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WOMEN FROM THE PERIPHERY IN *DON QUIXOTE*

Ekphrasis versus counter-narrative

Frederick A. de Armas

While the adventures of Don Quixote and his conversations with his more down-to-earth squire have enchanted audiences for centuries, and while the amorous adventures in the interpolated narratives have also caught the attention of many, the intrepid women that make an appearance during Don Quixote's adventures are sometimes forgotten, given the scope of his imaginings. This essay seeks to highlight two women from Iberia's periphery who in some ways counter the knight's imperial quest. In each of these adventures, the knight seems to dominate his surroundings by the use of his imagination. As dramatist and artist he transforms or paints over a quotidian space into a place for chivalric adventures. There is no question that the knight urges us to use our sight over and over again: "Ves allí, amigo Sancho Panza, donde se descubren treinta, o poco más desaforados gigantes" (1978, 129); "Dime, ¿no ves aquel caballero que hacia nosotros viene, sobre un caballo rucio rodado, que trae puesto en la cabeza un yelmo de oro?" (1978, 253). Indeed, not only does he paint over the landscape, but also he shapes new characters derived from his chivalric imaginings. When asked about Dulcinea, he replies: "píntola en mi imaginación" (1978, 314). Don Quixote believes in the capaciousness of his words to create something new. In ancient rhetoric this capaciousness is tied to a kind of *descriptio* sometimes called *ekphrasis*. It is not my intention here to enter into the debates over this term.¹ While Leo Spitzer (1962) once described the technique as "the poetic description of a pictorial or sculptural work of art . . . the reproduction through the medium of words of sensuously perceptible *objects d'art*" (1955, 207), Murray Krieger claims as one aspect of ekphrasis the exhilaration felt when the word is able "to freeze itself into a spatial form . . . [to] recover the immediacy of a sightless vision" (1992, 10). The dazzling images that emerge from Don Quixote's mind are thus transformed into capacious writing and this grants him the exhilaration felt by the poet. Don Quixote as creator does not feel the opposite reaction that may emerge from ekphrasis: the "exasperation" created because "words cannot have that capacity, cannot be capacious because they have literally, no space" (Krieger 1992, 10). For the knight, the landscape and the characters are truly changed. If his vision is challenged, then it has to do with malefic enchanters who are intent on changing his reality.

In this essay I argue that the exhilarating ekphrasis of the knight is countered by a counter-narrative, the quasi-untold or unnarrated stories about valorous, willful and adventuresome women who stand in contrast to the illusory Dulcinea: a Basque lady viewed as a kidnapped princess and a servant/prostitute from Asturias also imagined as a princess. A brief interlude

with some Galician mares also comes to our attention. Thus this study reflects the tensions between painting with the imagination versus hiding a so-called ordinary tale, and the opposition between a knight who wishes to make Castile the center of the world versus women from the edges of the peninsula who try to stand their ground.

The case of the kidnapped princess: a Basque story

Steve Hutchinson has spoken of the “liberating and salubrious effects of feminine journeys” (1992, 106) in Cervantes fiction.² He argues that, since women “are possessed as objects, transferred, kept, robbed, bought, and constantly referred to as things of value . . . the journey . . . removes them from where they are controlled” (1992, 107). This section begins with the story of a forgotten traveler – forgotten because she is a woman from the periphery who seems to fade away against the brilliant but imagined visual images that are at the basis of the knight’s adventures. Perhaps her invisibility is because she appears in one of the most narratable episodes in the 1605 novel, the adventure of the Basque. Indeed it is considered so narratable, so “worthy of being told” (Prince 1987, 56), that it is told four times. The four versions have been analyzed with great care and insight by Michael Gerli. But even he neglects our princess. Our purpose is to figure out why she is hidden and what it is that she is hiding.

As the knight watches the approach of two friars on mules, a carriage filled with damsels, four or five horsemen and two muleteers coming on foot, he works his magic by transforming the scene and making it into an adventure: “porque aquellos bultos negros que allí parecen deben de ser, y son, sin duda, algunos encantadores que llevan hurtada alguna princesa en aquel coche” (1978, 1.133).³ Don Quixote aided by the narrators paint a canvas with consummate skill, creating an ekphrasis filled with marvel, thus erasing the mundane. As Juan Bautista Avalle-Arce reminds us, the figure of Don Quixote can be conceived as an artist who paints over reality, creating marvelous designs of the imagination. Avalle-Arce asserts: “El caballero sale al mundo para vivir la vida como una obra de arte” (1973, 51). He then cites Vasari’s *Lives of the Artists* to explain the knight’s and the novel’s theory of imitation. Thus, the knight, aided by the narrators, paints with words a scene that he has viewed in the canvas of his mind. This is an ur-ekphrasis “existing as a concept of ekphrasis in the character’s mind . . . thus foregrounding the process of artistic creation” (De Armas 2006, 10).

