

EXECUTING THE WILL: THE END OF THE ROAD IN *DON QUIXOTE*

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One might speak—a bit ironically, perhaps—of the lingering death of Alonso Quixano the Good. In chapter 74 of Part II of *Don Quixote*, the country gentleman turned knight errant suffers from melancholy and depression brought about by defeat at the hands of the Knight of the White Moon, sleeps for some six hours, and awakens disillusioned. His sanity restored, he rejects the literary romances that had led him to cast himself in the chivalric mode. Near death, he claims to see the light of reason. The spiritual path replaces the earthly course, the knightly quest, and he returns to God's text. The good man is articulate, even eloquent, on the subject of his conversion. He makes a clean break from the traps (and from the trappings) of fiction, while those who are near him and those who narrate his story continue to call him Don Quixote, to cling in some way to his fictional identity. Certain readers, like the friends and narrative personae, seem inclined to probe the validity, or at least the impact, of the transformation, while others do not. In *A Study of "Don Quixote,"* for example, Daniel Eisenberg warns us that Cervantes does distinguish between what should be read ironically and what should be taken at face value, and he takes the final redemption quite seriously, as part of a message about salvation.¹ Ruth El Saffar similarly finds in Cervantes's works an increased emphasis on the eternal, on man's confrontation with his own destiny, a struggle which reflects the author's development as well as that of his characters.² Not surprisingly, Cervantes shows an interest in endings, and Alonso Quixano's movement from madness to perception need not be seen as detached from the artist's sense of mortality, nor, indeed, from his intimations of immortality. The report of the death in the last chapter of the novel is not grossly exaggerated, but one could argue that the solemnity of the occasion may be marred by the statement in the prologue to Part II

which attributes the protagonist's demise to an intrusion into the creative space of the author, in the form of an unauthorized sequel.³ What could be termed the deep structure of Alonso Quixano's death is founded on two premises, one theological (or philosophical) and the other literary. Cervantes seems to set up a contest of sorts between text and pretext, between—if you will—literature and life. The key to the double-edged death of the protagonist may be found in the compatibility, rather than in the separation, of the prologue and the final chapter of Part II.

Given the complexity and the profundity of *Don Quixote*, it would seem reasonable to maintain that the description of the events surrounding the death of Alonso Quixano should be reduced neither to the author's desire to "kill off" Don Quixote (and thus to prevent the publication of other spurious continuations) nor to a fusion of creator and character. That is, Cervantes does not dispose arbitrarily of the knight errant, nor does he forsake the protagonist in order to inscribe himself, whether consciously or unconsciously, into the narrative situation. To what extent do personal factors and to what extent does the issue of verisimilitude affect the ending of *Don Quixote*? What are the rhetorical strategies of the concluding chapter, and who is the ultimate object of redemption? The answers lie, I would submit, in the space between the purely satiric and the purely symbolic.

In *The Chivalric World of Don Quixote*, Howard Mancing contrasts the passive nature of Alonso Quixano with the active pursuits of Don Quixote. He notes that the country gentleman makes only two decisions in the course of the narrative: he trades his empty existence for the life of a knight errant, and he rejects the chivalric career. Unlike his alter ego, Alonso Quixano is not an engaging figure. His only meaningful act—the only thing that differentiates him from other mediocre people—is to become Don Quixote.⁴ The trajectory of Don Quixote leads him from imitation of the deeds and the rhetoric of chivalry to self-knowledge. Part II of *Don Quixote* represents what Mancing calls the protracted final stage of an evolutionary process that substitutes the willful transformation of reality in Part I into a humanity born of—to use a term from the text—disenchantment. For readers to acknowledge Alonso Quixano, they must renounce Don Quixote, and vice versa. According to Mancing, the choice should not be difficult.

In the spirit of dialogue, I would like to point out what I would consider several potential problems in Mancing's exemplary reading of the *Quixote*. Without doubt, Don Quixote is superior to Alonso Quixano, yet, it may be argued, not so much by force of character but because the book is about him. That the madman is more entertaining than his sane counterpart is hardly surprising. Mancing's interest in defending the one

against the other makes the conclusions a bit contradictory. Mancing works to establish the positive influence of Don Quixote's actions. As master of Sancho Panza, to cite one case, he allows the squire to master self and circumstance; he educates him and enriches his life. Furthermore, "it is Don Quijote who exposes to the reader the envy, pettiness, and insensitivity of the priest and the barber, the frivolousness and vindictiveness of Sansón Carrasco, and the moral bankruptcy of the idle rich ducal pair" (214). If this is possibly an overstatement of Don Quixote's powers and of his role in the novel, the treatment of disillusionment suggests a wish to humanize the overtly literary character, in a sense to bring him back into the domain of Alonso Quixano. Mancing is one of a group of critics who view the ending of *Don Quixote* as consistent with the comprehensive structure of the narrative. As Don Quixote "shares increasingly in the everyday world of Sancho Panza and the rest of us" (215), he is, in essence, distancing himself from the chivalric world and priming himself for the conversion to his former identity. In these terms, death becomes the culmination of a progression toward self-knowledge and, at the same time, and somewhat ironically, proof of the superiority of the deluded character over his unimaginative double. For Mancing, Alonso Quixano belongs to a society marked by repression and conformity, but how can the final knowledge of self be detached from a return to sanity, a return to so-called reality? Don Quixote "exposes" very little in Part II. He is, in fact, deposed of authority by readers of Part I, who gradually mold him into the passive Alonso Quixano. The dream is, in a manner of speaking, the end of the dream of Don Quixote. The live Don Quixote obviously is more intriguing than the moribund Alonso Quixano, but what are the broader implications of the death? How can one reconcile the particular features of the narrative with Cervantes's personal judgments and with his reaction to the Avellaneda sequel?

A critique based on the distinction between Don Quixote and Alonso Quixano must recognize a corresponding distinction between characterization per se and the role of character in the thematic or ideological coherence of the text. In this regard, it may not be as important to study the psyche of Don Quixote as to analyze the book itself as metaphor or microcosm. The novel not only reflects the world but grafts itself onto the world. The author in control of the death knoll for his protagonist will respond to the exigencies of plot and to stimuli within and beyond the text. The prologue to Part II promises the reader a Don Quixote "dead and buried," and one can seek a connection (a "fit") between the death foretold and the chronicle which follows and between grafts that bespeak changing circumstances for creator and creation.

In the introductory sections of his old-spelling control edition of *Don Quixote*, R. M. Flores discusses the intervention of printers and compositors in the published product, together with questions of authorial modifications and slips. Anything that would help to explain why Cervantes and his novel do what they do has obvious significance, but one may wish to limit the examination to evidence within the text. While the results of Flores's approach have a fundamental bearing on literary history, the problem of unity—and specifically, the relation of allusions to Don Quixote's death and the actual death of Alonso Quixano—is an internal matter, a component of what Roland Barthes terms the "writerly" text, which gives a type of co-authorial status to the reader.⁵ *Lazarillo de Tormes* is an ideal writerly text, a text that combines ambiguity with anonymity. The absence of an author makes this a narrative without an accompanying biography that could predetermine meaning, as the "New Christian" readings of *La Celestina* demonstrate.⁶ A spurious sequel to *Guzmán de Alfarache* brings Mateo Alemán into the authentic second part. By emplotting himself into the continuation, the author justifies the expanded context, legitimizes the fusion of fact and fiction, of life and art. Alemán incorporates the theft of his literary property into Guzmán's story, and the self-referential allegory exposes the pseudonymous author of the false second part. Whereas Fernando de Rojas may be "read into" the *Celestina* and Mateo Alemán "written into" *Guzmán de Alfarache*, Cervantes is neither absent nor quite so explicit a presence in *Don Quixote*. The captive's tale in Part I and the references to Avellaneda in the prologue to Part II, for example, give voice to his experience, but the situations are reinvented, reproduced in narrative form in the first instance and restated in rhetorical terms in the second. The prologuist is clearly not Cide Hamete Benengeli, and he is closer to the real Cervantes than is the prologuist of Part I. He is more distanced from the account of the Arab historian, and from the fictional premises of the text and the earlier prologue, but his commentary establishes the scope of the second part and orients the reader toward the demise of the protagonist. The question at this point is not so much whom to believe as how to believe them all.

L. A. Murillo focuses on the Quixano/Quixote dichotomy as a means by which Cervantes can have it both ways. The death has a sacrificial dimension: "The death of Alonso Quixano the Good in the time and place of story perpetuates the existence of Don Quixote the mythical entity and celebrity whose fame the narrator apostrophizes to the very close of his book. . . . Quixano dies in this exemplary manner so that the fame of Don Quixote can live on intact in its proper sphere, the world of fiction" (261). To support Murillo's argument, it can be noted that

Alonso Quixano is created, or at least named with certainty, only at the end of the narrative. The man who becomes Don Quixote is not as vital to the story as the man who gives up his life for his chivalric counterpart, his significant other. The last will and testament is, for Murillo, "a prosaic antithesis to the poetic illusion released and consumed in [Don] Quixote's chivalry" (260). The man of flesh and blood (and this is, of course, another story) dies to allow the fantasy to survive, but the separation seems difficult, if not impossible, to sustain. Friends and neighbors, public functionaries, and, it may be noted, the author of the chapter headings confuse the penitent madman with his former self. When all is said and done, the narrator informs us that "at last Don Quixote's end came" (Cervantes 1981, 829).⁷ On the one hand, what Murillo considers the expiatory act of Alonso Quixano—the very act of dying, a gesture aimed at discrediting the illusion born of madness—complements Don Quixote's rejection of his knightly quest for the mental and spiritual well-being of the country gentleman. On the other hand, neither measure is successful. The description of the death mixes the players and the metaphors. Who dies, and who lives on? Is the new chivalry abandoned or elevated? Is life superimposed on art, or vice versa? What are the markers that would indicate the author's stance regarding victory and defeat?

