Food, Eating, and the Anxiety of Belonging in Seventeenth-Century Spanish Literature and Art

by

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Romance Studies in the Graduate School of Duke University

2012
ABSTRACT

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Abstract

In my dissertation I propose that the detailed representation of food and eating in seventeenth-century Spanish art and literature has a double purpose: to reaffirm a state of well-being in Spain, and to show a critical position, because artistic creations emphasize those subjects who, because of social status or cultural background, do not share such benefits. This double purpose explains why literature and painting stress the distance between foodstuffs and consumers, turning food into a commodity that cannot be consumed directly, but through its representation and value. Cervantes’s writing is invoked because, especially in *Don Quixote*, readers can see how the protagonist rejects food for the sake of achieving higher chivalric values, while his companion, Sancho Panza, faces the opposite problem: having food at hand and not being able to enjoy it, especially when he achieves his dream of ruling an island. The principle is similar in genre painting: food is consumed out of the picture in still lifes, or out of the hands of the represented characters in kitchen scenes, for they are depicted cooking for others. Because of the distance between product and consumer, foodstuffs indicate how precedence and authority are established and reproduced in society. In artistic representations, these apparently unchangeable principles are mimicked by the lower classes and used to establish parallel systems of authority such as the guild of thieves who are presented around a table in a scene of Cervantes’s exemplary novel “Rinconete and Cortadillo.” Another problem to which the representation of foodstuffs responds is the inclusion of New Christians from different origins. In a counterpoint with the scenes in which precedence is discussed, and frequently through similar aesthetic structures, Cervantes and his contemporaries create scenes where the Christian principle of sharing food and drinking wine together is the model of inclusion that dissolves distinctions between Old and New Christians. I argue that this alternative project
of community can be related to the expulsion of the Moriscos from Spain, decreed in 1609, because this event made many subjects interrogate themselves about their own status and inclusion. An artistic model of response to these interrogations about belonging is the figure of the roadside meal, which appears as the main motif of a meal shared by Sancho and a self-proclaimed Christian Morisco in the second part of Don Quixote, and reappears in a painting by Diego de Velázquez, which presents in the foreground a dark-skinned servant working in a kitchen, and in the background another roadside meal: the Supper at Emmaus. Both in literature and painting the way of preparing meals, eating and drinking creates ties, establishes a different principle of belonging, and promotes unity. In this alternative model characters are recognized as subjects of the kingdom as long as they eat and drink the way Christians do. Even though this model still leads to a single Christian kingdom, paintings and writings suggest a different form of cohesion, in which subjects are considered equal and recognize each other because of their participation.
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Introduction

The present study is a material and a comparative approach to Cervantes’s novel *Don Quixote* and to Spanish art of the early seventeenth century. It focuses mainly on the representation of food and eating. The choice of this subject responds to the interest in food that has recently developed in diverse fields of research, but most importantly to the fact that the time and place under study represent a particularly prolific moment in terms of artistic representations of food as a cultural product. But the relevance of this multiplicity of works of art dealing with foodstuffs does not come from quantity as much as it does from the cultural relevance of this artistic production, and from the possibility of better understanding the way artists and writers related to the world in which they lived. In fact, the initial question that guides this reflection is whether it is possible to establish a relationship between the emergence of two distinctive artistic products: the Spanish still life as a genre, and the Spanish novel—as conceived by Miguel de Cervantes especially in *Don Quixote*—which in turn becomes the paradigm of the modern Western novel. I explore this potential relationship starting with the points where convergence seems more evident, through the analysis of the material life as represented by similitude between characters—when present in art—, situations, and especially objects represented in these works. I search beyond these points of coincidence to determine if the material conditions and social circumstances in which these works were produced also reveal connections between them.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, in 1605, Miguel de Cervantes publishes the first part of *Don Quixote* in Madrid. *Don Quixote* presents itself as a novel, and it seems to collect some elements from its immediate predecessor, the picaresque novel, especially the anonymous *Lazarillo de Tormes*, by then a half-century old, and *Gazmán de Alfarache*, published
a few years before Don Quixote by Mateo Alemán, who probably knew Cervantes in person. Like the picaresque, Cervantes’s novel revolves around the main character meeting different people along the road, and as in the picaresque, frequently these encounters contain scenes in which food is shared. But unlike the picaresque, Don Quixote gives food new roles and dimensions. If in the picaresque foodstuffs are the object of desire, in Don Quixote they are at the same time a mark of identity and a symbol of choice. Readers are informed of the protagonist’s diet in the first page of the story as a form of accentuating realism and class—this diet includes products that are identifiable as coming from Castile, and more concretely, from La Mancha—, but soon we see how the hidalgo abandons this diet to become a knight. His companion Sancho Panza is introduced as a good eater, but soon we see him make decisions, sometimes in favor of eating, sometimes against eating, that identify him as a subject and not as a stereotype. Many other characters are defined through the food they prepare, serve, or eat. In Don Quixote, the meaning of foodstuffs is multiple, and the reader is made aware of this multiplicity. By the same years, Juan Sánchez Cotán starts painting his still lifes in Toledo, which incidentally is the city that contains the market in which “Miguel de Cervantes” (the narrator) allegedly finds the Arabic manuscript of Don Quixote. Sánchez Cotán’s way of painting fruits and vegetables is as innovative as Cervantes’s representation. He collects elements from different traditions, but creates a space in which foodstuffs are suspended in space and time. As in Don Quixote, they are very realistic, very local, and are placed in a space that looks familiar, but at the same time their stillness and suspension defy physics, and they are displayed against a mysteriously dark background that constantly interrogates the viewer about the reality that is supposedly being represented. With his paintings, Sánchez Cotán reaches a new audience: nobles and ecclesiastics, and his success stimulates an artistic interest both in producing and in collecting still lifes in Spain. Less than a decade later, Cervantes publishes the second part of Don Quixote, and in this second
book the alternate roles of food are brought again into the scene and explored with more detail and complexity. New ways of interrogating and declaring a character’s identity are mediated by food, the narrative pays more attention to the habits of the rich and noble, particularly to their tables and kitchens, and in specific moments around the beginning and the end of Sancho’s rule over the island Barataria, food is the occasion for commenting on the political situation in Spain. Around the years of publication of the second part of *Don Quixote*, Juan van der Hamen y León picks up Sánchez Cotán’s model and brings it to the court of Madrid, while in Seville the young Diego de Velázquez paints his first *bodegones* (kitchen scenes). These two painters later compete for a space in the court, and their works represent those in charge of the government. Velázquez gains more prominence, and what we can see both in the paintings of his youth and of his mature years is that he pays attention constantly to what is served and eaten. But van der Hamen cannot be forgotten. He depicts nobles, but he depicts especially their material possessions, in particular the food they eat and the bowls and plates they use for displaying and eating fruit and sweets. Echoing the contrast between the first and the second part of *Don Quixote*, van der Hamen keeps Sánchez Cotán’s findings in composition, but the Castilian foods painted by the latter are accompanied and sometimes completely replaced in van der Hamen’s work by delicate, handmade sweets, wafers, and pastries. Elaborate food is presented as a symbol of status. The transformations in painting brought about by Sánchez Cotán, Velázquez, and van der Hamen, among other still life painters, are one of the subjects of reflection for Velázquez’s father-in-law Francisco Pacheco, as well as for Vicente Carducho, the two artists who have left the best-known Spanish treatises on painting from the period. In other words, in a lapse of twenty years the way of representing food, both in art and in literature, is reinvented, and this reinvention takes place in works that survive and are considered masterpieces until the present.
One of the main goals of this study is to analyze how and why the reinvention of food representation in literature and painting took place, taking into account the material factors that made it possible. From this point of view, reading the representation of food and eating implies understanding that the works analyzed here were created around and were influenced by an unsolved conflict in Spain: the one between the apparent wealth of the kingdom and the almost permanent state of poverty and hunger experienced by the majority of its subjects. The word *apparent* referring to wealth of the kingdom explains the tension: in the years the works of art under study were created, the same kingdom that had conquered America and ruled over two continents was facing its fourth bankruptcy. This may help us understand in general terms the fixation of literature and art on food, but it does not explain many other social and political roles of these representations, some of them equally valid in times of scarcity and in times of relative prosperity. As previously explained, a function of food that stands out among others is the way foodstuffs are represented as symbols of belonging. Cultural and social ties are established around edible products in two different levels: between characters within the space of the work of art, and between the work and its reader/viewer. In both levels, food is initially an element of recognition, due to the principle that those who belong to a community eat the same food. Eating in a certain way constitutes one of the many habits shared by the members of a society, sometimes throughout different social strata, and sometimes as a mark of distinction for the members of a specific class. Both levels are acknowledged and problematized in the artistic representations. On the one hand, we are presented with situations in which recognition is questioned or brought to its limits, because foodstuffs are placed in the hands (and mouths) of subjects, such as the Moriscos, whose habits in other spaces besides the dining table cannot always be reconciled with the social expectations that mark their belonging to the community; on the other hand, in art and literature we are frequently introduced to situations in which we can observe
exceptions to the habits of society instead of the habits themselves, and this means that we witness scenes in which class separation through food consumption is questioned.

Therefore, in literature and painting we are confronted with reflections on the cultural and social aspects of belonging, and we are presented with subjects who struggle with difficulties trying to fit into this system. That is why I introduce the idea of “anxiety of belonging” to refer to the behaviors exhibited by different characters in the analyzed works. Around particular foodstuffs, fictional subjects show diverse signs of uneasiness, either about themselves or about others in their company. They interrogate themselves, or each other, or sometimes the viewer/reader about their place in the scene and in the world of which the scene is a representation. Often, this interrogation is marked by expectancy, uncertainty, and other signs of anxiety. As I will show in the analysis of concrete works and scenes, the association between the situations that artists decide to underline and the appearance of these signs of this anxiety is frequent enough to think that this is not one among many possible subjects to represent, but one of the most relevant. What is at stake is both the situation of the subject, and the constitution of the community to which the subject tries to belong. If the principles of belonging are unclear, it is not only the subject who is placed in a state of anxiety, but also the community itself, because by having and showing these vulnerabilities in the everyday conventions on which the community is supposed to sustain itself, it cannot affirm its own existence as firmly as expected by its members.

My approach to the representation of food and eating focuses precisely on these everyday conventions. The discussion departs from the idea that a community is created and recreated in daily practices, among which the preparation and consumption of food have a relevant place, since they mark clear moments of the day and of the week, as well as specific milestones in the calendar, since in seventeenth-century Spain there is an intimate
connection between food and the Catholic liturgical calendar. Food, therefore, occupies a special place among the represented elements that allow us to reconstruct the material life of the seventeenth-century Spanish society, and to relate the particularities of this material life with the degree of anxiety we can observe in the subjects who make the production, circulation, and consumption of material products possible.

At the same time, by following the traces of foodstuffs, the reconstruction of material life in seventeenth-century Spain provides valuable information about the circulation of edible products, but also about the production, circulation and consumption of art and literature. In literature, it is not possible to ignore that “food scenes” in Cervantes are also part of a wider idea of realism in literature that was emerging in diverse points of Europe. Cervantes introduces this idea in Spanish writing by combining local elements from the picaresque novel and from drama, with resources he probably learned from reading Italian novellas. Similarly, it is important to trace the origins of the Spanish still life in two directions: to the North, in Flanders, where the still life was also acquiring relevance in artistic and economic terms, and to the South, in Italy, where painters such as Caravaggio were reinventing realism in painting. In this aspect, the circulation of paintings as commodities allows us to reconstruct a system of exchange in which economy and artistic influence overlap, since works of art are acquired in Italy and Flanders, transported to Spain, and collected by wealthy subjects of the kingdom as a result of their value as properties, but in the process they carry with them the innovations that artists pick up and transform to produce their own works.

Realism stands out in the process through which these influences and subjects are reinvented and transformed into a new, distinctive genre. Paintings containing edible products along with religious motives constitute a case of special interest to perceive this transformation. Flemish artists turn religious scenes “inside out,” situating the religious event
in a small area of the painting’s background while cooks and workers take the foreground, and emphasis is placed on the size and variety of the edible products displayed in the kitchen or the shop where the main scene takes place. Sometimes, this emphatic function leads to the grotesque, which consists in exaggerating and, to some extent, making allegories around the size and color, and even the state of decay of foodstuffs. Spanish painters seem to appreciate the inversion of the structure and the idea of experimenting with the kitchen and the servants or the products as protagonists, but they choose different paths. On the one hand, workers and servants are given a more central and individual role in the painting. The works by Velázquez and by Jusepe de Ribera, which are described and analyzed in this study, offer examples of this prominence. Nowadays we know of at least three paintings from Velázquez’s early years that represent women working in the kitchen, but his interest in representing men and women from the lower classes in Spain turns into one of the characteristic elements of his painting later in his career, for example when he portrays a soldier and some peasants and rogues as Bacchus’ “courtiers” in Los Borrachos. Similarly Ribera, who establishes himself in Italy, paints philosophers and saints in rags, and common men eating or showing edible products to the viewer. On the other hand, instead of the almost hyperbolic Flemish realism when dealing with foodstuffs and utensils, Spanish paintings focus just on a few, meaningful objects, depicting them with great care and detail. Besides Juan Sánchez Cotán and Juan van der Hamen, Velázquez’s painting is again a case of interest, because the presence of one or two significant elements, usually related to eating or drinking, can be identified as an element of his style from his early kitchen scenes, where attention is directed to a pepper or a head of garlic, to his best-known pieces, for example, Las Meninas, where a small red pitcher is part of the central action.

A similar process occurs with the Italian influence. Many art historians agree in considering Basket of Fruit (c. 1599, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan), painted by Caravaggio, a
milestone for the seventeenth-century European still life, and it is possible indeed to find evocations of this work (and of Caravaggio’s idea) in many Spanish paintings. Caravaggio’s basket of fruit “invades” the viewer’s space, an illusion that is praised by the authors of painting treatises such as Pacheco and Carducho, because it evokes the origins of the still life in the ancient Greece. It also includes fruit and leaves that show some damages, which increases the effect of trompe l’oeil but also relates to the previously mentioned connection between still life and deterioration of food as a subject. However, it is equally important to pay attention to the many ways in which the Spanish still life differentiates itself from this paradigm. Italian painting, and Caravaggio’s works themselves, tend to emphasize food in a way that we have learned to identify more clearly with the notion of Baroque, in the sense of multiplication of elements, emphasis on volume, dramatic lighting and rich colors. A similar basket, for example, reappears in the painter’s rendering of The Supper at Emmaus from 1601 (National Gallery, London), but even though the effect of depth is emphasized, the object is accompanied by many other elements on a table. This tendency reaches its highest points of elaboration with the paintings by Giuseppe Arcimboldo—a contemporary of Ribera, Sánchez Cotán and Cervantes—, in which food becomes the element that constitutes fantastic human-like creatures. The Spanish reflection on these possibilities gives as a result a different distribution of the elements, and sometimes compositions that seem to attempt exactly the opposite. Sánchez Cotán, and later van der Hamen and Velázquez explore the possibilities of the dramatic contrasts of light, shadow, and color, but they opt to work with few elements in the visual space, and to emphasize more perspective, geometry, and measurement.

These decisions shape what becomes the distinctive Spanish still life. The notions of realism that constitute the foundation of the genre create a visual world that can be connected both by subject and by aesthetic principles with the literary realism explored by the picaresque novelists, and later by Miguel de Cervantes. In fact, in many cases literature
and painting seem to share the same visual background, in the sense that some objects and, when present, some characters can be identified both in painting and in literature, for example the old woman who cooks eggs that appears in a painting by Velázquez and as a character in Guzmán de Alfarache, or the fat bodegón keeper from an anonymous painting kept today at the Rijksmuseum, who evokes the chubby ventero by whose hand Don Quixote is knighted. These coincidences are remarkable because in both artistic forms the convergence is not only related to products—which would be expected, since the works are produced in the same country and cultural system—but especially to contexts and to the social status, which is suggested by the represented objects, or made explicit by the characters. The author of Don Quixote understands that food needs to be represented in order to have a better rendering of his character and his circumstances, but he understands too that this representation cannot be exaggerated. He can relate to the symbolic dimension of food, but at the same time he needs foodstuffs to be real, sometimes as deteriorated and imperfect as the ones that appear in painting.

It is for these reasons that Don Quixote is considered the central literary text in this study. Cervantes's novel brings together elements from the picaresque and at the same time adds new ways of understanding the social and cultural roles of food and eating. It is also a text in which the anxiety of belonging can be found, analyzed, and described in detail. But it is especially a work of art in writing in which the different meanings of food are presented following criteria that we can find in painting as well. As artists, Cervantes and the painters who are his contemporaries see foodstuffs from angles that frequently coincide. What I present here is an exploration of these coincidences from the point of view of the relationship between the creators of the artistic works and the material culture of their time. This leads to a reflection about the reasons why they decided to look at food from these
specific points of view, and to considerations about the possible circumstances that translated into these points of convergence.

In chapter 1, I present an overview of the different meanings attributed to represented foodstuffs in Spanish literature and art. I refer occasionally to *Don Quixote*, but my intention in this chapter is mainly to show how the meanings found in Cervantes’s novel are prefigured and accompanied by other literary works, as well as by works of art. In this chapter I emphasize the need for an approach to this type of representation considering elements of the material world, and introduce the idea of “anxiety of belonging” on which I elaborate throughout the study. I propose that two dimensions can be especially addressed regarding the anxiety of belonging: one, predominantly social, is related mainly to social status and the separation of classes; the other, predominantly cultural, is related to the separation between Old and New Christians. The representation of food consumption specifically in *Don Quixote* is addressed in chapter 2, in comparison with artistic works by Juan van der Hamen y León, Jusepe de Ribera and Diego de Velázquez. The multiple levels on which food operates in the novel, from its role in the fictitious origin of the book as an Arabic manuscript to the way it is introduced among other fundamental resources to bring plot and characters back to reality, is contrasted with the innovative roles that painters are assigning to foodstuffs in their creations during the decade through which the two parts of the novel are published. Chapter 3 is dedicated to discussing the social dimension of the anxiety of belonging. Using as a starting point the materials and reflections presented in the previous chapters, I underline the figure of the *hidalgo* as the one on whom the anxieties of different classes converge. In this chapter I explain that these anxieties are related to a social structure which is especially visible at the table, and for this purpose I introduce the complementary notion of precedence. Through the relationship between belonging and precedence, I read the figure of the *hidalgo* through the episodes related to food
consumption in *Don Quixote*, and I propose that the novel offers, simultaneously, a reflection on the condition of the *hidalgo*, a problematization of the limits imposed on this class and on the classes below it in the social scale, and a series of responses to these limits through humor and through alternative models of coexistence and consumption. The existence of a wider Cervantine aesthetic project in these responses is discussed through a comparison between scenes in *Don Quixote* and in one of Cervantes’s *Novelas ejemplares*, “Rinconete and Cortadillo.” The fourth and last chapter is dedicated to elaborating on the way food representation in writing and painting reveals the intricacies of the separation between Old and New Christians in Spain. Focusing on the cultural aspects of the anxiety of belonging, I stress the importance of historical events, especially the expulsion of the Moriscos, in the transformation of Cervantes’s way of representing food and eating in the second part of *Don Quixote*. Concretely, I discuss the implications of Cervantes’s decision to include a returning Morisco as the protagonist of a meal in the novel, and compare this change of perspective with the aesthetic decisions that inform the works of the young Diego de Velázquez, which are also related to the presentation of a New Christian subject as the protagonist of a scene in which food has multiple connotations.

Food, eating, and the anxiety of belonging converge in relevant works of art from the Spanish golden age. Analyzing these points of convergence using a materialist approach that includes aesthetic considerations makes it possible to pay attention to the areas in which artistic production and everyday life are influenced by the spheres of politics, of social norms, and of the economy. The way authors and creations deal with these spheres offers a collection of elaborate strategies both for responding to established rules and for generating alternatives. The intimate character of the kitchen and of the daily ceremonies of gathering to eat and drink becomes a privileged space for diverse interpretations about what constitutes a subject, both in the sense in which we understand the word today, and in the
sense it was understood in the times of Cervantes and the still-life painters: subjects of
desire, of agency, subjects who fight for inclusion, but also subjects of one of the most
powerful kingdoms of the seventeenth century. If we agree about calling these years our
early Western modernity, then we can look back to these subjects to ask them, and ourselves,
about the early stages of our own anxieties as modern subjects. I have chosen to bring this
conversation to the kitchen, where the most important conversations frequently take place.
1. Food, Eating, and the Anxiety of Belonging

1.1. The Coin, the Hen, and the Mysterious Character of the Commodity Form

We can barely see it. If we try to think like the painter, making it appear only took a thin, white curved line and a touch of dark paint. But he knew what he was doing because the little object depicted with those two strokes, a coin, is the center of the action. The painted man who is holding it shows in his face an expression of slight sadness, as if passing the piece to the painted woman were a little difficult. In exchange for the coin, nevertheless, there will be a newly acquired good: a hen. The hen may represent the promise of feasting, but still the face of the man makes us think whether that bird he is holding by the legs is worth it. After all, his eyes still look at the other hens and roosters stored alive in a basket covered with a net. He seems to be pondering his election.

The woman who is receiving the object does not seem very comfortable with the intrusion of the eye of the viewer, even though she is not surprised. She looks at us straight in the eye, but she does not move the hand that waits to receive the coin. Her hand and her face have been carefully represented. “This is what I do,” she says with her actions and with her eyes, and we are expected to know the meaning of those actions, because we see her surrounded by dead birds, living birds, giblets, and eggs.

The coin that is about to change hands establishes the relationship between the two characters. He wanted something, she had that something. She gave it to him and she is getting something else in exchange. He buys, she sells. They exchange a coin for a hen.

We do not know if the painter wanted us to name his work after the woman, but we do. We call the painting *The Poultry Vendor* (figure 1) and this indicates that we pay more attention to the person who will receive the coin than to the one who is giving it. Even though he is getting the hen in exchange, she seems to be the one who is going to do better
in the exchange. The coin, right in the center of the picture, leads us to think that this process of giving and taking is not symmetrical. The hen is upside down and to our right, and this unnatural position tells us that it is more than likely going to be eaten. Consumed. The hen is destined to disappear. The coin will survive. That is why we think that, as soon as he turns in the coin, he will be lacking something while she will have something more.

Figure 1. Alejandro de Loarte, La gallinera (The Poultry Vendor), 1626, oil on canvas, 162 x 130 cm, private collection, Madrid.
The experts who have studied this work, painted by Alejandro de Loarte in 1626, tell us something else about the background. They tell us that what we see is the “Zocodover Plaza, the hub of mercantile life in Toledo,”¹ and this location reinforces the transactional nature of the exchange. The same experts coincide in another characteristic. In this painting, the human figures look slightly rigid, so the other elements—specifically the garments worn by the characters, as well as the birds and other products on display—are responsible for animating the picture. The presence of the coin, added to this transposition of properties, evokes a reflection by Karl Marx two centuries after the painting was completed:

> The mysterious character of the commodity-form consists therefore simply in the fact that the commodity reflects the social characteristics of men's own labour as objective characteristics of the products of labour themselves, as the socio-natural properties of these things. Hence it also reflects the social relation of the producers to the sum total of labour as a social relation between objects, a relation which exists apart from and outside the producers. Through this substitution, the products of labour become commodities, sensuous things which are at the same time suprasensible or social. In the same way, the impression made by a thing on the optic nerve is perceived not as a subjective excitation of that nerve but as the objective form of a thing outside the eye. In the act of seeing, of course, light is really transmitted from one thing, the external object, to another thing, the eye. It is a physical relation between physical things. As against this, the commodity form, and the value-relation of the products of labour within which it appears, have absolutely no connection with the physical nature of the commodity and the material [dinglich] relations arising out of this. It is nothing but the definite social relation between men themselves which assumes here, for them, the fantastic form of a relation between things. In order, therefore, to find an analogy we must take flight into the misty realm of religion. There the products of the human brain appear as autonomous figures endowed with a life of their own, which enter into relations both with each other and with the human race. So it is in the world of commodities with the products of men's hands. I call this the fetishism which attaches itself to the products of labour as soon as they are produced as commodities, and is therefore inseparable from the production of commodities.²

Even though Marx was not thinking about art when he wrote about the “fetishism of commodities” or the “mysterious character of the commodity form,” he was clearly aware of

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the visual dimension involved in the process of attributing value to objects and, as in this case, to animals.

But we cannot forget about the coin, which makes this process of attribution of value even more specific. We know that those birds have a price and that they can be purchased. With enough money, the young man in the painting can own these birds, and maybe take them to the kitchen and to the table. By painting a coin, Loarte introduces a new dimension in the principle of *mimesis*. In this work of art, *mimesis* is something else besides the “imitation of nature,” as some of his illustrious contemporaries such as Francisco Pacheco would define it following the ancient principles of Aristotle. Loarte’s painting mimes commodities. The birds are still birds, but each is also a thing that can be exchanged for a coin. A thing with value, then. A good, destined to be consumed but only after its price is paid.

Loarte paints money in action, in the center of his painting and as the element that makes the main action possible. With a few traces of his brush, he reveals the interconnection between art, food, and money. Food is still what people eat, but food is what people buy as well. In a historical sense, through this coin we can speculate about the price of food and establish some correlations with the prices of other commodities. But Loarte

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3 “Pintura es arte que enseña a imitar con líneas y colores. Esta es la definición. Para explicación de la cual se ha de saber que toda definición debe constar de género y diferencia. El género, según los lógicos, es una razón común que se dice de muchos diferentes en especie; diferencia es todo aquello por lo cual una especie se distingue de cualesquiera otras del mismo género. Esto supuesto, la definición de la Pintura consta de género y diferencia. Arte es el género: razón común en que conviene con otras artes diferentes della en especie. La diferencia por la cual difiere de las demás, es que enseña a imitar con líneas y colores todas las cosas imitables de la arte y de la imaginación y, principalmente, las obras de naturaleza: y esto en todas superficies, pero más de ordinario en superficie llana...” [Painting is the art that teaches how to imitate, with lines and colors. This is its definition. To explain it, we have to know that all definitions are composed of genre and difference. Genre, according to the logicians, is a common reason that correspond to different species; difference are all the features through which a species is distinguished from others that belong to the same genre. Upon agreement with this, the definition of Painting comprises genre and difference. Art is the genre: common reason in which it agrees with other arts that differ from Painting in species. The difference through which it differs from the other arts is that it teaches how to imitate, with lines and colors, all imitable objects from art, from imagination, and mainly, the works of nature: and this on all surfaces, but usually on flat surfaces...]” (Francisco Pacheco, *Arte de la pintura*, ed. Bonaventura Bassegoda i Hugas [Madrid: Cátedra, 1990], 75-76. My translation).
makes it possible for us to see more angles of consumption, and by doing so he brings us to a space where we see how a basic principle of modern capital operates:

The specific kind of commodity with whose natural form the equivalent form is socially interwoven now becomes the money commodity, or serves as money. It becomes its specific social function, and consequently its social monopoly, to play the part of universal equivalent within the world of commodities.¹⁴

We see chicken and we see commodities. We see game and we see commodities. In the foreground we see a plate in which an egg is surrounded by giblets, and we know that if the man or any other customer after him wants to eat that egg or the other pieces, he has to pay for them. We know that the woman is not going to eat what is displayed on the plate. It is on the counter, closer to the buyer. It is food, but not to be eaten. At least, not without a previous act similar to the one depicted, in which a coin is given and taken. That egg and the giblets are for display or for sale. And they have an added value precisely because they are on display. There is a suggestion: “If you accompany the egg with this, it will become a meal.” And this is colorful, inviting.

The disposition of the elements on the plate turn a common egg into the egg that someone will want to buy. Disposition, color, organization of the elements, all these factors add value, and the poultry vendor is not the only one who knows that. The painter is aware of these principles, and this is the point of contact between his work and the one of the woman he is painting. He needs to compose, to organize, to present color and form adequately if he wants his own product to be sold. For he is selling the poultry, the plate with eggs, the basket with cocks and hens, the woman, the man and even the coin. They have been painted. They are art. But the painting is also a commodity. The painting has captured value. Even its own, because it will be purchased with the same money that appears in the picture. For the represented vendor, as well as for the painter, the coin appears as a

¹⁴ Karl Marx, Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, v.1, 162.
promise of wealth. Both of them depend on getting, for their product, an interested buyer who is willing to pay the price and take it home.

1.2. A Material Approach to the Study of Food in the Spanish Golden Age

Taking into account these multiple layers of meaning that become visible when we approach the work of art from a material perspective, it is possible to explain better why recent scholarship has given a new meaning to the expression “We are what we eat.” These words that come from popular wisdom have been interpreted from the point of view of different disciplines, but only recently in our discipline have we come to reflect more extensively on the fact that the acts of producing, preparing, serving, sharing, and consuming food are very important cultural practices. Each of these stages of the process of production of food is marked by material exchanges, in other words, by processes of assignation and negotiation of the material value of foodstuffs. What is considered edible, how to prepare it and serve it, to whom, and in what circumstances are all decisions that establish social status, imply political intent, and create psychological bonds. But they also affect directly the economy of individuals and nations.

The Spanish Golden Age, the period of history when *The Poultry Vendor* was painted, is especially rich in the understanding of all these aspects, because in many ways it was shaped by economic processes related to food. It was the search for spices, among other products, that led the Catholic Monarchs to sponsor Columbus’s exploratory travels, and even though the direct maritime route that they were looking for was not found, the encounter with the New World changed the Western diet in the period, and for the centuries to come. European Early Modernity was nurtured by the products of the Americas, even though they were not immediately represented in art or literature. I borrow the example of the potato from Miguel Angel Almodovar’s book *El hambre en España*. Found in the high
plains of South America, cultivated by the Aymara and the Quechua, it made its way to the
tables and kitchens of the Old World, but it does not appear either in cookbooks or in
paintings, poems or novels for centuries. However, it was transplanted and cultivated
throughout Europe to feed peasants and workers, and by the nineteenth century it became
the “fuel” that fed the men and women behind the machines of the industrial revolution.
During the seventeenth century only a few products from the New World found their way
into books and canvases. Peppers are displayed in the early works by Velázquez (Old Woman
Cooking Eggs, 1618, National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh; Christ in the House of Martha and
Mary, c. 1618-20, National Gallery, London), and celebrated in a poem by Francisco de
Quevedo; a chayote squash and an unidentified ear of grain, which more than likely came
from America, appear in two paintings by Juan Sánchez Cotán (the chayote in Still Life with
Game, c. 1600, The Art Institute, Chicago; the ear of grain in the recently attributed Still Life
with a Hamper of Cherries and a Basket of Apricots, private collection, Madrid), and squash,
tomatoes, peppers, and some American flowers are depicted in several of Juan van der
Hamen y León’s works. We know, too, that cacao is mentioned at least once by Miguel de

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5 One of the most exhaustive inventories of works of art that mention or refer to American produce is María
José López Terrada’s study on the Spanish physician Francisco Hernández de Toledo (1514-1587), “Hernández
and Spanish Painting in the Seventeenth Century,” in Simon Varey, Rafael Chabrán and Dora B. Weiner, eds.
Searching for the Secrets of Nature: The Life and Works of Dr. Francisco Hernández (Stanford: Stanford University
Press, 2000), 151-169. For the purposes of contextualizing this study, the paintings mentioned here are the
ones produced around the years when Miguel de Cervantes was writing Don Quixote, the Exemplary Novels and
The Trials of Persiles and Sigismunda, and within a decade after his death. López Terrada mentions also later works
by Bartolomé Estéban Murillo, Juan de Arellano, Antonio Ponce, Tomás Hiepes, and Bartolomé Pérez.

6 “Todo fanfarrones bríos, / todo picantes bravatas / llegó el señor don Pimiento / vestidito de Botarga” (“All
bluster and noise/All bragging and boasting,/Here comes Sir Pepper/Dressed fit for a roasting”). Francisco de
Quevedo, “Boda y acompañamiento del campo,” in Poemas escogidos, Ed. by José Manuel Blecua (Madrid:
Castalia, 1989), 241. English translation by María José López Terrada in “Hernández and Spanish Painting in
the Seventeenth Century,” 153.

7 Juan van der Hamen y León, Still Life with Fruit Basket and Bunches of Grapes, 1622, private collection, Madrid;
Fruit Bowl with Sweets, 1623, Banco de España, Madrid; Vertumnus and Pomona, 1626, Banco de España, Madrid;
Terrada, American flowers can be seen as well in a Holy Family by Francisco de Zurbarán (1625, private
collection, Madrid).

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Cervantes, in his exemplary novel “La gitanilla,” and alluded by Pedro Calderón de la Barca in his play *La estatua de Prometeo*. But it is not only the presence of the New World that shapes the relationship between the Spanish Golden Age, food, and material value. Many other layers overlap in that moment of history. There is, first, the chronic problem of hunger, unsolved even after the encounter with America, and carefully portrayed in what we know now as picaresque novels where, significantly, the hero or “pícaro” is named after the lowest rank a young man can be given in an organized kitchen. Second, we find the challenges and frequently the contradictions of a multicultural society trying to create for itself an image of unity, and this translates into dietary conflicts between Christians, Muslims, and Jews. Therefore, food becomes more than food. Besides its commodity value, based on the possession or the ability to acquire certain products, it acquires a type of social value that relates to the construction of identity. The consumption (or non-consumption) of pork, for example, turns into a metaphor of what remains unsolved after the “reconquista,” the other renowned

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8 In both texts, cacao is evoked in direct relation to its material value. In Cervantes’s novel, a Gypsy man praises himself and his nation by saying: “. . . el mosqueo de las espaldas, ni el apalear el agua en galeras, no lo estimamos en un cacao.” (Miguel de Cervantes, “La gitanilla,” in *Novelas ejemplares*, Barcelona: Crítica, 2001, 76) [“. . . because the whipping of our backs and the paddling of water in the galleys are not worth for us but a grain of cacao”. My translation]. Diana de Armas Wilson has analyzed the appearance of this word among Cervantine characters in her book *Cervantes, the Novel and the New World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 85-88. There she explains that the character refers to cacao considering its exchange value, since Cortés and other chroniclers of the conquest of Mexico had said that cacao beans were used by the Aztecs as currency. In Calderón’s play, a character called Merlin mistakenly pronounces the word “Cacaoso” instead of “Cáucaso:” “Y así, deuina Pandora – / si de tres la vna lo acierto – / sepa su merçed que todo / el Cacaoso mui contento / de estar tan faborecido / y tan sobido de preçio / con su hermosura y su luz, / viene e q[ue] a sus patas puesto / le vendiga en su olor, vna / y mil veces repitiendo . . .” (“So, divine Pandora, / If I get one right of three / Your honor be advised / that all the Cacaosus will be / happy of being so favored / and so highly praised [priced] / with its beauty and its light / that at your feet / be blessed by your honor [odor], once / and a thousand times repeating . . .”) (Pedro Calderón de la Barca, *La estatua de Prometeo*, A critical edition by Margaret Rich Greer With a Study of the Music by Louise K. Stein, Kassel: Edition Reichenberger, 1986, 294). As Margaret R. Greer explains in this edition, the joke originates in the fact that cacao was expensive, and only accessible to the rich, and that is why Merlin can say that the Cacaoso (the Caucasus) is *sobido de preçio* (highly praised, but also highly priced). Some other literary references, not to cacao but to chocolate, can be found in Agustín Moreto’s comedy *No puede ser*, and in one of María de Zayas’s short novel “La esclava de su amante,” part of her *Desengaños amorosos, parte segunda del sarao y entretenimiento honesto*. For these references, see José Deleito y Piñuela, *La mujer, la casa y la moda en la España del rey poeta* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1946), 124-125, quoted also by Margaret Greer.
achievement of the Catholic Monarchs. “Tocinofobia” (“bacon-phobia”) is treated like a social illness. Those who do not eat pork are regarded as suspicious, and their eating habits may cost them interrogation by the Inquisition, imprisonment, or even their lives. As Américo Castro has shown while reflecting on Cervantes, one single gesture toward the act of eating pork, one gesture of pleasure or aversion, brings about many of the latent conflicts that pervade the everyday life of a kingdom that insists it is united under the Catholic faith, even while other non-christian faith practices have not been fully suppressed.

These conflicts find their artistic expression especially in narrative, even though poetry also celebrates food, when there is any (“Ándeme yo caliente y ríase la gente,” comments cynically the poetic voice of Góngora, as it assigns to a sizzling blood sausage a higher position than the one reserved for the meals of a prince). Hunger is the reason to act for the anti-heroes of the picaresque novels. Being poor, they explore imaginative ways to cope with hunger, but soon they also show that hunger is present even among those who are not officially poor, such as the esquire who hires Lázaro in the third chapter of Lazarillo de Tormes. With regard to the multicultural society, hunger and food appear in several episodes of the first modern novel, Don Quixote, where, as will be discussed in further chapters, Moors, Moriscos and other New Christians play with the reader a constant game of hide and seek around edible products.

A third issue associated with food in the Spanish Golden Age is its mystical role in art. Read from a material perspective, the voluntary deprivation of food that has been

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9 One of the most comprehensive studies about the presence of food in written documents of the Spanish Golden Age is María de los Ángeles Pérez Samper’s article “La comida escrita en la España del Siglo de Oro,” Food and History, v. 2, 1 (2004): 85-136. Pérez Samper covers both literary and non-literary texts. Among the former, she reviews novels, plays, and poems that refer both to traditional foodstuffs and to those that were newly introduced from the American colonies. Among the latter, she includes printed and handwritten cookbooks, books on medicine, and account books.

described as one of the main characteristics of Spanish painting in the period can be explained as an act of sublimation through which artists, mystic writers, and also non-spiritual writers tried to remediate the lack of food and to make of resignation a virtue, or ironize about it. What remains, no matter the case, are their works, in which food is the object of contemplation and it is the painting that becomes the matter of consumption. In writing we find again Don Quixote, where the main character begins his transformation into a knight with a change in his eating and drinking habits.

For all these reasons, it becomes necessary to look at food in paintings, poems, novels, and plays and try to understand it beyond its uses as part of the background of a scene. Many Spanish still lifes make this especially clear, because there is not a human figure in the “foreground,” so foodstuffs become the protagonists of the painting. In the literature of the period, as well as in art, textual mimesis is inclined towards an accurate representation of reality. In both fields, the representation of foodstuffs usually means the representation of their consumption in everyday life, although in literature hyperboles about food are used on occasion to generate a different interpretation (religious, allegorical or in

11 According to Emilio Orozco Díaz, in Mística, plástica y barroco (Madrid: Cupsa, 1977) and other works, the approach to foodstuffs from the angle of austerity and deprivation is what distinguishes the Spanish still life from others. The creation of Spanish still lifes would imply a combination of distance and contemplation, and a constant invitation to the viewer to play games of perspective and trompe l’œil, so common foodstuffs become altar table offerings to the Virgin or illustrations of God’s creation and wonder. As will be seen in further chapters, recent generations of scholars have disputed this explanation of the origins of still lifes related to mysticism, on the one hand because Juan Sánchez Cotán painted his works years before becoming a monk, and on the other hand because the mystical factor does not explain entirely the technical challenges of the Spanish still life.

12 It is important to underline that, throughout this study, the expressions “still life” and bodegón are used in different contexts. The name “still life” is reserved for representations of foodstuffs, flowers, and occasionally objects, presented to the viewer without the presence of human beings. In the seventeenth century, these types of paintings received were classified depending on what was painted on the canvas. For example, in his treatise on painting, Francisco Pacheco refers to “lienzos de frutas” (paintings of fruit), and “lienzos de flores” (paintings of flowers), and occasionally I will use also these terms. “Bodegón,” on the other hand, is a word that I reserve here for paintings representing kitchen scenes, since a bodegón was a place where people could eat in exchange for money. Although in current Spanish the word bodegón tends to be used indistinctly for still lifes and kitchen scenes, I maintain the separation to make an easier transition to references in seventeenth-century documents and treatises, in which bodegones and still lifes, although close to each other, are described as different types of works.
any other way symbolic) in the reader. As previously explained, painting appears at first sight as the realm of *mimesis* in the most naturalistic sense of the word, but when we look carefully we discover that canvases are as full of technical tricks and measurements as any baroque poem. The challenge, then, is to look at literature and paintings not as direct testimonies of reality in the period. Or, to be more explicit, to look at these works not only as such testimonies. We have to regard written and painted food both with socio-historical and with aesthetic lenses simultaneously.

It is for these reasons that a material approach to the representation of food in art and literature becomes necessary, and the specificity of the topic leads to the need to adapt different devices. At least since the decade of the 1950s, there has been an interest in studying everyday life, coming both from the pioneers of what would become cultural studies, especially Raymond Williams, and from social scientists such as Erving Goffman and Harold Garfinkel. Even though their initial works were especially focused on contemporary practices of everyday life that could be observed firsthand by the researchers, and literature, also contemporary, was quoted to illustrate these observations, they provided valuable and organized criteria to analyze the human behavior around the acts of eating and drinking. Susie Scott provides a summary of these findings:

Both eating and drinking . . . are not simply responses to biological drives, but are social practices that are ritualistic, rule-governed and subject to the constant possibility of challenge. The collective consumption of food and drink can serve a number of social functions, including but not limited to communality, hospitality, liminality and the celebration of group identity. The practices involved help individuals to express and to perform identities of gender, class, ethnicity and age, as well as to distinguish and disassociate themselves from other such identities. Finally, as rule-governed practices, eating and drinking can be found in both conformist and

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deviant forms, the contrast reminding us of the interplay between our themes of social order, rituals and routines, and norm-breaking challenges.\textsuperscript{14}

However, as useful as these contributions from sociology, anthropology and social psychology among other fields are, we need to adjust them, first, to the material perspective, and second, to the specific period and place under study.

