3. The Triumph of Women Readers of Chivalry in *Don Quixote* Part I

By the time Miguel de Cervantes evoked Amadís of Gaul as his hero’s primary target for imitation in *Don Quixote* Part I (1605), the romance of chivalry had lost much of its cultural cachet in Spain.¹ Beatriz Bernal’s *Cristalián* was among the last group of new romances to emerge in print, and what little chivalric publication continued during the reign of Felipe II was largely confined to editions of already known romances.² In Cervantes’s context, it was perhaps not possible to view books of chivalry as sacred objects capable of sustaining narrative authority, as Bernal does in her *proemio*. For Cervantes, chivalric romance is indeed a relic, but not an authoritative one. The reading of chivalry, transgressive in Bernal, becomes risible in Cervantes. Indeed, if one considered only Don Quixote’s too-literal reading practices, it would be logical to conclude that Cervantes expresses a categorical denouncement of chivalric romance in his novel. The mad knight, however, is not the only reader of chivalric fiction in *Don Quixote*, nor is he the final arbiter of what romance tropes mean or how they can be used.

The next two chapters of this book will examine the fates of four inscribed female readers in Cervantes’s novel—Luscinda and Dorotea from Part I, and the duchess and Altisidora from Part II—who echo the essential quixotic drive to apply literature to life. Although Cervantes mocks the romance of chivalry, he also celebrates it, primarily through the genre’s women readers. Cervantes eulogizes the masculine plotlines of Iberian chivalric romance while preserving one of its most radical features, the agency it grants female characters through the written word. In this chapter, I discuss how Luscinda and Dorotea partner to out-Quixote the other readers gathered at Juan Palomeque’s inn. These two seemingly naïve young women use chivalric romance as a handbook of creative solutions for the predation of men.

Far from representing the reading of chivalry as a masculine, aristocratic pursuit, Cervantes goes to great lengths throughout *Don Quixote* Part I to emphasize the diversity of romance readers. A work of fiction, of course, cannot be taken as a historical document, especially for a slippery phenomenon like readership, but various scholars have examined the readers Cervantes depicts and found them historically plausible. Elizabeth Spiller, tracing the

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connections between Cervantes and others who wrote about reading in the Golden Age, characterizes *Don Quixote* as a virtual laboratory that offers ‘a literary history of how romance reading changed in the previous hundred years’.\(^3\) For Lisa Vollendorf, the fact that women are among Cervantes’s inscribed readers reflects real women’s increasing access to literacy and literary culture during the author’s lifetime.\(^4\) For Cervantes, reading has the potential to cut across class and gender lines, and some ‘readers’ are illiterate listeners of texts. Cervantes’s fictional consumers of chivalric literature in Part I include Don Quixote himself, the priest, the barber, innkeeper Juan Palomeque, the innkeeper’s daughter, the servant girl Maritornes, the canon of Toledo, Cardenio, Luscinda, and Dorotea. These characters range from the low nobility to the working poor, with women appearing at both ends of the social spectrum. They converge on a single physical space, the inn in Sierra Morena, and their interlacing stories reflect different responses to the same reading material. Cervantes’s women read quite differently from the men, in ways both expected and unexpected. Far from reiterating the conduct tradition’s clichés about female readers, however, Cervantes complicates the question, playing with and at times circumventing the stereotypes.

Maritornes and the innkeeper’s daughter, the two lower-class women consumers of chivalry featured in Part I, experience the texts through out-loud reading. With little social position to lose, they are freer than upper-class women to admit to using chivalry as an inspiration for erotic fantasies, just as the conduct tradition warned women would do. Adrienne Martín compares Maritornes, who enjoys chivalric love scenes, to Don Quixote in her desire to reinterpret her own experience as a rural prostitute through literary trope.\(^5\) The innkeeper’s daughter, meanwhile, prefers a related motif, the love-laments of knights.\(^6\) These two women do indeed imitate their favorite literary genre, though in a parodic fashion. They entice Don Quixote to believe that he is participating in a nocturnal meeting like that of Amadís and Oriana at the window, instruct him to put his hand through a hole in the stable wall, and tie it to trap him in place. They do not gain erotic gratification from the encounter, but they do seem to delight in using their knowledge of chivalric trope to ridicule Don Quixote.\(^7\)

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4 Vollendorf, ‘Cervantes and His Women Readers’, 316.
5 Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quijote*, I, 32; 393; Martín, *Erotic Philology*, 42.
6 Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quijote*, I, 32; 394.
7 Ibid., I, 528.
Luscinda and Dorotea demonstrate a more sophisticated approach to literary imitation than Maritornes and the innkeeper's daughter. They are explicitly literate, and they combine strategies from chivalric romance and other literary sources including the sentimental novel, Ovid's *Heroides* and *Metamorphoses*, the conduct tradition, and Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*. Cervantes thus renders these characters inscribed readers not just of Iberian chivalry, but of other genres with more literary prestige. Luscinda and Dorotea's aptitude for comparison, imitation, and parody mirror the authorial habits of Cervantes himself. E. Michael Gerli explains that 'as [Cervantes] wrote he would critically read, assimilate, deconstruct, and as it were, rewrite—often write against—not just discrete literary traditions but also a broad spectrum of texts and discourses ranging from abstract Renaissance literary theory to specific legends, textual typologies, even his own prior versions of a passage.' For Gerli, Cervantes's governing citation principle is 'ironic reversal followed by reconstruction'. Expanding on Gerli's paradigm, I would characterize Luscinda and Dorotea as constructive readers who use reading to craft new realities. These two women succeed in reconciling chivalric romance with the literary climate at the end of the sixteenth century, especially its neo-Aristotelian appreciation for verisimilitude. Luscinda and Dorotea accomplish what Cervantes's canon and priest merely talk about in the end of Part I: rewriting the romance of chivalry to suit the demands of a 'real' world.

**Luscinda's Letters**

Luscinda, a young woman from a noble family of modest means, lives a conformist existence relieved by the entertainments of reading and falling in love. Yvonne Jehenson writes that, in general, the women of *Don Quixote* are 'controlled by the requirements of a good reputation, the expectations of a good marriage, and their own naiveté—the latter resulting from a sheltered education'. Luscinda might seem to fit Jehenson's template in that she remains mostly at home and forms a romantic attachment to one of the few men she knows, her neighbor Cardenio. However, Luscinda is not as guileless as Jehenson would expect: she manipulates her family, Cardenio, and Fernando through words and actions adapted from chivalric romance, Ovid, the sentimental novel, and the legend of Roman matron


Lucretia. Luscinda’s reworking of chivalric motifs to assert control over her fate follows Gerli’s principle of ironic reversal, and she undergoes a series of transformations in her love affair with Cardenio as she alternates among various literary models. In turn, her imitations put pressure on Cardenio to react in the way the literary model prescribes. In my discussion of Luscinda’s reading practices, I contrast them with Cardenio’s to explore how the couple’s reading habits both conform to and subvert gender stereotypes. Some of the dangers of reading chivalry appear to be gender neutral, while others can afflict the ‘wrong’ gender under certain circumstances.

The overall framework of Luscinda and Cardenio’s relationship mirrors that of Amadís and Oriana in *Amadís de Gaula*. In his analysis of the episode, Stanislav Zimic observes that both pairs of lovers promise eternal love and take on the institutions of patriarchy and nobility, sustaining their pact only ‘at the cost of great suffering, sacrifices, and risk of death.’

Cardenio and Luscinda are neighbors, like Amadís and Oriana, but rather than the heirs of neighboring monarchs, they are the scions of equally noble families. Both couples meet and fall in love as children and are separated in adolescence. The lady’s father is the obstacle to marriage in both cases. In *Amadís de Gaula*, the emperor of Rome persuades Oriana’s father, Lisuarte, to ignore his daughter’s opinion and betroth Oriana to him. Luscinda’s father makes much the same decision when Fernando, the second son of a duke, offers his hand. In *Amadís*, civil war, with all the collateral damage it implies, is required to make things right. In *Don Quixote*, a smaller-scale family disturbance erupts. The conflicts that haunt Cardenio and Luscinda center around four texts: two letters from Luscinda, and a letter and a poem from Cardenio. The insistent textuality of the episode recalls Montalvo’s treatment of Oriana’s angry letter, suggesting that for Cervantes, the entire episode is a meditation on the relative agency men and women may exercise through the written word. Both genders, indeed, fall short of the communicative goals they express in their missives, though Luscinda eventually accomplishes hers by other means.

‘Pyramus and Thisbe’, from Book IV of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, provides another structural model for Cardenio and Luscinda’s star-crossed love, revealing the relationship’s potential for disaster. The Ovidian lovers attempt to circumvent parental opposition by conversing through a crack in the wall and arrange a nighttime assignation that ends in their deaths. After escaping her parents’ home, Thisbe encounters a lion and is forced to flee. Pyramus, who finds her bloodied mantle, assumes that she has been killed.
and commits suicide. When Thisbe discovers her beloved’s body, she ends her own life. While Cardenio and Luscinda have an outcome more like Amadís and Oriana’s, were it not for the quick thinking of Luscinda and Dorotea, the episode might have concluded with the death of one or both of the lovers. Reading and literary imitation are key components of the relatively happy resolution of Luscinda and Cardenio’s story. Luscinda can make her words travel across distance through letters, and her reading gives her models that allow her to gauge the outcome of her communication.

Cardenio, for his part, evokes Ovid directly in his narration of the love affair to Don Quixote and Sancho, and it is quite likely that the Metamorphoses is a shared reading material for the couple. Cardenio remarks that Luscinda’s father restricted his access to her house, ‘imitando en esto a los padres de aquella Tisbe tan decantada de los poetas (imitating in this regard the parents of that same Thisbe praised so often by poets)’. Pyramus and Thisbe’s story contains no mention of literacy or texts, but their love affair, like that of Luscinda and Cardenio, breaches physical absence with words:

The walls that divided the two estates had a tiny hole,
a cranny formed long ago at the time the partition was built.
In the course of years, this imperfection had never been noticed
but what is not sensed by love? The lovesick pair were the first
to find it, and used it to channel their whispered endearments in safety.

