

DESPERATELY SEEKING DON FRANCISCO: A REVIEW-ARTICLE OF PABLO JAURALDE'S *FRANCISCO DE QUEVEDO (1580-1645)*

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For years Quevedo scholars have lamented the fact that there has been no major biography of Don Francisco from which we could draw for our own studies of his brilliantly jumbled *oeuvre*. After the ritualized attack on Astrana Marín's unreliable *Vida turbulenta de Quevedo*, most specialists have tended to send their readers off to consult José Manuel Blecuá's biographical sketch in his *Poesía original*. While judiciously solid in most respects, the latter nevertheless tends to leave readers hungry for more detail about various stages of Quevedo's life.

During the eighties many *quevedistas* caught wind of the fact that Pablo Jauralde was working on a full-scale biography of Don Francisco and that he was doing it the right way—that is, by patiently gathering every conceivable shred of evidence available in the pertinent archives. A good glimpse of the thoroughness of his efforts was made available when Jauralde published *Quevedo y su familia* in collaboration with James Crosby in 1992.

When *Francisco de Quevedo (1580-1645)* appeared in 1998, I was overjoyed at the chance of finally being able to explore every nook and cranny of the life of this author who continues to fascinate me as do few others. After sporadically sampling from its 1,071 pages once it reached my university's library, I finally was able to read it from cover to cover during the summer of 2000.¹

I will state from the outset that many of my expectations regarding Jauralde's biography were met. As will happen with most readers, I was left stunned by the thoroughness of Jauralde's research. We are dealing here with a painstaking effort of the type which is becoming increasingly impossible in academe's drive toward fast-food-like "productivity" (especially in this country). The patience, energy, and dedication necessary to root out the astonishing quantity of material found in Jauralde's book are simply beyond the capacity of most scholars working today.²

Such a thoroughness, however, does not come without a price. And here I will begin to allude to some of the problems which inevitably arise in a project of such magnitude.

On finishing *Francisco . . .*, one cannot help getting the impression that the sheer monumentality of the material gathered often tends to over-

whelm Jauralde in his efforts to come to terms with his subject. Attempting to reconstruct *anybody's* life, even a rather uneventful one, is no mean feat. But when trying to impose a vaguely "Apollonian" order on such a vexingly "Dionysian" entity as Don Francisco, the challenge is breathtaking.

Making it even more daunting is the whole problem of one's audience. To wit: how much detail is appropriate? Presumably the specialists will want it to be abundant and vivid and the non-specialists somewhat (or considerably) less so. Which group should the biographer favor?

And let us not forget that this is a *literary* biography. How much attention should be paid to the actual works produced by the author in question? Do we offer synthesizing over-views or do we delve into their complex inner beauties? Here, too, we run into the big problem of the audience. Do we want to satisfy fully our *quevedista* colleagues or do we have in mind a kind of educated "general reader" who may have been bitten by the Quevedo bug as a student and who now wishes to go back to read about his fascinating life? While the two groups are not necessarily light-years away from each other, insights sufficiently new to please the specialists may make the eyes of the lay reader glaze over after awhile.

My own impression is that Jauralde's work ends up "falling between two stools." On the one hand, the level of biographical detail is such that the general reader will find him or herself overwhelmed.³ On the other, the specialist might end up peeved at, or bored with, some of the short-hand treatments given several prominent works. The specialist also might feel put off by Jauralde's failure to engage the large critical corpus surrounding Quevedo's work. (With few exceptions, Jauralde does not refer to specific critical assessments of the works he reviews.)

Jauralde could respond, of course, that had he made frequent reference to that imposing scholarly edifice, his biography would have ended up another few hundred pages longer than it already is—thus sparking even more disparagement. Still, as specialists survey some of Jauralde's analyses of Quevedo's works, they will sometimes find themselves asking why he does not refer to certain key critical texts.

Ultimately, it is the true Quevedo *fanatic* who will probably be most gratified by Jauralde's effort. She or he will only revel in this excruciatingly detailed reconstruction of virtually every year of Quevedo's life. The reader *truly gets to know Quevedo* in a way that can prove mesmerizing. Moreover, the work provides an extraordinary feel for the sociopolitical texture of the period in question. We are walked through the mind-boggling intricacies of court life in a way that will also be useful for anyone working on a wide range of Quevedo's contemporaries.

Which brings me to the overall image of Quevedo projected by Jauralde's text. On the one hand, Jauralde militantly eschews the roman-

ticizing or hagiographical approach to Quevedo's life that one finds spread throughout the critical corpus. Indeed, his approach is a demythifying one—clear-eyed and unsentimental. But this is precisely what makes the final effect of the work so astonishing. That is to say, thanks to Jauralde's sober reconstruction of Quevedo's life, deflating the legend at every turn, Quevedo still ends up appearing "larger than life."

And here we come to a yardstick which many readers of this biography will want to apply to it, perhaps unjustly. Quevedo does strike many of us as an "enigma" to be solved. There seem to be so many contradictions, so many parts that do not fit together comfortably. (Quevedo of the exquisite love lyrics versus Quevedo the horrible misogynist; Quevedo the ranting anti-Semite versus Quevedo the serene neo-Stoic philosopher—the list goes on and on.) Many would like to see, as in physics, a "unified Quevedo theory" that would somehow help the entire picture hang together in a way that made more sense. If anyone would seem to be in a position to pull off this feat, it would be Pablo Jauralde. Nonetheless, that epiphanic moment we are all waiting for never occurs. No where, in brief, does Jauralde launch a "final assault" on the famous "enigma de Quevedo."

This could no doubt be interpreted as a sign of Jauralde's judiciousness. One might say that to propose an ambitious "master theory" would constitute a mere publicity stunt designed to garner the attention of the middle-brow reading public. (¡"El misterio de Quevedo, finalmente desvelado!") Still, even those who think of themselves in more exalted terms (i.e., as "specialists") could end up feeling that Jauralde did not go far enough with the wealth of information at his disposal, that he in fact was not able to see the forest for the trees.⁴ Be that as it may, in the pages that follow I will strive to point out key areas of Jauralde's valuable contribution to our understanding of Quevedo.

