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CERVANTES'S METHOD AND MEANING

Interlace

CERVANTES indicates to his reader how to read *Don Quijote*, as a whole and not as the sum of its parts, in the story of Leandra in Chapter 51, the last of the interpolated tales in Part One of *Don Quijote*. It is a kind of laboratory case set inside the novel to demonstrate one of the book's salient literary techniques, for it picks up echoes and details of *all* the other interpolated tales that precede it.

The charlatan soldier Vicente de la Roca, who runs off with Leandra, her jewels, and her father's money, is a debased version of the Captive, Captain Viedma, who recounts his escape from Algiers with his beloved Moor Zoraida, (Chapters 39–41). When the beautiful Leandra is compared to a miracle-working image [“imagen de milagros” (502; 506)] we are reminded of Zoraida, who brought about the Captive's “miraculous delivery” [“milagrosa libertad” (429; 431)], and who is closely associated with the Virgin Mary, whose name she takes as her own and whose images [“imágenes” (430; 432)] she recognizes when she first enters a church in Spain.¹ The phrase also anticipates Don Quijote's last exploit in the First Part, his attack on the disciplinants who are carrying an image of the Virgin Mary in the following Chapter 52. In its pastoral setting, and in the behavior of those lovers of Leandra who accuse her of disdain without ever having spoken to her, the episode obviously repeats the first of the interpolated stories, the episode of Grisóstomo and Marcela (Chapters 12–14). The songs that Vicente sings to Leandra evoke the story of Luis and Clara (Chapters 42–43). Leandra, the rich farmer's daughter who is seduced and abandoned, resembles Dorotea, dishonored and abandoned by Fernando (Chapter 28). The narrator of the tale, Eugenio, has a rival, Anselmo, whose name recalls the Anselmo of the “Curioso impertinente” (Chapters 33–35). When Eugenio, who has decided to blame the fickleness of women for his loss of Leandra, brawls with Don Quijote and Sancho in the next chapter, we should be reminded of Cardenio, who, similarly inveighing against the supposed falseness of Luscinda, fights with the hidalgo and his squire in the Sierra Morena (Chapter 24). Finally, when the braggart Vicente is said to claim that his right arm is his father, his deeds his lineage, and that as a soldier he owes nothing, even to the king (504; 507), he becomes a parodic mirror of Don Quijote himself,

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who in Chapter 4 had made the proverbial declaration that every man is the son of his own works (76; 57) and at the end of Chapter 45 had asserted to the police force of the Holy Brotherhood that he and other knights-errant were exempt from all jurisdiction (462; 465).²

As it recapitulates the episodes of Part One of Cervantes's novel, the story of Leandra suggests how these episodes interpolated into the adventures of Don Quijote and Sancho Panza are themselves interconnected. The stories of characters whom Don Quijote meets on his way (Marcela and Grisóstomo, Cardenio, Dorotea, Eugenio), the stories of the characters who arrive at the inn (the Captive, Don Luis, and Clara), the story of the "Curioso impertinente" that is labeled precisely as an interpolated tale, drawn out of a trunk and read at the inn, and, not least of all, the miniature chivalric romance that Don Quijote tells to Sancho in Chapter 21, itself another inset tale—these are all thematically linked not only to the deeds of knight and squire, but to one another. They take up the larger part of the narrative space of the first installment of the novel, and for long stretches can seem to crowd Don Quijote out of his own story.³ The first readers of the novel appear to have objected particularly to the "Curioso impertinente"; Sansón Carrasco tells us in Chapter 3 of Part Two that they complained that the story "is out of place and has nothing to do with the history of his worship, Don Quijote" ["por no ser de aquel lugar, ni tiene que ver con la historia de su merced del señor don Quijote" (549; 562)]. Still later in Chapter 44, Cervantes seems to be answering his critics when the narrator Cide Hamete links the "Curioso impertinente" with the Captive's Tale as digressions and episodes that seem detachable from the rest of the book ["como separadas de la historia" (833; 848)].⁴

Cervantes is being ironic. These first critics were not strong readers. And it is still one of the weaknesses of the tradition of criticism on *Don Quijote* that it has generally treated the novel's episodes individually rather than as integral parts whose mirroring relationship creates its larger whole.⁵ In doing so, such criticism may have emphasized the picaresque elements of *Don Quijote* over its inheritance from the chivalric romances the novel sets out to destroy and replace.⁶ To accomplish this satirical demolition, Cervantes treats the picaresque and the chivalric romance as inversions of one another, transforming the quest of his mad knight-errant into a series of picaresque wanderings. He signals the overlay and reciprocity of the modern and the medieval genres early on in Chapter 3 of the novel, when the first innkeeper whom Don Quijote meets poses as a retired knight and describes his own earlier picaresque career as thief and criminal as a series of chivalric adventures (69; 49).⁷ Cervantes thus gives his novel the formal appearance of a picaresque narrative, a collection of disparate episodes, one thing after another. Claudio Guillén writes that the picaresque "novel is loosely episodic, strung together like

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a freight train and *apparently* with no other common link than the hero.”⁸ In *Lazarillo de Tormes*, the ur-picaresque novel that Cervantes evokes in Chapter 22, the hero, as his name implies, appears to die and be reborn from one episode to the next as if to denote the discrete quality of each and the discontinuity of his human experience. (So, to a certain extent, does Don Quijote dust himself off after each defeat, assess the damage to his body, and ride off to his next adventure.) Guillén is careful to suggest, however, that despite appearances, even the picaresque narrative finds ways to link its parts together.

