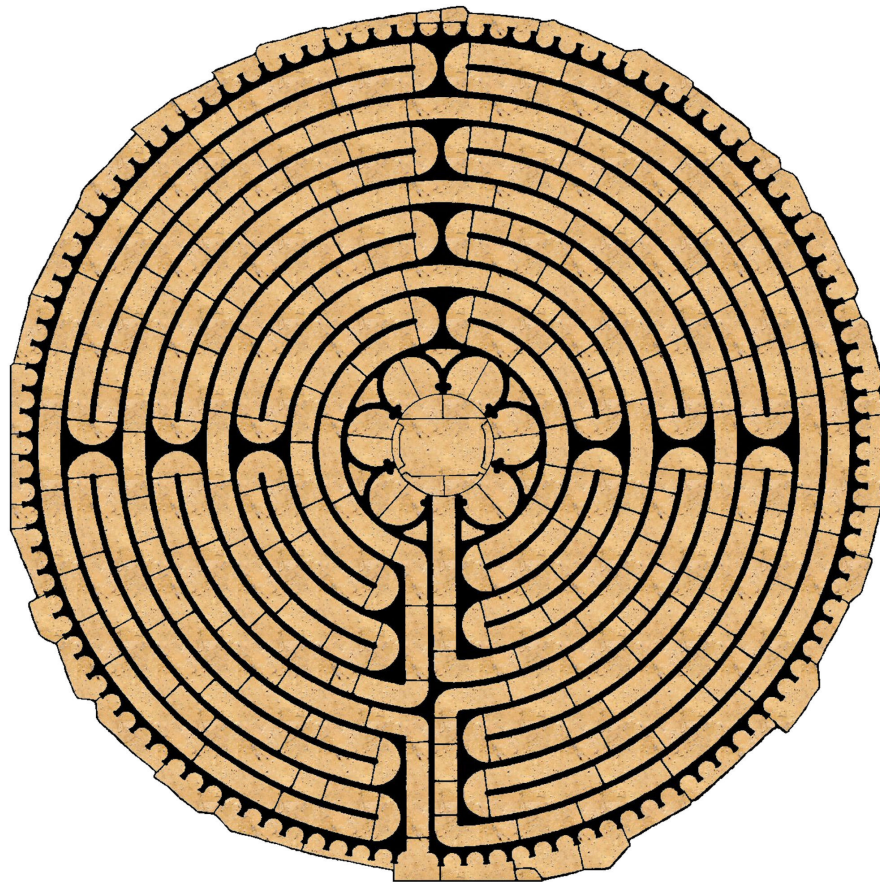


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(Dis)Arming Marital (Dis)Harmony:  
Sancho and Teresa Panza Discuss Marriage in *Don Quijote*

Stacey L. Parker Aronson  
University of Minnesota Morris

Miguel de Cervantes's *El ingenioso Don Quijote de la Mancha* is replete with images of marriage, a traditional mechanism by which early modern works end happily ever after and the relationship state to which early modern citizens aspired. However, I contend that a more nuanced and realistic portrait of an early modern marriage is effectively expressed by that between Sancho and Teresa Panza, and contemporary communication theory, specifically Cultural Discourse Analysis, will help elucidate pertinent features. In particular, I will analyze Book II, Chapter 5 in which Sancho and Teresa discuss and disagree about the future matrimonial prospects of their beloved daughter Mari Sancha, also known affectionately as Sanchica. I would like to consider this brief chapter in light of recent theories of communication to demonstrate the power dynamics and brinksmanship at play in their early modern marital relationship that is actually less authoritarian and more egalitarian than tradition might dictate. During the heated discussion surrounding Sanchica's marital prospects, both Teresa and Sancho resort to a series of linguistic strategies, including the use of proverbs, to promote their respective points of view: Teresa wants Sanchica to marry within her socio-economic station, while Sancho wants her to marry above her station to opportunistically take advantage of the benefit gained from what he believes will be his attainment of an *ínsula*.

Donal Carbaugh, who developed the theory of Cultural Discourse Analysis, considers the reciprocal relationship between communicative practice and "place" and writes that "... our communication is 'doubly placed'; it is both located in place, and, it shapes our sense of our place" (38).<sup>1</sup> That is to say that on the one hand, the communication between

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<sup>1</sup> I wish to express my sincere appreciation to Nadezhda Sotirova, Associate Professor of Communication, Media, and Rhetoric at the

Sancho and Teresa is a product and a reflection of the place they inhabit: their rural agricultural village. On the other hand, the place they inhabit is mediated by and understood through their communication: “... to place as primary for communication, and to the fact that our communication is playing a formative, constitutive role in creating our sense of place” (Carbaugh 4). That is to say that, to some degree, they have the free will to interpret their position within this place in accordance with early modern cultural and gender norms along with their individual interpretations of these norms.

