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Hailing Hunters: Leisure and Class Ideology in *Amadís de Gaula*

Este artículo sostiene que las escenas cinegéticas de Amadís de Gaula *(Garci Rodríguez de Montalvo, 1508) funcionan como aparatos altuserianos de interpelación, al reclutar a los nobles a través de representaciones de comportamientos recreativos propios de su estamento, reafirmando así una ideología estamental. Esta interpretación facilita asimismo un entendimiento de los motivos ideológicos de los moralistas que condenaban al* Amadís*. Estas condenas pueden entenderse como parte de un esfuerzo general para lograr una mejor movilidad social a través de la difusión de valores meritocráticos y de la crítica a conceptualizaciones tradicionales de identidad del estamento noble.*

Palabras clave: Amadís*, caza, ideología, nobleza, ocio*

This article argues that the hunting scenes in Garci Rodríguez de Montalvo's 1508 novel Amadís de Gaula *function as Althusserian hailing devices that interpellate nobles through the representation of a class-specific leisure behavior, thereby reinforcing a hierarchical class ideology. Moreover, this interpretation affords insights into the ideological motivations of period critics, whose moralistic condemnations of* Amadís *may be read as part of a broader effort to achieve social mobility through the promotion of meritocratic values and the critique of traditional conceptions of aristocratic class identity.*

Keywords: Amadís*, hunting, ideology, leisure, nobility*

Given that hunting is a popular pastime of the characters of Garci Rodríguez de Montalvo's *Amadís de Gaula* (1508), it is surprising that the most avid reader of chivalric novels, Don Quijote, is not more of a hunter.[1] The first pages of Cervantes's work describe the genteel Alonso Quijano as a "gran madrugador y amigo de la caza" (71), yet his obsession with books prevents him from making use of his old horse and hunting dog, for "los ratos que estaba ocioso – que eran los más del año – , se daba a leer libros de caballerías con tanta afición y gusto, que olvidó casi de todo punto el ejercicio de la caza" (71). These passages highlight a relationship between

leisure, hunting, and reading that dates back centuries and also appears in the pages of *Amadís de Gaula*. Medieval Spanish didactic literature conceived of hunting as a pastime that contributed to the physical, mental, and spiritual wellbeing of kings and princes, a discourse reflected by the depictions of hunting in Rodríguez de Montalvo's novel. The realistic depictions of an important aspect of medieval leisure discourse, however, contrast with the novel's more fantastic elements. Amadís's impossible feats of strength and swordsmanship, not to mention the frequent intervention of sorcerers, drew the derision of sixteenth-century critics who denounced the work as a pernicious influence on readers.

Yet their disregard for the book's didactic elements suggests that their condemnations may have had other motivations. Far from fantasy, the hunting scenes in *Amadís de Gaula* perpetuated the martial values of the Spanish aristocracy by portraying hunting as the exemplary leisure behavior of a warrior class. For centuries, such values had justified the privileges the nobility enjoyed as defenders of Christian territories during the Reconquest of the Iberian Peninsula (Gerbet 17).[2] Although readers of all stripes enjoyed *Amadís*, the hunting motif can thus be read as a kind of Althusserian hailing device that nobles would have recognized as a class-specific behavior, thereby reinforcing class identity.[3] Yet in the wake of the Reconquest, the nobility's traditional privileges conflicted with the political prerogatives of the Catholic Monarchs, Isabella and Ferdinand, who sought to consolidate their power over a newly united Spanish Iberia through the subjugation of the often rebellious aristocracy. Especially problematic were the high nobles, who had the material and political wherewithal to challenge the Crown's authority. Isabella and Ferdinand therefore took measures to strengthen their hand, such as by increasing the Crown's financial independence and creating a professional army.[4] They also allied themselves with the lower nobility, who often chafed at hierarchical divisions that restricted access to economic resources and political influence.[5] Their aspirations dovetailed with the Crown's efforts to centralize political power in an emerging state bureaucracy in which personal achievement increasingly afforded a means for social advancement.[6]

Many humanist authors' moralistic condemnations of *Amadís* may thus be read as veiled attacks on traditional values that impeded social mobility. A number of authors who condemned *Amadís* hailed from the lower nobility, and their distaste for chivalric literature formed part of a complex of overlapping ideological interests: they often commingled diatribes against chivalric novels, for example, with encomia for hard work and personal achievement, meritocratic attitudes antithetical to the presumed

dignity of aristocratic leisure and the notion that lineage was the ultimate arbiter of social status. Moreover, these authors frequently claimed that leisure was better employed in intellectual pursuits than in physical activities like hunting, a distinction that transferred the *armas y letras* debate from vocational merits to leisure pursuits.[7] Hence, the question of what one did in one's free time was as much about class ideology as it was about individual morality. Given hunting's traditional association with nobility, an analysis of the recurring hunting motif in *Amadís* affords insights into the novel's ideological underpinnings as well as the motivations of its detractors.

Previous scholarship on the hunting motif in medieval Spanish literature has tended to focus on its metaphorical function. In this regard, portrayals of hunting generally connote sexual desire and operate metaphorically or allegorically within a text to highlight these themes.[8] However, the hunting motif in *Amadís* draws on a sub-genre of medieval didactic literature that associates hunting with nobility and virtue (Deyermond 258), endowing the novel with a kind of exemplarity.

Various aspects of *Amadís de Gaula* support an interpretation of the hunting motif as part of a broader didactic project to teach readers through explicit doctrinal instruction and examples of chivalric behaviors.[9] In his prologue, Montalvo writes that he has incorporated edifying material into his retelling of the *Amadís* saga so as to depict exemplary chivalrous behaviors specifically for *caballeros*: "son con las tales enmiendas acompañados de tales *enxemplos y doctrinas* ... porque assí los *cavalleros* mancebos como los más ancianos hallen en ellos lo que a cada uno conviene" (1.225; emphasis added). To this end, he frequently includes sermonic digressions that highlight the narrative's edifying content. In 1.42, for example, he warns greedy nobles of high birth to take heed of the fate of the usurper Abiseos, whom Amadís vanquishes in order to restore Briolanja to her throne: "Tomad enxemplo codiciosos, aquellos que por Dios *los grandes señoríos* son dados en governación ... no seyendo contentos con aquellos estados que vos dio, y de vuestros antecessores vos quedaron ... queréis usurpar y tomar" (1.641; emphasis added). He also admonishes lower nobles to be content within their estate: "Y vosotros *los menores*, aquellos a quien la fortuna tanto poder y lugar dio, que seyendo puestos en sus consejos para guiar, assí como el timón a la gran nave guía servís a Dios, servís a todo lo general. Y *ahunque deste mundo no alcançáis la satisfación de vuestros desseos, alcançaréis lo del otro, que es sin fin*" (1.642; emphasis added). He thereby casts a conservative monarchist ideology as a form of morality (Smith 169, 172). In this sense, *Amadís* functions as a kind of foundational fiction that envisions the emerging Spanish state as a divinely ordained

