

## **CERVANTES'S INTERPOLATED NOVELS IN *THE COMICAL HISTORY OF DON QUIXOTE***

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*ABSTRACT: Immensely popular in seventeenth-century Britain, the interpolated episodes of Marcela and Cardenio were featured in the performance of the first British stage adaptation of Cervantes's masterpiece: Thomas D'Urfey's The Comical History of Don Quixote. This article provides a comparative analysis of the aforementioned stories in both works. An analysis of Cervantes's novel reveals that the protagonists of these tales enact a counter-hegemonic identity that subverts the dominant notions of gender and class. Hence, D'Urfey's play is approached with a view to determining whether the subversive potential of the original is preserved. It can be argued that, as opposed to his literary predecessor, D'Urfey exploits these episodes to reinforce and naturalise the hegemonic ideology and the resulting social order.*

*KEYWORDS: Don Quijote, Cervantes, Thomas D'Urfey, The Comical History of Don Quixote, interpolated novels, Restoration theatre.*

## **LAS NOVELAS INTERCALADAS DE CERVANTES EN *THE COMICAL HISTORY OF DON QUIXOTE***

*RESUMEN: Inmensamente populares en la Gran Bretaña del siglo XVII, los episodios intercalados de Marcela y Cardenio aparecieron en la representación de la primera adaptación teatral británica de la obra maestra de Cervantes: The Comical History of Don Quixote, de Thomas D'Urfey. Este artículo proporciona un análisis comparativo de las mencionadas historias en ambas obras. El análisis de la novela cervantina revela que los protagonistas de estos cuentos encarnan una identidad contrahegemónica que subvierte las nociones dominantes de género y clase. Por tanto, la obra de D'Urfey se aborda con el objetivo de determinar si se conserva el potencial subversivo del original. Puede afirmarse que, al contrario de su predecesor literario, D'Urfey explota estos episodios para reforzar y naturalizar la ideología hegemónica y el orden social resultante.*

*PALABRAS CLAVE: Don Quijote, Cervantes, Thomas D'Urfey, The Comical History of Don Quixote, novelas intercaladas, teatro de la Restauración.*

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## 1. Introduction

Immensely popular in seventeenth-century Britain, the interpolated episodes of Marcela and Cardenio were featured in the performance of the first stage adaptation of *Don Quijote* on English lands: Thomas D'Urfey's *The Comical History of Don Quixote* (1694-6). This article provides a comparative analysis of the aforementioned stories in both works, paying attention to the construction of identity undertaken by each author.

Cervantes's characters cannot be easily accommodated within the hegemonic social fabric, as they enact a counter-hegemonic identity that undermines the established social order. It is interesting to analyse how D'Urfey manages this subversive potential onstage. For the first time in Britain, these originally transgressive characters were incarnated by flesh-and-bone actors who could further explore the subversive elements through their actual bodies, voices, clothes and gestures. This possibility was enriched by the advent of actresses in the Restoration, as gender difference became materially visible on the public stage. The discourse of insanity is another all-important locus of identity building in the play: the musical expression of madness, itself an emblem of deviance, is strategically deployed by Marcella and Cardenio in their self-fashioning, as both roles feature the onstage performance of a mad song. It is therefore interesting to analyse how all these elements are blended together in D'Urfey's exploration of prescriptive identities and to determine whether the subversive potential of the original is exploited by the myriad of possibilities opened up by the theatre.

## 2. Cervantes's Marcela: an eloquent defence of women's free will

The pastoral episode of Marcela and Grisóstomo narrates the story of a learned student and son of a rich nobleman who falls in love with a beautiful, wealthy orphan. Unwilling to be burdened with the constraints of marriage, the maiden resolves to dress up as a shepherdess and lead a free life in the woods. Marcela's refusal to get married plunges her suitor into bitter despair and finally leads him to commit suicide. The men who gather for Grisóstomo's burial cast all the blame on the shepherdess's cruelty and ingratitude, prompting her to appear in the funeral to assert, in an impassioned speech, women's right to independence and freedom.

The bitter criticism that the shepherds target at Marcela can be attributed to her staunch resistance to embrace prescriptive femininity. In the Renaissance, the construction of "woman" as "an inexorably predetermined wife" (Navarro

1993: 21) pervaded many of the discourses engaged in fashioning gender identities. The theatre contributed to strengthen such construction through the motif of the *mujer esquiva*. Initially averse to the idea of marriage, these vain and scornful heroines end up almost invariably conforming to normative notions of femininity and showing “willing subjection to the *yugo blando* (‘sweet yoke’) of matrimony” (McKendrick 1983: 118). The *esquivas*’ claim to individualism was normally co-opted into the dominant discourse, as their deviance from convention was attributed to an unnatural flaw of character that they would finally amend. A noteworthy exception to this rule is Marcela, which led McKendrick to claim that “none of the playwrights of the Golden Age sympathizes with his *esquivas* in the way that Cervantes sympathizes with his Marcela” (1983: 145).

The shepherdess’ unconventional rejection of the institution of marriage met divided critical reaction. Some authors (Sieber 1974, Poggioli 1975, McGaha 1977, Herrero 1978, Finello 1986) criticised her transgression of the established social order. Significantly, Marcela’s resolution to destabilise and subvert traditional notions of femininity has unsettled not only her fictional companions, but also a considerable number of literary critics until as recently as the late twentieth century. However, other voices (Jehenson 1990, Navarro 1993, Laffey 1997, Gabriele 2003) have begun to eulogise her unconventional subversion of a social order that required the objectification of women for its perpetuation.

The readers of *Don Quijote* learn of Marcela’s story through the voices of several masculine characters. Before her sudden and unexpected appearance, the shepherdess circulates as symbolic currency, as a conduit through which the desiring male subject can fashion his own individual and communal identity.

The first character to relate this episode is a goatherd named Pedro, who provides the first of many descriptions that pervasively construct Marcela as the fiendish “other”: “se murmura que [Grisóstomo] ha muerto de amores de aquella endiablada moza de Marcela” (Cervantes 2009: 103). The shepherdess’s relegation to a deviant category is an attempt to reinforce the heteronormative social order that she blatantly contributes to subvert. In fact, the character’s demonisation transcends fictional boundaries to be passionately voiced by some literary critics. For instance, Javier Herrero defines the shepherdess as “an instrument of the demon of love [who] charms and poisons his [Grisóstomo’s] soul” (1978: 296).

In the seventeenth century, the institution of matrimony was the cornerstone of society, and the patrilineal transmission of property and titles, constructed as the foundation of order. In this context, marriage becomes “the social contract that resolves conflicts by taming desire and directing it toward reproduction

and restored social stability” (González-Echevarría 2005: xv). Significantly, the comedic ending of matrimony was recurrently used to symbolise the restoration of a social order that had previously been shattered.

Equally important to the social is the economic dimension of marriage. In arguing that Marcela “hace más daño en esta tierra que si por ella entrara la pestilencia” (Cervantes 2009: 108), Pedro makes a direct allusion to the devastating material consequences of her decision. The calamitous economic impact of Marcela’s resolution is underscored by Ambrosio, the second narrator of the story, who refers to the maiden as “aquella enemiga mortal del linaje humano” (Cervantes 2009: 117). In refusing to assume her procreative role, Marcela becomes not only the enemy of the human race, but the very “nemesis of the human bloodline—of human reproduction and renewal” (González-Echevarría 2005: 87).