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We all knew that Quevedo grew up in the court of Felipe II in Madrid and that his family was originally from "la Montaña." Jauralde, however, meticulously reconstructs not only Don Francisco's family tree but all the interstices of that courtly world within which his parents moved (65-88). As it turns out, there was an entire clique within the royal palace with its roots firmly planted in "la Montaña," thus providing Quevedo, from infancy, with a front-row seat from which he could observe the inner workings of the structures of power.

Of all the relatives with whom Quevedo had interactions during his early life, the one who stands out above all others is his maternal grandmother, Felipa de Espinosa. A well-connected and moneyed matriarch, Felipa described herself as "de la cámara de la serenísima infanta doña

Isabel" (70). Jauralde's analysis shows that she was very close to the royal family in its entirety. Courtly ambitions led to her marrying off her daughter, María de Santibáñez, to Pedro de Quevedo, our author's father, because of his more distinguished blood line. Indeed, Jauralde points out that of all the branches of Don Francisco's family tree, the Espinosa one is that which can not be documented so clearly (72-73).

Jauralde does a great job in showing how the entire network of family relations was well-entrenched in the middle levels of the royal palace's bureaucracy ("mayordomos, aposentadores, secretarios, escribanos, azafatas, guardadamas, contadores," 89). All of this, however, came about *without* their forming part of the upper nobility.

From this entire group, the individuals who stand out the most are Agustín de Villanueva and his son, Jerónimo. The former was married to one of Quevedo's aunts on his mother's side, Ana Díez de Villegas, and became Quevedo's "curador" after the death of his mother in 1600. Jerónimo was later to become the "Protonotario de Aragón" during the reign of Felipe IV, a political position second only to that of the Conde-Duque de Olivares (90). Quevedo, as a member of the Conde-Duque's team of advisors, would have sporadic dealings with Jerónimo during the later stages of his life, sometimes in not particularly pleasant circumstances. The crucial thing to note is that Quevedo made an effort not to appear to be too close to the Villanueva family because of the persistent rumors of its *converso* origins (90).⁵

While some readers might chafe at the level of detail with which Jauralde delves into Quevedo's family background, it nonetheless provides an illuminating warm-up for our encounter with what is one of the fundamental achievements of his biography. All of us knew that Quevedo was very much of a "political animal," but only after reading Jauralde can we truly understand the true depth of Don Francisco's entanglement in the courtly intrigue of his age. Indeed, I would go so far as to suggest that if one had to choose a "real Quevedo" over all the Quevedos with which we are confronted, it would be the one who is utterly immersed in political activity throughout his life. The infancy and adolescence Quevedo spent within the halls of power would appear to have programmed him for just that level of involvement.

There are two figures who loom large over all the others in the story of Quevedo the man of politics: Pedro Téllez Girón, Duque de Osuna, and Gaspar de Guzmán, Conde-Duque de Olivares. Jauralde's patient tracing of Quevedo's complex relationship with the first of the two contains material that will prove new to many readers. The friendship between Quevedo and Osuna was forged at a very early age—in Alcalá—and in colorful circumstances. There is substantial documentation which indicates that the two were involved as allies in a duel in 1599 (perhaps

related to amorous matters) and that they were forced to flee to Seville as a result. It seems that Quevedo was subsequently on the point of suffering a severe punishment, perhaps even the death penalty, and that he was only saved by his family's pulling strings with the Duquesa de Lerma.

These early escapades cemented a bond which would eventually lead to Quevedo's being recruited by Osuna to be his advisor when he was named Viceroy of Sicily, and later, of Naples. Jauralde's analysis shows that rather than getting himself involved in the rich cultural life available to him in Italy, Quevedo dedicated himself heart and soul to being Osuna's political agent in the widest variety of contexts imaginable (339). Part of the attraction had to do with the Duque's bold approach to using Spanish military might in the Mediterranean.

Indeed, we will have occasion to return to this intrinsically bellicose Quevedo later on. Suffice it to say now that since Osuna embodied Quevedo's ideal of a strong imperialist leader, he was willing to do anything necessary to keep Osuna in his key political position. Jauralde discusses Quevedo's involvement in extensive bribery when sent back to Madrid in 1615 (322-23) as Osuna's representative. While most of us had some idea about this shadier side of Quevedo's political career, I think it comes as a surprise to find out that our author, following a common practice of the time, very likely kept a percentage of the money with which he was busy "greasing palms" (362).

After the whole episode of the "conjuración de Venecia," Quevedo's usefulness as a political agent is exhausted, and a slow distancing from his friend becomes evident.⁶ And while they did see each other during Osuna's travails and subsequent fall into disgrace, Jauralde is at least willing to consider the possibility, aired at the time, that Quevedo had sold out Osuna to keep himself from getting into more trouble than he already was (452). Whether Quevedo did so or not, it is still quite remarkable how he was able to avoid the misfortunes rained down on his patron and many of his cohorts.

So dextrous was Quevedo that he soon was recruited into the political team being assembled by the Conde-Duque. Here, too, it would seem that a certain "idealism" motivated Quevedo's initial involvement with such a powerful political figure. One need only read his "Epistola satirica y censoria..." to realize that Quevedo took quite seriously the notion of a renewed, austere, and fundamentally war-oriented Spain. And to that end, he was willing to do the work the Conde-Duque had hired him to do—that is, as a propagandist and "attack dog" of the type which still abounds in our own political world (474, 477, 499, 524, 574).

But as the years went by, Quevedo felt himself increasingly ill at ease with his role as Olivares's agent, especially as the *privado* began to adopt policies which irritated—or even outraged—our author. Jauralde does

fine work in displaying all the tension-ridden complexities which characterized this relationship of mutual self-interest (542). Olivares needed Quevedo's prestige as a writer and expertise as a polemicist, but Don Francisco was perfectly capable of acting like a "loose cannon" when the spirit moved him. The exemplary case (to which we will return later) is Quevedo's becoming the prime opponent of a project dear to Olivares's heart—that is, the naming of Santa Teresa de Jesús as co-patron of Spain.