For the purpose of making such connections, *Don Quijote* turns back to the model of chivalric romance itself. Cervantes's method of playing one episode of the novel off against another derives from and is inspired by the technique of narrative *interlace* (“entrelacement”) that organizes the great chivalric romances of the Middle Ages such as the prose *Lancelot*.⁹ The romance follows the careers of some eight or ten questing knights, telling a segment of one knight's story before turning to a segment of another's, and thus keeps multiple plots going at once. The plots parallel one another and may share common motifs, and the reader begins to realize that the romance coheres and generates meaning not so much from the endings of the knights' stories, which are hardly in sight, as from the juxtaposition of the stories and their reflection upon one another.¹⁰ Narrative strands that initially seem to be discrete can turn out to be symbolically related. To take an example from the *Lancelot*: when one knight fights a giant in his story line, and another knight kills a villainous baron oppressing a damsel in his, we are invited to see the baron as a kind of giant.¹¹

So, in a rather clear-cut Cervantine adaptation of this technique in Chapter 29 of *Don Quijote*, Dorotea, cast by the Curate and Barber in the role of Princess Micomicona, tries to kiss the hands of Don Quijote after he has promised to champion her against the giant who persecutes her (295; 295). A few pages earlier Dorotea has in her own person tried to kiss the feet of Cardenio, who has promised to defend her honor against her seducer Don Fernando (290; 291). The reader sees the parallel between Dorotea's real-life situation and the chivalric scenario invented for the benefit of Don Quijote—Don Fernando is like a wicked giant, she is a genuine damsel-in-distress. Cervantes gives this narrative juxtaposition his typical psychological twist when Dorotea improvises upon and embroiders this scenario in Chapter 30: she seems quite conscious of the parallel and to be indulging in autobiography beneath the fiction that she is an exotic princess.¹² We may be led to a secondary reflection that if one inverts the parallel, the fantastic stories of chivalry may contain disguised versions of lived human experience in the first place.¹³

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Interlace is the principle of narrative organization in Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* (1516), the literary work that most deeply influenced Cervantes in *Don Quijote*.¹⁴ Not only does Ariosto juxtapose, contrast, and compare the adventures of the myriad knights and ladies who zigzag across the map of his romance; he also introduces interpolated tales, often in the form of Boccaccian novellas, into its sprawling narrative. The "Curioso impertinente" is a rewriting of the two novellas in Canto 43 (9–46; 72–143) of the *Furioso* that recount husbands testing the fidelity of their wives, and Cervantes signals his debt by giving his overly curious husband Anselmo the same name as the jealous husband in Ariosto's second tale. It is important to emphasize that Ariosto builds these tales into the larger interlace structure of his poem: thus these stories of Mantuan and Ferrarese husbands and wives comment on the climactic marriage of the heroes Ruggiero and Bradamante, who will found the Este dynasty that produced Ariosto's patrons, the Cardinal of Ferrara and the Duchess of Mantua. In a more pointed example, the notorious, salacious novella that Ariosto advises his lady readers to skip in Canto 28 describes sexual intercourse with the conventional metaphor of horseback riding; in the next canto the mad Orlando rides the horse of his beloved Angelica to death in what is clearly a symbolic substitution for rape; in between, the woman-hating Rodomonte, for whom the novella was told, journeys by boat to save wear and tear on his own horse: the juxtaposition tells us something about men who treat women like horses, horses like women, horses better than women.¹⁵

Cervantes masters his own version of interlace in Part One of *Don Quijote*. While he does not present a series of concurrent stories and jump from one to another—though he *will* do something of this sort in Part Two when he alternates chapters between Don Quijote's experience in the castle of the Duke and Duchess and Sancho's tenure of his "governorship" (44–53)¹⁶—he makes full use, as I have already suggested, of the interpolated stories of other characters and of the interpolated tale itself. He establishes connections among them and between them and the main plot of Don Quijote's madness with an artistry that can be dizzying. Thus he requires his reader not only to understand a given episode of *Don Quijote* on its own terms, but to juxtapose it with other episodes that may at first appear unrelated to it. A motif central to one story will turn up displaced in a peripheral position in another, as seemingly out of place ("no ser de aquel lugar") as the entire interpolated tale of the "Curioso impertinente." But in this scheme, nothing, in fact, may be out of place in the novel; the apparently extraneous detail, no less than an entire digressive episode, can be found to fit into a larger web of meaning. The reader or critic does not need to share a romantic notion of the organic unity of the literary work of art or a classical aesthetic of the work's

architectonic unity.¹⁷ The practical experience of reading literature itself produces the axiom that precisely those elements of the text that on the face of it do not seem to fit—the digression, the subplot, the story-within-the-story—will almost always reward close attention and offer commentary, often through contrast and irony, upon a principal or central story. In Part One of *Don Quijote* the madness and career plans of Don Quijote reveal their full implications in the stories of the other characters that jostle for narrative space in the novel alongside his own. *Their* stories, reciprocally, are deepened by parallels among themselves—and to Don Quijote's motives, ideas, and behavior: an obvious, continuous irony of the novel suggests, sometimes gently, sometimes savagely, that these other characters are not much saner than the mad hidalgo.