From what “place” does their interaction emanate? There are two geographical “places” at play in this chapter: the *ínsula* which Don Quijote promises and to which Sancho aspires, and the rural agricultural village in La Mancha, Spain “... de cuyo nombre no quiero acordarme ...” (I:1, 31)<sup>2</sup> they all inhabit. Interestingly enough, Sancho and Don Quijote both occupy the same geographic place but occupy it differently as members of different socio-economic classes. Their coming together for a series of adventures is cross-cultural or inter-cultural, frequently fraught with misunderstandings. The imaginary “place” Don Quijote chooses to inhabit harkens back to an earlier, chivalric time whereas Sancho’s “place” is alternately contemporary (like the rural agricultural village he inhabits with Teresa) and imaginary (the one he inhabits with Don Quijote). As regards the famous *ínsula*, Sancho trusts Don Quijote’s promise to reward his efforts as squire with the *ínsula*, perhaps because of his faith in the concept of *medro*, that socio-economic mobility within such a strictly hierarchical society is indeed possible. Don Quijote views the *ínsula* as part of a socio-cultural obligation, part of the medieval *noblesse oblige* that will be conferred to Sancho based on his loyalty and service. However, this same *ínsula* becomes a veritable bone of contention between the married partners. The idea of marriage in and of itself implies a sense of place: the establishment of a home, often physical, and a family to inhabit it with its implicit connotation of stability. While Sancho admits that he will miss his wife and family when he embarks on his third and final adventure, he envisions his marriage and his family,

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University of Minnesota Morris for bringing this theory to my attention and for generously discussing it with me.

<sup>2</sup> The quotes in Spanish are from the Martín de Riquer edition of *Don Quijote de la Mancha*, 2004.

specifically his daughter, as vehicles through which to demonstrate his future change in status.

Many of the marriages represented in the novel demonstrate the Herculean lengths to which individuals will go to attain their hearts' desires while often achieving upward socio-economic mobility. While the genesis of Sancho and Teresa's relationship is unknown to the readers of the novel (we do not know under what circumstances they met, fell in love if they even did, and married), they appear to have many material needs but few overt material aspirations until Don Quijote intervenes to plant them in Sancho's head with talk of the *ínsula* as a reward for his service as squire.

According to Carbaugh's communicative practice of Cultural Discourse Analysis, five discursive hubs form the bases of analysis: (1) identity, (2) action, (3) feeling, (4) relating, (5) and dwelling, all of which "... constitute and form a discursive web of who we are (about identity), what we are doing (regarding action), how we feel about things (our emotion), how we are linked to others (in relations), and the nature of things (by dwelling there)" (Carbaugh and Cerulli 6). Two such discursive hubs with particular relevance to this analysis of Sancho and Teresa's communication with one another are the *hub of identity* and the *hub of relating*.

With regard to the *hub of identity*, it is important to know the identities of those who inhabit the place, namely Sancho and Teresa. In part we know who they are by how they choose to address each other, at times with great affection and at other times with derision, depending upon their level of disagreement. More interestingly is how they believe that they will be identified and perceived by others once they attain their anticipated change in socio-economic status and use new titles to reflect this improved status. This leads to a consideration of the hub of relating.

The *hub of relating* involves the interrelationship between characters, specifically Sancho and Teresa, but more importantly, between them and the wealthier upper-class villagers. Sancho believes that the wealthier upper-class villagers will respect them once he attains his *ínsula*. Teresa disagrees and believes that these same people will, instead, subject them and their daughter to ridicule. To understand their difference of opinion, it is helpful to consider how they differ in their perceptions of socio-economic mobility and its connection to the way in which their new titles will be perceived by others within their village community. Whereas Sancho insists that Teresa's and Sanchica's being addressed by more respectful titles—*señoría*, *don*,

*doña*—will lead to prosperity and to a more advantageous position within the village hierarchy, specifically better and more comfortable seating in the Church, Teresa expresses concern that Sanchica's well-born husband might recriminate her humble origins. She also fears public humiliation for herself within her village community in which a strict social hierarchy is observed and in which individuals are expected to remain within their respective socio-economic classes. Teresa fears, perhaps with good reason, that any changes to her given socio-economic class (or that which she attained originally through her marriage to Sancho) will be met with derision and criticism. She is suspicious of the ability of *medro* to improve her status within the village community and the way in which her neighbors perceive her.