When these amazing and imagined ekphraseis are coupled with remarks by a doubting Sancho, the reader is asked to enjoy scenes that arouse laughter, curiosity, amazement and wonder. These images remain in our memory for further contemplation and they do so, in part, because the adventures are carefully fashioned to follow the dictates of the art of memory which was so prevalent in the Renaissance. Theorists of the time have argued that the images that best remain in the mind are those of heroic deeds. More generally, “rare and unusual things stay in the mind because they bring about wonder [*maraviglia*]” (Della Porta 2012, 103). And Don Quixote is forever inciting wonder. The Arts of Memory also claim that “horrible and frightful things,” as well as “things that easily move us to enjoyment or laughter” are memorable (Della Porta 2012, 103). As Giovan Battista Della Porta shows, when opposites are combined, they are even more striking. And it is precisely the opposition between the quotidian and the marvelous, the lofty chivalric ideals with its humorous and mundane realities that create what is particularly memorable. Thus, the double narrative, the quotidian presented by a rather hostile narrator (Cide Hamete) and the exalted one imagined by the knight create a truly mnemonic space. As Soledad Fox has argued, “It takes exceptional genius to create magic, beauty, or heroism on the infertile soil of La Mancha” (2010, 53).

Although it could be indeed marvelous to find a kidnapped princess in La Mancha, her possible abduction would not be particularly surprising since the lady in the carriage is a woman

of importance who is traveling on roads that were often dangerous. Banditry on Spanish roads was often a problem. And, the motif of the kidnapped princess is in itself a commonplace in the romances of chivalry. To cite but a few examples, in *Felixmarte de Hircania* the princess Martedina is kidnapped by savages and later freed by a savage woman named Belsagina; and in *Cristalián de España* the enchanter Algamaz kidnaps the wife and son of Lindedel (Ortiz-Hernán Pupareli 2009/10, 324–5). In *Duardos de Bretaña* by Pero Dacacova Carneiro, Carmelia de Tracia is kidnapped together with several other princesses, while the work concludes happily with her marriage to the protagonist, Don Duardos. A gender inversion occurs in *Clarisel de las Flores* written towards the end of the sixteenth century by Jerónimo de Urrea. Here, the female magician Filesa kidnaps the Doncel. Indeed, in her typology of women in the chivalric romances, Elami Ortiz-Hernán Pupareli lists more than twenty figures under the rubric: “doncella secuestrada o encantada” (2003, np).

Much more memorable than the frequently kidnapped princesses of the romances or the women metamorphosed by the knight into princesses in Cervantes’s novel, are the friars that become enchanters and ride dromedaries. Even the Basque using a pillow for a shield while fighting a crazed knight of old with surprising valor stands out much more than the lady in the carriage. Thus, from the start, the “princess” is at a disadvantage, somewhat hidden in the canvas of memory. But her story is not untold, it does not seem part of the unnarrated;⁴ it is just hinted at, fragmented and kept in the background. These bits and pieces may arouse the reader’s curiosity. Once the friar/enchanters are defeated by the “valiant” knight, he approaches the carriage and seeks to communicate with the “princess” (“vuestra fermosura” 1978, 1.135), telling her and her companions that they are now free of the kidnappers. He also requests that the princess and her retinue go to see Dulcinea and tell her of his exploits. Thus their freedom is contingent since they have to tell Dulcinea “lo que por vuestra libertad he fecho” (1978, 1.135). Rather than freeing them, his imperious command imprisons them. Because there is no response from the “princess” she remains as part of the imaginary canvas, caught in the knight’s imagination rather than enjoying the freedom of the journey.

But, a Basque squire who accompanies the carriage, realizing that they must turn away from their destination, takes up the fight. He considers himself as noble as Don Quixote. In garbled speech he asserts: “Vizcaino por tierra, hidalgo por mar, hidalgo por el diablo, y mientes que mira si otra dices cosa” (1978, 136). As this battle is about to start, the reader finally gets a glimpse at the lady’s emotions and actions: “admirada y temerosa de lo que veía, hizo al cochero se desviase de allí algún poco y desde lejos se puso a mirar la rigurosa contienda” (1978, 136). The lady shows some agency, simply asking the coachman to move the vehicle so she can watch the battle from a safe distance. The adjectives, “admirada and temerosa,” recall emotions that need to be aroused for the art of memory to work best. What she experiences can be termed *ekplexis*, a heightened sense of astonishment or marvel derived from striking visual images. Leonard Barkan (2013) equates it with *admiratio*. This may come from such extremes as bloody battles (Refini 2012, 46) or the extraordinary beauty of a woman such as Helen of Troy (Worman 2002, 132). Knowing the two extremes of the emotion, and being presented with the battle, a reader may hazard a guess that the narrative is hiding the extraordinary beauty of the princess, a point upon which the knight would agree.