Both painting and literature offer valuable details about everyday life in the Spanish Golden Age. For example: “. . . en toda la casa no avía ninguna cosa de comer como suele estar en otras algún tocino colgado al humero, algún queso puesto en alguna tabla, o en el armario algún canastillo con algunos pedaços de pan que de la mesa sobran . . .”\textsuperscript{15} [“And there wasn’t a thing to eat in the whole place, the way there is in most houses: a bit of bacon hanging from the chimney, some cheese lying on the table or in the cupboard, a basket with some slices of bread left over from dinner.”]\textsuperscript{16} In this passage from \textit{Lazarillo de Tormes}, the main goal of the description is to explain the very limited amount of food to which the main character has access. Since the narrator chooses to explain the situation by comparison, the result is that we receive additional information about what was considered usual in a sixteenth-century household. We learn about the preservation techniques that allowed families to keep cheese and bacon, and we see details about common household items. Even from the background, food gives the reader an idea about what was considered usual in the daily lives of the subjects of the Spanish monarchy, and from this situation we can deduce what was considered extreme poverty, which is the situation Lazarillo faces most of the time.

A more specific inquiry about everyday life in the past, and about its artistic representation comes from two schools of thought that share many principles: American


\textsuperscript{15} \textit{La vida de Lazarillo de Tormes, de sus fortunas y adversidades}, Ed. by Aldo Ruffinatto (Madrid: Castalia, 2001), 27.

\textsuperscript{16} \textit{The Life of Lazarillo de Tormes, His Fortunes and Misfortunes, as Told by Himself (With a Sequel by Juan de Luna)}, Trans. by Robert S. Rudder (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1973), 141.
New Historicism and British Cultural Materialism. Both schools contribute principles that are useful in the current project. One of the main principles is the analysis of the relationship between a work of art and its historical context, which allows us to read literature and art in the multiple dimensions previously mentioned. In words of Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield:

> . . . our belief is that a combination of historical context, theoretical method, political commitment and textual analysis offers the strongest challenge and has already contributed substantial work. Historical context undermines the transcendent significance traditionally accorded to the literary text and allows us to recover its histories; theoretical method detaches the text from immanent criticism which seeks only to reproduce it in its own terms; socialist and feminist commitment confronts the conservative categories in which most criticism has hitherto been conducted; textual analysis locates the critique of traditional approaches where it cannot be ignored. We call this ‘cultural materialism’.  

A second principle, explained also in this passage, is the Marxist reading of these works of art, which allows a deeper and more complex approach to elements like foodstuffs, because they are observed from a materialist point of view. Value, production, circulation and consumption of commodities become new, rich dimensions to read and analyze in aesthetic representations. But there is one more reason to consider these two schools essential for the type of analysis presented in this research, and it is their interest in the Early Modern period. Since Marxism is an important element of these approaches, Early Modernity needs to be addressed as the moment in which capitalism, as it is understood and criticized by Marxist theory, took shape. Although both Cultural Materialism and New Historicism focus on English literature and the Elizabethan court, it becomes evident that many approaches to the materialist practices in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries lead us sooner or later to pay attention to the Spanish kingdom, because of its presence in Europe, America, Africa, the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, and because it was one of the main providers of capital in

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Europe, and also one of the main consumers of goods that came from all over the world. Let us consider, then, the different dimensions in which food can be seen when our current knowledge about aesthetics and about the socio-historical, psychological and economic context converge in the period we have come to know as Spanish Early Modernity.

1.3. Food and the Artistic Representation of Everyday Life

In the Spanish Golden Age, the representation of food constitutes a creative challenge in itself. Painters and sculptors mainly, but also playwrights, poets and narrators are concerned with the Aristotelian principle of mimesis, translated by authors of treatises of the period into the idea of imitación de la naturaleza (imitation of nature). The goal is to present all aspects of nature as vividly as possible, and underline realism even if the subject of the representation is a legend or a myth, as happens in Velázquez’s Los borrachos (1626 or 1629, Museo del Prado, Madrid), where Bacchus and his court are endowed with human and very local facial and body types.¹⁸ Some products of the imagination, especially the chivalric novels, are attacked and replaced by realistic characters. As has been underlined in several studies about Don Quixote, one of the books that survives the fire to which others have been condemned–because they caused the madness of the gentleman–is Tirante el Blanco (Tirant lo Blanch, by Joanot Martorell), because in this book the knights eat, sleep, and die in their beds. Food turns into one of the elements that anchors any story to reality. The rule of realism suggested by Cervantes is, then, that whenever we see a character eating (or sleeping or dying), we can be sure we are dealing with a narrative about “this” world, as opposed to the ones created by imagination and fantasy, where heroes do not have physical needs. The representation of human beings eating, sleeping and dying is praised as an aesthetic value. In

¹⁸ See especially Steven N. Orso, Velázquez, Los Borrachos, and Painting in the Court of Philip IV (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).
fact, the “imitation of nature” is one of the main creative conflicts in *Don Quixote*, where reality literally hits the protagonist over and over again, where hunger strikes and we perceive the need of the characters to stop and sleep, and where natural death defines the end of the story. From the *Burial of the Count of Orgaz* by El Greco to the anatomical accuracy of the skulls painted by Antonio de Pereda in his *Vanitas*, from the death of Don Quixote to the admonitory “Soneto CLXVI” by Góngora, death is also shown as the ultimate proof of the intention to represent all orders of nature.

In these aesthetic projects, the representation of food is ranked low when compared to the representation of the human figure, but praised and recognized as a display of technical skill. Young painters or those who look for recognition find in still lifes the genre to present their skill as a credential, and also the occasion to demonstrate their knowledge about the artistic trends that come from Flanders and Italy. And these two sources of influence coincide in two subjects: painting everyday life scenes, especially kitchen scenes,

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19 Soneto CLXVI

Mientras por competir con tu cabello,
oro bruiñido al sol relumbra en vano;
mientras con menosprecio en medio el llano
mira tu blanca frente el lili lillo;

mientras a cada labio, por cogello,
siguen más ojos que al clavel temprano;
y mientras triunfa con desnada lozano
del luciente cristal tu gentil cuello:

goza cuello, cabello, labio y frente,antes que lo que fue en tu edad dorada
oro, lilio, clavel, cristal luciente,

no sólo en plata o viola troncada
se vuelva, mas tú y ello juntamente
en tierra, en humo, en polvo, en sombra, en nada.

Sonnet CLXVI

(Translation by Alix Ingber)

While trying with your tresses to compete
in vain the sun's rays shine on burnished gold;
while with abundant scorn across the plain
does your white brow the lily's hue behold;

while to each of your lips, to catch and keep,
are drawn more eyes than to carnations bright;
and while with graceful scorn your lovely throat
transparently still bests all crystal's light,

take your delight in throat, locks, lips, and brow,
before what in your golden years was gold,
carnation, lily, crystal luminous,

not just to silver or limp violets
will turn, but you and all of it as well
to earth, smoke, dust, to gloom, to nothingness.


The theme of this sonnet reappears in other compositions. It even influences the poetry of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, whose poem “A su retrato” repeats the conclusion. Referring to a portrait, the poetic voice declares: “es cadáver, es polvo, es sombra, es nada” ['is corpse and dust, shadow and nothingness'].
and still lifes. Both in literature and painting, an aspect of the new subjects and techniques relates to inventing devices that invite the observer or reader to participate in the scene, because no representation of reality would be complete if it did not feel real to the audiences. Francisco Pacheco uses this argument in *Arte de la Pintura* (1649)\(^{20}\) to justify his appraisal for still lifes:

¿Pues qué? ¿Los bodegones no se deben estimar? Claro que sí, si son pintados como mi yerno los pinta alzándose con esta parte sin dexar lugar a otro, y merecen estimación grandísima; pues con estos principios y los retratos, de que hablaremos luego, halló la verdadera imitación del natural alentando los ánimos de muchos con su poderoso exemplo . . .

Cuando las figuras tienen valentía, debuxo y colorido, y parecen vivas, y son iguales a las demás cosas del natural que se juntan en estas pinturas, que habemos dicho, traen sumo honor al artífice . . . No le sucedió así a Zeuxis cuando pintó el muchacho que llevaba unas uvas sobre la cabeza, a las cuales volaban a picar los pájaros, por donde, airado contra su obra, dixo: “Mejor he pintado las uvas que el muchacho, porque, si estuviera perfeto, las aves tuvieran miedo de llegar a ellas”.\(^{21}\)

Then what? Should bodegones not be esteemed? Of course they should, if they are painted the way my son-in-law paints them, reaching in this heights no other has reached, and then they deserve great esteem, since with these principles and the portraits of which we will talk later he achieved the true imitation of nature, encouraging the hopes of many others with his powerful example . . .

When figures have value, drawing and color, and seem alive, and look just like the other natural things that come together in these paintings we have talked about, they bring the highest honor to the artist . . . Not this did not happen to Zeuxis when he painted the young man who carried grapes over his head and birds flew toward them trying to eat them. It is said that, angry against his work, he said: “I have painted the grapes better than the boy, because if he were perfect, the birds would have been scared and would not have come close to them.”

The legend of Zeuxis, the painter who cheated birds and was only defeated by another painter of nature, Parrhasius, is told many times in the Spanish Golden Age, and not only by painters. The name of Zeuxis finds its way even into the ironic prologue of *Don Quijote*. To be followed or to be criticized, the ancestor of still life painting reminds artists that all objects, but especially food, have to be painted in a way that makes the viewer momentarily

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\(^{20}\) The book was published posthumously, but it is known that Pacheco was writing different chapters of his treatise at least since 1600.

confused. Techniques of *trompe l’oeil* multiply, perspective is called into the scene, brush techniques are perfected, but there is one point in which painting and literature converge: the audiences have to participate in the work. While Cervantes achieves this goal by addressing his readers directly and by making his characters talk about the very book in which they are living, the painters of still lifes and scenes from everyday life offer the observer the chance of touching or being touched by the picture. In a painting by Juan van der Hamen y León, the handle of a knife protrudes from a table, as if it were expecting someone to grab it and cut a slice of the cheese that awaits next to it. In one of the first works by a very young Diego de Velázquez, *The Waterseller from Seville* (ca. 1623, Wellington Museum, Apsley House, London) an almost life-size clay pot exudes water, and we are tempted to wipe off the drops that threaten to fall to the floor, but we refrain because we see that the firm hand of its owner is too close for us to go unnoticed. The participation of the audience is composed in equal parts of self-deception and rationality. The works of art create the trick but at the same time reveal the trick, they expect their reader or observer to remember that in the end he or she is standing in front of a painting or reading a book. As Barry W. Ife explains about the conception of art in the period:

. . . because an art object is a copy of an original or model, the artist is in a sense out to dupe his audience, to pass off the copy as the real thing—the very criteria for excellence in art outlined above ensure that he must do so. The danger is therefore proportional to the artistry. The man who most successfully creates an illusion of reality is the one who is most likely to lead the uninitiated astray: ‘poetry of that sort seems to be injurious to minds which do not possess the antidote in a knowledge or its real nature’ ([Plato, *Republic*] x, 595). Those who cannot see the unreality of art are most at risk, and the greater the skill of the illusionist the greater the risk that his audience will lose its bearings. Conversely, the more a work of art draws attention to its artificiality, the less harmful it is likely to be, a motto that might almost have been adopted as their own by the prose writers of the Golden Age.  

Given that painting and prose share this principle, we find here one more reason to study them together. In both fields, the technical challenge turns out to be double: achieve mastery in representational resources, and at the same time, in devices conceived to make the trick visible. As discussed regarding *The Poultry Vendor*, mastery in the techniques for both hiding and revealing the represented nature of the objects is usually accompanied by an increase in the artistic and in the material value of the works. However, it is important to remark that value and price need to be discussed in different orders. Prices for paintings and books were regulated by the market and by specific institutions (as we can see, for example, in the *tasa* printed in the first pages of *Don Quixote* and many other books). From a cultural materialist perspective, value would imply not only the dimension of price, but also the level of demand of the cultural product (book, painting), as well as the degree of prestige and social or cultural status related to its production and to its possession, establishing in this way the figure of the painter and the poet as part of the court (for example in the cases of Diego de Velázquez or Francisco de Quevedo), and opening a space for the figure of the noble *connoisseur*, the art collector (for instance, in the case of the Duke of Lerma).23

There is another aspect of everyday life that can be underlined when studying these representations, and it is the information provided by paintings about the habits and artistic convictions of their creators. The recurrence of a face or an object from painting to painting

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23 At the beginning of the second chapter of *The Field of Cultural Production*, Pierre Bourdieu observes that a pre-capitalist logic lives on in our contemporary understanding of the art business. Taking into account the period to which this study is dedicated, in which pre-capitalist and capitalist practices coexist, we can observe firsthand what Bourdieu calls “the accumulation of symbolic capital”, especially in the field of art: “Symbolic capital’ is to be understood as economic or political capital that is disavowed, misrecognized, and thereby recognized, hence legitimate, a ‘credit’ which, under certain conditions, and always in the long run, guarantees ‘economic’ profits . . . In short, when the only usable, effective capital is the (mis)recognized, legitimate capital called ‘prestige’ or ‘authority’, the economic capital that cultural undertakings generally require cannot secure the specific profits produced by the field—not the ‘economic’ profits they always imply—unless it is reconverted into symbolic capital . . . For the author . . . the only legitimate accumulation consists in making a name for oneself, a known, recognized name, a capital of consecration implying a power to consecrate objects (with a trademark or signature) or persons (through publication, exhibition, etc.) and therefore to give value, and to appropriate the profits from this operation.” (Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1993], 75).
tells us about the way the painter worked with his models, some of them being people recruited in the streets. These elements tell us also about the theories of lighting and perspective the artists were following. But the studio is not the only space we can reconstruct by paying attention to these paintings. The foodstuffs and “props” used by the painter make it possible to better understand everyday life in Spain. Again, literature and painting support each other in this task. If we wonder what Casilda means in Lope de Vega’s *Peribáñez y el comendador de Ocaña* when she says that she serves food “... no en plata, aunque yo quisiera; / platos son de Talavera / que están vertiendo claveles” [“... not in silver, although these are my wishes; / from Talavera come our dishes / pouring bunches of carnations”] we can compare the elegance of the reflective surfaces of the silver plates that appear in Francisco de Zurbarán’s *Still Life with Basket of Oranges* (figure 2) to the two hand-painted ceramic plates, one of them lying on the floor, broken, in Antonio de Pereda’s *Allegory of Lost Virtue* (figure 3), a kitchen scene where a young woman on her knees extends her hand to an armed man sitting on the rim of a table. What is more, this material contrast helps us understand better the main conflict between nobles and peasants in *Peribáñez*, a conflict that not coincidentally is related to the endangered virtue of the woman who owns the fragile ceramic plates from Talavera. The way the melon carried by a young man in Velázquez’s *Old Woman Cooking Eggs* (figure 4) is tied with a rope tells us how they were sold in the market and the care the vendors took for their product to reach the houses of their customers with the fruit intact. When we see a similar melon tied with a similar rope in the anonymous *The Bodegón Keeper* (figure 5), we can hypothesize that this practice was common throughout Spain. Therefore, from the *imitación de la naturaleza* we can reconstruct social and economic relations in a specific moment of Spanish history, and we can read the changes of a society. As we will see in further chapters, many contrasts in the conception of the world by the Spanish subjects can be found just by comparing the frugal paintings of fruits and
vegetables by Juan Sánchez Cotán to the dishes containing sweets and the bowls full of fruit and elaborate arrangements of flowers that appear in Juan van der Hamen’s still lifes.

Figure 2. Francisco de Zurbarán, *Still Life with Basket of Oranges*, 1633, detail, The Norton Simon Foundations, Pasadena, California.

Figure 3. Antonio de Pereda, *Kitchen Scene (Allegory of Lost Virtue)*, ca. 1650-5, detail, The Douglas-Pennant collection (The National Trust), Penrhyn Castle.
Figure 4. Diego Rodríguez de Silva y Velázquez, *Old Woman Frying Eggs*, 1618, detail, The National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh.

Figure 5. Anonymous, *The Bodegón Keeper*, detail, The Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.
Regarding the possibilities of reconstructing the material life of the period through artistic representations, two more aspects can be considered. One is the case in which ingredients conceived primarily as food become part of the materiality of the work of art itself. For example, the extended use of egg whites not as an ingredient, but as one of the materials used by painters to prepare colors. In situations like this, as well as in others related to other artistic creations (egg whites were also used to prepare a specific type of mortar in Spanish constructions), the production of works of art and architecture affect directly the demand, and therefore, the production of goods that are not primarily “artistic.” The other aspect is the presence of scientific principles and technological artifacts, both related to the transformation of edible goods.24 Piero Camporesi has been one of the first to observe how scientific knowledge intervened in changes of conception about the production of food. Even though his studies are dedicated to Italy, many of his observations can be used as starting points to reflect on Spanish production, both of art and of material goods. The case of wine is illustrative. In his essay “The Setting of the Moon,” Camporesi shows Galileo Galilei studying nature using grapes and wine as a starting point. Galileo’s intimate love for wine becomes first the origin of his passion for planting his own vines, and then a source of scientific inquiry:

Galileo attended to the cultivation of his vines ‘with more than ordinary observation, diligence, and industry’. He ‘was extraordinarily interested in agriculture’, and he must have tried to understand more about the mechanisms that set in motion the creative process within the grape, which prepared it for its metamorphosis into wine. A man who never missed ‘an occasion for philosophizing’ even ‘on the prolific virtue of seeds, and on the other wonderful operations of the divine Artifex’, he must have reflected also on the wet and the dry, on the putrefactive effect of darkness, which produced the negative energy of the processes of putrefaction, and on its opposite,

24 Other forms of technology are involved in these processes as well. The technology of printing, for example, has to be considered in the production of cookbooks as well as of the novels, plays and poems that contain references to food. With respect to this matter, the recent study by Francisco Rico El texto del “Quijote”: Preliminares a una ecdótica del Siglo de Oro (Valladolid: Centro para la Edición de los Clásicos Españoles, 2005) provides detailed information about the making of Don Quixote, but also about the process of making a book in seventeenth-century Spain.
fermentation, which in vine and wine releases radiant, fecundating and creative energy of light.25

Light is studied with similar passion by Galileo as a scientist, and by Italian and Spanish painters, but knowing light appears primarily as the knowledge of those who produce grapes and wine. In Camporesi’s description, material life begins and ends the cycle: the need to study light for grapes leads to science, but science goes back to the grapes that produce wine. A similar cycle takes place in the relationship between science and art: in a relatively close moment in history, while Galileo Galilei was intrigued by the transformations of light, Caravaggio was exploring the techniques of chiaroscuro, which were going to influence indirectly Velázquez and other painters. But Caravaggio himself, as well as one of his followers, Jusepe de Ribera, would use light to illuminate dramatically characters who look like peasants and workers. Significantly, for example, Ribera represents the sense of sight with a man of rough features, but holding a delicate optical instrument. Here we see the Renaissance heritage both in science and in art, and at the same time, the interest of both fields in understanding natural phenomena. Scientific contributions, therefore, change as well the meaning of the Aristotelian “imitation of nature.”

The relationship between characters and technology in works of art is more immediately observable. Probably the best known scene of Don Quixote is his battle with the windmills, which, described from a technical point or view, are wind-propelled machines used to grind wheat and other grains to produce flour. The role of this type of device is worth mentioning, especially in literature, while Spanish visual artists tend to privilege the representation of other technologies and mechanical devices,26 such as clocks, pocket


26 Windmills, however, are prominent in Flemish paintings of the period. They appear, for example in Peter Brueghel the Elder’s The Way to Calvary (1564, oil on panel, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna), and in Rembrandt’s The Mill (1645-48, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.).
watches and guns (see especially the works of Antonio de Pereda). Windmills and fulling-mill hammers are the occasion of two adventures in the story of *Don Quixote*, but they are also present at the beginning of *Lazarillo de Tormes*. His stepfather is caught stealing from the mill where he works, and severely punished, and this change in fortune becomes one of the reasons for Lázaro to begin his life of servitude with different masters. The figure of the *molinero* and his wife will be recurrent in ballads (*romances*) about peasants, as well. In these narratives in verse, both characters tend to be the victims of powerful lords, and the female character is usually the object of a seduction plot. As Iván Jaksíc observes about *Don Quixote*, technological devices are presented as symbols of modernity, and they are presented opposite to the protagonist. Even though in other texts the relationship is not the same, it is true that machinery used to produce massive amounts of foodstuffs can be read as a representation of power and of the relationship between the owner of the mill, the person who administers and operates it, and those who use the machine in exchange for money. The aesthetic challenge, therefore, is extended from the food products themselves to the mechanisms that make their production possible.

1.4. Food, Consumption and Community: The Anxiety of Belonging

Thinking in terms of the reconstruction of everyday life, we have to stop and consider foodstuffs in their role as community-builders. As I explained following Susie Scott, food can create identities and separations, and both aspects are sources of concern for the subjects of the Spanish kingdom throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In terms of food, identities are related to families of dishes, to the way in which they are named, prepared and served, to the choices made in a culture about what is considered

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edible, and to a set of ingredients shared by all members of society regardless of their class or status. In the Spain of Cervantes and El Greco, of Calderón de la Barca and Velázquez, a sense of community is created around the diet of the Old Christian, the Cristiano Viejo. By comparing literature and books of recipes, it is possible to determine the elements that are common to all social classes. It is a diet based on beef, lamb, pork, poultry, and game as sources of protein. Fish is eaten too, especially on days of religious abstinence. Bread, baked pastries, and fried pastries (frutas de sartén) are the main sources of carbohydrates. An important source of proteins besides or in substitution of meat are legumes. Green vegetables are less frequent, but meals can be preceded by fruit. The consumption of different types of nuts is also favored. Sugar is used in significant amounts, both for entrees and for desserts. To drink, water and wine are the two basic substances in use. Pedro Plasencia, referring to Miguel Herrero-García’s *La vida española del siglo XVII*, explains that the influence of the Hapsburgs, as well as the military campaigns in Flanders helped improve the rather small production of beer in Spain, and that, for refreshment Spaniards drank *aloja* (a mix of water, honey and spices), *hippocras* (aged wine, sugar, cinnamon, amber and musk), and some aromatic beverages made with orange flower, roses, rosemary or fennel.²⁸

Not only the meat, but many other parts of animals are used in the recipes, and as we will repeatedly see in this and the next chapters, the consumption of pork is especially encouraged. These two specific ways to consume animal products are decisive in establishing oneself as Old Christian, because pork is prohibited both by Muslim and Jewish religious laws, and because these laws include prohibitions on the consumption of blood or entrails. Thus the Old Christian defines himself as the one who can consume and enjoy all types of meats and animal products, as a proof of the freedom Christianity provides him, in contrast with the assumed limitations established by the other two religions that are present in one

way or another in Spain. I use the expression “one way or another” because in Spain the followers of the Jewish religion are banned since 1492 (in theory, only converted Jews or *conversos* remain in the Peninsula), and the followers of the Islamic creed are subjected to a gradual process of forced conversion since 1501, a process that will theoretically end with the expulsion of the Moriscos between 1609 and 1614.

One of the basic processes observed by material culture scholars is the one through which consumption sets people apart. Food consumption is especially important for this process, because it works as the mark of shared traditions, uses, and history. One of the principles related to belonging to a community has to do with being able to affirm: “We belong to the same place because we eat the same food.” Nevertheless, a difficulty arises when we try to apply this principle of belonging to representations of food and eating in seventeenth-century Spain, because the more attention we pay to these representations, the more we run into characters who face the risk of being excluded or marked as those who do not belong.

What these particularities show is that the value of food as a community-builder in the Spanish Golden Age relies on an idealized set of acts of consumption that are attributed to and expected from the Old Christian nobles and *hidalgos*. An Old Christian (*Cristiano Viejo*) was defined as an individual born in a Christian family in which no traces could be found of Jewish or Muslim ancestry. In theory, this had to be proven for several generations, but in practical terms religious and civil authorities usually verified the last three (the subject, his parents and his four grandparents). Fiction and nonfiction of the period coincide in pointing out that few Spaniards could prove their purity of blood (*limpieza de sangre*) and be recognized with complete certainty as Old Christians. Frequently these works also underline the way that, among those who could demonstrate this condition, only the members of the
noble class could really afford all the components attributed to the Old Christian diet.\textsuperscript{29} Nevertheless, this diet was used as a paradigm to include and exclude individuals from the elites, and it was also a measure of sincere conversion to Christianity. In this sense, it could be used as a form of inclusion or exclusion that underlined the spiritual dimension of such a diet. The Old Christian community, therefore, was considered both a social and a spiritual group. Belonging to this group was regarded as valuable, and being excluded meant to be regarded with suspicion, and sometimes, subject to coercion.

Claude Fischler underlines this aspect:

Because the act of incorporation entails vital and symbolic concerns, it is associated with fundamental gravity and deeply rooted anxiety. Psychoanalysis has accustomed us to the use of Melanie Klein's term: incorporation of the bad object. The fantasy entails the fear of a series of essential risks. Clearly, the eater's life and health are at stake whenever the decision is taken to incorporate, but so too are his place in the universe, his essence, his nature, in short his identity. An object inadvisedly incorporated may contaminate him, insidiously transform him from within, possess him or rather depossess him of himself.\textsuperscript{30}

This is the reason why one of the components of my argument is the phenomenon I call anxiety of belonging: a permanent state of awareness to which many subjects in the Spanish empire were vulnerable during the sixteenth and seventeenth century, because consuming determined products, especially foodstuffs, was conceived as a mark of belonging and inclusion into the kingdom and into the Old Christian, Catholic community, and the absence of these patterns or its irregularity created a state of permanent suspicion and a constant fear of being excluded both from the material and the spiritual community.

At first sight, it could be thought that the anxiety of belonging would have affected especially the Morisco and Converso populations, and that the Old Christian community


would not have had reasons to worry, since theoretically Christians were allowed to eat all sorts of foods, and there were no severe rules about purity and impurity as the ones prescribed by the Qur’an and the Torah. Nevertheless, as we will see, poor Old Christians had also to restrict their diet mainly because they could not afford variety, and what Fischler observes about the incorporation of “bad objects” affected them in different forms. First, the Catholic religion opened the diet but warned against gluttony and any type of excess at the table. Once more the exaggerated vision of the picaresque helps us understand this conflict, if we take as an example the priest who is Lázaro’s second master in Lazarillo de Tormes, and who gives him permission to eat only onions, in a ration of one for every four days. When he gives him permission to do so, he warns him not to overindulge.

With regard to the anxiety of belonging, social differentiation needs to be studied with the same attention paid to cultural or religious difference. With regard to food and eating, in most cultures upper classes tend to differentiate themselves from lower classes through their choices of food, through the quality and variety of the products they consume, and through manners. What makes especially interesting the study of seventeenth-century Spain is that, as Norbert Elias explains in detail in his History of Manners, we are witnessing the birth of contemporary manners along with social classes as we know them in the Western, capitalist world.31 One of the particularities of the Spanish Golden Age in this aspect is the amount of information we possess, and the insistence of art on the representation of these differences. Probably one of the best known examples is found in the first lines of Don Quixote, where we are informed that the gentleman who will soon become the protagonist of the story ate “una olla de algo más vaca que carnero” [“stew, beef more than lamb”]. Most of the annotators of Don Quixote from different centuries agree that

Cervantes wrote these words to underline the economic difficulties of Alonso Quijano, since, first, food consumed three quarters of his income, and second, he was forced to buy more beef than lamb because beef was cheaper. But to understand how the anxiety of belonging operates socially, there is another resource we can use: cookbooks.

In seventeenth-century Spain, besides storytelling, the book is used to preserve knowledge from different fields. The kitchen is one of them. There are three books that have been especially studied and republished many times: the Arte de cozin, vizcochería, pastelería y conservería (1611) by Francisco Martínez Montiño, who claims to be Philip III’s chief cook, and two others that carry the same title, Libro del arte de cozin, one by Diego de Granado (1599) and the other by Domingo Hernández de Maceras (1607). These books contain versions of a dish called olla podrida which, according to many Cervantes scholars, is an elaboration based on the olla mentioned in the first lines of Don Quixote. Following the Diccionario de Autoridades, Pedro Plasencia explains that the olla was a regular homemade stew, while the olla podrida was a more complex dish, prepared following the same procedures. The adjective “podrida” literally would mean “rotten” and leads to some literary jokes but, according to the Tesoro de la Lengua Castellana o Española, it seems to be a transformation of the archaic adjective “poderida,” which means “powerful”: “Andreas Bacio, médico Romano, en el libro que hizo De natura vinorum, dice que olla podrida es lo mismo que poderida,

32 Francisco Rico specifies that, in Cervantes’s times, beef was one-third cheaper than lamb. See Miguel de Cervantes, Don Quijote de la Mancha, edited by Instituto Cervantes under the supervision of Francisco Rico (Barcelona: Instituto Cervantes/Critica, 1998), 36, n. 5.

33 To these we have to add two important sources. One was published two decades before the birth of Miguel de Cervantes: Ruperto de Nola’s Llibre de coch (1520), in Catalan; the other one was published in Cervantes’s lifetime: Miguel de Baeza’s Los cuatro libros del arte de confitería (1592).

34 Pedro Plasencia, A la mesa con Don Quijote y Sancho, 82-90.

35 For example, in the second part of Don Quixote, Sancho, after having been offered and immediately denied many dishes as a governor of the island Barataria, says about ollas: “mientras más podridas son, mejor huelen”/“the more rotten/powerful they are, the better they smell” [II, 49].
conviene a saber poderosa, por ser tan grande y contener tan varias cosas”36 [“Andreas Bacio, the Roman physician, in the book he made *De natura vinorum*, says that *olla podrida* is the same as *poderida*, which to our knowledge is powerful, because it is very big and contains so many things.”]

The double logic of establishing a community and creating separation between classes can be easily noted if we compare versions of *olla podrida* from the three books. If we had just meat and lamb in the case of the *hidalgo*, on the table of princes and of the king, ingredients multiply. Granado suggests pork jowl, ham, snout, ears and feet, wild boar, sausage, lamb, calf’s kidneys, beef, capons, hens, pigeons, hare, partridges, pheasants, wild ducks, thrushes, quails, and francolins. Albeit Hernandéz de Maceras declares he is the cook for the Colegio Mayor de San Salvador in Oviedo, he presents his recipes as a selection adequate for princes, and asks for lamb, beef, bacon, pig’s feet, cow’s forehead and tongue, sausages, pigeons, wild duck, and hare. Martínez Montiño, who in his prologues takes some space to disqualify “other” cookbooks (referring probably to one of the former, or to both of them), asks for “. . . gallina, ó vaca, ó carnero, y un pedazo de tocino magro, y toda la demás bolatería, como son palomas, perdices, zorzales, y solomo de puerco, longanizas, salchichas, liebre, y morcillas”37 [“. . . hen, or meat, or lamb, and a piece of lean bacon, and all other types of birds, such as pigeons, partridges, pork loin, spicy and mild pork sausages, hare, and blood sausages”], and introduces an important modification: the *olla* is served in the form of a meat pie (*olla podrida en pastel*), adding even more elaboration to the recipe.

Contracted or expanded, some basic principles are shared in all the varieties and complexities of the Old Christian diet, and these principles constitute the inclusive aspect of

36 Sebastián de Covarrubias Horozco, *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española*, Ed. by Ignacio Arellano and Rafael Zafra (Madrid; Vervuert, Universidad de Navarra/Iberoamericana; Budapest: 2006), 1323. My translation.

37 Francisco Martínez Montiño, *Arte de cocina, pastelería, vizcochería y conservería* (Barcelona: Imprenta de Maria Angela Martí viuda: 1763), 164. Facsimile.
food, the one that identifies Spaniards as Spaniards. Even this aspect, however, implies a principle of exclusion. As Fischler explains:

Human beings mark their membership to a culture or group by asserting the specificity of what they eat, or more precisely—but it amounts to the same thing—by defining the otherness, the difference of others. Endless examples can be found to illustrate the fact that we define a people or a human group for what it eats or is imagined to eat (which generally arouses our irony or disgust): for the French, the Italians are “Macaronis” the English “Roastbeefs” and the Belgians “Chip-eaters”; for the English, the French are “Frogs”; the Americans call the Germans “Krauts”, and so on. Within the same culture a group defines a neighbouring group as “...-eaters”

Thus, not only does the eater incorporate the properties of food, but, symmetrically, it can be said that the absorption of a food incorporates the eater into a culinary system and therefore into the group which practises it, unless it irremediably excludes him. But this is not all: any culinary system is attached to, or part of, a world view, a cosmology... Man eats, so to speak, within a culture, and this culture orders the world in a way that is specific to itself. It operates a kind of generalized implicit taxonomy, in which food classifications have an important place...

The table of the hidalgo and the table of the prince share a way of preparing food, but they also make it visible that these members of the society are not equal.

This leads us to relate the ideas of belonging and exclusion in terms of associated acts of consumption. It would be incomplete to study the consumption of a specific commodity, some type of food in this case, without considering other acts of consumption related to it. As Fischler observes, when the associated consumption fails to happen or when it occurs in a way that is considered odd by society, the consumer can be accused of some form of illegitimacy, or at least regarded with suspicion.

If we consider that groups within society can be differentiated through their distinctive consumption of a series of ingredients and dishes, the noble class can exclude the hidalgos because the latter cannot add more variety to their ollas, and the hidalgos can exclude the peasants because of their distinctive use of spices (“Do not eat garlic or onions lest their

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“smell reveal your peasant origins,” suggests don Quixote to Sancho in II, 43\(^{39}\). But we also see Sancho speaking wonders of the “olla podrida” in more than one passage, which suggests that the peasant knows more elaborate versions of the dish. Therefore, we understand that the principle of social differentiation is sustained by a shared knowledge and a similar system of beliefs.

Literature and art play a prominent role in showing the points of contrast between the social expectations and the actual practices of consumption. If we keep in mind the ingredients suggested in the cookbooks and look back to *The Poultry Vendor*, the painting by Alejandro de Loarte described at the beginning of this chapter, the first coincidence we see is that many types of birds mentioned by Diego de Granado in his *olla podrida* are present in the picture (*The Poultry Vendor* was painted around 1626, two decades from the publishing of the cookbooks written by Granado, Martínez Montiño and Hernández de Maceras). The clothing of the young man relates him to wealth, since he wears a white collar, a colored and embroidered jacket, and a hat with not too many marks of wear. But the fact that he is carrying a basket helps us conclude that, even though well dressed, he does not belong to nobility or even to the *hidalgo* class, because he is working, which was socially disapproved by these two groups. The young man, then, is probably employed by a noble and wearing livery. Peter Cherry notes that even his hat can be the occasion of a veiled irony, because its shape suggests that the man is in hunting outfit, but he is buying a hen\(^{40}\). The outfit and the task of buying something make us wonder about the master for whom the character in the painting works, and we come up with the figure of a person who may be paying for the hen, for the employee’s work, and also for the painting that contains both of them.


\(^{40}\) Vid Peter Cherry, *Arte y naturaleza: El bodegón español en el Siglo de Oro* (Madrid: Fundación de Apoyo a la Historia del Arte Hispánico, 1999), 92.
In the different cookbooks, class separation is granted by the variety of ingredients that go into the *olla*, and we are to suppose that the access to this variety depends on the ability to acquire the ingredients. There is a class that consumes certain food, and consumes art about food. It is probably the same class that can consume cookbooks because, as we have seen, those books aim at the tables of princes. The cooks at noble houses or those who aspire to that status are the ultimate users of these books (the prologues address them), but their acquisition is possible only if the lord himself pays the price of the book, or if the cook is paid for his services, and then he can acquire the volume.

If the lord can pay for cookbooks, he can pay for books, books in which food is a frequent topic, either in literature, as happens with the picaresque novel and *Don Quixote*, in medicine, with pieces of advice written by physicians,\(^4\) or in religious subjects, with sermons about temperance and dietary recommendations from the church, especially taking into account that the decrees of the Council of Trent are being enforced, and that the colonization of America is raising questions about eating and devotion.\(^5\) Therefore, we have an ideal system of associated acts of consumption related to food for the upper classes:

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\(^4\) See, for example, Luis Lobera de Ávila’s *Vanquete de nobles cavalleros*, published in 1530, and Francisco Núñez de Oria’s *Regimiento y aviso de sanidad*, from 1586. Both books (the latter seems to be based in the former) contain medical advice about the best nutritional habits for noblemen, including the time of the day when meals are meant to be consumed, and detailed descriptions of the properties of the most usual ingredients.

\(^5\) Chocolate is a good example, since several physicians and scientists dedicated volumes both to its everyday use and to its implications for the liturgical calendar. Juan de Barrios published in 1609, in Mexico, a book entitled *Libro en el cual se trata del chocolate, que provechos haga, y si sea bebida saludable o no, y en particular de todas las cosas que lleva, y qué receta conviene para cada persona, y cómo se conocerá cada uno de qué complección sea, para que pueda beber el chocolate de suerte que no le haga mal* (On Chocolate, Its Virtues, and if It Is a Healthy Drink or Not, and Especially on All the Ingredients It Contains, and What Recipe is Better for Each Person, and on How to Recognize Each One’s Complexion, so Chocolate Can Be Drunk Without Harm). In Spain, Bartolomé Marradón published in 1618, in Seville, his *Diálogo del uso del tabaco, los daños que causa, etc. Y del chocolate y otras bebidas* (Dialogue on the Use of Tobacco, the Damages it Causes, etc. And on Chocolate and Other Drinks), Antonio Colmencero de Ledesma presented in 1630 his *Curioso tratado de la naturaleza y calidad del chocolate* (A Curious Treatise on the Nature and Quality of Chocolate), and in 1636 Antonio de León Pinelo published his *Pregunta moral. Si el chocolate quebranta el ayuno eclesiástico. Trátese de otras bebidas y confecciones que se usan en varias provincias* (On A Moral Question: Whether Chocolate Breaks Ecclesiastical Fast, and On Other Drinks and Confections that Are Used in Various Provinces), where he suggests further investigation to determine if chocolate is to be consumed as a solid, with added ingredients (in this case it breaks fast), or liquid (in this case it does not; many ecclesiastics agreed with this second option). To these books we can add Castro de Torres’s *Panegírico del chocolate* (A Panegyric on Chocolate), published in Segovia in 1640.
food in the kitchen, represented food in paintings, cookbooks that advise about the most pleasant uses of food, if it is available in the kitchen, and books in which food is part of the plot or of the discussion.

I introduce at this point one of the subjects that will be discussed in further chapters. An effect of the system of inclusion and exclusion created by the acts of consumption is the collective construction of figures of authority, who are thought to deserve precedence and honors, especially visible at the table. These figures cannot be identified with specific individuals or entities, but are constructed by the sum of the practices that are attributed to them. In the painting by Loarte and in the book by Hernández de Maceras, for example, the figure of the absent lord or master can be deduced from the practices of those who serve him, and who actually appear in the works. In other words, the sum of acts of consumption prefigures a superior who is supposed to be capable to perform all of them. As we will see, literature, art, and social life in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Spain were organized around the presupposition and the need for this superior instance to exist. The kitchen and the table are places where this precedence is built and enforced, because in these two instances it is made evident that someone has to precede the meals. In Loarte’s painting food is purchased for someone; in Velázquez’s kitchen scenes food is prepared for someone; in Don Quixote we attend several meals in which the knight is expected to be the head of the table whether he wants it or not. Many characters expect a lord, but the person who sits at the head of the table does not always coincide with the ideal that is expected.

The irony suggested by Loarte’s painting and the one present more clearly in literature tell us that the paradigm of a lord who exerts all the power and consumes all what is offered is less than frequent. All birds are for sale, but not all of them are being purchased. As a matter of fact, in contrast with the size and color of the hanging birds, the hen that is the object of the transaction looks humble, which leads us to wonder about the reasons for
such an election. If we follow the clue of the hunting hat, the male character may be buying something he was supposed to get using other skills, and even though the offer is ample, he is only getting one bird. We do not know if it is a regular day or a party, but the fact is that the final recipient of the purchase is going to eat only chicken, not all the variety of poultry offered by the vendor.

Similarly, in *Lazarillo de Tormes* we read that the squire who becomes Lázaro’s third master has these habits:

. . . en ocho días maldito el bocado que comió. A lo menos en casa bien los estuvimos sin comer.

No sé yo cómo o dónde andava y qué comía; ¡y velle venir a medio día, la calle abaxo, con estirado cuerpo, más largo que galgo de buena casta! Y por lo que tocava a su negra que dizen honrra, tomava una paja, de las que aun assaz no havía en casa, y salía a la puerta escarvando los que nada entre sí tenían, quexándose todavía de aquel mal solar.\(^43\)

. . . he didn’t have a damned bite to eat in a week. At least, we didn’t have anything to eat at the house. When he went out I don’t know how he got along, where he went or what he ate. And if you could only have seen him coming down the street at noon, holding himself straight, and skinnier than a full-blooded greyhound! And because of his damn what-do-you-call-it—honor—he would take a toothpick (and there weren’t very many of those in the house either) and go out the door, picking at what didn’t have anything between them and still grumbling about the cursed place.\(^44\)

In the behavior of Lazaro’s third master we can observe many signs of the social aspect of the anxiety of belonging. The squire is constantly aware that he needs to look and behave as a member of the upper classes, and this implies pretending that he has had a satisfactory meal. Beyond the hyperbole of spending a week without eating, what we can deduce from the passage of *Lazarillo de Tormes*, as well as from Loarte’s painting, is that occasionally the acts of consumption—which, associated, produce the effect of wealth and power—become associated enactments of consumption. This pattern appears also in the consumption of

\(^{43}\) *La vida de Lazarillo de Tormes*, 191-192.

\(^{44}\) *The Life of Lazarillo de Tormes*, 68.
books, since many nobles and hidalgos borrow volumes from those who are wealthier and buy them.

The consumption of food and of representations of food illuminates aspects of the public image in seventeenth-century Spain that count beyond the anecdote. There are groups within the society that go long distances to make others believe they can consume great amounts and varied types of food, but paintings and books show that the staging of wealth is more complex. A careful reading of the prologues to the cookbooks reveal other aspirations. Even Domingo Hernández de Maceras, who declares that his expertise comes from the kitchen of a colegio mayor, takes enough care to have the anonymous voice of the initial note “Al lector” state:

Y ansi, el author (aunque su ingenio es tan aventajado en un sinnúmero de invenciones de comidas, y manjares delicadíssimos, por el continuo trabajo y larga experiencia que de ellos tiene, en el discurso de quarenta años que ha que sirve de cozinero en el insigne Colegio Mayor de San Salvador de Oviedo), quiso limitarle [se refiere al apetito del hombre] poniendo solamente los más usuales y necesarios a las mesas de los príncipes y señores, para los que quisieren usar y exercer este arte en menos tiempo y con facilidad, se puedan hacer capazes leyendo este breve volumen.45

Therefore the author (even though his knowledge is great in innumerable inventions of food and delicacies, because of his continuous work and long experience throughout forty years as cook in the respectable Colegio Mayor de San Salvador de Oviedo), wanted to limit it [the author refers to human appetite] putting here only the most usual and necessary for the tables of princes and lords, for those who might use and exercise this art in short time and with ease, so they can become versed in it by reading this brief volume.

