98 just around the death of Saint Martin in 397, when Sulpicius decided to publish his work. In spite of the coincidence in dates, no one has established a direct influence of one writer on the other (Peebles, pp. 80, 92).

Julian himself, explaining:

“Allow me from now on to be a soldier of Christ. Let the man who serves you receive your reward. I however am a soldier of Christ and it is not allowed for me to fight” (IV, 3-4).<sup>41</sup>

After being called a coward Martin replies that he is more than willing to go into battle the next day, but on the condition that he will bear no arms except for the sign of the cross. This idea does not sit very well with the general, who directly throws him in jail. The next day however something extraordinary happens: the barbarians change plans unexpectedly and decide to withdraw from battle. Sulpicius attributes great significance to this episode and surrounds it with the same air of mystery, devotion and piety that adorn his other miracles of Saint Martin. But Sulpicius' narrative betrays inconsistencies here as in elsewhere, such as the fact that Martin's encounter with Julian would not have been possible chronologically.<sup>42</sup>

Nonetheless, what is important to keep in mind for our purposes is that modern historiography confirms the existence of a Roman citizen named Martin, a soldier who left the military after receiving Christian baptism and would then go on to become bishop of Tours in Gaul. He was a prominent public figure as well as a contemplative monk and a recognized pioneer of the monastic life in the West. Such historical recognition thus separates him markedly from cases like

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<sup>41</sup> My own translation from the original *Vita Sancti Martini* (Digital Library Intratext).

<sup>42</sup> Peebles, pp. 89-92.

Saint George or the Spanish Santiago. Moreover, the anti-military tone of his biography also separates him from them. The irony in that regard is that less than one century after his death the Franks - the barbarians who invaded the Roman Gaul region and were led by Clovis I (c.466-511) - would choose Saint Martin as their intercessor and the patron for their new nation, invoking his name in battle against Germans and Visigoths.<sup>43</sup>

Saint Martin was thus linked to a French and anti-Visigoth sentiment or national identity, just as Santiago was absorbed by a Christian Iberian and anti-Muslim national identity. The main difference, of course, is that Saint Martin did not miraculously appear riding on horseback to behead anyone's enemies. His figure continued to be represented by the charitable gesture that initiated his conversion and baptism. Both saints however share the fact of having been turned into icons at the service of military power, a very clear form of institutionalized and sacred violence.

Ironically, Saint Martin has come down in the Christian tradition as a patron of knights and soldiers, among other things, when it would have been more consistent perhaps to make him the patron of conscientious objectors. As Sulpicius observed, during the time that he had been

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<sup>43</sup> Clovis I's victory at the battle of Voillé in 507 - now believed to have happened in Voullon, near Poitiers - against the Visigoth King Alarico II was directly and solemnly attributed to the intercession of Saint Martin. Alarico's death all but guaranteed the advance of the Franks and the subsequent displacement of the Visigoths to the Iberian Peninsula (Mitchell, *Encyclopedia Britannica*).

baptized but was still serving in the Roman army, Martinus was said to be a soldier "only in name:" *solo licet nomine, militavit*. The hagiographer conveys the idea that Martin had been transformed interiorly and it would be wrong to think that he "militated," at least for the Romans.

In the same text, as noted above, Martin explains that he is in fact a soldier, of sorts: *Christi ego miles sum*. For centuries during the Middle Ages there would exist this concept of the Christian knight who wages war for Christ and his Church in the Crusades. But the interesting thing in the case of Saint Martin is the play on words that can be made with the idea of *miles Christi*, since the name Martinus in Latin also means warrior, soldier or "belonging to Mars," the god of war. Therefore the saint was literally only a soldier in name, that is, *miles* or *Martinus* of Christ.<sup>44</sup>

This is the kind of semiotic detail - the question of what there is behind a name - that tends to call powerfully one's attention while reading Cervantes. The fact that he insists in highlighting the title of "saints and knights" could well mean that he was aware of the *Vita Sancti Martini*, or at least of the episode referring to the anecdote

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<sup>44</sup> Even though Sulpicius does not spell out the meaning of the name of his character, there is a certain tension around this point throughout the text, something that merits further attention. On the one hand there is the role of Martinus as soldier, and on the other his self-baptism before Julian where he discards his own name and calls himself a *miles Christi* - ready for battle while wearing only a cross - *in nomine Domine*.

in question. This is what Don Quixote and Sancho speculate and joke about when looking at the Saint:

Este caballero también fue de los aventureros cristianos, y creo que fue más liberal que valiente, como lo puedes echar de ver, Sancho, en que está partiendo la capa con el pobre y le da la mitad; y sin duda debía de ser entonces invierno, que, si no, él se la diera toda, según era de caritativo. No debió de ser eso dijo Sancho, sino que se debió de atener al refrán que dicen: que para dar y tener, seso es menester. Riose don Quijote... (1096).

Sulpicius specifically pointed out the fact that it was winter, just as Don Quixote does in this passage. The hagiographer also mentions how upon seeing Martin sharing his cape with the beggar, the other Roman soldiers laughed at him. Sancho and Don Quixote also laugh, although for different reasons. If the Romans ridiculed the sudden charity of the soldier, Sancho and Don Quixote think he fell short by only giving up half of his cape.

The coincidence of laughter is suggestive nonetheless. Cervantes seems to be aware that a central element of the scene of Saint Martin is how it reflects a certain ambiguity over the saint's character. A soldier who breaks ranks - in the literal sense of not remaining in line - and cares for a beggar in need more than for his military discipline, is no longer playing his role of soldier and keeping decorum. The Roman army was not precisely known for its humanitarian concerns. On the other hand, a saint who only cares for the poor halfway or halfheartedly is also failing the virtue of charity in its strict

evangelical sense.

The laughter he receives from either side comes from the suspicions it arises on both groups, Christians and Romans. His being and yet not being fully a member of either group, soldier or saint, but rather a "santo a medias," fits with what some anthropologists in the tradition of Van Gennep term a marginal or "liminal" state. This is a transitional stage between two social groups that occupies the conflicted space where full separation from one has not occurred and yet full incorporation in the other has not either. In this case the two social groups would be the Roman pagans and the Christians. Saint Martin then becomes a key figure when considering Don Quixote's own liminal status between sacred violence and its opposite, the renunciation of it.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> The classic study *Les Rites de Passage* (1909) by Van Gennep explores topics such as the "liminal" state of transition mainly in the context of rites that emerged in primitive societies (ch. 1, 6, 9). For a brief introduction to the topic, see Turner (*Celebration*, intro., pp. 11-30, as well as his chapter in *The Ritual Process*, "Liminality and Communitas," pp. 94-130). Myerhoff considers the impact of marginality and liminality in modern society, where individuals have developed their own personal and family rituals in rejection of other traditional rituals imposed from the outside ("Rites of Passage: Process and Paradox," in *Celebration*, pp. 109-145. A specific application of Van Gennep's anthropology to the literature of Spain's Golden Age is Anne Cruz's study on *Lazarillo de Tormes*, "Charity, Poverty and Liminality" (pp. 3-38), in which poverty and the social role of the *pícaro* are revealed as a constant source of liminality and marginalization. In this context one could consider the parallel between Saint Martin and the beggar on the one hand - each with their corresponding marginal status - and the figure of Don Quixote, who is also undergoing his own liminal or transitional stage, often making up his own rites and ceremonies as he goes along.



Heaven suffers violence

By looking successively through the eyes of Don Quixote at the various traditions behind each of the four saints, therefore, we may see how the deeper irony surrounding the veracity of their existence lies in the fact that the knight himself does not worry about it in the least. All books that bear in the title the words "history of" appear to him equally true and worthy, just as all four saints in the wood reliefs appear to him equally real.

Cervantes scholarship has gravitated in the past towards this issue of truth vs. fiction, or history vs. fable, that arises from the images of the different saints.<sup>46</sup> But what has not received proper attention is the perspectivism present in this episode with respect to a deeper duality, one that deals with the representation of violence. That is to say, besides ignoring the historical controversy over Santiago, Don Quixote also ignores the contrast between two radically opposed models of sanctity, one violent and the other peaceful. The lines immediately following the description of Saint Martin reveal better than anywhere else the quixotic logic about the saints:

Estos santos y caballeros profesaron lo que yo profeso, que es el

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<sup>46</sup> This is fundamentally Castro's approach to the episode of Santiago, i.e. that Cervantes likes to play with the irony of a dual perspective, i.e. the saint's historical and non-historical background. Spitzer elaborates on the topic of linguistic and narrative perspectivism in his classic essay "Linguistic Perspectivism in the *Don Quixote*" (1948). See also Allen (pp. 17-23) for a brief presentation of perspectivism in Cervantes.

ejercicio de las armas, sino que la diferencia que hay entre mí y ellos es que ellos fueron santos y pelearon a lo divino, y yo soy pecador y peleo a lo humano. Ellos conquistaron el cielo a fuerza de brazos, porque el cielo padece fuerza, y yo hasta agora no sé lo que conquisto a fuerza de mis trabajos; pero si mi Dulcinea del Toboso saliese de los que padece, mejorándose mi ventura y adobándoseme el juicio, podría ser que encaminase mis pasos por mejor camino del que llevo (1097).

As I pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, such a lapidary statement by Don Quixote represents the first serious doubt about his profession of knight errantry. Using a passage from the gospel of Matthew (11:12), "heaven suffers violence," the protagonist seems to be saying that these saints were sufficiently violent - "*a fuerza de brazos*" and the use of their sword - to conquer heaven, while he is currently lacking the strength even to free Dulcinea.

If one were to read those words quickly and literally one might reasonably conclude that Don Quixote admits to not being as strong and therefore in the same league as his role models, be they Amadís, Saint Martin or Santiago. But then one would still wonder how he can conflate such opposite models of sanctity. By elevating the four knights equally to the category of venerable saints, he is drawing a sole distinction between some superior divine strength and another inferior, human one proper of sinners like him. But the distinction that should be drawn instead is between Santiago and Saint George on the one hand - i.e. models who turn military and chivalric violence

into something sacred - and Saint Martin and Saint Paul on the other, i.e. models who renounce such violence also on sacred grounds.

The thinking of Cervantes that transpires from this episode could then be seen as quite close to that of Girard or even Erasmus, that is to say, a critique of the type of Christianity that is not only consumed with fantastic miracles, relics or public displays of religiosity such as pilgrimages and festivals; but also a critique of a pernicious and violent ideology that provides moral support to slay Moors and persecute infidels.

If we look closely at the specific words of the gospel of Matthew in that context, we may see that they come from a passage with a similar tension between a violent and a peaceful interpretation of what Christ's message should be about. Such duality between violence and its renunciation in fact appears as the most significant link between the two texts. A translation that follows closely the original reads:

Y desde los días de Juan el Bautista hasta ahora, el reino de los cielos sufre violencia, y los violentos lo conquistan por la fuerza. Porque todos los profetas y la ley profetizaron hasta Juan. Y si queréis aceptarlo, él es Elías, el que había de venir. El que tiene oídos, que oiga. (Mateo, 11: 12-15) [versión Biblia de Las Américas].

These words sound almost deliberately ambiguous, and a philological analysis would be useful if only to understand the root of that ambiguity. Cervantes was most probably acquainted with the Latin

Vulgate version of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, which had benefited greatly from humanist philological studies. The humanist Vulgate had been purged of medieval editing and copying mistakes and it had been returned to a closer version of the original Greek and Hebrew manuscripts.

The *Políglota Complutense* Bible editions of 1514 and 1522, the *Novum Instrumentum* edition by Erasmus of 1516 and the *Vulgata Sixto Clementina* of 1592 had established the same Greek translation, which came to be known as the *Textus Receptus*.<sup>47</sup> Establishing one fixed text however was no guarantee of establishing one sole interpretation, as the constant religious battles of the Reformation demonstrate. In any case the specific line from Saint Matthew's gospel that Cervantes would have read is free from textual variations, so the Greek and Latin versions looked like this, along with a close Spanish translation:

βασιλεια των ουρανων βιαζεται και βιασται αρπαζουσιν αυτην.

*regnum coelorum vim patitur et violenti rapiunt illud.*

el reino de los cielos sufre violencia, y los violentos lo conquistan por la fuerza.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> See Figari on the various versions of the Vulgate (pp. 67-102). The term "textum receptum" to designate the common Greek version was not used until the 1633 edition by Daniel Heinsius.

<sup>48</sup> A 16<sup>th</sup> century Spanish version of the Bible, begun by reformers like Casiodoro de Reina (Basilea, 1569), revised and published by Cipriano de Valera (Amsterdam, 1602), is known until today as the *Edición Antigua Reina-Valera*. The verse is translated thus: "Desde los días de Juan el Bautista hasta ahora, al reino de los cielos se hace fuerza, y los valientes lo arrebatan" (Mateo, 11:12). In any case all these Spanish editions - along with the previous ones by Juan Pérez de Pineda, Francisco de Encinas or Juan de Valdés - were based on the

The words *βιάζεται* and *βιάσται* are equivalent to the Latin *vim patitur* and *violenti* respectively. The Greek root *βια* translates to Latin as *vis* (*vim* in this case), but in both (*bia*, *vis*) there still exists a certain ambiguity, or what we could call a double semantic value: 1) as mental or physical force, with a connotation of virtue, or 2) as a violent action against someone, an attack that is not usually virtuous. In fact, uses of the verb *biazw* (to attack) in Greek literature take place mainly in the sense of a violent, malicious and prejudicial attack, not as an act of courage. The only other place of the gospel where the word *biazw* is used does not shed much light (Luc 16:16), since it narrates the exact same episode from Saint Matthew.<sup>49</sup>

What becomes even more interesting, and revealing in its own way, is how not only the semantics but also the grammar of these terms is bathed in ambiguity, oscillating between two different verbal modes. *Patitur* is one of those deponent Latin verbs that are passive in form but active in meaning: "to suffer" in this case. The Greek *βιάζεται* is similar. It is a verbal form of *biazw* that can be conjugated both in the middle and passive voice and it means to suffer an attack or

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same Greek edition by Erasmus and originated in the same spirit of reformation and translation of sacred texts to the vernacular, which immediately made them the object of prohibition and persecution by the Inquisition. As with previous editions in Latin and Greek, the differences in terminology in the Spanish are not as important as the differences in interpretation. The axis of Erasmus-Valdés-Cervantes must be seen in this context.

<sup>49</sup> The text of the Textus Receptus can be found online at [greeknewtestament.com](http://greeknewtestament.com), or in the volume *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, by Bauer & Danker.

injury. This active/passive ambiguity of the verbal mode gets transferred to the noun *violentia*, which comes from *vis* + *latus(a)*, that is, force carried out or put into effect.

The violence or forces of nature invoke this more neutral, passive or impersonal meaning of the term violence. In some languages like English natural disasters are even characterized as "acts of God," which makes it impossible - indeed in any language - to seek legal remedy against such acts as it would imply having to sue God. This example goes to show how in the plane of human morality and intentionality violent actions normally require a personal subject, a transitive verb and a direct object.

So at least in romance languages "violence" can be defined as the imposition of an injury or harm, material or otherwise, upon something or someone. And as such, then, "violence" has developed moral connotations that are at best neutral, like the violence of an earthquake, but in most cases negative, i.e. the immorality of those who use violence against others. The term "force" on the other hand - while stemming etymologically from the same Latin root as violence, i.e. *vis* - evolved on a more virtuous path in the dictionary, connoting such things as "vigor, valor, robustness, constancy, courage, effort."<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> *Diccionario de la Real Academia*, ed. 2001.

The *Diccionario de Autoridades* from the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, however, which reflected linguistic usage of the Spanish Golden Age, shows a certain interchangeability in the semantic value of the terms "force" and "violence." Thus, force is defined among other things as the "violence exercised against someone." And the term violence can be found in definitions that range from the already mentioned natural disasters, to human actions that employ physical force, to other more subtle meanings that still allow for the interchangeability of the two terms. So for instance violence is defined as: "force with which someone is made to do something against his will," or "force used against the natural state of something," or "action against natural conduct or against justice." But the most interesting definition by far is this: "violence is also taken to be the sinister interpretation or application of some text."<sup>51</sup>

This would be a good point to return to the verse of Matthew's gospel and the particular logic that Don Quixote applies to it. The knight uses the phrase "*padece fuerza*" while a closer translations would be "*sufre violencia*." But, as we have seen, the two terms are somewhat interchangeable and in that sense they are both correct so that would not be a problem. The key however is in the meaning attached to each of those terms - whether *bia*, *vis*, *violentia* or *fuerza* - in its

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<sup>51</sup> This last definition is fascinating because it resembles what literary critics centuries later have also identified as a type of linguistic violence, such as in the act of misinterpreting and mistranslating a text. See for instance Venuti in his chapter "Invisibility" (pp. 1-42).

specific context.

On the one hand we have an interpretation that might be called the Gospel according to Don Quixote: heaven "*padece fuerza*," suffers force, which is the same force lacking in his arm but very present in the arm of Santiago. This is a kind of force "*a lo divino*" and therefore sacred, but it certainly seems somewhat sinister when it is linked to the indiscriminate slaying of Moors. On the other hand there is the "*fuerza*" of Saint Martin and Saint Paul, who conquer heaven but not by fighting infidels or waging the sword. Thus they invite an interpretation of "*violentos*" that is rather more benign and less sinister.

Violence, not of works but of faith

It was precisely a Spanish humanist from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Juan de Valdés (1509-1541), who approached this particular instance of the term violence in Matthew's gospel. Valdés was considered one of the most prominent intellectuals of his time, a follower of Erasmus and a student of Greek in the then young Universidad Complutense. His brother Alfonso was also a disciple of Erasmus and there is private correspondence between him and the Dutch humanist that has come down to us. As Marcel Bataillon reminds us (360), Juan went into higher education and the study of philology at the age of 25, after leaving behind the frivolities of books of chivalry.



Occupying the non-orthodox wing of Spanish intellectual life - which is to say, he was persecuted by the Inquisition - he enjoyed writing on theological issues and often times circulated manuscripts without official approval: out of print and of *imprimatur*.<sup>52</sup> For instance we have his commentaries to the epistles of Saint Paul, the Psalms and, more pertinent to this study, a translation and commentary in Spanish of the *Evangelio según San Mateo*, the only one of the four gospels he chose to that end.

Whether or not Cervantes was able to read this particular text by Valdés, one thing we can say is that both authors displayed a finely tuned Erasmian education and sensibility, and it may be useful to see how Valdés tackled the specific issue of the gospel of Matthew from the viewpoint of that intellectual tradition.

Valdés translates the original (*bia, vis*) directly as "*violencia*" instead of "*fuerza*," and then he proceeds to assign to that term the exact opposite meaning of the one used by Don Quixote:

"El reino de los cielos es violentado, y violentos lo arrebatan."  
A donde diciendo "es violentado," entiende: es saqueado, es tomado por fuerza; y puédese decir que los santos del mundo, queriendo y procurando justificarse por sus obras, pretenden entrar por pacto en el reino de los cielos, pero no entran, porque no se da a pacto, y así no entran en él sino los violentos, los que lo toman por

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<sup>52</sup> [Note Valdés family and the Converso Jewish link, as mentioned by Henry Kamen; borrow note from chapter 3 of this dissertation.]

fuerza, no de obras sino de fé, consistiendo el ser violentos en que cautivan sus entendimientos, sus juicios y sus discursos á la obediencia de la fé cristiana, con la cual se entra en el reino de los cielos. . . los gentiles, no curando de pacto [como los hebreos], ateniéndose á la fuerza de la fé, lo toman por combate y lo saquean.<sup>53</sup>

One thing that seems clear to Valdés is that the violence mentioned by Jesus is not meant to be that of conventional military force or holy war, but rather its opposite. He links "*violentado*" and "*fuerza*" to the strength required to bring one's will and understanding under the obedience of faith.

That definition of violence actually resembles one of the entries in the dictionary of *Autoridades* that we saw above: "force with which someone is made to do something against his will." The big difference is of course that Valdés speaks of a strictly spiritual force, an interior or intransitive action, one that evokes the virtue of inner struggle against sin and the *devotio intima* of Erasmus. The other type of violence, then, appears to be not internal but external, not intransitive but transitive, directed outward towards others, for sacred motives: the imposition of faith, coercion towards baptism, the persecution of heretics, infidels, etc.

The theological ramifications of this statement by Valdés should also

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<sup>53</sup> *El evangelio según San Mateo*, Capítulo XI. Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes.

be seen from the point of view of the protestant reformation, since Valdés insists so explicitly that this violence should not be expressed "by works, but rather by faith," in order to conquer heaven and attain salvation.

Such distinction undoubtedly refers to the famous words of the epistle of Saint Paul on which fell most of the theoretical basis for the reformation: "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the works of the law" (Rom, 3:28). As Erasmus or Valdés would be able to appreciate in the original Greek, the term "works of the law," *εργον νομου*, point to the various rites and laws proper to the Jews, such as circumcision, which Saint Paul expressly disavowed in his writings in favor of a common Christian faith for both groups, Jews and Gentiles.