As for the definitive rift which led to Quevedo's imprisonment, Jauralde is cautious when trying to arrive at an explanation. After rehearsing an entire gamut of reasons for Quevedo's growing antagonism toward Olivares (625), Jauralde centers his attention on the strong friendship that developed between Quevedo and the Duque de Medinaceli. One of an entire circle of powerful *grandes* who chafed under the Conde-Duque's rule and who eventually formed a network of clandestine opposition, Medinaceli's close ties with Quevedo eventually proved to be the kiss of death for him.

To the present day no documentary evidence has surfaced which would reveal the precise reasons for Quevedo's being accused of treason. Jauralde himself tends to agree with John Elliott's hypothesis that the devastating *Monopantos* episode in *La Hora de todos* might have been Quevedo's final undoing (776). A copy of it in Olivares's hands would have given more than enough reason to throw Quevedo in jail without ever having to spell out charges. I should add that Jauralde is sure that documents relating to the arrest and imprisonment were among those burned by Olivares as he was being deposed (764).

While painting his detailed portrait of the political Quevedo, Jauralde is also conscientious about showing how Quevedo's literary production was closely imbricated with his courtly maneuvering. Like most of his peers, Quevedo used the dedications of his works as part of his efforts to gain favor within powerful circles. But in his case, this practice was more complex. As Jauralde explains, Quevedo often dedicated his works *without having written them yet*:

primero las dedica, luego las escribe; al cabo, puede volver a dedicarlas. Preliminares, dedicatorias y fechas se acoplan bonitamente a las circunstancias, o se tergiversan para acomodarlas al mecenas de turno.
(399)

Indeed, timing was of the essence throughout his career, as we also witness how Quevedo decided what to publish and when, depending on the image(s) he was trying to project at a particular moment. He often circulated works in manuscript form to build up his profile as an up-and-coming court wit and talented writer but stopped short of publishing them if he felt that they would make him vulnerable to attack. That at-

tack could come from the many enemies he earned himself or from a more ominous source—that is, the censors of the Inquisition. An archetypal example of this phenomenon is what occurred with the first three *Sueños*. While there are signs that Quevedo was tempted to send them to press, he held back for fear of drawing the attention of the censors at a delicate point in his career (234-35).

Quevedo's fears would subsequently prove to be well-founded, as all students of the *Sueños* are well aware. What we might not know is the extent of Quevedo's jockeying throughout his life to avoid the stigma of being labeled "damnatus" (523). Jauralde does well in recounting the incredibly complicated game of cat-and-mouse Quevedo played with the Inquisition. Here again matters of timing come up (Quevedo holds off publishing *Jugetes* until the Index of 1631 has been finalized, 591) as well as connections (for awhile, one of Quevedo's close acquaintances, Andrés de Pacheco, is running the Inquisition, 513). More importantly, Quevedo's belonging to Olivares's inner circle also kept the Inquisition at bay (622). Indeed, his mortal enemies (e.g., those responsible for the *Tribunal de la justa venganza*) were infuriated by the way his political ties kept him off the hook of the Santo Oficio.

Lest we be too cheered by this image of an oppositional Quevedo, brilliantly outmaneuvering the "guardianes de la fe," we also must take into account that he actively collaborated with the Inquisition so as to remodel his published work to its liking (581). Hence, for example, the elimination of *El buscón* from the *Jugetes* (581). And then we have Quevedo's request that *all* of his work published prior to 1630 be collected by the Inquisition and destroyed (621)—a self-serving tactic designed to frustrate those who wanted to use the Santo Oficio to ruin him.

Yes, in most cases we are talking about pirate editions of his works, published in the mid-1620s. If they were, in fact, unauthorized editions, why not have the Inquisition go ahead and scoop them up?

Here Jauralde helps us by delving into the murky complexities of Quevedo's trip to Aragón as part of the royal retinue during which Roberto Duport (in Zaragoza) and others mysteriously begin to publish works such as *Política de Dios*, the *Sueños*, and *El buscón* (506-07, 516). Jauralde ends up speculating that there was some complicity on Quevedo's part (especially in the case of *Política*).⁷

Quevedo also displayed a multi-faceted strategy in his decisions regarding the distribution of his writings in manuscript form. Early in his career, Quevedo would allow his popular-oriented *romances* to circulate freely, but held onto his love poetry and his politico-moral poems. The first time he assembled his more serious poetry for distribution was with his *Heráclito cristiano*. This work, which no doubt displays an authentic *crise de conscience*, is also launched at a moment when Quevedo is striv-

ing to clean up his image so as to further his career at Court.

And here we arrive at one of the most intriguing preoccupations in Quevedo's career as a writer and public figure. Our author had made his mark very early as a talented satirist. He no doubt basked in the piquant notoriety it brought to him. But that same notoriety was a distinct liability for someone who very much wanted to be taken seriously in intellectual and political circles. Indeed, the story of Quevedo's life is a very instructive lesson for those scholars who might forget the very peculiar space occupied by satire at the time. The fame it conferred on a writer was double-edged in that it constantly threatened to consign him not only to the bin of "minor" writers, but to that specific one looked on askance because of its "maldicencia."

While it is clear from Jauralde's work that Quevedo was a true "book-worm" who managed to acquire an enormous and wide-ranging culture, it is also obvious that many of his early forays into humanistic and philological matters (e.g., his correspondence with Justus Lipsius) were meant, in large part, to cultivate his profile as a "serious intellectual" (148). Later in life, Quevedo's bolstering of his image as neo-Stoical writer (1630s) would also appear, in part, to have been part of his effort to shake off the fool's cap some were trying to leave firmly ensconced on his head (682). It is not that his neo-Stoical works were necessarily "insincere"; rather it is a matter of recognizing that they also helped to clean up his image.

Indeed, as Jauralde points out, the metaphor of cleansing is one which could be taken literally within the mind-set of the period. In reviewing the savage attacks leveled against Quevedo in the *Tribunal de la justa venganza*, Jauralde points out that its authors relish pointing out the "dirty" side of Quevedo's writings:

ni le será posible mudar estilo, porque además de ser inclinación suya el tratar de esas cosas, si le fue dificultoso al viejo aprender nuevo lenguaje, cuánto más le será al que es viejo y envejecido en hablar suciedades, siendo su boca un hediondo albañar de pútridos excrementos. (705)

While showing how these attacks link up with the concerns of late humanism, Jauralde very perceptively asserts that "el estatuto de la creación literaria no había alcanzado a distanciarse de la vida real: quien pintaba suciedades era sucio; quien escribía jergas era delincuente, etc." (706).

