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Don Quijote: The Econopoetics of Cervantes's Epic Comedy

La crítica ha mostrado un creciente interés por el discurso económico en Don Quijote*, pero la mayoría de los estudios dedicados al tema se han centrado en la posible ideología política de Cervantes o en la manera en que su ficción pudiera reflejar cambios socioeconómicos históricos, como por ejemplo la transición del feudalismo tardío al primer capitalismo. Este artículo pretende integrar el discurso económico de la temprana modernidad con la poética cervantina. Sostiene que* Don Quijote *constituye un híbrido experimental de la épica y la comedia, los dos géneros establecidos que mejor daban cabida a la materia económica, entendida esta como el gobierno de la casa dentro de la organización tradicional de la familia. De esta manera, el presente estudio propone una nueva teoría de la econopoética que estructura la épica cómica de Cervantes.*

Palabras clave: *épica, comedia, economía, teoría literaria,* Don Quijote

Critics have shown increasing interest in the economic discourse in Don Quijote*, but most studies on the topic have focused on Cervantes's possible political ideology or the ways in which his fiction might reflect long-term socioeconomic changes, such as the transition from late feudalism to early capitalism. This article seeks to integrate the discourse of early modern economics with Cervantes's poetics. It argues that* Don Quijote *constitutes an experimental generic hybrid of the epic and comic theatre, the two established genres that best accommodated economic material, which was understood as the governing of the household within the traditional organization of the family. It thereby proposes a new theory of the econopoetics that structures Cervantes's epic comedy.*

Keywords: *epic, comedy, economics, literary theory,* Don Quijote

The purpose of this essay is to integrate the discourse of early modern economics into the poetics of the epic comedy in *Don Quijote* and thereby to advance a theory of what I will call the econopoetics that structures Cervantes's experimental generic hybrid. While a substantial and growing body of criticism reads Cervantes's literary production in light of its

prominent economic content, there have been few attempts to analyze Cervantes's incorporation of this material in terms of his engagement with contemporary literary theory.[1] Two exceptions are studies by David Quint and Mercedes Blanco. Quint relates *Don Quijote*'s generic form to its economic content, arguing that its literary originality arises from Cervantes's charting of the transition from late feudalism to early capitalism, in which newly fluid social relations based on monetary exchanges replaced the older hierarchies of inherited wealth and status. According to Quint, Cervantes intuited this process and reflected it in his fiction by moving away from traditionally rigid stylistic categories and towards the generic multiplicity of the modern novel. Blanco contends that both *Guzmán de Alfarache* and *Don Quijote* represent different, but equally radical, experiments in prose fiction and that Mateo Alemán and Cervantes, respectively, drew on the incipient discipline of political economy to provide an ethical legitimation for their aesthetic innovations. Blanco argues that Cervantes set about to write "una comedia de nuevo cuño, comedia en prosa, no poema dramático sino poema mixto que combina diegesis [*sic*] y mimesis, modo narrativo y modo dramático" (Blanco 133). In other words, "la ambición del autor del *Quijote* consiste en el propósito de inventar una perfecta epopeya cómica" (Blanco 133). Blanco points out, however, that this project is paradoxical because, while Cervantes presents the *Quijote* as consonant with classical ideals, there were no canonical precepts governing the composition of a long prose comedy (133). She proposes that, in order to justify such an experiment, Cervantes made it the expression of a socio-political reform project, specifically the structural economic conditions of inescapable idleness that propitiate Don Quijote's literary madness. In this way, according to Blanco, *Don Quijote* reveals an ideological affinity with Mateo Alemán's *Guzmán de Alfarache*, although the aesthetic approaches of Cervantes and Alemán are quite different (137-40).

My reading of *Don Quijote* diverges from Quint's because, as I shall argue below, Cervantes's poetics are more traditional than he allows and Cervantes's engagement with economics is less reflective of contemporary socio-historical phenomena than he assumes. I concur with Blanco's claim that *Don Quijote* is an "epopeya cómica," but I would reverse the terms of the causal relationship between the subject matter and its expression. Instead of using economics to validate his literary experimentation, as Blanco argues, I contend that Cervantes chose epic and comedy as the appropriate generic forms to accommodate the economic content in *Don Quijote* because it was a theme common to both genres within the neo-Aristotelian poetics of the period. Cervantes therefore legitimates his work of comic prose fiction through the use of established theoretical models that permit the incorporation of economic material. The impetus to do so, I

believe, was the example of *Guzmán de Alfarache*'s unorthodox treatment of socio-economic content and inclusion of explicitly political commentary. From this perspective, *Don Quijote* emerges as an *aesthetic* reaction against Alemán's ideologically-centred approach to fiction.[2]

This reading does not, however, imply that Alemán was indifferent to the literary precepts of his time. Michel Cavillac argues that Alemán took from Alonso López Pinciano's *Philosophía antigua poética* (1596) the foundational idea that fiction properly embraces all three branches of moral philosophy, ethics, economics, and politics, whose literary expression corresponds to the genres of satire, comedy, and epic and tragedy, respectively (184).[3] In *Guzmán de Alfarache*, Alemán synthesized all four categories in the form of a new prose epic, a socially engaged *poética historia* that combines the universal truth of fiction with the specific socio-political truth of history. It therefore constitutes "el *Manifiesto* de una literatura nueva y 'comprometida' que ambiciona 'descubrir como atalaya' … los males de 'la república' a través de la figura 'no grave' de 'un pícaro'" (Cavillac 186). Cavillac acknowledges that such a conception of *Guzmán de Alfarache* "entrañaba un serio problema de decoro," since the prevailing poetics deemed this kind of abject character an unsuitable spokesman for a politically serious message (189). He explains the incongruity by asserting that Guzmán is a morally neutral character (naturally good but corrupted by society), whose ambiguous ending as a galley slave responds to López Pinciano's description of the appropriate dénouements of epic and tragedy (190-91). Anthony Close contests Cavillac's adscription to Alemán of a neo-Aristotelian poetics, pointing out the absence of unity in *Guzmán de Alfarache* between the main plot and its digressions and insisting on the unreconciled breach of decorum in giving voice to moral sententiousness through a lowly *pícaro*. Alemán recognized the theoretical infraction, Close argues, but despite repeatedly raising the issue he was unable to resolve it, instead consistently abandoning such considerations to return to his purpose, the ethical instruction of the reader (288-90).

Alemán seeks to pre-empt objections to the sententious didacticism of "nuestro pícaro" in the prefatory "Declaración para el entendimiento deste libro" by asserting proleptically that "no es impropiedad ni fuera de propósito si en esta primera [parte] escribiere alguna dotrina; que antes parece muy llegado a razón darla un hombre de claro entendimiento, ayudado de letras y castigado del tiempo" (1: 113). Despite his audacity in basing the essential verisimilitude of his narrative on the paradoxical moral authority that arises from Guzmán's personal abasement, Alemán explicitly distinguishes between the tale's serious message and comic material in the prologue "al discreto lector" in Part One: "no te rías de la conseja y se te pase el consejo" (1: 111). He repeatedly presents Guzmán's risible mishaps as a

way to gild the bitter pill of moral instruction, despite the manifest inappropriateness of the messenger:

> Ya le oigo decir a quien está leyendo que me arronje a un rincón, porque le cansa oírme. Tiene mil razones. Que, como verdaderamente son verdades las que trato, no son para entretenimiento, sino para el sentimiento; no para chacota, sino para con mucho estudio ser miradas y muy remediadas. Mas, porque con la purga no hagas ascos y la dejes de tomar por el mal olor y sabor, echémosle un poco de oro, cubrámosla por encima con algo que bien parezca. (2: 377)

Alemán's treatment of the story's comic incidents as entertaining adornments that sweeten the unsavoury medicine of moral didacticism ("con oro fino se cubre la píldora y a veces le causará risa lo que le debiera hacer verter lágrimas"), suggests that Close is correct in his assessment that, for Alemán, "the 'merry tales' of which the story is composed, with their origins in the traditional *burlas* of farces and *fabliaux*, fall into an untheorizable limbo" (Alemán 2: 49; Close 299).

