

THEATRICAL ASPECTS OF THE NOVEL: *DON QUIXOTE*, *JOSEPH ANDREWS*, AND THE EXAMPLE OF CERVANTES

Henry Fielding's indebtedness to Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra is self-avowed. The title of Fielding's second novel, *Joseph Andrews*, declares that it was written "in imitation of the manner of Cervantes." One of Fielding's earliest dramatic compositions, *Don Quixote in England*, was literally and imaginatively inspired by Shelton's translation of Cervantes' masterpiece. References to the Spanish author and his novel may be found throughout Fielding's works: in the Prologue to *Jonathan Wild*, in essays published by his *Covent-Garden Journal*, in his novels such as *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones*. In "Fielding, Swift et Cervantes...", Emile Pons goes so far as to declare: "La admiration de Fielding pour Cervantes attient aux proportions d'un culte, ou se rejoignent la ferveur et l'humilite."¹

In efforts to better understand the "manner of Cervantes" so admired and imitated by Fielding, the criticism has compared, especially, *Joseph Andrews* and *Don Quixote*, Aurelien Digeon, in his excellent *The Novels of Fielding*, underlines fundamental physical and moral traits shared by the heroes, Parson Adams and Don Quixote: their age and height, courage, credulity, idealism, faith in the truth of fiction, and ability to invoke reader sympathy.² Emile Pons adds to this list: the spiritual strength of the heroes, their steadfastness in love, their penchant for soliloquy. The pairing of knight and squire in *Don Quixote*—and the dialectic which evolves from their dialogues—has been identified as Fielding's source of inspiration for the coupling of Adams and Joseph, or Tom and Partridge. Minor characters in Fielding's novels have also been traced to Cervantine prototypes: Lady Booby to Doña Rodríguez, Slipslop to Maritornes, or Slipslop to Sancho (both characters suffering from what has been termed "lapsus linguae").³

Robert Alter, in *Fielding and the Nature of the Novel*, identifies nume-

¹ Emile Pons, "Fielding, Swift et Cervantes (De *Don Quixote in England* a *Joseph Andrews*)," *Studia Neophilologica*, 15 (1943), p. 138.

² Aurelien Digeon, *The Novels of Fielding* (London: George Routledge and Sons, Ltd., 1925).

³ See, for example, Allen R. Penner, "Fielding's Adaptation of Cervantes' Knight and Squire: the Character of Joseph," *Revue de Littérature Comparée*, 41 (1967), 508-514.

rous episodes which parallel one another in *Don Quixote*, *Joseph Andrews*, and *Tom Jones*: the puppet shows, incidents at inns, nighttime adventures, and battles resulting in effects more comic than tragic.⁴ The structure of *Don Quixote*—Cervantes' adaptation of the traditional romance epic, his use of the intercalated tale, irony and parody—and the impact of this structure upon *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones*, has been incisively examined by Douglas Brooks, Homer Goldberg, Harry Levin, Alexander Parker, and many others.⁵ Miguel de Unamuno comments upon the theme of the romance epic as "verdadera historia" in *Don Quixote* and *Joseph Andrews*, and Wolfgang Kaiser traces the origin of the modern novel to Cervantes, followed by Fielding, based upon each author's employ of personal narrators, multiple points of view, and the creation of characters who are comic, yet solicit reader compassion and affection.⁶

In light of the aforementioned critiques, one might wonder if there is anything left to say. We believe there is. For at the heart of Fielding's identification and fascination with "the manner of Cervantes," was a coincidence in the literary careers of these two authors, a coincidence which shaped their vision and which has not, to our knowledge, been examined comparatively for its impact upon the evolution of their common narrative techniques. Both Cervantes and Fielding were, of course, playwrights turned novelists. Yet a comparative study of each author's transition from dramatic to prose composition, and the consequences of this modulation upon the genesis and development of the modern novel, has not been attempted.

