
Unity-in-variety, *admiratio* and Verisimilitude in the Interpolated Stories of *Don Quijote*, Part One

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Abstract

The interpolated stories included in *Don Quijote*, Part one have frequently been studied as oppositional to the main plot in function of thematic binaries such as literature-life, illusion-reality, truth-fiction, idealism-realism and romance-novel. An analysis of the embedded tales' shared motifs, commonplace characterizations and structural relationship with the central narration, however, demonstrates Cervantes's attempt to incorporate and harmonize disparate literary elements into a single narrative according to the theoretical precepts of his age, especially unity-in-variety, *admiratio* and verisimilitude. The interpolated stories are constructed as symmetrical patterns of recurrent tropes and themes with varying degrees of coordination with each other, as well as with the main plot. This intricate structure demonstrates the incremental nature of Cervantes's innovation. Rather than constituting a decisive rupture with contemporary theoretical postulates, as the critical consensus holds, his approach to narrative and character develops in consonance with them.

Resumen

Las novelas interpoladas en la Primera parte de *Don Quijote* se han estudiado con frecuencia en contraste con la trama principal en función de temas binarios como literatura-vida, ilusión-realidad, verdad-ficción, idealismo-realismo y romance-novela. Sin embargo, un análisis de los motivos compartidos y caracterizaciones comunes de las digresiones, además de su relación estructural con la historia central, demuestra que Cervantes procura combinar de forma armoniosa distintos elementos literarios en una sola narración unida de acuerdo con los principios teóricos de la época, sobre todo unidad y variedad, *admiratio* y verosimilitud. Las historias intercaladas se construyen a base de patrones simétricos de tropes y temas recurrentes de variable coordinación tanto entre sí como con la trama principal. Esta compleja estructura indica la naturaleza incremental de la innovación de Cervantes. En lugar de constituir una ruptura decisiva con los postulados teóricos de su época, como sostiene el consenso crítico actual, su práctica literaria en lo que se refiere a la estructura narrativa y a la creación de personajes se desarrolla en consonancia con ellos.

The interpolated stories interspersed throughout *Don Quijote*, Part one (1605) have been the object of abundant critical scrutiny, both individually and collectively. Those studies that focus on the digressive episodes as a group often treat them as conventional counterpoints to the experimental main plot in function of thematic binaries such as literature-life, illusion-reality, truth-fiction, idealism-realism, and romance-novel.¹ An analysis of the embedded tales' shared motifs, commonplace characterizations and structural relationship with the primary narration, however, demonstrates Cervantes's sustained attempt to incorporate and harmonize disparate and tonally distinct literary elements into a unified narrative whole according to the theoretical precepts of the age, especially unity-in-variety, *admiratio*, and verisimilitude. The interpolated stories themselves are constructed as variations of repeating character tropes and recurrent narrative themes configured with differing degrees of coordination with the main plot according to their subject matter and the social status of their characters. The close study of this intricate structural arrangement elucidates aspects of Cervantes's engagement with contemporary theoretical principles of narrative structure and characterization in *Don Quijote*, Part one that have largely eluded detailed scholarly explanation.² When considered as precursors to the more radical experimentation of the *Novelas ejemplares* (1613) and *Don Quijote*, Part two (1615), the interpolated tales of *Don Quijote*, Part one demonstrate the incremental nature of Cervantes's literary innovations. Rather than constituting a decisive rupture with contemporary theoretical postulates, as the critical consensus holds, his approach to narrative and character develops in consonance with them.³

1 See, for example, Blasco 1993; Garrido Ardila 2015; Immerwahr 1958; Rozenblat 1991; Williamson 1982; Zimic 1998.

2 Critical attention has tended to focus on the explicit theoretical statements of the canon from Toledo and his literary debate with *Don Quijote* in Part one, chapters 47–50 (Forcione 1970: 91; Alcalá Galán 2009: 153).

3 For Riley, *Don Quijote* represents an ironic vision of the old literary and social hierarchies, which it replaces with a modern, realistic model representative of full human experience (1962: 145). Blasco argues that Cervantes was searching for a new form of *fábula* because the traditional types were incapable of reflecting reality as he and his contemporaries were able to perceive it (1993: 21). Garrido Ardila contends that *Don Quijote* is a novel because it is verisimilar, and verisimilitude is synonymous with Ian Watt's principle of formal realism as it arose in the novel (2013: 155–60). Citing Ortega y Gasset's well-known assertion that Cervantes 'quiso la inverosimilitud como tal inverosimilitud', Percas de Ponseti claims that the lack of verisimilitude constitutes a technique for achieving psychological realism (1999: 199n27). Following a study of the debate between the canon from Toledo and *Don Quijote*, Forcione concludes that 'Don Quixote's exposure of the weaknesses underlying the canon's conception of verisimilitude suggests Cervantes' suspicion of the fundamental direction of sixteenth-century critical thought [...] for Cervantes the artist stands beyond all the norms and restrictions by which criticism would control his creative powers, as god above both his creation and his audience' (1970: 125). Alcalá Galán concurs that *Don Quijote* wins the debate with the canon, which demonstrates that 'la literatura más que un debate sobre la veracidad de la representación es un asunto que pasa por el placer, por el contento' (2009: 153). Urbina also believes that the creation of literary pleasure ('deleite') propitiates a new kind of fiction that 'podría resultar verosímil a pesar de su radical inverosimilitud porque se basa en la verdad de una experiencia intratextual, de páginas adentro, en lugar de la

To fully appreciate how this is so, we must consider some basic theoretical premises of the period. The first complete exposition of Aristotelian literary theory written in Spain was Alonso López Pinciano's *Philosophía antigua poética* (1596). This disquisition, 'uno de los tratados de preceptiva más completos de todos los que se publicaron durante el Segundo Renacimiento', is organized as a dialogue between three characters, Ugo, Fadrique, and El Pinciano, the author's alter ego, who asks questions and challenges the assertions of his more learned interlocutors (Canavaggio 1958: 23). For the purposes of the present study, López Pinciano's treatise (1973) is particularly important because of its influence on Cervantes, and also because López Pinciano groups his discussion of unity of plot and its digressions together with his comments on *admiratio* and verisimilitude, as befits their close relationship within his theoretical framework.⁴ His detailed exposition of these principles provides a paradigm in which to situate Cervantes's literary experimentation in *Don Quijote*, Part one.

López Pinciano discusses unity of action in his comments on the structure of the primary narrative, or *fábula*, and the secondary *episodios*. He gives three, more or less metaphorical, definitions of the relationship between the two parts: 'Episodio, digo, es vn emplasto que se pega y despega a la fábula sin quedar pegado algo dél' (López Pinciano 1973, II: 20); 'la fábula es vna rosa abierta, y que el peçón y cabeçuela es la fábula, y las hojas son los episodios que la ensanchan y florecen; y assí, como las hojas penden de la cabeçuela, deuen pender los episodios de la fábula' (1973, II: 21); 'los episodios son aquellas acciones, las quales –au[n]que son tan fuera de la fábula, que se pueden quitar della quedando perfecta– deuen ser tan aplicados a ella, que parezcan vna misma cosa' (II: 22). As these descriptions indicate, the principle of unity-in-variety is by nature paradoxical, as are all three basic characteristics of the *fábula*: 'las quales son tres pares

experiencia de una verdad extratextual de páginas afuera' (1990: 103). Referring to decorum (verisimilitude of character) specifically, Maestro asserts that Cervantes's 'vinculación con la poética clásica es más bien teórica y formal, pues en la mayoría de los casos la libertad de la creación literaria – sobre todo narrativa– desmiente el ejercicio imperativo de la preceptiva tradicional' (1999: 63n11). Chevalier is blunter: 'sabe cualquier lector del *Quijote* que Cervantes no respeta este precepto' (1993: 8n15). More generally, Garrido Gallardo avers that, while Cervantes was familiar with contemporary theoretical precepts, 'cabe rechazar toda relación, más o menos mecánica, de preceptos y resultados de escritura, aunque no se pueda descartar cierta influencia (incluso inconsciente) de estilo de época' (2014: 198). In contrast, Close insists that Cervantes remains 'faithful to [the] spirit' of the 'Classical precepts of art' (2002: 76). Montero Reguera (1993) maintains that Cervantes adheres to contemporary principles of verisimilitude even in an experimental *novela* like 'La ilustre fregona'.