Nonetheless, Cavillac's framing of *Guzmán de Alfarache* as a new kind of prose epic is both faithful to the intellectual climate of the age and highly useful for understanding the work's generic hybridity. It explains why, in the *Philosophía antigua poética*, "encontraría Alemán la justificación de su apuesta por una épica en prosa abierta a la sátira y la tragicomedia" (Cavillac 196). The prose epic, as theorized especially but not exclusively by López Pinciano, indeed provides unparalleled scope for generic combinations and literary experimentation. I contend that Cervantes saw *Guzmán de Alfarache* as an aesthetic challenge and that, inspired by Alemán's example, he set out to write his own epic comedy in prose. In *Don Quijote*, however, Cervantes purposefully coordinates the serious and comic aspects of the narrative within a unified whole that more faithfully adheres to the traditional generic divisions that Alemán flouts. This is why he goes to such lengths to justify his project in the existing terms of the epic and dramatic comedy, drawing on the canonical poetics for legitimation and using the resulting hybrid as a theoretically unimpeachable framework for the inclusion of economic material, which he harmonizes appropriately in accordance with the rules of epic and comedy. In other words, Cervantes proposes to theorize what Alemán treats as untheorizable.

The early modern Spanish literary theorists espoused a hierarchical, though not inflexible, division of styles predicated on Aristotle's grouping of genres and characters. López Pinciano explains that "unos [poetas] imitan a mejores, como los ya dichos trágicos y épicos; otros, como los cómicos, a contrarios" (138). From these "oposiciones manifiestas," in which each kind of character is defined specifically in terms of its opposite, flow fundamental

differences of style, "porque es anejo el estilo a la persona que habla, que, si en la comedia es persona común y en la tragedia grave … claro está que el désta ha de ser estilo grave y el de aquélla, humilde" (López Pinciano 343, 387). Francisco Cascales expresses the same ideas in his *Tablas poéticas* (published in 1617 but written earlier, circa 1604):

> ser humilde la actión de la comedia dize que tenga personas humildes. De modo que las personas que constituyen la fábula cómica son gente popular, que a lo sumo sean soldados y mercaderes, y antes de aquí abaxo que de aquí arriba. Y siendo la actión de officiales, truhanes, moços, esclavos, rameras, alcahuetas, ciudadanos y soldados, será también el lenguage ordinario, conviniente en fin a esta gente. (204)

Cascales's inclusion of "mercaderes," "officiales," and "ciudadanos" among comic characters reflects a longstanding prejudice against mercantile and manual activity, codified by Cicero and summarized by López Pinciano: "Todas las cuales [artes] Cicerón, en sus *Officios*, reduce a cuatro con mucha prudencia y maestría; éstas son: letras, armas, agricultura y mercancía en grueso. Y no me oppongáis al panadero, al que ara y cava, que los tales pierden nobleza como los mercaderes que venden por menudo" (92). Nevertheless, both theorists concur that comedy fulfils the important role of teaching prudent household management, i.e. economics: "la comedia con sus risas [enseña] prudencia para se gobernar el hombre en su familia;" "La económica sirve al [poeta] cómico, que es la administración de la familia" (López Pinciano 381; Cascales 33). Andrés Rey de Artieda puts it even more succinctly: "Sepamos la Heconomica no es sciencia? / pues la Comedia que otra cosa enseña?" (89v).

While comedy teaches economics, epic, tragedy, and satire instruct readers in the other two branches of moral philosophy, politics and ethics, although López Pinciano is clear that there is substantial overlap between the didactic function of each (122). Comedy and satire were particularly related because of their common origin, the former being understood to have developed as a milder version of the latter (López Pinciano 499-500). Although in principle all literary genres may instruct in all areas of moral philosophy, López Pinciano illustrates the point with particular reference to the epic: "Y ¿no veis a Homero, cuán lleno está de todas las artes generalmente, y a Virgilio también, y, en suma, a todos los épicos (heroicos por otro nombre) junto con la política que es su principal intento?, ¿no enseñan la astrología, la medicina, la economía y otras muchas facultades?" (121). He declares that such thematic diversity "no es vicio, antes deleita por la variedad y tiene más doctrina por la misma razón" (122). Cascales concurs and notes that variety is especially characteristic of epic, the most capacious of genres (171). López Pinciano contends that this very inclusiveness makes

the epic slightly inferior to the other high genre, tragedy, because "la épica consiente marineros, y mercaderes, y otras personas que por humildes no las admite la trágica por forma ni manera alguna" (481). Nevertheless, such breadth allows epic to impart moral lessons, here conceptualized as allegories, better than any other genre: "en las épicas lo veréis … muy mejor y con mucho más primor y verisimilitud. Veréis en la *Ilíada* mucha philosophía natural y moral y, en la *Odysea* mucha moral y natural" (466).

Epic was the genre best suited to instruction in moral philosophy, and also the most entertaining because of its variety and ability to incorporate the whole spectrum of social types, down to and including the "marineros, y mercaderes" that were properly the province of comedy. This theoretical compatibility between the two genres extended to the fundamental symmetry between the discreet branches of moral philosophy, politics and economics, that were the focus of each. Conceptually, politics and economics were intimately related, since economics, in accordance with its etymology (from the Greek *oikos*, "home"), meant specifically domestic economy or household governance, and politics was conceived of as economics writ large. In *Microcosmia y govierno vniversal del hombre christiano* (1592), the Augustinian friar Marco Antonio de Camos draws this connection explicitly:

> segun Aristoteles, Xenophon, Platon, y otros, Economia es arte, o disciplina que enseña a los hõbres el modo de bien gouernar las cosas domesticas y familiares de su casa. Difiere lo q[ue] llamamos Polytica de la Economica, si seguimos a Platon, y a Socrates, en solo aquesto que la Polytica es gouierno de muchos: y la Economica de solos los de vna casa. En lo demas dizen estos philosophos que concuerdan, y son vna misma cosa. (56-57; pt. 2)

In his *Memorial de la política necesaria y útil restauración a la República de España y estados de ella y del desempeño universal de estos reinos* (1600), the lawyer in the Chancery Court of Valladolid and *arbitrista* (political economist or writer of socio-economic reform proposals) Martín González de Cellorigo makes the same point: "los jurisconsultos y los legisladores han reducido las leyes y ordenanzas de la política, de los Colegios y de las familias, a una misma ciencia, entendiéndola económica por el justo gobierno que el sabio político debe guardar entre los de su casa" (99).