Many expectations about status are at stake in this prologue. First, we have the cook from a colegio mayor who wants his book to be read, valued and used as a handbook by court officers of the kitchen. Second, we imagine the potential readers of this book, cooks who may be working already in the court, but also those who may want to improve their position by learning the art of creating dishes for nobles. And third, we have the masters who may buy

the book. Probably some of them had the means to execute the recipes, but taking into account the behavior of Lazarillo’s master, as well as recent information about the consumption of paintings\textsuperscript{46}—which makes it clear that less privileged courtiers and some incipient bourgeois used to order copies of still lifes that were painted for higher dignitaries—we can consider that some consumers bought the book in hopes of better days and fuller larders, or to suggest publicly that their cooks could execute the promised wonders, or simply out of curiosity, wanting to learn how the nobles were served.

The character of the \textit{hidalgo} is especially prone to these behaviors, and one of the main figures that illustrates the social aspects of the anxiety of belonging. This is shown in print even outside the realms of literature. In his \textit{Tesoro de la lengua}, under the entry \textit{vaca}, Sebastián de Covarrubias explains: “Proverbio: ‘¿Vaquita tenéis? Acá me quedo’; este es dicho que le atribuyen a hidalgos pobres que no hacen olla si no es por gran fiesta y se arriman a donde hallan entrada, aunque no los conviden”\textsuperscript{47} [“Proverb: “So you have veal? I’ll stay here”; this saying is attributed to poor \textit{hidalgos} who do not prepare an \textit{olla} but for a major celebration, and stay [to eat] wherever they can enter, even if they are not invited”]. Through the figure of the \textit{hidalgo} we can better understand how the associated acts of consumption are performed because of their social significance as much as because of their nutritional value.

What Covarrubias allows us to see is that maintaining a status through the public exhibition of a series of acts of consumption, especially the ones related to food, is a very delicate exercise, prone frequently to exposure (another source of anxiety). A particular difficulty when facing a system of goods that are expected to be consumed to maintain


\textsuperscript{47} Sebastián de Covarrubias, \textit{Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española}, 1504.
status in the period is that, for the public eye, the one that maintains the “negra honra” (as Lázaro calls it) only has to fall short with respect to one element in the association to create suspicion about the whole system. If a hidalgo like Alonso Quijano cannot eat more than beef or lamb, if a squire like Lázaro’s third master cannot eat at least three meals a day, he may be hiding other shortcomings.

Among Old Christians, these shortcomings refer mainly to status and to access to the court. The system of consumption guarantees that those who do not have enough money or privileges cannot cross certain lines. But there are other instances in which the expectation about associated acts of consumption can be used to reveal other types of “faults.” This is the case of the “tocinófobos” mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, who immediately raise suspicion about their purity of blood. However, what leads this situation to the realm of anxiety is that those who seem too fond of pork products and wine are equally suspicious. The ostentatious consumption of pork or wine, specific goods that belong to the system or expected choices for the Old Christian, increases the level of doubt because it can be showing that not only is the consumer pretending to be more wealthy than he actually is, but also that he may be trying to hide his non-Christian origins.

The differentiation between Old and New Christians involved ingredients and also ways of cooking. The variety of foodstuffs had to be accompanied by traditional ways to prepare and serve the ingredients; otherwise, there were also reasons to suspect the consumer. Antonio Domínguez Ortíz depicts this situation:

A geography of Spanish food would have to take account of the contrast between the dietary habits of the Christian, who liked meat, wheaten bread and wine, and those of the Moriscos, who were not very fond of meat and consumed great quantities of rice, fruit, vegetables and greens, which earned them the derision of their neighbours. But there was no disguising the fact that the Moriscos usually
enjoyed a healthier and longer life than the Christians, for reasons which were a mystery to the unenlightened physicians of those days.\textsuperscript{48}

In this case, an “imbalance” towards vegetables and even an unexpected longevity could be seen as marks of difference. This aspect is especially intriguing, because it raises questions about the separation between the dishes to be prepared according to the Old Christian canons and the subjects who prepared them, who in many cases were New Christian servants. It is also appealing in terms of this inquiry about food and the anxiety of belonging because it shows that Old Christians were concerned about what they ingested as much as the Conversos and Moriscos. An illustrative case is found in the written accounts of the first reaction of Spanish subjects toward American produce. Rebecca Earle explains:

Colonial writers throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries agreed that “those who come from other climates through [eating] new foods generate new blood, which produces new humors, [and] the new humors [create] new abilities and conditions.” A change in food, like a change in climate, was liable to provoke a change in both body and character. Food, in other words, helped distinguish Spaniard from Indian, but it could just as easily turn proud, bearded Spaniards into timid, beardless Indians. Such corporeal differences were real, but impermanent.\textsuperscript{49}

It is worth noting that this attitude could help explain, at least in part, the scarce appearance of American produce in cookbooks, in the visual arts and in literature, beyond the material difficulties implied in transporting fruits, vegetables and plants from the New World to Spain. We can consider that the encounter of the two worlds was mediated by the dietary constitution of the Spanish Old Christian community as much as the relationships with the other groups of “New Christians” were.

Food, therefore, helps us in making visible and in approaching from a material perspective the intricacies of the Spanish society, a society that tried to enforce principles of cultural and social hierarchies, and simultaneously wanted to abide by the commands that


\textsuperscript{49} Rebecca Earle, “If You Eat Their Food . . .?: Diets and Bodies in Early Colonial Spanish America,” \textit{American Historical Review}, 115 (June 2010): 693.
create a Christian community. The problems created by trying to make these two ideas operate simultaneously lead us to discuss the symbolic role of food in seventeenth-century Spain.

1.5. Food as a Symbolic Element

A comparative analysis of literature and painting that represent food in the early 1600s allows us to reconstruct some components of the visual repertoire that was shared by writers and painters. In this visual repertoire, religious (Christian) references related to foodstuffs and wine are preeminent. There are collective and possibly individual reasons for this. The collective reasons are related to the presence of the Catholic religion as the officially recognized creed, which implied that Christian values were considered unifying principles for all the subjects of the kingdom. The personal element, which in the case of many artists of the Golden Age is very difficult to establish, has to do with the voluntary or involuntary use of this imaginary repertoire. In some cases, with the help of biographic details, it is possible to establish if a poet, playwright, or painter felt comfortable with his status in the Christian community; in other cases, we have to speculate. But even in case of a possible disagreement, the Christian imagery may still have been used by the artist to avoid difficulties. Sometimes dissent can be expressed subtly by choosing less known themes or motives, or by describing or depicting a scene with a personal touch that serves as a comment. What we know is that it did not matter if the artists and writers of the period believed or not in God or the Christian religion in private. They had to present themselves publicly as members of the Catholic church, and this meant dealing with Christian models and themes for writing and painting. Moreover, Christianity being part of their everyday life, what is observable is that these subjects of the Spanish kingdom shared a repertoire of
images, a collection of religious scenes represented visually that could be “quoted” or used as hypotext.\textsuperscript{50}

As Francisco Pacheco points out in \textit{Arte de la pintura}, mythology is another important component of the visual repertoire for seventeenth-century artists. Nevertheless, even in mythological contexts, the representations of foodstuffs are meant to remind the observer/reader that there are superior powers that must be regarded with respect. Steven N. Orso’s reading of the painting \textit{Los borrachos} by Velázquez presents a good example of this approach. For Orso, the figure of Bacchus was chosen by the painter because he was aware of a legend in which the god of wine was named king of Iberia. Therefore, the painting, meant to be part of the royal collection of Philip IV and to be hung in the bedroom of his summer apartments in the Alcázar of Madrid, was both an allegory of the submission of Iberia to their king, and a reminder for the king to be generous with his people. Orso observes accurately the interrelation between this particular painting with others present in the same room, which seemed to form a collection of allegorical principles for a good government.\textsuperscript{51}

Since the presence of food marks important moments in the Bible, and since these types of scenes, especially from the New Testament, were frequently illustrated by Spanish artists, we can look for resemblances with religious sources when studying food scenes in literature or painting. Sometimes, the relationship is evident and declared by the artist. On other occasions, religious or mythical references are veiled, appear partially or become the hypotext for a parody.

The first approach to food from this angle is its use as the main element in a ritual performance. Food acquires religious meaning and allows characters to enact or evoke

\textsuperscript{50} I use this term in the sense proposed by Gérard Genette: “By hypertextuality I mean any relationship uniting a text B (which I shall call the hypertext) to an earlier text A (I shall, of course, call it the hypotext), upon which it is grafted in a manner that is not that of “commentary.” Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree, trans. by Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 5.

\textsuperscript{51} Orso, “Bacchus in Iberia”, in \textit{Velázquez, Los Borrachos, and Painting in the Court of Philip IV}, 109-141.
scenes from the Bible. This is especially visible with the two basic elements of Eucharist, bread and wine. In literature, the religious meaning tends to overlap with the lay use of the product. One of the best examples comes, again, from *Lazarillo de Tormes*:

... Yo, por consolarme abro el arca y, como vi el pan, comencélo a adorar (no osando recibillo)...  
... Mas como la hambre creciesse, mayormente que tenía el estómago hecho a más pan aquellos dos o tres días ya dichos, moría mala muerte, tanto que otra cosa no hazía, en viéndome solo, sino abrir y cerrar el arca y contemplar en aquella cara de Dios (que assí dizien los niños).  

... To console myself I opened the chest, and when I saw the bread I began to worship it—but I was afraid to “take any in remembrance of Him.”...  
... But my hunger kept growing, mainly because my stomach had gotten used to more bread during those previous two or three days. I was dying a slow death, and finally I got to the point that when I was alone the only thing I did was open and close the chest and look at the face of God inside (or at least that’s how children put it).  

Lázaro’s vocabulary is evidently religious and parodic at the same time. The loaves of bread the priest keeps locked are offerings to the church, so they have an initial religious meaning that comes from an agreement between the church and the people. In the scene, they acquire a second “religious” sense because they become “sacred” to Lázaro, being his only real source of nurture. It is in this second moment that Lázaro appeals to the religious words he knows. First, since the priest is starting to suspect, he cannot steal a loaf or even break a piece of it, so he can only kiss it and adore it as if it were the host before consecration. And again, mimicking the moment of adoration and the announcement of transubstantiation, Lazaro contemplates the face of God in the bread. The mention of children helps the storyteller lighten up the tone of the general description, so the parody does not go too far. Unfortunately, the inclusion of *Lazarillo de Tormes* in the Index tells us that the parody was more successful than the toning-down.

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52 *Lazarillo de Tormes*, 150-151.

In painting, there are many examples of compositions that are organized around a character who pours, serves, or offers wine. This action is present in *Los borrachos* (figure 6), as well as in the anonymous painting *El bodegónero* (figure 7). In both paintings, a character raises a bowl full of wine and offers it directly to the viewer. The way these scenes are composed, as well as the mythological component in the case of Velázquez’s work bear some resemblance with an act of consecration, performed toward the spectator instead of toward the altar.

![Figure 6. Diego Rodríguez de Silva y Velázquez, *Los borrachos*, detail, Museo del Prado, Madrid.](image1)

![Figure 7. Anonymous, *The Bodegon Keeper*, detail, The Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.](image2)

The importance of the religious meaning attributed to food in a ritual performance comes from its inclusive attributes. Whoever shares the food becomes a member of the community. In the case of the wine offering, the attitude of the painted character implies that any viewer is invited to be part of the scene that is taking place. It is an act of communion in the most literal sense of the word: sharing in common. This type of scene opens many questions about belonging. On the one hand, their relative openness (relative because they are open to any viewer, but confined to spaces that are not reachable by many
of them) seems to suggest spaces and instances in which belonging to the community is not as organized and prescribed as we could imagine reading only documents of the period. On the other hand, even though they seem to be directed to any viewer, they make us consider those who would not accept the invitation.

Catholic or Catholic-like rituality appears related to food in the aspect of temporality as well. Diet is one of the places where the presence of the church in everyday life is more evident. In different cultures, specific foodstuffs that are usually seasonal products signal the passing of time. Within the Catholic church, the relationship between food and time is visible at different scales. Specific diets are prescribed for moments of joy or sorrow in the liturgical calendar. Joy is usually celebrated with sweet pastries, as happens on Christmas and Easter, while moments of sorrow, especially Lent, Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, are commemorated with abstinence, mainly from meat. On a minor scale, the Church prescribes abstinence from meat every Friday. This is a situation that is frequently presented in the picaresque novel. In Mateo Alemán’s Guzmán de Alfarache, one of the first misadventures of the main character is due to the fact that it is Friday:

Y sobre tantas desdichas –que, cuando comienzan, vienen siempre muchas y enzarzadas unas de otras como cerezas– era viernes en la noche y algo oscura; no había cenado ni merendado: si fuera día de carne, que a la salida de la ciudad, aunque fuera naturalmente ciego, el olor me llevara en alguna pastelería, comprara un pastel con que me entretuviera y enjugara el llanto, el mal fuera menos.

And amongst other my so many misfortunes, (which when they once beginne, come by clusters, hanging like Cherries; one at the tayle of another) it was Friday night; and withall; somewhat darke. I had neither suppt, nor had any bever that afternoone. Had I gone out of the Citie upon a flesh day, although I had beene borne blind, my nose would have helped mee to smell out some one Cookes shoppe or other, where I

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54 Caroline Walker Bynum’s book *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987) is still one of the more specific scholarly approaches to the relationship between liturgy, food, and time from a Christian perspective. Even though it focuses on the Middle Ages, the description of the way time and diet were regulated in medieval Catholic cultures can be considered valid in many aspects for everyday life in early modern Spain.

might have bought a penny Pasty, wherewithall to entertaine my stomake, and to dry up my teares, and so my sorrow would have beene the lesse.\footnote{Mateo Alemán, \textit{The Rogue, or, The Life of Guzmán de Alfarache}, trans. James Mabbe (London: Printed for Edward Blount, 1622), 29. Online version at \url{http://eebo.chadwyck.com/search/full_rec?SOURCE=pgimages.cfg&ACTION=ByID&ID=22669364&FILE=../session/1296002786_20511&SEARCHSCREEN=CITATIONS&VID=25653&PAGENO=27&ZOOM=100&VIEW_PORT=&SEARCHCONFIG=var_spell.cfg&DISPLAY=AUTHOR&HIGHLIGHT_KEYWORD=undefined}, accessed on January 25, 2011.}

The lack of meat due to religious observance leads Guzmán to meet an old woman who, also intending to abide by the Catholic regulation, prepares for him a meal consisting of eggs and bread. This is the occasion for the author to add the grotesque: the eggs contain already chicken embryos, and Guzmán has to swallow them for the sake of his search for adventure.

One of the best known and discussed texts in which the daily religious regulations about meals are described appears at the beginning of \textit{Don Quixote}, where we are informed that, besides the \textit{olla} previously discussed, the \textit{hidalgo} ate: “salpicón las más noches, duelos y quebrantos los sábados, lantejas los viernes, algún palomino de añadidura los domingos” [I, 1] [“hash most nights, eggs and abstinence on Saturdays, lentils on Fridays, sometimes squab as a treat on Sundays”]. As it was noted before, the use of food provides here both religious and historical information. First of all, we can see that the \textit{hidalgo} observes religious principles about food intake every day of the week. In the description, Saturday is especially emphasized. Historians have shown that a particular form of abstinence was common practice in Castile in the times of Cervantes, and that this practice implied a special privilege for Castilians. Even though we do not know the exact ingredients of \textit{duelos y quebrantos} (being considered in the period a simple dish, it does not appear in seventeenth-century cookbooks; some authors favor the idea of eggs and bacon, while others suggest the dish might have been made with cattle’s offal, brains, hands and feet), what we can deduce from different sources is that it contained some type of animal product that could be eaten on Saturday without breaking fast. Diego Clemencín, one of the most renowned annotators of \textit{Don
Quixote, explains the reasons both for fasting on Saturday and for allowing Castilians to eat parts of animals:

Esta clase de olla, como menos sustanciosa y agradable, se permitía comer los sábados en España, donde con motivo de la victoria de las Navas, ganada por el Rey Don Alonso el VII contra los moros en el año de 1212, se instituyó la fiesta del Triunfo de la Santa Cruz, y se hizo voto de abstinencia de carnes los sábados.57

This kind of stew, less substantial and pleasant, was allowed on Saturdays in Spain, where, due to the victory of Las Navas achieved by king Don Alonso VII against the Moor in 1212, the festivity of the Triumph of the Holy Cross had been established, and it included a vow of abstinence of meat on Saturday.

Therefore, when we read about Alonso Quijano’s habits, we perceive him initially as an Old Christian because he is showing respect to the Church, and as the member of the traditional families of Castile because he adheres to pious practices established in previous centuries.

Along with the liturgic measurement of time comes the use of represented foodstuffs as reminders of Christian duties related to achieving a pious death after a life regulated by Christian values. The subject of death itself, as well as its representations, is not as directly related to the anxiety of belonging as the other, more prominent, subject of afterlife. From a materialist perspective, the convergence between foodstuffs and symbols of death in works of art offers an opportunity to better understand this dimension. A clear example of the Christian point of view is found in Tirso de Molina’s The Trickster of Seville (published in 1630, after its representation), in which we read: “Adviertan los que de Dios / juzgan los castigos grandes, / que no hay plazo que no se cumpla / ni deuda que no se pague.”[“Let all men know God’s punishment is great. / Take note all men who live below and wait, / For everyone the day of judgement’s set, / And no one can escape the final

debt”). In the same play, and prior to his final punishment, Don Juan shares a ritual meal with the ghost of his victim, Don Gonzalo de Ulloa. When the ghost appears for the first time to invite the trickster to dine, Don Juan’s servant Catalinón and the audience are informed about the afterlife. The first question Catalinón asks is whether the dead eat, and later, whether they drink. The answer is affirmative in both cases. Later, we learn the particular nature of food in the afterlife: snakes, scorpions, fingernails, and other haunted delicacies. With this meal begins the punishment of Don Juan, who in the end is taken to the underworld. In scenes like these, foodstuffs are used to help the audience visualize the dark and desperate nature of afterlife for those who do not live virtuously, and their function as temporal markers is introduced to emphasize that the time to pay for a life of sins comes just the way dinnertime comes every day. Associating this deadline with a meal may have created a strong effect on the audience because the sinner begins to pay by being served signs of evil and hell.

A similar effect is achieved in Tirso de Molina’s La venganza de Tamar (Tamar’s Revenge). In the decisive scene in which Ammon, who has committed incest and rape, has finally been killed by his brother Absolom, the act of reparation occurs during a banquet, and is transformed itself into a meal. Offering the dead body to Tamar, the victim, Absolom says:

ABSALON. Para ti, hermana, se ha hecho
el convite; aqueste plato,
aunque es de manjar ingrato,
nuestro agravio ha satisfecho;
hágate muy buen provecho.
Bebe su sangre, Tamar,
procura en ella lavar


59 With don Gonzalo’s answers, the reader witnesses a materialization of life after death that makes the latter a continuation of the former. Therefore, food consumption makes the spiritual world tangible and brings it closer both to the characters and to the audience.
tu fama hasta aquí manchada.
Caliente está la colada,
fácil la puedes sacar.

ABSOLOM. This banquet was prepared for you,
my sister. With this humble dish,
though distasteful to the palate,
we can count honour satisfied.
Here’s wishing you good appetite.
Drink his blood, Tamar; wash that stain
from your hitherto polluted
reputation. The bleach is hot,
It won’t be hard to wash it out.  

Two characteristics can be observed here and in the scene with Don Juan. First, the structure of a meal is used to represent in public the punishment for another type of bodily transgression: the excess in sexual pleasure. Don Juan and Ammon give in to lust and do not refrain themselves, but on stage, they are punished at the table.

The second characteristic is the value of the symbolic meal as an act of reparation. The rape of Tamar occurs when she brings food to comfort her brother when she thinks he is sick, while one of the women who is tricked by Don Juan falls during the celebration of her wedding, a celebration that, given the context, includes a meal among the rituals of hospitality. In fact, the peasants who are celebrating the wedding cannot say no to the self-invitation of Don Juan because he is a noble, but mainly because the rules of hospitality must be observed. As Margaret Visser notes:

Honour is part of the hospitality bond, and honour is in this case, as in so many others, a force moving in two directions at once. Guests are given precedence, fed first, their wishes constantly ascertained and if possible granted. Any visiting strangers must become guests by ritual means; the transformation means that instead of being treated with guardedness or disdain, they must receive the opposite treatment, being coseted, helped, and honoured. But the host, in spite of every protestation to the contrary, is normally, and from a ritual point of view, more powerful than the guests.  


It is in virtue of this power of the host that later Don Gonzalo is able to punish Don Juan and Absolom does the same with his brother Ammon. The fact of adding the transgression of hospitality to the sexual offense, and the dramatic resource of linking both crises in scenes where ritual meals take place, are ways to appeal to elementary and ancient social conventions shared by all the social groups attending the play, so it is easier to understand the gravity of the transgressive act and then justify its violent reparation.

The role of still lifes within this purpose constitutes part of the discussion in the following chapters; however, it is worth mentioning one specific type of still life here: the Vanitas, especially the ones painted by Antonio de Pereda. Even though this type of painting, which appears also in Flemish art, does not usually contain foodstuffs, it has to be considered in this approach because of the way it complements the relationship between painting and a religious understanding of the passing of time, and because there are links between Vanitas, still lifes, and literary works such as the ones by Tirso de Molina.

Vanitas are characterized by the depiction of human skulls, either by themselves, or accompanied by other allegoric objects that represent wealth, power, and other secular achievements. In some cases, there is also the presence of an ominous angel holding a message about eternity. The generic name comes from the first verses of Ecclesiastes: “Vanitas vanitatum omnia vanitas” [“Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity”], so the presence of the skulls, the objects and the angel is interpreted as a reminder of the ephemeral character of human life. In fact, a painting by Pereda, The Knight’s Dream (figure 8), seems to dialogue with Don Juan’s challenges to eternity in Tirso’s comedia.
In the play, the young nobleman responds several times to the warnings of punishment using a defiant tone, and the words “Tan largo me lo fiáis” (meaning that the day to pay for his crimes is still far away); however, by the end of the play the audience is reminded of the imminence of death (“no hay plazo que no llegue/ ni deuda que no se pague”). In the painting, another young and noble man sleeps while an angel holds a sign that reads “Aeterne pungit, cito volat et occidit” [“Eternally stings {referring to the painted arrow in the sign,} swiftly flies and kills”], in direct reference to time and death. With these warnings, the observer (who may well have seen the play), no matter the social status, is to be persuaded that the important treasures are the ones to be accumulated in heaven, and not in this world. To make this point clear, Antonio de Pereda includes in another of his Vanitas (figure 9), along with the objects already mentioned, a small cameo of King Charles V, held
by a dark-winged angel, implying that death awaited even the most powerful emperor of the Western world.

![Image of Vanitas painting]

Figure 9. Antonio de Pereda, *Vanitas*, oil on canvas, 139.5 x 174 cm, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie, Vienna.

The works of Pereda, one of the best-known—and few—painters of *Vanitas* in seventeenth-century Spain, allow us to directly relate *Vanitas* with foodstuffs. When we compare one of his paintings in the genre that is at the same time a study of the texture of a human skull (figure 10), with a small rondo he painted showing walnuts spread over a flat surface (figure 11), we see that his technical concerns are similar and that he is interested in presenting both the nuts and the skulls as objects, regarded from different angles.
In the case of the nuts, it has to be noted that he uses a dark background, a decision that gives the scene a mysterious atmosphere, and that constitutes one of the trademarks of the Spanish still life since the paintings of Juan Sánchez Cotán. Pereda shows a progression. First, on the right, a completely closed nutshell. Next to it, and toward the background, one
that is partially broken. Then, in the center, one in which half of the shell has been removed so we can see the way the meat is tightly secured to the shell. Next to this one, to the left and closer to the viewer, an empty shell that allows one to observe the intricacies of its interior surface. And then, in progressive movement towards the foreground, a peeled nut on the right, which still preserves its membranes. Finally, on the left, we see a nut half, showing just the meat, in direct relationship to the emptied shell that lies behind it. With the skulls, Pereda repeats the effect of progression, but reduces it to three items. In the background and to the right, dimly illuminated against the dark background—which in this case underlines the somber atmosphere of the painting—the profile of a skull; next to it, a second one, tilted and laying over its cheekbone to give just a hint of the area underside, as a preparation to the third skull, the one on the foreground, that appears completely illuminated. This third skull is presented with fine details, and reveals to the viewer an area not frequently portrayed or observed: the underside, with the occipital orifice and the rough surfaces that give shape to the cheekbones and the palate. Its many details are even more manifest in contrast with the clean and delicate lines of a luxurious watch and its key, which lie on the surface and slightly invade the space of the viewer. William B. Jordan explains about this Vanitas:

With uncanny skill, [Pereda] manipulates the creamy impasto until its texture as well as its hue imitates the object under scrutiny. In this way he was able to make this tiny painting, which might so easily have been dry sermon in lesser hands, a sensuous image whose moral weight is carried by its physical presence.62

As discussed earlier, Pereda is experimenting with these objects to show his skill in detailed painting technique, since similarities in angles and views demonstrate his interest in representing accurately the volume of round objects in space, but on the other hand, this transformation of the representation of the human skull into a mere object and the studied approach to its materiality have several symbolic purposes. First, the representation is

intended to move the viewer to think about the absence of life in those bones, and about the end of the cycle of life. Second, and closer to the function of food and eating, the painter chooses to represent the skulls without the lower jaw bone and lacking some dental pieces. This purposeful omission of anatomy for eating creates a sense of uselessness, because the artist implies that the human beings to whom the skulls belonged, besides being prevented from eating by death, are also materially impeded due to the disappearance of the pieces that, while alive, allowed them to chew. Third—and here it is worth comparing both paintings—Pereda explores the physical analogies between the human skull and the nutshell: the function of the skull as a hard shell, similar in shape and surface to the walnut shell, the intricate shape and texture of both natural cases, and the physical similarities between the convoluted surfaces of their contents, the brain and the walnut meat. Last, the unusual way the painter concentrates exclusively on the objects has to be underlined. In both cases Pereda focuses on the view of the skulls and the walnuts from several angles, avoiding almost all external allusions except for the watch in the Vanitas, which is present to remind the observer that life is short and all humans are subject to the passing of time. The same passage of time is alluded in the rondo, since Pereda illustrates a temporal succession of events: the time that it takes to break open a walnut shell to get to the contents and finally consume them.63

This particular relationship between food, everyday life, and death works upon the agreement of the viewers and readers about Christian principles and ways of seeing life and afterlife. But, as previously discussed, even though most members of the Spanish society declared themselves Christians, it is precisely in literary texts and in works of art that we find many examples of characters who faced different challenges related to this status: those who

63 I owe the improvement of these observations and details to an interview with Prof. Sarah Schroth on May 23, 2011.
had recently converted and were regarded with suspicion even if they insisted that their conversion was authentic, those who had been forced to convert, and those who resisted conversion and were persecuted by the State and the Church. What is worth observing in these cases are the many levels and signs of anxiety shown in the artistic representations of these subjects. Those who declare that their conversion is honest are anxious because their practices do not seem to prove enough their faith and their loyalty, and given the way death is depicted, they may also wonder if their actions are good enough to be taken to heaven instead of hell, as Don Juan. Those who were forced to convert are worried because they have to be aware of every act in their lives, and because acting according to the religion that was imposed on them places them in the middle of two dogmas with incompatible prescriptions, both promising hell to the infidel. Those who resist are anxious because they are in open war. Therefore, the construction of the Christian community participates in one of the many layers of the anxiety of belonging.

1.6.   **Humors, Characters and Signs of Belonging**

The different groups of men and women who faced the problems of voluntary or forced conversion brings us to a reflection on the scientific principles that informed the consumption of food in early modern Spain. Rebecca Earle’s research about the dietary implications of the early encounter between the New and the Old World provides details about the way criteria of belonging and exclusion are involved in the humoral theory in use during the Spanish Golden Age. Earle points out:

Learned men generally categorized Indians as phlegmatic, according to the tenets of humoral theory. This made Amerindians similar to women, who were also believed to be phlegmatic, although some argued that Indians were instead melancholic. In any event, everyone agreed that they were different from Spaniards, who were
choleric. The melancholy and phlegmatic Indians were therefore constitutionally quite unlike the choleric Spaniards.⁶⁴

The seventeenth century is a moment of challenge for medical knowledge in the peninsula. The American natives’ bodies are a mystery, and so are the varieties of plants used by them to heal. Francisco Hernández, court physician, sails away to the new continent to try to understand these differences. Meanwhile, in Spain, humoral theory is being studied in depth and transformed into a compendium of human psychology by Juan Huarte de San Juan. The result, *Examen de ingenios para las ciencias*, is read equally by physicians and by laymen. Among the first we can possibly count one Rodrigo de Cervantes; among the second, according to several critics, we can count his son, Miguel, who will later use the adjective *ingenioso* in the title of his novel about the insanity of a *hidalgo*.⁶⁵

The reflections of Huarte and other physicians add new components to the idea of belonging and to the forms of anxiety that this idea originates in Spanish subjects. When it comes to the transformation of food into humors and external characteristics, the ideas of belonging to the Christian community point toward distinctions both within and outside the community in terms of gender and of skin color.

Regarding gender, marks of the humoral theory and of Huarte’s classification of *ingenios* can be seen in many literary works besides *Don Quixote*. The influence of food on temperament and behavior is used to distinguish the sane from the insane, but it also is a mark to define whether a character has to be considered masculine or feminine. As Rebecca Earle points out, the natives of America can be equated to women following the classification of temperaments, and also because their diet differs from the one that is

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⁶⁴ Rebecca Earle, “‘If You Eat Their Food . . .’,” 691.

considered masculine and strengthening by Europeans. The consumption of certain types of foods is associated with marks of gender. These criteria are applied in Spain, too. In the first act of *La dama bobab*, the male lead character and his assistant exchange this dialogue:

LISEO. ¿Entretéñese la hambre
con saber qué ha de comer?
TURÍN. Pues sábete que ha de ser...
LISEO. ¡Presto!
TURÍN. ...tocino fiambre.
LISEO. Pues ¿a quién puede pesar
de oír nombre tan hidalgo?
Turín, si me has de dar algo,
¿qué cosa me puedes dar
que tenga igual a ese nombre?
TURÍN. Esto y una hermosa caja.
LISEO: Dame de queso una raja;
que nunca el dulce es muy hombre.  

LISEO. So, does hunger get diverted
just by knowing what’s to eat?
TURÍN. Just so you know...
LISEO. Hurry up!
TURIN. ...you are eating cured bacon.
LISEO. Well, what man could feel remorse
Before such a gentlemanly name?
Turín, if you’re going to give me something
What in the world can you give me
That equals such a fancy name?
TURÍN. This and a beautiful box.
LISEO. Give me instead a slice of cheese
For the sweet is not very manly.

Lisoe agrees about eating bacon. It’s salty, strong flavored, and moreover, it is pork which, as we have seen, is the mark of his condition of Old Christian, as he underlines when he affirms that bacon is a *hidalgo* name. Nevertheless, as Laura Bass observes, in the play this mark ends up being insufficient for the social success of the character.  

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When Turin offers Liseo the content of a box, he responds quickly asking for something else, better if it is some cheese. Works of art help us understand why Liseo is so upset when Turin offers him the box. In several paintings, especially by Juan van der Hamen (figures 12 and 13, for example), we see these boxes associated with different types of sweets. The content of the box, therefore, is more than likely a confiture, probably made of dates, quinces, figs, and nuts, all of them preserved in sugar.68

![Figure 12. Juan van der Hamen y León, Still life with sweets, 1621, oil on canvas, 37.5 x 49 cm, Museo de Bellas Artes, Granada.](image)

![Figure 13. Juan van der Hamen y León, Still life with sweets, 1622, oil on canvas, 58 x 97 cm, The Cleveland Museum of Art, John L. Severance Fund, Cleveland.](image)

68 The content of the box in the play has been identified with sweets or preserves by Diego Marín. See Félix Lope de Vega y Carpio, La dama boba (Madrid: Cátedra, 1976), 65, n. to verse 50.
There are at least two reasons for Liseo to feel offended. On the one hand, there is the humoral explanation. In *Examen de ingenios*, Juan Huarte reflects about manna and the temperament of the people of Israel in the desert, and he explains:

El temperamento de este alimento dicen los médicos que es caliente y de partes sutiles y muy delicadas. La cual compostura debía tener también el maná que comieron los hebreos; y, así, quejándose de su delicadeza, dijeron de esta manera: *anima nostra iam nauseat super cibo isto levissimo*; como si dijera: “ya no puede sofrir nuestro estómago este alimento tan liviano”. Y la filosofía de esto era que ellos tenían fuertes estómagos, hechos de ajos, cebollas y puercos; y viendo a comer un alimento de tan poca resistencia, todo se les convertía en cólera. Y por esto manda Galeno que los hombres que tuvieren mucho calor natural que no coman miel ni otros alimentos livianos, porque se les corromperán y en lugar de cocerse se tostarán como hollín.  

The temperament of this nutrient is, according to medical wisdom, hot and made of subtle and delicate parts. The manna eaten by the Hebrews must have been made this way, and so it happened that they complained about how delicate it was, saying: *anima nostra iam nauseat super cibo isto levissimo*; as if they were saying: “our soul loatheth this light bread.” And the philosophy of this was that they had strong stomachs, made for garlic, onions, and leeks, and coming to eat food of such low resistance, all of it was transformed into choler. And thus Galen commands that those men who have too much natural heat should not eat honey nor other light foods, because they will corrupt and instead of properly cooking [inside the body], they will burn like soot.

Following the beliefs of the period, brave, choleric men are supposed to be endowed with the same type of natural heat observed among the Hebrews, so the results of eating this type of food would be similar: no benefit, and, moreover, a loss of energy. But Liseo is more emphatic. He personalizes sweetness to say it is “not very manly.” With regard to this comment, Diego Marín points out: “La afición a los dulces se consideraba más propia de mujeres que de hombres.” [“The taste for sweets was considered proper of women rather than of men.”] The relationship between food and suspicion is found here too: men who show any inclination toward literal or metaphorical sweetness are to be carefully observed,

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70 The words come from Numbers 21, 5, quoted here from the King James version.

because their temperament can be altered. In other words, men may become ill, weak, and lose some of their manly attributes if they indulge too much in sweets and sugar.

This leads us to the second reason for the offended response of Liseo: the relationship between specific ingredients and specific genders. A few lines later, Liseo inquires about his soon-to-be wife, the beautiful Finea. This is the description he obtains:

TURÍN. Las damas de corte son todas un fino cristal; transparentes y divinas.
LISEO. Turín, las más cristalinas comerán.
TURÍN. ¡Es natural!
Pero esta hermosa Finea con quien a casarte vas comerá...
LISEO. Dilo.
TURÍN. ...no más de azúcar, maná y jalea.
Pasaráse una semana con dos puntos en el aire de azúcar.
LISEO. ¡Gentil donaire! 72

TURÍN. All maids in the court are Just like the finest glass, Transparent, and divine.
LISEO. Turin, even the most ethereal must eat.
TURÍN. Naturally!
But this beautiful Finea Who is going to be your wife Will eat...
LISEO. Say it fast.
TURÍN. ...nothing But sugar, manna, and jam. She must spend an entire week With just two airy dots Of sugar.
LISEO. Such a gentle disposition!

In the Habsburg court, women are expected to be ethereal, airy, and sweet. If their temperament inclines them to be phlegmatic, or even melancholic, just like the natives of the

72 Vega y Carpio, La dama bobo, loc. cit.
Americas, then they must consume nutrients slowly. That is why it is said that they can survive just eating manna, jam, and airy dots of sugar.

Lope de Vega’s text shows how the social and cultural expectations about gender are linked to food. Men and women are assigned different balances of flavors in their respective diets so they can maintain the temperament that is proper to their condition. Men are expected to battle, even against food. Swallowing whatever is served to them is a sign of courage, as is shown in *The Trickster of Seville*, when the ghost of Don Gonzalo de Ulloa serves snakes, scorpions, and fingernails to the impious Don Juan before taking him to hell.

Historical research shows that keeping up with gender expectations was literally hard to swallow for women. Part of the aesthetics of being ethereal was having a white, almost transparent skin. To some degree, makeup could help in this purpose, but to get an authentically translucent skin, early modern Spanish women introduced an unexpected ingredient in their diet: *búcaro*, a vase. In other words, they ate pieces of ceramics. The primary source of this information is Covarrubias’s *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española*:

> BUCARO. Género de vaso, de cierta tierra colorada que traen de Portugal, y porque en la forma era ventriculoso y hinchado le llamaro búcaro, a buca, que vale el carrillo hinchado; o puede traer origen de nombre griego βούκερος, bukeros, que vale cuerno de buey, por haber tenido en sus principios forma de cuernos, que aun hasta hoy día se usa esta hechura en todas materias. Destos barros dicen que comen las damas por amortiguar la color o por golosina viciosa y es ocasión de que el barro y la tierra de la sepultura las coma y consuma en lo más florido de su edad.73

> BUCARO. A type of vase of a certain red clay that they bring in from Portugal and, because its shape was wide and round in the bottom, as if it were swollen or inflated, they called it *buccaro a buca*, which means swollen cheeks; its origin may also be the Greek noun βούκερος, bukeros, which means the horn of an ox, because in the beginning they had the shape of a horn, and this craft is still used nowadays in all matters. They say that the ladies in the court eat these clays to lighten their color or as a bad tidbit, and it is causes them to be eaten and consumed by the clay and soil of the sepulcher when they still are in the spring of their life.

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73 Covarrubias, *Tesoro de la lengua castellana*, 361. My emphasis.
What Covarrubias allows us to see is that courtly ladies did not achieve the desired whiteness and transparency of skin by eating dots of sugar, but pieces of broken clay. In her article “Rango de la cerámica en el bodegón,” Natacha Seseña studies the myths and realities about this phenomenon, and provides new information about the origins and uses of búcaros. On the one hand, she explains that, besides being produced in Portugal, they also were brought to Spain from the New World, concretely, from Tonalá, in Guadalajara, Mexico. On the other hand, she notes following the Diccionario de autoridades that the specific type of clay used to make búcaros gave water a tasty flavor and fragrance.

The origins of the underlined whiteness of Spanish courtly women constitute the point in which gender and skin color converge. Clay pots, some of them handcrafted by the dark-skinned subjects of the kingdom overseas, become the secret ingredient of whiteness in the Christian peninsular court. White skin, a double sign of belonging—to European, Christian kinship and to nobility—originates in the hands of non-white subjects. This is not the only occasion in which the source of the product that is ingested is overlooked: both in Spain and in the American colonies, Spanish women would entrust their offspring to dark-skinned wet nurses, and they would also let dark-skinned servants cook the meals for their families, as long as the preparation responded to the Christian diet.

Natacha Seseña’s groundbreaking contribution to the búcaro phenomenon comes from biological and historical points of view. From biology, it is known now that the change of skin color was an effect of oppilation, an obstruction of the intestine due to some substance that cannot be digested, and that causes paleness. In this sense, eating búcaro reveals in a very material way the artificiality of the construction of whiteness. Nevertheless, nutritional reasons for the consumption of this clay are revealed: “La necesidad de algunos

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minerales fundamentales como cuarzos y feldespatos inclinaban a las mujeres del siglo XVII a su ingestión. El hierro es un antitóxico bueno para la anemia y la alúmina lo es contra la acidez de estómago”[“The need for some fundamental minerals, such as quartz and feldspar, inclined seventeenth-century women to ingest them. Iron is an antitoxin recommended against anemia, and aluminum, against stomach hyperacidity”], which in turn shows some deficiencies of the Peninsular diet. Finally, Seseña points out that the ingestion of búcaro led in some cases to mystical visions, quoting the case of Estefanía de la Encarnación, a nun, which provides a physical explanation for at least some cases of mystic trances.

From the historical point of view, Seseña’s research also shows how following the trace of búcaros we can re-encounter other New Christians:

. . . la ingestión de arcilla cocida la introdujeron los árabes y quedó anclada en los moriscos, grupo al que pertenecían muchas de las criadas que servían a la nobleza y realeza. Esa sería, pues, la puerta. La vida cotidiana de las princesas de la casa de Habsburgo estaba influida por costumbres moriscas. No hay que olvidar que sus criadas pertenecían a ese grupo social, que no fue expulsado de España hasta 1631.76 Pero dejaron sus huellas, heredadas de la cultura hispano-musulmana desde el siglo IX. Es una herencia más.77

. . . the ingestion of baked clay was introduced by the Arabs and rooted among the Moriscos, the group to which many servants of nobility and royalty belonged. This could be, then, the gateway. Everyday life of the Habsburg princesses was influenced by Morisco habits. We should not forget that their servants belonged to that social group, which was not expelled from Spain until 1631. But they left their mark, inherited from the Hispanic-Muslim culture since the 9th century. This is one more heritage.

75 Ibidem, 143.

76 Seseña is generous with the date of expulsion of the Moriscos, given that the decrees to banish them were issued between 1609 and 1614, but the mentioned date can give a good idea of the presence and influence of the moriscos years after their “official” departure.

77 Seseña, “Rango de la cerámica en el bodegón,” 146.
Either for nutritional or for aesthetic purposes, the practice of *bucarofagia* demonstrates that ingestion, belonging and character were linked both within the scientific and domestic spaces.

