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CERVANTES AND THE REINVENTION OF THE PICARESQUE NARRATIVE IN THE NOVELAS EJEMPLARES

Mark Mascia

Miguel de Cervantes' *Novelas ejemplares* fictionally chronicle various aspects of Spanish life in the *Siglo de Oro*, a time in which Cervantes bore witness to a number of problems and conflicts in Spain's economy, foreign relations, and daily life. As numerous literary genres flourished during the *Siglo de Oro*, Cervantes, in the *Novelas ejemplares* as well as in other works, experimented with the variety of literary genres available to him. One such genre was the picaresque narrative, well-developed in Spain at the time and oft-studied by scholars since. Cervantes openly incorporated many elements of the picaresque genre into his works, perhaps especially so in the *Novelas ejemplares*. However, Cervantes did not merely copy standard picaresque forms and notions that were prevalent; rather, he incorporated picaresque elements into his literature with alteration and modification. In the proceeding analysis, I shall use three *novelas ejemplares*, *La gitanilla*, *La ilustre fregona*, and *El casamiento engañoso*, and *El coloquio de los perros*,¹ to demonstrate that Cervantes is not a purely canonical picaresque author; he is, I believe, a quasi- or semi-picaresque writer in the *novelas*. Cervantes invents what might be called Cervantine picaresque literature.

Conventional picaresque literature offers a variety of salient characteristics. Most picaresque novels are written in autobiographical form, presenting one view of the world as seen through the eyes of the first-person narrator. This character leads a rather unfortunate life, experiencing many trials and tribulations during the course of a hard existence. He or she is most often of very humble origins, if

¹ I will refer to this as one story, partly in order to facilitate my analysis and the quotes from these stories which I will mention, and partly because one is the frame story of the other.

such origins are known.² He often resorts to a life in which crime and corruption become the means to survive, as a character operating on the margins of society. The *pícaro*³ is not always taken aback by the immorality of some of his actions, since he acts in the interests of his own survival. Immorality surrounds him and he is aware of it, but he becomes immersed in it through the lifestyle which he must necessarily lead. In addition, in the course of his life, he lives with and serves various masters, lacking a permanent home or locus of action for the extent of the tale or for very long periods of time. The picaresque novel thus presents a certain harsh realism, one in which the very underside of life is exposed, and in which idealistic notions of how to live cannot function. Consequently, there is usually no place for love—emotionally and socially constructive love, idealized love—in the life of the *pícaro*.

In contrast to the characteristics of standard picaresque literature, Cervantes maintains a pattern of his own picaresque traits throughout the *Novelas ejemplares*. With Cervantes, the autobiographical narrative form is not always present, and is often replaced by a dialogue or by simple third-person narratives that contain individual dialogues within them, resulting from Cervantes' well-known trait of multiperspectivism.⁴ The lives of his apparently picaresque characters, though at times beset by hardship, are not completely defined by hardship. Nor are their origins universally humble, as they are in, for example, *Lazarillo de Tormes*. Often, Cervantes' characters are of noble or at least generally stable families, and intentionally place themselves on the margins of society. Absent is the predeterminism of life that one finds in typical picaresque narratives. Although these *pícaros* do serve or live with various masters, there often is a home from which these *pícaros* come in the beginning of the story, and to which they may even return at the end. Additionally, these narratives evince more fixed loci of action, such as an inn. Finally, though these stories do indeed incorporate elements of realism, they often do not fail to include idealistic elements. As a result, social integration and constructive love become elements of the

² Although I recognize the presence and importance of female *pícaras* in Spanish literature, the ones presented in this analysis are principally male.

³ The word *pícaro* shall henceforth be written in regular text, as if it were an English word, and without the written accent. One term in English used to refer to the *pícaro* is "picaroon", which has been less frequently used in scholarship.

⁴ For further elaboration on narrative form and Cervantine perspectivism, see, for example, Carlos Blanco Aguinaga, "Cervantes y la picaresca: notas sobre dos tipos de realismo." *Nueva revista de filología hispánica* tomo XI, núm. 2 (1957): 313-342.