The next version of the story provided by the text is none other than Grisóstomo’s. At the shepherd’s funeral, Vivaldo reads a poem composed by the deceased and conveniently entitled “Canción desesperada.” In these impassioned verses, the image of Marcela as the callous, spiteful, contemptuous woman guilty of Grisóstomo’s death is reinforced.

In this male-dominated narrative, the shepherdess is confined within the pastoral role of the *mujer esquiva* and persistently turned into the object of men’s language, laments and desire. As we shall argue, Marcela’s transgressive appearance as an acting subject at Grisóstomo’s funeral is an effective subversion of both the pastoral genre that objectifies women and the hegemonic discourse that prescribes and validates such objectification. What is more, the male narrative that fashions Marcela as an “esquiva hermosa ingrata” (Cervantes 2009: 129) already contains traces of subversion that undermine her inscription in this literary role. In Jehenson’s words, “the text seems self-conscious about the conventional misogyny of its pastoral laments and exhibits a subversive attitude toward them” (1990: 24). Pedro dissipates any doubt that Marcela’s lifestyle should compromise her chastity: “Y no se piense que porque Marcela se puso en aquella libertad y vida tan suelta [...] que por eso ha dado indicio, ni por semejas, que venga en menoscabo de su honestidad y recato” (Cervantes 2009: 107). Despite the all-pervading attempts to characterise Marcela as a cruel, demonic “other,” a very different image of the shepherdess transpires from Pedro’s words. She is portrayed as impeccable in her behaviour and honest and forthright with her suitors.

Grisóstomo himself shows awareness of Marcela’s role as an ideological construct, as the imagined object of his harrowing laments and desire. Significantly, in his “Canción Desesperada,” the shepherd expresses his intention to remain “per-

tinaz [...] en mi fantasía” (Cervantes 2009: 122). Vivaldo’s reaction to the poem also contributes to subvert the construction of Marcela as the cruel perpetrator of Grisóstomo’s death, arguing that the song “no le parecía que conformaba con la relación que él había oído del recato y bondad de Marcela” (Cervantes 2009: 124). Even Ambrosio, the closest friend and a staunch defender of the deceased shepherd, acknowledges that “queda en su punto la verdad que la fama pregona de la bondad de Marcela, la cual, fuera de ser cruel, y un poco arrogante, y un mucho desdeñosa, la misma envidia ni debe ni puede ponerle falta alguna” (Cervantes 2009: 124).

Marcela’s categorisation as a *mujer esquiva* is contradictory and slippery. Hernández-Pecoraro provides an explanation for the shepherds’ failure to encode her within this literary role: “Marcela is not inaccessible. She is not a docile and malleable virginal figure or a cruel harpy. She does not avoid male company, unlike many of her pastoral predecessors. She expects the unexpected: male companionship without male objectification” (1997: 37). Despite its flagrant self-subverting nature, the male narrative that fashions Marcela persists in defining her according to its own standards. The shepherdess’s countrymen turn her into a familiar textual construct that they will be able to manage – that of the *mujer esquiva*.

During Grisóstomo’s funeral, Marcela makes her appearance in this constricted, all-male locus to defend herself, overcoming the discursive objectification into which she has been forced. For the first time in the episode, she becomes the narrating subject of her own story, capable of expressing agency through discourse. Through her speech, Marcela enacts a double subversion. First, she transgresses gender boundaries by infringing the normative prescription of silence to women. Second, she delivers a rational, persuasive and eloquent speech. It could be argued, therefore, that Marcela appropriates an emphatically “masculine” mode of expression to break the rule of female silence.

The shepherdess’s double transgression of normative femininity made her the target of devastating attacks. A variety of literary critics denounced both her impudence to speak and the inappropriateness of the kind of – gendered – discourse that she chooses to deliver. Diego Clemencín highlighted the impropriety of her “masculine” rhetorical style;<sup>1</sup> Poggioli denounced her alleged narcissism<sup>2</sup> and McGaha

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1. “Esta clase de discreción escolástica sienta muy mal a una doncellita. Marcela más bien parece una mujer de mundo [...] que una joven tímida, candorosa y sensible. ¿Cómo puede ser que interese?” (Clemencín in Cervantes 1894: 333).

2. “Marcela attends Grisóstomo’s funeral merely because it is also her trial. If she comes, it is not to pay the tribute of pity at the grave of a dead friend, but to use that grave as a tribune from which to plead the cause of the self” (1975: 173-174).

and González-Echevarría censured her as merciless<sup>3</sup>. The shepherdess's accession to discourse is simply not understood and persistently attributed to her alleged ruthlessness and self-centredness. Nevertheless, as Jehenson asserts, "Marcela must plead the cause of the self and she cannot and may not be silent" (1990: 17).

In her discourse, she refutes, with sound logic and great persuasive techniques, the assumptions on which the shepherds built their diatribe. First, she refuses to accept that her beauty should oblige her to reciprocate any amorous feelings, especially when she has always been unflinching in her honesty. Of this reasoning, she concludes that "si los deseos se sustentan con esperanzas, no habiendo dado yo alguna a Grisóstomo, ni a otro alguno el fin de ninguno de ellos, bien se puede decir que antes le mató su porfía que mi crueldad" (Cervantes 2009: 126). Marcela's speech is so subversive that it goes beyond exonerating the shepherdess and directly casts the blame on Grisóstomo, reminding the reader that "*cupiditas* is a volitive process that requires a subject participating actively in the observation of the object of desire" (Vélez-Sainz 2005: 130). Free will and volition are, nevertheless, made extensive to the female gender, as Marcela argues that "Yo nací libre, y para poder vivir libre escogí la soledad de los campos" (Cervantes 2009: 126).

Marcela also provides her own definition of true love, undermining the construction of marriage as woman's birthright: "el verdadero amor no se divide, y ha de ser voluntario, y no forzoso" (Cervantes 2009: 126). The shepherdess overtly defends her freedom to choose not to subject herself to the socially and divinely sanctioned institution of matrimony: "tengo libre condición, y no gusto de sujetarme" (Cervantes 2009: 127), effectively subverting the *mujer esquiva* literary type and the hegemonic construction of gender.

### 3. D'Urfey's Marcella: staging female subjugation

In *The Comical History of Don Quixote*, the audience's anxiety about women jeopardising the stability of society is exacerbated, as D'Urfey gives the character of Marcella a tangible feminine presence – that of the talented actress and singer Anne Bracegirdle. The shepherdess's resistance to be defined as the absent love

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3. "A modicum of humanity and respect for the man who killed himself out of love for her would surely have compelled her to keep silence" (Mc Gaha 1977: 34).

"Marcela is arrogant, callous, and self-centered in the way that she makes her dramatic appearance and delivers her cold and logical defense at Grisóstomo's very funeral" (González-Echevarría 2005: 86).

object essential to men's bonding and self-fashioning is directly threatened by the actress's corporeality.

Like the readers of *Don Quijote*, the spectators of D'Urfey's work learn of the story through the voices of other characters who persistently encode Marcella within the conventions of a recognisable literary genre: the antifeminist satire. The popularity of this genre during the Restoration is connected with the inter-related crises of authority that swept seventeenth-century England. Chaos and disorder held sway over a country that, in less than five decades, had witnessed a Civil War (1642-49), the execution of a legitimate King by the people (1649), a Puritan Interregnum (1649-60), the Restoration of Monarchy (1660), the controversial rule of a Catholic heir (r. 1685-1688) and his subsequent deposition in the Glorious Revolution (1688). By the 1690s, the foundations of the rigidly hierarchical Renaissance world order had been shaken to their roots. Late seventeenth-century England provided, therefore, fertile ground for the development of satire, "the genre of a social order in shambles" (Nussbaum 1984: 9) emerging from "a sense that things have gone wrong, that society or literature or morals are degenerating" (Miner in Nussbaum 1984: 9).

