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## **“Borrowed from Cervantes”: *Imitatio e inventio* en *The Female Quixote* de Lennox**

**“Borrowed from Cervantes”:** *Imitatio* and *inventio* in Lennox's *The Female Quixote*

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### **Abstract:**

This paper compares *Don Quixote of La Mancha* (Cervantes, 1605 and 1615) to *The Female Quixote* (Charlotte Lennox, 1752) to explore the existence of Cervantine elements in Lennox's work in its characters, some episodes, structure, and even its objectives with respect to the preceding literary tradition. It also studies a few differences between the two novels to demonstrate the new elements contributed by the British writer to the Quixotic tradition, providing some possible interpretations of them.

**Key words:** Lennox; *Female Quixote*; Quixotic fiction; gender parody; romance parody; Cervantine characters, image of women.

### **Resumen:**

El trabajo compara *Don Quijote de la Mancha* (Cervantes, 1605 y 1615) con *The Female Quixote* (Charlotte Lennox, 1752) para investigar la existencia de elementos cervantinos en la obra de Lennox a través de los personajes, de algunos episodios, de la estructura e incluso en los objetivos respecto a la tradición literaria anterior. También, se estudian algunas divergencias entre ambas novelas para evidenciar los elementos novedosos aportados por la escritora inglesa sobre la tradición quijotesca, abordando también algunas posibles interpretaciones al respecto.

**Palabras clave:** Lennox; Quijote femenino; ficción quijotesca; parodia de géneros; parodia del romance; personajes cervantinos; imagen de la mujer.

“cortada del mismo artifice y del mismo paño”  
(Cervantes, 2004: 546)

Charlotte Lennox (1730-1804) is an exemplar of the active role of some women (reader-as-writer<sup>1</sup>) in the literary discourse of the 18th century, an author embodying the professionalization (Schellenberg<sup>2</sup> 2005: 94-98, Wyatt, 2015: 16) of prose in England, whose work *The Female Quixote; or, The Adventures of Arabella* was anonymously published twice in 1752; the *editio princeps* was released on March 13, and a second, revised edition was published in June of that same year.<sup>3</sup> Henry Fielding (1988: 161) underscored the economic aims of its author. Lennox's novel “can be regarded as having initiated this [...] subspecies<sup>4</sup>” of ‘quixotic novel’ (Hammond & Regan, 2006: 148). Another work lying along this line is the play *Angelica; or Quixote in Petticoats*, anonymously published six years later by Lennox. Brean Hammond and Shaun Regan (2006: 146) observe that “following Fielding, the ‘manner of Cervantes’ would continue to exert a considerable shaping influence upon the development of the British novel during the important first phase of its consolidation as a serious cultural force.” A working hypothesis from which this article departs is that some of the quixotic heroines in 19<sup>th</sup>-century English literature owe a debt to Lennox, rather than to Cervantes directly; that is, the latter's influence was, in many cases, indirect.

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<sup>1</sup> This categorisation was applied by Cristina Mónica Soare on page 112 of her doctoral dissertation, entitled *The Female Gothic Connoisseur: Reading, Subjectivity and the Feminist Uses of Gothic Fiction*, defended in 2013.

<sup>2</sup> See especially the fourth chapter, dedicated to Lennox and Sarah Scott (94-119).

<sup>3</sup> *The Female Quixote* generated a string of reprints and memorable influences, as denoted by its inclusion in *The British Novelists* by Anna Barbauld in 1810. However, this work of fiction did not find a place in Sir Walter Scott's compilation *Ballantyne's Novelist's Library*, published between 1821 and 1824.

<sup>4</sup> Bautista Naranjo (2015: 15) believes that “Don Quixote is a literary myth that, though roughly criticised by the romantic writers, has an enormous value in itself and as such, must be approached from mythological criticism.”

English soil was ploughed and ripe for<sup>5</sup> the emergence of the Quixote-like character, as it should be noted that the reading of French romances<sup>6</sup> was prevalent in England, particularly the works of Mademoiselle de Scuderi (*Artames* and *Clélia*) and Gauthiere de Costes de la Calprenède (*Pharamond*, *Cassandra* and *Cléopâtre*) (Garrido, 2014: 154). *The Female Quixote* offers a “satire of the French heroic romances of the seventeenth century” (Neimneh, 2015: 500). Reactions to the genre of romance were diverse and can be found in short stories, novels, and even in works of literary criticism by the likes of Aphra Behn, Jane Barker, Jonathan Swift, Henry Fielding, Tobias Smollett and Samuel Johnson.