In an article entitled "The Three Deaths of Don Quixote: Comments in Favor of the Romantic Critical Approach," A. G. Lo Ré examines the final chapter of the *Quixote* in light of specific references to the death of the protagonist. The essay stresses the interplay of Don Quixote and Alonso Quixano, although the central thesis relates more to the idealism of the text than to differentiating aspects of character. In Lo Ré's opinion, while the contrite Alonso Quixano regains his sanity, he cannot undo the physical suffering caused by melancholy. He disavows himself from the foolish enterprise but cannot escape its consequences. At this stage, he is redeemed but not saved. The schizophrenic self leaves itself open to deconstruction, in the sense that Don Quixote remains an influence even after the recantation, to the extent that he is named as the deceased. Lo Ré's reading relies on Don Quixote's penultimate statement to Sancho Panza: "Forgive me, my friend, that I led you to seem as mad as myself, making you fall into the same error I myself fell into, that there were and still are knights-errant in the world" (828). In contrast to the critical consensus, Lo Ré does not view the statement as an expression of regret for errors committed but as an apology for the current state of chivalry. Don Quixote has misjudged the way in which the world would react to the reemergence of chivalry, not the value of chivalry per se, or the more abstract notion of social idealism. This

perspective links the reading to what has been called the "Romantic approach" to *Don Quixote*.⁸ For Lo Ré, the "three deaths" of Don Quixote contain clues to Cervantes's thoughts as he completed the novel.

The first of the deaths is found in the final chapter of Part I. Although the author of the history can locate no written documentation of a third sally, tradition has it that Don Quixote continued to pursue adventures. It is known that he was present at jousting tournaments in the city of Zaragoza, but little can be discovered regarding his death until an elderly physician produces a leaden box with parchment manuscripts in Gothic script and in Castilian verse, which tell of the knight's achievements and refer to his burial. The author appends the epitaphs and eulogies composed by the Academicians of Argamasilla. Lo Ré sees this allusion to the death of Don Quixote as consistent with the satirical tone of Part I: "Our would-be knight is roundly mocked even in death, which death is befitting the entertaining parody Cervantes intended to write," a parody with "no profound message or significance . . . at this point" (25). There is, in fact, no mention in chapter 52 of how Don Quixote dies. Oral tradition provides "no particulars," and the appendix includes "all that could be read and deciphered," that is, very little indeed, from the leaden box (402). The last section of the chapter notes that one of the academicians has labored over the worm-eaten parchment in the hope of publishing the events of the third sally, but the first chapter of Part II returns the narrative control to an ally of Cide Hamete Benengeli, now ready to inform us further. Not only is the conclusion to the first part open rather than closed, but Cervantes does not seem bound by its presuppositions. The academician is forgotten at once, the age of the manuscript is one of an infinite number of temporal discrepancies (or games) in the novel, and, with no analogue of the marketplace discovery in Part I, chapter 9, Cide Hamete becomes the historian of the third sally.

The second example is based on an allusion to Don Quixote's death in Part II, chapter 24. Commenting on the charge that the protagonist's account of events in the Cave of Montesinos may be apocryphal, Cide Hamete writes in a marginal note that "I see no way of accepting it as true, as it so much exceeds all reasonable bounds," even though "it is impossible for me to believe that Don Quixote could lie, since he is the most truthful gentleman and the noblest knight of his time." Relieving himself of the burden of proof, he leaves the judgment to the reader. He does mention that "some maintain, however, that at the time of his death [Don Quixote] retracted and said he had invented it all, thinking it a perfect match for the adventures he had read in his histories" (558). The digression leads Lo Ré to surmise that

Cervantes evidently had in mind here an ending in which Don Quixote would admit to play-acting in this and perhaps in other instances. . . . This death, one can suppose, would have been less vague and less comic than the first, but less dramatic than the last, and probably leading to a denouement still fairly appropriate to the parody being written.

Nonetheless, the constancy of Don Quixote seems little by little to threaten the burlesque spirit of this second death, and this posture "was beginning to leave no room for falsehood or pretense" (26). For *Lo Ré*, chapter 57, wherein Don Quixote and Sancho leave the palace of the duke and duchess, marks a turning point. At this crucial juncture, Cervantes moves from the second death to the third.

Don Quixote cannot die as a mere buffoon, nor can he simply admit to roleplaying. As he departs from the ducal residence, his discourse reflects an emerging doubt, a sense of sadness and foreboding, juxtaposed within the comedy but increasingly serious. The cause of this change is the publication of the Avellaneda sequel in the fall of 1614, assumed to be the time Cervantes was writing this portion of the text. Don Quixote's defeat at the hands of Sansón Carrasco ends with the pathetic cry, "Drive thy lance home, sir knight, and take my life, since thou hast taken away my honor" (787). *Lo Ré* notes a lack of humor in the scene, a sign that mockery has lost its conviction in the text. The false continuation forces Cervantes to look beyond the ironies of *imitatio* in order to justify his art, in order to demonstrate the superiority of his creation over the intrusive sequel. If *Don Quixote* is conceived as a mock-heroic version of chivalric romance, its own subjection to satiric re-creation causes Cervantes to replot the literary (or the metaliterary) scenario. In the final chapters, Don Quixote suffers humiliation after humiliation, with few comic twists, with a pervasive gloom, but without giving up his idealism. According to *Lo Ré*, "the continuing strength of his beliefs is such as to make one think that Cervantes himself, who has come to admire and defend his character—perhaps now even identify with him—is formulating an ending that now may be against his own inclinations" (33). The writer, "it would seem, has gradually come to accept the idea that his knight is suffering real grief, and now he is going to allow Don Quixote to die of that same grief" (34). Standing behind the disillusioned idealist is the author, no longer in a position to deride the principles that guide Don Quixote. Cervantes,

having wanted to believe—shown in the manner in which he has lovingly treated his character and brought about Don Quixote's

final, unfunny, gracious death—Death Three—[is] evidently, in the last pages, just as disillusioned, despite his forced attempt at humor, as ever any of the Romantics will have thought him to be. (36)

Lo Ré believes that Don Quixote epitomizes idealism, whether misplaced at times or not, and he relates the knight's struggles, and the indignities confronting him, to the hardships suffered by the author. Like Don Quixote, the disillusioned Cervantes may be ready to surrender and even to die. The "three deaths" of Don Quixote correspond to stages in the metamorphosis, or evolution, of Cervantes's conception of his work. Don Quixote as the object of satire develops character—develops into a character—and the writer appears willing to grant him a redemptive space, to allow him to admit his metatheatrical bent and thereby to reintegrate himself into society. Avellaneda's sequel disrupts this plan, and Cervantes now seems bent on his own redemption. The false continuation inspires Cervantes to reexamine his work and his life, to bring a sense of mortality into the text. There is a figurative (and prefigurative) death of comedy in *Don Quixote* following the publication of the spurious second part. The ending is a defense of Cervantes's novel and a defense of the idealistic spirit. Avellaneda's narrative promotes an ironic reversal, for Cervantes can no longer detach himself from his creation; his perspective shifts from parody to pride. A result of the new direction is a meditation on death, a drawing together of history and poetry.

The concept of the three deaths of the protagonist helps to explain the evolution of *Don Quixote*. Cervantes's decision to address the Avellaneda sequel ultimately determines a form of closure for the novel. Personal considerations and the author's identification with his character replace the ironic distance and the humor of satire. Cervantes becomes more introspective, more serious about his enterprise. The unity of the novel resides in parallel linear progressions, one involving Don Quixote and based on the quest theme and the other involving Cervantes and based on his personal response to his creation. I would like to outline an alternate reading which I believe complements Lo Ré's, but which, in the final analysis, juxtaposes the death of Quixote/Quixano not with Cervantes's preoccupation with his own destiny but with his obsession with books. In this approach, unity is a function of metaliterary aims, and an operating premise is that the "real" issues of the narrative are conveyed through—and are inseparable from—the internal rhetoric of the text. The death in chapter 74 is probably not the most important event of the novel, but, because of the critical role of irony throughout, the

ending certainly will have an impact on rereadings, on reconsideration of the message systems. *Don Quixote* is an experimental work; it brings theory into the practice of writing at the moment that praxis is being formulated and tested. For Cervantes, it would seem, incongruity is hardly a dirty word, and the configuration of the text is never stable. The presence of Don Quixote and the implied presence of Cervantes notwithstanding, the most stable feature of the novel may be its emphasis on the place of the book in the world and on the place of the world in the book. This will affect not only *who* but *what* dies in the concluding chapter.

The prologue and opening chapters of Part I of *Don Quixote* establish an angle of vision. The prologue is about the writing of prologues, about the confrontation of author and tradition. Cervantes is conscious of literary precedent—of the intertext—and of the need to create anew, to liberate himself from (to kill off) the works of the past. One may think of what Harold Bloom refers to as “the anxiety of influence,” which projects writers into battle with their poetic predecessors. The prologuist’s “friend” advises him to break with convention, to write his own rules. Chapter 1 extends this concept to the plot proper. The avid consumer of books reifies the lessons of the romances by living his readings, by replacing earlier heroes with a new type of chivalry. Like Cervantes, he rewrites the relation of theory to practice, of text to context. Mirroring theoretical debates between “ancients” and “moderns,” *Don Quixote* explores questions of genre. For both author and character, the result is imitation only to a point. The difference lies in the mediating space between repetition and invention. Cervantes comes face to face with the pastoral (Marcela and Grisóstomo), with the picaresque (Ginés de Pasamonte), and with the Italian *novella* (“The Story of Ill-advised Curiosity”), for example, just as Don Quixote sets himself against a specific chivalric model when he re-creates the penance of Amadís de Gaula. Generic mixing and literary mix-ups are testament to the tides of change. The disdainful shepherdess is more persuasive than her lover and her detractors, the rogue boasts that his life story is superior to *Lazarillo de Tormes*, the *novella* becomes an exemplary novel, and the penitential act transforms high emotion into low comedy. Grisóstomo’s suicide, Ginés’s disappearance and his reappearance as Maese Pedro, the death of the principals in the *novella*, and the unmotivated act of contrition are means by which Cervantes comes to bury, more than to praise, the intertext.