The reform movement of the 16<sup>th</sup> century in turn interpreted these "works of the law" to be the corrupt and widespread practices of the Roman hierarchy, as well as practices like pilgrimages, the cult of relics and saints, etc., which were now to be purged and phased out of the Church in the same way that Hebrew customs had been dispensed with by the early Christians.

A decisive step by Martin Luther in this process was his controversial translation of Saint Paul's epistle to the Romans, where he inserted the adjective "sola" to qualify the noun "fide," turning that one verse into a reformation slogan, "sola fide," that is to say,

salvation comes not just through faith, but through faith alone, without need for the works of the law.<sup>54</sup>

As we may see, then, that brief and somewhat ambiguous passage from Matthew's gospel conceals a deeper meaning than what it might at first appear - an Erasmian reformist meaning to be precise - and its emergence in Cervantes' text should be considered from that deeper perspective.

In the gospel Jesus mentions John the Baptist and speaks of a "kingdom of heaven" that had previously been promised exclusively to the People of Israel by the "prophets and the law." After John the Baptist however the rules change, so that the "violent" can now enter the kingdom, that is, those who believe in and are obedient to the new faith of Jesus of Nazareth. However the unreformed medieval understanding of this passage would have the "violent" be those who employ actual violence, as in Crusades, Jewish pogroms and the iconic Moor slaying of Santiago during the Spanish Reconquest. Ironically also, during the 16<sup>th</sup> century the more metaphoric and peaceful meaning of who the "violent" were would have to coexist with a resurgence of actual violence, sacred violence, this time among Protestants and Catholics in a series of Wars of Religion that would last well into the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>54</sup> Martin Luther has been the object of multiple studies on the Reformation. Specifically on the topic of translations I would point to the *History of the Christian Church* by Philip Schaff (VII, I.4), which deals with the Luther's German translation of the Bible.

But besides the complex theological baggage of that gospel passage, there are other reasons to explain Cervantes' interest in it. Matthew cites Jesus of Nazareth, who speaks of John the Baptist, who in turn was preaching about the Jewish Messiah prophesized in the Old Testament. Saint Paul then becomes a notable commentator of those words of Matthew, along with a great number of theologians and thinkers all the way down to humanists like Erasmus, Valdés, Lutero and, most importantly, the musings of Don Quixote de la Mancha.

The particular contribution of the knight errant seems to be how naturally he appropriates the discourse of sanctity and religion to his own purposes of chivalry and enthusiasm for military exploits. There is great logic then to Cervantes' use of this gospel passage and the considerable textual tension that it harbored throughout his lifetime. He is able to place his protagonist next to the image of Santiago Matamoros, turning them both into symbols of the corrupt and violent status quo, an order of things that seemed to him destined either to conversion and reform, or to oblivion.

The ultimate renunciation of chivalry that Don Quixote experiences in the last episodes seems to be associated to this double meaning implicit in the tableau of saints: either sacred violence against enemy infidels, or violence as obedience to faith and personal conversion. These two different types of sanctity embodied by the saints that appear before Don Quixote seem to completely elude him at

the point he meets them in Ch. 58 of Part II, whereas they will become more clear to him by the end of the novel.

*Caballos, santos, duelos y quebrantos*

As mentioned above, the most notable difference between the image of Saint Paul and the other three saints is that the former appears "*caído del caballo abajo*" whereas the latter are all still on horseback. Nevertheless, as we have also seen and as Cervantes surely understood, there is a world of difference between the images of Saint George fighting a dragon and that of Saint Martin sharing his cape, however much on top and in control of their horse they appear to be. Saint George stands for a chivalric fantasy with roots in popular folklore, just as Santiago did, while Saint Martin stands out more for his chivalry - as in gentlemanliness - and appears to be almost ready to voluntarily come down his horse and convert to a form of Christianity that is preached on foot, like Jesus or Saint Paul.

The preaching of Christ's message on foot was a literal evangelical injunction of Jesus to his disciples. Some have seen in this an explicit rejection of the prophecies whereby the Messiah ("the Anointed One") would show up on a white horse to restore the glory of the kingdom of David. In this sense then it is quite suggestive to think of the contrast between Santiago as James the apostle who preached on foot, and his later incarnation as Santiago the Moor

Slayer who appeared on horseback.<sup>55</sup>

The specific posture mounted on horseback that Santiago is normally depicted in should also be studied closely, i.e. wielding a sword and slashing enemies with it. As historians remind us, this type of quick combat position began to extend rapidly during the Middle Ages and the Reconquest - and don Juan Manuel for instance had a special name for it, "tornay-fuye," in his *Libro de los Estados*. This lighter form of combat was different from the traditional heavy or armored cavalry combat. The lighter and faster style was adopted and imitated out of pure necessity against the invading Berbers of North Africa. These were more efficient against the Christians since they used a different type of horse seats and stirrups that allowed them to keep their knees higher and it gave them more mobility and freedom to use their sword. This practice among the Moors came to be known as "*montar a la jineta*."<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Two pertinent passages of the gospel about the preaching of Jesus on foot are Matthew 14:12-14 and Luke 10: 11. For an insightful analysis of the background Messianic politics of the gospel, see Bammel and Moule, *Jesus and the Politics of His Day*, especially the essay by Lampe, "The two swords (Luke 22:35-38)" (pp. 335-352). Lampe summarizes and then dismantles the theory whereby Jesus was becoming a Zealot leader who intended to restore the former glory of the Jewish kingdoms.

<sup>56</sup> Much has been said about Sancho's comment to Don Diego de Miranda, the Knight of the Green Coat, when he says this is the first "*santo a la jineta*" that he had ever met in his life. See Castro (1966, p. 141); Percas de Ponseti (1975, pp. 361-363); Márquez-Villanueva (1975, p. 168), and Pressberg (2001, p. 220) among others. Pressberg in particular speculates on the different meanings of the name Diego and briefly mentions the obvious link to Santiago. But no one has noticed how Santiago would in fact be the second "*santo a la jineta*" that Don Quixote and Sancho meet during the novel.

Art historian Arias de Cossío describes medieval representations of the figure of the *miles Christi*, or Christian knight, where there usually appeared a warrior on horseback "beating down an enemy that would be identified with sin," and keeping him on the ground between the legs of the horse. This same scene is what Cervantes describes in his ekphrasis of Santiago. Arias indicates as examples of *miles Christi* the many portraits of Saint George slaying the dragon and the multiple "*santos Matamoros*," among which of course Santiago stood out. We see then that whether we draw artistic or hagiographic considerations from the images in Cervantes' episode of the saints, the four of them together represent different phases of complicity with, cooperation, disillusion and ultimately renunciation of sacred violence. And the parallels between these images and that of Don Quixote may yield several insights the more closely we look at them.

One way to deepen our understanding of these parallels would be to see what happens to Don Quixote in the episodes where he most famously charges an enemy while riding on horseback. This type of encounter was commonly known as the duel. In the opening chapters of Part I we learned that Alonso Quijano wanted to escape the monotony of his existence in a small town of La Mancha, and among his oppressive daily and weekly routines was a diet of "*duelos y quebrantos los sábados*." He would eventually escape these mundane "*duelos*" in order to enter into duels more proper of a knight errant, with his own horse, armor, helmet and sword.



The famous expression "*duelos y quebrantos*" has been studied in its linguistic dimension before, but only as an idiom and not with its full semantic possibilities. Indeed, the Spanish term "*duelo*" shares with "*fuerza*" and "*violencia*" the ambiguity of a double, or triple, semantic meaning. *Duel* derives from the Latin *duellum*, which in turn comes from *duorum bellum*: a battle of two. But it also comes from *dolus*, a pain or suffering, and the *Diccionario de Autoridades* points out that "*duelos, en plural, se toma casi siempre por trabajos y calamidades.*" Almost always, that is, but not always.

"*Duelos y quebrantos*" was a well-known dish in La Mancha that became associated with the half abstinence kept on Saturdays. It consisted of an egg omelet mixed in with "*tocino*," pork's fat, and "*sesos*," brain parts. Such ingredients were derived from animals but they were not considered meat proper, and that is why they could be part of a half-abstinence diet. The interesting thing about the singular vs. plural uses of "*duelo*" is that Cervantes was well aware of their confusing meanings and he played with them throughout the novel. For instance, when referring to the trials and tribulations that squires go through with their knight-errants, Sancho explains that "*los duelos, con pan son menos*" (II, Ch.13). And yet again in Ch. 55 he uses similar words when he feeds his donkey, "*los duelos, con pan son buenos.*" The phrases are similar but in each case one of the two meanings is emphasized.

If we extrapolate that same play on words to the beginning of the

novel, the already famous first paragraph of Don Quixote would gain a new and more interesting perspective, as if it were the beginning of an epic poem such as the *arma virumque cano* of Virgil, or the title of Cervantes' last novel, *Los Trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda*. That is to say, if the *Aeneid* appears from the first moment as an epic about some wars (*arma*) and a hero (*virum*) in particular, while the adventures of the lovers in the *Persiles* could be summarized as their trials and tribulations - "*trabajos*" as "*duelos*" - the story of Don Quixote could be seen as the epic of Alonso el Bueno, an *hidalgo* from La Mancha, "*de los de lanza en astillero, adarga antigua, rocín flaco y galgo corredor,*" who, in addition, is in the habit of eating - but also practicing and suffering - "*duelos y quebrantos.*"

If we look at the whole story from this angle, we could even say that the entire novel takes place or is contained in the space between two duels, two "*duelos y quebrantos,*" and that both of them are somehow reflected in the scene of the four saints. One of them occurs at the beginning of Part I, against the Basque, while the other happens at the end of Part II, against Sansón Carrasco in his guise of Knight of the White Moon.

#### Saint George and the Basque Knight

The Basque, as may be recalled, is the first character that stands up against the recently ordained knight-errant Don Quixote (I, Ch.8). The passion with which they challenge each other's worthiness and nobility

quickly leads them to a duel, a classic *duorum bellum* between two rivals; or between "doubles" if we consider the element of mimetic rivalry in any duel as Girard would have it. And yet, in this instance one might ask: rivalry over what? The pretext is the lady who travels with the Basque and Don Quixote imagines a captured princess. He is thus closest in this scene to the image of Saint George, as he would describe it later, i.e. "*defendedor de doncellas*," embodying the cardinal virtue of courage and fortitude.

It could be said that by admiring the image of Saint George as a defender of maidens in the episode of the saints in Part II, Don Quixote reframes the act of courage that became one of the most emblematic of his career. The parallel becomes even more obvious when one realizes that in the battle and victory against the Basque, Don Quixote emphasized how instrumental his "*fuerte brazo*" was to be. The knight and the strength of his arm were a common place of books of chivalry, and in many other occasions Don Quixote mentions the strength of his arm. But he points to it specifically when reflecting upon the images of the saints, in his remark that the victories of these knights are won and conquered just as heaven is won, "*a fuerza de brazos*."

This strength or "*fuerza*" of his arm is the same sinister force that we considered above, one that requires the use of swords and the shedding of blood, and pertains to the images of Santiago and Saint George. Not only is Santiago depicted beheading Moors with his sword, but also Saint George was known for his bloody arm, a relic of dubious

origin that had become one of the best known through Christendom in the Middle Ages.

Santiago and Saint George are therefore the perfect models for Don Quixote's first duel, which was to result in just about the only shedding of blood the knight causes in the novel. The narrator describes the Basque thus: "*comenzó a echar sangre por las narices, y por la boca y por los oídos*" (I, Ch.9; 111). This detail is so remarkable that Sancho would later recall it as the amazing "cuchilladas" his master performed, something Don Quixote enjoys hearing about and is quite proud of: "*tal quedó de arrogante el pobre señor con el vencimiento del valiente vizcaíno*" (I, Ch.15; 162).

Far from such "*fuerza*" then is the other kind, the one that shines as a spiritual virtue, as self-discipline or obedience to the faith. But Don Quixote clearly prefers the bloody type, the sacred violence that acquires legitimacy by the sword. And it is not difficult to see how this is the kind of triumph he kept pursuing in the beginning eight chapters of the novel. The battle with the Basque becomes the ultimate culmination of his efforts to find, collect, fix, get official blessings for and put to use his sword and the various pieces of his armor.

At the metanarrative level that opens in chapters 8 and 9 of Part I, the duel and triumph of Don Quixote over the Basque also becomes a famous emblem that appears plastered on the cover of the new

manuscript found in Toledo: "estaba en el primero cartapacio, pintada muy al natural, la batalla de don Quijote con el vizcaíno" (I, Ch.9; 109). This duel, therefore, turns into one of the most recognizable moments of Don Quixote's career and the clearest parallel between him and the images of Saint George and Santiago.<sup>57</sup>

As a transition to the other relevant duel in Don Quixote's adventures, we may think of one more element linking him to Saint George. This saint was the patron not only England but also of Aragon and in

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<sup>57</sup> The episode between Don Quixote and the Basque is pregnant with meaning and symbolism, and there have been innumerable readings of it by Cervantes scholars. I would like to recommend two recent ones that stand out for their insight into issues of religion, nationality and literary genre.

Eric Graf's *Cervantes and Modernity: Four Essays on Don Quixote* (2007) devotes its first chapter to the construction of a Spanish national identity and the Castilian ethnic anxieties inherent in a fight between a Basque and a (stained) Knight from La Mancha. He points out how this ethnic anxiety elicits laughter from the Arab translator of the new manuscript in Toledo and ties it to the image of a pomegranate during the knight's famous duel, a symbol of the last kingdom that was conquered from the Moors and was in the process of being cleansed again with the expulsion of the Moriscos (pp. 21-56). The symbolism of the pomegranate in particular is further explored in Chapter 3 of Graf's book (pp. 103-131).

Frederick de Armas' *Don Quixote Among the Saracens: A Clash of Civilizations and Literary Genres* weaves a very elaborate reading of the whole of Part I that finds a common thread in the images of the two columns of Hercules. He divides the novel into four parts, at the end of each of which the two columns appear symbolically and signal that the end of a narrative world, and by the extension the limits of a particular literary genre, have been reached. In this case the columns are constructed of Knight and Basque as they stand with their swords up high. De Armas makes a compelling argument that the genre that has been exhausted is a Pythagorean parody of books of chivalry, full of symbolic "quaternities." At the end of Ch.8 the opposing columns of Don Quixote and the Biscayan give way to those of Don Quixote and the new narrator/author Cide Hamete, a vehicle for a new narrative and a new genre. De Armas' argument builds slow and methodically and all of it is worth reading. The Biscayan is mentioned in page 58.

particular of Zaragoza, where every year they would celebrate a chivalric tournament in his honor. Don Quixote had mentioned this fact before and was in fact on his way there to participate in such tournament in Ch. 58 when he encountered the images of saints.

It is shortly thereafter however that the protagonist learns of the second and false edition of his adventures, authored by Avellaneda, and this really throws a wrench on his plans. Avellaneda's Quixote is famously shown attending the jousts in Zaragoza, and Cervantes' decision to pull his hero from that event has been seen as a humorous repudiation of Avellaneda's story. But we should note how this action carries with it an added symbolism, since it becomes a rejection of both Saint George's patronage and his chivalric ambitions. By changing course and taking the path to Barcelona, Cervantes exposes Don Quixote to other profound changes.<sup>58</sup>

Sansón Carrasco and Saint Paul

This decision to travel to Barcelona instead of Zaragoza - made so

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<sup>58</sup> Following up on the national identity theme pointed out in Graf's reading, there is another important consideration regarding Don Quixote's often mentioned association to the declining rule of the Hapsburgs and in particular the ailing figure of Philip II. Teófilo Ruiz's latest book (2012) devotes a full chapter to the complexities of this king's travels to his eastern kingdoms of Aragon, Catalonia and Valencia. In particular the royal entries into Zaragoza and Barcelona are singled out as rather infelicitous occasions compared to earlier ones. It is certainly possible to link Cervantes' decision to have Don Quixote's omissions and failures as a knight in relation to these two cities as a yet another veiled reference to Philip II.

quickly and unexpectedly - leads us to think of Don Quixote in turn as a parallel to the last figure of the saints' tableau, i.e. Saint Paul. The image of the apostle fallen from his horse acquires a tone of almost biblical prophecy, as a type of writing on the wall that announces to the protagonist how his most decisive fall and most serious suffering are in the horizon.

If we could look at the wood relief image before Don Quixote we would see Saul of Tarsus, in his role of violent extremist, laying on the ground on the road to Damascus, where he fully intended to defend "a *fuera de brazos*" his Jewish religion from the threat of the early Christians. As such, that mission was the perfect example of sacred violence in its role of persecuting heretics and infidels. In that sense it does not differ much from Santiago's mission.<sup>59</sup>

But the central motif of this depiction of Saint Paul is not his mission to Damascus but rather its spectacular failure. Upon falling from his horse, the violent Pharisee experiences a vision of Christ himself that will lead him to abandon his persecutions immediately. He hears: "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" It is then that the apostle renounces violence and takes up to preaching, an activity that is closer to what we noted in Valdés and Matthew's gospel, that is, the preference for a force that consists in the "cautivamiento" of

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<sup>59</sup> A fascinating treatment of the role of sacred violence in the life and work of Saint Paul can be read in *Sacred Violence: Paul's Hermeneutic of the Cross*, by Hammerton-Kelly.

one's will to the obedience of faith.<sup>60</sup>

If we focus on this aspect of the depiction of Saint Paul we may start to see the full parallel with Don Quixote, in that they are both similarly forced to renounce a personal mission of sacred violence upon being thrown off their horse. In Don Quixote's case, the challenge from Sansón Carrasco in the shores of Barcelona follows the general rules or "law" of the duel.

The graduate in disguise - as Knight of the White Moon - requests an impossible sign of submission from Don Quixote, i.e. to declare that his lady is "*más hermosa que Dulcinea del Toboso*," and that should he

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<sup>60</sup> There is a point I would concede in this regard, and that is the idea of preaching itself as a type of violence. When faith turns into aggressive proselytizing and the coercion of others to obey certain tenets, then the whole enterprise can quickly devolve into censure, repression of heretics, Inquisitions, book burnings, etc., and it could be understood as a return to sacred violence. The question then would be whether or not and to what degree did Christianity follow this type of coercion from its institutionalization under the influence of the apostles, or of Saint Paul. One alternative to my thesis would be to propose that in fact early Christianity was not just about brave Roman soldiers like Martin converting to Christ - or about the many martyrs who laid down their lives at the Roman circus - but also and quite often about the defense of the faith's purity through any means possible, even violence. As a good example one could consider the era of Saint Augustine, end of the 4<sup>th</sup> and turn of the 5<sup>th</sup> centuries. While he himself offered a very compelling story of conversion similar to Saint Paul, the historical record shows a very nasty internecine fight taking place right in his home turf of North Africa that came to a head during his lifetime. Augustine himself was deeply embroiled in the fight between Donatists heretics and the Catholic hierarchy. Brent D. Shaw's new book, *Sacred Violence: African Christians and Sectarian Hatred in the Age of Augustine* (2011) shows in painstaking detail the extent of physical violence between the two sides and how the rosy picture of peaceful loving 4<sup>th</sup> century Christians in the style of Saint Martin that I painted above should be quickly put in perspective.



fail to win their duel over this matter he would have to return home, where *"te recojas y retires ...sin echar mano a la espada, ...absteniéndote de buscar aventuras"* for a whole year. Don Quixote, explains the narrator, *"quedó suspenso y atónito,"* something contrary to his usual bravado. But his pause is quite understandable considering the possible outcomes. If he does not fight he would be avoiding a mortal danger - as Sansón Carrasco reminds him - but he would be leaving a personal affront without redress, something unacceptable to any knight-errant.

If he fights and wins, he would instantly increase his glory in the same way as happened after his defeat of the Basque early I:8-9. So far so good, things seem the same as in previous challenges. However, should he fight and lose, he would have to abandon completely his knight-errantry through an explicit act of obedience to the law of the duel.<sup>61</sup> These two choices then are essentially the ones that were laid out in front of him in the episode of the saints: violence by the sword or violence by obedience and personal surrender to God's law.

Therefore the "duel" in both senses of the term becomes inevitable for Don Quixote, whether he wins or loses. A loss would incur the sense of pain, difficulty and suffering, *"duelos y quebrantos."* The forced return home literally *"quebranta"* or breaks the protagonist since he

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<sup>61</sup> For a very useful primer on the historical and literary significance of the law of the duel, see Juergen Hahn's *Miracles, Duels and Cide Hamete's Moorish Dissent*, especially pp. 20-35, 41-45.

will soon fall ill, renounce arms altogether and die within days. This is where the novel ends, with the literal and narrative death of the knight-errant and his adventures.

All of these events are not clearly or even fully spelled out by the image of Saint Paul in II: 58. But one may see how Cervantes introduces this possibility when he has Don Quixote lament both a) his "sinful" rather than a saintly type of knighthood, and b) his persistent lack of a "*fuerte brazo*" as the inability to disenchant Dulcinea. The doubt that the protagonist expresses for the first time in this episode insinuates a crisis of personal transition that will fully manifest itself upon his defeat in Barcelona (II: 64) and his return home to La Mancha (II: 74).