Did Cervantes adapt techniques developed during his theatrical apprenticeship for the novel? Was it precisely this incorporation of so much theater and dramatic technique in *Don Quixote* that captured Fielding the playwright's imagination, and inspired the composition of *Joseph Andrews*, and then, *Tom Jones*? (We recall that Fielding's first imitation of Cervantes' novel was, in fact, a play: *Don Quixote in England*). Finally, Cervantes' literary innovations—imitated by Fielding and countless others thereafter—have been identified traditionally as the development of the autonomous character, dramatized narrators, and multiple points of view. But might not Cervantes' conscious alternation of dramatic and narrative techniques in *Don Quixote* have been more fundamentally responsible for inspiring Fielding's emulation of the "manner of Cervantes," resulting in

⁴ Robert Alter, *Fielding and the Nature of the Novel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968).

⁵ Douglas Brooks, "The Interpolated Tales in *Joseph Andrews* again," *Modern Philology*, 65 (1967-68), 208-213; Homer Goldberg, *The Art of "Joseph Andrews"* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), and, by the same, "The Interpolated Stories in *Joseph Andrews*," *Modern Philology* 63 (1965-6) 295-310; Harry Levin, *Contexts of Criticism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957); Alexander Parker, "Fielding and the structure of *Don Quixote*," *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 33 (1956) 1-16.

⁶ Miguel de Unamuno, "Glosa a un pasaje del cervantino Fielding," Vol. I, *Obras completas* (Madrid: Afrodisio Aguado, 1952), 612-616; Wolfgang Kayser, "Origen y crisis de la novela moderna (Cervantes y Fielding)," *Cultura Universitaria*, 47 (1955) 5-47.

the development of that new genre, now defined as the modern novel? Let us set out to address these concerns.

After the manner of *Don Quixote* and *Parson Adams*, it is only fitting that this literary adventure commence with a visit to an inn. Inns provide the setting for many dramatic interludes in the novels of Cervantes and Fielding; it is almost as if the confines of those walls were to have suggested "stage space" to these playwrights turned novelists.⁷ Readers of *Don Quixote* will easily recall "la reunión de la venta," that dramatic scene of reunion and reconciliation between four crossed lovers—Dorotea, Fernando, Lucinda and Cardenio—near the end of Part I. In this episode, Cardenio—the shy, young aristocrat, driven mad by the marriage of his beloved to his best friend, Don Fernando—is reunited with Lucinda. Don Fernando, the "burlador de mujeres" in this honor play within the novel, gives up Lucinda and proposes marriage to Dorotea, the woman whom he had seduced, and then abandoned, for Cardenio's bride-to-be. Don Fernando and Cardenio—former friends, divided by their passion for Lucinda—peacefully mend their differences. Order, in the best tradition of Spanish Golden Age drama, is triumphantly restored.⁸

But it is not only the "comedia"-like plot of "la reunión de la venta" which calls our attention to this episode in the novel. The manner in which Cervantes actuates the dramatic anagnorisis that brings this episode to its felicitous close reveals a playwright's technique. A brief recounting of the events in this episode will illustrate this point. Lucinda and Don Fernando arrive at the inn on horseback, accompanied by Don Fernando's servants. All of the characters are masked; the men costumed in black, Lucinda in white. While Don Fernando and his men dismount outside the inn, Cardenio and Dorotea—already guests, alerted by the "ventero" as to the arrival of the newcomers—react quickly and suspiciously. Dorotea masks her own face with a veil, and Cardenio hides behind a door to an adjoining room. Then Don Fernando and his men descend upon the inn in silence, a silence which is only broken when Lucinda—carried into the inn by Don Fernando—sighs heavily and collapses in a chair. The positioning of this chair is not incidental; it stands just outside the door behind which Cardenio has hidden himself away.

Hearing Lucinda's sigh, Dorotea moves towards her to comfort her. The masked leader of the newcomers (Don Fernando) insists that the woman (Lucinda) is not to be consoled. He claims that she is deceptive and a liar.

