

*Routledge Studies in Latin American and Iberian Literature*

# **INVENTING THE ROMANTIC DON QUIXOTE IN FRANCE**

**JANSENISTS, ROUSSEAU, AND  
BRITISH QUIXOTISM**

Clark Colahan



# Inventing the Romantic Don Quixote in France

Cervantes' now mythical character of Don Quixote began as a far different figure than the altruistic righter of wrongs we know today. The transformation from mad highway robber to secular saint took place in the Romantic Era, but how and where it began has just begun to be understood. France and England played major roles, but, contrary to earlier literary historians, Pascal, Racine, Rousseau and the Jansenists scooped Henry and Sarah Fielding. Jansenism, a persecuted puritanical and intellectual movement linked to Pascal, identified itself with Don Quixote's virtues, excused his vices, and wrote a game-changing sequel mediated by the transformative powers of a sorcerer from *Commedia dell'Arte*. As an early Romantic, Rousseau was attracted to the hero's fertile imagination and tender love for Dulcinea, foregrounding the would-be knight's quest in a play and his best-selling novel, *Julie*. Sarah Fielding reacted similarly, basing her utopian novel *David Simple* on the Jansenist concept of quixotic trust in others. Colahan here reproduces and explains for the first time the extremely rare original illustrations of the French sequel to Cervantes' novel, and documents the fortunes in French culture of the magician at the heart of the Romantic Quixote.

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revolutionary historian,  
source of light and warmth.**



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# Preface

The initial British reaction to the French revolution was primarily one of shock and fear, but half a century later, when in 1859 Charles Dickens published his widely read and now classic novel set in both Paris and London, *A Tale of Two Cities*, recognition of the dreadful situation of the poor and a heartfelt desire for thorough-going social change had softened the terror in many English hearts. The violence of the 1848 social upheaval and its repression by the ruling class, echoing and renewing fears of the post-revolutionary chaos in France that Napoleon had been able to calm only through reliance on years of warfare, spread renewed apprehension throughout Europe. But the call for reform to end the abuses of the class system that for centuries had condemned the poor to perpetual suffering had grown louder and more insistent. There was an emotional split in Britain that Dickens eloquently captured, not only metaphorically in his title, but in his novel's famous opening paragraph:

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair.<sup>1</sup>

Little did I realize when so many years ago I first read that effective appeal to reflection and emotion that my growing interest in *Don Quixote* and its origins in Arthurian romance would lead me to dig among the roots of the famous revolution whose consequences are still with us today in the global village.

For the last quarter of a century the international research team called GREC, based in Spain and publishing research on Cervantes' writings and their international reception over the years, has with a collective twinkle in their eye cordially invited me to join their band of primarily Spanish scholars. The team is based at the University of Oviedo, in the northwestern Celtic region of Spain, and has historically concentrated on translations and adaptations of *Don Quixote* done in the seventeenth

and eighteenth centuries in other European countries. Most recently, though still several years ago now, I was led onto a winding path taking me into the largely unexplored woods – at least unexplored by me – of French intellectual and religious non-conformists called Jansenists and earlier Italian magicians out of *Commedia dell’Arte* considered cousins to Merlin but surprisingly connected with Cervantes, too. Hints about which way to go in the forest had already turned up in my previous research on several French authors who had written a novel or tales grounded in Cervantes. Among them are two, Madame Le Givre de Richebourg and Marie-Catherine D’Aulnoy, whose Early Modern feminism resonates with that prominent in the Jansenist sequel to Cervantes’ novel.

GREC’s director, Emilio Martínez Mata, made me aware that there remained one more early French translation of *Don Quixote*, complemented by a long sequel, still in need of a thorough study. How could that be at this late date? That absence struck me as especially remarkable due to an unexpected circumstance: the translation and sequel had been the standard French version throughout all of the eighteenth century. As I got into the book’s thickly packed episodes and themes, I could glimpse story elements that I had not encountered in the *Quixote* rewrites previously studied, but familiar to me in the English adaptations I had encountered most of my life.

This, it dawned on me, was the earliest spring blossom of the Romantic Don Quixote, a literary character not only funny, full of satire and slapstick, but a cultural icon committed to random acts of kindness undergirded with altruistic rhetoric and a melancholy sadness for the world’s injustices. This was the novel, nearly full-blown or at least well into bud, acclaimed by the world’s 100 most successful novelists twenty years ago, who voted Cervantes’ masterpiece humanity’s greatest novel. As pointed out in the *Harvard Gazette* (April 25, 2016), the book has been translated into more languages than any other except the Bible, and it appeared likely to me that many, if not most of those versions bore the same comic-tragic tone of their early eighteenth-century French predecessor. That sequel, which throughout the Enlightenment was quietly attached to the original story as though Cervantes had written it, too, suddenly began to seem the genome of a literary archetype and myth.