By integrating the challenges to the writer into the novel, Cervantes moves away from the illusion of reality which will mark later narrative. Matters of history and manners of truth, plays of perspective and fiction

within fiction, consequences of the printed word and memories of oral culture all contribute to the imaginative construct that is *Don Quixote*. Cervantes explores the peculiar rhetoric of writing and reading. It seems clear that he recognizes that the processes by which the work of art captures reality are intimately linked to reality, but that they are not one and the same. The image of the graft suggests that the literary object represents (re-presents) reality through its own recourses. Paradoxically, Cervantes approaches the real by way of distancing devices and by exaggerated attention to the mechanics of reading and writing. The role of humor in the text is fundamental, not because seventeenth-century readers focused on this element (as critics such as Peter Russell have pointed out), but because Cervantes has chosen to present the ideas of *Don Quixote*—profound ideas, to be sure—in a comic mode. The consistently comic tone of the discourse may increase response to the processes and messages of the text while reducing empathy for the characters as people. One may be sensitive to issues and yet laugh at ridiculous situations; the wounds in *Don Quixote* are, in a manner of speaking, paper cuts. The allusion to Don Quixote's death in the last chapter of Part I gives more weight to problems of transmission, of gathering historical data, than to the hero's fall. The temporal confusion and especially the burlesque poetry of the fictitious academicians place the death in the realm of parody. The ending leaves an opening for more adventures. The manuscript and the work of the academic community do not seem to be part of a master plan, given that Cervantes disregards them as he begins the continuation. Ironically, the journey to Zaragoza remains in the scheme, which will be modified at a later date.

A dominant motif of Part II of *Don Quixote* is the reception of Part I. Early in the first part, Don Quixote contemplates the history which will record his exploits. When the book becomes a reality, he concerns himself with the accuracy of the portrayal, with his public self. Through his corps of narrators, Cervantes writes the critique of Part I into Part II. In dialogue with Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, Sansón Carrasco describes varied forms of response. Notably, the second part is inhabited by readers of the 1605 *Quixote*, including the Duke and Duchess, who orchestrate the major portion of the episodes. The active reading of others controls the events; they direct the movement of Part II as Don Quixote does in the first part. Another reality that bears on the structure of Part II is the publication of the Avellaneda continuation. Cervantes cancels the trip to Zaragoza, a feature of the spurious sequel, in favor of a stay in Barcelona, where the knight and his squire visit a printing establishment where proofs of the unauthorized history are being corrected. In chapter 59, two readers of the false second part verify that

the real Don Quixote and Sancho have little in common with their fictional counterparts, and in chapter 72, a character from the Avellaneda version puts into writing, before a magistrate, a renunciation of the "other" Don Quixote. This may be Cervantes's way of killing off the competition, if less elaborately and less personally than Mateo Alemán had done in *Guzmán de Alfarache*. Because the false second part is, in essence, an elaborate response to Part I, its publication is a most fortuitous event for the second part of *Don Quixote*, if not for Cervantes.

Inwardly-directed reader response and criticism are logical developments of the literary self-consciousness of *Don Quixote*, I. Not only do many of the characters imitate the reading habits of the protagonist, but they demonstrate how differently people read and how reading influences actions and perspective. The existence of Part I in the real world heightens the complexity (and the irony) of the play of truth and fiction, madness and method. The passive country gentleman becomes a (hyper)active knight as a result of his reading. When others read about him, they too begin to view the world as stage. While he remains an actor, they usurp his power as playwright and director. This change, present early in Part II and intensified in the episodes in the ducal palace, anticipates the return to the village and to the passive identity. One could define the movement in the novel as from the literary to the metaliterary to the metacritical. Part I is about the origins of the text and about the intricacies of the creative process. Part II is about the rewards and about the underside of literary success. And both parts, needless to say, are about life, presented through the recourses of art. The Avellaneda sequel is, in turn, the perfect bridge between life and art.

In the transitional chapter 58, which takes place on the road to Zaragoza, Don Quixote rejoices in his freedom (from Altisidora and in general), examines (without incident) a set of saints' images carried by villagers, comes upon a group of neo-Arcadians (including a self-created shepherdess who has read the first part of his history), and is trampled by a herd of bulls. One can only conjecture what kind of adventures would have presented themselves at the jousts, had he traveled to Zaragoza. The presence of Avellaneda's book at the inn in the following chapter leads Don Quixote to vow not to set foot in that city but to proceed to Barcelona, where, as Don Jerónimo informs him, similar tournaments are held. For whatever reason, such parallel adventures never materialize. Don Quixote meets the legendary robber Roque Guinart, who takes him seriously and who arranges a gracious reception for him in Barcelona. Don Antonio Moreno, his host, takes him less seriously but does treat him with courtesy. The Avellaneda sequel raises its ugly specter at the printer's—and Don Quixote may once again

condemn it as an abomination—but only briefly, for knight and squire become involved in the rescue of the future son-in-law of their Morisco acquaintance, Ricote. Don Quixote's defeat at the hands of the Knight of the White Moon occurs as the release of Don Gregorio is being played out. Don Quixote and Sancho enter into a rather sophisticated dialogue on the theme of resignation. The knight is saddened by his fate, but the Duke and Duchess invade his contemplative space, and their messengers whisk him away to the palace. The vanquished knight has lost much of his zeal,⁹ but not his chivalric spirit. He is still committed to serving Dulcinea and to renouncing the Avellaneda sequel (which shows up in the devils' tennis game in Altisidora's dream), to be dealt with in a definitive manner in the Don Alvaro Tarfe episode of chapter 72.

The narrator stresses the significance of the role of the magistrate and the notary in the dismissal of the false second part. The two functionaries give legal authority to Don Alvaro's statement, put in writing "with all the formalities required in such cases, at which Don Quixote and Sancho were highly pleased, as if such a document were of great importance to them, and as if their words and deeds did not plainly show the difference between the two Don Quixotes and the two Sanchos" (820). On his last night on the road, Don Quixote concerns himself with Sancho's penance on behalf of the enchanted Dulcinea. Before his arrival at the village, he approaches every woman he encounters to see if she might be his lady. Despite adversity, he sustains the heroic mold. He believes that he has vanquished his literary enemy and disenchanted Dulcinea, which means that the genuine second part of his history will record a pair of major triumphs to compete with the defeat in armed combat. In chapter 73, he informs the priest and Sansón Carrasco that he will spend the time away from chivalry in the pastoral mode. The implication is that after the year as a shepherd he will resume his knightly enterprise.

As the last chapter begins, Don Quixote's future remains open. His imagination and his penchant for living by literary models are strong. He has saved Dulcinea and his reputation as a public figure. His defeat is vexing but temporary, his projected victories postponed but still within the realm of possibility. The pastoral alternative will be an interlude, nothing more. Don Quixote has not given up on chivalry. In the final section of chapter 73, he says that he feels ill and asks to be put to bed, and this is the passage leading to death. In chapter 74, the narrator attributes Don Quixote's fever to either melancholy or divine will. His friends blame the illness on grief over the defeat and on lack of proof regarding Dulcinea's disenchantment. They attempt to animate him, but sadness weighs too heavily on his soul. Then come the dream and the

change of heart. Alonso Quixano calls for a notary to record the confession of his chivalric madness, receives the sacraments, and dies. The last words of Cide Hamete do not focus on Alonso Quixano's Christian death or on his rejection of the romances of chivalry. In the famous apostrophe to his pen, the Arab historian aligns himself with his subject—"For me alone was Don Quixote born, and I for him; it was his to act, mine to write"—against Avellaneda, "that pretended Tordesillesque writer who has ventured or would venture with his great, coarse, ill-trimmed ostrich quill to write the achievements of my valiant knight" (830). Cide Hamete expresses his hope that Avellaneda and other "malignant historians" will let Don Quixote rest in peace and then returns to the original pretext of the narrative, that its sole purpose has been to dissuade the public from reading books of chivalry.

It could be argued that the final chapter of *Don Quixote* is the source of mixed messages, which would by no means make it inconsistent with the rest of the text. The prologuist of Part I labors over the conventions of narrative fiction, not of history, and over public reaction to literature; the "true history" has its origins in chapter 1. Similarly, the prologue cites the overthrow of chivalric romance as the goal of the composition, while the text pretends to be the historical record of the three sallies. Don Quixote is the object of mockery and the object of praise. Cide Hamete never abandons the would-be knight for the repentant Christian. Although at the end he complies with the first prologuist's statement of purpose, he refuses to undermine the accomplishments of "my valiant knight." Alonso Quixano does not enter the discourse of Cide Hamete, and, for the historian, the body in the grave belongs to Don Quixote. From one point of view, it may be noted that while satire demands detachment, Cide Hamete cannot seem to distance himself from the figure enmeshed in the reading of unworthy books. From another, it is difficult to understand why the historian would cross into the territory of the first prologuist by speaking of moral values and of satirical ends in the concluding sentences. The fusion of ideas, voices, and narratees at the end makes for unity within incongruity and may lead to a reopening of the question of intention (which is valid as a question if not as an answer). How can theology and parody work toward the same ends? Who has the ultimate authority over the discourse? And are all readings equal?

For some readers, the aging author responds with increasing empathy to his creation. He personalizes, or shares, the death scene with the character. For others, Cervantes strikes a death blow to the romances by mocking them and by having Don Quixote proclaim his liberation from them. The motives may be literary or spiritual, for the evil books distract

good Christians from worthwhile pursuits, from the deeds that would allow them to win salvation. "Romantic" readers tend to focus on the idealism of Don Quixote and on the symbolic resonances of his discourse. They may condemn the books yet glorify the lofty aims of the reader. When Lo Ré maintains, for example, that Don Quixote never loses his idealistic spirit, the argument distinguishes between the actor and the deed, or between a negative stimulus and a positive response. I agree with Lo Ré that the ordeals of the third sally do not crush Don Quixote's enthusiasm, but I am not convinced that the author—or, more correctly, the text—is as protective of the protagonist as the idealist interpretation would suggest. In *Don Quijote, Symbol of a Culture in Crisis*, Bryant L. Creel points out that Cervantes is not against chivalry as an abstract standard, but against the corruption of chivalric ideals in his own day. Don Quixote represents both the purity of the tradition and its ludicrous extremes. While this is a valid perspective, its context is sociohistorical rather than literary, just as those approaches that stress the state of Don Quixote's mind are psychological rather than literary. The second part of *Don Quixote*, I would submit, is not about the declining status of chivalry or about the growing weakness of the protagonist but about the power of the book, and specifically about the power of Part I.