Despite this conceptual concinnity, politics remained a public, and therefore exclusively male, arena. Economics, on the other hand, was divided into public and private spheres, the latter of which was an explicitly female domain. This separation reflected a natural division of labour within the household: "Porque el recelo y recato de la mujer vale mucho para guardar las cosas de casa: y la audacia y entendimiento del varon, para allegar las de fuera" (Camos 57; pt. 2). This ideology was fully developed and

widely disseminated in a series of treatises by sixteenth-century humanists, Erasmus and Juan Luis Vives prominent among them, that dealt with marriage and the role of each spouse within the household and that culminated in Fray Luis de León's *La perfecta casada* (1583).[4] Pedro de Luján, who presents the *Coloquios matrimoniales* (1550) as a compendium of the works that precede it, expresses the concept with anaphoric insistence:

> El oficio del varón es ganar la hacienda, y el dela mujer allegarla y guardarla. El oficio del marido es andar fuera a buscar la vida, y el dela mujer guardar la casa. El oficio del marido es buscar dineros, y el dela mujer no malgastarlos … Finalmente, digo que el oficio del marido es granjear la hacienda, y el de la mujer es gobernar la familia. (98-99)

"Gobernar la familia" included tasks such as cooking, sewing, managing the servants, and raising the children. The contemplation of the industrious housewife was a source of domestic joy for the husband: "¡Qué placer es verlas aliñar su casa, lavar su ropa, ahechar su trigo, poner su olla, y descombrar su casa, y después de comer, y su marido y familia proveída, tomar su almohadilla para labrar, o su rueca para hilar!" (Luján 37). The literary theorists of the period incorporated this ideology into their discussions of female characters: such were the qualities of a good wife, and the principle of decorum dictated that such should be their literary imitation: "Veis a do Virgilio … describe una madrugada de una mujer casada, honesta y casera, y por ella enseña una fina y perfecta economía"; "En una muger, es honra texer, labrar y hilar; y en un hombre, es cosa vituperable … La muger casada es buena siendo honesta, vergonçosa, callada y solícita en el regalo de su marido" (López Pinciano 122; Cascales 74-75).

In short, the natural division of labour within the domestic economy of the home was strictly segregated by gender and presupposed certain essentialist qualities inherent to women, who occupied a subordinate place within the family structure and who were expected to manage the household, preserve the husband's wealth, and contribute to it through the practice of traditional tasks such as sewing and weaving. The literary theorists of the time imported this ideology as the foundation for their definition of good female characters, and it constitutes the underlying conception of economics that it is the purpose of comedy to teach. Moreover, economics provides a direct connection between comedy and epic because the core didactic function of the latter is instruction in politics, which is understood in explicit symmetry to economics as the governing of the polity instead of the household. Beyond this thematic correspondence, however, there are other, aesthetic, points of contact between epic and comedy. Both

genres could be written in either verse or prose; both could be based on either history or fiction; both should have a main plot with carefully structured digressions; and both could mix noble and non-noble characters. López Pinciano and Cascales each identify the *Odyssey* as the ideal example of this kind of epic-comic hybrid.

Although López Pinciano defines the epic succinctly as "un montón de tragedias," he distinguishes it from tragedy because, while the characters in both genres are noble, "a las más de las épicas sucede el fin cómico y deleitoso" (135, 456). This framing moves epic in the direction of comedy:

> Y, ansí, la *Ulysea* de Homero, según doctrina de Aristóteles, no es pura tragedia, sino mezclada de la comedia, de manera que se puede decir tragicomedia: tragedia, por el príncipe, Ulyses, y dioses que en ella intervienen; y comedia, porque, allende que tiene personas humildes y bajas, el deleite que della procede no todo viene de la miseración y lástima. (457)

Don Gabriel, the diegetic recipient of the letters from the character El Pinciano that comprise *Philosophía antigua poética*, expresses his delight in this formulation: "¡Enhorabuena!, que yo, con vuestro parecer y el de Aristóteles, siento que se pueden mezclar estas especies sin hacer monstruos, sino criaturas muy bellas … [N]o acuso a los épicos que, por deleitar, mezclan algunas cosas cómicas y, por enseñar, algunas satýricas graves" (490-91).

Cascales, more classically rigorous, rejects "la monstruosa tragicomedia," but he, too, accepts a hybrid of epic and comedy modelled on the *Odyssey*: "¿Sabéis con qué passaría yo y lo llevaría no mal? Con que la principal actión sea de gente humilde, aunque los episodios fuessen de cavalleros illustres, como lo hizo Homero en su *Ulissea*, que la principal actión fue illustre y muchos episodios de gente humilde, hasta introduzir porcarizos" (213, 205-06). He develops this idea further than López Pinciano, describing the mixing of characters in comedy in theoretical terms generally applied to tragedy:

> Fábula morata es donde particularmente se pintan las costumbres, y la cómica más que ninguna lo es por lo poco que tiene de casos lastimosos. Patética es donde las passiones del ánimo se manifiestan más. Fábula de un modo es quando en la comedia no se halla persona que no sea cómica. Y doble es aquella en que juntamente con las personas humildes se introduzen heroicas y divinas. (Cascales 212-13)

Latent in Cascales's conception of a *comedia morata* is the Renaissance commonplace, derived from Cicero, that *comoedia est imitatio vitae, speculum consuetudinis, imago veritatis*, which Cascales elsewhere extends

to all poetry: "es imitación de la vida, espejo de las costumbres, imagen de la verdad" (37).

The conception of a comic *fábula doble* carries stylistic implications because it potentiates a long prose comedy that combines both narrative and dialogue. López Pinciano defines the mixing of the voices of the narrator (identified as the poet) and the characters as a fundamental quality of the epic that distinguishes it from tragedy. In other words, epic is narrative, while tragedy is dramatic (452). This distinction means that epic can absorb material strictly appropriate to theatre but unable to be staged with verisimilitude: "Los amores de Leandro y Hero más eran para trágica que para épica y, por la falta del poderse representar aquel acto trágico, se convirtió en épico" (450). López Pinciano does not address comedy in these remarks, but there is no reason in principle that the comic, otherwise defined with tragedy as a dramatic genre, could not likewise be treated narratively within an epic framework, particularly in light of the hybrid epic-comic form that both he and Cascales propose. Paul Michael Johnson has prudently cautioned against "ascribing inordinate weight to premodern dramatic theories of comedy in support of the premise that *Don Quijote* was read by early moderns as an exclusively funny book," but the justification for a critically judicious application of those theories to Cervantes's epic comedy is implicit in López Pinciano's and Cascales's own exposition of mixed genres (102).

This is even more true for the use of prose in place of verse. While López Pinciano and Cascales both profess the superiority of poetry, neither makes it essential to fiction (López Pinciano 284; Cascales 159-60). Cascales declares that only epic can use both forms, but he subsequently concedes that comedy could be written in prose (131, 205). López Pinciano, however, asserts that comedies "tan bien parecen en prosa como en metro"; they are more verisimilar, as well, and, on that basis, he approves of prose comedy (285). López Pinciano also rejects the traditional dictum that epic (and tragedy) were to be based on history, while comedy was not: "No hay diferencia alguna essencial, como algunos piensan, entre la narración común, fabulosa del todo, y entre la que está mezclada en historia" (460). He makes this comment in his discussion of epic, but he is explicit in extending it to comedy, as well (387). In *Cisne de Apolo* (1602), Luis Alfonso de Carballo also accepts comedies based on history, as well as purely fictional "historias" or epics (2: 16, 41).