Novelas ejemplares. In sum, Cervantes is "picaresque" more in motifs and themes than in pure technique.

La gitanilla is by no means a pure picaresque work as such, though it does possess a number of picaresque characteristics. It is only certain surface characteristics, in my view, that are picaresque. Firstly, *La gitanilla* uses the third-person narrative, and as a result Cervantes places more distance between the reader and the events in the story than there would be in a picaresque narrative with an autobiographical point of view. Although the question of whether it presents picaresque characters and lifestyles is not so quickly settled, *La gitanilla* still deviates from the normative picaresque. Determinism is absent in this tale for the most part, in spite of its seemingly deterministic opening line: "Parece que los gitanos y gitanas solamente nacieron en el mundo para ser ladrones: nacen de padres ladrones, críanse con ladrones, estudian para ladrones" (1983: 7). The fixedness of people's fortunes is missing, as is seen in much of the life of the title *gitanilla*, Preciosa. She is an individualistic, sensible, and content young woman, who describes herself and her life in the following ways: "Yo me hallo bien con ser gitana y pobre, y corra la suerte por donde el cielo quisiere... mi alma... es libre, y nació libre, y ha de ser libre en tanto que yo quisiere" (14, 26). One of the elder Gypsies also states similarly about his group: "tenemos lo que queremos, pues nos contentamos con lo que tenemos" (25). Here, one does not observe the almost fatalistic, cynical determinism that one finds in traditional picaresque tales; the characters here, though marginalized—as Gypsies most certainly are—make do with what they have, and feel a sense of independence and isolation from a corrupt and dangerous world. Preciosa, above all others, is the one who shows this the most.

In addition, despite the acts of thievery that Gypsies are generally said in this story to perpetrate, there is also room for virtuous characteristics, again above all on the part of Preciosa, who "antes, con ser aguda, era tan honesta" (7). Shortly thereafter, an old Gypsy woman who has taken care of her for many years says of her, "a mi nieta [Preciosa, who in the old woman's eyes is like her own grandchild] la he criado yo como si fuera hija de un letrado" (11). Preciosa is honest, a characteristic one would not usually demand from characters such as Lazarillo de Tormes or Guzmán de Alfarache, and much less from a typecast community of Gypsies in Seventeenth Century Spain. She has willfulness and independence of spirit, which leads Ruth El Saffar to note that it "makes her stand out as unique, for it does not reflect the background in which she has been brought

up" (95). Additionally, Preciosa's suitor, who renames himself Andrés Caballero, chooses freely to associate with the Gypsy community and enter into its life to the point of becoming a member. The narrator demonstrates that Andrés clearly is responsible for marginalizing himself, as he was "criado casi toda su vida en la Corte y con el regalo de sus ricos padres,... y se vino a postrarse a los pies de una muchacha, y a ser su lacayo" (27). As a result of these characteristics, Manuel Durán offers that *La gitanilla* is "a joyous celebration of the freedom that comes from a wandering life and of Preciosa's beauty" (60). Regardless of the degree to which this *novela* may be considered joyous, it certainly does not conform to the canonical picaresque notions of a life full of constant hardships or of a lack of choice.