In the tableau of saints Don Quixote's doubt would correspond to the image of Saint Martin, whereas his fall from Rocinante and subsequent conversion corresponds to the image of Saint Paul. The protagonist thus finds himself in the last stretch of Part II in a type of catechumenate of conversion, just like Saint Martin was while in the Roman army, in a liminal position, facing a fork in the road, literally and figuratively, as he chooses Barcelona over Zaragoza.

Even though he intends to continue being a knight and participate in other tournaments, the change of course that takes him away from the capital of Aragon proves to be a fateful one. He has faced the images of the four saints but their ultimate meaning has eluded him, while he

continues his discourse of physical, military, chivalric and sacred violence.

## Conclusion

In concluding, I should point out that there have been notable readings of *Don Quixote* that have seen a gradual process of conversion, disenchantment or transformation throughout Part II of the novel. Sullivan has insisted on the importance of the Cave of Montesinos with a solid argument based on the theories of Lacan. Descouzis has seen the various humiliations of the protagonist through Part II as linked to an understanding of the theology of Saint Paul and its idea of spiritual triumph through personal defeat. This argument is not unlike my own, although Descouzis does not seem interested in the episode of the saints, the portrait of Saint Paul nor its link to Don Quixote's own fall in Barcelona and conversion in La Mancha.

Based on an understanding of sacred violence in the sense that René Girard has developed throughout his career, I would insist that Don Quixote's final renunciation of knight-errantry comes as a result of a gradual process, and that a key component in this process is his encounter with the four saints in II: 58. His ultimate renunciation may be understood as the rejection of a sinister or violent interpretation whereby his favorite form of literature, books of chivalry, had colored every other text he encountered, including the gospel. His particular form of madness can be seen as an exaltation of

the myth of sacred violence that is revealed pictorially in the tableau of saints.

The two main duels that frame the rise and fall of sacred violence for Don Quixote's career follow very neatly the pattern that is seen in the successive images of Saint George, Santiago, Saint Martin and Saint Paul - from their status as knights and saints, their various duels, trials and "*quebrantos*." Cervantes thus appears keen on highlighting the episode as a particularly significant point of transition in the story. The obligation imposed on Don Quixote to return to La Mancha in the last few chapters may then be understood as the final image of the tableau, with Saint Paul guiding Don Quixote's final steps. He represents the surrender of violence by the sword and the shedding of blood and a conversion to a strictly spiritual violence, one that can conquer heaven by turning to the obedience of faith. Don Quixote transitions from one model of sainthood to another and thus symbolizes the historical process of intellectual maturation in Spain that marked the rise and fall of the myth of Santiago.

Part II - Wounded Hands and Woeful Faces: Picaresque Violence in the Age of Cervantes

*Don Quixote* belongs to a very early, very primitive type of novel. It is closely allied to the picaresque novel - from *pícaro*, meaning rogue in Spanish - a type of story as old as the vineclad hills, which has a slyboots, a bum, a quack, or any more or less droll adventurer for hero. And this hero pursues a more or less antisocial or asocial quest, moving from job to job or from joke to joke in a series of colorful, loosely strung episodes with the comic element factually predominating over any lyrical or tragic intent.

- Vladimir Nabokov, *Lectures on Don Quixote* (11).

The following two chapters will trace the development of the picaresque genre from the early 16<sup>th</sup> century to Cervantes. As I have mentioned before with regards to the Nabokov, he had some very insightful observations about certain aspects of *Don Quixote*, even as he fell very short of lucidity on other aspects. I will only comment in passim about the intersection of the picaresque genre with *Don Quixote* in the present analysis, but I would like to submit from the beginning, as I mentioned in the introduction, that there is something deeper at stake with the picaresque genre and its treatment of violence that is not simply the "comic element" of jokes or humor. At its core, the picaresque deals with the question of shame, and this shame is most visibly represented by violence and the marks and scars it leaves on its characters.

Chapter 3. *La Celestina*, *Lazarillo* and *Guzmán*: Facial Marks and Picaresque Minds

Introduction

The various *pícaros* who populate the literature of Early Modern Spain typically do not kill or get killed by anyone. Despite the genre's aura of lawlessness, that type of denouement mostly falls outside its boundaries. But these characters often witness, suffer or perpetrate the kind of violence that leads to permanent scars and injuries. When those wounds are inflicted on hands and faces, moreover, they can amount to social death, by association to the criminal underworld.

A careful look at these characters and their scars in some of the most notable texts of picaresque literature will reveal in more detail the nature of such violence, after which I will turn my attention to some particular twists of its representation by Cervantes, primarily in *Rinconete y Cortadillo* and the Prologue to the *Novelas ejemplares*.

*Celestina, la de la cuchillada*

An early example - on the darker side - is the protagonist of *La Celestina* herself, from 1499. While this classic has never seriously been included in the picaresque canon, it has always been thought to exert a great influence in the development of that genre in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>-centuries. Low-life characters and settings from the social

underworld were not new to the picaresque, and were not even original to *La Celestina*. But following the lead of its protagonist they seemed to take on a life of their own in subsequent Spanish letters. As González-Echevarría has observed, these weren't "merely low-class types (such as peasants), but the dregs of society: whores, pimps, thieves and thugs" (11).

Thus, in Rojas' masterpiece it is an old prostitute, one described as "*aquella vieja de la cuchillada*," (IV: 8) who takes the lead role among the cast of characters. Her scar is referred to in various ways ("*rasguño*," "*señaleja*," "*cuchillada*") and only briefly throughout the text, but it appears to be visible even with makeup on, as Melibea points out: "*Así goce de mí, no te conociera, sino por esa señaleja de la cara*" (IV: 43). One of Rojas' contemporaries, Rodrigo de Reinosa, also introduces a Celestina-like character in his *Coplas de las comadres*, with the words: "*¿No conocéis la Emplumada? / gran maestra de afeytes, / que faze mudas e aceites / y tiene la cara acuchillada*" (73: 739-4).<sup>62</sup>

Critics have looked at Celestina's scar from various angles. Márquez-Villanueva, in a study on prostitution and the Semitic sensibilities of the work, believes that Celestina owes her facial mark to a Christian practice sanctioned by fray Francisco Eximenis in his late

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<sup>62</sup> There was even a debate between Russell on the one hand and Ruggiero and Gilman on the other over who came first, Celestina or Marí García (2001; 309, n.50).

14<sup>th</sup>-century treatise, *Chrestia*, whereby wronged husbands had the right to slash the face of procuresses in cases of adultery and prostitution (257). This is a very plausible explanation, and Rojas certainly paints his protagonist as an experienced go-between.

Soto-Ribera thinks of the scar as an image in a chain of metaphors that reveal Celestina's ultimate gift not so much for witchcraft, spells or love potions, but rather for rhetoric. *Cuchillada* and *cuchillo* both refer to the *hierro* they're created with, which is the same metal used in swords, and both are tied to the idea of words and rhetoric that can persuade others and thus mark them, as if with iron. So when she assures Sempronio that she will draw Pármeno to her circle, she explains: "*Pero yo lo haré de mi fierro, si vivo. Yo le contaré en el número de los míos*" (III: 42). In this view, her ultimate death by the sword closes the circle, whereby the evil rhetoric she used to corrupt others comes back to destroy her (1998; no pag.).

Dangler, from yet a different perspective, sees the facial wound as one in a series of body deformations that the author uses to portray Celestina as a monster, or as a "monstrous deviation from the conventional order" (112). Thus her scar, her old age, dreadful appearance and her beard are all external signs of her crookedness. The scar in particular, not only the beard, indicates an overly masculine identity, writes Dangler, since "women were not commonly portrayed in altercations with knives." This point might be debatable, as prostitutes and procuresses often became the object of corporal



punishment. But Dangler's argument seems more pertinent when she qualifies: "Celestina's scar connects her to a low social class that resolves disputes with weapons" (116). This is perhaps one of the most significant patterns I would draw from wounds and scars in the picaresque, too. That is, they tell the story of disputes that appear first to be negotiated verbally. But when words fail, and they often do in the criminal underworld, the only remaining path is violence. This point comes up again in Cervantes' *Rinconete y Cortadillo*, and it to some extent it reflects the frequent violence and beatings of *Don Quixote* that Nabokov found so offensive.

In any case, one thing that critics of *La Celestina* seem to agree on is that her facial scar carries social stigma. It either marks her as prostitute, or as a go-between, or it becomes a metaphor for monstrosity. Such stigma may seem justified in light of the protagonist's sinister bent, and she herself appears to be mindful of it when she tries to conceal it with makeup and powders. Remarkably, she is still able to gain the trust of Calisto and Melibea; and yet their general obliviousness to her "scratch" should not be understood as indicative of its lesser shamefulness among the upper class, but rather of the young couple's tragic naïveté in their rush to consummate a love affair.

*Lazarillo's Wounds: from Broken Teeth to the Mark of Cain*

Another relevant example of disfiguring violence can be found in the

foundational text of the picaresque itself, *El Lazarillo de Tormes* (1554). There are several blows to the face in the first two chapters alone that merit some attention. But perhaps the most glaring one comes in the first *tratado*. After successfully deceiving his blind master several times by stealing wine out of his jar, via a small hole at the bottom, some wax and lots of ingenuity, the action comes to a swift and violent climax. The old man realizes he has been tricked and waits for the exact moment when the child tries to steal his wine again, drinking directly under the jug. He then hits the poor *pícaro* in the mouth very strongly, leaving him no time to react:

Fue tal el golpecillo, que me desatinó y sacó de sentido, y el jarrazo tan grande, que los pedazos dél se me metieron por la cara, rompiéndomela por muchas partes, y me quebró los dientes, sin los cuales hasta hoy día me quedé (33).

Thus, besides the broken jar cutting his face, the bleeding and the momentary shock, what remains from this episode is a visible, permanent injury to his mouth. It has lasted "hasta hoy día," when Lázaro the narrator feels compelled to explain its origin. We might say that the whole purpose of his narrative is fulfilled when he shows that he has been really victimized and he is not lying about it, that is, he has the physical evidence to prove it. The broken teeth then function as a symbol of the other ugly blemish that is insinuated in the present tense, i.e. cuckoldry.<sup>63</sup> More specifically, the immoral

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<sup>63</sup> Although not concerned with the *Lazarillo*, there is a very suggestive psychoanalytic study on the *Celestina* by Garci-Gómez that

arrangement he has willingly, though not admittedly, entered into with the archpriest and his cleaning lady. Both the teeth and the cuckoldry are scars that others will notice sooner or later, along with their social stigma, and which should be mitigated or even legitimized by gaining the sympathy of "*Vuestra Merced*." Rhetorically, thus far, this is a well-executed *captatio benevolentia*.

What is not altogether clear is whether such benevolence remains intact by the end of the first episode, another violent climax, when Lázaro tricks the blind man into jumping over a stream of water and noisily hitting a stone pillar with his head: "*sonó tan recio como si diera con una gran calabaza, y cayó luego para atrás, medio muerto y hendida la cabeza*" (45). It may be fair to say that his master also walked away, if at all, with a permanent injury of some sort. But Lázaro's concluding words for the episode are: "*No supe más lo que Dios dél hizo, ni curé de lo saber*" (46).

This is an example of the ethical complexity that often characterizes picaresque narratives. Could "half-dead" have led to fully dead? As I mentioned at the beginning, this type of detail seems to fall outside

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ties the image of mouth and teeth to sexuality, and *muelas* in particular as metonymically related to the male member and desire. Calisto provides one such example: "Lo que Calisto quería de Melibera era que le calmara el dolor de muelas ('una sola muela') que le tenía derribado. Desde el punto de vista psicoanalítico el dolor de muelas puede explicarse como desplazamiento de una emoción de auto-represión. Sigmund Freud hace mención de cómo la castración suele representarse simbólicamente como la 'extracción o caída de una muela' (*La interpretación 2*, 195)" (199-201). Lazarillo's unwanted teeth extraction or fracture may thus be read as a symbolic and permanent castration of his social respectability.

of the confines of the genre. But the ambiguity over the fate of the blind man suddenly calls into question the morality of Lázaro's revenge. The child gets angry, and then he gets even - or more than even, perhaps. Yet looking back he innocently claims ignorance over what God ultimately decided. Presumably he is making a point about how judgment belongs to God alone, but of course this only comes after demonstrating that he took justice into his own hands. The irony is not without humor. This same feigned innocence appears in the frame narrative at the end of the book, when he pretends he does not really understand what his neighbors are gossiping about, and that in any case his intentions with this marriage have been nothing but decent all along: "*Yo determiné arrimarme a los buenos*" (133).

But returning to the violence, especially as it deals with lasting marks on the body, there is another instance of it quite pertinent to this analysis. In the second *tratado* we find perhaps the harshest treatment Lazarillo suffers in the whole story, at the hands of a priest with whom he stays and where he gets caught stealing bread. The entire episode is remarkable for its persistent use of religious allusions and double meanings, but I will focus on just a few that center around the gruesome incident.

With debilitating hunger, the child contemplates some tempting rolls of bread in an ark in the pantry, a vision he describes as "the face of God," and a few lines down as a *paraíso panal*, "breadly paradise." Thus, we might say that when he steals the bread he is himself acting

as a priest, of sorts, opening a tabernacle and worshiping the sacred host inside it. He accomplishes this with a secret key. But in order to make it look like mice or other pests are breaking in, he resolves to cut into the wood with a knife. This action turns the ark into another symbolic body, one with an open wound on the side: "*sin fuerza y corazón, luego se me rindió, y consintió en su costado por mi remedio un buen agujero*" (62).

That image evokes the body of Christ, this time on the cross, giving up his last breath for the redemption of sinners - even of the thief crucified by his side, we might add. Which is apparently what happens to Lázaro. The scene where it all unravels keeps churning out symbolic images, as the priest unleashes his righteous wrath by crushing the head of a "serpent" that he thinks has been breaking into the ark. In reality the serpent was the illicit key protruding out of Lázaro's mouth and making a whistling noise while he was asleep. So the priest's *garrote* comes down with all his might, opening a huge gash on Lázaro's head. The resulting damage is "*mucha sangre que se me iba*" (68) and a complete loss of consciousness. It seems then that Lázaro's sacrilege of the bread does not go unpunished.

Or perhaps the incident really turns on the image of Lázaro as Christ himself. After all, his relationship with the holy bread is depicted almost as a mystical union between him and God. Moreover, his punishment does seem somewhat excessive and his recovery somewhat miraculous, like a crucifixion followed by death and resurrection,

exactly three days later: "*A cabo de tres días torné en mi sentido y vime echado en mis pajas, la cabeza toda emplastada y llena de aceites y ungüentos*" (69-70). Whatever the case may be, the priest surely does not find any redeeming qualities to this child. He considers Lázaro very much a sinner who is no longer worthy of his breadly paradise, and after fifteen more days have elapsed and the child is well enough to walk, he is quickly evicted and left homeless.<sup>64</sup>

But Lázaro's head injury is so noticeable that he still manages to get by for several more days just on the charity of townspeople, as he enters the city of Toledo. Then an interesting thing happens, right at the beginning of the third *tratado*:

Con la merced de Dios dende a quince días se me cerró la herida; y mientras estaba malo, siempre me daban alguna limosna, mas después que estuve sano, todos me decían: 'Tú, bellaco y gallofero eres. Busca, busca un amo a quien sirvas.' (71)

That is the second set of fifteen days in just a few lines. So it takes approximately one month after the big blow for Lázaro's wound to heal completely. Then everyone suddenly refuses to support him anymore, which surprises the child and prompts one of his more memorable lines: "[Estuve] andando así discurriendo de puerta en puerta, con harto poco remedio, porque ya la caridad se subió al cielo" (72).

Francisco Rico points to the myth of Astrea as an obvious reference in

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<sup>64</sup> For a thoughtful comparison of this episode to a non-Christian archetype, see Yovanovich (1999; 59-62) where she claims it follows the model of Penelope's story in Homer's *Odyssey*.

those words (72, n.4). She was the Greek goddess of justice, chastity and charity, and the last of the immortals to escape to heaven when human corruption became too prevalent after the Golden Age. Thus, Lázaro seems to be complaining about the universal weakness of human virtue in general, and charity in particular. In a broader context, moreover, the idea of charity departing for heaven has served Anne Cruz as a starting point to study what she calls early modern discourses on poverty in 16<sup>th</sup> century Spain, and their connection to the growing problem of delinquency and how to contain it. So, when the people of Toledo reject Lázaro, they are dramatizing among other things a specific historical conflict, the enforcement of the Poor Laws (*Ley de pobres*) in the 1540s, which "attempted to curb almsgiving by first examining whether beggars were truly poor and licensed, and then restricting them to their place of origin" (24). Cruz's historicism thus contextualizes the pain that Lázaro and vagrants like him felt when works of charity became strained under increasing demographic pressures. The text can be seen then as a critique of social policies and as a contribution to the heated contemporary debates about the poor; all of it encapsulated in brief references to *limosna* and *caridad*.

But what I also find intriguing about this passage is the exact moment at which charity is said to have departed for heaven. We are told that it happened right after "*se me cerró la herida*." We could argue that at the most superficial, skin-deep level, what this means is that the wound, upon closing, became a scar. And though the text does not

otherwise describe this scar, we can discern with a fair degree of certainty that it is there. The healed wound no longer made him ill - he became *sano* as opposed to *malo* - but we have to assume that a gash so severe as to take over one month to close would have left some kind of scar tissue, a visible mark, at least for some time. And this scar would therefore fall under the same category of something disgraceful, of dubious origin, like a *cuchillada* that others could look down upon. Which in fact they do, quite explicitly, when they take to calling Lázaro a *bellaco*.

Rico points out how the term *gallofero* comes from *gallofa*, meaning breadcrumbs (71 n.2), so it describes precisely the type of beggar the child had just become. But the accompanying insult, *bellaco*, doesn't deal directly with poverty or hunger and is not tied to the biblical Lazarus, either one of them.<sup>65</sup> *Bellaco* is much closer to villain. The dictionaries of *Covarrubias* (1611) and *Autoridades* (1729) both agree that it comes from the Italian *villaco*, derived from *villano* or villain: "(villaco) porque los villanos naturalmente tienen viles condiciones y baxos pensamientos;" "(bellaco) el hombre de ruines y malos procederes, y de viles respetos, y condición perversa y dañada."

Lázaro therefore changes suddenly from portraying the image of an infirm and poor vagrant who inspires pity and receives charity, to one

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<sup>65</sup> For an in depth look at the biblical dimensions of the name Lázaro, see Cruz (1999; 12-31), where she channels previous scholarship and further elaborates on the possibilities of the name's origins.



of a healthy though scarred vagrant who is vilified. It is the scar then, like a mark of Cain, which triggers an unmistakably stigmatizing and vilifying effect. In fact, the whole span of the narrative from the episode of the blind man - through the priest and up to his meeting with the impoverished hidalgo - could be seen as a loose portrayal of Lázaro as Cain. That is to say, he leaves a man "half-dead" on the street, later he is cast away from his breadly "paradise," and in the following days he is condemned to wander aimlessly while marked as undesirable.

Technically the allegory would incorporate both Cain and his father Adam. First we see Lázaro somewhat callously reflecting on his revenge against the blind man: "*no supe más lo que Dios dél hizo, ni curé de lo saber,*" which sounds remarkably familiar to Cain's evasive words in Genesis: "I know not [where Abel is]. Am I my brother's keeper?" (Gen: 4:9) Then we see Lázaro as Adam, tragically falling from grace after eating the forbidden fruit in the garden that is the priest's house, and being abruptly expelled from it. This eviction means he now becomes a vagrant for the first time in his short life, just as Cain became the first vagrant in the short history of mankind. The biblical murderer was cursed to wander the earth - never to find rest in one place again - by being branded with a permanent, vilifying mark. In much the same way, except maybe for the murder part, Lázaro is also branded with shameful marks and doomed to wander from place to place.

In this sense, the presence of both Astrea and Cain signal a profound

interest by *Lazarillo's* author in the founding myths of Classical and Judeo-Christian traditions. He seems fixated on the loss of innocence and the emergence of corruption after the disappearance of the Golden Age, or of the Garden of Eden. The rejection of Lázaro that takes place in Toledo then deals with these anxieties through the disparaging words of its townspeople. They object not only to the vagrancy but also to the corruption, the delinquency and villainy that beggars had come to signify.

This rejection of vagrants had actually become a universal phenomenon in early modern Europe. As Bronislaw Geremek has suggested, vagrancy functioned much like a curse, that is, a vicious cycle from which it was very difficult to escape. His book *La estirpe de Caín* (1990) provides an extensive catalogue and close reading of multiple variations of German, English, French, Italian and Spanish versions of this archetype. He takes his title from a lesser known English writer, Samuel Rowlands, who published a work called *Martin Mark-all, Beadle of Bridewell: his defence and answer to the Belman of London*, in 1610. A character enters the scene at one point who has just arrived from the imaginary region of *Thevengen*, the Kingdom of Thieves, and who details the genealogy of his countrymen and how it harkens all the way back to Cain (145).