More discoveries kept coming. Blaise Pascal’s seventeenth-century philosophical ideas, as read by his fellow Jansenist intellectuals (political and religious rebels against Louis XIV), were the conceptual cornerstone that in France made possible the idealization of the intermittently crazy, always comic and sometimes inspirational Spanish social climber. The sect’s translation and sequel drew disapproving reactions from the Enlightenment’s major writers, notably Voltaire and Diderot, but the revolutionary social theorist Jean-Jacques Rousseau affirmed as something positive the strong Jansenist influence he had received in his youth.

He wrote a play drawing directly on the sect's reading of Cervantes, extolling quixotic loving kindness over clever deceit. Later, in his best-selling Romantic novel *Julie, or the New Eloise*, he created a tragic ending mirroring the death of Don Quixote as it had been reimagined in the somber Jansenist sequel.

Since Romantic quixotism arrived substantially earlier in France than in England, I surmised it might have come from France. I was wrong. The British, somewhat later, developed their own homegrown variety of the altruistic hero, now long well-known to readers of Henry Fielding and more recently rediscovered in the writings of Sarah Fielding. It was, once again as in France, a story of utopian dreams tinged with melancholy. Finally, to my wide-eyed surprise, it became apparent that the two streams of adaptation of *Don Quixote* had come together in Rousseau's *Julie*, with a foretaste of the high hopes and the tragedy of the Revolution.

I did not so much discover these connections, as they pulled me from one to the next. The Jansenist *Don Quixote* is very little known outside the Francophone world. There is no English or Spanish translation. A Spanish member of GREC was planning on doing one, but to date it has been impossible. In 2012 I published an article on the subject, and in 2020 a book, though one containing much less material than this one; both were written in Spanish and published in Spain.

To verify the wide French-language readership of the novel and sequel, I searched the catalogs of the Cervantes Project at Texas A and M University and the French National Library. Sixty-seven editions turned up, and publication data was collected. To evaluate the visual impact of the sequel, I searched, again in the Texas Cervantes project but also on a Spanish-language website, for the rarely seen illustrations that accompanied it. The ones I have used include all of them published in the three competing first editions of 1713, plus some from other later editions for comparison. My reading of the sequel enabled me to provide the first captions that identify and comment on the action depicted.

A third digital tool enabled me to discover more previously unknown aspects to the sequel, tracing over three centuries the print and film footprints in France of a central character, the magician and Don Quixote's mentor Parafaragaramus. Taken from Gallica on the website of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, the amazingly abundant entries show how the sorcerer's public image evolved all the way from his role as moral guide, helping to write the constitution of Pennsylvania, to Méliès' mad scientist destroying the earth and the moon. Yet a fourth technologically-assisted breakthrough came in the form of an on-line symposium I organized with leading commedia dell'arte scholars in the US and Britain. Their expertise and specially conducted research enabled us to identify and characterize the magicians in that genre that served as the model for Parafaragaramus.

All journeys of exploration require back-up, whether to the moon with help from Houston or into the mind of a seventeenth-century Jansenist with help from scholars who had already wondered about the behavior and *raison de être* of Renaissance wizards. John Achorn, Oliver Crook, and Arne Zaslove, after years of energetic rolling in the theatrical long grass of *commedia dell'arte*, improvisational theatre and its sometimes dimly glimpsed roots, eagerly picked up my gauntlet to explain the mysteries of those sorcerers and what they have to do with semi-numinous cultural presences like Harlequin and Mother Goose. My thanks to them, and to Joan Schirle, the founding artistic director of Dell'Arte International School of Physical Theatre in Blue Lake, California, who generously brought them all together online to share their magical knowledge with me.

Prof. Martínez Mata, as director of GREC and the research teams from which it evolved, has pioneered an international group approach to exploring and mapping the evolution of Quixote translations, interpretations and adaptations over the centuries and through many nations. His colleague at the University of Oviedo, María Álvarez Álvarez, did an extraordinary job with her edition of the earlier, shorter Spanish version of this book, helping bring together its far-flung elements that kept emerging from the stone as I chipped away at it – or rather watched it growing. And at the same Spanish university, Elisa López Padilla did the great majority of the translation from English into a current Spanish that should have a long shelf life. I am grateful for all their valuable assistance.

In Britain, the editorial board of the *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* early on stimulated my interest in the concept of Don Quixote as a holy man by responding with graciousness and intellectual curiosity as a lead-in to publishing my manuscript of an article finding the links between *Don Quixote* and a historical saint from the exact same part of La Mancha, the plains of Montiel, who had never before made it onto the radar screen of literary criticism. Their queries added balance and guidance in discovering a new dimension to Cervantes' unusual hero.