- 4 On López Pinciano and Cervantes, see Canavaggio 1958 and Mestre Zaragoza 2016. Eisenberg (1984) makes the case for López Pinciano's impact on Cervantes by arguing against the significance of the Italian theorists, especially Torquato Tasso. Porqueras Mayo contends that López Pinciano was not an important influence on Cervantes, on the grounds that 'no le ha interesado por su frialdad u objetividad expositiva' and that Cervantes preferred 'fuentes más exaltadas que participasen en la tradición platónica y divinizante' (1991: 85). Mestre Zaragoza (2006 and 2014), however, argues that López Pinciano's most original theoretical contribution was an aesthetic and moral legitimation of prose fiction in terms that synthesized Aristotelianism and Platonism.

co[n]trarios, porq[ue] la fábula deue ser: vna y varia, perturbadora y quietadora de los ánimos, y admirable y verisímil' (II: 39).⁵ For López Pinciano, the requirement that plots contain digressions transects genre: not every *fábula* has episodes, but epic, tragedy, and comedy must, and they must be long in the former and short in the latter two (II: 15).

López Pinciano leaves no doubt about the centrality of verisimilitude in fiction: 'es tan necessaria, que, adonde falta ella, falta el anima de la poética y forma, porque el que no haze acción verisímil, a nadie imita' (II: 62). Following Aristotle, he defines fiction ('poética') as imitation, and imitation must be of people. This would seem to call for a particularized rendering of the full panoply of human diversity, but such is not the case. On the contrary, essential categories of personhood are to be observed. López Pinciano draws on Aristotle and Horace in order to outline their parameters:

[C]onuiene que [...] mire el poeta a quien pinta, y siga siempre, como es dicho, a la naturaleza de la cosa, y, en suma, al verisímil y buen decoro, que por otro nombre se dirá perfecta imitación; ésta se deue guardar siempre, y, en ella, la edad, fortuna, estado, nación, hábito, instrumento y los dos adjuntos principales, que son tie[m]po y lugar. (1973, II: 77–78)⁶

López Pinciano refuses to speculate about *why* such categories of identity exist, referring the problem to natural philosophers (II: 77). Instead, he discusses the essential human typologies as he believes them to actually occur.

This approach reflects a coherent application to literary character of Aristotle's dictum that history treats particulars while poetry deals with universals. Nevertheless, López Pinciano does not accept this distinction without challenge. As El Pinciano puts it to Ugo, 'los viejos todos no son, como vos dezís, auaros, indeterminados y espaciosos. Veo yo en las comedias algunos pródigos determinados, y más que vnos niños, ligeros en las acciones corporales y aun espirituales, que no parecen mal; y según esto que veo y vuestra doctrina, parecen estas imitaciones malas y fuera de verisimilitud' (II: 81). Ugo's long response is worth quoting in full:

No es tan fuera della [la verosimilitud] como dezís; porq[ue] realmente ay algunos viejos, aunque pocos, de essa condición; y a éstos imitan los cómicos y de éssos guardan la verisimilitud. Lo que dixé o quise dezir es que, según la naturaleza y comúnmente, los viejos son de las dichas calidades, y q[ue] en cosas graues conuiene q[ue] el viejo se pinte guardoso, indeterminado y espaciado, porque es la comú[n] y natural acció[n] suya, mas en cosas de burlas y de passatíe[m]po está muy bien pintar a vn viejo de la manera q[ue] dezís auer visto, determinado, colérico y aun enamorado, si queréys, por dar más causa de reyr y más sal a la comedia. Assí q[ue] si quiero pintar la cosa graue, como ella es, pintaré la senetud en vn ho[m]bre graue, reposado,

5 For López Pinciano, all categories of fiction (tragedy, epic, comedy) use different means, 'espanto y conmisericordia' or 'alegría y risa', to produce the same effect in the reader, 'perturbar y alborotar' and 'quietar al ánimo' (1973, II: 54).

6 Verisimilitude of character was called decorum, 'el concepto horaciano de conformidad con la naturaleza y verosimilitud de los caracteres' (Chevalier 1993: 5). In this sense, López Pinciano treats both terms as synonyms, as in the cited passage, but he prefers verisimilitude and I follow him in that usage here.

pereçoso en su determinación, que assí son naturalmente los viejos, mas si la quiero pintar ridícula y de pasatiempo, pintaréla en vn hombre súbito y colérico, el qual dé que reyr con la demasiada desproporción. Assí que esta acción súbita del viejo es verisímil y no verisímil; verisímil a la naturaleza particular de algunos viejos y no verisímil a la vniuersal; y, por ser condición particular de alguno, no está fuera de la verisimilitud, como lo son las acciones que del todo carecen della y que ni son ni pueden ser (como sería pintar un ciprés en medio de la mar, y vn delfín, en medio de vn monte). Y acábesse de cerrar esta cláusula de la verisimilitud con q[ue] el poeta la deue guardar en el género, en la edad y con el hábito y estado de la persona; y assimismo en el lugar y tiempo de la manera dicha, y en lo demás. (López Pinciano 1973, II: 81–83)

The difference is between the universal and the particular. As a rule, old men are by nature thrifty, dithering, and deliberate. However, some (very few) do exist who are profligate (Don Quijote), impetuous (Don Quijote), choleric (Don Quijote), and even in love (Don Quijote). Such individuals, however, are aberrant and comically ridiculous, fit for ‘cosas de burlas y de passatie[m]po’, whose function is to ‘dar más causa de reyr y más sal a la comedia’. They are verisimilar but belong to the province of comedy; they are inappropriate for serious fiction, ‘cosas graues’.⁷

The tendency towards essentialist characterization was exacerbated by the application of another Aristotelian precept, that characters in the high styles (tragedy and epic) were better than average, while those in the low style (comedy) were worse than average. Here again, however, López Pinciano interrogates the principle through El Pinciano.⁸ Why, he asks, do poets not imitate their equals, but only those who are better or worse? Ugo seeks to square the circle. Men generally exaggerate and rarely tell things as they are, he reasons. Therefore, ‘¿por qué los poetas, que son imitadores de estos tales, como en las demás cosas, no los imitarán en éstas?’ (1973, I: 249). Thus, classifying literary characters according to category (better or worse than average) is ingeniously presented as a matter of accurately imitating reality: typecasting is verisimilar because it is an authentic reflection of real life. But there is another reason, as well: ‘Añado que, si el poeta pintase yguales como los hombres son, carescerían del mouer o admiración, la qual es vna parte importantíssima para vno de los fines de la poética, digo, para el deleyte’ (1973, I: 249). Average is not astonishing, and thus not appropriate poetic material. Indeed, so important is *admiratio* that López Pinciano allows for some violation of decorum in order to achieve it, especially in the epic (1973, II: 361). In relation to literary character, therefore, verisimilitude and *admiratio* exist in perpetual, paradoxical tension: the homogenizing, centripetal pull of verisimilitude counterbalanced by the centrifugal thrust toward astonishing particularity exerted by *admiratio*.

7 Luis Alfonso de Carballo (*Cisne de Apolo*, 1602) and Francisco Cascales (*Tablas poéticas*, 1617) treat decorum, universality, and particularity in similar terms and reach comparable conclusions, albeit without López Pinciano’s focus on comic aberration. See Alfonso de Carballo 1958, II: 117–24; and Cascales 1975: 75–81.