She serves to increase the astonishment of the reader through her own emotions. As she watches, the reader may wish to see through her eyes. This seems to create a kind of metatheater where readers as spectators watch her and her retinue as they watch the action.⁵ Diane Chaffee Sorace argues: “The lady’s withdrawal from the center of the action to its periphery changes her role in the dramatic episode from participant to spectator and converts the battle into a well-defined theatrical event” (1989, 210). Her role is subservient to the events about to take

place. Furthermore, she appears as ornamental as numerous ladies in the romances of chivalry, thus legitimizing Don Quixote's imaginative vision of her as a princess in distress. And to further diminish the importance of her very human emotions the narrator later asserts that all who watched the adventure were "temerosos y colgados" (1978, 1.137). Thus far the princess is forgettable as she is relegated to the backdrop by both knight and narrator. If this were all, her story would not just be untold but uninteresting and close to unnarratable.

Don Quixote, after being slashed by the Basque, invokes Dulcinea to succor him in his peril. A parallel movement occurs in the carriage. The lady and her attendants pray to countless Christian images of devotion and promise to make votive offerings if their squire is spared: "estaban haciendo mil votos y ofrecimientos a todas las imagines y casas de devoción de España, porque Dios librase a su escudero y a ellas de aquel tan grande peligro en que se hallaban" (1978, 1.137). This particular move raises their status, as the ladies compete with the knight in obtaining favors from above. We could almost be reading a (mock) classical epic where different gods and goddesses intervene in favor of opposing camps. But the results of such prayers have to wait, given that the manuscript ends.

This "frozen" moment (with the two opponents ready to do battle) recalls two epic instances: Ariosto's and Ercilla's "cantus interruptus" (Javitch 1980, 66–80). In *La Araucana*, there is an initial frozen duel between the "barbarous" Rengo and the Italian Andrea, a battle which is suspended between cantos fourteen and fifteen (De Armas Wilson 2000, 161–182; Lerner 1998, 207–220). Then: "The same brain bashing *bárbaro*, Rengo, returns to battle, not with a European opponent this round but with an Araucanian rival called Tucapel (29.53), whose sword remains in mid-air for over a decade between the publications of Part 2 (1578) and Part 3 (1589)" (2000, 176). Turning to Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*, David Javich points to a different kind of interruption, discussing how Angelica is about to be sacrificed by the Orc in Canto Eight but the reader must wait until Canto Ten for the resolution of this dire moment, thus arousing curiosity and suspense (1980, 66, 69). Such moments are less powerful when they occur in the midst of a Canto and are not resolved until much later since the reader loses curiosity because of the long deferral. In such a case, it is more a question of variety. However: "A recurring tactic of Ariosto's is to defy the expectation of closure at the end of the canto by terminating it at the start or at the height of a dramatic episode or action" (1980, 69). Grifone's revenge, begun in Canto Seventeen and continued in Canto Eighteen, may have some bearing on Cervantes' episode; however, Grifone's revenge is not completed here either (1980, 73). Thus the Cervantine text colludes with the knight to make this a truly epic moment recalling Ariosto and Ercilla. There is no thought here for the princess, for the lady in her carriage. She does not seem to exist in these maneuvers; she fades into the unnarrated since at the point of the sword, her story does not seem worth telling.

After the suspenseful break in the narrative, the "author" seeks a new manuscript while he praises the violence of the episode, recalling some of its key moments in what Gerli calls a "parody of unrestrained epic expression" (1995, 68). Indeed the author imagines that when the Basque and the knight's swords come down "se dividirían y fenderían de arriba abajo y abrirían como una granada" (1999, 1.8.139). The simile of the body as a fruit which exposes its red interior (the blood of the fighters) leads to an explanation of the savory flavors of violence. For Eric Graf, the *granada* or pomegranate has a number of meanings, among them, its many seeds recall the many lands that coexist in the Iberian Peninsula, the Basque abiding in its periphery.⁶

If we follow Eric Graf's lead in terms of the lady, we find that in paintings of the period the pomegranate is often held by the Virgin Mary. Such is the case of the *Madonna con bambino* by Botticelli or the *Madonna with Pomegranate* attributed to Leonardo.⁷ Perhaps the violence

aroused by the image of splitting the pomegranate is assuaged by religious images in the background as we recall the lady and her attendant praying to the Virgin Mary. Will the Virgin act through her? Diana de Armas Wilson, speaking of the dark aspects of liberation in Cervantes' novel, claims that there are two episodes that frame false liberation – the kidnapped princess in Chapters 8–9 and the statue of the Virgin in Chapter 52: “The matron’s liberation costs don Quijote half an ear (1, 9) and the Blessed Virgin’s, a shoulder smashed to pieces (1,52)” (2007, 250). I would add that the Virgin is not transformed into a princess, but becomes exactly what the earlier character was: “alguna principal señora” (1978, 1.598). Is this yet another clue that we are to view the princess’s future actions in terms of Mary? Although never explicit, the pomegranate evoked by Graf and the second frame indicated by Wilson may point to the lady’s intercession in the fourth version of the episode.⁸

The third telling of the story is an ekphrastic description of an illustration in the newly found manuscript. The illustration, like the narrative, point to the moment when the action is frozen: “pintada muy al natural la batalla de don Quijote con el Vizcaíno, puestos en la mesma postura que la historia cuenta, levantadas las espadas, el uno cubierto de su rodela, el otro de la almohada” (1978, 144). The illustration shows, to some extent, what would be the *punto crítico*, the climactic point of the whole adventure.⁹ Much is made of the animals here, both the Basque’s mule and Don Quixote’s Rocinante – even Sancho and his beast are exhibited. But the women are erased from the illumination. As with the second version, any hint of the princess must be unearthed in ways that are truly tenuous. The ekphrasis seems to relegate her to the unimportant: “Otras algunas menudencias había que advertir, pero todas son de poca importancia y que no hacen al caso a la verdadera narración de la historia que ninguna es mala como sea verdadera” (1078, 144).