hierarchy of static noble estates, each of which legitimizes its privileges through service to its superiors.[10] Royalty is the apex of this hierarchy, a point made allegorically when Amadís, the scion of royal parents, becomes the greatest *caballero* of all (Martín Romero 242-43).

These narrative instantiations of ideology sometimes blur the lines between chivalric fantasy and historical reality, as in Chapter XCIX of Rodríguez de Montalvo's sequel to *Amadís*, *Las sergas de Esplandián* (1510), which recounts a fantastical encounter between the author and one of the novel's characters, Urganda the sorceress. The episode begins realistically as the author sets off on one of his customary hunting trips to Castillejo ("que saliendo un día a caça, como acostumbrado lo tengo, a la parte que del Castillejo se llama" [Rodríguez de Montalvo, *Sergas* 534]) but takes a fantastic turn when he falls into an enchanted cave where Urganda reveals previously unrecorded adventures of Amadís's son, Esplandián. When the sorceress inquires whether any monarchs of the author's world match the valor and virtue of Amadís and his cohort, the author responds with an extended elegy of Ferdinand and Isabella: "puedo hacer muy verdadera relación ... de los grandes y muy famosos hechos del Rey y Reina, mis señores, que en esta sazón, casi todas las Españas, y otros reinos fuera dellas, mandan y señorean" (535). After praising their physical appearance, virtues, and wisdom, he concludes with a prayer that they retake Constantinople from the Turks, thereby framing his monarchical ideology as a religious mission to reclaim formerly Christian territories. Although the encounter with Urganda is fantastic, the author's first-person description of a common hunting scene in a concrete socio-geographical context imbues his ideologically weighted elegy with the authority of autobiographical discourse. Notably, the episode also enables him to signal his social status to readers by depicting himself as a noble accustomed to hunting.[11] In this way, the otherwise fictional episode contributes to Rodríguez de Montalvo's rationale for construing his novels as edifying reading material for nobles at leisure.

Throughout *Amadís de Gaula*, hunting scenes like this one anchor the fantastic novel in a historical reality, for the characters of *Amadís* frequently model this leisure behavior which medieval hunting literature enthusiastically encouraged. One important benefit medieval writers attributed to hunting was physical fitness. In times of peace, hunting kept warriors fit for combat and introduced youths destined to practice arms to the basic skills of their vocation (Díez de Revenga and Molina 32). Writers also lauded hunting's restorative effects on the psychological well-being of rulers who bore the burden of governing (Gómez Redondo 839). Hunting's intellectual and physical demands, they argued, kept heads of state fit to

rule. Though hunting was beneficial, moralists cautioned that too much leisure could be just as bad as too little and admonished noblemen to hunt only when they were free of other responsibilities. The practice of self-discipline and moderation were therefore additional benefits of hunting which extended to other spheres of life.[12]

Didactic literature touted these benefits of hunting as early as the mid-thirteenth century. In *Las siete partidas* (composed between 1256 and 1265), Alfonso X "El Sabio" praises hunting as a pastime essential to a king's wellbeing, writing: "[m]añoso deue el Rey ser, e sabidor de otras cosas, que se tornan en sabor, e en alegria, para poder mejor sofrir los grandes trabajos e pesares, quando los ouiere ... E para esto vna de las cosas que fallaron los Sabios, que mas tiene pro, es, la caza" (Alfonso X, *Los códigos* 349). Kings in particular should hunt because the therapeutic respite it affords enables them to rule more effectively. As the text explains: "los antiguos tuvieron, que conuiene esto mucho a los Reyes, mas que otros omes: e esto por tres razones. La primera, por alongar su vida e salud, e acrescentar su entendimiento, e redrar de si los cuidados e los pesares, que son cosas que embargan mucho el seso" (349). Though the association of hunting with physical fitness comes as no surprise, what matters here is that hunting improves the understanding and the affect. Alfonsine thought on this topic would influence Spanish hunting discourse for centuries to come.

Ruy Sánchez de Arévalo, for example, writes in his 1455 *Verjel de los príncipes* that leisure forms part of a regimen that keeps a noble physically and mentally fit. He recommends hunting as first among the leisure options available to a noble, writing that it counteracts the harmful effects of worry and sadness: "[otra] exçellençia deste noble exerçiçio consiste en apartar tristezas e pensamientos del coraçon del ome ... porque fué fallado este honesto deporte de caça fué para apartar tristes cuydados del coraçon humano, e quitar e desterrar dél los pensamientos malos e dañosas ymaginaciones" (Sánchez de Arévalo 46). Such thoughts, he warns, can cause psychological harm: "de neçesario resçiben los omes tristezas por los continuos negoçios e diversos eventos e acaesçimientos, resulta de aquí, que en los tales que se non ocupan en algunos honestos desportes e exerçiçios, incurren pensamientos de los quales nascen tristezas" (46). Yet, according to Arévalo, the sport offers more than a distraction from one's concerns: it can also prevent the harmful effects of too much sedentary leisure, or *ocio*: "otra exçellençia deste loable deporte es e consiste en apartar occiosidat e pereça de los nobles omes, e causar en ellos diligençia e prudençia" (47). In this sense, hunting is as much an exercise of a nobleman's virtues as it is of his body. By hunting, a nobleman in effect becomes nobler.

