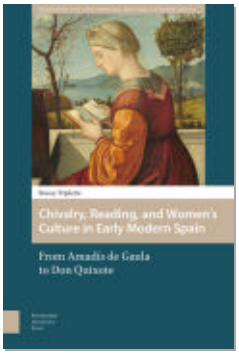
4. The Defeat of Women Readers of Chivalry in Don Quixote

Part II



4. The Defeat of Women Readers of Chivalry in *Don Quixote* Part II

Part II of *Don Quixote* shares Part I's preoccupation with the readership of the romances of chivalry, but its view of the literary market and of women readers is less utopian. While Cervantes in Part II affirms that women can and should read, he presents chivalry as a tool for mischief rather than redemption. This shift reflects Cervantes's increasingly critical outlook on the powers of the reader as *Don Quixote* Part I circulates on the literary market. In Part II, the character Don Quixote truly has become like Amadís, though not in the way he would have liked. Both Quixote and Amadís are personalities of the printed page, unable to defend themselves against the imitations and interpretations of their readers. As in Part I, chivalric romance remains a tool that can be used to subvert or reinforce social hierarchy. While certain reading women in Part I were able to effect positive change by drawing on chivalric trope, in Part II, women readers of chivalry use their knowledge to corrupt, oppress, and discomfit others.

While characters in Part I observed Don Quixote's chivalric actions and laughed at their discordance with the environment, characters in Part II find in chivalric romance the building blocks for what Vladimir Nabokov terms 'mental cruelties'.[1] For Don Quixote the character, at least, these cruelties reflect a literary market more hostile to chivalry than ever. Throughout the volume, Don Quixote the character must repeatedly confront his unflattering literary reputation. Indeed, as Howard Mancing has pointed out, *Don Quixote* Part I enjoyed swift and dramatic success. Printed in an economical octavo format that appealed to silent readers and readers of all classes, the work was published in six editions in 1605 and eleven by 1617.[2] The characters appeared as personae in public spectacles, and in Mancing's words, 'everyone from the king down to the lowliest peasant knew who the tall, thin knight-errant and his short, fat squire were'.[3] Adaptations of the work appeared as early as 1605 with Guillén de Castro's Quixote-themed *comedia*, and *Don Quixote* proved so successful beyond Iberian borders that

1 Nabokov, *Lectures on* Don Quixote, 83. For other critics who term the readers in Part II 'cruel,' see Cruz, 'Don Quixote', 372; Quint, *Cervantes's Novel of Modern Times*, 131; Schmitz, 'Sancho's Courtly Performance', 453.

2 Mancing, *Cervantes' Don Quixote*, 152.

3 Ibid.

it eventually became the work of world literature translated into the largest number of languages.[4] Don Quixote's reputation precedes him in the second volume, and anyone he meets is likely to be familiar with his mad chivalric exploits. They are more likely to mock him, however, than to celebrate him; even at the zenith of his fame, Don Quixote is an object of ridicule on par with romance personae during their genre's decline.

Amadís, Don Quixote's model for behavior in Part I, becomes an emblem of the negative dimensions of literary fortune in Part II. Don Quixote intuits this link between his hero and himself, and his response upon hearing that some readers consider him a pretentious, poorly dressed madman is to recall similarly impolite readings leveled at the characters of *Amadís de Gaula*. Quixote reports that certain sinister readers call Amadís's brother Galaor 'más que demasiadamente rijoso' ('more than a little quarrelsome') and Amadís himself a *llorón* ('tearful').[5] The term *llorón* implies the improper expression of emotion, which is, in this case, coded as feminine, or at the least as an infraction against the standard of masculine behavior. This personal insult to Amadís invalidates the very features of *Amadís de Gaula* that made it popular in its moment, particularly among women readers. Amadís's extraordinary devotion to Oriana, which led to frequent tears, is his most famous characteristic, and as Chapters One and Two of this book show, chivalric stories that follow the fidelity model popularized by *Amadís* make room for the agency of women and the representation of women's emotion. Quixote's comment at the outset of the volume looks forward to the gender-normative features of the chivalric imitations in Part II. Indeed, the inspiration for much of the malicious humor in Part II is the notion of chivalric masculinity and its counterpart, chivalric femininity.

The women of Part II, like the women of Part I, shape themselves according to feminine chivalric archetype, but their reading practices are less clever and their imitations more superficial than those of Luscinda or Dorotea. The Duchess and her servant Altisidora, explicit partners in imitation who parallel in some ways the collusion of women readers in Part I, force Don Quixote and Sancho to perform their literary exploits for a household audience, modeling the incorporation of pleasure reading into women's domestic activities. The duchess, though not the most sophisticated appreciator of chivalry in *Don Quixote*, creates a chivalric reading community for her serving women with herself at the center. For her, the imitation of chivalry is an exercise in control, a tableau of the social hierarchy in which she,

4 Ibid., 152–53.

5 Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quijote*, II, 2; 57; Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quixote*, 472.

though obeying the patriarchal authority of her husband, wields power over those below. The duchess's servant Altisidora, whose literacy status is uncertain but whose textual references are more specific than those of her mistress, models an opposing trend: the democratizing influence of print. In this chapter, I trace the relationship among hierarchy, gender, and reading communities, showing how Cervantes uses the Duchess and her household to build a model for his readership and then to critique those readers, especially women readers. Though the Duchess and Altisidora are very different readers, looking at them together allows me to explore reading as a site of class and gender struggle in early modern Spain. Humiliation awaits both women, but only Altisidora redeems herself, suggesting that the emergent print culture allows readers, in particular marginalized readers, to defy authors and authorities.

Reading Communities

As I discussed in the previous chapter, while readers in Part I often talk about texts together or even collaborate on imitations, no hierarchy orders their reading practices, and their cooperation is tacit rather than explicit. By contrast, the duke and the duchess stand at the head of two articulated reading communities—gendered masculine and feminine—which seek to ossify existing power relations. Roger Chartier observes that gender, along with social class, is a fracture line for early modern reading communities.[6] That the ducal reading communities are separate reflects a social context in which parameters for intellectual activity vary by gender. Asunción Bernárdez Robal notes that the educational manuals of the day recommended private spaces and religious books to women but encouraged men to occupy public space and read many types of books.[7] Chartier explains that 'reading is always a practice embodied in acts, spaces, and habits'.[8] The duke, the duchess, and their followers inhabit a space segregated by gender and infected by the imitation of chivalry. Although the duke and duchess likely read the same books, the chivalric performances they sponsor split along gender lines. The duchess and her serving women imitate chivalry in private spaces: the dining room, Don Quixote's sleeping quarters, the duchess's sitting room, and walled gardens. In such episodes as the

6 Chartier, *The Order of Books*, 7.

7 Bernárdez-Robal, 'Las mujeres lectoras en el *Quijote*', 285.

8 Chartier, *The Order of Books*, 3.

proclamation of Merlin, the petition of the cross-dressed Countess Trifaldi, and the duel between Tosilos and Don Quixote, the duke and his male servants perform chivalry publicly and out-of-doors.[9] The duke's servants offer Quixote adventures, namely a flight on a magical horse and a joust. The duchess's servants offer him help with personal grooming, gifts of handmade textiles, and love serenades at his window.

As is the case with the romance of chivalry itself, the men's performances are showier and easier to interpret than the women's. The outdoor entertainments at the ducal estate reference the *Amadís* romances, *Espejo de príncipes y caballeros* (*The Mirror for Princes and Knights*, 1555), medieval French Arthurian romance, and, as Giuseppe Mazzotta has discussed, Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* and Virgil's *Aeneid*.[10] While Cervantes credits the duke and duchess with the co-creation of these marvels, it is less clear who read the texts. Mercedes Alcalá-Galán notes that the duchess, at least in public, always submits to her husband's will; perhaps the chivalric theater conforms more to his taste than hers.[11] In terms of genre coverage, the duke may be a more impressive reader than his wife. He compares Dulcinea to Oriana, Madásima, and Alastraxerea, characters from Garci Rodríguez de Montalvo's and Feliciano de Silva's *Amadís* romances. The catalog of enchanters the duke's servants evoke includes Arcaláus and Alquife, of *Amadís* romances by Montalvo and Silva, respectively, and Lirgandeo, the enchanter of *Espejo de príncipes*.[12] Urganda la Desconocida of *Amadís de Gaula* is notably absent. Dulcinea, the largest chivalric role given to a female character in the tableau, is played by one of the Duke's pages. Even those roles played by men that do not come from existing chivalric texts tend to be specific. The countess Trifaldi and her squire Trifaldín have names and an origin story, and the wealthy farmer's son whom Tosilos plays in the joust is a specific person rather than an archetype. The duke's male underlings may not be readers themselves, but they do appear to understand their roles and are thus part of a well-functioning reading community.