One point of convergence of these pieces of information can be found in art, in a very well-known work by Diego de Velázquez. Part of the main action that is going on in *Las Meninas* is related to one of the young servants offering the princess a refreshment. The most identifiable object in the small tray is a red, round vase, a *búcaro*. Seseña, along with many other scholars, have presented documental information that strongly suggests the American origin of the piece that Velázquez represented in his painting. Although we cannot know if the choice of color in the paint used by Velázquez to represent the skin of the young maids was the product of an aesthetic decision based on convention (artists “whitened” the skin of their characters in portraits), or an attempt to represent a tone achieved either by the use of makeup or by the drastic method of eating *búcaro*, we can show evidence that *búcaros* reached the highest strata of the court.

Following the traces of what is meant or expected to be ingested, as well as of those products that cause conflict or alterations when ingested, we begin to perceive presences that were not there at first sight. Interspersed with acts of denial and rejection, or with prescriptions about what men, women, noble and non-noble are supposed to be, the weak and the not-too manly emerge, along with women, American subjects, and New Christian Moriscos. In this sense, the analysis of the consumption of foodstuffs (and other

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substances), leads us to the backstage, the space where habits are learned domestically and where we see the raw materials from which the public image is made.

From aesthetic challenge to community builder, from testimony of physiologic theories and of technological achievements to spiritual symbol, food reveals itself as ingrained in everyday life to a point that any attempt at representing this realm depends significantly on a proper rendition of the roles and uses of food and drink. As stated at the beginning, the presence of foodstuffs in such a variety of spaces and the visibility they acquire through painting and literature open several paths of exploration. The one studied here is consumption, due to the preeminence given to this process when it comes to representation. As this chapter has shown, there are two privileged spaces in which we can discuss the implications of representing food in seventeenth-century Spain: still lifes and literary texts. In this study, I work with selections from both realms, with an emphasis on the writings of Miguel de Cervantes, and especially on Don Quixote. The reasons for this specific choice in literature constitute the subject of the following chapter.
2. **Don Quixote: Aesthetics, Eating, and Consumption**

2.1. **Don Quixote, Paid in Full and Paid in Food**

Few books are as conscious of their own material value as *Don Quixote*. Like other books printed in the 1600s, it includes a *tasa* at the beginning, a document issued by a representative of the king in which its price is established, but this one goes beyond that formality. The book is sold and bought several times within the story: early in the first part, its manuscript, written in Arabic, is acquired in a market by “Cervantes,” the narrator, and in consequence saved from being used as wrapping paper. Later, this manuscript is translated, and the translation services are hired and paid. In the second part, we are informed by the enthusiastic Sansón Carrasco of the novel’s success in sales in Spain and other countries. The second part is also the place where we see the book compete against an apocryphal version, and Don Quixote is in charge of stating his own authenticity, as well as the originality of his adventures.

These forms of self-consciousness about materiality and value bring *Don Quixote* closer to the painting by Alejandro de Loarte previously discussed. Loarte emphasizes the commodity character of his work by placing a coin in the center of the action. Cervantes proceeds in a similar way when he makes his narrator buy the manuscript of the book he is going to write. Juan Carlos Rodríguez analyzes the meaning of this purchase in his book *El escritor que compró su propio libro*, and points out two aspects that are relevant for this study. On the one hand, he underlines the commodification of the book and even of the author, an idea that is derived from the Marxist principle of the fetishism of commodities explored in chapter 1:

[Cervantes] nos instala ya en otro mundo. El mundo donde el libro sólo existe como una mercancía que se compra y se vende, el único mundo que hace posible que la figura del escritor se legitime (incluso en tanto que “mercancía libre” él mismo). Con lo cual ha legitimado también no sólo al yo que sostiene la obra . . ., sino que ha
legitimado toda la obra (lo escrito anteriormente y lo que quizá está aún por escribir) . . . \footnote{1}

[Cervantes] places us already in another world. The world in which the book only exists as a commodity that can be bought and sold, the only world that makes it possible for the figure of the writer to be legitimate (even as a “free commodity” himself). With this, he has not only made legitimate the I that sustains the work . . . , but the whole work (what was previously written and that which may yet be written).

On the other hand, Rodríguez observes that Cervantes displays the skills of a modern capitalist when he first acquires the manuscript, because he purchases for a half real a book for which, as he declares, he would have paid six gladly. \footnote{2}

However, “Cervantes” does not pay for the book only with currency. He pays for its translation with wheat and raisins, and this is the first of many episodes in which material value and food converge in the first modern novel. In this aspect also, the book shows its proximity to the work by Loarte. In both works, the particularities involved in the process of exchange of commodities are enacted with and around edible products, and within this process, consumption is emphasized in different levels, which are going to be discussed here.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first one is dedicated to reflecting on the different meanings of the term “consumption,” the ways these meanings appear in *Don Quixote*, and their connections to different aspects of the anxiety of belonging present in the novel. The second section explains the role of the food-related episodes in the development of the plot of *Don Quixote*, first as a whole, and then as the sum of two parts written in two different moments of Cervantes’s life and of Spain’s history, paying equal attention to the continuities from the first to the second part, and to the changes that take place between them. This general approach to the novel is intended to work as an overview of the

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\footnote{1 Juan Carlos Rodríguez, *El escritor que compró su propio libro* (Barcelona: Debate, 2003), 159.}

\footnote{2 In her book *Cervantes*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1980) Melveena McKendrick explains that it is difficult to establish the everyday value of currency. However, for reference, she calculates that the psychological value of an *escudo* was similar to the value of ten dollars (in 1980). If an *escudo* was worth 400 *maravedís* and a silver *real* was the equivalent of 34 *maravedís*, the value of the “manuscript” of Don Quixote ends up being close to forty cents of a dollar.}
resources used by Cervantes, and as a background for the analyses proposed in the following chapters, in which the approaches to food are dedicated to more specific themes, problems, and characters. The distinction between the two parts of *Don Quixote* also serves the purpose of showing how the problems related to status and belonging changed in the ten years that passed between the publication of the first and the second part. The third section is an attempt to reconstruct the artistic context that surrounded the production of the novel. The purpose of this section is, on the one hand, to discuss the places and works about which Cervantes could have had notice, and on the other hand, to elaborate on aesthetic principles that may have been shared by the writer and the Spanish painters who were developing the still life as a genre around the same years in which Cervantes wrote the two parts of *Don Quixote*.

### 2.2. Food consumption in *Don Quixote*

The story of Don Quixote has just started when he is introduced to us as a consumer. As a consumer of food, indeed, and one who is intimately affected by this consumption. It is true that the food described at the beginning of the novel is supposed to be consumed, but if we look carefully at the way Cervantes uses the word “consumption,” we see that it is not the hidalgo who consumes food, even though this consumption is implied: “Una olla de algo más vaca que carnero, salpicón las más noches, duelos y quebrantos los sábados, lantejas los viernes, algún palomino de añadidura los domingos, consumían las tres partes de su hacienda” [I, 1] [“An occasional stew, beef more often than lamb, hash most nights, eggs and abstinence on Sundays–these consumed three-fourths of his income.”] In the sentence Cervantes writes, it is food that consumes. It consumes three-quarters of the gentleman’s money.
Beyond the word play, these terms make the readers of *Don Quixote* think about consumption from the first page of the story. As we have seen in the previous chapter, consumption, and more specifically the consumption of food, was a multifaceted problem in Cervantes’s times. It determined social and religious status, and by doing so, it created social needs that sometimes were satisfied symbolically rather than materially. That is why a first step in approaching the representation of food consumption in Cervantes’s novel is understanding the different layers of this process.

According to the *New Oxford American Dictionary*, there are at least six ways to understand the word consumption. They will be considered here in relation to their presence in the plot of *Don Quixote*.

1. *The using up of a resource.* This is the first concern of the narrator in *Don Quixote*. Food is scarce for the *hidalgo* and, as we have seen, it consumes a good part of his income. His resources are limited, and his diet, monotonous. Through different techniques, Cervantes makes us aware of the need and value of nurturing resources. Especially throughout the first part, Don Quixote can play between two ways of understanding the scarcity of food: voluntary deprivation in the name of chivalry and of Dulcinea’s love, and real lack of resources. A dialogue that takes place between Don Quixote and Sancho shortly after they have started to ride together illustrates the ambiguity of the knight when it comes to nurture:

   –Aquí trajo una cebolla y un poco de queso, y no sé cuántos mendrugos de pan –dijo Sancho–, pero no son manjares que pertenecen a tan valiente caballero como vuestra merced.

   –¡Qué mal lo entiendes! –respondió don Quijote. Hágote saber, Sancho, que es honra de los caballeros andantes no comer en un mes y, ya que coman, sea de aquello que hallaren más a mano; y esto se te hiciera cierto si hubieras leído tantas historias como yo, que, aunque han salido muchas, en todas ellas no he hallado hecha relación de que los caballeros andantes comiesen, si no era acaso y en algunos suntuosos banquetes que les hacían, y los demás días se los pasaban en flores. Y

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aunque se deja entender que no podían pasar sin comer y sin hacer todos los otros menesteres naturales, porque en efecto eran hombres como nosotros, hase de entender también que andando lo más del tiempo de su vida por las florestas y despoblados, y sin cocinero, que su más ordinaria comida sería de viandas rústicas, tales como las que tú ahora me ofreces. Así que, Sancho amigo, no te congoje lo que a mí me da gusto: ni quieras tú hacer mundo nuevo, ni sacar la caballería andante de sus quicios. [I, 10]

“I have here an onion, and a little cheese, and I don’t know how many crusts of bread,” said Sancho, “but these are not victuals suitable for a knight as valiant as your grace.”

“How little you understand!” Don Quixote responded. “I shall tell you, Sancho, that it is a question of honor for knights errant not to eat for a month, and when they do eat, it is whatever they find near at hand, and you would know the truth of this if you had read as many histories as I; although there are many of them, in none have I found it written that knights errant ever ate, unless perhaps at some sumptuous banquet offered in their honor; the rest of the time they all but fasted. Although it is understood that they could not live without eating or doing all the other necessities of nature because, in fact, they were men like ourselves, it must also be understood that because they spent most of their lives in the open, unpopulated countryside, without a cook, their most common food would be rustic viands, like those which you offer me now. And so, Sancho my friend, do not concern yourself with what may or may not be to my taste. You should not try to make the world over again or change the nature of errant chivalry.

Either because he is a self-sacrificing knight or because he is an hidalgo, Don Quixote accepts and justifies the consumption of simple food, the absence of a cook, and the scarcity of banquets. These decisions affect directly the extension of the adventures, because the protagonist states that he will survive with minimal resources. Don Quixote’s comprehension about nurture guarantees continuity, but also announces an ending, since the readers know that, with deficient nutrition and strenuous activity, a man in his fifties (an advanced age in the times of Cervantes) cannot stay healthy and active for too long.

The division between the two parts of the novel is also affected by this initial idea. In the first part, the real lack of resources is attributed sometimes to the gentleman’s delusions and sometimes to real poverty. Whichever the reason, he manages to survive as planned. In the second part, real food is more present. At the beginning, Don Quixote is cured mainly

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4 In his annotated edition of *Don Quixote* (Barcelona: Crítica, 1998), Francisco Rico explains that between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the average life expectancy in Spain was twenty to thirty years, and that about ten percent of the population surpassed sixty years of age.
through rest and good nutrition, so he can make another sally. But in the second part, banquets are more frequent due to Don Quixote’s popularity, and there are more discourses at the table. It is the turn of Sancho to act in relation to amounts and qualities of food.

2. The eating, drinking, or ingesting of something. These actions are extensively discussed in Don Quixote, and they are probably the best known and studied. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the descriptions of what the characters of the novel eat and drink help us

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5 Many books and articles have been dedicated to explaining and reconstructing the dietary habits of Don Quixote and other Cervantine characters. Probably the first and still the most renowned essay is Cesáreo Fernández Duro’s La cocina del Quijote, published in several editions since its first appearance as an article in La Ilustración española y americana (September, 1872), and later in his book Venturitas y desventuritas (Madrid, 1878). In the early twentieth century, Francisco Rodríguez Marin, one of the most prominent annotators of Don Quixote, gave a lecture in the Ateneo de Madrid, later published as El yantar de Alonso Quijano el bueno (Madrid: Tipografía de la Revista de Archivos, Bibliotecas y Museos, 1916); part of this lecture, related to “duelos y quebrantos,” had been already published as an appendix to his edition of Don Quixote in ten volumes (1959). In 1984, Enrique García Solana presented a study focused mainly on the ingredients and traditions of La Mancha: La cocina en el Quijote (Albacete: Papeles de la Diputación de Albacete), and in 1993 Lorenzo Díaz published another book frequently cited: La cocina del Quijote (Toledo: Junta de Comunidades de Castilla-La Mancha, 1993). This book has had successive editions by Alianza Editorial. By the end of the decade, Felipe Jiménez García-Moreno, Martha Jiménez García-Moreno, and Héctor Macín published El recetario del Quijote (Mexico: Gatuperio, 1998). Both Díaz and the co-authors of El recetario include in their books traditional recipes from La Mancha.

Similar titles have been published around the fourth centennial of the first part of the novel: Gloria Sanjuán, Ollas, sartenes y fogones del Quijote (Madrid: Libro Hobby Club, 2004), Antonio Campins, En un fogón de La Mancha: La ingeniosa cocina de Don Quijote y Sancho Panza (Mostoles: Cultural, 2005), the textbook La cocina del Quijote: Ayer y hoy (Almería: I.E.S. Almeraya, 2005), María Inés Chamorro Fernández, La cocina del Quijote: Gastronomía del Siglo de Oro español (Barcelona: Herder, 2002), Isaías Moraga Ramos, La comida en El Quijote (Zaragoza: Torre Nueva, 2005), Pedro Plasencia, A la mesa con Don Quijote y Sancho (Madrid: Suma de Letras, 2005), Julio Valles Rojo, Don Quijote y Sancho no pudieron ser gastrónomos: Algunos pasajes del Quijote relacionados con la comida (Valladolid: J. Valles 2005), Alfredo Villaverde and Adolfo Muñoz Martín, La cocina de Sancho Panza (Guadalajara: Ediciones Llanura, 2005), María Zarzalejos, Don Quijote gastronómico (Madrid: Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación, 2005), Gabriel Argumánez, El puchero de Don Quijote: Cocina tradicional de La Mancha (Murcia: Nausícaä, 2006).

Despite the amount of works published, academic approaches to the subject are less frequent. From the commemoration years, a short essay that reflects on the social aspects of food in Don Quixote is Michele Salazar’s Il áibo in Cervantes tra sogg e realità (Catanzaro: Robettino, 2006). British and American scholars have been writing about food in Don Quixote within the last ten years, and their approaches, from the perspectives of cultural materialism and cultural studies, have opened new spaces to read food in Don Quixote. Especially deserving of mention is Barry Ife’s study Don Quixote’s Diet (Bristol: University of Bristol, Department of Hispanic, Portuguese and Latin American Studies, 2000), Arthur Terry’s article “A Consuming Interest: Eating and non Eating in Don Quixote” in New Comparison, 24 (London: British Comparative Literature Association, 1997, 57-71), R.T.C. Goodwin’s unpublished thesis, “Food, Art, and Literature in Early Modern Spain: The Representation of Food in Velázquez’s Bodegones, Guzmán de Alfarache, Don Quijote, and the still-life paintings of Sánchez Cotán,” (University of London, 2001) and Carolyn Nadeau’s articles “Criticuing the Elite in the Barataria and ‘Ricote’ Food Episodes in Don Quijote II” (Hispanófila, 2006: 59-75), and “Spanish Culinary History in Cervantes’ ‘Bodas de Camacho’” (Revista canadiense de estudios hispánicos 29.2 Winter 2005: 347-61).
situate them socially and economically. They also provide a sense of progression in the novel: Alonso Quijano, the initial character, has the typical diet of a rural hidalgo, but when he becomes Don Quixote, he invents a new diet as a mark of his change of condition. It is important to make it clear that this is not the same diet as that of nobles, but one that establishes a different status in society for Don Quixote. The imagined knight considers himself noble but not exactly belonging to the contemporary noble class. The progression from the condition of hidalgo to the new status of knight errant also adds a social dimension to the continuity in the novel. This is established in the previously cited dialogue between the austere knight and his squire, that continues with this exchange:

―Perdóneme vuestra merced —dijo Sancho—; que como yo no sé leer ni escribir, como otra vez he dicho, no sé ni he caído en las reglas de la profesión caballeresca; y de aquí adelante yo proveeré las alforjas de todo género de fruta seca para vuestra merced, que es caballero, y para mí las proveeré, pues no lo soy, de otras cosas volátiles y de más sustancia.

―No digo yo, Sancho —replicó don Quijote—, que sea forzoso a los caballeros andantes no comer otra cosa sino esas frutas que dices; sino que su más ordinario sustento debía de ser de ellas, y de algunas yerbas que hallaban por los campos, que ellos conocían, y yo también conozco. [I, 10]

"Forgive me, your grace," said Sancho. "Since I don't know how to read or write, as I told you before, I don't know and am not aware of the rules of the chivalric profession; from now on I'll stock the saddlebags with all kinds of dried fruit for your grace, since you are a knight, and for me, since I'm not, I'll fill them with other things that have wings and are more substantial.

"I am not saying, Sancho," replied Don Quixote, "that it is necessary for knights errant not to eat anything other than those fruits you mention, but simply that their most ordinary sustenance consisted of them and of certain plants found in the fields, which were known to them, and to me as well."

While Don Quixote struggles to remain faithful to what he has learned in the books of chivalry, Sancho takes every chance he has to clarify that those rules apply to his master and not to him. However, from time to time he keeps offering food to the knight, and he ends up accepting.

As I explained in the previous chapter, the distance between master and squire is not only related to social rules, but also to different conceptions of consumption. These are
frontiers that are frequently crossed. Sancho does not seem to understand that his master can but would rather not eat more food, and that in Don Quixote’s mind this intention should be maintained no matter the type of food. On the other hand, when Sancho suggests that he will help his master in penitence by depriving him of food, Don Quixote reacts showing that there is no need to take the project too far. This means that we are not faced with a simple opposition between a materialist Sancho and a spiritual Don Quixote, but between a master and a servant who deal with the same type of hunger in different ways. The master seems to know the spiritual world better, but he also knows that he needs material sustenance, and, even though the servant wants to understand the spiritual world of his master, he also wants to rule an island and will not let go of tangible food. As the novel progresses, material hunger leads Don Quixote to think about the practicalities of his new condition, which had been previously idealized by his readings, while Sancho faces the inconveniences of food deprivation for the sake of government, when he encounters his own version of the chivalric world in the second part of the novel, in the island Barataria.

3. An amount of something that is used up or ingested. When we talk about amounts of food to be consumed, we deal also with social conditions and with cultural criteria. Cervantes seems to be very conscious of these two factors. Besides dealing with stereotypes about hidalgos, their anxieties and shortcomings, Don Quixote can be read as an attentive exercise in characterization through the association between a character and the quantity and quality of food he consumes.

In an article on Don Quixote’s diet, Barry W. Ife demonstrates that, from the information provided by Cervantes about his character, we can deduce several causes for the gentleman’s behavior:
Table 1: Analysis of Don Quixote’s Diet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nutrient</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cholesterol</td>
<td>72.24</td>
<td>mg</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carbohydrates</td>
<td>49.97</td>
<td>gm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dietary Fiber</td>
<td>16.53</td>
<td>gm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>524.75</td>
<td>Cal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fat</td>
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<td>gm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturated Fat</td>
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<td>gm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potassium</td>
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<td>gm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sodium</td>
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<td>mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsaturated Fat</td>
<td>10.01</td>
<td>gm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Amount</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>RDA</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folate</td>
<td>357.68</td>
<td>µg</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>mg</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnesium</td>
<td>96.55</td>
<td>mg</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niacin</td>
<td>7.99</td>
<td>mg</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phosphorus</td>
<td>570.84</td>
<td>mg</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protein</td>
<td>42.44</td>
<td>mg</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riboflavin</td>
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<td>mg</td>
<td>27%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thiamine</td>
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<td>mg</td>
<td>57%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vitamin A</td>
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<td>µg</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin B</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>µg</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin B6</td>
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<td>mg</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin C</td>
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<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>mg</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zinc</td>
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<td>mg</td>
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Ife comments:

... such diet would have left Don Quixote seriously deficient in energy; his calory intake is only about a quarter of that required by a 50-year-old male with even a sedentary lifestyle. The consequences of long-term malnourishment of this order would be wasting of the flesh and loss of muscle tone. Secondly, he is below the recommended daily amount of all nutrients, but is especially deficient in Calcium (8%), Vitamin C (6%) and Vitamin E (10%).

The calcium deficiency is extremely serious and would lead to osteoporosis (loss of bone mass), and inhibit blood-clotting. It would also account for the poor state of his teeth, frequently commented on in the novel. Vitamin C also helps wounds to heal and keeps bones and teeth strong. His low dietary intake of vitamin C probably meant that he was suffering from scurvy, a disease that causes weakness, slow healing of wounds, and extreme soreness of the gums and joints. The very low intake of vitamin E would also result in weakened red blood cells and neurologic dysfunction, causing loss of muscle coordination, and vision problems. Vision problems, from which it might be said Don Quixote suffers throughout at least the first part of the novel, are also caused by deficiency of vitamin A, which at 23% of recommended daily amount is also among the lowest percentages in the analysis.6

A relevant aspect of this analysis is the material demonstration of Cervantes’s principles of realism in the novel. No matter if the inclusion of details about Don Quixote’s diet was the result of Cervantes’s familiarity with medicine, or if it was due to his skills as an observer and writer, it is plausible to think that he wanted his readers to understand the contradictions between the heroic project of Don Quixote and the resources at hand.

The description of the amount and quality of consumed food serves as well the purpose of justifying Don Quixote’s actions deriving from his temper. Appealing again to medical knowledge, Cervantes organizes his representations around the types of character described by the classic theorists of medicine, such as Galen and Hippocrates and, in consequence, attributes to his hero qualities and defects proper to these types. In this context, the adjective “ingenioso” that presides over the title of both parts is psychologically and physiologically justified. As Otis H. Green has written:

All intelligent men have ingenio, whether boto [blunt] or sutil [subtle], but the ingenioso is “el que tiene sutil y delgado ingenio” [the one who has subtle and sharp ingenio].

6 Barry W. Ife, Don Quixote’s Diet (Bristol: University of Bristol, Department of Hispanic, Portuguese and Latin American Studies. December 2000), 15.
Such a man is colérico [choleric], partakes of the element of fire in greater proportion than of the others, and is born under the planet Mars. He symbolizes *inventus, aestas*, and the wind *Favonius*. The *ingenioso* possesses “una índole de ánimo vivaz inclinada a singulares y raras (Cervantes diría descomunales) ocurrencias” [“Vivacious spirits inclined to singular and rare (Cervantes would say colossal) ideas”]. Furthermore, his psychological balance is precarious. Huarte says: “por maravilla se halla un hombre de muy subido ingenio que no pique algo en manía, que es una destemplanza caliente y seca del cerebro.” [“It is rare to find a man of great ingenio who is not at least slightly inclined to manía, which is a hot and dry imbalance of the brain”] According to this, Alonso Quijano was properly called *ingenioso* “porque era caliente y seco de temperamento . . . y de subido ingenio, con su tanto de manía, primero por la caza, y después por la lectura; hasta que recalentándose y desecándosele el cerebro, vino a dar en la monomanía delirante.” [“because his temper was hot and dry . . . and of great ingenio, with a touch of mania, first for hunting, and then for reading, until his brain, overheating and drying, ended up producing monomania and delirium,”] That is to say, Cervantes thought *ingenioso* a fitting adjective to describe his hero's original pre-psychotic inclination and his subsequent psychotic excess.7

Diet, in this system, determines sanity or insanity, and the insufficient consumption of determined amounts of food and liquid is considered directly responsible for imbalances in the personality.

The amount of food consumed by a determined character or group of characters is used by Cervantes as a mark of contrast. This happens, for example, in the wedding of the rich man Camacho, in the second part. In the description of the banquet, Cervantes, who in the first part was not prone to exaggeration except when it was related to Don Quixote's hallucinations, presents a scene that is not imagined by the knight, but takes place in the world where the hidalgo and Sancho live:

Lo primero que se le ofreció a la vista de Sancho fue, espetado en un asador de un olmo entero, un entero novillo, y en el fuego donde se había de asar ardía un mediano monte de leña, y seis ollas que alrededor de la hoguera estaban no se habían hecho en la común turquesa de las demás ollas, porque eran seis medias tinajas, que cada una cabía un rastro de carne: así embebían y encerraban en sí carneros enteros, sin echarse de ver, como si fueran palominos; las liebres ya sin pellejo y las gallinas sin pluma que estaban colgadas por los árboles para sepultarlas en las ollas no tenían

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número; los pájaros y caza de diversos géneros eran infinitos, colgados de los árboles para que el aire los enfriase. [II, 20]

The first thing that appeared before Sancho’s eyes was an entire steer on a roasting spit made of an entire elm; and in the fire where it was to roast, a fair-size mountain of wood was burning, and six pots that were placed around the fire were not made in the common mold of other pots, because these were six huge cauldrons, each one large enough to hold entire sheep, which sank out of view as if they were doves; the hares without their skins and the chickens without their feathers that were hanging from the trees, waiting to be buried in the cauldrons, were without number; the various kinds of fowl and game hanging from the trees to cool in the breeze were infinite.8

This Pantagruelic banquet surprises the reader because it is the narrator and Sancho, not Don Quixote, who appreciate its immense proportions. As will be shown in the second section of this chapter, this description is part of the Cervantine narrative strategy of switching places and centrality between the knight and his squire for the continuation of the novel; however, as Carolyn Nadeau has observed: “This passage reveals a medieval sense of prestige defined in quantitative terms.”9 Therefore, the hyperbolic description of the wedding banquet suggests that a nostalgic vision of the Middle Ages and the chivalric world is shared by wealthy countrymen, and not exclusive to Don Quixote.

Moreover, when it comes to the amounts of food consumed, it is possible to explore new dimensions of economic power. The description continues:

Contó Sancho más de sesenta zaques de más de a dos arrobas cada uno, y todos llenos, según después pareció, de generosos vinos; así había rimeros de pan blanquísimos, como los suele haber de montones de trigo en la eras; los quesos, puestos como ladrillos enrelejados formaban una muralla, y dos calderas de aceite mayores que las de un tinte servían de freír cosas de masa que con dos valientes palas las sacaban fritas y las zabullían en otra caldera de preparada miel que allí junto estaba [II, 20]

Sancho counted more than sixty wineskins, each one holding more than two arrobas, and all of them filled, as was subsequently proven, with excellent wines; there were

8 It is worth noticing in this passage the presence of fowl and game hanging, since they are also represented this way in The Bodegón Keeper and in Alejandro de Loarte’s The Poultry Vendor, mentioned in chapter 1, as well as in Juan Sánchez Cotán’s Still Life with Game Fowl, which will be discussed in chapter 3.

also mounds of snowy white loaves of bread, heaped up like piles of wheat in the threshing floor; cheeses, crisscrossed like bricks, formed a wall; and two kettles of oil larger than a dyer's vats were used to fry rounds of dough, which were then removed with two strong paddles and plunged into another kettle filled with honey that stood nearby.

The passage of Camacho's wedding brings us back to the relationship between Cervantes's writing and visual culture. If the first part of the description had to do with measurements and proportions, here the disposition of bread and cheese creates also oversized surfaces (walls) and textures (bricks) which are not too far from the visual effect of massiveness visible in contemporary architecture.\textsuperscript{10}

Considering these relationships between visuality, writing and monumentality, the accumulation of bread has both visual and an economic implications. According to Carolyn Nadeau:

\ldots bread is the most important basic element of Spanish food during the seventeenth century \ldots Dealing in grain was a high-powered business. As urban centres grew, bread production was transformed into an important industry. In Madrid, for example, the government instituted a price ceiling for grains, regulated prices, controlled bread shipments and imposed bread delivery obligations on local villages. Wheat bread was reserved for the upper classes while millet, rye and other supposedly "inferior" grains were used to make bread for the lower classes \ldots So, "pan blanquísimo" implies both class and category.\textsuperscript{11}

Nadeau's reading suggests the use of quantification to re-read characters from specific information provided by the text. This approach works both to establish the character's place in the social and the economic systems, and to reconsider their individual marking. Sancho Panza is probably the best example. Given his name, which suggests a pronounced belly, the character of Sancho Panza is frequently associated with the

\textsuperscript{10} The Royal Seat and Monastery of San Lorenzo de El Escorial, built between 1563 and 1584, during the reign of Philip II, stands as the best-known example of this type of massiveness. The building of this monument was a major event in Spain during Cervantes's lifetime, and although it cannot be affirmed that he saw it personally, it is reasonable to think that he was at least familiar with news about the project for the building, its construction, and the further consecration of its church. About the principle of massiveness in the transition from the Renaissance to the Baroque see also Heinrich Wölfflin, "Massiveness," \textit{Renaissance and Baroque} (Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press, 1966), 44-57.

\textsuperscript{11} Carolyn Nadeau, "Spanish Culinary History in Cervantes' 'Bodas de Camacho,'" 352.
consumption of large amounts of food. This appears to be a problem for Cervantes himself in the process of writing the second part of *Don Quixote*, and his reaction to the attempts of his contemporaries to stereotype Sancho is to show him as a temperate consumer, even when he is confronted with excess, as happens in the scene of the wedding’s banquet. In Nadeau’s words:

Sancho often exercises moderation in his decisions, particularly with regard to food. He takes pleasure in consuming it, discussing it, and admiring its preparation. Before and after Camacho’s feast, Sancho accepts invitations to share a meal, partakes no more or less than the others in his company and always appreciates the experience.12

Quantification, associated to consumption, turns into a resource against stereotyping, so characters can be perceived in their complexity. From a materialist perspective, the use of quantification contributes a type of textual evidence that helps determine the “condición y ejercicio” [“condition and profession”] of a character, a crucial step to understand its interactions within the text and between the text and its context.

4. The purchase and use of goods and services by the public. As will be discussed in the second section of this chapter, the stops Don Quixote and Sancho make to eat and drink work as narrative “signs of punctuation” in the development of the plot. One of the basic problems that Don Quixote faces in the material world is the need for money to get food. This is established by the innkeeper in the first *venta* where he is “knighted:”

Preguntóle si traía dineros; respondió don Quijote que no traía blanca, porque él nunca había leído en las historias de los caballeros andantes que ninguno los hubiese traído. A esto dijo el ventero que se engañaba, que, puesto caso que en las historias no se escribía, por haberles parecido a los autores dellas que no era menester escribir una cosa tan clara y tan necesaria de traerse como eran dineros y camisas limpias, no por eso se había de creer que no los trujeron . . . [I, 3]

He asked if he had any money; Don Quixote replied that he did not have a copper *blanca*, because he never had read in the histories of knights errant that any of them ever carried money. To this the innkeeper replied that he was deceived, for if this was not written in the histories, it was because it had not seemed necessary to the authors to write down something as obvious and necessary as carrying money and clean

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The *venta* is the place where food is supposed to be purchased, given that Don Quixote and Sancho are traveling. One of the particularities of the story is, precisely, that even though knight and squire do visit *ventas*, eat and drink, they manage to leave without paying. This recurrence connects *Don Quixote* with the picaresque tradition on two levels: one, the dubious quality of the food that is supposed to be worth some money for the travelers; the other, the resolution of the problem of payment through humor. In the first inn described in the novel, the innkeeper’s advice about carrying money and clothing rewrites the whole chivalric canon, bringing the heroic knights back to the material world; later, in the *venta* owned by Juan Palomeque, the refusal of payment ends up with Sancho being tossed in a blanket, as a reminder for the characters and for the reader that the trick of leaving without paying may work once but not twice.

The *venta* operates in *Don Quixote* as a place where the scarcity of material resources is presented as an explicit problem for all subjects of the Spanish kingdom. This is made clear by another innkeeper with whom Sancho has the following conversation:

. . . preguntó Sancho al huésped que qué tenía para darles de cenar, a lo que el huésped respondió que su boca sería medida, y así, que pidiese lo que quisiese: que de las pajaricas del aire, de las aves de la tierra y de los pescados del mar estaba proveída aquella venta.

–No es menester tanto –respondió Sancho–, que con un par de pollos que nos asen tendremos lo suficiente, porque mi señor es delicado y come poco, y yo no soy tragantón en demásía.

Respondióle el huésped que no tenía pollos, porque los milanos los tenían asolados.

–Pues mande el señor huésped –dijo Sancho–, que con su pollo nos asen una polla que sea tierna.

–¿Polla? ¡Mi padre! –respondió el huésped–. En verdad en verdad que envié ayer a la ciudad a vender más de cincuenta; pero, fuera de pollas, pida vuestra merced lo que quisiere.

–Desa manera –dijo Sancho–, no faltará ternera o cabrito.

–En casa por ahora –respondió el huésped–, no lo hay, porque se ha acabado, pero la semana que viene lo habrá de sobra.

–¡Medrados estamos con eso! –respondió Sancho–. Yo pondré que se vienen a resumirse todas estas faltas en las sobras que debe de haber de tocino y huevos.
—¡Por Dios! —respondió el huésped— que es gentil relente el que mi huésped tiene! Pues hele dicho que ni tengo pollas ni gallinas, ¿y quiere que tenga huevos! Discurra, si quisiere, por otras delicadezas, y déjese de pedir gullurías. [II, 59]

. . . Sancho asked the landlord what he had for supper. The landlord responded that he could have anything and could ask for whatever he wanted: the inn was stocked with the birds of the air, the fowl of the earth, and the fish of the sea.

“There’s no need for so much,” responded Sancho. “If you roast a couple of chickens for us, we’ll have enough, because my master is delicate and doesn’t eat a lot, and I’m not much of a glutton.”

The landlord responded that he did not have any chickens because the hawks had devoured them all.

“Well, Señor Landlord,” said Sancho, “have them roast a pullet, if it’s tender.”

“A pullet? Good Lord!” responded the landlord. “The truth of the matter is that yesterday I sent fifty to be sold in the city; but, except for pullets your grace can order whatever you want.”

“Then that means,” said Sancho, “that you have plenty of veal or goat.”

“For the moment, there’s none in the house,” responded the landlord, “because it’s all gone, but next week there’ll be plenty.”

“That does us a lot of good!” responded Sancho. “I’ll wager that everything you don’t have can be made up for by all the eggs and bacon you do have.”

“By God,” responded the landlord, “that’s a nice sense of humor my guest has. I already told you I don’t have pullets or chickens, and now you want me to have eggs? Talk about some other delicacies, if you like, and stop asking for chickens.

At this point, Sancho is about to lose his temper, and then it is revealed that the only thing left to eat is a pair of cow’s heels stewed with chickpeas, onions, and bacon. Out of despair or hunger, Sancho offers to pay for them. In this instance, it is the guests and not the host who are tricked and forced to give money in exchange for a meager meal.

The transaction and the treacherous and comic process of bargaining that leads to it helps us re-connect the novel with its context. As in Loarte’s painting *The Poultry Vendor*, here we see the contrast between the promises of goods to be consumed and the act of consumption itself. If Cervantes was able to joke with his readers about the subject, which seems to be indicated by the fact that similar scenes appear in other moments of the novel (for example, in the banquet Sancho is not allowed to eat when he is a governor), we can assume that problems of access to foodstuffs and other goods were frequently discussed.
among the members of his audience. This aspect is related to the next meaning of consumption.

5. The reception of information or entertainment, especially by a mass audience. The multiple books that study traditional dishes of La Mancha mentioned in *Don Quixote* contribute valuable information about the relationship between the novel and its first readers. Part of the popularity of the book is related to the mention of places, social types, landscapes, and foods that were recognizable by those first readers. *Don Quixote* itself provides passages from which it can be deduced that it was conceived to be easily accessible. First, there is the scene at the inn that serves as an introduction to the novel *El curioso impertinente*, in which the innkeeper describes the custom of the harvesters of getting together around a reader to listen to stories from chivalric books. If we accept that Cervantes’s intention was to compete with such novels, we can think that when he wrote *Don Quixote* he might have been counting on these gatherings for his book to be read, and, in consequence, he considered the possibility of including references that were familiar to them. The success of such a strategy seems to be confirmed in the second part, when Sansón Carrasco says that *Don Quixote* has become a popular novel equally celebrated by men and women, old and young:

. . . los niños la manosean, los mozos la leen, los hombres la entienden y los viejos la celebran; y, finalmente, es tan trillada y tan leída y tan sabida de todo género de gentes, que apenas han visto algún rocín flaco, cuando dicen ‘Allá va Rocinante’. Y los que más se han dado a su lectura son los pajes: no hay antecámara de señor donde no se halle un *Don Quijote*, unos le toman si otros le dejan, estos le embisten y aquellos le piden. [II, 3]

. . . children look at it, youths read it, men understand it, the old celebrate it, and, in short, it is so popular and so widely read and so well-known by every kind of person that as soon as people see a skinny old nag they say: ‘there goes Rocinante.’ And those who have been fondest of reading it are the pages. there is no lord’s antechamber where one does not find a copy of *Don Quixote*: as soon as it is put down it is picked up again; some rush at it, and others ask for it.

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13 The biographical information about Cervantes connects him directly to these difficulties, since he was in charge of collecting grain for the Spanish Armada in rural Andalusia.
Given that the information is provided by the author himself, it has to be considered as a resource to better sell the second part, as Daniel Eisenberg has observed. Nevertheless, research about the actual popularity of the novel suggests that it was in fact consumed in large numbers, and that the characters very soon appeared in carnival festivities and popular dramas.

Whether or not Cervantes was considering less educated audiences (the ones that could have identified Don Quixote, Sancho and Rocinante in street festivities), mentioning popular dishes becomes a strategic decision. For the lords, it adds to the series of jokes

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14 Eisenberg refers mainly to the number of volumes published (12,000 according to Sansón Carrasco) and to the editions mentioned by the character, which do not seem to coincide with the actual numbers and places of the early editions of Don Quixote. Eisenberg suggests that the discourse of Sansón Carrasco serves two purposes: within the story, the numbers are meant to impress Don Quixote and convince him to make a third sally; in the sphere of the author, they help Cervantes promote his own work: “... Cervantes sacó la figura de 12.000 del aire; era una conjetura basada en los más nebulosos informes. Además, es verosímil que por lástima propia, por deseo de impresionar al lector y para mayor ironía, errara por carta de más que de menos. La figura, por consiguiente, carece de valor para juzgar la popularidad del Quijote.” [... Cervantes produced the cipher of 12,000 out of thin air. It was a conjecture based on the most nebulous reports. Besides, it is believable that, out of self-pity, of a wish to impress his reader, and to accentuate irony, he chooses to go overboard rather than run short. The cipher, then, has no value when it comes to judge the popularity of Don Quixote.] Daniel Eisenberg, “Díganlo Portugal, Barcelona y Valencia: Una nota sobre la popularidad del Quijote,” in Hispanófila, LI (1974), 71-72.

15 Judith Farré Vidal summarizes the appearances of Don Quixote and Sancho as popular characters since 1605: “... dos personajes que, por su aspecto, recordaban a los protagonistas cervantinos, intervinieron en una fiesta de toros y cañas con motivo del nacimiento del príncipe Felipe Domingo; en las fiestas de beatificación de santa Teresa de Jesús en Zaragoza (1614), Don Quijote formaba parte de la mascarada que organizaron los estudiantes, así como también en las fiestas que al mismo tiempo se solemnizaron en Córdoba (1615); don Quijote también formó parte de los festejos conmemorativos por la solemne publicación que el colegio mayor de Santa María de Jesús hizo en Sevilla de la concepción sin mancha de la Virgen María en enero de 1617; en la defensa del mismo misterio, la universidad de Baeza, la de Salamanca y en Utrera también involucraron a los personajes cervantinos (1618).” [... two characters whose features resembled the Cervantine protagonists were part of a fiesta de toros y cañas in honor of the birth of Prince Felipe Domingo; in the festivities that celebrated the beatification of St. Teresa of Jesus in Zaragoza (1614), Don Quixote was part of a masquerade organized by students, appearing as well in similar festivities in Cordoba (1615); Don Quixote also participated in the commemoration, by the Colegio Mayor de Santa María, of the solemn publication of the estatuto that declared the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary, in January 1617; in defense of the same mystery, the universities of Baeza, Salamanca and Utrera introduced the Cervantine characters.] Judith Farré Vidal, “La presencia festiva de El Quijote en los virreinatos americanos,” in Bernardo J. García and María Luisa Lobato, eds., Dramaturgia festiva y cultura nobiliaria en el Siglo de Oro (Madrid/Frankfurt: Iberoamericana/Vervuert, 2007), 388.

about hidalgos and provides some “color” to the depiction of the country, where most of the adventures take place; for the servants and for those who might have gathered to listen to the book, it connects them with their experiences of everyday life.

The reflection on food and eating in Don Quixote can also be read as a reflection about the consumption of the book itself. In this sense, it is worth remembering the words Cervantes uses when he declares he has lost track of his story and is looking for the continuation (which he will end up buying):

Causóme esto mucha pesadumbre, porque el gusto de haber leído tan poco se volvía en disgusto, de pensar el mal camino que se ofrecía para hallar lo mucho que, a mi parecer, faltaba de tan sabroso cuento. [I, 9]

This caused me a good deal of grief, because the pleasure [gusto] of having read so small an amount was turning into displeasure [disgusto] at the thought of the difficult road that lay ahead in finding the large amount that, in my opinion, was missing from so charming [sabroso = tasty] tale.

The terms related to food and taste used in the original have been marked to underline the way Cervantes insists in affirming that besides the continuation of the story, something else is missing: its flavor, what makes it delectable. The reference to books as “food for thought” was frequent in the times of Cervantes, and, in that sense, it is rather commonplace for the author of Don Quixote to refer to his writings using this type of expressions. The difference is related to the role of food in the narrative itself, since the consumers of Don Quixote become initially aware of the act of consumption through this resource. Alonso Quijano is introduced first as a consumer of food, and only later is he introduced as a consumer of books. Food is still part of the criteria of comparison when Alonso Quijano is about to change his status, because the remaining part of his income is not enough to buy more chivalry books, so he will have to sell part of his productive land. Food for the body is given in exchange for “food for thought.” The apparent unfairness of the exchange is one of the main criticisms against chivalric books in the novel, because this type of “food” is poisoned
with exaggeration and fantasy. Cervantes approaches both types of nurturing for his readers, the one that comes from familiar dishes (also from familiar tricks and lies about food, as they are implied in the dubious behavior of the innkeepers), and the one that comes from familiar analogies about books and reading.