Arévalo's attitude towards laziness is more than mere moralizing, for the idea that sloth was harmful to one's health constituted an important aspect of leisure discourse in early modern Europe. In his study of recreation in the Renaissance, Alessandro Arcangeli writes that the early Christian concept of *acedia,* "a sort of sleepiness and laziness that could only be avoided by keeping oneself always occupied, in prayer and work" (15), shaped attitudes towards idleness throughout early modern Europe. Over time, *acedia* came to be associated with a specific condition of the body caused by humoral imbalance. Early modern medical discourse valued the role of sport in the maintenance of good health because it was believed that exercise and rest were essential to treating humoral disorders like *acedia*.

A number of treatises demonstrate that this relationship between exercise and medicine was widely accepted in Spain in the medieval and early modern eras. In his *Libro de la caça de las aves* (likely written between 1385 and 1388), Pero López de Ayala writes that too much sedentary leisure will lead a man to sin by engendering sadness: "no se ocupando el ombre en algunas cosas buenas e honestas [nasçele] dende pensamiento en el coraçon, del qual pensamiento nasçe tristura e amortificamiento, e de tal tristura viene escandalo e desperamiento que es rayz de todo perdimiento" (López de Ayala 52). He goes on to explain the health effects of inactivity: "quando el ombre esta oçioso, sin fazer exerçiçio e trabajar con el cuerpo e mudar el aire, carganse los umores en el cuerpo, donde recreçen dolençias e enfermedades" (52). Hunting, he argues, counteracts these psychological and physical effects of sloth.

An even more detailed description of the relationship between exercise and humoral balance appears in Cristóbal Méndez's 1553 treatise on exercise. According to Méndez, exercise is particularly good for melancholics: "[e]l melancólico, que con su frialdad y sequedad está pensativo, triste, descontento, y huélgase con la soledad, haga exercicio y con éste, el calor incitado consumirá la frialdad y [como] simpre en él ay humedad, porque ay sudor, y la sequedad se dispondría de manera que no aya tanta, mudarse ha la complexión" (285). Even more to the point, he recognizes the value of hunting as exercise: "[l]a verdad es que los que inventaron la caça, assí como de conejos, libres, venados, puercos y jaualíes, y otras cosas semejantes, como bolatería, porque mezclaron el trabajo con mucho plazer y alegría, fueron muy doctos y son dignos de mucha alabança; pues aprouecharon a nuestra naturaleza humana con tan buen exercicio" (338-39). Méndez and Ayala thus relate exercise to mood and identify hunting as a wholesome form of exercise.

Returning now to *Amadís*, the characters' hunting behaviors often exhibit the principles described in didactic treatises. The first book begins,

no less, with a hunting expedition cast as a leisure activity befitting a virtuous king. Chapter 1 introduces the elderly King Garínter who "seyendo en la ley de la verdad, de mucha devoción y buenas maneras era acompañado" (1.227). The description of Garínter's *buenas maneras*, or chivalric values and practices, recalls Don Juan Manuel's *El libro de los estados,* wherein he recommends hunting among other martial *maneras* worthy of nobles: "estas maneras son así commo cavalgar et bofordar et fazer de cavallo et con las armas todas las cosas a que pertenesçen a la cavallería. Et otrosí son maneras ... caçar et correr monte en la manera que les perteneçe" (78). What is more, Garínter's expedition is framed as a form of therapeutic respite from his responsibilities: "por dar descanso a su ánimo algunas veces a monte e a caça iva" (1.228). Even so, he is not idle because he engages in prayerful meditation as he hunts: "andando por la floresta, sus oras rezando" (1.228). Ultimately, the excursion is both exemplary and fortuitous: in the forest he meets a knight errant, King Perión de Gaula, whom he invites into his home. Perión, however, will betray his host's trust by secretly engaging in a sexual relationship with his daughter, Helisena, a turn of events that, as Juan Manuel Cacho Blecua observes, recalls the hunting motif's traditional erotic connotations (Introducción 21). Yet the sexual incontinence of the young knight errant contrasts with the virtues of the aged hunter, whose devotion lends an air of auspiciousness to the forest encounter and its consequences, for Amadís is born of the clandestine union.

Like Garínter, King Lisuarte also often goes on extended hunting expeditions. One such expedition in Book 3 is described in terms similar to that of Garínter's: "Por dar descanso el rey Lisuarte a su persona y plazer a sus cavalleros, acordó de se ir a caça a la floresta y llevar consigo a la Reina y sus fijas" (3.1103). The text once again frames hunting as the kind of kingly respite prescribed by medieval hunting discourse. The hunt takes an unexpected turn, however, when Lisuarte encounters a strange youth who hunts with the aid of a lioness. The youth is later revealed to be his grandson, Esplandián, the lost love child of the union between Amadís and Lisuarte's daughter, Oriana. Obviously, this particular hunting scene blends the fantastic with the exemplary in that Esplandián hunts with the aid of the same lioness that suckled him after he was lost in the forest as a baby. Nevertheless, the episode enhances the nobility of both Lisuarte, who kills many deer that day, and Esplandián, who reveals his noble character by the exemplary way he distributes his game at court. Lisuarte commands the boy to split up his catch in order to observe him, whereupon Esplandián defers to the king, saying: "La caça es vuestra, y vos dadla a quien vos quisieredes" (3.1112). Lisuarte insists that Esplandián divide the game himself so the

youth cedes the most valuable catch to the monarch. He then turns to the queen, Elisena, giving her the roebucks. Finally, he approaches Oriana, who, unbeknownst to him, is his mother. He intuits that he should honor her with the remainder of his quarry: "parescióle que después de la Reina, no avía ninguna más digna de ser honrada, según su presencia" (3.1112). The episode recalls Don Juan Manuel's advice to emperors in *El libro de los estados* regarding the dispensation of goods and properties: "le cunple mucho que lo que diere, que lo dé de buen talante ... Et deve guisar que dé mucho et de buen talante, pero en tal manera que sienpre saque de lo que diere pro et buena fama, et que dé en guisa que sienpre aya que dar" (237). Esplandián's judicious distribution of his game is certainly worthy of a noble reader's emulation because it wins the esteem of the court by acknowledging the proper hierarchy of nobility.