While the men and their collective reading practices could be seen as dominant in the ducal household, this chapter emphasizes the more subtle chivalric theater the duchess and her ladies enact within the domestic

9 One particular page, assigned to play Dulcinea, breaks with this paradigm to some degree. He is initially depicted as being an underling to the duke's *mayordomo* or steward, who plays the roles of Merlin and Countess Trifaldi, but he also reports directly to the duchess, serving as her messenger to Teresa Panza. See Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quijote*, II, 36; 320, II, 50; 418.

10 Mazzotta, *Cosmopoesis*, 85–88.

11 Alcalá Galán, 'Las piernas de la duquesa', 29.

12 Rey Bueno, *Quijote mágico*, 50.

sphere. Though the duchess's actions are sometimes difficult to distinguish from those of her husband, critics agree that she is conversant with chivalric trope. The duchess submits to her husband when he is present, but she also undertakes chivalric activity on her own. For José María Paz Gago, the evidence suggests that she is a 'compulsive reader' of chivalry.[13] Martha García refers to her as the director of the chivalric tableaux at the ducal estate, and Judith Whitenack and Julia Barella argue that she co-organizes the collaborative imitations.[14] Yet the duchess provides no direct evidence of chivalric reading outside of *Don Quixote* Part I, perhaps reflecting the fact that by the early seventeenth century, many readers of *Don Quixote* were familiar with the names of Amadís and other knights or perhaps had experienced the characters as part of public spectacle but had not read the books.[15] The duke and duchess do not speak of owning books of chivalry, and they certainly do not come into physical contact with a copy of *Amadís* as Cardenio and Luscinda did in Part I.

The duchess and her women imitate chivalric behaviors and tropes rather than specific characters or lines of text. The duchess's female servants may or may not have direct experience of chivalry through silent or out-loud reading, but they have evidently received instruction in chivalric culture, likely from the duchess herself. Of the duchess's female servants, Altisidora comes across as the most sophisticated in terms of her intertextual references, and she is arguably more conversant with chivalry than her mistress. Altisidora pretends to be in love with Don Quixote, enacting a chivalric motif, but her reference points come not from Iberian romance, but from *Don Quixote* Part I, *Orlando Furioso*, Petrarchan lyric, Garcilaso de la Vega, Virgil's *Aeneid*, and Dante's *Inferno.* Altisidora is an expert performer of literary trope, and her favorite texts have greater prestige at the turn of the seventeenth century than the romance of chivalry. The duchess assigns herself a chivalric role, that of the enchantress, but her references to the genre are less specific than those of Luscinda, Dorotea, and even Maritornes and the innkeeper's daughter in Part I. The duchess's innovation as a reader comes not from her expertise with Iberian romance but from her desire to make the imitation of chivalry a community affair *for women*.

Literate men in early modern Spain had access to institutions like schools, universities, the Church, the print industry, royal bureaucracy, and the court

13 Paz Gago, 'La noble lectora', 175.

14 García, *La función de los personajes femeninos*, 120; Whitenack, 'Don Quixote and the Romances', 62; Barella, 'Atardece en la casa de placer', 259.

15 Lucía Megías, 'Los cuatro libros', 86.

through which to make their reading practices collective and formal. The women mentioned in earlier chapters, real and fictional, were educated in relative isolation, accessing literary culture piecemeal and expressing their literacy through private devices like letters. In a sense, the duchess liberates her female servants through providing them a collective education. Although the duchess commissions chivalric performances from her ladies that conform to the existing household hierarchy, the servants ultimately use chivalry to escape her control. Through the duchess and her ladies, Cervantes models the transformative potential of the early modern literary market for the woman reader. Women readers—even those who are members of the lower classes—find in their access to print culture a means to disrupt the social order, including traditional notions of gender roles.

Social Class, Gender, and Chivalric Reading

As a wealthy noblewoman, Cervantes's duchess is an appropriate leader for a reading community of women. Paz Gago has argued that the duchess represents the aristocrats of Golden Age Spain who frequently retired to country estates in pursuit of three pastimes: 'appearance […] reading, and hunting'.[16] Chivalry is likewise a suitable genre choice. Daniel Eisenberg points out that folio-sized printed romances were more expensive than works in other genres and thus marketed toward those who could afford luxury.[17] For bourgeois readers of chivalry, the discourse of individual merit that Jesús Rodríguez Velasco terms the 'chivalric fable', which undermines questions of lineage in many chivalric romances, likely held some appeal.[18] Critics generally agree, however, that the nobility comprised the genre's implied reader. Maxime Chevalier writes that the romances of chivalry served as a 'literature of evasion' for aristocrats, allowing an imaginative escape from the city, the court, and an increasingly mercantile economy.[19] Augustin Redondo concedes that bourgeois or even illiterate consumers of romance probably existed, but he agrees with Chevalier and Eisenberg that the primary audience for chivalry would have been aristocratic.[20] The duchess appears to absorb the genre's insistence on rank, and she expects her

16 Paz Gago, 'La noble lectora', 176.
17 Eisenberg, *Romances of Chivalry*, 102–105.
18 Rodríguez Velasco, 'Fábula caballeresca', 347, 357.
19 Chevalier, *Lectura y lectores*, 102.
20 Redondo, *Otra manera de leer el Quijote*, 29.

servants' chivalric imitations to adhere to decorum. The duchess's chivalric fantasy never brings into question the social categories of the 'real' world, and one of the reasons Sancho and Quixote become targets for ridicule is that they have made gestures toward social mobility. The *hidalgo*'s pretension to the title *don* and Sancho's gubernatorial ambitions indicate that they, unlike the duchess, appreciate the promises of class mobility contained in the chivalric fable. One wonders how the duchess might have absorbed the ideological ambivalence of *Don Quixote* Part I; perhaps she, like many other early readers of *Don Quixote*, read the novel superficially, as a work of broad humor but little depth.[21]

Given early modern Iberian restrictions on women's autonomy, the duchess might seem an unlikely figure of the reader, but though the duchess's gender limits her in some ways, it does not disqualify her from this role. A significant number of Golden Age women read romances of chivalry, and many women who could not read also had some access to these texts. Barbara Weissberger remarks that the aristocratic women to whom many romances were dedicated were a significant portion of chivalry's readership and had considerable influence in the public sphere.[22] Lisa Vollendorf argues that notions of the early modern literary public should include less privileged readers, among them 'phonetic readers, comprehensive readers, and merely "aural consumers" of early modern texts', many of whom would have been women.[23] As discussed in the previous chapter, *Don Quixote* Part I contains several characters who are likely illiterate but who appreciate chivalry nonetheless, including Maritornes and the innkeeper's daughter.

The two lower-class female consumers of romance from Part I are useful for thinking about the women readers of Part II because they imitate chivalry together. In a parody of the nocturnal meetings between lovers in chivalric romance, they play a joke on Don Quixote that ends with his hand tied to the stable wall. Neither civic nor parental authorities appear to notice that two peasant women have committed an offense against a social superior. Don Quixote himself attributes the event to *encantamento* ('enchantment'), as he did in his first nocturnal encounter with Maritornes, in which he imagined that she was an enamored damsel and inadvertently caused her to be beaten.[24] The seizure of Don Quixote's hand perhaps even serves as a kind of poetic justice, a petty entrapment in payment for petty assault.

21 Allen, *Don Quixote, Hero or Fool?*, 4.

22 Weissberger, 'The Gendered Taxonomy of Spanish Romance', 218.

23 Vollendorf, 'Cervantes and His Women Readers', 314.

24 Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quijote*, I, 43; 529, I, 16; 204–205.

Maritornes and the innkeeper's daughter use their knowledge of chivalry to act above their social station, and in Part I, they get away with it.

Juan Palomeque's inn is comparable to the ducal estate in some ways and distinct in others. The inn offers a space where members of different social classes listen to and discuss literature and in which social upheaval and reconstruction inspired by chivalry are possible. The duke and duchess have created a similarly corporate experience of reading for their servants. Retribution and revenge feature in chivalric imitations at the ducal estate, as they do with Maritornes and the innkeeper's daughter, but in Part II, the physical stakes are higher, and violations of the social order are followed by punishment. Sancho must self-administer real lashes in payment for an imaginary offense, and Don Quixote suffers physical damage to his face for a verbal affront to Altisidora. The servant girl, for her part, is condemned to a (metaphoric) hell for the presumption of playing a chivalric joke on Don Quixote. While the inn of Part I is a place where social class can be evaluated and remade, as in Dorotea's reconciliation with Fernando and the captive's unlooked-for restoration to family and wealth, the ducal household proves a slippery locus of change. However, both chivalric gathering places have in common the bifurcated nature of the roles they assign. With some exceptions, as with the cross-dressed Dulcinea at the ducal estate, the chivalric tableaux adhere to the gendered division of behavior present in Iberian romance.