Another historian who has written eloquently on the mark of Cain is Russell Jacoby, who explores the long history of the anti-Semitic interpretations surrounding the term. Significantly, as early as the

epistles of Saint Paul in the first century the Jews were singled out as "mutilators of the flesh" (Philippians 3:2-3 NIV) on account of the practice of circumcision. And Cain was subsequently identified as a Jew in Christian theology; therefore one of the marks of Cain all through history has been that unmistakable bodily sign of circumcision (148).

What I merely wish to highlight here is how the rejection of vagrancy that increasingly turned into a rejection of thieves and their underworld was also connected through subtle links, at least in Spain, to the rejection of Jews and the despised underworld of their progeny, Converso Christians. The nature of the *Lazarillo* as a work of art produced in a milieu of Converso culture under the constant suspicion of crypto-Judaism is well established.<sup>66</sup> In that sense it doesn't seem unreasonable to determine the sensibilities of its author to other forms of social stigma, especially one based on physical traits such as facial scars.

After all, purity of blood may have been an eminently invisible status, one that had to be verified and documented on paper. But some of the cases that the Inquisition famously pursued were precisely those of family members of the *judaizantes* who were successfully tried and

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<sup>66</sup> For a thoughtful analysis of the picaresque's emergence as an anonymous expression of the Marrano experience in 16<sup>th</sup> century Spain, see Yirmiyahu Yovel, *The other within: the Marranos: split identity and emerging modernity* (2009).

executed.<sup>67</sup> So, facial features understood as a reflection of blood ties could in fact be a liability. The Converso sons of Cain would thus be particularly sensitive to the bodily marks that identified the *pícaro* sons of Cain, whether these were broken teeth, disfiguring wounds or other visible scars. In Lázaro's case, as we have seen, these marks are not overly emphasized, but they can be appreciably traced in the course of the narrative. This understated quality of the facial mark should be kept in mind later when looking at the particular case of Cervantes.

*A Slashed Courtesan in Mateo Alemán*

But before getting to *Rinconete y Cortadillo* and its Prologue it would be useful to look at a *cuchillada* in another one of the most representative Spanish picaresque novels. It appears as a short anecdote related by the protagonist-narrator of Mateo Aleman's *Guzmán de Alfarache*, near the beginning of Part II (1604):

A una dama cortesana en Roma, por ser descompuesta de lengua, le hizo dar otra una gran cuchillada por la cara, que atravesándole las narices, le ciñó igualmente los lados. Y estándola curando, después de haberle dado diez y seis o diez y siete puntos, decía llorando: "¡Ay desdichada de mí! Señores míos, por un solo Dios,

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<sup>67</sup> See for example the case of Juan Luis Vives and his family, as mentioned by Kamen in his study on the Spanish Inquisition. His father was burned at the stake in 1524, and his mother was posthumously tried and convicted, her bones exhumed and burned for the crime of crypto-Judaism (1998, 130). In this sense also notice the persuasive argument made recently by Francisco Calero, who directly attributes authorship of *Lazarillo* to Juan Luis Vives (2006).

que no lo sepa mi marido." Respondióle un maleante que allí se había hallado: "Si como a Vuestra Merced le atraviesa por toda la cara, la tuviera en las nalgas, aun pudiera encubrirlo; pero si no hay toca con que se cubra, ¿qué secreto nos encarga?" (II, vi, 114)

There are several things worth noticing in this mini-story. The first is the scheme behind the *cuchillada*, that is, the settling of a score between two *cortesanas*, at least one of whom is married - more on this later. Whoever actually carries it out is not even mentioned, but one can imagine that it is some type of *maleante* like the one who speaks when she is having her stitches done. The mediated nature of the act leads us to think that it was indeed an *encargo*, an arrangement where money changed hands. The extent of the damage is also quite striking, sixteen or seventeen stitches. We could say that the *cuchillada* motif has grown somewhat larger from the almost discrete *señaleja* on Celestina's face a hundred years before. But besides the inflation in size there still seems to be a fundamental sense of disproportion to this type of violence. The punishment somehow does not fit the crime. That is to say, words, especially if they come from *lenguas descompuestas*, can be like knives. They can cause irreparable harm. But they never go as far as marking that person, physically and indelibly, for life. A *cuchillada* in the face, on the other hand, seems impossible to erase and very difficult to hide.

But perhaps we should consider the question of proportion and disproportion in light of the motive for this fight. We gather that

there was a verbal attack that blemished the honor of one of them, who may or may not also have been married. But the honor code related to a woman's virtue or *honestidad* - in marriage or as prospective for marriage - was a very serious matter at this time. It appeared in every form of literature. In Spain in particular it was on the public stage of the theater where it acquired its most famous expression and tragic overtones, but the idea of an ironclad honor code permeated all genres from poetry and the theater to pastoral romances, books of chivalry and other forms of prose narrative. Scott Taylor provides a useful reminder of what this rule of conduct meant in its more pure state: "a man's honor rests wholly on the sexual purity of his wife; he must commit violence in order to avenge dishonor, even unwillingly against people he loves; and honor rests on reputation so much that rumor is just as capable of disgracing someone as fact" (195).

It is in that sense of an intangible injury impossible to rectify that a violent and tangible reprisal like a *cuchillada* would make sense. The victim seems aware of her plight when she cries, "*¡Ay desdichada de mí!*" *Desdicha* can mean misfortune or more specifically disgrace, which conveys the profound sense of shame at the prospect of being branded permanently. She is now extremely anxious at her husband's return, too: "*Señores míos, por un solo Dios, que no lo sepa mi marido.*" This sentiment would parallel the anguish felt by the other lady at the wrecking of her reputation, something that, as we have seen, in theory could be deadly. The specter of physical death evoked by sexual transgression and its consequences could thus only be

matched by the reality of a *cuchillada*, with its resulting fall from grace and social death.

But such reading misses the mark - so to speak - when it hinges so much on a non-ironic meaning of term *cortesana*, female courtier, one that conjures up the chivalric ideals of courtly love and noble women depicted in the Italian Renaissance. Indeed, the word *cortesana* in Spain, just as it did in Italy, France and then England, had already come to attain a different connotation and was often used in a derogatory sense, i.e. courtesan as high-class prostitute. *Covarrubias* in 1611 explains the degradation of the term:

Cortesana, la mujer libre, que en la guerra seguía la cohorte: lo qual era permitido por evitar mayor mal: de allí les quedó el nombre de cortesanas a las que en la Corte viven licenciosamente, unas más que otras, por admitir gentes de diversos estados y calidades.

The *Diccionario de Autoridades* in 1739 quotes Antonio de Guevara's treatise *Menosprecio de corte y alabanza de aldea*, who by 1539 already establishes a clearly demeaning connotation for female courtier, even as he makes fine moral distinctions about male courtiers. Among the dangers and vices *cortesanos* should avoid was the company of *cortesanas*:

Ay otros géneros de perdidos en la corte, los cuales ni tienen amo ni salario, ni saben officio, sino que están allegados, por mejor dezir, arrufianados con una cortesana, la qual, porque le procura una posada y la acompaña quando la corte se muda, le da ella a él

quanto gana de día labrando y de noche pecando (ch. XI).

It is not uncommon for romance language words to have evolved with radically different meanings, positive for the masculine and negative for the feminine endings. This particular example can be traced in Italy through another humanist treatise, Baldassare Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier* (1528), where he uses the masculine form *cortigiano* but avoids the feminine form *cortigiana*, preferring the circumlocution *donna di palazzo* (palace lady).<sup>68</sup>

So *dama cortesana* - as opposed to simply *dama* or *dama de la Corte* - was definitely a loaded term by the time Mateo Alemán wrote it. Thus for example, in Part II of *Don Quixote* (1615) the protagonist tells a curious anecdote about a poet who wrote "*una maliciosa sátira contra todas las damas cortesanass*" (II, 8, 689), after which one of the ladies who was left out of it became upset and demanded to be included in a future revision; to which the poet obliged, "*y púsola cual no digan dueñas, y ella quedó satisfecha.*"<sup>69</sup> Don Quixote's humorous aside to Sancho is meant to illustrate the extremes people will go to in their desire for fame, be it good or bad. A further clue - if one was needed - in Guzmán's story about the type of ladies he is talking about is the expression *lengua descompuesta*. Redondo points to the use of that term in *Don Quixote*: "*Entre las damas había dos de gusto*

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<sup>68</sup> See *The Feminist Encyclopedia of Italian Literature*, edited by Rinaldina Russell (1997; 43-5).

<sup>69</sup> Francisco Rico attributes this reference to Vicente Espinel's *Sátira contra las damas de Sevilla* from 1578.



*pícaro y burlonas y, con ser muy honestas, eran algo descompuestas"* (II, 62, 1137), where he attributes *descompostura* to "ese atrevimiento [que] se toma siempre de modo negativo cuando se trata de una mujer" (506).

Therefore we can now see more clearly that the two ladies, their dispute and their *cuchillada* belong to a social position where the honor code for women would not have made much of a difference. The logic of the assault appears to be not retaliation against a deadly breach of honor so much as a vendetta typical of the criminal underworld, in particular one related to prostitution that managed to reach into the upper class. In fact, we could say that the reason why a *cuchillada* would matter so much to a *dama cortesana* is not because her lack of virtue might be exposed - since supposedly it would have already been, to some degree - but because her line of work as a *cortesana* consisted precisely in looking like a *dama* and being able to charge a premium for it. So a *cuchillada* would drastically "slash" or "mark down" her value as a high-priced commodity.<sup>70</sup> What was left for her would be the role of *puta cariacuchillada*, as in the case

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<sup>70</sup> That also would have been why the *dama cortesana* alluded by Don Quixote complained about being left out of the satirical poem. She would not care about her name getting a bad reputation so much as about being included in a who-is-who of high-priced women. Also, in regards to an economic reading of the story, Carroll B. Johnson's monograph *Inside the Guzmán de Alfarache* (1977) contains a brief but important chapter entitled "The Cash Nexus." It discusses the narrator's conflicted relationship with wealth and poverty and at one point observes how these phenomena can arise "the most violent emotions" in the protagonist (109). I would fully agree and adduce the example of this "slashed" courtesan who suddenly pops into Guzmán's mind.

of *La Celestina* or *La lozana andaluza*, whose faces were indeed blotched by scars and could not possibly pass for anything else.<sup>71</sup> This is why scars and facial flaws became a commonplace for prostitutes in the picaresque. As we will see ahead, the most memorable of these women in Cervantes' *Novelas ejemplares* is a character named "Cariharta," whose very designation implies the idea of facial marks.

*The Watchtower, the Picaresque and the Birth of Shame*

Now, once we have understood the implications of the anecdote in its own terms, it is important to note the immediate context where it appears in Guzmán's narrative, why he recalls it and what conclusions he draws from it. The protagonist-narrator recalls the two *cortesanas* and their *cuchillada* because he is suddenly trying to hide a shameful situation with his physical appearance, albeit a temporary one. He has just been dragged through the mud by a large pig in the streets of Rome after unsuccessfully attempting for several days to set up a tryst between his master the French ambassador and a beautiful Roman lady named Fabia. Except that this is a *señora principal y noble* who - though unhappily married - is intent on protecting her honor. So she meets Guzmán's entreaties with an elaborate hoax. She pretends to

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<sup>71</sup> As Luis Beltrán has noticed of Francisco Delicado's *La lozana andaluza* (1525), the constant flattery the protagonist receives could make us overlook the fact that, "besides minor blemishes (something like a scar in the form of a cross upon her forehead, for instance, or her possible alopecia), she has a hole where her nose used to be before syphilis took it away" (103). For more 16<sup>th</sup> century examples of facial marks on prostitutes see Gómez Consecó, where he mentions the *Carajicomedia* (1519), an *Auto* by Gaspar Gómez de Toledo (1536) and Melchor de Santacruz's *Floresta española* (1574) (n. 25, 388).

yield her time and attention for a few days, only to deceive and corral him later - literally in a corral - let him soak all night in the rain and then set loose a fat pig to drag him out through the streets. This defeat makes it all the more humiliating for Guzmán, who had gotten the ambassador so excited about his prospects, and all the more vindicating for Fabia, who through this prank is able to defend her virtue publically.

Thus, at the beginning of the following chapter we find Guzmán looking miserable: "*vestido de cieno, las manos asquerosas, el rostro sucio*" (II, i, 6, 100), back at his master's house desperately avoiding the other servants so as not to have to give any explanations. But when he stops to think about it, he realizes this is inevitable. That is the point where he recalls the anecdote of the Roman courtesan so anxious about her *cuchillada*. What follows is a peculiar stream of picaresque consciousness that I think is worth reading in its entirety:

Parecióme dislate y bobería hacer aquellos melindres y, pues el daño era público y de alguna manera no podía estar callado, que sería mucho mejor hacer el juego maña, ganar por la mano, salirles a todos a el camino, echándolo en donaire y contándolo yo mismo antes que me tomasen prenda entendiendo de mí que me corría, que por el mismo caso fuera necesario no parar en el mundo. Haga nombre del mal nombre, quien desea que se le caiga presto; porque con cuanta mayor violencia lo pretendiere desechar, tanto mas arraiga y se fortalece, de tal manera, que se queda hasta la quinta generación, y entonces los que suceden hacen blasón de

aquello mismo que sus pasados tuvieron por afrenta. Esto propio le sucedió a este mi pobre libro, que habiéndolo intitulado Atalaya de la vida humana, dieron en llamarle Pícaro y no se conoce ya por otro nombre (II, i, 6, 114-5).

This is a complex argument that requires a bit of unpacking before analyzing it further. First he says that when damage to one's reputation is done, it is done and it will not serve to hide it. Otherwise one would be imitating the *bobería* of the courtesan who fusses fruitlessly about covering up her *cuchillada*. It would be better to "*salirles a todos al paso*" and "*contarlo yo mismo*" so that the story can at least be recast and the bad impression minimized. This is what he seems to do in the following scene with the French ambassador, making his fall in the mud sound like a mere accident instead of the practical joke that has exposed and left them both in ridicule. And then he seems to say that by doing this and reframing the story oneself, one can turn a bad reputation into a good one ("*Haga nombre del mal nombre, quien desea que se le caiga presto*"). To do otherwise, that is, to simply react negatively and violently like the aggrieved courtesan from his anecdote, would be to right one wrong with another and to make matters worse. Violence would cause the bad reputation to stay "*hasta la quinta generación.*" Then comes the final part, where he explains that even a bad reputation that was not properly handled may eventually be overcome if you do what you should have done in the first place, that is, if you wear it as a badge of honor, "*[haciendo] blasón de aquello mismo.*" And this is apparently what has happened to his "poor" book, which he gave the title of

*Atalaya de la vida humana* - "Watchtower of human life" - but has instead been branded as a *Pícaro*; the logical conclusion being, one would think, that he is no longer disappointed with the new name, a picaresque tale, but has made peace with and is even proud of it.

We will return to this train of thought further down. But before proceeding it should be noted that Mateo Alemán's narrative can be notoriously oblique. Any single authoritative reading of a particular statement by either the author or his narrator runs the risk of overlooking the various points of view, tones of seriousness and shades of irony that characterize his work. The two-part novel is twelve times longer than the *Lazarillo*, and considerably more complex.<sup>72</sup> Yet in spite of that baroque style, its range of voices may be simplified by taking a step back and considering the metaphor that stands out the most from the beginning of the book, in its very title. Like *La vida de Lazarillo de Tormes*, *La vida de Guzmán de Alfarache*, *atalaya de la vida humana* sets up two major points of view by narrating the life of a young and immature *pícaro* from the perspective of his older and more mature self. Thus, in Alemán's version we find a

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<sup>72</sup> Yirmiyahu Yovel points out that the prologue to the "prudent" reader for instance reveals a particular fear or shame of broaching certain subjects, and how the resulting degrees of disclosure make it difficult to take anything in the text at face value: some things were written "merely sketched," *sin matizar*; some things a little more openly but still "hindered by fear," *temeroso y encogido*; and some things were disclosed openly "without fear." Besides, the work contains multiple prologues: three in the first part, "To the Vulgar Reader," "To the Prudent Reader," to his patron "Don Francisco de Rojas;" and two in the second part, "To the Reader" and to his next patron "Don Juan de Mendoza" (Yovel, 2003, n. pag.) I would also add a fourth prologue in the first part, the brief *Declaración para el entendimiento deste libro*.

particularly unrepentant - and repeat - offender whose deeds are recorded by an older, emphatically more repentant Guzmán, one who observes everything in hindsight and from above, as if from a watchtower.

This image of the watchtower should also be looked at more closely, as it holds clues to the framework for the entire text. It is mentioned just a few times outside the title, notably in this enigmatic passage after the *cuchillada* where the dichotomy *atalaya* vs. *pícaro* suddenly gives the narrator pause. What he means precisely by *atalaya* can be better understood in light of a short description in the prologue to the second part:

en esta historia se pretende sólo descubrir - como atalaya - toda suerte de vicios y hacer atriaca de venenos varios un hombre perfecto, castigado de trabajos y miserias, después de haber bajado a la más ínfima de todas, puesto en galera por curullero della (II, 22).

Alemán thus uncovers a panoramic view of human vices from the vantage point of a watchman in his tower, specifically one who - by being forced to the lowest possible position in the galleys (*curullero*) - finally converts and rises to a higher spiritual plane, with all the more perspective. In this way he can better discern for us both life's venomous *vicios* and their antidotes (*atriaca*), reconstituting in his cautionary tale, by dint of negative example, the image of a perfect man. So *atalaya* is used properly in its literal sense, while metaphorically it recalls a biblical passage from the prophet Ezekiel,

who was appointed by God as a watchman to his people: "*Hijo del hombre, yo te he puesto por atalaya à la Casa de Israel: oyrás pues tú la palabra de mi boca, y amonestarlos has de mi parte*" (Ez: 3: 17). In that figurative and biblical sense Alemán's aim appears as nothing less than fulfilling the role of the Jewish prophet by accepting a divine commandment to minister to his readers. Just as the *atalayas* would stand guard, watch, protect and sound the alarm from the walls of the city or other high towers, the role of the narrator in *Guzmán de Alfarache* is to discover all manner of vice and dangers so he may warn us about them.

David Castillo has written about the image of the *atalaya* in *Guzmán* precisely by emphasizing the deeply moralizing Counter Reformation perspective of the narrator. In his opinion, the passage above about the book's conflicted genre primarily comes down to a choice: "it is ultimately up to the reader: *Pícaro* or *Atalaya*; the 'wrong' marginal perspective of the rogue, or the 'right' watchtower view of the preacher?" (53). Castillo's choice is clear, he reads the *atalaya* as the "moment of birth" of the narrative voice, "not as the discourse of the *pícaro's* life, his persona, or desire – as in *Lazarillo* – but rather, as the discourse of the *pícaro's* death, and his regeneration in the voice of a preacher" (38).

Giancarlo Maiorino makes another valuable contribution when he finds a Foucauldian element to the *atalaya*. At the turn of the 17<sup>th</sup> century prisons and watchtowers were becoming a common feature of the

landscape, as a way to curb vagrancy and delinquency. Foucault's classic study focused on what would eventually become a very successful design for a watchtower - within the prison itself - Jeremy Bentham's panopticon (34-5). While Alemán's *atalaya* does not refer to that specific type of tower, it might be understood as a forerunner, of sorts. It certainly constitutes a privileged position from where to watch others - in this case his own past life and those who came in his path - from a perspective of moral and intellectual superiority. So the watchtower leaves us with some idea of autobiography as surveillance, a constantly corrective and self-disciplining perspective.

But it is perhaps Michel Cavillac who has studied more carefully the 16<sup>th</sup>-century rhetoric of *atalayismo* in Spain and its relationship to the picaresque genre where the *Guzmán* is most often placed. It would be useful to dwell in some detail on what is at stake in those opposing categories, as it could help us reach some conclusions on their link to Guzmán's parable of the *cuchillada*.

Cavillac traces the term *atalaya* from its religious and mythological uses to a more specifically political one regarding the decline of the Spanish Empire. Its origins are not only biblical, as in Ezekiel, but also classical, as in the Greek giant Panoptes (the actual forerunner of Foucault's panopticon) a watchman with a hundred eyes who appears in Homer. In the *Praise of Folly* (1511), Erasmus references Lucian's *Icaromenipo*, where a winged Menippus rises to the heavens and



experiences an illuminating vision of the whole of humanity. In a related passage the Dutch humanist reflects: "*Si alguien volviese la vista a su alrededor desde lo alto de una excelsa atalaya, como los poetas le atribuyen hacer a Júpiter, vería cuántas calamidades afligen a la vida humana*" (Erasmus, 92-93). *Atalaya* as an exalted plane for the contemplation of human misery also appears in the mystical writings of Santa Teresa. However, the idea of a watchtower was also popularized by a group of humanists who associated it with a political vision of rationality; this rationality translated into a more or less explicit support of mercantilism and an opposition to the reigning Habsburgs' lack of productivity, debt and general mismanagement.<sup>73</sup> So Cavillac argues that Aleman's work clearly inserts itself in a reform movement that offered a devastating satire of an aristocratic system too financially dependent on the Genovese. In this sense Guzmán emerges as the "*hijo bastardo de la usura judeo-genovesa y del ocio aristocrático, las dos taras que entorpecían la maduración en España de una burguesía emprendedora*" (181).