Like his father-in-law King Lisuarte, Amadís figures in a number of hunting episodes remarkable for their exemplarity. Near the end of Book 4, for example, Amadís is finally reconciled with Oriana's irascible father and retires to a life of leisure on the Ínsula Firme "con su señora Oriana al mayor vicio y plazer que nunca cavallero estuvo" (4.1640). Yet he finds little solace in his idleness as sad thoughts reminiscent of those described in hunting discourse cloud an otherwise happy ending. Unoccupied, the knight ruminates melancholically on the detrimental effect his retirement will have on his fame: "Amadís tornando en sí ... començó acordarse de la vida passada, cuánto a su honra y prez fasta allí avía seguido las cosas de las armas, y cómo estando mucho tiempo en aquella vida se podría escurecer y menoscabar su fama, de manera que era puesto en grandes congoxas, no sabiendo que fazer de sí" (4.1641). Clearly, the unaccustomed *ocio* of retirement takes its toll on the once active knight. Though he entreats Oriana to give him leave to take up his arms again, she forbids him to do so. He therefore turns to hunting to find some relief: "acordó con Grasandor ... que de allí fuera saliessen a correr monte y andar a caça por dar algún exercicio a sus personas" (4.1642). The two knights take great pleasure in the ample game found on the Ínsula Firme, dispelling the symptoms of idleness: "Y caçavan mucho dello, con que a las noches se acogían a la ínsola con gran plazer" (4.1642). In this instance hunting is exemplary because it is framed as a healthy outlet for relieving the harmful state of mind and body occasioned by too much *ocio*.

Like any medicine, however, hunting should be taken in moderation. Though Medieval Spanish writers encouraged hunting, they insisted it not be done at the expense of one's duties. *Las siete partidas* warn that while moderate hunting can enhance the execution of kingly responsibilities, it is detrimental to affairs of state if pursued with abandon: "[reyes] non deuen

y meter tanta cosa, porque menguen en lo que han de cumplir. Nin otrosi non deuen tanto vsar della, que les embargue los otros fechos, que han de fazer" (Alfonso X 349). Furthermore, hunting loses its therapeutic effectiveness if done excessively: "el alegria, que dende recibiessen, por fuerça se le sauria a tornar en pesar, onde le vernian grandes enfermedades en lugar de salud" (349). *Las siete partidas* thus circumscribe hunting within the bounds of a leisure discourse that takes into account both a king's health and good governance. Likewise, in Don Juan Manuel's *El libro de los estados*, the sage Julio explains that pastimes like hunting should not keep a king from his duties: "hay muy grant plazer ... faziendo caça commo deve, et non dexando nin perdiendo por ella ninguno de los otros fechos que omne a de fazer ... Et en el tienpo que non ha de fazer omne otros fechos mayores et más provechosos, non ha ninguno tan bien puesto commo en caça de aves o de canes" (244).

The hunting scenes in *Amadís de Gaula* reflect these principles, too. Amadís, for instance, only hunts when he is free from other duties. In addition to the previous example from Book 4, in Book 3 Amadís returns to the court of Grasinda to fulfill an oath, after which he finds himself idle for a few days, whereupon he decides to go hunting: "huvo sabor de ir a correr a monte, assí como aquel que, *no haviendo en qué las armas exercitar*, en otra cosa su tiempo passava" (3.1185; emphasis added). His decision to hunt conforms to the kind of behavior expected of one whose vocation is the exercise of arms. Similarly, the following description of one of King Lisuarte's hunting expeditions also reflects this principle: "Como el rey Lisuarte era muy caçador y montero fuese, *siendo desocupado de otras cosas que más a su estado convenían*, salía muchas veces a caçar" (1.476; emphasis added). As in the previous example, the text implies that Lisuarte's behavior is becoming of those of his *estado* or class and therefore exemplary.

Yet Lisuarte's hunting behavior conveys these principles through negative exemplarity as well. In Book 4, the king is despondent after having sent his daughter Oriana to be married to the emperor of Rome, a decision which divides his kingdom and strains his marriage. The regretful king therefore decides to go hunting: "no pudo tanto consigo que bien no mostrasse en su gesto y fabla el dolor que en lo secreto tenía. Y luego pensó que sería bien de se apartar por las florestas con sus caçadores hasta dar lugar al tiempo que curasse aquello que por entonces mal remedio tenía" (4.1359). In this case, Lisuarte's decision to go hunting contravenes the principles of medieval hunting discourse because he abandons his responsibilities during a crisis of his own making. Eventually, his overindulgence in leisure contributes to his moral and political decline, for by the end of the saga he has hunted to such an extent that its charm is lost

on him. His inability to escape the stresses that result from his political miscalculations show that even hunting has its limits as a therapeutic form of leisure. In the end, he and Amadís only reconcile after a bitter war in which many of his knights are killed. The former glory of his rule long past, the world-weary king retires to his hunting grounds in Fenusa "por dar algún descanso y reposo a su ánimo de los trabajos passados, y diose a la caça y a las cosas que más plazer le podrían ocurrir, y assí passó algún espacio de tiempo" (4.1739). Yet his favorite pastime affords no respite: "Pero como ya esto le enojasse, assí como todas *las cosas del mundo que hombre mucho sigue lo fazen*, començó a pensar en los tiempos passados" (4.1739; emphasis added). The text generalizes the king's predicament *by relating it to men in general*, emphasizing the didactic aspect of the king's negative exemplarity. Much like Amadís, he is beset by sad ruminations on the past occasioned by *ocio*: "de manera que, teniendo en la memoria la dulçura de la gloria passada y el amargura de la no tener ni poder haver al presente, le pusieron en tan gran estrecho de pensamiento, que muchas vezes estava como fuera de todo juicio, no se podiendo alegrar ni consolar con ninguna cosa que viese" (4.1740). This scene employs negative exemplarity to good effect, demonstrating the consequences of immoderate leisure time as the desolate king, reduced to a state of near madness ("como fuera de todo juicio"), vainly tries to amuse himself. This last hunting scene of *Amadís* stands in stark contrast to the first wherein the good King Garínter pursues game in prayerful meditation.