The Duchess as a Literate Enchantress

Female characters in the romance of chivalry typically congregate in a royal household not dissimilar to the duchess's domestic circle. They are queens, princesses, ladies-in-waiting, and lower-class servants who spend their days reading, singing, playing music, sewing, and participating in courtly ceremony. Eisenberg states that female chivalric characters 'did not travel for pleasure or amusement; in fact, except for women in search of assistance or carrying out some vow, they did not travel at all unless forced to by evil-doers'.[25] The duchess, however, assigns herself one of the few chivalric roles that gives women a high degree of agency and freedom, that of the *sabia* or enchantress.[26] Many enchantresses in the Iberian tradition take the

25 Eisenberg, *Romances of Chivalry*, 71.

26 Vladimir Nabokov refers to the duke and duchess as an enchanter and enchantress 'invented by the master enchanter, Cervantes'. See *Lectures on* Don Quixote, 63.

Lady of the Lake of the prose *Lancelot* as their model. These magical women are explicitly literate, and both they and the texts they create circulate through the romance world. Like other enchantresses featured in this book, including Montalvo's Urganda la Desconocida and Beatriz Bernal's Membrina, the duchess performs her magic via the interpretive pressure she asserts over the lives of others, in this case Don Quixote and Sancho. In her dress and actions, the duchess deliberately plays to the enchantress type, layering imitations of several powerful enchantresses in the romance tradition. Yet despite her beautiful exterior, the duchess also embodies the negative qualities of the enchantress, expressed in the ugliness that festers just below the surface and which reveals itself without the duchess's volition.

Don Quixote's initial encounter with the duchess in the forest suggests her as a figure of the evil enchantress, familiar from both Iberian and Italian chivalric texts. While good enchantresses like Urganda and Membrina protect and guide Christian knights, enchantresses of ill intent attempt to harm, seduce, or imprison them.[27] Judith Whitenack observes that Don Quixote, unlike many male protagonists of Iberian romances of chivalry, never succumbs to erotic enchantment.[28] Though Maritornes, the duchess, Altisidora, and even Dorotea attempt to entrap him with quasi-erotic promises, they never shake his fidelity to Dulcinea. The duchess leaves the seduction of Don Quixote to her handmaiden, but she does attempt to distract Don Quixote from his mission, and indeed, she succeeds in delaying him at the ducal estate through strategies both flattering and cruel. In this, the duchess resembles enchantresses of the Italian tradition, including Ariosto's Alcina and Tasso's Armida, who use a combination of magic and persuasion to trap knights. Ariosto's Alcina entices Ruggiero to stay on her magical island, delaying his destiny and preserving his life. He is fated to die soon after he converts to Christianity, marries Bradamante, and founds the Este dynasty.[29] Tasso's Armida, who shelters Rinaldo in her magical garden and keeps him from the fighting at Jerusalem, employs strategic delay in a similar way.[30]

In evoking Alcina and Armida, whose beauty, like that of Cervantes's duchess, belies their moral corruption, Cervantes reworks not only Italian epic but also Part I. As the previous chapter discussed, Dorotea, like the duchess, is a declared reader of chivalry and a figure of Armida. In Part

27 Whitenack, 'Don Quixote and the Romances', 74.

28 Ibid., 64–65.

29 Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso*, VI: 19–22, VII: 16–32, III: 19–24.

30 Tasso, *Jerusalem Delivered*, 16: 17–31.

II, however, Cervantes opts for a more sinister interpretation of the figure from Tasso. No virtuous motives can be ascribed to the duchess, and her home is a theatre of humiliation, not a pleasure garden. It is worth noting, moreover, that Dorotea's performance of the enchantress is more specific than that of the duchess, as she cites Armida's language, rather than just her general characteristics. The duchess adapts from the *maga* archetype her literacy, her power, and her ambivalent morality without any of the softening features of particular enchantresses.

The duchess has few sympathetic qualities, and her intentions for her prey are sinister. Don Quixote, for his part, has also changed. He was helpless before Dorotea/Micomicona's elegant request, but he enters the duchess's sphere of influence prepared to cope with enchantment, good or evil. Travel by purportedly magical boat precedes the encounter with the duchess. On encountering a boat in the wilderness, Don Quixote explains to Sancho that chivalric enchanters use their magic to help knights travel long distances: 'O le arrebatan en una nube o le deparan un barco donde se entre, y en menos de un abrir y cerrar los ojos le llevan, o por los aires, o por la mar, donde quieren y donde es menester su ayuda (Either they carry him off on a cloud or provide him with a boat which he enters, and in the blink of an eye they move him through the air or over the sea, wherever they wish and wherever their help is needed)'.[31] Though many romances of chivalry involve magical transportation, the coincidence of the ship, the cloud-vehicle, and a near-instantaneous voyage to foreign lands points to one particular romance as a potential intertext for this passage. *El conde Partinuplés* (*Count Partinuplés*), a fifteenth-century translation of the anonymous twelfth-century French *Partonopeus de Blois*, features an enchantress named Melior who makes scouting trips on a cloud and then sends a ship that steers itself to bring a French prince to her enchanted castle.[32] This romance, incidentally, is also a probable source for Beatriz Bernal, as discussed in Chapter Two. The magic ship to which Don Quixote alludes transports Partinuplés to an estate with invisible servants who rearrange household objects and a seductive lady (Melior) who will only meet him in the dark. The plot of the romance is a gender-switched version of the story of Cupid and Psyche from Apuleius's *The Golden Ass*. The Iberian *El conde Partinuplés*, the source material for the seventeenth-century Ana Caro play of the same name, was reprinted several times in the sixteenth century and was widely known; Apuleius was likewise familiar to Cervantes's contemporaries in Spanish

31 Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quijote*, II, 29; 262; Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quixote*, 647–48.

32 Monzó, 'Partinuplés', 413–14.

translation.[33] If indeed Cervantes references *Partinuplés* in this passage, it seems fitting considering the themes of entrapment and deception that will be important in the subsequent episodes. The duchess appears at the right place and time to play the role of the highly educated but morally ambivalent enchantress. The Melior of the romance is, by age three, 'la más sabia de todas las mugeres del mundo (the wisest woman in the world)'.[34] The duchess is the most educated woman in her world, and she has the power to confine Don Quixote physically and impose her interpretations of literary texts on him and on others.

The duchess presents herself as bait for a trap, like both Tasso's Armida and Melior of *Partinuplés*. Don Quixote and Sancho happen upon her in a secluded forest, seated upon her palfrey, with a bird of prey on her arm.[35] The encounter carries with it connotations of mystery, aristocracy, and magic. The duchess greets Sancho as if he were a long-expected emissary: 'Levantaos del suelo; que escudero de tan gran caballero como es el de la Triste Figura, de quien ya tenemos acá mucha noticia, no es justo que esté de hinojos (Rise up from the ground; it is not right for the squire of so great a knight as the Knight of the Sorrowful Face, about whom we have heard so much, to remain on his knees)'.[36] The duchess at once reveals her familiarity with *Don Quixote* Part I and her desire to exert control over that text. Sancho has introduced Don Quixote as the *Caballero de los leones* ('Knight of the Lions'), alluding to a recent triumph, while the duchess reasserts an older title from Part I.

The duchess's clothing, moreover, reinforces her moral ambivalence and her link to magic. She wears a green hunting outfit, a *vaquero*, which has evident predatory overtones. Carmen Bernis Madrazo describes the skirted *vaquero* as less heavy and restrictive than aristocratic formal attire and notes that warrior women on the Golden Age stage are often depicted wearing it.[37] The *vaquero*, moreover, corresponds with the physical movement granted to enchantresses in Iberian chivalry. The duchess's costume is green, according to Bernis Madrazo a usual color for hunting dress.[38] Julia Barella and Anne J. Cruz note the association of the color with madness, and Barella also

33 De Armas, *Invisible Mistress*, 171–74; Luna, 'Introducción', 41.

34 Monzó, 'Partinuplés', 412.

35 David Quint observes that the female characters in romances of chivalry always ride palfreys. See *Cervantes's Novel of Modern Times*, 131.

36 Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quijote*, II, 30; 269; Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quixote*, 654.

37 Bernis Madrazo, 'El traje de la duquesa cazadora', 62.

38 Ibid., 66.

links it with the concept of hope.[39] Martha García observes that medieval literature associated the color green with the precious emerald and used it as a symbol for femininity.[40] These divergent interpretations demonstrate that green is multivalent and not always associated with positive qualities.