The wall that separates the lovers finds an echo both in Cervantes and in Amadís de Gaula. Cardenio and Luscinda meet by night at the bars of her window, as do Amadís and Oriana and their own antecedents, Lancelot and Guinevere. Cardenio and Luscinda’s letters are analogous to words whispered through cracks in the wall; in fact, Luscinda’s decision to write to Cardenio may draw inspiration from ‘Pyramus and Thisbe’. The veil Luscinda is wearing when she arrives at Juan Palomeque’s inn recalls Thisbe’s mantle,

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11 Ovid’s works, particularly the Metamorphoses, were well known in Spain during Cervantes’s era. Rudolph Schevill and Frederick de Armas note the proliferation of Spanish translations of Ovid, and William Worden argues that Ovid’s Metamorphoses provides an organizing device within Don Quixote Parts I and II, as Cervantes ‘depicts transformations of all kinds’. For example, in Part II, the knight’s guide to the Cave of Montesinos declares himself to be working on a book entitled the Metamorfoseos, or the Ovidio español. See Schevill, ‘Ovid and the Renaissance in Spain’, 147–48; De Armas, ‘Captured in Ekphrasis’, 241–42; Worden, ‘Cervantes Transforms Ovid’, 116.
12 Cervantes Saavedra, Don Quijote, I, 24; 293; Cervantes Saavedra, Don Quixote, 184.
13 Ovid, Metamorphoses, IV: 65–70.
and Luscinda's feigned or real attempt to stab herself may be an imitation of Thisbe as well as Lucretia. If Luscinda indeed chooses to imitate Thisbe, she likely does so to heighten Cardenio's awareness of the danger they face. Luscinda's invocation of Ovid, whether deliberate or accidental, has a visceral affect on Cardenio. When Quixote and Sancho meet Cardenio, starvation and exposure have weakened him to the point that he risks imitating Pyramus and causing his own death.

Luscinda, however, does not restrict herself to the Metamorphoses as a model for behavior. A sophisticated reader of epistolary fictions, Luscinda channels Oriana and the female letter writers of the sentimental tradition as well as Ovid's Heroides in her letters to Cardenio. From Amadís de Gaula, Luscinda adapts Oriana's ability to command her lover through the written word. From the sentimental novel, Luscinda adapts the language of honor and duty that renders erotic relationships legal contracts. From Ovid's Heroides, Luscinda takes diction that externalizes emotion by mapping it onto the body. Through Luscinda, Cervantes re-interprets the female chivalric correspondents this book featured in Chapter One. María Carmen Marín Pina observes that in chivalric romance, many women write letters of reproach or reconciliation, while a select few ‘take the initiative and dare to declare their love in writing’.15 Luscinda’s letters express feelings, as chivalric letters do, but they surpass chivalric missives by pairing emotion with information.

Oriana and Luscinda are both meek conversation partners and bold correspondents. In Amadís de Gaula, Oriana brokers her rupture and reconciliation with Amadís through letters. Luscinda writes to Cardenio throughout their relationship, first ‘regaladas y honestas respuestas (delicate, virtuous responses)’, and then missives that contain commands.16 The first of Luscinda’s letters cited in Cervantes’s text is a veiled proposal of marriage. It alludes to emotion, but the diction is practical:

Cada día descubro en vos valores que me obligan y fuerzan a que en más os estime: y así, si quisieredes sacarme desta deuda sin ejecutarme en la honra, lo podréis muy bien hacer. Padre tengo, que os conoce y que me quiere bien, el cual, sin forzar mi voluntad, cumplirá la que será justo que vos tengáis, si es que me estimáis, como decís y como yo creo.

(Each day I discover in you virtues that oblige and compel me to value you even more; and therefore, if you wish to free me from this debt without

15 Marín Pina, Páginas, 193.
16 Cervantes Saavedra, Don Quijote, I, 24; 293; Cervantes Saavedra, Don Quixote, 184. All English citations from Don Quixote are from Edith Grossman’s translation.
attaching my honor, you could do so very easily. I have a father who knows you and loves me, and he, without forcing my will, can meet the obligation of what it is reasonable for you to have, if in fact you value me as you say, and as I believe you do.)

Luscinda encloses her letter in the volume of *Amadís de Gaula* she borrowed from Cardenio. For Spiller, this gesture serves to remind readers that Luscinda is imitating Oriana. Cardenio, who shares Luscinda’s knowledge of *Amadís*, would understand that Luscinda feels a faithful, passionate love that mimics Oriana’s, even though her diction is neutral rather than effusive. Luscinda’s communication is a partial success. Cardenio does speak to Luscinda’s father, who declares that a proper proposal must come from Cardenio’s father. The latter, however, presents a letter from an Andalusian duke demanding Cardenio’s service, delaying his son’s plans for marriage.

Luscinda’s second letter again prods Cardenio to action. In the intervening weeks, Cardenio has developed a friendship with the duke’s second son, Fernando. Luscinda warns Cardenio that his friend has betrayed his trust:

La palabra que don Fernando os dio de hablar a vuestro padre para que hablase al mío, la ha cumplido más en su gusto que en vuestro provecho. Sabed, señor, que él me ha pedido por esposa, y mi padre, llevado de la ventaja que él piensa que don Fernando os hace, ha venido en lo que quiere, con tantas veras, que de aquí a dos días se ha de hacer el desposorio [...]. Cuál yo quedo, imaginaldo: si os cumple venir, vello: y si os quiero bien o no, el suceso deste negocio os lo dará a entender.

(Don Fernando’s promise to you that he would speak to your father about speaking to mine has been carried out more to his pleasure than to your benefit. Know then, Señor, that he has asked for my hand in marriage, and my father, carried away by the advantage he thinks Don Fernando has over you, has agreed to everything he wishes, and with so much enthusiasm that in two days’ time the betrothal will take place [...]. Imagine the state I am in; if you come, you will see it, and you will know, in the outcome of this business, whether I love you dearly.)

Luscinda’s second letter is more modern than the *ars dictaminis*-inspired chivalric missives discussed in the previous chapters. It contains emotion

and a command, as Oriana’s letters do, but it also introduces a new plot point and gives Cardenio the information he needs in order to determine his next action. Thomas Beebee characterizes non-literary letters from this period as possessing ‘an unstable status between fiction, sermon, news, and gossip’.²⁰ Chivalric letters rarely contain news, which messengers must transmit verbally. Luscinda here improves on her correspondence model, making it suited for a context in which a messenger cannot be trusted to relay information and in which the letter must stand for itself.

Luscinda, moreover, improves the efficacy of her communication by subtracting as well as adding to Oriana’s model. Luscinda refrains from jealous rage, leaving all irrational expressions of emotion to Cardenio. Cervantes thus refuses to link Luscinda with negative stereotypes about women in general and female chivalric correspondents in particular. Despite the fact that Luscinda is the correspondent who deliberately invokes Amadís by inserting her letter into the book, Cardenio’s communications sound more like Oriana’s letters than Luscinda’s do. It is he who expresses sadness, jealousy, and rage, as Oriana did. By scrambling the gender polarities of his borrowings from Amadís, Cervantes brings into question the gendered hierarchy at the root of the love conflicts. Cardenio, in particular, offers a meditation on gender and reading, as he falls prey to the reading practices that the conduct tradition and other critics of romance identify with women.

Cardenio’s letter and poem strongly recall the letter and poem exchange between Amadís and Oriana. In Amadís de Gaula, Oriana hears a rumor that Amadís has been unfaithful and then writes a letter asking him never to contact her again. Her conclusion hints that she will soon die of grief. Amadís receives the letter by messenger and sends no reply, as his lady had instructed. Instead, Amadís writes a ballad that expresses both his innocence and a wish for death: ‘Pues se me niega vitoria / do justo m’era devida / allí do muere la gloria / es gloria morir la vida (Because a just victory is denied to me, there where glory dies, death will be my glory)’.²¹ Minstrels later deliver the message of the ballad to Oriana by hearsay. Both Oriana’s and Amadís’s compositions are rich in emotion and light on information. Indeed, their messages are dependent on the recipients’ prior knowledge of the context and the messengers’ skill in reporting pertinent facts.

Cardenio’s poem contains a message similar to Amadís’s ballad: ‘O le falta al Amor conocimiento / o le sobra crueldad, o no es mi pena / igual a la ocasión que me condena / al género más duro de tormento (Either love

²⁰ Beebee, Epistolary Fiction, 79.
²¹ Rodríguez de Montalvo, Amadís de Gaula, I: 731.
has too little understanding / or too much cruelty, or else my grief’s / not equal to its cause though it condemns me / to suffer this, the harshest kind of torment). Cardenio’s use of the pseudonym Fili (Phyllis) later in the poem hints that it is not love itself that he believes to be cruel, but Luscinda. Both Cardenio’s and Amadís’s poems declare their innocence, but only Cardenio attributes fault to his beloved. As David Quint points out, Amadís takes the blame because he caused his lady pain, however accidentally. By contrast, Cardenio reflects the misogyny that haunts interpretations of Oriana’s letter. As Chapter One relates, readers, starting with Montalvo himself, have often commented on Oriana’s jealousy, marking it as a particularly feminine failing.

Cardenio’s ‘carta misiva’ on the next page of the memory book is every bit as impassioned and unreasonable as Oriana’s letter, showing that for Cervantes, the emotion of jealousy does not belong exclusively to women. He writes:

‘Tu falsa promesa y mi cierta desventura me llevan a parte donde antes volverán a tus oídos las nuevas de mi muerte que las razones de mis quejas. Desechásteme, ¡oh ingrata! por quien tiene más, no por quien vale más que yo [...]. Quédate en paz, causadora de mi guerra. (Your false promise and my certain misfortune have taken me to a place from which news of my death will reach your ears before the words of my lament. You rejected me, O ungrateful lady, for one who has more than I, but not one of greater worth [...]. Go in peace, cause of my conflict.)’

Cardenio’s opening recalls Oriana’s ‘Mi raviosa quexa acompañada de sobrada razón (My furious complaint accompanied by more than enough reason)’. The two letters begin not with the writer, but with an adjectival phrase presenting his or her complaint. Both letters reference a rival, though not by name, and accuse the recipient of infidelity. They make the same basic request, ‘go away’: Oriana’s ‘no parescáis ante me ni en parte donde yo sea (do not appear before me or in any place that I am)’ is similar to Cardenio’s ‘Quédate en paz (go in peace)’. In addition, both letters state that the writers will soon die of the pain they feel. The difference between the two letters is that Oriana’s transmits a message to her reader. Oriana gives her letter

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22 Cervantes Saavedra, Don Quijote, I, 23; 282; Cervantes Saavedra, Don Quixote, 175.
23 Quint, Cervantes’s Novel of Modern Times, 33.
24 Cervantes Saavedra, Don Quijote, I, 23; 283; Cervantes Saavedra, Don Quixote, 176–77.
25 Rodríguez de Montalvo, Amadís de Gaula, I: 676-677.
to the servant Durín, who delivers it to Amadís. Cardenio, however, has abandoned his letter in the dust. With this incomplete communication, Cervantes perhaps hints that Cardenio's composition strategy and the misogyny that underlies it are relics best left behind.

