

## ABSTRACT

Riding with Don Quixote and Sancho: A Spanish Knight in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century

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This honor's thesis is a literary/historical/economic analysis of the two most influential characters in Cervantes' 17<sup>th</sup>-century novel, *Don Quixote de La Mancha*. The thesis argues the impact that Alonso Quijano, the title character's real/original name, and Sancho Panza, Don Quixote's wise-cracking sidekick, have on one another. The thesis also contains a study of Cervantes' social commentary portrayed through the actions and dialogue of the two characters. The first chapter provides some historical background of the time period when Cervantes wrote the novel and the significance the history and economy had in the action of the novel. The remaining chapters look at Alonso and Sancho as individuals. The chapters explain the transformation the two characters undergo, and the concluding chapter discusses the end of the novel and how the characters are different in the end.

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RIDING WITH DON QUIXOTE AND SANCHO: A SPANISH KNIGHT IN THE 17<sup>TH</sup>  
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I would like to dedicate my honors thesis to my family for all of their love and support. You guys are incredible and I do not know where I would be today without you! Love you!

## PREFACE

This thesis explores the world of Cervantes' early 17<sup>th</sup> century novel, *El ingenioso hidalgo Don Quixote de La Mancha* (1605). It takes a literary, historical, and economic view of the timeframe in which Cervantes wrote the novel. The first chapter describes the state of Spain due to the impact of such events as the discovery of the New World in 1492, the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588, and the policies of the kings Charles V and his son Phillip II. The history and economy of the time greatly impacted the events of the narrative, and Cervantes often uses the novel as a platform for social commentary. The first chapter also describes the origin of the knight. It discusses the chivalric code and emphasizes the fact that the reality of the medieval knight is far different from Don Quixote's literary knight.

Overall the thesis describes the impact that the two main characters, Alonso Quijano and Sancho Panza, have on one another throughout their journeys together. Cervantes depicts a lasting relationship between two contrasting personalities. In his article "Game of Circles: Conversations Between Don Quixote and Sancho" writer Howard Young states, "The two comrades deceive each other, mock each other, forgive each other, argue about the state of the world, provoke each other to extreme exasperation while each one acquires some of the characteristics of the other"(378). Alonso Quijano, Don Quixote's real life alter ego, is a champion of idealism while Sancho is the embodiment of materialism. The remaining two chapters focus on the characters as individuals and studies Cervantes' social commentary as voiced by the two characters'

actions and dialogue. The chapter about the central character, Don Quixote, talks about the many contradictions that Alonso Quijano demonstrates. The chapter also takes into consideration the issue of Alonso Quijano's madness and the ambiguity that surrounds the central issue of madness and sanity. Over the course of their time together, Alonso Quijano takes on the worst qualities of Sancho, showing that a knight does not belong in this world.

The final chapter analyzes some of the most iconic scenes and dialogue that involve Alonso's squire Sancho Panza. Sancho is the ultimate foil to his master both physically and in how he views the world. The last chapter also studies the eventual transformation of Sancho Panza, from ignorant peasant to noble squire. Throughout his journey the reader is also able to see that Sancho plays the role of the oracle/truth-teller, jester, and governor of the fictional island Barataria. Sancho, on his many adventures with Alonso, grows as an individual. It is this relationship and Alonso's influence that Sancho develops the idealistic nature of his master and clings to the idea of Don Quixote, even while the central character himself has begun to fall away from this ideal. This chapter shows how Sancho becomes a better person from having known Alonso Quijano.



## CHAPTER ONE

### A Snapshot of Don Quixote's Spain

Before there can be a discussion about the important characters in Cervantes' world there must first be some discussion of the economic and political instability of Spain in the early 1600's. The purpose of this chapter is to draw a quick picture of the state of the country and economy, influenced by both internal and external factors, which were affected by Spain's expansionist imperial policies, both in Europe and abroad. Hopefully, with this context, the reader will better be able to understand the social commentary that Cervantes voices through the actions and words of the characters in *Don Quixote*. The many internal factors affecting Spain during the time of Cervantes include the fluctuating economic condition of the countryside linked to certain policies of the kings, Charles the V and his son Phillip II. External factors include the impact of the discovery of the New World and Spain's relations with other countries, culminating in 1588 with the defeat of Philip's *Armada Invincible*. The choices of the two monarchs helped create the world in which Cervantes lived, a world that coincided to a large degree with the world portrayed in his novel *Don Quixote*. A massive blot in Spain's history under the rule of Phillip II, the enormous naval defeat of the perceived "invincible" armada left Spain with a damaged reputation that demonstrated to the world its weakness and inability to successfully wage war beyond its borders.

Furthermore, in order to properly understand Alonso Quijano, the principle protagonist of Cervantes' novel, one must also understand that the figure of the medieval

knight, crusading through the middle East on his way to Jerusalem, had already become a curious anachronism in Cervantes' time. Modern warfare and the development of the firearm had destined the romantic knight of Europe's twelfth and thirteenth centuries to the ash heap of history, replaced by modern soldiers and explorers who were handsomely paid for their efforts—Cortez, Pizarro, DeSoto. The literary knights that Alonso strives to imitate are a far cry from the actual blood and guts violence of real medieval knights. Cervantes experienced brutality himself, as he was a wounded veteran of the Battle of Lepanto. The economic condition of Spain, the defeat of the Armada Invincible, and the vanished knightly orders are elements that heavily influenced the world of *Don Quixote*. They impacted not only an entire population but also a writer who would write a novel about an old man's great adventure in order to discover one's own self-worth.

In the period leading up to the 1600's the emperor Charles the V (King Charles I of Spain) ruled for nearly forty years (1517-1556). He was succeeded by his son Phillip. The successes and failures of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Castilian economy set the stage for the following century's economic ups and downs. The discovery and conquest of the New World opened up for Spain a variety of new riches and income producing projects. This New World also brought forth the challenges of managing a vast area from overseas. Spain was still clinging too many of its medieval political, social, and economic practices and customs, which would not be easily applicable in the New World (Elliott, 181). One of the major benefits that the New World could offer Spain was a market for their products and a reserve of resources from which Spain could draw, yet, Spain extracted far more than it transacted. The first issue to be tackled was transatlantic trade.

Seville became the main hub into which goods, mostly commodities, would flow between Spain and the New World. Some of the most popular and sought after goods from America were dyed materials, pearls, sugar, and gold and silver (Elliott, 183). Silver and gold were the most precious commodities from the New World. One reason for this was by the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century Europe had extremely low reserves of precious metals such as gold and silver (Elliott, 183). The first years of exploration yielded small discoveries of gold in the Caribbean Antilles, but it was not until the conquests of Mexico and Peru and the discoveries of major gold and silver deposits that Spain began to see a reward from their investment and expansion in the New World. In 1545 the silver mine in Potosí, located to the southeast of Lake Titicaca, was discovered. It was not until 15 years later, with the implementation of a new silver refining method, that Spain was able to fully capitalize the wealth from the mines. A firsthand account describes a single shipment from the New World to Seville, highlighting the extent of the wealth involved,

On 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 1595, the ships from the Indies berthed at the quays on the banks of the river of Seville, They began to discharge and deposit with the *Casa de Contratación* 332 cartloads of silver, gold, and pearls of great value; on 8<sup>th</sup> April, 103 cartloads of silver and gold were unloaded from a capital ship... (Defourneaux, 79)

Silver production far outreached that of gold and over a 160 year period 16,000,000 kilograms of silver came to Seville. This easily tripled Europe's silver supply, and the gold supply also increased by one-fifth (Elliott, 183). In the short term these metals reinforced a faltering imperial treasury in Madrid. The long term was serious and devastating inflation, and fluctuating prices for daily goods.

During the period of the colonization of the New World there existed a two way trade between Seville and the colonies of the New World. The roughly 118,000 colonists

did not want to face life in the New World without some of the luxuries of their previous lives such as clothes, arms, horses, and foodstuffs, such as corn and wine (Elliott, 185). Ships filled with these items left Seville for the colonies and would return with commodities (barely processed resources) from the New World, mostly silver and produce. This two way trade generated two problems according to Elliott, “how to measure the stimulus given to the economic life of Castile by the expanding American market, and how to gauge the consequences for Castile of the influx of American silver.” (186).

It is difficult to ascertain the exact economic state of the Iberian Peninsula because during the sixteenth century there were three prominent economies: Seville, Castile, and Aragon. As mentioned before, Seville was the place where trade to the New World occurred, and because of this the city thrived. Industries such as ceramics, leather, silk, and steel blades in Castile were also on the rise due to an increase in European demand. The most prevalent industry was the textile industry that supplied Spanish and American demand (Elliott, 189). Though the textile industry was booming, there were many internal issues. One was a quality problem. For example, there were constant complaints about the low quality of the goods. The increased demand was also another issue that the industry faced. Since skilled labor was hard to come by, peasants, beggars, and other unqualified workers were hired. Eventually the Castilian economy ran into more problems. Goods from Castile were more expensive than goods brought from the New World (because of the huge foreign and domestic demand for the goods, and the inflation caused by the influx of gold and silver from the New World). Martín de Azpilcueta, a member of a famous school of writers from Salamanca University,

suggested that, ‘money is worth more when and where it is scarce than where it is abundant.’ (Elliott, 191). Elliott also mentions the work of historian Earl J. Hamilton who mapped out the three stages of Spain’s prices: 1501-1550 moderate rise, 1550-1600 culmination of the price revolution, 1601-1650 stagnation (192). What this means for our analysis of *Don Quijote*, and the character of Alonso Quijano is two-fold: first, that as a landowner, Alonso Quijano has little motivation to run his holdings because prices for his agricultural products are down; second, that as a person, he has missed all of the excitement of the heavy colonization movement to the New World, and he is inhabiting what has become a listless cultural and economic backwater.

