Material Girls – and Boys:

Dressing Up in Cervantes¹

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Costume is a language. It is no more misleading than the graphs drawn by demographers and price historians.

Braudel, 235.

hen moralists speak of costume in early modern Spain, they criticize their fellow citizens for dressing up. They dress down their male and especially their female subjects for the sin of vanity, and critics today echo this ethic when they speak disapprovingly of consumerism, betraying a nostalgia for a bygone, precapitalist era and revulsion towards contemporary culture. They are heirs in this respect to Don Quijote,

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like him longing for the Golden Age (I, 11), a world where transactions of money did not exist, where honesty and integrity prevailed: when, in effect, one knew (or so one imagined) what was what; when our minds and hearts were as free of twists, turns, loops, and hoops as was the simply-hewn cloth that—in the past as opposed to the present—was designed to provide protection for the body as opposed to transforming it into an object of display. The position taken in the present study, however, is quite different, for we believe that commodity consumption has had a bad rap. We will shape the discussion as follows: first we will provide a general description of clothing as a luxury item and as a marker of identity in historical Spain and in Cervantes’ works; then we will move to a more detailed analysis of selected scenes in Cervantes’ prose in which clothing details are noticeably foregrounded.²

Part I: Texts and Textiles.

Fabric and fabrication are inextricably bound, etymologically and symbolically. Cloth is one of the most important commodities used in the construction of an identity, and it is the relationship of cloth and more specifically clothing to identity that we wish to investigate. Social and political history combined with documents uncover the pervasive importance of textiles, suits of armor, or particular colors as social indices. Why, in “La española inglesa,” does Cervantes specify Milanese armor in his description of Ricaredo at the court of Queen Elizabeth I? Inventories reveal that Milan produced the most luxurious and prestigious armor. Why is black silk velvet so carefully specified for Leocadia’s dress on the evening of her betrothal in “La fuerza de la san-

² We take our cue from Lisa Tiersten’s review article on the study of consumer culture, in which she finds that both the concept and evaluation of a “consumer culture” have been revised. She notes the work of sociologist Chandrakanta Mukerji, who, in From Graven Images: Patterns of Modern Materialism, has dated the inception and gradual rise of a consumerist culture to fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Europe (121). Tiersten credits the seminal linking of a “fascination with material goods to the spirit of scientific inquiry and the ethos of self-improvement” (120) to Neil McKendrick et al., The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England.
Legal inventories meticulously pinpoint fabric—velvet versus taffeta versus satin—because the socio-economic connotation of each one is different—and important. Leocadia's velvet dress is very expensive, marking her change of status in society.

According to one account, there are thirty-five different kinds of cloth, twenty-four varieties of robes and gowns, twenty-five types of headgear, seven kinds of shirts and bodices, eleven varieties of dresses as well as of stockings and gaiters, thirteen types of breeches, sixteen different types of footgear, and some eighteen different colors mentioned in Don Quijote (Hoffman 82).

What are we to make of this? Should we take it as primary evidence of Cervantes' famed realism, skillfully created by the author's immersion in the quotidian and knowledgeable use of descriptive detail? Yes, of course. Yet conspicuous by their absence are other salient markers that serve to ground a text, such as, for example, descriptions of architectural features or household realia.

Cloth and clothing mattered—a lot. They mattered in England and France, and Spain is no exception. In fact, the Spanish court's taste for precisely these items was common knowledge in political circles, and in 1604 the Tuscan embassy secretary recommended: “To win over these people, nothing is more to the point than extraordinary varieties of cloth-of-gold, and rich and curious fabrics in designs never before seen” (quoted in Goldberg 1: 109); the gifts included “dress lengths, ecclesiastical vestments, upholstery materials and diverse trimmings,” and Spanish commissions of lavish suits of textile furnishings, paramenti from Tuscany, were in vogue among the rich and famous (Goldberg 1: 109).

According to the wills of the autores of plays, costumes were the most highly valued items (Díez Borque 196–203); clothing of value would remain in a family for generations, such as the traditional and priceless wedding dresses defended in the morisco Francisco Núñez Muley's protest against the 1566 edict of Felipe II: “Hay mujer que con un duca do anda vestida y guardan las ropas de las bodas y placeres para tales días, heredándoles en tres y cuatro herencias” (Luis del Mármol, quoted in Arié 138); one of the prisoners in Algiers (Pedro Ponce de Cabrera) seeking rescue
in 1569 stipulates that clothing has been requested as ransom by his captor, and gives explicit instructions as to color, cut, and material (Martínez Ruiz 253). In an assessment of the personal properties of the ducal house of Béjar in 1636, the value of clothing (6,762.5 ducats) is three times more than that of the furniture (2,783 ducats) (Jago 67). In an itemization of expenses for this same family in 1642, the duke of Béjar’s personal spending on wardrobe is 6,000 ducats, an amount equal to all of his “spending money” (Jago 77). We may here recall that in the exemplary novel “El amante liberal,” when Leonisa is captured by Turkish corsairs and put up for sale, the Jewish merchant asks 4,000 doubloons (Novelas ejemplares 1: 183). However, for her apparel, consisting of jewels and a Berber costume, carefully described as an “almalafa de raso verde, toda bordada y llena de trenzillas de oro” he wants 2,000 doubloons. What seems to us a gross overvaluation of apparel as opposed to personhood is adjudged modest by those involved: “en fin, les parecía a todos que el judío anduvo corto en el precio que pidió por el vestido” (1: 185).

Performance on the world’s stage was an expensive enterprise, particularly for the aristocracy. They had to compete in their conspicuous consumption with rapidly rising social groups, such as the letrados, judicial officials, and court nobility, no minor feat when someone like the duke of Lerma had amassed total assets in excess of three million ducats by 1622 (Jago 66–68). The threat, indeed the reality of being outperformed, was very real. And conspicuous consumption was hardly restricted to the upper echelons of society.

According to social historian Beverly Lemire, popular consumerism of the early modern period, “centring first on appropriate apparel,” led to social emulation and competitive spending at all levels of society (255). When Sancho’s family learns of his

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3 Silverware, gold and jewelry, and tapestries and hangings are listed separately, and account for a significant portion of the wealth. In a study of consumer spending in pre-industrial England and America, Carol Shammas shows that furniture did not emerge until the later eighteenth century as an investment item, and then only for the very affluent (172, 209, 293). It would be interesting to see data on this for Spain.
stunning reversal of fortune as governor of Barataria, his daughter’s questions to the ducal page focus on her father’s clothing: is he now wearing calzas atacadas (II, 50; 1041)? Calzas refer to any covering of the legs and includes both stockings and short breeches, but as a fashion item the fascination of calzas atacadas attaches to the startling waste of expensive fabric when it is slashed to allow an underlying and equally valuable fabric to show through. The small prince in the foreground wears calzas in the anonymous painting of 1583–1585 of Felipe II and his daughters (see Figure 1). The expense of these breeches still in fashion during the reign of Felipe III restricted their usage to the moneyed classes (Herrero 73) and would be prohibited by decree and personal example by Felipe IV (Herrero 80). In Sanchica’s bedazzled eyes, Sancho Panza’s shedding of laborer’s gregüescos in favor of such fashionable breeches provided certain evidence of his elevation in rank. “Like mother like daughter”: Teresa’s mind also immediately runs to fashion, and she requests that someone go to