—... y con este nombre [Teresa] me contento, sin que me le pongan un *don* encima, que pese tanto, que no le pueda llevar, y no quiero dar que decir a los que me vieren andar vestida a lo condesil o a lo de gobernadora, que luego dirán: “¡Mirad qué entonada va la pazpuerca! Ayer no se hartaba de estirar de un copo de estopa, y iba a misa cubierta la cabeza con la falda de la saya, en lugar de manto, y ya hoy va con verdugado, con broches y con entono, como si no la conociésemos.” (II:5, 597)

—... Por el pobre todos pasan los ojos como de corrida, y en el rico los detienen; y si el tal rico fue un tiempo pobre, allí es el murmurar y el maldecir, y el peor perseverar de los maldicientes, que los hay por esas calles a montones, como enjambres de abejas. (II:5, 598)

Sancho disagrees vehemently with her assessment of the situation.

—... De donde nace que cuando vemos alguna persona bien aderezada y con ricos vestidos compuesta y con pompa de criados, parece que por fuerza nos mueve y convida a que la tengamos respecto, puesto que la memoria en aquel instante nos represente alguna bajeza en que vimos a la tal persona; la cual ignominia, ahora sea de pobreza o de linaje, como ya pasó, no es, y solo es lo que vemos presente. Y si este a quien la fortuna sacó del borrador de su

bajeza (que por estas mismas razones lo dijo el padre) a la alteza de su prosperidad, fuere bien criado, liberal y cortés con todos, y no se pusiere en cuentos con aquellos que por antigüedad son nobles, ten por cierto, Teresa, que no habrá quien se acuerde de lo que fue, sino que reverencien lo que es, si no fueren los invidiosos, de quien ninguna próspera fortuna está segura. (II:5, 598-99)

Teresa and Sancho regard the concept of *medro* differently, and the complexity of their communication is made explicit early on when Teresa comments on the occasional indecipherability of Sancho's speech.

—No os entiendo, marido—replicó ella—, y no sé qué queréis decir [...]. (II:5, 594)

—Mirad, Sancho—replicó Teresa—: después que os hiciste miembro de caballero andante habláis de tan rodeada manera, que no hay quien os entienda. (II:5, 594)

—Yo no os entiendo, marido—replicó Teresa—; haced lo que quisiéredes, y no me quebréis más la cabeza con vuestras arengas y retóricas. (II:5, 599)

Not only does Teresa have difficulty understanding her husband's manner of speaking, a phenomenon she attributes to his association with Don Quijote, but the translator also suggests that various aspects of Sancho's speech are not realistic. Although they are a married couple cohabitating in the same rural agricultural village and co-parenting children, the nature of their communication could be classified as cross-cultural or inter-cultural, given their conflicting views of this *ínsula* and its connection to Sancho's impending role as governor and its power to improve their socio-economic standing within their rural agricultural village.

Sancho and Teresa possess different attitudes about their village as well. In a sense, Teresa conforms to gender norms about women consistent with women's enclosure within the home, family, community, and socio-economic class. While Teresa is consigned to remain at home although likely operating with an increased degree of autonomy and independence given her husband's absence, Sancho is afforded the privilege (or the

burden) of an adventure with Don Quijote. Sancho sees a way towards upward socio-economic mobility, or rather *medro*, albeit founded on an ultimately unfulfilled fantasy. Teresa Panza accurately predicts the fallacy of Sancho's aspirations.

What Sancho and Teresa bring to the table in any future marital negotiations are their most cherished and valuable assets: their children, especially their beloved daughter Sanchica. Regarding Sanchica's future nuptials, it is actually Teresa, not Sancho, who initiates the conversation. Due to Sancho's extended absences as squire to Don Quijote, having completed his first two excursions and contemplating a third, and as is typical of the same-sex parent, Teresa is the first to notice and comment on her daughter's budding sexual maturity. She tells her husband that she prefers that Sanchica marry, even unhappily as the incorporated refrain suggests, rather than succumb to her sexual desires and live dishonorably as someone's mistress.<sup>3</sup>

—... Mirad también que Mari Sancha, vuestra hija, no se morirá si la casamos; que me va dando barruntos que *desea tanto tener marido* como vos deseáis verse con gobierno; y, en fin en fin, mejor parece la hija mal casada que bien abarraganada. (II:5, 595, my emphasis)

Teresa fears her daughter's loss of reputation, especially within their rural agricultural village, a situation that might diminish her future marital prospects. Marriage is the natural condition to which young people, both young women and young men, are expected to assume. It is at this point that Sancho joins in to discuss and argue with Teresa over the socio-economic class of Sanchica's potential future husband.