To summarize, the hunting motif in *Amadís de Gaula* reflects a discourse of leisure prevalent in medieval didactic literature which recommends hunting as means of maintaining the health of a noble's mind, body, spirit, and, ultimately, that of the state. The hunting scenes thus serve Rodríguez de Montalvo's didactic ends because they model exemplary behaviors for readers of the same class as the nobles portrayed in his novel. In this sense, the hunting motif functions much like an Althusserian hailing device which "*interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects*" (Althusser 173) through a mirroring process that establishes and reinforces class identity.[13] Although Althusser writes from a twentieth-century Marxist perspective, the hailing devices he describes provide a useful paradigm for theorizing the ideological aspects of *Amadís de Gaula*'s exemplarity, which naturalizes class ideology through literary representations of class-specific behaviors. Adapting Althusserian theory to literary analysis, Pierre Macherey and Étienne Balibar write that fiction must bear some resemblance to reality in order to recruit subjects through interpellation. In this sense, they observe, there is little difference between "fiction-effects" and "reality-effects" in ideological terms insofar as "literature is the production of a certain ...

material reality and of a certain social effect" (10). Likewise, in his Althusserian study of *Don Quijote*, James Iffland writes that the "the level of interpellation [of a text] will be augmented substantially if the reader is able to identify with one or more of the characters in intimate fashion" (22). Thus, the ideologically saturated hunting motif contributes to the production of the material reality of the subject it recruits by affording just the kind of intimate identification – the depiction of a noble at leisure – to successfully interpellate the leisurely noble reader.

Yet if literary representations of hunting could serve as a means of reinforcing aristocratic class identity, they could just as easily alienate those whom they did not interpellate. First of all, hunting required the kind of wealth and leisure that was by and large only available to the higher, landed nobility, who often practiced hunting as a means of distinguishing themselves from nobles of more modest means (Munjot 102). Evidence that hunting was a class-specific behavior abounds in early modern literature, lending support to an ideological reading of the hunting motif in *Amadís*. Though Cristóbal Méndez encourages hunting as exercise, for example, he concedes that only the very wealthy can afford it: "en [la caça] se requieren principalmente riquezas para que se sustente y mucha ociosidad para vsallo y grande aparato para que sobre ... En conclusión digo, que para tomar este exercicio de la caça, si no es señor de mucha renta u hombre que tenga hazienda para de continuo conserv[a]lla, y grandes ocupaciones, no lo podrá sufrir" (339-40). Similarly, Alonso de Herrera asserts in his 1513 *Agricultura general* that there is nothing less suited to a laborer than hunting because it requires so much free time and money. He therefore excludes hunting dogs from a general survey of livestock, writing: "los perros de caça dexemos los a los ricos, a los cavalleros y a personas de re[n]ta, a los holgados que no tienen que hazer, y *es mejor que exerciten la caça que otros vicios en lo poblado*" (Herrera 337; emphasis added). Herrera's tone suggests that many resented the privilege and wealth represented by the cost-prohibitive pastime, which otherwise only served to prevent idle nobles from indulging in even worse vices.

These passages hint at a larger ideological context that can help modern readers understand why many sixteenth-century critics penned moralistic invectives against *Amadís* despite the author's didactic aims. Scholars have previously interpreted such criticism as stemming from a resurgence of Aristotelian poetics, the popularity of Erasmian humanism, and the pervasiveness of Counter-Reformation spirituality.[14] Yet the foregoing ideological analysis of the novel's hunting motif suggests that critics' moralistic invectives may have had other motivations, for authors who expressed disdain for chivalric novels often held in common other points of

view that implicitly challenged traditional conceptions of aristocratic class identity: these authors frequently espoused meritocratic notions of honor and nobility as earned rather than inherited, extolled the virtues of hard work, and esteemed intellectual endeavors as superior to physically demanding activities such as hunting.[15] Many of these authors were *hidalgos* and *caballeros* – the very *menores* whom Rodríguez de Montalvo admonishes to remain content in their estates in life – who sought greater wealth and power through service to the Crown, which, as discussed previously, had fostered their ambitions for its own political ends. While these authors rejected Rodríguez de Montalvo's vision of a static hierarchy of nobles, like him, they expressed their own countervailing ideology as a kind of morality: namely, they employed what Peter Burke terms the theological-moral discourse of leisure, one in which moralists "were primarily negative in their aims, concerned to forbid pastimes or at least to keep them within strict limits, to distinguish recreation which was 'lawful' or 'useful' from that which was not" (143). For such authors, leisure time was not an excuse to read frivolous books or hunt but rather an opportunity to enrich the mind and care for the soul – in other words, to engage in the kinds of scholarly activities that led to meritocratic advancement. This theological-moral discourse exerted a powerful influence over reader tastes in that most books consumed in the era were didactic or devotional in nature (Díez Borque 183). What is more, this discourse often "translated into social action, helping to form levels of expectation and the value systems expressed in objectives of social control" (Whinnom 311), such as occasional calls to censor chivalric novels.

Efforts to polemicize leisure on theological-moral grounds, however, also served to delegitimize literary representations of traditional hierarchical values anathema to the meritocratic attitudes that pervade the writings of *Amadís*'s critics. Pedro Mexía, for example, condemns *Amadís* and other chivalric novels in his 1545 *Historia imperial y cesárea*, a history of emperors from Julius Cesar to Charles V's grandfather, Maxmillian I. There, he entreats his readers to pay at least as much attention to his history as others devote to chivalric novels: "Y en pago de quanto yo trabaje en lo recoger y abreviar pido agora esta atençion y aviso, pues lo suelen prestar algunos, a las trufas y mentiras de Amadis, y de Lisuartes, y Clarianes, y otros portentos" (Mexía, *Historia* fol. CXLII v). Mexía echoes a common critique that historians of the period leveled at fictions like *Amadís*, namely, that they were falsehoods that detracted from the value of genuinely historical works (Fogelquist 15-16). Such works, he continues, should be banned: "devrian ser desterrados de España: como cosa contagiosa y dañosa a la republica, pues tan mal hazen gastar el tiempo a los autores y lectores de ellos" (Mexía,

Historia fol. CXLII v). Whereas imaginative fiction threatens the nation, Mexía claims that his history of emperors will provide readers with salutary exercise: "Por mi parte yo trabajo lo que puedo, dando a nuestro pueblo Castellano coronicas y cuentos verdaderos, en que se *exerçiten* y lean: donde hallaran cosas tan grandes y çiertas, como las muy grandes fingidas" (*Historia* fol. CXLII v; emphasis added). Like his medieval predecessors, Mexía advocates exercising during leisure time, yet his notion of exercise privileges intellectual pursuits. In his dedication to then crown-prince Phillip, he emphasizes the superiority of intellectual exercise to physical activity: "Porque si es verdad lo que todos los sabios affirman, que las obras y *exercicios del entendimie[n]to* hazen ventaja a las que son corporales" (Mexía, *Historia* fol. ii r; emphasis added). Mexía's use of the word *exercise* to refer to reading indicates a shift away from the traditional importance of physical training in a nobleman's daily regimen that had justified leisure activities like hunting.

