

Suddenly, Opportunity for Adventure: The Interplay of
Madness and Narrative in *Don Quijote*

by

Jacqueline Mica Stavis
Class of 2009

An essay submitted to the
faculty of Wesleyan University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Bachelor of Arts
with Departmental Honors from the College of Letters

In his *Lectures on Don Quixote*, Vladimir Nabokov characterizes Cervantes' writing as "alternate phases of lucidity and vagueness, deliberately planning and sloppy vagueness, much as his hero was mad in patches."¹ Both the thematic and formal aspects of the novel vacillate between the clarity and ambiguity referenced by Nabokov, who with this one phrase encapsulates two themes that inundate Volume One of *Don Quijote*: madness and narrative. Madness in *Don Quijote* manifests in various forms, the most notable of which appear in the characters of Cardenio, Sancho Panza, and of course, Don Quixote.² The madness of Don Quixote drives the narration of the novel forward not by itself, but through its interactions with the other instances of madness in the novel. It is these three forms of madness—Cardenio's, Sancho's, and Quixote's—that produce narrative.

The madresses of the aforementioned characters share a common denominator: each stems from the character's desire to change his social situation. Society, in this case, refers to the community of the villages they each initially inhabit. These yearnings range from wanting complete removal from society, to aspirations of an improved social status, and finally to the wish to inhabit an alternate society—one that no longer exists. These social discomforts serve as the basis for the character's mental instabilities, which in turn spurs different narratives, each with its own quirks. It is in the nuanced interactions between these narratives that the main story is produced. The stories come in contact with each other through actions that are

¹ Vladimir Nabokov, "Structural Matters." *Lectures on Don Quixote*. (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Javonovich, 1983), 28.

² Although the title of the Spanish text uses the spelling of "Quijote" with a "j", I am following the standard English spelling of "Quixote" with an "x".

incited by madness and the effects of these actions serve to further fuel the madness and encourage new ones.

Throughout the essay, my argument will be informed by M.M. Bakhtin's keystone work, "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel," which defines the chronotope as "the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature."³ Bakhtin focuses on the function of the chronotope in both chivalric and Greek romances, which will prove useful when examining both the characters and the narrative style within *Don Quijote*. He concentrates on common elements to these genres, which, when applied to *Don Quijote*, display how the novel prescribes to, plays with, and offends the genre of the chivalric romance to the effect of highlighting certain instabilities in the characters and the narrative. Additionally, his notion of the chronotope helps articulate the relationships between madness and spaces within the text.

The first section of this essay will address the specific madnesses of the three main characters in Volume One, focusing on how these madnesses interact to stimulate their own narratives, while the second part will contain discussion of the manners in which these narratives interact with one another to further generate narrative. The third section will look at the character of the narrator itself and the ways the narrative discourse adds to the instability of Volume One. Concomitant with this issue is the question of whether the narrator and the characters' madnesses influence each other, even across the different levels of discourse and story, and if they do, how the discourse reveals this communication.

³ M.M. Bakhtin, "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel." *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), 84.

I. The Circumstances of Madness and Generic Instability

Cardenio desires a change from his full involvement in the society of noble families—in fact, he wishes to escape to a place without society. He begins as a gentleman from a noble, wealthy family who has fallen in love with the beautiful, also rich, also noble Luscinda: this pair is such that, in Cardenio’s own words, “things could only end in our being married, a conclusion that the perfect matching of our families and our wealth made almost inevitable.”⁴ This marriage is what society, and maybe even destiny, has sanctioned for him, the ultimate end expected of him as a gentleman. Conveniently, this is also the goal he personally wishes to fulfill. Yet it is this same social pressure of marriage that betrays him, for Luscinda’s father, “carried away by what he sees as Don Fernando’s advantages over [him],” (173) promises her hand to the other man. This act provokes Cardenio to try to flee to a place where “mere material wealth is worthless” (143) for he does not wish to stay in a society where pure love and perfectly matched families are beaten by double-crossing friends and something as petty as money.

Deceived by the society that cultivated him, Cardenio goes in search of a place without society (with the intention of killing himself), and thus ends up in the Sierra Morena where “Fate is satisfied to take [his] sanity instead” (188). Here, his madness comes in waves and when present, is incapacitating. When not trapped in one of these fits, Cardenio exhibits no trace of mental instability; indeed, he even references and reflects upon his states of madness—a type of self-awareness other characters lack. He explicitly states this at one point:

⁴ Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quijote* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999), I. XXIV. 143. This work shall hereafter be cited parenthetically.

I have been aware...that I'm not always sane, but am sometimes split apart and feeble-brained, and doing a thousand crazy things, tearing my clothes, crying out in this desolate place, cursing my fate, and pointlessly repeating, over and over, the beloved name of my beloved enemy, with no purpose other than the thought of ending my life in such complaints. And when I'm myself again, I'm so weak and weary that I can barely move. (177)

Cardenio thinks it pointless to tell of his suffering; yet, as we shall see later, the narration of his madness is essential to its cure. He suffers from madness in patches, much like both Nabakov's impression of Cervantes' writing and Don Quixote's sporadic clarity.

Like Cardenio, Don Quixote does not want to live in the society of the unnamed village in La Mancha. There, he was a gentleman who spent "all his free time (which meant almost all the time) reading tales of chivalry, with such passion that he almost forgot to keep up his hunting, not to mention taking care of his estate" (13). He is painted as a *hidalgo*—the lowest rung in the hierarchy of nobility, falling only above peasants—whose only responsibilities seem to be taking care of his estate and hunting. (Since he is "getting close to fifty" (13), he is above the age for marriage and therefore he does not have to worry about that potential responsibility of a man of his standing.) His habit of reading books indicates that he has ample leisure time, for it is made clear that the villagers view reading to be suited solely for leisure time.

However pleasant this life may sound, this is not what Alonso Quijada/Quesada/Quejana wants, or even how he views his reality. Due to "so much reading [that] he dried out his brain and lost his sanity," (14) he "decided to turn himself into a knight errant, traveling all over the world with his horse and his weapons, seeking adventures" (15). This latter vision is Don Quixote's reality; Alonso's lifestyle (the estate, the niece, the housekeeper) is something Don Quixote

barely acknowledges. Don Quixote wants to belong to the world that exists in the novels he reads yet he fails, for the most part, to recognize that that kind of world no longer exists. Yes, he owns a suit of armor that he inherited from his great-grandfather, but it stands as the perfect symbol of the permanent retreat of the knightly order he wishes to join: “thrown in a corner and forgotten, covered with mildew and quietly rusting away” (15). Whereas Cardenio wants to remove himself from any society, Don Quixote simply wants an alternative one.

Where he encounters trouble is in behaving as though he is already in that alternative world. His every move is informed by his belief that he truly is a knight-errant and that the world around him will accept him as such. His striking moments of clarity, in contrast with Cardenio’s arresting moments of madness, only occur with regards to everything unrelated to knight-errantry, such as his famous lecture on learning versus weapons. Although it may seem that the chivalric world has complete control over his mind, Don Quixote’s instances of mental lucidity reveal that his intelligence is still intact, thus hinting at the hope for recovery. Don Quixote does, however, have one moment of seemingly ironic and unintended self-reflection in an observation about chivalric tales: “for you will see how they drive away melancholy and, for those who may be ill, will improve their condition. I can say for myself that, since I’ve been a knight errant, I’ve been brave, courteous, open-handed, well-behaved, magnanimous...” (339-40). He does not quite realize that the first part of his statement regarding the function of tales of knight errantry could very well apply to him, although it ultimately falls short as the fictions have worsened, not improved, his condition. With the second half of the statement, he mistakenly believes he is being

self-reflective, although we know that well-behaved is a rather inaccurate adjective to describe his knightly behavior, especially considering the damage he causes to the wineskins and beds in Juan Palomeque's inn. This declaration therefore reveals an attempt to be enlightening, but his madness prevents him from seeing the inconsistencies in this reflection.