In the period's satires, women were constructed as the embodiment of this profoundly feared absence of order and hierarchy. The Restoration satirists often drew from Genesis generically to fashion woman as the inheritor of Eve's sexual sin, as a demon incarnate whose deceiving beauty hid a corrupted and rotten soul. Ambrosio's encoding of Marcella in the conventions of this genre is clear: "Oh barbarous Women! The Sacred Powers above lent you Beauty to give Delight, not kill, tho it had Power; yet you all, fill'd with the old Serpent's primitive Mischief, knowing that Power – convert it to our Ruin" (II.ii: 34).

Working in circulation with other discourses and institutions – mainly the humoural medical doctrine and the Judeo-Christian tradition – the anti-feminist satirical discourse reinforces the construction of woman as the weaker vessel: lascivious, proud, shrewd and inconstant. Interestingly, the Restoration was a turning point in the dominant notions of femininity, a period of "chronological overlap between the misogynistic tradition and the first flowering of a positive ideology of womanhood" (Fletcher 1999: 377).

In the late seventeenth century, a discourse emerged that invalidated the hierarchical construction of gender. Political philosophers of the stature of Thomas Hobbes began to argue that no authority can be legitimately based on nature or divine law. Though useful to advance the interests of the middle classes, the discourse of liberty and equality generated social anxiety, as it could be deployed

to subvert the dominant notions of gender and the resulting power structures. Attempts to subdue the threat of female claims to public authority resulted in the ideology of separate spheres, which defined women as naturally suited to the private realm of the household. The ideological battle that emerged between the defenders and detractors of women's right to public participation was played out in the female body, which "came to bear an enormous new weight of cultural meaning" (Laqueur 1987: 18).

In this context, Bracegirdle's corporeal presence on the stage becomes relevant. In her absence, the shepherdess was defined as proud, lustful, false and immoral. Now, she has the chance to subvert the gender ideology articulated in the genre where she is encoded. Like Cervantes's, D'Urfey's shepherdess refuses to bear the blame for Chrysostom's death and resists being defined as the object of male desire. Nevertheless, instead of invalidating, through logic and persuasive argument, her obligation to reciprocate Chrysostom's love, Marcella launches a merciless invective against the male gender. Like her literary predecessor, she shows awareness of the "bewitching" effect that her impressive beauty has on the male beholder. Nevertheless, far from arguing that the choice to fall prey to her charms rests with the free will of rational men, she confirms her intention to exploit her beauty to subdue men and threatens to plunge the patriarchal order into chaos:

But know that I was born to plague your Sex,  
Form'd to attract, and featur'd to excel:  
Beauty's a Charm 'gainst which you want a Spell. [...]  
But whilst your Fate's submitted to my Sway,  
I know my Power, and Men shall obey. (II.ii: 36)

Through this speech, Marcella decides to incarnate the image of femininity articulated in the satirical genre. She willingly embodies the social and moral disorder that the seventeenth century most feared and rebels against the foundations of patriarchal authority. Thirsty for revenge, Ambrosio wishes "that some Power wou'd bless me with a Charm, to plague thy Heart as thou hast tortur'd his; that thou might'st feel the force of those hot Flames, that burnt the Life out of the Noble *Chrysostom*" (II.ii: 35). Marcella returns a scornful answer, stressing the power that her renunciation of love and sexuality grants her:

But since your Words have no bewitching Arts,  
 No Charm your Person, nor your Eyes no Darts;  
 Happy *Marcella*, who no Danger sees,  
 Untouch'd by Love, does neither burn nor freeze. (II.ii: 35)

Nevertheless, Ambrosio's words turn ironically prophetic. In the second part of the play, Marcella falls in love with Chrysostom's disdainful friend and literally burns with the all-consuming fire of passion and desire. At the beginning of Part II, Diego, "a rough ill-natur'd vicious Fellow" (D'Urfey 1729: 104), attempts to rape Marcella, who has no choice but to call for a "blest charitable Creature [...] to help a Maid in her Distress" (II.i: 123). Ironically, the shepherdess encodes herself as a chivalric damsel in distress, assuming the passive role of victim and object of masculine wrath and desire.

Due to her resistance to conform to the dominant economy of love and desire, Diego defines Marcella as unnatural and deviant. He fantasises with different parts of her eroticised feminine body, wishing to restore them to their preordained function: "I will not have those Beauties lost thro' Pride, which Nature first intended for Enjoyment; your Eyes shall learn to smile, your Lips to kiss, your Tongue to praise your Lover, Arm's t' embrace him: I'll mould your Body to a proper form, make every Part about you do its Office" (II.ii: 123-124). Diego naturalises the dominant construction of woman as the preordained object of masculine desire. Nevertheless, he must be punished because his attempt to possess Marcella through violence is legally unsanctioned: the socially and divinely approved institution where women's threatening power could be legitimately regulated and contained was marriage.

Ironically, the Knight who comes to Marcella's succour is none other than Ambrosio, whose bravery and generosity win the shepherdess's heart, leading her to conform to normative femaleness. Nevertheless, Marcella is harshly punished for her past transgressions. Her amorous advances are rejected by a disdainful Ambrosio and the scorned lover ends up a victim of love melancholy.

When the shepherdess comes back on stage, vulnerable and powerless, she has succumbed to Ambrosio's grace; her desperate attempts to seduce Chrysostom's friend are futile and humiliating. After a brief and failed attempt to recover her former position of power, Marcella submits to the dominant ideology and, addressing the ladies in the audience, utters the following words of instruction:

All stubborn Maids, let my Example guide,  
 Henceforth ne'er sacrifice your Love to Pride:  
 Take whilst you can, the kind deserving He,  
 Lest, in refusing, you repent like me. (II.ii: 145)

As opposed to Cervantes, D'Urfey enhances the audience's anxiety only to contain it later by staging the shepherdess's submissive contrition, reinforcing the traditional objectification of women and their duty to reciprocate men's affection.

Bracegirdle's performance of love melancholy also reinforces the construction of women as the weaker vessels. Their alleged physical, moral and intellectual frailty was defined as the cause of women's emotional excess, which in turn made them more naturally inclined to madness and lovesickness. The scientific discourse presented this ideological construct as the irrefutable result of empirical observation. For instance, Jacques Ferrand argues in *Erotomania* (1640) that weak women are more prone to love melancholy than men, "whom we never see brought to that Extremity: unlesse they be some effeminate weake spirited fellowes" (in Winkler 2006: 66). Ferrand contains the threat posed by male love melancholy by categorising it as a kind of effeminacy: whereas a man suffering from lovesickness was transgressing normative maleness and hence enacting a kind of subordinate masculinity, a melancholic woman was embodying and substantiating the dominant construction of femininity. In fact, Burton went as far as to claim that love melancholy literally "turns a man into a woman" (2009: 125).