Considered in the context of his other writings, a pattern emerges suggesting that Mexía's invective against chivalric literature forms part of a broader ideological perspective. The colophons of his published works – including the *Silva de varia lección* (1540), *Historia imperial y cesárea* (1545), and *Diálogos o coloquios* (1547) – often identify him as a "magnífico *caballero*," a moniker that precisely indicates his place in the aristocratic hierarchy. Though Mexía bore his title as a mark of distinction, in his *Silva de varia lección* he dedicates entire chapters to the meritocratic notions that the low-born can rise to greatness, that there is no shame in hard work, and that rulers should honor scholarly accomplishments.[16] Mexía lived his life according to these same principles: an accomplished cosmographer, historian, and author of popular works of non-fiction, he eventually earned a place at court as Charles V's official Spanish-language chronicler in 1547. Clearly, Mexía had a vested interest in promoting alternatives to Rodríguez de Montalvo's classist ideology.

Other writers who criticize *Amadís* had much in common with Mexía. Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, for example, condemns the novel in multiple passages of *Las quinquagenas de la nobleza de España,* a genealogical and moral treatise on the Spanish nobility composed around 1555. In markedly moralistic terms, he admonishes his readers not to waste time on novels like *Amadís:*

> tales son ... [los libros] que andan por este mundo, de Amadis, e otros tractados vanos e fabulosos, llenos de mentiras, e fundados en amores, e luxuria, e fanforrerias, en que vno mata e vençe muchos; e se cuentan tantos e tan grandes disparates ... en que

haze desbanar e cogitar a los neçios ... e incurrir en pecados que no cometieran si esas liçiones no oyeran. (Fernández de Oviedo, *Quinquagenas* 233)

What is more, he argues that such works harm both the body and spirit: "[con la mala lectura] se sigue muchos daños y peligros al cuerpo y al anima: al cuerpo, dexando de hacer otros *exerçiçios*, que, para la vida, onra e hazienda mas conuernian; al anima quitandole el tiempo en que las buenas obras se han de hazer, mediante las quales ella se avenzindase a açcercase mas çerca de Dios" (Fernández de Oviedo, *Quinquagenas* 481; emphasis added). Here again, the notion of exercise provides a rationale for distinguishing between licit and illicit leisure activities. Good reading material, on the other hand, affords "laudable" exercise for body and soul: "Como uno de los *loables exerciçicios* del ombre es la leçion de que se pueda sacar provecho para el anima, *e ocupaçion honesta para el cuerpo*, esta leçion se debe escoger e buscar que sea sancta" (Fernández de Oviedo, *Quinquagenas 535*; emphasis added). Like Mexía, Fernández de Oviedo conceives of exercise in broad terms that encompass intellectual and physical pursuits. At no point, however, does he recommend hunting. Rather, he assumes a decidedly disapproving tone whenever he mentions the sport. Glossing a verse on the death of Adonis, for example, he writes: "Adonis dizen que fue ... dado a la caça, o monteria, al qual mató vn puerco montes ... Asi que tales muertes han los que se ocupan mas de lo que conuiene en tales exerçicios, e se les va el tiempo en flores, e asi como flor de poco prouecho se les passa la vida mal empleada" (Fernández de Oviedo, *Quinquagenas* 421). Although medieval authors also warn against hunting to excess, Fernández de Oviedo *only* discusses hunting in a negative light. In another passage, he warns against testing one's strength against wild animals, citing a fatal incident in which King Favila of Asturias attempted to single-handedly kill a bear: "e estando el oso çercado de canes que le ladrauan e arrimado a vnu peña, el Rey le hirió de lança e el oso se fue para el e lo saco de la silla e le mato antes que pudiese ser socorrido, e asi murio como atreuido e desatinado" (Fernández de Oviedo, *Quinquagenas* 74). The examples of Adonis and King Favila connect hunting with folly and death, suggesting that for Fernández de Oviedo the sport lacked redeeming value. Moreover, he appears to have had scant interest in hunting, for in his *Historia general y natural de las Indias*, he admits to knowing little of falconry. In a passage describing New World birds of prey, he writes: "no tengo en memoria de que ralea porque *sé poco de çetreria*" (Fernández de Oviedo, *Historia general* 442).

Other passages of *Las quinquagenas* suggest that these perspectives form part of a more general ideological outlook. Born into an Asturian family

with tenuous claims to *hidalguía*,[17] Fernández de Oviedo ascended the ranks of various courts and the colonial bureaucracy, becoming official chronicler of the Indies in 1532.[18] It was in this capacity that he composed his encyclopedic account of the New World, *Historia general y natural de las Indias*, for which he is best known.[19] He therefore had an interest in promoting an ideology amenable to merit-based social advancement. In *Las quinquagenas*, for example, he writes that being born an aristocrat is a matter of luck, whereas true nobility lies in one's virtue: "La verdadera nobleza y entera de la virtud nasce" (Fernández de Oviedo, *Quinquagenas* 10). Elsewhere in the same volume, he enjoins nobles not to look down upon their inferiors, as all are equal before God (Fernández de Oviedo, *Quinquagenas* 70-71). He incorporates similar sentiments into his *Historia* wherein he writes that men of low station have risen to greatness just as the highborn have sullied their nobility through despicable actions. Judgements of another's character, he concludes, should depend on their actions, not their birth (Fernández de Oviedo, *Historia general* 178). Still more implicit critiques of the nobility pervade *Las quinquagenas* in the form of frequent reprimands of those who squander their leisure in sloth. In a passage that seems pointedly directed towards nobles with disposable time and income, he writes: "El Abbad Moyses dixo, que por quatro cosas se engendra el viçio, y estas son: por mucho comer e beuer, e por mucho dormir, e por estar oçioso, e por yr ricamente vestido" (Fernández de Oviedo, *Quinquagenas* 48). His repeated condemnations of *Amadís* as a pernicious influence on Spanish society can therefore be read as part of a broader ideological orientation articulated as a theological-moral discourse of leisure.[20]