In Iberian romance, the color green also has a history of association with another ambivalent force—magic. Feliciano de Silva's *Florisel de Niquea* Part IV features an enchantress wearing green who traps knights and ladies in a magical castle. The *maga* Sinestasia creates a ludic space of danger and delight for *Florisel*'s entire cast. She raises a magical mist at the border of the woods surrounding her castle, trapping everyone within. The ladies roam the castle freely, but they can only travel in the forest while protected by a bubble of enchantment. The knights remain in the woods, exposed to danger from beasts and from each other. In Sinestasia's magical wilderness, men and women can speak and interact, but they cannot touch. Sinestasia wears a green dress each time she goes out into the woods, perhaps signifying magic itself or the vain hopes of her affection for Rogel de Grecia.[41] Feliciano de Silva's romances have been a frequent reference point for Cervantes, and he mentions two of the characters of *Florisel de Niquea* Part IV, Daraida and Garaya, male warriors cross-dressed as women, in *Don Quixote* Part I.[42] Silva's Sinestasia is a sympathetic character, but her love for Rogel de Grecia goes unrequited, and her enchanted castle, like the duchess's estate, ultimately fails to hold her prey.

Like other enchantresses of ambiguous moral status, the duchess conceals a festering ugliness under a veneer of beauty. During the initial meeting with Quixote and Sancho, the text describes the duchess as *gallarda* ('elegant') and *bella* ('beautiful').[43] Quixote remarks on her *gran fermosura* ('great beauty'), and Sancho is described as 'admirado [...] de la hermosura de la buena señora (amazed by the beauty of the good lady)'.[44] *Fermosura* is a linguistic archaism, and Howard Mancing has shown that such constructions accompany Quixote's imitations of chivalry.[45] The duchess is a corrupt reader of chivalry, and her gallant appearance is deceptive. The servant

39 Cruz, 'Don Quixote', 374; Barella, 'Atardece en la casa de placer', 263. As Chapter Two discusses, in Beatriz Bernal's *Cristalián de España*, the symbolic damsel who wears a green dress and carries a green apple likewise symbolizes hope.

40 García, *La función de los personajes femeninos*, 105.

41 Silva, *Florisel IV*, 22r–28v.

42 Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quijote*, I, 24; 297.

43 Ibid., II, 30; 268–69.

44 Ibid., II, 30; 270; Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quixote*, 653.

45 Mancing, *The Chivalric World of Don Quijote*, 32.

Doña Rodríguez, likely with malicious intent, reveals her lady's secret ill health, which indexes her moral corruption.

The serving woman attributes the duchess's beauty to the salutary effects of 'dos fuentes que tiene en las dos piernas, por donde se desagua todo el mal humor (two issues she has on her legs, which drain the bad humors that the doctors say fill her body)'.[46] Mercedes Alcalá Galán describes these *fuentes* as the consequence of medical bloodletting.[47] Their purpose, Alcalá argues, would not have been cosmetic, though cosmetic secondary effects have been attributed to the procedure.[48] Though many scholars have read the duchess as a middle-aged or elderly woman, for Alcalá, her beauty and vigor indicate that she is of childbearing age. No children are mentioned in connection with the ducal couple, and Alcalá surmises that the *fuentes* are a treatment for infertility.[49] These open wounds would have severely impacted the duchess's health and perhaps even created a foul smell; Alcalá notes that the ill humors that exited them would have been the consequence of infection.[50]

The contrast between beautiful appearance and corrupt reality renders the duchess an object of disgust. Chivalric enchantresses likewise have a dual physicality, one part attractive and one part loathsome. Urganda la Desconocida first appears to be a young lady of eighteen, but when she wipes magical ointment from her face, she reveals herself to be an old woman.[51] Ariosto's apparently beautiful Alcina is revealed to be 'exceptionally ugly' when Ruggiero puts on a magic ring that protects its wearer from the effects of enchantment.[52] In the case of Alcina, physical ugliness indexes moral impurity. The duchess's *fuentes* likewise reveal multiple sources of secret shame: her childlessness, her repulsive physicality, and her lack of control over her own household.

Rewriting *Don Quixote* Part I

If the duchess is an enchantress, she is one who does not possess absolute power. Rather, she enters into conflict with Quixote, Sancho, and the

46 Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quijote*, II, 48; 403; Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quixote*, 771.
47 Alcalá Galán, 'Las piernas de la duquesa', 15.
48 Ibid., 20.
49 Ibid., 15–17.
50 Ibid., 21.
51 Rodríguez de Montalvo, *Amadís de Gaula*, I: 256.
52 Larrington, *King Arthur's Enchantresses*, 145.

members of the household as they struggle to promote their own interpretations of chivalric romance. Dulcinea is a frequent subject of inquiry, which implies competition between the duchess and Quixote's ideal woman. The duke explicitly compares the two, favoring Dulcinea. Don Quixote praises the duchess as the 'digna señora de la hermosura (most worthy mistress of beauty)', and the duke replies: 'Adonde está mi señora doña Dulcinea del Toboso, no es razón que se alaben otras fermosuras (When Señora Doña Dulcinea of Toboso is present, no other beauty should be praised)'.[53] The duchess later alleges that Dulcinea is entirely imaginary: 'Vuesa merced la engendró y parió en su entendimiento (Your grace engendered and gave birth to her in your mind)'.[54] In Part I, Dulcinea is a hybrid of the fantastic and the verisimilar. In the 1605 volume, Don Quixote is clear in his idea that the name Dulcinea represents Aldonza Lorenzo, a village girl he admires, just as the name Rocinante represents his pre-existing horse. In Part II, Sancho refers to Dulcinea as Aldonza Lorenzo in his letter to his wife, but Don Quixote never references the lady by her peasant name. Perhaps the duchess's influence cements an already developing change in Quixote's notion of the character, which distances Dulcinea from her once-humble social status. The duchess contests the authority of Part I of *Don Quixote*, attempting to substitute herself as a competing author-figure, and as regards Dulcinea, she achieves a measure of success.

In subsequent conversations with Don Quixote and Sancho, the duchess returns to a particular detail, the image of Dulcinea winnowing buckwheat, 'cosa que me hace dudar en la alteza de su linaje (which makes me doubt the nobility of her lineage)'.[55] Quixote and Sancho offer different explanations. Don Quixote blames enchanters for the indecorous appearance of Dulcinea, and Sancho blames himself. However, the duchess has her own reading of the event: Dulcinea is real, Dulcinea is noble, and Dulcinea, Sancho, and Quixote have all been enchanted. The duchess declares that she will make her reading canonical: 'Yo desde aquí adelante creeré y haré creer a todos los de mi casa, y aun al duque mi señor, si fuere menester, que hay Dulcinea en el Toboso, y que vive hoy día, y es hermosa, y principalmente nacida (From now on I shall believe, and make my entire household believe, and even my lord duke, if necessary, that Dulcinea exists in Toboso, and that she lives in our day, and is beautiful, and nobly born)'.[56] The duchess's

53 Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quijote*, II, 30; 271; Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quixote*, 656.
54 Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quijote*, II, 32; 290; Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quixote*, 672.
55 Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quijote*, II, 32; 291; Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quixote*, 673.
56 Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quijote*, II, 32; 291.

comment represents one of the few moments where she pushes back against her husband's authority. Here, the duchess is ready to overrule three men: her husband, Don Quixote, and Sancho. Don Quixote largely defers to her. The knight cares about Dulcinea's beauty, but he appears content with metaphorical existence and metaphorical lineage. About the reality of Dulcinea, he comments: 'Dios sabe si hay Dulcinea o no en el mundo (God knows if Dulcinea exists in the world or not)'.[57] On the issue of lineage, he replies that 'Dulcinea es hija de sus obras, y [...] las virtudes adoban la sangre (Dulcinea is the child of her actions, and [...] virtues strengthen the blood)'.[58] Roberto González Echevarría points out that Part I represents Don Quixote's ideal mistress as a *labradora* ('working-class woman') with a name, parents, a personality, a physical appearance, a geographical origin, and a history of acquaintance with Don Quixote.[59] The 'real' Dulcinea of Part I—Aldonza Lorenzo—could not be more different from the duchess. She is a vigorous, hard-working, illiterate peasant of attractive but somewhat masculine appearance.[60] The duchess's vision of Dulcinea shows that what she values in the romance of chivalry is nobility and archetypical femininity. Aldonza Lorenzo does not fit the duchess's concept of chivalric romance, and all trace of her must be expunged.

The conversation between Sancho and the duchess represents another attempt to impose her reading of Part I on others. Elias Rivers remarks that it is inappropriate for the duchess to invite a man from the working class into the privacy of her domestic apartment to converse with her and her ladies.[61] However, if one thinks of Sancho as a synecdoche of the book in which he is a character, it makes sense that he would be allowed to invade the domestic space. Aristocratic women entertain themselves with books, and the duchess and her ladies entertain themselves by speaking to Sancho. The duchess forces Sancho to retell the enchantment of Dulcinea in a scene that mimics out-loud reading before a group. When Sancho has finished, the duchess seeks to change his interpretation of events: 'Toda fue invención de alguno de los encantadores que al señor don Quixote persiguen; porque real y verdaderamente yo sé de buena parte que la villana que dio el brinco sobre la pollina era y es Dulcinea del Toboso, y que el buen

57 Ibid., II, 32; 290; Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quixote*, 672.

58 Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quijote*, II, 32; 291.

