

CERVANTES THE POET

Cervantes the Poet travels from the court of Isabel de Valois to Rome, Naples, Palermo, Algiers, and Madrid's *barrio de las letras*. Recovering Cervantes' nearly forty-year literary career before the publication of *Don Quijote*, Gabrielle Ponce-Hegenauer demonstrates the cultural, literary, and theoretical significance of Cervantes' status as a late-sixteenth-century itinerant poet. This study recovers the generative literary milieus and cultural practices of Spain's most famous novelist in order to posit a new theory of the modern novel as an organic transformation of lyric practices native to the late sixteenth century and Cervantes' own literary outlook.

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*The Don Quijote, Poetic Practice, and the Conception
of the First Modern Novel*

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Pero, para la carga de un poeta,
siempre ligera, cualquier bestia puede
llevarla, pues carece de maleta

Viaje del Parnaso
(1614)

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mentor. Without his guidance and support this project would not have been realized.

Hundreds of years ago, amidst every kind of violence and fanaticism (ideologies from which many never entirely freed themselves), a number of individuals chose (however imperfectly) to dedicate considerable time and effort to the writing of imaginative literature. These authors may be dead in the biological and theoretical sense, but I have spent such a great deal of time with these literary artifacts, texts which have changed who I am and the course of my life, that I would be remiss not to acknowledge the power of poesis here.

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Note on Abbreviations, Translations, and Terms

For the sake of simplicity, I have abbreviated “the *Don Quijote*” (text) as **the DQ** and “don Quijote” (character) as **dQ**. For the *DQ* I have retained Leo Spitzer’s use of the definite article. For *dQ* I have preferred the Spanish lowercase “don” to differentiate text from character. Alonso Quijano appears as **AQ**. For eponymous titles such as *La Diana*, *El pastor de Fílida*, and *La Galatea*, I have dropped the definite article in Spanish and retained it in English (i.e. **the Diana**).

Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own. At the risk of infelicitous renderings I have attempted to stay close to the original text, often retaining Latin roots and preferring a scholarly over a poetic emphasis. Words such as *ingenio* which must acquire meaning through the usages discussed in this text, are left in the original.

For the purposes of this study, I differentiate **Lyric**, a type of non-narrative poetry which privileges the interiority of the speaker, from **Poetry**, a stand-in for literature at large, from **Verse**, as a format that Poetry can take (the metric in prosimetrics), from **Poiesis**, as making.

Romance, sometimes called the Byzantine Romance, should not be confused with the English “Romances of Chivalry,” which are *libros de caballeria* in the Spanish or with the Spanish *romance*, a narrative-ballad associated with folk traditions which was “modernized” by poets such as Lope de Vega, Liñán de Ríaza, and Cervantes in the 1580s, or **Romantic** in the nineteenth-century literary sense, or with **romantic** in as a synonym for erotic or amorous.

For the sake of space, all bibliographic references occur in their entirety in their first mention in the notes and subsequently as short titles. There is no bibliography.