As with Don Quixote and Cardenio, Sancho's madness originates in frustration with the society that surrounds him, yet there is one difference: while the others wish for a change in the society itself, he wishes for a change in his role within the same society.⁵ In the La Mancha village, Sancho is a farmer, a "good man (if we can use that term for anyone who's poor) but not very well endowed from the neck up" (41). We do not get much information about his home life beyond the fact that he and his wife Juana are both worried about money.

Juana's concern is emphasized at the end of Volume One when they are finally reunited and the first thing Juana asks is "whether the donkey is in good health" (350), followed by "What good has all this squiring done you? Have you brought me any new dresses? Have you brought shoes for your children?" (350-1). She does not question his physical or mental health, or even what he has been doing for the past months; her complaint is only about the material possessions with which he left and those with which he hopefully, although disappointingly does not, return. Additionally, the one item he does relate to Juana about his time spent with Don Quixote is that "it's a great thing to go looking for things to happen, crossing

⁵ Don Quixote, to a small extent, does also wish for an elevated role, as the fact remains that if he had lived in chivalric times, his standing of *hidalgo* may not have qualified him for knighthood as it would have been too lowly.

mountains, investigating forests, climbing up peaks, getting to visit castles, stopping at inns whenever you want to, and without offering to pay the devil a red cent” (351).

Unlike Don Quixote, who is adventuring for the sake of “eternal fame and glory” (15), Sancho is motivated by ambition and the greedy desire for liquid currency. This distinction is clearly present in the scene where the two men find Cardenio’s abandoned belongings:

While Don Quijote looked through the notebook, Sancho—moved to rapture by the gold pieces he’d found, of which there were more than a hundred—was looking through the suitcase, poking into every corner, and into the cushion, too, peering and prying, even pulling seams apart, unravelling [*sic*] every single thread, to make sure he had overlooked nothing and done everything he could. And even though he found no more, he would have sworn, now, that it was all worth it—the blanket-tossing, the vomiting up his master’s magic balm, the blessings pounded into him by cudgels, the muledriver’s punches, the loss of his saddlebags, his stolen overcoat and all the hunger, thirst, and weariness he’d experienced in his grace Don Quijote’s service. It all seemed to him more than sufficiently repaid, now that he’d been rewarded with this treasure. (138)

The passage begins with a reference to Don Quixote’s interest in the notebooks and love letters left behind by Cardenio that is then juxtaposed with Sancho’s decided disinterest in those items, because he instead favors the more monetarily valuable articles. His yen for every last modicum of “treasure” is portrayed rather violently (pulling seams apart, unraveling threads), with an implication of desperation in the emphasis on examining “every” corner, cushion, and thread in the suitcase.

Comparatively, Don Quixote examines the written works by “leafing through virtually the entire notebook” (138)—a statement that does not hint at a frantic searching equal to Sancho’s. To be fair, Sancho’s greed is not limitless, for he does find satisfaction in the ultimate sum, declaring it worth the incredible amount of pain and hardship he has experienced under Don Quixote. The list of trials he has endured

is longer than the list of his attempts at finding more treasure, yet the treasure outweighs them all because it represents not only monetary gain, but also the promise of even more success.

Sancho wants to gain wealth and therefore agrees to become the squire to Don Quixote's befuddled knight after hearing promises of a whole island for him to govern and unknown glories from the many adventures they are sure to embark upon. He so desperately wants to escape from his low social standing that he is willing to seize any prospect, transforming it in his mind to one with a promised lucrative outcome. The extent of his dedication towards improvement within his society is illustrated in his decision to enter into another society's paradigm, leaving his own behind. This ambition is problematic for two reasons: the world into which Sancho is attempting to integrate himself does not exist, except in the mad mind of his master, and he seems detached from the knight errantry process all together. Sancho's detachment is most clearly exemplified when Don Quixote requests that he sit next to him at the goatherd dinner, and he declares he would prefer to sit in the corner where he can eat "without any fussing or show of respect [which would be] more comfortable and useful" (58). Ultimately, Don Quixote strongholds Sancho into a place directly beside him, a move that is typical of their subordination-based relationship.

Don Quixote is able to convince Sancho of squiring so thoroughly (and enacting the duties that come with squiring), not only because Sancho is more than ready to believe him, but also because he, Don Quixote, wholly believes in this world himself. If we now look to Bakhtin's chronotope of chivalric romance, we see that

Don Quixote's mentality is consistent with Bakhtin's "hero of a chivalric romance [who] plunges headfirst into adventures as if they were his native element; for him, the world exists exclusively under the sign of the miraculous."⁶ Bakhtin later elaborates the world as follows: "throughout this world the hero is able to bring glory on himself and on others; everywhere the same names resound and are glorious. In this world the hero is 'at home'; he is every bit as miraculous as his world. His lineage is miraculous, as are the conditions of his birth, his childhood and youth, his physique and so forth."⁷

This description of "the unique chronotope of this type of novel—a *miraculous world in adventure-time*"⁸ highlights the inconsistency of Don Quixote's status as a true heroic knight. While he does dive into adventures, nothing else in the above passages is applicable to him. None of the names he repeats, such as Amadís de Gaul, are universally recognized, much less glorious. Don Quixote manages to bring destruction and injury to those he tries to help; for example, Andrés, the boy he attempts to rescue, is only beaten more savagely as soon as Don Quixote turns his back. Nothing about Don Quixote's personal life and physique is miraculous. He has given himself the title of "don" for his knighthood, which elevates him to a higher social position than he can rightfully claim; moreover, he has spindly legs, knobby knees and a rather yellow, choleric complexion.⁹

The notion of Don Quixote as a true chivalric hero does not correspond with Bakhtin's version, which further emphasizes the generic inconsistency. From his birth

⁶ Bakhtin, 152.

⁷ Ibid., 154.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ In one instance his legs are described as "long and exceedingly thin, as hairy as a goat's and not very clean" (242). In another he is noted as having a "lean, yellow face" (255).

(both biological and into the world of chivalry) he is not meant to be the person who fills this role—his devotion to adventuring notwithstanding. Considering Bakhtin’s observations as a backdrop for thinking about the workings of a typical chivalric romance, it makes sense that a chronotope in *Don Quijote* would not fully adhere to any schema presented as typical of the majority of these romances; while this genre provides a tentative framework for the novel, Cervantes greatly embellishes and distorts it—a choice that shall be examined in greater detail later in this paper.