59 Roberto González Echevarría offers a reconstruction of the 'real' relationship of Don Quixote and Aldonza Lorenzo, emphasizing the social and legal implications of Quixote's fascination with the peasant girl. See *Love and the Law in Cervantes*, 38–41.

60 Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quijote*, I, 25; 311–13.

61 Rivers, 'Sancho y la duquesa', 38.

Sancho, pensando ser el engañador, es el engañado (It was all an invention of one of the enchanters who pursue Señor Don Quixote, because really and truly, I know from a reliable source that the peasant girl who leaped onto the donkey was and is Dulcinea of Toboso, and that our good Sancho, thinking he was the deceiver, is the deceived)'.[62] The duchess herself is the reliable source and the enchantress of this episode; she rewrites Dulcinea for her own amusement.

The duchess is not content with changing Sancho's understanding of events. She is determined to influence his wife, Teresa Panza, as well. When Sancho writes a letter to Teresa, informing her that the duke plans to give him the governorship of an *insula*, the duchess arranges for delivery and pairs the missive with one of her own. Letter writing was among the ordinary preoccupations of noblewomen at the turn of the seventeenth century. Montserrat Pérez-Toribio argues that, for historical women, letter writing 'lent itself perfectly as an instructional medium through which women created an effective support system, a sanctioned means of expression that surreptitiously allowed them to communicate about matters other than classic maternal or filial responsibilities'.[63] Letter writing is also a chivalric enterprise, and the duchess is not the first female character in *Don Quixote* to write a letter in imitation of chivalry. The previous chapter treats at length the moment when, in Part I, Luscinda tucks a letter for Cardenio in a copy of *Amadís de Gaula*, implying that it must be read against that text in order for its full meaning to emerge.

The duchess's letter, however, is quite different from Luscinda's private, emotional plea. The duchess evokes chivalry to mock Teresa for her low status. The letter resembles chivalric letters of prophecy, with an important difference—none of the duchess's predictions come true. The duchess writes of a future of prosperity and social advancement for Sancho's family that she knows will never arrive. She pairs the letter with a gift, a coral necklace. In sending this letter, the duchess channels Urganda's prophetic letters from *Amadís de Gaula*, discussed in Chapter One, which were sent with jewels. Urganda's letters predict the fates of important characters and help end a civil war. When her predictions come true, the king has them read aloud to the court, increasing the enchantress's prestige.

The duchess's letter to Teresa Panza is a prediction meant to be read aloud but never meant to come true. The duchess addresses Teresa in familiar terms, as *Amiga Teresa* ('my friend Teresa'), and promises future

62 Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quijote*, II, 33; 301; Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quixote*, 680–81.
63 Pérez-Toribio, 'From Mother to Daughter', 75.

acquaintance: 'Tiempo vendrá en que nos conozcamos y nos comuniquemos (One day we shall meet and communicate with each other)'.[64] If this time ever arrives, it will be when Cervantes's Part II of *Don Quixote* is published and Teresa Panza joins the other characters in the library of the ducal household. The duchess asks for a gift from Teresa, *bellotas* ('acorns'), that hints at the literary nature of her acquaintance with the Panza family. The request references Don Quixote and Sancho's humble meal in Part I with the goatherds; a handful of acorns evoked for Don Quixote the golden age of humankind, in which people enjoyed nature's bounty freely and without violence.[65] Acorns have an implication for social class; in the meal with the goatherds, they were gifts offered from the humble to the great and shared together. Though it seems a utopian moment, the goatherds have less food for themselves because they shared with an *hidalgo*; Quixote can offer them only a fine speech in return.[66] The duchess extends to Teresa Panza an equally dubious courtesy.

Teresa Panza's response to the letter is as exuberant and presumptuous as the duchess could have hoped. Teresa interprets the letter literally rather than through its chivalric frame. She finds acorns to send the duchess and plans an appearance at court. The letter appears to have accomplished the duchess's true purpose, exposing Teresa Panza to public ridicule. Because Teresa is illiterate, she needs a proxy in order to read the letter. Unlike Sancho's imaginary Dulcinea in Part I, she does not mind if others learn her business as they lend her their reading skills. The entire community, including Sansón Carrasco and the priest, finds out about Sancho's governorship, and the reply letter, also written by proxy, reflects their puzzlement. Teresa's ambitions delight the women of the ducal household, as they can laugh at her grasping for position and poor taste. Yet when Teresa Panza learns that Sancho's governorship has been a failure, both she and her daughter, Sanchica, accept the news with equanimity. They focus on the positives of the situation; their beloved Sancho has returned to them with more money than he had when he left.[67] Their reaction demonstrates that the duchess's influence is not absolute. She cannot draw Teresa Panza into an aristocratic fantasy for long, as she has misunderstood the *labradora*'s resilience and pragmatism. The null effect of the duchess's letter in Part II reveals the limitations of the interpretative power of readers, especially of

64 Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quijote*, II, 50; 418; Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quixote*, 785.
65 Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quijote*, I, 11; 155.
66 Cascardi, *Cervantes, Literature, and the Discourse of Politics*, 66.
67 Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quijote*, II, 73; 583.

aristocratic readers. The duchess likewise has a limited power to control the other readers in her reading community, especially her protégée Altisidora.

Altisidora's Literary Rebellion

Altisidora, the duchess's favorite handmaiden, joins with her fellow servants in a collective response to the romance of chivalry. Martha García emphasizes the theatrical dimensions of these scenes; for her, the servants are actresses the duchess has tasked with enacting a series of mock-chivalric rituals.[68] Though the duchess attempts to impose her own reading strategies on her female servants, Altisidora escapes her. Altisidora is an interesting test case for the duchess's reading community. We have no direct evidence of her literacy, but her poems reveal extensive knowledge of literary culture. As a young servant of uncertain economic status, Altisidora might be expected to have little interest in or access to literature. Yet she is among the most creative literary performers on the ducal estate, able to combine genre references and parody literary tropes. Instead of imitating Don Quixote's reading habits, as the duke and duchess apparently do, Altisidora draws on an international set of texts important to Cervantes over the course of the novel. Her ludic iterations of literary trope show that the consumption of literary texts is a diffuse practice that extends across class lines and perhaps even beyond literacy to serve as a catalyst for social transformation.

Don Quixote's reprimand to Altisidora at first seems puzzling, as he criticizes her for using chivalry much in the way he does, as inspiration for new behaviors. In critiquing Altisidora's performances, Don Quixote draws on the language of the conduct tradition, which opposed the romance of chivalry and all other entertainment-oriented reading, especially for women. When Altisidora attacks Don Quixote by means of chivalric trope, she also attacks the social discourses, including conduct literature, which seek to limit women's behavior. In the episodes that concern the duchess's female servants, Cervantes emphasizes domestic enclosure of the kind conduct writers universally advocated. The objects featured in the indoor tableaux, which include towels, basins, soap, musical instruments, garments, pins, and slippers, index women's daily occupations and pastimes. Even the cats that scratch Don Quixote are domestic and not wild beasts. It must be said, however, that though Quixote critiques Altisidora's apparent love for him in terms that support the entrapment of women, it does not follow that

68 García, *La función de los personajes femeninos*, 113.

Cervantes's opinion of female rebellion by way of literature is the same as the knight's.

Initially, the damsels of the ducal household imitate chivalry at their mistress's command. When Don Quixote arrives, the ladies disarm him without laughing, according to precise orders: 'Seis doncellas le desarmaron y sirvieron de pajes, todas industriadas y advertidas del duque y de la duquesa de lo que habían de hacer (Six maidens removed his armor and served as pages, all of them instructed and advised by the duke and duchess as to what they were to do)'.[69] Such scenes are frequent in Iberian romance, and they signal hospitality and friendship. A knight who refuses to remove his armor, concealing his identity and remaining ready for battle, expresses distrust toward his hosts. Though the description credits both the duke and duchess with giving the orders, these are the duchess's handmaidens, and they are likely to be more solidly under her control than under her husband's, as they belong to her sphere of influence. A short while later, these same women invent their own chivalric welcome ritual, one perhaps meant to indicate to Don Quixote that he has accepted the hospitality of enemies, not friends. They arrive in the dining room with basins of water, towels, and soap, and instead of helping the diners wash their hands, they wash Don Quixote's beard. The duke and duchess 'de nada desto eran sabidores (knew nothing about this)', and to maintain the appearance of authority, the duke demands that his beard be washed as well.[70] Every time the duke and duchess involve their servants in their imitative reading practices, the situation risks escaping their control.