Arms and Letters

The analyses that follow in this book seek to apply a method of reading *Don Quijote* by tracing and examining Cervantes's technique of interlacing his novel's episodes and of distributing its thematic motifs. They also propose an interpretation of the novel that emerges from this method. To suggest how one gets from the first to the second, I want to look now at two secondary instances of Cervantine interlace; they will give some idea of the technique in question. The first of my examples arches across nearly the entirety of Part One of the novel. It concerns the debate between arms and letters—that is, which is the nobler profession, that of the soldier or that of the man of learning?—a time-honored topos in Renaissance writing at least since the discussions of Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier* (1.42–46).¹⁸

Don Quijote, who is always ready to spout long passages from his reading, and who thereby repeatedly gains from those around him the opinion that he is a man of good sense when he is not pursuing his chivalric mania, gives an elaborate version of the debate of arms and letters in Chapters 37 and 38. The would-be knight naturally enough awards primacy to arms, whether or not he reflects the opinion of Cervantes, who could claim experience both as man of letters and as soldier. The author of *Don Quijote* had been wounded and lost the use of his left hand at the battle of Lepanto in 1571, as he tells us in the Prologue to Part Two, “the greatest occasion that present, past, or future ages have ever seen or can ever hope to see” [“la más alta ocasión que vieron los siglos pasados, los presentes, ni esperan ver los venideros” (526; 535)]. Cervantes weaves his character's version of this by now commonplace debate into a whole sequence of episodes in the novel, and we are invited to watch how its terms develop and change: the logic of this development will turn out to be *historical*,

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suggesting a movement from an earlier feudal social formation to the modern, money-driven society of Cervantes's age. This historical logic governs both the shape and the meaning of the first part of *Don Quijote*; it becomes a main subject of the larger novel.

The theme emerges as a joke that the Curate and Barber of Don Quijote's village make at Sancho Panza's expense when they greet him as he returns from the Sierra Morena on his mission to El Toboso and Dulcinea in Chapter 26. When Sancho tells them that he is to be rewarded with an island and governorship once his master rises through his prowess to become emperor or king, they play along and tell Sancho that it is very possible for Don Quijote "to become in time an emperor, as he had suggested, or at least archbishop, or something equally important" ["a ser emperador, como él decía, o, por lo menos, arzobispo, o otra dignidad equivalente" (260; 257)]. The offhand quip about the archbishop greatly worries the married Sancho, for he would be ineligible for the ecclesiastical benefices that Don Quijote in his capacity as archbishop-errant—one of the "arzobispos andantes," as Sancho calls them—would be able to bestow on him instead of the promised island. The Barber reassures him that Don Quijote will more easily become emperor than archbishop since he is "more of a soldier than a scholar" ["más valiente que estudiante"]. The contrast between Don Quijote's career options is thus cast explicitly in terms of the stereotyped opposition of arms and letters. Cervantes introduces this opposition in its most socially conservative form as one between martial aristocracy and church, in the feudal distinction between those who fight and those who pray.

These are the same backward-looking terms with which Don Quijote himself had already defined his mission as knight-errant much earlier in the novel in Chapter 13. When his traveling companion Vivaldo comments that the rules of knight-errantry appear to be stricter than those of the Carthusians, Don Quijote replies that "holy men, in all peace of tranquillity, pray to Heaven for the welfare of the world, but we soldiers and knights carry out what they ask for . . . not under shelter but under the open sky, exposed as target to the intolerable beams of the sun in summer and to the piercing frost of winter" ["los religiosos, con toda paz y sosiego, piden al cielo el bien de la tierra; pero los soldados y caballeros ponemos en ejecución lo que ellos piden . . . no debajo de cubierta, sino al cielo abierto, puesto por blanco de los insufribles rayos del sol en el verano y de los erizados yelos del invierno" (131–32; 118)]. Don Quijote thus claims for the soldier-knight a sacred calling—he is one of God's ministers on earth—even as he is careful not to pretend that the state of the knight-errant is as good as that of the monk: the two represent distinct but related careers. In the same passage Don Quijote lets himself think about just how high the chivalric career can aspire: some knights, he says,

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“rose to be emperors by the valor of their arms” [“algunos subieron a ser emperadores por el valor de su brazo” (132; 119)]. He returns here to his daydreams in the very first chapter of the novel, where he fancied himself “already crowned Emperor of Trebizond by the valor of his arm” [“ya coronado por el valor de su brazo, por los menos, del imperio de Trapisonda” (59; 38)]. When the Curate and Barber make their joke about Archbishop-as-opposed-to-Emperor Quijote, they thus pick up, without knowing it, the hidalgo’s own opposition of religious and chivalric vocations. Even the joke itself has its precedent in the novel: back in Chapter 7, the delirious Don Quijote, recovering from his first sally, had addressed the same Curate as “arzobispo Turpin” (93; 76), evoking a character of the chivalric romances who had really been an archbishop-errant.

The same opposition of the religious versus the military life reappears in a very different context in Chapter 33 inside the interpolated tale of the “Curioso impertinente,” in a prime example of Cervantes’s technique of displacing the thematic motifs of his novel from one episode to another. In the tale, Lotario is responding to his best friend, Anselmo, who has asked him to test the chastity of Anselmo’s wife, Camila, by pretending to court her. In urging Anselmo to consider what he may gain from this project, Lotario includes an odd and roundabout argument. There are, he says, three goals for human endeavors (none of which Anselmo can accomplish by his testing of his wife):

Man undertakes arduous enterprises for the sake of God, for the world’s sake, or for both. The first are undertaken by the saints, who strive to live as angels in human form; the second are accomplished by men who sail the boundless ocean and endure the vagaries of climates as they rove through far-off lands in quest of what are called the goods of fortune; the third, which are those that are undertaken for the sake of God and man, are the achievements of staunch soldiers, who no sooner see a breach in the enemy’s rampart made by a single cannonball than, shedding all fear of the perils that threaten them from all sides and soaring on the wings of the desire to conquer for their faith, for their country, and for their king, they hurl themselves forward into the jaws of death, which awaits them in a thousand guises . . . but the project you would now attempt will earn you neither heavenly glory, nor goods of fortune, nor fame among men. (332)