During the sixteenth century, inflation was rampant in the country due to the influx of gold and silver in the country. This goes along with what the scholar Azpilcueta suggests. If there were an increase in the amount of some commodity, and there were an abundance of it, then it would no longer have any value. Along with the flood of silver and gold that caused inflation, it also seemed that matters were made worse by the plans (or lack thereof) of Charles V for how to implement the supply of American wealth towards the Castilian economy (Elliott, 199). He could have used this new wealth to improve the textile industry, for example. Instead he chose to use the gold and silver to fund massive wars and also as collateral for large loans. In a ‘Letter About A Journey In Spain’ the author criticizes Spain’s use of the New World saying, “As a result, Spain is merely a channel through which passes the gold of the Indies which will be discharged into the seas of plenty in other countries” (Defourneaux, 20). In other words, it was other countries—England, the Netherlands, Italy, who were able to capitalize on Spain’s lack of initiative in developing markets in the New World.

The Spanish economy, at this time, was relatively underdeveloped for supporting the increased demand on the home front, in the New World, or in Spain European possessions in Italy or the Low Countries (Flanders). The economy's ability to support the new demand was also hindered by the fact that Spain's economy was still largely agrarian. This agrarian society was having difficulties feeding the growing population of Castile and meeting demand for food to the New World. This, of course caused food prices to skyrocket, making it harder for the citizens of Castile to buy the provisions to satisfy their everyday needs. Since people were concerned with buying food and supplies for their families, they did not spend money on manufactured items such as textiles, which in turn suppressed Spain's industries resulting in an economic downturn cycle.

Since Spain was unable to support the growth and demand of its own citizens, other countries took advantage of this opportunity. Foreign competitors such as Italy, Holland, and England made their mark in Spain's economy, and also took advantage of Spain's inability to supply the new market in America. Who suffered from this inability to meet demand? Generally, the working class suffered most. Their standard of living continued to be vastly different than that of the Spanish aristocracy, who spent lavish amounts of money on their lifestyles. Meanwhile, the crown spent increasingly enormous amounts of capital, building palaces in and around Madrid, especially El Escorial, la Granja de San Ildefonso, and Aranjuez. Who benefited from the price increase? One thought is that the industrialists and manufacturers benefited from this price increase, but this would mean that they would have to spend more on their materials and costs would increase to be able to take care of their employees. Landowners also

benefited from rising prices, and, in response, they raised their tenants' rents (Elliott, 196).

The inflation that plagued the economy could be seen as a fault in entrepreneurs and business men and their inability to adjust to new demand, but that is looking at only one side as to why there were so many issues. Government always plays a huge role in the functioning of economies. J.H. Elliot also stated that, "Many of the government's deficiencies are, in fact, to be found in the failings of the Council of Finance" (198). The members of this body were not experienced in the matters of commerce and other financial affairs and did not construct any economic plan that would adapt to the economic changes of the country and the New World. They neither took advantage of the benefits that the New World offered them, nor did they use it to its full potential. There was the construction and use of the mines, but there was not any other real use of the other resources that America offered.

The king's actions and lack of foresight also contributed to the economic shortcomings of the time. Charles V, the king of Castile, was also the Holy Roman Emperor. He had a huge amount of territory to rule across much of Europe, and he could not spend too long in one area and neglect the needs of another region. This constant travel would take a lot of money, so tax rates were increased in order to fund his expeditions and spending. There were many problems with imperial finance, and, in spite of receiving New World gold and silver literally by the boat load, Charles V was, paradoxically, always very short on needed funds. Since he was always short of cash, he found the need to go from source to source in the search of loans. Specifically, he borrowed from German and Genoese bankers. The terms were usually very unfavorable

and the threat of bankruptcy loomed over the monarch, though it is not until 1557, under the rule of Phillip II, which the bankruptcy occurred.

Ever searching for cash, the crown devised several new taxes and revenue streams. Charles could pull sources of funds from the church. The first was the *tercias reales*. One-third of the tithes collected by the Church of Castile went into his budget. Another tax was called the *subsidio* (Elliott, 201). This was a tax on clerical incomes and rents. There was also the *excusado* tax. This tax was implemented to pay for the war that would take place in Flanders (1515-23), and this tax would take a tithe of the most valued piece of property in the parish. It is logical to assume that this was an income producing piece of land, and that the revenue would go directly to the crown. The Spanish crown could also rely on the revenues from vacant sees (dioceses without bishops) and the lands and any income produced from the Military Orders (201). These lands would eventually be signed over as collateral for the loans Charles took out. Finally there was a very valued tax called the *cruzada*. This tax was granted by papal concession, and those of the clergy and the laity had to pay this tax. Originally this tax was meant to help with the fight against the Moors, but eventually turned into a continual source of income for the crown. This was taken out every three years. Charles focused on getting his revenue disproportionately from Castile instead of looking to other profitable places such as Aragon. It also would become clear that the brunt of the taxes would fall to the least financially able to pay.

Charles evidently had serious issues with the finances of the kingdom. Due to his constant loans from foreign banks, Spain was heavily dependent on outside sources of income instead of promoting revenue from within the country. Castile seemed to be the



only source of revenue, and this left his people struggling to pay the taxes. Between his numerous holdings in Europe and his vast holdings overseas, he had an enormous political responsibility and an immense amount of area to rule. He either did not have the insight himself to run the country's finances properly or he did not surround himself with a group of advisors that could take control themselves or tell the king that his actions would only hurt the economic state of the country. Therefore the crown that his son would inherit would soon suffer from bankruptcy.

*The Reign of Phillip II and the Effect of the Defeat of the Armada Invincible*

Another factor contributing to the state of Spain during the time of Alonso Quijano is the effect that the defeat of the Spanish Armada had on the country. Spain was heavily invested in this fleet of ships and Phillip II was confident in its "assured" success, so its untimely failure left Spain struggling to recover from the loss.

It is clear that Spain had vast amounts of resources invested in the Armada—men, ships, and supplies, and with its defeat, Spain suffered enormous economic losses. The Armada had 130 ships, and the crew consisted of sailors, soldiers, priests, and nobles along with provisions and weapons. The purpose of the Armada was to help gain control over the English Channel. The Armada was to also help the invasion of England to be led by the Duke of Parma. Phillip had his sights set on England, but also on France. On the English side there was 200 ships, each loaded with trained militia ready to defend the country. The face-off between Spain and England was a culmination of years of deteriorating relations, beginning with the 1560's. According to author Eugene L. Rasor, "In addition to political, dynastic, and religious conflicts, imperial, colonial, commercial, and financial expansion and domination of the New World and beyond were also at

stake” (Rasor, 4). It all boils down to the fact that both Spain and England were wanting their portion of what the world had to offer and each was ready and waiting to seize the opportunity.

Spain believed it was ready to face England. After his father’s abdication, Philip took over the country. It is considered by Rasor that Philip took the empire to its peak. During the period between the late 1570’s and the early 1580’s Spain was in a powerful position due to the imperial expansion into the New World, the area of the Netherlands was secure, the country of Portugal was annexed, and France was restrained. These elements plus others are one reason why Philip contemplated attacking England. Another reason was the fact that in 1587 Mary Queen of Scots had been executed, and Philip did have an opportunity to procure the English throne if Elizabeth were taken out of the picture.

Unfortunately to Philip’s great disappointment, and all of Spain’s, the massive armada did not come out of the battle on the Channel as expected. The armada suffered serious losses and was barely able to make it back to Spain. Many ships were lost, a fifth of the men and crew that came to fight were dead, munitions were depleted, morale was low, signs of mutiny were everywhere, and food and water stores were either empty or spoiled. When Philip heard news of the Armada’s defeat, he believed that he would have no issues financing the construction of another fleet even stronger than the Armada Invincible, but, of course, this was not the case. According to author Garrett Mattingly, Philip looked at his mistakes and came to several conclusions in order for his next fleet to be successful: the ships must be better, there must be more long range guns, there must not be a divided command, the execution of battle strategies must be better, and there

must be a better way to take advantage of the Dutch coastal waters (Mattingly, 328). Philip's reflection would do no good if a solution weren't found and there was no money to fund the implementation of these changes. After the Armada disaster, the balance of power in the Atlantic shifted from Spain to the rest of the world—England and France would begin to dispute control of the New World with Spain.

### *The Origin of the Knight*

It was within the paradoxical “Golden Age”-- of power and opportunity for some, but hard times and poverty for most-- that Cervantes chose to set his famous tale of *Don Quixote de La Mancha*. The major premise of Cervantes' famous novel is that Alonso Quijano considers himself to be a medieval knight-errant who lives in a world that has forgotten the ways of the knight. The origins of the knight, however, go much farther back than medieval times. Medieval knighthood stems from an old Roman practice called “commendation” (Baker, 8). This occurred when a Roman soldier would join themselves to a higher-ranking officer and pledge their service in exchange for a parcel of land. The bit of land that the knight would acquire was known as a benefice. The knights made their income off the land that they got from their benefactor, and with this money they would pay for their major expenses. The major expenses of a knight, which were considerable, consisted of their weapons and horses. They needed at least three horses. One horse was used for battle and the second was known as a courser. This horse transported the knight to and from the battlefield. The third and final horse was used as a packhorse that would transport all of the knight's baggage. The weapons most closely associated with the knight are the long-sword and the ball and chain, also known as the ball and chain mace. The long-sword took a considerable amount of strength

because it was long-bladed, double-edged, and straight-hilted. This type of weapon could easily split apart an opponent's armor. The ball and chain was another useful weapon for the knight. The heavy metal ball, connected to a wooden handle by a metal chain, was ideal for fighting an opponent that carried a shield. Finally, according to author Alan Baker, "...the weapon with which the medieval warrior is most closely identified: the lance" (45). Alonso Quijano's weapon of choice is the lance. The lance was a versatile weapon because it could be used to stab at an enemy or thrown over long distances. In addition, the lance was used for battles, training, and jousting (Baker, 45).