In his description of the symptoms of female lovesickness, Burton places special emphasis on heat, burning and the consumption of the heart and brain by smoky vapours. His constant references to blazes and scorching are explicitly linked to passion and lasciviousness. Burton's gendered symptoms of love melancholy find their way into Marcella's performance of madness. After having completely succumbed to the malady, she imagines her beloved transforming into a dragon and burning her with his ardent breath. Her discourse also reverberates with references to extreme heat, fire and blazes: "See! see! His Mouth and Nostrils breathing Flames that singe my Veins, and scorch my Heart to Cinders" (V.ii: 186).

Nowhere are Burton's symptoms better articulated than in Bracegirdle's legendary performance of "I Burn, I Burn", a song composed by John Eccles that beguiled the audience. The lyrics of the song, the music and Bracegirdle's feminine voice and fetishised body effectively combined to convey the emotional and sexual excess that the dominant discourse constructed as fundamentally feminine. Marcella's mad song makes explicit reference to the consumption of the

brain and is fraught with overtly sexual allusions to sultriness, heat, burning and fire. Furthermore, Burton's description of melancholic women as being "much troubled with wind" (2009: 340) also finds expression in the lyrics:

I Burn, I burn, my Brain consumes to Ashes;  
Each Eye-Ball too, like lightning flashes;  
Within my Breast there glows a solid Fire,  
Which in a thousand Ages can't expire.

Blow, blow, the Wind's great Ruler,  
Bring the *Po* and *Ganges* hither;  
'Tis sultry, sultry Weather;  
Pour 'em all on my Soul,  
It will hiss like a Coal,  
But never be the cooler. (V.ii: 187-188)

The advent of the actresses on the English stage brought feminine sexuality to the forefront of the social experience of playgoing. Actresses were manifestly female, and their distinct attributes were purposefully exhibited and exploited in the roles they played. Their gender difference was emphasised, rather than obscured or denied. This all-pervasive emphasis on the actress' sexuality, "effectively diffused the threat to male society of having women speaking, acting and creating characters on the public stage. As a sexual object she was no danger to the patriarchal system, but rather its toy" (Howe 1994: 21). Nevertheless, any representation of transgressive sexuality was threatening, since it could set a terrible example for the ladies in the audience. D'Urfey takes advantage of the perceived parallelism between the character/actress and the female spectators to make the experience of the former serve as a calculated admonishment for the latter. In her song, Marcella regrets that

'Twas Pride, hot as Hell,  
That first made me rebel;  
From Love's awful Throne a curst Angel I fell:  
And mourn now the Fate,  
Which my self did create. (V.ii: 187)

Marcella repents for not conforming to the period's hegemonic ideal of femininity and assumes all the blame for this condemnable act of rebellion. In attributing her fault to feminine pride and fashioning her identity as deviant – "a curst Angel I fell" (V.ii: 187) –, she also naturalises the divine law that constructs marriage as women's reason of being.

#### 4. Cervantes's tale of Cardenio: subverting gender and class identities

Like Marcela, the character of Cardenio has been the target of much literary criticism due to the unsettling kind of gender identity that he enacts. His non-conformity to traditional masculinity pervades the descriptions written of the madman, who has been defined as coward (Madariaga 1978, Hathaway 1999, Percas de Ponseti 1999), passive (Márquez-Villanueva 2011, Hathaway 1999), indecisive (Bandera 1995), timid (Márquez-Villanueva 2011, Rodríguez-Luis 1976, Hathaway 1999, Fajardo 2005), submissive (Feal 1993, Hathaway 1999), weak (Anderson 1988) and effeminate (Vallejo-Nágera 1950). These critiques rest on and perpetuate traditional notions of gender and reinforce normative masculinity by confining Cardenio within the deviant, effeminate category of the madman.

In his narrative, Cardenio fashions himself, self-pityingly, as a betrayed, suffering lover, a helpless victim to Luscinda's cruelty and deceit. Nevertheless, his tale contains a series of contradictions, omissions and "glaring inconsistencies" (Hathaway 1999: 5) that problematise this reading of the story. An analysis of the text reveals that the misfortune that the madman attributes to forces far beyond his control was prompted by his eschewing agency.

The first encounter with the madman comes through the eyes of Don Quijote and Sancho, who penetrate the rough, inhospitable Sierra to witness the strangest of spectacles:

iba saltando un hombre de risco en risco y de mata en mata con extraña ligereza. Figurósele que iba desnudo, la barba negra y espesa, los cabellos muchos y rebultados, los pies descalzos y las piernas sin cosa alguna; los muslos cubrían unos calzones, al parecer de terciopelo leonado, mas tan hechos pedazos, que por muchas partes se le descubrían las carnes. (Cervantes 2009: 216)

Cardenio's animality is hyperbolically emphasised; he resembles an animal in his mop of coarse hair and thick beard, his half-nakedness and his swift, goat-like movements. The madman is wearing the tatters of what once were his clothes, the markers of an identity which he now seems to repudiate.<sup>4</sup>

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4. It should be taken into account that in the Early Modern period, apparel was taken as signalling a person's fixed, preordained social status and nakedness, as a social transgression of the hierarchical order of society.

After witnessing such spectacular exhibition of madness, Knight and squire resume their journey soon to meet a goatherd, the first third-person narrator of Cardenio's story. He describes the mad character as a gentleman who, during his sane intervals, gives sign of impeccable politeness. Nevertheless, these periods of lucidity alternate with sudden violent fits of dementia. During these episodes, Cardenio exhibits a beastly behaviour, attacking the goatherds with "bocados" (Cervantes 2009: 220), "puñadas y coces" (Cervantes 2009: 219).

In the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries, the medical discourse began to fashion madness as a kind of bestiality. The insane were depicted as having *literally* metamorphosed into animals and degenerated into a state of irrationality. As a period of social crisis and ideological turmoil, the seventeenth century began to label dissent as madness. Articulated as unorthodox sexuality and unbridled violence, the irrationality of the lunatic was perceived as a threat to the stability of a social order in crumbles. Nevertheless, it also provided a category wherein to confine deviance and hence reinforced hegemonic identities. Cardenio brings to mind lust and irascibility, the characteristics that define those who have overthrown humane reason and degraded into animal madness. In fact, the goatherd describes his dwelling as "pocas o ningunas veces pisado sino de pies de cabras, o de lobos y otras fieras que por allí andaban" (Cervantes 2009: 217-218). Edward Dudley claims that these animals suggest "respectively the problems of sex and violence that haunted the seventeenth century" (1972: 125) and of which the madman provides a powerful embodiment.

During one of his lucid periods, Cardenio becomes the narrator of his own story. He introduces himself as a wealthy and noble man who had long been in love with a beautiful maiden of equal wealth and social standing. Known and approved by their parents, their love story seemed predestined to easy success. When the lovers reach a certain age, Luscinda's father banishes Cardenio from the family household, out of respect for his daughter. The physical distance between them only fuels the flames of Cardenio's desire, encouraging him to quench his passion by asking Luscinda's hand in marriage. Or so he says: "viéndome apurado, y que mi alma se consumía con el deseo de verla, determiné poner por obra [...] lo que me pareció que más convenía para salir con mi deseado y merecido premio, y fue el pedírsela a su padre por legítima esposa" (Cervantes 2009: 224). Nevertheless, we later learn that the initiative that the madman claims for himself was all Luscinda's. It is the enamoured woman who writes a letter to Cardenio, prompting him to take action and so revealing uncertainty about his ability to exert agency.