Las cosas dificultosas se intentan por Dios, o por el mundo, o por entrambos a dos: las que se acometen por Dios son las que acometieron los santos, acometiendo a vivir vida de ángeles en cuerpos humanos; las que se acometen por respeto del mundo son las de aquellos que pasan tanta infinidad de agua, tanta diversidad de climas, tanta estrañeza de gentes, por adquirir estos que llaman bienes de fortuna. Y las que se intentan por Dios y por el mundo juntamente son aquellas de los valerosos soldados, que apenas veen en el

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contrario muro abierto tanto espacio cuanto es el que pudo hacer una redonda bala de artillería, cuando, puesto aparte todo temor, sin hacer discurso ni advertir al manifiesto peligro que les amenaza, llevados en vuelo de las alas del deseo de volver por su fe, por su nación y por su rey, se arrojan intrépidamente por la mitad de mil contrapuestas muertes que los esperan . . . Pero la que tú dices quieres intentar y poner por obra, ni te ha de alcanzar gloria de Dios, bienes de la fortuna, ni fama con los hombres. (333–34)

Here, too, the man of religion and the man of war are opposed, even as they are shown to share some common goals. We should note that the soldier [“soldado”] in question is a modern one, apparently an infantryman and no longer Don Quijote’s knight [“caballero”]. Like the saint, this soldier pursues the glory of God as he fights for his faith, though he also seeks for worldly glory. In the second formulation of the opposition, however, it is the latter—fame among men—that seems to characterize the soldier and to place him squarely in a secular realm. That realm is defined further by the new, third term that the passage has meanwhile introduced: the merchant whose ventures now take him to a literally New World, undreamt of in earlier times, a world that Cervantes’s Spain had taken a leading role in discovering and colonizing. If there is a suggestion that the merchant’s hardships rise to a quasi-heroism—it is he who suffers the changeable weather that Don Quijote had earlier ascribed to the soldier-knight—Lotario’s speech decidedly places the motive of commerce, the mere gain of worldly wealth, beneath the goals of religion and military honor that seek in complementary and divergent ways to transcend the world. Heroism belongs most vividly to the soldier, and the speech expands into a brief set piece to celebrate military courage in the face of death.

Lotario’s speech has no place in its own context except to amplify his admonishment to Anselmo not to pursue his “impertinent” curiosity about the fidelity of his wife. Its larger function is to point forward in the novel, as a kind of connecting bridge, to Don Quijote’s long set speech defending arms over letters in Chapters 37–38 and to the ensuing interpolated tale of the Captive, Captain Viedma, newly come from Algiers with Zoraida. Don Quijote’s speech on arms and letters is, like so much of his discourse in the novel, a piece of book-learning; the topic was a favorite for rhetorical debate, and, as such, designed as much to demonstrate rhetorical and literary skill as to decide the issue. Lotario’s vivid little scene of land battle before a breach in the enemy ramparts has its counterpart in Don Quijote’s much expanded description of a sea battle in Chapter 38. Here, too, soldiers charge into near certain death into a tight space, on two planks of a battering ram, to reach the enemy ship: “inspired by the honor that spurs him on, he allows himself to be the mark for all their fire and endeavors to force his way by that narrow path into the enemy vessel” [“llevado de

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la honra que le incita, se pone a ser blanco de tanta arcabucería, y procura pasar por tan estrecho paso al bajel contrario” (391; 393)]. The passage evokes Cervantes's experience at Lepanto, and it is directly linked to Captain Viedma's ensuing narrative in Chapter 39, where he recounts how he was captured during Lepanto after he had jumped onto an Ottoman galley and found himself cut off from his own ship (396; 399)—turning Don Quijote's rhetorical example into true life-history.

If Don Quijote treats arms in a way consistent with the earlier appearances of the arms-versus-letters motifs we have traced in the novel, the same cannot be said for his discussion of letters. For the beginning of Don Quijote's speech in Chapter 37 now explicitly separates the vocation of letters from a religious calling:

The aim and goal of letters—I am not now speaking of divine letters, whose sole aim is to guide and elevate the soul of man to Heaven, for with that sublime end none can be compared—I speak of human letters, whose end is to regulate distributive justice, to give every man his due, to make good laws, and to enforce them strictly: an end most certainly generous, exalted, and worthy of high praise, but not so glorious as the aim of arms, which is peace, the greatest blessing that man can enjoy in this life. For the first good news that the world ever received was brought by the angels on the night that was our day when they sang in the skies: “Glory be to God on High and peace and on earth to men of goodwill”; . . . This peace is the true end of war, and by war and arms I mean the same thing. (387–88)

Es el fin y paradero de las letras . . . , y no hablo ahora de las divinas, que tienen por blanco llevar y encaminar las almas al cielo; que a un fin tan sin fin como éste ninguno otro se le puede igualar: hablo de las letras humanas, que es su fin poner en su punto la justicia distributiva y dar a cada uno lo que es suyo, y entender y hacer que las buenas leyes se guarden. Fin, por cierto, generoso y alto y digno de grande alabanza; pero no de tanta como merece aquel a que las armas atienden, las cuales tienen por objeto y fin la paz, que es el mayor bien que los hombres pueden desear en esta vida. Y así, las primeras buenas nuevas que tuvo el mundo y tuvieron los hombres fueron las que dieron los ángeles la noche que fue nuestro día, cuando cantaron en los aires: “Gloria sea en las alturas, y paz en la tierra a los hombres de buena voluntad”; . . . Esta paz es el verdadero fin de la guerra; que lo mismo es decir armas que guerra. (389–90)

Don Quijote links the soldier, once again in the novel, to a higher, sacred calling. Here is an early formulation of the paradoxical idea espoused by military establishments that peace is their business. Arms may still bear some link to religion and to *divine* letters. But the thrust of Don Quijote's speech is to redefine—and in the process somewhat devalue—letters as

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purely human letters, and more specifically, to connect them to the career of the jurist and the magistrate.