Altisidora pursues Don Quixote with the duchess's consent, and the details of her performance reference both chivalry and early modern representations of women's daily lives. I consider Altisidora an inscribed reader of chivalry, though whether she has read chivalry on the page or heard chivalry aloud is unclear. She makes no specific references to *Amadís de Gaula* or Feliciano de Silva's romances, but she does understand the genre well enough to communicate with Don Quixote through a shared notion of chivalric trope. When Quixote hears her first song, he muses on chivalry: 'Le vinieron a la memoria las infinitas aventuras semejantes a aquélla, de ventanas, rejas y jardines, músicas, requiebros y desvanecimientos que en los sus desvanecidos libros de caballerías había leído (He remembered an infinite number of adventures similar to this one, with windows, jalousies, gardens, music, amorous compliments, and swoons, which he had read in his delusive

69 Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quijote*, II, 31; 276; Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quixote*, 660.
70 Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quijote*, II, 32; 286; Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quixote*, 669.

books of chivalry)'.[71] There are many lovesick knights and ladies and many nocturnal meetings in the chivalric tradition. The rendezvous between Oriana and Amadís at her window in *Amadís de Gaula* is a midpoint, not the origin, of the trope: it reflects the influence of the prose *Lancelot* and generates echoes in many texts, including *Don Quixote* Part I.[72] Cervantes's Part I, meanwhile, provides additional models for Altisidora's interpretation of the motif. Both Fernando and Luis haunt ladies' windows by night, attempting to seduce women through song.[73]

Altisidora's first song layers references to literary culture, and both her physical position as the musician and the lyrics imply gender reversal. Altisidora uses stock images from lyric poetry to describe Don Quixote. His eyes are *dos soles* ('two suns'), and she credits him with youth, beauty, and valor.[74] Altisidora then references Part I by expressing a wish to trade places with Dulcinea. She goes on to reveal some degree of historical education by referring to Don Quixote as the emperor Nero, gazing down on a burning Rome. The song ends with two images of subtler provenance. Altisidora accompanies the blazon of Don Quixote with a series of garments that she will make for him:

> Oh, qué de cofias te diera
> qué de escarpines de plata
> qué de calzas de damasco
> qué de herreruelos de holanda
> (O, what fine caps I would give you,
> and oh, what gaiters of silver,
> and oh, what breeches of damask,
> And oh, what short capes of linen)[75]

Altisidora promises Quixote four items of fine clothing: a cap, slippers, breeches, and a cape. There is something intrusive in the offer, as articles of clothing enter into intimate contact with the body. Nancy Vickers argues that the conventions of Petrarchan lyric deny subjectivity to women by reducing them to eyes, lips, cheeks, hands, and other stereotypically beautiful features. Altisidora's list of garments performs the same 'scattering' that Petrarchan

71 Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quijote*, II, 44; 372; Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quixote*, 743.
72 Rodríguez de Montalvo, *Amadís de Gaula*, I: 380–86.
73 Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quijote*, I, 28; 350, I, 43; 521–23.
74 Ibid., II, 44; 373; Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quixote*, 744.
75 Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quijote*, II, 44; 373; Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quixote*, 744.

lyric enacts on women by dividing Quixote's body into parts.[76] Clothing can also substitute for bodies in Petrarchan lyric, as in Garcilaso's 'Oh dulces prendas, por mi mal halladas (Oh sweet tokens, found to my despair)', in which an article of clothing reminds the poetic speaker of his lost beloved.

Altisidora follows the blazon of Don Quixote with a more conventional one enumerating her own traits. Aspects of Altisidora conform to the archetype of beauty: she says that she is fifteen years old and has long blond hair. However, she also admits to other features:

> Aunque es mi boca aguileña
> y la nariz algo chata
> ser mis dientes de topacios
> mi belleza al cielo ensalza
> (And though my mouth is aquiline
> and my nose is rather blunt,
> I have teeth of topaz, raising
> my beauty up to high heaven)[77]

With her self-description, Altisidora twists the stock images of Petrarchan lyric. Noses, not mouths, are aquiline, and teeth are supposed to resemble white pearls, not yellow topaz. Altisidora's song represents her as an equivocal object of desire, equal parts beautiful and monstrous.

Part of the punishment Altisidora's chivalric theater imagines for Don Quixote is the confrontation of a fun-house mirror version of the ideal chivalric woman, the same punishment that awaits knights who fall for the deceptive beauty of the enchantress. Moreover, Altisidora's song reveals an awareness of the twisting of chivalric femininity in Part I. Her song echoes Don Quixote's dubious blazon of Dulcinea:

> 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 [...] que solo la discreta consideración puede encarecerlas, y no compararlas. (Her tresses are gold, her forehead Elysian fields, her eyebrows the arches of heaven, her eyes suns, her cheeks roses, her lips coral, her teeth pearls, her neck alabaster, her bosom marble, her hands ivory, her skin white as

76 Vickers, 'Diana Described', 265–66.
77 Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quijote*, II, 44; 374.

> snow, and the parts that modesty hides from human eyes are such [...] that the most discerning consideration can only praise them but not compare them.)[78]

Quixote's catalog is grotesque and clichéd, and his mention of the parts of Dulcinea hidden by clothing sexualizes her in a way that breaks Petrarchan decorum. Altisidora plays with the blazon much in the same way, invoking it at the edge of poor taste.

It is likely that Altisidora, having read or heard Part I as a member of her mistress's domestic circle, deliberately parodies Quixote's description of Dulcinea. Don Quixote might be offended at what this implies about his own poetic talents, or he may react badly to Altisidora because she serves as an unwelcome reminder of Dulcinea's (or perhaps Aldonza's) faults. Like her mistress, Altisidora participates in the reconsideration of the ideal of Dulcinea in Part II of *Don Quixote*. Altisidora implies a comparison between herself and Dulcinea by applying the blazon in this way, and perhaps Dulcinea is even the loser in the equation. Part of the discomfort of this juxtaposition may be Quixote's fading memory of an illiterate Aldonza/Dulcinea, who likely would not be able to perform a layered literary pastiche.

Altisidora's references to clothing, moreover, have a resonance beyond their metonymy with body parts. Sewing and weaving feature prominently in early modern discourse about women's lives, often alongside injunctions against reading for entertainment. Every episode involving Altisidora, including all her songs and speeches, contains at least one reference to the manufacture of textiles. Conduct books urged even women of high status to avoid sinful leisure by keeping their hands occupied in spinning, weaving, and sewing; Isabel la Católica, for example, learned embroidery as part of her early education.[79] Altisidora imagines gifts for Don Quixote that would be within the realm of her daily experience. However, Altisidora's constant occupation has not answered the conduct books' promise, as domestic tasks have not prevented her from absorbing literary culture or imitating chivalry.

Many early modern writers combine descriptions of needlework and reading, suggesting that these are emblematic activities for women of the bourgeoisie and upper class. Juan Luis Vives mentions reading and spinning in the same sentence: 'She will learn, together with reading, how to work with wool and flax, two arts passed on to posterity from that former age of

78 Ibid., I, 13; 176.

79 Howe, *Education and Women*, 34.

innocence'.[80] For Fray Luis de León, sewing and weaving are wholesome substitutes for reading chivalry, poetry, or letters.[81] Perhaps ironically, Feliciano de Silva's chivalric version of a conduct book also combines treatment of reading and needlework. In *Florisel de Niquea* Part IV, the female characters gathered in Sinestasia's magical castle spend their evenings discussing women's education. They write a book called the *Ornamento de princesas* (*The Ornament of Princesses*) that encourages girls to learn four skills: 'leer, escrevir, rezar y labrar (reading, writing, praying, and needlework)'.[82] Silva's characters offer no further detail on reading, but they represent needlework as the woman's equivalent of masculine prowess in battle. Their daughters should beautify household objects through embroidery 'ansí como los Cavalleros hermosean los campos con los cuchillos derramando sangre (just as the Knights make the fields more beautiful with their blades dripping blood)'.[83] Even Silva, a chivalric writer known for his ludic sensibility and eroticism, depicts the ideal woman in a gender-segregated domestic circle, spending her days with a needle and thread.

In Part I of *Don Quixote*, Dorotea's narrative likewise pairs the concepts of sewing and reading. She tells Cardenio, the barber, and the priest that her leisure activities consist of 'la aguja y la almohadilla, y la rueca muchas veces (the needle and pincushion, and at times, the distaff)' and the reading of 'algún libro devoto (a book of devotions)'.[84] Only later, when it proves convenient, does Dorotea admit to reading chivalry. For Christine Garst-Santos, 'Dorotea represents the female subject whom Vives and Fray Luis fear and seek to contain: a woman who understands that, while the conduct manuals may offer a very limited set of norms for self-fashioning, anyone can manipulate the norms in order to remake themselves'.[85] Like Dorotea, Altisidora cites the conduct tradition and twists it to her own purposes. While Dorotea is concerned with establishing herself as a young woman of virtue, Altisidora plays for laughs the basic assumption conduct writers make about female readers—that they use the romance of chivalry as a guidebook for sexual license.

