

Disruption, Self-Reflection and Renovation: Revisiting the Arabic Influences in *Don Quijote*

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ABSTRACT

Though the use of verisimilitude in *Don Quijote* served largely to counter the trend of imaginary settings in the chivalric romances, the question remains why Cervantes chose to emphasize elements of Spain's Arab-Moorish heritage and to what extent did such heritage motivate his writing? While the most widely acknowledged purpose of *Don Quijote* was to satirize and terminate the genre of the chivalric romances, Cervantes may have had other aims as well. Despite his ambivalence regarding Arab-Moorish culture, his references to Arabic names, places, and customs, as well as his utilization of various literary techniques of Arabic derivation, likely served to promote both an awareness of Spain's inherent liminality, and the necessity of adopting a liminal conscience in order to survive—as a nation, a culture, or an individual.

Keywords: *Don Quijote*, liminality, Arabic, Moorish, Muslim.

Introduction

As a seminal work of both Spanish and world literature, Cervantes' novel *Don Quijote de la Mancha* has left an impression on innumerable readers. Often credited as the first modern novel, it singlehandedly put an end to what had for at least a century been the most popular literary genre in Spain: the chivalric romance. It did so by superficially emulating the traits of this genre with the goal of satirizing both it and many aspects of the cultural context to which it pertained.

Published in two volumes, the first in 1605 and the second in 1615, it came at approximately the midpoint of the Spanish Golden Age, coinciding with the transition from the Renaissance to the Baroque period and the prolonged political, social and economic changes resulting from the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588. Spain's transition at this historical juncture was influenced by other factors as well. The Counter-Reformation facilitated the publication of counter-religious literature, such as the seminal satirical works *The Celestina* and *Lazarillo de Tormes* of the previous century. The colonization of the New World led to Spain's temporary enrichment and to an eventual inflation of its economy and its national ego.

Another transition, which, though more chronologically distant, still had ramifications in Cervantes' lifetime, was the fall of Granada to Ferdinand and Isabel in 1492. As the last remnant of an Islamic caliphate that once spanned the Iberian peninsula, Granada's fall marked both a practical and symbolic defeat for what had once been considered the pride of the Islamic civilization and, in the words of one scholar, "the Ornament of the World" (Menocal 2002). As the symbolic culmination of the Catholic Reconquest, this event reversed the hierarchy of Christianity and Islam in Spain, putting those of Moorish identity at a disadvantage. It facilitated their perception as Others and set the stage for their persecution and expulsion.

Yet despite the Catholic sovereigns' ultimatum for Muslims and Jews to convert or face exile, significant numbers remained in Spain, many of whom continued to practice their religion in secret under the guise of false conversions to Catholicism. Even for those who converted in earnest, and for *mudejares* who had been Catholic for generations but

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still adhered to the language and culture of their Muslim forbearers, the Moorish influence was still prominent. In the novel, *Don Quijote*, the numerous examples of Arabic language and Moorish traditions as well as Moorish characters in various stages of assimilation attest that the cultural reconquest of the Iberian Peninsula was still a work in progress and that the cultural, linguistic and religious identities of its inhabitants were as diverse as their origins. Cervantes shows a broad familiarity with Moorish culture through references to names, places and customs, as well as through the use of literary techniques of Arabic derivation. In the words of one scholar, “One who does not know Cervantes does not know the Spanish heart, and one who does not know the amount and extent of Islamic heritage in the Spanish land does not know Cervantes, and that is because Cervantes virtually gathers within himself the spirits of all Spaniards (Bustāwa, 1990, p. 70).

Cervantes likely observed liminality on multiple levels in Spanish society and considered its acknowledgement essential to the nation’s survival. The types of liminality found in *Don Quijote* include culture, language, religion, morality, socioeconomic status, geopolitical status, legal status, and identity. Examples include the fictional author Sidi Hamid Benengeli who is introduced in volume I, chapter 9; the renegade in the Captive’s Tale who interpreted for the Captive and the Moor Zoraida in volume I, chapters 39-41; the religious affiliation of Zoraida who claimed to have converted to Christianity but showed almost no evidence of transition in language or dress; the Moor Ricote who spoke Spanish and Arabic in volume II, chapters 21 and 22; the legal status and identity of the puppeteer Maestro Pedro in volume II, chapters 25-27, whose source of income, puppets, was destroyed by Quijote and who was later revealed to be the galley slave, Gines de Pasamonte, in disguise.

The most obvious example of liminality, that of Quijote, involves an unconscious transition stemming from conscious, deliberate acts. He occasionally displays glimpses of his liminality as seen in references to his psychological development. Yet his grasp of reality is limited, and insufficient to halt, reverse or facilitate his transformation. Likewise, Spain, represented metaphorically by Quijote, sought to be an agent of change without an accurate perception of reality, reflexive self-awareness or adaptability. Quijote’s acceptance of liminality in the novel’s final chapters—foreshadowed in a letter written to Sancho while staying with the duke and duchess, and realized in stages through his defeat by the knight of the White Moon, his formal renunciation of knight errantry, his reacceptance of his real name, and finally his death—culminates his search for freedom via a renunciation of the ideological shackles that had weighed him down. Given Cervantes’ profound knowledge of Spanish culture, he was likely promoting both an awareness of Spain’s inherent liminality, and the necessity of adopting a liminal status in order to survive—as a nation, a culture or an individual.

On a symbolic level, Cervantes’ choice of Arabic elements to promote the theme of liminality was due to the Moors’ lengthy presence in Spain and to their marginalized status—a status commonly associated with liminal figures that facilitates their ambiguous and transitional functions. On a more concrete level, his choice reflected the ways in which the trope of liminality was treated in Arabic literature and its importance in the process of self-realization. By drawing on cultural elements such as pseudo translation, the Arabic *maqāma*, stereotypical Moorish characters and Arabic customs and words in common use at the time, Cervantes revealed ways in which Arabic culture was ingrained in the Spanish psyche. Moreover, by honoring both Arabic and Spanish heritage, he showed how the liminal traits of mutual awareness, acceptance and adaption were necessary for either culture to survive.