In contrast to this high-minded and reformist *atalayismo*, the actual *pícaros* available to Alemán at the time would have been largely one-dimensional characters associated with trickery, thievery and buffoonery, more often the object of satirical verses than of serious

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<sup>73</sup> A list of Erasmanian and later reformers would include Alfonso de Valdés, Valtanás, Ávila, Giginta, Sigüenza; more explicitly political reformers are Ortiz Luzio, Mariana, Santamaría, Denín and Martínez de Mata; economic reformers or *arbitristas* were Valle de la Cerda, Pérez de Herrera, Cellorigo and Moncada.

works like the *Lazarillo*. Cavillac points to two linguistic facts in that regard, one well known and the other less so. First, the word *pícaro* as such does not even appear in the *Lazarillo*, but it does accumulate several negative connotations throughout the 16<sup>th</sup>-century - notably that of "bellaco," which as we saw above is used on Lázaro at some point.<sup>74</sup> Second, the actual concept of "novela picaresca" did not materialize until 1840, when a critic called Eugenio Tapia first applied it indiscriminately to both *La vida de Lazarillo* and *Guzmán de Alfarache* (162). And this is precisely the crux of the matter. Even though we still apply retrospectively the label picaresque novel to the *Lazarillo*, the point is that an unredeemed *pícaro* like Lázaro would never have been conceived as the protagonist-narrator of the serious "poética historia" that Alemán explicitly set out to write. This is the main difference between the two works that Castillo also referred to in his study. The very popular *Lazarillo* may have ended on a high note, with the narrator reaching "la cumbre de toda buena fortuna," but this was exactly the opposite of true *atalayismo*, that is, of the enlightened state that Guzmán only achieved through his conversion, upon reaching "la cumbre del monte de las miserias."<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Besides its pejorative connotations in the *Tesoro de la lengua* of Covarrubias and the *Diccionario de Autoridades*, the term *pícaro* is explicitly defined as "bellaco" as early as in the 1565 *Vocabulario de los vocablos que más comúnmente se suelen usar*, published in Alcalá por Jacques de Liaño (Cavillac, 202).

<sup>75</sup> Cavillac does not stop at the question of picaresque vs. *atalayismo*, but also considers Gracián's opinion that Alemán belongs among such authors of "graves epopeyas" as Homer, "quien pinta al vivo la peregrinación de nuestra vida por entre Cilas y Caribdis, cíclopes y sirenas de los vicios" (*Agudeza*, II, p. 199). Further, he finds in *Guzmán* an effort to abide by several of Lopez Pinciano's precepts in

While keeping that commentary in mind we could return to our contested narrative - be it picaresque, *atalaya* or something else - and pick up where we left off after the courtesans and their *cuchillada* made Guzmán consider his book's designation in the first place. We should recall how he remembered the seventeen-stitch incident precisely during his attempt to deal with his own sudden and unexpected loss of face. He then seemed to make a firm resolution not to hide the damage but rather to admit it openly and turn it to his advantage. His epiphany apparently involved no longer being afraid or feeling any shame like the courtesan felt about her scarred face. Instead he would *hacer nombre del mal nombre*, turning a bad name or into a good one by wearing his muddy appearance as a badge of honor.

The main problem with this approach is of course that Guzman does not follow it, so we may never know if it would have worked. He only seems to *salir al paso* of the immediate difficulty at the ambassador's house, but strictly speaking his reasoning would dictate that he tell the truth about the mud all over his clothes, hands and face. Yet what he does is promptly lie about it, which only buys him a little time. The prank with the pig does not remain secret for very long and he feels forced to leave Rome in a hurry, as the title of the next chapter loudly proclaims: "*Siendo público en Roma la burla que se hizo a*

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his *Philosophia Antigua Poética* (1596) regarding the proper use of topics and genres like satire, tragedy, politics, ethics or economics. His conclusion is that the full scope of Alemán's work would be greatly reduced if merely considered from the perspective of a picaresque narrative. He goes on to claim that instead it should be studied as a literary achievement on par with *Don Quixote*, able to compete for the title of first modern novel.

*Guzmán de Alfarache y el suceso del puerco, de corrido se quiere ir a Florencia*" (II, i, 7). To my mind, this development points to a revealing conflict on the part of the narrator. Which is it then, we might ask, does he feel shame about the muddy incident or doesn't he? First he appears to say no, but then he seems to retract it - or literally walk back, in fact run away from that statement.

The complex relationship of the picaresque voice to the sense of shame forms part of Yovel's study referenced above on the *Guzmán*. While David Castillo reads the *atalaya* as the "death" of the *pícaro* and his "moment of birth" in the voice of a preacher, Yovel's argument is the corollary, i.e. he thinks the "birth of the picaresque" coincides with the "death of shame." But what kind of shame, exactly? The answer apparently lies in an early sermon where the narrator reaches a turning point, shortly after his initial woes. Looking back, he realizes the hampering effect of shame and reacts angrily: "*Maldita sea la vergüenza [...] Vi que lo pasado fue cortedad y tenerla entonces fuera necedad, y erraba como mozo; mas yo la sacudí del dedo cual si fuera víbora que me hubiera picado*" (I, ii, 2, 275). The terms *cortedad* and *necedad* are used similarly to those in the later passage after the *cuchillada*, when Guzmán considers that to act ashamed like the courtesan would amount to *bobería* and *melindres*. Incidentally, both these passages represent shame as an external and visible wound to the flesh, be it from a viper's bite or from a *cuchillada*. This type of shame, then, one that is external, visible and which clearly stings, is what Guzmán must renounce in order to become a *pícaro*. And

when he does, as he explains in that initial speech, he experiences a newfound freedom and uninhibitedness: "*comencé a tratar el oficio de la florida picardía [...] me comencé a desenfadar y lo que tuve de vergonzoso lo hice desenvoltura*" (I, ii, 2, 275). *Vergüenza* then appears as the opposite of *desenfado*, *desenvoltura* and *picardía*. This *picardía* could translate to shamelessness, specifically *sinvergüenza* or *sinvergonzonería*. So in that sense in particular the birth of the picaresque corresponds to the death of shame.<sup>76</sup>

But herein lies the problem. This death of shame is not nearly so final that it can be considered a *fait accompli* in the rest of the narrative. The reason why the passage after the *cuchillada* seems contradictory is not just because it restates the opposition between the younger and the older Guzmán, but also because it shows an inner conflict within the younger Guzmán. That is, in principle he renounces the shame of external opinion with a determination parallel to his previous, eloquent speech. But then he quickly capitulates and flees town, proving that shame and stigma are still among his primary motivations: ones that, like the venom of a viper, have unwittingly found their way inside. So Guzmán is not always able to heed his own advice, thus displaying an interesting paradox of the *pícaro* state of mind: he keeps falling in the trap and perpetuating the vicious cycle

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<sup>76</sup> Yovel's original article from 2003 was later included in a comprehensive book length monograph on *Marrano* identity, 2009. For previous detailed analysis of the narrator's sense of shame, which covers a lot of this ground already, see Carroll B. Johnson's second chapter on his book on the *Guzmán*. He explores the psychology of shame and *ressentiment* from a Freudian perspective.

that he hates so much, i.e. that of society's judgment, rejection and marginalization of his way of life. Insofar as it does not work very well for the *pícaro*, then, this fear of society's judgment could be said to constitute the *wrong* type of motivation and the wrong type of shame. It is felt from the outside, externally, and it leads to all sorts of deceptions that keep him wandering about - as in the *Lazarillo* - somewhere along the spectrum between vagrancy and delinquency. Yet there is another type of shame that functions as the flip side of that coin, and which we may easily infer from the preceding analysis. The *right* type of shame would be the one originating on the inside, internally, and it is related not to deception but to the act of being honest and telling the truth. This is the hallmark of the *atalaya*, that is, the perspective of a reformed sinner turned watchman who is able to rise above his misfortunes, identify his own vices and repent for them.

We could say then that the role of the *cuchillada*, the immediate narrative possibilities and predicaments it poses for Guzmán - i.e. whether to acknowledge the pig incident, not acknowledge it, turn it into a badge of honor or simply escape town - deftly cut to the core of what the picaresque genre itself meant for Mateo Alemán. From the point of view of a writer at the turn of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, specifically one who recreates in the first person the life of a *pícaro*, the very act of authoring this picaresque experience would constitute a shameful act. So shameful that he might feel forced to publish it anonymously, as the author of the *Lazarillo* had done a generation or

two before. After all, the Inquisition might have to get involved - incidentally, as it did with the *Lazarillo*. Not for nothing does Guzmán mention the tenacity with which a bad reputation can grip someone's name, "*hasta la quinta generación*." Such would be the stigma of a picaresque life that once it was down in writing, one might not be able to shake it, like the venom from a viper's bite. And just as a *cuchillada* would permanently slash or mark down a woman's status, the infamy of a picaresque confession would forever stay in print, for anyone to read. We might call this effect not so much the death of shame, but rather the birth of shame, literary shame. The only way out of it - short of the anonymous publishing route - would be to rise to a higher moral plane, such as the *atalaya*, and tell the story from that perspective, with an eye for exemplarity. Which is precisely what Alemán did. As Maiorino points out, this type of autobiography works as a perfect Foucauldian mechanism with a self-disciplining perspective. But even that choice did not seem completely safe in retrospect, as the narrator of the second part in 1604 laments in the passage that we have been studying. That is, Part I of the *Guzmán* (1599) was an immediate commercial success, and yet one can't help but hear a tone of regret in the narrator's voice, a sense that the book has lost certain literary cachet when people recognize it only as *Pícaro*, instead of the *Atayala de la vida humana* that he had taken special care to name. It is as if Alemán himself - not just the courtesan or his narrator Guzmán - were complaining about a permanent scar to his reputation created by this title change, and the stigma that came with it.

One final possibility, therefore, would be to read Guzmán's reflections on the courtesan's *cuchillada* and the book's genre as Alemán's roundabout vindication of picaresque literature as a whole. After all, as the narrator says in his monologue, a bad reputation can always change after a few generations if one learns how to turn "that very thing" into a badge of honor, "*hacer blasón de aquello mismo.*" It is difficult to imagine a woman with a dishonorable *cuchillada* across her face gaining enough good fame generations down the line to be honored and revered for "that very thing." But that is in fact what happened with *La Celestina*. In a very literal as well as a literary sense what took place over the course of the 16<sup>th</sup> century was a popularization of the classic (*Tragi*)*comedia de Calisto y Melibea* such that its name started to change to that of its most famous - or infamous - character. Berndt Kelly, who has written the most detailed history of this title change, explains how the Italian, French and Flemish editions of the 16<sup>th</sup> century already reflected the new title, and it was widely referenced as such even in Spain. But the original title continued to be used for printed Spanish editions until the 19<sup>th</sup> century (26-34.).

## Conclusion

In conclusion, by studying Mateo Alemán's work we have seen how he used the idea of a facial mark to depict the radical change of social status in a woman like the courtesan. Immediately following that anecdote, he reflects on the radical change of status of his own book,



from *Atalaya* to *Pícaro*. We could then read the former (*cuchillada*) as a metaphor for the latter (name change), and realize that although this new title could seem at first a shameful demotion from the high-minded humanist tradition of *atalayismo*, it may also be seen as retroactive vindication or willing appropriation of its lower, picaresque minded aspect, following in the example of *La Celestina*. This appropriation would amount to a rebirth of the picaresque as a worthy literary genre. With this framework in mind I would like to turn now to Cervantes and his approach to the literary problem posed by the picaresque genre, including both its treatment of shame and the need for exemplarity.

## Chapter 4. Cervantes' Picaresque Self-Portrait

### Introduction: Recapitulating

In the previous chapter I studied the motif of facial and bodily scars in some of the best-known Spanish picaresque texts of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. One common denominator with all of these wounds - regardless of the weapon used or whether they seem warranted in any way - is how easily they become a marker for social stigma, making the victim look like a *pícaro/a* and therefore guilty by association to the criminal underworld.

Lazarillo for example gets a few teeth fractured by one of his masters, something he feels he needs to explain away to his readers, and on another occasion suffers a severe blow to the head with a resulting scar that others interpret as a sign that he, on the receiving end, is a *bellaco*. The slashed face of Celestina is routinely used as part of a degrading nickname, *puta cariacuchillada*, and the courtesan from the anecdote in the *Guzmán* shows great anxiety at her seventeen-stitch wound, among other things because she could well end up with the same nickname as the old hag.

What we might call the woeful faces of the picaresque thus illustrate a blame-the-victim attitude and the disgrace that befell those with disfiguring wounds. But also and upon further inspection the wounds themselves emerge as instrumental in understanding the genesis of the

genre as a whole. One of the more revealing images in the *Guzmán* is that of a wounded hand from a viper's bite, which the narrator uses to describe what the sting of social stigma felt like as a young man. Becoming a *pícaro* in that metaphor entails the ability to shake off the venom from the wound and to follow a life of sin without the external pressure of public opinion. This is the metaphor that Yovel (2003) has used to discuss the birth of the picaresque as the death of shame.

And yet, although they mark the death of shame at some level, these wounds are still very much a source of shame to the first-person narrators and even authors of picaresque novels, in as much as they take pains to distance themselves and their protagonists from any humiliating scars. The *Lazarillo* after all was published anonymously and with frequent protestations of innocence, while Mateo Alemán gave voice to his main character from the start as a reformed sinner, with a strong emphasis on exemplarity, from the top of a metaphorical watchtower. In this work in particular there is a monologue following the anecdote of the slashed courtesan, in Part Two from 1604, where the narrator laments that the first part of his novel from 1599 has become popularly known as *El pícaro*, instead of the original title of *Atalaya* that he had so carefully chosen. I suggest that this lament can be read in two ways. The more direct is that the author bemoans the new title as it cheapens his work somehow, slashing the book's literary value just as the courtesan's value as a high priced prostitute had been slashed by a *cuchillada*. But it could also be

understood as an indirect vindication and appropriation of the new title and the whole picaresque genre, if one considers the evolution of a previous work, the *Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea*, and how it had become more popularly known as *La Celestina* over the course of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, after its most infamous picaresque character.

#### The Picaresque and the Rise of Empathy

Regardless of how one reads Mateo Alemán's oblique pronouncement on the title or genre of his famous work, the fact remains that *Guzmán de Alfarache* hit just the right note with its audience at the time it was published. Both part I and II of Alemán's novel became instant bestsellers and, arguably, one could say that they did so because they tapped into a larger cultural shift originating in the early modern period that has been recently described as the "expansion of empathy" and "decline of violence" (Pinker; 2011).

Historians like Steven Pinker (2011) and Lynn Hunt (2007) have traced this tectonic shift in social outlook to the evolving tastes of audiences who gradually became more sensitive to narratives about ordinary people, as opposed to the adventures of epic heroes, aristocrats or saints. Hunt in particular believes that this trend reached its heyday during the 18<sup>th</sup> century with the popularization of the epistolary novel in France and England, which lent support to the humanitarian revolution of the Enlightenment. Pinker adds other more modern examples, citing 19<sup>th</sup> century bestselling novels or memoirs that

demonstrably exposed a wide range of readers to the suffering of a forgotten class of victims, and to the expansion of civil rights that followed an increased empathy towards them: for instance *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) and its pro-abolitionist stance had a profound impact on the end of slavery in the United States, *Oliver Twist* (1838) and *Nicholas Nickleby* (1839) helped focus attention and bring an end to the mistreatment of children in British orphanages and workhouses, and Melville's *White Jacket* (1850) among other works helped to end the flogging of sailors (loc. 4016). But Pinker also notes that the role of literature on this expansion of empathy probably started earlier, as far back as the advent of the printing press: "technological advances in publishing, the mass production of books, the expansion of literacy, and the popularity of the novel all preceded the major humanitarian reforms of the 18<sup>th</sup> century" (loc.4010).

The particular question of the origin of empathy in literature and its role in the decline of violence actually brings us back to the central theme of Girard's theory that we saw in chapter 2. Girard of course would place the origin of literary empathy much further back than the early modern period, since he maintains that it is the Bible alone - from the book of Genesis to the New Testament - that contains the foundational narratives that lay bare the workings of sacred violence. Biblical narratives in his opinion achieve this effect where other myths failed because they are able to convey true "concern for victims," the prime example of whom was the scapegoated and suffering Christ on the Cross.

What is interesting about these two different theories regarding the origin or expansion of empathy is how they seem to combine rather well when explaining a phenomenon like the rise of the picaresque novel in Spain in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. If we look again at the *Lazarillo de Tormes* for instance, we see that much of his effectiveness lies precisely in its ability to conjure up and sustain empathy for the poor child as an innocent Christ figure. Yet the overall tone of the narrative is not religious but thoroughly secular, one that in fact exposes the complex, corrupt and often violent entanglement of the Catholic hierarchy with its less fortunate victims, i.e. women and children.

Thus, Lázaro emerges as a protagonist of low social status, an ordinary person who is definitely no saint, aristocrat, knight-errant or epic hero, and who narrates his adventures from a first-person perspective in a rather empathetic epistolary style. This formula became an instant success, a virtually uncharted territory at the time where the author redefined his relationship with a mass audience and helped expand their sensibility. So one could say that Pinker and Hunt are correct when they speak of the revolutionary role of the epistolary novel in Europe. But it is important to remember that Spain's role in this "expansion of empathy" revolution began sooner than in the rest of Europe, with the decisive triumph of the picaresque genre in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Cervantes and the Rise of Empathy

Turning to Cervantes once again in the context of the preceding analysis one might ask what role the author played in this trend towards empathy and the decline of violence. To briefly recapitulate, chapter one of this thesis was devoted precisely to that question, i.e. the "rise and fall" of sacred violence in *Don Quixote*, by extrapolating from his brief encounter with four images of saints (II: 58). We saw how Cervantes makes it clear that there is nothing sacred about violence, and in particular helps expose the image of "Santiago Matamoros" as a martial and chivalric myth that originated and survived thanks to the historic imperatives of Spain's holy war with Islam. It is worth repeating here that Cervantes effectively questioned the "Mata-" and empathized with the "-moros" part of Santiago's famous moniker. Although neither he nor any writer of his generation were able to stem the official anti-Morisco sentiment that had led to the 1567-71 Revolt of Las Alpujarras, or to the eventual expulsion of 1609, it is significant nevertheless that Spain's final solution ruled out continued civil wars in favor of mass evacuation, the lesser of two evils. In that regard one might argue that Cervantes' demystification of Santiago fell in line with an ongoing though modest expansion of empathy towards Moriscos.

In chapter two we saw further how this greater empathy towards victims, particularly Moors and Moriscos, may be appreciated in Cervantes' evolving approach to the subtleties of Virgilian epic characterization. While the author showed he could emulate Virgil with the best of his

contemporaries, he also revealed much of his craft when intentionally subverting or parodying that model. The episodes of the false captives and of Jarife's prophecy in the *Persiles* - or the interpolated episode of the Captive and Zoraida in *Don Quixote* - make clear that the official rhetoric of cruel enemies, virtuous Christians, heroic captives, treacherous *renegados* and non-integrated Moriscos did not always hold true. On the contrary, Cervantes repeatedly demonstrated that there was more than met the eye behind facile epic archetypes.

In chapter three, as was just outlined above and I consider again in this one, the picaresque genre reveals a very different type of violence than the high-minded epic, chivalric and sacred battles that consumed the military class and the nobility. What we get instead are vendettas and score settlings that revolve around an underworld of vagrancy and/or delinquency, where the preferred means of negotiation are a knife and a *cuchillada*. These texts work differently but perhaps more effectively in expanding empathy toward their protagonists, who often get caught up without much choice in the midst picaresque violence.

#### *Don Quixote*: the Picaresque and the Limits of Empathy

The next step would be to ask how Cervantes dealt with this new genre that was exploding in popularity at the turn of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, at a time when he is presumed to have started composing *Don Quixote* and some of his *Novelas ejemplares*. As Carroll Johnson observed of these



two contemporaries:

In its time *Guzman de Alfarache* was the most popular and influential work of Spanish literature in existence, including *Don Quijote*. It was translated into the major languages almost immediately and was at least as popular as the *Quijote* outside of Spain. Mateo Alemán was called the "Divine Spaniard" by the same Europeans who considered Cervantes an amiable clown (1977; 1).