⁷ For a discussion of dramatic scenes in *Don Quixote* and *Joseph Andrews* see: H. Mendeloff, "The Maritornes Episode: A Bedroom Farce," *Romance Notes*, 16 (1974-75), 753-59, and Guillermo Díaz-Plaja, *Cuestión de límites* (Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1963); also, Geraldine Hammond, "Evidences of the Dramatist's Technique in Henry Fielding's Novels," *Wichita University Studies*, 1-15 (1936-45).

⁸ On the parallels between "la reunión de la venta" and plots and character types from the "comedias" of the Spanish Golden Age see: Stephen Gilman, "Los inquisidores literarios de Cervantes," *Actas del Tercer Congreso Internacional de Hispanistas* (México: El Colegio de México, 1970), and Francisco Márquez Villanueva, *Personajes y temas del "Quijote"* (Madrid: Taurus, 1975).

The woman protests—raising a voice in her own defense—and as she does so, Cardenio lets out a cry of recognition from his hiding place. The woman edges towards the door to discover the person behind it and, as she does this, the leader lunges forward to detain her. She twists to pull away from him and both of their veils fall. Dorotea, who is still embracing the woman, peers across at the face of none other than her “burlador,” Don Fernando. She, in turn, lets out her own “¡tristísimo ay!” and falls faint into the arms of the barber, conveniently standing at her back. The priest rushes towards the characters and unfastens Dorotea’s veil to give her more air. Don Fernando then sees Dorotea, the woman whom he had left behind. Cardenio, having heard Dorotea’s cry, has rushed into the main room to investigate. He discovers Lucinda and Don Fernando. The four characters stand, stunned, thus described:

Callaban todos y mirábanse todos,
Dorotea a don Fernando, don Fernando
a Cardenio, Cardenio a Lucinda y
Lucinda a Cardenio.⁹

This episode in Cervantes’ novel is replete with dramatic technique. The author has blocked his characters’ movements as if they were performing on stage. The characters reveal their own emotions through dialogue, gesture, and exclamation. Narrative descriptions in this episode approximate stage directions. The limited omniscience of the narrator—who does not reveal the identities of the newcomers until they are unmasked—provokes curiosity and arouses suspense. Suspense is also generated in this adventure by disguises (the veils, the stark black and white robes of the travelers), and by an acoustic shift from commotion (Cardenio and Dorotea rushing to hide), to silence (arrival of the troop), to commotion, and then back again (the screams, the fainting, and the final anagnorisis).

The theatrical apprenticeship of Cervantes—author of the *Ocho comedias y ocho entremeses*—is certainly evident in this scene. In fact, the moment of reconciliation between Don Fernando and Dorotea in this episode imitates a scene from one of Cervantes’ own plays: *El laberinto de amor*. In *El laberinto*, the public encounters Julia—a determined young woman not unlike Dorotea, who is also proposed marriage, then seduced and abandoned by the man she loves. Like Dorotea, Julia dresses as a man and goes after her “burlador,” Manfredo. We compare their reconciliation scene in the play, to Fernando and Dorotea’s in the novel:

Manfredo: Levanta, señora mía
que esta tu tamaña culpa

⁹ Quoted from Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quijote de la Mancha*, ed. Martín de Riquer, 2 vols. (Barcelona: Juventud, 1971), p. 374.

el deseo la disculpa
que en tus entrañas se cría:

* * *

Pues ya amor me ha descubierto
tus pasos, tu intento y celo,
descúbreme tú ese cielo
que traes con nubes cubierto

* * *

No te arrodilles; levanta,
que eres mi igual, y aun mejor.¹⁰

Fernando: Levantaos, señora mía: que no es justo que esté arrodillada a mis pies la que yo tengo en mi alma; y si hasta aquí no he dado muestras de lo que digo, quizá ha sido por orden del cielo, para que viendo yo en vos la fe con que me amáis, os sepa estimar en lo que merecéis...¹¹

Although Manfredo's reply in *El laberinto* is written in verse, while Fernando's speech appears in prose, a clear similarity is apparent not only in their words, but in Cervantes' visual conception of the scenes. This parallel offers further proof that Cervantes the dramatist stood at the shoulder of the author as he wrote his novel, bringing a dramatic sense of space, gesture, and timing to his prose.

