Artful Resources: Adaptation and Reconstruction in Drama

Recursos artísticos: adaptaciones y reconstrucciones dramáticas

Edward H. Friedman
Vanderbilt University
ESTADOS UNIDOS
edward.h.friedman@vanderbilt.edu

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Abstract. There is an obvious relation between the imitation and adaptation of literary works. The focus of the essay is the adaptation of early Spanish modern works —including *Don Quijote* and plays by Cervantes, Lope de Vega, and Juan Ruiz de Alarcón— and Miguel de Unamuno's *Niebla* into dramatic texts in English. Adaptation becomes a method of reading, analysis, and interpretation, as well as a form of communication among authors.

Keywords. Imitation, adaptation, metafiction, metatheater, the portrayal of women.

Resumen. Existe una relación íntima entre la imitación y la adaptación de textos literarios. El enfoque de este ensayo es la adaptación de obras españolas premodernas —entre ellos, *Don Quijote* y varias comedias de Cervantes, Lope de Vega y Juan Ruiz de Alarcón— y *Niebla*, de Miguel de Unamuno, en textos dramáticos en inglés. La adaptación se convierte en un método de lectura, análisis e interpretación, tanto como una forma de comunicaciones entre los diversos autores.

Palabras clave. Imitación, adaptación, metaficción, metateatro, la representación de la mujer.

Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal.
T. S. Eliot, *The Sacred Wood*

This is an essay about imitation and adaptation, with theater at its core. *Refurbishing* has several connotations, but the word usually hints more at a reverence for

the original, the base, than at a rivalry[1]. I will mention some of my own excursions into the field of adaptation, and, in doing so, I recall, with tremendous gratitude, the encouragement and support given to me over the years by my dear friend and colleague Professor Francisco Ruiz Ramón, who could not have been kinder or more generous to me. It was a privilege to know him and to work with him.

Imitation has many faces, some pleasant, others less so. Whether imitation is the sincerest form of flattery may be open to interpretation, dependent in part on the attitude of the one whose work is imitated and the talent of the imitator. Imitation can be inventive and have a value of its own, or it can come close to plagiarism. The concept of intertextuality, a term coined by Julia Kristeva, allows students of literature and culture to explore the seemingly infinite variety of interrelationships among texts[2]. Within Hispanic literature, Miguel de Cervantes's *Don Quijote* details an exemplary model of bidirectional intertextuality, given that the narrative both owes its existence to previous works and inspires future creation[3]. Through the narrative, Cervantes makes a bold statement regarding the capacity of imitations simultaneously to acknowledge and to deviate from their sources. The romances of chivalry are palpable in *Don Quijote*, which deconstructs rather than reconstructs. Cervantes does not invent literary self-consciousness, but he perfects the establishment of a template that remains, and will continue to remain, in effect. He signals realism and metafiction in a single act of invention[4]. He examines history, historiography, subjectivity, perception, perspective, the nature of truth, the absolute versus the relative, identity, madness, reading, writing, and on and on, all the while amusing a diverse public. *Don Quijote* inscribes the individual consumer into the center of an aesthetic object that explores the world, comprised of so-called reality and the universe contained in literature, through a technique that accentuates self-referentiality. Above all, perhaps, *Don Quijote* encourages metacommentary. Here, I would like to look at questions of imitation through *Don Quijote* and through a focus on two *comedias* by Juan Ruiz de Alarcón and (*con perdón*) adaptations that bear my signature.

To an extent, Cervantes rewrites the notion of imitation. *Don Quijote* positions chivalric romance against itself. The author situates the idealistic protagonist in new surroundings; the self-proclaimed knight errant is contextually isolated, alienated from the conventions of his preferred reading matter. Satire is only part of the picture. Philosophy, poetics, rhetoric, and politics enter the frame. Just as structuralism is about similitude and poststructuralism about difference[5], Cervantes emphasizes equivalence and (disproportionately) divergence, but he needs what could be termed a bouncing-off place, in this case literary precedent. Cervantes's

1. V. Hutcheon, 2013b, for general consideration of adaptation.
2. Kristeva, 1980, among other sources. Vincent Leitch describes intertextuality as «a Cultural Salvation Army Outlet with unaccountable collections of incompatible ideas, beliefs, and sources» (1983, p. 59).
3. V. Friedman, 2006, which looks at *Don Quijote* «in the middle» of the development of narrative.
4. A good starting point for reflection on metafiction is Linda Hutcheon's *Narcissistic Narrative*, first published in 1980 and reissued with a new preface in 2013 (2013a).
5. For the distinction, see, e.g., Culler, 1982; Leitch, 1983; Belsey, 2002; and Currie, 2013.

creative space is inflected by the spaces of others and by established codes. One cannot imagine the formulation of *Don Quijote* in anything resembling a vacuum, a tabula rasa. The narrative is contingent on intersections, on dialectical relationship between past and present. The guiding principle, or metonym, of *Don Quijote*, arguably, is reading, which, in turn, promotes action and writing. It could be said that the text boils down to the path of Don Quijote —his quest for fame, glory, and service to his lady Dulcinea del Toboso— and the process of composition of the chronicle that will record his deeds, together with the parallel work of fiction that will challenge rival texts and, by most accounts, that will become the macrocosm. In *Don Quijote*, Cervantes refuses to forge dichotomies; rather, he deals in an animated display of mirror effects and in unexpected, and sometimes radical, juxtapositions. Don Miguel gives the predominant roles, jointly, to the man who goes mad from leisure reading and to the readers —more likely fully engaged than idle— of the book about the errant knight. Intimately connected to the reader, of course, is the writer, whose intervention is literal and figurative, that is, symbolic, in multiple senses. Fittingly, the essence of *Don Quijote*, and of Don Quijote, lies in the mind of each reader. In an essay titled «Readers Digest: The Critical Frames of *Don Quijote*», based on a classroom exercise, I suggest that if readers were asked to list the ten most significant elements of the text (episodes, motifs, devices, and so forth), the result —the common denominators and the unity of the points raised— could serve as a description of the priorities and of the interpretive and analytical strategies of the respective reader, which is to say, the route to comprehension. *Don Quijote* is about multiperspectivism, through and through, in the telling of the story and in its deciphering.

The key to my personal reading of *Don Quijote* —my digestion, as it were, of the text— is the range of its metafictional or self-referential properties. For me, Cervantes uses the recourses of literature to depict and analyze life, and, not coincidentally, to depict and analyze literature itself. In a middle of sorts lie history and the *making* of history, understood as participation in memorable activities and as documentation of events. Cervantes appears to want to highlight the mediating ground between what has occurred and how historians represent (or re-present) the past, immediate or distant. By having the narrator proclaim this is the «true history» of Don Quijote, Cervantes produces a laughably ironic and thought-provoking signal, and the narration that follows is a roller-coaster ride of shifts, imbalances, altered circumstances, and inconsistencies, but not without an internal logic. Readers of *Don Quijote* must be aware of a game taken quite seriously and of their role in the intricate give-and-take of the artistic and thematic design of the narrative. The «funny book», as P. E. Russell tags it, contains a calculatedly ambiguous semiotics and fluctuating markers of meaning. Cervantes underscores the fact —fundamental to subsequent reader-response theory— that texts are stable, but interpretations are unstable, unpredictable, capricious, and frequently short-lived, even as the text progresses. There is method in the madness, and there is a strong measure of surprise, for the reader and for the author (see Avellaneda, for example). The entertainment value of *Don Quijote* is most admirable, as is its unending stream of insights, anecdotes, verbal and conceptual gems, and plot mechanisms.