During the heated discussion surrounding Sanchica's marital prospects, both Teresa and Sancho resort to a series of identifiable linguistic strategies to promote their respective points of view. Mariló Vigil

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<sup>3</sup> There may be some points of intersection with the episode of Dorotea (I:28), who also comes from a family of laborers, although her origins are more prosperous than those of Sanchica. While Dorotea admits her sexual attraction to Fernando, their sexual encounter may be seen as consensual or coerced, depending upon how the episode is interpreted. For one perspective, see Aronson.

in *La vida de las mujeres en los siglos XVI y XVII* demonstrates the varying points of view expressed by early modern Spanish moralists, all of whom endorsed the subservience of wives to their husbands as a way to ensure marital harmony, but not all of whom endorsed the corporal punishment of wives and daughters, such as fray Vicente de Mexía in *Saludable instrucción del estado del matrimonio* (1566). In order to keep her daughter from marrying above her socio-economic class and consistent with the view of many early modern Spanish moralists (Vigil 88), Teresa tries to persuade Sancho of the need for their daughter to marry within her socio-economic class; appeals to his love and protectiveness for their daughter; resists his authoritarian impulses; pretends to acquiesce to his desires, thereby demonstrating her obedience; insults her husband's intelligence; and finally, when all else fails to move her husband, cries, a stereotypically-female rhetorical strategy designed to evoke sympathy. In order to opportunistically benefit from what he erroneously believes will be his eventual attainment of an *ínsula*, Sancho tries to persuade Teresa of the need to elevate the socio-economic status of daughter/family; coerce Teresa's compliance by way of verbal insults directed at his wife; assert his paternal privilege to demand her obedience through authoritarian posturing; and finally console her when she cries and restore marital harmony by agreeing to defer his decision. The brinksmanship at play in marital relationships is evidenced in the marriage of Sancho and Teresa. Sancho desires to take advantage of his imagined future ascension to the role of governor of an *ínsula* in order to be able to secure a more socio-economically advantageous marriage for his daughter. Surprisingly, Sancho does not mention the possibility of this type of marriage for his son Sanchico.

—A buena fe—respondió Sancho—que si Dios me llega a tener algo qué de gobierno, que tengo de casar, mujer mía, a Mari Sancha tan altamente, que no la alcancen sino con llamarla señora. (II:5, 595)

Teresa resists Sancho's desire and fears that, in the event of some future marital discord, Sanchica's husband will use her low birth to recriminate and demean her. Teresa instinctively tries to protect her daughter from ridicule and humiliation, even at the expense of her future potential socio-economic security.

—Eso no, Sancho—respondió Teresa—; casadla con su igual, que es lo más acertado; que si de los zuecos la sacáis a chapines, y de saya parda de catorceno a verdugado y saboyanas de seda, y de una *Marica* y un *tú* a una *doña tal y señoría*, no se ha de hallar la mochacha, y a cada paso ha de caer en mil faltas, descubriendo la hilaza de su tela basta y grosera. (II:5, 595)

—... ¡Por cierto que sería gentil cosa casar a nuestra María con un condazo, y con caballerote que cuando se le antojase la pusiese como nueva, llamándola de villana, hija del destripaterrones y de la pelarruecas! ¡No en mis días, marido! (II:5, 595-96)

Teresa seems motivated by fear of social shaming, *lo que dirán*, and she is acutely aware of the “place” she inhabits. She even goes so far as to take the initiative to propose a series of possible husbands, local boys who will keep their daughter geographically close to the family, thereby inhabiting the same “place” and providing them a way to protect her and safeguard her welfare.