Oddly enough, this constant worry about being tagged as a foul-mouthed satirist never kept Quevedo from practicing his satirical art. Indeed, even while in prison in San Marcos de León, Quevedo continued to produce sharp, off-color texts while simultaneously building up his "serious" side by writing such works as *Providencia de Dios* and *La caída*

para levantarse de San Pablo. We would seem to be dealing here with a kind of compulsiveness: although Quevedo knew that it damaged his aspirations as an "autor grave," he simply could not stop himself from penning trenchant and often malodorous satire.

Despite all of his social pretensions, Quevedo at times seemed to position himself within the courtly world as a species of "hombre de placer." Jauralde points to the texts Quevedo produced during the royal trip to Aragón and Cataluña of 1627 and comes to this conclusion: "Es demasiado probable que el escritor oficiara de bufón intelectual en la Corte itinerante" (511). The very facility with which Quevedo "got away with" some of his more daring satire seems to be related to the traditional license afforded to the buffoon. The authors of the *Tribunal* do not hesitate to refer to his "acostumbrada bufonería," and then make the following curious observation:

la rabiosa y mordaz saña que tiene contra los que gobiernan, haciéndolos pupileros y maestros enseñadores de los demonios, en que queda conocido el poco respeto y la mucha desvergüenza con que los trata. Solo tiene en su favor el ver que se lo consienten y no lo ahorcan por mordaz libelador de toda la república en común y de todas las dignidades en particular. (708)

His very physical appearance would probably have helped in cultivating that jester-like aura.

The willingness to "play the fool" does obviously enter into conflict with other fundamental aspects of Quevedo's character and ideology. And here I would like to explore the whole matter of what we might call the "essential Quevedo" that slowly emerges in Jauralde's text. On doing so, we run squarely into that bundle of contradictions which cry out for theorization.

First, we must take into account Quevedo's true penchant for social-climbing. At the forefront we find his incessant legal efforts to establish himself as "señor de la Torre de Juan Abad." Jauralde explores in mind-boggling detail all the legal suits in which Quevedo was embroiled throughout his life with this tiny "lugar de la Mancha." And although at times the reader may end up being as tired of them as Don Francisco himself must have been, the reconstruction Jauralde carries out shows just how central these aristocratic aspirations actually were.

The other major facet of this problematic is the considerable effort spent on securing membership in the Order of Santiago. Here, too, Jauralde helps us to understand the complex maneuvering in which Quevedo engaged to achieve this objective. Symptomatically, his "knighting" came on the heels of, and was very probably related to, all of the unsavory activities, including bribery, Quevedo indulged in on behalf of Osuna in

Madrid.

Quevedo's ringing defense of Santiago in the polemic over the proposal to make Santa Teresa the co-patron saint of Spain is another emblem of the many levels of self-interest and ideology which intersected in practically everything he did. Quevedo the celebrator of holy war considers Spain to be spoils won by Santiago over the many centuries of the Reconquest. Santa Teresa was not even around during all those years, so why should she now shunt Santiago aside? And how would it be proper to invoke a *woman* during Spain's battles of the present, when Santiago's help is still routinely sought (547)?

While we would seem to be witnessing an archetypal Quevedesque crossing of jingoism and misogynism, the whole matter becomes even more complex:

La Torre de Juan Abad había sido la frontera de la Orden de Santiago con la de Calatrava. El escritor se sentía encamando a uno de los últimos "caballeros" de aquellas tierras antaño fronterizas y guerreras. . . . Pero también debe tenerse en cuenta la movilización general de "interesados" por el mantenimiento de ese engranaje religioso, con amplias derivaciones sociales y económicas, alguna de las cuales llegó a los bolsillos de Quevedo, quien cobró—sin duda—algún tipo de "premio" por su ardida defensa del patrono. (543)

In sum, militant nationalistic religiosity on the one hand, and on the other—yes—good old-fashioned venality.

The confluence of money, misogyny and knighthood in the Santa Teresa affair provides a nice bridge toward Quevedo's other knightly moniker—that of "Caballero de la Tenaza." The success of this early work was such that Quevedo even signed an actual letter as the "Caballero de la Tenaza" (276) and alludes to himself as such in another (478). The image of women as predators, constantly looking for ways to extract money from victimized males, forces us to reflect on the whole issue of women in Quevedo's life.

Jauralde does not come up with any over-all psychoanalytical theory about Quevedo's complex relationship with women, but he provides much raw material for those who might feel tempted to reflect along those lines. Having lost his father at age six, Don Francisco is raised in an environment Jauralde refers to as "pacato y femenino" (74). While resolutely avoiding marriage, in his mid-forties he does end up being "amancebado" with a lower-class woman referred to as "la Ledesma" in police reports, and even has children with her (455, 482). Never does Don Francisco refer to his offspring in any of his writings.

Alas, Jauralde is unable to reveal the identity of "Lisi"—one of those key mysteries we all were hoping to have solved. He does, however, bring

up the interesting fact that there is a burst of impassioned, Lisi-centered poetry precisely at the time Quevedo is being pressured into marrying an aristocratic, middle-aged widow from Aragón, Doña Esperanza de Mendoza, "señora de Cetina" (632-34).

Jauralde's account of this "non-marriage" is one of the most intriguing parts of the entire book. Why Quevedo, the impenitent bachelor, allowed himself to be roped into such an alliance is truly baffling, unless, of course, we take into account Quevedo the "political animal." Essentially it was a group of ladies from the very high levels of the Court (including the Duquesa de Olivares) who pulled this off. Starting with the fact that Quevedo apparently had not even met the woman before agreeing to this arrangement, and that he was writing incredibly dark material on women and marriage in *La cuna y la sepultura* at the time the wedding was being planned, and ending with the absolute lack of references to Doña Esperanza in his writings—the entire story cannot help but leave the reader with a deep sensation of perplexed sadness. What exactly was going on here?