Figure 1. Artist unknown (Spanish, c. 1583–85). The Family of Philip II of Spain. By courtesy of The Hispanic Society of America, New York.
Toledo or Madrid to purchase for her “un verdugado redondo, hecho y derecho, y sea al uso y de los mejores que hubiere” (II, 50; 1042). This “Spanish farthingale,” as it was called, when first introduced in Spain in the middle of the sixteenth century was restricted to court usage, but then became the dress of elegance par excellence. The verdugado had become part of an underskirt by Cervantes’ time, and the structure was usually made of a series of wooden hoops. Its ubiquity in the life of aristocratic women is figured in the painting of Felipe and his daughters. As noted by a costume historian, “Since exertion was difficult for anyone wearing it, the vogue emphasized social distinctions. Peasants and artisans, for example, did without verdugados even for feasts and weddings, and were content with skirts falling in natural folds, sometimes over hip pads” (Reade 7). Peasant women may never have worn a verdugado, but judging from Teresa Panza, they clearly aspired to donning one. Her wildest dreams of affluence have come true, and now that she has it, she is determined to flaunt it: she and Sanchica, presenting themselves “orandás y pomposas en la corte,” will increase Sancho’s power and prestige, or so she imagines (II, 52; 1058). Cervantes’ fine irony captures the absurdity of social emulation via fashion. But there is another interesting facet that emerges: as is typically assumed, fashionable pretensions are here shown to pertain to the feminine domain, but Teresa is by no means merely her husband’s passive “status object.” She (and she alone, quite independently of Sancho) actively constructs the self-image she wishes to display to the world, and assumes the leading role in the identification of the family’s social status: “vendrá a ser conocido mi marido por mí más que yo por él” (II, 52; 1058). Her role is active, although her performance, like all fashionable transactions, is momentary and insubstantial.

For those who could not afford to purchase new clothes, there was always recirculated merchandise. In fact, even those who could afford to buy new items engaged in this practice. For example, upon the accession to the throne of James I after Elizabeth I’s death, his wife Anne of Denmark, in spite of scruples of pride, had Elizabeth’s vast number of gowns altered for her own
use because “nothing new could surpass them.” The practice of giving used clothing to servants is recalled in Don Quijote in the Duchess’s gift to the new governor’s family of a “sarta de corales con estremos de oro” (II, 50; 1038) as well as the previous gift to Sancho of a green hunting outfit, a “vestido de paño finísimo que el gobernador sólo un día llevó a caza” (II, 50; 1039). The second-hand clothing is received enthusiastically, signaling this as a common practice that led to a far wider distribution of fine clothing than one might have anticipated. Sancho, we may recall, immediately took the gift, “con intención de venderle en la primera ocasión que pudiese” (II, 34; 913), but instead sends it home to his wife: the generous amount of material in this “sayo de monte” (Bernis 314) enables it to be refashioned into a “saya y cuerpos a nuestra hija” (II, 36; 931). We may recall here that the clothing proudly purchased by Lazarillo to indicate his new station in life, as an “hombre de bien,” is specified as “ropa vieja,” or used clothing (127), and that his wife is not the only hand-me-down he receives from the Arcipreste de San Salvador, who also gives him “las calzas viejas que deja” (131). Furthermore, we glimpse a bustling trade in stolen clothing in the interstices of some of Cervantes’ works. In “Rinconete y Cortadillo,” one of the thefts reported is that of a “canasta de colar, …llena de ropa blanca…con su cerca nada y todo” (I: 249); one of the galeotes freed by Don Quijote confesses that his crime was being in love—with a “canasta de colar atestada de ropa blanca, que la abracé conmigo tan fuertemente que a no quitármela la justicia por fuerza, aun hasta agora no la hubiera dejado de mi voluntad” (I, 22; 237); the loot robbed by Roque Guinart and his bandoleros includes “vestidos, joyas y dineros” (II, 60; 1124).

Legal or illegal movement of fashionable dress indicates a

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4 Scaramelli to the Doge, 10 July 1603, quoted in Ashelford 59. In Murillo’s edition of Don Quijote, when in the Cueva de Montesinos the enchanted Dulcinea’s cotton petticoat is offered as security for a loan request, the editor indicates that it was common practice to ask for loans of jewelry or clothing from friends or acquaintances, an occurrence not unusual among the women of the Cervantes household (II, 23; 221 n. 21).

5 Unless otherwise indicated, references to Bernis are to her El traje y los tipos sociales en El Quijote.
significant change in society. The enterprising spirit of consumerism allowed the blurring of anyone's ability, quickly and correctly, to differentiate rank by appearance of clothing. The marking of difference was certainly a well-established practice by the early modern period in Europe: the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 had required that Jews be marked by a special sign (not determined) so as to distinguish them from Christians (Hughes 17), a practice carried out rather erratically over the course of the next centuries with the red or yellow cloth circle, with some variations for women (veils and mantles for instance). Prostitutes had long been assigned various degrading sartorial designations, where a clever attempt at reverse psychology required them to wear items of clothing expressly prohibited to honest women in the sumptuary laws, as evidenced in the following 1639 Sevillian dictate titled: Pregón en que su Majestad manda que ninguna muger de cualquier estado y calidad que sea, pueda traer ni traiga guardainfan-te, o otro cualquier instrumento o trage semejante, excepto las mugeres que con licencia de las justicias públicamente son malas de sus personas. Concern about Muslim habit and costume is unique to Spain within the European context. Ironically, if by the fifteenth century royalty and nobility had appropriated elements of Moorish

Hughes recounts instances of both the establishment and abolition of the Jewish sign in Italian states, a practice generalized in the fifteenth century (Lucca being the exception). Its establishment, she notes, can be generally attributed to the influence of Franciscan preaching.

Hughes mentions bright yellow headbands in fourteenth-century Pisa, cheap fustian mantles in fifteenth-century Milan, and in Florence, the requirement that prostitutes attach to their garments the bells usually associated with lepers (25). In Don Quijote, Teresa's skirt ("saya parda") is so short that it seems cut "por vergonzoso lugar" (II, 50; 1036), an allusion, according to Murillo's note, to the punishment meted out to prostitutes referred to in the romance of Doña Lambra (the Infantes de Lara cycle), which was then passed on to the Cid cycle (II, 50; 1036-37 n. 9).