On this related question, then - the head to head comparison between Alemán and Cervantes - it would be useful to study the extent to which *Don Quixote* itself displays an anxiety of influence from *El Lazarillo* and the *Guzmán*, and whether Cervantes' choice of a protagonist who was neither an epic hero, a saint, a an aristocrat or knight errant - just an *hidalgo* of humble means - could be seen as a fundamental imitation of the picaresque model. This matter well merits its own study, for which I do not have the space here, but I should point out briefly some conventional wisdom on the subject and its implications for the "expansion of empathy" trend outlined above - before proceeding to the *Novelas ejemplares* where a closer look at the reception of the picaresque is warranted.

Carroll Johnson may have said it best in his monograph on *Don Quixote* (1990) when summarizing the impact of picaresque books on Cervantes' novel. He points out how after the episode of Marcela and Grisóstomo (I: 14) some travelers invite the knight to accompany them to Seville. The protagonist declines, on the grounds that much knightly work remains to be done in La Mancha. But, Johnson adds: "the real reason

is left unstated. If he were to go to Seville and engage in the kind of adventures the big city offers, his life would cease to be a romance of chivalry and become instead a picaresque book" (78). Just as we saw in chapter 2 with the various meanings and implications of Don Quixote's itinerary through Zaragoza or Barcelona, the fact that Seville remains outside of the textual and geographic boundaries of *Don Quixote* seems to indicate Cervantes' views on the limits of that genre as a whole. It also serves as a point of reference to the importance of geography in *Rinconete y Cortadillo's* opening scene.<sup>77</sup>

But this idea of the picaresque as a rather defined or even constricted space comes up again in Johnson's analysis of the episode of the galley slaves and the encounter with Ginés de Pasamonte (I: 22). He implies that on the heels of Alemán's exorbitant success Cervantes tried to dispense with this genre by having an actual *pícaro* converse with Don Quixote and show just how limiting its conventions could be. For one, Ginés bears more than a passing resemblance to both Lázaro and Guzmán in that all of them are rogue types, occupied with writing their autobiographies while finding it difficult or even impossible to reintegrate into society. Ginés is in fact a galley slave at the time of his encounter with Don Quixote, just as Guzmán was when he is said to have started writing his autobiography (77). Their physical confinement becomes an even clearer metaphor for genre restrictions when Don Quixote asks Ginés whether he is finished writing his life's

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<sup>77</sup> See also William Childers for a thoughtful discussion on the geography of Seville vs. La Mancha and its significance for Cervantes, "La Mancha as Borderland," in *Transnational Cervantes* (2006; 23-43).

adventures yet, to which the *pícaro* naturally replies that this is impossible since he is currently in the midst of them and still very much alive. Putting the emphasis on this obvious impediment signals by contrast one of Cervantes' most cherished and successful writing techniques, the multiplicity of narrative and authorial voices. On this basis Johnson concludes that: "Cervantes as a writer presents the picaresque format embodied in Ginés de Pasamonte only to reject it" (78). This is a rather valid point, since despite *Guzmán's* narrative complexity Mateo Alemán is basically working with an older and a younger narrator, one whose life story achieves closure but is technically unfinished. Cervantes on the other hand branches out with *Don Quixote* into several authors and editors who provide his protagonist with a complete narrative arc, including his final death and an epitaph.

Frederick de Armas frames the question of literary influence by rightly pointing out how "the many allusions to the picaresque in Cervantes' novel could well be the subject of a book" (2011; 7).<sup>78</sup> He views the episode of Ginés de Pasamonte and the galley slaves fundamentally as a clash of genres, an unwelcome irruption of the

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<sup>78</sup> Some of these allusions include Don Quixote's ordination as a knight by the picaresque figure of the innkeeper; the recurring matter of the theft of Sancho's donkey; the homage to *Lazarillo* when Don Quixote loses a few teeth and accidentally vomits on Sancho; or the sporadic appearance of Ginés de Pasamonte. De Armas focuses on the clash of genres and cultures implied by the many references to picaresque books, channeling the work of Bjornson on the Converso origins of these works, Cruz's insights on the plight of the poor, or Avalle-Arce's analysis of genealogy in the opening of *Don Quixote* by comparison to that of the *Amadis* and the *Lazarillo de Tormes* (8, 27).

picaresque into Don Quixote's previous epic-chivalric adventures, "where hagiography, mythology and Pythagorean numerology bolstered the narrative" (93). Here one may see perhaps the flip side of the coin - that is, the negative side - with respect to the expansion of empathy and the picaresque, since, as both De Armas and Gonzalez-Echevarría suggest, by overly empathizing with the slaves and taking arms against the king Don Quixote suddenly becomes a "fugitive from justice."<sup>79</sup> Further, in his ensuing defeat and humiliating escape Don Quixote proves incapable of using the gift of language that he had so effectively employed to transform his surroundings into epic-chivalric scenes before. In this case, by contrast, he is misled by the highly empathetic but also beguiling, manipulative and picaresque stories of the galley slaves. It seems therefore as if Cervantes did not necessarily view the picaresque as a liberating expansion of empathy and a defense of the weak against the powerful. It could also become quite easily a narrative of deception that should be avoided and kept at a safe distance.

*Novelas ejemplares: Exemplarity and The Picaresque*

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<sup>79</sup> For the term "fugitive from justice," see Roberto González-Echevarría's *Love and Law in Cervantes* (2005; 69). De Armas qualifies it by noting that the only thing that keeps the knight from becoming a *pícaro* himself is that he does not decide to break the law for his own personal gain, but rather out of a noble and chivalric instinct. What the knight's identification with Ginés de Pasamonte may represent, instead, is that besides becoming an outlaw "pursued by justice" he also displays his original "taint" as a gentleman from La Mancha, "pursued by anxieties of blood" (95). This idea supports his main argument about Don Quixote's Morisco identity.

Keeping those ideas in mind one should note that whereas in *Don Quixote* Cervantes made more or less playful use of picaresque situations and characters, he did not take up a serious imitation of the genre until the publication of his 1613 collection of short stories, the *Novelas ejemplares*. Three of them in particular - *Rinconete y Cortadillo*, *El casamiento engañoso* and *El coloquio de los perros* - bear distinctive hallmarks of the picaresque. Even though strictly speaking they lack a first-person narrator, they all present characters who speak of their descent into an underworld of vagrancy, delinquency and deception.

Of those three, in *Rinconete y Cortadillo* the themes of physical violence, knife slashings and facial marks play a prominent role. Significantly, this is also Cervantes' only self-admitted foray into the world of *pícaros*, whereas the other two novellas have elements mixed in that deserve to be studied in their own terms. But the woeful faces of the picaresque that we have considered up to this point are in full display in *Rinconete*. *Cuchilladas* to the face are mentioned as a routine method of score settling, and *chichones* and a black eye appear on a prostitute named "Cariharta" who suffers frequent beatings from her pimp boyfriend.

In this short story, as in its much longer predecessor *Guzmán de Alfarache*, the point of view of the narrator is one of careful distance and studied exemplarity. Cervantes makes sure that at key points the narrator passes categorical judgment on the worst offenders

from Monipodio's circle, the mafia of thieves and crooks that run organized crime in Seville and where the two main characters are drawn like moths to a flame. In this sense Monipodio provides a foil for the protagonists, who, the narrator assures us, will eventually escape this bad company and straighten out their lives. This is therefore an effective way for Cervantes to create empathy for his characters, and as such it points to the trend outlined above in the *Lazarillo* and the *Guzmán*. But *Rinconete* deserves its own separate chapter. First it will be useful to analyze some key aspects of its Prologue.

#### Cervantes' Wounded Hand and The Perils of Epic Characterization

In the *Novelas ejemplares* as a whole, the rather forceful point of view of the narrator as a conduit of exemplary moral judgment comes not only from within each story, but also from without and from the very beginning, in the Prologue. The art of the Prologue would become a hallmark of Cervantine writing, one which he deployed rather memorably and effectively in Part I of *Don Quixote* (1605) and would again use with relish in Part II (1615) and in the *Persiles* (1617). But it is this prefatory text of 1613 that opens with a remarkable appearance of a wounded hand and a detailed self-portrait of Cervantes, something that should put his "lector amantísimo" from the opening sentence immediately on the alert for a range of possibilities. Indeed, the full Prologue is striking for its links between outward appearance and inward character. Ostensibly, Cervantes uses it to affirm his moral rectitude and his credentials as the author of a collection of

exemplary stories. Under the surface however he creates a fascinating tension between various elements of physiognomy, exemplarity, character and violence.

The author opens with a conceit that is not dissimilar from the one in his 1605 Prologue. In that instance a friend pays him a visit and Cervantes uses their fictional dialogue to express deep anxiety at his current lack of inspiration and inability to write the Prologue itself, but also and more specifically at his fear of presenting in public this "dry, shriveled child, whimsical and full of extravagant fancies" that is his new book, *Don Quixote*. In the opening to *Novelas ejemplares* the author also begins by mentioning a friend, one who should have used a portrait painted by his contemporary "Juan de Jáurigui" to engrave his image at the beginning of the book, so his readers might learn what he looks like in real life. This type of portrait of the author - something we now take for granted on the inside of book covers - was just becoming a popular trend in literary publishing at the turn of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and Cervantes seems aware that he owes the public an explanation for the lack of a portrait thus far.

One common element in both Prologues, therefore, is a certain concern or uneasiness on the part of the author about showing his face - or his child's face - in public. His metaphorical "dry, shriveled" son might be reasonably understood to look sickly, wrinkly, ugly or unattractive ("*hijo seco, avellanado*"). In the case of his own

portrait the author also shows some hesitation, as if he were insecure with his looks. He implies that the portrait exists, and a copy could well be made for engraving, but somehow it remains unavailable and out of reach. So instead of an actual image Cervantes offers to reproduce what this friend of his might well have written as a caption underneath it, but did not. Here is the full text under the hypothetical engraving:

Este que veis aquí, de rostro aguileño, de cabello castaño, frente lisa 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, los dientes ni menudos ni crecidos, porque no tiene sino seis, y éstos mal acondicionados y peor puestos, porque no tienen correspondencia los unos con los otros; el cuerpo entre dos extremos, ni grande ni pequeño, la color viva, antes blanca que morena, algo cargado de espaldas y no muy ligero de pies; este, digo, que es el rostro del autor de *La Galatea* y de *Don Quijote de la Mancha*, y del que hizo el *Viaje del Parnaso*, a imitación del de César Caporal perusino, y otras obras que andan por ahí descarriadas y quizá sin el nombre de su dueño, llámase comúnmente Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra. Fue soldado muchos años, y cinco y medio cautivo, donde aprendió a tener paciencia en las adversidades. Perdió en la batalla naval de Lepanto la mano izquierda de un arcabuzazo, herida que, aunque parece fea, él la tiene por hermosa, por haberla cobrado en la más memorable y alta ocasión que vieron los pasados siglos ni esperan ver los venideros, militando debajo de las vencedoras banderas del



hijo del rayo de la guerra, Carlo Quinto, de feliz memoria (2005; 77-79).

This text is divided into two parts, the first is a physical description and the second a condensed biography. But for the purposes of this study I should begin with the second part, noting immediately the presence of a prominent and visible scar on Cervantes' left hand, or what was left of it after an "arcabuzazo," a rather painful sounding gunshot wound. This is the only physical trait in the biographical part, which makes it stand out even more. Daniel Eisenberg notes a study by Antonio López Alonso - medical doctor, Dean of the School of Medicine at Alcalá de Henares and Cervantes scholar - who looks closely at this wound in the nearly twenty direct testimonies about it by the author and his contemporaries. The main issue from a medical perspective seems to be that in the 16<sup>th</sup> century standard surgical practice was to allow for a "hypertrophic scar" to grow flesh around this type of injury, as opposed to modern practice where scar tissue is minimized so as to avoid any loss of motion. In Cervantes' case however it was customary that the wound "*criara carne*," and it is thus likely that as a result he also lost significant muscle mass and even the use of his forearm.<sup>80</sup> Thus, without delving too deeply into the medical repercussions, it seems obvious that this wound resulted in a very ugly and disfiguring scar. Cervantes admits as much, but with an important qualification: "*aunque parece fea, la [tengo] por hermosa, por haberla cobrado en la más memorable y alta*

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<sup>80</sup> See López Alonso (*Cervantes, manco y bien manco*; p. 201) as quoted in Eisenberg's review ("Un médico examina a Cervantes"; 2004, 173).

*ocasión que vieron los pasados siglos" (79).*

One might see gathered in those words the main threads previously discussed in this thesis, i.e. the epic-sacred-chivalric representations of violence on the one hand, and the picaresque on the other. First I will discuss the epic-chivalric. As we saw in chapter two, according to Quint's analysis one of the hallmarks of Virgilian characterization was the ability to draw sharp contrasts between opposing enemy sides, such as at the battle of Actium in the *Aeneid* or in Ercilla's representation of the battle of Lepanto. In this sense Cervantes' distinction of "fea" vs. "hermosa" seems to indicate how "ugly" or ignoble vs. "beautiful" or noble wounds should be interpreted. His wound may look ugly to others from the outside, but to him it looks beautiful because it was obtained as payment, "cobrada," in the highest of moral circumstances, "la más alta ocasión ...militando bajo las vencedoras banderas del hijo del rayo de la guerra." It almost makes it sound as if the scar came to him from heaven with a thunderbolt, a divine sign from the god of war himself in compensation for services rendered, "militando," under his auspices. It is thus an effective way to tie his hand and martial exploits directly to those of Juan de Austria, "hijo del rayo," and Juan's father Charles the Fifth, "rayo de la guerra."

The tone and the allusions used to characterize the wounded hand therefore sound rather epic. And the short reference to the author's captivity right before that - "cinco [años] y medio, donde aprendió a tener paciencia en las adversidades" - also helps to cast the episode

in an heroic manner, since the hand is presented as an example of one of the many adversities he contended with, and since epic protagonists were often introduced with an epithet that described a virtue they possessed to a heroic degree. Just as Aeneas was pious and Odysseus was resourceful, so Cervantes was patient, as evidenced by his wound. The many references to his own captivity that we saw in chapter two and the creation of an exemplary persona by the name of "Serbantes" also fits perfectly with this new textual portrait, bringing to mind the brush strokes of Virgilian characterization.

There is also an echo in this passage of the "shriveled child" from the 1605 Prologue. Both the "*hijo seco*" and the "*hijo del rayo*" are linked after all to things very near and dear the author's heart, i.e. his own book and his own hands. And in a way these two elements are inseparably intertwined since the former, his writing, is only made possible by the latter, his hands, either his ability to hold the pen with his right hand or to boast about his military exploits and royal patronage with the left one. It is no coincidence than that a little further down Cervantes alludes again to his novellas as his own children, or more specifically the progeny of his invention and his pen: "*mi ingenio las engendró, y las parió mi pluma*" (81). Both the "*pluma*" and the "*ingenio*" - a word synonymous to "*talento*" and "*destreza*," dexterity - thus stand literally or metonymically for his right hand; and so dear is this hand to the author, he goes as far as to say that if his exemplary children were to lead anyone to any sort of immorality, he would sooner cut off the hand with which he wrote,

or gave birth, to them.

More precisely, then, both his books and his hands are things that he somewhat fears showing in public lest they be misunderstood or lead anyone astray, but which hold great value to him personally. And here is where the other major thread from the present study can be found, i.e. the picaresque wound. The fact that Cervantes feels compelled to defend his integrity and to explain the source of his "*fea herida*" sounds remarkably similar to Lázaro's explanations about his broken teeth, or Guzmán's lamentations after the anecdote of the slashed courtesan. What Cervantes is doing, besides linking his scar to the beauty and glory of the battle of Lepanto, is to disassociate it permanently from the stigma and suspicion of the picaresque underworld that plagued those with disfiguring wounds. Lest anyone were to think this is one of those wounds, he has a perfect explanation that completely exonerates him. In that sense, too, the passage seems designed to create empathy for the author as an innocent victim, and an exemplary one at that.

The moral exemplarity tied to his left hand then becomes even stronger when referring to his right hand, as just mentioned above. But it is here perhaps, when one stops to think about it, that the right/left hand allusion begins to feel a little strained. The author explains:

Una cosa me atreveré a decirte, que si por algún modo alcanzara que la lección de estas *Novelas* pudiera inducir a quien las leyera a algún mal deseo o pensamiento, antes me cortara la mano con que

las escribí que sacarlas en público (80).

This sentiment seems very lofty and pure and it flows as a logical extension of the epic-chivalric and sacred imagery that readers are accustomed to in Cervantes' writings, such as the ones reviewed in chapter one of this thesis. The notion of preserving one's sexual purity at any cost, even by mutilating the body, comes straight from the gospel after all: "If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell" (Matthew, 5:29). Such sacred violence sounds eerily close to the physical duel between good and evil embodied by Saint George or Santiago Matamoros, who tore the limbs out of malefic dragons and wicked infidels. But more precisely it recalls the other gospel passage from Saint Matthew that Don Quixote used, or misused, to support the myths of the four "*santos y caballeros*" in Part II: 58, i.e. "heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force" (Matthew, 11:12-15).

Having one's own body pierced, hands cut or eyes torn could be seen as the ultimate sacrifice required to enter into heaven, a form of suffering exemplified by Christ on the Cross and by countless martyrs, as well as by the Christian tradition of mortification of the flesh, self-flagellation and mutilation. On the other hand, the clear endorsement of any form of sacred violence should give Cervantes' readers pause, especially in light of the analysis of the images of saints seen above. In that episode, Cervantes appears to favor the Erasmian interpretation of Matthew's gospel by Juan de Valdés, who

preferred to think of violence not as an external and physical act but rather as an internal one, "no de obras sino de fe," that is, not through works but through the persuasion of one's understanding to the obedience of faith. So then, why would Cervantes now signal support for the harder medieval reading of "violent" instead of the softer Erasmian interpretation? He may well be indicating that there is an obvious contradiction here.<sup>81</sup> Part of it may be, too, as some have pointed out, that this harsh statement functions as a veiled joke. For, how could someone famously injured in his left hand even attempt to cut off his only remaining hand? Leaving aside the morality of it, the mere act sounds too physically challenging.<sup>82</sup>

Then there is the fact that the author couches this entire section of the Prologue devoted to his "portrait" with an unusual disclaimer. As mentioned already, he says that if his image had been published with a legend underneath it, it would not have been done by a very close friend but by an acquaintance, one who in fact let him down and did not produce the engraving. This roundabout introduction seems to imply that the end result may not have been very reliable after all,

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<sup>81</sup> A classic study on self-inflicted violence and mutilation in the Christian tradition, pagan cultures, classical antiquity and modern psychiatry is Armando Favazza' *Bodies Under Siege* (1987). In the preface to third edition (2011) he makes an interesting point that mortification of the flesh and mutilation did not only appear in the gospel as a sign of holiness, but also of demonic possession. He cites the example of the man in Saint Mark's gospel from whom Jesus expelled a legion of demons, who then enter a herd of swine that commits suicide (2011; x).

<sup>82</sup> See Stephen Boyd (2005; 28) and Anthony Lappin (2005; 166) and Juan Bautista Avallé-Arce (1982; 120-21).

something that seems confirmed by Cervantes' opinion immediately after his verbal portrait, saying that indeed it sounds too flattering. The alternation between profuse praise and self-deprecation ends up being a little confusing, presenting now a heroic though ugly left hand, now a talented though potentially sinful and mutilated right hand. That lack of stability lends an air of insecurity to Cervantes' persona.

#### The Mystery of the Missing Engraving

There is therefore a feeling that all is not well with this exemplary, epic, sacred and chivalric portrait of the author, that it may be somewhat hyperbolic, exaggerated, that it doth protest too much. With this idea in mind we should perhaps look for other clues as to its reliability, authenticity, exemplarity, or lack thereof.

This topic has generated a lot of discussion in Cervantes studies. In a recent companion volume to the *Novelas ejemplares* (2005) Stephen Boyd reflects on the mystery of the missing engraving by explaining that the Prologue should be understood first and foremost as a "self-conscious work of metafiction" (49). Indeed the whole piece strikes him as an "elaborate, patently concocted tale of an absent engraving" from the first line, since Cervantes starts by saying that he might have dispensed with writing the preface entirely had his friend been able to produce his portrait for the cover (58). But, while it was indeed customary to provide an image of the author in literary works, it was not normal for it to stand alone without a preface. Cervantes

seems to be putting too much stock on an image that never materialized. As Javier Lorenzo also points out, Cervantes alters in this manner the "common topography of the Golden Age book, which divides the paratext into a series of discrete and well-defined units: "tasa," "fe de erratas," "privilegio," "aprobación," "retrato," "dedicatoria," "prólogo" and "poemas laudatorios" (86-7). Instead, the picture presented by the author seems to be "the result of a complex operation of *mise-en-abîme* that deliberately problematizes its relation to its origin and calls into question the authenticity of the portrait itself" (92).