To recapitulate, when Cervantes began to write *Don Quijote*, he had available to him a theoretical framework for a *comedia morata* or *fábula doble*: a hybrid prose genre not based on history that, following the canonical model of the *Odyssey*, could incorporate narrative and dialogue, noble and humble characters, epic structure, comic focus on everyday life

and customs, satire, all branches of knowledge, and both happy and tragic outcomes. Although he developed *Don Quijote* far beyond anything contemplated by López Pinciano or Cascales, this is the template for Cervantes's epic comedy. This is why, near the end of Part One, he includes an extended theoretical exposition on the prose epic and comic theatre, the two established genres that he refashions into a new narrative form. The canon from Toledo, in conversation with Don Quijote's village priest, simultaneously criticizes the absurdities of the chivalric romances and concedes the aesthetic potential of a well-written *libro de caballerías*:

> Porque la escritura desatada destos libros da lugar a que el autor pueda mostrarse épico, lírico, trágico, cómico, con todas aquellas partes que encierran en sí las dulcísimas y agradables ciencias de la poesía y de la oratoria: que la épica tan bien puede escrebirse en prosa como en verso. (602; pt. 1, ch. 47)

As the canon's remarks indicate and López Pinciano and Cascales confirm, the *libros de caballerías*, which critical custom today typically designates as chivalric romances, were considered to be epics in the period, essentially indistinguishable from the *Iliad*, the *Aeneid*, and a variety of other texts in both prose and verse that today are generically segmented.[5] The "ciencias de la poesía" contain all categories of knowledge, as López Pinciano repeatedly declares and Don Quijote himself attests (López Pinciano 121, 122, 500; Cervantes, *Don Quijote* 825-28; pt. 2, ch. 16). The "ciencias … de la oratoria" refer to rhetoric, which, as we have noted, was an expression of social class and therefore, in the canon's compendious formulation, includes all levels of society. Moreover, the new prose epic can incorporate all genres, including comedy.[6] Not merely the conventional expression of a stifling neo-Aristotelianism that *Don Quijote* renders obsolete, the canon's conception of an all-encompassing prose epic validates the length, capaciousness, and generic indeterminacy of Cervantes's experimental epic comedy in theoretically impeccable terms.[7]

E. C. Riley observes that

> [i]t is unlikely that [Cervantes] consciously thought of *Don Quixote* as a prose epic in the way in which he thought of the *Persiles*, although this does not mean that it does not owe anything to epic. Apart from the parodies and echoes, there is a fundamental connexion with epic through the novel of chivalry. But it is mock-epic at most. It lacks the elevated tone of the real thing, and its high moral seriousness is not heroic but of the sort that belongs, rather, to great comedy. (55)

Mercedes Alcalá Galán emphasizes the overlap between *Don Quijote* and epic that arises through the intermediary of the chivalric romances (317).

Applying a Bahktinian approach, she argues that Cervantes reconfigured the epic chronotope by situating it in the same temporal and valuative plane as the contemporary narrative voice, thereby enabling an irreverent perspective, laughter, and mimetic realism (322-23). This conclusion is similar to Riley's argument that "*Don Quixote* is an ironic vision in which the old world-view is compounded with one that is essentially modern, with the ideally exalted and the basely material coexisting as distinct but inseparable parts of human experience" (145). While I concur that *Don Quijote* is neither a traditional epic nor a modern one on the order of *Persiles y Sigismunda*, "libro que se atreve a competir con Heliodoro," I do not believe that Cervantes set out to undermine epic mimesis (Cervantes, *Novelas ejemplares* 1: 53). Rather, he combined it with comedy, which gives *Don Quijote* not only its subject matter, but also the immediacy and engagement with everyday *costumbres* that modern readers typically associate with realism. Riley, however, reminds us that the "realism of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century novel is essentially a product of its own age … Generally speaking, down to some time in the eighteenth century, it is more accurate to regard what is usually called 'realism' as writing in the low style, which was customarily associated with the comic" (144). The canon's model of a modern prose epic cannot account for *Don Quijote* because it is only one half of Cervantes's *fábula doble*. The other, also inadequate to explain *Don Quijote*'s complexity but nonetheless essential to its basic design, is provided by the priest's comments on the theatrical *comedia nueva*. Presupposing the traditional focus and functions of comedy, the curate complains that, "habiendo de ser la comedia, según le parece a Tulio, espejo de la vida humana, ejemplo de las costumbres y imagen de la verdad, las que ahora se representan son espejos de disparates, ejemplos de necedades e imágenes de lascivia" (Cervantes, *Don Quijote* 605; pt. 1, ch. 48). He then proceeds to an enumeration of the multiple infractions against decorum and verisimilitude in which Spanish playwrights habitually traffic, which he blames on greedy theatre company managers who kowtow to the unrefined tastes of their mass audience.

Quint remarks that "[w]hat the Curate criticizes as a lack of social decorum in the theatre is virtually the condition of Cervantes's novel," and he draws a direct parallel between the blurring of generic boundaries and the incipient erasure of social ones: "In this world on the move, classes mingle and distinctions between high and low – the stuff of decorum – begin to blur" (80, 81). Questions related to decorum of character were much discussed in the period. López Pinciano, Carballo, and Cascales all address the issue, challenge its premises, and agree that some infringement of the categories is acceptable in pursuit of *admiratio*, the wonder, astonishment, and delight that was the poet's highest aesthetic aspiration (López Pinciano

210-11; Carballo 2: 117-24; Cascales 75-81). For López Pinciano, epic and comedy are the two genres that most accommodate deviation from the literary standard for this purpose (211, 360). Cervantes indisputably violates the strictest tenants of decorum to produce *admiración*, but his practice is not so radical as Quint suggests, as his treatment of economics in *Don Quijote* illustrates. Particularly in *Don Quijote*, Part One, and pointedly unlike *Guzmán de Alfarache*, Cervantes separates the comic and serious treatment of economics, using Don Quijote and Sancho as the primary vectors for the former and expressing the theme through the parody of the chivalric romances. This is not to say that the topic lacks socio-political salience in those instances. As noted above, comedy was held to have evolved from satire and the two genres were therefore closely associated, but in the comic episodes in *Don Quijote* the satire remains oblique and the socio-political commentary must be largely inferred. The interpolated stories in Part One, in contrast, approach economics more directly and with more serious implications for the characters, in accordance with the higher social class of the protagonists. In this regard, *Don Quijote*, Part One follows Cascales's above-cited proposal for an epic comedy modelled on the *Odyssey*, in which "la principal actión sea de gente humilde, aunque los episodios fuessen de cavalleros illustres" (205). Moreover, in accordance with epic theory, the economic episodes in the first *Quijote* largely involve women and questions of household governance or domestic economy. These well-defined boundaries become somewhat more porous in *Don Quijote*, Part Two, but Part One reflects the established categories with surprising fidelity.

The conjunction between comedy, economics, and the parody of the books of knight errantry is established at the very beginning of the narrative:

> Es, pues, de saber que este sobredicho hidalgo, 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 y aun la administración de su hacienda; y llegó a tanto su curiosidad y desatino en esto, que vendió muchas hanegas de tierra de sembradura para comprar libros de caballerías en que leer. (39-40; pt. 1, ch. 1)

Given to an almost perpetual idleness, the hidalgo who will become Don Quijote develops an obsession for chivalric romance that leads him to the near abandonment of the administration of his estate, and even to sell off much of it in order to finance his addiction. As noted above, Blanco reads Don Quijote as a victim of structural socio-economic forces that foreclose the opportunity for fruitful activity, but the prevailing attitude among Spanish commentators in the period was that unproductivity was a choice

made by their proverbially lazy countrymen, whose destructive *ociosidad* was the cause of the moral and fiscal ruin of the kingdom. Structural factors were in play, but the blame was squarely on the people: "De esto son culpables gravemente los súbditos" (González de Cellorigo 12).[8] *Don Quijote* reflects this opprobrious ideology in the unnamed hidalgo's "curiosidad y desatino," which it associates explicitly with the books of knight errantry that drive him to madness.