Luscinda's father shows gratitude for Cardenio's request, but resolves that it is the suitor's parent who should rightfully make it. Deeming the decision well-founded, Cardenio heads home to reveal his wish to his father, whom "vendría en ello como yo le dijese" (Cervantes 2009: 225). This alleged resolution is, once again, questioned by a confession later made by the faltering madman: "no me aventuraba a decírselo a mi padre, así por aquel inconveniente como por muchos otros que me acordaban, sin saber cuáles eran" (Cervantes 2009: 264).

The obstacle to which Cardenio refers comes in the form of a letter. Luscinda's suitor arrives home to find an invitation from Duke Ricardo, grandee of Spain, welcoming him to become the "compañero, no criado, de su hijo el mayor" (Cervantes 2009: 225). Without making the slightest mention to his father about his marriage plans, Cardenio sets off to his destination. There, he befriends the second son of the Duke, Don Fernando. Given the alleged intimacy of their friendship, the aristocrat shares with him his innermost secrets and desires. This is how Cardenio comes to know that his lust for a rich *labradora* and the urge to possess her sexually has led Don Fernando to make her a promise of marriage.

If we are to believe his version, Cardenio does not learn until later that his friend has already deflowered the beautiful *labradora*. Neither does he seem to ask. On the initiative of Don Fernando, the friends plan to visit Cardenio's hometown, a prospect which rekindles his desire to see Luscinda. This desire, he feels morally obliged to share with Don Fernando, "en la ley de la mucha amistad que mostraba" (Cervantes 2009: 227). Not only does he share his secret with the aristocrat, but he hyperbolically praises Luscinda's personal worth, until he arouses his friend's desire to contemplate a maiden endowed with such perfection. Don Fernando's wish is soon granted. Cardenio does not doubt to let him take a furtive glance at the fair object of his passion. The sensual sight of the beautiful Luscinda, wearing a chemise under the soft glow of candlelight, cannot but ignite Don Fernando's desire.

Cardenio uses the female object to reassert his masculinity, an asset always in circulation that needed to be earned in the "male" public sphere. Whether consciously or inadvertently, he seeks Don Fernando's approval of Luscinda to validate his own manhood, and so makes him his potential rival. From this moment onwards, the Duke's son turns Luscinda into the central subject of their conversations, engendering in Cardenio a strange jealousy to which he only confesses when narrating his tale to Don Quijote. In acknowledging jealousy, Cardenio gives signs of a mistrust he constantly denied, either for his virtuous and faithful beloved, or for his closest friend, whom he is about to entrust with his marriage transaction.

At this point, the story reaches an abrupt end to be later resumed in chapter XXVII, where Cardenio draws his tale to a conclusion. He relates how Don Fernando treacherously asked for Luscinda's hand in marriage, devoting substantial space to the impossibility of foreseeing, let alone preventing, his trusted friend's treason:

¿Quién pudiera imaginar que don Fernando, caballero ilustre, discreto, obligado de mis servicios, poderoso para alcanzar lo que el deseo amoroso le pidiese [...], se había de enconar [...] en tomarme a mí una sola oveja que aún no poseía. [...] ¿Pude yo prevenir esta traición? ¿Pude por ventura caer en imaginarla? No por cierto. (Cervantes 2009: 264-265)

Nevertheless, there is ample textual evidence that Cardenio had enough signs to suspect Don Fernando. Luscinda herself is clearly overwhelmed with suspicion moments before his departure. She prompts her beloved to a hasty return in an exhibition of "lágrimas, suspiros, celos, sospechas [...] [y] temores" (Cervantes 2009: 265) that astounds Cardenio as unprecedented. Confused and afraid, he resolves to deceive himself and ignore any sign of danger. Nevertheless, he cannot avoid departing "triste y pensativo, llena el alma de imaginaciones y sospechas, sin saber lo que sospechaba ni imaginaba: claros indicios que me mostraban el triste suceso y desventura que me estaba guardada" (Cervantes 2009: 266). Hard as he may try to exonerate himself, Cardenio's narrative betrays an awareness of the misfortune that would soon befall him.

During this absence, Cardenio receives a letter from his beloved informing him of the treason and he hastens back home. In a clandestine encounter, Luscinda confesses her determination to kill herself with a hidden dagger if she cannot otherwise avoid the marriage, an initiative that betrays her distrust that Cardenio will exert any "manly" agency. Apparently unaware of her thoughts, Cardenio fashions himself as far more heroic than he is given credit for being, as he informs Luscinda of his intention to use his sword in her defence.

Luscinda rushes to the room where she is to get married. Hidden behind two tapestries in the recess of a window is Cardenio, a passive onlooker of the outcome of his own story. He hears the priest ask the question to the bride and, during the subsequent lapse of silence, wishes he dared come out of his hiding place. But he does not. Neither does he have the courage to take revenge now: "¡Ahora que dejé robar mi cara prenda, maldigo al robador, de quien pudiera vengarme si tuviera corazón para ello, como le tengo para quejarme! En fin, pues fui entonces cobarde y necio, no es mucho que muera ahora corrido, arrepentido y

loco” (Cervantes 2009: 270). Cardenio’s feelings of guilt get more transparent as his narrative progresses; in this particular confession, he shows “a rare, refreshing moment of clarity” (McCallister 2011: 115).

After this moment of suspense, the bride pronounces a feeble “Sí quiero” (Cervantes 2009: 270) and faints in her mother’s arms. Cardenio narrates how he then ran away from the house, still trying to persuade his audience that he escaped “con determinación que, si me viesen, de hacer un desatino tal que todo el mundo viniera a entender la justa indignación de mi pecho” (Cervantes 2009: 270). Only when he is alone in the wilderness, shrouded in a thick cloak of darkness, does Cardenio let loose his emotions. Instead of accepting the guilt he has occasionally acknowledged he feels, the madman resorts to the self-compliant task of casting the blame on others: providence, luck, Don Fernando’s social dominance and Luscinda’s female weakness, not himself, are the causes of his disgrace.

Here ends the narration of Cardenio’s misfortunes, which come to a happy ending due to a series of miraculous coincidences, the first of them a chance encounter with the beautiful *labradora* deceived by Don Fernando. Through Dorotea’s narrative, we learn that a letter was found in the bosom of the still fainted Luscinda, stating that “ella no podía ser esposa de don Fernando, porque lo era de Cardenio” (Cervantes 2009: 286) and expressing her intention to stab herself after the ceremony. On hearing the news, Cardenio admits some guilt: “Yo soy el que no tuvo ánimo para ver en qué paraba su desmayo, [...] porque no tuvo el alma sufrimiento para ver tantas desventuras juntas” (Cervantes 2009: 289). Nevertheless, he keeps on justifying himself, attributing his flight to an overwhelming feeling of suffering and sorrow. “As an epiphany, the admission is too narrow to satisfy” (McCallister 2011: 116).

On hearing Dorotea’s story, Cardenio sees a ray of hope in his future and does not doubt to offer his manly protection and support, claiming that if Don Fernando ignores his oath, he will not doubt to use “la libertad que me concede el ser caballero y poder con justo título desafialle” (Cervantes 2009: 290). Significantly, this manly promise he will also fail to fulfil when he finally gets the chance to face his rival.