It would be somewhat difficult to read *Don Quijote* without observing the evocation of antecedents, the practice and paradigms of earlier writers. By the same token, resonances of *Don Quijote* can be recognized in a gamut of succeeding narratives, literary projects, and other media, including the plastic arts, illustrations, film, music, dance, theater. Every re-creation conveys a «reading» of the text and an application, whether conscious or unconscious, of a specific approach to *Don Quijote*. Some drawings foreground the comic aspects of the text, for example, while others stress its dark side. What Anthony Close calls «the Romantic approach» seems clear in «The Impossible Dream», the anthem of the Broadway musical *Man of La Mancha* by Dale Wasserman, Joe Darion, and Mitch Lee. The later artists enact upon *Don Quijote* a duplication of Cervantes's reshaping of his models, with a major difference, doubtless too obvious to mention: Cervantes enhances all that he emulates, whereas those who build on the master work, whatever their worth, can only pale in comparison. And yet it is in the spirit of *Don Quijote* to expand the intertext and to share in the flexibility —the elasticity— of classic texts, their ability to elicit readings, rereadings, criticism, and metacriticism, the latter, on occasion, in the form of creative ventures[6]. Bearing in mind my belief that a refashioning pays homage to the original and that it can serve as a form of affirmative critique, I wrote an adaptation of *Don Quijote* for the stage, under the title *Crossing the Line: A Quixotic Adventure in Two Acts* (2012). The play could be considered a theatrical counterpart, or complement, to the essay «Readers Digest», since each attempts to investigate and scrutinize methods of reading. *Crossing the Line* is a tribute to *Don Quijote* and to Cervantes, and a demonstration of the hypothesis that writing is ultimately about reading.

The two acts of *Crossing the Line* correspond to the two parts of *Don Quijote*. The play draws on set pieces and provides some added features, most conspicuously the insertion of two new characters, a professor of literature from the United States and his graduate assistant. Scene 1 of Act 1 replicates, to a degree, the first prologue, a metaprologue between a fictionalized Cervantes and his friend. Scene 2 treats the liberation of the galley slave (and autobiographer) Ginés de Pasamonte, who rewards the knight's derring-do with a refusal to visit Dulcinea del Toboso, topped by a hasty and disrespectful exit. Scene 3 begins with a dialogue between the knight and his squire, who reach the inn in which Maritornes is employed. There, they meet the priest and barber from their village, who have a plan to bring Don Quixote home. Don Quixote interrupts the maid's planned tryst with a muleteer, and he later describes the events in the chivalric mode. Professor Theodore Marlowe and his student Benito Flores arrive at the inn, a virtual early modern Grand Central Station. In Scene 4, as the priest Pero Pérez completes his reading of «The Tale of Impertinent Curiosity», Don Quixote causes a stir, having attacked wineskins that he thought to be evil enchanters. Professor Marlowe and Benito have the opportunity to interview Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, and the two time travelers are in ecstasy. The professor is about to inform Don Quixote that he is a specialist on Cervantes's novel when Maritornes enters to announce the arrival of new guests, a

6. On the topic of «re-creations» of Cervantes, see the invaluable studies edited by Carlos Mata-Induráin (2012, 2013 y 2015).

former Christian captive and a mysterious lady. In Scene 5, the captive, Captain Ruy Pérez de Viedma, narrates his story of imprisonment and a daring escape with the beautiful Muslim-turned-Christian Zoraida. Professor Marlowe and Benito comment on the «true history» of the captain. The guard who was transporting Ginés de Pasamonte to the galleys shows up and is about to apprehend Don Quixote, when the priest eloquently begs him to respect the deluded knight's condition. The professor and the student head off; the new academic year is about to start. They are most grateful for the chance encounter with their fictional idols.

In the first scene of Act 2, Sancho Panza and then the university graduate Sansón Carrasco report to Don Quixote, respectively, of what people have been saying about him and what an Arab chronicler, Cide Hamete Benengeli, has written about his exploits. Don Quijote inquires as to the possibility of a sequel. Sansón initiates his plot to set Don Quixote on the road again. Sansón reinvents himself as the Knight of the Mirrors and shadows Don Quixote, with Sancho's neighbor and friend Tomé Cecial, in disguise, as his squire. The sly Sansón challenges Don Quixote to do battle, with the magnanimous aim of bringing the defeated knight home, but it is he who, by fluke, is defeated, and the magnanimity turns to a desire for revenge. Don Quixote and Sancho meet a duchess, who invites them to her palatial residence. Scene 3 brings the knight and squire to the palace, where they are received with prodigious ceremony. A grave ecclesiastic disparages the books of chivalry, but all others join in the metatheatrical festivities. The teenaged Altisidora declares her love for Don Quixote, who remains true to Dulcinea. The duke will grant Sancho an island (Barataria) to administer, and Don Quixote gives the soon-to-be governor theoretical and practical advice. Scene 4 showcases parallel episodes in the palace and on the ínsula. Don Quixote commits himself to fighting off hyper-passionate damsels and aiding middle-aged ladies in distress. Sancho, while making impressive decisions as judge, faces a series of callously contrived obstacles and resigns his position. The two determine to leave the palace, to the relief of all concerned. In Scene 5, at another busy inn, Don Quixote hears two gentlemen, Don Jerónimo and Don Juan, denouncing the recently published continuation of Don Quixote's history by a man who calls himself Alonso Fernández Avellaneda. Serendipitously, a character from the book, Don Álvaro Tarfe, has come to the inn, and he certifies that the knight before him is the genuine Don Quixote. In the sixth and final scene, Don Quixote is defeated by Sansón Carrasco as the Knight of the White Moon. Once more in his village, Don Quixote rejects his chivalric existences and declares himself to be Alonso Quijano the Good. He reads his will, which adheres to a pre-and post-chivalric mindset. Sancho weeps, and Sansón Carrasco delivers a missive, signed by the pen of Cide Hamete Benengeli and read aloud by the priest, with a profound message about authors, earthly and divine.