Such was the usual construction given to the profession of letters by the end of the sixteenth century. “Letrado” perhaps primarily designated a lawyer, and the opposition of arms and letters evoked a social divide between a traditional martial aristocracy and a new legal elite that filled government positions in the early-modern state: what in France would be called the “noblesse de la robe,” in Italy the “nobiltà della toga.”¹⁹ Like the church, this legal profession allowed some degree of social mobility: when Don Quijote takes up the subject again in Part Two of the novel (Chapter 24), he concedes that “more great families have been founded by letters than by arms” [“han fundado más mayorazgos las letras que las armas” (701; 718)]. He suggests as much here by describing the poverty of the student, even though he acknowledges that not all students are poor (388; 390). Through letters, the poor boy can make good.²⁰ And, Don Quijote concludes in Chapter 38, he is more likely to do so than the soldier who is most likely to meet his death, however honorable and glorious it may be, in battle (390; 391–92).

This redefinition of letters as a secular career leading to fortune and social position prepares the way for the Captive’s Tale that immediately follows (Chapters 39–41) and the further story of Captain Viedma’s brother and his family (42–45) that follows in turn. Just as Don Quijote’s long set speech on the Golden Age in Chapter 11 precedes the pastoral episode of Grisóstomo and Marcela (12–14), so here his discourse on arms and letters precedes the Captive’s story—which the Curate will later compare to an old wives’ tale—of the three brothers of the Viedma family who set out to make their fortunes in the world. To be sure, they come of blue blood from León, and their father, a former soldier, lives the aristocratic life of liberality—that is, he lives beyond his means and is impoverishing himself. So the sons, who imitate their father’s generosity by giving him back part of their inheritance, must find their own ways in the world.

The sons are instructed by their father to choose among the three vocations summed up in the Spanish proverb: “Iglesia o mar o casa real”:

If you want to be powerful and wealthy, follow the Church, or go to sea and become a merchant, or take service with kings in their palaces . . . one of you should pursue letters, another commerce, and the third should serve the king in his wars because it is difficult to obtain a place in his household, and although war does not bring much wealth it gradually brings great fame and renown. (394)

Quien quisiere valer y ser rico, siga, o la Iglesia, o navegue, ejercitando el arte de la mercancía, o entre a servir a los reyes en sus casas . . . uno de vosotros

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siguiese las letras, el otro la mercancía, y el otro serviese al rey en la guerra, pues es dificultoso entrar a servirle en su casa; que ya que la guerra no dé muchas riquezas, suele dar mucho valor y mucha fama. (396)

These three careers repeat the three callings described earlier by Lotario—ecclesiastic, merchant, and soldier—and we can see how that passage inscribed within the “fictional” tale of the “Curioso impertinente” now becomes actualized in the “real” world of the novel. The difference here is that all three—including the churchman’s—are now described as worldly careers whose aim is wealth and power. The soldier’s career may be distinguished on a higher level than the other two, but the fame and renown he seeks are worldly nonetheless—and Lotario’s soldier, we also remember, was motivated by human fame as well as by heavenly glory.

The story of the Viedma brothers, moreover, conforms to Don Quijote’s discourse on arms and letters by shifting the category of letters away from an ecclesiastical profession already conceived in primarily secular terms to the profession of law. One of the brothers (Cervantes is inconsistent as to whether it is the youngest or middle one) “said that he wanted to follow the Church or finish his studies in Salamanca” [“dijo que quería seguir la Iglesia, o irse a acabar sus comenzados estudios a Salamanca” (394; 397)]. The sentence is remarkably subtle and seems to enact the shift in which I am interested. Studies at Salamanca could lead to a career in the Church—Sansón Carrasco, bachelor of Salamanca, appears headed for one in Part Two. But the “or” suggests an alternative career in letters, and, in fact, when we meet this brother, who arrives at the inn shortly after the Captive has finished his tale, we find that he has studied the law and become a judge; he is on his way to Mexico, where he will sit as the king’s “oidor” on the supreme court (42). The opposition between arms and letters is played out in the Viedma family in the careers of the gallant Captain, who returns penniless to Spain from his captivity in Algiers, and his brother the Judge who pursued “letters, in which God and my own exertions have raised me to the position in which you see me” [“las letras, en las cuales Dios y mi diligencia me han puesto en el grado que me veis” (435; 437)]. The Judge speaks of his worldly rise with the satisfaction of the self-made man.

What early in the novel thus begins, at least in the nostalgic imagination of Don Quijote, as a choice between two holy vocations—fighting knights and praying clerics—has, through the progressive unfolding of the motif of arms and letters, been reconfigured into a more modern choice among thoroughly secular careers. The noble father of the Viedma brothers, too, looks backward with his proverbial wisdom, but the Church is no longer the only—perhaps not even the primary—destination for the “letrado.” The full extent of this secularization is suggested by the third, absent

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brother, the merchant.²¹ He is absent from the scene of the novel, and he finds no place in Don Quijote's opposition of arms and letters as the two possible careers that a man of honor can follow. Yet this brother, and the worldly means—money—that he has at his disposal, are in fact crucial to Judge Viedma's story. In the next sentence, the Judge tells us:

My younger brother is in Peru, so wealthy, that with what he has sent to my father and to me he has fully repaid the portion he took with him and has even given my father enough to satisfy his natural prodigality. Thanks to him, I have been able to follow my studies with more becoming fashion and authority, and so to reach my present position. (435)