Finally, of the three authors examined here, Francisco de Monzón presents the most explicit connection between a classist ideological perspective and scorn for *Amadís*. In the introduction to his 1544 *Libro primero del espejo del príncipe cristiano*, he condemns chivalric literature on theological-moral grounds, recommending that the authors of *Amadís* and similar works be punished for publishing "poisonous" reading material:

> Los autores q[ue] no sin gra[n]de cargo d[e] sus co[n]scie[n]cias escriuiero[n] a Amadis y a ... otros libros de semejantes cauallerais vanas y fingidas: deuria[n] ser castigados co[n] publica pena: porq[ue] no so[n] sino vnas dulces po[n]ço[ñ]as aq[ue]llas sobras q[ue] embauca[n] a los q[ue] lee[n] en ellas/segun en otra parte mas largame[n]te demuestro. (Monzón fol. V v)

Here he likely alludes to his *Espejo de la princesa cristiana*, which he composed around 1543 but never published (Gagliardi 109).[21] In that text, too, he calls for punitive measures against the authors of chivalric novels

because they raise doubts about the veracity of historical works by conflating fiction with truth (Gagliardi 122). Moreover, he argues, these novels corrupt readers' minds *and* bodies:

> Es tan perjudicial la lección de estos libros que hazen gastar y emplear en ella muchas buenas horas con la dulçedumbre de sus elegantes palabras ... y el fruto d'este tiempo perdido se saca es inclinar la voluntad a vicios y deleites carnales, porque en semejantes obras viciosas, la imaginación haze caso, que con solo un pensamiento carnal rescibe alteración verdaderamente *todo el cuerpo*. (Monzón qtd. in Gagliardi 122; emphasis added)

While these warnings apply to female readers, his reference in the prologue to the *Espejo del príncipe cristiano* indicates that he believes the same to hold true for male readers, too.

A priest, Monzón's moralistic tone is consistent with that of other clergymen of the era who expressed criticism of chivalric novels (Glaser 410). Nevertheless, his biography suggests that his ambitions exceeded his station. While his father possessed a *mayorazgo*, Monzón, a *segundón*, had no claim to it, as such estates were inherited according to primogeniture (Hernández Franco and Molina Puche 8-9). For younger siblings excluded from inheritance, the Church afforded an alternative means to acquire privilege and influence (Hernández Franco and Molina Puche 9). This could explain Monzón's decision to take holy orders and pursue a career as an academic theologian, teaching first at Alcalá, and later at Lisbon and Coimbra (Truman 125; n. 4). In Portugal, he eventually became the personal chaplain of King João III, to whom he dedicated the *Espejo del príncipe cristiano*. Like other critics of *Amadís*, then, Monzón earned a place at court through meritocratic advancement, an ethos reflected in many passages of his *Espejo del príncipe cristiano* concerning hard work, scholarship, and social mobility. In Chapter I, for example, he enumerates examples from Classical histories and the Bible of men born into low stations who became great leaders, such as Moses, who was born a slave yet became a great prince (Monzón, *Espejo* fol. VIII v). Chapter XI features a lengthy explanation of why young princes should accustom themselves to hard work and avoid sloth, reminiscent of Mexía's encomium of work. He also dedicates five chapters (XVIII through XXII) to the importance of a prince's studies. Moreover, in Chapter XXII he argues that public funds should be used to subsidize students who are too poor to pay for university. Likewise, his notions regarding a prince's preparations for combat (Chapter XXVIII) also take into account the public good, as he calls for the establishment of schools that teach fighting skills to any able-bodied man, regardless of rank.

Although Monzón prescribes a detailed physical fitness regimen, he leaves out hunting, a remarkable omission considering the volume concerns a prince's upbringing. Instead, he devotes two chapters (XLII-XLIII) to the question of whether or not hunting is a licit pastime. His conclusion that moderate hunting is permissible comes only at the end of a long invective against hunting and hunters. In chapter XLII ("Adonde se proponen los inconve[n]ientes y los prouechos que trae la caça y se concluye ser exercicio licito y prouechoso") he begins by writing that the ancients associated hunting with bad character: "[los antiguos] aborrescieron en tanto estremo la caça: que trayan por comu[n] sentencia/que no se dabua[n] a caçar sino hombres malos" (Monzón, *Espejo* fol. CXXVIII v). This was because the inventors of the sport, he continues, were despicable, wicked men ("hombres infames y malos"), such as Cain and Nimrod.[22] Further on, he describes the cruelty of hunters' merciless pursuit of defenseless animals: "La crueldad de los caçadores da testimonio d[e] ser reprouada la caça: porque sin ninguna piedad persiguen a las simples bestias" (Monzón, *Espejo* fol. CXXIX r). Moreover, he characterizes hunting as a vice that poses risks for society. Hunting, for example, led to the Athenians' downfall: "[Los atenienses] nunca fuero[n] señoreados de nadie/hasta que se dieron a caçar: porque andando descuydados por los campos oluidaron el exercicio de las armas" (Monzón, *Espejo* fol. CXXIX r). Though Monzón's characterization of hunting as a kind of "carelessness" ("descuydo") already represents a striking departure from the medieval didactic tradition, his tone grows increasingly condemnatory as he casts the creation of private hunting grounds as a classist symptom of "malice": "Pero *como ha crecido la malicia de los hombres crescio el uso de caçar*: y vino en tanto estremo/q[ue] se guardan los sotos y montes q[ue] no cacen en ellos sino sus señores: poniendo grauissimas penas a los estraños que para su mantenimie[n]to entran en los cotos a caçar" (fol. CXXIX v; emphasis added). He goes on to equate hunters with criminals, writing:

