

## Poet or Pimp? Theatricality and Sex Crimes in Lope de Vega and Cervantes

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*Por el color se dan señas  
de un hombre en tribunal.*  
(Lope de Vega, *Peribáñez y el Comendador de Ocaña*)

In *El escritor que compró su propio libro*, Juan Carlos Rodríguez argues convincingly that the source for Avellaneda's apocryphal continuation of *Don Quijote II* is the literary circle that surrounded Lope de Vega and, furthermore, that the apparent malice with which the anonymous author treats Cervantes's original arises from Lope's aristocratic aspirations.

Lope cumple hasta el fondo las reglas de la dialéctica Señor/siervo: por eso admira y sirve a los Señores, hasta su anegamiento en ellos, pero a la vez odia a «los grandes» de su propio ámbito, no se conforma con ser *primum inter partes*, sino que quiere ser primero siempre: de ahí su rechazo y su aludido temblor ante Góngora o Calderón. Los «teme» precisamente porque sí le pueden escapársele. Son como imágenes invertidas en el espejo de ese poder del Señor—o de los Señores—que él llevaba tan el fondo de la piel... que prácticamente acaba por imitar a Góngora y a Calderón casi como en un acto de vasallaje. (50)<sup>1</sup>

According to Rodríguez, Lope sees himself as a kind of artistic *grande* who, nevertheless, felt threatened by the likes of Calderón and Góngora due to their rising currency in the courtly aesthetic economy. But the question that motivates Rodríguez's extended essay concerns why and how Cervantes fits into Lope's search for power and prestige: "Góngora y Calderón eran «grandes» en sí mismos. De ahí sin duda el terror lopesco. Pero ¿y Cervantes? Si Cervantes era «nadie», ¿por qué la inquina, la enemiga continua—y aparentemente inexplicable—de Lope contra Cervantes, hasta incluso tratar de aniquilarlo con el falso Quijote, el surgido de su círculo de poder bajo el nombre de Avellaneda?" (50). To answer his question, Rodríguez builds on scholarship by Martín de Riquer, Nicolás Marín, Daniel Eisenberg, E. C. Riley and, more recently, Helena Percas de Ponseti, who argues convincingly that Cervantes's former companion-in-arms, one Jerónimo de Pasamonte (note the similarity to Ginés de Pasamonte), wrote the apocryphal Part 2, while Lope penned the Prologue.<sup>2</sup> Moving beyond the philological hypotheses, Rodríguez then situates his analysis within a materialistically founded methodology, similar to Spadaccini and Talens, who write: "Cervantes sees the 'effect of the economic infrastructure on artistic values and the artist's integrity' (Johnson 1981, 250-251) and his dialogue with Lope de Vega and the public theater of his time may be read as an attempt to

<sup>1</sup> Percas de Ponseti arrives at similar conclusion in her exhaustive and convincing effort to connect Avellaneda to Lope's immediate literary circle: "Aun después de muerto Cervantes seguirá Lope obsesionado con desacreditarle, herido, no cabe duda, por las sutiles indirectas del *Quijote* de 1615" (69).

<sup>2</sup> "Avellaneda, Lope de Vega, y Jerónimo de Pasamonte, antiguo compañero de armas de Cervantes en el Mediterráneo. Coincidieron desde agosto de 1571 hasta abril de 1572 en el tercio de Moncada. Participaron en octubre de 1572 en la acción de Navarino, y en la conquista de Túnez en octubre de 1573, antes de distanciarse cuando Cervantes fue a Cerdeña mientras Pasamonte se quedó de guarnición en Túnez. Éste fue cautivado diez meses después al perderse la Goleta (Riquer)" (94).

problematize those issues” (52). In the following discussion, I would like to take Rodríguez’s materialistic approach and combine it with emerging work on early modern theatricality by critics such as Bruce Burningham and William Egginton, who have observed that the themes and structures of metafiction and theatricality color almost every page of *DQ II*, to such a degree that the work may be said to contain Cervantes’s most prolonged and pointed engagement with baroque theater as well as the function and place of the author/artist in Spanish Counter Reformation society (Cascardi). My goal is to filter these materialistic and aesthetic lines of argument through a more focused lens, specifically, the theatrical staging of sex crimes, which will allow me to return to Rodríguez’s hypothesis in a more pointed fashion in the conclusion of this essay.

It is of course difficult to speak directly of sex crimes in early modernity, at least in strictly juridical terms. There is little debate concerning don Fernando’s deceptive seduction and jilting of Dorotea in *DQ I*, or his kidnapping of Lucinda; or Dorotea’s rape and close call with rape after she goes in search of the knave when his promises prove false (see Parker Aronson). Modern critics have long recognized the inherent sexual violence of courtly love lyrics as played out, for example, in the pastoral battle of wills between Grisóstomo and Marcela (Parker Aronson; El Saffar 1993); and Lope de Vega’s theater is far from unique in its staging of amorous deceits, rapes, and uxoricides. However, drawing a direct line between the repetitive and spectacular representation of these aesthetic tropes and motifs and the socio-juridical processing of criminal sexual violence may strike us as anachronistic.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, recent studies by Renato Barahona, Susan Byrne, and María M. Carrión provide historical and juridical frameworks for doing just that. As the epigraph at the beginning of this paper attests, Golden Age authors were fully aware of the legal procedures dealing with the seduction, kidnapping, and rape of, especially, lower class women by men from more privileged classes. Barahona’s *Sex Crimes, Honour, and the Law in Early Modern Spain* pays special attention to lawsuits initiated by families of disgraced, jilted, or raped women from the peasant class or lower rungs of the nobility against more wealthy respondents, where the goals ranged from legally compelling the culprit to marry the disgraced woman to monetary damages that would allow the woman and her family to seek a suitable marriage and thus preserve their honor. The undeniable presence of this sexually violent predicament throughout Spanish baroque literature, from the picaresque to the *comedia nueva*, Zayas to Cervantes, speaks to an urban crisis that authors attempted to explore, critique, and resolve in diverse fashion.<sup>4</sup>

The goal of this paper is to compare and contrast Lope’s *Peribáñez y el Comendador de Ocaña* with Cervantes’s *DQ II* in order to, first, understand the differing aesthetic and social approaches to an issue that is far from being resolved; and, second, to further illuminate what may be at the root of the socio-aesthetic antagonism between the two authors. My claim is that the constitutive difference between their approaches to the representation of sex crimes revolves around how: 1. Lope frames the potential sexual violence and theatrical chaos set in motion by the Comendador to trap the newly wedded Casilda as the work a deceitful, disobedient, and dishonorable aberration/abomination, who needs to be eliminated so that an inherently just and egalitarian society can function as God intended; while 2. Cervantes locates the source of the

<sup>3</sup> This is not meant to suggest that much work on sexual violence against women has not been done on early modern Spain, and Cervantes in particular. See El Saffar, de Armas Wilson, Cruz, Gossy, and Perry.