According to Hughes, Siena allowed to prostitutes the "silks, belts and platform shoes that honourable women wanted but that the city's sumptuary law denied them" (25). In a sermon, San Bernardino included the tale of a Sienese woman who, wanting a fashionable dress, had her dressmaker copy a prostitute's costume (26). The trains of ladies' dresses were a subject of much dispute (as "tails," they were adjudged bestial), and the bishop of Ferrara in 1434 prohibited them to all females except for prostitutes (Hughes 26 n. 74).
dress, in particular items of luxury, such as the marlota, used only on special occasions (Bernis, “Modas moriscas” 211–19), in the century following the fall of Granada the morisco population was subjected to stringent sumptuary laws. Thus the condemnation of a morisca by the Cuenca Inquisition: “Y declaramos la dicha Ana de Liñán ser inhábil, y la inhabilitamos para que no pueda traer sobre sí ni en su persona oro, plata, perlas ni piedras preciosas, ni seda, chamalote, ni paño fino, ni otras cosas que por derecho común, leyes y pragmáticas destos reynos e instrucciones del Santo Oficio de la Inquisición, a los semejantes inhábiles son prohibidas.” But as evidenced in Núñez Muley’s protest against the requirements that their women abandon their splendid traditional dress “ricas y de mucha estima,” without the monies to purchase clothing in keeping with Christian usage, the new Christian identity carried with it a concomitant new economic identity: poor, unable to rival the cristianos viejos. These particular sumptuary laws were based not on the moral distinction between bad and good/austere and profligate, but on a socio-economic distinction between high and low, rich and poor. The sign—modesty of dress—may have been the same, but the code was different. It was not to be read morally as “virtue,” but eco-

9 Citation from the Archivo Inquisitorial de Cuenca, file 250, no. 3376 (quoted in Cardaillac 45–46). The paradoxical position is made especially evident in the case of Fray Alonso Chacón: a proponent of mixed marriages between moriscos and cristianos viejos as the best means of assimilation, he also suggested that the state impose “alguna señal de las gorras y sombreros, y ellas en las tocas, como las traen los Judíos en Roma” (Archivo Histórico Nacional, Inquisición, legajo 1791 III, quoted in Cardaillac 44.

10 Mármol Carvajal, quoted in Arié 138.

11 There is evidence that luxurious female clothing continued to be worn, but only, it has been conjectured, within the privacy of the home. In 1566 the wedding dowry of Isabel Romaymia was confiscated, along with the property of her husband, a silk merchant. Two marlotas are recorded in her possession: one trimmed with gold accents and buttons, with velvet sleeves and seed pearls; one in decorated red velvet, which has led to the conjecture that luxury clothing of the moriscas was maintained for house wear (Anderson 217). It is no wonder that avarice was one of the complaints of the moriscos against the Inquisition (Cardaillac 105–08)!

Jewels and their value feature prominently in Cervantes’ description of female Moorish costume (for example in Don Quijote I, 41; 475).
nomically as modesty of means, a manifest degradation from their previous standing. Thus the irritation expressed in an early seventeenth-century romance, “De cómo y por qué el Rey Don Felipe III expelió a los moriscos de España, y de la pena que les causó este destierro” (Romancero general 190-92), against a too-successful Sevillian morisco population. Both men and women are accused of ostentation:

El morisco que ponía
Duro alpargate de esparto,
Ahora trae borceguíes
Argentados alosados,
Vestido de terciopelo
En tafetán aforrado,
Y espada muy plateada,
Y puñal sobresobredorado. (190b)

Y la morisca tendera
Que solía fregar platos,
Saca barretas de plata
En los chapines dorados,
Con gran vestido de seda
Collaretas extremados
Y gran cadena de oro
Eslabones esmaltados... (191a)12

12 By and large the official effort was a success, and by the time of their expulsion in 1609 their impoverished and desultory appearance is invoked by the theologian Pedro Aznar Cardona in his defamatory pamphlet as yet one more reason for the Expulsión justificada de los moriscos españoles (Huesca: Pedro Cabarte, 1612), the title of his work. They are, Aznar Cardona writes: “ridículos en su traje, yendo vestidos por la mayor parte, con gregüesquillos ligeros de lienzo, o de otra cosa valadís al modo de marineros, y con ropillas de poco valor, y mal compuestos adrede, y las mugeres de la misma suerte, con un corpezito de color, y una saya sola, de forraje amarillo, verde o azul, andando en todos tiempos ligers y desembaraçadas, con poca ropa, casi en camisa, pero muy peynadas las jóvenes, lavadas y limpias” (Part II, chapter 10, fols. 32-36, quoted in Caro Baroja 99-100 n. 21).
Marking difference by dress led to an ever-greater suspicion of the legibility of the text as the signs were knowingly manipulated. The Inquisition obsessively read and misread dress signifiers, and whether clean clothes were donned deliberately (or casually, as the accused claimed in their own defense) on a Friday or a Saturday as opposed to a Sunday led to suspicions of crypto-Islam or Judaism; the moriscas dressed “a lo cristiano” in public and hoarded their lavish textiles in secret. Imposters included the poor: “pobres fingidos,” writes Cristóbal Pérez de Herrera, feigned lesions, blindness, crippling; they begged for clothes to cover their nakedness, then sold the clothes given to them (26); a tapada seeking alms turns out to be not a woman, but a man (39); it was discovered that a woman who begged “con vestidos muy viles” (37) had a comfortable home and many possessions (37–38).

Reform measures required that the poor be physically examined by the authorities; then, if warranted, licensed to beg “con una tablilla colgada al cuello” (Pérez de Herrera 57 n. 11) and given shelter. And if these poor souls fraudulently “dressed down” or didn’t dress at all, at other echelons of society people were busily “dressing up” and pretending to be and have more than they did. In the entry for vestidura, Covarrubias ends his dictionary definition (which is, as usual, eccentric), with the observation that: “No es instituto mio tratar de reformaciones, pero notorio es el exceso de España en el vestir, porque un día de fiesta el oficial y su mujer no se diferencian de la gente noble.”

Carmen Bernis’s extraordinarily useful El traje y los tipos sociales en el Quijote (2001) documents apparel included in the kaleidoscopic society that Cervantes represented. That he was aware of what was fashionable is evidenced in the observation that the outfit concocted for the priest by the ventera in his role as dis-
traught princess was completely outdated: the narrator observes with humor that both the saya (petticoat) and the corpiño (bodice) must have been made “en tiempo del rey Bamba” (I, 27; 299). The ironic treatment of Sanchica’s pretentious inquiry about whether her father now sports calzas atacadas in his new position (II, 50; 1041) demonstrates Cervantes’ espousal of what has been called the “ley de la propiedad social” (Herrero 175).

Part II: Textual Portraits.

The discussion will shift now to the consideration of four different scenes in Don Quijote and the Novelas ejemplares. This is a change of focus to the visual.

Our interests here are the particular moments in Cervantine prose when description of attire creates a “freeze frame,” causing a significant pause in narrative pace—moments when, to borrow Marjorie Garber’s felicitous wording, clothing is “textualized” or the “textile...is text and tells a story of its own” (334). Absent from these visual portraits are any individualized facial or corporeal features, which remain idealized and abstract. The focus on costume draws attention to exactly this: that it is a costume, and a costume presupposes a role, and together they constitute a performance. The distancing created by such an awareness provokes the reader to question the role-playing, engendering what may be called a “politics of suspicion.” These are related to, but in excess of the frequent hesitations in Cervantes’ works occasioned by the erasure of clear distinctions of class, race, gender, and national identity, also enabled by the transformative “magic of clothes” (Stallybrass 307). Man or woman (“Las dos doncellas”)?