Don Quixote begins by parodying the romances of chivalry. A country gentleman, perhaps not unlike the reader in a number of ways, lets reading intrude on life. He remolds himself in order to emulate the heroes of the romances. On his journey, or quest, he encounters characters who in many cases also have been moved to action by literary models. Don Quixote acts funny, in the double sense of the term, because he is distracted, distanced from those around him; he shows little consciousness of time and place. The comedy of Part I stems from anachronism and from the willingness of others to humor the knight, to enter his world. The motif of fighting fire with fire—waging war against books, as in the scrutiny of the library—allows Cervantes to incorporate a range of literary genres, theoretical issues, and other matters into the text. The comic aspects of the first part do not keep the reader from caring about Don Quixote or from seeing how he grows from experience, but his exaggerated, literal-minded chivalry would seem to create a distance between him and the reader. The textual markers would seem to promote neither empathy in its purest form nor a serious symbolic code from which to judge his actions. If this were the case, the burlesque sonnets appended to chapter 52 would be highly offensive, but they are, instead, signs of the satire and self-conscious humor that characterize the 1605 *Quixote*.

The key to Part II, it seems to me, is the shift from the books of chivalry to Cervantes's book as the primary element of the intertext. Readers of Part I, such as Sansón Carrasco and the ducal pair, reenact in Part II what Don Quixote does in his sallies. They adopt a literary paradigm as a mode of action, and, as narrators and other characters note along the way, they become a bit mad. They escape from reality into fiction, or into metafiction. They lose perspective in their effort to control events. Fictional and real readers intersect, as do the "real" Don Quixote and the Don Quixote of the true history. Don Diego de Miranda, the most conspicuous non-reader of the first part, is sound of mind but of only negligible interest. What he does, like what Alonso Quixano does, cannot fill the pages of a book. The plot of Part I is built around pseudo-chivalric adventures, informed by literature as theory and performance. In Part II, plot cedes to metaplot, to effects produced by readings of Part I. The imaginary inner world of the published text expands to include the presence in society—in the so-called real world—of the (now aptly named) true history. Readers within the narrative invent situations in which Don Quixote may react in chivalric fashion. Don Quixote cultivates his public persona and worries about possible discrepancies between reality and representation, between the man and the verbal construct. Cervantes and his alter egos address, in commentary and in practice, the attitude of readers toward Part I. There is nothing that would fit the metacritical exercise better than a false and uncomplimentary sequel by an anonymous author.

Don Quixote opens with a critique, or a rewriting, of the conventional prologue, followed by a variation (rewriting) of the quest theme. From the beginning, literary topics interact with one another, and lessons derived from books mediate the narrative movement. If literary types and what has come to be known as media influences are the subjects of Part I, Part II expands the associative fields precisely because the intertext now includes the first part and its own dialectic with precedent. The "true history" in the first part is a comic reminder of the intricacies of emplotment. The label is a joke, albeit a most profound one. When the book appears, it becomes historical. When the anonymous sequel appears, it becomes true. As well as active readers of Part I, Part II features discussion of the flaws of the earlier tome. Don Quixote and the authorial figure(s) are concerned with what readers liked and disliked about the 1605 text. Cervantes has the opportunity to address omissions and inconsistencies in the text and to offer views on questions of structure. After the publication of the false second part, he is able to incorporate issues raised in that book into his own. Avellaneda's audacious act clearly infuriates Cervantes, but at the same time it gives

him additional ground for literary play. The spurious sequel treats Part I as Part I treats the romances of chivalry, that is, with irreverence. Avellaneda puts Cervantes on the defensive, and Part II becomes an apology of sorts for itself. Cervantes, for his part, manages a counterattack which does not (like Mateo Alemán's strategies in the *Guzmán*) throw the text out of balance. In order to prove Don Quixote's superiority over his imitator, he does not change the character of his protagonist or the premises of his narrative. Rather, he redirects the plot to prove the false history wrong (even though the last chapter of Part I refers to the trip to Zaragoza). When circumstances threaten Don Quixote's control over his destiny, the Avellaneda text redeems him. The introduction of the sequel in chapter 59 follows his stay at the ducal palace, and the signing of the affidavit in chapter 72 follows his defeat by Sansón Carrasco. The statements that attest to differences between the two protagonists are acts of affirmation for the real Don Quixote. The defeat is yet another trial, a test of his worthiness, a temporary inconvenience. He will emulate the pastoral paradigm for a year and then will return to the chivalric mode.

If one were to suggest that the events of chapters 59 and 72 distract from the mental decline of Don Quixote and thus from the psychological verisimilitude of the novel, I would argue that Don Quixote, though distraught, is never presented as undone by the defeat, that he remains optimistic about the future. The dream of chapter 74 is a *deus ex machina*, a vehicle for the off-stage conversion. In the last chapters of Part II, Don Quixote is no less blind to the real world than he was in Part I. On the contrary, he now finds greater acceptance of his exploits, which have been recorded for posterity. And if imitation in this case is not the sincerest form of flattery, it is the successful who are imitated. Don Quixote does not approach chapter 74—does not approach his death—as a human being who has lost his will to live. Literature, not psychology, is the ruling temper, the source of verisimilitude. Literary madness is not so much a form of mental illness as a method by which to show how literature operates on the mind. *Don Quixote* is about creative fantasies, about how texts affect the ways in which one perceives the world. The novel marks an awareness of the role of words and of books in life, but treats experience from the perspective of literature. What is *Don Quixote* about? It may be about everything, because it demonstrates that a literary object has the power to evoke external reality and simultaneously to pursue the inner world of fiction. It justifies the study of literature on its own terms, not as the stepchild of other disciplines. It is not about illnesses and cures but about art, about readers and writers whose passion for words is contagious. *Don Quixote* is the

true history of a book and of books in general. A truly idealistic reading of the novel may be one that sees the text as idealizing the creation and consumption of books, one that finds depth in the self-conscious humor and irony. Closure becomes a function, quite fittingly, of the intersection of life and art. The real world, in the form of a false artifact, helps to determine the destiny of the legitimate object. The paternal imagery of the prologue to Part I offers an ironic frame for the figurative sacrifice at the end of Part II. The writer begins by killing his poetic predecessors and ends by killing his creation. In the middle is an expansive critical space, the space of art as mirror to nature and to itself.

The death of Don Quixote/Alonso Quixano is calculated to please a number of factions. Romantics will understand that physical death cannot destroy lofty ideals; Alonso Quixano may die, but Don Quixote will live on. Phenomenologists, various types of analysts, and even biographers may insert the aging Cervantes into this scheme. The repentance and Christian death of the country gentleman should satisfy proponents of moral literature and censors of immoral thought. Ironists will commend the rendition of Christian death by a Moslem historian, together with the openness of the novel's closure. To what extent does Cervantes comply with his promise to kill and bury Don Quixote? Let us return to the question of metafictional idealism. The supposed man of flesh and blood, but really the shadow of a man, disappears from the text, yet he lives on in the book and in other books. He lives on because of the book, because he has lived by the book. Through his story, readers discover that books enrich and help to direct their lives. In *Reality and the Poet in Spanish Poetry*, Pedro Salinas attributes to Baroque art, exemplified in the poetry of Luis de Góngora, the capacity of the microcosm (art) to supersede the macrocosm (reality). This is, I believe, what Cervantes shows in *Don Quixote*. He privileges books, which can contain and move the world. Who dies at the end of the novel is not as important as what remains: the medium as message, the discourse as story. *Don Quixote* may be far removed from psychological realism but not from life. The protagonist need not be capable of emulating humankind in the art of dying in order to have the real world as one of his points of contact. Imagination and reality meet in the text, and their interaction and interference vitalize the proceedings. A cartoon by Mick Stevens in *The New Yorker* seems to capture this ironic essence. A woman speaking into a telephone says, "Operator, I'd like to make a person-to-person call, and I'd like to reverse the roles."¹⁰ The illusion of control marks the beginning and the end of the road. On the great stage of life, the director's chair may be the best seat in the house.

NOTES

1. See esp. the introductory section and first chapter of the study.
2. See, for example, *Novel to Romance*, xiii.
3. . . . this *Second Part of Don Quixote* which I offer you is cut by the same craftsman and from the same cloth as the *First*. In it I present Don Quixote continued and finally dead and buried, so that no one may dare bring forward any further evidence against him, for that already produced is sufficient. (Cervantes 1981, 417)
4. See *The Chivalric World*, esp. 9-13 and 210-15. Mancing cites the distinction made by Juan Bautista Avallé-Arce in *Don Quijote como forma de vida* between Alonso Quixano, who may be characterized by the verb *ser* (to be, to exist), and Don Quixote, who exemplifies the verb *valer* (to lead a worthwhile life).
5. See, for example, *S/Z*, 4. Barthes notes that "the goal of literary work (of literature as work) is to make the reader no longer a consumer, but a producer of the text."
6. The readings of *La Celestina* which emphasize Fernando de Rojas's *converso* origins show the influence of the historical theses of Américo Castro. An example is Stephen Gilman's *The Spain of Fernando de Rojas*.
7. All quotations from *Don Quixote* are from the Jones and Douglas edition of the Ormsby translation. Page numbers will refer to this edition.
8. Anthony Close, in *The Romantic Approach to Don Quixote*, offers the most comprehensive treatment of the topic. Jaime Fernández notes, for example, "Ante la muerte, el hidalgo abomina de los libros de caballerías, pero no de los grandes valores éticos, estéticos y sociales del espíritu caballeresco" (17). In a similar vein, Ellen Anderson argues that Alonso Quijano finds exemplarity in his own story. The reborn gentleman rejects Avellaneda's continuation but not Cide Hamete Benengeli's book: "As a true story of an imagined reality, it can serve as an example for readers, noble and common, *not* to imitate in their future action, a kind of anti-history" (186). Edgardo Rodríguez Juliá, in contrast, considers that "[d]evolverse la lucidez a [don] Quijote es quitarle su visión; es la dureza de la medianía de edad, es la crueldad de Cervantes novelista, el consuelo de su neurastenia" (199). Looking at the ending from the perspective of the pastoral tradition, Dominick Finello believes that Cervantes

turns the gentle art of pastoral play into a game of semicruel irony in which Don Quijote and his friends stretch bucolic exercises and duties to risible, if not absurd, limits. . . . Pastor Quijotiz is . . . a form of

self-conscious pastoral playacting by one whose life is on the wane. It is the reverse side of the simulated Arcadia, which suggests awareness of a cultural practice among those who are enjoying life to the fullest at a tender age. (178)

