

LABERINTO

AN ELECTRONIC JOURNAL
OF EARLY MODERN HISPANIC
LITERATURE AND CULTURES



VOLUME 17
2024

LABERINTO JOURNAL 17 (2024)

ISSN: 1090-8714

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Laberinto is sponsored by the Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies (ACMRS), affiliated with the Spanish Section at the School of International Letters and Cultures (SILC), Arizona State University, and published in Tempe, Arizona. Arizona Board of Regents©

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Early Modern Gender Fluidity in the Episode of Dorotea in
Don Quijote de la Mancha

Stacey Parker Aronson
University of Minnesota Morris

“Sir, or Madam, chuse you whether;
Nature twists them both together.”
—François de Chavigny de la Bretonniere,
The Gallant Hermaphrodite, An Amorous Novel (1688)

In San Juan de la Cruz’s poem “Noche oscura del alma,” the poetic voice refers to the transformation from female to male that occurs as the “Amada en el amado transformada.” As exemplified by this passage, gender identity is demonstrated to have a potentially more fluid representation in some exemplars of early modern Spanish literature. In this verse the female beloved is demonstrated to have transformed by way of a mystical spiritual experience into the very male beloved, their respective and distinct gender identities blending linguistically and poetically. Such an example of gender fluidity, while admittedly operating along a binary continuum and preferencing a male identity, does seem to allow for a more complex and nuanced representation of gender identity than one would expect in early modern culture.

The religious authority Fray Agustín de Torres narrates a similar story of gender transformation in a *relación* or *pliego suelto* (1617), designated as a *carta* (letter) and also reproduced by Francisco de Lyra. After having spent twelve years in a convent, the protagonist María (Magdalena) Muñoz, a thirty-four-year-old nun from Úbeda, seems to have miraculously and spontaneously transformed from a woman into a man after having participated in some strenuous physical activity.¹

y vn dia haziendo vn exercicio de fuerça fe le rompio vna tela por donde le falia la naturaleza de hōbre como los demas ... [and one day while engaging in strenuous physical activity a veil ruptured from which there emerged a male sexual organ like that of any man ... (My translation)]

There are numerous biological and physiological conditions that could result in such a transformation,² seemingly always from what was considered a less to a more perfect iteration, that is to say from female to male. Most often this transformation is verified by those in attendance through the act of touching

and palpating their genitalia. Muñoz's word or belief is not sufficient proof of this transformation. The obsessive need to touch and palpate the genitalia seems to belie a commonly held belief that human sexuality remained largely under wraps in the early modern period. The anatomical detail with which the religious authorities describe and the obsessiveness with which they examine Muñoz's body, ostensibly a female body, suggest that Muñoz's testimony or their vision alone is not sufficient to provide the evidence required.

Y el dia de fan Francisco entramos en el Conuento de las monjas los dos, y en achaque de tomarle fu dicho a folas en la celda donde estava encerrada, lo vimos con los ojos, y palpamos con las manos, y hallamos fer hombre perfecto en la naturaleza de hombre, y que no tenia de muger fino un agujerillo como vn piñon mas arriba del lugar donde dizen que las mugeres tienen fu flexu a pie del que la auia falido de hōbre. [And on the day of Saint Francis we two entered the convent of the nuns, and under the pretext of taking her testimony in secret in the cell where she was cloistered, we witnessed it with our own eyes, and we palpated it with our own hands, and we found him to be a perfect man in every respect, and he had no female organs with the exception of a small hole the size of a pine nut above the place where they say that women have their sexual organ and below the place where the male sexual organ had appeared. (My translation)]³

As the appendages of priests and nuns whose actions are not perceived as corrupting in the verification of Muñoz's transformation, hands are essential to the sense of touch. In *De Sensu*, Aristotle calls touch "the indispensable sense" (Harvey 4) and in *De Anima* notes that, because it is common to all animals, it should be considered the "primary form of sense" (413b; Harvey 4). Carolyn Nadeau notes that "... Humanists privileged sight and sound as 'higher' senses but also acknowledged, via the convivial feast, that the 'lower' senses of taste, touch, and smell are also key to the pursuit of knowledge" (141). The importance of hands emanates from the human beings erect bipedality. Marjorie O'Rourke Boyle comments that "Aristotle erred in asserting that humans had hands because they were intelligent; Anaxagoras was, perhaps, more correct in stating that humans were intelligent because they had hands" ("Senses of Touch" xiii). In the absence of certain body parts, she notes that hands could even substitute: "... for the eyes in the groping of the blind, for the tongue in the signs of the mute" ("Deaf Signs" 24).