<sup>4</sup> See my forthcoming paper “The Performance of Justice: Good-Natured Rule Breaking in Calderón’s *El alcalde de Zalamea*,” *eHumanista: Política y literatura. La razón de estado en las letras del Siglo de Oro*, eds. Antonio Cortijo Ocaña and Enric Mallorquí-Ruscalleda.

chaos in the hierarchical power structure of the aristocracy itself and its use of theatrical spectacles to simultaneously entertain and legitimize political privilege and economic superiority.<sup>5</sup> For Cervantes, the image of terror that is brought to the stage in a figure like Lope's don Fadrique is not external to the monarchical-seigniorial apparatuses of social and political containment, as Lope would have it, but is rather a symptom of its hierarchical structure, a structure embodied by and communicated through its aesthetic taste. We should keep in mind that the pastoral wedding of the *labradores* with which *Peribañez* begins is never allowed to take place at the palace of the duke and duchess in *DQ* II. Instead, doña Rodríguez's daughter, who was deceitfully seduced by the son of the aristocrats' creditor, is sent off to a convent rather than be allowed to marry to the quick-witted Tosilos, in spite of the desire of both parties. Such a marriage would stand as a challenge to the power of the duke and a constant reminder of his financial indebtedness, ethical failings, and, most importantly, lack of absolute power over his subjects.<sup>6</sup> In this light, the duke's violent suppression and punishment of his subjects' amorous desire can be seen as an intertextual grounding of the more idealistic resolution of Camacho's wedding and what Francisco Vivar rightly calls the "guerra económica" that structures its libidinal economy (84).

But before getting too deeply into the differences between the two authors, I think it will be instructive—and entertaining—to enumerate the more striking similarities, both thematic and structural, between Lope's play, published in 1614, and Cervantes's theatrical prose from the same period. In terms of characterization, the equestrian accident leading to don Fadrique's infatuation with the newly married peasant girl Casilda is occasioned by a problem with his tack: he gets tangled in a rope (*soga*), which leads to his near (and ultimately) fatal fall. Given the date of composition of the play, the quixotic resonance could not be clearer. The principle conflict in the play arises from the theatrical elevation of a peasant girl to the status of ideal object of amorous desire, for whom a smitten "knight"—who should be participating in a holy war against the infidel—is willing to spend his entire "hacienda... honor... sangre... y vida" in order to secure (vv. 638-41). Consider Fadrique's soliloquy after leaving Peribañez's house in act 1:

Hermosa labradora,  
 más bella, más lucida,  
 que ya del sol vestida  
 la colorada Aurora;  
 sierra de blanca nieve,  
 que los rayos de amor vencer se atreve:  
 parece que cogiste  
 con esas blancas manos  
 en los campos lozanos,  
 que el mayo adorna y viste,

<sup>5</sup> The thesis is similar to one I presented in my 2004 paper "Icons of Honor: Cervantes, Lope and the Staging of Blind Faith," which compared Lope's *auto sacramental* *La siega* to Cervantes's interlude *El retablo de las maravillas*.

<sup>6</sup> Francisco Vivar writes: "José Antonio Maravall, en *Poder, honor y élites en el siglo XVII*, estudia el gran papel que se le atribuyó a la riqueza 'en la constitución del estamento superior' y señala que 'en fin de cuentas ahora va a ser, cada vez más desnudamente, la riqueza la que determine el puesto—o la posesión de muy principales empleos públicos (por ejemplo, puestos en los altos Consejos o en el mando de los ejércitos)—que proporcionan posesión de bienes o disposición sobre ellos' (256); y cita la siguiente frase de López Pinciano: 'nobleza no es más que Antigua riqueza' (256). Esta nueva clase—los ricos—va a entrar en pugna con los antiguos poderosos (260)" (85, n2).

cuantas flores agora  
 Céfiro engendra en el regazo a Flora.  
 Yo vi los verdes prados  
 llamar tus plantas bellas,  
 por florecer con ellas,  
 de su nieve pisados,  
 y vi de tu labranza  
 nacer al corazón verde esperanza. (71, vv. 522-39)

Lope's spectator senses that there is something not quite right about this *elogio*, just as Cervantes's reader knows that there is something amiss in Don Quixote's noticeably rote, yet ribald, recitation of Dulcinea's physical attributes in *DQ I*:

Que sus cabellos son oro, su frente Campos Elíseos, sus cejas arcos del cielo, sus ojos soles, sus mejillas rosas, sus labios corales, perlas sus dientes, alabastro su cuello, mármol su pecho, marfil sus manos, su blancura nieve, y las partes que a la vista humana encubrió la honestidad son tales, según yo pienso y entiendo, que solo la discreta consideración puede encarecerlas y no compararlas. (I, 13, 104)

In the case of don Fadrique, it may be the description of how his "verde esperanza" arises from Casilda's "plantas bellas;" while in *Don Quijote*, it is most likely due, in part, to the fact that the objectifying tropes are patently recited according to the same *abecedario* from which the narrator took his authoritative quotations in the Prologue; in part, to the *unmention* of Dulcinea's unmentionables; and, in part, to Sancho Panza's incredulity when he finds out to whom the poetic inventory is directed.

Another strikingly similarity occurs in act 2 of *Peribáñez*, when don Fadrique points out which of the three peasant girls is Casilda, whose portrait he has hired a painter to render onto a "face" card (*naípe*). Here, the Cervantine resonance, from Sancho's "enchantment" of the three peasant girls early in *DQ II*, to the Durandarte's "paciencia y barajar" in the cave of Montesinos, where the three girls also appear, to the fact that the painter needs his patron to point out which of the peasant girls is the object of his desire (shouldn't it be obvious?) are notable. There are also the constant attempts of Fadrique's lackeys to reason with the Comendador and provide counsel on his capricious enterprise, which resonates not only with the Don Quixote-Sancho dyad, but which plants its deep historical roots in Don Juan Manuel's *El Conde Lucanor* and the class-based antagonism of Fernando de Rojas's *Celestina*. In assembling this catalog I am not trying to establish who is copying whom—with the possible exception of Fadrique's fall<sup>7</sup>—but rather to map out the common terrain of class-crossing tropes through which each author constructs his artifice.