Mi menor hermano está en el Pirú, tan rico, que con lo que ha enviado a mi padre y a mí ha satisfecho bien la parte que él se llevó, y aun dado a las manos de mi padre con que poder hartar su liberalidad natural; y yo, ansimesmo, he podido con más decencia y autoridad tratarme en mis estudios, y llegar al puesto en que me veo. (437)

Having chosen the career whose aim—as Lotario earlier defined it—is the “goods of fortune,” this brother has amassed a fortune in the colonial trade, money that, in fact, finances and makes possible both his father's generous way of life as an old-fashioned aristocratic man of arms *and*, perhaps more significantly, the Judge's own career as man of letters. The Judge did not live the life of the impoverished student described earlier by Don Quijote; his brother's money helped give him “authority” and it may have helped him to buy a lower court office (royal judgeships themselves were not for sale). Nor, he now acknowledges, is he entirely self-made: the repetition within two sentences, “me han puesto en el grado que me veis . . . y llegar al puesto en que me veo,” leaves the reader to decide just how much of Judge Viedma's prominence in the legal profession is due to his own “diligencia,” how much to the money that flowed in from the New World and allowed him to cut a dignified figure.

In the absent *perulero* brother the novel *Don Quijote* acknowledges, without quite being able to represent on its fictional stage, a modern mercantile capitalism that has brought about a new social fluidity. The moneyed economy has opened new avenues for social advancement, including Spain's colonial system that links together the two Viedma brothers, the soon-to-be Mexican Judge as well as the Peruvian merchant. In the third brother, the gallant Captain who goes East rather than West to fight the traditional religious enemy of Islam, Cervantes, the survivor of Lepanto, may still try to invest soldiery with higher, more disinterested values; if the soldier is not fighting as a crusader, he does at least pursue valor and fame. But, as I shall argue in Chapter Three, the money that ransoms the Captive and that he and his fellow Christians try to carry off from Zorai-

da's father in Algiers marks the novelist's simultaneous awareness of the extent to which worldly motives now infiltrate all professions.²²

The debate between arms and letters that runs through through Part One of *Don Quijote*, taken up by apparently disparate episodes that are thus unexpectedly linked together, contains an implicit narrative of modernity. It eventually introduces commerce as a third term that cannot be fitted into the traditional opposition of martial versus clerical careers; yet the monetary forces and secular spirit of an emergent capitalism come to dominate and transform the nature of those careers and of the larger social order. The selfless knight and churchman, the imaginative projections of a receding feudal order cited by Don Quijote toward the opening of the novel, now have their modern, mercenary counterparts in the soldier and judge. Part Two of *Don Quijote* will take up this opposition of arms and letters in the opposition of Don Quijote himself to Sancho Panza, when the latter takes up his position as governor and judge and, as an illiterate "letrado," briefly accomplishes the most dramatic social ascent chronicled by the novel.²³

Luscinda at the Window

My second example of how Cervantes links the motifs of Part One of *Don Quijote* is much more briefly told. It occurs in the space of two pages in the middle of Cardenio's story of his erotic woes in Chapter 27, and concerns two moments by the barred window of the house of his beloved Luscinda. The first records Cardenio's last conversation with Luscinda; she is troubled and her eyes fill with tears. Cardenio contrasts the moment with his recollection of earlier happier meetings by the window, always conducted, he notes, with propriety:

the greatest freedom I permitted myself was to take, almost by force, one of her lovely white hands and to press it to my lips as best I could, despite the narrowness of the bars that separated us. (268)

y a lo que más se estendía mi desenvoltura era a tomarle, casi por fuerza, una de sus bellas y blancas manos, y llegarla a mi boca, según daba lugar la estrechez de una baja reja que nos dividía. (266)

The second passage comes a paragraph later, when Cardenio tells us how a letter from Luscinda was delivered to him: the bearer had passed by her window and been asked, as a Christian ["si sois cristiano"] to take the letter to the absent Cardenio. Luscinda added a further incentive:

'And in case you want money to do it, take what you find wrapped in this handkerchief.' 'With these words,' the messenger went on, 'she threw out of

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the window a handkerchief in which were wrapped a hundred reals, this gold ring that I am wearing, and the letter that I have given you . . .’ (269)

“y para que no os falte comodidad de poderlo hacer, tomad lo que va en este pañuelo.”—Y diciendo esto, me arrojó por la ventana un pañuelo, donde venían atados cien reales y esta sortija de oro que aquí traigo, con esa carta que os he dado . . .” (267)

The memory of kissing Luscinda’s hands through the railing, the handkerchief filled with coins she throws down from her window to the messenger: neither of these details is strictly necessary to Cardenio’s story. But the first links the story backward in the novel to the model chivalric romance that Don Quijote tells to Sancho in Chapter 21, where a princess newly enamored by the knight-errant who has come to stay at her father’s castle meets him for a nocturnal tryst; she will “give her white hands through the railing to the knight, who will kiss them a thousand times and bathe them with his tears” [“dará sus blancas manos por la reja al caballero, el cual se las besará mil veces, y se las bañará en lágrimas” (205; 198)]. The second looks forward to Chapter 40 and to the moment in the Captive’s Tale when Zoraida lowers from *her* window a cloth [“lienzo”] filled with coins to Captain Viedma and his fellow companions in their captivity in Algiers; she, too, is searching for a Christian (405; 408).