A second implausible event occurs that prompts the story’s happy ending: the fortuitous encounter of the four lovers at Juan Palomeque’s inn. Significantly, Cardenio is the last character to exert agency. The first to break the silence is Luscinda, who appeals to Don Fernando’s duty as a nobleman to beg his permission to join her lawful husband. Right after her, Dorotea pronounces a brilliant discourse forcing Don Fernando to prove his personal worth by acting

nobly and fulfilling his promise. She undermines the inherited ideology of nobility-as-birthright to argue in favour of a counter-discourse that defined nobility as virtue, subversively claiming that “la verdadera nobleza consiste en la virtud, y si ésta a ti te falta negándome lo que tan justamente me debes, yo quedaré con más ventajas de noble que las que tú tienes” (Cervantes 2009: 379).

Some critics such as Francisco Márquez Villanueva have analysed Dorotea's discourse as effecting a moral reform in Don Fernando.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, there is enough textual evidence to argue against such metamorphosis: the aristocrat is left no other chance than to conform to the period's cultural standards; he simply lacks the rhetorical arms to deny the socially condoned truths exposed by Dorotea. All warn Don Fernando “que si se preciaba de caballero y de cristiano, que no podía hacer otra cosa que cumplille la palabra dada”, which leaves him with but one option: “se ablandó y dejó vencer de la verdad, que él no pudiera negar aunque quisiera” (Cervantes 2009: 382). In her brilliant narrative of self-fashioning, Dorotea constructs herself as a worthy wife for an aristocrat, despite her lack of noble blood. What is more, she succeeds in creating a respectable subject position as a deceived maiden, despite her blatant transgression of orthodox femininity. Even though she has relinquished her purity to Don Fernando and even acknowledged desire, Dorotea manages to safeguard her dignity in a culture that fetishises female chastity. Hers is a subversive performance of gender.

During Dorotea's long speech, Cardenio has remained silent and hidden “a las espaldas de don Fernando [...] porque no le conociese” (Cervantes 2009: 380). It is only after both women have intervened on his behalf and Don Fernando has physically released Luscinda from his tight grip that Cardenio acts, stepping out of his hiding place to grab a fainting Luscinda. Holding his beloved in an embrace, Cardenio “no quitaba los ojos de don Fernando, con determinación de que, si le viese hacer algún movimiento en su perjuicio, procurar defenderse y ofender como mejor pudiese a todos aquellos que en su daño se mostrasen, aunque le costase la vida” (Cervantes 2009: 381).

So many times has the character expressed his strong determination to act, only to later retract, that this last statement of intent simply lacks credibility. Inactive as he is, Cardenio definitely does not conform to prescriptive masculinity. Nevertheless, he is cured from his madness – a signal of effeminacy – and

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5. “El hijo del Grande, un símbolo de la lujuria y un jayán traslaticio, apenas si vuelve a intervenir en el relato porque ha sido vencido, aniquilado, porque ya no es él, porque Dorotea lo ha transformado en otro hombre, bueno y noble” (Márquez-Villanueva 1975: 34)

rewarded with a happy ending. He is neither punished for his deviance from the male subject's norm of behaviour nor transformed and led to embrace, willingly, hegemonic manhood. Therefore, his story does not provide an outright reinforcement of normative gender roles. Luscinda loves Cardenio as he is, not as he should be according to their culture's standards. She is, as described by Percas de Ponseti, the "prototype of the seventeenth-century obedient daughter, but also [the] prototype of the all time noble and strong woman, capable of redeeming the weak man through perseverance, loyalty, understanding and, above all, unconditional love" (1999: 204).

### 5. D'Urfey rewrites Cardenio: reinstating heteronormativity

The audience of 'Urfey's play learns of Cardenio's story from the curate and the barber. The former, Dorothea's uncle, hears that his distressed niece left the parental house in search of the man who took her virginity, broke his marriage oath and intends to wed Luscinda. This is also how we are first acquainted with Cardenio's madness: driven to despair, he falls "stark mad" and "runs wild amongst yonder Mountains of *Sierra Morena*" (I.i: 14). The curate finds his niece disguised as a man, living among a group of shepherds in the Sierra. During their conversation, he relates how Don Fernando forged an abandonment letter from Luscinda to Cardenio and took her by force from the nunnery where she had fled for protection.

There is no hint in the text that suggests any kind of irresolution, on the part of Cardenio, to marry Luscinda; quite the contrary, he is referred to as "her betroth'd love" (III.i: 39). Neither is he guilty of selling his fiancée's charms to the libertine Don Fernando. In this case, he is, like Dorothea, the actual victim of the aristocrat's lechery and deceit. The betrayed lady uses her experience as an admonishment for the women in the audience: "Oh, let all Virgins by my Fate take Warning, and never more believe that faithless Sex" (III.i: 40). In advising unmarried women to remain chaste, Dorothea reinforces the ideology that requires sexual restraint from the female gender, allowing men to indulge freely in sexual activity without risking the perpetuation of the legitimate lines of inheritance. Nevertheless, she also defines men as essentially deceitful, perpetuating a contradiction which became inherent to the late seventeenth-century dominant notion of masculinity.

Whereas the hierarchical model of sexual difference defined men as having greater self-control, the new paradigm of complementary difference relied upon the existence of two distinct gender categories. "In this world it was no slander to

say that a man was debauched or a whoremonger –it was a proof of his masculinity– [...] but adult men could not tolerate a charge that they were sodomites” (Trumbach 1987: 118). Sexual assertiveness became a signal of normative masculinity and hegemonic heterosexuality. Nevertheless, the construction of manhood that began to gain currency after the Glorious Revolution stressed the centrality that gentlemanly behaviour and moral soundness had to the male experience. In this context, any sign of overindulgence in sexual pleasures conflicted with the ethical uprightness and decorum required of the gentleman. Conversely, the failure to exhibit sexual prowess could make men risk charges of effeminacy, even sodomy. This conflict was often resolved through the character of the reformed rake. In this literary type, “all the sexual energies necessary to full masculinity are manifest extravagantly but then assimilated smoothly into the polite self-discipline of the gentleman” (Mackie 2009: 9). Don Fernando can be analysed as a reformed rake that validates the dominant construction of manhood.

Suddenly, Don Fernando and Luscinda arrive at the inn where Dorothea and her uncle are talking. Dorothea listens to the conversation held by the couple from the adjacent room, prepared to intervene when the opportunity arises. She hears Luscinda censure Don Fernando’s sacrilegious stealing of her from the nunnery and his betrayal of Cardenio, on the grounds that “you are of noble Blood, and in your Veins should run a stream of Virtue, that should distribute Justice thro’ your Soul” (III.i: 41). Luscinda’s argument is based on the inherited ideology of virtue as nobility: in exhibiting an ignoble, socially unsanctioned behaviour, Don Fernando refuses to embody the righteous spirit inherent to the aristocracy and jeopardises the honourable manhood that he should naturally incarnate. The play makes clear that actions are manifestly motivated by his male drive to quench his sexual appetite. Luscinda’s refusal of his marriage proposal exposes Don Fernando’s actual aspirations: “give me but the Reward that my Desire and Services deserv’d, and I’ll be satisfied” (III.i: 42). Even though his sexual assertiveness is proof of his masculinity, the character’s marked deviance from the period’s standards of male virtue undermines his gentlemanliness. Luscinda understands Don Fernando’s sexual profligacy as inherent to his maleness, but she condemns it for not being subject to socially acceptable restrictions: “You will not force me, rash as you are, young and ungovernable; you dare not be so base?” (III.i: 42).