Many didactic writers of early modern Spain follow the tradition of Erasmus in their recommendations, whether or not they cite his texts explicitly. According to J. K. Sowards, Erasmus recommends that women

80 Vives, *Education of a Christian Woman*, 58.
81 Fray Luis de León, *La Perfecta Casada*, 80.
82 Silva, *Florisel IV*, 83r.
83 Ibid.
84 Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quijote*, I, 28; 349; Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quixote*, 231.
85 Garst-Santos, 'Dorotea's Displacement', 65.

read only 'the literature of the church and the church fathers, with the ancient classical moralists appended'.[86] Erasmus opposes all forms of idleness for both men and women. For him, virtuous reading has the potential to shield the mind, but fictional reading, an idle pursuit, poses a danger.[87] Elizabeth Spiller writes that for Vives, the most famous Erasmian humanist from the Iberian Peninsula, 'readers' responses to [romances of chivalry] are inherently immoral because they result from the passion produced by reading'.[88] Alexio de Venegas equates books of chivalry with go-betweens: 'Vemos que veda el padre a la hija que no le venga y le vaya la vieja con sus mensajes, y por otra parte es tan mal recatado que no le veda que leyendo amadises y esplandianes con todos los de su bando le esté predicando el diablo a sus solas (We see that the father prohibits the old woman to go back and forth to his daughter with her messages, and by the same token it is just as unseemly if he does not prohibit that she read Amadíses and Esplandianes and all the others of that ilk, through which the devil preaches to her in her solitude)'.[89] Venegas seems to have taken literally the famous episode from Dante's *Inferno* in which Francesca da Rimini explains that reading the prose *Lancelot* inspired her and Paolo Malatesta to commit adultery.[90] This view of the dangers of reading had a high degree of diffusion in Golden Age Spain. When Altisidora pretends to be love-struck over Don Quixote, she parodies the lascivious behavior many didactic writers expected to find in women who read books of entertainment.

Quixote appears to share the anxiety of the didactic tradition about female readers of chivalry. In reply to Altisidora, he recommends sewing as a remedy against love:

> Suelen las fuerzas de amor
> sacar de quicio a las almas
> tomando por instrumento
> la ociosidad descuidada
> Suele el coser y el labrar
> y el estar siempre ocupada
> ser antídoto al veneno
> de las amorosas ansias.

86 Sowards, 'Erasmus and the Education of Women', 79.
87 Ibid., 83.
88 Spiller, 'Cervantes', 296.
89 Venegas, 'Prólogo al lector', 81; Menéndez y Pelayo, *Orígenes de la novela*, 1: 267.
90 Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, 5: 127–38.

Las doncellas recogidas
que aspiran a ser casadas
la honestidad es la dote
y voz de sus alabanzas.
(Often the power of love
can madden a maiden's soul,
using as its means, its instrument,
an unthinking leisure and ease.
Fine sewing and needlework,
constant devotion to labor,
can be the cure, the antidote,
to the poison of love's disease.
For sheltered and modest maidens
who aspire to be married,
chastity is the best dowry,
the best voice to sing their praises.)[91]

Quixote reprimands Altisidora for *ociosidad*, the idle condition Erasmians feared. Idleness leads, according to Quixote's ode, to libertine behavior. Altisidora does not hear the reproof alone; the duchess, the duke, and the ladies of the house are listening, and they have prepared a response to Don Quixote in the form of a sack of cats with bells tied to their tails. Cats, hunters of household vermin, are appropriate agents for the women's vicarious revenge. Moreover, Quixote earlier implied a comparison between women and animals when he urged Sancho, in his new governorship, to resist the complaints and *gemidos* ('whimpers') of beautiful women.[92] The confinement of the cats in the sack and their recourse to claws and teeth serves as a metaphorical representation of the women trapped in the domestic sphere. The women, including the duchess, enact similarly petty violence on each other, on Don Quixote, and on Sancho. The duchess and Altisidora beat Doña Rodríguez with a slipper and pinch Don Quixote, and the *dueñas* of the household prick Sancho Panza with pins.[93]

Quixote's indifference to Altisidora appears to discomfit her, though Cervantes never makes clear what response she desires from the mad knight. In her second song, she takes on the pose of the unrequited lover, calling

91 Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quijote*, II, 46; 384; Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quixote*, 754–55.

92 Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quijote*, II, 42; 359. The word *gemir* can be applied to sounds made by many animals, including cats and dogs.

93 Ibid., II, 48; 403, II, 69; 560–61.

Quixote a monster and comparing him to 'Cruel Vireno, fugitivo Eneas (Vireno most cruel, [...] fugitive Aeneas)'.[94] Though Iberian romances of chivalry contain many examples of women scorned, Altisidora chooses Virgil's Dido, who, like the Cervantine character, is an ambivalent figure. In Virgil, Dido is sympathetic for her pain, but her disappointment and eventual suicide are necessary sacrifices to Trojan (and masculine) progress. Altisidora evokes her and Olimpia of *Orlando Furioso*, abandoned to die by her cruel husband, Bireno, to imply that Quixote is guilty of similar cruelties to women. Part I, meanwhile, is another intertext for Altisidora's song, as it depicts cruel men who abandon women to ignominious fates, most prominently Dorotea's seducer, Fernando.

Altisidora pairs her literary allusions with the accusation that Quixote has stolen 'tres tocadores / y unas ligas (de unas piernas / que al mármol puro se igualan en lisas) blancas y negras (three nightcaps / and garters both black and white / from legs that rival the purest / marble in their smoothness)'.[95] These articles of clothing, especially the intimate garters, are female counterparts for the male clothing enumerated in the first song. In chivalric romance, ladies often give their knights a token to signal their acceptance of his service. In *Amadís de Gaula*, Oriana offers Amadís a ring, and in *Las sergas de Esplandián* and *Cristalián de España*, princesses send the titular characters valuable jewels as pledges of favor. These small items of clothing are tokens a servant like Altisidora can afford, and she would likely have made them herself.

The reference to garments made as part of a woman's domestic employment indicates that Altisidora and Quixote are negotiating not a love affair, but a set of beliefs and practices that determine the ways in which women are allowed to spend their time. The duchess was unaware that Altisidora had planned this second song: 'Quedó la duquesa admirada de la desenvoltura de Altisidora [...] no estaba advertida desta burla (The duchess was amazed at the boldness of Altisidora [...] since she had not been told about this joke)'.[96] The duchess's authority is among the power structures Altisidora's performance seeks to contest. Altisidora's final appearances in the novel, moreover, stage both her defeat and her vindication. Whether the duchess and Golden Age society succeed in taming her is left unclear.

94 Ibid., II, 57; 468; Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quixote*, 829.
95 Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quijote*, II, 57; 468; Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quixote*, 829.
96 Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quijote*, II, 57; 469; Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quixote*, 831.

The Death and Resurrection of Altisidora

Quixote leaves the ducal estate for several chapters and returns to a final spectacle, that of Altisidora dead of love on his account. The final ducal marvel is a complex set piece that involves both male and female servants and evokes many intertexts, including the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice, Aeneas's meeting with Dido in the underworld, Dante's *Inferno*, and the funeral of Grisóstomo in Part I.[97] Altisidora, the central figure of this tableau, becomes an inscribed reader of all the intertexts her performance activates: her knowledge of them must have some source in reading or listening. When Altisidora regains consciousness after the *dueñas* attack Sancho, she levels at Don Quixote Garcilaso's famous line: 'Oh más duro que mármol a mis quejas (Oh, harder than marble to my complaints)'.[98] Yet Altisidora seems to have grown tired of love, and she wounds Don Quixote in a new way by turning the conversation to his reputation as a literary character. In the ducal episode, Quixote and Sancho have been treated as incarnations of their book, circulating in a metaphorical literary market. From Chapter 59 onward and in the prologue, Cervantes also reacts to the publication of Fernández de Avellaneda's unauthorized second volume.[99] Avellaneda's sequel is not a concern during the initial ducal episodes, but it is very much at issue during Quixote's second visit to the estate. Indeed, the combination of the figure of the sequel writer with the hostile ducal reading communities in this episode implies that, for Cervantes, all readers are potential 'writers' with the ability to twist and distort their reading materials to suit their own performative needs. For the same sin as a hack sequel writer—malicious and self-serving reading practices—Altisidora has been sent to hell.

In Altisidora's description of the underworld, books stand in for people, and bad books are punished in the place of sinners. Altisidora claims that she did not enter into hell proper, but rather stood watching a literary spectacle outside the gate:

97 Jehle, 'The Resurrection of Altisidora', 10–12.

98 Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quijote*, II, 66; 545. Here, the verse occurs as part of what Edward Dudley terms a farewell to the pastoral world. See Dudley, 'O mas dura', 30. Altisidora's citation of Garcilaso is part of a dense network of references to the poet. Jorge Aladro-Font and Ricardo Ramos-Tremolada identify fifteen references to Garcilaso in Part II in 'Ausencia y presencia de Garcilaso en el *Quijote*', 89–90.