8 López Pinciano also challenges the very meaning of better and worse in this context. His three characters eventually agree that Aristotle refers, not to virtue or behaviour, but to ‘nobleza de sangre y grauedad de antepassados’ (1973, II: 328–29).

López Pinciano insists that the best kind of ‘admiración’ is ‘causada de algún acacimiento nuevo y raro; porque esta nouedad haze mucho para el deleyte, que, aunque [...] sola la imitación le trahía, mas quando es de cosa no oyda, ni vista, admira mucho más y deleyta’ (1973, II: 57–58). He identifies three categories of ‘admiraciones’: ‘vnas son ni alegres ni tristes, como el buelo de Pegaso; otras, trágicas y tristes, como la muerte de Príamo y desventura de Hécuba; otras son ridículas, como las burlas entre Mercurio y Sosia’ (1973, II: 61). Surprise is the fundamental characteristic of *admiratio*, which might otherwise be paired with different emotions, including sorrow and laughter.⁹ The possible combination of *admiratio* and comedy (‘admiraciones [...] ridículas’) merits particular emphasis. E. C. Riley, citing López Pinciano’s statement that unintentional violations of verisimilitude cause laughter, argues that the Spanish theorist held there to be ‘una antítesis entre lo admirable y lo risible (o por lo menos cierta clase de lo risible)’, an attitude that he also attributes to Cervantes (1963: 179). Eduardo Urbina shares Riley’s supposition that ‘admiración y risa’ constitute antithetical ‘extremos opuestos’ for Cervantes (1990: 95). Anthony Close, in contrast, maintains that Cervantes’s comic characters are ‘a simultaneous source of *admiración* (wonderment) and *risa* (laughter)’, and he asserts, without further elaboration, that ‘[t]he two kinds of reaction are not mutually exclusive’ (2002: 24; original emphasis).¹⁰

Besides the direct statement on comic *admiratio* cited above, López Pinciano provides a further example that conclusively demonstrates the potential reconciliation of both concepts. Fadrique argues that, strictly speaking, an ‘imitación’ need not cause ‘admiración’ to qualify as a ‘poema’. As evidence, he posits a play in which a *buñolero* comes onstage and plies his trade: ‘¿por ventura podréys tener la risa? Claro es que os reyréys y holgaréys co[n] sola la imitación’. Ugo counters that imitation *itself* is sufficient to cause *admiratio*: ‘Essa imitación común tiene también su admiración; y claro está que los que se ríen dello, se admiran de la imitación tan a gusto’ (López Pinciano 1973, II: 57). As to content, he advises that comic *admiratio* not be too scabrous (1973, II: 61). For López Pinciano, therefore, ‘admiración’ and laughter are not fundamentally incompatible, although, like ‘admiración’ and sorrow, they may be understood as somewhat independent variables within the same ‘imitación’.¹¹

9 Riley states that *admiratio* ‘[n]o dista mucho del espanto, quedando en grado menor’ (1963: 176; original emphasis).

10 According to Herrick, *admiratio* came to be a cornerstone of early modern comic theory. In his treatise *De Ridiculis* (1550), Madius linked *admiratio*, in the sense of the surprising or unexpected, directly to comedy, and this connection became the unifying concept among subsequent sixteenth-century theories of the risible (Herrick 1964: 41–57).

11 Urbina identifies three types of *admiratio* in *Don Quijote*: *positiva*, associated with beauty and harmony; *negativa*, based on strangeness, extravagance, and the foolish, and associated with laughter; *ambivalente*, the inseparable juxtaposition of the other two types, which includes both astonishment and acceptance and strangeness and rejection (1990: 95–97). The result is a paradoxical synthesis, which Urbina terms the ambivalent grotesque and which creates a new verisimilitude: ‘Se trata en el fondo de un modo grotesco que tiene como base la ruptura de preceptos y normas [...] provocando admiración y risa, conmoviendo y deleitando, y haciendo de lo que en un modo es inverosímil algo verosímil en

Cervantes's practice in *Don Quijote*, Part one reflects these theoretical principles. A noblewoman reacts 'admirada y temerosa' to Don Quijote's fight with her Basque squire (Cervantes 2016, I, 8: 82); when Marcela first appears, '[l]os que hasta entonces no la habían visto la miraban con admiración y silencio' (Cervantes 2016, I, 14: 124–25); Anselmo's proposal provokes 'admiración y espanto' in Lotario (Cervantes 2016, I, 33: 332); Sansón Carasco reacts to Sancho with *admiración* and laughter: 'Admirado quedó el bachiller de oír el término y modo de hablar de Sancho Panza, que, puesto que había leído la primera historia de su señor, nunca creyó que era tan gracioso como allí le pintan' (Cervantes 2016, II, 7: 600). Some variant of *admiración* is the standard reaction to Don Quijote, but this might equally be curiosity or astonishment provoked by the strangeness of his appearance, the unconventionality of his speech, or his unprecedented mixing of delusion and erudition, as laughter caused by his comic *disparates*.¹² By the same token, the fortuitous coincidence of the encounter between Dorotea, Don Fernando, Cardenio, and Luscinda at the inn, which Helena Percas de Ponseti describes as 'un feliz e inverosímil reencuentro y desenlace', is ascribed to astonishing providential destiny: 'Notad cómo el cielo, por desusados y a nosotros encubiertos caminos, me ha puesto a mi verdadero esposo delante' (Percas de Ponseti 1999: 184; Cervantes 2016, I, 36: 378). Such 'peripecias y agniciones' were an ancient and still-popular source of *admiratio* in the period (Riley 1963: 180–81). In all these cases, the basic effect sought on the reader, astonishment and wonder within the bounds of verisimilitude, is essentially the same. López Pinciano describes the constant tension between *admiración* and verisimilitude as a paradox ('contradicción'), in the same way that the unity-in-variety structure of the ideal *fábula* is paradoxical (1973, II: 61–62). An author creates *admiratio* along multiple dimensions by resolving these multifaceted contradictions into a harmonious, unified narrative whole.

otro' (1990: 104; original emphasis). Urbina convincingly explicates Cervantes's increasingly sophisticated combination of *admiratio* and laughter in *Don Quijote*. However, since López Pinciano makes clear that 'admiración' and 'risa' are perfectly compatible, and that one can simultaneously laugh at and be astonished by (implicitly verisimilar) 'imitación', I see Cervantes's literary experimentation as developing in consonance with the basic tenets of contemporary theories of verisimilitude and *admiratio*, not as 'la ruptura de preceptos y normas'.

- 12 The following examples are representative: 'Contó el ventero a todos cuantos estaban en la venta la locura de su huésped, la vela de las armas y la armazón de caballería que esperaba. Admiráronse de tan extraño género de locura y fuéronselo a mirar desde lejos' (Cervantes 2016, I, 3: 44); 'Por estas razones que dijo acabaron de enterarse los caminantes que era don Quijote falto de juicio y del género de locura que lo señoreaba, de lo cual recibieron la misma admiración que recibían todos aquellos que de nuevo venían en conocimiento de ella' (Cervantes 2016, I, 13: 112); 'Admirado quedó el oidor del razonamiento de don Quijote, a quien se puso a mirar muy de propósito, y no menos le admiraba su talle que sus palabras' (Cervantes 2016, I, 42: 441); 'Mirábalo el canónigo, y admirábase de ver la extrañeza de su grande locura y de que en cuanto hablaba y respondía mostraba tener bonísimo entendimiento: solamente venía a perder los estribos [...] en tratándole de caballería' (Cervantes 2016, I, 49: 503).