Johnson perhaps says it best by pointing out how the 1613 Prologue marks a new feat of self-fashioning for the author, in how it relies on a similar device as his 1605 Prologue. Cervantes closes the mini-story of his supposed friend and his neglect in obtaining the engraving by saying that the whole episode has left him "en blanco y sin figura" (79). Johnson adds: "a blank page, without a face: a non-existent text, verbal and pictorial. There is here the same insistence on identity as text that can be extracted from the *Don Quixote* prologue" (2005; 289). It would be useful therefore, in my opinion, to pay close attention to this "identity as text," bearing in mind that this is all that Cervantes left behind after reconstructing the missing portrait from his memory, or perhaps simply from thin air.

Identity as Text: but Which Identity, and Which Text?



Boyd takes the time to consider the character of the facial features according to the conventions of classical portraiture. He points out how they follow a pattern of descending order, in imitation of the "*descriptio pulchritudinis* (description of beauty)" or "*descriptio puellae* (description of a girl)," which typically begin with the hair and move downwards to the head, forehead, eyes, nose, mouth and teeth, ending with a shorter description of the rest of the body (62). What Boyd finds significant in this regard is the humorous description of Cervantes' bad teeth: how it clashes with the classical model by being impossibly detailed - a "dentist's eye view," he calls it. The idea is that Cervantes was here parodying "the pedantic approach to artistic truthfulness" typical of the contemporary debate over Aristotelian poetics (63).<sup>83</sup> But his main insight into the itemized list of facial and bodily features is that they actually represent something of a balance between opposites, if not always the Aristotelian mean. So for instance: "*nariz corva, aunque bien proporcionada*"; "*las barbas de plata, ...que fueron de oro*"; "*los bigotes grandes, la boca pequeña*"; "*la color viva, antes blanca que morena*"; "*algo cargado de espaldas, y no muy ligero de pies.*" This "hypnotic rhythm" of back and forth between contrary or corresponding qualities is only interrupted by six rotting and misaligned teeth, "[*sin*] *correspondencia los unos con los otros,*" which take up the middle of the description somewhat

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<sup>83</sup> Boyd mentions Torquato Tasso's theory, for instance, that the poet should base his plots as closely as possible on historical events, using minimum invention. He contrasts this view with Cervantes' propensity to parody the pedantic writers who would equate historical truth with the accumulation of trivial details, as in *Don Quixote* II, 60: "sucedió, pues, que en más de seis días no le sucedió cosa digna de ponerse en escritura."

disproportionately and ruin the portrait's sense of balance and decorum (63). Such display, concludes Boyd, may serve as an appropriate introduction to the novellas, i.e. a complex body of work and yet an incomplete image of human nature, "deliberately and fruitfully lacking in formal perfection" (65).

So here we have the first possibility for an originating textual authority by which to identify the portrait. Cervantes may well have meant his ekphrasis as a verbal exercise in flaunting overly constricting classical Horatian and Aristotelian precepts like decorum, through the mixing of discordant styles and facial features, or the concept of *ut pictura poesis* that governs poetry's imitation of painting and art's imitation of nature. This verbal portrait is based on what an unreliable friend might have written based on an engraving that is itself a copy of a painting based on real life, so there is a potential breakdown of too many links between the facial features as they are described - i.e. *poesis* and *pictura* on the one hand - vs. the actual, historical features of the author on the other. This flaw in the classical theory of imitation also ties in with the idea mentioned above, about the author who writes his works like a father begets his children. By breaking the link between the likeness of one and the other, we are left to wonder if these novellas are perhaps only as exemplary and decorous as one might expect from someone who is an otherwise noble looking war veteran, but whose appearance is marred by six ugly and misaligned teeth.

A second possibility, similar to the first one, would be to follow De Armas' idea about the irruption of the picaresque in *Don Quixote's* episode of the galley slaves, and to see Cervantes' jarringly ugly teeth as a picaresque subversion of the epic-chivalric model of a war hero. As we saw in chapter three, Lazarillo's teeth were famously broken with a clay jar at the house of his blind master in the first *tratado*. They remained visibly broken "*hasta día de hoy*," when the grown-up Lázaro still feels shame and stigma from that episode. So the foundational text of the picaresque may indeed be creeping up in the middle of Cervantes' condensed and heroic biography, signaling how things are not always exemplary in Exemplary Land. But I will return to this picaresque possibility after the following one.

A third possibility in finding the proper textual identity of Cervantes' portrait, and by far the one that received the most attention in Cervantes studies during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, has to do with the painter mentioned in the opening paragraph, the first link in a tangled chain of artistic representations. Cervantes calls him "Juan de Jáurigui," a spelling variation that may actually be a simple spelling mistake, the painter's real name being Juan Martínez de Jáuregui y Aguilar (1583–1641). He is thought to have returned to Madrid from Italy shortly before 1610, but little was known for a long time about his actual birth date or whereabouts. The information certainly eluded those who "discovered" and donated in 1911 a wooden panel with an oil painting to the Real Academia Española, an image that triggered a rather noisy dispute for years over its authenticity.

This would have been the only known remaining image of Cervantes, giving it really high stakes in literary and cultural circles. It prominently displayed the following text separated into two headings, above and below the portrait: "*D. Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra* [above]. *Iuan de Iaurigui. Pinxit, año 1600* [below]".

It should be noted that other portraits had been thought to be the missing Jáuregui before and even some afterwards, though none as seriously as this one. And in no case did those other paintings display unequivocally both the name of the Spanish author and the signature of the painter. So perhaps this new signature, this textual identity that quickly catapulted to fame in 1911 could finally hold the key to Cervantes' missing portrait. Much was written about this painting in the almost four decades before its status as a forgery was finally laid to rest. To properly do it justice one would need a separate study. But, to make a long story short we could summarize who and what this dispute mainly concerned. On one side was the then President of the Real Academia and renowned Cervantist, Francisco Rodríguez Marín (1855 - 1943), who defended the painting's authenticity from the moment he saw it in 1911 and until his death. His major text on the subject was *El retrato de Miguel de Cervantes: estudio sobre la autenticidad de la tabla de Jáuregui* (1917) where he gathered the evidence, objections, and used his own legal expertise to analyze and answer them. On the other side were various art historians who expressed skepticism at different times, but it was Enrique Lafuente Ferrari who finally collected a definitive point-by-point

response to Rodríguez Marín's arguments in 1948. Just focusing on this idea of the painter's signature as the textual identity of the portrait, then, one may see why it was finally declared a counterfeit. None of the other portraits found from the same painter displayed that particular spelling mentioned by Cervantes. He would either sign "Don Io. de Iauregui," or "Don Iuan de Iauregui invent.," or "Don Joan de Jáuregui fecit et dicavit." In other words he never wrote his name as "Iaurigui" with an "i" in the middle, and more importantly he would never omit his rightful title of "Don." That same title, on the other hand, was actually misplaced in the case of Cervantes, who did not have a right to it, never used it, nor did anyone else when addressing him (1948; 90-97).<sup>84</sup>

Taking a step back, it is important to draw a few conclusions from this episode of the forged Jáuregui and Cervantes' suspicious sounding portrait. The first is, obviously, that not everyone agreed on the authenticity of the painting, or on whether there was even a missing Jáuregui in the first place, although this last point was never ruled out. The second, by the same token, is how everyone would still agree

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<sup>84</sup> Besides, there is also the matter of size and placement of the signature, which according to Lafuente Ferrari was much more modest and down to one side in the real Jáuregui paintings, but it shows too conspicuously and ostentatiously in the forgery. Another problem is how in the year 1600 when the painting supposedly took place, Jáuregui would only have been around sixteen years old and had not yet received his artistic training in Italy. And finally there is the entire saga of the painting's obscure provenance, from an art teacher and dealer, Juan Albiol, who "donated" it to the Real Academia in exchange for a nice promotion to "*funcionario*." On the specific matter of the painter's signature, see also Luis Astrana Marín's *Vida ejemplar y heroica de Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra* (Vol. I), published in the same year as Lafuente Ferrari's book, 1948.

that finding a real painting of Cervantes in an attic somewhere and rightly attributing it to Jáuregui would be of astronomical significance. This simple calculation is based on the idea that Cervantes' description of his own portrait, whether it was ever painted or not, probably showed what he looked like in real life. Even the most recent scholarship on the subject finds no reasons to doubt that he wrote a more or less accurate verbal description of himself at the time of the Prologue's composition in 1612, when he was well into his 60s, with a "silver" looking beard that was once "gold," for instance. It may perhaps have been influenced by classical conventions of portraiture, but it could still serve as a guide to the appearance of his eyes, nose, mouth, teeth, etc. This point in turn leads us to consider how the big appeal of having at least one surviving image of Cervantes to study would derive from the power of physiognomy and its ability to unveil elements of someone's character that may not be accessible otherwise.

The next section will be devoted in detail to the topic of physiognomy. But before getting to it a final consideration should be made in regards to the possibility that the missing Jáuregui was just as fictional as the friend who never got the engraving made. That is, what if there was never any painting of Cervantes hiding anywhere? In this case we could assume that if the author himself reared his head today - Cervantes redivivus - he would probably be very amused with the fights that erupted periodically over the authenticity of this or that particular painting. Lafuente Ferrari's concluding reflections as

an art historian suggest that by painting a verbal self-portrait the author of *Don Quixote* was probably more interested in that mirage effect than in anything else, something that would drive many future generations as mad as his own protagonist: “[el retrato de Cervantes ha sido] uno de los más imaginarios molinos de viento de la erudición cervantina que, acometido una y otra vez, dejó hasta ahora maltrechos a los caballeros andantes que, lanza en ristre y con calenturienta exaltación, se dejaron llevar arrebatados por su ensalmado espejismo” (149).

It is therefore a legitimate question to wonder if perhaps Cervantes was playing an elaborate game by shifting his “most beloved” readers’ attention to a fictional painting briefly mentioned in his text rather than to the text itself. And if he was interested in giving us a false clue, was he also trying to hide something else? Could this be one more “*misterio escondido*” of the kind that he thinks may be found his novellas?: “*pues yo he tenido osadía de dirigir estas Novelas al gran Conde de Lemos, algún misterio tienen escondido que las levanta*” (82). García López notes how this statement carries with it implicitly the distinction between “*lector discreto*” and “*lector vulgar*” that was commonplace at the time. As we have seen in the course of this dissertation, Cervantes certainly knew the difference between the two types of readers and always painted with a wide palette, pleasing both the unlearned and learned with multiple layers of meaning, some easy to understand but others rather difficult unless observed under the microscope. Indeed, part of Cervantes’ popularity and ability to

withstand the test of time is this tacit agreement with his *lector discreto* that he ought to engage in that more detailed and careful reading, something many have done over the years rather successfully.

#### Della Porta's Physiognomy and Cervantes

One such prudent reader of Cervantes is Frederick de Armas, who has studied extensively the relationship between the visual and verbal aspects of Spanish Golden Age literature and Italian Renaissance art. In two books (1998, 2006) and numerous articles he documents the many ways in which Cervantes was influenced by his early years in Italy. *Quixotic Frescoes* (2006) specifically shows how Cervantes infused his work with ekphrases of paintings by Raphael, Michelangelo, Titian, Giluio Romano, etc. Besides painters, however, De Armas also traces the influence on Cervantes of prominent Italian theorists like Giorgio Vasari or Gianbattista Della Porta. About the latter in particular De Armas shows how Cervantes made extensive use of his *Art of Memory* - *L'Arte del ricordare*, 1566 - and the idea of architectural and pictorial mnemonics.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Combining Della Porta's mnemonics with Juan Huarte's prevailing theory of physiology on the humidity vs. dryness of the mind, De Armas interprets Don Quixote's madness in a rather unique way. He notices how the protagonist was still able to vividly retain and refer scenes from books of chivalry and Italian artists despite having his memory and mental faculties compromised by his "dried up" brains. De Armas suggests that before this "dryness" had set in, when the hidalgo's mind was still humid, the art of mnemonics would have allowed him to fixate those images to his mind like plaster to a wall. These plastered images then, "quixotic frescoes," would reappear gradually during his adventures, like images in a gallery or a museum.



De Armas' contribution is pertinent here for two reasons. The first is that he establishes quite thoroughly that Cervantes weaved portraits and other images from Renaissance paintings into his writings, oftentimes in a hidden way accessible only to those who could unlock the code.<sup>86</sup> The second is that he shows how Cervantes was a careful reader of Della Porta in particular. These findings are crucial as we reflect further on the author's enigmatic self-portrait in his 1613 Prologue, for it appears that Cervantes paid close attention not only to Della Porta's work on memory but also on physiognomy. Entitled *De humana physiognomonia* (1586), this text immediately became an obligatory reference on a topic that, like many others from antiquity, had experienced a Renaissance during the early modern period.

Due to their often esoteric nature, however, Della Porta (1535-1615) was not always able to publish his works. He had earned this reputation after the wide popularity of his first book, *On Natural Magic*, 1558. Published in Latin, *Magia naturalis* dealt with popular science but it also included topics problematic for the Counterreformation, ones that now perhaps we might simply call pre-

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<sup>86</sup> See for instance chapter seven of *Quixotic Frescoes* (2006), "Drawing Decorum: Titian" (pp. 113-33), where De Armas finds the hidden portrait of the Spanish emperor - Titian's 1548 *Charles V at Mühlberg* - encoded in a series of key passages in the novel. He argues that this lofty and imperial image becomes deconstructed into qualities that actually work to diminish Don Quixote, such as "the lance, the horse, the chivalric pose, the solar qualities of the emperor/knight, his melancholy, etc." Just as Titian's rendering of Charles' famous "jaw of determination" gets turned into the protagonist's humble last name, "Quijada," the various elements of Charles' portrait "are repeatedly transformed into something less majestic and ideal" (119).

modern or unscientific. So for example besides geology, magnetism or meteorology he wrote on alchemy, astrology and occult philosophy. The Inquisition finally warned him formally in 1580 not to publish anything related to magic or the occult. This was the time when he was writing on physiognomy, a text in which he does not particularly claim any arcane knowledge, but rather defensively insists that it is firmly rooted on science and natural phenomena. Still, it took Della Porta until 1586 to get the needed permission to publish and then only for the Latin version of his work. The Italian translation would only appear later in 1598 under a pseudonym, and then again in 1610 in a revised edition, in Naples, this time with official *imprimatur* and addressed to none other than his new patron the Count of Lemos (Della Porta, 263). Coincidentally, this was the same patron who regularly helped Cervantes in the last part of his life and figures prominently in the Prologue to the *Novelas*, as well as in the dedication of *Don Quixote* Part II and the *Persiles*.<sup>87</sup>

In any case, despite and perhaps even because of Della Porta's frequent run-ins with the Inquisition, Cervantes could have read this text either from 1586 in Latin or from 1610 in Italian, which was shortly before the composition of his Prologue to the *Novelas* in 1612.

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<sup>87</sup> Further research into this particular personal connection is warranted and would be an important addition to Cervantes' biography one day, that is, whether the 8<sup>th</sup> Count of Lemos would have spoken with either author about the other, given them each other's works to read, or left any paper trail about it during the time of his viceroyalty in Naples, 1610-1616. The only salient fact about this character in Cervantes' biography is how the author had wished he had been invited to move to Naples with Lemos, but wasn't.

One thing that is remarkable, while on the topic of translations, is that although Della Porta's influence can be traced in subsequent English and German writers, neither the original or vernacular versions ever appeared in Spanish until now, practically, in 2007-2008 on a two volume translation and edition by Miguel Ángel González Manjarrés (González, 7-19).<sup>88</sup>

It should also be noted here that Julio Caro Baroja devotes an entire chapter of his *Historia de la Fisiognómica* (1988) to the significance of Della Porta's work and considers it a high point in the Western literature on this topic. Caro Baroja only mentions Cervantes in *passim*, as one among other examples of authors who were well aware of the power of physiognomy. Though he does not link the Spanish author directly to Della Porta's work, he points out a passage from *Don Quixote* Part II: 3 that contains enough clues. This is when Sansón Carrasco is first introduced: "*tendría hasta veinticuatro años, carirredondo, de nariz chata y boca grande, señales todas de ser condición maliciosa y amigo de donaires y de burlas*" (Baroja, 171). Della Porta's *Physiognomy* in fact notes how a "*cara redonda*" is a sign of being "*desvergonzado*" "*irascible*" and "*fatuo*." A "*nariz chata*" is often a sign of "*libertinaje*," while a "*boca grande*" often means someone is "*belicoso y arrogante*" (Della Porta vol. 1; 157, 170, 177). Cervantes was thus quite knowledgeable about the specific features

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<sup>88</sup> González suggests a direct influence of Della Porta's *Physiognomy* on Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, 1621, and on the Swiss writer Johann Caspar Lavater and his *Physiognomische Fragmente* from 1778 (19). To this list, as I will show, one should also add Cervantes.

that would indicate Sansón's maliciousness. As Caro Baroja also remarks, a little further in Part II: 14 the narrator even mentions the term, "[tenía] la misma fisonomía," to describe the uncanny resemblance the Knight of the Forest bore to Sansón Carrasco and Don Quixote's great surprise upon discovering it.<sup>89</sup>

What is important for our purposes, in any case, is that both Caro Baroja and De Armas suggest that Cervantes' use of physiognomy was part and parcel of a theoretical current in vogue at the time, and that this should be taken into consideration or given more credit when reading his texts closely. In the case of his self-portrait of 1613, then, the logical next step that this chapter has been trying to reach is to look at Della Porta's theory of physiognomy and what it might reveal specifically about the author's facial features. As we will see, this simple step would have saved a lot of time to Cervantes scholars over the centuries who speculated endlessly about the missing engraving, or the various mystery paintings that surfaced from time to time.

#### Della Porta's Physiognomy and Cervantes' Self-Portrait

So, without further ado, we should consider the fourth possibility in

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<sup>89</sup> Writing on this same scene De Armas also uncovers a revealing ekphrasis that links Sansón's squire's "eggplant" nose to the grotesque portraits made of vegetables by Italian painter Arcimboldo. See De Armas' "Nero's Golden House: Italian Art and the Grotesque in Don Quijote, Part II" *Cervantes*, 24 (2004): 143-71.

that list mentioned above, based on Johnson's assertion that the 1613 Prologue relies on the same formula of creating "identity as text" as the 1605 Prologue. The only problem is that the text this time, Della Porta's *On Human Physiognomy*, is a little unwieldy. It breaks down human anatomy into multiple encyclopedic entries, with some features referred to more than once under separate sections while others seem entirely absent. Fortunately for our purposes, many of Cervantes' facial and bodily traits are described as distinct entries in Della Porta, and put together they form a fascinating image that could surpass any missing Jáuregui anywhere.

But first, let us take a quick look again at Cervantes' self-portrait, in his own words:

Este que veis aquí, de rostro aguileño, de cabello castaño, frente lisa 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, los dientes ni menudos ni crecidos, porque no tiene sino seis, y éstos mal acondicionados y peor puestos, porque no tienen correspondencia los unos con los otros; el cuerpo entre dos extremos, ni grande ni pequeño, la color viva, antes blanca que morena, algo cargado de espaldas y no muy ligero de pies (2005; 77-78).

Some of these do not correlate exactly to Della Porta's *Physiognomy*, for instance the term "aguileño/a" is absent with respect to "rostro" or "cara," though it can be easily found under "nariz aguileña," right next to "nariz corva." The word "bigote" also does not appear, at all,

which is odd for a major facial feature, but it may be understood as implicit in the discussion of "barbas." The word "castaño" in relation to "pelo" does not appear either, while it does with "ojos castaños." But it will be useful to see these terms in context. The third feature in the list for example, "nariz corva," sounds very much like this:

*Nariz corva desde la frente. Aristóteles en la Fisiognomía:*

"Quienes tienen la nariz corva justo desde la frente son impúdicos, como los cuervos." En efecto, la curva de la nariz arranca desde la frente, junto al entrecejo; y la impudicia, por otro lado, es una cualidad propia de cuervos, de quienes se sirvieron los romanos para efectuar numerosos presagios. Pero yo más bien diría que cuantos tienen tal nariz son ladrones y rapaces, pues la rapacidad es una cualidad propia de cuervos y aves de pico adunco. El cuervo es, además, proclive al hurto por naturaleza, según se aprecia en los que criamos en casa como animales domésticos, que a menudo roban clavos, monedas, cuchillos y otros utensilios semejantes y los esconden en algún agujero o debajo de las piedras. Yo he conocido a mucha gente con una nariz semejante, y todos eran ladrones (vol. 1; 151).

Cervantes' nose is said to be "corva, aunque bien proporcionada," so there is some room to wonder if perhaps that means it does not protrude directly from his forehead or look too big compared to his face. But there is no avoiding the fact that Cervantes means his nose is curved - rather like a crow's, however proportionately - and that shape is the quality that Della Porta and his sources seize on when drawing an animal comparison and a moral judgment. It is also

significant that the author says "*nariz corva*" and not "*nariz aguileña*," seeing as he has just used that term for his "*rostro*" as a whole. As I mention above, "*rostro aguileño*" does not have its own entry, but interestingly "*nariz aguileña*" does and it is rather positive:

*Nariz aguileña.* Aristóteles en la *Fisiognomía*: "Quienes tienen la nariz aguileña, con las articulaciones visibles desde la frente, son magnánimos, como las águilas." Polemón y Adamancio, que lo siguen: "La nariz aguileña indica magnanimidad." Alberto, según Loxo: "La nariz del águila se atribuye a los hombres magnánimos" (vol. 1, 152).