### Note on the illustrations

Many of these images are engravings made for Filleau de St. Martin's and Challe's sequel to Cervantes' novel; they appeared in the first complete edition of all six volumes, which was published in Paris simultaneously by three companies in 1713. Many are unsigned and now little known. Some illustrations from these and later editions I have taken from Biblioteca Digital Hispánica, a website operated by Spain's National Library.

The majority, however, come from The Cervantes Project at Texas A and M University, available on their website ([cervantes.dh.tamu.edu/V2/](http://cervantes.dh.tamu.edu/V2/)

[CPI/index.html](#)), where there is an excellent collection of illustrations from many editions of Cervantes' work. There is an explanation in each case of what earlier engravings may have been imitated. However, the compilers could not identify in the French sequel the episodes depicted, the chapter involved, or even what is happening. My use of the illustrations, here placed individually near the commentary in the text on the relevant chapters and accompanied by explanatory captions, is intended to supply that missing information. They are also useful because they show what subject matter publishers and illustrators chose to emphasize.

The most famous French illustrator of *Don Quixote* is Charles-Antoine Coypel (1694–1752). He was the court painter and director of the Académie Royale. In 1715 he was commissioned to make a series of cartoons for Gobelín tapestries, illustrating the novel. He did most of them between 1725 and 1740. Moving in an aristocratic milieu, he clearly found compatible the integration of Don Quixote and Sancho into the upper crust's elaborate style of entertainment, a fundamental element of the narrative that the writers of the sequel took from the original and expanded. It apparently was not deemed useful to remind readers at the time that Cervantes' Don Quixote left the chateau of the Duke and Duchess out of a sensible rejection of the place's empty search for diversion, which sometimes verged on the cruel.

On the contrary, Coypel filled his pictorial spaces with elaborate, florid decoration celebrating the splendor of the exalted company, the settings they inhabit, their stylish attire, and both how pleasant it is to laugh at the lower classes and the novel's growing acceptance into the literary canon by society's elite. The illustrations I have selected, for the most part, are the work of earlier artists, many living farther north in Europe, and presenting a more down-to-earth view. For details on Coypel's approach to the Quixote legend and his influence, see the study by González Moreno and Urbina.<sup>2</sup>

## Notes

1. Dickens, Charles, *A Tale of Two Cities*. New York: Walter J. Black, 1964 [1859], p. 1.
2. González Moreno, Fernando, and Eduardo Urbina: "Don Quichotte conduit par la Folie: la herencia de Charles-Antonio Coypel en las ediciones ilustradas del Quixote," *Anuario de Estudios Cervantinos* 4 (2008): 23–66.

# Synopsis

The growth of an archetypal myth is complex, so for the sake of clarity this synopsis is presented as an evolution of ideas and events. *Don Quixote* (1605, 1615) is a comic satire of an insanely overambitious social class. However, in the years on the chronological border between the Enlightenment and Romanticism the protagonist was reshaped to be an altruist, a secular saint who models new forms of exemplary behavior to be imitated by those wishing to rise in social and moral standing.

- 1 This transformation began early in the history of the novel, already in Cervantes' Part 2. There the hero shifts his role models from chivalric champions, often Amadís of Gaul, to pillars of Christian tradition, especially St. Paul.
- 2 In Spain, chivalric romance and hagiography had a strong tradition of fusing to become a unified guide to admirable conduct.
- 3 Generically, the novel is primarily a parody, in Part 1 of tales of chivalry, while in Part 2 saints' lives are parodied as well. Like all parodies, though, it retains an element of respect for those exaggerated forms of behavior that are targeted. By the dawning years of Romanticism, the latter element became dominant.
- 4 This transformation of the protagonist's moral worth became pronounced in France a half-century earlier than in England. Historical circumstances explain this time-lag.
- 5 French Jansenists felt akin to Don Quixote, since like him they were persecuted as eccentric non-conformists who proclaimed utopian ethical ideals. Jansenists chose to focus on his uplifting rhetoric rather than his often contradictory and counter-productive behavior.
- 6 Jansenists wrote a translation and a long sequel to Cervantes' novel. It immediately became the standard edition in French throughout the eighteenth century.
- 7 Jansenists interpreted the ontological ideas of their co-religionist Blaise Pascal to mean that trust in others, especially traditional figures of veneration both biblical and chivalric, was a wise guide to