Behn (1995: 333) defined romances through the symbolic synecdoche of “a bundle of Papers [...] I suppose, to burn” (Behn 1995, 333), in the words of her character Moorea. Barker (1726: 102), who was inspired by Behn in her *The Story of Tangerine, the Gentleman Gypsie*, portrayed her character Lady Gypsie exhibiting unnatural and amoral behaviour, caused precisely by reading “some ridiculous Romance or Novel, that inspired her with such a vile Undertaking, from whence she could rationally expect nothing but Misery and Disgrace.” Jonathan Swift (1985: 91) has Gulliver urinate in The Empress’s Apartment to douse a fire caused by “A Maid of Honour, who fell asleep while she was reading a romance” in the fifth chapter of the trip to Lilliput. Henry Fielding addresses the believability of the literary work in the first chapter of the eighth book of *Tom Jones*.<sup>7</sup> Tobias Smollett, meanwhile, has Miss Williams lose her sanity by reading romances in *Roderick Randon*. These examples

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<sup>5</sup> In the scientific context of the 17th century, some thinkers and scholars had already approached the subject matter of insanity and melancholy from a systematic viewpoint, which paved the way for England to receive a character as unique as Alonso Quijano. Francis Bacon had addressed the issue of madness in *Novum Organum* (1620); Robert Burton had studied melancholy (μέλας χολή), more concretely the *atra bilis*, as the main cause for abnormal behaviour, in *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1620); and Thomas Browne had laid stress on melancholy and irrationality in *Religio Medici* (1642).

<sup>6</sup> Recent lines of research pursued at the universities of Alicante and Seville point to the reinterpretation and translation work of Spanish texts by French authors, in turn translated from French and reinterpreted by English writers in the 17th and 18th centuries. One noteworthy research group is “The Restoration Comedy Project” (University of Seville), coordinated by Manuel José Gómez Lara, Juan Antonio Prieto Pablos and María José Mora Sena. Leticia Álvarez (University of Alicante) has been in charge of the research project “Los Libros de Caballerías Castellanos en Lengua Inglesa: Anthony Munday y la Cultura Europea Renacentista”. Other source of interest is the group “Research in Transhistorical Literary Studies in English” is coordinated by Jordi Sánchez Martí.

<sup>7</sup> The text reads as follows: Within these few restrictions, I think, every writer may be permitted to deal as much in the wonderful as he pleases; nay, if he thus keeps within the rules of credibility, the more he can surprise the reader the more he will engage his attention, and the more he will charm him. As a genius of the highest rank observes in his fifth chapter of the *Bathos*, “The great art of all poetry is to mix truth with fiction, in order to join the credible with the surprising.”

reveal the disgust and aversion generated by the overabundance of romances during the era.<sup>8</sup>

Samuel Johnson (2008: 175-178) also echoed the criticisms made of excessive fantasy in fiction, particularly in his fourth installment of *The Rambler*, two years before the publication of *The Female Quixote* (Saturday, March 31, 1750). Johnson warned of the dangers run by the readers of romances: “In the romances formerly written, every transaction and sentiment was so remote from all that passes among men, that the reader was in very little danger of making any application to himself,” calling for “familiar histories [...]” that “convey the knowledge of vice and virtue with more efficacy” to achieve didactic value through the “power of example.”

In fact, Lennox was a writer favoured by Samuel Johnson (Schürer, 2008: 214), as noted by Samuel Richardson (1964: 223) in his letters: “*The Female Quixote* is written by a woman, a favourite of the author of *The Rambler* [...]” Lennox borrowed from Johnson some traits of her protagonist, Arabella, specifically being inspired by the character Imperia, who appears in edition 115 of *The Rambler*, an idea suggested by Isles (1989: 422) and confirmed by Garrido Ardila (2014: 153). Margaret Doody (1989) identifies *La Fausse Clélia*<sup>9</sup> as the inspiration for *The Female Quixote*, and mentions the resemblance she finds between Arabella and Bidy Tipkin in Richard Steele’s *The Tender Husband*.

Margaret Dalziel (1989: 390), meanwhile, and James Lynch (1987: 43-48) affirm that Lennox completely rejected and parodied the tradition of romances. However, scholars such as Cristina Garrigós (2004: 46) disagree with these categorical assertions because “it seems that Arabella’s disavowal of romances is not so clear.” Doody even defines Lennox’s work as a romance with feminist aspirations. Amanda Gilroy (2006: xxxv) stresses the historicisation of the romance, emphasising “the relation between fiction and history and with the way society privileges certain representations of ‘reality’ over others.” In contrast to these interpretive discrepancies with regard to the genre of the romance, there is unanimity amongst specialised critics with regards to Cervantes’s influence on the English work.

John Garrido Ardila (2014: 54-55) identifies a whole series of thematic and stylistic points that English novelists adopted in emulation of the Spanish novelist, such as the creation of a Quixotic protagonist, along with other key figures, such as a Sancho figure, the imitation of “passages” present in the Cervantine work, the Quixote’s “ironic humour,” its “parodic (and satirical)” component, its “narratological structure”, and its “generic hybridity, which furnishes it with a counter-genre quality.” Esther Bautista Naranjo (2015: 97)

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<sup>8</sup> Barbara Fuchs (2004: 9) refers to the “textual strategy” of romance as “a concatenation of both narratological elements and literary topoi, including idealization, the marvelous, narrative delay, wandering and obscured identity [...]”