Chivalric correspondence serves Luscinda because she adapts only those parts of it that function in her world. She uses letters to command her beloved, as Oriana does, and to work around her father's consent, but she adapts the structure of the missives themselves for a context in which letters need to carry news. Yet unlike Oriana, Luscinda cannot get what she wants with a one-sided correspondence. The difficulties Luscinda and Cardenio encounter in creating a two-way letter exchange evoke another major correspondence model, the Iberian sentimental novel. In the sentimental tradition, the materiality of the letters themselves and the contexts in which they are transmitted tend to have negative consequences for communication. Spiller writes that in Cervantes, ‘the pure love letters of the Amadís become material objects that can be misdirected, misread, sold, stolen, or lost’. However, as Chapter One shows, the letters of the 1508 Amadís do indeed have material specificity. Montalvo depicts Oriana writing her angry letter with ink and parchment and then describes the finished letter's envelope, wax seal, and stamped heraldic device. Oriana's letters are subject to time, distance, and the whims of messengers, as when Durín accuses Oriana of murdering Amadís with her words.

I would argue that the difference between Oriana's and Luscinda's letters has less to do with materiality than with the intervening model of Diego de San Pedro's sentimental novels, in which women's letters utilize the language of honor, duty, and reputation, and men ignore women's words in favor of bodily signs.

According to Marina Brownlee, the chivalric and sentimental traditions influenced each other, and for Barbara Weissberger, they are similar enough to be considered members of a single genre. Both genres include a mix of letters and narration. Don Quixote, however, adapts some features of Diego de San Pedro's novels Arnalte y Lucenda (1491) and La cárcel de amor (The Prison of Love, 1492) that do not appear in Amadís. Dorothy Severin discusses several connections between Arnalte y Lucenda and the Cervantine episode, noting the similar names of Lucenda and Luscinda, the depiction of the lover

27 Rodríguez de Montalvo, Amadís de Gaula, I: 717.
as a suffering wild man, the betrayal by a friend, and the lady's retreat to a convent. Although *Arnalte y Lucenda* did not circulate widely in Spain during Cervantes's lifetime, Severin believes that Cervantes might have known it in French or Italian translation. Cervantes would almost certainly have known *La cárcel de amor.* For Severin, Cervantes's imitation of San Pedro's sentimental novels is partial: ‘The epistolary form is merely hinted at and not exploited’. Cervantes's sentimental episode contains fewer letters and more narration than San Pedro’s sentimental novels; structurally, it bears greater resemblance to the epistolary episodes of *Amadís de Gaula.* Yet thematically, Luscinda's letters have much in common with women's letters in the sentimental tradition. For San Pedro’s Luenda and Laureola and Cervantes's Luscinda, bodies are commodities for exchange, love is a service that incurs a debt, and men, even men in love, have an obligation to protect a lady's reputation. By evoking the sentimental novel, moreover, Cervantes hints that Luscinda, as an inscribed reader, is sophisticated enough to imitate and recombine different correspondence models for rhetorical effect. The intertextuality of her letters hints not at an inexperienced writer reacting to overwhelming emotions, but at the calculation of an author.

Luscinda's first letter uses economic metaphors to persuade Cardenio to propose marriage. The verb *obligan* (‘oblige’) and the noun *deuda* (‘debt’) evoke duty both moral and financial. Luscinda's use of *valores* (‘virtues’ or ‘values’) and *estime* (‘esteem’ or ‘estimate’) to evaluate her potential partner looks forward to the economic metaphors for women's honor Lotario employs in the interpolated tale *El curioso impertinente* several chapters later, including the luxury goods *finísimo diamante* (‘finest diamond’) and *armínio* (‘ermine’). Quint identifies the love triangle of *El curioso impertinente* as an intertext for the Luscinda-Cardenio-Dorotea-Fernando affair, and the fact that metaphors from the same semantic field apply in both places implies that manipulation is as much at work in Cardenio and Luscinda's story as it is in the more transparent interpolated novella. Spiller characterizes the monetary implications of Luscinda's letters as a response to the print industry: ‘At each new narrative level the basic thematic elements of the epistolary exchange between Amadis and Oriana reappear, but they do so in increasingly material, mercantile, and public forms’. Luscinda uses

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29 Severin, ‘Diego de San Pedro’s Arnalte y Lucenda’, 146–47.
30 Ibid., 149.
31 Ibid., 145.
antiquated genre references to produce a modern product, and in so doing, she seeks to subvert traditional gender norms. Luscinda manipulates Cardenio through their shared reading material in order to secure another modern commodity, a marriage based on mutual affection rather than family prerogatives.

Like her chivalric and sentimental antecedents, however, Luscinda is only partially successful in persuading her reader. Cardenio attempts to bring about a parentally sanctioned betrothal, but he is distracted by other business and fails to formalize the bargain. Luscinda's second letter employs the language of obligation to warn Cardenio of a broken contract. Fernando has broken his word to Cardenio and attempted to make his own contract with Luscinda's father. Luscinda uses two forms of the verb *cumplir* (‘to fulfill’), reinforcing the notion of marriage as a business negotiation. If the first letter was a proposal of marriage, and Cardenio's actions an attempt to accept, it can perhaps be argued that Cardenio and Luscinda entered into a precontract to marry. However, Luscinda's father threatens this tenuous business deal through his contradicting betrothal of Luscinda with Fernando. The semi-public ceremony of the *desposorio*, if completed, would likely supersede Cardenio and Luscinda's private betrothal. Luscinda's second letter thus asks Cardenio to weigh two contracts against each other and decide which is the most valid.

In the sentimental tradition, women use the language of economics a bit differently, to discourage unwanted admirers rather than to entice a beloved to act. In *Arnalte y Lucenda*, Arnalte indulges in dangerous and threatening behavior. He cross-dresses in order to talk to Lucenda at church, coerces her into dancing with him at court, follows her to her lodgings, and arranges to spy on her from his friend Elierso's nearby dwelling. Lucenda writes two short letters asking Arnalte to stop harassing her. At first, Lucenda says, she considered not writing at all: ‘¡Oh cuánto llegar la mano [a]papel rehusé! (Oh how I refused to put hand to paper!)’. Lucenda knows that writing to a man, even for this purpose, places her reputation at risk: ‘Cata que cuando las tales vitorias los hombres pregonan, de la honra de las mujeres fazen justicia (See that when men boast of such victories, they put women's honor on trial)’. As Janet Altman explains in reference to the French epistolary novel, female correspondents' efforts to defend themselves with letters often fail: ‘Whereas the seducer regards the letter as his arm for overcoming the barrier between him and his lady, the lady paradoxically regards the letter

34 San Pedro, *Cárcel*, 198.
35 Ibid.
as an extension of this barrier, as her weapon of protection’. Lucenda's second letter offers Arnalte a contrabto (contract), agreeing to let him kiss her hands only if thereafter he ends his pursuit. The story ends in disaster when Arnalte breaks the contract. Lucenda marries Elierso, Arnalte kills him in a duel, and Lucenda flees to a convent in order to escape from her unwanted suitor. Lucenda's literacy does not aid her: whether she writes or remains silent, she cannot control Arnalte.

In San Pedro's *La cárcel de amor*, Laureola's letters evoke the same semantic fields as Lucenda's. Laureola explains her compassion for Leriano as the repayment of a debt: ‘Más te escrivo por redemir tu vida que por satisfacer tu deseo. Mas, triste de mí, que este descargo solamente aprovecha para complir conmigo (I write you to redeem your life rather than to satisfy your desire. But, alas, this discharge of debt will only serve to bring an end to me)’. The words *redimir* (‘redeem’), *satisfacer* (‘satisfy’), *descargo* (‘discharge’), and *complir* (‘fulfill’ or ‘end’) employ economic metaphors for love. In further connection to Lucenda, Laureola asks Leriano in one of the letters to preserve her *fama* or reputation. Emily Francomano writes that for the characters of *La cárcel de amor*, these letters are indeed legal contracts: ‘The characters see the creation of these written documents as both dangerous and binding’. As in *Arnalte y Lucenda*, however, the contract fails to protect the interested parties. Laureola can be traded for Leriano, or Leriano for Laureola, but only one can survive. Almost immediately upon Leriano's exit from the allegorical prison of love, Laureola's father confines her to a physical prison. Laureola pays her sentimental debt to Leriano with the coin of reputation: ‘Remedié como inocente y pago como culpada (I redeemed as an innocent person and paid as a guilty one)’. The language of payment and remediation speaks to Laureola's fraught position as, at once, *señora* of courtly love and subject to the king, her father. She shares this double bind with Oriana of *Amadís de Gaula* and Cervantes's Luscinda. Yet Luscinda, with her combination of strategies, does eventually prevail over her father, Cardenio, and Fernando, though not without difficulty.

In the Cervantine episode, as in the San Pedro novellas, this difficulty arises when men refuse to take women’s words at face value, instead interpreting the situation according to stereotype, dubious physical signs, or

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36 Altman, *Epistolarity*, 16.
37 San Pedro, *Cárcel*, 205.
38 Ibid., 90.
40 San Pedro, *Cárcel*, 106.
their own wishes. Luscinda responds to this problem by exteriorizing her emotions in a dramatic tableau. Her suicide attempt, real or feigned, is an extreme measure that gives male spectators the emotional display they expect from a woman. Chapter One discussed the ways in which Ovid’s *Heroides*, a mutual source for the chivalric and sentimental traditions, mapped women’s emotions onto specific, often sexualized body parts. Ovid’s female epistle writers rend their hair and cheeks and describe tear-stained faces. In *Amadís de Gaula*, both men and women manifest emotion in the body. The sentimental tradition takes the embodiment of emotion one step further, as men actively read women’s bodies for physical signs of emotion or deception.