- conduct and to understanding life in general. Hence the growing popularity of Don Quixote as a student and practitioner of ethics.
- 8 Jansenists believed that members of the middle and lower classes, such as Don Quixote and perhaps even Sancho, through vigorous striving for moral excellence, at least in principle could achieve the standing of honorary aristocrats. However, the Jansenist pessimistic view of the flawed human condition led to a tragic sense of life, something which tinged with sadness the originally farcical Don Quixote.
  - 9 The two authors of the Jansenist sequel invented a magician, Parafaragaramus, who acted as a moral guide and disciplinarian for Don Quixote and Sancho. He was modeled on magicians in Italian *Commedia dell'Arte* who functioned in the same way.
  - 10 Parafaragaramus took on great popularity in French culture, perceived as a sort of alter ego to his former pupil, Don Quixote. His evolution through the eighteenth, nineteenth and into the twentieth century reflects changing social attitudes toward magic, agency, and moral guidance in the tradition of Don Quixote.
  - 11 Rousseau, deeply influenced by Jansenism in his formative years, wrote a short play, "*Harlequin in love in spite of himself*," *Arlequin amoureux malgré lui*, featuring Parafaragaramus, the same magician created in the Jansenist sequel to *Don Quixote*. This avatar, however, is not benevolent, but uses knowledge as power for selfish ends. As an alternative, Rousseau proposes trusting love relationships like the one Jansenists extolled in Don Quixote's attitude toward Dulcinea.
  - 12 In England a different perception of Cervantes' protagonist as a model of virtue developed, one centered on social harmony and civility. In reaction to the country's civil war and religious conflicts, as well as the correlated dominance of empiricism, this virtue was envisioned in secular terms.
  - 13 Two of the earliest English writers who enriched the concept of Don Quixote as eccentric but exemplary citizen were Corbyn Morris, in his *Essay towards Fixing the True Standards of Wit, Humour, Railery, Satire, and Ridicule*, and Henry Fielding, in his game-changing novel *Joseph Andrews*. The latter put into a fictional narrative Addison and Shaftesbury's theoretical program of taking the novel's social satire out of a political context and into the realm of the aesthetics of humor, but at the same time demonstrating that such a protagonist can be a model of civic virtue.
  - 14 Sarah Fielding, also stressing moral character, shared her brother's idealization of Don Quixote, but took it a step further. She expanded the Cervantine use of interpersonal trust among individuals within a four-person circle of friendship and love. In her novel *David Simple* (1744), widely read in England and France, she describes groups of

friends who fail or thrive in accordance with such quixotic behavior. Arguably, she draws on that same concept as used by Cervantes in his famous interpolated story of Cardenio.

- 15 In *Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse*, “*Julie, or the new Eloise*,” which was written in the 1750s and like *David Simple* contains several references to *Don Quixote*, Rousseau describes a utopian attempt, parallel to the one imagined by Sarah Fielding, to create a circle of friends based on mutual trust and self-sacrifice.
- 16 In contrast with the happy outcome to Cardenio’s tale of love and friendship within a closely knit group, and the similar story in *David Simple*, Julie is unable to control her feelings and actions and so welcomes death. The circle of trust breaks, just as it does in the conclusion to the Jansenist *Don Quixote* when the suffering protagonist chooses hatred and death over love for Dulcinea. This tragic outcome of failed aspirations within a utopian community expresses the melancholy of the Romantic Don Quixote’s dashed hopes.



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# Introduction

## A pragmatic approach to a complex archetype

Literary historians studying translations and adaptations of *Don Quixote* in the English- or French-speaking world have, understandably, often been more familiar with the developments in either England or France, rarely both. I am reminded of Franco Moretti's concept of "distant reading," with his enthusiastic vision of "a truly collective effort, like literary history has never seen." But critics like Carolyn Lesjak stress the importance of the essential second step, the synthesis of accumulated data. Along with that consideration must be factored in the equally important correlation that analysis necessarily outweighs synthesis by far. We can add that any grand synthesis based on what satellite information gathering calls "remote sensing" has the hermeneutic advantage of a broad focus but presents the inverse danger of misunderstanding individual cases that are essential to getting the big picture right. An equivalent critical dilemma is a reality for any approach to *Don Quixote*, one of the world's most widely read and studied novels.

The critic and literary historian Jean-Paul Sermain has recently taken a big step forward in the identification of contacts between England and France, the cultures that have produced the largest number of literary works shaped by and shaping the myth of the protagonist. But an introductory review, a state of the question, regarding what critics have concluded about the cultural artefacts created on both sides of the Channel, is clearly useful. It points, for example, to how and why the now canonical novel became popular two generations earlier in France, and what was done differently with it.