On the other hand, we have tangential details that can help in reconstructing the counter-narrative. We are given the Basque’s name: Sancho de Azpeitia. Although a fairly common Basque name, it could point to the birth of Ignatius of Loyola in a town thus named. He fought with Castile, receiving the famous wound that led to his religious conversion.¹⁰ Many paintings and illustrations show how he prayed to the Virgin, how she appeared to him, and how she even inspired him to write the *Ejercicios espirituales* in later years. Thus, it is easy to see how the princess’s intervention might be seen in terms of the Virgin’s interceding for Ignatius. Indeed, the name Sancho de Azpeitia may not only evoke a miraculous intervention in Cervantes’ text, but may also have to do with the composition of place, a technique from Loyola’s exercises, which derives in part from the Art of Memory. As Frederic Conrod (2008), Philip Davidson (2012) and others explain, Loyola’s book influenced Cervantes’ novel. Davidson traces the many writers that have seen a connection between Cervantes and Loyola throughout the centuries. Conrod, discussing the director/exercitant relation in Cervantes’ novel argues that: “Don Quixote is not a director for Sancho nor vice versa; Sancho is simply doing a parallel mental pilgrimage and benefits from Don Quixote’s greater capacity to establish a structure within his own mind” (2012, 111). The different mental images in Loyola are evoked by the succession of very different episodes in Cervantes. “Don Quixote takes Sancho along so that he can teach him the values of imagination and free will. At several stages he reveals the fundamental truth of the novel: every human perception is different. Of all Catholic orders, the Society of Jesus is the one that places most importance on casuistry and the relativity of perception . . .” (2012, 111). Thus, Loyola’s *Exercises* bring together the visual, the imaginative and the emotional, three key elements in our adventure; and they even involve Sancho in this pursuit. In Cervantes’ episode, the Basque’s wounds, it can be argued, will bring about, if not his conversion, then an intercession from above. And the Exercises were said to have come about with the aid of the Virgin, and the saint is depicted in art writing under her tutelage.¹¹

The fourth and final version, which begins in medias res, recounts that even though the Basque was able to wound the knight, taking half of his left ear, he in turn gave such a blow to his adversary that the squire fell from his mule bleeding from the nose, the mouth and the ears. Don Quixote, in the fury of battle, does not wait, and climbing down from his horse: “poniéndole la punta de la espada en los ojos, le dijo que se rindiese; si no, le cortaría la cabeza” (1978, 1.146). As Judith Whitenack has pointed out, this is a typical of the “conversion or death” threat in the romances of chivalry (1993, 67). The conversion in this case may well consist in the belief in Dulcinea’s beauty and powers. Thus, while Don Quixote believes in an earthly goddess, the women prefer to pray to Christian images. Not able to respond, the Basque is about to meet his end when the ladies from the coach come forth and beg for mercy. The ladies’ squire had previously spoken in jumbled Castilian, a typical strategy of humor in the literature of the period and used by Cervantes in *El Vizcaino fingido*.¹² But now the would-be princess and her attendants seem to address the knight in clear and respectful Castilian: “si las señoras del coche . . . le pidieran con mucho agradecimiento les hiciese tan gran merced y favor de perdonar la vida a aquel su escudero” (1999, 1.9.146). Although still in great fear, the women are able to save their squire through correct and persuasive speech.

This may not seem as much of a feat after the great battle, but I would argue that it is a major accomplishment which the bellicose gentleman seeks to minimize. The women, whatever they may think of Don Quixote, stand up to the knight and prevent a murder. Sancho Panza knows quite well that the whole adventure was not lawful. He realizes what almost happened and what did happen. He asks his master whether they should seek asylum in a church: “sería acertado irnos a retraer a alguna iglesia” (1999, 1.9.147). For surely the *Santa Hermandad* or Holy Brotherhood, which protects the countryside, would be after them after such an event. After all, their role is “to keep roads safe” (González Echevarría 2005, 64). Don Quixote rejects the idea, but his words are significant: “¿Dónde has visto o leído jamás que caballero andante haya sido puesto ante la justicia, por más homicidios que hubiese cometido?” (1999, 1.9.148). He knows quite well that if the ladies had not intervened, his choleric disposition may have led him to kill the Basque, and that this *homicidio* would be hard to explain.

The episode is now ended and knight and squire move on, curiously “sin despedirse ni hablar más con las del coche” (1978, 1.147). This lack of courtesy portrays the knight as a self-absorbed figure whose only goal is to win, no matter how much violence is unleashed. De Armas Wilson explains that: “Our fondness for Don Quixote should not allow us to overlook certain imperial (and imperious) strains of his mania” (2007, 251).