In *La cárcel de amor*, the *auctor* (‘author’), who plays messenger to the lovers, places greater faith in physical cues than Laureola’s words. When Laureola makes an angry reply to Leriano’s request, the *auctor* searches her face for a different response: ‘Hallava en sus apariencias más causa para osar que razón para temer (I found in her appearance more cause for boldness than fear)’.41 The *auctor* feels certain that Laureola feigns sickness as a cover for love: ‘Más vezes se quexava de estar mal por huir los plazeres. Cuando era vista, fengía algund dolor; cuando la dexavan, dava grandes sospiros (Many times she complained of feeling ill to flee from pleasures. When she was seen in public, she feigned some pain; when they left her alone, she heaved great sighs)’.42 Yet the change in Laureola’s appearance might well be due to concern for her reputation, not love. In her letter, Laureola uses embodied language to express fear: ‘Con este miedo, la mano en el papel, puse el coraçón en el cielo (With this fear, and with my hand on the paper, I committed my heart to heaven)’.43 The body, as a set of signs, is even more inscrutable than the written word, and yet men in the sentimental tradition are always confident that they can read it.

Having failed to transmit their point of view, San Pedro’s Lucenda and Laureola have recourse to silence. Luscinda, in contrast, attempts to capitalize on the ways in which men read women. Luscinda’s third letter, never quoted in text, is not a real communication, but a prop in a one-woman play that brings together the imitation of several literary sources. During the betrothal ceremony to Fernando, Luscinda shows Cardenio the emotion he expects, despair taken to the point of self-sacrifice. Luscinda’s feeble attempt to stab herself recalls the tragic ending of ‘Pyramus and  

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41 Ibid., 79.  
42 Ibid., 80.  
43 Ibid., 90.
Thisbe’, Amadí’s and Oriana’s allusions to death in their letter and ballad, and legendary Roman matron Lucretia’s honor-preserving suicide. The letter tucked into the bodice of Luscinda’s gown, meanwhile, discloses her precontract with Cardenio and her desire to end her life. I agree with David Quint that Luscinda’s gesture toward self-harm is only for show, as it bears a close resemblance to Camila’s explicitly fake suicide attempt in El curioso impertinente. Luscinda has thus set up this tableau and placed her written words in a setting in which they will be read against the signs of her body. She appears to know how men read women, and she exploits those stereotypes. Here, as with the earlier letters, Luscinda’s cleverness as an adapter of intertexts gives her quasi-authorial powers.

Given the deliberate staging of the suicide attempt, the fable at its center, that of Roman matron Lucretia, bears further examination. Though Luscinda does not utter the word ‘Lucretia’, her double, Camila, does, referencing the exemplary figure in her staging of the same trope. Lucretia, the wife of a Roman official, was raped by Tarquin and then committed suicide to expunge her family’s honor. Livy relates the story as an illustration of the chastity and fortitude of Roman women. As Pamela Benson points out, Lucretia was a popular persona in books of exempla like Boccaccio’s De Mulieribus Claris. Her story speaks to women’s reputation in two ways. Tarquin becomes determined to rape her because of her reputation for chastity and wifely devotion, illustrating that for women, any kind of fame—even positive fame—can be dangerous. More obviously, the story illustrates the lengths to which women are expected to go to defend their core virtue. Lucretia earns readers’ sympathy because her response to circumstance is so extreme. By evoking this ancient persona, Luscinda connects her own story not to the tawdry world of chivalric or sentimental fiction, but to the gravitas of the classical exemplum, demonstrating to those present that she is innocent of wrongdoing. Remote, exaggerated models like Lucretia proved difficult for medieval and early modern women to follow. For Luscinda, as for Camila in El curioso impertinente, a feigned suicide attempt is an attempt at compromise: she wishes to earn the credit for self-martyrdom without actually dying.

44 Quint, Cervantes’s Novel of Modern Times, 39.
45 Cervantes Saavedra, Don Quijote, I, 34; 430.
46 Livy, The History of Rome, 81.
47 Benson, Invention of the Renaissance Woman, 10.
48 Ibid., 30.
Though Lucretia is the name most strongly associated with an honor-related suicide, Ovid’s *Heroides*, another likely reading material for Luscinda, provides a secondary model that emphasizes women’s capacity for revenge. One of Ovid’s female letter writers is the bitter, raving Dido, who commits suicide upon being abandoned by Aeneas. Whether Luscinda is more like Lucretia or more like Dido depends on whom she feels has wronged her more deeply; is it Fernando, with his misplaced lust, or is it Cardenio, in his lukewarm treatment of the woman he claims to love? In a secret meeting at her window, Luscinda indicates that Cardenio is the real target of her performance, telling him:

> Procura hallarte presente a este sacrificio, el cual si no pudiere ser estorbado de mis razones, una daga llevo escondida que podrá estorbar más determinadas fuerzas, dando fin a mi vida y principio a que conozcas la voluntad que te he tenido y tengo.
>
> (Try to be present at the sacrifice, which, since it could not be prevented by my words, my hidden dagger, which could deter even more determined forces, will put an end to my life and a beginning to your knowledge of the love that I have had and still have for you.)

Luscinda insists that Cardenio spy on the betrothal ceremony. If the real target of Luscinda’s performance were Fernando, Cardenio’s presence would not be required. Fernando, moreover, can learn nothing he does not already know from Luscinda’s suicide; Cardenio will learn the depth and sincerity of Luscinda’s love, which he might have gleaned from the letters had he been willing to pay attention to a woman’s words.

As he watches the ceremony through a window, Cardenio expects to see physical violence but instead encounters verbal violence in the ‘sí quiero (yes, I do)’ with which Luscinda gives her consent to marry Fernando. If Cardenio is in fact the target of the suicidal tableau, the sí could be meant to hurt him just as Dido’s coldness wounds Aeneas when she encounters him in the underworld in Book VI of Virgil’s *Aeneid*. A jealous Cardenio watches as Luscinda faints, prompting her mother to loosen the girl’s gown and reveal the dagger and the letter. Cardenio notices only the letter: ‘Se descubrió en él un papel cerrado, que don Fernando tomó luego y se le puso

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50 Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quijote*, I, 27; 339; Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quixote*, 223.
51 According to Michael McGaha, the *Aeneid* is one of the most important sources for *Don Quixote* Parts I and II. See ‘Cervantes and Virgil’, 34–35.
a leer [...] y se puso la mano en la mejilla, con muestras de hombre muy pensativo (A sealed letter was discovered, which Don Fernando immediately took and began to read [...] when he finished reading it, he sat on a chair and rested his cheek in his hand, like a man lost in thought).\textsuperscript{52} Previously, Fernando spied on Cardenio and Luscinda’s correspondence, but in a typical Cervantine reversal, Cardenio reads Fernando’s face as he reads the letter.

Luscinda’s letter does not have the desired effect on Cardenio because he does not stay for the entire performance. In Dorotea’s account of the same event, which she did not witness, the reader learns that the dagger was indeed tucked into Luscinda’s clothing and that Fernando attempted to kill her with it.\textsuperscript{53} We also learn that Fernando did not heed Luscinda’s words. After the failed betrothal, he abducted her from her convent refuge, presumably to renew his plan to force her to marry him. Luscinda’s attempts to manipulate men through literary imitation go wrong because her male interlocutors misunderstand them. Cardenio and Fernando witness the performance but ignore what they see. Dorotea, however, shares Luscinda’s reading habits, and as an interpreter of Luscinda’s performance and collaborator after the fact, she becomes the key to Cardenio and Luscinda’s reconciliation. During her conversation with Cardenio, she plays the messenger, transmitting the content of Luscinda’s third letter to Cardenio and corroborating Luscinda’s suicide plan. Dorotea, a capable supporting actress, provides a logical excuse for Luscinda’s behavior: ‘Si había dado el sí a don Fernando, fue por no salir de la obediencia de sus padres (If she had agreed to marry Don Fernando, it was in order not to disobey her parents).\textsuperscript{54} To add to the ironies of this episode, Cardenio considers the gossip Dorotea retells a more authoritative source than the testimony of his own eyes. Cervantes gives no indication as to which version is true, emphasizing the importance of stories, including those told by women, in shaping the reality of the diegetic world.

**Dorotea and the Performance of Chivalry**

Like Luscinda, Dorotea has a problem caused primarily by Fernando and resolves it through playing a number of literary roles, many of them informed by chivalry. Dorotea seems at first to be a damsel in distress, but she also plays a messenger, a princess, and an enchantress. The tacit cooperation

\textsuperscript{52} Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quijote*, I, 27; 340; Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quixote*, 224.

\textsuperscript{53} Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quijote*, I, 28; 356.

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.; Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quixote*, 237.
between Luscinda and Dorotea continues when the characters converge at Juan Palomeque’s inn. Luscinda speaks first in this scene, calling Cardenio her verdadero esposo (‘true husband’), but then defers to Dorotea, who puts on a show that solves the problems of both women.\(^{55}\) In Dorotea, Cervantes collects the chivalric roles available to women and allows the character to play them to her advantage. Though Luscinda also attempted to manipulate men through literary models, her success was incomplete. It is as though the two women have written two halves of a chivalric comedia, with Dorotea, the most astute reader of all, performing the final act.

Cervantes introduces Dorotea in Sierra Morena, placing her in the symbolic wilderness where Cardenio and Don Quixote practice their love-madness. This is also the location where La cárcel de amor began and is thus the literal and figurative crossroads of the sentimental novel and chivalric romance. Dorotea, dressed as a shepherd boy, recites a long monologue recounting her life history to the barber, the priest, and Cardenio that is itself rich in literary allusion. Stanislav Zimic observes that Dorotea’s confession to a trio of strangers echoes Heliodorus.\(^{56}\) Armando Villamandos compares Dorotea’s story to the Italianate novella and cape-and-sword plays.\(^{57}\) Both Villamandos and Christine Garst-Santos find references to Juan Luis Vives’s The Education of a Christian Woman (1523) in Dorotea’s representation of herself.\(^{58}\) Garst-Santos also mentions Fray Luis de León’s La perfecta casada (The Perfect Wife, 1583) as a touchstone for Dorotea’s description of her family life.\(^{59}\) Like Luscinda, Dorotea takes a combinatory approach to citation, and she fuses tropes from each of these genres to her imitation of chivalry.