In constructing *Crossing the Line*, I sought a double form of condensation, one on the narrative level and one on the theoretical level. Without dreaming of a work of epic proportions, I wanted to give the spectator/reader a sense of the breadth of *Don Quijote*: its physical and mental geography, the feeling that the story covers a substantial and exhaustive distance. Naturally, my goal was to incorporate prominent episodes and characters while maintaining the humor and the ironies of the

text. Most of all, I hoped to make the dialogue complex, intense, distinctive, and faithful to the spirit of *Don Quijote*. The motivating factor was the metafictional, or metatheatrical, thrust of the novel. An array of characters can be classified as metaphorical playwrights, and an exceptionally large portion of the text relates to literary composition, history and historiography, ties between fiction and reality, and the production of the chronicle(s) about *Don Quijote*. Criticism and theory inject themselves into narrative practice, which never eludes —or undertakes to elude— self-referentiality. *Crossing the Line* complies with my personal checklist of the pivotal issues of *Don Quijote*, from the metaprologue of Part 1 to the concluding words of the pen. In the overflowing pages of *Don Quijote*, Cervantes precociously anticipates narrative realism, postmodernism, poststructuralism, and the late twentieth-century boom in theory. He seems to envision, as well, the self-consciousness that is a legacy of Russian Formalism and structuralism. Professor Marlowe and his graduate assistant in *Crossing the Line* pay homage to metafiction, theory in practice, critical fascination with *Don Quijote*, the inexplicable chronology of the text, binary oppositions and dialogism, and the curious and circuitous trajectory in the representation of reality, a modus operandi that I have labeled, in *Cervantes in the Middle*, periphrastic realism[7].

Don Quijote bears the message that art and life are not mutually exclusive, but blend in surprising and intriguing ways. Cervantes redefines realism before realism defines itself. His narrative does not eschew reality; rather, it utilizes fiction to access (and to assess) reality, while addressing (and remaking) the precepts of literature. My wish was that *Crossing the Line* would indulge the *meta*-facets of *Don Quijote* and, in the manner of Bertolt Brecht —and of Cervantes— promote a type of introspection that encompassed literary and existential realms. Cervantes appears in the play, but he is the author as character, and the purveyor of the revised prologue is the friend and advisor:

> THE FRIEND. Don Miguel, you simply cannot abandon the enterprise. Your volume is destined to make history, and you must persevere at all costs. Let me try to help you resolve the dilemma in which you find yourself. You have a book, and you need a prologue. You prefer not to struggle to write a traditional prologue. Therefore, I advise you to write a *non-traditional* prologue. *(Slight pause)* Your obligation is to fill a predetermined space. How you fill that space ultimately is up to you. Include a prologue, but design your own format. Deviate from the standard, if you choose, but, I repeat, *fill the space*. Forget Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Marcus Aurelius, and their ilk. Leave the philosophers, the rhetoricians, the scholars, the historians, and the poets resoundingly to the side. Do *not* forget the Bible, but keep it out of the prologue, if you wish. In the battle of the prologue, place yourself on the victory stand by seizing command of the literary domain. In sum, my revered Don Miguel, write a prologue, write *your* prologue. Make new rules by breaking the old ones. Gain authority by relinquishing the authority of the past. Wage war not only on the books of chivalry, but also on the rituals of antiquity and the dictates of custom. Rebel, and excel[8].

7. Friedman, 2006, pp. 11-31.
8. Friedman, 2012, 1, 1, pp. 24-25.

The emphasis on diffused authority reflects Cervantes's use of alter egos (and, in the case of the friend, the alter ego of an alter ego) to propose that creation is a collaborative act, and, as such, a recognition that control is unavoidably tentative and inconstant, and that no position of authority is secure.

The visitors from the United States confer with Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, who reveal their outlooks, opinions, and idiolects:

> THE PROFESSOR. Don Quixote, why do you view the past as preferable to the present?
>
> DON QUIXOTE. Our forebears had greater respect for justice, decency, and nature. We have taken what was esteemed and venerated, and we have destroyed, defiled, and devastated the pristine innocence of man, woman, and the earth. I labor to bring back the simple life and the undiluted morality of bygone ages. The inspiration for all my endeavors is the lady Dulcinea del Toboso, whose outer beauty complements the beauty of her soul.
>
> THE PROFESSOR. Do you hope to marry her someday?
>
> DON QUIXOTE. The love that I feel for Dulcinea is endearingly and enduringly platonic. My mind envisions her as ethereal, lighter than air, and more idealized, more radiant *form* than material *substance*. As long as she has no physicality, she can have no flaws. No lady can be more perfect than she.
>
> THE STUDENT. Good Sancho, have you seen the lady Dulcinea del Toboso?
>
> SANCHO PANZA. I have seen the «lady» that my master has christened Dulcinea. Her name is Aldonza Lorenzo, and she is as strong as a heifer and as mean as a nanny goat. She wears pants, and her shoes are always muddy. I suppose that she takes a bath every Saturday night, like good girls do, but she always smells like Saturday afternoon, if you catch my drift. Hard work must make her odious.
>
> THE STUDENT. I think you mean *odorous*, Sancho[9].

Like the scrutiny of Alonso Quijano's library in chapter 6 of Part 1, Professor Marlowe and Benito Flores bring criticism to the narrative mix. They are scholars far removed from their academic setting, and, thanks to the poetic license that recalls the tricks of Cervantes's trade, they have the exceedingly rare occasion to converse with the characters who occupy their time and minds. Summoning *Don Quijote*, this is a critical dialogue that enters —and becomes indistinguishable from— the plot per se. The merging of process and product, theory and practice, and action and storytelling punctuates Cervantes's innovative approach to narrative and to the beguiling domain of adaptation, which seems to presuppose that artistic connections will cross boundaries and that time-honored categories will be shaken. Cervantes turns narration into an event, a happening, with dynamism and with clout.

A crucial juncture in *Don Quijote*, and in *Crossing the Line*, is the visit, early in Part 2, of Sansón Carrasco, who speaks of the published chronicle. The main intertext is no longer chivalric romance but Part 1, and Carrasco is the first reader/critic

9. Friedman, 2012, 1, 4, p. 56.

to comment and to assuage Don Quixote's reservations with regard to the accuracy of the Arab historian:

> DON QUIXOTE. Some selection should take place in the plotting of the history, however, for the sake of promoting heroism. Ulysses and Aeneas certainly had more flaws than their stories portray. Homer and Virgil realized the gift of poetic license.
>
> SANSÓN CARRASCO. Please do not be concerned. You belong on cloud nine, Don Quixote. The volume is much loved for its array of adventures and ideas. It is a book for the ages, and it charms readers of all ages. Children request it as a bedtime story, young people are amazed by its action, older people celebrate its messages and motifs, and the elderly empathize with an implicit hunger for immortality. It is a literary triumph, that is, a *historical* triumph[10].