Other aspects must also be considered. Preciosa is not forced to follow the picaro's life of wandering from master to master and encountering continuous malice or moral degeneration along the way. The only people that can be considered her "masters" are the members of the Gypsy camp with whom she lives. The relation between them and Preciosa, however, is not what one would expect from a typical master-servant relationship; they appear to function well together, without the notion of Preciosa as their servant. As a result of living together in a solid, albeit marginalized community, there is a central locus of action for essentially the entire story: the Gypsy camp itself. Though Gypsy lifestyles have most often been itinerant and lacking permanent housing, the action revolves principally around the camp, wherever it may be. Finally, love is a very evident element in the story. In addition to the fact that the love here is seen as an integrating force (since Andrés and Preciosa are married at the end and live together as an established part of Spanish society), it is seen also as wise and not merely passionate. Preciosa values and guards her virginity, something admirable for Cervantes' contemporary readers, as she says of it, "no la tengo de vender a precio de promesas ni dádivas" (16). This is clearly not something one would find in Lazarillo's heart; as Juan Bautista Avalu-Arce aptly notes, "El amor... el buen amor, es ajeno, más aún, antitético a toda novela picaresca" ("*La gitanilla*" 12). He even states that it ends as a "novela amorosa, en la cual resuenan decididos ecos del *omnia vincit Amor* virgiliano" (12), and describes the world of *La gitanilla* as "one of romantic love and travel" ("*Novelas ejemplares*" 137). It seems as though Cervantes has developed a *novela* more along the lines of a romance than a picaresque novel, and in fact even incorporates certain characteristics of the "Greek romance," such as nomadism, anagnorisis, and a happy ending. Cervantes chooses to write a

novela that does not conform to standard notions of the picaresque—as well as one whose main character is really neither a *pícaro* nor a Gypsy.

One final element to be noted before closing the discussion of this particular story is that whatever generic elements Cervantes incorporates in *La gitanilla*, the narrator appears to contradict himself in the story, in the apparent views on Gypsy life. Through Preciosa, Cervantes seems to be offering an idealized, nonconformist view of Gypsies, suggesting that they are not all thieves and morally bankrupt people. However, at the end, it is revealed that Preciosa is not a Gypsy at all; her identity as a Gypsy is shed, and her real identity—she is the daughter of the Corregidor, and thus ethnically Spanish—comes to light. Preciosa's kind statements on behalf of the Gypsies, a people to whom she thought she had belonged, become less relevant at the end, including even her emphatic statement where she says, "¡Pues en verdad que no somos ladronas ni rogamos a nadie!" (21). The reader (especially the reader in Cervantes' day) is allowed a sigh of relief at the end because of these revelations about Preciosa's ancestry. Though some positive qualities were mentioned regarding Preciosa and her Gypsy community, the question of why Cervantes ended his *novela* this way remains unanswered. El Saffar sensibly notes that "Never... is it suggested that Gypsy society is preferable to that of the Spanish nobility" (90). Admittedly, one can logically assume that because of this twist in the plot, Cervantes is not necessarily trying to assert that Gypsies must now universally be seen as immoral. One can easily discern legitimate, positive features about the Gypsies and their lifestyles, perhaps because of Cervantes' multiperspectivism. Still, the positive assertions regarding Gypsies earlier in the story carry less meaning at the end for the central characters, since Preciosa is found not to be a Gypsy; thus, her justifications and defenses of Gypsy life are no longer needed. It is also significant to note that the identities of both Preciosa and Andrés are ultimately fixed: in reality, they belong to mainstream Spanish society, not to the underworld of the Gypsies. As a result, for Preciosa at least, "only in the discovery of her nobility is the church marriage possible" (El Saffar 100). Cervantes, regardless of how marginalized or independent he allows his characters to be, changes the tone of his story at the end by revealing that the "good Gypsy," Preciosa, is in fact not a Gypsy at all.

In *La ilustre fregona*, like *La gitanilla*, Cervantes makes use of the third person to relate events. Additionally, there is often an ongoing

dialogue between the two main characters, don Diego de Carriazo and don Tomás de Avendaño, two young friends recreating their lives. There is no singular perspective here of one picaresque character addressing his reader. Carriazo and Avendaño maintain one essential difference as to their views: Avendaño is more scholastically oriented and confines some of his activities to interior spaces, whereas Carriazo is more ready to initiate adventure and carry out action in exterior spaces. In any event, it is the third-person narrator who assumes the most authority here, in the absence of one sole character to forge an autobiography. El Saffar observes this phenomenon: "Cervantes allows the narrator's voice to dominate the scene... The narrator takes time to add his own feelings regarding the main characters' actions and shows a strong propensity to include his own voice in the story" (87).