Modern readers often assume that the interpolated stories in *Don Quijote*, Part one are not verisimilar, in ironic counterpoint to the realism of the main plot.¹³ Early modern poetics, however, held verisimilitude to be a basic requirement of all categories of fiction (Close 2002: 8). Epic poetry, classical tragedy, Greek romances, sentimental and pastoral novels were considered just as verisimilar as *Celestina*, *La lozana andaluza*, *Lazarillo de Tormes*, and *Guzmán de Alfarache*.¹⁴ As Isabel Lozano Renieblas points out, ‘las obras que hoy se califican como idealistas o realistas pertenecían a un mismo modelo estético, en contraposición con aquellas que operaban en el campo de la libre imaginación’ (1998: 121). The latter category included the so-called Milesian fables and chivalric romances, which both López Pinciano and Cervantes reject as preposterously lacking in verisimilitude (López Pinciano 1973, II: 8–9 and III: 178; Cervantes 2016, I, 47: 489–91). In contrast, Heliodorus’ *Aethiopian History*, which today is considered the prototypical prose romance and which Cervantes took as the model for his own *Persiles y Sigismunda*, was notable precisely *because* of its verisimilitude.¹⁵

In the prologue to his French translation of the *Aethiopian History*, which Francisco de Vergara included, unattributed, in his own anonymously published Spanish translation of the work (Antwerp 1554; reprint Salamanca 1581), Jacques Amyot praises the Greek novel for its faithful imitation of nature in terms that will be immediately familiar to many readers of Cervantes: ‘entre las ficciones aquellas que estan mas cerca de natura, y en las quales ay mas de verissimilitud, son las que agradan mas a los que miden su plazer con la razon, y que se deleytan con juyzio’ (Anon. 1554: 3).¹⁶ Few readers today would make such claims about the *Aethiopian History*. The obvious conclusion is that ‘la noción de verosimilitud en el Siglo de Oro es distinta de la actual’ (Miñana 2002: 17). Verisimilitude is not a normative mimetic standard that can be equally applied across different historical periods.¹⁷ The aspects of the embedded stories in *Don Quijote*, Part one

13 Garrido Ardila 2015: 884–88; Rozenblat 1991: 113; Williamson 1982: 51.

14 In fact, *Guzmán* was controversial in part because the erudite sententiousness of its protagonist-narrator was deemed neither credible nor appropriate in a low character (Mañero Lozano 2009: 380–85).

15 In Cervantes’s lifetime, there was no equivalent to the generic category of ‘romance’ as critics use it today. Martial heroics were the indispensable subject matter of romance throughout the sixteenth century. When the term ‘romance’ began its process of radical evolution in the 1620s and 1630s, first in France and subsequently in England, it quickly came to (retroactively) include not only Greek and pastoral romances but such comic or satirical ‘romances’ as *Lazarillo de Tormes*, *Guzmán de Alfarache*, and *Don Quijote*. In English, the terms ‘romance’ and ‘novel’ did not polarize until the late eighteenth century. For a full discussion, see Lee 2014.

16 ‘Hanse de casar las fábulas mentirosas con el entendimiento de los que las leyeren, escribiéndose de suerte que facilitando los imposibles, allanando las grandezas, suspendiendo los ánimos, admiren, suspendan, alborocen y entretengan, de modo que anden a un mismo paso la admiración y la alegría juntas; y todas estas cosas no podrá hacer el que huyere de la verisimilitud y de la imitación, en quien consiste la perfección de lo que se escribe’ (Cervantes 2016, I, 47: 490–91).

17 As López Pinciano acknowledges: literary tradition and reader expectations play a powerful role in this regard (1973, I: 268–69 and II: 65–66).

that modern readers typically find unrealistic, the commonplace characters, the serendipitous encounters, the contrived outcomes, were much to the taste of an early modern public, for whom these tales were both astonishing and verisimilar (Miñana 2002: 84–85).

Cervantes's treatment of character and his exploration of the modal possibilities of *admiratio* are much more sophisticated than anything contemplated in contemporary poetics. Nevertheless, an analysis of the interpolated stories in *Don Quijote*, Part one, both in their structural relationship to the main plot and their presentation of character, brings Cervantes's critical engagement with the theoretical precepts of his age into sharper focus. In what follows, I have deliberately chosen to highlight those elements of the embedded tales that best demonstrate Cervantes's adherence to existing literary postulates, since it is that fidelity that modern critics have been most reluctant to accept. My purpose is certainly not to argue for slavish conformity, but to underscore Cervantes's nuanced, evolutionary approach to a conceptual paradigm that he fully assimilated and consistently challenged, but never abandoned, in his own fiction.

Traditionally, there were two ways for authors to include interpolated episodes in their fiction: either by juxtaposing them to the main plot or by coordinating them with it, so that the secondary characters become involved with the primary action. Cervantes uses both techniques in *Don Quijote*, Part one, although the latter predominates. Ana L. Baquero Escudero identifies three categories of relationship between the *novelas interpoladas* and the main plot in Part one: *suelta* ('Curioso impertinente'); *pegadiza* ('Capitán cautivo'); and *pegadas* (Marcela and Grisóstomo, Cardenio and Luscinda, Dorotea and Don Fernando, Doña Clara and Don Luis, Leandra and Vicente de la Roca) (Baquero Escudero 2005: 35–43). Close argues that the tight coordination of primary and secondary plots distinguishes Cervantes's use of interpolated materials: 'What is revolutionary about his practice in *Don Quijote* is his adaptation of it in order to synthesize incongruous narrative strands. Instead of combining like with like, courtly or Byzantine *novelas* with pastoral fiction, as he does in *La Galatea*, he combines romantic stories with the comic doings of the mad *hidalgo*' (Close 2002: 138). This integration, however, has limits: 'El curioso impertinente' is too tragic to be effectively coordinated with the comic main plot and is therefore juxtaposed to it (Close 2002: 140).

In fact, we can refine these distinctions still further. A comparison of the first of the interpolated stories, that of Marcela and Grisóstomo, with the last, the tale of Leandra and Vicente de la Roca, reveals significant variations in the degree of coordination with the main plot, as befits the different social categories of the characters and the outcomes of their adventures.¹⁸ In the first episode, a goatherd named Pedro relates the news of the death of Grisóstomo, a local *hidalgo* who committed suicide after he was spurned by the beautiful Marcela. She, in order to avoid marriage, dressed as a shepherdess and went to live alone in the *monte*,

18 Ansó notes a number of parallels between the episodes in order to argue that Cervantes uses them both to advocate the freedom and *honestidad* of young women in opposition to Tasso's *Aminta* (2004: 279–91).

where Grisóstomo and many other rich and noble suitors, costumed in like fashion, continued to pursue her. The following day, on the way to Grisóstomo's funeral, Don Quijote, Sancho, and the others come upon a group of shepherds and two caballeros. One of these noblemen is Don Vivaldo, who, after taking the measure of Don Quijote's madness, probes him with a series of questions intended to elicit comic responses. Don Quijote's description of Dulcinea illustrates the tenor of this exchange. It is a pastiche of Petrarchan tropes that culminates in an outrageously burlesque flourish, as the erstwhile lover casts his imagination below his beloved's skirts: 'y las partes que a la vista humana encubrió la honestidad son tales, según yo pienso y entiendo, que sólo la discreta consideración puede encarecerlas, y no compararlas' (Cervantes 2016, I, 13: 115). By the time the travelling party comes upon Grisóstomo's funeral cortège, 'hasta los mismos cabreros y pastores conocieron la demasiada falta de juicio de nuestro don Quijote' (Cervantes 2016, I, 13: 116).

The point that I wish to draw out is Cervantes's careful separation of the comic and serious elements in this interpolation. The Marcela and Grisóstomo story is a tragic digression from Don Quijote's parodic enactment of literary chivalry.¹⁹ It is introduced into the main narrative after a meal, a traditional time for storytelling and thus for diversionary episodes in fiction. Don Quijote's dialogue with Don Vivaldo, in turn, takes place during a journey, another conventional space for inserting secondary materials. The comic conversation, which returns to the parodic theme of literary imitation, is therefore structured as a mini-digression within the larger deviation of the embedded story. This intricate composition, like a set of narrative nesting dolls, demonstrates Cervantes's orthodox use of episodes early in *Don Quijote*. While not set off from the comic main plot to the same degree as 'El curioso impertinente', the Marcela and Grisóstomo episode is nevertheless more separate from it than are, for example, the stories of Cardenio and Dorotea, which end happily.