—... y con éste, que es nuestro igual, estará bien casada, y le tendremos siempre a nuestros ojos, y seremos todos unos, padres y hijos, nietos y yernos, y andará la paz y la bendición de Dios entre todos nosotros; y no casármela vos ahora en esas cortes y en esos palacios grandes, adonde ni a ella la entiendan, ni ella se entienda. (II:5, 596)

Ironically, Sancho, who pertains to the same socio-economic class as Teresa and may be motivated by a feeling of powerlessness, berates her by calling her a series of pejorative epithets, including *boba*, *bestia*, *mujer de Barrabás*, *animalia*, *mentecata*, *ignorante*. He does not resort to physical violence to guarantee her compliance, but he would have been justified in doing so to compel her obedience in early modern Spain. Both Teresa as well as their daughter Sanchica could be subjected to physical violence as a legitimate and legally-sanctioned method for domestic control. As counterintuitive as it might seem, domestic violence did not invalidate the early modern idea of a happy marriage, although for whom it was happy was up for debate. In

addition, deviant female behavior and disobedience did not always need to be rectified or punished by the state or the church. Such behavior could be carried out by men as they took domestic law into their own hands. While early modern moralists generally cautioned restraint (Ruff 132), others, such as Vicente de Mexía, placed the responsibility squarely on the shoulders of the women by encouraging them to obey their husbands so as to avoid violence (Vollendorf 51). Juan Luis Vives acknowledges women's responsibility and writes in *Instrucción de la mujer cristiana* that women should accept the inevitability of domestic violence as part of the natural order of things.<sup>4</sup>

No sólo la usanza y costumbre de nuestros antepasados, mas aún todas las leyes divinas y humanas y la misma naturaleza da voces y manda expresamente que la mujer debe ser sujeta al marido, y que le debe obedecer. En todo linaje de animales las hembras son sujetas a los machos y síguenlos, y haláganlos, y *sufren ser castigadas de ellos, y naturaleza enseñó que esto es necesario hacerse*, y que conviene que se haga. (II:IV, 225-26, my emphasis)

According to Gratian's twelfth-century *Decretum*, "A man may chastise his wife and beat her for her own correction; for she is of his household and therefore the lord may chastise his own ... so likewise the husband is bound to chastise his wife in moderation" (Staub 133).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> *The Education of a Christian Woman* was originally published in 1524 (Antwerp: Michel Hillen) in Latin as *De Institutione Feminae Christiane* and written for Mary I of England, daughter of Henry VIII and Catherine [Catalina] of Aragón. It was first translated into Spanish in 1528 and in English in 1529.

<sup>5</sup> An early modern *pliego suelto* "... letra contra las mujeres bravas, obra muy graciosa" advises a husband to beat his disobedient wife as a means to maintain his own marital happiness: "Quien quisiere tener placer / dele de palos â su mujer." It even provides a detailed protocol as to how, when, and where on the body to administer the corporal punishment and even what type of wood should be used for the cane. While he is admonished to refrain from beating his wife while she is pregnant, he is free to resume the abuse once she delivers. Also, in Exemplo XXXV "De

However, “male violence as a kind of household discipline” (130) hardly warranted attention unless it was particularly brutal.<sup>6</sup>

Fortunately for Teresa, Sancho resorts only to verbal abuse. He is not prone to physical violence, although he is often the recipient of violence.<sup>7</sup> His conundrum throughout his discussion with Teresa is that he seeks unanimity in this decision to marry Sanchica above her socio-economic class. Either he wants his wife to recognize and concede to his authority in accordance with traditional gender norms that proscribed female subordination and obedience, or he wants to maintain marital harmony in the face of a typical early modern family that was not as automatically authoritarian as one might have believed.

Moralist Juan Luis Vives admonished wives to maintain concord with their husbands by agreeing to their husbands’ points of view in all things:

Porque si esencialmente y con verdad se amaren marido y mujer, ésta será la señal: que entrambos querrán y no querrán una misma cosa. En lo cual (según aquel sabio dice) está la verdadera amistad. Ninguna discordia, ninguna rencilla, ningún desabrimiento puede haber entre los que vienen de un corazón mismo, no deseando cosas diversas, y un parecer no juzgando cosas diferentes. (II:V, 250)

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lo que contesció a un mancebo que casó con una [mujer] muy fuerte et muy brava” (131-36) of Don Juan Manuel’s *El Conde Lucanor* (1335), a Muslim husband kills a series of domesticated animals—a dog, a cat and a horse—as a means by which to effectively terrorize his new wife into submission and unquestioning obedience.