Sansón is a consummate actor and metadramatist. He manipulates the knight, but his performance is hardly free of glitches; after all, every stage has its unscripted moments. The symbolic fall of the Knight of the Mirrors allows Don Quixote to advance on his pursuit of celebrity status, and the knight goes from this rakish and ambitious scenic director to the ducal pair, armed with reading knowledge, histrionic sensibility, unlimited funds, and an increasingly evident streak of perversity. The duke and duchess have at their disposal a cast of thousands, more or less, to mount their spectacles. A standout is Altisidora, who plays the enamored maiden to the hilt, despite the notable age difference:

> I am the lovesick Altisidora.
> Nothing can save me. No fauna, no flora.
> My heart beats loudly, then skips a beat.
> My emotions run wild, like a dog in heat.
> No one can help me, not even a nurse.
> I suffer intensely. Every day it gets worse.
> I live in pain. I live in fright.
> My days are nightmarish, lest I have my knight.
> It is you, Don Quixote, who relieves me of pain
> when I am pining away and I see you again.
> Please do not leave me. Please do not go.
> Stay by me, and hug me, and set me aglow.
> If you do this, my darling, I will worship and prize you,
> pamper, indulge, and fore'er idolize you.
> But should you reject me, I shall lie down and die
> of a grief that besets me till heaven be nigh.
> I do not mince my words. I can*not* tell a lie.
> I am madly enamored, and now you know why.
> So keep Dulcinea as a memory, at best,
> and this castle will be for us both a love nest[11].

10. Friedman, 2012, 2, 1, pp. 75-76.
11. Friedman, 2012, 2, 4, p. 102.

One cannot ignore the beauty and appeal of Cervantes's language, including the poetry of composed by a number of characters, among them the aristocratic shepherd Grisóstomo, Don Lorenzo de Miranda, and the protagonist himself. Not all the poetry is of the highest quality —intentionally so, it would seem— and the adapter can, as with Altisidora's lament, welcome the prospects for versifying (and thus diversifying) the discourse. The villager-as-squire has a tremendous learning curve, and Cervantes gives him room for growth and for using, and abusing, words. The role can flaunt the progressive development from country bumpkin to wise and crafty judge, and nonetheless keep the malapropisms from disappearing. In Barataria, Sancho reproaches a woman who has accused a man of violating her; the governor has caught her in a lie, and she must pay the price:

> SANCHO PANZA. If you had defended your honor with the same strength and fury that you demonstrated while defending the coins, this man could not have violated you. I believe that you consented and then became greedy. You are guilty of purgatory. Leave the court at once. *(Slight pause)* And you, sir, bear in mind that pleasure is more pleasurable when it is not paid for[12].

The humor of *Don Quijote* grounded in a search for truth, or truths, about the world, the text, and human nature. Don Quijote and Sancho Panza are, remarkably, caricatures and emblems, with disarming and endearing personalities. Their «realism» and, as a corollary, their humanity surely must be qualified, but these traits are not absent. When Alonso Quijano dies, the reader probably will not be in the mood to laugh, although the context is a tad preposterous, because Don Quijote may not be *un hombre de carne y hueso*, but neither is he a hollow man, and the books that tell his story are not mere parodies. In the final words of the text, the pen becomes the narrator and joins Cide Hamete Benengeli with Miguel de Cervantes and with writers in general. For *Crossing the Line*, a talking pen seemed out of the question (see Orfeo, below), and I elected to have Pero Pérez read a letter signed by the historian's pen. I hoped that the epistle would summarize and synthesize, in relatively few lines, the topics of the play: authority, authorship, history, creativity, configuration, critique, collaboration, complementarity, writing, and reading. The crux of *Crossing the Line* is the dialectics of interpretation, with adaptation, appropriately, as a postscript:

> THE PRIEST. «TO THE FRIENDS AND FAMILY OF DON QUIXOTE: This epistolary message is from the pen of Cide Hamete Benengeli, the author of the chronicle —the *true* chronicle— of the chivalric feats of the fearless knight Don Quixote de la Mancha. For me, Don Quixote was born, and I for him. He acts, and I capture those acts in writing. We work in tandem, and the intrusion of the man known as Avellaneda cannot break that link, nor can it cause us injury. In the universe, there is a Supreme Being, a supreme *authority*, a word that contains within it another word: *author*. Every author —save *one*— *has* an author. Here on earth, the recorder of history and the creator of art have at least a measure of authority. They can conceive, invent, reinvent, represent, and, of course, fabricate, for better or worse. And on earth, as in heaven, there are judgments. The *heavenly* judge is divine. The *earthly* judges are mortal. The first is eternally right. The second are often unsure

12. Friedman, 2012, 2, 4, p. 106.

> and often wrong. That is the limitation and the benefit of books: they call upon us to join the fray, like Don Quixote taking to the road. Let us analyze and interpret books —and the world that we and *they* live in— with sensitivity, prudence, and respect for our brothers and sisters. Is Don Quixote a *real man*? Is his book a *history*? Is his death an *illusion*? The answers always lie in the following chapter. Peace be with you»[13].

The first two sequels to *Don Quijote*, by Avellaneda (1614) and Cervantes (1615), initiate the theory and practice of adapting the narrative. Avellaneda is a curse and a godsend, for he extends and heightens the depth and the rivalry implicit in any continuation or adaptation. He triggers the fury of Cervantes, while turning his literary enemy into a more sophisticated ironist. Further, he inadvertently may contribute to making the legitimate Part 2 the richer and more comprehensive of Cervantes's tomes. The spurious sequel gleefully and misanthropically misreads Part 1, whereas the genuine second part, spurred by both predecessors, subsumes the first part and leads criticism and theory into previously unmapped territories, within and beyond the fictional frame.

At one end of the adaptation spectrum of *Crossing the Line* are changes with respect to genre, language, length, number of characters and episodes, and the worldview of the early modern period. The objective was to encapsulate the message system of *Don Quijote*, supplemented by my own reading and literary education, and by a rather mild dose of the anxiety of influence, because my reverence for the original outweighed any desire to compete with Cervantes. The adaptation was born of praise and of a wish to «profess», through the dramatic medium, lessons derived from *Don Quijote*. I could contend that although I pushed myself to be creative, I knew my place and, therefore, my distance from the genius of Cervantes. My warm-up to *Crossing the Line* was the dramatic adaptation of another novel, Miguel de Unamuno's *Niebla* (1914), titled *Into the Mist* (2011). Unamuno was an ardent admirer of Cervantes, and his reading of *Don Quijote*, *La vida de Don Quijote y Sancho* (also published in 1914), puts forward an idealized vision of the protagonist and his lofty goals. Starting from the same text, Unamuno reinvents his source material in *Niebla*, to which he gives the name *nivola* in order to differentiate its form and ends from the *novela*, the novel of realism and naturalism. As with *Don Quijote*, metafiction prevails over —without erasing— the inevitable traces of realism. Unamuno is reacting to the narrative conventions of his time and propagating a «novel» kind of fiction, yet by no means does he forget his literary mentor. Cervantes invents through reinvention, and so does Unamuno. Cervantes creates a fictionalized author and various alter egos to give prominence to the creator, and the main narrative and the narratives encoded within *Don Quijote* become blurred, and the same is true of Unamuno in *Niebla*. In each case, authors and authority confront and tease each other. There continually seems to be a higher plane in the picture.