It is this narratorial voice which will at times show perhaps the most picaresque aspects of the story, however: the lifestyles and personal characteristics of Carriazo and Avendaño. Their origins are not lowly at all, as the two grow up in structured, mainstream families, the sons of "dos caballeros principales y ricos" (1974: 297). But, as initiated by Carriazo, they voluntarily decide to leave their families in search of adventure, as noted at the beginning of the story: "Trece años, o poco más, tendría Carriazo cuando, llevado de una inclinación picaresca, sin forzarle a ello algún mal tratamiento que sus padres le hiciesen, sólo por gusto y antojo, se desgarró, como dicen los muchachos, de casa de sus padres" (297). Strictly speaking, what Carriazo does is by choice; however, his choices are influenced by his "inclinación picaresca" noted above. This is an explicit reference by Cervantes to the picaresque, even though Carriazo exercises free will and is not forced to do so by a difficult life at home. He was simply bored with the life of noblemen, as "[n]i le entretenía la caza, en que su padre le ocupaba, ni los muchos, honestos y gustosos convites que en aquella ciudad se usan le daban gusto" (300). In fact, this self-made picaresque even chooses to go to the tuna fisheries, as Cervantes' third person narrator declares: "no os llaméis pícaros si no habéis cursado dos cursos en la academia de la pesca de los atunes" (298).

Cervantine scholarship has appreciated the use of one's own volition in this "picaresque" of the young Carriazo as well. Carlos Blanco Aguinaga observes that "La *inclinación* y no los rasgos hereditarios—bíblicos o no—ni sólo el medio ambiente, es lo que lleva a los individuos a sus actos" (339). Similarly, Durán indicates that *La ilustre fregona* "narrates the adventures and misadventures

of two sons of noble families who have become picaroons out of love for adventure" (73). These young men are picaros by choice and not by necessity, thereby making themselves conform only in part to the standard model of a picaresque character, and neatly fitting them into Cervantes' usual design for a voluntary and transitory picaro. These characters see positive elements in what they do as well; as Cervantes notes about the new-found picaresque identity of Carriazo in the tuna fisheries, "Allí campea la libertad y luce el trabajo" (299). The lifestyles of these two principal actors is picaresque up to the point of such lifestyles being voluntary constructs, as it is "el individuo siempre por encima del tipo" (Blanco Aguinaga 339).

Carriazo and Avendaño do not stay picaresque forever, though, as the story's characters and narrative elements do not conform to standard picaresque models such as *Lazarillo* or *Guzmán*. The inn is the central locus of action, in which Carriazo or Avendaño are not placed in anyone's service. Carriazo can be said to have something of a pseudo-master prior to the inn, a lackey to govern both him and Avendaño in the short episode involving his journey to Salamanca to study alongside the latter. However, the two youths conspire to rob the unsuspecting lackey of his money—a non-picaresque trait in that they malign those who have not maligned them. Outside the inn, the two have more freedom to act out whatever picaresque or other fantasies they wish. Yet, inside the inn the reader discovers a much more complex reality in which the independence of Carriazo and Avendaño is maintained, though without the same possibility of being wandering picaros in search of adventure. Some surface elements that seem picaresque are maintained inside the inn, it should be noted, such as the reference to the dances known as *zarabandas*, which the editor, Fernando Gutiérrez, notes as a "danza picaresca" (322n), as well as a reference to a well-known place for picaresque youngsters in Seville, "el Compás de Sevilla" (321), in a song sung by Carriazo.