While the story tells how the friars left the battle, it is silent as to when or how the coach was able to resume its journey to Seville. And even though the text follows knight and squire into the forest, it turns away from the women of the coach and the voyage of the would-be princess who travels to meet her husband. Indeed, a longer journey awaits her on arriving in Seville, since her husband had received a “cargó honroso” in the Indies.

Although the tale of Don Quixote’s adventure continues without a thought for the wounded squire, we know of his valor and of his lady’s ability to match the knight in prayer and to stop a homicide that could well have landed the knight in jail or worse. While a man from Biscay can challenge Don Quixote and give him a very good fight, it is this woman from the periphery who succeeds in allowing the narrative to proceed unimpeded. She has saved the life and reputation of Don Quixote and she has saved the novel and its imaginative adventures for the time being. Only after the episode of the galley slaves, as Roberto González Echevarría states, do “both Don Quijote and Sancho become fugitives of the law” (2005, 63). It is then that the interpolated tales replace the knight’s adventures as he hides out in Sierra Morena.

After crossing the peninsula from the northeast to the southwest, the lady from the Basque country will disappear from the narrative space as she and her husband travel to the Indies. Such a long voyage seems beyond Don Quixote, who is content to journey a short distance from his home. While she may witness real adventures at sea and in America, he will imagine all of his. The irony is that his episodes are recorded while hers would not make it to print. Such a digression would establish a counter-narrative that would challenge the knight. Its geographical amplitude would compromise a knight who seldom thinks of the lands north of Castile or beyond the sea, being content with evoking tenuous chivalric sites. Thus, Don Quixote and his narrators will conceal the narrowness of his journey and his lack of true exploits through powerful images, imaginative twists, mnemonic scenes and clever contrasts. And the knight has to have some worthy opponents: the illustration seeks to highlight the battle by making the Basque into a figure who can fight like his countryman, Ignatius of Loyola, and can be wounded just like him. Are these wounds a prelude to conversion and does the lady echo celestial interventions? We will leave such questions for the imaginative knights.

The fact is that we know nothing of the lady's background, as opposed to that of her squire. The gaps in the narrative allow the reader to create her own counter-narrative.¹³ For all we know, Don Quixote was right. She could descend from royalty. According to legend, the Señorío de Vizcaya was formed when the daughter of a Scottish king traveled by sea to Biscay. There, she had a son who was chosen to command the troops of the area against the son of the King of Leon. Victorious in battle, and of royal blood, he became the Señor de Vizcaya. Such a genealogy for the lady from Biscay might be even worthy of the knight's imaginings.

In this first adventure, the lady from Biscay is a figure of power. She points to a story that is just beginning to be told, as her meeting with Don Quixote may be the first of her adventures. The geographical capaciousness of her travels seeks to rival the imaginative capaciousness of the knight's quests. Her prayers, countering those of the knight, might have leveled the playing field in battle. But most importantly, we rest assured that her keen intellect and her soothing and regal words, an intercession that echoes those of a celestial being or a woman of power, have prevented a dangerous strike by the knight and thus have allowed her to continue her journey and him to continue his quest unimpeded. Thus, the curious case of the kidnapped princess both hides and reveals her narrative, political and personal triumphs as she revels in the freedom of the road.

The Galician mares: an interlude

Chapter Ten, which immediately follows the episode of the Basque, is titled: "De lo que avino a don Quijote con el vizcaíno y del peligro en que se vio con una turba de yangüeses" (1978, 1.146). This is incorrect since the episode of the Basque concluded in Chapter Nine and that of the muleteers from Yanguas would not be told until Chapter Fifteen. It can be argued, then, that in the original plan for the novel, Cervantes intended to place the episode of the muleteers immediately after that of the Basque, but he later decided to insert a pastoral episode in between so as to ridicule some of the shepherd's lofty sentiment and the presence of Marcela as a *mujer esquiva*. Marcela's self-sufficiency mirror the behavior of the muleteers' mares.¹⁴ There is a second apparent mistake in that these muleteers from Yanguas are also said to be from Galicia. To make matters even more confusing, there are two towns called Yanguas, one in the area of Soria and the second in Segovia. Most agree that the text points to the village in Soria since their muleteers were famous throughout Castile and even La Mancha in Cervantes' time. It has also been argued that the suppression of Galicia in favor of Yanguas was due to the editor or printer, and not the author. Thus, Juan de la Cuesta and his team may have been

responsible. Indeed, his family had lands in the Yanguas area (Barroso Cabrera and Morin de Pablos 2009, 227–29). For our purposes, it is the author’s initial intent to have these muleteers come from Galicia that is most important because the narrative would then move from an adventure with the Basque to a melee with these muleteers who are transporting Galician mares (“*hacas galicianas*” [1978, 1.194]) and then on to a “princess” from Asturias in Chapter Sixteen. Thus, in three succeeding episodes, the novel would have dealt with three regions in Iberia’s periphery: the Basque Country, Galicia and Asturias.