All of these mechanisms and motifs make for a productive comparison, but it is their overall theatrical structures that provide the richest terrain for analysis. Once don Fadrique decides that he must have Casilda at all costs, his adulterous and arguably criminal enterprise becomes constitutively theatrical; as a result, every word, gesture, gift, invitation, etc., takes on multiple meanings. In his own words, "No va mal trazado así; / que su villana aspereza / no se ha de rendir por ruegos; / por engaños ha de ser" (2568-71). From planting the false *segador*

<sup>7</sup> Even here the commonplace of the nobleman falling off his horse as a sign of impending dishonor establishes that Cervantes is playing with theatrical allegory from Don Quixote's first sally.

Luján in Peribáñez's cohort of laborers,<sup>8</sup> to the squire Leonardo's false promise of marriage to Casilda's maid Inés, to Fadrique's deceptive 'promotion' of Peribáñez to the rank of Captain—not unlike the duke's appointment of Sancho to the *alcaldía* of Barrataria—theatricality threatens the social and ontological integrity of Ocaña and, by extension, Toledo, the seat of Enrique III's monarchy. The maximum expression of the Comendador's attempt to expropriate Casilda's corporeal reality through artifice is of course the painting, an image that is blasphemously rendered during the parade of the Virgin Mary's holy icon through the streets of Toledo. This juxtaposition underlines the metaphysical implications of the would-be-rapist's illegitimate attempts to impose his violent and chaos-inducing desire on his obedient and humble subjects. In the words of Mary Randel, "Lope as clearly associates virtue with the notion of the living portrait as he connects the Comendador's aberration with worship of an empty icon. A portrait on canvas or in wood can only derive meaning if it represents a divine personage, the Virgin, Christ or a saint" (155).<sup>9</sup> In sum, there is a wide array of aesthetic-affective, economic, social, and political resources deployed by the aristocrat in his repeated attempts to influence and finally force (*forzar*) Casilda's will.<sup>10</sup> The list includes: his attempts to woo the new bride through the objectifying tropes of courtly love; the "gift" of the two "perfect" mules;<sup>11</sup> the noble *reposteros*;<sup>12</sup> and the fashionable earrings he has made for the object of his impertinent sexual desire. Let us not forget the important roles played by Luján and Leonardo in easing Fadrique's penetration into the peasants' household; and, to repeat, the ceremonious promotion of Peribáñez to the rank of captain for *El Justiciero*'s crusade into Granada.

Given all of this, it would not be excessive to call the Comendador's enterprise an attempted gang rape,<sup>13</sup> if not quite a symptom of institutionalized sexual violence.<sup>14</sup> Here is

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<sup>8</sup> The figure of Luján resonates deeply with the diabolical characters of *Soberbia* and *Envidia* in Lope's *auto La Siega*, who secretly enter the wheat fields of the *Labrador* (Christ) when he is away on an errand while the *Labradora* sleeps to sow discord and heresy (*cizaña*) (Nelson 2004). Victor Dixon identifies the theological foundation of *Peribáñez* when he writes: "The Comendador, our author implies, in procuring an image of Casilda, a mortal, a peasant woman, another man's wife—to worship her exactly as others worship God, the Virgin and the Saints, takes the 'religion of love' to the point of blasphemy (with overtones of sympathetic magic). In then indulging the fancy that he can be content with this fetish, this *fantasma*, though denied the reality, he approaches an insane idolatry" (18).

<sup>9</sup> See also Georges Güntert, and Melveena McKendrick, who writes: "A projection and recipient of male fantasy and desire rather than the exalted, powerful sovereign self it is made out to be, the female portrait-image becomes a sign not only for man's emotional and ideological configuring of woman, but for the reality of woman's very existence" (272).

<sup>10</sup> According to Barahona, "Coerced or forcible sex—in effect, rape— was generally expressed through the verb *forzar*" (54).

<sup>11</sup> As John Beusterien points out, "mula" is the root word of "mulato" a racial epithet that underlines the monstrously hybrid nature of mixed-race peoples as well as their supposed sterility (111-15).

<sup>12</sup> Peribáñez is not bereft of Sancho Panza-like characteristics. His and Casilda's seeming obsession with adorning their coach with noble trappings in order to make a grand entrance into Toledo is analogous to Sancho and his wife Teresa's discussions of the same in *DQ* II, 5. Moreover the Duchess's gift of jewelry to Teresa, as well as her letter, strike homologous chords in Lope's play. In Teresa's words: "Que todo es comenzar a ser venturosas, y como yo he oído decir muchas veces a tu buen padre, que así como lo es tuyo, lo es de los refranes, «cuando te dieran la vaquilla, corre con soguilla»—cuando te dieran un gobierno, cógele..." (II, 50; 807). And of course Cervantes gives us the «soga» proverb for good measure.

<sup>13</sup> This is also the case in Calderón's *El alcalde de Zalamea*, in which Pedro Crespo's daughter Isabel is kidnapped by Don Álvaro's gang of lackeys and taken to the mountains and raped. When she recounts the crime to her father, she refers to the Captain, not as *the* rapist but rather as "el primero..." (Act 3, vv. 129). See "The Performance of Justice: Good-Natured Rule Breaking in Calderón's *El alcalde de Zalamea*," forthcoming.

<sup>14</sup> See my analysis of María de Zayas's representation of institutionalized sexual violence (2011).