This connection continues at the inn during Don Quijote's first sally, when the innkeeper enquires if the knight has any money. "[R]espondió don Quijote que no traía blanca, porque él nunca había leído en las historias de los caballeros andantes que ninguno los hubiese traído" (60; pt. 1, ch. 3). Convinced by the innkeeper that knights errant did carry money, clean shirts, and medicine in discreet saddlebags, he puts the advice into practice before venturing out on his next sally: "Dio luego don Quijote orden en buscar dineros, y, vendiendo una cosa y empeñando otra y malbaratándolas todas, llegó una razonable cantidad … Proveyose de camisas y de las demás cosas que él pudo, conforme al consejo que el ventero le había dado" (100-101; pt. 1, ch. 7). This pattern continues at the beginning of Part Two, when Don Quijote and Sancho set out again, the latter "proveídas las alforjas de cosas tocantes a la bucólica, y la bolsa, de dineros que le dio don Quijote para lo que se ofreciese" (747; pt. 2, ch. 7).

Quint reads the roadside inns in Part One as realistic spaces appropriate to the new genre of the novel, whose "informing principle" is money. He argues that Don Quijote's refusal to pay for lodgings after his first stay at Juan Palomeque's inn constitutes "the novel's principal emblem of how Don Quijote's re-creation of a chivalric past attempts to escape from a modern world of money" (65). The issue is not money per se, however, but its relationship to literary fiction. The passage from *Don Quijote* that Quint cites in support of his argument makes this clear:

> Yo no puedo contravenir a la orden de los caballeros andantes, de los cuales sé cierto, sin que hasta ahora haya leído cosa en contrario, que jamás pagaron posada ni otra cosa en venta donde estuviesen, porque se les debe de fuero y de derecho cualquier buen acogimiento que se les hiciere, en pago del insufrible trabajo que padecen buscando las aventuras de noche y de día. (Quoted in Quint 65; Cervantes, *Don Quijote* 199; pt. 1, ch. 17)

Don Quijote will not pay for lodgings for the same reason that he initially carries no money (nor clean shirts): because it is not documented in the chivalric romances that the fictional knights who are his role models did so. It is not a question of rejecting a modern world and a monetary economy outright. Don Quijote accepts that in the age of knights errant there existed

both money and inns in which the knights found shelter, but he does not accept that they were ever charged for their stays. Being a knight errant himself and living by the literary rules of a fictional past, he should not have to pay his own bill, either. His attitude and actions are therefore a psychologically coherent projection of his bookish delusion. This is confirmed by an episode near the end of his second stay in Juan Palomeque's inn, when Don Quijote resolves a dispute between the innkeeper and two guests who try to sneak out without paying their bill, "por persuasión y buenas razones" instead of threats of violence (567; pt. 1, ch. 44). Don Quijote refuses to intervene with force of arms because, as he explains to the innkeeper's exasperated wife and Maritornes, "no me es lícito poner mano a la espada contra gente escuderil" (566; pt. 1, ch. 44). This justification relates directly to the earlier beating that Don Quijote and Sancho take at the hands of the *yangüeses*, for which the knight assumes responsibility: "yo me tengo la culpa de todo, que no había de poner mano a la espada contra hombres que no fuesen armados caballeros como yo" (176; pt. 1, ch. 15). In both instances, Don Quijote's conduct is the product of the consistent application of his chivalric mania. He admonishes the two lodgers to pay their bill for precisely the reason that he will not pay his own. Money, in these episodes, is not emblematic of an epochal change in real socio-economic structures, but an expression of Don Quijote's comic psychology and the literary parody in which it originates.

Quint proposes that *Don Quijote* "charts the emergence of modern times" by demonstrating "how the atavistic values of an earlier social order come into conflict with and gradually yield to a modern social ethos" (21). The underlying assumption, widely shared among literary critics, is that Don Quijote's exposition of the rules of knight errantry reflects the reality of that "earlier social order." Carroll Johnson renders this presumption explicit by insisting on Don Quijote's "encyclopedic knowledge of the old [order]" (31). He takes the character's pronouncements on the service of squires *a merced* as an accurate description of pre-capitalist labour relations and declares the relationship between Don Quijote and Sancho "the essence of feudalism" (23). This premise underpins Johnson's analysis of the early capitalist ethos contained in Sancho's requests to be paid a fixed salary. In fact, the chivalric romances are not reflective of the historical phenomenon of feudalism, and to take Don Quijote's pronouncements on the matter as the basis for an historiographical analysis is to commit the same category error as the madman. A vassal's service to his lord in medieval Castile could be remunerated through a variety of means, including monetarily, as is set out in the *Siete Partidas*, the thirteenth-century law code compiled under the auspices of Alfonso X: "E vassallos son aquellos, que reciben honrra, o bien fecho delos señores, assi como caualleria, o tierra, o dineros, por

servicio señalado que les ayan de fazer" (2: 61v; Cuarta Partida, title 25, law 1). Moreover, after one year, a vassal could leave the service of his lord for non-payment of salary: "Ca si nõ ouiesse sabor de viuir cõ el porq[ue] l[e] pagasse mal la soldada, o por otra razõ qualquer, bie[n] se puede partir del" (2: 63r; Cuarta Partida, title 25, law 7).[9] As with Don Quijote's attitude towards money, Sancho's salary does not relate primarily to the historical transition from late feudalism to early capitalism, but to the comedy that arises directly from the parody of literary chivalry.

This is evident in Don Quijote's reaction to Sancho's first request for a salary, early in Part Two:

> Mira, Sancho, yo bien te señalaría salario, si hubiera hallado en alguna de las historias de los caballeros andantes ejemplo que me descubriese y mostrase por algún pequeño resquicio qué es lo que solían ganar cada mes o cada año; pero yo he leído todas o las más de sus historias y no me acuerdo haber leído que ningún caballero andante haya señalado conocido salario a su escudero. Sólo sé que todos servían a merced. (743; pt. 2, ch. 7)[10]

Don Quijote's attitude does not reveal the socio-economic structures and power dynamics of historical feudalism, but insanity born of literary fantasy. Sancho is emboldened to seek a salary "porque tenía creído que su señor no se iría sin él por todos los haberes del mundo" (744; pt. 2, ch. 7). At just this moment, however, Sansón Carrasco arrives and (with a burlesque intention that Don Quijote perceives but uses to his own advantage) offers to serve as the knight's squire, which prompts Sancho to accept the initial terms of service (i.e., *a merced*). We could read this episode as Cervantes's serious contemplation of wage negotiation in a competitive labour market under conditions of monopsony, but it is unclear what understanding we would gain by doing so. The emphasis here is on the finely drawn psychologies of the characters, who are fundamentally comic but no less complex and fully human for that. The text itself provides an audacious meta-commentary on its own astonishing originality in this regard:

> Admirado quedó el bachiller de oír el término y modo de hablar de Sancho Panza, que, puesto que había leído la primera historia de su señor, nunca creyó que era tan gracioso como allí le pintan … y dijo entre sí que tales dos locos como amo y mozo no se habrían visto en el mundo. (746; pt. 2, ch. 7)

Acting as a proxy for the reader, Sansón Carrasco expresses surprised delight (*admiratio*) at the unprecedented comic originality of the two characters, whose relationship is structured by a fundamentally economic issue.