9. See esp. 131-47.

10. July 23, 1990: 75.

Sign(ature)s of the Invisible: The Ideologies of *Historia de la monja alférez*

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“Únicamente su mano podría hacer dudar de su sexo, porque es llena y carnosa, aunque robusta y fuerte, y el ademán, que, todavía, algunas veces tiene un no sé qué de femenino.”¹

The Disambiguation of a Spectacle

In a letter dated 1626, Rome, the traveler Pedro del Valle makes this symptomatic observance about his contemporary Catalina de Erauso, the famed crossdressed lieutenant nun and alleged writer of a book of memoirs, *Historia de la monja alférez*, which surveys her endeavors and vicissitudes against the backdrop of Spain's imperial enterprise in the Americas as well as the Empire's desperate efforts to preserve its hegemony in Europe in an age of counter-reform. Del Valle's impression of Catalina suggests that her masculine dress and demeanor co-exist with “un no sé qué de femenino.” Indeed, in accord with del Valle's estimation, she is masculine and feminine all at once, “llena y carnosa aunque robusta y fuerte.” Although not much is known about del Valle from the letter, the fact that he has come to know Catalina through his friend, and compatriot of Catalina, Father Rodrigo de San Miguel suggests his relation to constituted authority. Del Valle first learns of her story while traveling in India. In other words, he does not familiarize himself with Catalina through direct acquaintance, but is informed by Catalina's celebrity. Del Valle's reaction to Catalina represents, one might say, an already codified

response to the extent that the sight of her ceases to scandalize. That the image in question appears to be perfectly tolerable for del Valle raises questions, since the reverse ought to be true for anybody writing from the perspective of Aristotelian Scholasticism, the philosophical foundation of the established Church doctrine of the time as set out, for example, in Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica*. For this reason, del Valle's 'indifference' to Catalina begs the question: why does he abide by her androgyny, so to speak, conceiving male and female as an ensemble rather than a difference, when reproof would be more appropriate from this Scholastic point of view? Why does the literal image of the body in question signify this way, when it ought to contradict itself? The explanation can only be found in a complex social conjuncture in the throes of ideological struggle.

Reservations about the image of Erauso call to mind the matter of interpretation, which is germane to a debated theme in *Historia de la monja alférez*,² namely that of her mutation. Erauso's life, though apparently an anomaly with respect to the prescribed feminine behavior of her day, is also an anomaly *for* her narrative—an assertion I will hold in abeyance and explain in due course. In the meantime, I will advance that the matter of transformation is one to be charted not in some abstract 'will to power,' but in the discursive conditions of possibility embodied in the very language of the text. To this effect, contrary to what occurs in much of the current scholarship on Erauso, I want to suggest that the problem is radically different from that which can be articulated by the model of a transgression, in quite essentialist or universalist terms.³

The assortment of *Historia's* modern editions attests to lingering ecdotic problems that naturally need to be sorted out for a reading that is characterized by in-depth exegetical

rigor. However, the existence of philological quandaries should not preclude a reading that assumes that *Historia de la monja alférez* is steeped in the ideological conditions that arise in Spain's transition from feudalism to mercantilism beginning in the 14th to 16th centuries and the ideological struggles that, though inaugurated therein, will remain part of the Spanish landscape for a protracted period of time. That the text of *Historia de la monja alférez*, attributed to Catalina de Erauso, is based on a lost manuscript, presumably dating from the 1600's (1625 or 1626), and that the existing modern edition derives from an 1784 Madrid manuscript set to print in 1829, poses no obstacle to this sort of reading, for there is always the text's objective inscription in history. Since the text can be analyzed in terms of its internal logic (the relation of its key notions and themes to a particular ideological problematic), one cannot rule out the possibility of a correspondence between the lost original and the 1784 manuscript. Even if the 18th century manuscript were to represent a further elaboration or re-elaboration of the lost original, it would not be one that diverged significantly *in terms of its ideological horizon*, for in the case of Spain, I insist, the struggle between feudalizing forces and their mercantile counterparts vying for hegemony is a lengthy affair. At any rate, I will be arguing that the peculiarity of *Historia* lies in its own articulation of the mingling of two dominant ideological matrices, explicitly animism and substantialism,⁴ and that the *form* of the text, a linear narrative, reveals an attempt by established power to recast Catalina's autobiography along more conventional lines.

An understanding of these matrices, along with some more general thoughts that I will offer regarding ideology, is absolutely crucial in order to understand how the contradictions figure in *Historia*. Without the concepts of animism and substantialism,

the text's real contradictions could easily be overlooked. As the ideological matrix of feudal relations substantialism presupposes several conditions, including: the inextricability of body and soul; that things have a natural place; that all movement is towards repose; that persons are an expression of their blood or lineage; and that a benevolent God hierarchically orders the world. A corollary to the latter thought is the idea that the sublunary world is the mirror image, albeit imperfect, of the celestial world. By contrast, animism, or the ideological matrix of mercantile relations, assumes body/soul duality: that is, a soul that is not marred by the actions of the body but still expresses itself in the body; the perpetuity of movement; and the person as a "free" individual or subject. The text, I argue, has no speech beyond these two matrices and cannot exist but by virtue of them. In the transition from feudalism to the first capitalist formation, the impact of bourgeois social relations was to make possible new forms of thought, new ways to write and live. But in order to fully appreciate this, one must consider that social relations, of whatever kind, be they master/slave, lord/serf, or our existing Subject/subject relation, exude ideology as a natural emission of their own interconnectedness. The basic presuppositions of an ideology are later elaborated by those through and for whom it lives, the effect of which is to legitimate those relations and act to solidify their performance. As a natural upshot from concrete social relations, ideology is a manifestation of class power. However, since ideology precedes all individuation, it is unconscious, and hence, more than the patrimony of the dominant class, it subsumes the whole social formation and acts as the ground for all social being. Moreover, only if one accepts ideology as unconscious can one understand, for example, why, within the context of the transition, the Count-Duke of Olivares, the minister to

King Philip IV, sought to limit the power of the nobles (his own class) and encouraged policies that objectively favored mercantile interests and relations (Rodríguez 359-360). Of course, this struggle between two radically different historical constraints also frames Catalina de Erauso's life story, but what is absolutely crucial here is that the prevailing ideologies of the period are the substrata of social life, and without them the text of *Historia de la monja alférez* would cease to have meaning. Moreover, if one discounts *Historia's* location in these historical matrices, critics could say virtually anything about the text—and with impunity—so long as their elucidation and analyses reflect present day tastes, norms of enquiry, interpretative pressures, and so forth. Thus, in so far as constituting unconscious mechanisms that give form and meaning to Catalina's thoughts and actions, these ideological matrices are there as the font of her social existence, and she is compelled to draw on them to transform her life.

History and Mutability

That said, what some critics, tacitly or intentionally, believe to be Erauso's "private"⁵ transformation cannot be completely divorced from the notion of transformation as an historical possibility. In this regard, only two distinctive possibilities emerge for producing or stifling such a notion. For feudal substantialism, transformation is inadmissible, except as the result of a miracle or magical incantation, such as in the transubstantiation of the Host into the body of Christ or the alchemist's conversion of base metals into gold. For the animism of mercantile relations, by contrast, transformation is not only possible, but also 'natural' given its premise that things do not possess inherent and organic qualities and are hence invariably labile. At its core, animism assumes the disavowal of the Scholastic-Aristotelian notion of 'Nature' in

which beings are such in virtue of inborn static characteristics. Justifiably, if there is no essential nature, then everything is in a state of flux. In lieu of 'Nature,' animism will emphasize the notion of 'Soul' or 'Platonic body' (i.e. as seen in the lyric of Garcilaso de la Vega: 'mi alma os ha cortado a su medida').⁶ This notion of 'soul,' of the individual considered, in principle as unrestrained by the body, establishes the possibility for Erauso's metamorphosis.

Though the animist concept of soul, which features as 'mind' in Cartesian philosophy, offers only a broad vignette for treating the issue of Catalina's identity, it will serve to interpret subsidiary questions such as that of gender attitudes, crossdressing and so forth by serving as their neurological core, so to speak. By way of an initial foray into the matter, it is important to note that with the disintegration of feudal relations and the sacralized bonds that inhere therein, new moral imperatives arise. For this reason, if virile qualities, for example, enjoy currency under feudalism, the social value of those qualities cannot be related to the 'adrenalin-driven' impulses of a society that is organized around the idea of progress, but rather only to a divinely ordered society in which 'man' is conceived "by nature" to be closer to God than his counterpart in the chain of being. Therefore, in the context of substantialism, while virile qualities are not undesirable in a woman, woman only 'imitates' or aspires to manliness (i.e. is more God/Christ-like) to the extent that Man, in his fallen nature, is somewhat more removed from sin than his derivative. Catalina de Erauso's transvestitism cannot take place within the confines of this 'Scholastic body,' which suggests that the difference between man and woman is not fortuitous, but something inscribed by God in nature: simply, woman derives from man and man derives from God. This order cannot be overturned, and underpins, for example,

current resistance within the Catholic Church to the ordination of women (i.e., it is not a question of woman's 'rights' –sic- the argument goes, for the calling to vocation is a decision made by the Lord himself). The case of Joan of Arc, by way of contrast, is another matter even though she is indeed operating within the limits of substantialism and the "Scholastic body.' I point out in reference to Joan of Arc that crossdressing is only acceptable because, like any saint, she is conceived as possessor of divine qualities, and one who has been 'chosen' or 'called upon.' According to this logic, Joan ceases to be like all women, who are genealogically related to the originator of sin and daughters of Eve, and is rather transfigured by the divine purpose that resides in her. Ultimately, crossdressing is permissible in this case to the extent that the warrior armor that Joan dons reflects her sacred character. In opposition to the case of the saint, who was (in)formed by prophetic visions, Catalina de Erauso is driven by Machiavellian *virtú*, the use of prowess and determination, in the acquisition of 'merit,' or what may be called 'symbolic capital,' which appears increasingly as the most practicable way to ensure survival for an *hidalgo* in the gradual breakdown of feudalism. For those who aim to qualify for a position in the state bureaucracy, this disposition is especially important. Catalina's mutation is, in part, a function of this drive to acquire merit, which is in turn an effect of the split between public and private spheres that is characteristic of the functioning of the Spanish absolutist state: while the public sphere is reserved for politics, the creation of a private space serves to promote the needs of private enterprise. Likewise, the public/private dichotomy provides a domain for the cultivation of private talent, and so its public recognition.⁷ It stands to reason that if virile⁸ qualities, as conceived by this social formation, are endemic to the scramble for merit, it is plausible

to regard Erauso's crossdressing as an acknowledgement of the value of "manliness" for the emerging bourgeoisie in so far as it assumes a corporal behavior in keeping with the demands of *virtú*. The gambling and recurrent altercations that Catalina is involved in throughout *Historia* are a manifestation of such conduct. In this sense, it is not unusual for this class horizon, as it engenders itself as masculine, to envision the nobility as effeminate,⁹ especially once the bourgeoisie has consolidated its economic dominion.