In a discourse reminiscent of Diego’s, Don Fernando naturalises the dominant construction of women as the preordained object of masculine desire: “Are those dear Eyes that warm all Hearts with Passion, that lovely Face and Body, fit for a Nunnery? Fie, Sweet, ‘tis Contradiction to the Intent of Providence, that gave thee Beauty to delight and love” (III.i: 43). Nevertheless, his sacrilegious

stealing of a maiden from a convent and his betrayal of Cardenio and Dorothea also make his intent socially and morally unsanctioned. Luscinda's appeal to his humanity and sense of honour succeed, and the rake eventually realises that he has been "but a squeamish Whore-master" (III.i: 43).

This is the moment when Dorothea enters, as if providentially sent to bring Don Fernando to the path of virtue. Where the nobleman expects hatred, he finds forgiveness: "Oh Heaven! My Hatred? What for a small Frailty, a slight Forgetfulness, which all young Men have naturally, when their Loves are absent?" (III.i: 44). Through these words, Dorothea naturalises sexual profligacy as inherent to masculinity. In her self-fashioning, she also substantiates normative femininity: "I am as fair as she, as young, as charming, form'd for the Pleasure of my dearest Lord; bless'd too with Virtue, Constancy, and Duty" (III.i: 45). Distancing herself from her literary predecessor, Dorothea defines her worth as dependent on the traditionally fetishised attributes of beauty and purity, embracing the role of the object of male desire. Enraged at her obstinacy, Don Fernando threatens to kill her. In her answer, Dorothea embodies the self-sacrifice that lies at the core of the traditional ideal of femininity, subjecting her delicate body and soul to Don Fernando's authority: "Why then, no harmless Dove, or tender Infant, will ever die so patient" (III.i: 46). On hearing these words, Don Fernando's heart is miraculously softened; the rake is finally reformed.

D'Urfey's Don Fernando returns willingly to the path of virtue, truly ashamed of his past behaviour. He resolves to marry Dorothea and implores Luscinda's forgiveness, claiming that he was "enchanted, mad" (III.i: 47). The discourse of insanity is called upon to naturalise and substantiate normative masculinity, providing a category wherein to confine deviance. Unlike his literary predecessor, Don Fernando is eventually "cured" and led to embody hegemonic manhood, reinforcing the dominant connection between masculinity and reason. It can be argued, therefore, that the episode serves dominant ends. As a reformed rake, Don Fernando joins the sexual assertiveness necessary to demonstrate his masculinity and the moral soundness and politeness required of a noble gentleman. As regards Dorothea's performance of gender, it lacks all the subversiveness of the original. Fashioning herself as a saviour angel come to lead Don Fernando to the rightful path, she validates hegemonic femininity and constructs sexual inconstancy as a natural male flaw.

Determined to reinstate his good name, Don Fernando parts in search of Cardenio, who is first found by Don Quixote. Bowman – the actor who plays the madman – enters "in ragged Clothes, and in a wild Posture" (IV.i: 61),

exhibiting the outward signals of male insanity. Standing at the forestage, an enraged Cardenio passionately bursts into singing “Let the Dreadful Engines of Eternal Will”.

Bowman’s performance of madness is characterised by constant and abrupt changes of mood, as the character is violently assaulted by different feelings and emotions. Through references to heat and wild natural events, the opening of the song conveys threatening ire:

Let the dreadful Engines of Eternal Will,  
The Thunder roar, and crooked Lightning kill;  
My Rage is hot as their, as fatal too,  
And dares as horrid Execution do. (IV.i: 61)

Cardenio’s flaring temper then changes abruptly into icy despair: “Or let the Frozen North its rancour show, / Within my Breast far greater Tempests grow; / Despair’s more cold than all the Winds can blow” (IV.i: 61). A brief memory of Luscinda suffices to make the heat return and plummet to reach hyperbolic levels. References to “Hell,” flaming “Meteors” and “Blue Lightning” flashing (IV.i: 61) are proof of Cardenio’s blazing passion. He imagines the sky reached by flames and the entire world burning fiercely; overwhelmed by lust, he has completely forsaken “manly” reason.

After this moment of unbridled passion, Cardenio suddenly relapses into bittersweet nostalgia, recalling the blissful days he used to share with Luscinda. He describes a paradise on Earth, full of “flow’ry Groves, / Where *Zephyr*’s fragrant Winds did play” (IV.i: 61), where “the Nightingale and Lark” (IV.i: 62) sang and “all was sweet and gay” (IV.i: 62). Immediately afterwards, his deluded mind returns to the present; his fiery rage is spontaneously revived: “Glow, I glow, but ‘tis with Hate; / Why must I burn for this Ingrate?” (IV.i: 62). Nevertheless, on this occasion, Cardenio manages to keep his hot temper under control [“Cool, cool it then, and rail, / Since nothing will prevail” (IV.i: 62)] and to recover his lost reason. He moves on to pronounce a diatribe against the female gender, casting the blame of his misfortune on women’s falsity, inconstancy and cruelty.

Though grounded in the conventions of antifeminist satire, the last part of the song is, as Vélez Núñez (2003) pointed out, governed by reason, not unbridled passion or emotion. Here lies a key difference between Marcella’s and Cardenio’s madness: whereas female lovesickness served as a reinforcement of women’s

being essentially emotive and irrational, male insanity threatened to undermine the dominant construction of masculinity. In allowing the two last stanzas of Cardenio's song to be governed by reason, D'Urfey contains anxiety about the threat that male melancholy posed to hegemonic manhood.

Cardenio reappears in Act V, "new dress'd" (V.i: 78) and with "his Sense [...] perfectly recovered" (V.i: 78). His dementia is attributed to mere "Colds and ill Dyet" (V.i: 78); medication and gentle sleep have sufficed to restore Cardenio to his original good sense. The transitory, accidental nature of his madness is conveniently emphasised and hegemonic maleness, effectively reinforced. His new outfit can be taken to symbolise Cardenio's willingness to reenact his social identity and hence to conform to the dominant world order. As soon as he appears on the stage, he challenges Don Fernando to a duel. Unlike his Cervantine predecessor, Cardenio does not eschew manly agency; he does not doubt to draw his sword to take revenge on the man who has tarnished his honour and betrayed his trust. His rival admits his guilt, which he attributes to uncontrollable lust: "all the soft Bonds of our endearing Friendship were scorch'd and burnt, by her bright Eyes, to Ashes" (V.i: 79).

Don Fernando's words reverberate with sexual references to burning, heat and fire, stressing that his reason was completely overwhelmed by unbridled sexual desire. Nevertheless, both friends are cured of their effeminising "pathologies," led to embody hegemonic masculinity and finally reconciled. Their friendship bond is renegotiated through the utterly objectified female body, as proved by the alternative that Don Fernando offers to the duel: to use Luscinda as symbolic currency to be exchanged between Cardenio and himself. At this point, the female "object" enters the scene, veiled; her covered face suggests the depersonalisation into which she has been forced. Luscinda's material value, which is stated through economic metaphors, makes the transaction worthy: "Let this atone then for my rash Offence, that I surrender back this precious Jewel, bright and unsullied; and for my Sin in seeking to corrupt her, with Shame and Sorrow once more beg your Pardon" (IV.i: 80).

The ending of the Cardenio episode does serve hegemonic ends in D'Urfey's play. The two male lovers are "cured" of their deviance and led to embody and substantiate hegemonic manhood. As regards Dorothea, she lacks all the subversiveness of her Cervantine predecessor. She is but the charming, patient and self-sacrificing "Guardian Angel" (IV.i: 80) that brings Don Fernando back to the path of virtue; her transgression of orthodox femininity is justified, since it seeks to restore the hegemonic order of society.