<sup>6</sup> Because domestic violence was not seen as unusual does not mean that abused women had no recourse whatsoever to judicial remedy for their unhappy situations. Lisa Vollendorf describes the situation of Bernarda Manuel. Although Bernarda confessed to Judaizing to avoid torture by the Inquisition, she mounted a robust defense by framing herself as a victim of an abusive and mentally unstable husband.

<sup>7</sup> In addition to being the recipient of physical violence enacted by others, Sancho self-imposes a regimen of physical violence—self-flagellation—as a means to disenchant Dulcinea (II:35).

Despite the prevailing wisdom popularized by early modern scholars about Spanish gender norms that proscribed female subordination and obedience, early modern women throughout the Iberian Peninsula and in Latin America did not necessarily conform to what were believed to be fairly rigid understandings of gender norms. Teresa refuses to give her consent, demonstrating the power she asserts within her own home and her own community.

Some scholars have attributed the nature of their marital relationship to a reversal of gender roles. Maurice Molho opines that “behind that quick-witted country wife of Sancho Panza hides a terrible figure capable of inverting masculine virility” (248). Wolfgang Mieder, in his analysis of the use of proverbs, notes that Teresa’s use of one particular proverb—“viva la gallina, aunque sea con su pepita” (II:5, 594-95)—“... has to be understood as somewhat of a demasculinization of Sancho” (55).<sup>8</sup>

Moralists blamed men’s perceived feminization during the early modern period in Spain for a host of economic and social ills and encouraged men to “man up” by divesting themselves of the fashionable trappings of the elite, including wigs, make up, and plucked eyebrows along with foppish fashion. Yet Montserrat Pérez-Toribio finds this attribution far too simple in the case of Sancho and Teresa: “Hablar de un simple trasvase carnavalesco de roles a partir de los cuales Sancho se feminiza y Teresa se masculiniza *no acredita la más que complementaria intermediación de Teresa en la economía y gerencia familiar*” (Pérez-Toribio 185, my emphasis).

Other scholars assert that traditional gender norms were not always what they seemed to be. Pérez-Toribio writes of Teresa’s economic autonomy as she governs her home in the absence of her husband. Historians Mary Elizabeth Perry and Blanca Morell Peguero also document women’s increasing economic autonomy, as husbands emigrated to find economic prosperity elsewhere.<sup>9</sup> With regard to early modern Galicia,

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<sup>8</sup> For studies regarding the use of proverbs in *Don Quijote*, see Ciallella, Mieder, and Sullivan.

<sup>9</sup> Also see Mary Elizabeth Perry’s snapshot of XVI and XVII century Sevilla “as men took on the important Counter-Reformation work of proselytizing non-Christians and subduing colonial territories, women assumed more responsibility at home. In fact, much of the life of this city

historian Allyson M. Poska concurs that women's roles were much more complex.

As first their husbands, brothers, and sons set off for distant places, these women adeptly managed without men [...]. In much of Galicia, women held the purse strings and made key decisions about friends and family, and their prerogative to do so was acknowledged by all the parties involved. Their use of property to assert authority over others presents a complex view of peasant women as economic and social actors in their families and communities. Moreover, cultural norms and traditions socialized women into their critical role as heads of households. As a result, early modern Galicia was not merely a land without men, as the elderly man described it to an anthropologist; Galicia was a land of women. (*Women and Authority* 40)

Similarly, Poska also documents that early modern women throughout the peninsula and in Latin America did not necessarily conform to what were believed to be rigid understandings of gender norms with regard to sex, despite the prevailing wisdom popularized by early modern scholars that chastity was the norm for women. In particular, sex before marriage was a fairly accepted practice among early modern Galician women who actually had far more personal and economic autonomy due to their husbands' long absences at sea, and children born out of wedlock in Galicia were not stigmatized to the extent previously thought ("An Ocean Apart" 40-41; *Women and Authority*). Teresa's concern that Sanchica is coming into her sexual maturity is what leads her to initiate the discussion about their daughter's marital prospects marriage with Sancho.