Through the ritual of pseudo translation, carried out through the creation of a fictional and liminal Moorish author, Cervantes affected the identities of both himself and the protagonist. Through the dialectic of opposition between the protagonist and the fictional author, Cervantes did not merely suggest a co-dependency of both figures; he also proposed a reversal of their relative statuses through a deflationary mockery of the noble protagonist and a rhetorical empowerment of the shadowy Moor. Through a ritual disruption of the Golden Age status quo, this aimed to revive the Spanish literary tradition with new insights from the liminal period—Cervantes’ novel—that may even affect the social structure of the post-liminal period. His choice of a Moor as fictional author and a Catholic noble as protagonist juxtaposed and symbolically reversed figures at opposite ends of the social hierarchy who were nonetheless mutually

influential in the Spanish cultural milieu. By illustrating the liminal yet mutually dependent natures of both figures and of the cultural identities that each represented, Cervantes showed that while both were essential components of Spanish heritage, neither was guaranteed supremacy of position or permanency of form. Reminiscent of the dialectic relation between protagonist and author, the relationship between Spanish and Moorish identities in Spain was liminal, as were these identities themselves. Moreover, members of both groups should be aware of their co-dependence with each other and with the broader Spanish culture.

2. Literature Review

Prior to delving into a new analysis of pseudo translation, the fictional author, liminality, ritual and identity, it is important to consider what has already been written. I will begin with pseudo translation, since it forms the context in which the other concepts are applied. Anthony Pym defines pseudo translation as “texts represented by translations, but which have no corresponding source text (Large, 2018, p. 1). He adds that such texts question translators’ originality and creativity, allow texts to avoid censorship in the pursuit of social criticism, and allow them to smuggle in new literary forms (Ibid., p.1-2). Tom Toremans and Beatrijs Vanacker point out that pseudo translations facilitate aesthetic innovations under the guise of translation. They imply paratextual discourse and invite a critique of expectations that underlie it. Such discourse often exists in fictional form, commenting on the text’s origin, transfer, and critical aspects such as authorship, originality, genre, and its fictionality or historicity. Not surprisingly, it raises questions about the originality of genres, as well as questions about the relation between the source and target texts (Toremans, 2016).

According to Carol O’Sullivan, pseudo translations are fictional narratives crafted to afford insight into unique foreign ways on the assumption that they contain elements of objective truth. While the name of a pseudo translation’s author may be an indicator of nationality, it can also be misleading. In either case, it is a key component in the presentation of pseudo translations regarding their influence on readers’ expectations (O’Sullivan, 2005, p. 66-67).

Pseudo translation has a history in both Spanish and Arabic literature. In earlier Spanish chivalric romances, authors often sought to enhance their fame by claiming that their works were translated from Greek, Latin or Arabic, thus giving themselves status as portals to otherwise inaccessible foreign cultures (Bahous, 1990, p. 12). In a similar vein, the use of a pseudo translation may serve to increase a text’s fame by suggesting a preexisting tradition of which it is a part. Both the *Cifar* (a 13th-14th century romance) and *Don Quijote* present themselves as translated Arabic texts that have been discovered (Ibid., p.8). By presenting themselves as part of traditions, they enhance the image of their authenticity. Pseudo translations were also used by writers to innovate within a literary system, particularly one that was resistant to change (Ibid., p.15). The attribution to a foreign source, the inevitable change of meaning in translation, and the existing prejudice against Moors in Spain made this strategy a convenient one for Cervantes.

To fully appreciate the trope of pseudo translation in *Don Quijote*, one must also consider the chief figure in this process—the fictional author—as well as Cervantes’ reasons for creating him. According to Ruth El-Saffar, as Quijote’s character develops and becomes more sympathetic, he threatens Cervantes’ independence as the author. Thus, Cervantes creates Benengeli, alternately referred to as author, historian, translator and philosopher, as an intermediary figure who is historically removed, to distance himself from the protagonist. In doing so, Cervantes demonstrates his awareness of the interconnectedness and liminality of protagonist and author (El-Saffar, 1968, p. 176-177).

Benengeli’s role as historian gives him sufficient distance to maintain the illusion of control of the characters (El-Saffar, 1968, p. 169). Removing Benengeli from the time of the characters implies their previous existence and grants the former control over the textual treatment of the latter (Ibid., p.170). The dialectic of opposition between author and character is found in other places in the novel as well: between the Captive and the characters in his tale, between Ginés de Pasamonte and his autobiography, between Maestro Pedro (Ginés in disguise) and his puppets (Ibid., 176-177). The tellers of all stories, including tellers of interpolated tales, Ginés, Maestro Pedro, Quijote when boasting of his illusionary deeds and Sansón Carrasco when fabricating his tale of deception all experience distance from their

normal lives in the contexts of their storytelling (Ibid., p. 172). In a similar manner, the audiences of interpolated tales and the characters who become aware in volume II that a story has already been written about them in volume I experience distance from the people in the stories that they hear (Ibid., p.174). Narrators exercise power through telling, while listeners exercise power through the ability to judge what they hear. Yet they are at a single level of removal from their created or evaluated texts in that they are still limited by the confines of the plot. To observe the same situation from a different angle, it may be said that both the characters of subplots and those who tell about them or judge them in the main plot are all characters from the perspective of the reader. Within the context of the novel, both the reality represented by the main plot and fiction represented by the subplots are all inherently fictional (Ibid., p. 173). Benengeli, however, is different in that he is in the text but not of the text. He was created by Cervantes as a paratextual mediator between characters (primarily the protagonist) and the author.

According to Mary Ross, certain tribes use ritual to disrupt the quotidian reality which consists of classifications, boundaries, roles and hierarchies. They abandon these designations in favor of egalitarianism, even if only for a short time (Ross, 1982, p. 135). Society members may revive the structure that they have left behind by changing it based on the insights and results of the liminal period. This brief but powerful phase creates artistic forms, beliefs and ethical ideals to be integrated into the social structure of the post-liminal period (Ibid., p. 135). Transitional objects, which are used to help wean infants from their mothers and help them gain awareness of themselves and their mothers as separate individuals, are considered by D. W. Winnicott to be the precursor of all cultural creations. Transitional objects and phenomena appear in a “potential space” where an infant may “bridge the gap between self and other, inside and outside, reality and fantasy (Ibid., p.136). Bridging separateness, a key component of liminality, is present in attempts to bridge reality and fantasy (Ibid., p.138). It may be said that Quijote’s lance, armor and knighthood are all transitional objects or phenomena for him. Further, the novel *Don Quijote* may be considered a transitional object for Spanish literature, arising in the potential literary space to gain the reading public’s awareness of themselves and chivalric romances as separate entities, and ultimately to wean the former from the latter.