> Y cierto oy en dia se haze[n] mill robos y vexaciones a los labradores y pastores/porque dexen la caça para los hombres nobles q[ue] vean q[ue] los cieruos y puercos monteses les vienen a comer los panes no osan los tristes de bedarselo por las graues penas q[ue] tienen puestas: y q[ue] executa[n] en los q[ue] matan alguno dellos: y si algo les q[ue]da q[ue] no destroce[n] las fieras/ los mismos caçadores se los destruyen: que por seguir a vn cieruo o a vna liebre/van corriendo por las tierras sembrabas/derrocandolos panes sin ninguna conciencia: valiendo mas lo que destruyen en un dia lo que caçan en un año. (Monzón, *Espejo* fol. CXXIX v)

This description of hunters and hunting stands in contrast to the medieval didactic tradition represented in the pages of *Amadís*. While Monzón admits that hunting has afforded humankind some benefits, his associations of the sport with immorality, malice, and criminality smack of the same moralistic tone with which he condemns chivalric novels.[23] What is more, he singles out the nobility for abusive behaviors that visit loss and suffering upon the lower estates, who have no means of redress. Monzón's characterization of hunting, then, suggests that the sport was a flashpoint of class conflict. As such, its representation in *Amadís* could hail nobles on the one hand but, on the other, potentially alienate readers who lacked the wealth and status of the hunters depicted.

Considered in this light, the stakes of early modern Spanish debates about leisure and literature may be understood to have extended well beyond concern for the wellbeing of individual readers: chivalric novels were one of early modern Spain's most popular literary genres, after all, and appealed to a gamut of readers from diverse backgrounds, from Emperor Charles V and nobles of all ranks, to readers of lesser stature like merchants, artisans, and day laborers (Aguilar Perdomo 49). *Amadís de Gaula* thus proved an effective vehicle for Rodríguez de Montalvo's ideology because its appeal transcended class identity even as it reaffirmed the traditional class distinctions that the hunting motif connoted. According to the Althusserian logic of literary interpellation described by Macherey and Balibar, then, Spanish humanists' efforts to change readerly tastes could have potentially resulted in the sort of material social effects they advocated in their other writings. Hence, rather than acknowledge the didactic value of the hunting motif in *Amadís de Gaula*, critics like Mexía, Fernández de Oviedo, and Monzón decried the novel's unrealistic battle scenes and depictions of sorcery as violations of a theological-moral discourse of leisure – a discourse that, in turn, served to promote their own meritocratic ideology.

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NOTES

1 I wish to thank Dr. Steven Wagschal for his invaluable input on early drafts of this article.

2 Such privileges included exemption from taxation, immunity from certain forms of punishment, the right to duel, and appointments to high offices (Dominguez Ortíz 38-39; Elliot 119).

3 Regarding readership, see Chevalier, Nalle, and Aguilar Perdomo.

4 Regarding the Crown's relations with the high nobility, see Elliot (87-92), Espinosa (87-88), Gerbet (317-18), and Maravall (*Estado* 6-8, 489); regarding the creation of a professional army, see Tena García (374) and Quatrefages (62).

5 The high nobility dominated the Consejo Real, monopolized administrative posts, and received royal allowances (Tena García 370). Regarding the social-economic conditions of the lower nobility, see Dominguez Ortíz (54-55), Elliot (118), and Gerbet (348). Regarding tensions between noble estates, see Dominguez Ortíz (53, 190), Maravall (*Estado* 20-21 and "La imagen" 281), and Martín Romero (232-33). Regarding the Crown's relations with the lower nobility, see Elliot (92), Espinosa (192), Maravall (*Estado* 6), and Smith (166).

6 See, for example, Carrera de la Red (66), Dominguez Ortíz (152), Elliot (120, 169), Espinosa (138), and Maravall (*Estado* 6).

7 Regarding the *armas y letras* debate, see Russel.

8 See, for example, Rogers, Seniff, Lida de Malkiel, and Gerli.

9 See Martín Romero (2017) regarding Montalvo's didactic use of "buena doctrina" and "exemplos."

10 See Carceller Cerviño and Marín Pina for additional ideological readings of *Amadís*.

11 The techniques were borrowed, perhaps, from authors of medieval hunting manuals, who often employed autobiographical discourse to establish their political and epistemological authority (Rodríguez Argente del Castillo 138).

12 For a more in-depth treatment of the relation between self-discipline and hunting, see Di Stefano.

13 Louis Althusser describes the ideological function of hailing devices in the formation of the subject in his 1971 essay, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards an Investigation)."

14 Regarding critics of chivalric novels, see, for example, Bataillon (614-15), Glaser (410), and Riquer (284).

15 Regarding the notion that the highborn were inherently virtuous, see Martín Romero (242-43) and Russel (52-53); regarding aristocrat's aversion to work, see Gil Fernández (295, 522), Kagan (77), and Maravall (*Estado* 380-86); regarding aristocrat's aversion to study, see Carrera de la Red (52), Di Camilo (137), and Russel (52-53).

16 See 2.36, 1.32, and 3.9 respectively.

17 Regarding Fernández de Oviedo's claims to nobility, see Bolaños (582-83).

18 For a summary of Fernández de Oviedo's biography, see Myers (12-25).

19 Fernández de Oviedo first published the *Historia* in 1535 but continued to amend and expand it for years thereafter (Myers 55).

20 Nevertheless, Fernández de Oviedo had published his own chivalric novel, *Don Claribalte*, in 1519. Scholars have attributed his subsequent renunciation of the genre to a conversion to Erasmian humanism in 1524 (Merrim 330).

21 As María Carmen Marín Pina observes, chivalric novels were also popular among noblewomen, whom moralists like Monzón feared would be corrupted by the novels' eroticism and sensuality (Marín Pina "El público" 359). Though an interpellative analysis of chivalric novels from a female perspective would require its own article-length treatment, Marín Pina notes that authors (both men *and* women) often wrote with a female readership in mind and included exemplary representations of women as, variously, virtuous beings worthy of reverence ("El público" 361), warriors ("El público" 367), and repositories of knowledge, such as the sorceress Urganda ("El público" 367).

22 Cain, a hunter, killed his brother Abel (*Genesis* 4.8). Nimrod, whom Monzón refers to as the first tyrant, is described as a mighty hunter in *Genesis* 10.9.

23 Monzón describes five benefits of hunting in Chapter XLII: it eliminates dangerous animals; hunters gather natural historical observations; hunting isolates princes from worldly temptations; forests afford space for peaceful contemplation; and hunting provides sustenance for the poor.

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