6. *(Dated)* A wasting disease. This sense of the word differs from English to Spanish, for in English it used to refer mainly to tuberculosis, a meaning that could not be deduced from the writings of Cervantes. Nevertheless, what certainly can be maintained is the relationship between consumption, disease, and death, because in Spanish an illness (tuberculosis or any other) can “consume” a human being. Therefore, it is useful to refer to this dated way of understanding consumption to explore in more depth the relationship, explained in the previous chapter, between the representation of consumption and death.

As we have seen in the research by Barry W. Ife, when Alonso Quijano decides to become the knight errant Don Quixote de la Mancha, his new diet lacks many nutrients and on several occasions he abstains when Sancho offers him something to eat. The alterations in the diet of Alonso Quijano seem to be an early announcement of the movement towards the end that is described by Peter Brooks as one of the main processes of narrative discourses:

> If the motor of narrative is desire, totalizing, building ever-larger units of meaning, the ultimate determinants of meaning lie at the end, and narrative desire is ultimately, inexorably, desire for the end.16

If we follow the gradual deprivation of food in *Don Quixote*, we can conjecture that Cervantes, a writer who insists frequently on realism, may have considered death as an ending early in the process of writing of the novel. Another reason to consider death at least in the background of the creation is the aesthetic consciousness of it, made evident in other works of the period, such as the many plays in which death becomes the resolution of the

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conflict, as well as allegorical portraits of saints that included the skull as a reminder of death (this practice finds its echoes later in works like Antonio de Pereda’s *Vanitas*). But even if Cervantes meant his character to live, at least in the first part, we can say that, following the rules that the narrative itself establishes, and using food to support them, the adventures were not meant to go on for a long period, because the protagonist was doing more than he could with his diet.

If in painting the treatment of decay and of the passing of time can be translated into objects that are represented with slight damages, in Cervantes’s writing the equivalent appears in the initial description of Alonso Quijano, and extends throughout the moments in which the characters or the narrator reflect on aging and on the deterioration suffered by Don Quixote in his quest. In this sense, a subplot that can be read in the novel is the competition between the gradual exhaustion of the hero and the efforts of his friends to get him back home to rest and eat properly. One of the outcomes of the tension between Don Quixote’s actions and his state of health is the surname Sancho chooses for him already in the first part: *el Caballero de la Triste Figura* (The Knight of the Sad Figure, or of the Sorrowful Face). Coincidentally, this name is used right after Don Quixote and Sancho encounter a funeral procession. The encounter ends in a battle between the knight and the men who were accompanying the dead body, with the victory of the former. Then Sancho tells one of the defeated:

–Si acaso quisieren saber esos señores quién ha sido el valeroso que tales los puso, diráles vuestra merced que es el famoso, que por otro nombre se llama el Caballero de la Triste Figura.

Con esto, se fue el bachiller; don Quijote preguntó a Sancho que qué le había movido a llamarle el Caballero de la Triste Figura, más entonces que nunca.

–Yo se lo diré –respondió Sancho–: porque le he estado mirando un rato a la luz de aquella hacha que lleva aquel malandante, y verdaderamente tiene vuestra merced la más mala figura, de poco acá, que jamás he visto; y débelo de haber causado, o ya el cansancio deste combate, o ya la falta de las muelas y dientes. [I, 19]
“If, by chance, those gentlemen would like to know who the valiant man is who
offended them, your grace can say that he is the famous Don Quixote of La
Mancha, also known as The Knight of the Sorrowful Face.”

At this the bachelor rode off, and Don Quixote asked Sancho what had
moved him to call him The Knight of the Sorrowful Face at that moment and at no other.
“I’ll tell you,” responded Sancho. “I was looking at you for a while in the light
of the torch that unlucky man was carrying, and the truth is that your grace has the
sorriest-looking face I’ve seen recently, and it must be on account of your weariness
after this battle, or the molars and teeth you’ve lost.”

As we can see, weakness is added to the lack of teeth, which indicates that, besides his vows
and intentions of being stoic, the knight has real difficulties in eating.

One of the advantages of approaching Don Quixote from a materialist point of view
is the possibility of relating text and context, and reconnecting the book with the conditions
of its production. In the case of Cervantes, it is possible to connect the reflections about
decay and death that are present in the novel with very specific circumstances of the author.
To do so, it is necessary to relate the consciousness about time in the novel to extra-narrative
time, the one that can be deduced from the writings of Cervantes and that gives some hints
about his lifetime. Even though biographic data about Cervantes is scarce, in between the
publishing of the two parts of Don Quixote there is a document written by Cervantes in
which he provides a specific detail about himself. As part of his prologue to the Novelas
ejemplares, Cervantes describes his portrait, and mentions these features: “. . . la boca
pequeña; los dientes, ni menudos ni crecidos, porque no tiene sino seis, y éstos mal
acondicionados y peor puestos, porque no tienen correspondencia los unos con los otros”17
[“. . . a small mouth, teeth not much to speak of, for he has but six, in bad condition and
worse placed, no two of them corresponding to each other”18]. Given the general health
situation of the period in which Cervantes lived, this description could not be the mark of
an exception for men of his age (the Novelas were published in 1613; Cervantes was probably

17 Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, Novelas ejemplares (Barcelona: Crítica, 2001), 16.

64 or 66 years old. Considering that the author had only six teeth left, in bad condition and the ones not corresponding to the others, it is reasonable to think that for him the mere activity of eating every day became a difficult experience. In addition to the physical difficulties he was facing with eating, Cervantes’s biographers, such as Jean Canavaggio and Melveena McKendrick, state that in his last years he was struggling on many levels with the problem of sustainment. Because of the tone of the same prologue, we know that Cervantes was not feeling comfortable with his status among poets and playwrights.

Therefore, we can say that in his last years Cervantes himself was facing the social dimension of the anxiety of belonging, since he was struggling to maintain his status both in the court and as a writer. The biographers add that he was having economic and family difficulties, and that his income was relatively low. If these concerns were as inescapable as the mentioned sources indicate, it is reasonable to think they would find their way into Cervantes’s fiction as well.

By the time of the publishing of Don Quixote and the Exemplary Novels, Miguel de Cervantes was considered an old man. He had tried to keep up with the court and its system of influences without complete success (in the first pages of Don Quixote he complains because he could not find an important person to write the prologue), and in the introductory texts of his books he seems tired of successive rejections. His access to food seems to have been difficult both because of limitations in the acquisition of foodstuffs due to his economic situation, and because of his lack of several teeth. Between the first and the

19 “... al cincuenta y cinco de los años gano por nueve más y por la mano” [“To the fifty-nine of years I win by nine and by the hand”], declares Cervantes (my translation). As explained before, at this point of his life Cervantes belongs to the exceptional group of people who surpassed the sixty years of age.

20 In the prologue he complains about the reception of his prologue to Don Quixote, and insists in his right to be called the first one to write novels in Spanish.

21 Different versions of Cervantes’s life suggest that in his youth he also faced the anxiety of having to prove his belonging to the Old Christian community, because the Cervantes seemed to have Converso ancestors in their family tree.
second part, then, a clearer consciousness of Cervantes's own decay and aging is added to the consciousness of the approach of Don Quixote's death. It is true that Cervantes's narrator declares by the end of the novel that one of the important reasons to let don Quixote die has to do with avoiding potential continuations such as the one by Avellaneda, but it is also true that Cervantes keeps insisting on the approach of death, a presence that is clear in the dedication of *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda*, where he declares to his protector, the Count of Lemos, that he has received the Holy Oil, the last sacrament in preparation for death. In the prologue to this book, Cervantes tells the story of his encounter with a young man to whom he confides his suffering from dropsy, and there we find food and death together again, because the student recommends that he eat and drink properly, and Cervantes answers that his life is coming to an end.

The purpose of this review has been to show that, in *Don Quixote*, consumption, specifically the consumption of food, becomes a process of production. It produces discourses, reflections, and actions, as well as points of contact with readers. It also points out some suggestions about the way the book itself is expected to be consumed, and through this, offers an approach to the logic of consumption in Cervantes's times. Consumption also produces a logic for the plot. The second part of this chapter is dedicated to exploring the implications of such a logic.

### 2.3. *Don Quixote*: Food and Plot Development

In Cervantes's writing, food and plot development are intimately linked. The connection is visible from the beginning, in the choice of the names of the main characters. *Quixote*, to begin, is a reference to the piece of the armor that covers the thigh, but it also

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22 Cervantes’s concerns with death, and especially with Purgatory have been studied by Henry W. Sullivan in *Grotesque Purgatory: A Study of Cervantes’s Don Quixote, Part II* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996).
has a resonance from the word **gigote**, that means a dish of diced meat, and whose origins can be traced to the word **gigot**, that in French designates the thigh of a lamb or kid cut in that way and dressed to be served as a meal. This similitude between words allows a humorous wordplay in *Don Quixote* I, 30, when a young woman called Dorotea—who pretends to be a damsel in peril to convince Don Quixote to go back home—calls the protagonist “Don Gigote.” The connection between both words is also proposed by Sebastián de Covarrubias in his *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española*:

Gigote. Es la carne asada y picada menudo, y particularmente la de la pierna del carnero, por ser más a propósito, a causa de la mucha pulpa que tiene. Es nombre francés, gigot, que vale pierna, conviene a saber la que es muslo en el hombre, y así pienso que la palabra quijotes, que son el armadura que cae sobre el muslo, está corrompida de gigotes, armadura de los muslos, como la de la rodilla abajo se llaman grebas. El diccionario latino gálico, en la palabra gigot, pone por ejemplo gigot, de mouton, coxa vervecis, pierna de carnero, y aunque lo que de ella se llama gigote, cuando se parte menudo se diga con propiedad, no por eso dejamos de llamar gigote la demás carne picada, como gigote de un pecho de un capón, o de una perdiz. *Addendum:* Con todo eso no desecho la etimología puesta en la palabra quixotes, quasi cujotes, a coxa que en italiano vale muslo, del latino coxa.

Gigote means roasted and minced meat, particularly the one from a lamb’s leg, which is appropriate given the amount of pulp it contains. It is a French name, gigot, which means leg, or a man’s thigh. Therefore I think that the word quijotes, which are the parts of the armor that cover the thigh, is a corruption from gigotes, the armor of the thigh, the same way that the parts that go below the knee are called grebas. The Gallic-Latin dictionary, in the word gigot, presents, for example, gigot, de mouton, coxa vervecis, a lamb’s thigh, and it is proper to call gigote what comes from it when it is minced, as it is when it comes from the breast of a capon or a patridge. *Addendum:* Nevertheless, I do not discard the etymology I gave in the word quixotes, quasi cujotes, a coxa, which in Italian means thigh, from the Latin coxa.

In the case of the name of *Don Quixote* there is a multilayered humorous construction: if taken in the sense of gigot, a lamb’s thigh, the name subtly animalizes the character; if taken

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in the sense of *cuxa*, a man’s thigh and, by extension, the piece of the armor that covers it, both the body part and the material object point to the lower parts of the body. According to Mikhail Bakhtin, in the Renaissance and still in the years when *Don Quixote* was written, the lower body is an object of artistic reflection. Being considered less noble than the upper body, since the latter contains the brain, the heart, the eyes and ears, all related with the superior functions of thinking, discerning, perceiving the world, and learning, the lower body allows writers to think in terms of *degradation*:

... in their purely bodily aspect ... the upper part is the face on the head and the lower part is the genital organs, the belly, and the buttocks. These absolute topographical connotations are used by grotesque realism, including medieval parody. Degradation here means coming down to earth, the contact with earth as an element that swallows up and gives birth at the same time ... To degrade also means to concern oneself with the lower stratum of the body, the life of the belly and the reproductive organs ...  

Metonymically, the thighs are located under the stomach, and close to the excretive and reproductive organs, so by calling the hero *Don Quixote* Cervantes degrades him, in the Bakhtinian sense of the word of bringing him closer to the earth and to the material world, and does so twice, by pointing toward the lower areas of the body and to their similitude to the ones of animals. Belonging to a social class is therefore problematized, because nobles are identified with the upper regions both of society and of the body (they constitute the head and limbs of the State), but Don Quixote’s self-created chivalric nobility is sustained in the lower regions.

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25 Carroll B. Johnson has elaborated on the sexual implications of this metonym, although he later proposes an alternate explanation related to Morisco garments: “In 1979, as Don Quijote was beginning to be viewed as a sexual being, John Weiger returned to the quixote as thigh-guard, noted the proximity of the thigh to the genital area, and drew the appropriate erotic-symbolic conclusions (35). I was happy to follow John’s insight in my own examination of Don Quijote’s sexuality in 1983, and I also identified Lanzarote as a sexual being, obsessively evoked in his adulterous affair with Queen Guinevere (68–71). In 1991, with sexuality now firmly established at the center of Don Quijote’s character, Alfredo Baras Escolá summarized the accumulated sexual associations to the name, and in addition pointed to the phallic lanza embedded in Lanzarote (82).” (Carroll B. Johnson, “Dressing Don Quijote,” 12).
The heroic personality of the protagonist is not the only one affected by this type of etymological word plays. In the first pages of the story, the narrator declares: “Quieren decir que tenía el sobrenombre de ‘Quijada’, o ‘Quesada’, que en esto hay alguna diferencia en los autores que de este caso escriben, aunque por conjeturas verísimiles se deja entender que se llamaba ‘Quijana’” [I, 1] [“Some claim that his family name was Quixada, or Quexada, for there is a certain amount of disagreement among the authors who write of this matter, although reliable conjecture seems to indicate that his name was Quexana”]. The first possibility, Quijada, means literally the lower jawbone, and by metonymy refers to the mouth and the function of eating and chewing. The process of degradation here is subtle, because even though the mouth is located in the upper part of the body, it is still related to the function of eating and digesting, that takes place in the lower half of the body, in the stomach. A reference to the jaw does not seem casual if we take into account that there are many passages (which will be discussed here and in the next chapters) in which Cervantes as an author, as well as the narrative voices he creates, focus on the difficulties for eating that result from the lack of teeth. The second possibility, Quesada, was the word used in the times of Cervantes for different kinds of pastries made with cheese, so once again we encounter a word that refers to something edible or related to ingestion. A few paragraphs further, when the narrator is telling the way Don Quixote chose his chivalric name, he stops to make this reflection: “. . . se vino a llamar ‘Don Quijote’; de donde, como queda dicho, tomaron ocasión los autores desta tan verdadera historia que sin duda se debía de llamar ‘Quijada’, y no ‘Quesada’, como otros quisieron decir.” [I, 1] [“. . . he called himself Don Quixote, which is why, as has been noted, the authors of this absolutely true history determined that he undoubtedly must have been named Quixada and not Quexada, as others have claimed.”]

26 Quesada originates the word quesadilla, the name of a dessert frequently found in the cookbooks by Francisco Martínez Montiño, Diego de Granado and Domingo Hernández de Maceras.
Although the *hidalgo*’s last name keeps evolving throughout the book until it is fixed as *Quijano* in the second part, here it is associated to the jawbone, so we have an overlapping of senses: the “gentleman of the jawbone,” which is used to eat and to connect the upper half of the body with the lower half, becomes the “knight of the thigh,” a thigh that points to the lower body, that assimilates a human body part to an animal body part, and that, in this sense, refers to a *gigot* that is meant to be eaten.

*Panza*, the last name of Sancho, is the word used to designate the stomach of an animal, especially cows, and colloquially is also the word to refer to a pronounced belly in a human being. The implications of this name have also been discussed by Bakhtin:

Sancho’s fat belly (*panza*), his appetite and thirst still convey a powerful carnivalesque spirit. His love of abundance and wealth have not, as yet, a basically private, egotistic and alienating character . . . In Cervantes’s images of food and drink there is still the spirit of popular banquets. Sancho’s materialism, his potbelly, appetite, his abundant defecation, are on the absolute lower level of grotesque realism of the gay bodily grave (belly, bowels, earth) . . .

In his reflection on *Don Quixote* Bakhtin uses these meanings to construct an opposition between the grotesque implications of Sancho’s surname and the idealism of his master, but this does not seem to be completely coherent with the procedures we have just seen through which Cervantes names his protagonist. It does not consider either some passages where Sancho shows contention even when faced with great amounts of food, as happens in the wedding of Camacho. Nonetheless, Bakhtin recognizes the semantic implications of naming the squire with the word that designates the stomach, and the influence this decision has in the actions of the character.

Another name related to the world of food and eating is the one of the “original” author of *Don Quixote*’s story in Arabic, Cide Hamete Benengeli. This name can be translated as *Sidi* (Sir or Master) Hamid Eggplant and, in fact, this is a word Sancho

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specifically uses in the second part as a “mistake” when he comes to realize that the
adventures of his master have been published.

—Yo te aseguro, Sancho —dijo don Quijote—, que debe de ser algún sabio encantador
el autor de nuestra historia; que a los tales no se les encubre nada de lo que quieren
escribir.
—Y cómo —dijo Sancho— si era sabio y encantador, pues, según dice el
bachiller Sansón Carrasco, que así se llama el que dicho tengo, que el autor de la
historia se llama Cide Hamete Berenjena!
—Ese nombre es de moro —respondió don Quijote.
—Así será —respondió Sancho—, porque por la mayor parte he oído decir que
los moros son amigos de berenjenas.
—Tú debes, Sancho —dijo don Quijote—, errarte en el sobrenombre de ese
Cide, que en arábigo quiere decir señor.’ ” [II, 2]

“I assure you, Sancho,” said Don Quixote, “that the author of our history must be
some wise enchanter, for nothing is hidden from them if they wish to write about
it.”

“Well,” said Sancho, “if he was wise and an enchanter, then how is it possible
(according to what Bachelor Sansón Carrasco says, for that’s the name of the person
I was telling you about) that the author of the history is named Cide Hamete
Berenjena?”

“That is a Moorish name,” responded Don Quixote.

“It must be,” responded Sancho, “because I’ve heard that most Moors are very
fond of eggplant.”

“You must be mistaken, Sancho,” said Don Quixote, “in the last name of this
Cide, which in Arabic means señor.”

Like the name of Don Quixote, that is further used for the joke of the “gigote,” the name of
Cide Hamete is picked up for this joke with eggplants. This suggests that Cervantes planned
the names of his characters to be suggestive, and that part of their comic effect was meant
to relate to foodstuffs and eating from the beginning.

The name of Dulcinea del Toboso follows the same pattern. It derives from the
adjective dulce (sweet), and is carefully picked by Don Quixote because he wants to convey
both the nobility and exquisiteness of his beloved. Outside the gentleman’s fantasy she’s
called Aldonza Lorenzo, but as the narrator explains, since the knight changes his status, so
does the lady of his thoughts. Once again, the name has a metonymical function, since
Dulcinea is named after a sensation perceived with the sense of taste, i.e. with the mouth,
and more precisely with the tongue and the palate. Moreover, as will be seen in chapter four, there seem to be specific reasons why Cervantes chooses to associate Dulcinea with the world of flavors.

The presence of names related to food in the novel already suggests that it is worth going beyond the contextual value of food (in other words, the function of food as a prop or as part of the scenery) to interrogate the text about the narrative principles to which the representation of food and eating is responding. As we have seen, the names of the characters have specific functions in the story, but there are more instances in which the representation of food consumption relates to plot development. Three of them are the most visible. First, food consumption can be read as a leitmotif that keeps the narration connected to the sphere that the characters call reality (La Mancha, with its houses, roads, and ventas); second, it can be followed throughout the story as an element of continuity; and, third, it can be identified as an element of variation and transformation through which the first part dialogues with the second part.

The function of food as a leitmotif is related to the principles of realism of Cervantes’s narrative project. The acts of eating and drinking operate as one among many marks of return to a level of “reality” that corresponds to an initial premise of the novel, found in the chapter where the priest and the barber review Alonso Quijano’s library. There, the priest comments about the chivalric novel Tirante el Blanco:

Dígoos verdad, señor compadre, que, por su estilo, es éste el mejor libro del mundo: aquí comen los caballeros, y duermen y mueren en sus camas, y hacen testamento antes de su muerte, con estas cosas de que todos los demás libros del género carecen. [I, 6]

I tell you the truth, my friend, when I say that because of its style, this is the best book in the world. In it knights eat, and sleep, and die in their beds, and make a will before they die, and do everything else that all the other books of this sort leave out.
If “the best book in the world” is a book with these characteristics, and the same milestones can be reached by Don Quixote, the episodes related to eating and drinking can be read as “checkpoints” for a major narrative project: composing a book that can be counted among the best because it departs from a world where food and drinks are necessary, explores different levels of existence (dreams, hallucinations, or staged tricks such as those plotted by the dukes) and comes back to the world that has been set as the starting point.

Food helps anchoring the story to reality also because what is represented are mainly foodstuffs consumed in everyday life. The characters in Don Quixote need to eat and drink because they are traveling through places that Cervantes describes with familiarity. Whenever we see Don Quixote eating and drinking common food with usual names, we agree with the narrator that the character is placed in a real context. Food is an element that is usually not altered even when Don Quixote is fantasizing. In his first sally, for example, he imagines a castle, he turns two prostitutes into damsels and the innkeeper into a lord, but when it comes to food, he sounds lucid, comparing the cod he is offered to currency and declaring, as he will frequently do, its importance for the strength of a knight:

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than beef, and kid, which is better than goat. But, in any case, bring it soon, for the
toil and weight of arms cannot be borne if one does not control the stomach.”

There are also many occasions in which the story is interrupted and comes back due
to the use of foodstuffs. Let us consider one of the “narrative problems” that can be found
in *Don Quixote*, especially in the first part: the insertion of short novels and parallel stories,
such as *El curioso impertinente*. As we can see in the second part of the novel, this “weakness”
was already a topic of discussion while Cervantes was alive:

–Una de las tachas que ponen a la tal historia –dijo el bachiller– es que su autor puso
en ella una novela intitulada *El curioso impertinente*, no por mala ni por mal razonada,
sino por no ser de aquel lugar, ni tiene que ver con la historia de su merced del señor
don Quijote.

–Yo apostaré –replicó Sancho– que ha mezclado el hi de perro berzas con
capachos. [II, 3]

“One of the objections people makes to the history,” said the bachelor, “is that its
author put into it a novel called *The Man Who Was Recklessly Curious*, not because it is
a bad novel or badly told, but because it is out of place and has nothing to do with
the history of his grace Señor Don Quixote.

“I’ll bet,” replied Sancho, “that the dogson mixed up apples and oranges.”

The novel of the *Curioso impertinente* is marked as the element of the narrative where the
reader almost loses track of the protagonist and his squire because it is autonomous enough
to be read as a separate piece. Successive annotators and editors of the novel have proven
that many of the difficulties and incoherences of the first part were mistakes of impression
and composition by the publisher, but the placing of the *Curioso impertinente* seems to obey a
conscious decision of Cervantes.

One of the most important functions of this novel is that it confers a more realistic
character to the main plot, since the reader can contrast the “fictional” character of the
novel within the story and the “real” world in which Don Quixote, Sancho, and all those
present in the *venta* live. Therefore, the moments in which the reading of the story are
interrupted contribute to the effect of realism, since these characters can stop reading
whenever something else is happening.
The presence of food and wine contributes to this effect. It is worth remembering that the novel of the *Curioso impertinente* appears when Don Quixote is asleep, which means that, for a moment, the focus of the narration leaves him to follow other characters, those who are traveling with him, and who take a break and decide to listen to the story. This time it is they and not Don Quixote who are being charmed by a book, and, ironically, it is Don Quixote’s literary dreams that bring them abruptly back to reality. The story is interrupted because they hear some noises coming from another room, and discover that Don Quixote, half-asleep and half-awake, is fighting several giants whose heads end up severed and bleeding red wine, because the gentleman has attacked some wineskins that the innkeeper has been saving for his business. This return to the main plot through wine implies a material problem for Don Quixote or those who are near him. The bleeding of the wineskins takes the reader back to the difficult question of how a knight errant sustains himself economically. It is a question that could only be asked where real food is being consumed, and real wine is being wasted.

Food-related episodes in *Don Quixote* create an effect of continuity through progression. In other words, the transformation of the main characters is accompanied by changes in their relationships with food. The fundamental progression has to do with Don Quixote’s diet: he decides to change his habits in order to become a knight, and he takes this principle as far as he can. Hence the penance in Sierra Morena and his constant exchanges with Sancho about eating just enough to survive. This logic changes a little when he learns he has gained name and recognition, because he allows himself to participate in banquets, but apart from these episodes, in which the narrator does not explain how much he eats, he
keeps his austere principles. An example is his advice to Sancho before he becomes the

governor of Barataria:\textsuperscript{28}

\begin{quote}
No comas ajos ni cebollas, porque no saquen por el olor tu villanería. . . . Come poco y cena más poco; que la salud de todo el cuerpo se fragua en la oficina del estomago. Sé templado en el beber, considerando que el vino demasiado ni guarda secreto, ni cumple palabra. Ten cuenta, Sancho, de no mascar a dos carrillos, ni de erutar delante de nadie. [II, 43]
\end{quote}

Do not eat garlic or onions lest their smell reveal your peasant origins. . . . Eat sparingly at midday and even less for supper, for the health of the entire body is forged in the workshop of the stomach. Be temperate in your drinking, remembering that too much wine cannot keep either a secret or a promise. Be careful, Sancho, not to chew with your mouth full or to eructate in front of anyone.

This passage allows us to discuss the way food also marks a progression for Sancho Panza. As Carolyn Nadeau has shown in her article “Critiquing the Elite in the Barataria and ‘Ricote’ episodes in \textit{Don Quixote II},” Sancho is the protagonist of many of the food episodes in the second part of the novel. He is the character we follow in the banquet at the failed wedding of Camacho; it is his extensive dialogue with Dr. Pedro Recio de Tirteafuera that we witness in Barataria, in which several dishes are being described (and taken apart before being consumed); and it is he who encounters the Morisco Ricote, a particular character who is defined by his consumption of food. Traditional approaches to \textit{Don Quixote} tended to outline the novel, and especially the second part, as a process through which the characters exchanged attributes, Don Quixote becoming more conscious of the real world, and Sancho becoming more idealistic. This idea is problematized when we read the food episodes, first because Don Quixote maintains his ideas of austerity during most of the story, and second because, as Nadeau explains, Sancho is a complex character whose relations with food change throughout the novel.

\textsuperscript{28} I owe to Dr. Francisco López-Martin an observation about the value of red meat in Don Quixote’s change of diet: even though we cannot say that he completely eliminates red meat, the way he reduces it seems to accompany his efforts of being an austere knight. Francisco López-Martín, personal communication. See also his “Representaciones del alimento en el Siglo de Oro,” M.A. Thesis (London, Ontario: The University of Western Ontario, 2003).
One of the main points Nadeau discusses is the stereotype of Sancho as a glutton. She demonstrates that, if we read *Don Quixote* carefully, Sancho shows a different behavior:

The exaggerated culinary moments that Sancho continually experiences seem all too appropriate in a world filled with superlative characters, serendipitous moments, and disparate events. Yet upon closer examination, Sancho's relationship with food is, in fact, one of the moderate, stabilizing components of the novel. His praise of the *olla podrida*, his table manners, his delicate use of the knife, and the respect he shows for exiles, foreigners, and their food, place Sancho with the noblemen for whom the etiquette manuals were written.

More than an “exchange” of personalities between don Quixote and Sancho, from the first to the second part of *Don Quixote* there is a clear change in the focus of the narration. For long periods we stop following Don Quixote and concentrate on his squire, and this happens mainly because Cervantes elects to keep the narration in the “real” world.

A third major function of the representation of food and of food-related episodes in *Don Quixote* is the introduction of variation, which in turn makes it possible for both parts of the novel to dialogue. Variation occurs when elements that were organized and presented in a certain way in the first part are reorganized and presented again in the second. This is one of the main effects to be analyzed in this study, because food plays an important part in the composition and recomposition of the scenes in which variation occurs.

In the first part, representation of food is dedicated to products that can be found in everyday life. Their role is to help identify the characters and their habits. When changes in dietary habits occur, as happens with Don Quixote, they are directly related to changes in the life of the protagonist. Penance, austerity, and a promise of not eating bread at table are the ideas proclaimed and defended by the knight. A principle is maintained: master and squire have different dietary regimes, and even though Sancho makes many comic remarks about

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the food of his master, he does not seem materially interested in changing his habits. What he wants is to be allowed to continue eating his usual food.

In the second part, these positions are rearranged. Both Don Quixote and Sancho attend banquets, and this time it is Sancho who becomes involuntarily tied to penance: three thousand and three hundred blows on his bare buttocks to “disenchant” Dulcinea. As we have seen in Camacho’s wedding, scarcity and austerity are replaced by hyperbolic descriptions, even though some of them are presented only for contemplation and not for indulgence. In episodes such as his banquet in Barataria, with the intervention of Dr. Pedro Recio de Tirteafuera, Sancho is confronted with his own desire to change status and diet. In general, in the second part relationships around food become more political, and there is more at stake when we see characters eating and drinking.

Besides the narrative functions of these resources, the episodes related to food in both parts of Don Quixote operate around progression and variation in the social sphere. The novel starts with an acknowledgment of the social situation and of the social relationships implied in the way characters access and consume food, and then moves towards a reflection on the limits of this differentiation. This reflection includes the consideration of alternatives to those structured relationships. The transition from hidalgo to caballero in Don Quixote is the case described with more detail, but many others emerge: this is the case of Sancho, who wants to become a squire or a governor and eat more and better, and of the Morisco Ricote, who wants to be recognized as Christian because he complies with the Christian criteria about eating and drinking.

2.4. The Pictorial Context of Food Consumption in Don Quixote

The last part of this chapter studies some parallels between the principles of representation of food described in Cervantes and those present in the works of specific
painters of the Spanish Golden Age. Several books and articles have already been devoted to the influence of painting in the language, images and visual models used by Cervantes and some of his contemporaries. More recently, specific contextual information leads Cervantes’s scholars to believe that, besides his travel to Italy around 1569, which still is considered the decisive artistic experience for him, he could also have been present in Madrid when Philip III opened the royal collections to be visited by local artists. Besides, it is known—and will be discussed later—that prints (estampas) inspired in Flemish and Italian paintings circulated in large amounts during the period in Spain, being used frequently as starting point for local works of art, so it is plausible to think that Cervantes had access to these inexpensive copies, especially if we take into account that he had to deal directly with printers, who produced, purchased, and sold these images as well. Moreover, as we have seen, Cervantes’s lifetime coincides with the moment in which still lifes were being consumed not only by nobles, but also by the same bourgeoisie that was benefiting from the trade with Flanders, and which imported to Spain both original works of art and estampas, among other products.

But even if we did not have this information, it is still true that Cervantes lived in a period of important changes in Spanish painting, changes that in turn imply transformations

30 See especially the works authored and edited by Frederick De Armas: Cervantes, Raphael and the Classics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), Ekphrasis in the Age of Cervantes (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2005), and Quixotic Frescoes: Cervantes and the Italian Renaissance Art (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006).

31 The possible influence of this event in the works of Cervantes has been proposed by Ana María Laguna in her book Cervantes and the Pictorial Imagination (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2009).


33 Besides the books mentioned, most of the information related to estampas has been provided by Prof. Javier Portús Pérez, with whom I had the opportunity to have an interview on May 6, 2011.
in different aspects of the Spanish kingdom. But to understand these changes, as well as the moment in which Cervantes wrote his works, it is necessary to cover events that take place before his birth and after his death. Jonathan Brown traces a timeline for Spanish painting between 1474 and 1700, and he divides this period in three broad phases, which are summarized here.\(^3^4\) The first period, that goes from 1474 to 1555, is marked by the physical presence and heavy influence of Italian and Flemish painters and paintings, especially after Charles V comes to the throne. For Brown, the most important painters of this moment are Alonso Berruguete and Pedro Machuca, but, as he explains, they later shift their activities to sculpture and architecture. The second phase goes from 1556 to 1630. The life and works of Miguel de Cervantes coincide with this period and with the reign of Philip II and Philip III. Not only does Philip II collect art from Italy and Flanders, but travels to both countries in his youth and learns from their art before becoming the king. As a result, he develops a policy of royal patronage, but this policy favors especially foreign painters, such as Titian and Antonis Mor. Nonetheless, in these years, as Brown points out, “in nearby Toledo, a small group of ecclesiastics and theologians was able to support the career of El Greco, a painter who did not conform to the prevailing taste in Castile and failed to find favor with the king.”\(^3^5\) Brown situates the golden age of seventeenth-century painting on a period that covers the reign of Philip III and the first decade of government of his son and successor Philip IV, due especially to the impulse of Philip III’s valido (favorite) and Prime Minister, the Duke of Lerma, who also brings to Spain the influence of a taste for Tuscan painting. These are the years in which many famous names of Spanish painting converge, such as Jusepe de Ribera and Francisco de Zurbarán. The third period, after Cervantes’s death, goes from 1631 to 1700, and covers the remainder of Philip IV’s reign, the succession of Charles II, and the


transition to the Bourbon dynasty. The weight of influence switches from Italy to the North, especially with the works of Peter Paul Rubens, collected by Philip IV. It is, in addition, the moment when important treatises on painting are written by two renowned artists: Vicente Carducho (Vincenzo Carducci) (*Diálogos de la pintura, su defensa, origen, essencia, definición, modos, y diferencias*, published in 1633) and Francisco Pacheco (*Arte de la pintura*, published posthumously in 1649, even though Pacheco scholars believe that he was working on different versions of it from 1611 onwards). By the end of this period, one of the noted names is Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, whose works seem to close the Habsburg cycle and influence. But in terms of fame and artistic quality, this third moment is especially the era of the most famous painter of the Spanish Golden Age, Diego Rodríguez de Silva y Velázquez, who works for Philip IV as pintor de cámara (chamber painter). Velázquez draws from the Italian and from the Northern influences and creates the personal style that is still the subject of many studies. Velázquez is also important because his first works in Seville, dedicated to kitchen scenes, coincide with the last years and the last writings of Miguel de Cervantes.

Following the life of Cervantes, this study focuses on the years of transition between the reigns of Philip II and of his son, Philip III. If we follow the previous outline, one of the most important practices that relates these monarchs and the artists is collecting, which brings us back to the realm of consumption. As we have seen with *Don Quixote*, seventeenth-century Spanish works of art in painting and writing frequently operate in two dimensions: they represent acts of consumption, but they also testify to their own consumption as goods with aesthetic and monetary value. It seems understandable, therefore, that in a moment when painting is acquiring artistic relevance and some economic value, it would become an important subject of reflection for the author of *Don Quixote*, especially considering that he

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36 See Bonaventura Bassegoda i Hugas’s introduction to Pacheco's *Arte de la pintura*, 43-46.
lived both in Toledo, where the trend of collecting still lifes seems to have started, and in Madrid, where this practice was being supported by Philip III’s Prime Minister, the Duke of Lerma.

As explained at the beginning of this chapter, Toledo appears related to Cervantes’s biography just around the years of preparation of *Don Quixote*: his biographers have established that he lived there in 1600, before the court moved to Valladolid. In fact, the voice of “Cervantes,” the narrator, declares in the first part of *Don Quixote* that he found the Arabic manuscript of the novel in the Alcaná of Toledo. The place and the circumstances of the finding are significant, first because Alcaná is the name of a street where many businesses were conducted, and second, because this detail situates the purchase of the manuscript of *Don Quixote* in the same city where the scene painted by Alejandro de Loarte in *The Poultry Vendor* takes place. This coincidence gives us an idea of the importance of Toledo in the economy of seventeenth-century Spain. Toledo is also important to understand the transformation of food consumption into art consumption, because the story of the Spanish still life, with its own names and trends, seems to have begun there:

. . . [The] early collectors were a small group of Toledan nobles, many of them intellectual members of the clergy at the Toledo cathedral, who continued a long tradition of advanced taste associated with that prestigious institution. By purchasing or commissioning still lifes for their private collections, two archbishops and other lay members of the Cathedral Chapter encouraged the bold experiment in still-life painting that artists from their own city initiated before 1590. Court inventories of the same period, from 1590 to 1630, reveal that nobles in Madrid and Valladolid were more conservative in their tastes, and did not admit the new genre as quickly. When they finally did, the evidence strongly suggests that the shift was due to the influence of the more progressive taste of the Toledan intellectuals.37

Around the years *Don Quixote* is conceived, written, and published, Spanish painters have begun to practice and theorize the art of still life. Two different practices lead to the birth of this new genre. One is the depiction of scenes of everyday life, especially in the kitchen and

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in small eateries. In fact, the name of these eateries baptizes the genre: *bodegón*. The second practice is the one of painting fruits, flowers and plants as naturally as possible, following a trend that is also emerging in other countries:

Artists of all eras have painted fruits and arrangements of objects and foodstuffs, but only as accessories in historical or religious depictions. Truly independent easel paintings of still lifes (*lienzo de frutas*) suddenly appeared about the same time in Spain, Italy, The Netherlands, and Germany. The simultaneous emergence of still life throughout Europe is still not completely explained; the discovery of and interest in ancient text, the fascination with the Italian tradition of the grotesque (festoons and swags of fruits, flowers, and birds), the challenge of illusionism, the growth of empirical science and natural history, the interest in creating and collecting secular subjects, and the embracing of an everyday experience as an alternative mode of expression all seem to have contributed to the development of the genre.38

The birth of the *bodegón* and the still life is complex because, in the canons of the period, depicting flowers and fruits is not considered as valuable as painting Biblical and epic scenes or portraits. Nevertheless, these works find their way into important collections and slowly create a demand, and with it, a specialized market.

It is difficult to prove any contact between Cervantes, the painters who were transforming still lifes into an autonomous genre, and the nobles and ecclesiastics who were collecting these works. His presence in Toledo and his successive attempts to enter the circles of the court suggest that he could have learned about this trend while staying in the city. In terms of works, however, some points of convergence can be observed. In Toledo, the pioneer of the still life genre is Juan Sánchez Cotán, a painter who later became a Carthusian monk. Like Cervantes, Sánchez Cotán chooses to represent in his works foodstuffs that are consumed locally, such as melons (an important produce of La Mancha), cardoons, and cabbages, but beyond coinciding in the object of representation, the writer and the painter have similar points of view in their approach to foodstuffs. For both, there is

a certain distance between the object and the beholder or consumer. The reasons for and
effects of this particular approach will be discussed in the next chapter.

From the early years of the seventeenth century also come the paintings by Jusepe de
Ribera, and although his works were mostly painted in Italy (where he was called “Lo
Spagnoletto,” “The Little Spaniard”), his choice of subjects suggests influences from both
Spanish painting and literature. Ribera introduces the theme of food in a traditional art
form: the allegory of the five senses. He chooses to represent them with human figures
captured in the act of seeing, smelling, touching, hearing or tasting, but instead of giving these
figures the traditional attributes of mythological characters, he depicts rustic, poor men with
humble clothes, whose faces and hands bear the marks of time and of work (figures 14-18).
All of them are painted in a half-length, standing behind a table that is shown in the
foreground. In all cases, there is something meaningful in the hands of the character, and on
the table as well. The sense of sight is represented by a man with a telescope that seems
fragile in his big hands, while on the table we see a mirror, a pair of glasses and their case,
and a hat with feathers, probably a sign of his occupation; the sense of touch is a blind man
with a wrinkled, bearded face, touching with his darkly tanned hands the white marble head
of a sculpture and turning his back slightly from a painting that rests on the table; the sense
of hearing—even though the original is missing, copies made on dates close enough to the
production of the original can be trusted—is a smiling man holding a lute and facing a music
book on the table; the sense of smell is a man in rags whose face is partially obscured by the
shadows of the room and by his hat, and whose hands hold an onion cut in half, while on
the table rest a whole onion, a head of garlic, and a fragile flower; and the sense of taste is a
gypsy man wearing an old shirt, holding in his right hand a glass full of wine and in the left
an uncorked bottle of the same liquid, while in front of him, on a rustic table, we can see a
dish of eels (one of them has fallen off the plate), a piece of bread and a paper cone from which some olives have spread.

Little is known about Ribera from his birth in Játiva (Valencia) in 1591 to his appearance in Rome twenty years later. However, recent scholarship considers that, among
his first works, the allegories of the five senses are the ones that can be more closely related to Ribera’s Spanish background and to the principles of representation of reality that guide Cervantes as well. Even though Ribera owes his explorations of realism in part to the influence of Caravaggio’s works, which were being admired and studied in Italy by the time he settled there, it seems reasonable to think that the realism visible in Spanish literature is an element to consider among the painter’s influences, especially in his early works, such as this series. In 1966, Roberto Longhi established that it could be dated on or before 1616, during Ribera’s first years in Italy, but further research indicates that the paintings may be linked to the painter’s life in Spain. Ribera scholar José Milicua affirms that the series was painted for a Spaniard patron, given that several copies of the pictures are preserved there. Milicua and other scholars date the paintings as soon as 1611. Whichever date is correct, the time frame given for the production of the series (1611-1616) coincides with the period when the second part of *Don Quixote* was being written. This detail justifies a comparative reading between these works, especially considering the similarities that can be found between the aesthetic projects of their creators. Regarding Ribera’s series, Milicua observes:

> The Five Senses are admirable both for their superb pictorial qualities and for their absolutely innovative iconographic treatment (apparently for the first time in European art, this traditional allegorical theme is resolved in a naturalistic key, with highly polemical accents, such as the onion cut in half instead of the flower to symbolize smell). They impress us with their elevation of ordinary people from the poor districts to protagonists who are captured with truthful individuality, expressing a range of moods and humors, from the heartbreaking pathos of the blind man to poverty borne with smiling unconcern. If any paintings are related to the picaresque

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40 José Milicua, “From Játiva to Naples,” in Alfonso E. Pérez Sánchez and Nicola Spinosa, *Jusepe de Ribera 1591-1652* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art/Harry N. Abrams, 1992), 14. Besides the temporal coincidence with Cervantes discussed here, Milicua suggests that also the young Diego de Velázquez could have seen either the original works or copies of them.
literature of the time, to the “taste of garlic and onions” (as Longhi said of a certain kind of Spanish painting), it is these. 41

Both Ribera and Cervantes refer to classic canons (allegories of the five senses in Ribera, chivalric archetypes in Cervantes), and both translate them into images of real men, not very young or especially good-looking. In Don Quixote, the protagonist’s clothing appears as limited as his diet (both are described at once, in the first pages of the novel). Throughout the novel he wears his old hidalgo clothes under the incomplete pieces of an ancient armor, and he seems very conscious of the deficiencies of his garments, especially in a passage of the second part when he is undressing himself and finds that the stitches of one of his stockings are loose and he cannot darn them. 42 Similarly, in Ribera’s paintings different degrees of poverty are signaled by worn-out clothing: the man in Smell (figure 17) is literally in rags, while the gypsy’s shirt in Taste (figure 18) does not look very clean and one of its cuffs is ripped.