<sup>9</sup> This work by Thomas Perdou de Subligny was translated into English as *The Mock-Clélia* (1678).

establishes three “mythemes” that capture “the mythical essence of the character,” and considers them a “*conditio sine qua non* to discuss the total rewriting of the myth in new contexts.” These aspects are, firstly, “bookish reverie,” “visionary idealism” and, finally, “individual and anachronistic individualism.”<sup>10</sup> This set of themes is evident in Lennox’s work. The first of the nine books making up *The Female Quixote* announces the influence of the Spanish writer right in its title: “Contains a Turn at Court, neither new nor surprising. - Some useless Additions to a fine Lady’s Education. - The Bad Effects of a whimsical Study, which some will say is borrowed from Cervantes.” (Lennox, 2006: 17).

Henry Fielding (1988: 161) was quick to publish a review of Lennox’s work on March 24, 1752 in *The Covent Garden Journal*, eleven days after the publication of the two volumes. The English novelist found the work by his countrywoman superior to *Don Quixote*, arguing that a young girl was more likely to be “subverted by her reading of Romances” than an old man.

The works present a constellation of characters, with Arabella incarnating the heroic traits of Don Quixote. In the Spanish work, Alonso Quijano “se enfrascó tanto en su lectura, que se le pasaban las noches leyendo de claro en claro, y los días de turbio en turbio”, such that, “[...] rematado ya su juicio [...] le pareció concebible y necesario [...] hacerse caballero andante y irse por todo el mundo [...]” (Cervantes, 2004: 29). In the English work, similarly, Arabella had in her room “great Store of Romances [...]”. The surprising Adventures with which they were filled, proved a most pleasing Entertainment to a young Lady, who was wholly secluded from the World” (Lennox, 2006: 19). As noted by Richetti (2003: 205), the “heroine is literally convinced that the heroic amatory world of French seventeenth-century romances is identical to her mid-century domestic reality”.

Another parallel is drawn between the two footmen characters, the squire Sancho Panza and the maid Lucy, who exhibits Sancho-like fidelity and innocence. Both Sancho and Lucy at times view reality through their masters’ eyes, share and mimic their rhetorical and behavioural codes, are scatter-

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<sup>10</sup> Esther Bautista Naranjo (2015: 96-97) distinguishes eight “mythemes” or “semes” upon which “the myth of Don Quixote” and the string of rewritings are based: “an easily recognisable appearance, as against an exemplary and symbolic behaviour; the triangle of desire, and the role of books as the means to attain the ideal; a glimpse of madness; the transformation of the world through language, and its adjustment to the sublime ideal; the inner double: a split personality (the real person and the visionary character adhered to the ideal pursued); an individualistic and subjective character searching for its own truth, which is linked to the ideal of justice, peace and universal harmony; the desire to improve oneself and to overcome adversity both in the name of knightly heroism and for the love of the lady; criticism of materialism in modern society and the defence for declining values through the character’s commitment to its ideal of justice and honour, which is presented in the text by a distant narrator and an open polyphony of voices”, and finally, “a learning process: from enthusiasm and fantasy to disillusion in order to recover “sanity” and a more authentic identity, thus overcoming the visionary side of the split personality.”

brained and absentminded, and exhibit an awkwardness in their oratory that verges on the comic. A case in point is Lucy's dialogue with Tinsel (Lennox, 2006: 328-343). In this regard, Garrido Ardila (2014: 165) reveals that:

Unlike Sancho, Lucy is not greedy or gluttonous, but those are, to some extent, minor aspects of the squire's behaviour; her status as a maid, her role as the sole source of the female Quixote's support, her comic oversights and mistakes, make Lucy one of the literary characters most akin to Sancho in all world literature.

Other similarities can be perceived between the Cervantine priest and Lennox's Doctor of Divinity, both of whom endeavour to make the two protagonists see reality. The Countess also resembles the Spanish clergyman, as she seeks to convince Arabella of the dangers posed by the fantasies found in romantic fiction. While the Countess (who appears in the penultimate book of the second volume) does not realise her goal, disappearing abruptly in Bath, the Doctor does finally achieve his, as discussed below. Garrido Ardila (2014: 167) even cites the parallelism between supporting characters like George (in Book VI) and the dukes who mock Don Quixote in the second half of the Spanish work. In this case the similarity is the humour emanating from the ridicule of the protagonists' deeds and discourse.

In addition to these similitudes, the works by Cervantes and Lennox coincide in their episodic nature, interpolated stories, how their different adventures are presented, their division into chapters with a clarifying header, the inclusion of metaliterary disquisitions, and their parodic global intentions. There are also parallels in their stylistic and thematic aspects. Garrido Ardila (2014: 155) argues that the affinity between *Don Quixote* and *The Female Quixote* lies in their "thematic, structural and critical aspects," lamenting that "the structure of the novel has been overlooked by critics."