It may be useful, then, to take a brief look at Chapter Fifteen before turning to the second princess. Here, Sancho decides to let loose Rocinante so that he can graze at will, knowing that the horse is very tame. However, Fortuna or the devil brings the muleteers with their mares to this same valley. Rocinante suddenly becomes very feisty and excitedly pursues the mares, deciding to “*refocilarse*” with these female creatures. They in turn reject him quite violently. When the muleteers intervene to stop this melee, Don Quixote and Sancho go to defend Rocinante from what are now called Galician muleteers (“*los gallegos*” [1978, 1. 191]). Needless to say, the knight is badly beaten by this crowd. While Don Quixote had defeated the Basque and released the “kidnapped” princess, here he is unable to triumph over other figures from the periphery. Both the Galician mares and the muleteers are perfectly peaceful until attacked by the chivalric pair. It is as if they are the cause of conflict.

While the princess in the previous episode was able to triumph using correct and lofty Castilian to obtain the release of her squire, here the female animals are far from polite, using their heels and their teeth to beat away Rocinante. Chad Leahy, who has studied pamphlets and other writings critical of Galicians during this period in order to shed light on this episode, asserts: “*El comportamiento de las yeguas en este sentido se muestra representativo de una naturaleza inherente al pueblo gallego, desde la imagen tipificada del gallego como criado vasallo rebelde y traidor, hasta la idea de la gallega como moza poco constante en el servicio y en el amor*” (2008, 13).¹⁵ Thus, Cervantes subjects inhabitants of the periphery to careful scrutiny and so far, they seem to have the upper hand. The Princess can speak perfect Castilian, is in control of her rhetoric and can win the release of her squire, while the Galician mares are not fickle but seem to defend their right to choose their mate. Indeed, just as in the previous episode a Basque squire shows honor and valor, here, in John Cull’s words: “*The arrieros beat Rocinante to the ground with their stakes to punish his boldness, then turn their wrath on Don Quixote and Sancho*” (1990, 47).

While in the previous episode, the visual, narrative and epic-chivalric elements overwhelm the reader so that the princess’s tale is almost untold, here, the knight fails to paint over the scene, to create a chivalric medium to excuse his attack. He ends up admitting that the god of war (Mars) has punished him for battling with those who are not knights. While Don Quixote is weakened and fails at ekphrasis, the men and female beasts from the periphery succeed. In addition, the action preserves a mnemonic quality since Della Porta asserts that comic and lewd images are easily remembered (2012, 103). I believe that this lowering of style and subject in this comic interlude prepares the reader to engage with the so-called princess from Asturias.¹⁶

The case of the trapped princess: a tale from Asturias

Knight and squire reach the inn in a sorry state. Don Quixote, although lying flat on Sancho’s beast, is not to be deterred from his imaginings by one relapse into the quotidian. As Sancho takes up the mantle of chivalry assuring those present that Don Quixote’s wounds are the result of falling down a cliff, the knight, being taken to a rustic bed, begins to imagine that the inn is

a castle. Indeed, several beds are placed in succession away from the door: first Don Quixote's, then Sancho's, then a muleteer's. Indeed, the presence of an *arriero* connects this adventure with the previous interlude. What has been called a "bedroom farce" (Mendeloff 1975) and a bawdy tale that borrows from Boccaccio and Bandello (McGrady 1987) ensues as the servant from Asturias enters the room in darkness and in search of the *arriero* with whom she has a tryst, but runs into an eroticized knight, with his eyes "abiertos como liebre" (1978, 1.202), the hare symbolizing sexuality and a creature of Venus.¹⁷ Indeed, for Carolyn Nadeau, Maritornes resembles Circe, a figure who keeps the hero from continuing his duties in the Homeric epic (2002, 19). Judith Whitenack adds that the *magas* of the romances of chivalry act very much like Circe, keeping "the hero enchanted for a long time," and attempt to make him forget not only the quest but also the lady (1993, 75). Analyzing Don Quixote's reaction to Maritornes, she sees here a glimmer of the *magas* of old, and adds: "Of course, part of the humor of the scene derives from the contrast between Don Quixote's self-designation as a faithful knight and his evident enjoyment of the rejection scene" (1993, 79).

Although we might think that these allusions to myth and chivalry may elevate the scene, this is not the case. Each attempt to turn to a higher style of narration ends in humor. Contrary to the story of the first princess, this tale is fully told although it seems to belong to the unnarrated, that which flaunts the conventions of writing. Indeed, in an aside, the narrator intervenes to criticize the author: "Benengeli fue historiador muy curioso y muy puntual en todas las cosas, y échase de ver, pues las que quedan referidas, con ser tan mínimas y rateras, no las quiso pasar en silencio" (1978, 1.201). In fact, the chapter delights in telling of the grotesque physique of Maritornes: "ancha de cara, llana de cogote, de nariz roma, del ojo tuerta y del otro no muy sana . . . no tenía siete palmos de pies a la cabeza, y las espaldas, que algún tanto le cargaban, la hacían mirar al suelo más de lo que ella quisiera" (1978, 1.198). This contrasts with Don Quixote's imaginings of a delicate and beautiful princess who abides in this castle/inn and must obviously desire him. This clash between beauty and ugliness, expectations and reality, the mythical/chivalric and the quotidian strengthen the mnemonic aspects of the scene through extreme contrasts. Don Quixote, on coming across Maritornes, not only enlivens his memory of chivalric books, but acts in a manner that seems to replicate a painting by Titian, *Tarquin and Lucretia*.¹⁸ In this case the description is both an ekphrasis deriving from the mental image in the knight's imagination and a dramatic ekphrasis, one where both the knight and the narrators strive to paint the scene in terms of the Titian's canvas, while fully exposing the lurid reality.