This study is limited to the roots and development of an altruistic, self-sacrificing Romantic Don Quixote. For that reason, it does not get into the details of two well-known French avatars from the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. One is Lesage's widely read but diametrically opposed interpretation of Don Quixote's character. Assaf points out that Lesage played a role in making the picaresque genre a literary fashion throughout Europe. He wrote, in addition to his adaptation

## 2 Introduction

of Fernández de Avellaneda's spurious sequel to Cervantes' novel (which greatly irritated the literary father of the hero), many novels whose content has been characterized as pseudo-Spanish.<sup>1</sup> Although Lesage's adaptation of Avellaneda's version of *Don Quixote* is not examined here, I do look at Lesage's indirect connection to the Jansenist sequel to *Don Quixote* through his comic use of magicians in *Le Diable boiteux*, "*The Devil on Two Sticks*."

The other frequent French rewriter of Cervantes is Marivaux, who produced three adaptations of *Don Quixote* in the years 1712–1715. In his early works, such as *Le Don Quichotte Moderne*, "*The Modern Don Quixote*," he created characters who, like the magician in the Jansenist sequel to *Don Quixote*, manipulate plot twists for their entertainment value. However, he shared with the contemporary English critic, Addison, a primary stress on the aesthetics of the narration instead of strongly delineated characterization. He represents a different turn in the flow of the evolution of the Quixote myth, since, along with Diderot and other contemporary French novelists, he did not follow the Jansenist and later Romantic approach. That would consist, as Sermain has put it, in turning Cervantes' book into a fable that illustrates idealism and the impossibilities it crashes into. Marivaux rejected that interpretation and the manner of reading that it implies. Seizing on the unsatisfactory conclusion found in the Spanish original, unsatisfactory in that the hero repents of all the high-flown rhetoric with which the reader has come to identify, instead he focuses on the "ensemble of the novel's moments, scenes, discussions or stories and considers each one of them as the expression of a point of view.... They foreshadow what twentieth-century criticism has sought to recover in *Don Quixote* by using the term 'perspectivism.'"<sup>2</sup> A far cry from the Romantic avatar of the tale.

Nor do I, with one exception, trace the destinies of the characters in Cervantes' novel who appear in interpolated tales and have little to do with either Don Quixote or Sancho, even when they were for some decades imitated and adapted as the two central characters themselves. Instead, this book considers primarily the Don Quixote who is mad in only a clearly admirable way – a view still often encountered in the culture surrounding our readers. Dale Wasserman's 1966 musical play and subsequent film *Man of La Mancha* will come to mind for many. An excellent recent book on this aspect of the Quixote myth is Ziolkowski's *The sanctification of Don Quixote: from hidalgo to priest*. While it analyzes works written in England and Russia, it does not look at France or its many approaches to the myth of Don Quixote. To fill this gap in cultural history, a close look at the Jansenists is needed. In the 1670s they were still a fairly recent religious and intellectual sect, Puritanical and independent-minded though considering themselves part of Catholicism. They contributed much to the intellectual and literary life of the nation, and one of their leading members, Filleau de Saint-Martin, produced

the eighteenth century's standard French translation and, together with Robert Challe, a sequel to Cervantes' novel. Still, they have not been credited with shaping the myth of Don Quixote we know today – and having done it earlier than any other stream flowing into Romanticism.

### **The Gallic Don Quixote: a little orientation on the state of the question**

Jean-Paul Sermain's compendious study of French quixotism in the period of 1660–1710 devotes carefully organized attention to the philosophical and stylistic elements of literary works by a large number of authors, including a section on the protagonist's evolving personality. In the 1670s Don Quixote was in one case ingenuously portrayed as a victim of a cruel world, though he was one much less accomplished and virtuous than in the contemporary Jansenist version. In contrast, critics Démoris and Lafon, focusing on the link between Pascal and Quixotism in France, stress that the philosopher 'recognized that instead of making fools wise, folly could make them happy, setting up pathways between imagination and emotion that announce the future.' These critics characterize folly in religious terms that recall Erasmus' *In Praise of Folly*: 'These diverse experiences connected more or less directly with an experience of the divine.'<sup>3</sup> That approach, a counter current still alive during the Enlightenment, now needs to be completed with the recognition that, for many thinkers of Pascal's time, God's communications in the past, not just new ones in the present, were regularly accessed through veneration of traditional scripture thought to have bridged the gap between the human and the divine many generations earlier.