La ilustre fregona continues to deviate from traditional picaresque canons also in that it introduces, not unlike *La gitaniella*, the element of love. This takes place precisely at the inn, where Avendaño is smitten by Costanza, the "ilustre fregona" of the story, with "la amorosa pestilencia" (306). This love, not unlike Preciosa's, is sincere and mature, as Avendaño explains to his companion: "yo la quiero bien, y no con aquel amor vulgar con que a otras he querido, sino con amor tan limpio" (319). At the same time Costanza herself is not a picara either. Though she was necessarily prevented from growing up with a stable mainstream family, being the product of a

rape (born at the inn of an anonymous mother, who was victimized by Carriazo's father, no less, as the reader learns at the end), she does have the innkeeper care for her and provide her with employment at the inn. As El Saffar observes, as for "the innkeeper and his wife, the motives of financial gain as well as the opportunities for free labor compete and lose out against the more noble instincts of love for the child born in such mysterious circumstances and concern for her well-being" (105). Costanza's admirable qualities include being "devotísima de Nuestra Señora" (343), as well as literate and honest, like Preciosa. Love, in different types, is present in this *novela*, in both Avendaño and the innkeeper; and it is this that once again sets off the story from the more bleak environment of the true picaresco.

This story includes characteristics of other genres as well, such as the pastoral romance. William Clamurro adds that this story, though not "the full-blown, conventional Renaissance pastoral of Cervantes' own *Galatea*... seems to belong to that group of more open-ended and ambiguous forms wherein the 'pastoral' space exists within the text and does so in a way that reveals its edges, both its separateness from and its points of contact with contingent and surrounding societies" (43). Robert M. Johnston stresses the Platonic love that Avendaño has for Costanza, and even mentions that the very tuna fisheries in which Carriazo works—"famous center[s] for picaresque life"—are described positively, almost as a *locus amoenus* for the self-made picaresco involved (170, 171). These characteristics seem to give *La ilustre fregona* a certain relationship to the pastoral romance. Not unlike *La gitánilla*, there is also anagnorisis as well as a happy and productive ending.

Finally, the love story leads to an idealistic conclusion: all the identities of the characters who have either lost or changed theirs are recovered, and a number of marriages—socially integrating forces—take place. Blanco Aguinaga even implies that this story is a "novela idealista," and that it is "en ningún sentido una novela picaresca" (338). Though I would not typify this as a wholly idealistic story, the theme of recovered identities is important; Carriazo's and Avendaño's ending is not like Lazarillo's, in that the latter character is forced to live with an identity of poverty that his parents left him. Lazarillo also marries the concubine of a clergyman—something not bothersome to Lazarillo, as his only concern is to ascend the social ladder. Lazarillo's concern is evident when he says of himself, "yo determiné de arrimarme a los buenos" (1987: 175)—the term "buenos" meaning outwardly respectable people. The fact that Carriazo and Avendaño willingly reintegrate themselves into their families and into

the rest of the society at the end (as well as the fact that Carriazo returns to his family for a while after the first time he had left) demonstrates that they do not want to break with the past. Carriazo, as El Saffar notes, is "willing to maintain ties with his family" (87). Maintaining family ties is a privilege for a picaro, and hence, *La ilustre fregona* evinces some idealism. In all, the picaresque is a backdrop which Cervantes chooses to utilize but to alter as well, thus allowing for a rather idealistic ending that cannot be expected from typical picaresque literature.

The last *novela ejemplar* of this study is *El casamiento engañoso* and *El coloquio de los perros*. The former, which frames the latter, involves a third-person narrator and a continuous dialogue between the two main characters of the story, Ensign Campuzano and Peralta. *El coloquio de los perros*, more importantly, involves a complete reliance upon a dialogue between two talking dogs, Cipión and Berganza. This combination of stories does allow for autobiographical elements, since the characters (Campuzano in *El casamiento engañoso* and Berganza in *El coloquio de los perros*) essentially provide their interlocutors with oral histories. It is still quite evident, though, that the basic narratorial form of the *novela* is not technically autobiographical, because of the dependence upon dialogue mentioned above. This, in turn, leads finally to the same characteristic noted in the narrative technique of the other stories: Cervantine multiperspectivism. Blanco Aguinaga considers this view of reality "una realidad filtrada... una realidad dual sobre la cual es posible meditar y hasta vacilar", and believes that "la forma autobiográfica se convierte en pura apariencia" (331).⁵

⁵ There has been some interesting discussion regarding the autobiographical elements of this story. Avalor-Arce suggests that *El casamiento engañoso* and *El coloquio de los perros* are an autobiography in dialogue form, stating that Cervantes "invented a new literary genre of such extraordinary novelty that it has had no followers: the autobiography in dialogue form" ("*Novelas ejemplares*" 149). Indeed, a symbiotic relationship between the autobiographical narrator and his interlocutor is forged, though it must be remembered that the Cipión/Berganza and Campuzano/Peralta pairings are still pairings of separate voices.