Unamuno's distracted protagonist is Augusto Pérez, so taken with abstractions that he often fails to notice while lies before and around him. Augusto wants to involve himself in a quest, which becomes a pursuit of (and service to) a lady. He

13. Friedman, 2012, 2, 6, pp. 125-126.

confides in his good friend, the writer Víctor Goti, credited as author of the prologue, who is at work on a *nivola* whose plot uncannily resembles that of *Niebla*. Augusto Pérez is out of sync with his environment. Trapped in his thoughts, he misses the obvious. His psychological experiment on women fails miserably, and he falls into a deep depression. After consulting with Víctor Goti, Augusto vows to commit suicide. He makes a trip to Salamanca to announce his plan to Don Miguel de Unamuno, who mockingly informs him that the only one who can bring about his demise is his creator, Unamuno himself. The debate in chapter 31 is the climax and the paramount tour de force of the *nivola*. Unamuno is now an *ente de ficción*, and the polemic is not only literary but theological in scope, about nothing less than immortality. Unamuno brilliantly leaves the matter of the winner open, but suffice it to say that he has written solid arguments for Augusto Pérez, who uses the noted author's words against him: Did not Don Quijote invent Cervantes, according to the master? The debate ends when Augusto, who earlier had wished to commit suicide, begs for his life and Unamuno denies him that option:

> AUGUSTO PÉREZ. I want to be myself! I want to live! … *(He falls to his knees, begging.)* Don Miguel, for the sake of your children, your wife, for what you most cherish …! Remember that at some time you won't be yourself. You will die. … I want to live!
>
> MIGUEL DE UNAMUNO. It just cannot be, poor Augusto. I already have written it, and it is irrevocable. You cannot live any longer. I don't know what to do with you. God, when He doesn't know what to do with us, kills us. … I don't know what you were thinking when it came into your mind to kill me …
>
> AUGUSTO PÉREZ. But, Don Miguel, I …
>
> MIGUEL DE UNAMUNO. It doesn't matter. I know what I'm saying. … And I fear that, in effect, if I don't kill you soon you'll end up killing me.
>
> AUGUSTO PÉREZ. But could we arrange to …?
>
> MIGUEL DE UNAMUNO. It cannot be, Augusto. Your time has arrived. I've made my decision and put it in writing, and I cannot turn back. You are going to die. For all that your life is worth …
>
> AUGUSTO PÉREZ. But, for God's sake …!
>
> MIGUEL DE UNAMUNO. I repeat: God cannot help you now. Please leave!
>
> AUGUSTO PÉREZ. So you won't help me? You won't let me be myself, come out of the mist, live, live, live, see myself, hear myself, touch myself, feel myself, put up with myself, be myself? So you don't want to help me? So I have to die as a fictional entity? All right, my lord creator Don Miguel, you will die also, and you will return to the nothingness from which you emerged. … God will cease to dream you. You will die. Yes, you will die, although you may not want to. You will die, and all those who read my story will die, all of them. No one will escape. You are fictional entities just as I am! You will all die! I, Augusto Pérez, fictional entity, nivolesque entity, like you, make this announcement. Because you, my creator, my Don Miguel, and your readers are nothing more than nivolesque entities, the same as I, your victim…
>
> MIGUEL DE UNAMUNO. My victim?

> AUGUSTO PÉREZ. Victim, most certainly. To create me in order to let me die! You will die, as well. He who creates is created, and he who is created will die. Death awaits you, Don Miguel.
>
> *Augusto, dejected, exits. Unamuno sits at his desk, reflecting on what has happened. He takes out a handkerchief and wipes a tear from his eye*[14].

The mystifying death of Augusto Pérez, whether by overeating or by Unamuno's will, offers considerable food for thought. The literary backdrop is replete with surrogate authors and metafictional devices, but reality and the divine are in no way elided. Corresponding with that of Cervantes, Unamuno's narrative vision can be exaggeratedly anti-mimetic, or, one might dare to say, post-mimetic, because realism and the depiction of reality become two different stories.

The impact of abstraction in *Niebla* is so powerful that the text lends itself to the reader's imagination. A dramatization needs to bring in the air of abstraction without sacrificing the visual qualities of the theater and the movement of the plot. Unamuno supplies a quest theme —a search for the self, for a lady to serve, and for immortality— and a protagonist, antiheroic in a quixotic sense, who clearly stands out as distinct from the other characters. Augusto Pérez's sojourn is sad, his affect offbeat, and his responses ingenuous, but his soul is as good as it is vulnerable, and something about him radiates the energy of a mind ceaselessly in motion. I recommend a set design in which all the characters remain in a semicircle at the back of the stage, with Miguel de Unamuno on one end and Víctor Goti on the other, as authorial bookends, figuratively speaking. Augusto Pérez moves from station to station and from situation to situation, tirelessly talking to himself in a kind of metacommentary on his life and on life in general. The thinking out loud stands in for the *monodiálogos* delivered in *Niebla* by Augusto to Orfeo, the stray dog who becomes his cherished companion and who does not appear in *Into the Mist*. *Niebla* ends with closing words of Unamuno and an «Oración fúnebre por modo de epílogo», from the mouth of Orfeo, perchance inspired by *El coloquio de los perros* by Cervantes. *Into the Mist* gives the final words to Unamuno, or «Unamuno», and this seems reasonable, because Unamuno is a magisterial wordsmith, who —it bears repetition— emulates Cervantes in the luster, virtuosity, benevolence, wit, humor, and irony of his writing. As with Don Quijote, Augusto Pérez is grossly unreal, but he is not lacking in humanity. Metafiction does not rule out his possession of a heart and, Unamuno seems to submit, *a fin de cuentas*, a soul, for their fates would seem to be inexorably intertwined. Literary immortality is a metaphor for eternal life. This is the epilogue of the play:

> MIGUEL DE UNAMUNO. When I received the telegram informing me of the death of poor Augusto Pérez, and the attending circumstances, I wondered if had acted properly or not in telling him what I told him that afternoon when he came to consult with me about his intention to commit suicide. And I even repented of having killed him. I thought that he might have been right and that I ought to have let him get his way, by causing his own death. And, further, I seriously considered

14. Friedman, 2011, 2, 12, pp. 124-125.

> resuscitating him. That night I had a dream in which Augusto appeared to me. I asked him what he wanted, and he said: «To bid you farewell, Don Miguel, until eternity, and to order you —not to beg you, but to order you— to write the *nivola* of my exploits». When I told him that I was contemplating the prospect of resuscitating him, he told me that this was out of the question. «Would it be possible to resuscitate Don Quixote?» he asked, and added, «One cannot dream the same dream twice. You should know that». Then he disappeared into the mist, and I woke up feeling some pressure on my heart. *The lights go out*[15].

Niebla raises the stakes of the Cervantine template, and Unamuno, as is his custom, casts himself in a weighty role. He is prudent enough, however, to cede to his protagonist and to stay, with Víctor Goti, in the sidelines (if not in the wings), and that is what I tried to achieve in *Into the Mist*, where the authors are never off-stage but rarely in the center. As Unamuno writes himself into the scenario, he probes and interrogates basic questions of philosophy, theology, and semiology, within the framework of the creation of art. Like *Don Quijote*, *Niebla* is a «funny book» with hefty excess baggage. In *Into the Mist*, I hoped to retain the lively abstraction and the linguistic and intellectual reverberation of *Niebla*. If reading is the centerpiece of *Crossing the Line*, writing is the centerpiece of *Into the Mist*, where things happen not in the clarity of daylight but in the ephemeral haze that, at once, blocks and intensifies vision, as sight becomes insight.