15 Bernis (285) specifies that what is old-fashioned about this outfit are the "fajas de terciopelo negro de un palmo e anchas, todas acuchilladas," for by the mid-sixteenth century these adornments, plain and in a different color than the dress, had become much more sumptuous and were of the same color as the dress they decorated.

16 Sarah Walker Schroth, in her study of Juan Pantoja de la Cruz (“Re-Presenting Philip III”), characterizes royal portraiture of this period (1598-1621) as one that deliberately eschewed individual features in favor of an abstract, even mask-like representation that served to emphasize the remoteness and inaccessibility of an idealized monarchy.
Spanish or English (“La española inglesa“)? Muslim or Christian (Zoraida in Don Quijote; Leonisa of “El amante liberal“)? Gypsy girl/kitchen maid or damsel of noble birth (“La gitanilla,” “La ilustre fregona“)? All of these are sites of what Garber terms a “category crisis,” defined as the “failure of definitional distinction, a borderline that becomes permeable, that permits of border crossings from one (apparently distinct) category to another” (16).17

In certain of Cervantes’ representations, the visual transaction is itself foregrounded with extraordinary emphasis: looking and being-looked-at are interlocked, riveted to one another in an act of mutual identification. The process is one that Jacques Lacan compares to photography—of being looked at and looking at the same time (Silverman 143).18 Thus the pause, the stillness. The reference to photography is, of course, anachronistic. But the notion of the suspension of action entailed in posing had indeed been conceptualized in the period. Francisco Pacheco, commenting on King Felipe IV’s thraldom to Velázquez, writes: “pero lo que excede todo encarecimiento es que, cuando le retrató a caballo, le tuviése tres horas de una vez sentado, suspendido tanto brío y tanta grandeza” (209). From their position of self-conscious posing, the characters in Cervantes convey contradictory messages. Dissonances, even concealments are mapped on their costumes. A reading of these textile maps can lead us to sites where, it seems to us, the “crisis of categories” is particularly anxiety producing. We will consider images from “La fuerza de la sangre,” “La española inglesa,” and Don Quijote.

17 These are not unique to Cervantes, and the visual language of clothing and color has been deftly analyzed in the Desengaños amorosos of María de Zayas by Amy Kaminsky, to cite but one example. In these examples the disruption of binarisms is temporary, and the ambiguity created by costuming is resolved in narrative closure: either man or woman, master or servant, Muslim or Christian.

18 Silverman refers to the following passage in Lacan’s The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis: “This is the function that is found at the heart of the institution of the subject in the visible. What determines me, at the most profound level, in the visible, is the gaze that is outside. It is through the gaze that I enter light and it is from the gaze that I receive its effects. Hence it comes about that the gaze is the instrument through which light is embodied and through which—if you will allow me se a word, as I often do, in a fragmented form—I am photo-graphed” (106).
“La fuerza de la sangre” provides a salient example of what we may call “sartorial scopophilia”: for the reader, pleasure not so much in the text, as in the textile. Leocadia’s presentation to her husband-to-be is orchestrated as a theatrical spectacle. Preceded by two attendants bearing candles in silver candlesticks and holding her son’s hand, she is richly attired: “Venía vestida, por ser invierno, de una saya entera de terciopelo negro llovida de botones de oro y perlas, cintura y collar de diamantes. Sus mismos cabellos, que eran luengos y no demasiado rubios, le servían de adorno y tocas, cuya invención de lazos y rizos y vislumbres de diamantes que con ellos se entretenían, turbaban la luz de los ojos que los miraban” (2: 166).

The lavish display of diamonds and pearls, supreme symbol of virginity (Ashelford 43, plate 31), the luxury of black velvet, among the most prized of silk fabrics (Bernis 277), are worthy of a court portrait that coincidentally bears resemblance to Sánchez Coello’s 1584 portrait of Felipe II’s daughter by this third wife, Isabel de Valois, the Infanta Catalina Micaela, shortly before her wedding at not quite eighteen years of age (see Figure 2). For Leocadia this splendid costume presents a dramatic contrast to her previous attire. Some seven years before, in her parents’ care after the rape, Leocadia lived quietly, “con vestido tan honesto como pobre” (2: 156). No doubt a gift from her mother-in-law, that wily and extraordinary doña Estefanía, this magnificent outfit is the livery that symbolically marks Leocadia’s passage from a modest hidalgo family to an illustrious and ancient one. Marriage is, of course, always a rite of passage. But in this short novel, class distinctions are emphasized from the first moment, and, for Cervantes, in an unusually judgmental way. Leocadia’s family is noble, but not rich. Rodolfo, on the other hand, is wealthy, and characterized thus:

Hasta veintidós tendría un caballero de aquella ciudad a quien la riqueza, la sangre ilustre, la inclinación torcida, la libertad demasiado y las compañías libres, le hacían hacer cosas y tener atrevimientos que desdeñan de su calidad y le daban renombre de atrevido. (2: 147)
It is implicit that Leocadia's virtue is her dowry, and that it is this virtue that redeems her dissolute fiancé. What is made explicit is Leocadia's "vestimentary 'package'[ing]" (Silverman 145): only when thus adorned can she bridge the hierarchical distinction

Figure 2. Attributed to Alonso Sánchez Coello or Sofonisba Anguissola. Infanta Catalina Micaela, c. 1584. Madrid, Prado Museum.
and be integrated into her new family, a worthy mother to the “ilustre descendencia que en Toledo dejaron” (2: 171).

Another aspect must be considered. In addition to being spectacularized, Leocadia is also sacralized. The probable connection with the martyred Toledan St. Leocadia, whose bones were returned to the city to great pomp and circumstance in 1587, has been established by Alban Forcione (317–97). In this betrothal scene, the analogy is materialized, literally expressed by means of textiles. The processional, candlelit entry and richly adorned dress elicit admiration, but also and more significantly, reverence. Leocadia, with her boy child, assumes the role of an imagen de vestir. They are Madonna and Child, whose lifelessness is enlivened by dressing-up for public display. At the sight of her, “Levantáronse todos a hacerle reverencia, como si fuera alguna cosa del cielo que allí milagrosamente se había aparecido (2: 166). Cervantes’ audience was exposed to statues that were not only painted realistically, but were also dressed in human garments, and in the Subida del Monte Carmelo St. John of the Cross makes it clear that in the sixteenth century this clothing could be opulent (167). 19 Making a parenthesis enclosing the Cervantine world, Fray Bernardino de Villegas in 1635 adds that processional statues are dressed like “women of the world” (quoted in Páramo 22). Although the friars denounce the custom as scandalous and frivolous, they respond to a tradition that was too entrenched to destroy. The practice of clothing Christian statues had existed at least since the Middle Ages, and it was revived in the sixteenth century in defiance of efforts to eliminate it as a sacrilege (Webster 112–29). As the Virgin of the Macarena in Seville famously illustrates (see Figure 3), the ritual of dressing statues continued