These elements in the evolution of the figure of Don Quixote might be outlined in something slightly resembling a Euclidian proof. Pascal and DQ's shared search for ontological bases > the individual's Imagination (genius) and/or sacred scripture (biblical or chivalric) > truths distinct from and more emotionally sustaining than logical manipulation of sensory data ("le coeur a ses raisons", 'the heart has its reasons') > Jansenism as philosophically grounded by Filleau de la Chaise's emotional, spiritual reading of Pascal > Don Quixote morally improved by trust in chivalric scripture and the personages it contains (especially Dulcinea) > sequel writers Saint-Martin and de la Chaise connect chivalric scripture to the concept of virtue > Q.E.D. Pascal became linked to DQ.

This line of reasoning regarding the bases of knowledge and of moral improvement is not appreciated by Sermain, who on occasion describes Don Quixote as the most famous case of a pathological visionary, someone who replaces reality with what he wants. But the critic recognizes the mindset of the seventeenth century by affirming that the story's hero can be seen as a soldier of Christ who instructs the nobility on how they should play their role in Christian and feudal society. This second reference to

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Erasmus is to his *Enchiridion, The Handbook of a Christian Knight*. Written in 1501, it became one of Erasmus' most influential works.

Sermain sees parallels to *Don Quixote* in Dassoucy's autobiographical *Adventures*, which as early as 1677 had focused on the protagonist's suffering as a libertine.<sup>4</sup> The narrative does not mention Don Quixote or Cervantes, and can be related to the Spanish novel only in the general sense of portraying a self-centered character who wishes to be considered on a par with a saint or literary hero. Dominique Bertrand, however, points out that the tale's claims to victimization by society vacillate between a tone of triumph over persecution and the use of transparent irony: 'The triumphal discourse is in part undermined by an internal parody of the 'glory' of a saint in hagiography or heroes in novels.... The narrator doesn't stop attributing his survival, not without irony, to the effects of Providence and God's justice.'<sup>5</sup> Dassoucy focuses not on a heroic effort to become a virtuous knight, but, using the self-serving tone typical of picaresque narrators posing as victims, claims to have found the inner resources to survive a series of near fatal consequences, but they clearly resulted from a reckless lifestyle. There are clearer parallels, connections of both theme and plot, to the Jansenist sequel in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, which is focused on developing virtue and was first published the same year as Saint-Martin's translation. For Jansenists and for Bunyan, the blame for suffering lies not in the world but in the human failure to strive for righteousness with sufficient heroism.

Fifty years later, thanks to Saint-Martin and Challe, Don Quixote had become such a well-known figure that other interpretations began to appear in the 1720s. In at least one case, "*The Story of the Brave Knight Patapon*," *L'Histoire du brave chevalier Patapon* (1723), the serious view was playfully mocked by De Mailly.<sup>6</sup> The peasant Patapon consistently does good within his very limited capabilities, comically finding himself rewarded with women and money. It is a parody of a baroque novel, in which all of Don Quixote's and Sancho's self-centered dreams come true. While it is true that a great number of readers of the time opted to believe in the idealism of the hero's grand rhetoric, but they were not all. It was still published into the nineteenth-century, with the more descriptive title of "*The Comic Story of the Brave Knight Patapon, the Famous Hunter*," *Histoire amusante du brave chevalier Patapon, fameux chasseur*. The publisher knew that the tale had become something of a comic classic, and wanted to jog book buyers' memories.

De Mailly, however, is best remembered for his fairy tales. The tale of Patapon, in addition to being a parody of *Don Quixote*, was part of the cultural shift of these years toward valuing highly imaginative stories and giving special prominence to fairy tales. Though depicting the sufferings of social groups often oppressed, notably women, they provided hope and the inspiration of happy endings.<sup>7</sup> The evident link to quixotic idealism, provided the emphasis on heroic striving to improve the world

could be maintained in spite of the novel's melancholy ending, stands out in the writings of Catherine-Marie D'Aulnoy (1650–1705). Although not focused in any of her works primarily on Don Quixote, she explicitly endorsed him and his impractical way of life with nostalgia, inserting him prominently in the frame story of her "*The New Gentleman*," *Le nouveau-gentilhomme*.

Flying in the face of the fact that during the Enlightenment the mentally unstable pretend knight was often considered as anything but a good model for behavior, these fairytale writers illustrated the change toward an increasingly less satiric and more sentimental manner that appreciated the finer qualities of Cervantes' hero. These women's praise of traditional medieval narratives as the conduit of moral values between generations coincides with the somewhat earlier view of Don Quixote initiated by the Jansenists as an exemplary ethical traditionalist. Barchilon has documented D'Aulnoy's use of traditional types of fairy tales as a key to her growing popularity – which in the Romantic era grew to be remarkable in both France and Britain – while I have studied her public avowal of irresistibly growing affection for Don Quixote and his immersion in traditional narratives.<sup>8</sup> She confessed that both he and she preferred to live in that elusive but nonetheless better world.