Since the use of a transitional object or phenomenon in a liminal phase allows its user to come to terms with his past and negotiate between the past and the present, it may be said to constitute an act of parody, even if unconsciously so. According to Jill Twark, this is particularly true for texts with intimidating legacies. Like the liminal rituals used as rites of passage in certain tribes, parody provides a process for the transfer and reorganization of the past and plays on the tensions between past and present. This is possible when a new text imitates the form of an archaic text while updating the content to satirize a present occurrence. Parody may also serve to broaden the scope of a text’s commentary, as seen in the case of *Don Quijote* (Twark, 2002, p. 25-26). Twark points out that satire is often used in transitional times to terminate antiquated institutions and behaviors while bringing in new points. The release of emotions from criticizing society expedites the reconciliation with the past (Ibid., p.64-65). She adds that liminality allows one to stand aside from one’s own social position and from all social positions and to formulate “a potentially unlimited series of social arrangements”. Without liminality, program might control performance—a risk which directly relates to Cervantes’ motive for creating the fictional author Benengeli. Twark echoes the idea expressed by other authors that with liminality, old programs can be undermined and new ones can be created (Ibid., p.69). This also directly relates to Cervantes’ motive for writing.

An essential outgrowth of this liminal period is a renewed sense of identity for its participants. Identity, as Dajani and Omari indicate, is limited and clarified by others, who interact with us in language, style, culture, religion, and socio-economic level. The concept of identity depends on the concept of the self, derived from the presence of the other, who is an essential part of our effective presence. His life is organized by our local laws in addition to the changing conditions of time, place, means and ability. The presence of many others and the “I” in the same place means that there cannot be a sole identity for all in a society. Community identity is determined first by the selves and then from the identities that derive from the selves. Accord and discord are essential factors that shape identity on individual and group levels. Many different identities are present in a community, yet the community identity is a

mixture that yields harmony between different sects. While individual identities combine to form general features that define the broad communal identity, these specific identities are not homogeneous; they retain their unique features (Dajani& Omari,2008, p.74-75).

3. Pseudotranslation, Authorship, and Benengeli's Ambiguous Role

In *Don Quijote*, pseudo translation is integral to the novel's identity by accounting for its origin. It hinges on the use of the fictional Arab translator Sidi Hamid Benengeli—a claim that at once makes the novel's content appear both exotic and suspect. In a period when literary transgressions could be punished by imprisonment or worse, Benengeli provides a foil for the real author Cervantes, who knowingly incorporates controversial material in his book with the purpose of critiquing the injustices and hypocrisies of his day. As such, the pseudo translation creates liminality by forming a dialectical relation between the real author and the fictional author and by calling both of their identities into question. At the beginning of the Prologue, Cervantes attempts to distance himself from the authorship of the book with his claim, "But though I may seem to be Don Quijote's parent, I'm only his stepfather" (Cervantes, 1605, p. 7). In effect, he adopts the role of narrator instead of author. The distinction between the narrative and authorial roles is further complicated near the end of chapter 8 of volume I, where Cervantes has the narrative text of Quijote's adventures mysteriously disappear. Here, in his role as custodian of the text, he must search for its remainder in order to continue the narration. The first eight chapters of volume I are narrated from a third-person perspective, in keeping with the norm of a chivalric romance. Yet much of chapter 9 is narrated from a first-person perspective, describing the alleged process of Cervantes' search. While both perspectives correspond with Cervantes, they reflect different roles in the construction of the novel. The first part of chapter 9—prior to the discovery of the story's continuation—constitutes a meta-narrative in which Cervantes addresses the dilemma of searching for the missing text and his proposal to visit the marketplace of Toledo—reputed to have an abundance of Arabic texts and translators.

Upon discovering Arabic script on a scrap of paper which he picks up, Cervantes rushes to have it translated, and it turns out to be the continuation of the novel. He uses this unlikely coincidence—and the textual impasse leading up to it—to introduce three crucial topics related to liminality: meta-fiction, authorial uncertainty, and textual uncertainty. For the first time, he also reveals, satirizes, and (ironically) exploits the bias in seventeenth-century Spain against Arabs and Muslims. A hint of this may be seen in the translation of the newly discovered text's title: "*History of Don Quijote of La Mancha, written by SidiHamid Benengeli, Arab historian*" (Cervantes, 1605, p. 52), where the name "Benengeli," a variant of the Arabic word for "eggplant," serves as an ethnic slur against Arabs via the implicit reference to their darker skin color. More explicit evidence of the promotion of bias is revealed on the same page to account for alleged inaccuracies in the portrayal of certain characters and their traits: "And if there is any possible objection to the truthfulness of the account, it can only be that the author was an Arab, since it's very natural for people of that race to be liars" (Ibid., p.52). In his meta-narrative at the beginning of chapter 9, Cervantes reflects stereotypes against Moors. He reiterates this stereotype in chapter 3 of volume II, when the protagonist discovers a book written about himself. While Quijote is pleased to see his own name in print, "it still bothered him that the author was a Moor, to judge by the name 'Sidi,' for truth simply could not be expected from the Moors, because they were all cheats, swindlers, and wild-eyed troublemakers" (Ibid., p. 374). The introduction of a Moorish ghostwriter seems to resolve the question of authorship presented in the Prologue. Yet the question of the text's veracity remains.

The issue of veracity relates directly to the function of the fictional author. In this sense, the novel borrows from the *maqāma* tradition—a popular Arabic literary genre that served as a precursor to the picaresque novel—in which a text's truthfulness is reiterated multiple times via references to the chain of narrators and to its own narrator (Hermes, 2014, p. 215). As such, the repeated references to the fictional personage of Benengeli throughout volumes I and II appear to enhance the narrative's credibility. Below is a quotation that alludes to Benengeli's role of validating the text:

Everyone who enjoys stories like this ought to be really and truly grateful to Sidi Hamid, our original author, for the care he has taken to report all these details to us, omitting nothing, no matter how small or minute, and

shedding a clear light on everything. He has told us what people were thinking, how their minds worked, answered questions, cleared up doubts, and resolved disputes and, in short, given even the most inquisitive among us every speck of information he might want. Oh most justly famous author! (Cervantes, 1615, p.566)

While this encomium is clearly hyperbolic, it addresses topics in keeping with the goals of a historian. Further, it reflects the ideal of objectivity which constitutes the chief distinction between history and fiction. A later quotation that portrays Benengeli as a philosopher rather than author, reiterates his alleged aim of finding and revealing the truth: “Or so says Sidi Hamid, Muhammadan philosopher, for there are many who, without the light of true faith to show it to them, nevertheless fully comprehend the fickleness and instability of this mortal life, and the endless reach of eternity toward which it looks” (Ibid., p. 640). It also promotes a kind of liminality by suggesting that, while faith may be considered a criterion to access wisdom for some and a stumbling block for others, there are those who can intuit essential truths about life without it. In this sense, faith—conceivably Islamic faith, due to Benengeli’s association—may be considered a liminal threshold for accessing wisdom and thus for determining people’s status in a wisdom-based hierarchy. Yet the necessity of faith for accessing wisdom is also questioned. The fickleness and instability associated with mortal life also suggest a type of liminality, which when coupled with the endless expanse of eternity, casts doubt on the value of the data provided by Benengeli’s reputed inquisitiveness.