As an illustration of a common episode<sup>11</sup> the employment of the theme of book burning is cited; the sixth chapter of *Don Quixote*, entitled "Del donoso y grande escrutinio que el cura y el barbero hicieron de la librería de nuestro ingenioso hidalgo" (Cervantes, 2004: 60-69), commences thus:

El cual aún todavía dormía. Pidió las llaves a la sobrina del aposento donde estaban los libros autores del daño, y ella se las dio de muy buena gana. Entraron dentro todos, y la ama con ellos, y hallaron más de cien cuerpos de libros

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<sup>11</sup> Doody (1989) analysed four parallel episodes; according to Garrido Ardila's words (2014: 156): firstly, "the passage in which Arabella defends Edward, which reflects the liberation of Andrew"; secondly, "the idea of burning the books as conceived of by Arabella's and Don Quixote's relatives"; thirdly, "the heroic attitude of Arabella when approaching Miss Groves and the naval officer's companion in Vauxhall, an exact duplicate of the knightly descent of Don Quixote"; and, lastly, "the speech of the Doctor of Divinity, similar to that of the priest." Dalzier (1989: 398) considers Arabella's digressions into how "The Law has no power over heroes" and Don Quixote's protests when liberating the galley slaves to be quite alike."

grandes, muy bien encuadernados, y otros pequeños; y, así como el ama los vio, volvióse a salir del aposento con gran prisa, y tornó luego con una escudilla de agua bendita y un hisopo, y dijo:

-Tome vuestra merced, señor licenciado; rocíe este aposento, no esté aquí algún encantador de los muchos que tienen estos libros, y nos encanten, en pena de las que les queremos dar echándolos del mundo. (Cervantes, 2004: 60)

In parallel, in the English work the marquis confirms that Arabella's madness is due to reading the books found in her library, so he decides to burn it, of which his father also approves. These books will be categorized in the English novel as "foolish old-fashioned Books" (Lennox, 2006: 71):

The Girl is certainly distracted, interrupted the Marquis, excessively enraged at the strange Speech she had uttered: These foolish Books my Nephew talks of have turned her Brain! Where are they? pursued he, going into her Chamber: I'll burn all I can lay my Hands upon.

Arabella, trembling for the Fate of her Books, followed her Father into the Room; who seeing the Books which had caused this woful Adventure lying upon the Table, he ordered one of her Women to carry them into his Apartment, vowing he would commit them all to the Flames. (Lennox, 2006: 71-72)

In the case of Don Quixote, "del poco dormir y del mucho leer se le secó el cerebro de manera que vino a perder el juicio. Llenósele la fantasía de todo aquello que leía en los libros" and, as a result, "asentósele de tal modo en la imaginación que era verdad toda aquella máquina de aquellas soñadas invenciones que leía" (Cervantes, 2004: 29-30). Arabella's mind "turn'd" due to the reading of "these foolish Books [...] supposing romances were real pictures of life, from then she drew all her Notions and Expectations" (Lennox, 2006: 9).

In the two works, the books are subjected to a similar process: in the Spanish work they name some of the titles and, after briefly defining them, the priest decides whether to spare them or commit them to the flames; the first is saved while the second is thrown out the window:

Y el primero que maese Nicolás le dio en las manos fue Los cuatro de Amadís de Gaula, y dijo el cura:

-Parece cosa de misterio ésta, porque, según he oído decir, este libro fue el primero de caballerías que se imprimió en España, y todos los demás han tomado principio y origen de éste; y, así, me parece que, como a dogmatizador de

una secta tan mala, le debemos sin excusa alguna condenar al fuego.

-No, señor –dijo el barbero-, que también he oído decir que es el mejor de todos los libros que de este género se han compuesto; y así, como a único en su arte, se debe perdonar.

-Así es verdad –dijo el cura-, y por esa razón se le otorga la vida por ahora. Veamos esotro que está junto a él.

-Es, dijo el barbero – Las Sergas de Esplandián, hijo ilegítimo de Amadís de Gaula.

-Pues en verdad –dijo el cura- que no le ha de valer al hijo la bondad del padre. Tomad, señora ama, abrid esa ventana y echadle al corral, y dé principio al montón de la hoguera que se ha de hacer. (Cervantes, 2004: 61)

A common point is that advanced by Pedro Ruiz Pérez (2010: 207) with respect to the literary tradition and the revision of it: “In the polyphony of the *Quixote* voices and speech intermingle, comprising a genuine sum of the narrative prior or current at the time, in a continuous review of the different episodes [...]”. As different points, it may be noted that Cervantes reflects the Inquisition and the banning of books that was perpetrated in Spain, such that this chapter goes beyond a parody of the books of chivalry. Lennox, meanwhile, ridicules romances, responsible for Arabella's bizarre behaviour. The end of the first book, in the thirtieth chapter (titled “The Adventure of the Books continued”) and the beginning of the second book (titled “In which the Adventure of the Books is happily concluded”), read:

Fortune, however, which never wholly forsook these illustrious Personages, rescued them from so unworthy a Fate, and brought Mr. Glanville into the Marquis's Chamber just as he was giving Orders to have them destroyed. (Lennox, 2006: 71-72)

The Marquis, as soon as he saw Mr. Glanville, told him he was resolved to cure Arabella of her Whims, by burning the Books that had put them into her Head: I have seized upon some of them, pursued he, smiling; and you may, if you please, wreak your Spite upon these Authors of your Disgrace, by burning them yourself.