For further study of the relationship between the self and the other in autobiography, see Karl Joachim Weintraub, *The Value of the Individual. Self and Circumstance in Autobiography*, and Julia Watson, "Shadowed Presence: Modern Women Writers' Autobiographies and the Other". The former has an especially insightful and useful commentary on Petrarch's *Secretum*, in which dialogue, though possessing "only a limited capability for fulfilling central autobiographic demands", is also the poet's "instrument for self-investigation, self-clarification, and ultimately for self-orientation" (106). The relationship between dialogue and self-exploration which characterizes Petrarch's discourse can also be found in Cervantes. Regarding autobiography and

If not in form, however, it is in precisely the content that Cervantes most approximates the picaresque genre in *El casamiento engañoso* and *El coloquio de los perros*. The adventures of Campuzano, for example, resemble picaresque adventures to a limited extent, in that his lifestyle manifestly relies on learning via empirical means. It is because of his ignorance and ease at being duped that he comes to learn from his mistakes—and perhaps on a greater scale than some picaros. Lazarillo, being a child, suffers physical abuse and poverty, whereas Campuzano, being an adult, suffers something more: venereal disease. Campuzano's intent was to marry an attractive woman, doña Estefanía, and thus tie himself to her fortune. However, it is Campuzano who gets deceived at the end—she runs off with his wealth, which, though admittedly modest, proves that Campuzano has lost. Insult is added to injury, since he contracts a venereal disease from her and is forced to seek treatment at the hospital mentioned in the story (the locus of Cipión's and Berganza's conversation). Campuzano's exploits and lessons are summarized in a short saying of Peralta's, one which can potentially be made for any picaro in literature: “que el que tiene costumbre y gusto de engañar a otro, no se debe quejar cuando es engañado” (1983: 283).

More significantly, the dog Berganza proves himself to be quite picaresque. First of all, his origins are humble, as Cervantes has chosen a picaro who had been marginalized from the start, rather than by his own volition. According to the story that Berganza had heard about his origins, the witch Camacha had turned him into a dog when he was an infant, out of a complaint against his mother. This picaro's life begins rather unusually, in that he is marginalized by lycanthropy and evil intent on the part of a witch. Even so, Berganza does begin his life in an unfortunate state, and must fend for himself as a dog, lacking the physical capabilities of humans. There are other marginalized people throughout Berganza's life, if one considers witches as denizens of the borders of society. Berganza is the perfect example of the individual forced to use his wits to survive from the start; hence, he does not fall into the

the issue of authority, Peter Dunn offers that the “place where Cervantes brilliantly outmaneuvers and deconstructs the picaresque autobiography is in the location of authority... he makes narrators doubt other narrators, makes his readers believe, doubt, question his narrators” (130, 131). In sum, in Cervantes' *novela*, the true form of the tale remains dialogue and third-person narration, with the autobiographical elements as part of the *content* of the tale. However, it can also be said that *El casamiento engañoso*/*El coloquio de los perros* is easily the most autobiographical of the *novelas* presented within this study.

Cervantine pattern of allowing the individual to choose his destiny, as has been noted in the previous *novelas ejemplares*. With this idea in mind, one can say that Berganza "tells his life according to the picaresque formula" (González-Echevarría 110).