When the knight was not on the battlefield, he spent his time honing his fighting and horsemanship skills. The knight was a landowner and oftentimes he would bestow pieces of land to several people who would soon afterward replicate the same process. This caused the knight's land, usually fifteen hundred acres, to be divided up into smaller parcels. The knight would serve his lord with complete and utter obedience in all the knightly duties. These duties consisted of fighting in his master's army, protecting his castle, and serving as a messenger (Baker, 9). The lord had the final say in what the knight did or did not do. For example, the lord gave the final word on who the knight could marry, and he also determined what would happen to the knight's land after he had died.

Alonso's highly idealized version of the knight errant, Don Quixote, is the romanticized, literary knight that might be found in Mallory's *Le Morte d'Arthur* (Caxton 1485) who fought dragons and giants in the name of his lady, not the more realistic, crusading, bloody, and vicious killer characteristic of European knighthood in the 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. For example, real knights would have to show off their skills as

killers in tournaments. These tournaments were real battles fought over miles of open land, and chivalry, the main driving force of knighthood, did not apply at these events. There was no hesitation when it came to killing one's opponent. One technique implemented by knights was known as the "count of Flanders". This is where the knight would wait until their opponent was weak from a day of battle, then swoop in and defeat the fatigued knight, claiming an easy victory. This is hardly the behavior of a chivalric knight. In fact, Baker writes that the death rate was so high at these tournaments that the church attempted to ban them and issued threats of denying any knight killed in a tournament a Christian burial. Tournaments, specifically jousting tournaments, were more for the purpose of entertainment and honor than anything else. These tournaments were different from the ones previously mentioned. Jousting tournaments were held on special occasions and held purely for enjoyment (Barber, Barker, 97). The participants were elaborately dressed and competed to show off their skills to the great fanfare of the onlookers. The main point of these tournaments wasn't to fatally injure one's opponent but rather, gain honor through victories over opponents. In their article *Tournaments: Jousts, Chivalry and Pageants in the Middle Ages* authors Richard Barber and Juliet Barker state that, "An impressive tournament was held, at which the knights fought 'as fiercely as if it were a real battle of deadly enemies', though the chronicler notes that one of the rules was that no-one was to thrust with his sword, nor to strike at his opponent's back" (102). This further demonstrates that tournaments, specifically jousting ones, were not meant to be a tournament of killing. The previous examples both show contrasting realities of medieval tournaments. Chivalry was upheld in the jousting tournaments but this was not always the case. The violence presented in the mock battles should not be

forgotten when considering the fact that, the literary knight that Alonso desires to be would not have survived in certain medieval tournaments. Another example of the brutality displayed by knights is seen in the fall of Jerusalem during the Crusades. Muslim and Jewish men, women, and children were executed. The Crusaders spared no one.

Alonso wants to epitomize the ancient practice of chivalry, "...the life of the knight was characterized by the system of discipline and social interaction known as chivalry" (Baker, 57). Knights would train tirelessly to improve upon their skills in attack and defense. This led to the idea that a knight had complete control over their body, mind, and speech. The knight's discipline in regards to their social interactions stemmed from the fact that the knight gave his total obedience to his lord. Furthermore, knights had to treat each other fairly and equally. In the novel *Don Quixote* the character of Alonso is obsessed with the code of chivalry, and his antics are ridiculous in his efforts to uphold these virtues that were by his time, anachronistic and obsolete. In reality many medieval knights would break the code of chivalry in order to obtain a victory. For example it was unheard of to attack an opponent on the Sabbath. Baker references an example given by Jim Bradbury that states,

“[T]he Sabbath truce was often broken, in order to make a surprise attack. At Liège the duke of Burgundy favored such an attack, but was opposed by Louis XI, who however gave way... The citizens were certainly not expecting an attack, and had gone for their Sunday dinner...” (60).

This example also shows that the literary knights Alonso places on a pedestal, such as Tristan, Amadis, or Authur are, in fact, far different from how medieval knights really were.

The development of medieval chivalry had its origins in Spain and France, and the practice later spread into England and the rest of Europe (Baker, 57). The main virtues of chivalry were piety, courtesy, honor, loyalty, and chastity. In literature, at least, the knight's loyalty belonged to three different beings. The first belonged to his eternal master, God, the second belonged to his earthly master, or his liege lord, and the third holder of his loyalty was his mistress, the lady he had pledged his heart to. The love the knight felt for his lady was more of a platonic love than a romantic one. The lady to whom he swore his love was either a virgin or the wife of another man. In Cervantes' novel, *Alonso Quijano*, comically pledges his love not to a Lady, but rather to a humble farm girl in the neighboring village. As a part of his strange fantasy, he renames her *Dulcinea de Toboso*, elevating her from the uncouth *Aldonza*. In his eyes *Dulcinea* is a renowned beauty. She is demure, kind, and humble. All other knights' ladies are a dim comparison to his *Dulcinea*. In reality, as both the narrator and *Sancho Panza* comment, *Dulcinea* is no demure beauty but in fact a crude and earthy farm girl. She is the farthest thing from a proper knight's lady. She is a further example of *Alonso Quijano's* enormous disconnect from the real world, one of the many elements introduced by Cervantes to show a world that is absurd and fraught with delusions.

As Cervantes' novel begins, then, readers must remember that Spain has already reached the pinnacle of its empire and expansionist ideology, and with the death of Philip II in 1598 has begun its march towards decadence. Paradoxically, and in spite of fresh gold and silver arriving from the colonies, Philip had declared state bankruptcies on five occasions: 1557, 1560, 1569, 1575, and 1596. Thus by the time Phillip died, and Cervantes was writing his novel, the economic atmosphere within Castile was both

uncertain and conflicted. Many of the ambitious had already emigrated to the New World, and peace and tranquility had descended over much of the peninsula. Knights had become a thing of the past, replaced by professional soldiers who worked strictly for pay. All crusading had been over for more than a century, and the only kind of knights that anyone knew about anymore were the ones that existed between the pages of the numerous novels published in the late sixteenth century, the ones Alonso Quijano, the protagonist who turn himself into Don Quixote, would read.



## CHAPTER TWO

### The Journey of Alonso Quijano

The main character of the novel is Alonso Quijano, an enigmatic Spaniard, who may or may not be mentally disturbed. He is pictured as an older gentleman in his fifties who spends his days reading the many books of chivalry that he possesses. He resides in a sleepy little village in the backwater that is La Mancha. One day, completely out of the blue, he decides to venture out into the world in order to live the life of a knight-errant. Yet, readers would know that knights-errant had long since disappeared, turning Alonso Quijano into a living anachronism. On his adventures, he confounds many of the characters he comes into contact with because he is a walking contradiction and remains a contradiction throughout the entire novel. For example, he experiences bouts of lucidity amongst his elaborate fantasies. He impacts many characters, specifically his squire, while eventually developing the many negative qualities that Sancho Panza possesses. Throughout the novel the reader would begin to notice that there is potentially something very wrong with the main character of the novel. Alonso's actions and speech are not grounded in reality, but in some instances it seems as if the noble knight is faking. Only in the end of the novel do the lines between reality and imagination become clear and the reader is able to see where Alonso truly stands with his convictions.

To understand the character of Alonso Quijano, it is first important to be aware of his background and where he comes from. At the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, La Mancha, with the lowest population density in Spain, is a quiet agricultural community

where economic growth is stagnant. In this community Alonso is a respected gentleman. Cervantes gives some hint of his wealth through descriptions of his food, “His stew had more beef than mutton in it and most nights he ate a hodgepodge, pickled and cold” (56) and clothing, “The remainder was spent on a jerkin of fine puce, velvet breeches, and slippers of the same stuff for holidays, and a suit of good, honest homespun for weekdays” (Cervantes, 57).<sup>1</sup> This shows that he is not overtly wealthy, but he is better off than many others in the village. He has enough to keep himself decently clothed and fed. He has a housekeeper and a young serving boy. Alonso is likewise able to support his twenty year old niece. Alonso also is clearly educated and able to read, unlike many of his neighbors in La Mancha. It is not necessary for him to work and therefore he must find something to occupy his time. Alonso finds the perfect solace in books of chivalry. He becomes obsessed with obtaining this genre of book, “Indeed his craze for this kind of literature became so extravagant that he sold many acres of arable land to purchase books of knight-errantry, and he carried off to his house as many as he could possibly find” (57). This also shows that he has adequate funds and assets that allow him to obtain his books.

As mentioned previously, the main reason that Alonso turns to literature about knighthood is because he is bored by the everyday routine of life. La Mancha is a cultural backwater. Life here is not the same as it would be in a major city such as Seville or Madrid. If Alonso lived in either of those places, he would have plenty to keep him busy. As a respected member of the community he would be involved with daily issues of city life. This is not the case with La Mancha, where Alonso is a *hidalgo*.

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<sup>1</sup> For consistencies sake this thesis references the English translation of Don Quixote by Walter Starkie.