Dorotea joins many other quixotic figures in the novel, including Luscinda, in her indulgence in entertainment-oriented literature. Both characters imitate what they read, but Luscinda embodies chivalry’s passive roles for women, while Dorotea exhibits the agency and penchant for cross-dressing of chivalry’s warrior women. Each of Dorotea’s phrases is calculated to capitalize on her interlocutors’ attitudes toward women, chivalry, and reading. For example, Dorotea initially admits only to reading ‘algún libro devoto (a book of devotions)’, but once the priest presents his plan of entrapping Don Quixote with a mock quest, Dorotea reveals herself to be a fond reader of chivalric romance.\(^{60}\) Dorotea’s lie of omission reveals her

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55 Cervantes Saavedra, Don Quijote, I, 36; 449–50; Cervantes Saavedra, Don Quixote, 316.
56 Zimic, Los cuentos, 100.
58 Ibid., 16; Garst-Santos, ‘Dorotea’s Displacement’, 54–55.
60 Cervantes Saavedra, Don Quijote, I, 28; 349; Cervantes Saavedra, Don Quixote, 231.
awareness of the humanist prejudice against chivalric reading. Throughout the episodes in which she appears, Dorotea performs her identities for others. She is alternately an ideal daughter, a helpless princess, and a no-nonsense seeker of revenge, depending on who is listening. The stories Dorotea tells about herself constitute what Judith Butler would describe as a ‘social performance’ of gender tropes rather than a reflection of qualities inherent to the character. Dorotea is capable of living for weeks dressed as a man and defending herself from threats by verbal or physical means. The narratives she offers her male interlocutors are a particularly useful form of self-protection, and her autobiography likely owes as much to literature in its construction as does her more overt imitation of chivalry.

Dorotea brings the powers of the reader to bear on all the identities she represents, but she must tread carefully as she reveals that reading to her interlocutors. Most early modern moralists considered some amount of reading to be acceptable for women, as long as they did not stray into the entertainment-oriented genres that encouraged idleness and vice. Erasmus praises educated women, including Catherine of Aragon, but he decries fictional reading for both genders. Juan Luis Vives writes that women should restrict their reading to devotional books and the Scriptures. Fray Luis laments women’s fondness for ‘el leer en los libros de caballerías, y [el] traer el soneto y la canción en el seno, y [el] billete (reading books of chivalry, carrying sonnets and songs tucked in their bodices, and letters). Pedro de Luján, who wrote a romance of chivalry, Silves de la Selva (1546), and a conduct book, Coloquios matrimoniales (Colloquies on Matrimony, 1550), uses the character Doroceta, a literate woman of the bourgeoisie ‘asaz instructa en la lengua latina (very learned in Latin)’, to inform women that they should read only devotional books, Scriptures, and history. Cervantes’s Dorotea, whose name suggests a possible connection to Luján’s character, is careful not to stray from humanist recommendations until the priest’s comment reveals that it is safe to do so.

Dorotea in this passage suggests herself as the opposite of an idealized female figure in Don Quixote’s orbit, the illiterate Dulcinea. The gulf between the two characters reveals the degree to which women’s literacy could be considered controversial. In the very section of the work in which Luscinda

65 Luján, *Coloquios matrimoniales*, 19, 152.
and Dorotea make use of their literary habits, Don Quixote writes a letter to Dulcinea but comments that ‘Dulcinea no sabe escribir ni leer (Dulcinea does not know how to read or write)’.\(^6\) It is unclear whether Dulcinea cannot read because her model, the village girl Aldonza Lorenzo, comes from a social class with a low level of literacy, or whether she cannot read because Don Quixote considers illiteracy a desirable quality in a woman. In this same passage, Don Quixote mentions the encerramiento (seclusion) in which Dulcinea’s parents brought her up, a term that would apply to Luscinda’s upbringing and that actually surfaces in Dorotea’s description of her youth.\(^5\) Cervantes may mean to prompt readers to compare the three women.

In fact, Cervantes may even mean to illustrate that literacy is a lesser evil than ignorance. While Dulcinea’s literacy debatably places her at a moral advantage, it is also inconvenient to the point that it makes communication with Quixote impossible. If Dulcinea is to hear Quixote’s missive, Sancho, the scribe, and the literate person who eventually reads it to her must learn her private business, which they might later use to harm her reputation. Sancho never does deliver the letter, but he tells Quixote an apocryphal story of doing so, and even he, an illiterate farmer, understands the risks a love letter read out loud would pose to a woman’s reputation. Sancho’s imaginary Dulcinea tears the letter into pieces, valuing privacy over communication. Dulcinea’s illiteracy makes it impossible for her to conduct business of any kind across distance, which would have made an aristocratic or bourgeois woman’s household duties more difficult to accomplish.

For Cervantes’s Dorotea, as for other women of the emergent bourgeoisie, literacy provided not just instruction and entertainment but also an opportunity to contribute to the family’s economic productivity. Dorotea manages her family’s account books, oversees parts of the farm, and hires and fires servants, activities best paired with literacy and numeracy.\(^6\) For Garst-Santos, literacy is a fundamental part of ‘the emergent virtue of hard work’.\(^6\) Cátedra and Rojo’s study of women’s wills from sixteenth-century Valladolid finds connections between book ownership and other professional activities for women, such as participating in a family business.\(^7\) Dorotea uses the categories familiar from conduct books to describe her genteel employments and literary pursuits, but ultimately what emerges

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67 Ibid., I, 28; 349.
68 Ibid.
is a portrait of a woman fully involved in her family’s economic life who uses her learning to support that activity. The illiterate Dulcinea, whom Sancho depicts winnowing grain, can only participate in the family economy through physical labor.71

Dorotea’s statement that she was brought up in cloister-like seclusion cannot be accurate, especially if she took an active role in managing the farm.72 Her parents do not appear to have restricted her reading material much either, and she has almost certainly read some of the same books as Luscinda. In further connection to her tacit partner, Dorotea has been under attack by Fernando, the same unscrupulous nobleman who preyed on Luscinda. Dorotea explains how, like Diego de San Pedro’s Arnalte, Fernando pursued her in increasingly public ways, bribing her servants, playing music in the street at night, and sending infinite numbers of letters (billetes).73 Fernando’s unwelcome letters, like Arnalte’s and Leriano’s, breach physical and emotional barriers. Unlike Lucenda, however, Dorotea chooses not to respond.

A lack of written response, unfortunately, proves to be no better defense than a letter of rejection. Fernando bribes his way into Dorotea’s house and rapes her under pledge of matrimony. Anne J. Cruz remarks that early modern readers might well have blamed Dorotea for her own assault: ‘Once a man transgressed a girl’s protective barrier, she incurred the blame for leaving herself vulnerable to his attack’.74 To seek justice, Dorotea turns away from the conduct book and toward chivalric romance. When Dorotea narrates the crime to the priest, the barber, and Cardenio, she first describes Fernando as a caballero, a word that means both nobleman and knight, and argues that he has broken the social contract. Second, she reports that she asked Fernando to swear a pact of clandestine marriage, as many couples do in Iberian books of chivalry.75 Dorotea uses the language of the romance of chivalry to accomplish the goal of a sentimental novel-style letter, the preservation of her honor. Moreover, her narrative draws in Cardenio, the barber, and most importantly, the priest, as witnesses after the fact to the clandestine marriage, a technique that will later help her cement its legality.

Hierarchy, one of the main principles of chivalric romance, is key to Dorotea’s narrative, and she represents the relationship between herself and

71 Cervantes Saavedra, Don Quijote, I, 31; 382.
72 Ibid., I, 28; 349.
73 Ibid., I, 28; 350.
74 Cruz, ‘Dorotea’s Revenge’, 626.
75 Ruiz de Conde, El amor y el matrimonio secreto, 183.
Fernando as essentially feudal. She begins the story with ‘en esta Andalucía hay un lugar de quien toma título un duque (here in Andalucia there is a place from which a duke takes his title)’, not with herself or with her family, because this is a story about lords who betray their vassals.76 The phrase ‘un lugar de’ recalls the opening lines of the novel and Don Quixote’s own obscure hometown, suggesting a comparison between Dorotea and the mad knight and reinforcing the idea that, in her narrative, Dorotea is imitating chivalric romance. Dorotea’s geographic reference also recalls the linkage of character and place common in the romance of chivalry, as in the names Amadís de Gaula, Belianís de Grecia, Palmerín de Inglaterra, Lancelot du Lac, and Cristalían de España. The names Don Quixote de la Mancha and Dulcine del Toboso parody this trope. Dorotea foregrounds Fernando’s origin to show that he disrupts the social contract, a serious breach either in the romance of chivalry or in the world of Don Quixote.

Fernando at once transgresses against the chivalric code and the more verisimilar concept of noblesse oblige. Maurice Keen writes that chivalry requires of the knight both hereditary nobility and personal virtues including prowess, loyalty, generosity, courtesy, and frankness.77 The code of chivalry reinforces existing hierarchies, and the knight owes service to those above and below. The lord-vassal relationship is a cornerstone of chivalric literature: knights owe fealty to their lords and magnanimity to their vassals. Don Quixote’s promise to reward Sancho with an island reflects the idea that knights must share the spoils of victory with their retainers. The relationship between Dorotea and Fernando’s families is one of unequal power but mutual responsibility, and it should be a relationship of mutual respect. Dorotea makes explicit their contract: ‘Tu vasalla soy, pero no tu esclava; ni tiene ni debe tener imperio la nobleza de tu sangre para deshonrar y tener en poco la humildad de la mía (I am your vassal, but not your slave; the nobility of your blood does not have nor should it have the power to dishonor and scorn the humbleness of mine).’78 Dorotea argues that relative to their station, her family is just as worthy of respect as Fernando’s.

In chivalric narratives, exalted lineage usually correlates with virtue. Jesús Rodríguez Velasco, however, has observed what he terms the ‘chivalric fable’, a counter-discourse of personal merit in which knights make their own way in the world, independent of their families.79 Rodríguez Velasco

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76 Don Quijote, I, 28; 347; Cervantes Saavedra, Don Quixote, 230.
77 Keen, Chivalry, 3.
78 Cervantes Saavedra, Don Quijote, I, 28; 351; Cervantes Saavedra, Don Quixote, 233.
79 Rodríguez Velasco, ‘Fábula caballerescas’, 357–58.
also notes that the late medieval bourgeoisie employed the discourse of chivalry against an entrenched nobility: ‘Certain bourgeois groups that accrued a growing economic importance set up new spheres of power by invoking and reinventing discourses on chivalry’. Dorotea seems to favor social mobility in accordance with virtue and, in connection, punishment for those of privileged lineage who defy the chivalry code. Dorotea argues that Fernando has transgressed against his noble blood, revealing that blood to be worthless in the first place. Her narrative also leaves open the possibility of new entry to the nobility. Dorotea's own parents are in the process of climbing the social ladder:

Ellos, en fin, son labradores, gente llana, sin mezcla de alguna raza mal sonante, y como suele decirse, cristianos viejos ranciosos; pero tan ricos, que su riqueza y magnífico trato les va poco a poco adquiriendo nombre de hidalgos, y aun de caballeros (They are, in short, farmers, simple people with no mixture of any objectionable races, what are called the Oldest of Old Christians, but so rich that their wealth and luxurious way of life are slowly gaining for them the name of gentlefolk, even of nobility)

In one sentence, Dorotea transforms her parents from humble farmers to old Christians to caballeros, the same word she applies to Fernando's family. She suggests, moreover, that her parents are more truly noble than Fernando. The word magnífico ('magnificent') suggests not just wealth and luxury but generosity offered to those below on the social ladder, who ideally should exist in a relationship of mutual respect and benefit with their betters.