The Literal Truth of Subject, Market, and Allegory

The initial scene of *Historia de la monja alférez* serendipitously objectifies for us the ideology of the subject previously mentioned. Having deserted the convent in San Sebastian, where she was to take her vows, Catalina undresses, fashions a man's garb, jettisons the nun's habit, and cuts her tresses. She resolves to blaze a path with no apparent direction or motive ("eché no sé por donde," 95). This absence of direction is a recurring theme in the narrative sequence¹⁰ depicting her escape and metamorphosis. In male attire, the fugitive nun can blaze a trail ("calando caminos") from the sacralized space of the convent to the city (Victoria), whose "air makes men free" ("el aire de la ciudad hace libre a quien lo respira") according to a Medieval European adage uttered into various languages. Regardless of the fact that gender is masked in the Spanish version, yet bold in the English, it would be accurate to say that it is *men* who stand to gain the most from life in the towns, a fact which draws attention, in some measure, to why Erauso dons the garments and assumes the mannerisms of the opposite sex, allowing her to vicariously live out the more advantageous 'role.'¹¹ In the sacralized space of the nunnery, the body is a 'substantial form': Catalina's situation mimics the basic feudal relationship, and like a serf, she is there to serve her Lord. Withdrawal from the convent's

space then presupposes a distancing from the sacred that, in turn, serves to figuratively illustrate the impact of bourgeois relations on the sacralized horizon of feudalism. In fact, this impact was to unleash a process of secularization and sever the bonds that tied the serf to manor and lord in order to turn the serf into a subject, or an individual proper, who is capable of selling his labor power as a “free” individual, responsible for his own thoughts and actions, and unbound in serving no master other than bare necessity itself, or so the story goes.

With respect to the initial sequences of *Historia*, in alluding to ‘substantial form,’ I am evoking the core notion of feudal substantialism. The implication in speaking of ‘substance’ is that there is a basic entity that persists through change. Any alteration of this basic entity is perceived as a sign of corruption or, more positively, an indication of divine presence. Identity is otherwise stable. Apparent deviations will eventually tend toward their ‘natural place.’ Therefore, “[n]obles tend to nobility, serfs towards serfdom, and slaves towards servitude,” (Read 64) and, by analogy one might add, woman tends towards womanhood. The convent as an expression of this feudal(izing) logic is also a sign of a whole ideological matrix from which Erauso’s narrative begins to separate itself: a separation that takes the form of an experiential narrative. In other words, in telling a life story, the narrative breaks with the substantialist notion of a Book (examples of which are stories of chivalry and hagiographic narratives that always function mimetically to approximate a foundational Truth) to create a linear narrative of progress, where the end or goal is not determined beforehand. As *narration*, properly speaking (in counterpoint to imitation), its purpose is not to read-off the inscriptions of the Truth in nature, but to render the things of the world as literal realities. The *literal gaze* through

which the world is perceived is the outcome of the secularizing logic of emerging bourgeois relations, and presupposes that the objects of the world no longer serve as vessels for the resounding voice of God's *signatures*, but are mere literal *signs*. The shift from signature to sign, which frames the difference between Catalina as nun, say, and Catalina as transvestite in the narrative's initial passages, suggests that in order for transvestitism to occur, 'woman' cannot be, as already mentioned, a substantial form. I remind the reader, in passing, that the case of Joan of Arc is exclusive and only makes sense from a feudal standpoint; Catalina's transvestitism, by comparison, is never expressed in terms of a 'calling.' If, however, Catalina is only *literal*, then she is only ever defined by chance, and like any sign, she is only arbitrary and conventional. By this virtue, I suggest that Catalina de Erauso does in truth fashion her own life, but ultimately as a ruse of ideology. In this respect, Catalina is our contemporary and precursor. That is, she exploits the lack of an essential link between clothes and the body that they dress in order to create her own subjectivity through them in a way that is similar to how we, for example, also create our own subjectivity today through the products of pop culture. We create a life for ourselves, which we believe to be truly unique and different. This "freedom" to make a life for ourselves (not unlike that of Catalina) is part of our modern ideological unconscious in a way that is radically different from the fact that lavish wardrobe served nobles as a way not of producing their subjectivity as individuals (an idea they could care less about), but of buttressing their objective class power (see note 13 below). The circumstances for this modern sense of self are, in a way, "narrated" in the very lines of *Historia*, as we shall see. At the surface level, one can see that by leaving the convent, which stands as a 'natural place,' Catalina is confronted with the

‘void.’ *Historia* like any ‘narrative’ is an attempt to fill the vacuum produced by the withdrawal of the sacred, which always —one needs to note— assumes plenitude of meaning. This semantic vacuum is really the undergirding for the appearance of signs in opposition to signatures. As a signature, Catalina’s crossdressing is not only a form of deception, but also a transgression of one’s nature, for one’s raiment should be adequate to one’s being in a society founded on the notions of blood, honor and lineage as forms of essential nature.¹² As a mere literal sign, she is no longer in the domain of absolute meaning, but rests in regard to a certain norm, one that is not implacable —it goes without saying— like divine laws, but always contingent. Signs abound in the theater: the actor/actress can *stand in* for the king or the princess, and can perform the part of Hamlet or Lady Macbeth, but only as the result of a tacit agreement among spectators. In society (off-stage), if Catalina stands in for a man, either bourgeois relations will label her abnormal (“una rara”), given the weight of familial ideology, or substantialism, given that she is in violation of her true nature, will move on to explain the irregularity in its own terms. But I will delve more into this later. Now, I am merely concerned to state that her transvestitism can only be subject to judgment from these two competing moralities.¹³

The literal norm, from which *Historia* is written, saturates the text from beginning to end; from the initial sequences, where she flees from her father while serving the King’s secretary don Juan de Idiáquez, to the accounting and record keeping Catalina performs for the affluent merchant from Trujillo, Juan de Urquiza. While the book¹⁴ in which she meticulously registers all commercial transactions for Urquiza conveys the importance attributed to commodity value and surplus earnings, the workings of the mercantile

bourgeoisie could not be more transparent than in the description of her duties while employed under Juan López de Arguijo:

Entregóme [Juan López de Arguijo] diez mil cabezas de carneros de la tierra para con ellos trajinar, con ciento y tantos Indios. Entregóme una gran partida de dinero para que fuese a los llanos de Cochabamba y comprase trigo, y moliéndolo, lo llevase a vender al Potosí, donde había falta y tenía valor. Fui y compré ocho mil fanegas a cuatro pesos; carguélas en los carneros, víneme a los molinos de Guilcomayo. Molí tres mil quinientas, y partí con ellas al Potosí. Vendílas luego allí a panaderas a quince pesos y medio. Volvíme a los molinos; hallé allí molido parte del resto, y hallé compradores para todo. Vendílo todo a diez pesos, y volvíme con el dinero al contado a las Charcas a mi amo, el cual, vista la buena ganancia, me volvió a mandar volver a lo mismo a Cochabamba (132-3).

Mercantile production alone is not described here; the passage also renders literal the contradictory character of Spain's colonial economic development supported by ancillary slave labor as well as the commodification of "free" labor power in the interest of profit maximization. The passage makes clear that both slaves and propertyless laborers are presupposed as conditions for production, as well as for the renewal of those conditions: "me volvió a mandar volver a lo mismo." In this regard, the passage represents, perhaps more than any other, Erauso's real conditions of existence. Her status as noble, by contrast, lacks any real infrastructure and works only symbolically when she needs to position herself in a competitive labor market or to summon her privileges as a *vizcaína* to get out of trouble with the authorities. Not only is the wage-form implied in the cited passage in terms of the need to carry out what are purely economic imperatives, it is *the* form through which Erauso's relationships are expressed. To this effect, she is quite candid and specific about her wages. This is not only the case in the "service" of merchants, for even as soldier she performs her service in exchange for a salary. As critics often fail to point out, Catalina is a *mercenary* soldier. To emphasize on the other

hand that she is a ‘soldier of fortune’ tends to obscure this point. Coincidentally, Machiavelli makes the claim that mercenary soldiers are “useless and dangerous” for modern states, in so far as they are faithful only to a “trifling wage” (43).

I mention the work’s literal problematic along with this final question of ‘fidelity,’ because it brushes firmly against a differential logic operating in the text. The literal details, for example, from the episode where Erauso tries to save María Dávalos from her husband, who suspecting her betrayal hopes to avenge himself, contrast strikingly with the theme of honor, which the episode noticeably brings into view. In her mule-ride to the nearest sanctuary, for example, Erauso declares: “Llegué a una venta... desperté al ventero... cuidé de mi mula... diónos ropa, unos huevos, y pan, y frutas, procuramos torcer y exprimir la ropa” (139). The attention that is given to these particulars—their mere appearance I would argue—presents a language that is of a different order than the overarching dynamic of the scene with its more “transcendent” emphasis on a key value of seigniorial ideology, namely honor. But nowhere is the contrast between the literal gaze that pervades the text and an allegorical one more apparent than in the description of the battle in the plains of Valdivia:

Tomaron y asolaron los indios la dicha Valdivia: salimos a ellos, y batallamos tres o cuatro veces, maltratándolos siempre y destrozándolos; pero llegándoles la vez última socorro, nos fue mal y nos mataron mucha gente y capitanes, y mi alférez, y llevaron la bandera. Viéndola llevar, partimos tras ella yo y dos soldados de a caballo, por medio de gran multitud, atropellando y matando, y recibiendo daño: en breve cayó muerto uno de los tres. Proseguimos los dos. Llegamos a la bandera, cayó de un bote de lanza mi compañero. Yo recibí un mal golpe en una pierna, maté al cacique que la llevaba y quitésela, y apreté con mi caballo, atropellando, matando e hiriendo a infinidad, pero malherido y pasado de tres flechas y de una lanza en el hombro izquierdo, que sentía mucho. ... Al cabo de ellos mi hermano me sacó del gobernador la bandera que yo gané, y quedé alférez de la compañía de Alonso Moreno . . . (114).