According to historian Marcelin Defourneaux the *hidalgo* is the, "... true symbol of society in the Golden Age" (40). The *hidalgo* was placed on the lowest tier of nobility and because of this they held their honor above all other ideals. *Hidalgos* did not have vast amounts of territories with tenants to take care of but rather lived somewhat comfortable lives on their small estates. Life at the turn of the 17<sup>th</sup> century is slow to say the least for *hidalgo* Alonso. This is because crusading, the main occupation of the *hidalgos*, has long since disappeared. Though the world is on the cusp of modernity, La Mancha is still lagging behind from a developmental viewpoint. Therefore, because he is a relatively affluent man that does not have to work for a living, there is nothing to entertain him other than his precious books containing stories about knights.

Cervantes states that the tales of knight-errantry caused, "...little sleeping and much reading, his brains dried up to such a degree that he lost the use of his reason" (58). Alonso cannot get enough of the heavily romanticized books, and this gives him a false reality on how a knight actually behaved. This shows how Alonso is the embodiment of idealism. In his text *Daily Life in Spain in the Golden Age* Defourneaux discusses the conception of life during this time period,

It arose from two elements which were at the same time opposed to each other but intimately bound up together in the Spanish soul-- idealism and materialism. This combination produced a paradox often manifest both in social and individual life and is perfectly illustrated by those inseparable characters Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, in the greatest literary creation of the Golden Age (45).

Alonso loves the principles that the literary knight stood for while completely ignoring the true nature of a medieval knight. The knights of the crusades for example were not the love-struck knights that Alonso admires but hardened combatants. Yet he believes that everything he reads is a true historical account. Imitation is the highest form of

flattery, and along these lines, Alonso takes it into his mind that he must become a knight-errant. Alonso also does this, "... both for his own honor and for the service of the state..." (59). He is a proud man. As a *hidalgo*, he is proud of his heritage and roots. He has the armor of his great grandfather. It has been three generations since this armor has been used and he believes that now is the time to bring it back to its former glory and honor. He repairs it the best he can, but it is nowhere near what it needs to be. Cervantes writes, "He cleaned it and repaired it as best he could, but he found one great defect: instead of a complete helmet there was just the simple morion" (59). In his mind, however he is the picture perfect knight. He also is proud of his homeland. This is evidenced when he decides to call himself Don Quixote de La Mancha. His deeds as a knight will bring honor to his family and his country.

His final steps are to find a steed and a lady to pledge his life, but as is the case with the rest of his endeavors to be the proper knight, his steed and lady fall somewhat far from the ideal. A description of Alonso's steed states,

"... and although it had more cracks in its hoof than there are quarters in a Spanish real and more faults than Gonella's jade, which was all skin and bone, he thought that neither the Bucephalus of Alexander nor the Cid's Babieca could be compared with it" (60).

For Alonso, his horse is perfect and gives him a name equally fitting of his station, Rozinante. Alonso's fair lady is also a dim comparison to the damsels of Alonso's tales. "It happened that in a neighboring village there lived a good-looking country lass with whom he had been in love, although it is understood that she never knew or was aware of it" (61). Her name is Aldonza Lorenzo but he changes her name to Dulcinea de Toboso. At this point, the reader would believe that the books on knight-errantry have rotted his

brain turning him into a madman. Alonso is a figure not to be pitied because of a perceived madness but, rather to be applauded for his courage-- a quality of a knight-- to defy the social standards of his time and stay true to his idealistic nature (Ackerlind, 10).

His first adventure as a knight sets the stage for many of his future misadventures. Cervantes writes that Alonso believes that, "... the world needed his immediate presence" (62). In this passage the reader is able to see the important values that he upholds. When Alonso ventures forth, he brazenly goes out to face the world. There is no fear, just the excitement of a new adventure, despite the fact that he is in no condition to undertake an adventure such as this. He is old for this time period. He is also a gaunt and skeletal looking man that looks as if a stiff wind could blow him over. Despite his physical appearance, he pushes himself and Rozinante hard, to the point of exhaustion. This shows his dedication and drive to succeed as a knight. He has also made no provisions for either money or food because literary knights do not eat or need to purchase things. Some would say this shows how mad he truly is, but it is also an example of his conviction. Alonso pushes himself in the effort to complete his adventures as Don Quixote de La Mancha. He comes upon an average looking inn and of course sees something completely different, "... no sooner did he see the inn than it assumed in his eyes the semblance of a castle with four turrets, the pinnacles of which were of glittering silver, including drawbridge, deep moat, and all the appurtenances with which such castles are depicted" (64). Alonso sees things that are not there. He also imagines things in vivid and great detail. Once again this could point to a madness that cannot handle reality, but on the other hand one could say that his romantic mindset is

able to find the beauty in everyday things. Yes, he has a habit of romanticizing everything that he reads and sees, but this is not necessarily a poor character trait.

Another way his first adventure is an indication of what the rest of the novel is like is through the reactions of the people that Alonso comes into contact with. These characters serve as the reader's reality checks. They do not know what to think of the boney, old man wearing rusted armor sitting atop a sad looking horse because the days of knight-errantry have been over for decades. They are also unable to understand the way he speaks and instead find it to be very comical, "... but when they heard themselves called maidens, a thing so out of the way of their profession, they could not restrain their laughter..." (64). Alonso mistakes prostitutes for young maidens and the two cannot help but laugh at the new title he has given them. Though people are confused by his appearance and ramblings, they usually end up playing along with him, mostly because they find him to be extremely entertaining. One reason these other characters are so taken with him is because he is shaking up their boring lives. They enjoy the brief reprieve from the monotony of everyday life because they reside, "...in an age devoid of cheerful entertainment..." (276). This scene demonstrates the conflicting nature of Alonso. Dressed in his armor and atop his horse he is completely out of his element here. These are everyday people who have no idea how to handle a knight. At first the characters are charmed by Alonso, but he never fails to stir up anger amongst them. This is generally because someone interferes with his knightly duty or he sees some injustice that must be righted due to the code of chivalry. Therefore, whenever Alonso performs knightly duties, it usually ends up with a beating. These physical failures point to the largest contradiction within the narrative: Alonso Quijano is an old man in his middle

fifties, well past the age when all knights should be retired. He is an old man, yet he starves himself and goes without water for days. He suffers constant beatings. It is inconceivable to the reader that he is able to continue in this fashion. Though he is physically abused throughout the novel he does not stop upholding the code of chivalry, either signifying his idealistic nature or pointing to a deep-seated madness.

In his constant endeavors to uphold justice, Cervantes further reveals that the knight Don Quixote is completely out of his element in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Two examples of this are the scene where Alonso tries to help the young boy who is being flogged and the episode where Alonso releases the galley slaves. Upon his return from his first adventure, by himself, Alonso hears the cries of a young boy who is being beaten by his master. Immediately Alonso recognizes this as an injustice and tries to help the lad. He confronts the boy's master demanding that he pay the boy what he owes him and takes his departure when he feels that the countryman will keep his promise. Unfortunately for the boy this is not the case, "Catching the boy by the arm, he tied him again to the oak and gave him such a drubbing that he left him for dead" (77). Alonso had no business interfering with this situation yet he took it upon himself to try and right the wrong he witnessed. Cervantes sarcastically writes, "Such was the manner in which the valiant Don Quixote undid that wrong" (77). Another example of Alonso's failure to right a wrong is when he frees the criminals in the chain gang. He declares, "here is the opportunity for me to carry out my duty: to redress grievances and give help to the poor and afflicted" (210). After questioning each man in order to discover how they ended up as captives Alonso aids in their escape. As is the pattern, whenever Alonso involves himself with matters that do not concern him the situation ends in disaster. The freed

criminals stone Alonso and Sancho and Alonso suffers very serious injuries from one of the criminals, "... and taking the basin from his head, gave him three or four blows with it on the shoulders and then struck it repeatedly on the ground, almost breaking it into pieces" (218). Here the reader is able to see that Cervantes shows his concern for justice through Alonso's desire to right every wrong he sees. Further, through Alonso's actions, Cervantes is demonstrating that knighthood and chivalry do not apply to the world in which Alonso finds himself. Once again he is out of his element. Paradoxically, Alonso's failure as a knight demeans the values and ethics that he tries to embody.

Other examples of the inconsistencies that Alonso portrays are the bouts of clarity he has during the elaborate visions in which he finds himself acting. This can be evidenced in the scene in the mountains with Dorotea. Dorotea is a beautiful young shepherdess that is hiding in the mountains due to a shaming series of events that happened to her. Alonso is currently performing penance, though the way he is doing this is of course questionable. Cervantes writes, "... he had found him naked except for his shirt, lean, yellow, and half dead with hunger, sighing for his lady, Dulcinea" (291). It is obvious that if another way is not found for Alonso to perform penance he will not survive. Several characters from the early chapters of the novel, the curate and barber, along with Sancho, devise a new way for Alonso to perform penance. Dorotea will play a princess in need of assistance that comes to the knight begging for his aid. Dorotea has full confidence that she can execute this role successfully, "She told them, furthermore, to put entire trust in her talents, for she had read many books of chivalry and was well acquainted with the style in which distressed damsels were accustomed to beg their favors from knights-errant" (292). The characters are all fully aware of Alonso's



predilection to invent fantasies and use this to their advantage. They are not only humoring him but they are equating his madness with gullibility. Dorotea, playing the role of the Princess Micomicona, tells Alonso an elaborate tale that seems as if it is straight from one of Alonso's chivalric tales. As she spins her story Dorotea is not consistent with the details and Alonso is quick to correct her, " 'But, dear lady,' said Don Quixote, 'how did you land at Osuna, seeing that it is not a seaport?' " (303). Dorotea and the other characters believe Alonso is mad and because of this they think they can tell him anything and he will accept it as truth, almost how one treats a child. This is not the case because amongst this fantasy he demonstrates a sharp mind. It is true that Alonso is fully committed to his fantasy but he is not far gone to ignore the smallest of details. It is quite the mystery that the man who decided to forego clothes in the wilderness is the same man who is able to pick up on such a minute detail. Yet, after exhibiting a moment of clear-headedness he once again sinks to the depths of a madness that leaves the reader truly confused to what is reality and fantasy for Alonso. Cervantes writes, "His imagination was so intently fixed upon the forthcoming adventure that it made him dream that he had arrived at the kingdom of Micomicón and was already at war with his foe" (364). This incident further establishes that Alonso is an inconsistency both to the characters of the novel and to the reader.