## 6. Conclusion

The interpolated stories in *Don Quijote* became a cherished source for adaptations in seventeenth-century England. This paper has provided an analysis of two of these tales in *The Comical History of Don Quixote*: the episode of Marcela and the story of Cardenio. The choice of these tales is grounded on the claim that the characters of Marcela, Cardenio, Don Fernando and Dorotea enact a counter-hegemonic identity that undermines the dominant notions of gender and class. Exhibiting initiative and reasoning powers, Marcela and Dorotea raise their voices to become active agents in their self-fashioning; the former, to defend women's free will; the latter, to obtain the spouse of her choice, subversively acknowledging sexual desire and agency. The resolution shown by these characters is entirely absent from Cardenio, who, unable to exert manly agency, does not conform to hegemonic masculinity. Nevertheless, he is not stuck within the effeminising category of the madman; he is recovered and granted a place in society, despite not embodying prescriptive maleness. Similarly, the reasoning skills exhibited by the women are Don Fernando's main flaw, as the aristocrat exhibits the lust and lack of self-control traditionally associated with the weaker vessels.

An analysis of *The Comical History of Don Quixote* reveals that D'Urfey's characters enact and naturalise hegemonic gender identities. His depiction of Marcella reinforces the construction of women as the weaker vessels whose dubious chastity conditions the stability of the nation, raising the audience's anxiety about this integral paradox of patriarchy. Nevertheless, by staging Marcella's/Bracegirdle's capitulation, D'Urfey contains this anxiety, naturalising the construction of women as objects of male desire and preordained wives. Dorothea becomes the embodiment of ideal femininity: sweet, passive and self-sacrificing, she drops her disguise and renounces any agency as soon as hegemony is restored. As a reformed rake, Don Fernando neutralises a contradiction inherent to the dominant construction of manhood, exhibiting, simultaneously, the sexual assertiveness and gentlemanly manners required of a nobleman. Through the discourse of insanity, Cardenio naturalises hegemonic gender difference: the ending of his mad song is governed by logic and the character is, unlike Marcella, cured of his deviance. This difference provides an effective reinforcement of the gendered binary of reason and emotion challenged by Cervantes.

The author of *Don Quijote* explored a variety of literary genres, ranging from the chivalric to the pastoral and the epic, in order to destabilise the ideological constructions imposed by their conventions. Through this exploration, he created a heterogeneous array of characters of different genders, ethnic origins and

socio-economic backgrounds that provide a commentary on his social, cultural and literary context. In Counter-Reformation Spain, the hegemonic discourse strove to define a national identity based on the articulation of difference and the subsequent exclusion of the “other”. Such difference was constructed through the naturalization of purportedly innate, essential subjectivities. As argued by Fuchs, “normative, aristocratic male subjects [...] staked their identity on two basic tenets: honra (honor) and limpieza de sangre (blood purity). The first depended largely on male valor and female chastity, as well as on stringent distinctions between classes” (Fuchs 2010: 3). Interestingly, it is the construction of men as naturally braver and aristocrats as innately virtuous that the characters of Cardenio and Don Fernando respectively subvert. As regards Marcela, she undermines the objectification of women that empowered the normative subjects to keep the status quo under control. A question arises from these conclusions: On what grounds does Cervantes challenge the established truths of his society? First, we should take into account that identities are produced and constrained by different coexisting – and often opposing – discourses; it is precisely the prevalence of an emerging ideology over a once-ingrained precept that brings about change. The following lines provide a brief analysis of the conflicting ideologies appropriated by Cervantes in the episode studied in this paper.

The conduct manuals that prescribed female behaviour in late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Spain coexisted with an emerging reality that was taking shape at the time: Women were transcending the silent domestic sphere in which they were traditionally confined and exerting a more noticeable influence in the public domain. Females of different social classes and ethnic backgrounds “positioned themselves as key to the functioning of the emerging nation state and often overcame the obstacles placed on them by that state and its culture of control” (Vollendorf 2005: 315). Marcela is an example of this kind of woman contemporary of Cervantes who subverts the normative discourse deployed by the hegemonic social groups by encroaching on “male” territory.

Another change recorded by Vollendorf (2005) is an unprecedented rise in female literacy that began to occur in Spain around 1580. Not only did women become readers, but, more importantly, writers of all literary genres. Like Marcela, they adopted the role of agents of their own stories and tackled a variety of topics, including marriage and sexual desire. Of this changing paradigm, Vollendorf concludes that “a revolution in women’s relationships to the written word and to the dominant culture was afoot during the time that Cervantes was writing his masterpiece” (2005: 316). As she continues to argue, the peasant is a representation of those historical female subjects who were challenging the

normative discourse “as authors and artists as well as founders of convents and managers of businesses” (Vollendorf 2005: 317).

Even if the author of *Don Quijote* was representing an emerging reality, the threat that his unprecedented *esquiva* poses to the dominant order is still worthy of attention. However, Marcela's inability to persuade the shepherds' to sympathise with her cause and the blatant criticism that scholars targeted at the character indicate that she could easily have been interpreted as an uncompassionate woman, and the traces of subversion revealed by her discourse, overlooked. After all, the context of reception plays a major role in the understanding of any text, and the 21<sup>st</sup> century is a more fertile ground for the celebration of female liberty and free will.

The Renaissance construction of virtue-as-birth was also contested by an emergent discourse during Cervantes's lifetime. At the dawn of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Spain was facing a series of crises: the defeat of the Armada, combined with epidemic diseases and a domestic economy weakened by inflation, resulted in a period of decline. The solutions offered to address these conflicts, primarily aimed at increasing productivity, were articulated in a new discourse of noble masculinity: “Many lamented the laziness that resulted from the nobility's passive accumulation of riches, fearing that this lassitude threatened masculinity itself” (Lehfeldt 2008: 479). Don Fernando embodies the feudal nobleman whose idleness and self-indulgence started to be perceived as compromising the nation's wellbeing. By these standards, birth was not enough to demonstrate virtue, which had to be gained through noble deeds. However, the threat that the character poses to the ideology of nobility-as-birth is disregarded by the critical analyses that advocate for the aristocrat's transformation. Such readings, which also ignore the traces of subversion present in Don Fernando's speech, interpret the episode as endorsing the discourse that defines nobility as essentially virtuous.

D'Urfey's prolific literary production spanned a tumultuous period that covered the reigns of four successive monarchs: Charles II, James II, William III and Mary II, and Queen Anne. Biographers have often highlighted his ability to be complimented by all, “a feat that must have taken considerable manoeuvring as the political climate in England changed once and again in a relatively short period of time” (Gómez-Lara et al. 2014: 17). During the rule of libertine Charles II, D'Urfey penned overtly licentious works disapproved by men of sterner morals. However, the Glorious Revolution brought about a rupture of the established order. Gómez-Lara et al (2014) explain that whereas the comedy of wit often dealt with the shortcomings of marriage, the new regime required that matri-

mony should be portrayed in a more positive light. The pro-Orange discourse represented the deterioration of marriage and the traditional family as signaling the decadence of the nation, which William III had been divinely appointed to “rescue”. In the episodes analysed above, D’Urfey decides to accommodate to the prevailing power structures: Marcella’s punishment, Don Fernando’s heartfelt moral reformation and Cardenio and Luscinda’s wedding all endorse the institution sanctioned by both God and the author’s patrons.

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