While wealth and hard work have improved the standing of Dorotea's family, marriage to the son of a Duke would offer greater social prominence. Though the prospect of a marriage between Dorotea and her abuser might seem abhorrent to twenty-first-century readers, Cruz notes that 'life in a convent or marriage to the assailant' would have been the only available means of restoring honor after a rape in early modern Spain. To lay the groundwork for her social redemption, Dorotea convinces Fernando to swear a pact of clandestine marriage that resembles the secret oaths of Perión and Elisena and Amadís and Oriana in Amadís de Gaula. Dorotea echoes Oriana when she declares to Fernando that she would freely grant the sexual favors

80 Rodríguez Velasco, Order and Chivalry, 2.
81 Cervantes Saavedra, Don Quijote, I, 28; 348.
82 Cruz, ‘Dorotea’s Revenge’, 623.
he seeks by violence to a legitimate husband.83 Oriana, though consenting to sex willingly, makes a similar statement during her first sexual encounter with Amadís: ‘Yo haré lo que queréis, y vos hazed como, aunque aquí yerro y pecado parezca, no lo sea ante Dios (I will do what you wish, and you must make it so that, even though it seems to be error and sin, it is not so in God’s eyes)’.84 Dorotea’s diction is likewise religious: ‘Para con Dios seré su esposa (In the sight of God I will be his wife)’.85 Dorotea shares with her chivalric sources the notion of marriage as a spiritual, private matter dependent on consent and requiring no familial or ecclesiastical supervision.

Yet there are differences in the two scenes, the first of which concerns hierarchical relationships. Dorotea refers to Fernando as señor (‘lord’), while Oriana calls Amadís the more affectionate amigo (‘friend’). Amadís, meanwhile, gallantly refers to Oriana as his señora (‘lady’), granting her symbolic power. The second deviation concerns the legality of the private marriage contract. Though the clandestine marriages in Amadís have an ambiguous legal status and are later reinforced through public wedding celebrations, the mid-fourteenth century, when the primitive Amadís emerged, would have been more likely to support a clandestine marriage than post-Council of Trent Spain.

In this episode, Cervantes references the centuries-long debate in Europe over who has the power to make marriage contracts. The needs of individuals who wish to contract marriages of choice conflict with the needs of families, who increasingly in the early modern era assert their right to choose marriage partners for their children. Yet Christian thinkers and humanists pay lip service to consent, as demonstrated in Pedro de Luján’s statement ‘por solo el consentimiento se contrae el matrimonio (matrimony may only be contracted by consent)’.86 Michael Harney writes that Iberian chivalric romance consistently debated the issue: ‘The principal conflict in the narratives occurs between those who regard arrangement of marriage as a patriarchal entitlement and those who [...] glorify marriage as an emotional and sexual bond between two individuals’.87 In medieval Iberia, as Harney explains, the Church took the side of consent, while wealthy families emphasized the needs of kin groups over those of individuals.88 The Siete Partidas (Seven-Part Code) of Alfonso X upheld the validity of marriages contracted on consent

83 Cervantes Saavedra, Don Quijote, I, 28; 354.
84 Rodríguez de Montalvo, Amadís de Gaula, I: 573.
85 Cervantes Saavedra, Don Quijote, I, 28; 353; Cervantes Saavedra, Don Quixote, 235.
86 Luján, Coloquios matrimoniales, 40.
87 Harney, Kinship, 105.
88 Ibid., 113.
alone, especially if those marriages were consummated.\textsuperscript{89} However, medieval legal codes also recognized the difficulties such marriages could present.\textsuperscript{90} Anne J. Cruz explains that ‘although valid, clandestine marriages offered no means of ensuring consent by both parties, since there were no witnesses and, without banns posted or read, no way to investigate impediments’.\textsuperscript{91} In 1563, the Council of Trent invalidated private marriages.\textsuperscript{92}

Iberian chivalric romance, with some exceptions, takes a sympathetic view of characters who engage in clandestine marriage. In Cervantes the situation is more ambivalent, and the question is not resolved until Fernando confirms Dorotea’s version of events in public. The measures Dorotea takes to solemnize the marriage, however, echo chivalric romance. In both \textit{Amadís} and \textit{Don Quixote}, there are witnesses to the promise: Dorotea’s unnamed maid and Elisena’s maid Darioleta. An object with symbolic significance also takes part. Darioleta asks Perión to swear on his sword to marry Elisena, and for Fernando and Dorotea, an image of the Virgin Mary serves the same purpose.\textsuperscript{93} Rings change hands in both clandestine marriages in \textit{Amadís}; Perión gives Elisena his ring, and Oriana gives Amadís her ring. Fernando, similarly, removes a ring from his hand at the conclusion of their meeting and gives it to Dorotea. These rings are pledges of sentiment, but they are not equivalent to modern wedding rings. In chivalric romance, such tokens are meant to identify the giver and receiver to each other. For example, they can be sent with letters to certify the message’s authenticity or given to an illegitimate child to certify his or her paternity.

In order to make her marriage to Fernando a legal reality at the turn of the seventeenth century, Dorotea must engage in a second chivalric imitation. Dorotea volunteers to play the \textit{doncella menesterosa} (‘damsel in distress’) in order to assist the priest and barber in extracting Don Quixote from the wilderness. She changes from her shepherd’s attire into her own clothes and asks Don Quixote to follow her until she releases him. Anne J. Cruz remarks that ‘as a marvelously ingenious storyteller, [Dorotea] spins a delightful novel of chivalry that allegorizes her own amatory experiences’.\textsuperscript{94} For me, Dorotea’s performance as Micomicona is not merely an allegory, but a deliberate attempt to persuade her interlocutors. Yet at first, Dorotea and the priest struggle for authorship. Micomicona was the priest’s idea, and he adds details that mock

\textsuperscript{89} Ruiz de Conde, \textit{El amor y el matrimonio secreto}, 205.
\textsuperscript{90} Hindson, ‘Fernando-Dorotea’, 484.
\textsuperscript{91} Cruz, ‘Dorotea’s Revenge’, 620.
\textsuperscript{92} Hindson, ‘Fernando-Dorotea’, 483.
\textsuperscript{93} Rodríguez de Montalvo, \textit{Amadís de Gaula}, I: 233.
\textsuperscript{94} Cruz, ‘Dorotea’s Revenge’, 617.
Dorotea both implicitly and explicitly. For Laura Gorfkle, when Dorotea imitates the discourse of chivalry, ‘she emphasizes her neediness and her dependence on male authority’.95 As Gorfkle observes, the romance of chivalry often places women in dependent positions. However, chivalric romance also contains many female chivalric characters who disobey convention—not just the famous cross-dressed female knights, but also certain princesses, servants, and enchantresses, whose adventures are on display in the first two chapters of this book. Dorotea seizes control over the Micomicona fiction in order to exploit chivalry’s transformative potential. By the episode’s conclusion, three male readers of chivalry—Cardenio, the priest, and Don Quixote—have pledged their support for her version of the character.

The priest introduces Micomicona to Sancho as a Guinean princess who has come to Spain to ask Don Quixote ‘que le desfaga un tuerto o agravio que un mal gigante le tiene fecho (that he right a wrong or correct an injustice done to her by an evil giant)’.96 The priest’s take on the romance of chivalry shows inexpert knowledge of the genre. He describes the apocryphal Micomicona as the heiress of her kingdom ‘por línea recta del varón (by direct male line)’ when this is impossible, as she would be a female inheritor. The repetitive phrase ‘tuerto o agravio’ could mean anything or nothing. The term *mal gigante* suggests the most banal of chivalric villains. According to Walter Stephens, giants in medieval literature are evil by nature, and their malice has little psychological motive.97 For Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, the giant is a creature of pure appetite.98 The giant of the priest’s imagination has no specific motivation; he is merely evil in a generic way.

The priest imagines a princess who is likewise deviant from the ideal in a generic, superficial way. She hails from Guinea, and the white skin of the woman who incarnates her suggests a connection to Chariclea and Clorinda, the white-skinned African princesses in Heliodorus and Torquato Tasso respectively. The details of Micomicona’s apocryphal biography reference color-based racism and the African slave trade. Sancho imagines enslaving the country’s black inhabitants and turning them, literally, into money: ‘Por negros que sean, los he de volver blancos o amarillos (No matter how black they are, I’ll turn them white and yellow)’.99 I would argue that the details of the priest’s story express not only racism, but also the priest’s unfavorable

95 Gorfkle, ‘The Seduction(s) of Fiction’, 287.
99 Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quijote*, I, 29; 366; Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quixote*, 245.
opinion of the woman who plays Micomicona. The salient idea behind Micomicona's origin is her failure to conform to the white Christian ideal. In Luján's *Coloquios matrimoniales*, the character Eulalia comments: ‘Más quisiera haberme casado con un negro de Guinea cuando me casé con mi marido (I would have rather married a black man from Guinea than my husband).’ The reference to Guinea indicates that the priest considers Dorotea undesirable.

The name ‘Micomicona’ reinforces this notion, as all its potential meanings are misogynist. For modern readers, *mico* suggests a connection to female genitals, though this interpretation is likely an anachronism. For the early modern context, Covarrubias defines *mico* as ‘una especie de mona, pero con cola, y de faciones, y talle más jarifio (a type of monkey, but with a more lovely tail, features, and figure)’. In Iberian romance, Montalvo and Feliciano de Silva use *mono* (‘monkey’) and *ximio* (‘primate’) as insults, usually as markers of ugliness. Covarrubias mentions in his definition of *mona* that sailors often mistake apes for human beings in their travels. In the *Sergas de Esplandián*, monkeys both imitate and transgress against humans. Two large apes steal helmets from Christian knights and repeatedly ‘poníanlos en las cabezas y quitávanlos (put them on their heads and take them off)’. Carlos Sainz de la Maza reads this detail as a ‘comic interlude’ but also notes that in the medieval bestiary tradition, monkeys symbolize the devil. In connection, the ugly dwarf Ximiaca of Feliciano de Silva's *Florisel III*, whose name means monkey-like, mimics chivalric femininity in a perverse manner. This minor character elicits laughter as she promises to release the Christian hero from prison in return for sexual favors. By naming Dorotea ‘Micomicona’, the priest reads her as worthy of mockery and guilty of sin.