Muñoz's genital transformation brings to light other previously identified physical characteristics that suggested a female gender identity, such as an underdeveloped vagina and urethra, the lack of menstruation, and the lack of breast development. All of these physical characteristics are corroborated by

witnesses, including Muñoz's father and the nuns in the convent. In fact, Muñoz long deceived the nuns with whom they cohabitated by applying blood from penitential self-flagellation to the bed to simulate menstrual blood and to avoid their teasing and condemnation.

Dixonos como por ser muger cerrada, y que no tenia mas de aquel pequeño agujero fe auia metido monja, y ni tenia fu padre otro hijo, ni hija. [She said that because she had such a small vagina with nothing more than that small hole, she chose to become a nun, and her father had no other child, neither son nor daughter. (My translation)]

Confessó que jamas la auia venido su mes: y porque las monjas no le llamassen marimacho, que quando fe disciplinava hazia ostentacion de la fangre en las camilas, diziendo estava con fu regla, miramos los pechos, y con fer de treynta y quatro años, no los tenia mas que vna tabla. [She confessed that she had never menstruated; and so that the nuns wouldn't berate her by calling her butch, when she scourged herself, she showed off the blood saying that it was from her period, we examined her breasts, and given that she was 34 years old, they were as flat as a tablet. (My translation)]

The spontaneous development of male genitalia is then followed by or provokes other physical changes typically associated with stereotypically biological males, such as beard growth and voice deepening.

En feys, o siete dias que le auia falido el sexu de hombre, le començaua a negregear el boço, y fe le mudó la voz muy grueffa. [In six or seven days after the appearance of the male genitalia, a beard began to grow, and her voice deepened. (My translation)]

This fascination with physical verification is seen today in the public's curiosity towards the genitalia of transgender or intersexed individuals and whether their genitals are pre- or post-operative.

Gender identity is considered by some to be an arbitrary social construct (Soyer 5).⁴ In François Soyer's study *Ambiguous Gender in Early Modern Spain and Portugal: Inquisitors, Doctors and the Transgression of Gender Norms*, nearly all of the cases to which he refers through Inquisitorial records include evidence that the individuals were subjected (or submitted) to a physical, often manual, examination of their genitalia to verify their respective gender identities. Cathy McClive suggests that "the notions of masculinity and femininity adopted by early modern Europeans were 'seated in the genitalia'" (65) and demonstrated a physical manifestation. Perhaps this notion is still the norm to some degree and

consistent with the idea that intersexed or transgender individuals are not truly transitioned until their genitalia matches their gender identification.⁵ While there were only rudimentary and potentially dangerous surgical options for early modern intersexed or transgender individuals,⁶ there was a need for the genitalia to match to conform to the society's expectations and be functional in the societal imperative to produce offspring (McClive 46).

Barbara Fuchs's *Passing for Spain: Cervantes and the Fictions of Identity* addresses "first, the resistant fluidity of individual identity in the [Early Modern] period and, second, the ways in which that fluidity undermines a collective identity based on exclusion and difference" (3) and, therefore, "challenges the very notion of a transparent, easily classified identity on which the state can rely for exclusionary purposes" (7). As Fuchs's analyses deal with the act of passing as a conscious act designed to exclude and differentiate, early modern moralists and ecclesiastical authorities expressed particular concern regarding the fluidity of maleness and masculinity. As I summarize in my article, "Do Clothes Really Make the (Wo)Man? Male to Female Cross-Dressing and Transnatural Transformations on the Insula Barataria in *Don Quijote*," moralists criticized upper-class men's effeminizing adoption of what would have been considered female attire and beauty practices and deemed such habits responsible for Spain's military and moral decline (44-45).

Muñoz was not actively passing, and their transformation purportedly happened unbeknownst to them. Two infamous cases of more active or intentional passing are those of Catalina de Erauso⁷ and Elena/Eleno (or Elenx) Céspedes.⁸ Catalina de Erauso, known as the Lieutenant Nun, was able to avoid the punishment due to the public attention she garnered by her impressive military exploits and her insistence upon her virginity and previous status as a nun. As Mary Elizabeth Perry notes, "Neither simply woman nor man, she [Erauso] was both and all, a sexual anomaly, a circus freak, a symbol of nature undone and amazed, a paradox of boundaries violated but hymen intact" (407).