So it is amusing to realize that Cervantes mixed those two adjectives, "*aguileña*" and "*corva*," with the least favorable results. Moving on to the next feature we read that Cervantes has a "*frente lisa y desembarazada*." If the previous characteristic hinted at a malicious crow-looking thief, a smooth forehead does not sound so bad; in fact it gives him an air of calm and stillness, free from disturbing wrinkles and blemishes. Yet here is what Della Porta has to say, following his classical sources:

*Frente lisa.* Según Rhazes, "la frente sin arrugas es señal de hombre pendenciero." Tal signo creo yo se relaciona con los perros, que tienen la frente lisa. La causa natural podría estribar en que la lisura de la frente se deba a sequedad, que es la predominante en el temperamento del hombre pendenciero, como se comprueba en los manuales de Medicina (vol. 1; 133).

That is now beginning to sound unambiguously wrong. What about his

"ojos alegres," though? Surely those sound like a positive trait. Not so fast, suggests Della Porta:

*Ojos risueños y alegres.* Polemón y Adamancio: "No consideramos ayunos de vicio los ojos que desprenden cierto placer y sonrisa, pues son engañosos, ocultan la dirección de sus decisiones y maquinan y ejecutan todo con malevolencia." Alberto: "No todos los ojos risueños y alegres son dignos de elogio." Escribe Dares que el troyano Eneas tuvo "ojos alegres," y así fue traidor de su patria y gran embaucador. El rey de Persia Tamaso, hijo de Ismael Sofí, tuvo ojos muy alegres y un semblante apropiado para el imperio, lo que viene a ser de suma importancia entre los persas, y fue así un consumado jinete y tirador de arco, que gobernó su reino con suma maestría (vol. 1; 56).

If those qualities were not troubling enough (deceitful, malevolent, fraudulent), the word "alegres" also appears in the section that describes "*ojos resplandecientes.*" The key word is in Italics:

al igual que en estado de ira los ojos se tornan fogosos y, en medio del dolor y la tristeza, hundidos y turbios, así cuando domina el placer y la agitación se vuelven hinchados, *alegres* y resplandecientes, pues de causas contrarias proceden efectos contrarios. O quizá también porque el semen, según dice Demócrito, procede de todas las partes del cuerpo y, como en tal momento se produce gran humedad y suma agitación, dicho estado se manifiesta en los ojos debido a su transparencia (vol. 1; 41-2).

Thus, if there was any doubt in the previous quote about Tamaso, the Persian king with joyful eyes who was at least good at some things



like horseback riding, archery or governing, this other entry inclines our judgment back to negative traits like lasciviousness, and to the deceitfulness and maliciousness described under "*ojos alegres*." So far then, taking it from the top, we are looking at someone who is an indecent, quarrelsome thief, deceitful and libidinous, and who also sports a small mouth that makes him "effeminate":

*Boca pequeña*. Polemón y Adamancio: "La boca pequeña es señal de afeminamiento, pues es un signo propio de mujeres." Alberto se la atribuye tanto a mujeres como a hombres afeminados (vol. 1; 177).

Here perhaps the effeminacy of the mouth might be balanced by Cervantes' facial hair, mentioned immediately before. He sports a big moustache, a feature which extrapolating from Della Porta's discussion "*sobre el vello*" would appear to be a sign of virility. Yet while the *Physiognomy* speaks of "*barba muy poblada*," "*prolija*," "*larga*," and "*mentón peludo*" (vol. 2; 78) all as good signs, it completely omits any mention of the moustache. Cervantes does say he has "*barbas de plata, que no ha veinte años que fueron de oro*." So that again should be an unequivocally good sign, except that it appears to be the wrong color. The virility of the beard, in other words, may have left with its golden and youthful looks. Here is what Della Porta notes under "*cabello dorado*":

9. *Cabello dorado*. El color intermedio entre el rubio blanquecino, propio de hombres afables, y el rubio rojizo, propio de hombres valientes y elocuentes, es el dorado, que se aparta por igual de ambos. Así lo describe Apuleyo: "El cabello a veces resplandece como el oro para ir difuminándose hasta alcanzar el tono mate de

la miel"; es decir: quienes tienen un agradable color de miel, pero mezclado de cierto brillo mate, son belicosos y de notable inteligencia.

Tal es el color de tus cabellos, joven e ilustrísimo Alfonso de Leiva, de ahí que seas al tiempo valeroso, intrépido, afable y lleno de urbanidad, tan apto para las armas y las ciencias que a duras penas puede ponderarse a qué lado te inclinas más: en tiempo de paz te entregas al estudio y nadie hay más agradable que tú, pero cuando hay que hacer algún negocio o ir a la guerra, a todos superas en entrega, diligencia y grandeza de espíritu (vol. 2; 84).

Golden hair therefore confers that rare combination of strength both in arms and the life of the mind, in the youthful and illustrious Alfonso. White hair, on the other hand, is a sign of virtue that has run dry; much like Don Quixote's intellectual abilities did along with his brains:

14. *Cabello blanco*. Avicena en los *Cánticos* (y con él Averroes): "El cabello blanco indica hombre de complexión fría, por eso es señal de cobardía." Aristóteles en *Sobre los colores*: "El pelo se torna blanco cuando la humedad que posee al salir, aun conservando el calor natural, se seca por ser escasa y por completa cocción; el indicio de que tal cocción es la causa de la canicie nos lo da la ceniza, que cuando el calor la consume se vuelve blanca. Las partes del cuerpo humano que primero encanecen son las sienes, debido a su escasez de humedad, ya que allí se disipa y cuece rápidamente, lo mismo que ocurre con las partes enfermas y dañadas, aunque esta vez por debilidad de calor y humedad. Por semejante

debilidad física los niños recién nacidos tienen la cabeza completamente blanca y las cejas como las de los viejos. Asimismo, los animales de pelaje blanco son en general más débiles que los de pelaje negro, puesto que, antes de terminar de crecer y cocida su humedad por la escasez de alimento, se vuelven blancos. Hay, no obstante, quienes encanecen en plena juventud o son blancos de nacimiento, a los que podríamos considerar de un carácter semejante al de los viejos (vol. 2; 85-6).

So there we have a detailed account of decrepitude and dryness, of golden hair and strength that has burned out and turned to ash. The list of Cervantes' physical attributes could hardly seem less ideal then, and by the time we get to his mouth, as mentioned above, we are greeted with his six lonely and misaligned teeth. Della Porta does not have a specific entry for missing teeth, but he does have one for mixed-size teeth that do not look proportionate or match each other, which is arguably what Cervantes is trying to say:

*Dientes mixtos.* Una vez tratadas las constituciones extremas de los dientes, pasamos ahora a ver la óptima. En efecto, "los dientes mixtos, sin orden, unos estrechos, otros anchos, unos ralos y otros apiñados son señal de hombre sagaz, inteligente, arrogante, envidioso, desdeñoso y camaleónico" (vol. 1; 182).

Thus, "*mixtos, sin orden*" compares to Cervantes' "*ni menudos ni crecidos ...sin correspondencia,*" and the cumulative effect of Della Porta's qualifying adjectives such as "*arrogante, envidioso, desdeñoso, etc.*" can begin to make us wonder if there are any redeeming qualities to this portrait. Bad teeth could show a man to be sagacious and

intelligent, and that seems to be it.

The features that remain have to do with the body. Cervantes is rather vague here but he does indicate he is of medium size, neither too big nor too small, and his color is "lively" leaning on white, "*antes blanco que moreno*." Della Porta actually praises those of medium stature, at long last, indicating in a section "*Sobre el grandor y la pequeñez del cuerpo*":

[Aristóteles, en la *Fisiognomía* dice que] si los hombres de cuerpo desproporcionado son viles, los de proporciones adecuadas "serán justos y valerosos," aunque en este caso emplea un razonamiento a *contrario*. Y dice así a Alejandro: "El hombre de buena estatura es aquel que ni es muy alto ni muy bajo." Polemón y Adamancio, en la figura del capacitado, le atribuyen un "cuerpo de tamaño mediano" (vol. 1; 117).

This is perhaps the only unequivocally good thing that Cervantes may have said about his appearance according to the *Physiognomy*, i.e. that he is neither too big nor too small. Yet as Della Porta notes this is an argument based on negative evidence, from the Latin "*a contrario*," and so it may not carry as much weight as all of the other arguments that speak rather poorly of the portrait. In regards to white skin for instance Della Porta does not have anything flattering to say, although there is room for ambiguity in Cervantes' words when he specifies that he is "*antes blanco que moreno*," i.e. not too white, but rather more white than dark. One general principle in the *Physiognomy* for white skin is that it lacks sufficient blood flow and

it is common to those with an excess of phlegm:

[los flemáticos] son de color blanco porque la blancura de la piel se debe a la ausencia de sangre: como dice Avicena, la carencia de sangre propicia el color blanco (vol. 1; 60)

Admittedly, Cervantes is not drawing the general picture of a phlegmatic person in his portrait. However, Della Porta devotes a later section entirely to white skin under "*los colores del cuerpo*," and that detailed description is not very reassuring either:

2. *Color blanco*. En la figura del lascivo Aristóteles afirma que suele tener piel blanca, y en la *Sobre los animales* dice que los hombres blancos abundan en esperma, pues son muy húmedos, y que las mujeres blancas son libidinosas, pues la blancura es señal de humedad, de la que a su vez se genera el semen. Polemón, en la misma figura, considera que el color blanco es señal de lujuria. Dice Suetonio que César fue blanco de tez y muy lujurioso, al igual que Tiberio. Éste, además, adiestró a sus maestros de voluptuosidad y a niños para que le hicieran felaciones, e incluso en un sacrificio violó al ayudante que portaba el incienso y a su hermano, que era flautista, y cometió otros muchos actos semejantes que cuentan Suetonio y otros autores. Según Nicetas, Heraclio fue de tez blanca y tuvo muchos hijos (vol. 1; 92).

Like the "*ojos alegres*" above, therefore, this entry suggests unrestrained or perverted sexual desires. If Cervantes was in fact, as it appears, hiding clues in his portrait from Della Porta's *Physiognomy*, he must have been aware of the shock value of some of these characteristics.

And last we come to a description of his overall physical demeanor, that is, "*cargado de espaldas y no muy ligero de pies*," which is not very specific again but it sounds as if his back is somewhat bent and as a result his walking speed is rather slow. The only place where Della Porta speaks of someone "*cargado de espaldas*" is when he makes a full description of the "*fatuo malicioso*" type (vol. 2; 42). But one could argue as before that this is just a small item from a full description that does not match the portrait at all. That would be a fair argument. Another place where Della Porta refers to an arched or bent back is in the section on "*espaldas*," in a subheading on severely curved or hunched backs, "*espaldas muy encorvadas*," which make a person either "*avaro y ansioso de lucro*," or "*perverso y envidioso*" (vol. 1; 218). Here again it could be said that Cervantes' condition, "*un poco cargado*," sounds more like sign of aging than a pronounced physical deformity - what Della Porta describes as "*muy encorvado*" - and so one should not jump to conclusions. That still leaves us with one other clue, "*no muy ligero de pies*," and in this case the *Physiognomy* offers some possibilities, in a section aptly entitled "*sobre la forma de andar*":

8. *Andar a pasos cortos y lentos*. Aristóteles, en la *Fisiognomía*:

"Los que andan a pasos cortos y lentos son hombres a quienes la pereza impide emprender una obra y nunca, además, la llevarán a término."

12. *Quienes andan a pasos lentos, se detienen a voluntad,*

*permanecen en su camino y miran alrededor*. Adamancio: "Quien anda con lentitud, se detiene a voluntad, permanece en su camino y mira

alrededor, has de saber que es un hombre orgulloso, injurioso, soberbio y adúltero." Alberto lo reproduce con bastante ineptitud: "Quien es lento de movimientos, se para de vez en cuando, alza el cuello y mira alrededor, ofrece señal de soberbio."

17. *Quienes caminan con el cuerpo inclinado.* En las figuras del cobarde, el apocado y el afable, Aristóteles les atribuye un "cuerpo inclinado." Sus dos secuaces dicen lo mismo en las figuras del cobarde y el fatuo malicioso (vol. 1; 103-5).

That last point could be the key, then. Cervantes' slow walk, especially if due to some physical impediment - like the inclination of his body, i.e. his back - could well mean that he is cowardly, timid or a malicious fool. If the sluggishness is due to his frequent stops or short steps, then he could be lazy, proud, injurious or adulterous.

#### The Della Porta Code and The Picaresque

To sum up then, the picture that emerges when contrasting Cervantes' self-portrait to Della Porta's *Physiognomy* is not particularly positive. He appears to be an indecent, quarrelsome thief, deceitful, lascivious and effeminate. Depending on the reading, he could also be an arrogant, jealous and contemptuous sexual pervert, a malicious fool, and a lazy, cowardly slow walker. This dark portrait then sounds like a critical element to factor into subsequent readings of the 1613 Prologue, or even the *Novelas* as a whole. Even if one were to take the most literal approach to Della Porta's *Physiognomy* and rule out a few

of those qualities - very few - Cervantes' exercise still reveals an extraordinary portrait of shame, one which poses several questions for further inquiry. In order to reach a conclusion, however, I will only touch on two that concern this study.

The first would be to ask how this alternative portrait could have gone unnoticed for so long. It bears mentioning again that the mystery of the missing engraving has given Cervantes scholars a lot to discuss and research for a long time. It seems however that no one was searching in the right place. Since the *Novelas ejemplares* first appeared, the Prologue's enigmatic portrait seems to have kept everyone busy either by believing or disbelieving its existence, or incorrectly attributing to Jáuregui the many paintings discovered along the way, like the one donated to the Real Academia in 1911. The interesting part about this hidden portrait - revealed only through the "Della Porta code," to put it in somewhat contemporary terms - is of course that Cervantes himself would have planned it that way. If so, he did his best to throw a few distractions in his readers' way. The first was to drop the name of a famous painter, one who could conceivably have met him and completed his work shortly before his composition of the Prologue. Another major distraction is the fact that he accompanies his ekphrasis with a short epic-chivalric biography that insists on his heroic and exemplary character, as a way of introducing the real topic of the Prologue, which was his authorship of the collection of *Exemplary Novels*.



This question of authorship then leads us back to the topic of the picaresque, in particular the wounded hands and woeful faces observed in this study on some of the major exponents of that genre. From the *Celestina* to the *Lazarillo* and the *Guzmán*, the question of authorship seems to be intimately connected to facial or bodily scars, and the resulting social stigma they bring to the narrators, protagonists or authors of these stories. In this sense, the missing teeth in Cervantes' portrait provide a distant echo of the broken teeth of the *Lazarillo*. But in light of the full Della Porta reading, Cervantes' bad teeth clearly would have been the least of his problems. The irruption of the picaresque discussed by De Armas in regards to the galley slaves in *Don Quixote* seems in full display here, as the author's duplicitous self-portrait recalls the beguiling Ginés de Pasamonte and his many predecessors, whose claims to innocence would typically turn out to be a charade. But whereas those literary tricksters still showed a varying degree of transparency in their deceits, Cervantes instead forges a much neater and impenetrable façade in the opening of his Prologue.

The picture that emerges behind the author's honorable portrait therefore is that of a deceitful *pícaro*, and not just one like Lázaro with a few teeth missing but rather of a full-bodied picture of misery, from head to toe. It is also the image of an old and greying *pícaro*, one whose silver hair may not necessarily indicate wisdom but rather decrepitude, dryness and even lust, which calls to mind the case of *La Celestina*.

Further, the rhetorical effect of this hidden *pícaro* hiding behind the exemplary author of the *Novelas* may be a conscious subversion of a tradition where Lazaro or Guzmán were so preoccupied with justifying their scars and other flaws, pleading at every turn for their readers' sympathy. By switching outward physical scars like *cuchilladas* or broken teeth for physiognomical qualities like a small mouth, smooth forehead or a curved nose, Cervantes seems to be celebrating rather than feeling shame over a deeply flawed personality. The fact that his flaws can only be read by the initiated in the art of physiognomy adds a fascinating layer of complexity to his subversion of the picaresque, just as we saw how his image of Virgilian epic exemplarity becomes rather unstable under close scrutiny.

Finally, the whole exercise should also be considered in light of the humor and irony that characterize Cervantes' earlier work. By showing us the image of a *pícaro* who professes to be an honorable and exemplary author of short stories, Cervantes is calling into question the truthfulness, validity and exemplarity of those very stories. This technique is reminiscent of the various authors and editors that keep cropping up at the beginning of *Don Quixote*. Renewed attention to the Prologue of the *Novelas* therefore should perhaps bring it to a privileged position from under the role of second fiddle that it has often played to its 1605 predecessor.

## Conclusion

More than a step-by-step recapitulation of the whole thesis, which I already outlined at the beginning of chapter 4, I would like to take this occasion simply to do two things.

The first is to look back at the example of Cervantes' self-portrait and to reflect on how it weaves together some of the major themes studied in this dissertation. As mentioned above, the portrait and its accompanying legend contain an element of the sacred and the epic that we saw in the chapters 1 and 2. Cervantes presents his condensed biography, supposedly written by a friend, almost as if it were a saint's *vita*, which incidentally and to some extent seems to justify his being the subject of a renowned painter at the time.<sup>90</sup> The author even admits with a certain degree of humility after transcribing this biography that it sounds a little too flattering, although he does not in fact contradict any portion of it. All he says is that this type of "elogios" under such portraits are probably not the kind one should trust: "*Porque pensar que dicen puntualmente la verdad los tales elogios es disparate, por no tener punto preciso ni determinado las alabanzas ni los vituperios*" (79).

This comment sounds innocent enough, either as a classical topos of affected-modesty and self-deprecation, or perhaps as an indirect jab

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<sup>90</sup> It may come as no surprise that one of the few actual remaining Jáuregui's in existence is a painting of Saint Teresa of Avila (Lafuente Ferrari, 95-96).

at other flashy and flattering portraits of authors in circulation at the time, like Lope de Vega's. Or, also, it could be a reference to his previous Prologue of 1605, to *Don Quixote*, where the conversation with his friend turns at one point to this same topic of false praise and forged dedications. But most importantly, as we have had the chance to discover through Della Porta's *Physiognomy*, is the fact that this particular portrait of Cervantes is such a perfect example of the kind that should not be trusted. The image of the saintly author and epic war hero - with a prominent wound on his left hand, and who has written a most exemplary collection of short stories with his right hand - is utterly and exhaustively given the lie by a detailed physiognomical reading of his picaresque portrait. It is the perfect forgery.

The only thing that I will add here in that respect - and to return briefly to the topic mentioned in the introduction to this thesis - is that this portrait could also be the perfect rebuttal to Nabokov's objection that the violence in Cervantes is nothing but "coarse and stupid fun" (65). In a way, as I suggested above, the act of inscribing a whole series of shameful features in what should be the figure of an honorable man, constitutes a kind of disfiguring and stigmatizing *cuchillada*, of the type seen so often in the picaresque genre. In other words, it is an act of violence. But it is also done in a way that is highly humorous and funny. Thus, far from "coarse" or "stupid," this example demonstrates how *refined* and *intelligent* violence can be in the hands of Cervantes.

The second and last thing that I should do in this conclusion is not to look back but rather to look forward to what should be the next chapter in a book manuscript. Cervantes' artful disguise of his picaresque identity behind the mask of an honorable portrait could serve as introduction to a close reading of his centerpiece picaresque (and exemplary) story, *Rinconte y Cortadillo*. Besides the reference to the *cuchilladas* in the *Libro de Memoria* at Monipodio's house - and the name of some of the characters, such as *Cariharta* or *Cortadillo* himself - there is another element of that story that would not otherwise be too immediately obvious when discussing violence, but which perhaps should be in the context of the preceding analysis. One of the first things the young *pícaros* do upon entering Seville is to steal a purse with money from an unsuspecting sacristan. Not content with this, however, Cortado then follows the inconsolable victim and begins to speak with him, pretending he has seen the thief, promising to help in his capture and reassuring the sacristan that everything will turn out fine. But what is really happening is that while talking incessantly and holding the sacristan's stare eye to eye, Cortado pulls a silk handkerchief from his victim's pocket without him noticing anything. The whole double theft is done so smoothly that the poor sacristan walks away, having being robbed twice while thanking Cortado for his words of encouragement. I would say that this is a very similar instance of the kind of picaresque trickery that Cervantes displays in his Prologue, and it underscores what will be of running themes in his short story, namely that stealing is a form of violence as well. But that will have to wait for a future chapter.

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