

DON QUIXOTE: KIND RECONSIDERED

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It may be time, after twelve years, to sally forth once again on the quixotic quest to reorient the Cervantine establishment regarding the dominant genre of the *Quijote*. Knowing full well that success is beyond the pale, our intrepid critic is nevertheless armed with the assurance that one can still meet defeat with equanimity and a certain *je ne sais quoi*. When I published my *'Don Quixote': An Anatomy of Subversive Discourse* in 1988, it was my impression that it was a book primarily about genre. The title was meant to suggest that focus, at least to those who might recognize that "anatomy" is a synonym of "satire," the structure was meant to reinforce that perspective, by showing how the subversion of narrative authority combines with point of view and characterization to form a satiric structure, and finally by the two concluding chapters, which were devoted unequivocally to the question of genre. "Kind," by the way, is the best English rendering of its unpronounceable French counterpart, as Alastair Fowler makes clear in his likewise significantly titled *Kinds of Literature*.

It has perplexed and amazed me during these several years that readers of my *Anatomy* have chosen to focus on the first two chapters (on narrative voices and presences) rather than on the last two (on kind), in conjunction with the overall thrust. It may be that some did not read beyond those first two chapters; it may be that others remain unconvinced of the larger thesis, or merely find greater value in the narratological issues than the generic ones. Since the main purpose of the book—now out of print—has been ignored, it may be time to reiterate portions of it, while updating others. That is my purpose here.

Perhaps the largest obstacle to acceptance of my "satiric" thesis is the self-satisfaction we seem to enjoy in being the doorkeepers to the first modern novel. The apparent importance of this self-assumed assignment has generally escaped me, because my assumption has been, and continues to be, that the novel, of whatever variety, is only one narrative form among many. Nor is narrative per se inherently superior to any other kind of literature, for instance drama or lyric verse. But putting that consideration aside, just why the novel should be privileged over romance, satire, the short story, and even narrative verse (epic) is not at all clear. In Cervantes's day, it was felt that lengthy prose narrative, such as the books of chivalry, was a degenerate form of the epic and greatly inferior to it. A

lengthy picaresque narrative, say *Guzmán de Alfarache*, is more than a decadent epic; it is a full-blown anti-epic as surely as it is an anti-romance. Perhaps we could do more to recover perspective on the historical importance of genres, along with an enhanced awareness of the inherent arbitrariness of privileging one over another. It might also be remarked that the privileged narrative form today, to judge by popular consumption, is that curious hybrid, the romance novel, which is neither a modern, realistic novel nor yet a post-modern, self-conscious one. It might also be ventured that the bulk of so-called post-modern novels are more properly satires, at least insofar as the form manifests itself in Latin America and Spain. Romance and satire have reasserted themselves, it would seem.

We now have the post-modern or post-realistic novel, of course, and considerable effort has been expended to demonstrate that the *Quijote* also anticipates that paradigm (see Alter, Paz Gago, Friedman). I have succumbed to this temptation myself on occasion, although my main interest has been to show how the *Quijote* anticipates in actual practice any number of theoretical formulations of today, *avant la lettre*. These include Derrida's notion of the illusory frame, certain related concepts of deconstruction, illustrated for instance in the 1605 title and in the *mise en abîme* involving orality and literacy, as well as Prince's disnarration, Genette's metalepsis, and my own notion of motivated and unmotivated narrators. All of these are demonstrably deployed in the *Quijote*, primarily at the diegetic level, and this fact leads to the preliminary observation that the aspects foreshadowing the post-modern novel are to be found primarily at the diegetic level, dealing largely with metalepsis and other narrative techniques, while those that anticipate the realistic, or modern, novel are situated primarily at the mimetic level, relating especially to the characters, their dialogue, and the world they inhabit. This latter statement requires elaboration, as we shall see.