Milicua notes that in some of the paintings the characters seem to be ironic considering what the viewer is contemplating, and this aesthetic decision also brings Ribera and Cervantes close to each other. As the Ribera scholar underlines, once again following Longhi, in these ironies food–people’s food–plays an important part. In Smell, onions are the theme of the composition while the flower is ostentatiously weakened; in Taste, the dish of eels on the table is closer to the ones to be found in ventas than in palaces. Thus what is emphasized in the paintings are the two same ingredients against which Sancho is warned by his master when he is about to switch status, from peasant to governor.

Such resources are also used by Sánchez Cotán. Using his technical skill, he chooses to render minute imperfections seen in real life on a cabbage leaf, on the skin of a quince, or

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41 Ibidem.

42 In the same passage [II, 43], Cervantes inserts a discourse on poverty by Cide Hamete Benengeli, in which he laments especially the behavior of the impoverished hidalgo, who try to cover their misery with appearances.
on the surface of a cut cantaloupe. As previously explained, Cervantes proceeds similarly when he portrays the gentleman of La Mancha and his squire emphasizing details about their clothing, habits and economic situation. On the one hand, the poverty and the anachronistic features of the protagonist are underlined by his very limited wardrobe, by the work of patching and darning the clothes have undergone, and by the rust and dirt that covers his incomplete armor. On the other hand, by description and by behavior, Sancho resembles the gypsy man in Ribera’s allegory of taste. They are both men who have pronounced bellies, hands shaped by work, and simple tastes at the table. The dish of eels, the olives and the piece of bread in Ribera’s painting convey a meaning about food preferences that agrees with Sancho’s attitude on the subject:

Bien se está San Pedro en Roma: quiero decir que bien se está cada uno usando el oficio para que fue nacido. Mejor me está a mí una hoz en la mano que un cetro de gobernador, más quiero hartarme de gazpachos que estar sujeto a la miseria de un médico impertinente que me mate de hambre, y más quiero recostarme a la sombra de una encina en el verano y arroparme con un zamaro de dos pelos en el invierno, en mi libertad, que acostarme con la sujeción del gobierno entre sábanas de holanda y vestirme de martas cebollinas. [II, 53]

St. Peter’s fine in Rome: I mean, each man is fine doing the work he was born for. I’m better off with a scythe in my hand than a governor’s scepter; I’d rather eat my fill of gazpacho than suffer the misery of a brazen doctor who starves me to death, and I’d rather lie down in the shade of an oak tree in summer and wrap myself in an old bald sheepskin in winter, in freedom, than lie between linen sheets and wear sables, subject to a governorship.

The fact that Ribera is producing a series of paintings about poor men and workers and going against tradition and the canon around the years Cervantes is writing the second part of his novel suggests a widespread influence of the principles of realism, as they appear in the Picaresque genre and in the first part of Don Quixote. What needs to be noticed is that the period between 1600 and 1615, which comprises the publication of both parts of the novel, seems to have been crucial for the establishment of this aesthetic trend in Spain. If, as
Milicua informs, Ribera’s painting style was completely reinvented when he arrived in Italy, what remains unaffected from his Spanish years seems to be the attention paid to those “garlic and onion eaters” that found their most representative figure in Sancho Panza.

The transition after the death of Philip II finds its echoes in visual art as much as it does in Cervantes’s writing, especially in the second part of Don Quixote. The still life genre undergoes transformations as paintings about foodstuffs acquire value for collectors. A Castilian artist of Flemish origin stands out among the many painters who dedicate time and practice to exploring the genre: Juan van der Hamen y León. During the reign of Philip III, van der Hamen’s paintings keep foodstuffs as subjects, but change the point of view about them. William B. Jordan explains the relationship between this transformation and the new reign:

The still life took hold of the public imagination in Madrid at the moment when conditions were right for it. The genre could have flourished only in an urban environment sufficiently sybaritic in its priorities to justify spending money on pictures of the pleasantries of affluence. Unlike North European cultures, where moralizing symbolism was often encoded into images of luxury, Spain’s, with its ubiquitous religious imagery, had no need of such sermons. Van der Hamen’s genius was to perceive that his fellow sybarites, especially those in the middle class, were ready for this and to structure his studio practice to capitalize on it.

Van der Hamen’s still lifes represent aspects of everyday life, but from the middle and upper classes. Some of his paintings, such as Plate with Bacon, Bread, and Wine (figure 19) still can be related to the diet of a rural hidalgo like Alonso Quijano, but others, for example the Great Fruit Bowl with Plates of Cakes and Sweets (figure 20; it has to be noted that both were painted around the same year, 1621) suggest already a level of wealth and elaborate taste that could

43 “It is in no way surprising that Ribera’s later production does not permit us to infer his first steps in painting. This is, in fact, frequently the case among the young foreign painters in Rome who converted to the naturalist novus ordo of Caravaggio. In that conversion, all signs of their former stylistic identities were considerably weakened or canceled out altogether. To cite a concrete example, this occurred to such significant French artists who were contemporaries of Lo Spagnoletto in Rome as Valentin and Simon Vouet.” José Milicua, “From Játiva to Naples,” 12.

44 William B. Jordan, Juan van der Hamen y León and the Court of Madrid (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2005), 73.
be hardly attainable by a rural gentleman. In the former, nobility is evoked by the delicate, thin wine goblet (probably from Venice), and in the latter, by the green glass and gold fancy mount of the fruit bowl, its decoration with plum branches and leaves, the exquisite manufacturing of the pastries, and, over all, the intricate display of skill of the painter who recreates these objects on his canvas. The wealth of the patron is, therefore, suggested in the painting through the value of the painting itself and through the value of the represented objects. Something similar occurs in *Don Quixote II*, in the figure of the dukes, who are explicitly presented as consumers of the book, since the degree of elaboration of their pranks comes from their possession and detailed knowledge of the printed first part of *Don Quixote*.

Figure 19. Juan van der Hamen y León, *Plate with Bacon, Bread, and Wine*, about 1621, oil on canvas remounted on wood, 37 x 43 cm, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels.

Figure 20. Juan van der Hamen y León, *Great Fruit Bowl with Plates of Cakes and Sweets*, about 1621, oil on canvas, 84 x 104 cm, Banco de España Collection (P.69), Madrid.

While this is the path the still life follows in the court of Madrid, a young Sevillian painter who competes with van der Hamen for the favor of the king and the nobles is exploring the depiction of eateries (*bodegones*) and kitchens. His name is Diego de Velázquez, and the years of the reign of Philip III are the years of his apprenticeship. The works of this period are close to Ribera’s approach to the representation of food and people eating.
Velázquez’s *Two Men at a Table* (figure 21), *The Luncheon* (figure 22), and *Old Woman Frying Eggs* (figure 23), all of them painted before 1620, have been frequently related to the Picaresque tradition. In these and other paintings, Velázquez practices the technique of depicting different surfaces and textures, for which tables, utensils, and foodstuffs are especially suitable. The painter uses his skills and accuracy in a way that differs from van der Hamen’s style. He applies them especially to details in two paintings that will be discussed in chapter 4: *Kitchen Scene with the Supper at Emmaus* (around 1617), and *Christ in the House of Martha and Mary* (painted between 1618 and 1620). Both are kitchen scenes in which a servant is working, and in both paintings, a small frame circumscribes another scene. In the first painting, as indicated by the title, the subject of the painting within the painting is the supper of the resurrected Christ with his disciples at Emmaus. In the second one, Christ talks to the two sisters of Lazarus, but the painter also takes the opportunity to direct his viewer’s attention to a small white pot over a plate, introducing in this way a still life within the miniature.

![Image of Two Men at a Table](https://example.com/image)

Figure 21. Diego Rodríguez de Silva y Velázquez, *Two Men at a Table*, oil on canvas, Wellington Museum, London.
Figure 22. Diego Rodríguez de Silva y Velázquez, *The Lunch*, Ermitage Museum, Leningrad.

Figure 23. Diego Rodríguez de Silva y Velázquez, *An Old Woman Frying Eggs*, 1618, oil on canvas, 99 x 128 cm, National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh.
As far as it is known, Cervantes did not live to see the works of Velázquez in Seville or Madrid, but it is possible that the young painter read or at least heard of *Don Quixote* when he arrived to the court in 1622. Diego de Velázquez did not go further in the exploration of the still life by itself in his mature years, but throughout his work he maintained the same level of attention to detail when representing utensils and foodstuffs. One of the legacies from the generation of Cervantes that is perceptible both in the young and in the maturing Velázquez, and that also links his painting to the early works of Ribera in Italy is the depiction of people from the lower classes. An act of recognition of their presence and value for the kingdom is the crowning of a soldier by the god Bacchus in *Los Borrachos*, in which we can also see the faces of characters that could fit in a picaresque novel.

Cervantes’s personal interest in art, as well as his coincidence in time and places with the birth of the Spanish still life lead us to read *Don Quixote’s* references to food in a new light. Food and eating are brought forward in visual art and in Cervantes’s writing as an affirmation of the consciousness of the creators about the conditions in which their works will be consumed. Consumption is expected while at the same time it is questioned. If real food consumes part of one’s income, as stated at the beginning of *Don Quixote*, the consumption of represented food in books or paintings is, depending on the amount of income, either a payable excess or an extra effort, but in any case a new type of need to consume, associated with prestige. The creators seem to share some intuitions about the fact that the object of this need is painted food or written food. By way of celebration or of irony, they seem to understand that foodstuffs need to be reconsidered. Many of them choose to work on this reconsideration by representing scenes that take place away from the table of the nobles, even when they know that it is the nobles who consume the paintings. The dynamics of these representations generate ambiguous literary discourses and images,
which expose desires, resentments, hidden needs, and anxieties. A concentration of these manifestations takes place in the early years of the seventeenth century, the years of Don Quixote, and it is from this point of view, one that implies the authors and the readers as subjects of those demands and responses, that we can return to the discussion of the relationship between “food episodes” and painting.
3. The Problem of Precedence

During one of the banquets with the dukes in the second part of *Don Quixote*, Sancho observes an exchange of attentions between the dukes and his master. The dukes insist that the knight occupy the head of the table, and he accepts. Suddenly, Sancho laughs, surprising them, and when asked, he says he has been reminded of a story. Amused, the dukes ask him to tell his tale, and Sancho does so. A *hidalgo*, he says, had invited a peasant to eat at his house. A conflict arose when they had to decide who presided over the meal, because the *hidalgo* was the host, but since the peasant was the guest, custom dictated he should do the honors. After some struggle, this was the solution:

—Digo, así—dijo Sancho—, que estando, como he dicho, los dos para sentarse a la mesa, el labrador porfiaba con el hidalgo que tomase la cabecera de la mesa, y el hidalgo porfiaba también que el labrador la tomase, porque en su casa se había de hacer lo que él mandase; pero el labrador, que presumía de cortés y bien criado, jamás quiso, hasta que el hidalgo, mohíno, poniéndole ambas manos sobre los hombros, le hizo sentar por fuerza, diciéndole: “Sentaos, majagranzas, que adondequiera que yo me siente será vuestra cabecera”. Y este es el cuento, y en verdad que creo que no ha sido aquí traído fuera de propósito. [II, 31]

“And so I say,” said Sancho, “that like I said, when the two of them were going to sit down at the table, the farmer insisted that the nobleman should sit at the head of the table, and the nobleman also insisted that the farmer should sit there because in his house his orders had to be followed; but the farmer, who was proud of his courtesy and manners, refused to do it, until the nobleman became angry, and putting both hands on his shoulders, he forced him to sit down, saying:

‘Sit down, you imbecile; wherever I sit will be the head of the table for you.’
And that’s my story, and I don’t believe it was out of place here.”

Many layers of meaning operate in the scene. The comic effect has been prepared by the way Sancho tells the story before arriving at the passage presented here. What he does is start the story and then wander away, adding details that make his master impatient. Then Sancho gets to the point, surprising his master and the dukes with the uncomfortable ending. Don Quixote reacts with shame, and the dukes, who take the story as a joke, change the subject to rescue him from humiliation. To understand the reasons for Don Quixote’s
reaction, we should remember that Sancho tells the story while sitting at the dukes’ table, where it is Don Quixote who has been invited to sit at the head, so his (and Cervantes’s) choice of the anecdote to be told is oriented to let the readers perceive the analogy between the two situations. Both the narrator and Sancho explicitly declare that the squire has remembered the anecdote because of the way his master is being treated by the dukes. In the story, the equation goes against Don Quixote: Don Quixote is presented as inferior to the dukes the same way the rustic farmer is inferior to the *hidalgo*. The gentleman, who has been seen in the role of the master because he has been paired with Sancho throughout the book, suddenly turns into the servant, and into the country man whose manners are pompous but inadequate.

With his story, Sancho makes the social aspect of the anxiety of belonging visible, because the problem of the place at the table translates the complexities of the social scale in the times of Cervantes. As we saw in chapter 1, the figure of the *hidalgo* is the weak link of the chain. On one end, Sancho himself shows he is used to serving and to showing respect for those who are higher than him in society. Since there is not too much to lose for him, he can become for a moment the critical observer of what is going on around him. On the other end, the dukes are very conscious of their power and the respect that is due to them. That is why they can let Sancho tell his story. They can also have fun with Don Quixote because the gentleman is obliged to them by principles of respect, hospitality, and class, so he cannot escape and has to endure the story to the end.

The focus of this comic moment is placed, albeit negatively, on the figure of the *hidalgo* and his relations with power. In material terms, the *hidalgo* Alonso Quijano is subordinated to those who are wealthier and higher in nobility. The dukes belong to the specific group in which material wealth and social status are proportionally related. Their symbolic place at the table, underlined by Sancho’s story, reinforces this social organization.
Don Quixote is reminded of his place in society when he is not Don Quixote. That is why he is the only one at the table who does not laugh after the story is told, and feels ashamed. He is the subject of anxiety.

The discomfort and strangeness experienced by this gentleman turned knight reappears in different moments of the novel, and very frequently is related to situations that involve food. In several of these cases, the need to affirm and reaffirm precedence comes to the surface. Continuously, characters are driven either to preside over a meal, or to occupy a determined place at the table. Sometimes this implies leaving space for an authority, even if it is not present. The table becomes the privileged space in which power and status struggles are revealed. What is particular about Don Quixote is the way this practice is presented and described, and the responses Cervantes’s characters offer to their readers.

In this context, and for the purposes of this chapter, I privilege the use of the term “precedence” because it conveys simultaneously the senses of place at the table, authority, and status. In his Tesoro de la lengua castellana, Sebastián de Covarrubias explains that precedencia (precedence) comes from the verb preceder (to precede), which he defines in these terms: “Ir delante a los demás, del latino praecedere: y de allí precedencia, precedente: como capítulo precedente . . .” [[1]](#footnote1) (“To go ahead of others, from the Latin word praecedere, which is the root of precedence and precedent”). This entry indicates that the word was in use in Spain during the seventeenth century, and this information is confirmed and complemented by historical research in the Oxford English Dictionary, which provides the following definition as the second entry related to the word precedence: “The fact of being above or ahead of another or others in order, rank, or importance; superiority; the foremost place, pre-eminence”.[2] This

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1 Sebastián de Covarrubias y Orozco, Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española, 1373.

entry gives as the first appearances of the word in English *Holinsbed’s Chronicle*, by Abraham Fleming et al., from 1587, the *Miscellanies of the Scottish History Society*, from 1610, and the play *Regulus*, by John Crowne, from 1694. I underline these dates to show that the term “precedence” also began to appear in written English around the years of the creation of *Don Quixote*. Not only was it registered in England, but in different points of Europe, as we can see in the same entry. Adding to the previous definition, the dictionary explains that the word is also used in the following sense:

The right of preceding others in ceremonies and social formalities; the fact of occupying the highest or a higher position in an assembly or procession; [hence] the order to be ceremonially observed by people of different rank, according to an acknowledged or legally determined system.3

In this case, the first appearance of the word is found in John Florio’s *Worde of Wordes* (his Italian-English dictionary) from 1598, which records the use of the word in Italy. The next record, from an English document entitled “The Copie of a Booke of Precedence of all estates and playcinge to ther degrees,” comes from 1600, a date even closer to the publishing of *Don Quixote*, and a third one is found in Charles Cotton’s translation of Guillaume Girard’s *History of the Life of the Duke of Espernon*, from 1670, which attests the use of “precedence” in France.

Precedence, therefore, is a matter of reflection in the European courts. Given the ceremonial character of precedence, meals become occasions for the enforcement of such conventions. Margaret Visser writes extensively about precedence at the table in her book *The Rituals of Dinner*. In the third chapter, she explains the political implications of organizing— and of not organizing—the participants in a meal according to hierarchy, contrasting the uses of the Middle Ages with those of the Renaissance:

Hierarchy at dinner is usually enforced when a group comes from a mixture of social backgrounds. We hear a good deal about what seems to us the outrageously

3 Ibidem.
discriminatory at medieval banquets. (One source of frustration for the scholars who research the history of medieval food is that the texts of the period—and the Middle Ages are not unique in this—seldom describe the food served at a banquet in any detail; but they do make clear everything to do with precedence in the seating arrangements. This is because food was regarded as beneath literary consideration, whereas the seating was fascinating enough to be recorded.) Special guests and the hosts of the banquet sat at the raised “high table,” upon which stood a huge silver salt cellar, marking the place of the host or of an outstandingly important guest; the other people sat therefore “below the salt,” and the further away from it the lower. The high-ups were deliberately given better food, and more of it.

Seventeenth- and eighteenth century aristocrats in Europe, on the other hand, increasingly ate together in small groups, and would not hear of hierarchical seating; their hosts decided who would be a compatible group to invite, and guests sat down near the people they preferred. Tables were often quite small and, significantly, round. What had in fact happened at these “intimate suppers” was that the people who sat “below the salt” had simply been banished from the party.  

This description brings us back to the story told by Sancho when he and his master are sitting at the dukes’ table. The question of who deserves the place at the head of the table had already appeared in the episode of the goatherds from the first part, it reappears in several occasions throughout the second part, and also in other works by Cervantes. The passages discussed in this chapter explore the implications of precedence, in the sense of place at the table, both when hierarchy is indeed established—as happens with Don Quixote, Sancho, and the dukes—and when the boundaries are apparently ignored or fade to allow members of different social groups at the table. In both cases, the anxiety of belonging plays a part in the relationship between subjects. It usually does not show when subjects are completely excluded, because they are not part of the scene. More frequently, different degrees of anxiety emerge when subjects face a situation that seems incoherent, either because they believed they were entitled to participating in a symbolic meal but are rejected, or because the circumstances in which they are invited to the symbolic table situate them in unexpected places, like the one in which Don Quixote finds himself during the dinner with the dukes. Painting, in this discussion, shows the visual correlation of these rules, especially

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4 Margaret Visser, The Rituals of Dinner, 122.
when it comes to establish the identity of the host as a wealthy person, i.e., in position of economic power. I depart from the idea that even when there is a conscious attempt to surpass the boundaries established by power and authority, different mechanisms operate to retrace them, coming both from the group that supposedly holds the power, and from those who are subjected to it. That is why at some points I refer to a “need of precedence,” in the sense of an impulse of those participating in a symbolic meal to reconstruct these structures of authority by assigning a character the role of presiding over the event.

3.1. The Dialogue Between Babieca and Rocinante

*Don Quixote* opens with a series of poems written by imaginary poets. The last piece before the narration begins is a dialogue, written as a sonnet, between Babieca, El Cid’s warhorse, and Rocinante, Don Quixote’s humble nag. Eating is the main issue at stake:

Diálogo entre Babieca y Rocinante

*Soneto*

B. ¿Cómo estáis, Rocinante, tan delgado?
R. Porque nunca se come, y se trabaja.
B. Pues ¿qué es de la cebada y de la paja?
R. No me deja mi amo ni un bocado.
B. Andá, señor, que estáis muy mal criado
   pues vuestra lengua de asno al amo ultraja.
R. Ásno se es de la cuna a la mortaja.
   ¿Queréislo ver? Miraldo enamorado.
B. ¿Es necedad amar?
R. No es gran prudencia.
B. Metafísico estáis.
R. Es que no como.
B. Quejaos del escudero.
R. No es bastante.
   ¿Cómo me he de quejar en mi dolencia,
   si el amo y escudero o mayordomo
   son tan rocines como Rocinante?

Dialogue between Babieca and Rocinante

*A Sonnet*
B. Why is it, Rocinante, that you’re so thin?
R. Too little food, and far too much hard labor.
B. But what about your feed, your oats and hay?
R. My master doesn’t leave a bite for me.
B. Well, Señor, your lack of breeding shows
    because your ass’s tongue insults your master.
R. He’s the ass, from the cradle to the grave.
    Do you want proof? See what he does for love.
B. Is it foolish to love?                    R. It’s not too smart.
B. You’re a philosopher.                  R. I just don’t eat.
B. And do you complain of the squire?    R. Not enough.
    How can I complain despite my aches and pains
if master and squire, or is it majordomo,
are nothing but skin and bone, like Rocinante?

What is immediately perceivable in the poem is the tension between superiors and inferiors we have seen in Sancho’s story about the *hidalgo*, the peasant, and the head of the table. Following the logic of precedence, even the animals in the dialogue are presented standing on different levels. Babieca, the real horse of a real knight, interrogates the working horse of a rural *hidalgo* who still belongs to the nobility but does not have many resources. The dialogue focuses on the relationship between the master and the squire, the squire and the nag, the nag and the horse who interrogates him, on the one hand, and, on the other, between the nag and the metaphorical ass that is mentioned. Differences of status are marked constantly, since Babieca reprimands Rocinante when he complains about his master. By correcting the nag, the warhorse presents himself as a superior to the reprimanded. Rocinante is progressively placed lower and lower in the scale: under the power of his master, of the squire who is supposed to feed him, and under the authority of Babieca, who is the paradigm of strength and loyalty. No questions are asked by Rocinante about the relationship between Babieca and his own master. The text itself tells us that this relationship is meant to be considered a paradigm of respect, submission, and manners, since Babieca underlines Rocinante’s insults against his master, singling them out as an exception to an implicit norm, and as a proof of lack of breeding.
The social aspect of precedence is already introduced in this poem, since we see Babieca use constant reminders of the exact place each one occupies in society. El Cid’s horse, just like the hidalgo in Sancho’s story, seems only to be capable of seeing the world in terms of immutable status and of respect due to superiors. Following the terms of Sancho’s tale, for Babieca it is clear that there must be a “head of the table,” and it is also clear for him who has to take that place. Rocinante’s answers show that there are two difficulties in following this way of thinking: first, it does not solve the basic problem of his hunger, and second, in his opinion the master and the squire are not too different from him, since they are all equally weak or equally stubborn, depending on the interpretation the reader wants to give to the word rocines, placed at the last verse precisely to leave the meanings open and create a humorous reflection about the book and its characters. The fact is that hunger, mixed with the question of hierarchies, animates Rocinante’s irony.

In the dialogue/poem, the physical aspect of Rocinante catches the healthier horse’s attention, and the immediate response introduces the problem of lack of food. Rocinante refers to his master, but the dialogue changes subject before we can ask ourselves why this master does not have the means to feed his beast. If we consider the literary works mentioned in chapter 1, as well as Covarrubias’s references to hidalgos, we can understand that mentioning these causes was not necessary. The readers may have understood that it was an innuendo related to the precarious economic situation of this social class. This situation, in turn, was part of a bigger crisis. In Cervantes’s lifetime up to the point when he wrote the first part of Don Quixote, besides a more or less constant problem of hunger in different areas of the Peninsula, Spain had faced three moments of bankruptcy, in 1557, 1575, and 1596, and the author was going to witness one more in 1607. He also witnessed the great plague of 1599-1600 in Castile. See J.H. Elliott, Imperial Spain, chapters 5-8.
metaphysical illness, more related to love, and we only reencounter a connection between the situation of the master, the squire, and the horse in the last line, where they are all equated to nags, in other words, old, sick, or weak.

Lack of food, breeding, status, and health are attributed to Rocinante, but according to Babieca he is not supposed to complain about his master. As he points out in the second line of the poem, he is expected to work, but the position of Rocinante regarding work is significant if we take into account that in his life before the chivalric enterprise of his master he was the horse of a hidalgo, and after the first sally he becomes the supposed horse of a knight. In seventeenth-century Spain, social conventions prevented hidalgos from working with their hands in any kind of manual activity. In this context, Rocinante is expected to serve Alonso Quijano and do the heavy work for him, at least transporting him from a place to another.6

In the sonnet, Rocinante declares that he works and implies that so does the squire, who is also called majordomo.7 And workers need to be compensated with food. The dialogue establishes a problem of remuneration that skips money and reaches nurturing directly. Not eating and working too much is shown as another imbalance or exception that leads to a thin and weak shape. The expectation, from Rocinante’s point of view, seems to be

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6 The other reference to Rocinante’s tasks before the first sally is the mention of a mozo, in the first chapter of Don Quixote, in charge both of pruning and of “saddling up the nag,” which means that Rocinante was a horse primarily used for riding.

7 Carroll B. Johnson explains that Sancho follows Don Quixote in part due to a confusion between the chivalric meaning of squire, which is the one Don Quixote is using, and the use of the word in seventeenth-century Spain, which is the same used in the third chapter of Lazarillo de Tormes when he says he worked for a squire: “The traditional basic fighting unit composed of a knight and his escudero (literally ‘shield bearer’) had been rendered obsolete by the evolution of warfare. One possibility for those escuderos whose function within the economy of medieval warfare had disappeared, and who couldn’t live off what their land could produce, was a kind of updated version of their traditional role of service to a caballero (knight). During the sixteenth century many caballeros . . . were moving from the country into the city, where they used the income from their country property to maintain a townhouse (or palace) and as lavish a lifestyle as they could afford. They needed servants to supervise the other servants in their households, so some escuderos were able to enter the service of caballeros and other aristocrats in the new urban setting.” Cervantes and the Material World (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 3. Even with its difficulties and challenges, the perspective of becoming escudero in this sense of the word is an opportunity for Sancho to improve his social status.
an amount of food that compensates him for his work, and he is not receiving it. The problem is that there does not seem to be an authority to whom to present the complaint. Doing so with the squire is not enough, and going to the master does not promise better results because, as Rocinante observes, they are both in a similar situation. Our extra-literary knowledge of the previously mentioned bankruptcies tells us that the problem of remuneration was not better solved on the higher levels of Spanish society. In such a situation, Rocinante’s following the path of reflection and irony is understandable.

Francisco Rico has explained one of the many senses of the word “metaphysical” in the dialogue. Approaching the situation from the point of view of humor, Rico suggests that Rocinante is meta-physical: since he lacks physical shape and material nurturing, he is virtually an abstraction. In Edith Grossman’s translation of Don Quixote to English the word has been replaced with “philosopher,” and in the times of Cervantes both terms may have worked as equivalents. To these senses we have to add the metaphysical implications of the concept of desengaño. Howard Mancing offers this definition:

The theme of desengaño, recognizing reality and coming to terms with God, yourself, and the world in general, was a popular one in Spanish Golden Age literature. Perhaps the single most famous example is that of Segismundo in the final act of Calderón’s La vida es sueño. The ideal was to achieve a state of desengaño before death in order to pave the way to paradise in the afterlife. On his deathbed, [Don Quixote] renounces the romances of chivalry, proclaims a state of desengaño, and wishes he had more time to read books that might be a light to his soul.

The principle of desengaño suggests that the physical world is to be left aside, to focus on spiritual growth and the final joys of heaven, after death. Through desengaño we can think that

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8 Remuneration, especially of the troops, represented a major problem for Philip II’s administration. The demands of the soldiers meant the multiplication by thousands of the complaint stated by Rocinante about not eating and working, and they would translate sometimes in extreme and violent measures. The sack of Antwerp, in 1576, is one of the best known examples of this type of reaction, in which Spanish troops decided to pay themselves with what they could find valuable in the city.

9 See Francisco Rico’s notes to Don Quixote (Barcelona: Crítica / Instituto Cervantes, 1998), p. 34, note 3.

Rocinante is being forced by the circumstances to live a life that is more ascetic than the one he would desire. In this sense, he finds himself in the same position as the picaresque heroes, meditating about hunger even when it is not self-imposed as penitence. Humor works on this level as well, because the down-to-earth answer of Rocinante to the attribution of philosophical knowledge by Babieca suggests that it is easy to become a philosopher when there is no food around.

Love is attacked from the same point of view. In Rocinante’s opinion, the master leaves his duties unattended because of love, and by doing so he acts like an ass. The connection of ideas works by a sudden association. Babieca compares Rocinante to an ass while reproaching him for his complaints, but instead of showing directly why it is useless to try to complain either with Don Quixote or Sancho, Rocinante chooses the example of love. In a space of fourteen lines, the hidalgo/knight is equated two times to an animal, first to an ass, in lines 7-8, and then to a nag, along with Sancho, in line 14. In these comparisons we can perceive some expectations from the horse. In his best interest, Don Quixote should not act like a love fool nor like a horse (like Rocinante himself). In his practical approach, his master should simply get him food.

In the light of the novel that is about to begin, the introduction of food, of work, and of a remuneration in this initial poem becomes an early intervention in the logic of the chivalric novels in which, by contrast, heroes were expected to act for honor’s sake and their squires served because they were learning how to be knights. In Babieca’s discourse we perceive the social demands that asked hidalgos to maintain status in spite of the lack of food or money, and that kept the non-noble away from the sources of wealth and nurturing. From Rocinante’s responses, we can deduce the social expectations for the social class of hidalgos and the limitations that made it very difficult for them to connect their social status with real access to material wealth.
3.2. Sánchez Cotán and the “Mysterious Character of the Commodity-Form”

The symptoms of crisis perceived by Rocinante and his complaints about becoming metaphysical without asking for it appear in other artistic expressions. In a study dedicated to the works of Juan Sánchez Cotán, Norman Bryson appeals to a significant word: anorexia.

Bryson explains:

> The relation proposed in Cotán between the viewer and the foodstuffs so meticulously displayed seems to involve, paradoxically, no reference to appetite or to the function of sustenance, which becomes coincidental; it might be described as anorexic, taking this word in its literal and Greek sense as meaning ‘without desire’. . . . Absent from Cotán’s work is any conception of nourishment as involving the conviviality of the meal—the sharing of hospitality of the antique xenia. The unvarying stage of his paintings is never the kitchen but always the cantarero, a cooling-space where for preservation the foods are often hung on strings ( piled together, or in contact with a surface, they would decay more quickly). Placed in a kitchen, next to plates and knives, bowls and pitchers, the objects would inevitably point towards their consumption at table, but the cantarero maintains the idea of the objects as separable from, dissociated from, their function as food. In Quince, Cabbage, Melon and Cucumber . . . no-one can touch the suspended quince or cabbage without disturbing them and setting them rocking in space: their motionlessness is the mark of human absence, distance from the hand that reaches to eat; and it renders them immaculate. Hanging on strings, the quince and the cabbage lack the weight known to the hand. Their weightlessness disowns such intimate knowledge. Having none of the familiarity that comes from touch, and divorced from the idea of consumption, the objects take on a value that is nothing to do with their rôle as nourishment.¹¹

If we follow Bryson’s argument, we can conclude that in *Still Life with Quince, Cabbage, Melon, and Cucumber* (figure 24) and other paintings, Sánchez Cotán seems to complement the scenario described by Rocinante. In one case, there are subjects who don’t eat; in the other, there are foodstuffs that are not being eaten: they have been captured in a particular moment that suspends action (and, in consequence, narrative), and placed before the eyes for contemplation.

In this sense, Sánchez Cotán’s painting adds new meanings to the lines of the dialogue: “B. Metafísico estáis / R. Es que no como,” implying that it is possible to achieve some degree of metaphysical knowledge by non-eating. This knowledge, according to Emilio Orozco Díaz, is related to the spiritual life both of the painter and of his audience. Orozco’s ideas lead to similar conclusions as the ones by Bryson:

. . . el pintor tenderá a suprimir de sus bodegones lo artificial, los objetos o cosas donde la mano del hombre se ha superpuesto a la del Creador. Y estos elementos naturales, por otra parte, al perfilarse, pendientes o en el borde de una ventana, sobre un fondo negro, parecen querer sugerir que surgiendo de la nada se asoman a nuestro mundo para que los contemplemos.  

. . . the painter will tend to suppress from his bodegones all that is artificial, the objects or things in which the hand of the man has been superimposed over that of the Creator. And these natural elements, on the other hand, by being brought out as they hang or are placed on the rim of a window, against a dark background, seem to

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suggest that, emerging from nothingness, they approach our world for us to contemplate them.

Moreover, in Orozco’s eyes, the representation of foodstuffs by themselves is a proof of monastic discipline in this and other paintings, such as the Bodegón del cardo (figure 25):

. . . las zanahorias y cardos, pintados con todo el amor y respeto que merece una criatura de Dios, estimularían . . . al monje sentado a la mesa, a gustar y hasta saborear aquellos trozos de verdura que tenía ante sí en su pobre escudilla, invitándole a la moderación y a la abstinencia.\textsuperscript{13}

. . . carrots and cardoons, painted with all the love and respect that God’s creation deserves, would stimulate . . . the monk sitting at the table to taste and even savor those vegetables he had before him, in his poor bowl, inviting him to moderation and abstinence.

But the type of contemplation presented in the painting does not only relate to religion. As explained in chapter one, it is important to consider it also from the point of view of an artistic challenge. Javier Portús explains:

\textsuperscript{13} Orozco Díaz, “Realismo y religiosidad en la pintura de Sánchez Cotán,” 78.
pensando en Sánchez Cotán, me cuesta creer que lo que está haciendo es una representación devocional, aunque haya recibido, por la presencia del vacío, esa interpretación, aunque fray Luis de Granada haga una lectura en términos devocionales de los objetos cotidianos. Lo que pasa es que fray Luis de Granada hace esa lectura en un contexto religioso como son sus obras, pero los bodegones no se inscriben en contextos religiosos. El único tipo de objeto de naturaleza muerta que se integra a un contexto religioso serían las flores, que sí aparecen en la decoración de santuarios. Pero los bodegones de Zurbarán son bodegones comestibles, la mayor parte los casos, y son, junto con las mención a los bodegones de Blas de Prado, lo primero que se conoce de la naturaleza muerta en España. A mí me cuesta muchísimo la idea de un pintor que se está internando en un género completamente nuevo, que lo haga pensando en términos devocionales. A mí me parece mucho más lógica la idea de un pintor que se está internando en ese tipo de género haciéndolo en términos sobre todo artísticos, de creación pictórica. Es un género al que está despojando de todo su contenido narrativo, es el género antinarrativo por excelencia, y son obras que nunca se van a incorporar a un lugar de culto público, pero tampoco a lugares de culto privado. Son obras destinadas a otro tipo de estancias en las casas.14

Therefore, what we need to consider here is the impact of Sánchez Cotán’s aesthetic decisions in the material world where the work of art is consumed. Along with avoiding the presence of the human hand, Sánchez Cotán reduces in the painting the amount of references to active labor by implying that all actions (sowing, reaping, cutting, tying, hanging and displaying) have taken place before the moment the objects are captured. Within the painting, only the craft of the niche and the strings from which the quince and the cabbage

14 Javier Portús, interview by author, Madrid, Spain, May 6, 2011.
are hung declare the presence of the direct activity that has led to the contemplated stillness, and even in this case, the actions seem improbable from the point of view of the laws of nature:

The main conceit of the artist is ingenious: hanging a dense quince and a heavier cabbage from delicate strings (that could never have supported the cabbage), and arranging them, with mathematical precision, together with a melon and cucumber to create a composition based on a graceful hyperbolic curve. . . . The emptiness of the black background is as much a part of the composition as anything else and, as a void, is given tremendous weight. Beginning with the quince, each of elements seems to come out a little farther into the viewer’s space.¹⁵

This trick, however, reveals another dimension of labor. Implied by this trompe l’oeil, by the composition, by the material existence of the painting, and by a signature of the painter, the labor of the artist declares itself.

As Javier Portús points out, we have to remember that Sánchez Cotán’s exploration of the still life begins before he enters the Carthusian order, and its material context is a particularly active moment for early modern capitalism in Spain and Europe. A new way to look at objects can be related to the importance given in that moment to objects as commodities. Orozco Díaz’s observations remain valid in this sense: objects are, indeed, endowed with qualities that subject them to a new, careful visual inspection. They are highly regarded as samples of God’s creation, but they are also valuable for trade and consumption. This overlapping of the symbolic, social, and economic connotations of the represented objects reminds us of Marx’s reflections about the fetishism of commodities. Even though he does not refer to art, Marx describes the creation of a relationship between the object, endowed with its attributes as commodity, and those who enter its symbolic sphere by participating themselves in the process of production in which commodities exist as such.

In the first chapter we saw that, because of the circulation of works of art as commodities between the Peninsula, Flanders, Italy, and other regions, early modern artists were especially aware of the market value of their creations. Therefore, in the case of Sánchez Cotán’s *bodegón*, we can move around the painting and the objects represented in it and look at them from different angles. From one of them we can still read the contemplative intention of the representation of the objects within the frame, religiously, as suggested by Orozco Díaz, or philosophically, as stated by Bryson. From another angle, the technical one, we can think about the painting as a suspension of time and space so the represented objects can become protagonists by themselves. From a materialist point of view, we can consider the former approaches as reflections about the literal rise of the commodity as the protagonist of economic relations in the period. Finally, from this same point of view but walking a few steps backwards to look again at the painting itself as a commodity, we can consider the *bodegón* as a self-referential reflection in which a commodity (the painting) points towards itself to show the commodities contained in it (the quince, the cabbage, the melon and the cucumber), and makes of the act of observing both levels of “objecthood” the reason of its existence.

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16 The term “objecthood” is used in art theory especially to refer to contemporary works of art, as explained by Michael Fried in his book *Art and Objecthood: Essays and Reviews* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998). Fried uses it to discuss the condition of the artistic object from the second part of the twentieth century to the present. The term is used here in a different sense: the prevalence of the object as matter of reflection is maintained but, on the one hand, and following the guidelines of cultural materialism, the emphasis is placed on the materiality and the socioeconomic and symbolic value of both the objects represented and of the work of art that represents them. On the other hand, the term is used to refer to a seventeenth-century painting keeping in sight that the artist’s consciousness about the objects he was representing then responded to an aesthetic project that was different in principles, knowledge and understanding of the world, the object, and the place of art, from the one that prevailed four hundred years later. As Tony Gibart explains: “The word ‘objecthood,’ by virtue of the contained suffix, can be defined as the condition of being an object, or the object condition. ‘-hood’ derives from a distinct noun, which had the meaning of ‘person, sex, and state or condition,’ which was applied to other nouns. The meaning of ‘objecthood’ then depends on the meaning of the word ‘object.’” (The University of Chicago Keywords Glossary: Objecthood, [http://csmt.uchicago.edu/glossary2004/objecthood.htm](http://csmt.uchicago.edu/glossary2004/objecthood.htm), accessed July 6, 2001). For the present study, and from a materialist perspective, the meanings of the word “object” are considered both from an aesthetic point of view and from the perspective of their value as commodities.
Here we can find another possible point of coincidence between Sánchez Cotán and Cervantes’s ideas about art. For both, the representation of objects of nature needs to be straightforward. Elaborate technique is reserved for the means of representation,\textsuperscript{17} but not for the object that is being represented. Against the artificiality mentioned by Orozco, Cervantes chooses the path of simple logic: those who work and do not eat suffer; Sánchez Cotán works with a principle that makes contemplation possible: the object (or the work of God) is represented by itself. In his case, artificiality would come from the intervention of the human hand. The difference is that for Cervantes working and not eating is a concern, while for Sánchez Cotán, either for aesthetic or spiritual reasons, eating is literally out of the picture.

As Portús observes, Sánchez Cotán suspends all narrative, leaving the observer face to face with the represented objects. They look edible—and in this sense we can agree more with Portús’s perspective than with Orozco’s—, nonetheless they are still unreachable for the observer due to this suspension: if, for example, the hand and the knife that cut the melon are excluded to allow the composition of the painting to exist, the potential consumer of the melon is equally excluded, first because his actions would destroy the composition, and second because the act of consumption, if it happens, only can occur in a moment that takes place after the moment depicted.

Regarding still lifes, we are constantly faced with the difficulty of thinking about the moment when the act of consumption takes place, and of wondering if it is meant to take place at some point. As we saw in paintings like *The Poultry Vendor*, probably not all the objects offered to the eye are meant to be consumed at once. The same question can be asked about Sánchez Cotán’s works. Far from a general speculation or from an attempt to

\textsuperscript{17} For the principles of mathematical composition in the painting by Sánchez Cotán, see Martín S. Soria, “Sánchez Cotán’s Quince, Cabbage, Melon and Cucumber,” in *The Art Quarterly*, Summer 1945, 225-230.
reintroduce narrative in the paintings, the reason to think about commodities and the conditions for their consumption comes from the association between two situations: one, the contemplative and attentive attitude of a potential observer confronted with foodstuffs represented in painting; the other, a similar attitude described by Miguel de Cervantes in *Don Quixote*, when Sancho Panza is confronted with several dishes in the island Barataria.