Elena/o/x Céspedes was a mulatto, formerly enslaved person, and practicing surgeon who alleged intersexuality to explain why, as Elena, she married and gave birth to a child and later, as Eleno, she married a woman and, therefore, fell under the scrutiny of the Inquisition.

... the intersexed were increasingly policed by legal and medical authorities, who sought to determine whether a hermaphrodite was female or male. Once sex was assigned, the person could enjoy "all of the prerogatives of that sex." With sodomy's criminalization, which dates to before the Renaissance in Europe and appears in a number of Inquisition cases, hermaphroditism moved from the arena of unusual *physiology* into that of unnatural or transgressive behavior. (Vollendorf 19; Daston and Park "The Hermaphrodite" 123-24)

What seems to have provoked the ire of both the secular and the ecclesiastical authorities and brought Elena/o/x to the attention of the Inquisition was the potential instability and mutability of an intersexed individual's gender identification. As Anne Fausto-Sterling notes,

... all over Europe the sharp distinction between male and female was at the core of systems of law and politics. The rights of inheritance, forms of judicial punishments, and the right to vote and participate in the political system were all determined in part by sex. (*Sexing the Body* 35)

While intersexuality was acknowledged albeit poorly understood, the intersexed individual was expected to determine with which gender to identify and maintain that gender identification for life or face severe punishment or death (Fausto-Sterling "Five Sexes" 23). What was problematic for Elena/o/x Céspedes, for example, was that s/he (they) changed gender identification over time. As a woman, Elena/o/x married and gave birth to a child. Later s/he (they) identified as a man and remarried a woman, thereby running afoul of the Inquisition. Kathleen P. Long provides a succinct yet detailed explanation of the understanding of intersexuality in "Early Modern Scientific Accounts of Hermaphroditism," and explains that, in order to be an active participant in the fabric of early modern culture and to be inscribed within the social order, one needed an immutable gender identification (4).

In his study of the evolution of "trans" words, Joseph Gamble identifies the introduction of "trans" words—specifically "transexion" and "transfeminated" to refer to the change from female to male—in Sir Thomas Browne's *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* (1646) to account for such transformations (Gamble 26-27). In contemporary times, an alternative gender identity could be described by an evolving repertoire of terms including but not limited to non-binary, queer, gender fluid, genderqueer, transsexual, transgender, etc.⁹ However, in the early modern period, the understanding of gender identity would have been much more limited and limiting. Intersexed individuals were required by societal norms and by ecclesiastical and legal practice to choose from and align with one end of the binary spectrum or the other. An identity which occupied a place between or outside of the spectrum was not acceptable and would have been considered heretical, including the possibility of a more fluid or modulating gender identification. Kathleen P. Long references the complex way in which the intersexed individual was simultaneously viewed and feared by early modern society.

The intersexual is celebrated and reviled, alternately a monster and a god, thus reflecting ambivalence towards the rigid gender roles imposed by the law as well as towards what has been declared by law and by the Church to be sexual deviance. The omnipresence of the hermaphrodite

in most aspects of Renaissance culture suggests *attraction towards sexual ambiguity as well as fear of transgression of sexual roles*. (Long 5, my emphasis)

The idea that an individual might be able to determine their own categorization was a revolutionary one.

Don Quijote contains myriad scenes of transvestism and cross-dressing (both female to male and male to female) for comedic or dramatic effect by which individuals present as different genders than the ones to which they were born. However, one particularly evocative scene reveals a minute rhetorical space that seems to allow for the possibility of a non-binary gender fluid identification, or that an individual might determine or self-select the gender identity that the individual prefers to assume or present. In the iconic scene in Book I, Chapter 28, in which the priest, the barber Maese Nicolás, and Cardenio first encounter Dorotea, she is dressed as a young man. Surprisingly, they have no need to touch her to verify her gender identity as the attractiveness of her feet, legs, hair, and face serve as telltale erogenous signs that she is a woman, despite presenting as a man, albeit not very convincingly to those surreptitiously watching her. In addition, to have subjected her to a physical trespass on her body would have dishonored her, and they are honorable men. Although Dorotea's attempt at "passing" is not convincing to her unintended audience, it does not invalidate the identity or identities she may wish to assume.