Other events like the one previously mentioned begin to pose a question for the reader: is Alonso actually faking his madness? Cervantes has demonstrated the romantic nature of the main character, but he has also shown Alonso's conflicting personality. Now the reader must question what is truly real in Alonso's mind.

One instance where the reader begins to question if Alonso really believes his fantasies or is just pretending is the scene in the cave of Motesinos. Alonso has it in his mind that he must travel down into the cave of Motesinos, “Don Quixote said that even if it reached to the abyss, he was determined to see where it ended” (682). Sancho and another character called the cousin remain behind with a rope in order to pull Alonso back up. The cave is extremely deep; at least 480 feet, and Sancho and the cousin worry for the knight. They pull up the rope, “. . .and when they had pulled him all the way up, they saw that his eyes were shut and that he appeared to be fast asleep” (684). This is unusual for the normally vivacious knight. When he finally awakens he immediately wants to tell his companions what he saw, “Don Quixote said: ‘Let no one stir. Now, my sons, give me all your attention’ ” (685). He is preparing his audience because he wants them to listen to everything he has to say. The story he tells is one of the stranger adventures of the novel and for many reasons. The first thing that is off about his story is when they pulled him up he was fast asleep. Anything that could have happened to him must have been a dream because he was only down in the cave for about half an hour, yet his vision is so elaborate and detailed that it is hard to believe that it is his madness talking. Sancho and the cousin find it difficult to believe. The cousin states, “I cannot understand, Don Quixote, how in so short a space of time as you were down below you were able to see so many things and to say and answer so much” (691). It is logical for the reader to question Alonso and to come to the conclusion that he is lying. Another issue with Alonso’s account about the events in the cave of Motesinos is the fact that he tries to gloss over details when questioned. In response to a critic from Sancho Alonso counters, “But this matter is not of importance; it does not disturb or alter the truth of the

story” (687). He is ignoring a minute detail that before, as he previously demonstrated in the adventure with Dorotea, he would have corrected. The reader can also come to the idea that he is avoiding details because he is covering up a lie. Finally Sancho comes to this conclusion, “But forgive me, master, if I tell you that of all you’ve said up to the present, God seize me--I was just going to say the devil--if I believe a single word” (692). For all his previous escapades the witnessing characters have always reasoned that Alonso acted the way he did because they believed he was mad. Now, Alonso’s most loyal companion is having difficulty believing his master’s actions are fueled by his madness. It is hard to accept that the idealistic knight could speak and act untruthfully, “Could Don Quixote tell a lie?” (692). In the previous events where he displays his madness, one is able to see that he acts as he does as a matter of principle. He truly believes that he is a knight and he must uphold the code of chivalry. However, the adventure in the cave of Motesinos is not the same and the reader is left with the feeling that Alonso is faking his madness.

Another adventure that evidences the fact that Alonso is faking his madness is the scene with Clavileño, the flying steed. Alonso and Sancho find themselves in a convoluted adventure dreamt up by a duke and duchess they are staying with. The duke and duchess humor the duo in their claims at being a knight and squire because they amuse the nobles. The challenge is to mount a wooden horse and embark on a bizarre journey and doing so will rid The Doleful One and her ladies of their beards. Cervantes writes, “...the horse is here, our beards are growing, and each one of us beseeches you by every hair to shave and shear us; nothing remains but to mount with your squire and make a happy start on your strange journey” (813). The two are a little reluctant at first

but eventually decide to get on the horse for the sake of the bearded ladies and the key to the challenge is that the two must remain blindfolded the entire time. This quest is one of the more comical exploits depicted in the novel due to the length the actors go to maintain the ruse. In order to mimic the fast winds the two would experience if they were actually flying the actors, "...were blowing air on him from several large bellows" and in order to recreate the region of fire they would pass through, "...with some pieces of wick hanging from a cane, easily lit and quenched, they warmed the riders' faces from a distance..." (817-818). The image of the blindfolded knight and his squire amuse all who witness the pair and soon the voyage is over when the wooden horse, filled with firecrackers, explodes from underneath them. When the smoke has cleared they discover the duennas are missing and, "...by merely attempting it..." *it* being the challenge, the ladies no longer possess beards (819). When asked of his experience on Clavileño Sancho describes a weird account of playing with the seven she-goats while in the sky, "...softly and gently I skip down from Clavileño and have a frolic with the kids..." (820). Sancho claims that he played with the goats for about three quarters of an hour. Everyone, even Alonso, knows that this certainly did not happen and either Sancho has lost his mind or is just playing along with the adventure.

The most important quote from this section comes from Alonso when he pulls aside his squire to whisper something to him in confidence, " 'Sancho, if you want me to believe what you saw up in the sky, I wish you to accept my account of what I saw in the cave of Montesinos. I say no more' " (821). This statement suggests that Alonso made up the events that transpired in the cave. He believes that Sancho is feigning innocence about what happened to him in the sky and agrees to believe him if Sancho, who

previously doubted his master, accepts what he says to be truth. Sancho's tale is just as ridiculous as Alonso's. Alonso is justifying his false adventure in the cave by agreeing to accept as fact the events that Sancho speaks of. Alonso feels that he must save face, thus, demonstrating that he is aware of his own delusion on a certain level. This begs the question of why would the formally so idealistic knight be reduced to this?

At this point in the novel Alonso and Sancho have spent a great deal of time together. It is logical to believe that after the great deal the two have been through they would begin to embody the traits of the other, though they represent polar opposite morals. Alonso is the romantic dreamer that believes in the beauty of the world and will always fight in the name of justice. Sancho is the acquisitive realist that although he remains by his master's side because of the promised "island", demonstrates his true loyalty in the end. Throughout the novel Sancho grounds Alonso. He is always there to remind him of the reality of the situation. Yet, as evidenced with the flight of Clavileño and other incidents, Sancho is thought to be faking what he saw. One could argue that rather than pretending, Sancho has inherited Alonso's idealistic nature and fully embraces the lessons of the concept of knight-errantry. This is because Alonso has enlightened his squire, transforming him from a crass peasant to progressive member of society. Sancho has acquired his master's best quality while Alonso has taken in Sancho's worst trait. This is an explanation for the scenes where it is relatively obvious that he is feigning his lunacy. He is not pretending but rather it is because he no longer believes in the principles of knighthood, and further, he has lost hope for the world that he finds himself in. He now views the world as Sancho previously did, as a black and white existence that leaves no room for imagination.

This is why Alonso had so fervently latched on to the concept of knight-errantry. The ideals that the literary knight personified called to him. They allowed him to see the magic and beauty of everyday life. It is in the last few chapters of the novel where the reader is able to see the complete 360 that Alonso has made. Alonso and Sancho's journey ends right where it began, in the characters' home of La Mancha. Alonso returns not as the proud Don Quixote but as a sad shell of his former self. One reason is found in the scene where Sancho overpowers his master. Alonso wants to whip Sancho in order to rid Dulcinea of her enchantment and when he tries to overwhelm Sancho, "... but Sancho jumped to his feet, and making for his master, he gripped him, tripped him, and laid him flat on his back, whereupon, setting his right knee upon his chest, he held his hands fast so that he could scarcely stir or draw his breath" (955). This is the final evidence that the two characters have switched roles and in addition to that, Sancho has come out on top. Sancho even demands Alonso to make an oath to him. Alonso returns to La Mancha disheartened because not only has he let go of his romantic nature but because Sancho has defeated him he comes to the conclusion that he does not belong in this world.

Alonso Quijano, through his attempt at knight-errantry, defies the social concepts of his time. He eventually is beaten by the world and discards the idea of knighthood. It is believed by the reader and characters that he is a mad man that contradicts everything he does but really Alonso was a wise old man that possessed a method to his madness. This idea is summed up in the following quote, "... the knight only went astray when he touched upon chivalry, but in every other topic he showed that he possessed a clear-sighted and unbiased mind, with the result that his actions belied his judgment, and his judgment his action, at every step" (827). He perpetuated an excessive idealism that

caused his acts of knighthood to fail. His moments of sanity amongst fantasy confounded the characters of the novel attesting to the fact that the world was not ready for Don Quixote and Don Quixote not ready for the world.

## CHAPTER THREE

### The Transformation of Sancho Panza

After Alonso Quijano's first adventure on his own, he decides to recruit another person to join him on his journey as a knight-errant. Alonso selects a man named Sancho Panza to serve as his squire. The reader is easily able to see that Sancho is the foil to Alonso both physically and mentally and morally/ethically. Throughout their many journeys together Sancho undergoes a metamorphosis. He begins as an uneducated farmhand and ends as the loyal squire, while playing the role of many other characters in between. At the end of their adventures together, Sancho is not the same man he had been because of his unique relationship with Alonso Quijano. Howard Young states, "In today's language, Sancho might be said to have a dim front porch light, not only an unkindness... but an inaccuracy, for Sancho's porch light in the course of the novel will grow brighter and brighter, at times eclipsing that of his master" (379).