The adaptation of *Don Quijote* and *Niebla* required modifications of generic, linguistic, spatial, and audience-oriented elements. In the adaptation of three early modern Spanish *comedias* —Lope de Vega's *La dama boba*, Cervantes's *El laberinto de amor*, and Juan Ruiz de Alarcón's *Mudarse por mejorarse*— I concentrated on language, plot, and characterization. I wanted to re-create the baroque style, verbally and in plot complexity, and, equally importantly, I wanted to pay close attention to the presentation of the female characters. In each case, and with progressive «autonomy» from the source text, I took the broad outline of the plot as a starting point and moved in some new directions. *Wit's End* (2000; rev. with Jeffrey Ullom 2013), based on *La dama boba* (1613), maintains the transformation of the mentally-challenged protagonist motivated by love. Finea (now Aurora) goes from helpless to incandescent when chemistry stirs her juices and awakens her mind. The neoplatonic motif of love as teacher is grist for comedy, but *La dama boba* has what I would call two awkward features. The man who wins the protagonist's heart is a materialist who gives up her sister's brains and social graces for the more bountiful dowry of the title figure. Finea loves him, but he loves her money. The intelligent sister must reconcile herself to become engaged to an alternate choice, as must the man who becomes her fiancé. Lope's play belittles women who seem to be too bright for their own good, women who flaunt their brainpower. The women's father states that, if forced to choose, he would prefer a simpleton to a bluestocking. In *Wit's End*, I reversed the matchings: the *dama boba* is attracted to her initial suitor, who learns to love her as her mind becomes sharper. The sister (Nise, here Marisa) is a poet in love with a gentleman from her literary circle (here, Gonzalo). Aristo-

15. Friedman, 2011, p. 129.

cratic but poor, he is inclined, at least temporarily, to give up intellectual stimulation in order to fill his pocketbook, but true love triumphs, in *Wit's End*, for both pairs and for their like-minded servants. The deep structure of *La dama boba* remains, while the inequities and the punishment of the scholarly sister are eliminated; the comedy, I believe, leaves no bitter taste, for allegiance is rewarded and the faux pas of the protagonist are cancelled by her cerebral makeover. Lope's set pieces are preserved, but love conquers self-interest.

In Act 1, scene 2, of *Wit's End*, Marisa delivers a soliloquy on her feelings for Gonzalo and on her plight as a woman with highbrow aspirations:

> What is happening to me? Why is my head throbbing so? A man has just told me that he worships me, and, if I may speak plainly, I admire him greatly. He is bright, he is handsome, and he professes a love that knows no bounds. Why, then, am I shaking? Why, then, do I dare to distrust the sincerity of his pledge? I want to be chosen from among all women and cherished forever. I want to be loved by a man whom I love and respect. *(Slight pause)* The rest should be simple. *(A pause)* But my life, like my art, has become baroque. *(Slight pause)* My art! My art! Perhaps that's where the problem lies. Is the female intellectual a deluded fool, a moron, … *(pleased with herself)* an oxymoron? *(Pause; then quite serious once more)* As a child, I always wanted to read and write. I wanted to learn, to learn to think, to play with concepts, to analyze, «ideologize», anything but compromise. Never have I minded sewing, or knitting, or quilting, as long as I could talk while I worked and as long as that talk could center on matters of the head and not the hearth. *(Slight pause)* I want to be more than a wrapped package. Never have I longed to be a man, but neither did I wish to become a mannequin. I merely wanted to use my mind, to understand ideas, to have ideas, to express ideas. *(Slight pause)* Poetry seemed to be the answer to my prayers. Poetry has thought. Poetry has feeling. Poetry offers beauty, the heights of joy and the depths of suffering. Poets do marvelous things with words. They taunt us, they tease us, they fill us with wonderment. They move us to think, and they move us to tears. Oh, to capture the world through words! Oh, to liberate the world through words! To debate, infiltrate, exonerate, palpitate, exacerbate, excoriate! *(Slight pause)* To abnegate, berate, concentrate, decimate… *(Realizing that perhaps she has gone a bit too far)* But where has poetry taken me? My guiding metaphors remain unrealized. Art is not life. *(Slight pause)* With Gonzalo and my comrades in art, I float, through planes of abstraction, to conceptual utopias and aesthetic paradises. I am granted entry into realms of thought which baffle me yet let me breathe. But when I leave the celestial sphere of poetry, I land defenseless. I am surrounded by guardians of my honor. I am blessed with devotees. But I have no control. And I have no muse. *(A pause)* My father has been mum on the question of marriage. I am ready to fight for Gonzalo's cause, but I am confused by that cause. How does my suitor view me? As an emblem —or worse, as an altar? I must search for the man behind the poet, for the mortal who has sought to immortalize me. I must persuade him that there is life beyond rhetoric. And I must deal with the ties that bind me to society. Can I rise to the occasion? Can Gonzalo? My future is a mystery. I am not oblivious to reality, but I fear that reality may be oblivious to me. *(A deep sigh. She exits stage left)*[16]

16. Friedman, 2000, pp. 56-58.

Because early modern Spanish drama as a whole tends to see social interaction from a masculine perspective, the conflict can be one-sided. The honor plays, for example, view the reputation of women as a function of their husbands and, before marriage, of their fathers, brothers, and other male family members. In serious works, women can die for honor, even when innocent, because dishonor, verifiable or perceived, is worse than death. In comic plays, the risk of dishonor is forever in the background, even when the danger is mollified by a tone of levity, but women can suffer when deceitful men lose the women they seek and have to «settle». These men get their comeuppance, and so do the women who involuntarily become part of marriage contracts. As in the case of Nise in *La dama boba*, extraordinarily bright women, seen as arrogant, must pay for defying protocol and for their immoderate pride. I hoped that my modest efforts could address and narrow the gender gap, and update the dramatization of sexual politics.