What is significant for this analysis is that the priest addresses her in a way that appears to allow her the agency to determine for herself which gender identity she prefers to assume: "Así que, señora mía, o señor mío, *o lo que vos quisierdes ser, ...*" (I: 28, 277, my emphasis).¹⁰ Perhaps he makes this comment to allow her to maintain her disguise, therefore avoiding further humiliation for Dorotea whose situation they do not yet know but which can be assumed to be embarrassing to say the least? Or perhaps he opens a small rhetorical space in which there is the possibility that she might choose to which gender identity she prefers to adhere, at least for the moment? While Dorotea is not represented as an intersexed or transgender individual, as were Muñoz and Elena/o/x Céspedes, the fluidity of her performative gender identity, along with the priest's seemingly innocuous comment, allows the early modern (and contemporary) reader to entertain a momentous possibility: that early modern iterations of gender identity are potentially mutable, and that Dorotea has been granted the prerogative by the priest, the representative of ecclesiastical authority, to determine which one she will assume, something along the binary or something else altogether ("... lo que vos quisierdes ser, ..."). The presence of the second conjunction "o" in the Spanish version suggests a third possibility beyond that of the binary identification of female or male, or perhaps something existing between the two. An understanding of a non-binary identity did not fit neatly within the early modern understanding

of gender identity. It is even more surprising that it is the priest, whom we expect to enunciate official Catholic doctrine, who seems to break with orthodoxy to suggest this surprisingly progressive possibility.

English language translations have both expanded upon and limited similar gender fluidity. The English translation by Edith Grossman, for example, interprets the passage in such a way as to allow for gender fluidity: “And so, my dear Señora, or Señor, *or whatever it is you wish to be, ...*” (229, my emphasis).¹¹ In the English translation by Burton Raffel in the Diana de Armas Wilson edition, the passage is interpreted in a binary way as the priest comments, “And so, my dear sir — or my dear madame, *whichever you choose to be—...*” (Armas Wilson; I.28: 174, my emphasis).¹² It is likely that some English language translators opined that the binary of male and female was the only acceptable iteration of human gender identity expected and permitted in early modern Europe/Spain. But was it? A careful consideration of the Spanish version of this passage allows for a radical reinterpretation of gender identity (Kivi), one worthy of broader consideration.¹³

Binary gender and/or sex identification, however, was not always the norm. Intersexed identities were recognized and acknowledged in early modern culture, even as far back as Aristotle, who wrote about the existence of individuals possessing additional or missing body parts, as an intersexed individual was perceived to be either in excess or lacking appendages consistent with their gender identification. In *The Shape of Sex: Nonbinary Gender from Genesis to the Renaissance*, Leah DeVun details the vigorous and contradictory early Christian theological debates and opinions regarding the concept of Adam’s “primal androgyny” and whether “... sexual unity (androgyny) or sexual division (binary sex) [was] the first and intended state of humanity?” (17).¹⁴ DeVun demonstrates that, while the concept of androgyny came to be associated with hermaphroditism—eventually considered defective and even criminal and heretical—in the 12th-13th centuries, her exhaustive analyses of ancient and medieval theological and philosophical texts reveal that “sexual binarism was neither a natural nor a timeless phenomenon” (201). In fact, nonbinary sex was often envisioned as the epitome of divine perfection in the original biblical creation story or the apocalypse (DeVun 39), and biblical scholars theorized that Adam was created as a hermaphrodite but later split into male and female (Fausto-Sterling “Five Sexes” 23). Even Christ (DeVun 39) and some medieval saints have been represented as nonbinary or transgender.¹⁵ The correlation between Dorotea’s nonbinary gender identification and her nascent divinity is evident when Cardenio, upon seeing her face for the first time, exclaims that “—Ésta, ya que no es Luscinda, no es persona humana, *sino divina*” (275, my emphasis) [“That isn’t Luscinda, so it can’t be a human being, *but perhaps it’s an angel*” (174, my emphasis).].

In the realm of intersexuality, there were even more than one variety. The Greek philosopher Plato (428/427 or 424/423 – 348 BC) opined that there

were actually three sexes, not two (Fausto-Sterling “Five Sexes” 23). Ambroise Paré (1510-1590) described four types of intersexed individuals, termed in the parlance of the time as hermaphrodites, all of whose variations were contingent upon their reproductive capacities (Long 44): male hermaphrodites (for whom only the male organs function); female hermaphrodite (for whom only the female organs function); neither male nor female (for whom no organs function); and both male and female (for whom both sets of organs function). This last type is the most dangerous due to the mutability of their identification. In accordance with her belief that “sex is a vast, infinitely malleable continuum that defies the constraints” of easy categorization (“Five Sexes” 21) and consistent with our increased scientific knowledge, Anne Fausto-Sterling even goes so far as to conjecture that there are at a minimum five sexes: in addition to male and female, she theorizes three additional intersex identities she terms “herms,” “merms,” and “ferms” (“Five Sexes” 21).¹⁶ In addition, Gilbert Herdt posits a third identification based on not only sex and gender, but erotic desire.¹⁷ The idea that an individual might be able to determine their own categorization is a revolutionary one.