Though I have all the Reason in the World to be enraged with that Incendiary Statira, said Glanville laughing, for the Mischief she has done me; yet I cannot consent to put such an Affront upon my Cousin, as to burn her favourite Books: And now I think of it, my Lord, pursued he, I'll endeavour to make a Merit with Lady Bella by saving them: Therefore



spare them, at my Request, and let me carry them to her. I shall be quite unhappy till we are Friends again.

You may do as you will, said the Marquis; but I think it encouraging her in her Follies to give them to her again. (Lennox, 2006: 73)

Significantly, Granville wants to save his cousin's books,<sup>12</sup> while the Marquis begins to reaffirm his decision to burn them, claiming that they are the root of Arabella's fantasies, so as to allow Granville to proceed with his plan. Granville then returns to him some books, described as if they were a treasure:

As ridiculous as the Occasion of these Tears was, yet Glanville could not behold them without being affected: Assuming, therefore, a Countenance as sad as he was able, he laid the Books before her; and told her, he hoped she would excuse his coming into her Presence without her Permission, since it was only to restore her those Books, whose Loss she seemed so greatly to lament; and added, that it was with much Difficulty he prevailed upon the Marquis not to burn them immediately; and his Fears, that he might really do as he threatened, made him snatch them up, and bring them, with so little Ceremony, into her Closet.

Arabella, whose Countenance brightened into a Smile of pleasing Surprize at the Sight of her recovered Treasure, turned her bright Eyes upon Glanville with a Look of Complacency that went to his Heart. (Lennox, 2006: 74)

These equivalent episodes make it possible to conclude that *Don Quixote* goes beyond books of chivalry, just as *The Female Quixote* transcends the generic and thematic mould of romances. In 1692 the English writer William Congreve (2003: 5), in *Incognita*, defined the concepts of the romance and novel in this way:

Romances are generally composed of the Constant Loves and invincible Courages of hero's, Heroins, Kings and Queens, Mortals of the first Rank, and so forth, where lofty Language, miraculous Contingencies and impossible Performances, elevate and surprize the Reader into a giddy delight [...] Novels are of a more familiar nature; Come near us, and represent to us Intrigues in practice, delight us with Accidents and odd Events, but not such as are wholly

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<sup>12</sup> Of remarkable interest is the burning of the books, which is also a recurrent topic in other literary works, such as the cited *The Unfortunate Bride*, in which Moorea intercepts the love letters of the protagonists, Frankwit and Belvira, who still cling to the idea of metaphysical love, so distinctive of the tradition of the romance. She thinks of these letters as "a bundle of Papers [...] to burn". See Aphra Behn (1995a: 333).

unusual or unprecedented, such which not being so distant from our Belief bring also the pleasure nearer us.

What characterises the books by Cervantes and Lennox with respect to parodied books is precisely that “more familiar nature” that Congreve describes; such that, despite all the nuances that one might wish to apply, it is not possible to classify *The Female Quixote* as a romance, *per se*, nor is it possible to categorise *Don Quixote* as a book of chivalry, *sensu stricto*. Neither can they be deprived of categorisation as novels. In the words of William B. Warner (1998: 286), “Lennox’s *Female Quixote* explicitly thematises the effects of the *Pamela* media event –namely, a new textualisation of the opposition between fiction and reality [...]”.

In another vein, the common ties linking Cervantes and Lennox bear more correlations, as illustrated by the inclusion of theoretical passages included in both works. One example of this appears in the sixth chapter of the seventh book of the English novel, in which Lennox expounds on mockery, distinguishing it from satire and even referring to the conceptual binary of *ars* and *natura*:

I am of Opinion, Sir, said Arabella, that there are very few proper Objects for Raillery; and still fewer, who can raily well: The Talent of Raillery ought to be born with a Person; no Art can infuse it; and those who endeavour to raily in spite of Nature, will be so far from diverting others, that they will become the Objects of Ridicule themselves.

Many other pleasing Qualities of Wit may be acquired by Pains and Study, but Raillery must be the Gift of Nature: It is not enough to have many lively and agreeable Thoughts; but there must be such an Expression, as must convey their full Force and Meaning; the Air, the Aspect, the Tone of the Voice, and every Part in general, must contribute to its Perfection.