Iconic though he is, the reader is first introduced to Sancho in chapter seven of Part One. The character introduced here is the ignorant field hand. Cervantes writes, "...Don Quixote made overtures to a certain laboring man, a neighbor of his and an honest fellow (if such a term can be applied to one who is poor), but with very little wit in his pate" (95). In this first description the reader is able to immediately see some of the differences between Sancho and Alonso. Sancho is a working man, but not a working man in the sense that he has a stable and cushy job to go to everyday. He is a subsistence farmer that lives hand to mouth. Anything he has is because he had to work



hard for it. His donkey, Dapple is a beloved animal of Sancho's. This is most likely because a donkey is a very important animal to have for a laborer. A donkey is also humbler than a horse and requires less maintenance.

Sancho spends his days plowing fields and tending to livestock. This is extremely different from how Alonso spends his days; ultimately the main difference is that Sancho must work in order to provide for himself and his family, while Alonso does not. Sancho does not know the luxury of reading during his free time. This is not a major loss to Sancho, though, because he is illiterate. In his line of work Sancho does not need the ability to read or have 'book smarts'. He just needs to be skilled with his hands and crafty. This is the complete opposite from Alonso whose mind became soft due to all the books on knighthood he read constantly. Sancho is uneducated, and because of his lack of education, he is also gullible at times.

It did not take much effort from Alonso to persuade Sancho to become his squire. Cervantes writes, "...Don Quixote told him that he should be most willing to go with him because some time or another he might meet with an adventure that would earn for him, in the twinkling of an eye, some island, and he would find himself governor of it"(96). Though it is a known fact by everyone in the community, such as the curate, that Alonso is mad, Sancho believes him nonetheless. The curate and other villagers play along with Alonso's fantasies and so does Sancho, but in this one aspect of the fantasy, he fully trusts in Alonso. Many times this is Sancho's one motivation to continue on as Alonso's squire.

Sancho and Alonso differ physically as well. Alonso has been described as short and overweight. In fact "panza" means belly. Sancho paints for the reader a contrary

image when compared to the tall, gaunt, and almost decrepit knight. Sancho's physical description lends to his personality as well. He is a very base character. His constant concern is when he can get his next meal. He is frequently searching for supplies for their journeys. Sancho is most at peace when he has food in his belly and a place to sleep at night. It does not have to be the softest bed, but anywhere that is dry and warm will satisfy him.

There are several different theories concerning Cervantes' treatment of Sancho's physical description, specifically his weight. Scholar Anthony Rotunno explores the different perspectives on Sancho's weight in "The Mirth of Girth: Don Quixote's Stout Squire." He discusses the practice of Fat Studies and references Lesleigh J. Owen that states, "fat persons are stigmatized (2) and many use adjectives such as, "slovenly,' 'dumb,' 'pathetic,' 'lonely,' 'working class,' 'lazy,' and 'loud'"(9). The reader has two ways to discern the meaning behind Sancho's weight. The first is through Cervantes' description of him and most importantly how Alonso addresses him. It is a possibility that Cervantes shared this view when writing the novel. The reader is able to see this in the initial description of Sancho where he calls Sancho an honest man but also a dimwit. In an aside he also states it is difficult to call a man so poor honest. This correlates with the theory that overweight individuals carry a bad reputation.

Though there is nothing in this description about his weight, there are still pessimistic things said about him. In addition, though Sancho is a field laborer he is also lazy. He enjoys any downtime that he shares with his master and sometimes cannot keep up with the fast paced adventures Alonso wants to undertake. This could also be seen as a negative trait that Sancho possesses due to his weight. Another theory, as written by

Rotunno, is that, “Cervantes purpose in regard to weight was humor, not derisiveness”. Once again, in the first description of Sancho his weight is left out. This signifies that Cervantes does paint Sancho in a negative light because of his weight but uses it later for humorous reasons. For example, all the scenes where Sancho suffers bodily harm or gets sick are made even more comical when the reader pictures the stout and short character being affected. It is true that Alonso suffers the same harm, though to a lesser extent, it is even more comical to the reader to image the physical foil to Alonso receiving the same injuries. Another derogatory term concerning heavy people is the concept of gluttony. Glutton is used in regards to Sancho but it is not in an off-putting light. Rotunno uses the example of when Alonso is giving advice to Sancho before he assumes the role of governor of his island. Alonso advises, “Don’t show yourself to be (even though you might be, *which I don’t believe*) greedy, a chaser of women, or a *glutton*” (732). Rotunno adds emphasis on glutton. This emphasis shows that Alonso does not believe that Sancho is a gluttonous individual. As previously discussed Sancho does enjoy his food but he is not a glutton. Rotunno writes, “Satiating hunger, which is what Sancho does, is not gluttony”. Overall Cervantes description of Sancho concerning his weight is to serve as a comical contrast to Alonso, not as a derisive commentary concerning overweight individuals.

Not only is food a concern for Sancho but he is a family man that has a responsibility to his wife and children. From the text the reader is able to determine that Sancho has a wife and daughter. Teresa and Sancho are very much alike and their main prerogative is that they find a husband for their daughter, Sanchica. Alonso does have a niece, but he does not have to worry about finding a husband for her in order to secure

her future. Alonso has enough money to keep her living comfortably after he is gone. Sancho does not share the same conviction that Alonso had about their adventures. As previously mentioned, Sancho thinks with his stomach, but he also wants to avoid as much discomfort as possible. Alonso sees himself as a literary knight. He believes that the Lord will provide for all his needs. For example Alonso states, "Leave all in God's hands, Sancho" (97). Sancho is more practical. He knows that unlike literary knights and squires, they must eat and secure a safe place to stay. In addition, also unlike literary knights, they will not miraculously heal from injuries. This is a reason why Sancho wants to avoid as much physical confrontation as possible. One example of this is when Alonso decides to concoct the balsam of Fierabrás in order to heal them of their injuries. Alonso takes it and is immediately racked with bouts of fever and vomiting. Several hours later the knight emerges feeling much better and mostly healed from his injuries. Sancho begs his master for some of the balsam to relieve him of his ailments. Cervantes writes, "... he was racked by bouts of writhing, retching, and kicking, with such cold sweats and swoonings, that he truly thought his last hour had come, and in his agony he cursed the balsam and the rogue who had given it to him" (164). Poor Sancho suffers at the hands of his master and unfortunately for him this will not be the last time that Sancho suffers.

Alonso frequently involves himself in matters that are none of his business and because of this he receives many injuries throughout the story. Sancho is "punished by association". He gets blamed for Alonso's actions and because of this he also is physically abused. One instance of this occurs in chapter seventeen. When Alonso refuses to pay the innkeeper the tab Sancho suffers the consequences. Cervantes writes,

“There they placed Sancho in the middle of the blanket and began to toss him up in the air and make sport with him as they would with a dog at Shrovetide” (166).

Another way the two characters are different is their heritage, but most importantly their claim to fame. Sancho might just be an uneducated subsistence farmer but he proudly claims that he is a *cristiano viejo*. He is a pure Visagoth (i.e. “white”) Spaniard and his lineage is not tainted by foreign blood. He brags about his pure blood line constantly throughout the tale “...for I’m an old Christian, and that’s enough blue blood for a count” (207). This concept of identity is very important to Sancho because during this time the idea of a pure blood line was very important to the Spanish people. For example, a person would be looked down upon if it was thought that they potentially had Moorish blood in their veins. In his book *Daily Life in Spain in the Golden Age* Marcelin Defourneaux discusses how the lack of ‘ancestry’ was beneficial to common folk like Sancho,

“Nearly all of them were puffed up with pride, more or less with good reason, in being ‘old Christians’. Moreover, because of the desire to improve the social status, so characteristic of the times, there came the notion that ‘purity of blood’ in itself conferred a sort of nobility...” (39).

Again this is different from Alonso’s claim to fame. Alonso had an ancestor that was a knight. This is evident because the armor that Alonso wears is the armor of his great grandfather. One could argue that Sancho’s claim to fame is more important than Alonso’s. Once again, this is because the concept of *sangre viejo*, or *cristiano viejo* is more important to Spaniards than knighthood, a long since forgotten part of Spanish life.

After examining the differences between Sancho and Alonso the reader is able to see that Sancho is a humble man that represents many of the Spanish population during

the 17<sup>th</sup> century. As Sancho plays the role of the Labrador he also represents the Everyman. Sancho personifies the everyday Spanish citizen during the time Cervantes wrote *Don Quixote*. He is much more relatable than Alonso to the reader. The biggest way that Sancho relates to the reader is through another role that he plays throughout the tale. Sancho also serves as the oracle/truth-teller.

Unlike his master, Sancho knows what is real and what is imaginary. He does not have any issues distinguishing between fact and fiction. Sancho also does not hesitate to tell his master that the acts of knight-errantry he attempts to do are not what he believes them to be. The reader is able to pick up on this quickly as well. Many characters throughout the novel go along with the knight's imaginings. They do not stop him or tell him that what he is doing is ridiculous. Sancho on the other hand tells it like it is and is the first one to tell his master how ridiculous he is acting.

An example of this is also one of the most iconic scenes in *Don Quixote*, the scene where Alonso fights the windmills. As the knight and his squire are making their way in search of adventure Alonso spies thirty or forty windmills in the distance. His addled brain leads him to think that they are giants and he prepares to fight them in the name of his lady Dulcinea. When Alonso tells Sancho his plan he responds by asking what giants (98)? He immediately tells his master that they are windmills, not giants. Alonso dismisses what he says calling Sancho a coward and ignorant of adventure and proceeds to fight the windmills. Alonso suffers bodily harm, this time Sancho escapes unscathed, and Sancho must take care of the now injured knight.

This episode demonstrates how Sancho is frank and honest. He cuts to the chase because it is in his nature to tell the truth. One reason is, as a squire, he does not want to

see harm come to his master and overall he does not want harm to come to himself.