Like so many other scenes in bedrooms, lofts, and palace chambers in *Don Quixote*, "la reunión de la venta" manifests Cervantes' importation of the techniques of drama into prose fiction. These "resting places" in the narrative allow Cervantes to set aside the methods of a narrator in order to experiment with the conventions of a playwright. Drawing from *La Celestina*, sixteenth century Spanish drama, and his own "comedias," Cervantes brings dramatic methods of character presentation, dialogue, and scene development to prose fiction.¹² This alternation of dramatic and narrative techniques represents one of Cervantes' boldest literary innovations in *Don Quixote*. Furthermore, it is an innovation which we believe was perceived by Henry Fielding, and became one of the primary motivating factors in Fielding's selection of *Don Quixote* as the model for *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones*.

When, due to the Stage Licensing Act of 1737, Fielding the dramatist was excluded from the theater, he had already perceived the proximity between many of the adventures in Cervantes' novel, and scenes which

¹⁰ Quoted from Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *Obras completas*, ed. Angel Valbuena Prat, 2 vols. (Spain: Aguilar, 1970), p. 542. On the chronology of Cervantes' dramas see: Jean Canavaggio, *Cervantes Dramaturge: un Théâtre à Naître* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1977), pp. 11-32. Canavaggio claims *El laberinto* was composed prior to 1602.

¹¹ Cervantes, *Don Quijote*, p. 379.

¹² On the influence of these dramatic forms in *Don Quixote*, see: Anthony Close, "Characterization and Dialogue in Cervantes' 'Comedias en Prosa'," *Modern Language Review*, 76 (1981), 338-56.

¹³ Regarding seventeenth century dramatizations of the Cardenio episode see: Harriet Frazier, *A Babble of Ancestral Voices: Shakespeare, Cervantes and Theobald* (The Hague: Mouton, 1974).

could be easily dramatized on the stage. (Fielding's comedy, *Don Quixote in England*, was published in 1734). Of course, this perception was not uniquely Fielding's. In fact, the Cardenio episode in particular—and the tale of *El curioso impertinente* which it frames—became favorites among playwrights in England during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. No less than six dramatic renditions of these episodes from Cervantes' novel appeared on the English stage between 1613 and 1737, including a Cardenio play entitled *The Double Falsehood*, written by Lewis Theobald, Shakespeare's editor, and performed ten years before the publication of Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*.¹³ Appreciating the dramatic potential of Cervantes' novel like so many of his countrymen, Fielding probably saw in "the manner of Cervantes," an opportunity to exercise his talents and concerns as a dramatist within a new medium.

Indeed, *Joseph Andrews* reveals that Fielding was, like Cervantes: disappointed by the fact that his dramatic career had been eclipsed; aware of the influence of the theater upon contemporary society; and contemplating the relationship between prose and dramatic fiction. Comparing textual references to the theater and dramatic technique in *Joseph Andrews* and *Don Quixote*, striking parallels may be found. The discussion between the Canon and the Curate in *Don Quixote* (I, 48) is echoed in two dialogues in *Joseph Andrews*: one between Parson Adams and a gentleman playwright (III, 3), the second between the poet and the player who dialogue at an inn (III, 10). In their literary discussions, Fielding's characters—like Cervantes'—comment upon the low standards of contemporary playwrights, the depravity of the actors, and the difficulty of getting fine dramas produced. In fact, the gentleman playwright's words concerning attempts to peddle his wares in *Joseph Andrews*, vividly recall Cervantes' self-portrait in the Preface to his *Ocho comedias*:

...my last performance not having sold well the bookseller declined any further engagement, and aspersed me to his brethren as a carefree idle fellow.¹⁴