It is also worth noting that those who take the *Quijote* to be a novel merely make the assertion, often in passing, apparently assuming consent on the part of the reader, without bothering to offer a paradigm or typology for the sort of novel they have in mind. This is understandable, I suppose, because it is also frequently claimed that no typology of the novel is possible. Thus we find ourselves back with what might be called the default definition, Pío Baroja's infamous declaration that the novel is a "saco vacío donde cabe todo." Now this is hardly a "scientific" statement, nor, I trust, a typology to which any serious literary critic would want to subscribe. It is simplistic in the extreme, needless to say. But until I see a more refined typology, with specific reference to the *Quijote*, I can only assume that those who refer to the *Quijote* as a novel take for granted that their reader has in mind a similar definition—since they do not elabo-

rate—or else, perish the thought, they are unable to formulate an adequate paradigm.

So allow me, if you will, to offer two paradigms for satire to which I feel the *Quijote* conforms quite well. The first is Mikhail Bakhtin's catalog for Menippean satire (Menippean is an adjective derived from Menippus, a Cynic orator and satirist of antiquity, none of whose writings survive today). These are: 1) the comic element is conspicuous; 2) there is extraordinary freedom of philosophical invention and of invention within the plot; 3) extraordinary situations occur frequently, which provoke and test a philosophical idea embodied in a wise man, a seeker after truth; 4) the man of an idea—the "wise man"—is confronted with extreme expressions of worldly evil, baseness, depravity, and vulgarity; 5) it tends to focus on ultimate philosophical questions and on putting these to the test; 6) some representation of the nether world is common, specifically conversations among or with the dead; 7) there may occur observations from an unusual point of view, from a high altitude for example, coupled with radical changes in the scale of the observed phenomena; 8) the Menippea presents unusual, abnormal moral and psychic states—insanity of all sorts, split personalities, unrestrained daydreaming, unusual dreams, passions bordering on insanity, suicide, etc.; 9) there may be scandalous scenes and scenes of eccentric behavior; there appear new artistic categories of the eccentric which are alien to classical epos and the tragic; 10) the Menippea is fond of sharp contrasts and oxymoronic combinations: the wise fool, the shrewd simpleton, the noble bandit; it presents sharp transitions and changes, ups and downs, rises and falls, and *mésalliances* of all sorts; 11) the form often includes elements of, or aspirations toward, social utopia; 12) it makes wide use of other genres: *novellas*, letters, verse, and so forth; 13) the multiplicity of genres intensifies the variety of styles and tones; and, finally, 14) the genre is replete with both open and hidden polemics with various tendencies and currents of the time.

While we might debate whether Don Quixote is a "wise man," he seems to qualify in the special sense in which Bakhtin uses the concept. Certainly he does meet the criteria to be considered a wise fool, or perhaps a foolish wise man, or, as we sometimes say in Spanish, a *cuerdoloco*. This is particularly so in Part II. The remaining criteria are met reasonably well, as the discreet reader will have remarked while plodding through the list. Bakhtin considers that the Menippea in tandem with vestiges of the Socratic dialogue produces what he calls carnivalized literature. There are any number of instances in the text when the dialogue approaches Socratic style, for instance in the discussion of history and poetry near the beginning of Part II, so I think it fair to say that those remnants are indeed discernible and, furthermore, that the *Quijote* quali-

fies as carnivalized literature. Augustin Redondo has devoted numerous studies to illustrating that very dimension.

There is no doubt that carnivalized narrative can be incipiently novelistic. Indeed, Bakhtin takes great pains to offer an alternative to Lukác's thesis that the novel derives from the epic. The Russian will contend that it finds its origins in the Menippea and the Socratic dialogue, more specifically in an amalgam of the two. It is not possible in this space to debate the relative merits of the two theses, but it could well be that they are not mutually exclusive. Of course, there are also those who would hold with William Congreve, Clara Reeve, and Henry Fielding that the novel is basically an anti-romance, which is tantamount to saying that it has its roots in romance. Again, all three perspectives could be viewed as complementary. Surely that is so in the case of the *Quijote*. It owes a great deal to the *romancero* (see esp. Sánchez), which is generally considered to consist of fragments of epic; it is without question an anti-romance, or counter-genre, as Claudio Guillén might say; and it is also carnivalized literature, owing much to Menippean satire. But does all of that, wrapped up together, make it a novel? I would allow only that it is incipiently novelistic, in terms of both the realistic and self-conscious varieties, agreeing in that respect with Robert Alter, and reiterating that the realistic novel centers around the mimetic dimension, while its more recent self-conscious counterpart correlates more closely with the diegetic. One of the obstacles to formulating an adequate typology of the novel may revolve around the failure to make that fundamental distinction.