Barahona's list of key elements of sex crimes: "1) courtship, persuasions, and offers; 2) seduction and premarital sexual relations—relations, it should be underscored, generally carried out under the promise and assurance of matrimony; 3) a breach of promise to marry by the defendant (sometimes accompanied by his flight—in effect, by abandonment of the female); 4) assertions of shame and dishonor to the plaintiff in the aftermath of the deception and desertion; and 5) claims of damages" (6). Critics will object that only the first and (potentially) the second elements are present in *Peribáñez*; or that Lope's *El villano en su rincón* might make for a more relevant or accurate comparison, due to the potential for the seduction of Juan Labrador's socially ambitious daughter by the smitten courtier Otón. Certainly, the king's assumption that his squire's intentions towards the peasant maid in *El villano* are dishonorable seems to indicate that marriage into the nobility is more of a poetic conceit than a historical reality. I would argue, however, that the fact that Lope does not stage the rape is a vitally important element of the contrasts between the two authors. Moreover, what I am particularly interested in analyzing in *Peribáñez* is Lope's use of theatricality, because it is here where both the convergence and divergence of his aesthetic and political vision with Cervantes's approach to the issue of class-based sexual violence become most acute. As the previous catalog attests, the theatrical nature of the knight's enterprise is underlined repeatedly, culminating in *Peribáñez*'s insistence that the Comendador arm him as he would any other noble (another quixotic moment in the play), a demand through which the wealthy peasant attempts to take control over the theatrical deceit by compelling his lord to recognize that seducing or raping his subject's wife would dishonor himself. From the insulting way in which Fadrique and his lackeys plan the seduction/rape,<sup>15</sup> to his appropriation of a religious crusade in the interest of a deceitful seduction, the Comendador's use of theatricality is framed as a threat to the social, political, and religious integrity of Enrique III's realm. In short, Lope erects a dialectical structure in which a *transgressive theatricality* is framed as a menace to the symbolic order, leading to two inter-related ends: 1) an opposition between legitimate and illegitimate theatrical practices; and 2) a marriage between *legitimate theater* and monarchical power.

Such a model holds to William Egginton's definition of the Hispanic Baroque's *major rhetorical strategy*: "precisely in its function as artifice it refers implicitly to a reality that is 'out there,' beyond representation, independent of its fictitious message. Because everyone can comfortably agree that this is the case, we the viewers end up being force-fed a 'neutral' and 'independent' reality that is in fact a very specific political version of reality" (*The Theater of Truth* 4-5). The *neutral* and *independent* reality beyond the aberration of the Comendador's spectacular performance is of course the absolutist monarchy of Enrique III and its relentlessly hierarchical structure, in which the only possible route for social mobility would be through the *real/royal* ceremony staged at the end of the play. In the words of Frank P. Casa, "the *Comedia* has, in its advocacy for the monarchy, entered the modern world where the State assigns each individual a juridical entity regulated by the impartiality of the law, that is the 'impersonality' of the law, regardless of the status of the individual involved" (270). Casa's replacement of the term 'impartiality' with 'impersonality' is an important distinction, but it still fails to demonstrate how theatrical spectacle disguises the not so impersonal protagonists of modern juridical institutions. Spadaccini and Talens are more explicit: "the law is nothing more than a mechanism used to redirect forces that are unleashed against the interests of the monarchico-seigniorial segments of

<sup>15</sup> When Luján laughs at don Fadrique's sharing of his intimate feelings with a lowborn lackey such as himself, the latter answers: "No te espantes; / que sirviendo mujer de humilde prendas / es fuerza que lo trate con las tuyas" (801-803).

Spanish society” (34). In Casilda’s almost-rape we observe the juxtaposition of a legitimate theatrical ceremony, in which Enrique III grants Peribáñez the right to bear offensive and defensive arms, alongside the illegitimate theatrics of don Fadrique detailed above. Again, Egginton: “Thus the reality hiding behind the play, supposedly independent, gets colored by a very specific set of presuppositions that, in this case, help the commoners leaving the theater to feel more invested in a system that taxes them in order to maintain a landed elite and gives them very few rights, privileges, or protections against that elite” (5).

In the end, Lope gives us a hierarchically layered theatrical spectacle in which some uses of theater are framed as more legitimate than others. What is more, no rape actually occurs, which means that Peribáñez’s triple murder is preemptive. As such, the center of the conflict is a threat framed as lustful, dishonorable, heretical, ultimately, Jewish.<sup>16</sup> Since the crime never actually occurs, its very existence becomes debatable. Both the threat of the crime and its potential perpetrator disappear in the preemptive execution, leaving the monarchy untouched. Finally, there is no space provided in the play to question the “reality” alluded to in this dialectical structure. On the other hand, there is little historical evidence to support the claim that what Lope is putting on the stage bears much resemblance to the historical incidence and treatment of sex crimes in Baroque Spain.<sup>17</sup> Barahona’s inventory of sex crime trials details few, if any, cases in which complainants’ petitions are fully met, supporting Egginton’s argument concerning the ontological precariousness of the presupposed reality lurking behind the “false” appearances. Indeed, there are many cases in which the respondents simply refuse to recognize the court system and either send their delinquent sons away, or ignore the judgment altogether. As such, it can be argued that framing the rape, or attempted rape, of a peasant woman by an aristocrat as an anomaly, aberration, or even abomination works to obscure the decidedly common, even mundane, existence of sexual violence in Counter Reformation society (Nelson 2011).<sup>18</sup>

This is not at all what happens in *Don Quixote* I and II, where attempts to force women’s wills (and bodies) through symbolic surrogates that include courtly love, false promises of marriage, arranged marriages, elaborate trials of fidelity, as well as physical force abound. From Marcela’s self-defense and flight to the countryside, to Dorotea’s repeated experiences with rapists, noble and not, Anselmo’s theatrical attempt to unveil the “true nobility” of his wife Camila, Basilio’s use of religious ritual to save his beloved from a life sentence with the rich but disgusting Camacho, even Don Quixote’s physical restraint of the prostitute Maritornes during his Dulcinean delusion, the potential for and incidence of sexual violence are rarely absent from

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<sup>16</sup> The anti-semitic undertow of Lope’s play reaches its climax when the shepherd/soldier Belardo insults the noblemen who accompany them in their campaign against the Moors: “¡Quen piensen estos judíos / que nos mean la pajuela!” (vv. 2460-61).

<sup>17</sup> In the words of Manuel Delgado-Morales: “De ahí que la subversión realizada en torno a la autoridad de Don Fadrique, más que ataque a la nobleza en sí, significa la reafirmación del presupuesto político de Lope de que las armas y la virtud de aquella deben aunarse obligatoriamente en la fundamentación de tal sistema” (189).

<sup>18</sup> Noël Salomon’s historical work on peasant rebellions is even more eloquent on how the Crown dealt with tyrannicide. Here he recounts the reaction of Charles I to the execution of Juan Palafox in Monreal: “Under the reign of Charles I the [townspeople] killed Juan Palafox, their master, with a crossbow, in the town of Monreal. The response of the king was to send an armed force, commanded by the governor of Aragón, to the town of Monreal, which was set ablaze and almost completely destroyed, while some of the inhabitants received an exemplary punishment” (720). Salomon provides similar examples involving Felipe II, including the town of Ariza (721). In sum, there are marked contradictions between the edicts cited in Díez Borque’s introduction to his edition of *El alcalde de Zalamea* concerning the behavior of the king’s troops and the monarchy’s violent reaction to attempts by rural inhabitants to take matters into their own hands after having suffered abuse by the royal troops (see Díez Borque, Introducción).

the multiform plot. As stated above, the narrative line that most interests this essay concerns the seduction, disgrace, and eventual confinement of doña Rodríguez's daughter in a convent (and the related beating of her suitor Tosilos), all of which occur in the episodes centered at the palace of the duke and duchess.