There ought also to be a great Distance between Raillery and Satire, so that one may never be mistaken for the other: Raillery ought indeed to surprise, and sensibly touch, those to whom it is directed but I would not have the Wounds it makes, either deep or lasting: Let those who feel it, be hurt like Persons, who, gathering Roses, are pricked by the Thorns, and find a sweet Smell to make amends. (Lennox, 2006: 303-304)

Cervantes's work also features various theoretical disquisitions, such as the speech given by the *hidalgo* on arms and letters in Chapter XXXVIII (Cervantes, 2004: 394-399), and the definition of poetry that Don Quixote provides in the sixteenth chapter of the second part, in front of the Knight of the Green Gabán:

[...] estudiante que le dio el cielo padres que se lo dejen, sería yo de parecer que le dejen seguir aquella ciencia a que más le vieren inclinado; y aunque la poesía es menos útil que deleitable, no es de aquellas que suelen deshonorar a quien la posee. La poesía, señor hidalgo, a mi parecer es como una doncella tierna y de poca edad y en todo extremo hermosa, a quien tienen cuidado de enriquecer, pulir y adornar otras muchas doncellas, que son todas las otras ciencias, y ella se ha de servir de todas, y todas se han de autorizar con ella, pero esta tal doncella no quiere ser manoseada, ni traída por las calles, ni publicada por las esquinas de las plazas ni por los rincones de los palacios. Ella es hecha de una alquimia de tal virtud, que quien la sabe tratar la volverá en oro purísimo de inestimable precio [...]. (Cervantes, 2004: 666)

Aurora Egido's (2016) thesis is corroborated when she argues that Cervantes originated the modern novel, and also the postmodern, "understood as a metanovel, through its inclusion of literary reflection on the narrative." *Mutatis mutandis*, this postulate can also be applied to Lennox, who also included passages of a theoretical nature. In this way, *he Female Quixote* is contextualised in a period that consolidated the new genre in England and set down some parameters for its subsequent development.

The ingenious *hidalgo* and Arabella embody the *ingenium excellens cum mania* cited by Plato (1987: 50) in his brief dialogue *Ion*. The consequences of an erratic perception of reality spur both Don Quixote and Arabella to actions that reflect their dislocation<sup>13</sup> and madness. In this regard, according to Aurora Egido (2016), "The Quixote is [...] not only a challenge to the theory of Aristotelian imitation, by trying to make credible what apparently was not, but a defiance of the Horatian antinomy between ingenuity and art [...]."

Consider, for instance, the "treinta o cuarenta molinos de viento" that Don Quixote mistakes for "desafortunados gigantes con quien pienso hacer batalla y quitarles a todos las vidas" (Cervantes, 2004: 75), from Chapter 8; or the battle that Don Quixote wages against some wineskins (Chapter XXXV). Containing a similar theme is Arabella's perception of the gardener,<sup>14</sup> Edward, who she takes for a prince (Lennox, 2006: 35-38); the protagonist's pervasive belief that all men admire and love her; and her act of leaping into the River Thames, cited in the penultimate chapter of the book as "her throwing herself into the River" (Lennox, 2006: 411) and occurring in the ninth chapter of the same book. A group of horsemen approach, she believes with the intention of

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<sup>13</sup> Readers interested in this subject matter might wish to examine the work by Carlos Castilla del Pino (2005).

<sup>14</sup> A similar episode happens to Dorcasina Sheldon in *Female Quixotism* (1801), when she mistakes a servant for a knight in disguise after reading *Roderick Random*.

kidnapping all the women. Thus, after delivering a laughable address to the ladies, she throws herself into the Thames:

And the Detail had such an Effect upon Arabella's Imagination, bewilder'd as it was in the Follies of Romances, that 'spying three or four Horsemen riding along the Road towards them, she immediately concluded they would be all seiz'd and carry'd off. [...] Possess'd with this Belief, she utter'd a loud Cry, and flew to the Waterside, which alarming the Ladies, who could not imagine what was the Matter, they ran after her as fast as possible. Arabella stop'd when she came to the Waterside, and looking round about, and not perceiving any Boat to waft them over to Richmond, a Thought suddenly darted into her Mind, worthy those ingenious Books which gave it Birth. [...] Saying this, she plung'd into the Thames, intending to swim over it, as Clelia did the Tyber. (Lennox, 2006: 404-405)

As a result, Arabella falls ill with a severe fever, prompting the visit by the clergyman. It is, precisely, in the tenth chapter that the main character explains to the clergyman why she jumped into the river, which represents a summary, a kind of analepsis, of her exploits for the reader and their articulation by the female Quixote. The eleventh chapter of the last book features the aforementioned dialogue between the doctor and Arabella, in which the protagonist challenges him to demonstrate to her the three pernicious attributes of romances: that they are fictitious, absurd, and dangerous. In Cervantes's work there is a similar dialogue between the cleric and Don Quixote, filling two chapters (XLVII-XLVII) (Cervantes, 2004: 482-500) to demystify romances, as "false and deceitful."