When Sancho and Don Quixote are staying with the dukes, in the second part of the novel, Sancho is granted his wish of becoming the governor of an island, fulfilling the promise his master had made in part one. After listening to his master's advice, Sancho is pompously taken to the island. As happens with all adventures that take place under the dukes' influence, ceremonies have a burlesque twist, that is only toned down in this case by the sobriety and wisdom with which Sancho conducts himself as governor. When Sancho feels hungry after his first day as governor, he is brought to his palace for a meal. Surrounded by the officers of his government, he is seated alone at a fine table, and a first elaborate dish is presented to him. But then, an unexpected interruption occurs:

Pusose a su lado en pie un personaje, que después mostró ser médico, con una varilla de ballena en la mano. Levantaron una riquísima y blanca toalla con que estaban cubiertas las frutas y mucha variedad de platos de diversos manjares. Uno que parecía estudiante echó la bendición y un paje puso un babador randado a Sancho; otro que hacía el oficio de maestresala llegó con un plato de fruta delante, pero apenas hubo comido un bocado, cuando, el de la varilla tocando con ella en el plato, se le quitaron de delante con grandísima celeridad; pero el maestresala le llegó otro de otro manjar. Iba a probarle Sancho, pero, antes que llegase a él ni le gustase, ya la varilla había tocado en él, y un paje alzándole con tanta presteza como el de la fruta. Visto lo cual por Sancho, quedó suspenso y mirando a todos, preguntó si se había de comer aquella comida como juego de maesecoral. [II, 47]

A personage, who later proved to be a physician, came to stand at his side, holding a rod of whalebone in his hand. They lifted the fine white cloth that covered the fruit and a wide variety of dishes holding different foods; one man who looked like a student said the blessing, and a page put a bib trimmed in lace on Sancho; another who was performing the duties of a butler placed a dish of fruit in front of him; he had barely eaten a mouthful when the man with the rod used it to touch the dish, and it was taken away with extraordinary speed, but the butler placed another dish of different food in front of him. Sancho was about to try it, but before he could reach it and taste it, the rod had touched it and a page removed it as quickly as the fruit had
been taken away. When he saw this, Sancho was perplexed, and looking at everyone, he asked if the dinner was to be eaten like a conjuring trick.

Readers know that this is another joke played on Sancho by the dukes. This is one reason to look beyond the arguments based on health that the man with the rod, named doctor Pedro Recio de Agüero, presents later to justify the disappearance of food. Given that the dukes are behind all the invention, what seems to be at stake in this scene is a problem of status and access to specific products. This takes us back to the story told by Sancho about the hidalgo and the peasant. We have to remember that in the narrated world of Don Quixote, part II, the dukes have learned about Sancho’s appetite by reading the first part. Since their strategy is to attack both master and squire using their own wishes and aspirations, we can think that the adventure of the vanishing dishes, as well as the jokes played on Don Quixote while he and Sancho are apart, bear a meaning that is very similar to the action of the hidalgo in the anecdote: putting down Don Quixote and Sancho to remind them both that no matter what they do, the dukes are still their lords and masters. As such, they have privileged access to a sphere that only exists for Cervantes’s characters as the object of their desire.

Sancho is denied access to food the same way Rocinante is prevented from eating and the beholder of Sánchez Cotán from altering the delicate equilibrium of the still life: a superior force seems to keep subject and object apart. In Rocinante’s case, this force takes the shape of the infinite chain of masters to which he is supposed to complain; in the case of the still life, it is either the power of God that makes his creation visible for the painter and for the observer (but not reachable unless the objects that make the work of art possible are altered) or the “mysterious character of the commodity-form,” as Marx puts it, that makes it only possible to relate to the object by entering into the logic of commodification; in Sancho’s case, both the power of the dukes and the power of a supposedly scientific discourse prescribe that he is not to eat the produce. In the case of Sánchez Cotán’s painting,
the response depends on the beholder. If he has the means to acquire the painting, he is
granted access to the sphere of material consumption, and he probably also has the means
to acquire the represented objects. In the other two cases, the ones that come from *Don
Quixote*, subjects are prevented from accessing the objects, and they complain. Not
surprisingly, the affair of the vanishing dishes is one of the reasons why Sancho decides to
resign his office.

The existence and status of the beholder as potential consumer helps us find a way
to address the problem of precedence in painting. In the previous chapter we encountered
briefly the works of Juan van der Hamen y León and observed how the luxury of the
objects that appear in his still lifes indicated the level of wealth and the taste of those who
could admire and own the painting. In a recent study, Carmen Ripollés observes:

Van der Hamen's still lives [sic] visually engage the values of aristocratic hospitality,
especially as they evolved in the particular social context of Madrid. As a sign of the
generosity (and status) of the host, this noble hospitality was characterized as an
exchange that was not mediated by money. But, paradoxically, it depended upon the
city's economic expansion. By visually replicating the practice of aristocratic
hospitality, Van der Hamen's still lives eclipse the conditions of production and
acquisition of the products they depict. Rather, they present a visual offering that is
seemingly unmediated by commercial considerations. Most importantly, by
capitalizing on this form of representation, Van der Hamen also created an artistic
identity that ultimately erased its commercial basis.  

In van der Hamen's paintings, therefore, we find another aspect of the “mysterious character
of the commodity-form,” which consists in hiding value in plain sight. As Ripollés accurately
observes, commercial considerations are not directly addressed in these works. Two factors
have to be considered, however. One, the presence of the painting as a commodity itself
that frames the represented hospitality; the other, the meticulous rendering of details both in

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18 Carmen Ripollés, “Chapter 4: Still Life, Nobility, and Artistic Identity in the Art of Juan van der Hamen y
León,” in “Constructing the Artistic Subject in Golden Age Spain” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois at
Urbana-Champaign, 2010), 133-134.

19 Other painters address this issue more directly. For example, Antonio de Pereda in some of his *Vanitas* and
in *The Knight's Dream* (see chapter 1, figure 8), where he includes coins and jewels among the mundane objects
eclipsed by death.
the containers and in the foodstuffs displayed on them, which suggests a level of quality in manufacture that could only be acquired by those members of Spanish society who had the means to access those luxurious items. In other words, the amount of generosity of the lord can only be measured in proportion to the luxury of the objects and foodstuffs he seems to be willing to offer, both within and outside the painting.

On the other hand, the apparent display of generosity on the side of the noble finds its counterpart in the submission the host and owner of the painting seems to expect in exchange for his kindness. In this sense, van der Hamen’s works suggest precedence in a way that appears in other sources, such as Diego de Granado’s *Arte de Cozina*, where he advises:

> En la mesa lo primero que se debe poner, es el salero y luego los paños de mesa (las servilletas) y los cuchillos, esto acabándose de lavar el señor y ya quitada la toalla en que se enjugó las manos después de una muy gentil reverencia muy bien hecha. Después en un plato poner las rebanadas de pan y el paño de mesa y un cuchillo, besándolo si es persona de título a quien se le debe hacer salva y si come con otros Caballeros a su mesa, poner a cada uno su paño de mesa y pan sin hacer reverencia a ninguno de ellos sino sólo al señor salvo si comiesen con él algún hijo o hijos mayorazgos de algunos Grandes (de España) porque a estos tales se les debe hacer reverencia y servir los platos cubiertos. Al Señor se le ha de mudar el paño de mesa cada vez que beba trayéndole el plato cubierto y al tiempo que se le da el paño descubrir el plato y besar el paño de mesa y dárselo. También se suele cambiar el paño de mesa con cada potaje y dar las viandas de grado en grado, es a saber: Primeramente la fruta y tras ella un potaje y luego lo asado y después otro potaje y lo cocido tras este potaje salvo si es manjar blanco que entonces el potaje se suele dar tras la fruta al principio.\(^{20}\)

The first thing that must be laid on the table is the saltcellar and then the table cloths [napkins] and the knives, this being done when the lord has finished washing and the towel for drying his hands has been taken away with a gentle, well-done bow. Then the bread slices are placed on a dish, and a table cloth, and a knife, kissing it if the honored person has a title, and, if he is eating with other Gentlemen at the table, each one has to have his table cloth and bread, without bowing to any of them but to the lord, except if he is accompanied by the elder son or by the sons of the Grandees [of Spain], because they deserve a bow and to be served in covered plates. For the Lord, the table cloth must be changed each time he drinks, bringing to him a covered plate and, at the time the table cloth is presented, the plate is uncovered and the cloth handled after kissing it. The table cloth is usually changed too with each

\(^{20}\) Diego de Granado, *Libro del arte de cozina, en el qual se contiene el modo de guisar y de comer en cualquier tiempo, así de carne como de pescados, para sanos, enfermos, y convalecientes; así de pasteles, tortas, y salsas, como de conservas al uso Español, Italiano, y Tudorse de nuestros tiempos, año de 1614* (Barcelona: Pagés, 1991), 24.
stew and when giving each dish in its proper degree: first the fruit, and then a stew, and then a roast, and then another stew, and then something cooked, except if it is manjar blanco, because in that case the stew is usually served after the fruit, at the beginning.

The quotation from this book is used here because of its proximity in time both to the first editions of Don Quixote and to the dates of the paintings, which makes it a more immediate reading available in the early seventeenth century. However, it is worth noticing that Granado takes this text in its integrity, without changing words, from Ruperto de Nola’s 1525 edition, in Spanish, of his Libro de guisados, originally published as Llibre de coch, in Catalan, in or around 1477 (the first preserved edition dates back to 1520). This background allows us to understand that, in the early seventeenth century and even as far as a century before, objects destined for the table were invested with symbolic power and treated with utmost respect whenever they were going to be in contact with the lords. Kissing the knife and napkins the lord is about to use evokes again a ritual, one in which everyday objects are invested with the power of establishing the difference between servants and masters, and of putting these two spheres in contact.

In appearance, this would be a reason to contrast Sánchez Cotán’s proverbial sobriety with van der Hamen’s displays of luxury, since in Sánchez Cotán’s world luxurious utensils are omitted. But this contrast can be misleading, especially because it would imply paying attention to the represented objects only, and not to the level of virtuosity displayed by the painters, who are using their best resources to trick the viewer’s eye (trompe l’oeil). In this sense, the level of technique, elaboration, and what Pacheco calls valentía is similar in the

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works of art of both painters, and all these elements add material value to the paintings.22

On the other hand, we must remember that the composition of *Still Life with Quince, Cabbage, Melon, and Cucumber* was used again by Sánchez Cotán as part of another work, known today as *Still Life with Game Fowl* (figure 26), a painting that includes more elements and suggests that in its creation the painter was more concerned with technical experimentation than with an idea of temperance.

![Figure 26. Juan Sánchez Cotán, *Still Life with Game Fowl*, c. 1600, oil on canvas, 67.8 x 88.7 cm, Chicago Art Institute, Chicago.](image)

22 As Carmen Ripollés suggests, this aspect opens a new space to discuss the problem of precedence: the place and the possibility of the artist to be recognized as noble: “Since the first decades of the seventeenth century, artistic theories, theatrical plays, and legal suits involving painters, formulated the idea that painting was a liberal art, and that painters should, accordingly, attain noble status. In so doing, these various seventeenth-century Spanish documents produced an enduring discourse of ‘artistic nobility.’ ” (Carmen Ripollés, “Constructing the Artistic Subject in Golden Age Spain,” 6). The closest and best-known case of an artist reaching a high status in court is the concession to Velázquez of the *Orden de Santiago*. Even though it is difficult to refer to distinctions of this type as an access to nobility, as it was understood in the period, it is possible to trace similar trajectories with authors such as Francisco de Quevedo, Lope de Vega, and Luis de Góngora, who in different moments of their careers were favored by members of the court and enjoyed some privileges associated with nobility. As far as it is known about Cervantes’s biography, and taking into account what he writes in his prologues to *Don Quixote*, the *Exemplary Novels*, and *The Trials of Persiles and Sigismunda*, he was not very successful in this aspect. In fact, in *Don Quixote*’s discourse on arms and letters [I, 37-38], the protagonist gives more credit to soldiers than to those who dedicate their lives to writing.
In *Still Life with Game Fowl* we reencounter the birds we saw in Loarte’s *Poultry Vendor* (chapter 1, figure 1). They may be either the fruits of hunting or birds bought in the market. None of these cases makes the observer necessarily think about pious refectories, but rather about lay tables. We also see that, right under the cabbage, Sánchez Cotán adds a *chayote*, a type of squash that came from the New World, and therefore an object that represents the products Spain collected from its colonies. Javier Portús observes that the inclusion of these new objects, concretely the game fowl, makes it difficult to sustain the hypothesis of a mystical approach to the works of Sánchez Cotán, especially to those produced in the years when he had not yet been ordained:

> Yo creo que todo esto tiene que ver con una determinada visión de la pintura española, una visión esencialista y una visión mística, una visión que también ha llevado a hablar del bodegón español como un género austero cuando los objetos que reproduce no son austeros. Ni siquiera en el caso de Sánchez Cotán. Lo son en el *Bodegón del cardo*, pero el resto . . . las aves que aparecen en sus bodegones no tienen nada que ver con la comida de los pobres, precisamente, hasta desde el punto de vista de su riqueza cromática . . .

I believe that this [interpretation] has to do with a certain vision of Spanish painting, an essentialist vision, a mystical vision, a vision that has also led to speaking of the Spanish *bodegón* as an austere genre when the objects it reproduces are not austere. Not even in the case of Sánchez Cotán. They certainly are in the *Bodegón del cardo*, but for the rest . . . the birds that appear in his *bodegones* have nothing to do with the food of the poor, precisely, even from the point of view of their chromatic richness . . .

The encounter with this painting allows us to think about the problem of precedence in different terms. An exploration of the possibilities of perspective and *trompe l’oeil* may have led Sánchez Cotán to this second version, since the inclusion of new elements in the case of *Still Life with Game Fowl* complements the mathematical composition of *Quince, Cabbage, Melon, and Cucumber*. However, the choice of game fowl for this second experiment adds new layers of meaning to the picture. On the one hand, the hanging birds suggest two bourgeois and not very spiritual activities: hunting or going to the market (again the reference is

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23 Javier Portús, interview by author, Madrid, Spain, May 6, 2011.
Loarte’s *Poultry Vendor*; on the other hand, their presence introduces death, which is not the same type of stillness as the one represented with vegetables only. The actions that have been suspended but implied by the painting come from a different order: animals deprived of life by a human hand interact and replicate the stillness of the vegetables, and at the same time are assigned new roles in the composition, since they come even closer towards the observer. Human presence is still kept outside the painting, but precedence finds its way in the work of art even when narrative is not present. New commodities, which carry with themselves connotations of power—the *chayote* because it comes from the conquered lands, the birds because they are elements of trade or of noble and bourgeois leisure—literally step forward and redefine both the space of the painting and the space of the viewer. In *Still Life with Quince, Cabbage, Melon, and Cucumber*, and even more in its alternate version, *Still Life with Game Fowl*, commodities come to the encounter of the beholder.

### 3.3. Sitting Around the Symbolic Table

As the plot develops in *Don Quixote*, readers receive small but constant amounts of information regarding the protagonist’s own rules about food and eating when he decides to become a knight errant. His already poor diet, justified by his *hidalgo* stoicism and his “ingenious” temper, goes a step forward early in the first part (in chapter 10), because after battling a Basque man and losing part of his ear he vows not to eat at a table until he reencounters his opponent (this reencounter never takes place). The vow creates a narrative problem related to precedence, because Don Quixote still needs to affirm his precedence over Sancho, and find a way to be recognized as a knight by those who run into him. Cervantes solves this problem by appealing to the visual memory of his readers, creating scenes where real tables are avoided but symbolic ones are created when the time to eat comes.
The first example of this technique is found at the moment when master and squire stay overnight with a group of goatherds. As part of their hospitality, the goatherds invite Don Quixote and Sancho to eat together. But they are not treated equally:

The goatherds spread some sheepskins on the ground, quickly prepared their rustic table, and with displays of goodwill invited them both to share what they had. The six of them, which was the number in their flock, sat down around the skins, having first with artless ceremony asked Don Quixote to sit on a small wooden trough that they turned upside down and set out for him.

The gesture of the goatherds suggests that this meal has turned special for them, not only because they have a guest, but because they recognize that this guest has a different place in society. This is why they have to improvise with the trough a seat that looks at least a little higher.

As Margaret Visser observes:

Eating together is a sign of friendship and equality, and yet people have always used the positioning of the “companions” as an expression of the power of each in the relationship to the others. Hierarchical seating arrangements make up one of the most intricate aspects of protocol, for placing guests at table is a deeply political act. Where diners are not ranked, a political, or social and religious, statement is as surely being made.24

In the scene there seem to be many conflicting principles of organization at stake. The medieval principle of precedence is signified by Don Quixote’s higher seating, but at the same time it is questioned by the fact that this disposition has to be improvised using a trough, a utensil that, when not upside down, would probably be used to feed animals. The principle of aristocratic equity described by Visser is brought into the scene also by the presence of Don Quixote, this time in his role as Alonso Quijano the hidalgo, and in this case

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the counterpoint is created by the presence of the goatherds, who in other circumstances
would have been excluded from the table. In fact, their being present at the table adds new
meanings to the seating arrangement, by establishing another level of equity, one that is
possible among those who share a communal meal, and that originates in a practical aspect
of the meal: even though Visser underlines the circular disposition around the table as a
feature of early modern aristocratic tables, it is also true that, independent of the moment of
history, circular seating allows all participants to be at equal distance from the pot where
food has been cooked, and that in many cultures this disposition seems to be respected
equally by hosts and guests.

The conflict between these principles is visible in Don Quixote’s intervention in the
scene. He attempts to establish some type of equity, and this would respond to the values of
an early modern court (although, as Visser points out, this equity should work with nobles or
with other *hidalgos*, not with peasants), but he begins this attempt by declaring a difference in
status that seems to come from his medieval fantasies:

Sentóse don Quijote, y quedábase Sancho en pie para servirle la copa, que era hecha
de cuerno. Viéndole en pie su amo, le dijo:

–Porque veas, Sancho, el bien que en sí encierra la andante caballería, y cuán
a pique están los que en cualquiera ministerio della se ejercitan de venir brevemente a
ser honrados y estimados del mundo, quiero que aquí a mi lado y en compañía desta
buena gente te sientes, y que seas una misma cosa conmigo, que soy tu amo y natural
señor; que comas en mi plato y bebas por donde yo bebiere: porque de la caballería
andante se puede decir lo mismo que del amor se dice: que todas las cosas iguala. [I, 10]

Don Quixote sat down, and Sancho remained standing to serve him and fill his cup,
which was made of horn. His master saw him standing and said:

“So that you may see, Sancho, the virtue contained in knight errantry, and
how those who practice any portion of it always tend to be honored and esteemed in
the world, I want you to sit here at my side and in the company of these good
people, and be the same as I, who am your natural lord and master; eat from my
plate and drink where I drink, for one may say of knight errantry what is said of
love: it makes all things equal.”
Don Quixote underlines that he can establish equity because he is not equal to his squire, but his natural lord and master. The use of the word “natural” in the discourse is crucial to understand what happens in this meal, because it contains principles of precedence similar to the ones held in the story of the hidalgo and the peasant told by Sancho. For the characters, especially for Sancho and the goatherds, the idea of natural superiority and precedence is familiar, and despite Don Quixote’s efforts, it does not break with the conventions they have been taught about society and class. The response of the goatherds is very clear about this: as soon as they turn the trough upside down to provide a seat for Don Quixote, they show they are aware of precedence. Moreover, they decide to follow these conventions because they do not know exactly who Don Quixote is. What they see and hear is a rather confusing character, who looks and speaks like a gentleman, but who also wears armor and introduces archaic terms in his discourse: “No entendían los cabreros aquella jerigonza de escuderos y de caballeros andantes, y no hacían otra cosa que comer y callar y mirar a sus huéspedes, que con mucho donaire y gana embaulaban tasajo como el puño.” [I, 11] [“The goatherds did not understand their nonsensical talk about squires and knights errant, and they simply ate and were silent and looked at their guests, who, with a good deal of grace and eagerness, devoured pieces of goat meat as big as their fists.”] They comply with the basic rules of hospitality, they give the visitor a special place and feed him, but they do not seem to be even aware of the suggestion of equity made by Don Quixote. From the point of view of the goatherds it does not seem to matter if Don Quixote expects to be

25 Even though in the times of Cervantes soldiers still wore some pieces of an armor, such as helmet, breastplate, and in some cases tassets, they would hardly be confused with Don Quixote. In his book El espíritu cervantino desde los tercios al tercio (Madrid: Ministerio de Defensa, 2006, 62-65 and notes), Juan José Amate Blanco observes that Cervantes mentions the extremes of extravagance and poverty associated with the figure of the soldier. While in service, they wore colorful garments that made people call them “papagayos” (colorful parrots), and Tomás Rodaja, the “Licenciado Vidriera” of one of Cervantes’s exemplary novels is called this name when he joins the troops. When out of service, they could go through difficult times, and they are described this way at the beginning of Don Quixote I, 38, as part of Don Quixote’s discourse on arms and letters.
regarded and treated as superior because he is a knight and not a hidalgo. All they know is that they have to treat him differently.

The way Sancho and Don Quixote eat, grabbing big chunks of meat from the pot and swallowing them eagerly, connects this scene with the reflections of Rocinante in the initial poem, because lord and squire are shown equally hungry and in need. The ironic way the narrative voice describes them while eating emphasizes the already present contrast between discourse and actions. The Bakhtinian notion of degradation, discussed in chapter 1, helps us understand this procedure. The words gracia and donaire would be expected to describe more “noble” actions, such as dancing, horse riding, or posing for a portrait, performed therefore by higher members of society. In his fantasies, Don Quixote would expect to be described in terms of gracia and donaire while performing his duties as a knight, but here, although the narrator concedes him these attributes, he does so when he is tired and hungry, and performs the action of eating avidly. In the case of Sancho, the irony is even more evident because he has been constantly described as a peasant and as a simple man. Then the narrator uses the verb embanlaban, which adds to the meaning of “devouring” that appears in the translation a metaphoric sense of disproportion by comparing the stomach with a trunk (baúl). Degradation occurs in the use of this word, because the apparent gracia and donaire, which belonged to the sphere of “high,” are invested in filling up with provisions the trunk of the stomach, which already belongs to the sphere of “low.” The action is magnified by this comparison, and complemented by the size of the bites the guests eat, since each of them is compared to a fist.

When we look at the scene from the point of view of the literary and visual sources it evokes, we find a collection of intertexts where the role of precedence regarding food and the ritual of eating together is emphasized by its symbolic evocations. Regarding the literary sources, Don Quixote’s behavior before and after eating, when he gives to his audience the
discourse of the Golden Age, may be evoking the magnanimous behaviors of literary knights who are his role-models. In the Arthurian tales, for example, the round table is a symbol of equity but King Arthur presides over it. In the same sources—known by Don Quixote since in different moments he recites fragments of ballads about Sir Lancelot and Queen Guinevere—we find stories such as the one of Sir Percival and the Fisher King, in which there is a ritual meal that includes the Holy Grail (the cup that Jesus used for instituting the Eucharist in the Last Supper, and that is supposed to contain blood and water from the wound Jesus received from a lance while on the cross), as well as a miracle of healing that involves the king whose name gives title to the story.

The visual organization of the scene finds its correspondence in works of art, but in this case the evoked images, while still giving a prominent place to eating and drinking, are not still lifes or bodegones. What we see is that Don Quixote, the peasants, and Sancho compose a picture in which the character who is considered superior is placed in a prominent position, his closest follower is singled out—he is described holding a cup and about to serve wine to his master—, and around them six humble men, who contemplate the central figure, sit in a circle. To this we have to add the chivalric references recently mentioned, which in many occasions overlap with religious evocations, such as the Holy Grail. These two paths seem to converge in a visual referent that both Don Quixote and the goatherds may share: a particular way to represent the Last Supper. Benito Navarrete Prieto proposes that the circular disposition of characters around a table to represent the Last Supper was a motif in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Spanish painting, and it seems to have been inspired by a print made by the Dutch engraver Cornelis Cort in 1578 (figure 27). Several paintings, some of them in churches, followed this model (figures 28, 29, 30, and
A print being the main source, it is possible that Cervantes had access both to the engraved and to the painted versions.


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Figure 30. Francisco Ribalta, *Holy Supper*, 1606, altar in Juan de Ribera’s Colegio de Corpus Christi, Valencia.

Figure 31. Juan Ribalta, *Holy Supper*, 1616, predella panel for the altar of Our Lady of the Rosary at the church of the Assumption, Torrente.
One reason to relate Cervantes’s writing to these artworks is an unexpected and forced visual parallel that takes place in a moment of the meal. Don Quixote invites Sancho to join him and the goatherds, but Sancho shows some reluctance:

—¡Gran merced! —dijo Sancho—; pero sé decir a vuestra merced que como yo tuviese bien de comer, tan bien y mejor me lo comería en pie y a mis solas como sentado a par de un emperador. Y aun, si va a decir verdad, mucho mejor me sabe lo que como en mi rincón sin melindres ni respetos, aunque sea pan y cebolla, que los gallipavos de otras mesas donde me sea forzoso mascar despacio, beber poco, limpiarme a menudo, no estornudar ni toser si me viene gana, ni hacer otras cosas que la soledad y la libertad traen consigo. Ansi que, señor mío, estas honras que vuestra merced quiere darme por ser ministro y adherente de la caballería andante, como lo soy siendo escudero de vuestra merced, conviértalas en otras cosas que me sean de más cómodo y provecho; que éstas, aunque las doy por bien recibidas, las renuncio para desde aquí al fin del mundo.

—Con todo eso, te has de sentar; porque a quien se humilla, Dios le ensalza. Y asiéndole por el brazo, le forzó a que junto dél se sentase. [I, 11]

“You’re too kind!” said Sancho. “But I can tell your grace that as long as I have something good to eat, I’ll eat it just as well or better standing and all alone as sitting at the height of an emperor. Besides, if truth be told, what I eat, even if it’s bread and onion, tastes much better to me in my corner without fancy or respectful manners, than a turkey would at other tables where I have to chew slowly, not drink too much, wipe my mouth a lot, not sneeze or cough if I feel like it, or do other things that come with solitude and freedom. And so, Señor, these honors that your grace wants to grant me for being a servant and follower of knight errantry, which I am, being your grace’s squire, you should turn into other things that will be of greater comfort and benefit to me; these, though I am grateful for them, I renounce now and forever.”

“Despite all that, you will sit down, for God exalts the man who humbles himself.”

And seizing him by the arm, he obliged Sancho to sit next to him.

A detail in the paintings of the Last Supper is the way John, the beloved disciple, is represented. He is depicted leaning over the table, with his hand on his head, looking downhearted. Pictorial conventions of the period established that one important moment to be represented in the Holy Supper is the one in which the Christ has declared that one of his disciples is going to betray him, and this seems to be the reason why John is represented this way. Corresponding to the gesture, Jesus embraces him or places his hand over his back, in a
consoling attitude. Keeping this reference in mind, what we see happening in the scene with the goatherds is an automatic reaction from Don Quixote, as if he were following an imperative that commanded him to “compose” the scene. This reaction suggests that the knight may be following a visual model, either the one found in chivalric novels, which makes him want to have a perfect circle, or the one found in religious art, which leads him to forcefully fit Sancho in the picture. In either case, we are reminded once again of the tale about the hidalgo and the peasant, since some force is used to keep the non-noble in place.

While struggling with Sancho’s resistance to participate, Don Quixote uses words that are almost literally taken from the Gospels: “Porque el que se ensalzare, será humillado; y el que se humillare, será ensalzado” (“And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted,” Matthew 23:12). Whether or not he is thinking about the Holy Supper, Don Quixote realizes that the meal has acquired symbolic connotations. It is not a matter of merely eating anymore, and he confirms this by remarking on the need of Sancho’s participation and by naming God. The ritual character of the meal is underlined as well by the presence of the horn full of wine that circulates among these men after food is consumed:

Acabado el servicio de carne, tendieron sobre las zaleas gran cantidad de bellotas avellanadas, y juntamente pusieron un medio queso, más duro que si fuera hecho de argamasa. No estaba, en esto, ocioso el cuerno, porque andaba a la redonda tan a

27 Other examples that follow a similar pattern, especially about the figure of Christ and John, and that are closer in time and place to the moment of writing and publication of the first part of Don Quixote are the Holy Supper painted by Titian for the Monastery of El Escorial (see figure 32 below), located there since 1574 (Cervantes could have seen or heard about this painting during the later years of his life, spent in Madrid), and the one painted by Alonso Vázquez in an uncertain date between 1588 and 1603 for the Carthusians of Santa María de las Cuevas, in Seville. According to Navarrete, Vázquez also seems to have used the print by Cort as his source of inspiration.

28 All English quotations from the Bible in this study come from the King James Version. The Spanish text is quoted from the first complete Spanish translation of the Bible by Casiodoro de Reina, from 1569, reviewed by Cipriano de Valera in 1602. It is probable that Cervantes had access to this translation, considering the years of publishing and revision, the importance of religious life in the period, his involvement in printing and publishing, and his declared interest in reading: 

“... y como yo soy aficionado a leer aunque sean los papeles rotos de las calles” [DQ I, 9] [“... as I am very fond of reading, even torn papers in the streets”].
menudo (ya lleno, ya vacío, como arcaduz de noria), que con facilidad vació un zaque de dos que estaban de manifiesto. [I, 11]

When the meat course was over, the goatherds spread out on the unshorn sheepskins a great quantity of dried acorns, along with half a cheese that was harder than mortar. In all this time the horn was not idle, for it made the rounds so often—sometimes full, sometimes empty, like the bucket at a well—that one of the two wineskins in evidence was emptied with no difficulty.

Moreover, the meal seems to inspire Don Quixote’s discourse on the Golden Age, a time when people “did not know the two words *thine and mine*” [I, 11], but through this discourse we are led to the justification of chivalry and difference: since those idillic times are gone, the world needs champions who bring back equity and justice.

Even though Cervantes was not a theologian and he probably was not consciously trying to create an allegorical picture in this scene, the structural relationship between the meal and contemporary visual representations of the Last Supper suggests the principles of community that seem to be leading the way characters interact. In the encounter with the goatherds there is a logic of community that requires all participants to be included through the act of sharing food. Therefore, it is precisely the fact that Don Quixote is present that creates some difficulties in the execution of the principle of equity on both sides, albeit for different reasons. The goatherds assume they have the obligation of giving Don Quixote special treatment because he is not one of them. He deserves respect as guest, but they see too that he is Sancho’s master. Acting accordingly, they underline that complete equity is not possible by assigning him a higher place. Don Quixote, following the conventions of his chivalric delusion, believes he is meant to act in a benevolent, almost paternal way with his hosts, and he does so, transforming the practical habit of eating around the pot into a symbolic meal. The participants, coming from different backgrounds, may be interpreting the event from diverging points of view, but they agree about the need for precedence and accommodate to it.
3.4. **Monipodio’s Banquet**

Visual order and precedence at the table seem to be part of Cervantes’s creative concerns. To discuss this it is necessary to look briefly outside *Don Quixote*, since one of the most visual scenes involving a meal can be found elsewhere. It is the meal at the house of Monipodio, as it is told in Cervantes’s exemplary novel “Rinconete and Cortadillo.”

Monipodio is the leader of a band of rogues in Seville. They specialize in different illicit arts such as minor robbery and offenses to honor. Monipodio keeps rigorous track of these deeds, their price and accomplishment in an account book, as would happen in any other type of business. At the beginning of the story, the main characters, two boys called Rincón and Cortado, are invited by a young thief to join the group. The young man explicitly describes the group using religious terms:

—¿Es vuesa merced, por ventura, ladrón?
—Sí —respondió él—, para servir a Dios y a las buenas gentes, aunque no de los muy cursados, que todavía estoy en el año del noviciado.

A lo cual respondió Cortado:
—Cosa nueva es para mí que haya ladrones en el mundo para servir a Dios y a la buena gente.

A lo cual respondió el mozo:
—Señor, yo no me meto en tologías; lo que sé es que cada uno en su oficio puede alabar a Dios, y más con la orden que tiene dada Monipodio a todos sus ahijados.

—Sin duda —dijo Rincón— debe de ser buena y santa, pues hace que los ladrones sirvan a Dios.

—Es tan santa y buena —respondió el mozo—, que no sé yo si se podrá mejorar en nuestro arte. Él tiene ordenado que, de lo que hurtáremos, demos alguna cosa o limosna para el aceite de la lámpara de una imagen muy devota que está en esta ciudad, y en verdad que hemos visto grandes cosas por esta buena obra . . .

“Is your Grace by any chance a thief?” Rincón inquired of their guide.

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“Yes,” he answered, “that I am, and at the service of God and all good people; although I am not one of the best, seeing that I am still in the first year of my apprenticeship.30

“That is something new to me,” said Cortado, “to hear that thieves are in this world to serve God and good people.”

“Sir,” replied the youth, “I do not meddle with tologies; all I know is that everyone in this business may praise God, especially in view of the order that Monipodio keeps among his adopted sons.”

“Undoubtedly,” observed Rincón, “his rule must be a good and holy one if he is able to make thieves serve God.”

“It is so good and holy that I do not know if it could be improved in any way, so far as our trade is concerned. He has commanded that out of what we steal we must give something in the way of alms to buy oil for the lamp that stands before a highly venerated image here in this city; and I must say that this act of piety has had great results . . .”32

Monipodio combines the skills of an administrator with the rigor of the superior of a religious order. His band is organized like a cofradía, in both senses of religious brotherhood and guild, the point in common being the veneration of a holy image, a symbolic representation of divine precedence for which all members reserve part of their earnings. Later on, we are also informed that they go to mass every day. Within the organization, Monipodio operates as the arbiter of disputes, the enforcer of rules, the godfather and the guardian of faith. He even has the power to change names. When the protagonists arrive at his house, they are still called Rincón and Cortado. After meeting the leader they are renamed Rinconete and Cortadillo, so they are recognized as candidates for the guild. The members of the association are organized according to their experience, and the youngest are called novices, just as in a monastery or convent. Prayer is mixed with thievery and bullying, but all these acts are performed as services, in exchange for money. In fact, one of

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30 Note that the original refers to a novitiate, which is coherent with the idea of an “order” as it is mentioned later.

31 In Spanish the intention of Cervantes of using “order” in both senses of the word, as a rule and as an institution, is more patent because the rogues are called his “godsons,” and because the adjectives “good” and “holy” that follow in the answer of Rincón agree in gender and number with it, so the reader thinks of a “good and holy order.”

the services offered by Monipodio has to do almost directly with the Inquisition: on demand, the members of his gang can nail to the door of a victim a sambenito, the sentence of the Tribunal, revealing in this way suspicious origins (Jewish/Converso or Arabic/Morisco) and raising concerns about purity of blood.

The cofradía follows Catholic structures and principles of organization in many aspects of their life, including meals. In fact, a communal meal is described extensively in the story. These are its components:

... se sentaron todos alrededor de la estera, y la Gananciosa tendió la sábana por manteles, y lo primero que sacó de la cesta fue un grande haz de rábanos y hasta dos docenas de naranjas y limones, y luego una cazuela grande, llena de tajadas de bacalao frito. Manifestó luego medio queso de Flandes y una olla de famosas aceitunas, y un Plato de camarones, y gran cantidad de cangrejos, con su llamativo de alcaparrones, ahogados en pimientos, y tres hogazas blanquísimas de Gandul.33

... they all sat around the mat and Gananciosa spread the sheet for a tablecloth. The first thing she brought out of the hamper was a large bunch of radishes and some two dozen oranges and lemons, followed by a large earthenware pot filled with slices of fried codfish. There was also half a Dutch cheese, a jug of fine olives, a platter of shrimp, and a great quantity of crabs, with a thirst-inspirer in the form of capers drowned in peppers, together with three very white loaves of Gandul bread.34

What Cervantes describes is very similar to a still life. In fact, he suspends the action for a moment to allow the reader observe the picture. There is a tablecloth that serves as background, and over it Gananciosa displays large amounts of food, which comes in different varieties. Abundance is a key element in the description, and this aspect is relevant both for the visual and the narrative aspects of the scene. Visually, it creates an effect of multiplicity that is closer to the one achieved by painters in works where they depict plates full of fruit or other foodstuffs, showing them from different angles and insisting on the effects of light and shadow on them. In narrative, and as an effect of this multiplicity, the reader attends to a lay version of the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes,


one in which profusion in food products contrasts with the poverty of the characters, but at the same time suggests that their organized work, although illegal, is rendering good profit that can be transformed into abundant food.

As happened with Don Quixote and the goatherds, the ones who congregate are considered equals under a superior authority, and they share food and break bread. We have to assume that in this case the source that makes the abundance possible is the distribution of what has been earned through theft and the special services provided by the gang. In the case of Don Quixote and the goatherds the distance kept by the latter was explainable because the gentleman came from outside the group. When the structure reappears here, precedence is kept even when the leader comes from inside the community.

Immediately after the description of the food that is served, we are informed by the narrator: “Serían los del almuerzo hasta catorce, y ninguno de ellos dejó de sacar su cuchillo de cachas amarillas, sino fue Rinconete, que sacó su media espada”\(^{35}\) [“There were around fourteen at the meal, and none of them failed to bring out his yellow-handled knife, with the exception of Rinconete, who made use of his short sword”].\(^{36}\) At this point, two of the eldest and the young man who has introduced the protagonists to Monipodio start pouring wine. These elements give us a scene that approaches visually the model of the Last Supper, but there seems to be an extra character, since it is assumed traditionally that there were thirteen people present at the Holy Supper: the twelve disciples and Christ. The number fourteen sounds odd in writing, but turns out to be less conflicting in paintings and prints. Two works that may have been part of Cervantes’s visual background exemplify this. One is Titian’s \textit{Last Supper} from El Escorial (c.1563-1566, figure 32), the other, a print by Jan Sadeler

\(^{35}\) Miguel de Cervantes, “Novela de Rinconete y Cortadillo”, 196.

\(^{36}\) Miguel de Cervantes, “Rinconete and Cortadillo,” 46.
(figure 33). In both cases, the character number fourteen is a man, probably a servant, who is speaking to one of the disciples.

Figure 32. Titian, *The Last Supper*, c.1563-1566, oil on canvas, Real Sitio y Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial.

Figure 33. Jan Sadeler, *The Last Supper*, print based on a painting by Martin de Vos, in Benito Navarrete Prieto, *La pintura andaluza del siglo XVII y sus fuentes grabadas*, 113.
Another element that multiplies oddly in the scene are blades, and it is worth paying attention to this detail because it suggests some recurrences in the Biblical sources that, consciously or unconsciously, Cervantes evokes in his descriptions of meals. In the supper described in “Rinconete and Cortadillo,” every character is armed with a knife that is used for all purposes, at the table and in the streets, and Rinconete uses a broken sword that he carries as a weapon. In the context described by Cervantes, of prostitutes, thieves and especially bravos, who are paid mercenaries, carrying a sword is a sign that indicates that the bearer can be hired, so the knife or the sword are the equivalents of the tool through which a member of a guild is recognized for his specialty. In the band of Monipodio there are at least two bravos: Maniferro (who has an iron hand in place of the one that has been cut off as a punishment for a crime) and Chiquiznaque. What is emphasized in the passage through the number of blades at hand is a direct relationship between the tool of work and the food that is obtained by using it. The reference to men carrying weapons but organized by religious principles does not stand as far as it could be imagined from the texts that seem to visually inspire the meal. All four Gospels suggest in one way or another that Christ’s disciples were armed with swords, since in the moment the Master is about to be arrested one of them defends him and cuts off the ear of a man, but only one of them gives more details. In the Gospel of Luke swords are mentioned twice while Jesus is announcing he will be betrayed. First, in chapter 10, verse 36, he advises his disciples to sell a cloak and buy a sword; next, in verse 38, it is the disciples who show two swords to their Master, and he
answers with an ambiguous “That’s enough.” Besides this explicit depiction of men carrying blades around the table, what suggests Cervantes’s preference of this version over the others is the fact that Gospel of Luke is also the one in which, during the Supper, Christ solves a conflict of precedence among his disciples using the figure of the place at the table as a starting point:

And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. And he said unto them, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.”


Similar to what happens in the scene with the goatherds, the equity reached by the members of Monipodio’s gang around the table—with the recognition of a symbolic authority—seems to offer a reflection on the problem of precedence that appears in Sancho’s tale about the hidalgo and the peasant. In this case, and in contrast with the improvised character of the meal shared by Don Quixote and the goatherds, Monipodio’s authority has been established beforehand, and is indisputable. Unlike Don Quixote, who presides at a table due to his social status, but without being completely aware of the circumstances, Monipodio knows

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37 We should notice as well that the knife is a constant element in still lifes of the period, for several reasons. First and with regard to technique, the knife allows the painter to show his virtuosity with light, shadow and depth, since it is usually placed on the rim of a table, projecting a shadow over the tablecloth; the protruding handle, usually projected towards the viewer, helps increase the effect of third dimension in the painting. Second, the knife creates a relationship of cause and effect between the objects at the table that reinforces the composition, since the observer tends to relate visually and read together the knife and whatever is shown as having been cut in the scene. Third, the knife is the index of human presence in the painting. In this case, the handle extended to the observer serves as an invitation to be involved in the picture.
what to say and how to behave. He fits effortlessly in the picture, and makes the best of the structure of precedence already in use.

We have seen that the problem of precedence is one of Cervantes’s concerns, given that it appears in that story, in the scene of the goatherds, and once again in “Rinconete and Cortadillo.” We have also seen that in these scenes Cervantes links the problem to actions around the dining table, and that at least on one occasion he explicitly uses as a resource a Biblical text: the quasi literal quotation of Matthew in the meal of Don Quixote and the goatherds. Taking into account this information, it is possible to think that another approach to the problem of precedence, the one present in “Rinconete and Cortadillo,” may be sustained by Biblical references as well, concretely from the Gospel of Luke.

Another circumstance that evokes the Gospels is the moment when the meal at Monipodio’s house is interrupted by a woman called la Cariharta (“Chubby Faced”), who arrives in great distress and presents before Monipodio a complaint against her man, who has beaten her up. The scene is reminiscent of a passage, also from Luke, in which a woman enters the house of Simon the Pharisee while he is having dinner with Jesus, and washes his feet with her tears and ointment, and dries them with her hair [Luke 7: 37-50].

In the Gospel the scene ends with Jesus forgiving the woman and solving a conflict that arises among the pharisee and his friends due to the presence of the female character, who makes them uncomfortable given her fame as a sinner. In “Rinconete and Cortadillo,” Monipodio promises to solve the case of Cariharta as well, using his particular rhetoric.