On entering the room, Maritornes "topó con los brazos de don Quijote, el cual la asió fuertemente de una muñeca, y tirándola hacia sí, la hizo sentar en la cama" (1978, 1.203). In the Italian canvas, Sextus holds on to Lucretia's arm while she reclines on the bed. The similarities are thus striking. Furthermore, the knight decides to paint over this rather grotesque-looking servant into a princess from the romances utilizing instead Titian's painting of the Roman matron. Maritornes' hair becomes as golden as that pictured by Titian: "hebras de lucidísimo oro de Arabia 1978, 1.203); while the glass beads she wears on her wrists become Lucretia's bracelets "de preciosas perlas orientales (1978, 1.203). Moving back from the ur-ekphrasis to the dramatic ekphrasis, the narrator explains how "la moza forcejaba por desacirse y don Quijote trabajaba por tenella" (1978, 1.204). In the same manner, In Titian's canvas, Lucretia attempts to disengage herself from the threatening Sextus, pushing him away with one arm, while he holds on to her other arm. The approach of the *arriero*, who wishes to know what is transpiring, completes the ekphrasis of Titian's painting since the canvas shows a slave or servant as voyeur.

There is no need to recount here the many battles that ensue, where the knight is beaten over and over again and decides that the castle is haunted. What is of interest is the contrast between

the two imagined princesses. While the first is in reality a lady of quality, the second is a servant and a prostitute; while the Basque lady is known for her voice, the Asturian servant is silent; and while the first is conceivably very beautiful, this second one has to be fully painted over by the knight. And yet, the two episodes have some things in common: the use of mnemonic techniques and contrasts; the importance of the ekphrastic to elevate the knight's adventures from the quotidian; and the presence of women from the periphery. While the Basque princess prays to religious images for the deliverance of her squire, Maritornes also shows her devotion. At the end of the events at the inn in Chapter Seventeen, Maritornes, seeing that Sancho has been tossed in a blanket over and over, decides to act: "La compasiva de Maritonres, viéndole tan fatigado, le pareció ser bien socorrelle con un jarro de agua, y así se lo trujo del pozo" (1978, 1.214). When Sancho asks for wine, she buys it for him from her own money. This charitable moment contrasts with Don Quixote, who either does not want or cannot intervene to save his squire as he is being tossed on a blanket for failing to pay for his and the knight's lodging at the inn.¹⁹ While Sancho is often portrayed bouncing up into the air, to my knowledge there are no illustrations of Maritornes' charitable act. Although this event seems to have been forgotten, we can assert that the two princesses from the periphery show agency, goodness and devotion.

Although Maritornes will appear much later in the novel to extract her revenge for being forcibly kept on the knight's bed, it is time to end this essay, which has reviewed the importance of two women from the edges of Iberia, made into princesses by the knight's imaginings. In both instances as well as in the interlude with the Galician mares, it is the imperious and imperial knight who wishes to control the action, showing a combative nature. But the women from the periphery, each in their own way, counter the knight's aggression and ability to use a capacious and ekphrastic language, through counter-narratives that subtly or overtly point to his failures and their own triumphs. The Basque princess saves her squire and saves the novel with her prayers, her rhetoric and her fine Castilian; and the princess from Asturias, even though she is a prostitute, knows how to fight Don Quixote's advances, and knows the goodness of Sancho, showing him a kindness that no one else at the inn even considers. Both the Basque and the Asturian are women of power in their own realm. They challenge the knight's imperial and ekphrastic impetus through the fragmented, the untold and the unnarratable. Their tales are worthy of being told, as they begin a counter-narrative that can challenge our most beloved knight.