Many readers and critics join the priest in his unsympathetic interpretation of Dorotea's rape narrative. Anne J. Cruz notes a sexist trend in criticism on the episode: ‘Nothing that Dorotea says or does convinces [scholars] that she is anything but a vindictive virago hiding under the guise of a meek,
guileless victim’. Márquez Villanueva, for example, writes that Dorotea is immodest. Harry Vélez Quiñones remarks the ‘regrettably misogynistic’ current in Robert M. Flores’s reading of the episode, which characterizes Dorotea as damaged goods, unworthy of becoming Fernando’s legal wife. Robert Hathaway emphasizes Dorotea’s capacity for deception. For many critics, Dorotea is a seductress suspicious in her behavior and rhetoric. The priest’s story of Micomicona amplifies Dorotea’s potential negative qualities, and for Augustin Redondo, Micomicona might truly be larger than life. He finds in the name ‘Micomicón’ a potential connection to the chivalric giant based on the phonetic similarity between Micomicones and Patagones, the famous giants of Primaleón. Redondo speculates that Micomicón might mean ‘giant monkey’. Though Redondo finds utopian potential in the suggestion, it bears mentioning that a land of giants might also be a region of evil, and that a giant monkey would be an undesirable bride for most humans.

The priest, the worst acting partner possible for the improvisational comedia built around Micomicona, offers Dorotea an origin story that promises humiliation. However, using her extensive knowledge of chivalry, she redirects Micomicona’s biography to earn her interlocutors’ sympathy. Dorotea asks Quixote for a favor according to solemn chivalric ritual:

De aquí no me levantaré ¡oh valeroso y esforzado caballero! fasta que la vuestra bondad y cortesía me otorgue un don, el cual redundará en honra y prez de vuestra persona y en pro de la más desconsolada y agraviada doncella que el sol ha visto.

(I shall not rise up from this place, O valiant and brave knight, until thy goodness and courtesy grant me a boon, which will redound to the honor and renown of thy person and the benefit of the most disconsolate and aggrieved damsel e’er seen by the sun.)

Dorotea’s expansive syntax and linguistic archaism reveal knowledge of the form and content of the romance of chivalry. She defines the knight’s identity through the virtues of valor (‘bravery’) and esfuerzo (‘prowess’) and

107 Cruz, ‘Dorotea’s Revenge’, 626.
109 Vélez Quiñones, ‘Barefoot and Fallen’, 282; Flores, ¿Cómo iban a terminar los amoríos de Dorotea y don Fernando?, 463.
110 Hathaway, ‘Dorotea, or the Narrators’ Arts’, 112.
111 Redondo, Otra manera de leer el Quijote, 365.
112 Cervantes Saavedra, Don Quijote, I, 29; 364.
acknowledges his quest for honra (‘honor’) and prez (‘reknown’). Her kneeling posture and her state of mind, described as desconsolada (‘disconsolate’) and agraviada (‘aggrieved’), identify her as a worthy suppliant. After Quixote vows to comply with her request, Dorotea evokes a second chivalric motif by making her favor open-ended, asking that he follow her until she has been avenged.\footnote{Ibid., I, 365.} The don contraignant (‘blind promise’), a familiar chivalric motif, places the knight in Micomicona’s power and gives her a means to abuse him, should she wish to. In connection, those that remain with Don Quixote, including the priest, now must follow her lead.

Dorotea’s favor draws on Torquato Tasso’s Armida as a model, as Frederick de Armas and Pedro Ruiz Pérez have noted.\footnote{De Armas, ‘Cervantes and the Italian Renaissance’, 44; Ruiz Pérez, ‘La hipóstasis de Armida’, 157.} This citation reveals that more is at stake in this episode than giants and princesses. Tasso, like Cervantes, tried to reconcile chivalry and verisimilitude, and through Dorotea, Cervantes reiterates and reconstructs Tasso’s theory of the marvelous. In Canto IV of Tasso’s Gerusalemme Liberata (Jerusalem Delivered, 1581), the Saracen sorceress Armida requests help under false pretenses from Godfrey and his soldiers, hoping to thin the Christian ranks by convincing men to abandon the battlefield. Armida introduces herself as a princess, the daughter of Aribilan and Chariclia of Damascus. The name Chariclia invokes the protagonist of Heliodorus’s Ethiopian History, the white-skinned princess Chariclea from North Africa, whose biography also resembles Micomicona’s. According to Armida, her parents died, leaving her to the mercy of an uncle who usurped power in her kingdom and urged her to marry her objectionable cousin. Though not a giant, this man has a ‘misshapen’ exterior, ‘base mind’, ‘proud heart’, and ‘greedy and burning desires’.\footnote{Tasso, Jerusalem Delivered, 4:46.} Some of the details Dorotea adds to the priest’s Micomicona story, including her status as an orphan and the threat of unequal marriage to a partner who is psychologically but not physically monstrous, closely resemble Armida’s story. Dorotea, not the priest, is the potential reader and imitator of Tasso.

It is possible that the invocation of Armida’s deceitful request to Godfrey indicates that Dorotea’s cause is not just. Ruiz Pérez describes Armida as ‘the feminine image of evil, seduction, and deceit’.\footnote{Ruiz Pérez, ‘La hipóstasis de Armida’, 157.} However, Dorotea’s intentions are substantially different from those of the Saracen sorceress. Armida leads Christian soldiers away from holy war to a garden of false
delights. Dorotea wants to lead Don Quixote away from a wilderness where literary tropes and fantasies intersect, causing harm to those who indulge in them, including herself. Armida sickens her victims, but Dorotea leads Quixote toward sleep, food, and the recovery of his health.

Armida and Dorotea may have different moral polarities, but they resemble each other as figures of the meanings and uses of fiction. Critics have understood Armida as a crucial articulation point for Tasso’s debate over the deceptive nature of fiction in Gerusalemme Liberata and Discorsi sul poema eroico (Discourses on the Heroic Poem, 1594). Tasso wrote the early portion of the discourses at the same time at which he composed his heroic poem, which he later revised as Gerusalemme Conquistata (Jerusalem Conquered) according to Aristotelian criteria for verisimilitude. For Tasso, the primary struggle concerns the dubious reputation of the marvelous, which existed both in the ancient epic he sought to imitate and in the romances of chivalry that influenced his depictions of knighthood and military action. Chivalric fiction itself is not immune to the preference for truth: books of chivalry, including Amadís de Gaula, often pretend to be histories. 117 In the Italian context, epic poetry and chivalric romance are difficult to distinguish. Boiardo’s Orlando Innamorato (Orlando in Love) and Ariosto’s Orlando Furioso (The Frenzy of Orlando), both of which Tasso terms heroic poems, freely intermingle tropes from classical epic and chivalric romance.

Tasso, who looked to epic as his privileged model, developed a concept of the Christian marvelous in the Discorsi that sought to include fanciful motifs while observing Aristotelian rules. 118 Tasso found the marvelous necessary to produce ‘wonder’ and ‘delight’, but cautioned that writers should ground it in verisimilitude:

The poet ought to attribute actions that far exceed human power to God, to his angels, or demons, or to those granted power by God or by demons, for example, saints, wizards, and fairies. Such actions, if considered in themselves, will seem marvelous; nay, they are commonly called miracles. But if regarded in terms of their agent’s efficacy and power, they will seem verisimilar. 119

117 Fogelquist, El Amadís y el género de la historia fingida, 6–9.
119 Tasso, Discourses on the Heroic Poem, 38.
Armida, as an enchantress, inhabits Tasso’s space of dubious verisimilitude. For Lynn Enterline, she allegorizes and distorts Tasso’s own narrative project.\textsuperscript{120} For Lawrence Rhu, Armida represents ‘the temptation that lays traps for the affective faculty’.\textsuperscript{121} According to Tasso, it requires only a small suspension of disbelief to accept the idea that wizards and enchantresses can do magic. Armida thus suggests one way to reconcile the desire for the marvelous with the need for verisimilitude: sorceresses are inherently believable.\textsuperscript{122} Modern readers, however, are not likely to agree with Tasso on the relative realism of wizards and fairies. Cervantes’s Dorotea poses a solution with greater longevity in the modern novel through the use of chivalry as a metaphor for ‘real’ life, rather than presenting chivalry as verisimilar in and of itself.

Like Tasso, Cervantes’s canon of Toledo expresses ambivalence about fiction that announces itself as different from reality. It is possible that Cervantes had Tasso in mind when he developed the conversation between the canon and the priest in \textit{Don Quixote} Part I.\textsuperscript{123} According to Anthony Cascardi, the conversation references the search in classical texts, especially Aristotle, for ‘normative guidelines that could be used to regulate contemporary literary practice’.\textsuperscript{124} Similarly, Forcione argues that Cervantes sought to reconcile the appealing features of medieval romance with the Aristotelian rules in vogue at the turn of the seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{125} The canon refers to romances of chivalry as harmful to the nation, criticizing them for heterogeneity, bad style, and lack of verisimilitude.\textsuperscript{126} This character is a failed chivalric writer, and perhaps his opinion indexes his frustration with his own inability to reconcile chivalry to the present moment. Yet neither the priest nor the canon, both vocal opponents of chivalry in \textit{Don Quixote} Part I, can resist the powers of romance, and they listen attentively when Don Quixote tells his own story of the Caballero del Lago (‘Knight of the Lake’), which contains a boiling lake and an enchanted palace made of gold. Don Quixote’s take on the romance of chivalry may provide the wonder and delight Tasso sought, but it is Dorotea’s version that reconciles the real and the fictional.

\textsuperscript{120} Enterline, \textit{The Tears of Narcissus}, 115.
\textsuperscript{121} Rhu, \textit{The Genesis of Tasso’s Narrative Theory}, 158.
\textsuperscript{122} Tasso, \textit{Discourses on the Heroic Poem}, 14–15.
\textsuperscript{124} Cascardi, \textit{Cervantes, Literature, and the Discourse of Politics}, 43–44.
\textsuperscript{125} Forcione, \textit{Cervantes, Aristotle, and the Persiles}, 12.
\textsuperscript{126} Cervantes Saavedra, \textit{Don Quijote}, I, 47: 564.
Micomicona’s plight is not only Armida’s—it is also Dorotea’s own, drawn from her previous narration to the other characters. Critics generally agree that Dorotea reinterprets her personal misfortunes during her performance as Micomicona. David Quint observes that ‘the reader sees the parallel between Dorotea’s real-life situation and the chivalric scenario invented for the benefit of Don Quijote—Don Fernando is like a wicked giant, she is a genuine damsel-in-distress’.