Cervantes's complex use of theatricality goes beyond Lope's dialectical structure, starting with the meta fictional, meta theatrical, and seemingly limitless spectacle mounted at the palace of the duke and duchess, both of whom have read *DQ* I and are thus knowledgeable about the knight's and his squire's previous exploits, aspirations, and idiosyncrasies. Spadaccini and Talens call Cervantes's aesthetic strategy the transformation of "theatricality into narrativity": "It is precisely the opposition between reading, on the one hand, and the witnessing of a staged performance, on the other, that provokes in Cervantes' discourse the necessity to inscribe the 'stage' in the written page" (63).<sup>19</sup> In this case, the aristocrats' knowledge of Part I informs their theatrical praxis. The *mise en abyme* structure, which frames the theatrical enterprise within both the book and 'the spectacle within the book' works to simultaneously encapsulate and overrun Lope's aesthetic paradigm, exemplifying Egginton's notion of a *minor* aesthetic strategy: "This strategy, then, rather than accepting the presupposition of two opposing levels—a representation and a reality independent of that representation—undermines our ability to make this distinction in the first place. Not, however, in order to lead us further astray from 'reality itself,' but rather to make us aware, to remind us that we are always, at any level, involved with mediation" (6). What is most powerful about Cervantes's *minor* strategy, in my view, is that it does not allow for the resolution, violent or otherwise, of the sexual violence on stage, or off, as arguably happens in *Peribáñez*. To the contrary, the off-stage confinement of doña Rodríguez's disgraced daughter extends the power of the aristocracy into the world of the reader as a *real* remainder and reminder of the true basis for the power of the monarchical-seigniorial elements of Counter Reformation society. In Lacanian terms, where Lope blocks our view of the social and political inequality and violence of monarchical Spain with the executed body of the Comendador, thus preserving the fantasy of social equity and justice, Cervantes refuses to provide what Slavoj Žižek calls "symbolic bliss" in his representation of social antagonisms, be they sexual, class-based, ethnic, economic, or aesthetic.<sup>20</sup> As Joan Copjec explains in *Imagine There's No Woman*, "Lacan's definition of the real is precisely this: that which, in language or the symbolic, negates the possibility of any metadimension, any metalanguage" (95). But I am getting ahead of myself.

The pivotal figure in the honor intrigue that leads to the aborted joust between don Quixote and the duke's lackey Tosilos is doña Rodríguez, whose melancholic autobiography serves as one of the few sources of notional reality in what otherwise is a meta theatrical structure with no apparent exterior (another would be Ricote's story). What is more, the history of her seduced and betrayed daughter—whose name we never learn—is arguably the touchstone of the interrelated theatrics that move between Sancho's false governorship, the duchess's running gag with Sancho's wife Teresa, and of course Altisidora's aggressive, even masculine, attempts to seduce and then punish don Quixote. Let us recall that doña Rodríguez's haughty response and defensive insults of Sancho's impertinence—specifically, his request that the middle-aged

<sup>19</sup> See also Burningham 2003.

<sup>20</sup> In *Tarrying with the Negative*, Slavoj Žižek put it like this: "The fundamental thesis of Lacanian psychoanalysis is that what we call 'reality' constitutes itself against the background of such a 'bliss,' i.e., of such an exclusion of some traumatic Real. This is precisely what Lacan has in mind when he says that fantasy is the ultimate support of reality: 'reality' stabilizes itself when some fantasy-frame of a 'symbolic bliss' closes off the view into the abyss of the Real" (118).



retainer attend to his ass—serve as our introduction to this proud figure, who has suffered multiple losses of material well-being and social status due to the impoverishment of her hidalgo family and the violent actions of her former mistress. This is a marked contrast to the potential or perceived loss of face of Lope's peasant heroines in *Peribáñez* and *El villano*. In like contrast to Lope's elevation of Peribáñez to membership in the weapon-carrying nobility, the social seduction and elevation of Sancho and his wife Teresa is purely theatrical, designed solely to entertain the duke and the duchess, to whom these farces give pleasure, due in part to the seriousness with which the peasants accept the false promises of the aristocrats:

No quedaron arrepentidos los duques de la burla hecha a Sancho Panza del gobierno que le dieron, y más que aquel mismo día vino su mayordomo y les contó punto por punto todas casi las palabras y acciones que Sancho había dicho y hecho en aquellos días, y finalmente les encareció el asalto de la ínsula y el miedo de Sancho, y su salida, de que no pequeño gusto recibieron. (II, 56, 838)

The relation here between an impertinent *gusto* derived from an orchestrated *burla* is not dissimilar to one between *estupro* and *burla* as described by the plaintiffs studied by Barahona: “Even though victims used a panoply of terms to underscore their loss and plight, the most common expression was *burlada*” (31). As Henry Sullivan observes, there is real cruelty here of a sadistic nature, as much of the humor arises from the naïve aspirations of Sancho and Teresa, aspirations that are not unlike what we see in Lope's peasant-centered honor plays: “The whole sojourn on the Duke's estate is a kind of theater of sadism that encloses the two protagonists, while not making them privy to the true nature of their role” (56-60). In the doña Rodríguez episode, Cervantes seems to be exploring how the false ideological promises at the heart of the theatrical interpellation of the peasantry play out in “real life” (see Castillo and Egginton).

Doña Rodríguez is the daughter of an impoverished couple from the *hidalgo* class in Asturias who bring their daughter to Madrid to work as a seamstress for a “principal lady.” Right away we can see how the massive urbanization of Spanish society works to erode the family structure (Maravall). While subject to this principal lady, she catches the eye of an aged squire, a motif that could be said to serve as a primary plot engine of both books. This May-December romance is perversely reflected in the siege of Don Quixote's fidelity by Altisidora, who, according to Mercedes Alcalá Galán, functions as a surrogate of the duchess through whom the latter “se propone vencer a Dulcinea y para ello se ayuda de la vulnerabilidad en la que se sume el caballero al quedarse solo en el palacio” (29-30). Alcalá Galán extends this analysis to the duchess's attempts to insert herself into the marriage of Sancho and Teresa through hers and her husband's false promises, thus recentering the mediation of their conjugal relationship through the aristocrats' theater of lies. Spadaccini and Wlad Godzich reach a more expansive conclusion in their analysis of Spanish baroque culture: “The state, in other words, has arrogated unto itself the capacity of containing all the discourses used on its territory, and is making them all answerable to itself” (59).