In contrast, the tale of Leandra and Vicente de la Roca is much more harmonized with Don Quijote's narrative. This short interpolation, with its pastoral overtones, is a comic reflection of the Marcela and Grisóstomo episode. Like the earlier story, it is told after a meal (although not a rustic one) by a goatherd (although not a real one), this time named Eugenio. In this instance, however, the love interest, Leandra, was not aloof but seduced by a soldier named Vicente de la Roca, with whom she eloped and by whom she was robbed and abandoned, although not deflowered. Further, Eugenio, Anselmo, and the other rich suitors whom Leandra rejected did not adopt pastoral dress to follow her into the forest in the hope of winning her affection, as did Grisóstomo and his rivals, but only after she had run away, thereby enacting a post-hoc pantomime of pastoral suffering. So, a near-complete inversion of the tragedy of the earlier story, and the disparate treatment of the theme of virginity in the two tales highlights the difference.

19 Observe, however, the unifying theme of literary madness. Grisóstomo's life of literary pastoral is the tragic iteration of Don Quijote's chivalric lunacy.

Nobody questions Marcela's maidenhood, which she declares she will never surrender, in ironic counterpoint to Don Quijote's previous assertion that his mission as a knight errant is to restore a Golden Age in which barely clad maidens wandered the forests unmolested. Leandra's virginity, in contrast, is a source of speculation. 'Duro se nos hizo de crear la continencia del mozo', comments Eugenio wryly, and Vicente's self-control strikes many modern readers as incredible, as well (Cervantes 2016, I, 51: 519).²⁰ If we try to understand his continence in terms of plausible behaviour, then Leandra's insistent profession of virginity appears to be a transparently farcical cover-up in the service of hypocritical propriety. The focus of the episode is not psychological or social, however. Eugenio's cynical comment, along with his attribution to a she-goat of the ancient cliché of the fickle female heart, reveals that we are not in the realm of probable human conduct but of literary convention. There was, in fact, a tradition of epic exegesis in which female chastity was manipulated for aesthetic purposes. Francisco Cascales (*Tablas poéticas*, 1617) explains that the historical Dido was chaste, while the real Penelope was promiscuous during her husband's absence. Nevertheless, Virgil and Homer legitimately altered the historical record in order to appropriately exalt the heroic qualities of Aeneas and Ulysses, and in doing so both poets correctly applied the principle of verisimilitude (1975: 160–63).²¹ In the episode of Leandra and Vincente, Cervantes appropriates this convention for parodic effect, treating his all-too-human protagonists as the farcical heroes of a burlesque mini-epic as part of his meta-literary comedy.²²

Compare Cervantes's presentation of the same theme in *Don Quijote*, Part two. In Teresa Panza's letter to Sancho, she relates: '*Por aquí pasó una compañía de soldados: llevaron de camino tres mozas deste pueblo; no te quiero decir quién son: quizá volverán y no faltará quien las tome por mujeres, con sus tachas buenas o malas*' (Cervantes 2016, II, 52: 952; original emphasis). Like Leandra, these village runaways will make good marriages once memory of the scandal has faded, but unlike the rich man's daughter, there is no suggestion that they have preserved their virginity. Leandra's adventure explicitly provokes *admiratio*, 'suceso que de nuevo puso en admiración a todos', whereas the peasant girls have a more prosaic experience (Cervantes 2016, I, 51: 519). Both stories are equally verisimilar by the standards of the period, however, notwithstanding the fact, more important to our age than to

20 See Hathaway (1995), who surveys a broad swath of critical opinion.

21 Don Quijote gives Sancho a comic lesson in the verisimilar exaggeration of Ulysses and Aeneas, whom Homer and Virgil depicted 'no [...] como ellos fueron, sino como habían de ser, para quedar ejemplo a los venideros hombres de sus virtudes' (Cervantes 2016, I, 25: 234). Compare López Pinciano: 'Algunos poetas imitan a mejores que en aquellos tiempos fueron, como la épica y la trágica, las cuales son imitaciones de varones grauísimos quales nunca fueron; y esto por suadir a los príncipes [que] sean como aquellos, o, a lo menos, los imiten y parezcan en algo, ya que no en todo' (1973, I: 246).

22 Quint points out that Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* calls into question Penelope's chastity, and he relates this representation to Camila, who is ironically compared to Penelope in 'El curioso impertinente' (2007: 29). The origin of this counter-tradition to Penelope's proverbial fidelity appears to have been a series of satirical responses to Ovid's *Heroides* written by fifteenth-century Italian humanist Angelus Sabinus (Cascales 1975: 162n14).

Cervantes's, that one reflects common experience, while the other represents life as filtered through literary convention.

Leandra's artificially preserved virginity is an artefact of literary category. It allows her story to remain an essentially comic one and permits the last interpolation in *Don Quijote*, Part one to be directly coupled to its parodic main plot. When Eugenio enquires about the identity of the strange-looking knight errant, the barber exclaims that he is 'don Quijote de la Mancha, desfacedor de agravios, enderezador de tuertos, el amparo de las doncellas, el asombro de los gigantes y el vencedor de las batallas'. Eugenio's incredulous reaction, 'para mí tengo o que vuestra merced se burla o que este gentilhomme debe de tener vacíos los aposentos de la cabeza', enrages Don Quijote, who retorts with characteristically hyperbolic choler: 'Sois un grandísimo bellaco [...] y vos sois el vacío y el menguado, que yo estoy más lleno que jamás lo estuvo la muy hideputa puta que os parió'. Having thus descended into farcical vulgarity, Don Quijote initiates a comic brawl: 'Y, diciendo y haciendo, arrebato de un pan que junto a sí tenía, y dio con él al cabrero en todo el rostro, con tanta furia, que le remachó las narices' (Cervantes 2016, I, 52: 522).²³ The physical humour in this scene closely parallels an example of comedy of action ('obras') given by López Pinciano: 'la obra fea, necia o disparatada, en cierta sazón y conyuntura, es produzidora de la risa, como la de vn hombre apasionado del miedo, que, por escaparse, se pone debaxo de una albarda; y otro, estimulado de la ira, que arroja el copo de estopa al que dessea matar; y del enamorado que anda sin juyzio' (1973, III: 43). Don Quijote, 'estimulado de la ira', reaches, not for a cotton ball, but for a baguette, a more appropriate, though equally ridiculous, substitute for his sword. Note, as well, López Pinciano's apposite description of the senseless lover as inherently comical, which dovetails with his previously cited assertion that an old man in love is aberrantly verisimilar within a work of comedy.²⁴

Contrast this ending, in comic mayhem involving Don Quijote directly, with that of the Marcela and Grisóstomo interpolation. Following Marcela's appearance and defence of her freedom to love no one and live alone, Don Quijote rides forward to defend her, 'pareciéndole que allí venía bien usar de su caballería, socorriendo a las doncellas menesterosas' (Cervantes 2016, I, 14: 128). The narrator, however, promptly undercuts his intervention: 'O ya que fuese por las amenazas de don Quijote, o porque Ambrosio les dijo que concluyesen con lo que a su buen amigo debían, ninguno de los pastores se movió ni apartó de allí' (Cervantes 2016, I, 14: 128). Cervantes further emphasizes the futility of Don Quijote's chivalric pretensions through his subsequent failure to find Marcela and offer her his services. From a structural perspective, this tragic episode is quite separate from the main plot, particularly in comparison with its comic inversion, the tale of

23 The canon from Toledo quickly removes a knife from Eugenio's reach: the participants in these comic fisticuffs will be bloodied, but no one will be seriously injured or killed.

24 Don Quijote's violent reaction also undermines his statement to the canon, made immediately prior to this episode, on the moral benefits of chivalric romance: 'después que soy caballero andante soy valiente, comedido, liberal, bien criado, generoso, cortés, atrevido, blando, paciente, sufridor de trabajos, de prisiones, de encantos' (Cervantes 2016, I, 50: 511).