John Jay Allen characterizes the meeting between Quixote and Dorotea as ‘a confrontation between a mad knight playing the part of a mad knight and a damsel in distress playing a damsel in distress’.

Ruth El Saffar states that ‘as Micomicona, Dorotea repeats the role she played for the priest and barber’. For Quint, Allen, and El Saffar, the correspondence between appearance and reality are key to Dorotea’s rendition of Micomicona, while for De Armas and Ruiz, literary imitation is the most important feature of the performance. For me, it is precisely the balance of imitation and verisimilitude that creates Dorotea’s personality as an author-figure. While it is true that many stories about women in chivalric romance include predatory men or predatory giants, in my opinion, Dorotea bends the details of Armida’s story toward her own biography in a way that is meant to be read as deliberate. As a result of this closure of the gap between literature and life, her story is more convincing to her listeners than Quixote’s ‘Caballero del Lago’, which contains, coincidentally, a woman who is preternaturally silent.

Dorotea’s most successful use of chivalry as metaphor occurs when she renders Micomicona’s giant enemy an echo for Fernando. She gives the monster a name—Pandafilando de la Fosca Vista—and describes him to Don Quixote as a ‘descomunal gigante, señor de una grande ínsula, que casi alinda con nuestro reino (monstrous giant, lord of a large island that almost touches our kingdom)’. Pandafilando’s uncommonly large size and his geographical proximity to the kingdom of Micomicón reflect the lord-vassal relationship between Fernando and Dorotea’s families. The term ínsula echoes Don Quixote’s own promise to reward Sancho and gestures to the language of social class and obligation present in Dorotea’s autobiographical narrative. Dorotea has primed her audience to see Fernando as evil and Dorotea as a victim who merits restitution.

127 Quint, Cervantes’ Novel of Modern Times, 5.
128 Allen, Don Quixote, Hero or Fool?, 69.
129 El Saffar, Beyond Fiction, 70.
130 Cervantes Saavedra, Don Quijote, I, 30; 373; Cervantes Saavedra, Don Quixote, 251.
Dorotea’s description of Pandafilando, moreover, clarifies that the nature of his monstrosity is psychological, not physical, placing her narrative more clearly in the territory of metaphor. His name seems to reference a deformity, but Dorotea explains that ‘aunque tiene los ojos en su lugar y derechos, siempre mira al revés, como si fuese bizco, y esto lo hace él de maligno (although his eyes are in the correct place, he always looks the wrong way round, as if he were cross-eyed, and does this out of malice)’. Pandafilando’s propensity to turn his head and stare reflects Fernando’s sinister lust. In further connection to Dorotea, Micomicona resists the giant’s advances because he represents an unequal marriage. Here Dorotea inverts the relative social positions of herself and her seducer; Pandafilando is too base a partner for Micomicona. Dorotea may be Fernando’s economic inferior, but she is his superior in virtue. Micomicona flees Pandafilando’s endiablada fuerza (‘devilish power’) to seek help in Spain, just as Dorotea fled her home to seek recognition of the clandestine marriage. The word endiablada references the chivalric giant’s usual status as pagan or infidel, and fuerza references his physical strength. However, these words also have a metaphorical application to the Christian Fernando. By ignoring the contract of marriage, sworn before the icon of the Virgin Mary, Fernando has violated the terms of his faith. Fuerza, moreover, has a legal meaning as the use of force against someone else’s will and is one of the most common Golden Age words for rape. The word indexes the force Fernando employed when he invaded Dorotea’s bedroom, physically restrained her, and coerced her into sexual activity.

By presenting her own rape as a story about an evil giant and helpless princess, Dorotea displays her skill in reading her audience. Dorotea’s interlocutors will not believe a story about rape in a bourgeois household, but the archetypes of the giant and the princess draw on her audience’s habitual reading material and earn immediate recognition. Yet Dorotea’s performance as Micomicona also reveals her intellectual limits and her need for collaboration. Dorotea has Micomicona disembark at Osuna, her home city, which lacks a port. Don Quixote, who has apparently had the outward-looking education recommended for men, points this out. Women’s education looks inward, to the home, the family, and the spirit, and even

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132 *Don Quijote*, I, 252; 374; Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quixote*, 252.
133 Covarrubias’s legal definition of fuerza comprises not just rape but any violence that goes against the voluntad (‘will’) of a victim. It applies to simple assault and abduction as well as sexual assaults. *Tesoro de la lengua castellana*, 418r.
Dorotea’s mercantile activities do not take her beyond the family farm. She may simply not know the names of Spanish port cities, as she would be unlikely to find them in either devotional books or romances of chivalry, whose geography tends toward the exotic. It is ironic, but indicative of the limits on women’s education, that Dorotea can cite the speech of a character from Italian romance and yet does not seem to know whether her own city borders the sea. The priest covers for Dorotea’s mistake, showing his own knowledge of the cities of Spain by surmising that Micomicona must have disembarked in Málaga. The priest’s intervention could be taken as officious, or even as an attempt to reassert control over the narrative. However, it could also be taken as collaboration. Fiction requires readers, and plays require spectators. Luscinda lacked such sympathetic interlocutors, but the priest and the other characters present during the Micomicona scene play an essential role as a receptive audience. Indeed, at the inn, the priest proves himself a true ally.

Dorotea’s convenient fiction of Micomicona removes the need for her interlocutors to choose between supporting the claims of a peasant woman against a male aristocrat or blaming a victim for crimes perpetrated against her. Both the priest and Don Quixote accept the romance version of Dorotea’s plight, and each helps her in his own way. While sleepwalking at the inn, Don Quixote champions Micomicona by beheading the skin of wine he believes to be Pandafilando. The priest provides more concrete assistance by serving as a symbolic church authority to help legalize her clandestine marriage. His is the final speech made to Fernando, the argument that at last persuades the nobleman: ‘Si se preciaba de caballero y de cristiano, que no podía hacer otra cosa que cumplirle la palabra dada; y que, cumpliéndosela, cumpliría con Dios y satisfaría a las gentes discretas (If he valued himself as a gentleman and a Christian, he could do nothing but keep the promise he had made; by keeping it, he would keep his faith with God and satisfy all discerning people)” The priest’s speech references themes from Dorotea’s narrative, namely the spiritually valid clandestine marriage and Fernando’s special responsibilities as a caballero. The priest, like Dorotea, represents an unequal marriage as the lesser evil.

In his newfound support for Dorotea, the priest mirrors the hermit Nasciano of Amadís de Gaula, who persuaded Lisuarte to recognize Amadís and Oriana’s union. During the civil war, Oriana confesses all to the hermit.

134 Cervantes Saavedra, Don Quijote, I, 30; 375.
135 Ibid., I, 36; 454; Cervantes Saavedra, Don Quixote, 319.
and he helps her bargain with the king.\textsuperscript{136} The priest likewise plays marriage broker in Cervantes. Moreover, he appears to have exchanged his initial negative opinion of Dorotea for one that renders her exemplary, telling Fernando that ‘pocas o ninguna se le podían igualar (few, if any, women were her equal). Laura Gorfkle points out the importance of the priest in persuading Fernando, and for her, this fact signals the defeat of Dorotea’s agency.\textsuperscript{137} I disagree with Gorfkle and join Anne J. Cruz in counting the recognition of the marriage as a victory for Dorotea.\textsuperscript{138} Martha García, in a similar vein, reads Dorotea’s story as that of the triumph of all women: ‘Dorotea shows that women too possess passion, courage, and mental capacity’.\textsuperscript{139} Cervantes defeats social convention by allowing Dorotea to accomplish a feat of literary magic, convincing her fellow chivalric readers to prefer her narrative to others. Even if, as an early modern woman, Dorotea has only incomplete agency, as her society forces her to defer to men in many circumstances, it cannot be denied that through the Micomicona fiction, Dorotea displays both a talent for authorship and the ability to construct her own narrative authority.

Dorotea’s success as an author, in turn, leaves the way clear for Luscinda and Cardenio to conduct their own narrative and their own marriage as they see fit. Yvonne Jehenson states of \textit{Don Quixote} Part I more generally that ‘the doubling of characters results in a mirror effect’.\textsuperscript{140} David Quint agrees that Dorotea and Luscinda face two versions of the same problem, ‘male egotism, its relationship to codes of love and honor, and its concomitant victimization of women’.\textsuperscript{141} At the end of the episode, the fates of the two pairs resemble each other and their privileged literary model, the romance of chivalry. The final book of \textit{Amadís de Gaula} contains the marriage not just of Amadís and Oriana but of all their friends as well, matched into neat, happy pairs. Even if Dorotea’s partner is unworthy of her, she has nonetheless succeeded in bringing about the conclusion that she hoped for with the chivalry-inspired clandestine marriage. Cardenio and Luscinda, for their part, have little to lament.

With Luscinda and Dorotea, Cervantes sketches the outline of a community of women readers who might benefit from shared literacy. Luscinda and Dorotea are collaborative readers, though they are not friends or even

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{136} Rodríguez de Montalvo, \textit{Amadís de Gaula}, II: 1114–15.
\item \textsuperscript{137} Gorfkle, ‘The Seduction(s) of Fiction’, 290.
\item \textsuperscript{138} Cruz, ‘Dorotea’s Revenge’, 628.
\item \textsuperscript{139} García, \textit{La función de los personajes femeninos}, 77.
\item \textsuperscript{140} Jehenson, ‘The Dorotea-Fernando/Luscinda-Cardenio Episode’, 210.
\item \textsuperscript{141} Quint, \textit{Cervantes’s Novel of Modern Times}, 22.
\end{itemize}
acquaintances. If Luscinda had not resisted a formal betrothal to Fernando, he would not have been free to recognize his clandestine marriage to Dorotea. If Dorotea had not shared the gossip she heard about the failed betrothal, Cardenio might never have forgiven Luscinda. The resolutions of both episodes have subversive qualities, but together, the implications are even more striking. Cervantes suggests in Part I that communities of women readers are greater than the sum of their parts. The women readers of Part I of Don Quixote are masters of metaphor, of the revelation of truth through art. Together, women have the power to reconcile literature and life that male readers and writers of chivalry seek but rarely find.