Chapter 24 in volume II begins with a reference to a marginal note by Benengeli which casts doubt on the veracity of Quijote’s recorded adventure in the Cave of Montesinos. After explaining the reasons for his doubt, Benengeli states: “Accordingly, if this adventure seems apocryphal, do not put the blame on me: I’ve simply recorded it, and I say nothing as to its truth or falsity” (Cervantes, 1615, p.487). Benengeli then invites the reader to evaluate its veracity himself and goes on to claim that Quijote admitted to the fabrication of the tale on his deathbed (Ibid., p.487). By effectively transferring the story’s authorship from himself to Quijote, Benengeli relegates himself to the status of yet another narrator (or translator) in the chain of transference, thus casting doubt on the earlier claims of his authorship made by Cervantes. This reference could also parody the *maqāma* tradition by showing how repeated references to the roles of narrator and author may do more to detract from a text’s credibility than to enhance it. Yet while Cervantes explicitly addresses his own novel’s veracity and implicitly celebrates the Arabic narrative tradition from which it draws, he simultaneously counteracts both of these processes by alternately referring to Benengeli as translator, author and historian.

By underscoring the ambiguity of Benengeli’s role, these references further call into question the veracity of the text with which he has been associated. The essential function of each role further questions the text’s veracity. If Benengeli is really the author, as initially claimed, and Cervantes is the stepfather (i.e., translator and narrator), then Benengeli’s role is creative and subjective. If he is a translator or historian, as suggested in subsequent references, his role is intended to be objective, yet it is inevitably subjectified by the limitations and biases of the person who fulfills it. As such, the ambiguity of his function—along with Cervantes’ repeated reference to the text using the Spanish term “*historia*” (meaning either “history” or “story”) creates uncertainty regarding the text’s function and veracity. In addition, his potential role as translator raises the issue of original authorship by another person, whose anonymity casts further doubt on the text’s reliability. A further detail that questions the veracity of claims about the discovery of an Arabic original is the widespread destruction of books in Arabic that occurred after the culmination of the Catholic Reconquest. As a breach of the prohibition on writing in Arabic, this alleged original is a relic that threatens the status quo to achieve survival in spite of official disapproval. It is through the trope of pseudo translation—borrowed from the Arabic *maqāma* genre—and the attribution of authorship to an “Other” who is both Moorish and fictional, that Cervantes succeeds in avoiding punishment and in having his book published for Spanish readers (Sukar, 2015, p. 8).

Another important aspect of *Don Quijote* is the liminality of the protagonist—a trait also found in the Arabic *maqāma* and in the picaresque novel, the latter being both an outgrowth of the *maqāma* and an important influence on the writing of *Don Quijote*. Both the *maqāmas* and *Don Quijote* start with the narrator introducing the protagonist

(Murādā, 1969, p. 2). The sovereignty of the narrator over the protagonist via this introduction reiterates the latter's fictionality, and in doing so, illustrates the concepts of meta-narrative and meta-fiction. Regardless of the protagonists' popularity in the respective folkloric traditions of each text, this practice reminds the reader that these characters are merely figments of the authors' imagination. In contrast to *Don Quijote*, the *maqāma*'s subject is neither heroic nor elite. Yet similar to both *Quijote* and its predecessor *Lazarillo de Tormes*, the *maqāma*'s protagonist descends to the streets and discovers irony between different levels of society (Sukar, 2015, p.13).

Beggary is a predominant aspect of the protagonist in *maqāmas* of Al-Hamdhāni and is considered one of the standard traits of the picaresque genre (Sukar, 2015, p. 13). It is also present to a certain extent in *Don Quijote*, since it is in keeping with the lifestyle of poverty and the dependence on alms to which Quijote voluntarily adheres. It has even been observed that Cifar—the protagonist of a well-known Arabic *maqāma*—and his squire may serve as prototypes for Don Quijote and Sancho Panza. If the name *Cifar*—derived from the Arabic word “*safar*” (سَفَر)—connotes the idea of a journey, as suggested by some scholars (Bahous, 1990, p. 8), then it underscores yet another key aspect of the *maqāma* shared by the picaresque genre and *Don Quijote*: the continuous movement from one place to another.

The *maqāma* involves the protagonist's continuous movement from one city to another in a way that exposes him to different kinds of people in different levels of society. This has several purposes. The displaced social panorama constantly challenges the protagonist by exposing him to new social settings. As a result, the depiction of different social settings, beginning at the level of thieves and continuing to the highest socio-economic echelons, provides a satire and criticism of different social phenomena. The different levels of meaning in the *maqāma*, both literal and non-literal, lend it an air of sarcasm and humor (As-Sa'ad, 2013). The idea of movement also carries a psychological overtone. In the classical texts of Sufi Islam, the word “*maqāma*” carries the additional meaning of “station” or “season,” associated with stages of spiritual development (Chittick, 2002, p. 26). Thus, the trope of movement may reflect stages of psychological development associated with Quijote's transitions from one place or experience to another. Some, such as his visit to the Cave of Montesinos or his interaction with the dramatic troupe performing a play titled *The Parliament of Death* carry symbolic meanings related to the distinction between illusion and reality and/or to the realization of human mortality (Cervantes, 1615, p. 414). Both events are reminiscent of the liminal tribal rituals mentioned by Ross in that they represent important life transitions in an artistic manner with the purpose of providing renewed insight on the viewers' situation.

On another level, the psychological overtones of movement in the *maqāma* parallel each of Quijote's three departures from the town of La Mancha, along with his return at the end of each journey. Just as each return connotes the end of an adventure (and with it, the admission of defeat), it also provides the protagonist with an opportunity for self-reflection and for an interaction with his most frequent audience—neighbors, family and friends—in keeping with the connotation of “*maqāma*” as “a council”. In each instance, the members of this informal council—including his niece, his housekeeper, the village priest, the barber, and the university graduate Sansón Carrasco—critique his performance and advise him on changes for the future. Not all their communication is straightforward—at times it is deliberately misleading. Yet it all has the goal of curing him of his obsession with knight-errantry and helping him to recognize his true self. Quijote's frequent vacillation between moments of clarity and lunacy evokes the image of a wise fool—a common trope both in Arabic literature—and shows that his existence is one of constant struggle (Ar-Ramlī, 2016). This trope is also one of the common oxymoronic combinations in Menippean satire that is used to express the liminality of its characters, so it likely has a similar function in Cervantes' work (Parr, 2000, p. 141).