Leandra and Vicente de la Roca, which is grafted directly onto Don Quijote's story through physical buffoonery.²⁵

The two mirroring digressions that bookend *Don Quijote*, Part one demonstrate how Cervantes simultaneously achieves narrative unity and variety by repurposing the same themes and story elements in different contexts. Their structural integration into the main plot is an intricate and sophisticated, but ultimately conventional, application of neo-Aristotelian literary theory, which considered the precept of unity-in-variety in terms of primary and secondary plots. However, Cervantes uses the same technique of thematic re-appropriation to give cohesiveness to the digressive episodes themselves, effectively doubling the main unity-in-variety structure along a secondary axis across the various interpolations. We have already observed some ways in which the Leandra and Vicente de la Roca episode reproduces in a comic register the tragic elements of the Marcela and Grisóstomo story, but similar remixing of themes and motifs occurs throughout all the secondary stories in Part one.²⁶

The first of the embedded tales serves as a paradigm for those that follow. Love is a theme common to all of them, although it manifests differently in each one, in a series of repetitions and inversions. Marcela, Dorotea, and Leandra are the daughters of rich farmers; Leandra, Zoraida, and Doña Clara are motherless. Marcela, who is an orphan, runs away from home to avoid her suitors, while Dorotea flees in pursuit of her seducer, and Zoraida and Leandra abscond in the company of their soldier-lovers. The latter three take money and jewels from their fathers to finance their adventures, whereas Marcela relies on the wealth inherited from her father to avoid amorous entanglement. Zoraida and Leandra are both robbed of their jewels but not their virginity.²⁷ Don Luis runs away from his father's house to follow Doña Clara, who, unlike Zoraida and Leandra, refuses to abandon her father for the person she loves. Luscinda, Leandra, and Camila seek refuge in a convent following their unhappy erotic experiences. Marcela looks down from a boulder and (unsuccessfully) enjoins her would-be suitors to abandon hope of winning her hand; Dorotea kneels before Don Fernando and (successfully) begs him to marry her.

25 The tales of Cardenio and Dorotea are much more tightly interwoven into Don Quijote's narrative than those of Marcela or Leandra. This is possible because they occupy a middle ground between the two extremes: the characters are of high social status and their predicaments are serious, but they end happily in a manner typical of the *comedia nueva*, which permits all involved to participate in the climactic Campo de Agramante scene, a theatrically staged donnybrook worthy of an *entremés*. Note, however, Don Fernando's importance in cleaning up the mess: 'fue común opinión que se debían dar las gracias a la buena intención y mucha elocuencia del señor cura y a la incomparable liberalidad de don Fernando' (Cervantes 2016, I, 46: 475).

26 Ansó (2004), Jehenson (1992), Rozenblatt (1991), and Williamson (1982), among others, identify a number of repeated motifs among the interpolated stories, although their conclusions, as well as many of the symmetries that they highlight, differ substantially from mine.

27 Cervantes returns to the conflict between greed and lust in the exemplary novel 'El amante liberal', in which the beautiful Leonisa escapes sexual violation by a group of Turkish soldiers and a Jewish merchant because, as a virgin, she will fetch a higher price as a slave.

Male friendship and rivalry are among the most prominently recurring themes. Grisóstomo and Ambrosio remain friends despite the former's obsession with Marcela, whereas Lotario and Eugenio compete for Leandra's affection until she rejects them both. In contrast, rivalry over love fractures the fraternal bond between Cardenio and Don Fernando and Anselmo and Lotario. Ruy Pérez and Agi Morato, in turn, are paternal rivals for Zoraida. If Agi Morato is her biological father, the much older Captive Captain is more a caretaker than an actual lover. Their relationship begins as the result of a common goal, escape to Christian Spain, and is thus more pragmatic than emotional from the start, and their appearance at the inn as avatars of Joseph and Mary indicates the nature of their union.²⁸ Agi Morato throws himself into the sea when he realizes that Ruy Pérez has not kidnapped Zoraida, that is, when he recognizes that his daughter has chosen a rival father figure. His failed attempt to take his own life forms part of a pattern that contrasts with Grisóstomo's successful suicide.

Anselmo hides behind tapestries to watch Camila (appear to) confront Lotario, just as Cardenio hides behind tapestries to view Luscinda's wedding to Don Fernando. Cardenio expects Luscinda to kill herself, and her failure to do so appears (wrongly) to confirm her faithlessness. Camila, in contrast, feigns a suicide attempt, which appears (wrongly) to confirm her fidelity to Anselmo. Leonela, Camila's maid, facilitates her mistress's adultery with Lotario and also proclaims, as part of the farce staged for Anselmo, that, if spurned, her desperate seducer might rape her. Dorotea's maid allows Don Fernando access to her lady's bedchamber, and Dorotea reasons that if she does not accede to his sexual advances, Don Fernando might resort to force. Both Dorotea and Camila proclaim their complete innocence as part of a deliberate strategy to persuade their male audiences of their unblemished virtue. These onlookers include a priest and a husband, both substitute fathers. In contrast, Zoraida's attempt to justify her actions to her real father fades away in the physical distance as Agi Morato is abandoned on a desert shore. Similarly, Cardenio's pledge to prevent Luscinda's forced marriage to Don Fernando goes unheard, as the bride rushes back to her unwanted wedding.

In order to alert Cardenio to her impending marriage to Don Fernando, Luscinda calls to a passing neighbour from her window and drops the man a letter and a bag of coins in payment for delivering the message. The same device recurs in the Captive Captain's tale, as Zoraida signals the Christian from her window and subsequently drops numerous messages and money bags to him. Doña Clara and Don Luis reveal themselves to each other from their windows and communicate by signs, like Ruy Pérez and Zoraida. Leandra falls in love with Vicente de la Roca by watching him from her window. Cardenio inverts this pattern by showing Luscinda to Don Fernando through the window of her bedchamber.

28 According to the Dominican Domingo de Soto, St. Joseph and the Virgin accepted a chaste marriage as 'un servicio de religión' (Soto 1967, IV: 626). On Zoraida as popular image of the miracle-working Virgin, see Lee 2007.

Cervantes reproduces this motif in a comic register when the innkeeper's daughter and Maritornes, pretending to be a lovestruck lady and her maid, call to Don Quijote from the hayloft and tie his hand with a halter, leaving him stranded, standing on Rocinante's back. In the same way, Rocinante's adventure with the 'jacas gallegas' following the Marcela and Grisóstomo digression is a parodic version of the *mujer esquiva* motif staged in the tragic tale, just as the sexually available Maritornes becomes 'la nueva contrafigura de Marcela' in her encounter with Don Quijote on his first night at the inn (Ansó 2004: 294). Don Quijote's burlesque *copla* about Dulcinea carved into a tree in the Sierra Morena, with its ridiculous rhymes in *-ote* and qualifying *estrambote* 'del Toboso', mirrors Cardenio's refined poems of heartache (two sonnets and an *ovillejo*). Don Luis courts Doña Clara with sophisticated lyrical compositions (a sonnet and a *lira*), whereas Vicente de la Roca seduces Leandra with inept *romances*. In each case, the comic main plot is an explicit inversion of the serious themes treated in the digressions.