While Sancho tries repeatedly to gain Teresa's compliance, even going so far as to try to assert his authority as husband—"Y cácese a Mari Sancha *con quien yo quisiere*, ..." (II:5, 596, my emphasis)—, she tries to negotiate with Sancho by offering a truce, acquiescing to his dream to elevate his family out of poverty through the vehicle of their son: "... que

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was carried out by women without the help of men" (14). Blanca Morell Peguero documents other women from Sevilla who founded "sus propias compañías para negociar en las mercancías más variadas" (77).

llevéis con vos a vuestro hijo Sancho, para que desde agora le enseñéis a tener gobierno; que bien es que los hijos hereden y aprendan los oficios de sus padres” (II:5, 599). With her daughter, she remains resolute. Their differences of opinion extend to the ability of their children to serve as vehicles to improve the socio-economic well-being of the family. Sancho is willing to gamble his daughter, Sanchica; Teresa, her son. Perhaps for the sake of her own marital harmony, Teresa later feigns acquiescence but makes it clear to Sancho and to the readers that she does not consent, telling her husband

—... Vos haced lo que quisiéredes, ora la hagáis duquesa, o princesa; pero séos decir que *no será ello con voluntad ni consentimiento mío*. (II:5, 596-97, my emphasis)

When Sancho realizes that unanimity is unlikely if not impossible with Teresa, he tries unsuccessfully to attain her compliance by persuasion with what he believes to be reasoned arguments, and then by coercion through verbal abuse and derogatory epithets, and finally by the assertion of his paternal privilege within the household. Just when he thinks that he and Teresa have breached the impasse, he summarizes his assessment of the situation, expecting her to agree, and she responds in a complex series of utterances.

—En efecto, quedamos de acuerdo—dijo Sancho—de que ha de ser condesa nuestra hija.

—El día que yo la viere condesa—respondió Teresa—, ése haré cuenta que la entierro; pero otra vez os digo que hagáis lo que os diere gusto; que con esta carga nacemos las mujeres, de estar obedientes a sus maridos, aunque sean unos porros. (II:5, 599)

The complexity of Teresa’s double- (or triple-) voiced discourse allows her to vehemently disagree with this decision (“—El día que yo la viere condesa—respondió Teresa, ése haré cuenta que la entierro”), then to appear to concede to male spousal prerogative in the decision to marry a child, specifically a daughter in this case (“—... pero otra vez os digo que hagáis lo que os diere gusto; que con esta carga nacemos las mujeres, de estar obedientes a sus maridos”), and finally to insult him (“—... aunque

[sus maridos] sean unos porros”). Although she appears to capitulate to Sancho’s argument in favor of a socio-economically advantageous marriage for Sanchica, Teresa’s insult successfully divorces herself from any responsibility for a potentially unsound matrimonial decision for her daughter. Her subsequent tears successfully conclude any further conversation about Sanchica’s future marital prospects. While Sancho may have technically had the last word, Teresa wins the argument.

Their differing opinions with respect to the *ínsula* sheds lights on their marriage and the negotiations in which they engage. For Sancho the *ínsula* represents the upward socio-economic mobility he hopes to attain through his socio-economically-advantageous affiliation with Don Quijote. For Teresa the *ínsula* represents a geographic separation from what she knows and from her daughter whose more socio-economically advantageous marriage will separate her from her family and their vigilance and protection. What is surprising is that when Teresa finally learns that Sancho has at last attained his coveted albeit imaginary *ínsula* in Book II, Chapter 50, she seems to express a change of heart and welcomes some of the modest trappings of this upward socio-economic mobility, most specifically a coral necklace gifted to her by the Duchess. When the Duchess dispatches her page to convey the news to Teresa of Sancho’s new position as governor of the *ínsula*, Teresa meets the page’s feigned deference towards her with great suspicion.

—¡Ay, señor mío, quítese de ahí: no haga eso —respondió Teresa—  
; que yo no soy nada palaciega, sino una pobre labradora, hija de un  
estripaterrones y mujer de un escudero andante, y no de  
gobernadora alguno! (II:50, 928)

He is finally able to persuade her of the sincerity of his regard for her and the veracity of his message. Together with a letter from Sancho and Sancho’s fine hunting suit, the page presents a letter from the Duchess herself along with a necklace of coral beads—*la sarta de corales con extremos de oro*—intended as a gift from the Duchess to Teresa, from one noble wife to

another.<sup>10</sup> Upon hearing the Duchess's letter, replete with expressions of friendship and a promise to marry Sanchica in a manner befitting her improved albeit imaginary socio-economic status, Teresa is moved by the apparent sincerity of her words, oblivious to the fact that the Duchess is engaged in a game to ridicule them all.

—¡Ay —dijo Teresa en oyendo la carta—, y qué buena y qué llana y qué humilde señora! [...] y veis aquí donde esta buena señora, con ser duquesa, *me llama amiga, y me trata como si fuera su igual*, que igual la vea yo con el más alto campanario que hay en la Mancha. (II:50, 929-30, my emphasis)

Teresa's previous experience with the wealthier upper-class villagers leads her to doubt their good intentions and acceptance of her.