Unlike don Quixote's ‘relationship’ with Dulcinea/Aldonza, on the other hand, doña Rodríguez marries her aged squire, and they have a daughter, who becomes the unnamed center of the honor/sex crime intrigue.<sup>21</sup> Continuing her experience of familial displacements, doña Rodríguez's stay with her first mistress is abruptly terminated when her husband is literally

<sup>21</sup> The narrator's description of the daughter (II, 48, 788) echoes descriptions of other brilliant and beautiful young female characters in Cervantes's works, from Dorotea to Ricota to Preciosa from *La gitanilla*.

stabbed in the back by Casilda (her Señora's name) when the latter takes offence at the squire's handling of a chance meeting in public with local officials. Doña Casilda objects to her footman's insistence on following an article in the honor code that compels him to accompany a municipal judge rather than his mistress, "as custom and law required he do, to properly honor so important a personage [*Translator's Note*]" (II, 48 788, n14). Put another way, social class violently imposes its will over the law and recognized custom, foreshadowing what will happen to doña Rodríguez's daughter. Spooked by the squire's reaction to being stabbed, the horse throws his mistress to the ground, and she summarily dismisses him from her household. Subsequently, the squire dies and doña Rodríguez is employed by our duchess. While living in her new household, the daughter is seduced with the (false) promise of marriage by the son of the duke's principal creditor, thus losing her principal capital for securing her future: her good name and chastity. Her daughter's disgrace represents the *hidalga's* third loss of status in as many households, an emphatic repetition that underlines the mundaneness of her situation in early modern Spain, now perpetuated in her daughter's dishonor. In doña Rodríguez's words:

En resolución, desta mi muchacha se enamoró un hijo de un labrador riquísimo que está en una aldea del duque mi señor, no muy lejos de aquí. En efecto, no sé cómo ni cómo no, ellos se juntaron, y debajo de la palabra de ser su esposo *burló* a mi hija y no se la quiere cumplir, y aunque el duque mi señor lo sabe, porque yo me he quejado a él, no una, sino muchas veces, y pedídele mande que el tal labrador se case con mi hija, hace orejas de mercader, y apenas quiere oírme, y es la causa que como el padre del *burlador* es tan rico, y le presta dineros y le sale por fiador de sus trampas por momentos, no le quiere descontentar, ni dar pesadumbre en ningún modo. (II, 48, 789; emphasis added)

According to Barahona's archival research on the prosecution of sex crimes in early modern Vizcaya, doña Rodríguez's summary of her daughter's predicament is a textbook example of "*estupro*."<sup>22</sup> An innocent girl is seduced through a false promise of marriage, after which the false suitor denies the promises made and/or disappears.

There are, however, aggravating circumstances in this case that shed light on the realities of the juridical process as well as the conventional theatrical representation of nobility in Baroque Spain. According to Barahona, this case would often lead to some sort of restitution on the part of the rich peasants, because there is nothing, other than the duke's involvement, to prevent doña Rodríguez from taking the family of her daughter's rapist to court. And this is precisely the point: the social institution that theoretically embodies honor and justice is subverting all attempts by the increasingly desperate mother to safeguard her daughter's future. The middle-aged widow (she's probably 32-33 years old) provides a scathing indictment and rebuke of the duke's actions as well as his financial dependency on the wealth of a peasant. And of course the duchess fares no better, literally embodying the holes in the edifice from which bad humors are evacuated from the decadent and sterile aristocracy.<sup>23</sup> After seeing first hand how her husband was expelled from

<sup>22</sup> "These, then, are the chief particulars of a fairly uncomplicated and otherwise routine lawsuit involving the form of sexual misconduct known to contemporaries as *estupro*—a transgression that Vizcayan legislation defined primarily as the loss of virginity in unmarried women" (6).

<sup>23</sup> Alcalá Galán's essay "Las piernas de la duquesa" provides an excellent historical and textual analysis of a well-known 'medical' procedure that is most likely related to the infertility of the duchess, concluding: "el útero será el centro que gobierne el organismo femenino, desde su salud mental hasta la física. Esto combinado con la teoría de los humores y la toxicidad inherente a la fisiología femenina establecen que la salud femenina sea un planeta aparte cuya especificidad viene determinada por la única razón para su existencia: la fertilidad. Por eso no deja de sorprender

the corrupt household of her first mistress, doña Rodríguez knows that moving from palace to palace will expose her daughter to a lifetime of domestic abuse and instability. So what does one do when the social body charged with defending the honor and safety of the defenseless instead facilitates its exploitation?

As we have seen in *Peribáñez*, one solution is to stage what Catherine Bell calls “the ritual motivation of bias,” in which an ‘evil’ antagonist is made to embody the constitutive contradictions and inherent sexual violence of the honor code, which antagonist is then eliminated by the ostensible victim of that violence in an act that is eventually sponsored by the State (172). In Lope’s play, the dying Comendador actually confesses his guilt and pardons his executioner, thus cleansing the aristocracy (and straining credulity to the breaking point). *Don Quixote* II also stages a ritual ceremony with the purported goal of sorting out the sexual misconduct. But before dealing with the *faux* tournament, it is important to take a look at the discursive context in which it is placed. Two of the four rapes considered in Parker Aronson’s recent article take place in the episodes revolving around the duke’s courtly theater. In my view, doña Rodríguez’s daughter should be added to this number, which starts to push the number of incidents of sexual violence in or around the palace to an absurd number.<sup>24</sup> One of the incidents studied by Parker Aronson is included in Teresa Panza’s letter to the duchess: “Por aquí pasó una compañía de soldados. Lleváronse de camino tres mozas de este pueblo, no te quiero decir quiénes son. Quizá volverán y no faltará quien las tome por mujeres, con sus tachas buenas y malas” (II, 52, 820). In the same letter, Teresa also mentions the son of Pedro de Lobo, who received his minor orders as a priest. The subtext would seem to indicate that the son apparently fled to the Church to avoid marrying Minguilla, the neice of Mingo Silvato. Minguilla “hale puesto demanda de que la tiene dada palabra de casamiento. Malas lenguas quieren decir que ha estado encinta dél, pero él lo niega a pies juntillas” (II, 52, 820). This case fits comfortably into Barahona’s study and also provides a dialogical resonance for doña Rodríguez’s complaint. Thus, the letter to the duchess, which is read out loud to the courtiers’ delight, indicts both the military and the Church in recognized sexual crimes.