In David Castillo and William Egginton’s book *What Would Cervantes Do?*, the authors demonstrate how our current state of socio-political discourse mirrors the pervasive spread of disinformation during the Spanish baroque. They also demonstrate how Cervantes’s literary works specifically counter such disinformation through what they consider the author’s use of “excesiva ortodoxia” [“excessive orthodoxy”] (123). “Excessive orthodoxy” is a mechanism to highlight the irony with which opinions are expressed, opinions which seem to support official political and cultural narratives, but which, upon closer inspection, do not. For example, statements made by the *morisco* Ricote (Book II, Chapter 54) seem to endorse Felipe III’s systematic and complete expulsion of the *moriscos* from Spain.¹⁸ However, upon closer examination of the way in which Ricote is portrayed and his statements related to his and his family’s sense of loss at being expelled from their home country, the character’s presence actually resists and poignantly opposes this political policy.¹⁹ In the case of Dorotea, the fact that it is the priest who articulates a more fluid gender expression is ironic and somewhat revolutionary. One would logically expect the priest to espouse the most orthodox position with respect to gender identification. Surprisingly, he does not, and it is he who appears to allow for the greatest variation and who demonstrates the most tolerance. Daniel Holcombe also acknowledges the priest’s liberal leanings and non-judgmental moralizing as evidenced in the interpolated novella “El curioso impertinente” as it is the priest who publicly reads the story of the homoaffective and potentially homoerotic friendship between Anselmo and Lotario (79, 101).²⁰ How might we account for this phenomenon in Cervantes? As priest, he would have likely been more educated than his voyeuristic counterparts. He would have also been aware that there was a theological understanding that angels were

sexless or genderless and that many saints were somehow transgendered in their representations, such as the female saint Wilgefortis, who is often represented as bearded.²¹ In addition, priests and other religious authorities were often called upon to adjudicate in such cases where an individual's gender identity was in doubt or undetermined, as was true in the case of María Magdalena Muñoz. While Cervantes's *Don Quijote* is replete with myriad episodes of cross-dressing—both male to female and female to male—, for both comedic and dramatic effect, the episode of Dorotea is the only one in which an individual's gender identity is fluid.

Interestingly enough, the priest does not adjudicate her gender identity as he might if she were intersexed. Instead, he grants Dorotea the authority to make her own determination as to his/her/their identity. As the representative of ecclesiastical authority and orthodoxy, albeit a fictionalized one, the priest grants Dorotea the power to decide for herself if she wants to reside on one end or the other of the accepted binary spectrum or if she wants to radically occupy a space either between or outside of it: "... *o lo que vos quisierdes ser* (I.28: 277, my emphasis). While Dorotea does not possess the authority to empower herself, once empowered by the priest, the ultimate decision will be hers. The fact that the priest acknowledges a certain gender fluidity and movement between binary gender identities and even the possibility of an alternate gender identity makes this literary scene remarkable in its forward thinking. Dorotea's gender identity, therefore, is not "seated in the genitalia" (McClive 65), but is, instead, firmly entrenched in the authorial imagination, thereby allowing for a more progressive and potentially more transgressive act that will exist at least within the realm of early modern fiction.

Notes

¹ I would like to express my sincere gratitude to University of Minnesota Morris student Bridget Peterson for their efforts and insights into this *pliego suelto* during a faculty-student research project conducted during 2017-18. Also see Vollendorf's "I Am a Man and a Woman," (11-31), particularly pages 11-12, in which she provides a detailed analysis of this same event. I will refer to María Magdalena Muñoz as simply Muñoz to account for an ambiguous and possibly intersexed gender even though witnesses and the narrator situate Muñoz's gender identification on both sides of the typical male-female gender binary.

² See Vollendorf, 15-16.

³ The author refers to Muñoz with both feminine and masculine descriptive words in this passage. In my translation I have attempted to do the same or use the neutral "they/their" when necessary.

⁴ Also see Michel Foucault, Judith Butler, and Thomas Laqueur.