... y no las hidalgas que en este pueblo se usan, que piensan que por ser hidalgas no las ha de tocar el viento, y van a la iglesia con tanta fantasía como si fuesen las mismas reinas, que no parece sino que tienen a deshonra el mirar a una labradora; [...]. (II:50, 929)

Teresa reciprocates the Duchess's gesture, dictating letters to be sent to both the Duchess and to Sancho and sending a gift of the locally-produced acorns the Duchess had requested. In her letter to the Duchess, she asks that Sancho send her some money as she envisions traveling to the court in luxury as the vehicle through which to demonstrate her husband's new position, much to the chagrin of others who might deride her unexpected socio-economic mobility.

*Yo, ... estoy determinada, ... yéndome a la corte a tenderme en un coche, para quebrar los ojos a mil envidiosos que ya tengo; y así, suplico a vuesa excelencia mande a mi marido me envíe algún dinerillo, y que sea algo qué; porque en la corte son los gastos grandes: que el pan vale a real y la carne, la libra, a treinta maravedís, que es un juicio, ... si yo y*

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<sup>10</sup> "La sarta de corales" is the title chosen by Concha Espina to the section dedicated to Teresa Panza in her essay "Mujeres del Quijote," published in 1916.

*mi hija andamos orondas y pomposas en la corte, vendrá a ser conocido mi marido por mí más que yo por él, siendo forzoso que pregunten muchos: “¿Quién son estas señoras deste coche?” Y un criado mío responder: “La mujer y la hija de Sancho Panza, gobernador de la ínsula Barataria”; y desta manera será conocido Sancho, y yo seré estimada, [...].* (II:52, 947, my emphases)

In her letter to Sancho she asks her husband to send her some pearls if they are considered fashionable on the *ínsula*: “Envíame tú algunas sartas de perlas, si se usan en esa ínsula.” (II:52, 948). Teresa’s new-found interest in the trappings of wealth and her apparent change of heart emanate, not from Sancho’s material success per se, but from the Duchess’s corroboration of Sancho’s success and her seemingly kind gesture towards Teresa, specifically the letter and the necklace. Consistent with Carbaugh’s *hub of relating*, the interrelationship between characters is paramount to Teresa’s understanding—or misunderstanding, in this case—of the Duchess’s offer of friendship. Teresa believes that her “place” in the wider world has changed to allow for the real possibility of upward socio-economic mobility, opened to her by the Duchess’s gesture and by Sancho’s success. What is ironic and poignant is that the Duchess’s gesture is in reality as cruel as that carried out by the wealthier upper-class members of her village. Teresa is blissfully unaware that she, too, along with both Don Quijote and Sancho, is the subject of ridicule. Apparently, she was right to trust her intuitions. Her initial suspicions regarding her and Sanchica’s reception and consideration by wealthier upper-class villagers proves to be true, and her initial reluctance to assume the trappings of wealth and prosperity is well-founded.

Teresa’s subversive linguistic strategy used with Sancho when they discuss and argue about their daughter’s marital prospects is born of a society vested in male control and female subordination and obedience. And yet, it reveals the extent of her agency and, to a lesser degree, her autonomy within an early modern marital relationship. Even though moralist Juan Luis Vives admonished wives to acquiesce to their husbands’ points of view, he does suggest that their obedience emanate from a sense of mutual admiration and affection. However, Teresa resists, and her argument ultimately wins the day. The episode in Book II, Chapter 5 concludes with Sancho’s acquiescing to her desires—and not her to his—

and with no mention of the subject Sanchica's marriage again, at least *by them*, for the remainder of the novel. This linguistic interplay is likely a well-rehearsed ritual in which they have previously engaged and one that defines their preferred or customary mode of communication within their marriage. As Carbaugh reminds, "... our communication is 'doubly placed'; it is both located in place, and, it shapes our sense of our place" (38). While their communication with each other is a product of the place they inhabit—their rural agricultural village with its accompanying social customs and gender norms—it also shapes this same place by demonstrating more relational flexibility than one might imagine. Their conflicting views of their daughter's future marital prospects correlate to their conflicting views of the *ínsula*, together with its connection to Sancho's impending role as governor, and their respective beliefs in the power of *medro*.

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