Sermain, on the contrary, has no sympathy for the Jansenist translation and sequel by St. Martin and Challe. He describes the puritanical sect as opposed to art and literature in general, and in particular to the pleasures of the imagination, the sensual world, and novels. Nonetheless, the lasting acceptance of the Jansenist rendering of the myth testifies to its vitality. Even as a journey consisting of an ascent to morality by Don Quixote, but one not without frequent comic backsliding by Sancho, it does not suffer from wooden protagonists. The narratological voltage is maintained by means of remarkable changes in social status, combined with the intricacies of the magician Parafaragaramus' temptations, moral instruction and elaborate practical jokes. Just as in other tales about characters who have become archetypes, as Sermain accurately points out, readers ample became absorbed in concocting their own self-identifications and interpretations of what the protagonist is like and what is going on in his mind at each point. The sequel generates complexity in the two main characters, who are in emotional turmoil all through a doomed fight for social promotion, love, and glory. Reader response to this narrative energy was not lacking, to judge by its long-running success at the bookstore throughout the nineteenth century.

### **The British Don Quixote: good-natured laughter and utopian dreams**

Paulson's book *Don Quixote in England* carefully draws on the work of earlier scholars addressing Quixotism and Cervantes' novel in Britain.<sup>9</sup> The conclusions he has drawn are largely political, including why there



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were many fewer editions of the novel before 1700 in England than in France. The factors identified include the perceived threat to England by the Spanish monarchy, the Roman Catholic church and the memory of the Armada; and fear of the French upon the return of James II with the support of the French army.

In the intertwined realms of philosophy and politics, Paulson affirms that the British Don Quixote was not possible without the rise of empiricism and the independence of thought it fostered, something he describes as precluded in Europe by the growing strength of centralized, absolutist governments in seventeenth-century Spain and France.<sup>10</sup> It should be pointed out, however, that in the late seventeenth century, the puritanical Jansenists in France and the Puritans in England both contained intellectual dissenters.

In France, Louis XIV relentlessly persecuted the former for their “ungovernable” nature. Roger Chartier, in *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution*, explains how the Jansenist-Parliamentary alliance undermined respect for the power structure of the Roman church and the monarchy, preconditions for the Revolution.<sup>11</sup> In England, Swift and Butler, both Tories, used satire as a political weapon against such stubbornness, which they equated with Puritan Roundheads and Don Quixote both.

Opposed to the Tories was the interpretative position of Shaftesbury, Addison and likeminded Whigs. In the spirit of the broadminded consensus-building of the Anglican church in the period, they reframed the nation’s epistemological approach to politics and religion to become a celebration of peaceful dissent and the therapeutic power of laughter. The concepts of wit and good-natured humor became the standard by which Quixote novels were read and written. It was not until the defeat of the 1745 Jacobite rebellion – whose cause was associated by many with Don Quixote’s contrarian and traditionalist mindset – relieved fears of more civil war that novelists and playwrights began to bring out boldly the noble aspects of the Spanish knight’s quest. An example is Smollet’s *Sir Launcelot Greaves* (1760), whose protagonist shares with his Jansenist counterpart his altruistic conduct and the tragedy of being pushed beyond human limits of emotion. Both virtuous heroes are finally driven truly mad by the treachery of others.

Women’s role in literary Quixotism in both England and France went from passive reception of male-generated idealization, as exemplified by Cervantes’ Dulcinea, and to something less often remembered, women themselves imitating Don Quixote and so making the same mistakes as he did in imitating Amadís and Orlando. But the former tendency was more central in France. There the Jansenists’ quick acceptance of Don Quixote’s commitment to developing his virtues in an effort to be worthy of Dulcinea was grounded in the Catholic Mariology of the time, a moral connection that the sequel writer Challe went on to state directly

and develop. Jansenists, considering themselves Catholics, were free from Protestant rejection of the worship of Mary, but they often found their place in society, as did Protestants, to be one of disagreement with the Jesuits and the Vatican. That position in between made a middle course regarding Mary the most attractive. The subsequent step to admiring Don Quixote as a secular saint for his adoration of Dulcinea, a feminine figure we might consider a bridge between Catholicism, Protestantism and enlightened secularism, was a small one for a Jansenist. It turned out to be a big one for the myth of Don Quixote.