This is true from the inception of their collaboration. Despite his talk of being Sancho's "natural señor," Don Quijote has no pre-existing seignorial claim on the peasant farmer's labour, which is why he effectively hires him to be his squire, with payment deferred until such time as he has won an "ínsula" to bestow on his servant in the manner of a literary knight errant (131; pt. 1, ch. 11, 99-100; pt. 1, ch. 7). José Manuel Martín Morán remarks that, his crazy ideology and the ostensibly feudal relationship that structures his arrangement with Sancho notwithstanding, Don Quijote retains "cierto apego a los valores del mundo capitalista" and reveals "la mentalidad burguesa naciente" (325). I agree, but for the reasons adduced above I would substitute the feudalism/capitalism framing for a focus on literary imperatives. The sustained nexus between comedy and economics arises from the essential characteristics of Don Quijote and Sancho. The former is an example of poor husbandry whose attitude towards money is explicitly determined by his literary insanity, while the latter's role as squire is an extension of his identity as *paterfamilias* and an expression of the traditional function of comedy to impart economic lessons. There are references to this fundamental relationship throughout *Don Quijote*. In Part One, after Sancho has been *manteado* for not paying his bill at Juan Palomeque's inn, he advises his master that "lo que sería mejor y más acertado, según mi poco entendimiento, fuera el volvernos a nuestro lugar, ahora que es tiempo de la siega y de entender en la hacienda, dejándonos de andar de ceca en meca y de zoca en colodra" (204; pt. 1, ch. 18). In Part Two, after he is beaten during the episode of the braying aldermen, he complains bitterly that "harto mejor haría yo … en volverme a mi casa y a mi mujer y a mis hijos, y sustentarla y criarlos con lo que Dios fue servido de darme, y no andarme tras vuesa merced" (944; pt. 2, ch. 28). By the same token, both the duke's chaplain and the Castilian living in Barcelona berate Don Quijote for his lunacy and admonish him to return home and attend to his household (970; pt. 2, ch. 31, 1241, pt. 2, ch. 62).

Sancho's relationship with his wife (initially called Juana Panza, but subsequently and definitively named Teresa) is also structured along traditional economic lines. When he returns to the village at the end of Part One, "lo primero que [Juana] le preguntó fue que si venía bueno el asno. Sancho respondió que venía mejor que su amo" (645; pt. 1, ch. 52). The health of the donkey (an important economic resource) is a source of relief to the housewife, who continues with a practical line of enquiry: "qué bien habéis sacado de vuestras escuderías. ¿Qué saboyana me traéis a mí? ¿Qué zapaticos a vuestros hijos?" (645, pt. 1, ch. 52). Like Sancho, Juana understands her role in the domestic economy in accordance with the natural division of labour outlined above: he goes out to earn the money, and she stays home to administer the household.

This relationship is more fully developed in Part Two, in which Sancho's economic interests remain tied directly to the comic discourse of parodic knight errantry. He announces to Teresa his intention to return to the road with Don Quijote "porque lo quiere así mi necesidad, junto con la esperanza que me alegra de pensar si podré hallar otros cien escudos como los ya gastados"; he would prefer to remain at home, he claims, "si Dios quisiera darme de comer a pie enjuto y en mi casa, sin traerme por vericuetos y encrucijadas" (723-24; pt. 2, ch. 5).[11] Sancho envisages marrying their daughter, Mari Sancha, to an aristocrat, but Teresa's view is more practical: "Traed vos dineros, Sancho, y el casarla dejadlo a mi cargo" (726; pt. 2, ch. 5). As to their son, Sanchico, Sancho plans to instruct him in the office of governor: "En teniendo gobierno … enviaré por él por la posta y te enviaré dineros, que no me faltarán, pues nunca falta quien se los preste a los gobernadores cuando no los tienen; y vístele de modo que disimule lo que es y parezca lo que ha de ser"; again, Teresa is more focused on the practicalities of home life: "Enviad vos dinero … que yo os lo vistiré como un palmito" (731; pt. 2, ch. 5).[12] There is a satirical barb in Sancho's observation that governors never want for those who will lend them money, which is subsequently sharpened when it is revealed that the duke who gives him the governorship of his *ínsula* Barataria is in debt to one of his own vassals, a rich farmer whose wealth subsidizes the duke's lavish but wasteful lifestyle. This is part of a pattern in which Sancho, with naïve candor, unwittingly gives voice to contemporary economic and political criticisms, such as his desire to sell as slaves the black vassals that he hopes to receive from Princess Micomicona's African lands, invest the proceeds, and thereafter live idly from the rents (372-73; pt. 1, ch. 29).[13]

Micomicona is the parodic damsel-in-distress, identity adopted by Dorotea to help lure Don Quijote out of Sierra Morena. In her role as wandering princess, her offer of marriage to Don Quijote, who will then become king of her territory and reward Sancho with an *ínsula*, is concomitant with the discourse of economics in conjunction with literary parody that extends throughout both parts of *Don Quijote*. This is evident in the comic descriptions of Dulcinea that act as bathetic counterpoints to Don Quijote's idealized vision of his lady, such as the marginal note appended to the manuscript found in the market that reads "Esta Dulcinea del Toboso, tantas veces en esta historia referida, dicen que tuvo la mejor mano para salar puercos que otra mujer de toda la Mancha" (118; pt. 1, ch. 9). Likewise, Sancho's description of Aldonza Lorenzo, Dulcinea's peasant counterpart, who is physically masculine, assertive, promiscuous ("cortesana"), and can be found "rastrillando lino o trillando en las eras;" or his invented story of delivering Don Quijote's letter to Dulcinea, whom he found "en la fuga del meneo de una buena parte de trigo que tenía en la criba" (310-11; pt. 1, ch. 25,

392; pt. 1, ch. 31). Recall the *Coloquios matrimoniales* cited above, in which Luján describes a housewife threshing wheat as a joy for her husband to behold. Rosilie Hernández-Pecoraro has rightly observed that the description of Aldonza Lorenzo as a productive farm girl reflects the discourse of socio-agrarian reform promulgated by many *arbitristas*, but she argues that this characterization contrasts with Don Quijote's role as an idle *hidalgo* and that a "materialist analysis … asks that one move past the abstract debate over the theoretical and generic boundaries between history and fiction that are explored in the *Quixote*" (170). In fact, questions of theoretical and generic boundaries, not between history and fiction but between categories of fiction, are central to the expression of economic ("materialist") content and the appropriate articulation of the theme, and Aldonza Lorenzo and Don Quijote occupy the same plane of comic literary representation. In both cases, the comedy derives from the contrast between the (insane) literary fantasy and the prosaic reality of traditional domestic economy.

This connection continues in the Altisidora episodes in Part Two, an elaborately staged farce at Don Quijote's expense in which one of the duchess's servants acts the part of a maiden smitten with the knight, whom she pretends to seduce. Impervious to her wooing, Don Quijote advises the duchess to find productive labour for Altisidora: "Señora mía, sepa vuestra señoría que todo el mal desta doncella nace de ociosidad, cuyo remedio es la ocupación honesta y continua," and in keeping with the traditional tasks of women in the home, he proposes that Altisidora sew "randas" (lace), "que ocupada en menear los palillos no se menearán en su imaginación la imagen o imágenes de lo que bien quiere" (1308; pt. 2, ch. 70). Sancho seconds this opinion, "pues no he visto en toda mi vida randera que por amor se haya muerto, que las doncellas ocupadas más ponen sus pensamientos en acabar sus tareas que en pensar en sus amores" (1308-09, pt. 2, ch. 70). Once again, the comedy includes a satirical sting, since the reader perceives, as Don Quijote and Sancho do not, that Altisidora's "ociosidad" is simply an extension of that of her mistress, who, like her husband the duke, is an unproductive, idle aristocrat. The scene, however, remains resolutely comic and ends with a burst of burlesque sexuality in Sancho's ribald declaration that he would not have been so standoffish as his master: "¡A fee que si las hubieras conmigo, que otro gallo te cantara!" (1309; pt. 2, ch. 70).