The scene is plagued by what may be called ‘epic narrativity.’ In other words, the scene is written with the obvious gesture of *showing*: take for instance the hyperbole of a warrior woman who, having been cut through with a lance and sustained arrow wounds, manages to recapture the ensign amid the pandemonium of battle and with no training in warfare. Obviously, the drive for a reward—a soldier’s endeavors are usually acknowledged in the form of an *encomienda*—gives form to Erauso’s description of the battle. But there is more at stake in this passage that, I insist, runs forcefully against the general literalism of *Historia*. What predominates is not the ‘eye-that-sees-the-thing’ of the literal gaze, as for instance in Bernal Díaz del Castillo’s description of the first battle scenes in the conquest of the New World, but rather an account modeled on books of chivalry. If what is represented in this passage are not Catalina’s deeds, but those of the Hero or heroism in abstract, it is because, in contrast to the literal account of a foot-soldier such as Bernal Díaz, the cited description draws on another available norm for writing the Conquest, namely the allegorical reading practiced by Francisco López de Gómara in whose *Historia de la conquista de México* the apostles St. James the Moorslayer and St. Peter emerge as part of Cortés’ cavalry. The other norm is best represented by Díaz, who writes:

hablando aquí en respuesta de lo que han dicho y escrito, personas que no lo alcanzaron a saber, ni lo vieron, ni tener noticia verdadera de lo que sobre esta materia propusieron, salvo hablar a sabor de su paladar, por oscurecer si pudiesen nuestros muchos y notables servicios, porque no haya fama de ellos ni sean tenidos en tanta estima como son dignos de tener; y aun como la malicia humana es de tal calidad, no querrían los malos detractores que fuésemos antepuestos y recompensados como su Majestad lo ha mandado a sus virreyes, presidentes y gobernadores (1).¹⁵

That foot-soldiers were not awarded their rightful compensation was already a theme in Díaz's time for which reason it would only make sense that he offer an alternative version of what happened. Despite the literal fiber of her own narrative, and considering the significance of feudalizing values in post-tridentine Spain, for Erauso it is still viable to exploit the opposite ideological perspective and allegorize in order to establish her merit and make a legitimate petition to the Crown for a reward.

The Uses of Narration

*...when the identity of roses with virginity
is more than just poetic Sunday dress...¹⁶*

Pursued by the authorities for one of several homicides, Catalina is saved from arrest by the Bishop of Guamanga's intervention, and is, possibly out of gratitude, inclined to be forthright with him, and reveal her status. Upon listening to an initial interview in which Catalina discloses that she is a woman and explains how she lived her life, the Bishop demands a proper confession. This confessional *scene* represents an abrupt turnaround with respect to the general succession of events from which her story unfolds, for it represents a way of showing that stands in sharp contrast to the literal. If the 'eye-that-sees-the-thing' is part and parcel of a narrative of progress, then confession, as distinct from testimony, evokes a logic of redemption; and redemption, in this scene, is the recognition of one's face in the mirror of the Other's discourse (as sinner, etc.). That is, it inscribes Catalina's story (if not Catalina herself) within the 'rules' of confession, which dissolve Catalina's account of her life as 'individual experience.' To be exact, Catalina's literal story can have no legitimacy by itself, and must first be hermeneutically aligned with Truth. That Truth must come before "facts" or "experience," according to

the sacralized vision of substantialism, is clear from the Church's desire to verify Catalina's virginity *before* endorsing the content of her confession. What increasingly becomes evident in the sequences that span from her confession to the Bishop of Guamanga until her meeting with Pope Urban VIII are the limits imposed on her individuality. The limits, however, are not only those that may be bracketed under mercantile imperatives, but also those more 'symbolic' or 'superstructural' limits established by substantialism, which not only proscribes crossdressing, but the subject as well. For if Francisco de Quevedo, who writes from this perspective in *El buscón*, is impelled to drag his character, Pablos, through the mud, so to speak, in order to mortify and debase him, then the Church apparatus too must execute its designs on Catalina. For this perspective, she is execrable, not because she is a woman, who has transgressed the public/private divide, or her "domestic" limits—for these domains do not exist for substantialist ideology (everything is "public," to use a word, for this horizon)—but because as subject, she is eroding constituted authority. Individualism is not only breeding in Europe, but more so in America, where it is having its concrete manifestation in 'rogue' conquistadors such as Lope de Aguirre and Hernán Cortés in the wake of the new, more lenient, conditions they encounter in the New World, where the weight of the official substantialist ideology holds less sway than in Europe. What is revealed, in her encounter with the Bishop of Guamanga, is not the literal story of her life as told up until this point, but rather the interpretation of that literal story in substantialist terms—it is a refunctioning of this story, I emphasize, in terms of her honor. For to have abandoned her 'natural place' as a woman and, in so doing, maintained the purity of her blood—the honor of her lineage—is indeed a 'miracle,' for the substantialist outlook. This rationale

forms part of a substantialist attempt to explain and justify for itself this contradictory image. In the end, what this scene makes present, as we shall see, is the power of substantialist ideology to transfigure the image of Catalina into an ‘orthodox anomaly,’ even as the ideology of the subject becomes ubiquitous.

Upon making what the Bishop would consider a proper confession, Catalina de Erauso undergoes a concurring physical examination wherein two matrons verify her “integrity.” Chastity is a key element in their assessment of this unusual case, because for substantialism, Catalina must tend towards her natural and purposive end; any incongruity can be understood as a sign of “corruption”; the faintest suspicion that she is impure can jeopardize her “merits” and the sincerity of her claims. The authentication of her “virginity,” then, by anxious Church authorities constitutes their trump card, as it were, in manufacturing an image of Catalina that sits comfortably with substantialism: one that *shows that it is God’s providence that directs her*. Consecrated, then, by the highest authorities, the Church and the Monarchy, she is different only inasmuch as this difference exists in consonance with power. Evident from the weight that is given to her chastity, she becomes an accepted anomaly, very much in the same way that the life of a martyr or a saint represents an aberration with respect to standard religious devotion, just as it defines devotion itself. In this sense, the story has something of a hagiographic narrative, conferring on her a kind of aura. One must recall, in this respect, the Bishop of Guamanga’s words to Catalina, which resonate with telling detail: “...os venero como una de las personas notables de este mundo...” (161, my emphasis). Considering that Catalina’s story renders the Bishop speechless, offering by way of communication only the sublime tears of one who has witnessed the presence of the divine —“se quedó

también sin hablar, y llorando a lágrima viva” (161)—, the term *venerar* alludes to the formation of a hallowed status for the transvestite. But what purpose does a “saint” serve¹⁷ if not to be a concrete example of the imitation of Christ. Catalina de Erauso’s life is exemplary to the extent that she is the successful incarnation of an ideal, and, like any saint or martyr, instructs as to the normative behavior, which is one of sacrifice: a negation of individuality in favor of the common good. In this sense, the image of a transvestite warrior is like grist for the substantialist mill. Given Spain’s contradictory assimilation into capitalism, drawing in its tow the seigniorial ideology that ran the absolutist state, the strangeness of Catalina could not be left to stand on its own. Constituted authority had to wrest control of an image that actually belonged to the opposite ideological tendency. In this way, the memoirs do not only promote Erauso’s celebrity for the purpose of securing a state pension, but they also aid Church and State in harnessing the figure of Catalina in the service of Empire, as the icon of a good soldier and citizen. For this reason, upon arriving in Rome, her name is inscribed in a book indicating her status as “Roman citizen,” giving voice to Spain’s “civilizing” mission.

The disproportion between the narrative of growth that one encounters in *Historia* and the rearticulation of this narrative (within the narrative), occurring from the confessional scene onward, paves the way for the questioning of a deeper contradiction, which the narrative itself obscures, namely that between the ideological formation of the subject and her real conditions of existence, for how can Catalina defend/speak her own “life,” if that life only exists to serve a social requirement? Even when Catalina attempts to guard the legitimacy of this life in the final chapter in what would, upon a perfunctory reading of this chapter, appear to be a minor quarrel with two prostitutes who turn Catalina into

an object of derision, is it not history that speaks yet here too? Though it is reasonable to argue that more tangible institutions like Church and Monarchy, and even more abstract but no less real institutions such as the patriarchy, act as constraints on individual behavior, it is also no less true that Catalina is ‘inoculated’ with the meaning of life in the 17th century. *Dónde es el camino?* the ladies ask. They summon her with this somewhat ambiguous, yet inflammatory, question preceded by their laughter. Why does the question aggravate Catalina? Is it charged with sarcasm and ridicule about her appearance, or rather with envy and resentment at her success? One must admit that unlike the Italian ladies, Catalina has in a certain sense escaped her ‘destiny,’ a theme that could not be more evident than in the celebratory rites held in her honor in the Holy City:

Hízose el caso allí notorio, y fue notable el concurso de que me vide cercado, de personajes, príncipes, obispos, cardenales, y *el lugar que me hallé abierto donde quería*, de suerte que en mes y medio que estuve en Roma, fue raro el día en que no fuese convidado y regalado de príncipes; y especialmente un viernes fui convidado y regalado por unos caballeros, por orden particular y encargo del senado romano, y me asentaron en un libro por ciudadano romano . . . Y todos, o los más, me mostraron notable agrado y caricia, y me hablaron muchos (173-4, my emphasis).