The storyline of Cardenio and Luscinda (and also to a lesser degree that of Dorotea and Don Fernando) also serves as a crucial instance of the Bakhtinian chronotope of *adventure-time*, a distinguishing feature of the Greek, but more relevantly, the chivalric romance. The schema that Bakhtin presents is as follows:

There is a boy and a girl of *marriageable* age...They are remarkable for their *exceptional beauty*. They meet each other *unexpectedly*, usually during some festive *holiday*. A *sudden* and *instantaneous* passion flares up between them that is as irresistible as fate, like an incurable disease. However, the marriage cannot take place straightaway. They are confronted with obstacles that *retard* and delay their union. The lovers are *parted*, they seek one another, find one another...There are the usual obstacles and adventures of lovers...a different bridegroom and bride intended for either of the lovers (*false couples*).¹⁰

There are, of course, some discrepancies between this model and the actual situation of the lovers. Cardenio and Luscinda did not meet spontaneously during a festival: they had been, for all intents and purposes, betrothed for years before they even reached marriageable age. Yet, the skeletal structure of fated lovers facing obstacles

¹⁰ Bakhtin, 87-8.

before they can realize their marriage is present, and theirs even contains the specific obstacle of the *false couples*.¹¹

Unlike Don Quixote as heroic knight, it initially appears that Cardenio and Luscinda do not veer significantly from the simpler¹² *adventure-time* chronotope, and therefore do not twist the genre in the same way Quixote does. This formula, nonetheless, serves simply as an observation of repeated motifs in adventure novels, not as a hard rule for what must happen, and certainly not as its defining characteristic. Bakhtin, however, notes a distinguishing feature of *adventure-time*: he points towards the idea that although there is a starting point (in this case, the ignited passion of the lovers) and an end point (“successful union in marriage”), the events they flank are but “an extratemporal hiatus”.^{13,14}

In other words, they could be rearranged or removed and the result would be the same. This is due, in part, to another feature of *adventure-time*: “the love between the hero and the heroine is not subject to doubt; this love remains *absolutely unchanged* through the entire novel”.¹⁵ If love, the driving force behind this type of chronotope, remains unchanged, then those intermediary events are unnecessary, because the end of the narrative is expected to be marriage, the culmination of this love.

¹¹ It is the mention of the false couples that leads me label the roles of Dorotea and Don Fernando as subordinated to the main lovers because this pair only functions as an obstacle, and thus their storyline is rather unimportant on its own.

¹² I call this type simpler in comparison because I see Don Quixote’s to be of the more specific “miraculous world within adventure-time” variety.

¹³ Bakhtin, 89.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 90.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 89.

Here is where Cardenio's adherence to the chronotope begins to falter.

Regardless of the fact that Cardenio and Luscinda are most certainly not the hero and heroine of this novel, it is also true that there is no doubt in the reader's mind that they will end up together, just as their parents and the genre itself foresee. In that respect, they still correspond to the schema, but the necessity of immutable love causes the split from it. In order for their destiny of marriage to be fulfilled, their love for one another must not change, but for Cardenio's sake, it cannot permanently remain as it is. Indeed, their love does not mutate; Luscinda's perceived betrayal catapults Cardenio into a state (of madness) where his love for her is, and must be, temporarily buried. He is left wandering the Sierra Morena "waiting for Heaven...to so change [his] memory that [he] can no longer recall either the beauty or treachery of Luscinda"(177). His mental capacities have diminished to the point that he is unable to love her as he once did.

This is not to suggest that Cardenio's time in the Sierra Morena ultimately causes their love to grow stronger, which would, according to Bakhtin, transport them into "an example of a much later European novel-type, one that would not be an adventure novel at all, and certainly not a Greek [or chivalric] romance"¹⁶; rather, it enables and allows him to regain the love from whence it had been driven. Without the Sierra Morena, Cardenio would not have been able to rediscover this love, and therefore the ultimate end of marriage between he and Luscinda would not have happened. Therefore, this time was essential to their goal and their narrative's endpoint and could not have been removed; it was not simply a hiatus in the

¹⁶ Ibid., 90.

mountains.¹⁷ In this way, neither Cardenio nor Don Quixote is wholly positioned within the typical chivalric romance as exemplified by Bakhtin's model, and this underscores the distortion of the genre itself by Cervantes and the narration. The instability of the genre creates a setting in which the characters can never fully and comfortably situate themselves; consequently, they are continually searching for the stability that Cervantes, and the genre, fails to provide them with. The narration is thus propelled forward due to the constant yearning for generic security: Cardenio is on a quest for Luscinda and Don Quixote desires the miraculous world where he can finally be the chivalric hero.

¹⁷ Both Cardenio and Don Quixote's time spent in the Sierra Morena is vital in other ways as well, which shall be addressed shortly.

II. The Intersection of Madness and Narrative

We have seen Cardenio's mad episodes of fragmentation, Don Quixote's delusional madness represented in his full belief in the world of knight-errantry, and Sancho's willingness to believe in such a delusional world sustained by his denial and coupled with his greedy yet ambitious motives. The interactions among these madnesses generate the narratives of the individuals and in doing so create the story of Volume One. Don Quixote's madness is the principal driving force in this dynamic, as it inherently produces adventures, the likes of which exponentially create others that ultimately lead to the Sierra Morena, where we encounter an explosion of narrative threads.

It is patently clear that without Don Quixote's madness this novel would not exist. He is, after all, the title character whose personality is practically defined by his madness, a fact made clear from Chapter One: "Arguments like these cost the poor gentleman his sanity" (14). It is worthwhile, however, to delve into the mechanics of *how* his madness influences, changes, and creates the narrative lines in order to reveal the import of madness as a productive element within the novel itself. Additionally, while his madness is the main influence, the other characters' madnesses contribute as well, and in some cases, the narrative even benefits them.

As it is Don Quixote's stated goal to seek adventures and give "himself every opportunity to experience every sort of danger" (15), it follows that this is what actually happens. The much written about windmill incident illustrates how his madness creates adventures out of seemingly ordinary events or objects. Don Quixote views these windmills as the perfect first chance to "begin to enrich" (43) the

adventures of himself and Sancho, despite Sancho's protestations that they are but windmills. Quixote reminds Sancho (and by extension us), "obviously, ... you don't know much about adventures" (43). *He* understands adventures because his job as a knight-errant requires that he seek adventures and in order to seek, he must first know what he is looking for—it is his business to comprehend adventures. His madness is what has caused his delusion that this is his duty in life, and hence his madness is the basis of his adventuring.

Oftentimes, these adventures seem like superficial episodes that only function to emphasize how delusional Don Quixote is, but there is one in particular that does more. I refer to the incident of the cloth-hammers, which is perhaps better classified as a non-adventure. Don Quixote and Sancho hear, and then tentatively approach, loud, frightening banging sounds expecting to stumble upon something far less innocuous than hydraulic hammers beating cloth. Yet, that is what they discover, and hence, they do not begin the "fearful expedition" (116) that they were expecting; in fact, there is nothing to be done at all. Realizing this, Sancho begins joking amicably about the misunderstanding, to which Don Quixote colors and replies

You may be joking...but I'm not. Consider this, my merry friend: Do you think that if this had been yet another dangerous adventure, and not just hammers beating out cloth, have I or have I not shown the courage necessary to deal with it, from start to finish? And by any chance am I required—being, as I am, a knight—to be so familiar with the sounds we hear that I can know one for another, and understand whether a particular noise is or is not made by a cloth hammer? What's more, might it not be the fact—as in truth it is—that I had never in my life seen anything of the sort, as you most surely have, being the vulgar peasant you are, born and raised among such contraptions? Otherwise, just turn these six hammers into six monstrous giants, and send them rushing right at me—whether one at a time or all at once—and if I didn't knock them flat on their backs, with their legs sticking up in the air, then you can make fun of me as much as you like. (117)

At this point in the story Don Quixote has dislocated his shoulder, lost a significant number of teeth vomited reciprocally on Sancho, thanks to Quixote's professed magic balm. Sancho Panza, his loyal squire, has expressed some doubts as to the propriety of his master's knightly actions, noting "all the calamities happening to us have been punishment for the sin your grace committed against the laws of knighthood" (105), thus indicating a small decline in reverence towards Quixote, although this is partially rectified when Sancho subsequently and affectionately dubs him "The Knight of the Sad Face" and beseeches Quixote not to abandon him to the wilderness. In short, Sancho's morale is at its nadir, which makes sense given that he has witnessed only the failures, or at best, small successes accompanied by serious injury of his master. His low morale manifests in his unappreciated joking, its undertone of simple trust and loyalty notwithstanding. He is willing to go along with Don Quixote's silly reasoning, although it is unclear whether Sancho views it as such and equally clear that Quixote does not. The first line reveals the seriousness of Don Quixote's complete madness: "You may be joking...but I'm not". There is no room for games in his world of adventures, a sentiment emphasized in his sardonic labeling of Sancho as his "merry" friend.