In the meanwhile, Sancho is dealing with a similar issue as governor/judge, in the case of pig herder and the ‘prostitute.’ In this well-known episode, a woman physically drags her alleged rapist into Sancho’s parody of a court and accuses him of rape. The pig herder argues that he and the woman had agreed upon a price for sexual services, a price that he accuses the woman of attempting to renegotiate after the act. Sancho, of course, sends the woman out of the court with the man’s money and then sends the man after her. When she successfully defends the purse, Sancho declares that if she had defended her virtue as vigorously as her money, she would never have been raped (II, 45, 771-72). Parker Aronson summarizes the generally accepted reading of this episode, concluding, “There appears to be a correlation between their access to legal resolutions and their equivalent social status. Even though Sancho does not rule in her favor, his innocent belief in the impartiality of justice suggests an open-minded, fair process, and he represents a one-man jury of their peers, so the speak” (131). Although the episode has generally been read as a confirmation of Sancho’s native astuteness and “common sense” approach to

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que nadie haya vinculado nunca las fuentes con la infertilidad de la duquesa, puesto que nada sería más lógico y más coherente con la visión médica del cuerpo de la mujer en la época” (20).

<sup>24</sup> This is a puzzling omission, since Parker Aronson refers to an essay by Abigail Dyer, who observes that “Abandonment after a relationship had been sexually consummated could also be legal grounds for a charge of rape” (Dyer 444).

justice,<sup>25</sup> I think that Cervantes provides several prompts for a more problematic reading. First, in spite of the pig herder's claim that he is "un pobre ganadero," the narrator describes "un hombre vestido de ganadero rico" (II, 45, 771). Second, when he describes his business dealings, the pig herder complains that "cuatro puercos que me llevaron de alcabalas y socialiñas poco menos de lo que valian" (II, 45, 771), suggesting that here is an astute businessman used to hard bargaining and downplaying his profits. Finally, he states that he paid the woman "lo suficiente," and not necessarily the agreed upon sum. The theatrical nature of the pig herder's performance suggests that we are looking at yet another case of false or unfulfilled promises, i.e., rape as defined by Barahona and Dyer. Furthermore, Sancho's juridical *traza*, summary judgment, and harsh punishment are all indicative of the unjust juridical practices where sexual violence is concerned. Indeed, the banishment of the woman and the accompanying threat of two hundred lashes foreshadow the eventual 'resolution' of doña Rodríguez's daughter's plight, making Sancho an unwitting extension of the duke's sadistic theater of cruelty (Sullivan). Finally, the image of the poor woman clutching the purse in her lap ("ella la saya levantada, y en el regazo puesta la bolsa") as her attacker attempts to wrestle it away from her makes for a striking image of the economic substrate of gender relations in early modern Spain (II, 45, 771).

Returning to doña Rodríguez, her ingenuity is reflected in her desperate challenge to Don Quixote's ethical integrity and the limits of the duke's burgeoning entertainment industry, as she engages in what Burningham terms theatrical *reciprocity* in an attempt to redirect the entire spectacle in her interest ("An Apology," 135). This is not unlike Peribáñez's attempt to make don Fadrique uphold his duty to his newly minted Captain. Embodying what José Antonio Maravall calls a "medievalizing" ideology (36), the aging widow entreats the aged knight to defend her daughter's honor by challenging the false suitor to a duel. It is worth mentioning here that the duke's control over the theatrical edifice has already shown significant cracks, whether it be Sancho's excessive beard-washing, or Altisidora's assault on Don Quixote's chastity. It is a testament to his absolute power that he never feels threatened by these excesses, to the contrary, he finds them enormously entertaining, which is of course the point: entertainment *is* power in the palace.

The duke's handling of the joust is a lesson in both dueling protocol and stagecraft.<sup>26</sup> From placing doña Rodríguez and her daughter under the official tutelage of their champion, to the detailed instructions to Tosilos, down to the removal of the points from the lances, seemingly every possible detail is meticulously considered and controlled. It is also another way of saying that the entire game is rigged and tilted against doña Rodríguez, which begs the question: where is the entertainment in such a scripted affair? Part of the answer has to do with the duke's desire to see his will carried out by other characters, some of who do not suspect that the whole thing has been designed to produce a singular outcome. It also has to do with the fact that Don Quixote can be counted on to produce moments of absurd humor balanced with surprising lucidity, albeit with little drama. What the duke cannot control, of course, is the will of the actors, and this is where things go temporarily wrong, when Tosilos falls in love with the dishonored maiden. Although the duke is enraged by the willfulness of his lackey, he sticks with the artifice, knowing that he can enforce his will at a later time.

<sup>25</sup> The unflattering caricature in Lathrop's edition visually (and unfortunately) supports this misogynistic reading, showing a monstrous woman lifting the poorly shod pig herder into the air with one hand (773).

<sup>26</sup> This includes the duke's recognition that duels are officially banned by the Council of Trent (II, 56; 838). But it is also another example of how Don Quixote's chivalric understanding of natural justice challenges the juridical institutions of early modern Spain (Byrne).

There are two aspects of this scene I would like to focus on: the role of truth, and the exercise of brute force. In the first case, as in all duels, the outcome does not hinge on what has actually happened or who might actually be right, or wrong. The narrative makes it crystal clear that doña Rodríguez's daughter is the victim of sexual misconduct and that her attacker has fled to Flanders. The duke as much as recognizes this through his obsessive staging of the joust. Jody Enders has read this kind of epistemological maneuver through the relationship between forensic rhetoric and torture in the Middle Ages: "the medieval understanding of torture both enabled and encouraged the dramatic representation of violence as a means of coercing theater audiences into accepting the various 'truths' enacted didactically in mysteries, miracles, and even farces" (4). The physical punishments in these episodes, both threatened and executed, take on a much darker meaning when placed in Enders' framework. What Cervantes adds, of course, is the structure of modern theatricality and 'professional' actors, actors who embody as well as exceed the characters they are playing (Burningham 2003; Egginton 2003).