Another reason has to do with his background and upbringing. As previously mentioned Sancho is a simple farmer that is unable to read. He is unphased by fantasy and fairytales, not only because he cannot read them, but they are not practical to everyday life. It is certain that he knows *of* legends and fairytales, but he knows better than to believe in them. He has no time to spend fantasizing and daydreaming because he has to work hard in order to have anything. Therefore he cannot entertain fanciful thoughts and can only take things for what they are. In many ways Sancho's existence is very black and white and it is not until he comes in contact with Alonso that his perspective on life begins to change.

Another example where Sancho plays the role of the truth-teller is the scene where Alonso requests Sancho to deliver a letter to Dulcinea. Alonso wants to inform his fair lady that he is about to perform penance. When Sancho finally realizes just who she is he immediately begins to describe the "true" Dulcinea. Sancho states, "Why, she's a lusty lass, tall and straight, with hair on her chest, who can pull the chestnuts out of the fire for any knight-errant now or to come who has her for his lady" (247). He sees Dulcinea or Aldonza Lorenzo for who she really is. He does not insult his master about the fact that his lady is far from a demure maiden. In fact, up until this point, Sancho believed Dulcinea to be a princess or an esteemed member of society. Once again he is telling his master how things really are. Sancho gives the story the dose of reality that it needs. He is there to anchor the mind of his scatter brained master. Sancho's sanity clashes with his master's insanity just enough to give the story a good balance between reality and fantasy.

As previously mentioned Sancho is the perfect foil to Alonso. He brings truth to his deranged master. Yet, there are several contradictions when considering his role as the oracle/truth-teller. Even though he knows that the situation with the letter that Alonso writes to Dulcinea is a farce he goes along with the story, yet makes up realistic possibilities. For example, when Alonso asks him what Dulcinea was doing when Sancho found her, he describes, “she was winnowing two bushels of wheat in a backyard of her house” (308). Sancho does not spin some elaborate tale that places Dulcinea on a pedestal, but rather shows her to be the base country girl that she is. Regardless of the fact that this did not happen, it is very likely that this is what a peasant girl would be doing. Sancho continues to describe Dulcinea, “All I can vouch for is that I got a whiff of something a bit mannish; this must have been because she was sweating and a bit on the run” (311). One might ask if Sancho’s actions to maintain his master’s farce remove him from the role of oracle/truth-teller. It does not because even though he perpetuates the fantasy, he still gives the doses of reality that reminds the reader that Dulcinea is a part of the ravings of a crazed old man. Another issue that contradicts his role as oracle is his belief that if he does as his master says he will receive an island to govern. If throughout their adventures together Sancho speaks of the reality of the situation, why then does he believe his master in this one aspect? This does not dismiss him as the source of truth for the tale. As previously mentioned he is a poor subsistence farmer while Alonso is financially stable. He has been given an opportunity to better himself by becoming a governor. One might argue that he is gullible but in becoming Alonso’s squire he is taking a chance in order to better his station and his family. One cannot blame him for wanting a better life. In a way he is like a mercenary. He is only in it for



the money or in this case the “island”. He knows that everything he and Alonso do is a big joke but in the end he has his eyes set on his final reward. Overall, through his role as the oracle/truth-teller, Sancho brings equilibrium to the demented knight and the reader is able to relate to him because he or she sees the truth as well.

So far the reader has seen the many facets of Sancho’s personality. He is the farmhand and the oracle/truth-teller, but there is also another dimension to his personality. He is the jester of the novel. *Don Quixote* is a very funny novel. The character’s actions and dialogue are outrageous and ridiculous, making for a comical story. Alonso is the expected comedic relief in the story through his wild fantasies, which cause him to do insane things. For example, in order to perform penance he decides to turn cartwheels in an open field with no pants on, “Then, stripping off hastily his breeches, he remained in nothing but skin and shirt. Then, without more ado he cut a couple of capers and did two somersaults with his head down and his legs in the air...” (253). While Alonso’s addled brain is the reason why his character is so funny, Sancho is the jester for different reasons. Alonso attempts to mimic the image of the literary knight. This is one who is noble, devout, and completes fantastic feats. In Sancho’s role as the jester he ends up debasing the noble image that Alonso tries to portray. This is evident when Sancho tries to impress his master with his wisdom. Sancho constantly strings together nonsensical jumbles of proverbs. It is clear that when he does this he is going for quantity rather than quality. For example, “‘Where there’s plenty, the guests can’t be empty’; and ‘He that cuts doesn’t deal’; and ‘He’s safe as a house who rings the bells’, and ‘He’s no fool who can spend and spare.’” (829). These sayings have nothing to do with each other yet he recites them with the intention of showing that he knows a

great many proverbs, regardless of the fact that they make no sense in the current situation.

He attempts to put forth the façade of an educated man, like his master, but ends up failing. This is humorous, but also in a way undermines Alonso's formal education. Another example where Sancho demeans the image of the literary knight and his squire is the episode where both Sancho and Alonso vomit on each other. Alonso has just been beaten by several shepherds because Alonso had taken it upon himself to attack them. He received several injuries and asks Sancho to check how many teeth remain in his mouth. Sancho places his face extremely close to Alonso's mouth in order to get a good look,

“...and it was precisely at the fatal moment when the balsam that had been fretting in Don Quixote's stomach came up to the surface; and with the same violence that a bullet is fired out of a gun, all that he had in his stomach discharged itself upon the beard of the compassionate squire” (175).

Sancho believes that his master has vomited blood on him, but soon horrifically realizes it is vomit, not blood, “and so great was the loathing he felt that his own stomach turned, and he emptied its full cargo upon his master...” (175). The image that Cervantes depicts in chapter 18 is extremely humiliating for both characters but amusing to the reader.

Someone witnessing this event would never believe these two figures were a knight and his squire. Sancho and his master are no longer the ideal knight-errant and his squire. Literary knights never fall ill and do not have bodily functions. They both have just demonstrated that in reality this is not the case. The lofty aspirations of knighthood that Alonso attempts to mimic are devalued by the circumstances that he and his squire find themselves in.

Another equally entertaining example of the debasement of knight-errantry is the scene where Sancho defecates next to Alonso. Again this demonstrates that in reality knights and their squires must eat and later answer nature's call. Cervantes writes, "... he raised his shirt as best he could and bared to the air both buttocks, which were not of the smallest" (192). Sancho tries with all his might not to make any noise as he relieves himself but is unsuccessful. Another problem arises; he is unable to prevent the inevitable odor that arises "... it was impossible for some of the smell, which ascended almost perpendicularly, not to reach his nose..." (193). Alonso believes that Sancho has had this accident because he is afraid. Alonso comments on the fact that this kind of behavior is unacceptable, "... and pay more attention to your person in the future and to the respect you owe me. It is my great familiarity with you that has led to this contempt" (193). Alonso recognizes that the actions of his squire demean the both of them. Episodes like this remind the reader that the life of knight-errantry that Alonso desires is not attainable. Cervantes is showing how life really is and reminding the reader of daily life concerns by lowering the superior station of the knight through his portrayal of Sancho as the jester. In addition, *Don Quixote*, as is supported by the previous two examples, is a very humorous story. According to author John Allen in his article, "Smiles and Laughter in Don Quixote", Cervantes' amusing portrayal of the two main characters and use of slapstick humor, "...has a broad and obvious appeal that spans cultures and centuries." Allen further mentions that "...Cervantes's humor is crucially dependent upon the integrity of each character...". The out-of-place knight is amusing, due to the ridiculous acts of "gallantry" he endeavors to accomplish while his squire is entertaining through his acts of debasement as the jester. This demonstrates how the

humor of the two characters differ, but is it important to take into consideration the fact that their humor also parallels one another. Allen argues that, "...Cervantes's humor is grounded in our consciousness of the universal human tendency towards self-deception..." and that, "...Don Quixote involves the repeated exemplification of the distortion of perception by desire, and the comic consequences of this distortion." Alonso truly believes he can change the world through knight-errantry, and Sancho remains by his master's side because of the promised "island". Both characters suffer, to the enjoyment of the reader, because of their individual self-deception.

It is also important to note that the previously mentioned quote about the "great familiarity" the two characters share is significant for another reason. At this point in the story Sancho and Alonso have been through a great deal together. The reader is able to see how the two characters have adopted the traits of the other. It is through this great familiarity that Alonso speaks of, which Sancho is taken from a humble farmer to his next role in the novel, the governor.

The reader has seen the conversion that Sancho has undergone throughout the various episodes in the novel. He has faithfully stuck to the side of his master and will be rewarded as promised. Sancho finally will be given an "island" to govern. Alonso does not gift him the island because it is a spoil from one of his battles but rather he is indirectly involved. A duke and duchess that the two have been staying with are so amused by the antics of the knight and squire they decide to fabricate an elaborate ruse so Sancho can have his opportunity at governing an island called Barataria. It is here, before Sancho leaves his master's side, that the reader sees Alonso as more than just Sancho's master but also his mentor. Alonso spends two chapters giving Sancho advice

for the good of his soul and how to dress his body. This shows the knight's concern for his squire's standing with God and how he should carry himself in front of others. This also shows the type of ruler he wants and believes Sancho can be. Cervantes writes, "First of all, O my son, fear God, for to fear Him is wisdom, and if you are wise, you cannot err" (824). Alonso wants to make sure that his squire puts God above all else because this will lead to wisdom and a wise ruler will not fail. Alonso also advises, "Never let arbitrary law rule your judgment; it is the vice of the ignorant who make a vain boast of their cleverness" (826). Again, this shows Alonso's desire for his squire to be successful and also faith that Sancho has the ability to govern fruitfully.