Don Quixote's indignation at Sancho's mockery also indicates his awareness of Sancho's small acts of insubordination and his resulting frustration. He emphasizes his own knightly status while addressing his servant's vulgar status, a point that heretofore had been unobjectionable and seems now to be purely defensive, because Don Quixote felt so ashamed at his mistake. Moreover, he righteously claims that he was ready to fight those hammers, has shown the courage necessary to do so, and

certainly would do so if given the chance. This potential adventure provides a minimal risk for Don Quixote to gain credibility (necessary as he likely will fail if presented with a true challenge) and thus fulfills one purpose of an adventure: Sancho's faith in his master's heroism is restored. This, in turn reassures him that he will get to be governor after all. Instead of quitting and going home, Sancho is reenergized and ready to proceed. This determination sets the stage for more adventures, real or otherwise, which impels the narrative forward.

The story of *Don Quijote*, however, is comprised of more than just daring knightly escapades; there are interpolated secondary stories as well. Many times, these stories are told because Don Quixote's curious mind prompts their (re)telling. Such is the case with the tale of Grisóstomo and Marcela, originally introduced by a young goatherd spreading the news in a perfunctory manner that displeases Don Quixote, who then implores another goatherd to tell him the tale in full. To Don Quixote, an adventure is implicated in every detail; every moment has the potential to become an episode. His desire to know more details elucidates a basic element of his madness: his intractably inquisitive mind.

The introduction of Cardenio's narrative, which coincides with Quixote and Sancho's entrance into the Sierra Morena, is an even greater example of the scope of potential for adventure as the sparse terrain of the *despoblado* enhances not only Don Quixote's madness and narrative, but also those of his compatriots. Recalling now Bakhtin's chronotope of *adventure-time* and its relation to space, he writes that for "adventure-time to work, one must have an *abstract* expanse of space...the link between space and time has, as it were, not an organic but a purely technical (and

mechanical) nature. In order for the adventure to develop it needs space, and plenty of it. The contingency that governs events is inseparably tied up with space”.¹⁸ The Sierra Morena is this space; it is ripe for adventure—an atmosphere that Don Quixote experienced when he “felt his spirits rise as they reached the mountains, for this seemed to him a perfect place for the adventures he was seeking” (136). This attitude permeates Don Quixote’s mental state as he wanders through the mountains, and indeed through life, thus sustaining the atmosphere of potential adventure. The mountains are a free space for every type of adventure, a feeling that, along with Don Quixote’s aforementioned alarmingly inquisitive mind, leads to the beginning of Cardenio’s narrative, which starts even before we are introduced to the man himself when Don Quixote and Sancho Panza stumble upon of an abandoned suitcase and a deceased donkey upon entering the Sierra Morena.

Don Quixote’s first instinct at the discovery of these objects is that they “cannot be anything but the remains of some lost traveler, obliged to pass through these mountains, where, being attacked by a band of thieving scoundrels, he was killed, after which they brought him to this secret place and buried him” (136). This instantiates an adventurous mind that jumps instantly to grandiose conclusions (which Sancho reasonably rebuffs by claiming that since there is money left they could not have been thieves). The knight-errant then proceeds to read through the love letters and notebooks that are contained in the suitcase, hoping that they will reveal more about the mysterious nature of these articles and “convinced, as ever, that in such a wilderness he could not help but find some strange adventure” (138).

¹⁸ Bakhtin, 99.

Here again, we see how the power of the landscape mingled with Quixote's madness produces both adventures and narratives. Excited by his intrigue, the reader is also "powerfully interested in finding out whose suitcase it was, imagining, because of the sonnet, the letter, the gold coins, and the exceedingly fine shirts, that it must have belonged to some highborn lover, who had been brought to his despairing end by his lady's scorn and ill treatment" (138). This is Don Quixote's titillating backstory for the previous owner; indeed, in the next paragraph we are introduced to the wild, ragged, bare-chested mountain man Cardenio, and thus his narrative, and this adventure, can truly begin.

Cardenio's appearance augments Don Quixote's preconception that he will find adventure by imbuing his mind with thoughts of finding the ill-fated lover, "even if it mean[s] spending a year in the mountains" (138). He is prepared to invest a significant amount of time, in the spirit of adventure, and this dedication leads to both the initiation and interruption of Cardenio's narrative. Before we have heard a word from Cardenio, Don Quixote asks a shepherd to impart any knowledge he may have about the owner of the objects. Here, he learns of the existence of Cardenio's fits of madness, but not the reasons behind it beyond hints at the treachery of a Fernando.¹⁹ This is the substantial beginning of Cardenio's story, even if as of yet it is still hearsay.

When Quixote and Cardenio are finally united after what seems like an adventure of its own, The Knight of the Sad Face reveals that he has "made up [his] mind not to leave the mountains until [he has learned from Cardenio's] own lips if

¹⁹ It is also revealed that the goatherds have a plan to take him to a town where, if possible, his madness can be cured. This will be a key fact in the analysis of Cardenio's place in the Sierra Morena—a topic that shall be addressed shortly.

there might be some cure for the sadness and pain” (142). Although the initial tone of this statement is compassionate, the resolute nature intimates that Don Quixote has found yet another opportunity for adventure. Cardenio begins telling his tale under the one condition that no one interrupts him (because lingering over it will cause even more sorrow), yet at the first mention of *Amadís de Gaul*, Don Quixote’s chivalric hero, the befuddled knight loses control and interjects excitedly with a “scrupulous defense of knightly decorum” (170). This interrupts, breaks the promise, and suspends the narration. We do not hear another word of it until the circumstances are perfectly set up.

The culmination of these circumstances follows Sancho’s first act of his own volition; as for the majority of Volume One both his madness and his narrative are intertwined with and subordinated to those of his master, Don Quixote. Sancho’s introduction into the novel comes not, as with many of the other characters, from an accidental encounter with Don Quixote, but rather from Don Quixote’s seeking him out to fill a position that is inherently subordinate. Sancho’s initiation is intentional and therefore is not, as the accidental encounters are, an interruption to the narrative. Don Quixote pointedly invites Sancho to be a part of his mad world, and in this way Sancho is also subordinated to Don Quixote’s madness. The priest and the barber note this about Sancho, observing “that Don Quixote’s madness was so passionate that it had thus swept away this poor man’s sanity” (164). In other words, Sancho does not have any madness of his own—desiring a higher social standing is not unusual—but in using Don Quixote for his social standing as a knight, he unwittingly appropriates Don Quixote’s characteristic madness as a means of escape and a basis of hope for re-

integration as someone better. Other instances of this subordination occur multiple times in various situations, the most straightforward of which is when Don Quixote places a restriction on Sancho's speech:

From now on, however, be warned about one thing, which is that you check and restrain all this excessive conversation with me, for in all the many tales of chivalry I've read—and their number is infinite—I've never heard of a squire who talked to his lord as much as you talk to me. Truly, this seems like a grievous error, both for you and for me—for you, because you have less respect for me; and for me, because I don't command sufficient respect...From everything I've said, Sancho, you must conclude that it is essential to make distinctions between master and servant, between lord and man, and between knight and squire. (118)

With this, Don Quixote clearly lays out the divisions between them—reminiscent of when he lambasted Sancho's vulgar status—except that here his tone is more rational; in both cases, however, Don Quixote is concerned with commanding the respect he thinks he deserves. Ironically, this constraint is mostly symbolic, as Sancho only recognizes it to a point. He asks permission to talk only a few times and then proceeds onto tangents that most likely would exceed the limitations of the restriction, that is, if Don Quixote actually were to enforce it. This is not to imply that Sancho is *not* subordinated to Don Quixote, but rather to emphasize the fluidity of this subordination. This example portrays the business aspect of their relationship, which is in its nature one of differing levels of power.