Obviously, Catalina has managed to carve out a *space* amid the “disorder” of the transition: *el lugar que me hallé abierto donde quería*, she says. But, more importantly, has not *doña* Catalina, a noble subsumed by capital, knowingly gained her ‘substantialist’ revenge by performing her role correctly amid the “chaos” of history? Is she not awarded tributary income and privileges without having to labor, like a proper noble? How else could these wretched ladies react? Indeed, they are a stark reminder of those who have no space or time, and are unable to reflect the “redemptive” image that their society prescribes for them, living their lives through resentment. In all fairness, Catalina does

not have it only her way, as the episode of her confession attests. Church authorities cannot take Catalina, or anyone else for that matter, as a mere literal sign (viz. a woman *standing in* for a man). In good form, they must save the signs in this world by reinterpreting them as signatures in which God's intentionality is expressed. As substantialism considers crossdressing a sin, and only permissible under special circumstances, the "oddity" of Erauso has to be translated as a miraculous phenomenon, an intervention of the divine in the world to perpetuate a Holy order. In this sense, her actions in the conquests of Chile and Peru make her a suitable icon for substantialism with respect to the fate of the Spanish empire, for this reconfiguration of Erauso supports its ideology as the one that is to prevail throughout the course of imperial expansion. This explains why Pedro del Valle, who I mention at the outset, like others entrenched in feudalizing ideology, were impervious to her transvestitism, which can easily be accommodated to the status quo even as it is embroiled in the contradictory, though resolute, development of an emergent capitalist Empire.¹⁸

In order to fully validate Catalina's transvestitism, the Church must make it a public spectacle, one that aims to shape collective consciousness and give rise to consent: "Parece que el caso se divulgó, y era inmenso el concurso que allí acudió, sin poder excusarse allí la entrada a personajes, por más que yo lo sentía y su ilustrísima también" (161). Perhaps both the Bishop and Catalina are complicit in building this public image from which they are inclined to benefit, albeit in different ways, as Erauso's conviction in this last line contrasts strikingly with the air of felicity with which she describes the attention that she drew in Rome. She is turned into a public figure, like an actor or prostitute, in hopes that popularity will make her less of a threat. Private transformations

beyond the control of substantialist ideology can have a devastating effect. After all, the repetition of this “miracle” by others, who may want to follow in her path, can invalidate its sacred character and have the inverse effect of making transformation artificial (i.e. the object of the will). Too much public exposure and circulation, in contrast, can put her honor at risk for which reason the Church anxiously encourages Catalina to return to her “rightful” place in the convent. It seems clear that Catalina expects that this process of consecration will eventually lead to material reward, which is why she initially concedes to her confinement. Fortunately for Catalina, there is an unpredicted turn of events: word comes from Spain affirming that she was never a professed nun to begin with, and is free to go. In spite of Bishop Julián de Cortázar’s insistence that Catalina remain in the convent of her particular religious order, she determines not to abide by conventional piety: “le dije que no tenía orden ni religión, y que trataba de volverme a mi patria, donde haría lo que pareciese más conveniente para mi salvación” (165). The term “salvación” here is emptied of any sacred connotation, for lacking religious affiliation, Erauso’s deliverance can only be understood as worldly and animal survival (Goetz 99). In this sense, I conclude that if she finally seems to resist confinement, substantialism has already made its view of her public, by which it refuses to go along with the artificiality of signs. Nonetheless, it is not for this reason that Catalina is merely an artificial or spurious construction, nor is she an expression of the Book of the World. Rather, as her autobiographical account will attest—in its irreconcilable creases and folds—Catalina is primarily an outcome of the invisible social forces that shape her ‘life’ in a moment of acute ideological strife, or what one may deem precarious times for life, even when life is here nothing more than an idiom of history.

Undoubtedly, Catalina's transvestitism serves to challenge the feudalizing ideology of her moment. But while crossdressing (alteration) is a power or potential of an ideology such as animism whose exercise allows Catalina to by-pass the strictures governing women's lives in her time (conventional existence, marriage, normative behavior, etc.), it is not the expression of a freedom, but rather the symptom of an enslavement. Indeed, with the bourgeoisie as history's protagonist, Catalina's crossdressing externalizes the objective conditions established by this social class, most importantly its ideology of freedom and possessive individualism. Catalina does not crossdress because she identifies with the bourgeoisie and its struggle against the obstacles of feudal society. She only "identifies" with its unconscious pre-suppositions, which ensure the meaning of her crossdressing, for becoming a possessive individual only makes sense as a man. That Catalina lived against the notion of a sacralized life with a preordained meaning through masculine guise and demeanor stands not only because women are rather an article to be possessed, but because the question of 'to be or not to be' was always located in another terrain for her, namely in a bourgeois context in which the question of 'being' as free creativity is always limited by the question of 'to have or have not.' That is, only men could 'have' insofar as capable of accessing the public sphere where, if fortune has it, they can obtain a livelihood. Thus, if Catalina's crossdressing stood to jeopardize substantialism, it is only by exercising a secular masculinity (namely Machiavellian virtù) in counterpoint to it. However, since under mercantilism one only 'is' to the extent of 'having' or 'possessing,' pursuit of a material reward became central to Erauso's narrative. Nobles can always put their faith in their lineage, but the creative individual must always prove herself, must always possess something. But ideology while

possessing is also a thing possessed, and that is why one must always ask whose language is spoken when one speaks, thinks or writes. In this sense, I have tried to make no pre-suppositions about Catalina de Erauso, about her impulses, desires or individual intentions, but only about ideology in so far as it serves as a language for the body. Certainly, what is important to identify about the figure of Erauso is not that she is a ‘transformative subject’ (indeed, in a certain sense she is) or, to the contrary, that she serves merely as a support for ideology, but rather that her transvestitism is the glyph in which one can begin to read the debacle of a whole social structure, and therein lies the real value of *Historia de la monja alférez*.

NOTES

¹ Cited in Jesús Munárriz’s “Epílogo,” to *Historia de la monja alférez: escrita por ella misma* (Madrid: Hiperión, 2000) 108.

² All references are to the following edition of the text, unless otherwise stated: *Historia de la monja alférez, Catalina de Erauso, escrita por ella misma*, ed. Ángel Esteban (Madrid: Cátedra, 2002).

³ Cf., for example, Sherry Velasco who in her *The Lieutenant Nun: Transgenderism, Lesbian Desire and, Catalina de Erauso* (Austin: U of Texas P, 2000) points out that Erauso’s “transgression” (as she calls it) has its roots in orthodoxy, for even in Fray Luis de León one finds the notion of a “manly woman” as a value (2).

⁴ In addition to my own summary treatment of these terms as ideological matrices, one can consult, for a more in-depth and exhaustive description, Juan Carlos Rodríguez, *Teoría e historia de la producción ideológica*, 2nd ed. (Madrid: Akal, 1990) as well as the subsequent texts of this still evolving research program. Rodríguez’s first and principal work is also available in English translation: *Theory and History of Ideological Production* (Newark: U of Delaware P, 2002).

⁵ Cf., for example, the work of M. E. Perry, and that of S. Velasco.

⁶ The idea is that it is no longer the Divine that gives form to things in Garcilaso’s animist lyric, but the *individual* soul: “a su medida.”

⁷ For a thorough discussion of this question, see Rodríguez, specifically the chapter section entitled “La relación Privado-Público: el mérito, la edición y las academias,” *Teoría e historia*.

⁸ *Nota bene*: both terms ‘virtú’ and ‘virile’ derive from *vir* (Lat. *man*).

⁹ Spanish literature offers a host of examples, but suffice it to mention the characterization of the nobility in the *Lazarillo de Tormes*, especially the “Prólogo” and, of course, the “Tratado tercero.”

¹⁰ For instance: “me salí a la calle sin haberla visto ni saber por dónde echar ni adónde ir”; “Tiré no sé por dónde”; and later “eché no sé por donde” (95).

¹¹ Of course, since wardrobe is a convention, and much of what we call behavior is ideological, one ought not to hold unambiguously that Catalina transforms into a Man, but rather into what her historical conjuncture deems to be manly. I am saying that Catalina does not adopt the characteristics of Man as an abstract —but false— universal, but rather man in his existing spatio-temporal coordinates, and in so doing reproduces some of the more objectionable aspects of modernity’s Man —objectionable that is from a moral axiology that is opposed not only to historically specific codification of masculinity but the modern individual itself.

¹² Obviously, Catalina does not deviate from this formulation, for while her crossdressing is a violation of substantialist norms, her obsession with clothing, their quality and so forth, rampant throughout *Historia*, is indeed substantialist and indicative of lingering nobiliary values. Carlos Astarita’s assertions regarding the social function of dress as a way for the nobility as a class to reproduce itself are insightful in this respect:

...dress had the basic social function of making one’s social rank and evincing one’s power. Beyond their ordinary usefulness, then, these fabrics constituted a language, acquiring a semiotic value as prestige goods with a role in social relations and especially in the symbolism through which the lords demonstrated their power (110).

¹³ Moreover, it is useful to point out again that the way that the body signifies in *Historia de la monja alférez* is through the animist thematic of the spiritualized body, exemplified in, among other ideological phenomena, Shakespeare’s comedies, where (sexual) transvestitism is commonplace —here the actors can wear the mask or costume of the opposite sex, because ultimately they are not determined by their nature, but by ‘love’ for the soul of the world. This figure of a ‘beautiful soul,’ which in animism is considered relatively separate from the world, but capable of joining the *anima mundi* through the universal force of attraction, is a theme that one encounter in not only in

Shakespeare, but in the poetic universe that extends from Petrarch through Garcilaso and Herrera to John Donne.

¹⁴ It is curious to note that this rather “mundane” book, baring notations, which point directly to commercial exchange practices, is obtained by turning the feudal Book on its head: if the feudal Book reveals the Truth of the Other world, the book (lowercase) merely becomes a facsimile of this one to the extent the it describes *only* what is available to sensuous perception.

¹⁵ For a recent contribution to the study of this significant text, see María del Mar Campos Fernández-Figares, *El caballo y el jaguar: Sobre la Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España* (Granada: Comares, 2002).

¹⁶ These lines, derived from a key work by Dutch historian Johan Huizinga, sum up the substantialist idea of an essential bond between outward appearance and inner nature (239).

¹⁷ To claim that the Church and Crown use Catalina is not to imply that she does not herself use these institutions of power in turn. It is, I think, evident that only through these institutional mechanisms can she effectively realize her merit, for only they have license to confer the sought-after reward.

¹⁸ As G. Arrighi maintains, the growth of historical capitalism with all its contradictions was relentless, despite the political attempts by Spain, the Hapsburg Imperial House and the papacy to save whatever vestiges they could of the medieval system of rule (40-44).

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