19 While affirming the value of devotional images, San Juan de la Cruz criticizes the abuse to which they are subject: “Esto se verá bien por el uso abominable que en estos nuestros tiempos usan algunas personas, que, no teniendo ellas aborrecido el traje vano del mundo, adornan a las imágenes con el traje que la gente vano por tiempo va inventado para el cumplimiento de sus pasatiempos y vanidades, y del traje que en ellos en reprendido visten a las imágenes, cosa que a los santos que representan fue tan aborrecible, y lo es; procurando en esto el demonio, y ellos en él canonizar sus vanidades, poniéndolas en los santos, no sin agraviarles mucho” (167a).
to be validated with costumes that were ever more expensive. Before the creation of this image of the Macarena and her latter-day wardrobe, we know from ecclesiastical documents that sacred sculptures received donations of clothing, as when the Duchess of Albuquerque gave her brocaded dress to make a mantle for the Virgin (Anderson 200). Clothes could have a second life, and symmetrically they could confer a second chance on
their wearers: Leocadia’s status is raised by referencing her as a holy image whose vestments are so noble as to eradicate past dishonor.

A similar spectacularization of the female occurs in “La española inglesa,” when Isabel is presented by her English family to Queen Elizabeth, borne to the palace in a beautiful coach accompanied by a horse-drawn retinue. Only an envious lady of the court takes umbrage to the national dress. Queen Elizabeth, on the other hand, admires everything about Isabel, and historically is known to have worn “diverse attires, Italian, Spanish and French, as occasion served,” and the inventory made at the time of her death records “thirty-one beautiful fans of great worth” (Norris 507). The Queen, described by a contemporary account as “glittering with the glory of majesty and adorned with jewelry and precious gems,” recognized fashion display as a powerful political tool, as exemplified in her portrait commemorating the triumph over the Armada (see Figure 4). The juxtaposition of the lavish costume with the naval battle and emblems of royal dominion illuminates the expressive potential of dress. For example, the envy of the English lady-in-waiting expressed in her dislike of the young Spanish girl’s dress is only thinly disguised national rivalry. For this occasion Isabel was dressed

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\text{a la española, con una saya entera de raso verde acuchillada y forrada en rica tela de oro, tomadas las cuchilladas con unas eses de perlas, y toda ella bordada de riquísimas perlas; collar y cintura de diamantes, y con abanico a modo de las señoras damas españolas; sus mismos cabellos, que eran muchos, ru-}
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20 Both clothes and their donors were surprisingly mobile, as when “garments loaned by profane women” (“vestidos recibidos en préstamo de mujeres profanas”) were also donated to clothe sculptures, to the horror of the synod of Orihuela in 1600 (Crescenciano Saravia, “Repercusión en España del Decreto del Concilio de Trento sobre las imágenes,” quoted in Webster 119).

21 “Buena es la española; pero no me contenta el traje” (2: 55).

22 Comment made in 1577 to Don Juan de Austria by Dr. Thomas Wilson, ambassador for England in Flanders, quoted in Ashelford 36.

23 The Diary of Baron Waldstein, A Traveller in Elizabethan England, quoted in Ashelford 36.
bios y largos, entretiédos y sembrados de diamantes y perlas, le servían de tocado. (2: 54)

Though adorned, her uncovered head proclaims her status as a doncella (Bernis 208). The saya entera, which included a train and was typically Spanish (Bernis 224), was reserved for special occasions and provided certain indication of rank (Bernis 221); the diamonds defining the waist (which was V-shaped) and necklace occur in descriptions of court portraits (Bernis 263). By 1623


24 See "Memoria de los retratos que Bartolomé González, Pintor, ha hecho por mandado del Rey Ntro. Sr. y de orden del Sr. Hernando de Espejo, Caballero de
Spanish dress of the previous decades was considered so lavish that the new government of Felipe IV passed a sumptuary law limiting the use of such precious gems, prohibiting necklaces "de solos diamantes, sino que ayan de llevar, a lo menos otras tantas piedras de diferente calidad, o perlas, como llevaren de diamantes." This same outfit will be worn again towards the end of the story, when Isabela is preparing to enter the convent, with the difference that she enhances the display by adding to it the priceless pearls and diamond ring given to her by Queen Elizabeth ("Salieron a luz las perlas y el famoso diamante" [2: 92]). Again, the crowds feast their eyes on this vision of loveliness, in accord with Isabela's express desire to "ponerse lo más bizarra que le fue posible" (2: 92). If, as Carroll Johnson suggests, the interchangeability of costume "a la inglesa" and "a la española" is to be read as a sign not of opposition but of mutuality, of reconcilable rather than irreconcilable differences (173–77), then we should look again at the remarkable description of Ricaredo's appearance at court, immediately upon landing:

Era Ricaredo alto de cuerpo, gentil hombre y bien proporcionado. Y como venía armado de peto, espaldar, gola y brazaletes y escarceas, con unas armas milanesas de once vistas, grabadas y doradas, parecía en extremo bien a cuantos le miraban: no le cubría la cabeza morrón alguno, sino un sombrero de gran falda, de color leonado, con mucha diversidad de plumas terciadas a la valona;²⁶ la espada, ancha; los tiros, ricos, las calzas, a la esguízara. Con este adorno, y con el paso brioso que llevaba, algunos hubo que le compararon a Marte, dios de las batallas, y otros, llevados de la hermosura de su

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²⁵ Recopilación de las leyes destos reynos hecha por mandado de la Magestad Católica del Rey don Felipe II nuestro señor (Madrid, 1640), Part II: "De los trajes y vestidos," book VII, sect. XII, ff. 237–43, quoted in Bernis 264.

²⁶ Bernis (105) notes an error here, for the hat would be "terciada," not the plumes, and she cites a description of Claudia Jerónima in male disguise, with a "sombrero terciado, a la valona" (II, 60; 112).
rostro, dicen que le compararon a Venus, que para hacer alguna burla a Marte de aquel modo se había disfrazado. (2: 68)

Unskilled as we are in the art of reading armor, we might be unable to grasp the conflicting codes the costume exudes were it not for the reactions of bystanders. Once the Queen has departed, the ladies-in-waiting surround Ricaredo, teasing him about his armor (had he come to fight?) (2: 70) and doubts are raised about the appropriateness of wearing armor at court (2: 71). In addition, Ricaredo is a blond lad, and the insistence on his handsome physique and facial beauty tend to feminize him, as does the staging, which makes him an object of attention, admiration, and desire, a position usually reserved for the female.\(^{27}\)

Before considering the details, some generalizations are in order. By now armor had become ceremonial and iconic. As the science of gunpowder advanced in the course of the sixteenth century, musket balls could penetrate even the best armor, causing it to be abandoned in battle (Karcheski 32–37). In France, musketeers had stopped wearing armor altogether, as though flaunting the superiority of muskets, their nakedness stressing the futility of armor (Blair 144). Also in Spain, armor and edged weapons move into the realm of the metaphorical, as a coded reference to something other than their actual use in battle: an “ideología nobiliaria” (Domínguez Ortiz 24). According to this symbolic system, royalty are to appear in battle with swords, lances, or batons (and thus they are represented), with the bearing of the newly democratic firearms permitted only in the safely elitist context of hunting (Domínguez Ortiz 24).