Although I realize full well that alignment with models can be tedious, Gilbert Highet's criteria for satire, expounded in his *Anatomy of Satire* (where "Anatomy" refers to an analysis or dissection, as is also the case in Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism*), may help to make my point that the dominant kind of the *Quijote* is just that, satire. When we think of Golden Age satirists, a name that springs to mind is, of course, Quevedo. He is indeed one of that tribe, and overtly so. Cervantes is more subtle and less directly confrontational or censorious. Nor is Cervantes given to personal attacks, like Quevedo, with the possible exceptions of Lope de Vega and the pseudonymous Avellaneda. In brief, Cervantes follows more closely the model of Horace in his tone and tenor, while Quevedo follows the lead of Juvenal, a much more caustic critic, to mention two more archetypal satirists of antiquity.

The six characteristics of satire, according to Highet, are these: first, although not necessarily foremost, the work generally can be identified from the outset as satirical in nature; it may do this in several ways, one of which might be the obviously parodic and ironic 1605 title, coupled with the prologue and festive verses; the marker "invective" appears in the 1605 prologue, while satire is mentioned in the 1615 counterpart;

beyond that, an awareness of satire is usually made manifest, and this occurs in II.16, where Don Quixote holds forth on poetry in conversation with Don Diego de Miranda: "Riña vuestra merced a su hijo, si hiciere sátiras que perjudiquen las honras ajenas (. . .) pero si hiciere sermones [this is the title Horace gave his satires] al modo de Horacio, donde reprehenda los vicios en general, como tan elegantemente él lo hizo, alábale . . .". Don Quixote rejects *ad hominem* attacks, of the sort Juvenal was notorious for, but favors Horace's milder correctives of a more general nature; the salient aspect here is the awareness of satire expressed within the text, and of two important traditions of the form.

Highet's second criterion is that the target of the satire is always something external to the text itself and is ordinarily some contemporary issue. It is a historian, José Antonio Maravall, who has done most to identify the target of Cervantes's satire, although he does not use that term. Maravall's *Utopía y contrautopía en el 'Quijote'* has not received the attention it deserves, although I am delighted to note that Robert Felkel has produced a very fine translation into English. The distinguished Spanish historian shows that there were influential voices in the realm who counseled a return to a largely imaginary golden age, associated with Ferdinand and Isabel and their successors, Charles I and Felipe II, as a model for the utopia that would surely ensue if that model could be resuscitated. It seems clear that Don Quixote's self-assumed mission of restoring his own fantastical version of the golden age can be read as a travesty of the socio-political agenda of the powerful advisers alluded to above. The obvious satirical targets, books of chivalry, are so obvious that there would be no subtlety whatsoever in the attack. Just as hypocrisy and anti-clericalism are only superficial objects of censure in the *Lazarillo*, the same can be said of books of chivalry in the *Quijote*. The author of the *Lazarillo* does seem to be nostalgic about the good old days, but the inferred author of the *Quijote* apparently has no illusions about recapturing that splendor. Don Quixote's agenda is absurd on the face of it; his attempt to restore a pristine past is held up to ridicule throughout. He and his agenda are not only defeated, they are totally discredited (Parr, "The Janus-Like Discourse" 106). Castillo and Spadaccini have recently reproduced a pertinent passage from Maravall's *Utopía*, in a study of the *Persiles*: "'El Quijote no es propiamente una utopía, sino que ésta se halla desarrollada a lo largo del relato, para descrédito de los que a ella se aferraban. De esa manera, el Quijote . . . representa un energético antídoto contra el utopismo difuso y adormecedor de nuestro siglo XVI' (10)" (116). Secondary targets that are also relatively transparent, which is to say more so than anti-utopianism but less so than the books of chivalry, are inferior writing and reading in the aesthetic realm and unconstructive use of leisure time (*ocio*) in the social sphere.