This elaborate pattern of repetitions and counterpoints provides cohesion both among the embedded stories and between the interpolations and the main plot, thus creating a multifaceted structure that applies contemporary principles of unity-in-variety with great originality and sophistication. The use of thematic recurrence with variations in *Don Quijote*, Part one also anticipates Cervantes's more experimental narrative approach in the *Novelas ejemplares*. In that collection of twelve independent short stories, Antonio Rey Hazas has identified 'la existencia simultánea de un complejo y multiforme entramada de relaciones mutuas que liga unas novelas con otras desde muy diferentes puntos de enfoque, tanto temáticos y argumentales, como estilísticos y técnicos, sin olvidar las similitudes o antítesis constructivas y de organización estructural, etc.'. This nexus of themes, styles, and structures creates a 'marco implícito' that substitutes for the frame story that the collection lacks (1995: 197). By comparison, the interpolated tales in *Don Quijote*, Part one are much less diverse and their internal symmetries are significantly less complex and developed. With the exception of 'El curioso impertinente' and 'El capitán cautivo', they are also substantially less autonomous. However, they are more independent of the main plot than the tightly integrated episodes in *Don Quijote*, Part two.²⁹ Therefore, If we conceptualize *Don Quijote*, Part one as a being similar to a collection of novellas (interpolated stories) within a frame story (the main plot), we can see how its intricate but still relatively conventional organization of primary and secondary materials anticipates the more radical structural innovations of the internally connected yet frameless *Novelas ejemplares* and the more complete synthesis of *Don Quijote*, Part two. Having pushed traditional narrative technique to its limit in *Don Quijote*, Part one, Cervantes took one pole of the unity-in-variety paradigm and presented it in purified form in each of the subsequent works.

Like the *Novelas ejemplares*, the interpolated stories in *Don Quijote*, Part one vary significantly in style, tone and outcome in function of the requirements of

29 On these differences and the structural innovations of Part two, see Close 2002: 128–50.

verisimilitude with respect to the social status of the characters and the generic paradigms of their stories. This is particularly evident in the priest's reaction to 'El curioso impertinente':

Bien –dijo el cura– me parece esta novela, pero no me puedo persuadir que esto sea verdad; y si es fingido, fingió mal el autor, porque no se puede imaginar que haya marido tan necio, que quiera hacer tan costosa experiencia como Anselmo. Si este caso se pusiera entre un galán y una dama, pudiérase llevar, pero entre marido y mujer, algo tiene del imposible; y en lo que toca al modo de contarle, no me descontenta. (Cervantes 2016, I, 35: 374)

Marina Mestre Zaragoza argues that this judgement expresses Cervantes's conception of a new verisimilitude that privileges internal coherence over mimetic imitation of reality: 'a pesar de su perfecta verosimilitud (la acción transcurre en Florencia, y no comporta ningún elemento maravilloso), la ficción no ha funcionado porque nadie puede creer que un hombre "normal" ponga así a prueba a su esposa' (2016: 46). R. M. Flores, in contrast, believes that the priest does not deem the novella unsatisfying because of its faulty characterization or lack of verisimilitude, but because it is set in a foreign culture (Florence) whose values he does not understand (2000: 93). In fact, the priest's comment applies verisimilitude of character to Anselmo, which is why his behaviour would be extreme but tolerable if he were merely a lover, as opposed to a husband. From a modern perspective, it makes no sense that his marital status should so suddenly and deeply affect his psychology and behaviour. As we have seen, however, López Pinciano (1973, II: 77–78) advises the poet to be mindful of a character's 'estado' (age, sex, social status, nationality, etc.), and so the change from single to married alters the parameters of verisimilar action. The priest's statement on the matter is therefore perfectly orthodox.

The boundaries of appropriate behaviour, both in literature and in real life, were progressively stricter as one moved up the social hierarchy (Close 2002: 118). As a result, verisimilitude demanded more rigid standards of comportment from nobles than from commoners.³⁰ Consider the behaviour of Don Fernando and Cardenio in Juan Palomeque's inn. The resolution to their subplots comes about when these aristocratic men act in accordance with their noble status and show themselves to be, respectively, generous and courageous.³¹ These are not the traits

30 Riley calls this a "socialized" theory of styles' and observes that it reflected a real-life sense of decorum: 'Literary characters had to speak, act, and be written about as befitted their station. (Parody and burlesque, of course, were calculated exceptions.)' (1962: 132). López Pinciano also reflects this assumption in his analysis of rhetorical style (1973, II: 125 and 207–08). Riley (1962: 131–45) argues that Cervantes exposes the artificiality of such stylistic categorization, whereas I contend that his praxis is initially traditional and that his innovations develop incrementally from a position of relative orthodoxy.

31 To acknowledge this fact is not to gainsay the importance of Luscinda and Dorotea (one of Cervantes's most complex creations) in bringing about the happy outcome. It is, rather, to recognize the very real power differentials in play. Such asymmetry, coupled with an assumption of modern psychological realism and consistency of character, leads Flores to conclude that Fernando will simply abandon Dorotea as soon as they leave the inn (1995: 463–64). On the basis of the same assumptions but with the acceptance of a happy outcome,

that either has exhibited heretofore, but in the moment of truth the two characters revert to (stereo)type. Dorotea convinces Don Fernando to behave honourably by appealing directly to his social position and noblesse oblige:

Por quien Dios es te ruego y por quien tú eres te suplico que este tan notorio desengaño no sólo no acreciente tu ira, sino que la mengüe en tal manera, que con quietud y sosiego permitas que estos dos amantes [Cardenio y Luscinda] le tengan sin impedimento tuyo todo el tiempo que el cielo quisiere concedérsele, y en esto mostrarás la generosidad de tu ilustre y noble pecho, y verá el mundo que tiene contigo más fuerza la razón que el apetito. (Cervantes 2016, I, 36: 381)

The other characters echo Dorotea's words until Don Fernando, 'en fin, como alimentado con ilustre sangre', relents (Cervantes 2016, I, 36: 382). For modern readers, this metamorphosis defies credulity: 'Es imposible aceptar que el egoísta, violento y empedernido Don Juan cambie de un minuto a otro y se convierta en don Fernando amoroso, noble y generoso' (Flores 1995: 464–65); 'Don Fernando's change of heart is so sudden a *volte face* that it could only be reconciled with plausible psychological reality if we attribute a kind of resigned cynicism to him' (Williamson 1982: 55). As we have now observed at some length, however, the principle of early modern verisimilitude is orthogonal to our concept of 'plausible psychological reality'.

Cardenio also changes his behaviour, from cowardly to courageous, as befits a young aristocratic male. His story forms part of a pronounced metacritical discourse in the narrative. In chapter 48, the priest is inspired by the canon from Toledo's criticism of chivalric romance to fulminate against the infractions of verisimilitude committed by contemporary playwrights: '¿Y qué mayor [disparate] que pintarnos un viejo valiente y un mozo cobarde, un lacayo retórico, un paje consejero, un rey ganapán y una princesa fregona?' (Cervantes 2016, I, 48: 495). Cardenio's initially distinguishing characteristic, however, is precisely his cowardice. On two occasions he shows himself to be full of bluster in promising to defend females in distress. The first is just before Luscinda's forced marriage to Don Fernando, after she has vowed to commit suicide rather than be another man's wife: 'Hagan, señora, tus obras verdaderas tus palabras; que si tú llevas daga para acreditarte, aquí llevo yo espada para defenderte con ella o para matarme si la suerte nos fuere contraria' (Cervantes 2016, I, 27: 268). What Cardenio actually does, however, is slip away in the confusion after Luscinda gives her *Sí quiero* and swoons.

He makes his second unfulfilled promise to Dorotea in the Sierra Morena:

yo os juro por la fe de caballero y de cristiano de no desampararos hasta veros en poder de don Fernando, y que cuando con razones no le pudiese atraer a que conozca lo que os debe, de usar entonces la libertad que me concede el ser caballero y poder con justo título desafialle, en razón de la sinrazón que os hace, sin acordarme de mis agravios, cuya venganza dejaré al cielo, por acudir en la tierra a los vuestros. (Cervantes 2016, I, 29: 290)

Serrano González argues that 'it is the construction of men as naturally braver and aristocrats as innately virtuous that the characters of Cardenio and Don Fernando respectively subvert' (2017: 162).