A propos of this marriage, Jauralde makes one of his best attempts at "reading" Quevedo:

En la abdicación del individualista que lucha por no integrarse en alguno de los sistemas de su propia formación histórica hay siempre algo de rebeldía social, que suscita esos movimientos aparentemente simpáticos por acoger en el redil a la oveja extraviada. Sus obras más recientes no hacen más que provocar esta reacción, pues una y otra vez entona el mea culpa de su vida escandalosa, de sus muchos pecados, de su rosario de despropósitos. . . . El tono estoico . . . conviene sobremedida al final de una existencia escandalosa que admite la apacibilidad del matrimonio sereno, lejos de los encantos de la carne y otras pasiones. Era otro modo de contrapesar el chorro de ediciones que siguen dando a leer sus obras satíricas y festivas. (634)

In sum, the marriage seems to have been another one of those efforts at "self-fashioning" in which Quevedo was involved throughout his life.

Another of the aspects of the "essential Quevedo" that Jauralde explores well is the relationship with neo-Stoicism. To what degree was Quevedo's commitment real and to what extent was it largely related to his public-image-crafting? Jauralde tends to accept the sincerity of Quevedo's embracing of Stoic doctrine while at the same time stressing the obvious: our author's character was as probably as unstoical as you could possibly get. Regarding the first of a string of neo-Stoical works, *Nombre, origen, intento, recomendación y descendencia de la doctrina estoica*, Jauralde comments:

Las tesis estoicas acerca de la imperturbabilidad del ánimo y de la autosuficiencia ante los embates de la adversidad sirvieron no pocas veces de contrapeso pacificador a una personalidad a menudo agitada por conflictos y zozobras.

La recreación de un espacio del pensamiento en el que convivieran sus creencias religiosas con la necesidad de cierto sosiego vital e histórico es una de las constantes en el pensamiento de Quevedo y uno de los hilos conductores de toda su creación. (283)

Jauralde points out that while the first of Quevedo's neo-Stoical writings tend to be more expository in nature, later on—in writings of a more autobiographical bent, such as *La cuna y la sepultura* and *Virtud militante*—the doctrine appears to have been truly internalized by him (286). Nevertheless, Quevedo himself is the first to say: “Yo no tengo suficiencia de estoico, mas tengo afición a los estoicos” (287).

It is also worth noting that Quevedo's peculiar “life-style,” if I may, seemed to be related in oblique ways to that neo-Stoicizing side of his character. Despite the social-climbing and often venal tendencies noted above, Quevedo also displayed what Jauralde calls a “desprendimiento material” (167). For example, throughout his life he rarely had a fixed residence in Madrid, preferring to live at inns or at friends' houses, always dragging behind him trunks of books and writings. Indeed, he does not buy a house until age forty (414-15), and according to Jauralde, there is real doubt as to whether he actually ever lived there (despite the plaque now gracing the location).

Likewise in tune with this “life-style” was Quevedo's deep commitment to his beloved retreat at La Torre de Juan Abad. Yes, he fought tooth-and-nail in the courts to be its “señor,” but it is also apparent that the placid, small-town atmosphere functioned as a soothing balm for the “political animal” striving to distance himself from his obsessions. Jauralde points out that Quevedo's self-association with La Torre was such that many of his contemporaries did, in fact, look on him as a kind of “country gentleman” (685).

It should be noted that there was also a bit of the Epicurean in this attachment to La Torre: Quevedo loved to hunt and cook there, even boasting of having developed his own recipes (717). His commitment to the senses, and not only in La Torre, also involved an intense love of chocolate and tobacco (732, 745, 847).⁸

Now, as he smoked, drank chocolate and invented recipes in his hide-away in La Mancha, Quevedo also managed to keep up to the minute with everything going on in the Court (685). As noted above, our Stoic *engagé* was never able to let go of his deep concern for the fate of the Spanish nation. This concern often manifested itself in ways which can prove disturbing to modern readers, and it is to his credit that Jauralde

does not shy away from exploring the darker side of the political Quevedo. Most readers will have already perceived his jingoistic side through reading the well-known "Epístola satírica y censoria." But what we find there often pales in comparison to other, lesser-known works. His "octavas" dedicated to the "Jura del Príncipe Baltasar Carlos" in 1632 are a call to Felipe IV to unleash the power of the Spanish war-machine on the heretics of the North:

Padrones han de ser Rhin y Danubio
de tu venganza en tanto delincuente;
rebeldes venas les será diluvio;
cuerpos muertos y arneses, vado y puente;
rojo en su sangre se verá, de rubio,
el alemán, terror del Occidente:
tal gemirán las locas esperanzas
de quien no tema al Dios de las venganzas. (629)

That this call for a blood-bath was not just a rhetorical flourish for a state occasion is seen throughout his life-time, in word and deed. As for the latter, let us not forget his enthusiasm for Osuna's use of Spanish military muscle in the Mediterranean. As for his writings, it is there from the *Sueño de la Muerte* (420-21) all the way through to his *La caída para levantarse de San Pablo*, which he writes in prison (829).

And let us not forget that among those enemies of the faith in need of a stern hand are the Jews and their *converso* offspring. Quevedo's anti-Semitism is, of course, no secret to anyone with even a nodding familiarity with his works.⁹ Only relatively recently, however, has the true, sordid depth of that anti-Semitism been revealed to us, thanks to the excellent edition of Fernando Cabo and Santiago Fernández of *Execración contra judíos* (1633). Apparently sparked by Quevedo's disgust at the Conde-Duque's willingness to engage the services of Portuguese *converso* financiers, as well as by the scandals provoked by the blasphemous posters put up around Madrid at the time, this diatribe spews forth its bile with a vehemence, and a specificity, which can only make the present-day reader think of the terrible events of the last century. The Jews are accused of lending Spain money simply as a way of infiltrating it like vermin:

ratones son, señor, enemigos de la luz, amigos de las tinieblas, inmundos, hidiondos [sic], asquerosos, subterráneos. Los que les fian roen y lo que les sobra inficionan. Sus uñas despedazan la tierra en calabozos y agujeros, sus dientes tienen por alimento todas las cosas, o para comerlas o para destruirlas. (661)