Sancho's opinions are also viewed as inferior; indeed, when Sancho addresses his concerns that perhaps they are not finding adventures due to Don Quixote's sins against knighthood, his master turns this around and blames Sancho himself, saying "it's because you are guilty of not having reminded me in time that you had that affair with the horse blanket" (104)! Whether this is due to Don Quixote's muddled brain,

or his defensive belief that he is incapable of wrongdoing, it only serves to stress the imbalance between them and also between their narratives. Don Quixote has incorporated the poor farmer into his madness and subsequently dragged him through towns and mountains—“a barren place, a place without ‘pueblo’, without people, outside the town, a kind of wilderness, the uncivilized”²⁰—on a mad narrative journey. The geographic removal of the land transforms the *despoblado* from simply a vast expanse for potential adventures to an even more apt conduit for Don Quixote’s madness because of its solitude.

It is not until Sancho ventures off by himself, at Quixote’s behest, that he creates his own narrative separate from his master’s, and thus, they are able to leave the Sierra Morena; if he had not, the narrative, along with the characters, would be trapped in those mountains, at a veritable standstill. What prompts this splitting is Don Quixote’s request that Sancho bring a love letter to Dulcinea de Toboso informing her that he has gone mad in her name. Fittingly, this letter—a tangible, written piece of Don Quixote’s narrative—ultimately stays in the *despoblado* with its author because he forgets to give it to Sancho, thus enabling his squire to be truly independent for the first time since his introduction into the novel.

What Sancho does on this journey sets many actions in motion that prove to be imperative. He immediately encounters the priest and the barber from La Mancha, who recognize him and inquire as to Don Quixote’s whereabouts. This is the first challenge to the strength of Sancho’s individual narrative and an opportunity to see how his madness manifests itself without the overbearing presence of Don Quixote.

²⁰ Roberto González Echevarría, *Love and the Law in Cervantes*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 63.

He spews out the tale of Don Quixote and his adventures since they left La Mancha, and in this re-telling of Don Quixote's madness he reveals the extent of his own, thus cementing the idea that while he may be physically on his own, he cannot ever fully separate himself from the knight's madness, nor from his narrative.

The more important event spurred by this encounter, nevertheless, is Sancho's return to the Sierra Morena, accompanied by the priest and the barber. They are armed with a plan to rescue Don Quixote out of the wilds in which one of them shall dress up like a damsel who will appeal to Don Quixote's sense of knightly adventure and thus, entice him out of the mountains. The significance of the re-introduction of these two characters is twofold; it is because of this duo that Cardenio finally finishes the telling of his tale, which is due in part to the discovery of Dorotea and the consequent telling of her narrative, without which his would not be complete. Additionally, Dorotea then plays a key role in their plan by creating the role of Princess Micomicona, which is yet another narrative generated by Sancho's involuntary act of bringing the two men back.

The priest and his hair-cutting companion overhear Cardenio's sad poetic lament and approach him with "trenchant yet wise words trying to talk him out of this miserable way of life" (169), but in Cardenio's opinion "since they do not understand, as I do, that in abandoning this injurious life I must fall into a worse one, [so] perhaps it is best if they take me for a man of weak mind—even, still worse, a man not in his right mind" (169). This statement shows Cardenio's self-awareness about what is truly best for him, much as he previously showed self-awareness regarding his mad

streaks. Even so, the priest's kind words prompt Cardenio to narrate his whole story, and we, along with them, finally receive the finale.

Yet, the finale is not actually the end of Cardenio's narrative or his madness. There is still a missing piece of the puzzle, an unasked, unanswered question whose solution appears in the form of Dorotea. Once again, it is the priest and barber who discover her, dressed like a man but revealed to be a woman, hiding in the Sierra Morena. The first words they speak to her carry similar weight to the greeting they gave Cardenio. They claim that their intentions are purely assisting in nature, but instead of attempting to dissuade her from or incite her into any action (as they did to Cardenio) they encourage her to share her "fortunes, good or bad, so that jointly, or separately, [they] may be enabled to help [her] bear [her] misfortunes" (179). In addition to offering to bear her misfortunes, they promise to assist with their advice, although this promise is ultimately perfunctory, as the solution lies in her narration.

As Dorotea is relating her tale to the priest, the barber, and Cardenio, the latter perceives that this is the counterpart to his narrative: the viewpoint of the other jilted lover. After listening to her speech in its entirety, he exclaims:

"Heaven has been hiding a greater happiness in our miseries than either of us had thought possible. Assuming, that is, that Luscinda cannot be married to Don Fernando, since she is already married to me, and Don Fernando cannot be married to her, since he is already married to you, and since Luscinda has so publicly declared these facts, why should we not begin to hope that Heaven will now give us back what is rightfully ours—since it still exists, neither given to anyone else nor destroyed? And since this newfound expectation comes to us, not from any tenuous, remote hope, nor from wild fancies, let me beg you, señora, to turn your chaste mind in more courageous directions, as I myself plan to do, and let us adjust ourselves to this new and better fortune that may well await us." (189)

This quotation serves to remind the reader of the extraordinary events that connect the two characters while simultaneously evincing the restorative quality of the conjoining of these two characters' narratives, the conjoining of their sorrows and madnnesses. Cardenio emboldens them to discard their misfortunes in the mountain wilderness and reintegrate themselves into society. Without Dorotea's narrative, Cardenio would not have learned that his former life had, in fact, not been destroyed—the belief of utter destruction had robbed him of his sanity. Additionally, Dorotea's narration induces Cardenio to divulge that her former life is also still intact. The dual revelations are facilitated by the priest and the barber, who were led to these mountains by Sancho on his independent journey.

Dorotea serves an additional purpose in providing the missing link to Cardenio's narrative; she contributes a female body to the priest and the barber's plan to lure Don Quixote out of the Sierra Morena. In doing so, she adds plausibility to their fiction, for now it bears the name, face, and newly generated narrative of Princess Micomicona, a fair maiden with a rich lineage who is searching for Don Quixote to defend her honor against a horrid giant. This is the perfect scheme to convince Don Quixote, as it contains all the elements of his perfect adventure and is set in the emptiness of the Sierra Morena; but it is also the solution to what has been Sancho's main worry: that his master will choose to be an archbishop, then an emperor, and that Sancho will never obtain his position of governor. If, instead, Don Quixote marries this Princess, then all will be right.²¹ This scheme works of course,

²¹ This belief on Sancho's part once again highlights the subordination of his madness to Don Quixote's. The priest is "astonished by his stupidity, and at seeing how caught up he was in his master's mad fantasies" (191).

with the favored result of Don Quixote being carted out of the *despoblado* and back into society.

Cardenio is cured because he narrates his way out of the madness—something that is possible precisely because he stays in the mountains instead of leaving them to seek an outside cure, which the priest, the barber, and the goatherds had thought was the best idea. Bakhtin provides a concise way of viewing this concept: “Every concretization, of even the most simple and everyday variety, would introduce its own *rule-generating force*, its own *order*, its *inevitable ties* to human life and to the time specific to that life. Events would end up being interwoven with these rules, and to a greater or lesser extent would find themselves participating in this order, subject to its ties.”²² The *despoblado* does not have this order, as it is without people and completely uncivilized.