Cardenio's use of 'razón de la sinrazón' directly echoes Don Quijote's puzzlement over Feliciano de Silva's hyperbolic 'razón de la sinrazón que a mi razón se hace' (Cervantes 2016, I, 1: 29). It also recalls the tangled verses of Grisóstomo's suicide song: 'Tú, que con tantas sinrazones muestras / la razón que me fuerza a que la haga / a la cansada vida que aborrezco' (Cervantes 216, I, 14: 122). Cardenio's pledge similarly foreshadows Don Quijote's promise to restore Princess Micomicona (Dorotea) to her kingdom. Of course, Cardenio is no more effective at resolving Dorotea's situation by force of arms than is the pretend knight errant, who 'slays' the giant Pandofilando de la Fosca Vista in the form of the innkeeper's wineskins. On the contrary, when Don Fernando and his party serendipitously arrive at the inn, he hides in the room where Don Quijote is sleeping so as not to be seen. Upon hearing the voice of Luscinda, he bursts out but stays behind Don Fernando to avoid recognition (Cervantes 2016, I, 36: 380). Finally, when Don Fernando releases the fainting Luscinda, Cardenio rushes forward to catch her, 'pospuesto todo temor y aventurando a todo riesgo' (Cervantes 2016, I, 36: 380). Subsequently, 'no quitaba los ojos de don Fernando, con determinación de que, si le viese hacer algún movimiento en su perjuicio, procurar defenderse y ofender como mejor pudiese a todos aquellos que en su daño se mostrasen, aunque le costase la vida' (Cervantes 2016, I, 36: 381).

The abruptness of this change in character is striking. Cardenio has so far demonstrated only hollow bombast and cowardice, but here he suddenly acts with courage and determination. Such an unexpected alteration in behaviour can hardly be deemed realistic, in the sense of according with normal human conduct or consistency of character as we conceive of them.³² Nevertheless, his actions are verisimilar in terms of early modern literary theory. The fact that Cervantes rather artlessly *tells* us about Cardenio's interior change instead of *showing* it to us through the character's own words and actions underscores the fundamental importance of the underlying principle. It is an example, not of character development, but of reversion to type, the decisive and courageous nobleman ready to spring forward and sacrifice himself for another, as social codes and literary decorum dictated. Percas de Ponseti (1999: 202–04) and Emilio Martínez Mata (2015: 956–58) argue convincingly that this outcome is brought about by Luscinda's moral rectitude and fidelity. Even so, such a sudden behavioural shift, 'determinación inusitada [...] en quien hemos visto comportarse de manera tan dubitativa', operates on the basis of an inherent and determinative nobility of character that is inconsistent with Cardenio's prior comportment (Martínez Mata 2015: 962).³³ The conventionality of this outcome is even more apparent because, in yet a further example of symmetrical patterning, Cardenio's and Don Fernando's characters have been, until this point, perfectly inverted images of each other: whereas Don Fernando

32 'So many times has the character expressed his strong determination to act, only to later retract, that this last statement of intent simply lacks credibility' (Serrano González 2017: 155).

33 Percas de Ponseti explains away the inconsistency by insisting that Cardenio has *not* changed: 'Cardenio no ha cambiado. Sólo puede obrar por estímulo' (1999: 201).

acts with unreflecting temerity in fulfilment of uncontrolled sexual appetite, Cardenio behaves toward Luscinda with timid indeterminacy until the crucial moment at the inn.³⁴ Of course Cervantes, and everyone else, knew that cowardly youths and duplicitous aristocrats might actually exist in real life, but such was not the universal nature of their social type and thus would not make for verisimilar characterization in this context.

Cervantes's disparate treatment of precisely this kind of strict verisimilitude in different episodes casts his practice in sharp relief. The first encounter between Cardenio and Don Quijote in Sierra Morena ends when Cardenio, in the grip of his transient insanity, makes the indecorous declaration that 'aquel bellaconazo del maestro Elisabat estaba amancebado con la reina Madasima', which precipitates a brawl over the honour of a literary character (Cervantes 2016, I, 24: 229). As a battered Don Quijote explains to Sancho, 'es muy gran blasfemia decir ni pensar que una reina esté amancebada con un cirujano' (Cervantes 2016, I, 25: 232). This altercation directly anticipates the canon from Toledo's later criticism of chivalric romance: '¿qué diremos de la facilidad con que una reina o emperatriz heredera se conduce en los brazos de un andante y no conocido caballero?' (Cervantes 2016, I, 47: 490). Despite their shared subject matter, these two pronouncements on verisimilitude are tonally very different, as are their effects within the narrative. The canon's comment reflects established aesthetic principles, whereas the conflict between Cardenio and Don Quijote is a slapstick encounter between two madmen who are explicitly presented as doubles, *El Roto de la Mala Figura* and *El Caballero de la Triste Figura*, respectively.³⁵ These differences in register explain Cervantes's variable application of the same theoretical precepts: his poetics is adaptable, and context is crucial to the characters' behaviour. The comic treatment of a literary commonplace in one situation does not invalidate serious applications of the same concept elsewhere. Thus, Cardenio, when mad and in conversation with Don Quijote, participates in a send-up of literary verisimilitude, but later, as part of the resolution of the serious subplots at the inn, he suddenly reverts to aristocratic type and behaves in precisely the contrived manner that verisimilitude dictates. One episode is no more real or true (historically or poetically) than the other; they are equally verisimilar.

Cardenio and Don Fernando are aristocratic males, and so their range of development is particularly constrained by contemporary notions of decorum. Cervantes balances *admiratio* and verisimilitude by showing both characters deviate from prescribed behaviour, only to return to social type in a way that is unsatisfying to a modern public but in consonance with contemporary literary postulates and reader expectations. As we have seen, López Pinciano allows some limited scope for particularized verisimilitude, but in comedy, 'cosas de burlas y de passatie[m] po'. In serious matters, 'cosas graues', he insists that characters be portrayed in

34 On Cardenio's erotic cowardice, see Martínez Mata 2015: 959–61.

35 In each case, their insanity is also literary. Cardenio unconsciously imitates the violent madness of Ariosto's Orlando, while Don Quijote intentionally mimics Amadís de Gaula's melancholy retreat to the Peña Pobre (Gilman 1970: 19–20).

terms of their universal type, ‘según la naturaleza y comúnmente’ (López Pinciano 1973, II: 82). In tragedy, he demands, with Aristotle, that characters not only conform to type but be static (López Pinciano 1973, II: 361–62). Although his work by no means abjures slapstick and scatology, Cervantes’s treatment of the comic represents a qualitative leap in sophistication relative to López Pinciano’s traditional definition of comedy as predicated on ugliness and physical inelegance: ‘Pregunto: ¿ay algún hombre o mujer que cayga hermosamente?’ (1973, III: 35). However, his process of creating a more character-based comedy (compare Don Quijote’s first sally in Part one with the series of dialogues that open Part two), which ultimately transcends the merely funny and incorporates the full gamut of human emotion, thereby dignifying the lower strata of society and contributing decisively to the rise of the modern novel, is very much evolutionary and in consonance with established literary precepts. His poetics does not reject but, rather, develops from within the theoretical parameters of his age.

Cervantes’s characterization of Don Fernando, Cardenio, and Anselmo is illuminating in this regard, as is his care in structuring the interpolated stories in Part one in accordance with the traditional separation of high (epic and tragedy) and low (comedy) plots and characters. At the same time, the harmonization of these various narrative strands across multiple dimensions presages the complex thematic and stylistic ‘marco implícito’ that Rey Hazas has catalogued in the *Novelas ejemplares*, as well as the more complete synthesis of primary and secondary materials achieved in *Don Quijote*, Part two. In the embedded tales of *Don Quijote*, Part one Cervantes mixes clusters of conventional motifs in different proportions to create distinct effects in pursuit of a narrative whole that is both unified and diverse, astonishing and verisimilar. In this intricately structured series of interpolations, Cervantes uses traditional elements to construct complex narrative patterns that will ultimately crystalize into new models of characterization, transcending established theoretical boundaries and creating new possibilities for literary expression.

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