Professional actors or players appear in both novels (the traveling troupe in *Don Quixote*, II, 11; the actors who perform at the inn in *Joseph Andrews*, III, 7), as do many characters who are aficionados of drama and the theater as in the case of Don Quixote ("desde muchacho fui aficionado a la carátula"), Sansón Carrasco ("gran regocijador de los patios de Salamanca"), Parson Adams (whose favorite companion is his copy of *Aeschylus*), and Joseph (who attends plays at the Covent Garden, and at the end of Book I, chapter three, bursts into a soliloquy he had memorized from a play). *Joseph Andrews* also contains numerous references to character's

¹⁴ Quoted from Henry Fielding, *The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews, and His Friend Mr. Abraham Adams Written in the Manner of Cervantes*, Intro. Mary Ellen Chase (New York: Norton Library, 1958), p. 193.

actions, or narrative techniques, described in dramatic terms. In Book III, chapter thirteen, Mrs. Slipslop flings herself into a chaise, "casting a look at Fanny as she went, not unlike that which Cleopatra gives to Octavia in the play."¹⁵ In Book II, chapter fourteen, Parson Trulliber is described as "one of the largest men you should see, and could have acted the part of Sir John Falstaff without stuffing."¹⁶

In Book I, chapter eleven of *Joseph Andrews*, the narrator refers to the chapters of his novel as "scenes." Later, he calls the narrative a "tragedy," and claims that he will "imitate the wise conductors of the stage, who in the midst of a grave action entertain you with some excellent piece of satire or humor called a dance."¹⁷ These references, along with Fielding's discussion in the Preface to his work—where he defines *Joseph Andrews* as a "comic epic poem in prose"—reveal that this author, like his Spanish master, was experimenting with the principles of dramatic action as they might relate to prose fiction.¹⁸ Consequently, it is not surprising to discover that *Joseph Andrews*, emulating *Don Quixote*, includes numerous dramatic interludes in the course of the narrative—orchestrated scenes which unfold in carefully defined settings such as alehouses, bedroom chambers, forest clearings, and, of course, inns. In fact, Book II, chapter twelve of *Joseph Andrews* depicts a scene of reunion not unlike the chance meeting of Dorotea, Fernando, Cardenio and Lucinda at the "venta."

In this episode from *Joseph Andrews*, Parson Adams is sitting by the hearth, smoking a pipe, and reading his treasured *Aeschylus*. Fanny is also warming herself by the fire, a bit impatient as she listens to the storm raging outside. The weather has forced Fanny, Adams, and their guide, to take refuge at this alehouse—abandoning, temporarily, their search for Joseph. Suddenly, Fanny hears a voice coming from an adjoining room. Someone is singing about a beautiful maiden named "Cloe." As Fanny listens to the voice, and appreciates the singer's words, she pales. Adams, so engrossed in the reading of his "inseparable companion of upwards of thirty years" that he has not heard a word of the song, happens to glance up at Fanny. "Bless you, you look extremely pale!" he exclaims. "Pale, Mr. Adams... oh Jesus!" cries Fanny, as she promptly falls faint into a chair. Adams jumps up, unthinkingly flings *Aeschylus* into the fire, and shouts to the other guests for help. Among those who run to assist Adams is the young singer, who, of course, turns out to be none other than Joseph Andrews. He sees Fanny, rushes to her side, and wakes her out of her faint with kisses.

Emulating Cervantes, Fielding's "reunión de la venta" communicates the immediacy, plasticity, and animation of drama. His reliance upon setting, the movement of characters within a scene, visual and aural effects,

¹⁵ Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*, p. 139.

¹⁶ Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*, p. 141.

¹⁷ Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*, p. 234.

¹⁸ Digeon, *The Novels of Fielding*, discusses this topic extensively. See especially pp. 227-232.

compels the reader to see the action as if it were an objective, three-dimensional presence. The internal climax of the episode—the cry, Fanny's fainting—culminating in the happy anagnorisis, repeats the dramatic pattern of Cervantes' "reunión." To conclude: Cervantes and Fielding's shared theatrical apprenticeship is more than mere biographical coincidence. It provides the key to understanding Fielding's identification with "the manner of Cervantes," a manner which introduced the modern novel, by combining drama's ability to show, with the narrative's ability to tell.

Jill Syverson-Stork
Boston College
Boston, Mass.