After the long and difficult dialogue, alluding even to oratorical and argumentative techniques, Arabella presents an anagnorisis (ἀναγνώρισις) (Aristotle, 1996: 17) or revelation: "my Heart yields to the Force of Truth, and I now wonder how the Blaze of Enthusiastic Bravery, could hinder me from remarking with Abhorrence the Crime of deliberate unnecessary Bloodshed." Arabella recognises that "I have hitherto at least trifled away my Time," even stating that "I tremble indeed to think how nearly I have approached the Brink of Murder, when I thought myself only consulting my own Glory" (Lennox, 2006: 427). For these reasons, Robert Mack (1998: 14) writes that *The Female Quixote* "had seen its heroine forced to renounce the 'Romantick Heroism' of her wonderfully expansive French narrative models not only as 'absurd' but [...] 'criminal.'" According to Catherine Gallagher (1994: 179), "the Quixote's cure begins not with the renunciation but with the acknowledgement of fiction."

Don Quixote's transformation takes place in the final chapter of the second part, in which the moribund protagonist apologises to his squire: "Perdóname, amigo, de la ocasión que te he dado de parecer loco como yo, haciéndote caer en el error en que yo he caído de que hubo y hay caballeros

andantes en el mundo” (Cervantes, 2004: 1102). The Manchegan knight goes on to recognise that “Yo fui loco y ya soy cuerdo; fui don Quijote de la Mancha y soy ahora, como he dicho, Alonso Quijano el Bueno,” adding, while drafting his will, that: “Pueda con vuestras mercedes mi arrepentimiento y mi verdad volverme a la estimación que de mí se tenía, y prosiga en adelante el señor escribano” (Cervantes, 2004: 1103).

The English book features an absorption and a unique reproduction of the legend of Don Quixote, at the same time providing an original perspective (*inventio*) on its context. John Richetti (2003: 208-9) asserts that “in her ardent appropriations of romance ideals, Arabella is also exemplifying an emerging set of habits that characterizes the modern bourgeois consumer ethic,” arguing that “her emotional self-determinism is what the sociologist Colin Campbell calls 'modern self-illusory hedonism,' the key, as he sees it, to the puzzle of the new consumerism.”

Another *differentia specifica* between the English work and the Spanish one lies in the former's denouement, when the doctor mentions alternative examples of reading and literature, specifically citing a neoclassical novelist and essayist. The first work mentioned is *Clarissa*, by Richardson, whose virtuous nature he extolls. Related to Richardson is Samuel Johnson, with the cleric quoting words the moralist wrote on February 11, 1751, in issue 98 of *The Rambler*:

Truth is not always injured by Fiction. An admirable Writer of our own Time, has found the Way to convey the most solid Instructions, the noblest Sentiments, and the most exalted Piety, in the pleasing Dress of a Novel, and [...] "Has taught the Passions to move at the Command of Virtue." (Lennox, 2006: 420-421)

In this way Lennox establishes a clear dichotomy between good and deplorable literature, between good and “bad fiction” (Hammond & Regan, 2006: 151). She employs as an alternative the didactic tradition that for years had informed the English novel, applying *docere* through established and recognised models. In short, Lennox's work heeds the Horatian gospel of teaching in a pleasing manner, an approach embraced by other 18th-century novelists. According to the Latin poet: “*aut prodesse [...] aut delectare [...] / aut simul et iucunda et idonea dicere vitae*”<sup>15</sup> (Horace, 1783, lines 333-334). In the “Prologue” to the “Desocupado lector,” Cervantes expresses his desire that “leyendo esta historia, el melancólico se mueva a risa, el risueño la acreciente, el simple no se enfade, el discreto se admire de la invención, el grave no la desprecie, ni el prudente deje de amarla” (Cervantes, 2004: 14).

Another example of this *inventio* appears in the twelfth chapter, in the final words of the work, which functions as a colophon, when Lennox mentions

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<sup>15</sup> Translatable as follows: “either to benefit, or to amuse, or to utter words at once both pleasing and helpful to life.”

the two types of marriage,<sup>16</sup> one rooted in the customs of the past (for convenience), and the other a reflection of virtue (for love). Traditional marriage is of the type typified by Sir George and Miss Granville, while the new and virtuous form of marriage is that exemplified by Arabella, the protagonist, and her union with Granville:

We chuse, Reader, to express this Circumstance, though the same, in different Words, as well to avoid Repetition, as to intimate that the first mentioned Pair were indeed only married in the common Acceptation of the Word; that is, they were privileged to join Fortunes, Equipages, Titles, and Expencc; while Mr. Glanville and Arabella were united, as well in these, as in every Virtue and laudable Affection of the Mind. (Lennox, 2006: 428)

The ingenious *hidalgo*, knighted in the second half of the work, ends up dying in the last chapter, LXXVII, (Cervantes, 2004: 1104) thereby preventing other authors from resuscitating him to ride again, like Avellaneda ostensibly did.<sup>17</sup> The protagonist's passing also symbolizes the closing of the traditions of the knights errant and books of chivalry. In contrast, Arabella promises her future in marriage, implicitly denoting a multiplication effect on the English tradition.