Portraits from the late sixteenth century forward cite metonymic pieces of armor as part of fashionable dress—a gorget here, a sword belt there, nonsensical as protection but vital as “power dressing.” Nowhere is this better seen than in Pantoja de la

\(^{27}\) Mar Martínez-Góngora discusses the feminization of Ricaredo in relation to the power (both actual and symbolic) wielded by Queen Elizabeth.
Figure 5. Pantoja de la Cruz. Felipe III, 1606. Madrid, Prado Museum.

Cruz’s state portrait of Felipe III of 1606 (see Figure 5), where the gilded, etched, and polished armor is one more modish accessory alongside the fabulously starched ruff, white silk shoes, and straight-line calzas, all of which belong on the palace runway.
rather than on the field of battle. The monarch does hold the baton of command in his right and rests his left on the sword hilt, but with a lightness of touch that communicates his performance as the most elegant courtier of the realm, not as the most seasoned soldier.

Back to “La española inglesa.” The specified Milanese armor is among the most prized, and, because foot and boot pieces are not mentioned, we assume that like Felipe III’s, Ricaredo’s armor is torso only, allowing the fashionable clothes underneath to show in part, as do Ricaredo’s short breeches that were displaced by calzones from before 1600 but retained by royalty and nobility (Bennis, 91). Useless in terms of protection, but symbolically powerful in its flamboyance, the wide-brimmed hat with feathers replaced the helmet around the turn of the century (Bennis 105), and was considered so handsome that the fashion-conscious bandoleros in Don Quijote (II, 60) adopted it as part of their costuming (Bennis 69–72).

The generalized female admiration stated in rather stereotypical terms as “no parece sino que el sol se ha bajado a la tierra y en aquel hábito va caminando por la calle” (2: 71) is located much more precisely and with much less constraint by a little girl, who

Alzáble las escarcelas, por ver que traía debajo de ellas, tentáble la espada, y con simplicidad de niña quería que las armas le sirviesen de espejo, llegándole a mirar de muy cerca en ellas. (2: 71)

If we missed the phallic symbolism of the sword, the child’s peeping under the escarcelas—“el armadura que cae desde la cintura al muslo” (Covarrubias)—surely focuses our attention on the loin and groin area. Covarrubias includes a “cantorcillo de las donzellas, en tiempo de las mayas” in the definition of the alternate meaning of escarcela as “pouch” or esquero: “Echa mano al esquero, cavallero; / Echa mano a la bolsa, cara de rosa.” The eroticism of this ditty is likewise suggested in the girl child’s peeping action, and the mirror-like sheen of the armor showcases the narcissistic aspect of the costuming. The appearance in court in mili-
tary guise is exhibitionistic. This is not surprising in view of the well-documented handsomeness of military dress, which along with ecclesiastical wear was exempt from sumptuary laws. Showy uniforms indicated the prestige in which the profession was held, and, known to be seductive to women, were considered a positive incentive to joining the army (Bernis 88–90). The scene also reiterates the previous iconographical reference to Venus and Mars, with the child and the mirror, citing a pictorial motif common to the Toilette of Venus (see Figure 6). Cervantes evokes the erotic as opposed to the heroic version of Mars, and his playful god was a standard item in the repertoire of educated life. The Duke of Lerma, Felipe III’s favorite, amassed a collection
of paintings between 1604 and 1606, and one of his best known treasures, Veronese's Mars and Venus (see Figure 7) captures a complexity shared by Cervantes' vignette. As Sarah Walther Schroth's analysis of the Veronese points out, "Mar's undressing of Venus is interrupted by Cupid, who has been pushed over by an excited little dog who grabbed her wrist" ("Charles I" 550).

![Figure 7. Veronese (1528-1588). Mars and Venus, n.d. Edinburgh, National Figure Gallery of Scotland.](image)

Dogs in paintings enact both concupiscence and fidelity, and the result here is an interruption of the dalliance via the complicated imaging of desire and innocence. The Mars recalled by Cervantes
and Veronese is not the god of war, but the lover of Venus, adulterous wife of Vulcan, in the brief but memorably hilarious incident recounted in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* (4.169–89), where the couple is exposed flagrante delicto to the laughter of the gods. The imbrication of these two figures, Venus and Mars, would suggest that the message is—to put it in language of the late 1960s: “make love, not war.” Ricaredo’s costuming, like Isabela’s speaks not of hostility but rather of peace.

Armor could be highly polished and workshops included an armor polisher, so thus far the description of Ricaredo’s armor is accurate, but we must read it more thoughtfully and notice how it moves. Thanks to the incorporation of an audience—the laughing women and curious child—we realize that this scene suggests a performance on stage. Furthermore, Ricaredo’s thigh-plates or escarcelas do something that only stage armor could have done. The armor that exists in historical collections does not have thigh plates that are easily maneuverable. It cannot be that Cervantes the military man did not know how correct armor worked. The costume historian Stella Mary Newton remarks on the difference between armor in reality and armor in representation when she states that most armor in paintings is “almost always wildly incorrect from a historical point of view, though there were some painters who recorded with considerable accuracy [emphasis added] of its various parts in movement, and it is through the eyes of these that the theatrical armor of the day can best be observed…. It is not unlikely, indeed, that actual contemporary armor [of the late fifteenth century] was, on occasion, adapted for stage use by the simple addition of a ‘skirt’ made of strips of leather” (116). We suspect that—whether in painting or prose—depictions followed a theatrical model. Though Cervantes writes a century after the Italian paintings Newton has in mind, we believe our Spanish escarcelas follow Italian props in being more mobile on stage than on the battlefield. Cervantes’ scene already represents armor as a quotation from olden days in retro form, a device of fashion and flirtation, and his audience would have known its appearance from plays more than from battle. As Newton remarks, “it is clear that dress which could only be called theatrical did exist and that
it could be recognized by contemporary audiences” (131).