99 Though the first direct mention occurs in Chapter 59, Montgomery argues that Cervantes may have learned of the illegitimate sequel as he was writing Chapter 58. See Montgomery, 'Did Cervantes Learn of Avellaneda's *Quijote* Earlier than Chapter 59 of Part Two?', 11.

> Llegué a la puerta, donde estaban jugando hasta una docena de diablos a la pelota, todos en calzas y en jubón, con valonas guarnecidas con puntas de randas flamencas, y con unas vueltas de lo mismo, que les servían de puños, con cuatro dedos de brazo fuera, porque pareciesen las manos más largas; en las cuales tenían unas palas de fuego; y lo que más me admiró fue que les servían, en lugar de pelotas, libros, al parecer, llenos de viento y de borra. (I reached the gate, where about a dozen devils were playing pelota, all of them in tights and doublets, their collars trimmed with borders of Flemish lace and cuffs of the same material, exposing four fingers' width of arm so that their hands appeared longer, and in them they were holding bats of fire, and what amazed me most was that instead of balls they were using books, apparently full of wind and trash.)[100]

Altisidora's description of hell as a place with a gate and a region outside it recalls Dante's *Inferno*. In Dante, the ambivalent, those who chose neither good nor evil, are condemned to spend eternity outside Inferno's gates. They mix with those angels who neither obeyed nor rebelled: 'The heavens reject them so as not to be less / beautiful, nor does deep Hell receive them, for the / wicked would have some glory in them [...] The world permits no fame of them to exist'.[101] Like the ambivalent angels, the poorly written books are of indeterminate status, unworthy of literary fame or even of a stable place in hell. Altisidora's description of the devils again pays attention to men's clothing, this time collars and sleeve-cuffs made of lace. The devils have their wrists exposed to make their hands look longer, as did the *dueñas* who pricked Sancho.[102]

Altisidora's anecdote about the books recalls the story of the madman and the dog in the prologue to *Don Quixote* Part II, in which a madman hesitates to drop a stone on any dog, remembering the moment when he was criticized for dropping a stone on a hound. Cervantes follows this enigmatic fable with a comment about sequel writer Avellaneda: 'Quizá de esta suerte le podrá acontecer a este historiador, que no se atreverá a soltar más la presa de su ingenio en libros que, siendo malos, son más duros que las peñas (Perhaps something similar may happen to this storyteller, who will not dare ever again to set his great talent loose among books, which, when they are bad, are harder than boulders)'.[103] In the madman story, the

100 Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quijote*, II, 70; 566; Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quixote*, 915.
101 Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, 2:40–42, 49.
102 Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quijote*, II, 69; 560.
103 Ibid., II, 36; Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quixote*, 457.

stones represent books, and the dogs the reading public. Some books are only appropriate to drop on certain publics; other books, like Avellaneda's, are not appropriate for anyone. Altisidora's vision of hell has shown her the fate of the bad writer. Avellaneda's *Quixote* serves as one of the balls in the game Altisidora witnesses. One devil levels at it a diabolical sort of praise, calling it 'tan malo [...] que si de propósito yo mismo me pusiera a hacerle peor, no acertara (So bad [...] that if I myself set out to make it worse, I would fail)'.[104] What is most puzzling about this description is that Altisidora, a woman of uncertain literacy status, should have journeyed Dante-like to the site of literary punishment.

Altisidora's association in hell with the apocryphal sequel writer reveals that what is at stake in the ducal episode is the power of the reader. A sequel writer, especially a bad one, is a proven reader with a concrete interpretation of a text, and thus can serve as a straw man for complaints about the way reading can twist and pervert an author's creation. By placing herself among the ambivalent and among the bad books, Altisidora declares that she is not in love with Don Quixote. If her sin were lust, she would have taken up a place with Francesca, Paolo, and Dido in the second circle. If she has sinned, she has sinned as a figure of the writer; her performance of chivalric trope did not convince Don Quixote. The duchess's ladies, especially Altisidora, are inscrutable as consumers of literary culture. How do they benefit, or hope to benefit, from imitating chivalry? Do they truly relish cruelty, or is it merely their response to being trapped, like the cats, in a repressive environment? The answer is likely different for each woman.

Don Quixote, frustrated with the entire reading community, utters a final condemnation for Altisidora's behavior not to the girl, but to the duchess. Perhaps he means for the mistress as well as the servant to follow his advice:

> Todo el mal desta doncella nace de ociosidad, cuyo remedio es la ocupación honesta y continua. Ella me ha dicho aquí que se usan randas en el infierno; y pues ella las debe de saber hacer, no las deje de la mano; que ocupada en menear los palillos, no se menearán en su imaginación la imagen o imágines de lo que bien quiere.
> (All the problems afflicting this maiden are born of idleness, and the remedy lies in honest and constant labor. She has told me that they use lace trimmings in hell, and since she must know how to make them, she should never let them out of her hands; if she is occupied in moving the

104 *Don Quijote*, II, 70; 566; Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quixote*, 916.

> bobbins, the image or images of what she desires will not move through her imagination.)[105]

Don Quixote returns to the strictures of the conduct book for his final comments. Perhaps the next time Altisidora goes to hell, she can offer the literary devils an appropriate gift.

Quixote's words seem particularly cruel given that it is not in Altisidora's power to change her own life. It is up to the duchess to decide whether Altisidora works or is idle, or whether she eventually gains any sort of independence. The entire reading community, starting with the primary readers, must address the problem of *ociosidad* ('idleness') and dedicate themselves to different pursuits if Quixote's commands are to be followed. Perhaps ironically, obeying Don Quixote the character would remove the entire community from the virtual audience for *Don Quixote* the book. The question remains of whether Cervantes would consider his other female characters—perhaps Luscinda or Dorotea rather than the duchess or Altisidora—ideal readers of his work, or whether the true ideal is in fact the illiterate Dulcinea. *Don Quixote* contains many female characters steeped in literary culture, which seems to indicate that Cervantes imagines women among his audience, but their status, like that of the bad books in Altisidora's hell, is ambivalent.

The key to understanding Quixote's regressive position on women's reading at the end of the novel is its timing. The resurrection of Altisidora occurs at the midpoint between Quixote's defeat at the hands of Sansón Carrasco and his death.[106] The fortunes of women and of chivalry fall with Don Quixote's return to sanity. It is possible that Cervantes uses the ducal sequence to solidify his critique of chivalry, that most base and corrupt of literary genres. However, this reading would require us to rejoice at Don Quixote's death. At least in part, extradiegetic readers are meant to feel a sense of loss at the return to conventional standards for female behavior, just as we feel the shock of Quixote's demise. Furthermore, it seems likely that Don Quixote's condemnation of the woman reader is his own, an opinion that departs from that of the author.

Altisidora, unsympathetic though she may be, mirrors Cervantes in the complexity of her literary references and in her ludic imitations of those texts. Perhaps with the servant girl, Cervantes is suggesting that the most expert readers are not necessarily the most privileged. Though Altisidora

105 Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quijote*, II, 70; 568; Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quixote*, 917–18.
106 Jehle, 'The Resurrection of Altisidora', 16.

joins Avellaneda briefly in hell, she is resurrected thereafter, to the words of Garcilaso.[107] While Altisidora's death models the exclusion of women readers, her resurrection suggests their resurgence. Though the romance of chivalry was crafted for an aristocratic male audience, the new genre that would coalesce into the modern novel, represented by Parts I and II of *Don Quixote*, directs itself to a wider public that ultimately includes readers like Altisidora. Don Quixote the character expresses discomfort with his readers throughout Part II, and perhaps his antipathy for Altisidora merely reflects a general stance against readers of either gender. Cervantes, however, is not as anti-reader as his character, especially when reading has the potential to break class barriers. The final glimpse of the ducal palace reduces the duke and duchess's participation in favor of that of their servants, especially Altisidora. The duchess recites no poetry and visits no imaginary landscapes, hellish or otherwise. Her preferred genre—the romance of chivalry—and the hierarchy-reinforcing principle with which she administers it to her reading community are part of the past, both for Part II of *Don Quixote* and for Golden Age Spain. In the end, Cervantes hints that the resurrected Altisidora, a figure of the newly emancipated bourgeois and lower-class readers of the print era, should move beyond *Amadís* and other artifacts crafted by and for the nobility. Instead, she should read the book in which she appears, which stages her revolt and her survival: *Don Quixote*, the most durable Iberian echo of *Amadís de Gaula*.

107 Just before Altisidora stirs, a musician sings the second octave of Garcilaso's *Égloga III* (II, 69; 559).