The indeterminacy implicit in the genre of the *maqāma* and its ramifications regarding the function of *Don Quijote* parallel several aspects of narrator and protagonist. These include their alleged singularity of skill, their vacillation between portrayals of legitimacy and illegitimacy, and their textual interdependence. In a manner reminiscent of Quijote's accolades, similar accolades are presented on behalf of Benengeli, mostly by the narrator in the context of stories about Quijote. However, there are at least two other key examples reflecting the bidirectional influence between

Benengeli and the narrative's characters. One occurs in chapter 59 of volume II, at the inn where Quijote and Sancho reside en route to Barcelona. Quijote hears two men in a room adjacent to his own, discussing a book titled *Don Quijote de la Mancha: The Second Part*, which appears to be the second volume of his story, but is really the false sequel by Cervantes' rival Avellaneda. After introducing themselves and discussing differences between the two works, the novel's co-protagonists make two key observations about the sequel.

First, Quijote criticizes Avellaneda's negative portrayal of Cervantes in the Prologue (Cervantes, 1615, p. 673). Second, Sancho interjects that the representations of himself and Quijote in Avellaneda's book cannot be real due to their contrast from the legitimate representations in Benengeli's text (Ibid., p. 674). Given Sancho's illiteracy and his previously stated bias against Moors as people who could not be trusted (Ibid., p. 376), his defense of Benengeli as the legitimate author is surprising. One of the other residents reiterates Sancho's conclusion by declaring, "and if it were possible, it ought to be made illegal for anyone but Sidi Hamid, the original author, to write about the great Don Quijote and his doings" (Ibid., 674). The endorsements of the original novel over Avellaneda's unauthorized sequel by its readers and by its character Sancho provide a subtle vindication for Cervantes in his ongoing attempt to defend his honor and to maintain sovereignty over his book and its characters (Johnson, 2007, p. 195).

While Sancho and Don Juan are both one-sided in their defense of Benengeli, Quijote exhibits greater equanimity. His response "Let anyone paint me, if he wants to so long as he doesn't mis-paint me" (Cervantes, 1615, p. 674) reflects his own intended prioritization of truth over appearance. While Quijote does not directly acknowledge Benengeli's legitimacy here, he implies it by criticizing the work of Avellaneda. His willingness to consider the legitimacy of Benengeli's authorship shows a marked transition from his skepticism of Benengeli's credibility in volume II, chapter 3 on the basis of his Moorish identity. Benengeli's transition from illegitimacy to legitimacy, from a heterodiegetic narrator to a homodiegetic one, and from the periphery of the narrative to its center culminates on the novel's last two pages. Here, the relationship between protagonist and author is voiced by Benengeli himself: "And Don Quijote was born only for me, as I for him; he knew how to act, and I how to write; only we two are a unity, in spite of that fake Tordesillian scribbler" (Ibid., p. 746). Benengeli's longest soliloquy not only concludes the novel; it effectively juxtaposes the creative force of authorship with the destructive force of terminating the chivalric genre. He also aims to cement his own authorial status, albeit one that is co-dependent on Quijote, as suggested in their bi-directional causality. Such a relationship is an example of the dialectic of opposition proposed by El-Saffar. While it reverses the centrality of protagonist and fictional author by allowing the latter to have the last word, it does not cement the fictional author's sovereignty over the protagonist.

4. Liminality in Narrative Style

Liminality also plays an integral role in the narrative style of *Don Quijote*. The narrative's liminality is primarily evident in its dialogic nature and its changeability, both of which borrow from the Arabic tradition. Regarding the narrative's dialogic nature, *Don Quijote* borrows from the Arabic *maqāma*, which depends on a conversation between the narrator and the protagonist. Given the alternate meaning of *maqāma* as "council" or "group of people," this genre is seen as a commentary in which the story of an absent narrator is recounted to a group of people (Sukar, 2015, p. 13). On a meta-textual level, Cervantes could function as the raconteur who retells a story originally narrated by an author or historian. While the protagonist never interacts directly with Cervantes, he could be said to reflect the latter's identity in certain ways. Chief among these is his status as a hopeless idealist who fails to achieve his dreams during his lifetime. On a textual level, the dialogic aspect of the narrative is manifest in several ways. Regarding the narrator/protagonist binary, there is an ongoing exchange between the third-person narrative and the first-person dialogue in which the protagonist participates. The most common dialogue occurs between Quijote and Sancho, yet in this case, neither one is really a narrator. The closest that either character comes to being a narrator is in offering brief synopses of previous experiences.

When listening to tales told by Sancho or others, Quijote plays the role of the council. Each retelling of a story in the novel corresponds with the *maqāma*'s function as a commentary in which an absent narrator's story is retold. Tales

narrated to Quijote include the tale of Marcela and Grisóstomoin volume I, chapters 12-13; *The Man Who Couldn't Keep from Prying* in volume I, chapters 32-35; *The Captive's Tale* in volume I, chapters 39-41; the tale of priest at the lunatic asylum in Seville in volume II, chapter 1, and the puppet show representing the Tale of Don Gaiferos and Melisendra in volume II, chapter 26, among others. Given the frequency of interpolated tales in *Don Quijote* and their integral role in its meta-fictional structure, the novel may be described as a series of loosely connected *maqāmas* which contribute to the protagonist's collective conscience. As such, these figurative *maqāmas* supplement the tales of knight errantry that form the basis of his knowledge. At the close of each tale, Quijote—or sometimes another character—fulfills the role of the listening council by asking questions and offering commentary. In a similar vein, the novel itself may be viewed as a meta-*maqāma* in which Quijote repeatedly transitions from the role of protagonist to that of listening council in accordance with the narrative shift from central plot to interpolated tale. In this respect, he is similar to the narrator Sheherazade of *A Thousand and One Nights*, all of whose episodic stories are incorporated into a single over-arching story (Busfāwa, 1990, p. 70), and where the latter fulfills the role of narrator until the completion of her tale, at which point she awaits the judgment of the Sultan Shahriyar (Bahous, 1990, p. 168).