If Cardenio were to have stayed in society, a concrete place, especially compared to the barren *despoblado*, he would have been subject to its rules and its order, which would have landed him in a mental institution. He instinctually feels that this would not be the best decision for him, and so he leaves, seeking a place disconnected from society all together, the Sierra Morena, where “there isn’t a road, or even a trail” (140) to get there. Ironically reassuring, it is only seven miles outside the city and so it is a reasonable distance if he ever does want to return to society.

The lack of a rule-generating force or an order is what makes the Sierra Morena so conducive to Don Quixote’s madness because it enables the mountains to function as Bakhtin’s miraculous world, mentioned earlier. This is the world where

²² Bakhtin, 100.

the chivalric “hero is able to bring glory on himself and on others; everywhere the same names resound and are glorious”²³: the world that for the majority of Volume One does not exist for Don Quixote because barely anyone in the novel’s present-day La Mancha understands knight-errantry or recognizes the famed knights to whom he constantly refers. It is amidst the rugged wilderness that his madness flourishes to the point of Don Quixote’s declaring himself mad in the name of his lady Dulcinea while also paying homage to these great knights of old.

As Quixote explains to Sancho, “My idea is to become a lunatic for no reason at all, and to ask my lady, seeing what I do without cause, what she imagines I might do if I really had one?” (151). This moment is a transformation of his madness, one that is enabled by the solitude, and lack of rules, of the *despoblado*. Here he makes a conscious decision to imitate madness to prove a point, ironically not realizing how inherently crazy that notion is: he is imitating the story of a knight errant who did the same thing because his woman cheated on him. Not only was Dulcinea not unfaithful to him, she does not even know Don Quixote exists! And surprisingly, his recognition of this fact (that he “paint[s] it all in [his] mind exactly as [he] want[s] it to be” [157]) is one of his most coherent, logical statements. The blank canvas of the *despoblado* gives Don Quixote the opportunity to create his ideal world, and so he does. Through his fake penance he establishes himself, at least in his own mind, as a bona fide knight, thus proving himself worthy of taking on the challenge with which Princess Micomicona later presents him. One gets the sense that this is quintessential Don Quixote, doing exactly what he wants to be doing. There is no one to dissuade him,

²³ Ibid., 154.

aside from Sancho who tries and fails, and so Don Quixote can continue as he pleases.

In response to those that may still have doubts that Don Quixote's madness belongs in the Sierra Morena, one only has to remember the disaster that takes place inside Juan Palomeque's inn. I refer to Don Quixote's battle with the innkeeper's wineskins, which he views as the giant that Micomicona has ordered him to vanquish. While Sancho fully believes that it is the giant's blood spurting all over the room, the innkeeper does not suspend his disbelief for a second, instead yelling "Oh lord kill me...if that Don Quijote—or Don Devil!— hasn't been slashing away at some of my good red wineskins,...and the wine pouring out must be what this fool thinks is blood" (242). He is finished putting up with the nonsense that the travelers bring and is not willing to play along, even if he knew how. Playing along with a destructive madman is not reasonable in his inn, or in society. This one example epitomizes what happens when Don Quixote meets the obstruction of society, which is not present in the barren outskirts of the city.

While the priest, the barber, and even, at times, the goatherds, believe that the best cure for the various individuals' madnesses is to return to society in order to seek one out, it is clear that these are misjudgments. Cardenio and Dorotea needed only to learn of each other's stories through verbal narration in order to begin to cope with their problems, while Don Quixote is happier and safer (both to himself and to others) outside of a society that wishes to meddle with his narrative. The *despoblado* not only lacks civilization, it also lacks any generic framework of its own, thus allowing Don Quixote (and whomever else) to impose the parameters that he (or she) wants or

unknowingly needs. He can live in this miraculous world that is typical of chivalric romances, and so it is here, where the novel unexpectedly finds some generic stability, that Don Quixote finds some as well.

III-The Usurped Narrator

Upon a first reading of *Don Quijote*, it is obvious that the story and the characters are afflicted with madness, and it even seems as though this madness extends into the discourse²⁴, affecting novelistic aspects from the formal elements, such as chapter headings, to the character of the narrator itself. To be able to analyze the narrative structure, it is important to remember that *Don Quijote* is presented as an historical account of the knight-errant and his adventures; the story is thus purportedly based on historical facts and evidence. The conceit of documentary subjectivity allows the role of the Narrator to be played, so to speak, by a proliferation of actors or, better put, historians. The jumble of narrative voices, although they are virtually indistinguishable from one another, obfuscates exactly whose words and opinions we are reading. The reminder that there is a narrator takes the reader out of the very experience of reading and interrupts the narrative story itself. This helps create the illusion of an unreliable discourse that both prepares us for, and develops alongside, the madness that is to unfold within the novel, although the madness develops at a more accelerated pace.

To begin, there is the narrator of Part One, a character that we take for granted because we do not know that there is, or could have been, any other narrator. This is presumably the same voice that we hear in the prologue, although the prologue introduces a confusion of its own, which will be examined shortly. At the

²⁴ I am using Seymour Chatman's definitions of story and discourse as laid out in his book *Story and Discourse* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978). He defines it as follows: "Structuralist theory argues that each narrative has two parts: a story (*histoire*), the content or chain of events (actions, happenings), plus what may be called the existents (characters, items of setting); and a discourse (*discours*), that is, the expression, the means by which the content is communicated. In simple terms, the story is the *what* in a narrative that is depicted, discourse the *how*." (19)

end of Part One and the beginning of Part Two, however, we are introduced to a second narrator. This second narrator takes over at the point where he writes, “the original author of this history left the battle suspended in mid-air, excusing himself on the grounds that he himself could not find anything more” (49). It appears, therefore, that he is aware of the happenings of Part One; he is not coming into this blindly without any knowledge of the first narrator’s relation to both the discourse and the story.

The entrance of the second narrator is only the start of the narrator’s confusion, as he informs us of how he came to be, essentially narrating his own tale, similarly to Cardenio, Dorotea, and the numerous others whose interpolated stories pepper the novel. So perturbed by the original author’s claim that there was no more of Don Quixote’s story, he goes in search of the rest. What he finds in a Toledo market is a set of notebooks, written in Arabic—a language he cannot read. Much like Don Quixote, the second narrator has an inquisitive mind, which prompts a desire to understand the notebooks and so he finds a Moor who can translate. It is revealed that these notebooks hold the rest of the history, as written by Sidi Hamid Benengeli, an Arab historian.

In summary, the current situation is one of multiple mediators: there is the history written by Benengeli, translated by the Moor, and narrated by the nameless second narrator. It is important to note that the second narrator is distrustful of Benengeli’s account as “it’s very natural for people of that race to be liars” (52). He even hides insults within compliments, such as when he credits Benengeli for writing “this lofty, impressive, scrupulously detailed, pleasant, and highly imaginative

history” (127). At first, the compliment appears to be purely praise, but as the second narrator has already expressed his predilection for a straightforward historian who “should be accurate, truthful, and never driven by his feelings, so that neither self-interest nor fear...should lead him away from the highway of truth” (52-3), it is clear that he does not view a “highly imaginative” history as positive.

The second narrator’s skeptical cynicism towards Benengeli reveals a bias that threatens his credibility, adding to the undependable narration of the novel. It also relieves both the second narrator, and Don Quixote himself, of responsibility for the story, as the narrator assures the reader, “I’m sure you’ll find everything you may want, presented in the pleasantest way, and if indeed there’s anything worthwhile missing, I’d blame it on its dog of an author, rather than on any deficiency in the subject itself” (53). In other words, if something is lacking, the reader cannot blame either the narrator or any character in the history because he, the narrator, has relinquished authority. The one responsibility that remains his is to the discourse—a duty that is not as easy as it sounds because of the continual interference of the characters’ madresses; this shall be addressed shortly.