And the solution?

desolar y expeler a los infames y vilísimos judíos y depreciar sus tesoros precitos y sus caudales condenados . . . Señor, hase de empezar el castigo desde una puerta a otra puerta: esto es decir que en todas las puertas de vuestros reinos han de hallar muerte y cuchillo. . . . Perezcan, señor, todos y todas sus haciendas. Escoria es su oro, hediondez su plata, peste su caudal. (661)

Even more blood-curdling than these public rantings is what we find in a personal letter to the Conde-Duque a propos of the famous scandal of Benito Ferrer (who grabbed a communion wafer from a priest celebrating mass and stomped on it). Quevedo complains about the burning of this heretic, precisely because of the opportunity it provided the latter to serve as an inspiration for others of his ilk. Rather than executing him publicly, they should have done it in secret: “parece medicina sigura [sic] y descansada burlarles [a los herejes] esta diligencia con que el Santo Oficio de la Inquisición a todo hombre que vivo e impenitente se deja quemar, le queme vivo con el propio secreto que le prende” (484).

Let us turn away, now, from this vile Quevedo toward the one we love to remember. Jauralde’s text is full of helpful insights not only regarding Quevedo’s individual works but also the creative process itself. With respect to the latter, Jauralde says that Quevedo very probably began to emerge early on as a primarily oral wit, but then began to jot things down to circulate among his friends (113). One area where his emerging talent displayed itself was in parody—in this case, of government decrees and other forms of official discourse (114). Indeed, throughout his life Quevedo’s literary drives took him in the direction of what we might call “creative recycling.” In his excellent comments on *Política de Dios*, Jauralde discusses Quevedo’s taking on of a somewhat overworked genre so as to turn it on its head and thus re-energize it:

una vez más Quevedo muestra su originalidad convirtiendo en libro de éxito un tratado político sobre el buen gobierno, el buen Rey y el papel de los privados, es decir, un género que había producido ya más de medio centenar de obras y contaba con una tradición prestigiosa y espesa . . . Hemos de recordar, por tanto, una vez más la predilección de Quevedo por crear en campo trillado, sobre modelos y estructuras conocidas o de moda, que él rehace muy a su peculiar sabor. (401)

Jauralde also highlights how Quevedo tended to work on several projects at the same time, going back and forth between them as the spirit and circumstances moved. This *modus operandi* changes, however, as Quevedo nears the end of his life. In commenting on what he sees as one

of our author's true masterpieces, *Las locuras y necesidades de Orlando enamorado*, Jauralde stresses the following:

Mucho tiempo debió de pasar Quevedo puliendo este asombroso poema, una de las cimas de la poesía burlesca española, sin conseguir acabarlo. La perfección de los dos primeros cantos, con todo, indica un modo de trabajo peculiar: el de ir cerrando tareas antes de acometer otras nuevas . . . [E]s una novedad en los hábitos literarios del escritor, que quizá ahora pensaba en un futuro de tiempo más breve. (734)

Many critics have profiled Quevedo's tendency toward the concatenation of brilliant fragments in his prose works. Together with the new work habits just noted, we find his growing ability to organize his prose with greater overall coherence, a prime example being the second part of *Política de Dios*, on which he starts to work around 1634 (735).

Jauralde's comments on this work, I should add, are among his best (see 738). And here we must return to my initial remarks on the degree to which Jauralde's work will satisfy the specialists. As noted there, our biographer simply cannot spend very much time on specific analysis of works, given the demands of recounting, in detail, Quevedo's life. Nevertheless, many of his terse assessments will be of interest to Quevedo scholars. I would draw attention particularly to the passages dedicated to *España defendida* (213), *Heráclito cristiano* (296-97), the first part of *Política de Dios* (404), *La cuna y la sepultura* (654-56), *Marco Bruto* (788-90), and *La caída para levantarse de San Pablo* (828).

Although I would venture to say that the commentary on Quevedo's prose works is generally superior to that dedicated to the poetry, there are, nonetheless, illuminating moments in the latter as well. In dealing with *Heráclito cristiano*, for example, Jauralde persuasively argues for the abandonment of the term "metafísico" used by editors to describe many works belonging to this collection:

He obviado hasta el final utilizar el término "metafísica" para una parte de este tipo de poemas, buscando no desnaturalizar un *corpus* de poesía históricamente "moral". No podremos deducir de estos versos ningún tipo de esquema filosófico medianamente consistente, antes bien el análisis nos llevará a una asombrosa asimilación de un legado cultural tan rico como a veces complejo, del que Quevedo toma vitalmente, poéticamente, rasgos, tonos, actitudes, detalles que vuelca apasionadamente en sus versos. Es como si su avidez intelectual y su ansiedad histórica—quizá, mejor que humana—le hubieran convertido en una esponja que recoge el torbellino ideológico de un católico ferviente, que busca en los rincones de la tradición cultural hebrea, cristiana, pagana . . . puntos de referencia para luchar contra su propio vértigo. (297-98)

As one would expect, the parts of the biography dedicated to the Quevedo-Góngora rivalry are among the most interesting. Jauralde traces the origin of the rivalry to the publication of Espinosa's *Flores de poetas ilustres* (138), which he identifies as "vanguard" anthology designed for "minorías" (135). Perhaps the most interesting part of the whole story is Quevedo's effort to combat the transformation of Góngora into a "modern classic" by promoting Fray Luis and Francisco de la Torre as antidotes to *culteranismo* (536). Jauralde justifiably highlights Quevedo's dedication of the Fray Luis edition to the Conde-Duque as one of the key theoretical statements on his own aesthetics:¹⁰

La extensa dedicatoria de Quevedo al Conde-Duque—fechada en Madrid a 21 de julio de 1629—es uno de los textos esenciales para conocer sus ideas literarias, particularmente su postura ante la nueva poesía, con argumentos eruditos, no sarcásticos. Y lo de sarcásticos no lo digo en balde, pues al mismo tiempo que ensaya el tono grave para defender un determinado talante poético, está redactando *La Culta Latiniparla*, con *La Aguja de navegar cultos*, para incluirla en la colección de *Juquetes de la niñez*. (588)

Jauralde suggests that the Fray Luis maneuver was not simply designed to foil his enemy but to pay homage to a figure whom he considered a model for his own poetic project:

esa poesía concéptuosa, densa, surtida de la familiaridad con los clásicos, era uno de los modelos codiciados por Quevedo poeta . . . Porque, en efecto, detrás del estilo o de la dicción luisiana, Quevedo ha reconocido en las odas de Fray Luis su propio itinerario poético, hacia una poesía moral, hermanando estoicismo y cristianismo, elaborando cuidadosamente a partir de una refinada lectura de los clásicos grecolatinos y de la Biblia. (589)

This, of course, was the image Quevedo hoped would prevail for posterity, but needless to say, his "Mr. Hyde" was always lurking close by . . .