A further aspect of *A Thousand and One Nights* that reflects the liminality of its narrative style is each night's liminal function as a harbinger of the tale's conclusion and of its teller's impending judgment. It also raises the question of who possesses greater agency: the narrator or her interlocutor. Both Quijote and Sheherazade effectively talk themselves into being—the former by creating a fictional identity, and the latter by maintaining her captor's interest long enough to avoid execution. Most of Sheherazade's discourse constitutes *diegesis* or narrative and does not include her as a character, yet it relates to her in that its entertainment value determines whether she lives or dies. Most of Quijote's discourse constitutes *mimesis* or imitation of the chivalric romance. It lacks the immediate urgency of Sheherazade's tales; yet it possesses an imagined urgency regarding Quijote's self-imposed responsibility of restoring what he considers Spain's Golden Age. Unlike Sheherazade's tales, those of Quijote do not win the admiration of their textual audience; on the contrary, they win disbelief, mockery, beatings, a stoning, imprisonment, collusion by friends and relatives, a defeat in combat, a ban from practicing knight-errantry, and finally a renunciation of his imagined identity. Whereas Sheherazade succeeds in bending the will of her interlocutor, Quijote fails. Nevertheless, Quijote's liberation from the yolk of his illusion parallels, in an ironic sense, the liberating function of Sheherazade's tales from her own yolk of slavery and imminent condemnation. It should be noted that Quijote's failure to achieve his own goals as a protagonist facilitates Cervantes' achievement of his goal as an author: ending the chivalric novel genre. The fact that each of Quijote's adventures has the potential to bring him closer to his own demise reiterates its liminal function and, in doing so, underscores its similarity with the tales of Sheherazade.

Another aspect of the narrative that relates to liminality is the role of third-person distancing fulfilled by the fictional author Sidi Hamid Benengeli. Such distancing allows for an external consciousness that facilitates the narration of events and allows the narrative to achieve artistic status (Bahous, 1990, p. 14). His distance from the text is established in several ways, including the ambiguity of his role, his absence, and his otherness as a personage who pertains to a different culture, language and religion than members of the Spanish status quo. He is further distanced by the type of narrative role that he fulfills. For the first eight chapters, he functions as a heterodiegetic narrator (Ibid., p. 168). He is neither present in the narrative nor referred to by it. He does not enter the readers' consciousness until chapter 9 when Arabic writing on the scrap of paper in the Toledo market place reveals him as the alleged author (Cervantes, 1605, p. 52). Starting at this point, he gradually transitions from a heterodiegetic (or extra-diegetic) narrator to an intra-diegetic one. He is rarely homodiegetic in the sense of being a first-person narrator, but assumes a more direct form of interaction with the story via direct narration, inclusion, and meta-narrative commentary. The following from chapter 27 in volume II is an example of his homodiegetic narration:

Sidi Hamid, this great history's chronicler, begins this chapter with the following declaration: 'I swear as a Catholic Christian...', "to which the translator adds that when Sidi Hamid swore as a Catholic Christian, being

as he surely was a Moor, all he meant was that he was swearing in precisely the way that a Catholic Christian would swear, or is supposed to swear, that he is being truthful in saying whatever he says, just as Sidi Hamid, swearing as a Catholic Christian, was verifying his own truthfulness in what he recorded about Don Quijote (Cervantes, 1615, p.504-505).

If readers suspend their disbelief to the point that they imagine Benengeli as the author, then this quotation constitutes a complex form of narration in which the author first refers to himself in the third person as a chronicler who briefly quotes himself. Immediately after the reference to his swearing, the narration reverts to a third-person reference to the translator—an individual whose identity is uncertain, given the absence of any name here, as well as references elsewhere to both Cervantes' and Benengeli's assumption of this role. The interplay of first and third-person narrative perspectives—potentially associated with the same person, the uncertainty of the translator's identity, and Benengeli's figurative portrayal as a Catholic Christian—all serve to undermine the authenticity that his oath aims to establish. One scholar observes that from the Muslim perspective at that time, swearing like a Christian was equivalent to invalidating an oath (Mancing, 1981, p. 77). Yet in the paragraph immediately after this oath, the meta-narrative commentary reveals a hidden detail about the previous chapter—that the puppeteer Maestro Pedro is really the galley slave Ginés de Pasamonte. In this instance, the uncertainties of Benengeli's narrative role and the validity of his oath are overshadowed by the truthfulness of his account.

The majority of attributions to Benengeli are not homodiegetic but intra-diegetic, as in the following three examples. In each of these, Benengeli is referred to in the third person and the ostensible purpose of his interjection is to elucidate truths which might otherwise be overshadowed. Yet a closer reading shows that his comments aim to hinder readers' ability to establish the novel's veracity. The first example offers a meta-textual commentary on the narration of Quijote's and his squire's adventures.

"Blessed be Allah the All-Mighty!" says Hamid Benengeli at the beginning of this eighth chapter. "Blessed be Allah!" he repeats three times, noting that he utters his benediction because Don Quijote and Sancho are now back in action, and from this point on the readers of his pleasant history can count on hearing our hero's heroic deeds and graceful observations, not to mention those of his squire. And he suggests that his readers forget all the past exploits of our Ingenious Gentleman, fixing their eyes on those still to come. (Cervantes, 1615, p.397-398)

The use of the name Allah, which is more typically used by Muslims than by Christians, serves to cast doubt on Benengeli's credibility. These benedictions, which constitute Benengeli's only homodiegetic utterances in this passage, serve the ostensible purpose of condoning a transition in the narrative: from a discussion of language touching on prayers, proverbs, malapropisms and flatteries in chapter 7 to the resumption of Quijote's travels—specifically his visit to the village of Toboso—in chapter 8. As such, this transition suggests a return from meta-narrative commentary to the narrative itself. It also marks Quijote's third and final sally from his home to his domain as a knight-errant. Since both of his previous sallies were failures, Benengeli's request that readers not judge Quijote based on these suggests an optimistic outlook regarding the next adventure. The visit to Toboso is a parody of the chivalric hero's traditional return to the home of his lady, so Benengeli's optimism reinforces the expectation that the hero will be recognized and legitimized. Yet this hope is not fulfilled. Further doubt is shed on the narrator's reliability given that Benengeli's premature optimism contrasts with both the denouement of Quijote's visit to Toboso in chapter 8. The peasant women to whom Quijote is presented in the town of Toboso do not adhere to the criteria of noble ladies. Further, by mocking Quijote's gestures, they reject his request for recognition and legitimization.

The transition from past to present implicit in Benengeli's request parallels other changes that occur between volume I and volume II. One example is the protagonist's transition from a mere textual character to one with a meta-

textual awareness of a book bearing his name, first seen in Sansón Carrasco's presentation of the novel to Quijote in volume II, chapter 3. Evidence of the shift from optimism to pessimism paralleling the cultural transition from the Renaissance to the Baroque in Spain is seen in Quijote's skepticism about Dulcinea's authenticity in volume II, chapter 8, his pessimism about knight-errantry in his letter to Sancho in volume II, chapter 51, and his skepticism about the puppeteer's credibility in volume II, chapters 25-27. Another key transition is the increasing complexity in writing style. This transition is evidenced in the alternating episodes involving Quijote and Sancho in volume II, chapters 44-53. Yet this very complexity, an essential element of volume II, is ironically denied by Benengeli (Cervantes, 1615, p. 586). From a narrative standpoint, Benengeli's redirection of his audience's attention towards the future serves to heighten readers' anticipation of the coming adventure. It suggests the liminality of Quijote's status as either active or passive, and as either a success or a failure.