Berganza's life after having been turned into a dog provides many other picaresque experiences as well. He leads a large portion of his life in Seville, a well-known place for picaros in Cervantes' day. Berganza describes Seville as "amparo de pobres y refugio de desechados; que en su grandeza no sólo caben los pequeños, pero no se echan de ver los grandes" (292). More importantly, Berganza also serves a wide variety of masters throughout his life—much more so than the "semi-picaros" observed earlier—and he explicitly details the evil nature of his masters. For example, he recounts how, early in his life, he lived with several slaughterers. He describes his visceral reaction to them as follows: "ninguna cosa me admiraba más, ni me parecía peor, que el ver que estos jiferos con la misma facilidad matan a un hombre que una vaca: por quitame allá esa paja, a dos por tres, meten un cuchillo de cachas amarillas por la barriga de una persona, como si acocotasen un toro" (287). These same slaughterers try to kill him later, though Berganza escapes alive. Perhaps an even more significant episode in which Berganza is able to expose the extreme vice of his masters occurs when he lives with several shepherds. He is initially optimistic about being a shepherd's dog, as one sees when he says that he found it "propio y natural oficio de los perros guardar ganado, que es obra donde se encierra una virtud grande, como es amparar y defender de los poderosos y soberbios los humildes y los que poco pueden" (288). Such virtue, however, not only goes unrewarded but is actually the antithesis of what the shepherds themselves are doing, as they kill animals from their own flock and make it appear as though a wolf had been the culprit. Not only does Cervantes show the underside of Spanish life for his canine picaresque character, but in so doing he also deconstructs pastoral romances through this same character. As Berganza says of pastoral novels, "todos trataban de pastores y pastoras, diciendo que se les pasaba toda la vida cantando y tañendo con gaitas, zampoñas, rabeles y churumbelas, y con otros instrumentos extraordinarios... [Pero] todos aquellos libros son cosas soñadas y bien escritas, para entretenimiento de los ociosos, y no verdad alguna" (289, 290). Additionally, as Blanco Aguinaga observes, what Berganza says "parece arremeter... directísimamente contra la novela pastoril" (330).

From all these experiences, Berganza learns about life much as

a picaro would necessarily do and learns to formulate opinions about others. He tells his companion about the suffering in life when he says, "cuando las miserias y desdichas tienen larga la corriente y son continuas, o se acaban presto con la muerte o la continuación de ellas hace un hábito y costumbre en padecerlas, que suele ser su mayor rigor servir de alivio" (295). Berganza also has had experiences dealing with Gypsies, and speaks of their marginalized lives (and, as the reader might interpret, picaresque life conditions): "desde que nacen hasta que mueren se curten y muestran a sufrir las inclemencias y rigores del cielo; y así verás que todos son alentados, volteadores, corredores y bailadores" (314). Nevertheless, he is as opinionated as he is observant—he speaks of "sus muchas malicias, sus embaimientos y embustes, los hurtos en que se ejercitan, así gitanas como gitanos, desde el punto casi que salen de las mantillas y saben andar" (314)—and his opinion supports the notion of Cervantes' seemingly negative, or at least mixed, attitude towards the Gypsies. Berganza even goes so far as to speak of "la insolencia, latrocinio y deshonestidad de los negros" (298). His observations, prejudiced though they may be, come from years of experience living a life of mostly misfortune. Berganza concludes his life story for Cipión when he tells him, "¿Ves cuán larga ha sido mi plática? ¿Ves mis muchos y diversos sucesos? ¿Consideras mis caminos y mis amos tantos? Pues todo lo que has oído es nada comparado a lo que te pudiera contar de lo que noté, averigüé y vi de esta gente" (318).

Durán's opinion of Berganza's tale is essentially the same; the life that the poor dog has led is not a particularly happy one and can, in effect, be construed as picaresque. As he states, what "the dog Berganza tells his friend, the dog Cipión, is a sad tale about corruption, folly, [and] virtue unrewarded" (75). Berganza, admittedly, is not a perfect animal, and he is aware of it; however, he is even more intensely aware of the imperfection of the human beings whom he has observed in his difficult life (and as it is, such acute awareness leads him to commit unethical acts from time to time). With this exposition of vice and hypocrisy in men, Cervantes adds an interesting ironic note in this narrative: the dogs here are perceptive and can detect the vice in people more easily than people themselves can. The "brute animal" becomes astute. As Durán also notes, the dogs really "turn out to be much wiser than the human being who listened to them [Campuzano, who fell for Estefanía's ruse] and even presumably than the human being who reads about this conversation or the other human beings who now read it in the text published by Cervantes" (74). In all, the notion of the picaro's existence as its own

learning process is maintained throughout both Campuzano's and Berganza's lives, as both are capable of giving vivid expression to their experiences and to the meanings found therein.