The narrators’ renouncement of authority occurs even before the entrance of the second narrator: it is immediately established in the self-deprecating writer of the prologue. Although most presume this person to be Miguel de Cervantes, I hesitate to wholly agree because of a few key facts. Firstly, the pagination begins in this prologue, indicating that this is the start of the novel and should not be considered separate from the following text, a discursive choice, which indicates that its contents contain fictionalized characters. The prologue author’s tone, like that of the narrator’s

tone throughout Part One, is more concerned with historical facts than the second narrator, which suggests that they are one and the same. He can only be Miguel de Cervantes, the fictionalized narrator, a character who happens to have the same name as the author. Such a playful designation would not be out of line, as a character that shares this name appears within the Captive's tale towards the end of Volume One. Additionally, the prologue is unsigned, and thus, this narrator, like the first (if they are indeed distinct) and second narrator, remains unnamed. Therefore, the prologue's narrator is the fictionalized Cervantes and it is highly likely that Part One's narrator is as well. The second narrator is separate from, although aware of, the previous narrators. The import of this discrimination is that it compounds the disorder present in the levels of narration, which adds to the discourse's pretense of madness.

Regardless, the prologue's author himself is unsure of the quality of the book he is presenting, referring to it as "a man bred in a jail cell, where everything grates on your nerves and every new sound makes you still sadder" (7). His lack of confidence in his own work imposes a similar lack of confidence on the part of his audience towards the text, but also towards the narrator himself. The fictional Cervantes also claims that "though [he] may seem to be Don Quijote's parent, [he's] only his step-father" (7), implying that while he did not create Don Quixote, he did raise him, cultivating who the knight became. Cervantes' assertion abdicates responsibility in much the same way the professed historicity of this novel does, and is reminiscent of the way in which the second narrator passes off responsibility to Benengeli. The historicity permits the claim that the narrator-historians are only interpreting and presenting, not conceiving, the events. Similarly, the second narrator

holds, and instructs us to hold, Benengeli culpable for any insufficiencies in the story. As Diana de Armas Wilson observes in her introduction, “by yielding the narration of his [a fictionalized Cervantes’] text to a cry of authors, he debunks both authorship and authority” (xi). The narrator’s lack of authority is reinforced as one notes the majority of the prologue is literally in another’s voice: that of a friend of the author. It is questionable if this friend truly exists, and if he does whether he said these words, or if Cervantes made up the persona of the friend altogether. By giving up authority, he gives the characters free reign, which proves to be an unwise decision.

Cervantes’ friend is one of the first instances of an untrustworthy narrator in *Don Quijote*. He gives Cervantes advice that seems reasonable, except when one realizes that it is littered with inaccuracies. He provides a semi-relevant quotation that he claims is from Cato, but at the end of the quotation are brackets containing Ovid’s name (9). It is unclear from where this subtle correction comes, but it only serves to undermine the credibility of the prologue’s narrator, as it is implausible that he would want to inflict that upon himself. This mystery is not meant to be decipherable; rather, it is a tactical decision that both bolsters the underlying tone of disorientation and anticipates the madness that pervades the entire novel.

The friend does provide one insightful recommendation when he advises the fictionalized Cervantes, “All you have to do is try, with meaningful words, properly and effectively arranged, to honestly unroll your sentences and paragraphs, clearly, sensibly” (11). Here, he addresses the importance of clear discourse, or the arrangement of the words on the page. Cervantes responds to this suggestion positively, affirming to the readers that they will “find this history of Don Quijote de

La Mancha so plain, so straightforward, and so utterly free of confusion” (11). As any reader of *Don Quijote* knows, the novel is particularly complicated and convoluted—the opposite of what it is purporting it to be. This blatantly inaccurate description serves a similar purpose to the friend’s misquotations and the second narrator’s skepticism of Benengeli in that it causes the reader to question the credibility of the narrator. The fact that these reservations are established from the beginning establishes this narrative as unreliable, which notifies the reader to be alert while reading, and to expect the unexpected.

Expecting the unexpected is a notion that Bakhtin refers to as the “suddenly”—a concept specific to the chivalric romance. He describes it as a “type of time [that] emerges only at points of rupture...in normal, real-life, ‘law-abiding’ temporal sequences, where these laws are *suddenly* violated and events take an unexpected and unforeseen turn. This ‘suddenly’ is normalized...it becomes something generally applicable, in fact almost ordinary...Even ‘unexpectedness’ itself...ceases to be unexpected”.²⁵ One example of this is the infrequent, yet consistent reminders of the different narrators, which violate laws equivalent to breaking the fourth wall in theater.²⁶ This approach surprises the readers, causing them to be constantly alert and thinking about the narrative structure. The “suddenly” is the framework for the novel’s projected madness on the level of narration and discourse.

The twisted discourse, specifically in the chapter summaries, is one of the more successful tools for emphasizing the prominence and import of the “suddenly”

²⁵ Bakhtin, 152.

²⁶ This occurs when one of the characters addresses the audience directly.

because it effectively displays the unpredictable, tenuous relationship between the discourse and the story. It is within a selection of the chapter summaries that we see the breakdown of authority and its negative effects on the narrator and the discourse. Chapter Eight's summary is the first occurrence of the chapter summary not corresponding to the actual events narrated in the chapter. It states "*—the great success won by our brave Don Quijote in his dreadful, unimaginable encounter with two windmills, plus other honorable events worth remembering*" (43), yet Don Quixote famously loses the battle! Initially, this seems like an intentional discursive decision, one that portrays the narrator as sarcastic and unstable, which would be consistent with the atmosphere set up by the prologue and intertwined levels of narration. What it actually demonstrates, however, is the narrator's first loss of control, an unintentional testament to the continued instability of the discourse. He thought that Don Quixote was going to win great success, yet the knight-errant disappointingly veers off course. Interestingly, it is at the end of this chapter that the first narrator excuses himself, perhaps because he does not want to try to deal with the fact that these characters are starting to exhibit some unexpected agency of their own.

The second narrator assumes responsibility at this juncture, cognizant of the happenings of Part One, including the initial rebellion of Don Quixote's madness against the discourse. At first, he slyly tries to pass off any inconsistencies to Benengeli, in his left-handed compliment that was addressed earlier. However, as the very next chapter summary displays, he reconsiders his attempts at accepting more liability: "*—what happened to our famous Don Quijote in the Sierra Morena mountains—one of the strangest adventures narrated in this entire veracious history*"

(135). The use of the word veracious in this context is akin to the narrator announcing that he is in control and only reporting the facts as they happen, not fabricating them, consequently revealing that he is actually out of control. Nevertheless, it soon becomes apparent that the characters, specifically Don Quixote, have their own plan and that the narrator is not aware of it, even though he is supposedly narrating a history. They are living in the world of Bakhtin's "suddenly," where their actions are unexpected. Don Quixote's madness, in particular, is the point of rupture in a real-life scenario, which allows for the presence of the "suddenly." The narrator, lacking an awareness of the presence of the "suddenly" within his story, is unprepared to handle its startling effects.

Chapters Thirty-Five through Thirty-Seven most concisely indicate the narrator's (and therefore the discourse's) lack of control over the story. The narrator states in the summary that this chapter will be "*—the end of The Story of the Man Who Couldn't Keep from Prying*" (241), yet as soon as the chapter begins, Sancho comes "running wildly out of the room where Don Quijote had been sleeping, shouting" (241) about how his master has slain the giants who were tormenting Princess Micomicona. Don Quixote's madness interrupts the narrator's agenda, much like it interrupted the original narration of Cardenio's tale. Granted, the chapter summary is not completely false, as *The Story of the Man Who Couldn't Keep from Prying* does eventually get told, but Chapter Thirty-Six reflects the extent to which the story has strayed from the discourse. Its summary states that it will discuss "*Don Quijote's noble but unusual battle against several wineskins filled with red wine, along with other strange things that took place at that inn*" (247), which, of course, is

what has already been related in the previous chapter. What actually occurs in this chapter is what is supposed to be reported in Chapter Thirty-Seven “—*which continues the tale of the famous Princes Micomicona, along with other pleasant adventures*” (254). It is as if the narrator is unaware that the story has gotten ahead of the discourse that he is responsible for.