The effects of this juxtaposition of episodes in the novel are complicated. First of all, it places the genre of the story of Cardenio, Luscinda, and Cardenio’s rival, Don Fernando—an erotic novella—somewhere between the stereotypes of chivalric romance that fill Don Quijote’s imagination and the “true history” of the Captive’s Tale and, perhaps more specifically, to the reality principle that lends the tale its verisimilitude: the presence of money. Thus here, too, *Don Quijote* seems to be telling, on the level of literary history, a story of modernity, the transition of fiction itself from the fantasy world of chivalry, the literature of an outmoded feudal past, to the depiction of lived experience in a modern materialistic world, the new realm of the novel that Cervantes is inventing. Cardenio’s kissing Luscinda’s white hand is a gesture of old-fashioned romance and suggests something of the unreal, excessively literary quality of his love for her. It links him and the penitence he imposes upon himself to Don Quijote the lover of Dulcinea, the lady who is almost exclusively the creature of Don Quijote’s literature-fed imagination. On the other hand, Cardenio is tied by money to the real world: the hundred reals that Luscinda wraps in her handkerchief [“pañuelo”] recall the very first appearance of Cardenio himself in the novel in Chapter 23, not in person, but in the form of his traveling bag that contains four shirts of Holland linen and a hundred “escudos” wrapped in a little cloth or hand-

kerchief [“pañizuelo” (222; 216)], money—it may or may not be the same money—that Sancho happily appropriates. Here, too, Cervantine interlace is at work, for the first innkeeper whom Don Quijote meets in Chapter 3 advises him to carry money and clean shirts (70; 49), and the knight is careful to do so (96; 79) as he prepares in Chapter 7 for his second sally. Even when Cardenio goes mad for love, he is similarly prudent enough to pack the necessities. Cardenio’s money, moreover, acquires a life of its own in the novel, for in Chapter 3 of the Part Two Sansón Carrasco states that many readers of Part One want to know what Sancho did with it: “for it is one of the substantial points that is missing in the work” [“que es uno de los puntos sustanciales que faltan en la obra” (551; 564)]. Money, Cervantes punningly asserts, is a matter of substance in his novelistic world.

The Two Loves of Don Quijote

These two examples of Cervantes’s technique of interlacing together the thematic motifs and episodes of his novel are themselves related by the similar stories they tell about the arrival of a modern world reshaped and increasingly dominated by money. *Don Quijote* is a novel whose central character chooses to reject the modern world, to turn back the clock and to live in a idealized and fabulous realm of feudal chivalry derived from the romances he consumes. Don Quijote has a weaker sense of the anachronism he is committing than has the second innkeeper in Chapter 32, who believes just as firmly as the mad hidalgo in the literal truth of the chivalric romances, but who acknowledges that knight-errantry is no longer the custom [“ahora no se usa lo que se usaba en aquel tiempo” (324; 325)]. At times Don Quijote speaks of “reviving” [“resucitar” (186; 188)] chivalry and a lost golden age (Part One, Chapter 20); at the beginning of Part Two, on the other hand, he appears to believe that there are other knights-errant than he still wandering across Spain (Chapter 1). Through its hero who wants to live in the past, even or especially because it is an imaginary past, Cervantes’s novel depicts the factual reality of the modern present.

Don Quijote’s nostalgic, anarchic impulses—manifested above all in his refusal to pay money for his stays at inns and his claimed exemption from the king’s laws that is symbolically enacted in his freeing of the galley slaves in Chapter 22—are what make visible the imprisoning bars of this reality, and Don Quijote himself is literally imprisoned in his cage and escorted home by the king’s troopers at the end of Part One. (As we shall see in Chapter Three, it is a triumph of the novel and of its method of interlace to suggest that the inn itself is a kind of prison from which

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only money—i.e., paying one's bills—can allow one to escape.) What Don Quijote rides up against is not only the material solidity of windmills but the social arrangements of a moneyed economy and the nation-state.²⁴

My examples suggest, furthermore, a progressive narrative unfolding in Part One that brings the novel from a nostalgic evocation of earlier social conditions and values (the knight and the monk as sacred vocations; the hand of the idealized lady) to the conditions and values of modernity that supersede them (the soldier, the judge, and the merchant as secular careers of worldly success; the hand of the lady that contains a packet of money). This progress is written large in Part One by the sequence that moves from its two main clusters of interlaced narratives, each organized around a separate chivalric-erotic fantasy of Don Quijote himself. These clusters will, respectively, be the focus of my next two chapters.

The first, which I want to label the “Dulcinea” cluster, comprises the remarkably closely interlaced stories of Cardenio, Luscinda, and Don Fernando and of the “Curioso impertinente,” as well as the earlier pastoral story of Marcela and Grisóstomo; these stories of women variously idealized and victimized by the egotistic male imagination and the cult of male honor all comment on Don Quijote's apparently selfless worship of Dulcinea, his ideal lady who may or not exist. The second, the “Princess Micomicona” cluster, includes the Captive's Tale, the story of Don Luis and Clara, and the story of Leandra, and it comments on Don Quijote's project, which he outlines to Sancho in Chapter 21, of marrying the daughter of a king and ascending to the throne himself: his project of making himself emperor. This scheme seems about to be realized when Dorotea, disguised as the Princess Micomicona, promises to marry Don Quijote after he has defeated the giant who is oppressing her kingdom.