El casamiento engañoso/*El coloquio de los perros* is probably the most realistic and generically picaresque of all the *novelas ejemplares* examined herein. There does not seem to be much of a place for constructive love in *El casamiento engañoso* or *El coloquio de los perros*, not even in Campuzano's short-lived relationship. Nor is there an inn or living quarters that occupies half of the story as a centralized locus of action, as there is in some of the other stories. It is true that there is an interesting reference to *Rinconete y Cortadillo*'s don Monipodio in *El coloquio de los perros*, whom Berganza describes as an "encubridor de ladrones y pala de rufianes" (302), but whose house is really just a temporary stopover for the dog. Perhaps most of all, this *novela* appears to portray a kind of gritty realism not often found in other stories of the same collection. There is no pure autobiography, but more significantly there is not the Cervantine trait of allowing characters to step out of their original social roles—to make themselves picaros—or to step back in them, either, as one sees from the other tales. Cervantes has gone beyond his own usual limits for using the picaresque genre, without actually conforming to all of its canons.

One might question Cervantes' possible intentions for writing these *novelas* the way he did. Was he trying to parody the pastoral genre, for example, as had been noted above? This is seen in the fact that shepherds (such as in *El coloquio de los perros*) can be terrible people, while picaros or thieves elsewhere are capable of possessing a kind heart.⁶ Cervantes may also have had the intention of simply showing the underside of Spanish society in the early Seventeenth Century, a time when Spain's political and economic status in the world was declining, with the literary goal of fashioning a new realism. This argument could be used to bolster the theory of breaking a collective idealism of the Spanish mind, created perhaps in part years earlier by overseas conquest and a heritage of idealistic and heroic literature; or, it might bolster a new notion of individualism, as can be seen from the self-determination of many of Cervantes'

⁶ Dian Fox believes that Cervantes had similar intentions in the *Novelas ejemplares*, with respect to one story not presented in this study, *Rinconete y Cortadillo*: "Whether or not Cervantes is taking direct aim at the pastoral or simply participating in the literary response to that type of literature, *Rinconete y Cortadillo* is a compendium a *lo grotesco* of conventions also found in the *Eglogas* of Garcilaso, Montemayor's *Diana*, and his own *Galatea*" (146).

picaros. It is possible to speculate that Cervantes may have wanted to parody even the picaresque genre itself, if one looks at his variations of it as a parody or criticism.

In conclusion, Cervantes did experiment with various literary genres, the picaresque naturally being one of them. Undoubtedly, this can be seen in most of his works—most notably in *Don Quijote*—but he does show some variety in the *Novelas ejemplares* as well. The intention of this study was to concentrate on several of these *novelas* and, more particularly, their picaresque aspects. It can be fairly said, though, that “Cervantes was fascinated by all literary forms” (Dunn 130), and that he also felt an “intellectual need... to experiment with the picaresque genre” (Avalle-Arce, “*Novelas ejemplares*” 144). I would not only say, as Roberto González-Echevarría has suggested, that Cervantes engaged in the “deconstruction of picaresque formulas” (113), but also that, in effect, he has become a unique picaresque creator. In sum, Cervantes is able to combine positive and negative elements in life, while allowing his picaros to see life as such and enabling them to exercise free will at the same time that they must use self-reliance. What emerges is something unique: the Cervantine picaresque mode. It is hoped that future study of Cervantes’ treatment of this and other genres might further illuminate readers regarding the intersection between a genre in the abstract and its more concrete examples.

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