Third, the language of satire tends to be comical, cruel, and familiar. Surely no examples are needed. Fourth, the traditional techniques of the satirist include irony, violence, exaggeration, obscenity, scenes that offend propriety or aesthetic sensibilities, parody, and paradox. Parody and irony stand out as constants, but paradox is also rampant, one of the central paradoxes being the grounding sought by writing in oral tradition in a passage I have alluded to many times, the beginning of II.44: "*Dicen que en el propio original desta historia se lee que llegando Cide Hamete a escribir este capítulo, no le tradujo su intérprete como él le había escrito*" (emphasis added). My point would be that when we find several of these markers in a text (the only one missing is obscenity), we should begin to suspect a certain satiric thrust; indeed, we should begin tentatively trying to identify the external object(s) of that thrust.

Fifth, the satirist attempts to offend readers' sensibilities by having them experience vicariously certain disagreeable features of reality, making manifest aspects one might prefer to overlook. The objective is to produce a negative reaction to tendencies or conditions of whatever kind. The negative reaction sought would seem to be against the utopian delusions of an influential faction of advisers to the king—looking again to Maravall for historical context—and secondarily, but not incidentally by any means, against the facile, unexamined reception of both history and fiction by the great mass of consumers, exemplified in Alonso Quijano, or the so-called second author of I.9, or the innkeeper and Maritornes (naive listening in their case, since they cannot read). It also extends to censuring fairly explicitly the abuse of leisure time, most conspicuously in the machinations of the duke and duchess, but also in the case of the main character himself ("los ratos que estaba ocioso [que eran los más del año]" [I.1]) and, in the latter's ironically unselfconscious comment to the duchess about Altisidora and her mischief ("el mal desta doncella nace de ociosidad, cuyo remedio es la ocupación honesta y continua" [II.70]). This could be read as an *indirecta* to the duchess herself, but the discreet reader also infers that the speaker might have done well to heed this advice during his own pre-history, rather than devouring escapist fantasies. Of course, had he done so, we would be the poorer.

Sixth, a more subjective criterion, according to Highet, the emotional response sought from readers is a mixture of amusement and aversion. This is merely to say that there is an attempt to involve the reader along certain axes, while distancing her along others. Farce would amuse, but would be superficial and unworthy of Cervantes's pen. Aversion would be produced, likely, by invective, but we shall find precious little of that either. What he has succeeded in doing is blending the two somewhat antithetical drives, prompted no doubt by Horace's advice to poets about mixing the useful with the sweet. The aversion he seeks to stimulate to-

ward utopian fantasy is masterfully modulated by a bemused outlook and ludic manner of presentation.

These, then, are Hightet's six criteria. The *Quijote* conforms remarkably well in every respect. But there are other markers that signal satire. The proliferation of animals and the reduction of human beings to "bestias" is one of the most compelling ("volvieron a sus bestias, y a ser bestias, don Quijote y Sancho" [II.29]; also the braying episode; also the *manteamiento*, a fate usually reserved for dogs). The attribution to animals of human sensibilities is a corollary (e.g., the friendship between Dapple and Rocinante [II.12]; think of the Houyhnhnms in *Gulliver's Travels*; consider *El coloquio de los perros*). Animals are a staple of satire, from *El asno de oro* to *El coloquio de los perros* to *Gulliver's Travels* to *Animal Farm* and beyond. In addition, we frequently find pedantry held up to ridicule—another staple of satire in all times and places—usually in the person of the main character.

We might now consider the characters and the world in which they "live" and move about. Northrop Frye's notion of a vertical axis remains useful. Modifying and truncating that axis somewhat, we would place the world of romance above us, since it deals with beings who possess powers superior to ours; we would place the world of realism (and the novel) on the same level as we find ourselves, since it presents people like us and situations we ourselves might encounter; below us, we would situate the degraded world of satire, a world in which the characters do not enjoy the freedom we do (or think we do), because they are in thrall to forces over which they lack control, be they internal or external. These could be hobbyhorses or they could be physical in nature. Irony is a constant at this lowest level.