The fantasies involving Dulcinea and “Princess Micomicona” are both, to be sure, fantasies of self-aggrandizement and omnipotence—the peerlessness of Dulcinea makes her chosen knight (or the knight who chooses *her*) without peer, while the princess raises him to royalty—but the latter has an evident social correlative where the former does not. In the first “Dulcinea” narrative cluster, the lady is the object of intersubjective rivalry among men all conceived more or less as social equals—for Don Quijote, Dulcinea is the token by which he surpasses other, similar knights-errant—and these stories may thus look historically backward to what Jacob Burckhardt called the “medieval caste sense of honor” that preceded the more fluid and confused arrangements of rank and class that characterize the modern society of Burckhardt's Renaissance.²⁵ In the second “Micomicona” cluster, the lady is both the trophy and, in part, the cause of an advancement in worldly fortune, and these stories belong to a world of social ambition and mobility—and to the marriage-and-money plot of the novel, the new genre of this new, modern world.²⁶

TABLE 1.1
Dulcinea vs. "Princess Micomicona"

<i>Chapter</i>	
12	D (Marcela)
13	D (Don Quijote describes Dulcinea; Marcela)
14	D (Marcela)
16	M (Don Quijote, Maritornes, and the Inn-Castle)
21	M (Don Quijote's fantasy of the chivalric career)
23–24	D (Cardenio's story)
25–26	D (Don Quijote describes Dulcinea; Don Quijote's penance)
27	D (Cardenio's story)
28	M (Dorotea's story)
29–30	M (Dorotea as Princess Micomicona)
33–34	D ("Curioso impertinente")
35	M (Don Quijote and the wineskins)
35–36	D ("Curioso impertinente"; reunion of the lovers)
37–41	M (Captive's Tale)
42	M (The Judge)
43–44	M (Luis and Clara)
47, 50	M (Canon of Toledo and Don Quijote on social mobility)
51	M (Leandra and Vicente de la Rosa)
51	D (Eugenio and Anselmo as shepherd-suitors of Leandra)

It is possible to map these two clusters of stories—those organized around Don Quijote's ideal love for Dulcinea, those organized around his fantasy of a rise to power and riches and its supposed embodiment in "Princess Micomicona"—across the narrative of Part One and to see how they intertwine. The first cluster is marked D, the second M in Table 1.1.

If the two clusters of stories alternate in the first two-thirds of the narrative of Part One, this diagram suggests that from the Captive's Tale on, the second cluster of stories succeeds and very largely replaces the first. The novel and its stories, that is, come increasingly to recognize the importance of money and class mobility. They do so in ironic counterpoint to Don Quijote's own progress in the novel: his mobility as a knight-errant virtually ceases as the action stops at the inn and he is imprisoned in his cage in Chapter 46, five chapters after the Captive tells of his own liberation from captivity in Algiers. The larger narrative plan of Part One thus seems to follow a historical trajectory, traced in its stories of erotic intrigue, that moves from the idealized feudal past of Don Quijote's chivalric fantasies to the mentality and social arrangements of Cervantes's present-day Spain. Tales about lovers driven by old-fashioned notions of jealousy and honor are succeeded by others that bring us closer to the way that we live and love now, stories of modern desire.

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It is not surprising that when Don Quijote is asked to choose between his two fantasies—as he is in Chapter 30, when Sancho urges him to marry Princess Micomicona immediately then and there (and keep Dulcinea as a mistress on the side), and still earlier in Chapter 16, when he imagines that the serving girl Maritornes is the princess of his dreams coming to a nocturnal assignation with him—he professes his unswerving devotion to Dulcinea. The ideal lady Dulcinea is not only a censoring device to keep real women at a distance for a character who we may begin to suspect has never had any sexual experience at all. The very disinterestedness of Don Quijote’s love for Dulcinea and his simultaneous spurning of the wealth and power offered by the “princess”—his rejection of the poor-boy-makes-good, social-success story thinly veiled in chivalric garb—represent his spurning of the conditions of modernity. Don Quijote will not, finally, be in it for the money.

If Cervantes uses Don Quijote to criticize the mercenary motives and materialistic values of the modern world into which he is cast, he nonetheless skewers his hero’s efforts to transcend that world: Don Quijote’s attempt to return to the supposed ethos of an earlier time and to dedicate himself to his ideal lady. Cervantes does so not so much by bringing the knight into contact with the demands of a real, material existence; for, as we have just seen, Don Quijote can still choose in such a case to cling stubbornly to his ideals, choosing Dulcinea over Micomicona. Rather, Cervantes discredits Don Quijote’s apparently selfless idealization of Dulcinea on its own terms by revealing just how selfish it actually is, how much this idolatrous cult of the lady feeds Don Quijote’s male ego. Through the parallels among their interpolated stories, Cervantes criticizes Don Quijote as lover of Dulcinea by associating him with the monstrously self-centered lovers Cardenio, Grisóstomo, and the Anselmo of the “Curioso impertinente”—all madmen in their own way. Perhaps the most remarkable feature of this association is the way in which it conversely links these stories of male jealousy to the *premodern* mentality of Don Quijote’s project. The code of male honor itself, so dear to the Spanish cultural and literary imagination, is viewed as a holdover from an aristocratic feudal past that is gradually being replaced in that imagination by the modern allure of wealth and the wordly career.

Part One of Cervantes’s novel does not have much good to say for this new ethos that it represents in terms of marrying for money instead of for love. It may share, that is, many of its hero’s apprehensions that the modern, moneyed world is bereft of heroism and human values. But, unlike Don Quijote, it has little use for the feudal values of the world that preceded it. Ten years later, as we shall see in Part Two of the novel, Cervantes and Don Quijote together begin to make peace with and discover positive

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worth in the conditions of modern society. Part One of *Don Quijote* is interested in depicting, as the very sequence of its episodes suggests—the succession of the “Dulcinea” by the “Princess Micomicona” cluster—how the atavistic values of an earlier social order come into conflict with and gradually yield to a modern social ethos, and how this shift is registered in a refocusing of human desire itself. It charts the emergence of modern times.