If we compare this performance of truth to the *baciyelmo* scene in Part 1, we recognize both the vital role of theatrical mediation as well as its limits. In both cases, what should be an unproblematic truth is complicated by the intervention of interested spectators and actors: in the case of the *baciyelmo*, a secret vote is taken; in the case of the joust, secret arrangements have been made. Ultimately guaranteeing both outcomes is the de facto power of the aristocracy, don Fernando in Part 1, and the duke in Part 2. According to Cascardi, in moments such as these, Cervantes is giving voice to his "experience of living in a world where many things boldly asserted as true were plainly false; for example, the 'truth' that so many Spaniards were of pure, Old Christian blood; or, as Quevedo argued in *La España defendida* of 1609, that Spanish was the most ancient of all the modern tongues because it had its roots in Hebrew" (242). The structure of the episodes exposes a "culture in which the discourse of the truth had been severely distorted by political attempts, at both official and popular levels, to establish it on solid ground by constructing cultural pedigrees out of fantastical ideas" (Cascardi 242). Going one step further, they also show how a compromised theatricality delivers these fantastical ideas to a captive public.

Even though doña Rodríguez and her daughter eventually agree to a marriage with Tosilos, the duke postpones the outcome of the "comedy" until he can restore his absolute power off stage by subjecting Tosilos to one hundred strikes with a bat and imprisoning/exiling doña Rodríguez's daughter in a convent. As occurs in the scene with the goatherd Andrés and his master Juan Haldudo in Part 1, don Quixote rides away believing he has righted a great wrong, when his actions have been, at best, ineffectual and, at worst, aggravating to an already hopeless situation. But even here the duke has the last word when he challenges the knight to a duel over Altisidora's missing garter, a garter she was wearing the whole time. Although there have been understandable questions over Altisidora's agency, or lack thereof, in her courtly pursuit of don Quixote, it is also fair to ask whether the duke (or duchess) told her to hide her nightcaps in Sancho's saddle pack in preparation for a final, sadistic slap at the knight's dignity. In the end, no one is allowed to enter or leave the duke's theater on her own terms. If this is the point, as I believe it is, then Cervantes's critique of the theatrical excesses of the duke and the constitutive relationship between theatricality and aristocratic power could not be clearer. And again, it is important to remember that this episode is continuously juxtaposed with Sancho's farcical governorship and the duchess's playful exchanges with Teresa, not to mention Sancho's ambiguous communion with Ricote, who provides my last comparison with *Peribáñez*.

As stated above, don Fadrique's betrayal of the honor code is refracted by the king's

crusade against the Moors in Granada. Although we can read such a far-fetched plot in relation to Lope's statement in *El arte nuevo de hacer comedias* concerning how difficult it is to keep the *vulgo* entertained, I prefer to read this plot line as evidence of the need for an ethnic and geo-political *other* against which to articulate the aforementioned fantastical alliance between the peasantry and the monarchy (Moisés Castillo). The Comendador and his military force are the targets of anti-semitic slurs by Peribáñez's peasant battalion; thus, the Comendador's desertion of martial duty frames him as doubly treasonous while simultaneously reifying the recent expulsion of the *moriscos*. It is noteworthy that Sancho is also granted "armas ofensivas y defensivas" when Barrataria is attacked by the unnamed "enemigos" in yet another dig at Lope's theatrical edifice. These enemies, however, are fabricated by the duke's *mayordomo*, converting the nationalistic threat into a theatrical device. And here is where Don Quixote's construction of Dulcinea meets the theatrical fabrication of both a threat to and a fantasy of national integrity and identity, because what I am suggesting is that Lope's theatrical attempt to create an affective bond between an oppressed peasantry and a crisis-ridden alliance of monarchial and seigniorial segments of society is portrayed by Cervantes as a false promise akin to Barahona's definition of *estupro*. This is not meant to take anything away from Cervantes's devastating representation of sexual violence and criminality, because I see them as part and parcel of the same regressive ideology.

But it is meant to bring me back to J. C. Rodríguez's argument concerning the apocryphal Part 2, which concerns the vitriol that runs through Avellaneda's *classic*. By unveiling the alliance between the *comedia nueva*'s aesthetics and the drive for power of a decadent aristocracy, Cervantes virtually places Lope and other court-embedded artists in the position of the aristocracy's creditor as well as its pimp: their artistic capital is lent to the monarchial-seigniorial segments of Spanish baroque society as a guarantor for the latter's symbolic legitimacy, while the peasantry is seduced through false promises that lead to its own impoverishment. Peribáñez may be allowed to sport arms just like a noble, but his wealth does not gain him entrance to the nobility as an equal. Calderón clearly recognizes this reality in a play like *El alcalde de Zalamea*, where Pedro Crespo gets away with what is most likely premeditated murder only because he beats don Lope Figueroa and the Felipe II at their own juridical game on a public stage.<sup>27</sup> However, he is *not* invited into the court; rather, he is appointed mayor in perpetuity on the territorial and social margins. Calderón's play is a bit more interesting than Lope's due to the display of brute physical violence both in Isabel Crespo's gang rape and her father's garroting of Don Álvaro. And, in fact, Cervantes is probably closer to Calderón than to Lope in his inspection of the relationship between theater and power due to the way both authors embed an ambivalent, as opposed to totally negative, theatricality in their works.

Perhaps the most sobering aspect of *Don Quixote* II is the way in which Part 1, even in the embodied form of its protagonists, has had absolutely no effect on the power relations of its aristocratic readers. In fact, this might be Cervantes's harshest indictment of Avellaneda and co.: they either haven't understood Cervantes's creation (see Beusterien on the Prologue to Part 2); or they are willing accomplices of the State; but they are decidedly not honorable artists. In what could be seen as a dark and vicious parody of Avellaneda's vision, the duke and duchess subject Don Quixote to one humiliation after another, to the point where his only option to rescue any dignity whatsoever is to remove himself from courtly society altogether (See Cruz, "Don Quijote's Disappearing Act"). There is no place for him at court, just as there is no place for a

<sup>27</sup> See Nelson 2010, chapter 5; and Ruano de la Haza.

free Marcela in the society of men, and no place for Ricote in his native land. And, most importantly for my essay, there is no *natural* place for the artist in the Court. Symbols of nobility are grudgingly bestowed, audiences with powerbrokers are granted, but real political power and status elude the artist. In Cervantes's devastating and *theatrical* framing of a power-infused theatricality, Lope's artistic enterprise as well as his personal search for social promotion are unveiled as a quixotic projection of vain and illusory aspirations.

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