Of all the more burlesque or satirical poetry dealt with by Jauralde, the *jácaras* are those that receive the most thought-provoking treatment (265-71). After pointing out that this new modality of the *romance* is yet another instance of Quevedo's taking a "forma literaria consagrada para convertirla en criatura deformada grotescamente," Jauralde calls our attention to

esa sensación que experimentamos de que se sumerge gozosamente en un mundo en el que todo se puede decir y hacer, todo se pone en solfa, como si en aquellos momentos Quevedo recuperara, por vía de la

creación artística, la libertad que le vedaba su tiempo. En fin, ¿cómo no subrayar el marcado contraste entre este auténtico “baño” en el mundo que le rodeaba, frente al proceso de introspección y aislamiento a que le llevaban sus querencias neostoicas, exactamente durante estos mismos años? (266)

That vicarious sense of freedom provided by placing himself within the “subject position” of a low-life type like Escarramán is no doubt related to an enormously complex moment within the social psychology of Spain (see 266 and 268). However, the question is why was it Quevedo, specifically, who managed so brilliantly to crystallize this latent desire for more freedom (or psychological latitude, at least) among his contemporaries?

Here we get to what I consider one of the fundamental weaknesses of Jauralde’s study. From the very beginning our author tends to downplay, or attack outright, what he refers to as the cliché of “Quevedo the rebel”:

Política y Religión, dos obsesiones a las que referir cualquier otro aspecto. Francisco de Quevedo . . . sostendrá sin vacilación superficial alguna . . . su motivación patriótica y su militancia católica, y las convertirá frecuentemente en eje argumental de sus actuaciones, en el crisol al que someterá cualquier acción, juicio o circunstancia. Resulta descaminado buscar en sus escritos el menor atisbo de heterodoxia fundamentada o razonada. (28)

Although Jauralde immediately points out that Quevedo did bump up against the strictures of power throughout his career as writer and thinker, he still ends up casting substantial doubts on the notion of Quevedo as “dissident.” At later junctures in his study, Jauralde is even more categorical on this point: “Pocas veces parece Quevedo haberse sentido excluido, ajeno o enfrentado al sistema vigente o a la ideología dominante, por más que esa actitud es la que la leyenda le ha prestado con más fuerza y menor motivo” (145).

And yet, there are so many passages throughout Jauralde’s work—including those dedicated to the *jácaras*—which make one wonder why he is so intent on debunking the image of Quevedo as in any way oppositional. How, for example, could someone completely in tune with the “ideología dominante” come up with such a blistering attack on the notion of a blood-based aristocracy as we find in this passage, cited by Jauralde, from *Marco Bruto*?

El noble infame no es hijo de nadie . . . El que sólo es noble por la virtud de sus mayores, dé gracias a que los muertos no pueden desmentir a los vivos, que cuando cita sus abuelos, si pudieran hablar, tantos mentises oyera como abuelos blasona. Más honra tienen los difuntos

que soberbia los vivos que los quieren deshonorar . . . siendo así que el nacer no se escoge, y no es culpa nacer del ruin, sino imitarle; y es mayor culpa nacer del bueno y no imitarle . . . (757)

And what about some of the resoundingly harsh things he has to say about kingship in the second part of *Política de Dios*?

Muchos entienden que reinan, porque se ven con cetro, corona y púrpura—insignias de la Majestad y superficie delgada de aquel oficio—y siendo verdugos de sus imperios y provincias, los deja Dios el nombre y las ceremonias, para que conozcan las gentes que pidieron estas insignias para adorno de su calamidad y de su ruina. (738)

Insensatos Electores de Imperios son los nueve meses. Quien debe la Majestad a las anticipaciones del parto y a la primera instancia del vientre, mucho hace, si se acuerda para vivir como rey, de que nació como hombre. Pocos tienen por grandeza ser reyes por el grito de la comadre. Pocos, aun siendo tiranos, se atribuyen a la naturaleza: todos lo hacen deuda de sus méritos. Dichoso es quien nace para ser rey si reinando merece serlo . . . (739)

One need not interpret passages such as these as proof that Quevedo was a crypto-republican of some sort; on the other hand, it also seems to make little sense to gloss them over in an attempt to knock down well-entrenched “legends” about him.

If one were to try to theorize the ideological ambiguities which are certainly present in Quevedo, it would be necessary to examine his precise location within the aristocracy. Jauralde helps us to do this, but rarely—if ever—does he attempt to *theorize* about the effects of that location on our author’s attitudes and works. Quevedo’s “in-betweenness,” his situation as an “insider/outsider,” is spelled out by Jauralde right at the beginning of his text:

El joven Francisco de Quevedo va a estar rodeado . . . de gentes de Palacio; pero no de nobles o aristócratas, sino de altos funcionarios, no exactamente o solamente letrados—lo que le hubiera permitido aspirar a mayores cargos—sino de funcionarios procedentes de las capas de la hidalguía y de la hidalguía rural. Vería vestida a su hermana mayor de “menina” jugando con la infanta, a su madre y a su tía como “azafatas” de la Reina . . . Mundo ajeno y proclive a la hostilidad hacia la sociedad urbana y mercantil que crecía en torno a Palacio, con la que, sin embargo, estaba en permanente contacto. Pero mundo también ajeno al de los círculos aristocráticos de los grandes y nobles que dominaban todas las esferas de la Corte. (88)