Cervantes's three-act comedy *El laberinto de amor*, published in 1615, gave me the idea and a ready-made design for *The Labyrinth of Love* (2013), in which I could endow early modern female characters with a fighting spirit and a contemporary worldview. From Cervantes, I borrowed the co-protagonism of three leading ladies and a labyrinthine structure. I wanted to take the conventions of roleplaying, *la mujer vestida de hombre*, and adventures on the road to the maximum, and to have the nine characters gathered together at the dénouement, when the plot threads and mysteries would be resolved in a happy ending. I endeavored to juxtapose the intricacies of the plot with a discourse that was suitable to the context, but with ironic layers that would resonate with a postmodern audience/readership. *The Labyrinth of Love* is, on multiple levels, about matters of timing: the time to break away, the time to make audacious moves, the time to jeopardize one's own safety to benefit another, and the time to compromise, to acquiesce to reality principles. Analogously, the play is about timing onstage, with actors shifting from place to place and from role to role at breakneck speed. Two of the three protagonists are young women who live in the country. Porcia and Julia are defined by their bookishness, because what they know —and what they know is estimable— comes primarily from their voracious reading. They decide to leave home —dressed in male garb and with a trusted guardian— in order to experience life directly and to substitute the pragmatic for the theoretical. The third protagonist is Rosamira, a noblewoman who likewise feels constricted in her overly protected environment. She flees, and the lives of the unruly and unwavering women crisscross and become unified when the ongoing confusion is clarified. In the final scene (Act 2, scene 7), the two country ladies explain what they have sought in their travels and what they wish for the future:

> JULIA. We wish to be liberated from the traditional domestic role of blatant subservience to one's husband.
>
> PORCIA. And from unwarranted victimization under the honor code.
>
> JULIA. The aim is an equal partnership.
>
> PORCIA. A match based on the sharing of love, laughter, family, and matters of the mind.

> JULIA. We are not unrealistic. We do not want to change society. Only to modify the restraints placed on women.
>
> PORCIA. The selection of a spouse, for example, and questions of priorities and authority in marriage.
>
> JULIA. We left home because our options were few and our intellectual stimulation was minimal. We wanted to see if we could do better on our own. We had to become males in order to traverse the countryside.
>
> PORCIA. That gave us more insights than we expected. To state the results plainly, if tautologically: *Men are men*.
>
> ANASTASIO. What does that mean, pray tell?
>
> PORCIA. Men are accustomed to being in control, to using the advantages of class to get their way and to push those below them around. And their operating assumption —their principal presupposition— is that men are wiser and more capable than women[17].

The assertive women of early modern Spanish comedy are permitted certain liberties in the saturnalian atmosphere of inversion, where the rules and the decorum of society are flouted. The freedom is a component of fiction, not a reality. Even then, men have the upper hand in many instances. In Ruiz de Alarcón's most honored play, *La verdad sospechosa*, for example, the dissembling protagonist/antagonist Don García loses the woman he has schemed to marry by virtue (or vice) of his unrelenting stream of lies, when he could have had Jacinta, his ideal woman, had he remained silent and passive. His tricks result in receipt of the hand of Lucrecia, a lovely lady who is far less favored by him. Don García will marry an attractive and respectable woman, while Lucrecia has little choice in the matter. Often deemed a morality play, *La verdad sospechosa* (c. 1620) has a one-dimensional take on poetic justice. Women are objects —commodities— in the negotiations, contractual and within stage business, of men. Lucrecia, like Nise in *La dama boba*, gets lost in the transactions that take place around her, but in which her participation and, indeed, her power are minor. Pierre Corneille's adaptation of *La verdad sospechosa*, *Le Menteur* (1643-1644), translated into English by the noted poet Richard Wilbur, gives the female characters, including the objects of affection and equivocation Clarice and Lucrèce, a notch of aggressiveness above Jacinta and Lucrecia. The mendacious Dorante seems less malicious and less calculating than Don García, to the extent that the ending makes Lucrèce's acceptance of her father's wishes slightly more palatable. The tenor of Corneille's play is not as menacing, and one senses that this smart lady will not be taken advantage of. The American playwright David Ives's adaption, *The Liar* (2010), matches the cleverness and allure of *Le Menteur*, while adding fresh coats of ingenuity and verbal humor. Ives does not shy away from drowning in conventions —and, shall we say, perking them up— while invoking the intertext and presupposing a well-read and theater-savvy audience. He relieves the tension of the honor theme and the feminist oversights by having Dorante pronounce, in a closing speech to the public, that «How liars are punished

17. Friedman, 2013b, p. 109.

by their lies! / Was not the moral of this exercise / But rather how, amidst life's contradictions, / Our lives can far out-fick the finest fictions»[18]. Each of the plays sets the plot in motion through mistaken identity, and each text abounds in the dazzling fabrications of inveterate liars. In Ives's play, the lies are a means to an end, not ends in themselves, and just deserts are not the order of the day.

La verdad sospechosa does punish the liar and, as part of the resolution, penalizes the woman ensnared in the web of prevarication. In another play, *Mudarse por mejorarse*, published in 1628, Ruiz de Alarcón is laxer still in the retribution afforded the duplicitous protagonist/antagonist, also named Don García. Don García, for two years suitor to the widow Doña Clara, is immediately smitten by her niece Doña Leonor, who is visiting from Sevilla. Doña Leonor is a few years younger than her aunt, and she is wealthier, and hence a better prospect. Don García is set on winning the new prize through stealth and cunning. He must overcome the competition of rivals. Doña Leonor is mindful of the fact that she may be betraying her aunt, but she resists the advances only nominally. After the requisite complications and suspenseful scenes, the young lady from Sevilla tricks the trickster, or «plays» the player, by promising her hand to a more formidable and affluent gentleman. It is Doña Leonor who lives up to the title. She makes the best deal for herself; «se muda por mejorarse». Don García, once rejected, rushes to protect his interests. He returns to Doña Clara, who remains blind to the subterfuge. In *Mudarse por mejorarse*, Ruiz de Alarcón exhibits his creativity in plotting strategies and in offering a pastiche of the norms, preoccupations, and sensibilities of the period. He contrasts Madrid to Sevilla, and brings in questions of class structure, a widow's situation, courtship rituals, friendship, loyalty, and the state of the theater. Don García wishes to move up the social ladder, but it is Doña Leonor who ascends in the fickle hierarchy of the time. The irony of the circumstances would be luminous, were it not for a disturbing detail: Doña Clara is the innocent victim of an intended scam. The treachery of Don García brings him back to where he started. He loses Doña Leonor, but he misrepresents himself to Doña Clara, with no consequences for his dishonesty.

Don García loses one woman when, it could be argued, he should have lost them both. In my adaptation of *Mudarse por mejorarse*, titled *Trading Up* (2015), that was precisely my aim: to keep the overall spirit of the original, but to rectify the final dodge on the part of the devious protagonist. I followed Ruiz de Alarcón's plan of having the Don García character (here, Don Diego) with a friend and accomplice (Don Pablo) pitted against rival suitors (Don Sebastián, a marquis and a cousin of the widow, here Doña Carmen, and his protégé Don Alonso). The object of affection of Don Diego and Don Sebastián is the fetching Doña Elena, newly arrived from Sevilla. In *Trading Up*, Don Diego is not evil, but he is selfish and, in business parlance, willing to speculate and to protect his interests at the expense of others. I focused on the groupings, with various sets of triangles and parallel scenes. I added a dimension to Don Alonso, a gifted economist and advisor who is appreciably timid around women, and I worked to contrast the conniving schemes of Don Diego with the altruistic disposition of Don Sebastián, and to give more humanity to the

18. Ives, 2010, p. 117 (emphasis in text).

sought-after niece. I augmented the roles of the three servants: Don Diego's Mudanza, Doña Elena's Justina, and Don Sebastián's Fidelio. Mudanza, Justina, and Fidelio become a type of chorus, commenting on the actors of their masters and mistress, bonding in friendship, and proving that there is negligible correlation between social rank and intelligence, or between status and tenderheartedness.