Princess Micomicona forms part of this comic narrative thread. As the jilted daughter of rich farmers, however, Dorotea is a crucial figure in the serious expression of the same economic themes of idleness and productivity. Her dual identity therefore condenses into one character the double presentation of economics in *Don Quijote*, as both comedy (with satirical implications) and politics, as befits Cervantes's experimental prose

synthesis of epic and comedy. Dorotea is the apple of her parents' eye and the manager of their estate:

> del mismo modo que yo era señora de sus ánimos, ansí lo era de su hacienda: por mí se recibían y despedían los criados; la razón y cuenta de lo que se sembraba y cogía pasaba por mi mano, los molinos de aceite, los lagares del vino, el número del ganado mayor y menor, el de las colmenas; finalmente, de todo aquello que un tan rico labrador como mi padre puede tener y tiene, tenía yo la cuenta y era la mayordoma y señora. (352; pt. 1, ch. 28)

What is more, the times when Dorotea was not actively running the farm, "los entretenía en ejercicios que son a las doncellas tan lícitos como necesarios, como son los que ofrece la aguja y la almohadilla, y la rueca muchas veces," (352; pt. 1, ch. 28). Christine Garst-Santos argues that Dorotea constructs her own identity as an ideal wife in the discursive mold of Fray Luis's *perfecta casada* as well as a productive subject in the terms of contemporary *arbitrismo* or political economy (66-72). Indeed, Dorotea carefully shapes her narrative to explicitly contrast her own fruitful industriousness with the unproductive idleness of her aristocratic seducer, Don Fernando. Though she lived in "un encerramiento tal, que al de un monesterio pudiera compararse" and only left her home to attend Mass, "los [ojos] del amor, o los de la ociosidad, por mejor decir, a quien los de lince no pueden igualarse, me vieron, puestos en la solicitud de don Fernando" (353; pt. 1, ch. 28). Dorotea's story is the morally and politically serious iteration of the theme of domestic economy that finds comic expression in episodes involving Don Quijote and Sancho (she is the perfect double of Aldonza Lorenzo along this dimension), and Fernando is the precursor of the economically wasteful and socially destabilizing duke and duchess. The divergent treatment of the economic topic is a function of the different social classes of the characters and reflects Cervantes's adherence to literary orthodoxy in this regard. Dorotea is an intermediate figure, since her parents are not noble but so rich that they are practically "hidalgos," or even "caballeros" (352; pt. 1, ch. 28).[14] This makes her the ideal protagonist of an interpolated episode in Cervantes's experimental epic comedy: as (technically) a commoner, she functions as a comic character, while, as a de facto noble who efficiently manages a large agricultural estate, she models "una perfecta economía," in López Pinciano's characterization of Virgil's solicitous housewife, but in a way that is socially specific and politically relevant to early modern Spain.[15]

Dorotea shares these traits with another striking female character in Part One, who is also young, beautiful, intelligent, and the only daughter of rich-but-common farmers. Marcela, however, is an orphan who has

inherited her father's wealth, and the use to which she puts that resource establishes a sharp distinction with Dorotea. Marcela is also unlike her own mother, who was "hacendosa y amiga de los pobres," both a *perfecta casada* and a perfect subject in Counterreformation Spain (143; pt. 1, ch.12).[16] Unfortunately, she dies in childbirth and her brokenhearted husband follows soon after, "dejando a su hija Marcela, muchacha y rica, en poder de un tío suyo sacerdote" (144; pt. 1, ch.12). As Marcela grows and word of her wealth and beauty spreads, she is courted by rich and noble suitors from the whole area. She rejects them all until, one day, "dio en irse al campo con las demás zagalas del lugar, y dio en guardar su mesmo ganado" (145; pt. 1, ch. 12). Marcela's inherited wealth potentiates her decision to abandon society and "vivir en perpetua soledad," unmarried and childless. As she explains to the men gathered for Grisóstomo's funeral: "tengo riquezas propias, y no codicio las ajenas; tengo libre condición, y no gusto de sujetarme" (169; pt. 1, ch.14).

Unlike Dorotea, and indeed her own mother, Marcela will not administer her father's estate productively. Instead, she will use it to subsidize a life of literary fantasy as a character from a pastoral novel. She will not be a *perfecta casada*, indeed, she will not be a *casada* at all, and both her wealth and her womb will remain barren. Of course, the whole point of Marcela's spirited defense of her own independence is that she has no obligation to conform to the expectations of others, but while that is a deeply resonant message for modern readers, it was an open question, to say the least, in early-seventeenth-century Spain. González de Cellorigo warns that, following the outbreak of plague that ravaged Castile in 1596, "viene el [mal] que da ocasión a que el vulgo entienda que el Reino con muerte de tantos quedara rico respecto de las herencias, siendo ello contra toda buena política, pues como tenemos dicho, la mayor riqueza del Reino es la mucha gente" (41). This will lead to a general rise in prices, "[l]o uno, por la falta de gente que hay que acuda a la labor y a todo género de manufactura necesaria al Reino, y lo otro, porque los que hubieren heredado desampararán el trabajo y seguirán la ociosidad, como se ve ya en lo que descubre la presente ocasión" (42). Many other observers in the period also decry the accumulation of excess wealth, which the people invest in order to live off the rents, making them both economically and biologically unproductive. Pedro de Valencia (1608) insists that it is particularly important that "las mugeres estén occupadas i se egerciten i trabagen," otherwise "no pueden parir varones fuertes, i ellas, en criándose siempre a la sombra en ocio i regalo perpetuo, no pueden ser grandes ni fuertes, ni aun estar bien sanas, ni ser fecundas, sino tener mil opilaciones i humores viciosos, i hazerse estériles" (170-71). The focus on the reform of the female population is common. Cristóbal Pérez de Herrera dedicates the "Discurso cuarto" of his

Amparo de pobres (1598) to the remedy of "las mujeres vagabundas y delincuentes destos reinos" (117). These "perdidas" should be forcibly confined to workhouses (*albergues*), where they will be taught to be "virtuosas y hacendosas, ganando la comida y lo necesario con sus manos por fuerza, con tareas señaladas, en diferentes oficios y ministerios" (119). The newly upright and productive women will enrich the republic "con diferentes labores ordinarias de sus manos; las cuales serán de moderados precios de aquí adelante, pues serán muchas, porque al presente van subiendo a excesivos" (128). There will be public health benefits as well, "escusándose por este camino muchas enfermedades del mal francés, y otras, con que contaminan e inficionan los reinos, por la desordenada vida que traen" (128). From this perspective, Marcela's decision to use her inherited wealth to live a life of literary pastoral and perpetual virginity instead of becoming an economically and biologically *perfecta casada* is not a laudable act of self-actualization but a social catastrophe.[17]

Commenting on the "Elogio" that Alonso de Barros contributed to *Guzmán de Alfarache*, Part One, Cavillac observes that "Barros veía en el *Guzmán* un genial arbitrio novelizado, acorde con los proyectos reformistas del doctor [Pérez de] Herrera, interpretación ésta refrendada por Alemán en su *Carta* de 1597 al Protomédico" (183n8). While the contemporary discourse of political economy is clearly discernable as an intertext in the stories of both Marcela and Dorotea, in (purposeful) contrast to the treatment of similar material in *Guzmán de Alfarache*, it is impossible to draw simple conclusions or trite political messages from them because Cervantes has upended the reformers' fundamental premises. Marcela, for example, "hace más daño en esta tierra que si por ella entrara la pestilencia," but she is not one of Pérez de Herrera's *perdidas*, and the disease that she spreads is not *el mal francés* but a plague of virginity (145; pt. 1, ch. 12). Dorotea, on the other hand, casts herself as the perfect, productive housewife, but she is also legally unmarried (although the rhetorical thrust of her argument is that she *is* Don Fernando's legitimate wife), and she wanders the Sierra Morena dressed as a man because of her sexual dishonour. If, as Garst-Santos tells us, Fray Luis dedicates few comments to chastity "because without it a woman cannot be a wife or, indeed, even a woman," then whom are we to take as a model of female conduct (67)? Marcela, who is inviolately chaste but also an idle, unproductive, and sterile consumer of her father's wealth, or Dorotea, who is an industrious and competent manager of her own father's estate but who also expresses uncommonly frank sexual desire and is, by the standards of the age, morally compromised? There is no straightforward answer, just as there are no obvious political "consejos" to extract from the entertaining "consejas."

Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's argument that power relations within literature are sociologically structured, Martín Morán argues that "los personajes del *Quijote* interactúan a partir de los mismos presupuestos que las personas de la realidad del momento" (341). Those interactions, however, are heavily mediated by assumptions about the essential qualities of different characters and the genres that they inhabit, particularly in an early modern context of intense theoretical debate about the nature of fiction and its relationship to reality. *Guzmán de Alfarache* was undeniably a challenge to literary convention in this regard, which explains why Barros lauds Alemán "por su admirable disposición y observancia en lo verosímil," and why Alemán prefaced his work with a "Declaración para el entendimiento deste libro" that, as Cavillac explains, "es una reivindicación de la verosimilitud que sustenta el discurso de Guzmán en pro del 'bien común'" (Alemán 1: 116, 113; Cavillac 188). In the prologue to *Don Quijote*, Part One, Cervantes famously satirizes authors who observe "un decoro tan ingenioso, que en un renglón han pintado un enamorado destraído y en otro hacen un sermoncico cristiano," which he dismisses as "un género de mezcla de quien no se ha de vestir ningún cristiano entendimiento" (12, 18; pt. 1, Prologue). This is surely a swipe at Mateo Alemán, but it does not constitute a rejection of serious subject matter, even in a work of entertainment. Rather, it is a refusal to subordinate literary principles to non-literary purposes, "en pro del 'bien común.'" In place of an (unquestionably great) novelized *arbitrio* that applies comic gilding to the unsavory pill of ethical instruction, Cervantes gives us an unprecedented prose narrative that is, by turns, "épico, lírico, trágico, cómico," and which harmonizes socio-economic and political content through a synthesis of the two canonical genres best able to accommodate such material, epic and comedy. *Don Quijote* couples comedy's humble characters, focus on everyday life, presentation of domestic economy, and capacity for satire with epic's thematic breadth, structure, and expression of politics as large-scale economics. It thus integrates economics not merely as thematic content but as an indissociable formal element of its generic experimentation, the econopoetics of Cervantes's epic comedy.

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NOTES

1 Significant contributions to the study of economics, broadly considered, in Cervantes's works include: Fernández Flores-Funes; Fernández-Morera; Graf; Hernández-Pecoraro; Hutchinson; Carroll Johnson; Larroque; Layna Ranz;

Osterc; Redondo; Salazar Rincón; ter Horst; Vilar. See also the collected essays in Galindo Martín.

2 The influence of *Guzmán de Alfarache* on Cervantes has been widely acknowledged. See Márquez Villanueva and Micó.

3 See López Pinciano (123).

4 For a summary of this tradition and a discussion of *La perfecta casada* in its ideological context, see Rivera. On the economic role of the wife within marriage, see particularly chapter 3 (64-84). For a broader survey of the treatment of marriage in sixteenth-century humanistic dialogues, see Ferreras (369-435).

5 López Pinciano defines the "romances de los italianos" as epics, along with other works in verse and prose: "los *Amores de Theágenes y Cariclea* de Heliodoro y los de *Leucipo y Clitofonte* de Achile Estacio son tan épica como la *Ilíada* y la *Eneida*; y todos estos libros de caballerías, cual los cuatro dichos poemas, no tienen, digo, diferencia alguna essencial que los distinga ni tampoco essencialmente se diferencia uno de otro por las condiciones individuales" (460-61). Cascales extends the epic designation to eclogues, satires, Sannazaro's *Arcadia*, Boccaccio's *Ameto*, Montemayor's *La Diana*, and Montalvo's *Pastor de Fílida* (131-32). Michael Armstrong-Roche points out that the distinction between romance and novel, which today characterizes much Cervantes scholarship, is a product of Romanticism and was not operative in Cervantes's lifetime. He therefore proposes to read *Persiles y Sigismunda* in light of the epic (7-8). See also Lee's study of the evolution of the term romance in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

6 The canon's inclusion of lyric but not satire is also significant, inasmuch as Cervantes repeatedly expressed, but did not consistently observe, an aversion to caustic satire.

7 For a different perspective on the canon's poetics and Cervantes's praxis, see Forcione's highly influential analysis (91-166).

8 See also: Ortiz (22); Pérez de Herrera (110); Gutiérrez de los Ríos (276); Valencia (148-49); Moncada (108).

9 A *soldada* was payment made in addition to ordinary provisions: "el partido que se da al criado o criada, fuera de su ración ordinaria; y díjose de sueldo" (Covarrubias 900).

10 Don Quijote repeats this argument to a battered Sancho following the adventure of the braying aldermen (946; pt. 2, ch. 28).

11 This theme receives a non-comic treatment in Part two, when the exiled Morisco Ricote offers to help alleviate Sancho's penury in return for assistance in retrieving the treasure that he buried prior to the expulsion: "yo te daré docientos escudos, con que podrás remediar tus necesidades, que ya sabes que sé yo que las tienes muchas" (1173; pt. 2, ch. 54). Without abandoning the

comedy-economy paradigm, in Part Two Cervantes expands upon it by expressing serious economic and political content through his comic characters.

12 The language that Sancho and Teresa use in this exchange is so incongruous that the anonymous translator takes the whole chapter to be apocryphal. Their speech indeed flouts the dictates of literary decorum for humorous effect, but the violation is confined to the level of expression, not the motivations and psychologies of the characters, who behave in accordance with their social class and whose actions express the fundamental connection between comedy and (domestic) economy.

13 See Redondo (77-79).

14 Don Quijote, of course, is an *hidalgo*, but his insanity renders him an aberrant, and therefore by definition, comic character (López Pinciano 211).

15 Roberto González Echevarría reads the interpolated stories in *Don Quijote*, Part One in light of both the literary discourse of love and the characters' historical, and particularly socio-juridical, context (114-56). He comments on the legal framework governing marriage and property but, like many Golden Age *comedias*, his analysis ends at the point of matrimony (or its lack, in the case of Marcela and Grisóstomo). I would insist on both spouses' continuing economic responsibilities and the thematic importance of this discourse within the narrative.

16 Marcela's mother is an exemplary wife according to a highly developed strain of thought in Renaissance Humanism, which promoted "[s]abiduría y caridad cristiana" as the highest expressions of conjugal love (Ferreras 398).

17 This ideologically pro-social approach to marriage had a longer provenance in Spain than turn-of-the-century *arbitrismo*. It featured prominently in humanistic dialogues written throughout the sixteenth century (Ferreras 371-79).

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