Notes

- 1 There is a controversy as to whether *ekphrasis* refers to a stop in a narrative to describe an art object or if it is a wider concept taken from ancient Greece: "a conception of the word as a force acting on the listener . . . words . . . to the ancient reader were alive with rich visual and emotional effects" (Webb 2009, 5).
- 2 He speaks of Preciosa in *La gitanilla*; Cornelia in *La señora Cornelia*; Auristela and Feliciana de la Voz in *Persiles y Sigismunda*; Dorotea, Luscinia, and Zoraida in *Don Quixote* I (1992, 105–106).
- 3 Although I am quoting from Murillo's 1978 edition, I have also consulted Francisco Rico's text and notes.
- 4 Her partially untold story does not fit into the unnarrated: it is neither too boring nor conventional, that is, "not worth narrating" (Prince 1988, 1–8); nor does it flaunt manners or literary convention and thus cannot be narrated (Prince 1987, 1–8).
- 5 Jill Syverson-Stork asserts: "The author has blocked his characters' movements as if they were performing on stage" (1986, 124).
- 6 On the *granada* see Eric Graf, who points to its many referents. For example: "The *granada* [pomegranate] at the beginning of Chapter 9 has two principal meanings, one geopolitical and the other moral. In the first case the *granada* refers to the kingdom of Granada . . . [It] can still be seen today at the base of the Spanish coat-of-arms found in the center of the national flag" (2004, 44). In his

- book, he argues that Botticelli's Madonna of the Pomegranate can be an "organizational device for Don Quijote" (2007, 115).
- 7 This small panel has also been attributed to Andrea del Verrocchio but today many think it is by Lorenzo di Credi. It is also called the *Dreyfus Madonna* because it was owned by Gustave Dreyfus from 1872 to 1930. It now hangs at the National Gallery.
 - 8 Graf relates the pomegranate to a transcultural message: "The way to be free of the endless cycles of ethnic-religious violence is to affirm the Other (Zoraida) as the bearer of religious meaning (Mary), to learn to apply the antidote of a new and more ethnically diverse and tolerant Christian philosophy at the cites of cultural conflict"(54). But it is also a symbol of death and resurrection, the passion of Christ, Persephone's stay in the underworld because she ate seeds from the fruit.
 - 9 Greg Baum (2013), pointing to the 1738 Carteret edition of the novel, shows how every illustration here appears at the *punto critico*. It is used here to supplement language in its inability to express certain things such as the movements of the soul. These illustrations also supplement the imagination and often foreground psychological complexity (Baum 2013).
 - 10 Born in Azpeitia in 1491, Ignatius died in Rome in 1556. He was raised by the Castilian Juan Velázquez de Cuéllar, and often traveled with him to the Court at Valladolid. In 1521 he fights with the Castilian army in Pamplona against the French and Navarre forces who want to liberate the area.
 - 11 The inspiration of the Virgin in composing the "Exercises" at Manresa is not based on any written testimony but upon a revelation made in 1600 to Marina de Escobar as told in the Life of *Father Balthazar Alvarez*.
 - 12 Gerli compares his speech to that of Don Quixote: "Don Quijote's bombast is, as well parried by the near-unintelligible gibberish of the Biscayan . . . a veritable babble of knight-speak and nonsense" (1995, 65). On the Basque who speaks garbled Castilian in the literature of the Golden Age see Carmoná Tierno and the joint essay by Castillo Martínez and Ramírez Luengo (2008). Carmoná describes the break in the syntactic order as: "caos morfosintáctico del español Se quebrantan casi todas las normas de dicción castellanas, hasta el punto de que se hace necesario un intérprete para comprender lo que ha dicho el personaje" (2013, 344). This kind of speech appears for the first time in the *Tinelaria* (1517) by Torres Naharro.
 - 13 Ross Chambers in *Loiterature* calls digressions a counter-narrative. Indeed, the partially missing tale may have to do with questions of identity, as Samuel Frederick (2012) states: "If plot is that which affirms its identity by appropriating difference [i.e., digression] then digression is that which affirms difference by repudiating that identity" (4). The gaps in the princess's tale allows for the creation of a counter-narrative and for the creation of a new identity in character and plot that has the potential of rivaling the main story.
 - 14 Joaquín Casalduero was one of the first critics to point to this contrast and to also relate it to the ensuing episode with Maritornes: "el episodio de *Rocinante* y las jacas es una deformación burlesca de la pastoril y prepara la parodia del amor caballeresco," (1970, 97).
 - 15 He even cites the *Buho Gallego* attributed to Cervantes' patrón, the Conde de Lemos. On Cervantes' Galician patron see also Casás Fernández 1949; and on Don Quixote and Galicia see Presado Garazo (2006) and Saavedra Pegerto (2005).
 - 16 Curiously, this interlude may have as its model a passage in Apuleius's *Golden Ass*, which thus adds a sense of authority to the comic scene. See Prjevalisnky Ferrer (1948).
 - 17 "it is also the case that rabbits and hares are standard symbols of lechery" (McGrady 1987, 7).
 - 18 I will be brief in recounting the parallels between painting and action since I have already referred to this on two occasions (De Armas 2004, 2006, 186–187).
 - 19 Carolyn Nadeau has stressed Maritornes' inner beauty and virtue, pointing out that outer beauty does not always accompany virtue (2007, 205–213). Although she recognizes Maritornes' double nature, she points to Casalduero: "De la misma manera que la cultura Antigua concibió de una raíz única dos Venus, la cultura cristiana le ha dado a la caridad también dos fases: la iluminada con la luz de la gracia y la que florece en medio de las ruinas humanas. Maritornes, que marcha en la oscuridad como ciega para satisfacer al arriero, al aire libre siente piedad por Sancho" (1971, 98).

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