Next comes the advice on how to dress his person. Alonso's counsel ranges from what to eat and how much to drink to how to properly ride a horse. His most important suggestion is that Sancho refrain from the overuse of his many proverbs, "Furthermore, Sancho, you must not overload your conversation with a glut of proverbs, for though proverbs are concise and pithy sentences, you so often drag them in by the hair that they seem to be maxims of folly rather than of wisdom" (829). Alonso does not want Sancho to seem as if he is putting on airs in regards to his intelligence because Alonso is fully aware that Sancho is sharp, when in the beginning he is introduced as dimwitted and slow. At the end of this section Alonso believes that Sancho is fully ready to accept his new position when Sancho states, "...when I become governor, remember that I'd rather go to Heaven as plain Sancho than down to hell as governor" (832). Alonso has the same faith in Sancho that he has had in his master their entire journey.

Equipped with the advice of his master, Sancho is now ready to travel to his new home. During his time as governor of his island Sancho shocks the actors involved in the

jest with his knowledge and prudence. When he first arrives he is immediately asked questions in order for his citizens to get a sense of the type of governor he will be "...and by his answers the people feel the pulse of his understanding and thus judge whether they ought to rejoice or to be sorry for his coming" (844). Citizens are brought before him in order to tell him of their plight in the style that grievances were brought up to King Solomon. In the first grievance Sancho must decide if the tailor who created five hats will be compensated for his work by the countryman that ordered them. Because the tailor refuses to give the countryman the hats unless he pays and the countryman declines to pay what is owed Sancho rules, "And so, I give the judgment that the tailor lose the making and the countryman the stuff, and that the caps be given to the prisoners in jail" (845). This impresses the bystanders and, "...aroused their admiration" (845). In another example he figured out that the ten crowns of gold owed to one man was in fact in the staff of the other man involved. When asked how he determined this Sancho says,

"He replied that, having noticed how the defendant gave the cane to the plaintiff to hold while he took the oath and how he then swore that he had returned him the money into his own hands, afterward taking back his cane from the plaintiff, he then took it into his head that the money in question must be inside the cane" (847).

This once again impressed the citizens of Barataria.

Sancho's excellent council shows how he has become a judicious leader, though he is still the same illiterate Sancho. It is because of the experiences and adventures he shared with his master that the reader is able to see this side of Sancho. Alonso has been a positive influence on the life of Sancho because he has brought out the best in him. Without Alonso he would most likely still be out in the fields barely making a living. This is not how one should live life. Alonso sparked a desire inside the squire to better

himself, “And, mind you, it’s not covetousness that makes me forsake my cottage and set myself as a somebody, but the longing I have to taste what it’s like being a governor” (823). Though it is all a ruse Sancho is a wise leader and he surprises many people that he does well. It does not take away from the experience that the island was fake because Sancho believed it to be real and under these assumptions he performed extremely well. At the core of this is the fact that he has been shaped by his experiences with Alonso but in the end he is still Sancho, “Clothe me as you will, I’ll still be Sancho Panza” (823). This leads to the final facet of Sancho, the loyal squire.

When their adventures are finally over and the pair return to the quiet region of La Mancha Alonso is not the same. He is depressed and melancholy. As the pair are settling back into their lives and making plans to lead a pastoral life as shepherds Alonso suddenly falls ill. His friends and family soon realize that the knight is soon to die. He is racked by a violent fever and he must remain in bed. During his sickness Alonso shocks his friends and family by rejecting knight-errantry and everything that he once stood for. Cervantes writes, “My judgment is now clear and unfettered, and that dark cloud of ignorance has disappeared, which the continual reading of those detestable books of knight-errantry had cast over my understanding” (1045). He curses the books he once considered an absolute truth. He also disowns the noble title of Don Quixote, “My dear friends, welcome the happy news! I am no longer Don Quixote of La Mancha, but Alonso Quijano, the man whom the world formerly called the Good, owing to his virtuous life” (1045). Everyone is in disbelief at his words but no one more so than Sancho. Sancho has demonstrated the faith he has in his master throughout the entire story. He remained by Alonso’s side and did what his master asked of him. He never

stopped believing that he would one day become a governor of an island. In the beginning when Alonso first propositioned Sancho to be his squire it took a huge leap of faith in order for him to follow Alonso. It is here at the end of his master's life that Sancho proves himself to be the loyal squire. During his time confined to his bed Sancho never leaves his side and he weeps bitterly over the state of his master. He scolds his master and begs him not to die. Cervantes writes,

“ Don't die on me; but take my advice and live on for many a year; the maddest trick a man can play in his life is to yield up the ghost without more ado, and without being knocked on the head or stabbed through the belly to mope away and die of the doldrums” (1047).

He blames himself for his master's loss and even says that Alonso's beloved Dulcinea will no longer be enchanted in order to comfort Alonso. He is trying anything to get his master to still believe. This is the ultimate act of loyalty that Sancho could show his master. He refuses to let the idea of Don Quixote die. It is obvious that Sancho will keep Don Quixote alive after his master is gone.

It is now Sancho who fully believes in knighthood like Alonso previously did. At first Sancho remained with Alonso because of the promise of the island, but by the end of the story he fully believes in all the principles that Alonso once stood for. In order for this to happen Sancho had to fully experience life as a squire and “...by simply breathing the air of knight-errantry...” (824) he now understands the importance of what Don Quixote was trying to do. The reader feels the loss of Don Quixote along with Sancho Panza and knows that he will continue his role as the loyal squire honoring Don Quixote.



## CONCLUSION

There are several things to take away from reading *Don Quixote de La Mancha*, while keeping in mind the historical and economic influences on the novel. Spain's economy is stagnant, and its people are suffering from heavy taxes and the misuse of state finances. Spain is also on the cusp of modernity, but it is not quite ready to fully embrace a new economic system. La Mancha is still clinging to its medieval ways, a predominantly agrarian society with an extremely low population density where almost nothing of significance ever happens. The people are depressed, and according to Cervantes, do not have much to look forward to (Cervantes, 276). They are stuck in the rut of their everyday lives.

Alonso Quijano is the exception to this situation. He is a dreamer, but more than that he is a simple idealist who attempts to defy the social norms of his time. Iconoclastically breaking with tradition and the pre-established social conventions of his time, he chooses the noble practice of knight-errantry as his medium for expressing his own personal identity. He completely ignores the historical fact that the practice of knightly chivalry has been extinct for more than a hundred years. There are no knight-errants in his time, and his particular imagining of the heroic figure may never have existed at all, coming to life only in the pages of the fantastic knight-errant novels that were so popular in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century. He does not want to comply with the social standards to which everyone else has resigned themselves. He does his best to uphold the

values of chivalry, and every time the world knocks him down, he comes back fighting. This is evidenced when Alonso is fighting the windmills. Each time he is knocked down, he gets right back up. His romantic nature has a positive impact on his squire Sancho Panza. Throughout their travels Sancho's goal is to obtain his island and become a governor, demonstrating a desire to rise above one's social class and become something superior. He also becomes an idealist like his master; refusing to let Alonso Quijano/Don Quixote denounce everything he previously stood for. The key to this transformation is the fact that Alonso became a part of his life, and they experienced many adventures together. Sancho had to venture forth and experience life as a squire in order to become the man he is at the end of the novel.

Alonso is a contradiction and the biggest question he poses to the reader is this: where are the lines of reality and fantasy really drawn? There is no doubt that he is mad, but his madness comes out in his attempt at being the perfect knight. Alonso has shown that he can be wise. This is seen when he serves as a type of mentor to Sancho. Finally, the reader is able to determine that he is not a complete madman when he regains some of his sanity and rejects all that he stood for. A truly mad person would not come to this realization. It is Sancho's influence on Alonso that has allowed him to see the world for what it truly is; one where chivalry is dead and the ideals of the knight no longer apply. After fighting for so long he is finally beaten by the world. This is seen when Sancho overpowers Alonso. The roles they once played have been reversed because Alonso no longer belongs in this world.

Sancho is the character that comes out on top at the end of the novel. The reader has seen the many facets of his personality, the oracle/truth-teller, jester, and governor,

with the ultimate role being that of the devoted squire. He begins his journey as the realist of the novel, the perfect foil to his idealist master. Eventually Sancho no longer is the foil to Alonso because he embodies the best traits of his master and becomes his own character. Alonso undergoes a transformation into his own character as well, but Sancho's transformation leaves the reader with hope that the idea of Don Quixote did not die with Alonso Quijano.

This novel shows that, during this time period, it is great to have ideals, but in practice chivalry, the way Don Quixote imagines it, will not work. Fantastical literature is just that, fantastical, and it can serve as a temporary reprieve and escape from everyday life, but nothing more. The world of Cervantes and Alonso Quijano is not a world for dreamers, but it was important that Alonso made an attempt to live this idealistic life. For example, his influence on Sancho can only be seen as constructive. As with the adventure of the bearded ladies, by merely attempting the challenge was Alonso, with the aid of his squire, able to "remove" the ladies' beards. Allen writes, "Cervantes's achievement in *Don Quixote* arises in part from his realization that the reader is more involved with a hero who struggles with his inadequacies than with a Romance hero like Amadís of Gaul, whose activity simply demonstrates repeatedly his superiority" (Allen, 521). Even though the reader is aware of Alonso's faults, it is difficult not to engage with him. Cervantes paints a character that the reader wants to see succeed and with his death the reader mourns the loss of the knight alongside Sancho. In the end Alonso Quijano exhibits a knight's bravery in his endeavors to defy social standards, though the world in which he lived in was not ready to accept one such as Don Quixote de La Mancha.

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