The encounter between Don Quijote and Don Diego de Miranda (II, 16-18) has elicited perhaps more conflictive readings than any other, and his outfit, in particular its color, has been a source of much dispute:

venía sobre una muy hermosa yegua tordilla, vestido un gabán de paño fino verde, jironado de terciopelo leonado, con una montera del mismo terciopelo; el aderezo de la yegua era de campo y de la jineta, asimismo de morado y verde; traía un alfanje morisco pendiente de un ancho tahalí de verde y oro, y los borceguíes eran de la labor de tahalí; las espuelas no eran doradas, sino dadas con un barniz verde, tan tersas y bruñidas, que, por hacer labor con todo el vestido parecían mejor que si fuera de oro puro. (II, 16; 751)

Green has been read symbolically for its erotic overtones (Chamberlin and Weiner); its connotations of “desire, lust, sex,” purportedly reveal him as a pseudo-hunter whose “game is women” (Percas 39). In addition, the green in combination with tawny has been read symbolically for its emblematic connection with fools’ costumes (Márquez Villanueva 219–27), and with the outfits of the court dwarfs and fools (221 n. 102). Subsequent studies (Joly; Gingras), based on costume history and contemporary accounts, have rectified many misapprehensions, and Carmen Bernis’s latest publication reiterates the use of green as typical for travelers’ outfits (43); the footwear, of Moorish origin, was also commonly worn by Spanish horsemen (44). Furthermore, the coordination of the outfit with the harness of the horse is in keeping with the practice recommended in the horsemanship literature of the period, such as Bernardo Vargas Machuca’s Teórica y ejercicios de la jineta (1619): “Los borceguíes, ya todos saben que han de responder al jaez del caballo.”28 It was customary to dress lavishly when a traveler (Bernis 19–21), to the extent that a sumptuary law in 1625 forbade the use of gold and silver in cloth and deco-

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28 Vargas 160, quoted in Bernis 46.
ration “aunque sean de camino” (quoted in Bernis 19). 29

If we may be allowed a seeming digression, we would like to examine this negative critical response to the color green, which received perhaps the strongest condemnation from Márquez Villanueva: “El efecto de conjunto no puede ser así más chillón: don Diego de Miranda viste como un papagayo. La prudencia y miramiento que distinguen al personaje ciertamente se invierten al llegar al terreno de la indumentaria, que le destaca como una llamada de policromia tropical en el seno atusto del paisaje manchego” (220). Márquez Villanueva seems to articulate a position that is almost universal among twentieth-century critics: Diego de Miranda’s costume is so ludicrously coloristic that it is suspiciously un-Spanish. Our conjecture is different. We suggest that we are heirs to a received tradition that has become so naturalized that we do not recognize the cultural politics at its foundation. Simply phrased: green (or any color, in fact) is read today as not-black and therefore problematic as authentic Spanish dress. It is this frozen relation of contradiction that determines the significance for us. While J. C. Flügel’s “Great Masculine Renunciation” analyzes the male shift from opulent dress after the French Revolution, when men renounced their love of self-display, this move took place earlier in Spain. Charles V’s father, Philip the Good, made black a Burgundian fashion color, though its emphatic use can be attributed to its later users, Charles V and Felipe II. Many reasons have been suggested for the adherence to black in the Spanish court (Schneider), made even more pertinent by the fact that Spain, more than any other country, could have made use of a new, cheaper source of red dyestuff from the New World, cochineal, coveted by English and Dutch pirates (Schneider 434). Attacks on color, especially by radical Protestants, were moral and economic—dyeing cloth was expensive and not natural (Schneider 431–33; Gordis 30). In Spain, another


30 Reference is made to the writings of the New Jersey Quaker John Woolman (1720–1772). Gordis points out that his objection to dyes is both literal (they harm
factor can be posited: in the ever increasing drive against diversity, rejection of color signified aggressive dissociation from the Orientalized Muslim, whose splendid, brightly-colored garments had initially been admired and adopted by royalty (McKim-Smith). This cultural politics of color has been transmitted to us principally by means of the visual information provided in the portraiture of kings and nobles. Black is the color of choice for state portraits of Felipe II (see Figure 1), Felipe III (see Figure 5), and Felipe IV (see Figure 8), but historical accounts tell us these kings did wear other colors, as did the Spanish citizenry in general.\footnote{This color coding for royalty is a symbolic gesture, for inventories from the second half of the sixteenth century report that wealthy Spaniards possessed costumes and furnishings of many colors (Bartolomé Arraiza 102–09). In his study of Felipe II, Kamen notes that “By May 1541 Philip…was given permission by Charles to exchange his black garments for more colourful ones, and to wear gold” (8). Felipe also wore red and white for his wedding to Elizabeth (Kamen 223–24), Felipe III was fond of luxury of all types, including the use of color. Although Felipe IV deliberately imitated the austerity of the black court of Felipe II, court documents show that he wore bright hues at times, as in his red and silver costume at Fraga (Pellicer 227). We are grateful to Richard Kagan for reminding us of the relevance of this court chronicle.}

Now that we have added to the already plentiful blue and black ink spilled over the color green, we return to Don Diego de
Miranda, with yet another question, the same one posed by Monique Joly (62): If, in effect, there is nothing scandalous about his outfit, which seems in perfect accord with the fashion of the day, why does Cervantes describe it in such detail? Why indeed? Like Don Quijote himself ("un hidalgo de los de lanza en astille-

Figure 8. Velázquez. Felipe IV, c. 1626-1628. Madrid, Prado Museum.
ro, adarga antigua, rocín flaco y galgo corredor” [I, 1; 35]), he is presented as a type, “un caballero labrador y rico” (II, 18; 772) whose house, as pictured by Cide Hamete but then censored by the translator, is typical of his social type. We know that Don Quijote has constructed a new identity, and thus presents himself to the world. Don Diego’s self-conscious identification of himself, his habits, his beliefs has the quality of a masquerade (Rivière), of scripted expectations. He seems to be performing a role, carefully rehearsed for the intended effect upon his audience, as though schooled by the very media consultants who nowadays “package” political candidates. Thus, we believe, the dis-ease readers experience, because the very discourse of revelation is coterminous with a discourse of concealment. Just as Don Diego’s appearance is emphasized over his “essence,” we know nothing of the interior of his house, only of its exterior: the facade is decorated with a family emblem of nobility above the entryway (II, 18; 771). But in a society so obsessed with lineage, nothing and nobody are above suspicion. The conspicuous foregrounding of this architectural detail occasions doubt: would this family have withstood the scrutiny of a linajudo (professional genealogist), one wonders? The mixed signals imply a contradiction between appearance (perfect Christian gentleman) and a reality we cannot know. Furthermore, even if he is, in fact, a perfect example of a “perfect Christian gentleman,” the juxtaposing of the opposing codes that he and Don Quijote incarnate relativizes and blurs the autonomous security of each one.