It is fair to say that the *Quijote* is an upside-down romance, a generic *mundo al revés*, wherein everything we associate with the romances of chivalry is turned on its head. So it does incorporate elements of romance, but only to parody them. The next question would be whether it is a realistic world. In some ways it is, and it is those elements that will culminate in the realistic novel. But it owes too much to other literature to be considered "novel," and the main characters are stylized according to their humoral imbalances, as well as being polymorphous or adaptable to any and all situations. They change according to circumstances, in other words, and the author does succeed in transferring certain proclivities from one to the other, as Madariaga observed long ago, but they do not develop. When the plot demands it, Don Quixote can be discreet and insightful, as in his dialogues with Don Diego and his son, but at other times the plot may demand, even rather late in the game, that he be humiliated by being clawed by cats or trampled by pigs or bulls. The characters are at the service of the overriding satiric thrust. No; the world of

the *Quijote* is a degraded one, saturated with irony, in which the characters are not free. Sancho is subject to the physical demands of appetite and the psychic demands of greed, while his master is delusional throughout Part I and subject to the manipulations of others in Part II. Now clearly the world of the *Quijote* is not as loathsome as those found in some picaresque narratives, but all we can infer from that fact is that degradation can be a matter of degree. The point is that we do look down on a scene of bondage, whether to appetite or greed, madness or manipulation, and whether we feel involvement through pity or alienation through ironic distancing, we surely must recognize that we enjoy greater freedom than they. Thus, following Frye's modal axis, they inhabit the degraded, ironic world of satire.

The degradation of the Knight through irony begins already in the title via the name he has so naively assumed. A "*quijote*" is a piece of defensive armor that shields the thigh. The proximity to the lower bodily stratum, as Bakhtin would call it, has a deflationary, if not degrading, effect, as does the fact that it is a piece of defensive armor, not an offensive weapon like the *lanza*, so conspicuous in the name Lanzarote. He becomes more ridiculous by his use of an unwarranted title, the "*don*," and his place of origin, *de la Mancha*, serves also to suggest a *mancha*, or blemish, on his escutcheon. The antiquated armor he wears (whose incongruity will be enhanced by the barber's basin), the nag he rides, and the mature peasant esquire who accompanies him add to the ironic and deflationary effect, of course.

There is more to be said than can be compressed into these confines. Genre is more than just a way to catalog or classify texts. It is also a powerful mode of communication, as Adena Rosmarin has shown. The communication in this instance would seem to take place on two levels. The inferred author conveys to an ideal, discreet reader a somewhat subversive message about the futility of trying to resurrect a largely illusionary golden age, while at the same time offering amusing and sometimes bizarre situations and dialogues for the delectation of the common reader, or *vulgo*. Dustin Griffin brings up the thorny issue of rhetoric vs. referentiality, pointing out that the Chicago Aristotelians tended to see satire as primarily referential, while the Yale School viewed it as more rhetorical, emphasizing its (dis)playfulness and rhetorical gambits. Surely the *Quijote* displays both. It displays historical allusiveness and artful innuendo. While my emphasis here has been on referentiality, on the repudiation of a socio-political ideology, there can be no doubt that Cervantes enjoys playing with language also, as we can see in the rhetorical exuberance of many passages that display self-conscious style (e.g., techniques such as *veni, vidi, vici* Caesarean laconism; polysyndeton; anaphora; *bimembración*; zeugma; hyperbole; etc.), all of which serve to

distance the work from the more prosaic and straightforward manner of the realistic novel.

In conclusion, I would say that the *Quijote* is undoubtedly indebted to romance; it anticipates aspects of both the realistic and self-conscious novels (particularly the diegetic dimension of the latter); but its dominant kind is the Menippea in terms of structure, coupled with the Horatian *sermón* in terms of tone. It looks to two important forms from antiquity that continue to thrive in its own *moment et milieu*, satire and romance, while anticipating their revival in our own post-realistic times. It is thus an important link between past and present, which may be more significant in the long run than its possible ties to the realistic novel, an apparent aberration in the trajectory of prose fiction. It is preferable, I would submit, to represent a defining moment in a venerable tradition, a moment that looks back to antiquity while anticipating many aspects of today's more self-conscious narrative, than to have spawned the anomalous form called the (realistic or modern) novel.

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