The narrator does venture, one last time, to defend himself in an attempt to resume an air of authority by emphasizing the reputability of Chapter Forty-Five “—*in which the investigation into the helmet and the saddlebag is concluded along with other events of an equally veracious nature*” (309). It is all he can do to insist that the story is accurately portraying the extent of the characters’ madnenses, and this chapter is the opportune place to do just that. The barber from La Mancha decides to play a joke on the second barber, by playing along with Don Quixote’s madness and pretending that everything he was saying is the truth. The effect of this is that “those who knew Don Quijote’s madness found all this excruciatingly funny, but those who didn’t thought it the stupidest thing they’d ever seen” (310). The investigation into the helmet and saddlebag is indeed concluded, but it is settled in such a way that emphasizes the madnenses of the characters. If believed, the settlement would prove advantageous to the narrator because, hopefully, the readers would understand that it was not his intention that the earlier divergence of discourse and story mislead, but rather be understood as the fault of Don Quixote’s madness overpowering the discourse.

The discourse can be toppled in this way because unlike the characters it oversees, it is not operating under the temporal reality of the “suddenly.” It *should*

expect the unexpected, as it prepared us to do through the prologue and the initial confusion surrounding the role of the narrator, but it does not. One would think that if the narrator had considered who his main character was, along with his characteristic madness, he would have been better prepared. After all, Don Quixote is, or at least thinks he is, the chivalric hero whose “world exists exclusively under the sign of the miraculous ‘suddenly’.” In this world, “the unexpected, and only the unexpected, is what is expected”.²⁷ If the magnitude of his madness had been considered, the discourse would have been able to adjust to the unforeseen interruptions that this madness caused. Due to this fault, the discourse appears unreliable, consequently suggesting that to have credibility in the world of *Don Quijote*, one must live according to, or at least be aware of, the “suddenly.”

Seymour Chatman writes of narrative structure that “the narrative will not admit events or other kinds of phenomena that do not ‘belong to it and preserve its laws’,” or it shall be thought of as ill formed.²⁸ Chatman’s claim suggests that, much as the “suddenly’s” unexpected becomes the expected, the law in *Don Quijote* is based on lawlessness, or a lack of control. In acting according to the “suddenly,” the characters and their madresses violate both social and discursive laws, thus creating a perfect environment in which the “suddenly” can thrive. Don Quixote seeks adventure where others seek solitude—in the wilderness of the Sierra Morena. Here, the laws of society do not apply; in fact, the land sits outside the jurisdiction of the government, patrolled instead by the Holy Brotherhood—a group of men whose duty

²⁷ Bakhtin, 152.

²⁸ Piaget as cited in Chatman, 21.

it is to police the *despoblado* for fugitives from justice. In its lawlessness, the barren terrain is the perfect setting for both adventure and isolation because it allows each character's distinct madness to develop unimpeded, without the obstruction of certain systematic rules.

Delaying discussion of the discursive laws for now, Don Quixote provides the most exhaustive case of the characters' violations of social laws. In Juan Palomeque's inn, we see a tangible example of Don Quixote's inability to live according to society's rules. He has no concept of monetary value and so he freely damages property within the inn, such as the wineskins and beds, while refusing to pay for privileges, such as the dinner and use of the stables. In his own words, he is "unable to contravene the rules of knight errantry, which [make] perfectly clear...that such knights never paid for lodging nor for anything else in the inns where they may have stayed" (95). His citation of the laws of knighthood seems to clearly indicate that he is living under different laws, yet Sancho accuses him of violating even these. Don Quixote's madness leads not only to the breaking of the property laws that are vital to society, but also to the accusation of breaching the laws of knighthood, a code that is solely subject to Don Quixote's madness. Notably, it is in the wake of the supposed rupture of the knightly laws that the non-adventure with the cloth-hammers emerges, a manifestation of the "suddenly," in so far as Sancho and Don Quixote expected that they would have to confront monsters, not machines. Additionally, the "suddenly" informs Don Quixote's madness. For example, because he has read of Amadís de Gaul's adventures in the Barren Mountain, he envisions the Sierra Morena as "being

so admirably suited for” his insane penance to Dulcinea (151). These are rules that he can create in the *despoblado* because there is no one to contradict their propriety.

Sancho Panza also takes part in the inn’s damage, thus transgressing the property laws, although to a lesser degree. His major breach of social laws is against those laws of upward mobility. Through the unintentional use of Don Quixote’s madness, an unorthodox method indeed, Sancho tries to unnaturally bypass the system by leaving it behind altogether. As his madness is inescapably linked with Don Quixote’s, it is inevitable that the Sierra Morena plays an indispensable role in Sancho’s madness. Because Don Quixote is so drawn to the potential he feels present within the *despoblado*, he sends Sancho out on his own, and it in this way that Sancho gains as much narrative autonomy as the novel is willing to grant him. Unlike Cardenio, for whom the Sierra Morena contains the cure to his madness, Sancho is never truly released from his, and thus must continue living under the “suddenly.”

Cardenio has the most straightforward relationship with the Sierra Morena, while also violating the fewest number of laws. His greatest offense is fleeing to the mountains, thus acting as no respected gentleman of his stature would. His correspondence with the “suddenly” is therefore proportionately weaker. By providing a space where he can coincidentally encounter Dorotea, the Sierra Morena works to his advantage, alleviating, not exacerbating or strengthening his madness; it does not do significantly more than that. He finds solace there, like Don Quixote does, but for Cardenio it has a more restorative function.

The “suddenly” is the true foundation that allows the novel to function. It is made possible because the madresses of the characters violate laws, the ruptures of

which pave the way for the existence of the “suddenly.” In turn, it enables the madnenses of the characters that produce the narrative, in so far as the unexpected actions caused by the madnenses are absorbed, managed, and accepted. Although disordered, they do not delay the narrative flow, but rather propel it. Without the “suddenly,” the madnenses would stand out, instead of integrating into, and forwarding, the narrative. In the violation of the laws that typically govern the chivalric romance, as noted in Bakhtin’s account of the chronotope, the madnenses find new power and motivation. They break through the coded genre by creating a new code that draws from and distorts the chivalric romance, thus releasing them from any preconceived constraints, pushing them into the “suddenly.” The “suddenly”-motivated madnenses further affirm their superior power by stealing control from the narrator, a transaction illustrated through the discourse. Even the rules of discourse cannot contain the sudden madnenses of the characters. These madnenses violate the unwritten laws of novel writing and thus create an opportunity for more miraculous events to occur. To be mad is to live according to the “suddenly”: it would be mad not to. To be in control is to admit to being out of control. *Don Quijote* is a novel whose structure is unstable, yet out of, and perhaps even because of, this instability a singular, sudden set of inviolable laws emerges.

Works Cited

- Bakhtin, M.M. "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel." The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays. Ed. Michael Holquist. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986. 84-258.
- Cervantes, Miguel de. Don Quijote. Ed. Diana de Armas Wilson. Trans. Burton Raffel. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999.
- Chatman, Seymour. Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978. 15-42.
- Echevarría, Roberto González, Love and the Law in Cervantes. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005. 54-74.
- Nabokov, Vladimir. "Structural Matters." Lectures on Don Quixote. Ed. Fredson Bowers. Trans. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Javonovich, 1983. 27-50.