*The Female Quixote*, like *Don Quixote*, can be interpreted as containing a parodic intent, based on hyperbole and the exaggeration of features, as well as the introduction of disruptive elements with respect to the preceding tradition. There is a dual interpretive possibility, however, for though Arabella's perception of reality is fanciful, skewed by her reading of romances, this generated world permits the protagonist a certain independence, mobility and autonomy (Lasa, 2016: 436), allowing her to act on her own, even if it is through her fantasies (Pawl, 2009: 166). Marina Mackay (2011: 96) indicates that Arabella "having read the seventeenth-century romances of her emotionally isolated mother [...] expects her life to be as interesting as fiction." Patricia Meyer Spacks (2006: 82), meanwhile, writes that "From her books, Arabella has learned of female power. That consists [...] of power over men in the period of courtship," pointing out that "Arabella has also acquired a vision of female 'virtue,' involving not only chastity, but also, more conventionally, male attributes such as courage, dignity and heroism."

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<sup>16</sup> Such a dichotomy is also drawn by other authors, such as Aphra Behn, who wrote a whole short story dedicated to contrasting the two marriage forms and their two value systems, as well as those most remarkable elements. See Aphra Behn (1995b). The main character, Arabella, runs away from home to avoid becoming the victim of a marriage arranged by her parents; she manages to develop as a woman and finally marries for love.

<sup>17</sup> However, the multiplication effect on translations, allusions, intertextuality and *imitatio* was remarkable, even in the following centuries, as the literary work studied in this paper demonstrates.

Cristina Garrigós (2004: 46) observes that recent criticism coincides in the view that this work simultaneously disapproves of and celebrates the romance. *The Female Quixote* “is an invective against these works, but also exhibits the allure and the possibilities that they offer women, as they allow them to mentally live the adventures to which they do not otherwise have access.” Hence, the kind countess, a woman, is not able to convince Arabella to abandon her reading of romances. In spite of this, it is inferred that Lennox's work ends up constituting a landmark in the genre it aims to ridicule, just as *Don Quixote* and *Gulliver's Travels* parody a genre that they consecrate at the same time.

Arabella obeys the realities of her fantasy world, in which she is the centre of attention (König 2014: 90-91) and her own authority, devised as a counterpoint to society's patriarchal standards. Thus understood, Arabella's behaviour is a challenge to the “social construct” (Armstrong 1987, 36) of her time. According to Amy Hodges (2013:12) “Lennox endorses a new way of shaping women's intellectual development: social literacy.” Richard Barney (1999: 274) has written that “Arabella's stalwart commitment to romance is in effect a pre-emptive strike against the normalizing force at least implicit in masculine attempts to re-educate her,” adding that “as such, it is direct, aggressive, and unapologetic in its aim to subdue the men around her.” Arabella is presented as an everywoman and marks the genesis of a moralistic tradition in England (Bautista, 2015: 182). In addition, the protagonist's evolution also makes it possible to conceptualise the work as a *bildungsroman*.

*The Female Quixote* is an exemplar of the shift from the romance to the novel in English literature, which began to take shape during the pivotal late 17th century. In that initial phase, which Rose Zimbardo (1998) called the discourse of the “zero point,” epistemological, cultural and literary values transformed. *The Female Quixote* continues the new path (Zimbardo, 2014: 39) paved by *Oroonoko; or, The Royal Slave* (by Aphra Behn) and goes further. According to Garrido Ardila (2014: 150), Lennox “managed, through a parody, to banish the romance from the British literary scene, which in the quarter century following the publication of *The Female Quixote* only welcomed novels.” The Edinburgh professor adds that “around the 80s, however, there emerged the Gothic novel, which revived romance, until Austen did away with it.”

Cervantes wrote the second part of the Quixote, “cortada del mesmo artifice y del mesmo paño que la primera” (Cervantes, 2004: 546). Lennox turned to the Cervantine loom, whose threads can also be seen woven through the works of other writers, such as Ann Radcliffe, Tabitha Tenney and Jane Austen. The parodic path taken by Lennox would also be trod by Radcliffe in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, by Tenney, on the other side of the Atlantic, in *Female Quixotism*, and by Austen, in *Northanger Abbey*. Lennox, Tenney and Austen share a penchant for “rereading” (Grundy, 1997: 197).

On a final note, it should be observed that Austen marked the definitive demise of Quixotic fiction<sup>18</sup>, a genre in which *The Female Quixote* represented an essential work in the context of English literature. Following the postulates of Pedro Javier Pardo (2005: 357) and Esther Bautista Naranjo (2015: 181), it can be concluded that “the Quixotic heroines of the 19th century do not descend directly from Cervantes's *Don Quixote*, as Lennox's novel stands between them.”

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<sup>18</sup> A Spanish landmark may be cited, exclusive to the field of translation: the version by Bernardo María de Calzada entitled *Don Quixote con Faldas, o Perjuicios morales de las disparatadas novelas* (1808).



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