A third key example of Benengeli's role as an intra-diegetic narrator occurs in the first paragraph of chapter 44 in volume II in a passage that introduces the beginning of Sancho's governorship. This long passage serves as a meta-critical commentary on the Baroque writing style, but also as an alleged self-critique by Benengeli:

It is said that, in the true original of this chapter, one can read how, when Sidi Hamid came to write this chapter (which his translator only partially rendered in to Spanish), the Moor penned a kind of complaint against himself, for having undertaken such a dry and narrow history as Don Quijote's, because it seemed to Sidi Hamid that he was always having to write either about Don Quijote or about Sancho, without ever being able to spread himself more broadly, with other and more serious, not to say entertaining, diversions and incidents, and he recorded that, being obliged to constantly bend his mind, his hand, and his pen to writing on just this one subject, and to expressing himself through the mouths of so few characters, was an intolerable struggle of no great benefit to himself as an author, which was why, to extricate himself from such a difficult situation, he had in the first volume of this history used the device of quite separate and distinct stories, like *The Man Who Couldn't Keep from Prying* and *The Captive's Tale*, in addition to narrating those events which had happened to Don Quijote himself and so could not be omitted. (Cervantes, 1615, p.586)

In the same paragraph, the following commentary is added:

And this, in turn, was why, in this second volume, he had decided not to introduce any separate, artful tales, but only such narrative as, to his mind, emerged out of the strictly historical facts, and to tell even these in narrow compass and at just enough length to make them clear; and thus, confining himself as he does to the narrow bounds of history, while having the talents, capabilities, and understanding to deal with the entire universe, he concludes his complaint by asking his readers not to look down on what he has here accomplished, and to praise him, not so much for what he has written, as for what he has refrained from writing. (Ibid., p.586)

Here, Benengeli greatly exaggerates the narrative focus on Quijote and Sancho, given the presence in both volumes of secondary stories—both titled ones such as *The Man Who Couldn't Keep from Prying* and *The Captive's Tale* and untitled ones such as the story of Grisóstomo and Marcela—and of meta-textual interventions by Benengeli himself. His claim to have omitted interpolated tales from the second volume is both false and ironic, since their abundance in volume II exceeds that in volume I. The increase of interpolated tales and the increasing complexity of their presentation—particularly the tale of Quijote's visit to the castle of the duke and duchess, and the tale of Sancho's governorship, which are presented in interwoven fashion over the span of eleven chapters—exemplify the stylistic shift from the Renaissance to the Baroque. Benengeli's commentary also reflects on the topic of artistry—a goal at odds with historical accuracy. He insinuates that volume I prioritizes artistry through the diversity of narrative content and perspective, while volume II aims for historical accuracy and clarity. Yet Cervantes' increase of interpolated tales in

volume II is based on artistry with the goal of obfuscation, which is precisely the opposite of Benengeli's stated goal.

Further, Benengeli, though never a homodiegetic narrator in the fullest sense of the word, comes closer to being one in volume II due to his more frequent invention there. This transition from a heterodiegetic to homodiegetic narrator parallels that of Sheherazade in *A Thousand and One Nights* (Bahous, 1990, p. 168). As in *A Thousand and One Nights*, the change suggests a blurring of divisions between author, narrator, and text and foreshadows a resolution of Benengeli's identity and fate—similar to those of Sheherazade—in which the storyteller will be integrated into the story. Yet Benengeli is never fully integrated. The closest he comes is in his final soliloquy on the novel's last two pages where he claims for himself authorship and ownership of Quijote's story (Cervantes, 1615, p. 745-746). While Benengeli's frequent interventions may serve to humanize him, they never fully resolve the dilemma of his veracity (Johnson, 2007, p. 195). Though his commentaries suggest the goal of elucidation, they tend to have the opposite effect. By blurring the distinctions between different textual levels and different agents—author, narrator, and character—in the hierarchy of textual creation, he underscores the complexity of the writing process, as well as the fact that no text may be fully attributed to a single author, given the multiple cultural and authorial influences on which any author draws. Like Sheherazade, Benengeli straddles the border between textual creator and textual creation. As a potential—but never fully recognized—author/character whose appearances are sporadic, brief and unpredictable, he makes gestures of elucidation, yet ironically further confounds his readers regarding his own reality, the veracity of the text of *Don Quijote*, and the nature of his relationship with it.

Jinn are a key component of Arabic folklore that frequently influences narration. They are supernatural beings that exist outside the realm of reality yet interact with humans in stories. As such, they suggest a connection between the supernatural and the natural. While *jinn* are never explicitly mentioned in *Don Quijote*, they do have a parallel in the enchanter Frestón. Like *jinn*, Frestón possesses magical powers, is believed to be capable of influencing real events, yet is not a tangible part of reality himself. He is frequently accused by Quijote of being responsible for false appearances, such as the alleged transformation of the giants into windmills in volume I, chapter 8 or of Dulcinea and her ladies-in-waiting into peasant girls in volume II, chapter 10. Quijote even calls him a Moorish enchanter (Cervantes, 1605, p. 92-93). In doing so, he underscores the stereotypical association of both trickery and magic with Moorish culture.

Since *jinn* demonstrate liminality in the natural and supernatural realms, one may question if they are also liminal in terms of textual agency via their ability to influence a story on both textual and meta-textual levels. Through an observation about *A Thousand and One Nights*, one author acknowledges that *jinn* do indeed influence the process of narration:

A Thousand and One Nights" is: among the most important of the great narrative works in Arabic literature, and in the open world of the *jinn* in every aspect, and every event and all types of relations that float the Arab narrator in a being that never ends the imagination unfettered from the reality and its taboos, free before its illusions and fears and perceptions and ideas. (Bustāwā, 2016, p. 73)

This comment suggests that *jinn* are influential on the textual level via their relations with other characters, and on the meta-textual level regarding narration. Benengeli may even be said to emulate *jinn* in his ability to appear unexpectedly in the narrative, to interact with the narrative in a heterodiegetic, homodiegetic, or intradiegetic manner, and to shift his textual role from author to translator to narrator to historian. Some scholars speculate that Benengeli may serve as a poet, and that the interpolated tales reflect the fickle and changing times in which Cervantes lived (Ibid., p. 72). Benengeli's own fickleness in terms of his textual role may similarly reflect the changeable nature of cultural institutions and identities in Golden-Age Spain.