Trading Up has a byzantine plot that focuses on interactions among the nine characters. Each of the noblewomen has two suitors, and Justina is in continual dialogue with Mudanza and Fidelio. Doña Carmen has a broader role than her counterpart in *Mudarse por mejorarse*, and she is privy to the machinations that transpire around her. Both she and Doña Elena are the decision-makers in the end. Doña Carmen chooses Don Alonso, whom love has made less shy, more vocal, and keen to follow his heart. He beats out Don Pablo, who is guilty by association with Don Diego, and Don Diego himself, who cannot be forgiven for his indiscretions. Doña Elena selects Don Sebastián, who has been steadfast, straightforward, and sincere. She realizes that she has toyed with the emotions of others and that her actions have threatened the welfare of her aunt. She has erred, but she had found the right (and righteous) path. In the following passage, she explains her decision to Don Diego:

> DOÑA ELENA. But everything smells of deception. We—the three of us—are misleading my aunt, and my guilt is unbearable. She has committed herself to caring for me, and look how I have repaid her.
>
> DON DIEGO. How? By falling in love with me? … Your powers of resistance could take you only so far.
>
> DOÑA ELENA. Don Diego, you are handsome, wealthy, upscale, suave, and stimulating.
>
> DON DIEGO. *(Does not hear a «but» coming)* I know, my dear.
>
> DOÑA ELENA. But I have been too caught up in the moment. I let your romantic flourishes pull me away from my aunt —and from the loyalty that I owe her— to engage in arousing —although innocuous— escapades with you.
>
> DON DIEGO. I have shouted out my love for you over and over!
>
> DOÑA ELENA. You have been playing a game, Don Diego. It is a travesty of love. … I recognize that I entered the game. … I was new to the city. … I adored the attention. … And, in the process, I forsook my aunt.
>
> DON DIEGO. Elena, this discussion should be about us. … We are young, beautiful, and deeply in love. We deserve to relish our bonanza.
>
> DOÑA ELENA. Diego, you are not listening to my words. … I cannot forget—and you should not forget—that you have a history with my aunt. … You cannot just discard her. … Or, if you do, I cannot stand by and sanction the dismissal.
>
> DON DIEGO. I do get your point, my lady. I do. … But you have to comprehend my rationale. … Until I met you, I was contented to nurture thoughts of marrying Doña Carmen. … Her list of attributes is glowing. … Then you marched into Madrid with even more to offer. … You were a cut above, the better-quality product. … You

were new. You were improved. You enhanced what was already out there. … And I being I, I am entitled to the best. … I am entitled to you, my fabulous, my own Elena.

DOÑA ELENA. While I respect, in theory, your sense of entitlement, Don Diego, I feel that your operational system lacks moral impetus. You are dealing with people, not merchandise. …

DON DIEGO. But you and your aunt are people. … I want the superior person. … I have the chance to trade up, and I want to grab it.

DOÑA ELENA. I repeat: This is not the stock market. … You have many commendable traits. … You also have a one-track mind, and your inflated ego tends to get in the way. … *Nota bene*, my dear Don Diego. You are a prize, someone's prize, just not mine.

DON DIEGO. *(Surprised, places his hand over his heart)* Oh!

DOÑA ELENA. I have learned much from you, and much about myself from you. … Oddly, you have been a positive influence on me, and I will be in your debt for that.

DON DIEGO. This is a blow to me, Elena, but I will not force myself on anyone. … My consolation is that Doña Carmen is still in line for my attentions.

DOÑA ELENA. I will let the two of your determine your fates. … I hope that you have learned something from this experience, Diego.

DON DIEGO. I have learned that the business model may not apply to all ventures. … Yet I would hate to see aristocratic values—and hierarchies—go down the drain.

DOÑA ELENA. That is not the lesson that I had in mind, but I am not the director of your actions.

DON DIEGO. Be well, dear Elena.

DOÑA ELENA. The same to you, dear Diego[19].

As part of the restoration of harmony, the three servants are rewarded for their loyalty, and, fortuitously, Justina, who has grown attached to Fidelio, has a twin sister to pair with Mudanza, who, by a quirk of fortune, has been offered a job as valet to Don Alonso. All's well that ends well for the good people. The hypocrite does not get even a consolation prize. It is the women who have traded up.

Each effort at adaptation, in sum, relies on the original material and its rearrangement, an engineering of similitude and difference. The goal may be to imitate, update, refashion, revere, disparage, satirize, or acknowledge in another way. My reason for adapting *Don Quijote*, *Niebla*, *La dama boba*, *El laberinto de amor*, and *Mudarse por mejorarse* varies according to the text, but a common element is the wish to share a treasured work in a different context. With *Crossing the Line* and *Into the Mist*, I wanted to share personal readings of my favorite texts and to challenge myself by switching language and genre, by reducing the length, and by finding a correlative of narrative perspective. With *Wit's End*, *The Labyrinth of Love*, and *Trading Up*, I tried to re-create the comic attraction of the source plays, to invent my

19. Friedman, 2015b, 2, 5, pp. 102-105.

own dramatic design, and to give greater credence to women's position in society and in the theater. There are numerous beautifully conceived roles for women in early modern Spanish literature, but there are too many women as victims of rigid codes, hierarchies, and subject positions that conspire to exclude them. Comedy may be the ideal locus for suggesting change and for amplifying visions implicit in the works of the Golden Age. Equal opportunity plotting can enrich the existing corpus and enhance the canon. Literary analysis and criticism can explicate and elucidate texts, and thereby bolster the author's craft and message. Adaptation can be seen as analysis and criticism, and definitely as an amalgam of scrutiny and reconfiguration. Adaptation reiterates the dialectics of stability and instability that marks the interpretation of texts. Adaptation, in short, embraces reading, rereading, and rewriting. More often than not, it complements and compliments its sources.

CODA

To celebrate the four-hundredth anniversary of the publication of Part 2 of *Don Quijote* in 2015, I wrote a «condensed» version of the novel in *Quixotic Haiku: Poems and Notes*. The haiku form featurew three verses of 5, 7, and 5 syllables. *Quixotic Haiku* includes 130 poems, with a note for each. Below are four examples. The first is based on chapter 1 of Part 1, the second on the discovery of Cide Hamete Benengeli's manuscript (1.9), the third on Don Quijote's encounter with a lion (2.17), and the fourth on the closing words of the pen (2.74):

Books of chivalry,
heroic yet maddening,
jointly cause and bane[20].

Manuscript appears.
Anxious thought: something may be
lost in translation[21].

Knight faces lion.
Lethargic, thank goodness, or
the knight would be naught[22].

Collaboraive
enterprise to the ending.
Reader, take a bow[23].

20. Friedman, 2015a, p. 46.
21. Friedman, 2015a, p. 62.
22. Friedman, 2015a, p. 127.
23. Friedman, 2015a, p. 168.

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