Another fashionable appearance in green captures a reader’s imagination—the hunting outfit of the Duchess. Don Quijote encounters the hunting party at a distance, and as he gets closer, his eyes focus on a woman dressed in green, “tan bizarra y rica—

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32 For a study of the power and corruption of these professionals, see Ruth Pike’s study of their role in Seville. In Don Diego de Miranda’s case, the gap in his declaration of faith (II, 16; 755)—he is devoted to Mary and God the Father, but Jesus is conspicuous by His absence—is coincident with the morisco/Muslim negation of the divinity of Christ (Cardaillac 257–308). The visual coding for Muslim includes not only bright colors, boot-style, and riding style a la jineta with short stirrups, also of Moorish origin (Redondo 265–89), but also the type of sword (alfanje), which is an unusual feature (Joly 64 n. 11).
mente” (II, 30; 875) on a white horse with green harness and silver saddle; later, this time hunting wild game, she will again be described as “bizzarramente aderezada” (II, 34; 913) This hunting outfit, identified as a vaquero, of Turkish influence, was the usual hunting outfit for women, worn without a verdugado (Bernis 307–12), and the color green not uncommon. This impressionistic stroke is deft, light and minimal. Its lasting impact on the reader is, one might say, “excessive.” Perhaps the reader clings to this memory because here commences what is, in effect, a novel within a novel, the “Novela de los Duques” according to one critic (Grilli 42)? Perhaps the reader recalls it because, in spite of the salient role of the duchess, no further description is offered? In spite of all the other activities in which she participates, indeed orchestrates, she remains—visually—“la bella cazadora” (II, 30; 874), as the chapter subtitle indicates. In the second scene she is holding an “agudo venablo en las manos” and the hunting costume plus this accessory qualify her as assertive. Her vaquero is not an idle accoutrement in the upper-class sport of hunting: it confers agency, and when the fearful wild boar approaches, Don Quijote and the duke go to confront the beast, “pero a todos se adelantara la duquesa, si el duque no se lo estorbara” (II, 34; 914). A clue to the reader’s mixed reaction to this character is offered by Carmen Bernis’s information that this same outfit is worn by females seeking revenge, armed variously with swords and daggers, cited in plays of both Tirso de Molina and Lope de Vega. It is the outfit of Judith in a wood carving by Pedro de Mena, as well as of Salomé in a painting of the decapitation of St. John the Baptist by Ambrosio Martínez (Bernis 309–10). The potential

33 Bernis (308) cites the following verses concerning preparations for hunting from Tirso de Molina’s La república al revés: “Camila, dame el vaquero / de verde y hojas de plata.”

34 The works cited by Lope are Don Lope de Cardona, El conde Fernán González, La boba para los otros y discreta para sí; the work by Tirso is Quién habló, pagó. The choir stall carving is in the Málaga Cathedral; the painting, “La degollación de San Juan Bautista” (1619), is in the Concepción Francisca Monastery in Toledo. Citing an earlier article by Carmen Bernis on the association of the vaquero with arms (“El traje de la duquesa cazadora”), Grilli concludes: “Esto ayuda a insinuar un papel más abiertamente embestidor por parte de la Duquesa” (50 n. 18).
danger lurking beneath the riveting facade is hinted at in doña Rodríguez’s metaphor describing the duchess’s beautiful skin “que no parece sino de una espada acicalada y tersa” (II, 48; 1021). The duchess can remain a fantasy figure only when dressed, and costume is detachable. Beneath her skirts are to be found, according to the dueña, “dos fuentes que tiene en las dos piernas, por donde se desagua todo el mal humor de quien dicen los médicos está llena” (II, 48; 1022). The castration anxiety hinted at in the knife metaphor is fully mobilized by the vision of oozing wounds. Judith and Salomé are indeed lurking in the background.

Fashionableness itself, associated with rank and money and in these examples inscribed in the color green, may be construed as being in and of itself suspect: “All that glitters is not gold,” as Cervantes so artfully exemplified in “El casamiento engañoso.” Fashion is notoriously unstable. Although, as we have seen, the dress code demanding black was relaxed during the much more ostentatious reign of Felipe II (to which Cervantes’ text corresponds), it was reinstated by Felipe IV in a very self-conscious rejection of the court of his predecessor and realignment with that of Felipe II, and green was a casualty. A decree was issued in 1633 ordering an inspection of all the paintings of the King and Queen in public places and artists’ studios for appropriate decorum. One of the corrections ordered is a dictamen (no. 53, dated 1633): “Y uno de los dichos retratos grandes, del Rey Nuestro Señor, que está con calzones y medias verdes, se ha de borrar el color del vestido, y hacerle decente” (“Dictamen” 236). Fashion can bring great pleasures—an appreciation of tactile and visual beauty, exhibitionistic release, ego enhancement, cre-

35 Called by Rico “término de comparación común” in a note on the same page. In this context it forms part of a cluster of negative signs.

36 The control of royal imagery was a concern also of Elizabeth I of England’s regime. A decree was issued in 1563 condemning the “errors and deformities” of the circulating visual representations (paintings, engravings, prints) and requiring that all representations follow an approved “perfect patron and example.” Obviously difficult to enforce, the decree was reiterated in 1596, and all objectionable likenesses were to be collected and destroyed (Montrose 108–09).
ative playfulness. It can also be the cause of psychic pain for an individual (we recall the shame experienced by Don Quijote in the ducal palace when he notices the run in his green stocking). For a society such as Cervante’s, fashion can become a site of anxiety, so poignantly characterized by Jacques Lacan and Vladimir Runoff: “Anxiety, as we know, is always connected with a loss... with a two-sided relation on the point of fading away to be supplanted by something else, something which the patient cannot face without vertigo. This is the realm and nature of anxiety” (273). When nations and religions are capable of ever greater commingling (“La española inglesa”), when boundaries of rank collapse in the face of social mobility (“La fuerza de la sangre”), when aristocratic privilege becomes divorced from any ethical imperative (the Duke and Duchess), when nobility is reduced to prescribed attitudes rather than actions (Don Diego de Miranda), an old world order is waning, and mourned for. It is giving way to a new world order, as yet unknown—and feared. All these ruptures are inscribed in the sartorial system. If read symptomatically, as signifiers of a particular place and moment in history, cloth and clothing do more than act as material texts that parallel Cervantes’ narrative. Reading for costume reveals something unnoticed in Don Quijote and the Novelas ejemplares. Cervantes rarely describes clothing in detail. But when he does, the action stops. Readers have sensed that something vertiginous is happening when the mysterious Caballero del Verde Gabán appears, when the Duchess’s aural hunting panorama opens before our gaze, when Leocadia processes into a transfigured life. To this list of charismatic scenes we now add Ricaredo’s comedic sketch in “La española inglesa,” where his half-armor is laughably stylish yet reminiscent of the glory days of empire that Spaniards recognized as disappearing into the past (Elliott 213–86). In all these performances, clothing is described in a detail that is suddenly too vivid. Time is suspended. The narrative disappears and is replaced by an experience that is visual. These performances mark a loss, which is compensated for by the intense and lingering aesthetic pleasure of freezing what is mobile, and seeing it in slow motion. Fashion is transitory, but we surrender to its mo-
mentary splendor in order to experience an illusion of permanence. Inventories record the opulence of the garments worn by the performers in Cervantes' world and stress the enormous importance of dressing up. Sumptuary laws document a longing for a fixed and comprehensible world. But Cervantes' text, by the fact that it allows us to glimpse this consumer's paradise for a little too long, reminds us that it is slipping away before our fascinated eyes.

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List of Figures