⁵ In David Ebershoff's novel "The Danish Girl," the protagonist undergoes an experimental, highly dangerous, and ultimately deadly surgical procedure to remove the vestiges of her male/masculine identity.

⁶ See Vollendorf, 16, for an early modern surgical intervention performed on an intersexed body.

⁷ See Velasco and Perry.

⁸ See Vollendorf, Burshatin, and de Souza.

⁹ For a detailed explanation of terminology, see Stryker, "Chapter 1: Contexts, Concepts, and Terms," 1-44. For a study of the evolution of the terms "transexion" and "transfeminate," see Gamble.

¹⁰ Unless otherwise indicated, the Spanish language citations are taken from the 2015 edition by Francisco Rico, and the English language translation are taken from the 2020 edition by Diana de Armas Wilson.

¹¹ In the English translation by the Lerner Publishing Group, the priest says, "And so, senora, or senor, *or whatever you prefer to be, ...*" (282, my emphasis).

¹² In the English translation by Samuel Putnam, for example, the priest says, "And so, dear lady, or dear sir, *whichever you prefer, ...*" (235, my emphasis).

¹³ Max Kivi, who graduated from the University of Minnesota Morris in 2022, studied *Don Quijote* with me in the fall of 2020, and I am indebted to his brilliant and perceptive analysis of this passage.

¹⁴ See DeVun, especially 16-39 and 163-99.

¹⁵ See Bychowski's consideration of Magnus Hirschfeld's text *Transvestiten* (*Die Transvestiten*) (1910) to examine the case of St. Marinos the Monk as a transgender saint. Hirschfeld proposes that cross-dressing "may be a revelation of the gender experienced by the transgender soul" (252) and may represent an individual's authentic identity.

¹⁶ According to Fausto-Sterling, a "herm" is a true hermaphrodite, possessing "one testis and one ovary (the sperm- and egg-producing vessels, or gonads)." A "merm" is a male pseudohermaphrodite possessing "testes and some aspects of the female genitalia but no ovaries." Finally, a "ferm" is the female pseudohermaphrodite possessing "ovaries and some aspects of the male genitalia but lack[ing] testes" ("Five Sexes" 21).

¹⁷ Herdt describes several third sex/gender identities, including the *kwoluaatmwol* of the Sambia in New Guinea; the berdache of North American and Pacific Rim Native American groups; and the Hijra of India.

¹⁸ "... que me parece que fue inspiración divina la que movió a Su Majestad a poner en efecto tan gallarda resolución, no porque todos fuésemos culpados, que algunos había cristianos firmes y verdaderos, pero eran tan pocos, que no se podían opinar a los que no lo eran, y no era bien criar la sierpe en el seno, teniendo los enemigos dentro de casa. Finalmente, con justa razón fuimos castigados con la pena del destierro, ..." (963) ["... that it seemed to me that nothing less than divine inspiration could have led His Majesty to promulgate such a courageous decree—not that all of us were equally guilty, some Moors having become firm and reliable Christians, but most were, and the minority among us could not have successfully opposed the vast majority, and why nourish a viper in your

bosom, and let your enemies lodge in your house? Truly, the penalty of perpetual exile fell upon us for good cause, ... (622)].

¹⁹ “Doquiera que estamos lloramos por España, que, en fin, nacimos en ella y es nuestra patria natural; en ninguna parte hallamos el acogimiento que nuestra desventura desea, y en Berbería y en todas las partes de África donde esperábamos ser recibidos, acogidos y regalados, allí es donde más nos ofenden y maltratan” (963) [“Wherever we are, we weep for the Spanish homeland where, after all, we were born and raised, nor have we found, anywhere else, the welcome our miserable hearts long for, and even in Algeria and Morocco and all the places in North Africa where we hoped and expected to be eagerly and joyously and bounteously received, there above all else we have been most reviled and mistreated” (622)].

²⁰ “That a priest is reading the story indicates that a morality is being conveyed and that the story exists to provide a didactic moment regarding homosociality, homoaffectivity, male friendship, the treatment of women, and traditional marriage under the auspices of the Catholic Church and the patriarchal and heteronormative societies in which both the novella and *Don Quixote* are set. From a queer studies perspective this lacuna is of great interest, as it implies that the priest does not consider intense homoaffectivity, potential homoeroticism, or heterosexual tragedy worthy of comment” (n.p.).

²¹ See Mills’s analysis of the figure of St. Wilgefortis. Also see Gutt and Spencer-Hall.

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