At other moments Jauralde seems to perceive quite clearly the tensions

generated by this ambiguous position occupied by Quevedo. Apropos of what he perceives as the ideological thrust of *El buscón*, Jauralde comments:

[Quevedo] es el heredero de una poderosa familia de "funcionarios" de Palacio, con formación humanística, quien empieza a destilar su venenosa sabiduría a través de esa mirada despectiva hacia el mundo burgués, casi siempre aplebeyado en sus páginas. Pero la distancia con respecto a la nobleza y a los círculos más altos de poder delata, si bien de manera más sutil, la difícil postura del escritor. Sus apetencias sociales, claro está, apuntan hacia arriba, círculos cerrados y conservadores, para lo cual marca rotundamente su distancia con el patriciado urbano, las clases mercantiles, los oficios, la plebe. (132)

Jauralde's careful analysis of Quevedo's finances, I should add, puts in crystal clear terms the "medianía" of his socioeconomic situation (172-73).

Putting all this together, it should not be that difficult to begin to understand some of the dissonance (or dissidence?) found throughout Quevedo's work. Yes, his head may have been full of fundamental ideological precepts of the upper aristocracy, but if his actual economic niche was way below the latter's, and if his own interactions with the aristocracy cultivated feelings of disdain for it (particularly because of the abandonment of its military obligations), and if he had seen close up some of the more than human failings of some of the most powerful monarchs on earth, would it not have been possible for him to express some frustrations in less than orthodox ways? I am not suggesting that the more orthodox pronouncements were designed simply to hide the dissident feelings; rather, that we are dealing with a mind going in both directions *at the same time*.

To my knowledge, no one has theorized adequately the whole problem of writers belonging to the lower nobility in the case of Spain—that is, how their precise location within the social hierarchy could help to produce the ambiguities of the type we find in Quevedo. If we were able to do that, we might be able to find a solid middle-path between those who present Quevedo as the insurgent iconoclast and those who, in the interest of "demythologizing" him, insist too sharply on his orthodoxy.

* * *

I mentioned at the outset of this essay that there are some organizational problems in Jauralde's biography. There are many moments in the text where we are confronted by repetitions of material already presented (with no allusion to the first mention). Thus, for example, we find reference to the death of Quevedo's younger sister, María, on both pages 150

and 152; to the lifting of “leyes antisuntuarias” on both pages 465 and 466; to the doubts Jauralde has as to whether Quevedo actually ever lived in the house in the Calle del Niño, which bears a plaque to that effect, on pages 460 and 670; to the relative freedom with which Quevedo operated vis à vis the Inquisition on pages 526 and 533, etc.

Other problems relate to the juxtaposition (or outright admixture) of commentary and information of very different orders within a relatively small space in the text. Thus, for example, do we find comments on poetry dedicated to Lisi juxtaposed with yet another reflection on the impact on Quevedo of the naming of Cardinal Zapata as the new General Inquisitor (531-32). Comments on the never-ending legal wranglings regarding La Torre sit cheek by jowl with reflections on Quevedo’s admiration for Luis Carrillo y Sotomayor (229-30) and the impact on our author of the assassination of Henry IV in France (233-34). These are the moments—and there are many—in which Jauralde simply seems overwhelmed by the bulk of material confronting him. His admirable desire to fit in everything he has unearthed outpaces his capacity to meld it all together harmoniously.¹¹

These, of course, are criticisms coming from someone who openly confesses that he would never have been able to meet the daunting challenge of putting together such a thorough, well-documented account of Quevedo’s life as has Pablo Jauralde. All of us who might feel prone to raising objections to this monumental labor should do so with the requisite humility. And despite whatever reservations we may have about *Francisco de Quevedo (1580-1645)*, we should all feel profoundly grateful to its author for having written it.

Notes

¹I did so at the instigation of my friend Julián Olivares, whom I thank for asking me to do this review-article for *Calíope*.

²Jauralde’s system for documenting Quevedo’s manuscripts sometimes does not facilitate matters for scholars wishing to consult them. To do so, they should take advantage of the valuable work done by Isabel Pérez Cuenca in her prize-winning *Catálogo de los manuscritos de Francisco de Quevedo en la Biblioteca Nacional*.

³It should be pointed out that Jauralde published an abbreviated—and much cheaper—version of his book in 1999, also with Castalia. The only real difference between the two, however, is that the “popular” edition lacks the very useful “Ensayo de un catálogo de las obras de Quevedo” (927-97). The pagination of the text of the 1999 edition, I should add, corresponds exactly to that of the original one.

⁴To be fair, I should point out that Jauralde explicitly casts doubt on the whole enterprise of trying to unravel the “true” personality of Quevedo (895-96).

⁵Although Jauralde does not mention it, Jerónimo de Villanueva ends up being satirized in the anti-Semitic “Monopantos” tract in *La Hora de todos y la Fortuna*

con seso (331-332).

⁶Given the general thoroughness of Jauralde's work, it is somewhat surprising that he never explains of what exactly the "conjuración" consisted.

⁷We must remember, by the way, that Quevedo had not actually published a single line until 1620, his break into print being the biography of Tomás de Villanueva commissioned by the Augustinian order (398). The sudden "boom" of printed works in the mid-1620's thus had enormous resonance among readers of the time.

⁸Jauralde takes a certain pride in pointing out that Quevedo is "uno de los primeros fumadores de nuestra literatura," (898).

⁹For a good over-view of the matter, see Juventino Caminero's *Víctima o verdugo: Conservadurismo y antisemitismo en el pensamiento político-social de Quevedo*.

¹⁰Elias RIVERS has recently completed an excellent edition and study of this text, along with the dedication of the Torre volume, in *Quevedo y su poética dedicada a Olivares*.

¹¹Sometimes one wonders whether a model in which "vida" and "obras" were neatly separated out into alternating units within the general flow of the biography would have worked out more satisfactorily than Jauralde's tendency to fuse them. It might seem to be an excessively mechanical way of organizing matters, but it also could have mitigated the dizzying effect that the swift swerves of Jauralde's text can often induce.

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