Though in English literature of the time both men and women characters demonstrated the tendency to become overly enthusiastic readers of highly unrealistic books and imitators of those characters in their own lives, one of the most successful examples on the feminine side was Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote* (1752). Sarah Fielding, on the other hand, in Part 1 of *David Simple* (1744), finds in Don Quixote a more encouraging role model for all genders. The knight's exceptional ability to trust and believe wholeheartedly in others, combined with what she calls his "madness in one point and extraordinary good sense in every other," is optimistically presented as lighting the way to revolutionary communities, at least small ones, founded in idealism and strengthened by trust.<sup>12</sup> I argue that in addition to the explicit references to *Don Quixote* in her utopian novel, Sarah took as her model for its plot and theme Cervantes' interpolated tale of a foursome tied together in love and friendship: Cardenio, Dorotea, Luscinda, and Fernando.

Finally, we shall see that in his best-selling novel "*Julie, or the New Eloise*," *Julie, ou La nouvelle Héloïse*, Rousseau followed Sarah Fielding's lead in this regard. He fused three Cervantine elements: Cardenio's circle of love and friendship (described by Cervantes as successfully enduring) and Fielding's similar circle, explicitly linked to *Don Quixote* and again optimistically presented (though with disillusionment to follow in her much lesser-known sequel). The third element is linked to the conclusion of Challe's continuation of *Don Quixote*, which at the end foregrounds a tragic choice of death over love after a long up-beat narrative about moral and social ascent. In Rousseau's novel, then, the French and English branches of quixotic idealism are combined in a lament to dashed hopes, pronounced in a tone of Romantic melancholy.

## Notes

1. On the gulf separating Cervantes' and Lesage's approaches to Spanish fiction and culture see Joseph R. Jones' "Notes on the Diffusion and Influence of Avellaneda's 'Quixote,'" *Hispania* 56 (1973): 229–237.
2. Un autre mode de lecture qui saisisse l'ensemble des moments du roman, scènes, discussions ou histoires, pour les considérer chacun comme l'expression d'un point de vue, d'une manière de raconter et de saisir le monde: ils préfigurent ainsi ce que la critique du xx<sup>e</sup> siècle a prétendu retrouver dans

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*Don Quichotte* sous le nom de ‘perspectivisme’. Sermain, Jean-Paul, “La fin de *Don Quichotte*,” *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez* [En ligne], 37–2 | 2007, mis en ligne le 11 octobre 2010, consulté le 27 septembre 2022. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/mcv/1667>; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/mcv.1667>

3. Reconnaissait qu’à défaut de rendre sages les fous, elle pouvait les rendre heureux, et ménageait des passerelles entre imagination et sentiment qui annoncent l’avenir. ... Ces diverses expériences renvoyaient de manière plus ou moins directe à une expérience du divin. René Démoris and Henri Lafon, *Folies romanesques au siècle des Lumières*. Paris, 1998, pp. 11–12.
4. For a different perspective on the work see Bertrand, Dominique, “La ‘merveilleuse histoire’ des ‘disgrâces’ de Dassoucy: récit de survivance et résilience ambiguë,” *Études littéraires* (savante, fonds Érudit) 38 (1) (2006): 77–88.
5. Le discours triomphal est en partie miné par une parodie interne de la ‘gloire’ du saint des hagiographies ou des héros de romans... [Le narrateur] ne cesse d’imputer sa survie, non sans ironie, aux effets de la Providence et de la justice de Dieu. Bertrand, “Dassoucy,” par. 26.
6. Mailly, Chevalier de, *Histoire amusante du brave chevalier Patapon, fameux chasseur*, Dole: Prudont, 1808.
7. Marina Warner names French women writers of fairy tales who used the genre to this purpose of providing hope and courage through imaginative tales: Marie-Catherine D’Aulnoy, Marie-Jeanne L’Héritier, Henriette-Julie de Murat, Charlotte Rose de la Force and Marguerite de Lubert. See *Once Upon a Time: A Brief History of Fairy Tale*. Oxford University Press, 2014, p. 47.
8. On D’Aulnoy’s use of, and emotional involvement in, the genre, see Jacques Barchilon, “Adaptations of Folktales and Motifs in Madame d’Aulnoy’s *Contes*: A Brief Survey of Influence and Diffusion,” *Marvels & Tales: Journal of Fairy-Tale Studies* 23 (2) (2009): 353–364; and Clark Colahan, “‘Le nouveaugentilhomme’ de Mme d’Aulnoy: factores trans-culturales en la calibración de la salud mental de don Quijote,” *Tropelías* 29 (2018): 330–341.
9. Paulson, Ronald, *Don Quixote in England: The Aesthetics of Laughter*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998.
10. Paulson, *Don Quixote in England*, p. xi.
11. Chartier, Roger, *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution*, translation Lydia G. Cochrane. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1991.
12. Cited in Ziolkowski, Eric J., *The Sanctification of Don Quixote: From Hidalgo to Priest*. University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State UP, 1991, p. 35.

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