Another trait of *jinn* that underscores their similarity with the roles of Cervantes, Benengeli, and the enchanter Frestón is their tendency to play with humans for their own amusement. The observation below, while never alluding directly to *jinn*, compares the shared playfulness of Cervantes and Benengeli, as well as their inextricable connection to

the role of textual production. Perhaps inadvertently, it also sheds light on their similarity with *jinn*:

That the main attribute in the novel is the ability of the author to play with the reader, and in this during the division of the character of the author, he is Cervantes on the one hand, and on the other hand he is a character from the forefathers of the Arab historian Sidi Hamid Benengeli whom Cervantes mixes in his Spanish story with the Arab historian himself. (Busfāwā, 2016, p. 72)

Here, it is evident that Benengeli plays an ambiguous role shifting from author to character. His presence on both textual and meta-textual levels has a disorienting effect on readers. Like *jinn* who often aim to disorient humans in their perception of reality, Benengeli serves to disorient readers regarding the text's structure, origin, veracity and authorship. In doing so, he calls into question the author's sovereignty over the text and its characters.

An overarching goal of Benengeli, and by extension of Cervantes, echoes that of *jinn*: to diminish readers' apparent agency relative to that of the author in the process of textual interpretation by questioning fundamental concepts on which the processes of authorship and readership are based. On a more subtle level, however, Cervantes aims to empower readers by leading them to question the veracity of these concepts and, in doing so, to achieve more sophisticated levels of thought. Benengeli's *jinn*-like behavior reflects a dialectic of opposition with Cervantes regarding his presence inside or outside of the narrative and his role in the narrative's creation.

5. Conclusion

In the novel *Don Quijote*, Cervantes used his parody of chivalric romances and other literary genres to create a ritual disruption in the literary field. By presenting parts of previously existing genres and texts in innovative ways, he altered the ways in which they interacted with each other and the ways in which they were perceived by readers. By allowing characters throughout the novel to function as interlocutors of interpolated tales, and characters in volume II to function as interlocutors of both the mimetic narrative and the diegetic criticism of volume I, he proposed a dialectic opposition between the author or the audience and the characters of a text. He also suggested that the characters may function as agents in the process of textual composition and revision. While the novel contained multiple examples of dialectic opposition between authors and characters on different levels, the most prominent was that between the protagonist and the fictional author, Benengeli. Cervantes used Benengeli to act upon the already renovated text in a way that altered it even further by calling into question its author, purpose, authenticity and veracity. While he created Benengeli as an intermediary to distance Quijote from himself, this had the consequence of creating a new dialectical opposition between protagonist and fictional author. While Benengeli's influence appeared to increase in volume II in a manner suggestive of reversal, his hierarchical status in relation to the protagonist was never fully resolved.

By restructuring components of previously existing genres, underscoring the dialectical relation between author and text, creating a fictional author, and allowing both the fictional author and the characters to act upon the text, Cervantes suggested reversals at both textual and metatextual levels. Through parody, satire and change, he provided comic relief to a society in which tensions were high. Further, he revived the literary field by creating a new genre and by calling into question the value of older genres. This process is reminiscent of tribal rituals that serve to reduce tension through reversal of roles and disrupting the status quo. While Cervantes directly parodied various existing rituals such as tributes at the beginning of the book, the frequent use of Latin proverbs, and narrative techniques such as pseudo translation that borrowed heavily from the Arabic tradition, their ironic treatment served not to blindly perpetuate tradition but to increase self-awareness and bring about change.

Cervantes created a text whose narrative and structural complexity, self-referentiality, contradictions, ambiguity and ability to engage in dialogue and mutual self-creation with readers mirrored traits typically associated with a person. If one adds to this list the novel's acknowledgement of earlier literary traditions, its anticipation of future ones and its recognition of its own limitations, it may be said to acknowledge its imperfection while still striving for an ideal. In this respect, it parallels the liminal struggle of its protagonist, and by extension the liminality of Spain as a

complex entity whose Arabic cultural heritage would always play a significant, if undefined role in determining its identity. Cervantes likely aimed to promote an awareness of liminality among readers, based on the understanding that their identities are in a constant state of flux depending on those with whom they interact in their socio-cultural milieu. Such awareness may lead readers to be less hasty in their allegiances to and judgments of various genres, literary-critical perspectives, or cultural or religious inclinations, opting instead for a measured approach that anticipates surprises, re-evaluations and re-categorizations.

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الاضطراب والتفكير الذاتي والتجديد: إعادة النظر في التأثيرات العربية في دون كيشوت (كيخوته)

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ملخص

إنَّ من المعروف أن رواية دون كيشوت (كيخوته) تهكمت على الروايات ذات الطابع البطولي، وعملت على اجتثاثها. ومع ذلك، يبقى السؤال لماذا اختار ثرفانتس التركيز على عناصر الثقافة الموريسكية (مسلمة إسبانيا) إلى الحد الملحوظ في هذه الرواية، ويشير هذا البحث إلى أن ثرفانتس نظر إلى الهوية الموريسكية باعتبارها جزءاً أساسياً من الهوية الإسبانية الأوسع، واعتبر أن الاعتراف بهذا أمر ضروري لتجديد الثقافة الإسبانية. وبأسلوب أكثر تحديداً، يشرح كيف استخدم طقوس الترجمة الزائفة التي يسهلها الأسلوب المجازي لمؤلف موريسكي خيالي ليعزز المعارضة الجدلية بينه وبين بطل الرواية، وفي نهاية المطاف بين المؤلف الخيالي والبطل. ومن خلال التحرر من التقاليد الأدبية والتسلسل الهرمي الاجتماعي بتقليل شأن النبيل الكاثوليكي ورفع سوية الموريسكي، يخلق ثرفانتس "مساحة مُحتملة" محدودة، إذ يسخر من الأفكار القديمة، وتُختبر أفكار جديدة، ويسبر القراء نظرات ثاقبة جديدة حول الأدب والهوية: أي أنه على الرغم من أن جميع الأنواع جزء من التراث الأدبي، وجميع الهويات جزء من الإرث الثقافي، إلا أنها جميعها محصورة؛ وأن لا شيء يضمن تفوق الموقف أو دوام النموذج.

الكلمات الدالة: التأثيرات العربية، الرواية الغربية، دون كيشوت (كيخوته)، التفكير الذاتي، التجديد في الرواية.

¹ جامعة تشارلستون، كارولينا الجنوبية؛ ²مركز اللغات، الجامعة الأردنية.
تاريخ استلام البحث 2017/7/26، وتاريخ قبوله 2019/7/30.