To describe the continuation of the meal, Cervantes still uses words that have connotations of liturgical origins:

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38 Benito Navarrete Prieto mentions a painting with this subject in the cathedral of Málaga, made by Miguel Manrique, and based upon a print by M. Natalis after Rubens. See Benito Navarrete Prieto, La pintura andaluza del siglo XVII y sus fuentes grabadas (Madrid: Fundación de Apoyo a la Historia del Arte Hispánico, 1998), 205.
... y así, todos volvieron a su gaudeamus, y en poco espacio vieron el fondo de la canasta y las heces del cuero. Los viejos bebieron sine fine; los mozos adunia, las señoras, los quires.39

... and they all returned to their gaudeamus and within a short while had reached the bottom of the basket and the dregs of the flasks. The old men drank sine fine, the young men right heartily, and the ladies said their Kyrie eleisons.40

With regard to the word Gaudeamus, Jorge García López explains in his 2001 edition of the Exemplary Novels that the word was used to begin mass during popular festivities.41

Concerning the reference to Kyrie eleison, its use implies several levels of knowledge in Cervantes. To connect it back to Don Quixote, we can observe that the word is used by Cervantes early in the novel as the name of a character from the chivalric book Tirant lo Blanc: “Aquí está don Quirieleisón de Montalbán, valeroso caballero” [I, 6] [Here is Don Quirieleisón of Montalbán, that valiant knight”]. But one of the most extensive explanations of the term can be found in Francisco Rodríguez Marín’s 1905 critical edition of “Rinconete and Cortadillo.” In his notes to the text, Rodríguez Marín explains that the expression “los quires” was frequently added after verbs such as beber (to drink), dormir (to sleep), or jugar (to play) to emphasize the action and to signify that it was performed repeatedly or intensely. This meaning appears in Covarrubias’s Tesoro de la lengua castellana and contains precisely the passage from “Rinconete and Cortadillo” as an example, and is also used by Quevedo and Rojas Zorrilla, among many others. Following another dictionary, the Diccionario de la lengua castellana written by Dr. Francisco del Rosal and published in 1601, Rodríguez Marín explains that the association between the Kyries and repetition or abundance comes from the fact that in the Tridentine Mass the Kyrie eleison is repeated nine times:42

40 Miguel de Cervantes, “Rinconete and Cortadillo,” 51.
41 Miguel de Cervantes, Novelas ejemplares, ed. by Jorge García López (Madrid: Crítica, 2001), 818.
42 The Latin formula establishes that Kyrie eleison is sung or said three times, followed by a threefold Christi eleison and by another threefold Kyrie, eleison.
Declaring in *Alfabeto tercero* the proverb “After good or bad eating, thrice drinking,” Rosal remembers quoting Plautus that “the ancients advised drinking five or three times, not four” because “they held odd numbers sacred and blessed . . . ” And he refers to the *Alfabeto último*, “in number three, where many things are said about this and the proverb “Beber los kiries is declared . . . And, as promised, in this last *Alfabeto*, after quoting the classic rules about drinking, such as Horatio’s *Tribus aut novem* [three or nine] (to the Graces or the Muses), Ovid’s *ter bibe, vel toties ternos* [drink three times, or three times three], etc., he adds: “and since the highest number of times for drinking was nine . . . reduplicated by three times, as Ovid commands, in Castilian the great drinker is said to *drink the Kyries*, which means that he drinks nine times, in groups of three, the way Kyries are grouped.”

Therefore, the use of the expressions *Gaudeamus* and *Kyrie* by Cervantes in the context of the meal serves several literary purposes. On the one hand, Cervantes degrades—in the Bakhtinian sense of the word—the meaning of words from the mass. He brings these words back to earth, to the ground, and to the stomach. The Latin verb *gaudere* refers to a feeling or expression of joy, so the primary translation of *Gaudeamus* is usually “Let’s rejoice;” however, in a degraded context as the one that takes place in the scene of the meal, a more accurate translation would be “Let’s enjoy,” so in the change the nature of joy is rendered more worldly. The *Kyries*, as we have seen, are used here more in a sense of quantity than in their liturgic sense. On the other hand, he uses these words to mark the ritual and festive character of the meal, since these words, especially *Gaudeamus*, seem to be related to moments of

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44 The quote comes, in fact, from Ausonius’s *Idyllia*, II, 1.
popular celebration. At the same time, the joke would not be a joke if the reader were not familiar with the words used in the rite of the Tridentine Mass, so the words used to describe the consumption of food and wine in the scene provide both the degraded context in which the meal actually takes place and the elevated origin from which the Latin references come.

3.5. Precedence, Visual Models, and the Material World

In different scenes and moments of his writing, Cervantes revisits scenes of collective meals that visually evoke the representation in painting of the Holy Supper. He also creates scenes that derive from these visual paradigms, such as chivalric meals. The material components of these meals are underlined both because of their daily use and familiarity, and because of the way they are used to establish order and hierarchies among characters. Materiality brings the attention of the reader to the status of the performers, whose actions resemble the ones in the Catholic rites of Eucharist, but take place in lay and often poor contexts. In these scenes, a character is given precedence and is assigned the mission of presiding over the meal, and characters seem aware of the need for gathering and eating together to reaffirm their belonging to a group. As much as these events can be explained by a Christian imaginary shared by the characters, the narrator, and the reader, it is necessary to acknowledge the mediation of visual representations in this process. Moreover, it would be difficult to reconstruct that imaginary without considering the prints and paintings that probably helped inform it. Complementing and contrasting these references, the meanings presented through comic resources introduce the material world through the process of degradation. Through this resource, the ritual of gathering to share food is taken back to its tangible origins. In these episodes, foodstuffs operate as the elements of the material world that help individuals from different origins and backgrounds get together, by making them visible to each other.
Cervantes’s writings converge with paintings such as the ones by Juan Sánchez Cotán in the sense that a figure of precedence and authority is created within the work of art. These figures, in a symbolic sense, are the providers of nourishment, but, as Sánchez Cotán shows, this nourishment has to be praised and observed before being enjoyed. The lords and masters (be it the dukes or those who enter in the succession explained also by Rocinante), are providers because they are meant to give food and resources to the squire so he can give food to the working horse, but this function is delayed because these masters seem to have decided to give priority to elaborate projects (such as knighthood, in the case of Don Quixote), parties, or even jokes (in the case of the dukes, regarding Don Quixote and Sancho), over food. The artists seem to suggest two possible responses to hunger: one, accepting and honoring this distance; the other, making it visible and declaring it constantly, no matter if the authority to which the complaint is presented appears as strong as the figure of the dukes or as poor and hungry as the one of Don Quixote.

An effect of the creation of this figure of precedence is the organization of a community around it. Diet is one of the most visible elements through which the members of this community are related, and meal scenes frequently show the way they depend on a central figure, not only because of its function as provider, but also because this figure seems to offer a point of reference for the group to get organized. In this sense, the visual effect of the circles created around the figure of precedence is justified aesthetically and also has a political function. This, in turn, implies a logic of inclusion and exclusion, mediated by the way food and wine are shared. In this chapter I have emphasized the social dimension of this logic, considering it as operating at different social levels, but still within the Old Christian community. In the next chapter I will explore these mechanisms, and their implications regarding the anxiety of belonging, by observing the way they operate with regard to New Christian subjects.
4. “From Many Different Grains One Single Bread is Made”

In *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española*, Sebastián de Covarrubias y Orozco offers the following definition of communion:

En la Santa Iglesia Católica se toma por aquel acto de recibir el cuerpo de Nuestro Redentor Jesucristo debajo de las especies de pan, en los seglares, y en los sacerdotes debajo de ambas especies de pan y vino, celebrando; y por comerle todos los fieles, sin que haya distinción del rico al pobre, del señor al siervo, y serles a todos común, se llamó comunión; y por ser Sacramento de unión, que así como los que comen un pan a la mesa de un señor se aman y se quieren entre sí, así, y con más razón, se deben amar y unirse en caridad los que participan y comunican este pan celestial. Que así como el pan material (del cual este Santísimo Sacramento, después de la consecración, no quedan más que los accidentes) se amasa y junta de muchos granos, haciéndose un cuerpo, así los fieles que reciben el pan celestial se deben unir, encorporar en Cristo. Y esto nos da a entender San Agustín, quando en el tratado 26, *In Ioanem*, dice: “*Ex multis namque granis unus panis efficitur*”, etc.¹

In the Holy Catholic Church [communion] is considered the act of receiving the body of Our Redeemer Jesus Christ under the species of bread, among laymen, and among priests in both species, bread and wine, celebrating [the Mass]; and because all faithful men eat it, with no distinction between rich and poor, between lord and servant, and because it is common to all of them, it came to be called communion; this, and also because it is a sacrament of gathering, and those who participate and share this heavenly bread must love and gather in charity the way those who eat bread at the table of a lord love and care for each other. For as the material bread (from which, in this Holy Sacrament, after consecration just the accidents are left) is kneaded and put together from many grains, becoming a single body, so the faithful who receive this heavenly bread must unite, incorporate in Christ. And this is what St. Augustine makes us understand, when in his 26th Treatise, *In Ioanem*, he says: “*Ex multis namque granis unus panis efficitur*,” [*From many different grains one single bread is made*], etc.

Covarrubias’s definition summarizes the main principles held as an ideal of Christian community by the Roman Catholic church after the council of Trent. At the same time, it offers a series of terms that allow us to identify points of conflict for the subjects of the Spanish kingdom in the early seventeenth century.

¹ Sebastián de Covarrubias, *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española*, 589.
First, there is the problem of establishing who are those “faithful men” who are meant to share the communion, because the Christian faith is not an option among others, but the only one recognized by the king and the Catholic church. Second, as seen in the previous chapter, the supposed equity between rich and poor, lord and servant, is constantly questioned by practices destined to reinstate precedence. Third, and more relevant for our discussion, there is some difficulty when it comes to interpreting St. Augustine’s metaphor of the bread that is kneaded from different grains and becomes a single body. In fact, the kingdom faces serious political, economical, and social conflicts when trying to achieve a unity comparable to the ideal bread that Covarrubias proposes as a symbol of community, following St. Augustine, especially if we understand the figure of multiple grains as a metaphor of the multiple origins of the Spanish subjects.

On the one hand, seventeenth-century Spain faces conflicts between the rich and the poor, between those who have the means to consume food and those who face constant hunger. On the other hand, the kingdom faces the challenge of incorporating to the Christian community subjects who come from Jewish and Muslim backgrounds. Following St. Augustine’s metaphor, they represent different grains, but it frequently happens that these “grains” do not want to be part of the “bread,” or at least not in the terms they are commanded to do so. They are expected to incorporate themselves in the community, but at the cost of leaving behind languages, traditions, and religious and cultural practices. They are commanded to belong, and in some cases they try to follow the rules that allow them to belong, but at the same time they are subjects of suspicion, of surveillance, and of exclusion. Torn between these two impulses, they face an anxiety of belonging.

For different reasons, artists and writers show a particular awareness about this uneasiness, and Cervantes is one of them. Some of his biographers believe that Cervantes’s family had Jewish/Converso origins, which may have played a role in his observations, while
others defend the idea that he had an Old Christian background. But, as Jean Canavaggio notes:

Whatever his choices may have been, to insist that they were dictated to him by his membership in one of the two castes is to fall into the trap of superficial determinism. In Cervantes, let us not forget, the doctrinaire never takes precedence over the artist, and the subversive power of his oeuvre transcends the design from which it seems, at first sight, to proceed. To know that the most illustrious writer of the Golden Age, the very symbol of Spain’s universal genius, was a converso forced to conceal his origins may perhaps throw light on certain aspects of his mental universe, but it will never provide us with the key to its creation.²

Moreover, some particularities of Cervantes’s writing make it difficult to determine where he stood regarding Conversos and Moriscos, and even more difficult to establish if his thoughts changed over time. One of these particularities is the ambiguity of the narrative voice, because some passages related to the Spanish New Christians can be interpreted both in a literal or in an ironic sense. Another one is the use of multiple voices, because sometimes it is not the narrator but a character who speaks in favor or against the groups in conflict.³

Given this scenario, the alternative is to pay attention not to the words but to the actions of Cervantes’s characters in the episodes involving New Christians, especially those of Arabic origin, and to the role that foodstuffs have in these occasions, given its symbolic value for belonging to a community, and the specific meanings attributed especially to bread in the early seventeenth century, as explained by Covarrubias.

Even though it is not easy to establish the author’s motivations, what is evident is that he rarely refers to Conversos or Jews, while his stories are full of references to Moors, Moriscos, and other Arabic subjects. Two major events in Cervantes’s life may explain this insistence. The first one is his five years of captivity in Algiers (1575-1580),⁴ which are the

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³ Francisco Márquez Villanueva is one of the scholars who has dedicated more studies to these particularities in Cervantes. See especially his book Moros, moriscos y turcos de Cervantes (Barcelona: Bellaterra, 2010).

⁴ Regarding Cervantes’s captivity see especially María Antonia Garcés, Cervantes in Algiers (Nashville : Vanderbilt University Press, 2002).
source of several of his works: the story of the cantivo in Don Quixote, the exemplary novel El amante liberal/The generous lover, and three plays: El trato de Argel/The treaty of Algiers, Los baños de Argel/The Bagnios of Algiers, and La gran sultana/The Great Sultana. The second event, to which Cervantes was a witness and happened in his lifetime, is the expulsion of the Moriscos from Spain that began in 1609. The incidence of this event in literature and art will be discussed later, but it can be said in advance that, being an extreme measure taken by Philip III, it was widely commented by several authors.

Although the story of the cantivo is part of Don Quixote, it will not be discussed in detail here. Foodstuffs are in fact relevant for the plot—the captive enters the house of his beloved with the excuse of being looking for herbs to prepare salad—but there is not a special emphasis on the description of such herbs, and they are not mentioned again in the

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5 The latter two are the titles Barbara Fuchs and Aaron J. Ilika use in the most recent translation of the plays, “The Bagnios of Algiers” and “The Great Sultana” (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press: 2010).

6 After the fall of Granada in 1492, the Arabic population of Spain had had to decide either to convert to Catholicism, at least nominally, or leave. They were repeatedly confronted with ultimatums: In 1501, the Muslims of Granada were ordered to convert, and the next year, the tolerance of Islam in Spain ceased; in 1508, traditional Moorish clothing was prohibited in Castile, and in 1512, the Moors of Navarre underwent the same process of forced conversion. Similar events occurred in Valencia by 1521, and in Aragon by 1526. In all these occasions, because of their work, their possessions, and also because they felt they had the right to live where they had been born, most of the Arabic population chose to stay and follow the norms. Thus by the time when Cervantes was born, Spain was a territory where men and women of Arabic heritage, already known as Moriscos, lived and worked as the rest of the Catholics. The prohibition about clothing was relative, and they were able to use their language, even though from time to time they were investigated by the Inquisition.

This changed in 1567, when Cervantes was twenty years old. In that year, Philip II decided to ban again and more strongly their clothing and their language, forcing them to educate their children under the supervision of Catholic priests. This led to the rebellion in the mountains of Alpujarras, in Granada, which lasted three years, from 1568 to 1571. At the time, the tensions and the repression grew because of suspicion. Moriscos were held suspects of supporting the main enemy of Spain in the Mediterranean: the Ottomans. The rebellion was repressed by the half brother of the King, the man who later would be Cervantes's commander-in-chief in Lepanto: Don Juan de Austria. As a result of the defeat, the Moriscos of Granada were relocated to different regions of Spain, one of them being Castile, and specifically La Mancha. After the rebellion of the Alpujarras, the situation of the Moriscos in Spain grew precarious. A first agreement about expulsion was made by the Consejo de Estado in Lisbon, in 1582, but Philip II decided not to follow it through. A policy of reinforced religious education and more control was implemented instead, but it did not solve the conflict. With the death of Philip II and the ascent of Philip III, political and religious influences in the court changed, and the project of expulsion was resumed, leading to the first decree of expulsion of 1609, four years after the publishing of the first part of Don Quixote. That year the Moriscos were expelled from Valencia, and in 1614, one year before the second part of the novel would be printed, they were expelled from Castile.
story. Instead, in my discussion I emphasize moments of the novel in which the main characters are involved and food plays the roles described in chapters 1 and 2, related to the anxiety of belonging. These findings create a new level of reading of the novel, a way to connect episodes that do not seem to be related at first sight, and allow a re-reading of major characters and their actions. It is in this level that a poetic and politic use of the representation of foodstuffs can be reconstructed. This is also the dimension that makes it possible to find new connections between Cervantes’s writing and the visual culture of the period.

4.1. Wheat and Raisins

One of the most original narrative resources found in the first part of *Don Quixote* is the adventure of Cervantes, the fictionalized author, who in chapter 8 confesses he has lost track of his characters and sources, and then, in chapter 9, finds the Arabic manuscript that will allow him to continue and finish his novel. Continuity is interrupted at a critical moment: Don Quixote and a Basque man are about to attack each other, and the story stops right at the moment when they are raising their swords. Discouraged, Cervantes is about to abandon the project of writing the story. Then he finds in a market, in Toledo, an Arabic manuscript of which he can only understand the illustrations. These illustrations show two men about to attack each other with swords, and they look very familiar to Cervantes. He looks for a translator, he finds one, who happens to be a Morisco, \(^7\) and hands him the writings. The man reads them and confirms Cervantes’s first guess: the notebooks he has rescued contain the story of Don Quixote. Then the author decides to have the writings

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\(^7\) Cervantes as a narrator-character specifies that the man who translates *Don Quixote* is a “Morisco aljamiado,” this is, a Morisco who speaks Castilian. These two words show that, by the time the first part of *Don Quixote* was being written, the Moriscos of Toledo spoke Arabic among themselves, and Castilian with Old Christians. As explained, this flexibility changed after the rebellion of the Alpujarras, and the use of Arabic was prohibited in Spain.
translated, and he shares with his readers the amount and type of payment agreed for the task:

Apartéme luego con el morisco por el claustro de la iglesia mayor, y roguéle me volviese aquellos cartapacios, todos los que trataban de don Quijote, en lengua castellana, sin quitarles ni añadirles nada, ofreciéndole la paga que él quisiese. Contentóse con dos arrobas de pasas y dos fanegas de trigo, y prometió de traducirlos bien y fielmente y con mucha brevedad. [I, 9]

I immediately went with the Morisco to the cloister of the main church and asked him to render the journals, all those that dealt with Don Quixote, into the Castilian language, without taking away or adding anything to them, offering him whatever payment he might desire. He was satisfied with two *arrobas* of raisins and two *fanegas* of wheat, and he promised to translate them well and faithfully and very quickly.

The first detail to be underlined is that the transaction takes place in a symbolic place, the cloister of Toledo’s cathedral, where the Morisco is brought by the Christian author to reach a commercial agreement. And it is within the grounds of the cathedral that the deal is closed in species, not money. From the moment Cervantes tells us he has paid for the translation with two *arrobas* of raisins and two *fanegas* of wheat, new functions for food appear in the novel. These products represent part of the material value of the book. The other part is the half *real* that Cervantes pays for the notebooks in which the story is written. There is also the diegetic value that comes from the fact that food has been invested with the power of keeping the story active, since we are told that without the offer of produce to the translator the novel would not exist in Spanish. And there is the semantic value, since the presence of wheat and raisins within the grounds of a Catholic cathedral opens a semantic field that will continue until chapter 11, in which, as we have seen, some elements of the Eucharist are indirectly alluded to when Don Quixote eats with the goatherds. Even though it is hard to affirm any kind of explicit religious intentions in Cervantes from the analysis of

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8 Edith Grossman explains: “Two *arrobas* is approximately fifty pounds; two *fanegas* is a little more than three bushels.” This means, first, that once Cervantes becomes the exclusive owner of the manuscript, his investment in the translation is higher than the one he made when buying the manuscript, and second, that he had to pay the Morisco an amount of produce that was not excessive, but may still have represented an uncommon investment for an individual of Cervantes’s status and income.
this semantic field, it is certainly possible to find a relationship between the series of scenes that extend over chapters 9 to 11 and the ritual of the Catholic Eucharist.

A component of this relationship is present in the elements of the transaction, because they refer to the two main elements of the Eucharist. Wheat is the origin of bread, and raisins are grapes that have not reached the state of wine. In his edition of *Don Quixote* published posthumously between 1833 and 1839, Diego Clemencín notes about raisins:

> Comida muy usada de los moros, a cuya costumbre alude aquí Cervantes, zahiriendo delicadamente al morisco de que se trata. Como la ley prohíbe el uso de vino a los musulmanes, se desquitan consumiendo muchas uvas frescas y pasas. Gabriel Alonso de Herrera en su libro *De Agricultura*, hace mención de la destreza con que las conservaban y curaban los moros granadíes (lib. I, capítulo XIX).

Cervantes alludes here to [raisins as] a type of food that is frequently used by moors, thus humiliating delicately the mentioned morisco. Since law forbids Muslims to drink wine they get even by eating fresh grapes and raisins. Gabriel Alonso de Herrera, in his book *De Agricultura* mentions the skill shown by Granadine moors in preserving and curing them (book 1, chapter 19).

Wheat acquires its value from the potential of being transformed into bread or being part of other meals. As suggested by Covarrubias's definition, it implies a point of convergence between the two men, since both agree about its value as nourishment and as a commodity. Following Clemencín, raisins can be read as products a Muslim Moor could receive because he could not receive wine, either as a valuable product or as a religious symbol. But the translator is not a Moor, he is a Morisco. This means that, at least publicly, he declares he is a Christian or is in the process of becoming one, according to the laws of the kingdom. In this scenario, the concession of products related to the Eucharist speaks of a spiritual relationship between Cervantes-character as an Old Christian and the Morisco translator, and of the opening of a space of convergence, even though it is not a neutral one, since the

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9 I thank Dr. Christophe Fricker for helping me see this and other details about the presence of the Eucharist in *Don Quixote*.

Catholic church maintains its precedence. This tension remains unresolved throughout the episode, and it exemplifies the way relationships mediated by food reveal different levels of conflict. In the episode of the translation, the narrator and his characters face the challenge of coexistence when religious and political laws do not permit equity among the participants. The same way the final product of the translation is a Castilian rendering of the story, the expected outcome of the conversion of the Moriscos is a Catholic and Castilian-speaking subject. But the narrator lacks part of the story he wants to tell, and the only way to recover it is by admitting the existence of the Arabic version and recognizing the presence of the Morisco as a subject who is valuable because he has the knowledge required for the translation.

The physical space of confluence where the transaction takes place, albeit Christian, cannot be completely understood if regarded only as a symbol of power imposed over the Morisco. In the text it is identified as a space of trust, where a transaction can be completed. Given this context, Clemencín’s suggestion (that the payment in wheat and raisins implies some kind of humiliation) does not seem coherent either with the plot or with the detail that it is the Morisco who establishes the products he wants as payment. Regarding the plot, even if the translator were openly Muslim, Cervantes needs to be on good terms with him to obtain the continuation of the story, so any kind of humiliation seems unnecessary. If we follow other implications in Clemencín’s note, however, we can think that by closing the deal in the cloister and using raisins in the transaction the author is bringing the Morisco closer to Christianity, because he is giving what pleases him while showing that there are some other pleasures, like the material and spiritual contact with wine, that could be enjoyed if he completed his conversion.
Elements of Catholic doctrine may also lie behind the form of the transaction and the election of the payment. The 21st session of the Council of Trent, held on July of 1562 (Cervantes was then 15), establishes:

For although the Lord Christ did institute in his last Supper this venerable Sacrament under the kinds of Bread and Wine, and so gave it to his Apostles, yet such institution and Tradition do not infer, that all Christian Believers are by God's Ordinance obliged to take it in both kinds. [21st Session, Chapter 1]¹¹

and shortly after:

. . . yet it must be considered, that Christ wholly and entirely, and the true Sacrament is taken under one kind alone; and therefore as to what concerns its fruits and advantages, those who take it in one kind alone, be not defrauded or deceived of any Grace necessary to Salvation. [21st Session, Chapter 3]

So we can think that by giving at least one of the ingredients that could make communion possible, the Christian is leaving the Morisco some margin for a further conversion, even if at the beginning he cannot drink wine.

In the episode with the translator of Don Quixote, foodstuffs play the role of elements that make it possible for the Christian and the Morisco to communicate and find a space of negotiation. Even though this space is not neutral, the actions of the characters allow readers to see more possibilities of interaction. Regarding the Morisco translator, Cervantes performs discourses and actions in which the problem of precedence is treated with a certain degree of respect. This attitude situates him in a position that differs from that of his character Don Quixote when he relates to Sancho and the goatherds. Even though there is a misunderstanding between them with regard to the status of Don Quixote, in the end he is given precedence by the peasants, while Cervantes tries to be pious but he does not force the Morisco to do what he expects from him. The value of equity and the principle of

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¹¹ The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent, Celebrated under Paul III, Julius III and Pius IV Bishops of Rome, Faithfully Translated into English (London, 1687). Microfilm. All quotes from this version.
inviting others to join the Christian community in this respect are regarded as the framework for the transaction.

4.2. **The Hand of Dulcinea**

The first thing the Morisco translator does as soon as he has opened the Arabic manuscript of *Don Quixote* is laugh. He laughs because he reads a handwritten note in the margin of a page. Cervantes asks, and the Morisco translates: “Esta Dulcinea del Toboso, tantas veces en esta historia referida, dicen que tuvo la mejor mano para salar puercos que otra mujer de toda la Mancha”. [I, 9] [“This Dulcinea of Toboso, referred to so often in this history, they say had the best hand for salting pork of any woman in all of La Mancha”].

A reference to food is associated with Dulcinea and presented to the reader as a mark of recognition. This procedure had already been used by Cervantes at the beginning of the novel when he introduced Alonso Quijano using his diet to single him out as an impoverished *hidalgo*, and is used again throughout the two parts with different characters. As shown in chapter 2, the name of Dulcinea has been chosen by Don Quixote to convey the sweetness and gentleness of the damsel. But in the handwritten note to the manuscript, Dulcinea, the sweet, introduces saltiness, in both senses of the word, to the story. Juan Carlos Rodríguez observes:

> . . . Cervantes vuelve a llevar al extremo la construcción de esa ficción real . . . doblando todos sus sentidos. Puesto que no es Aldonza Lorenzo sino Dulcinea del Toboso la que se convierte ahora (como Don Quijote) en símbolo de toda La Mancha a través del oficio de “saladora”. Evidentemente, el desdoblamiento nos deja atónitos quizá por fundir todos los planos del texto. Por unificar a un personaje puramente imaginario (Dulcinea) con otro personaje igualmente imaginario (Aldonza) que sin embargo en la ficción se nos ha presentado como auténtico y plausiblemente “real”. La labradora que sala puercos es sin embargo Dulcinea y no Aldonza, con lo que la alucinación narrativa llega al extremo.12

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12 Juan Carlos Rodríguez, *El escritor que compró su propio libro: Para leer el Quijote*, 156.
Cervantes takes the construction of that real fiction to the extreme... duplicating and unfolding all its senses. Because it is not Aldonza Lorenzo but Dulcinea del Toboso who becomes now (like Don Quixote) a symbol of La Mancha through her work as “saladora.” Evidently the duplication and unfolding leaves us astonished perhaps because it fuses all the levels of the text. Because it turns two characters into one: the purely fictitious Dulcinea, and Aldonza, who is equally fictitious but in fiction has been introduced as authentic and plausibly “real.” The peasant who salts pork is, however, Dulcinea and not Aldonza. The narrative hallucination reaches its peak.

One of the many senses that make the joke possible is related to the fact that the “best hand for salting pork” is attributed to the damsel, Dulcinea, and not the peasant Aldonza. This is a comic situation, among other factors, because a character from the world of chivalry is placed in the world of the peasants of La Mancha. But, as the readers know, Aldonza originally belonged to this world, so what seems out of place is her transformation into a damsel in the first place. Another component of the joke is the way information is presented. Even though this is not the first reference we have to Dulcinea del Toboso, it is the first detailed one we have about the activities of this female character, and in the joke these activities, which make perfect sense in rural La Mancha, are performed with particular skill, but by a supposedly noble lady. Therefore, there is a dimension of the joke that is related to a character who does not belong in the context in which she is placed.

Juan Carlos Rodríguez observes that in the passage Dulcinea becomes a symbol of La Mancha, but since her name is out of place (the real girl from La Mancha is Aldonza), then this symbolic operation turns unstable. Beyond semantics, there are historical reasons that support this effect. We have to remember that Cervantes is vague about the “lugar de la Mancha” where the gentleman Alonso Quijano lives. In contrast, when he talks about the object of the knight’s affection he is very specific. The girl lives in another “lugar” called El Toboso, and this specificity seems to be part of the many mechanisms that make the translator laugh.
The reason why Cervantes chooses El Toboso has been explained by Américo Castro in his study *Cervantes y los casticismos españoles*, by quoting an administrative document from the times of Philip II:

En 1576, El Toboso (Toledo) tenía “novecientos vecinos con los moriscos que de las Alpujarras del reino de Granada se trujeron; y nunca tuvo tantos vecinos ni población como ahora [...] Son todos labradores, [...] sino es el doctor Zarco de Morales, que goza de las libertades que gozan los hijosdalgo por ser graduado en el Colegio de los españoles de Bolonia, en Italia”. Cervantes empareja sarcásticamente el linaje de Dulcinea, o Aldonza Lorenzo, con los más ilustres de la Antigüedad o de España, y aúna en lazo de amor al Hidalgo Manchego y a la morisca tobosina en una proyección ilusoria de las antes mencionadas uniones. Lo morisco de Dulcinea es un tema latente, aunque bien entrelazado con la textura literaria de la vida quijotil.

In 1576, El Toboso (Toledo) had “nine hundred residents including the Moriscos who were brought from the Alpujarras of the kingdom of Granada; and it never had as many neighbors nor population as it does now [...] They are all peasants, [...] except the doctor Zarco de Morales, who enjoys the liberties enjoyed by gentlemen because he is a graduate of the Colegio de los españoles of Bologna, in Italy.” With sarcasm, Cervantes pairs up Dulcinea’s–or Aldonza Lorenzo’s–bloodline with the most illustrious ones from Antiquity and from Spain, and joins together with ties of love the Manchego gentleman and the Morisca from El Toboso in an illusory projection of the aforementioned unions. The Morisco character of Dulcinea is a latent subject, even though it is well intertwined with the literary texture of Don Quixote’s life.

If, as Castro shows in this passage and throughout his book, Dulcinea is actually a Morisca, then there is yet another way to think of the lack of agreement between the subject’s name and her actions. Not only is Dulcinea caught between the worlds of chivalry and peasantry, she is also trapped between the Christian and the Morisco worlds, and by salting pork she seems to be doing what New Christians had to do in the times of Cervantes: be baptized as

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13 The document refers to the forced relocation of the Moriscos of the Alpujarras after the rebellion of 1568-1571.

14 Américo Castro, *Cervantes y los casticismos españoles*, in Obra reunida (Madrid: Trotta, 2002), 98-99. Castro’s quotation comes from the Relaciones... de los pueblos de España, hechas por iniciativa de Felipe II. Castro’s hypotheses have been recently revalidated by Francisco J. Moreno Díaz in his book Los moriscos de la Mancha: Sociedad, economía y modos de vida de una minoría en la Castilla moderna (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2009), where he dedicates an appendix exclusively to presenting a list of names of Morisco landowners in Ciudad Real and El Toboso who transferred their lands to Christian owners in 1610, one year after the expulsion. The El Toboso register contains 30 names of Morisco residents (the most frequent last names are Zarco, Vicario, Chacón and Velázquez), many of them related to several transactions.
Christians (i.e. acquire a name that changes their previous condition and origin) and show in public their adoption of a new faith through actions such as salting pork.\(^\text{15}\)

Given the context and the anxieties that surrounded the consumption of pork, the reasons why Cervantes chooses this meat for a joke are understandable. As a writer, he knows he can build many layers of comic meaning just by bringing pork into the scene. But he does something else: in the origin of his joke and in one of the most important events for further plot development of Don Quixote, he places pork, an ingredient that could transform the act of eating into a conflict of identity, in the hands of a probable Morisca. The supposed quintessential Spanish ingredient is flavored by a hand that does not seem to belong to the Old Christian community. This choice works as an announcement for the reader: whenever we find this ingredient, we should pay attention, because things may not be as solid and traditional as they appear.

Even though the detail of Dulcinea salting pork seems casual, different written testimonies of the period show that the Moriscos were under constant surveillance. José Jiménez Lozano affirms: “. . . se obligaba incluso a los Moriscos a que guisaran en la calle para comprobar que lo hacían con manteca de cerdo y comían sus menudillos o magras”\(^\text{16}\) [“Moriscos were even forced to cook in the streets to prove they were doing so with lard and ate pork offal”], and Juan Eslava Galán paints a similar picture:

Sucesivas leyes prohibieron hablar árabe, vestir a la morisca, los baños, la cocina sin cerdo, el baile, el folklore... Las más inocentes actividades de los moros parecían sospechosas a los suspicaces misioneros cristianos. Cuando había boda de moros, las puertas de la casa debían permanecer abiertas para que la autoridad se cerciorase de que no practicaban ritos prohibidos. En los partos tenía que asistir una comadre cristiana por los mismos motivos. Y en los libros de bautismo se señalaba el nacido con la nota *morisco* o *moriscote*.\(^\text{17}\)

\(^{15}\) See José Jiménez Lozano, *Sobre judíos, moriscos y conversos: Convivencia y ruptura de las tres castas*, 3rd. Ed. (Valladolid: Ámbito, 2002), 123.

\(^{16}\) Idem.

\(^{17}\) Juan Eslava Galán, *Califas, guerreros, esclavas y eunucos: Los moros en España* (Madrid: Espasa, 2009), 263.
Successive laws forbade speaking Arabic, wearing Morisco fashions, baths, the habit of cooking without pork, dances, folklore . . . Even the most innocent activities of the Moors were regarded as suspicious by the Christian missionaries. Whenever there was a Moorish wedding, the doors of the house were to be left open so the authorities could be sure that no forbidden rites were performed. A Christian midwife should be present at labor for the same reasons. And in the baptism registries, the newborn was inscribed as Morisco or Moriscote.

Sometimes, the Moriscos were victims of cruel jokes, as it is stated in Damián Fonseca’s *Justa expulsión de los moriscos de España* (1611):

Estava en manos de cualquier cristiano hacerles pasar muchos días sin beber, porque con untar un poco la fuente del lugar con tocino no había remedio que en muchos días bebiesen agua dellas y destas burlas eran muchas y muy donosas las que hacían cada día.\(^{18}\)

It was in the hands of any Christian to make them spend several days without drinking, because it was enough to rub the public fountain with bacon [and] there was no way for them to drink water from it, and many of these jokes, and some of them very elaborate, were played every day.

These passages confirm that Moriscos were the target of humor and jokes because of their habits, especially their dietary customs. Given that the remark found in the manuscript does not belong either to Cervantes, the character, or to Cide Hamete Benengeli, the first author, nor even to the Morisco who is doing the job of translation, but to a fourth anonymous character, someone who has already read *Don Quixote* in Arabic, and who adds this detail for the sake of verisimilitude, we become aware of the fact that Cervantes and Cide Hamete are not the only ones who know the story. There are others who know the version to which Cervantes and we have access, but who also know other versions.

As readers we know that the annotator is somebody who writes in Arabic, because the first person to read the annotation, understand it, and laugh is the translator. We know that this annotator writes about the excellences of pork salted by Dulcinea, when pork is a prohibited, impure animal in Islam. We assume, then, that the writer of the note is a Moor

or a Morisco. In both cases, the joke adds up. If the character is a Moor, a practicing Muslim, he (or she) is trying to discharge himself (or herself) from any suspicion attributing Dulcinea’s fame to what others say, but simultaneously reveals an interest in what is forbidden. If the character is a Morisco, he is trying to be included in the practice of eating and tasting pork, and by underlining this pleasure, revealing that it is a novelty. Taking into account that in the times of Cervantes being “new” to the Christian faith was as problematic as not belonging to it—because the “newness” carried along with it the suspicion of insincere conversion—, confessing the pleasures of eating pork is a type of joke in which the situation is unfortunate both for the joker and for the subject of the joke no matter if the sentence that makes the joke possible is true or false. Besides the already ridiculous commentary about Dulcinea as the subject of the joke, the paradoxical situation of the subject of enunciation of the note also takes part in the Morisco translator’s laughter. Moreover, this annotator uses the word “dicen” (“they say”), and in this way he establishes a community of readers who know the story. Readers and versions of Don Quixote multiply, and what those readers share is a sensorial experience: at least one among them, but probably more than one (the plural gives an account of several people who “say” this) have tasted the meat of the pork salted by Dulcinea del Toboso. This sentence creates even more ambiguity, because it implies that some Moors or Moriscos, those who “say” Dulcinea had a good hand for curing meats, have been indulging both in the reading of the Arabic Don Quixote and in the consumption of pork. Because of the surveillance and the jokes against the Moriscos, the first idea that comes to mind is that this is a note intended for Old Christians. However, since it is the Morisco translator who first laughs at it, the note might as well have the character of an inside joke among Moriscos. After all, in the fictional world the book is written and commented on in Arabic, and it is just an accident that it ends up in the hands of the Christian narrator. Whichever the case, the effect of the short, humorous note is a
sudden multiplication of Arabic subjects within the Castilian space in which the novel is written and read.

With the action of salting pork, Dulcinea is either trying very hard to be recognized as Christian, or she is making a big effort at pretending so, since the marginal note says that she salts and preserves pork, not that she actually eats it. Eric Clifford Graff summarizes well this aspect of the text:

The Morisco translator does more than laugh at the actual object of Don Quijote’s desire; he participates in a kind of intercultural mockery that is ultimately geopolitical in nature. He mocks the Castilian’s ethnic anxiety, his need to prove, by eating pork, that neither he nor his love object is Jewish or Muslim. The Morisco’s laughter discloses the knowledge he shares with the Arab glosser, who recognizes that Don Quijote’s beloved is also from the region called La Mancha (from “pastureland” but also literally “stain,” “blemish,” or “stigma”) and therefore quite likely Semitic despite her excellent reputation for salting pork. . . . This passage, then, exposes the historical and ethnic truth of the hero’s earlier fantasy about Dulcinea as a modern Jarifa in *Don Quijote* 1.4. 19

Food becomes an element of recognition, but at the same time a reason for anxiety. Eating this specific ingredient turns into the mark of an Old Christian-Spanish origin, and into the sign of those who are trying to prove it precisely because they do not have it. Graf accurately refers to an “ethnic anxiety,” which could be considered as a manifestation of the anxiety of belonging.

In the first part of *Don Quixote*, the first symptoms of this anxiety are interspersed within the bigger picture of an elaborate joke. One of the elements that adds up to such a joke, and that seems to equally amuse the readers and make them uncomfortable is the fact that the situation does not have a right outcome: Either Dulcinea consumes the right food for dubious reasons, so the anxiety is placed on her, or she does so because she has honestly converted. But then the remark, written by an Arab hand, calls attention to this fact and

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19 Eric Clifford Graf, *Cervantes and Modernity: Four Essays on Don Quijote*, (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2007), 37. The episode referred is an early one in which Don Quixote identifies himself with the Moor Abindarráez, the protagonist of romances and a novel (*El Abencerraje*), and recites some verses about his being in love with a beautiful Moor woman called Jarifa.
makes this conversion suspicious, creating anxiety in the multiple readers of the note who are moved to doubt because the source of the comment comes from outside the Old Christian community, and because they are also interrogated about their own dietary habits and motivations.

There is a parodic nobility implied in Castro’s analysis which also leads to laughter and questions the ideas of precedence that appear in other moments of *Don Quixote*. In the comment to the Arabic manuscript it is Dulcinea, the damsel, not Aldonza Lorenzo, the peasant, who has the *best* hand for salting pork. There are three facts to observe here: First, salting meat means to cure it, to prepare it for its preservation; second, the knowledge of this procedure was especially appreciable in a time when few effective methods for preserving food were known; and third, not only does Dulcinea, the damsel, know the art, but she is a master at it to the point that her fame is, according to what is written in the margin of the text of Cide Hamete, known throughout La Mancha. Therefore, as Castro shows, what gives her a parodic nobility—besides her invented bloodline from El Toboso—and confirms her status is her experience. Within the boundaries of parody, Cervantes recreates the epic idea of the union between the best: the maddest man in La Mancha, whose chivalry is created by himself, loves the greatest pork salter of the region, whose fame comes from her culinary experience.

In this sense, the anxiety of belonging has an ethnic component but also a social one. As a noble lady, Dulcinea del Toboso is not supposed to work with her hands the way the peasant Aldonza Lorenzo does, but to dedicate herself to high arts and delicate crafts, and for amusement only. In the chivalric world, women either play musical instruments or, at best, are shown working with fine textiles that will ornament their own figures or will be given to the knights who fight battles on their behalf. Showing a lady working the way Dulcinea does breaks this logic on both sides: it counters the logic of the chivalric world by
turning the image of the lady into a grotesque one, and it makes the impossibility of the existence of Dulcinea visible in the peasant milieu of La Mancha, since a woman who knows how to salt pork cannot be noble or be named as one.

Moreover, dealing with meat and with pork indicates some rustic and unladylike manners, features that will be confirmed later in the novel. Taking some elements from the traditional figure of the *serrana*, Cervantes describes Dulcinea with characteristics that would be traditionally attributed to men. She has the strength to deal with a whole ham, and this strength is recalled by Sancho when he says she could throw the bar, yell and joke just like a man:

–Bien la conozco –dijo Sancho–, y sé decir que tira tan bien una barra como el más forzudo zagal de todo el pueblo. ¡Vive el Dador, que es moza de chapa, hecha y derecha y de pelo en pecho, y que puede sacar la barba del lodo a cualquier caballero andante, o por andar, que la tuviere por señora! ¡Oh hideputa, qué rejo que tiene, y qué voz! Sé decir que se puso un día encima del campanario del aldea a llamar unos zagales suyos que andaban en un barbecho de su padre, y, aunque estaban de allí más de media legua, así la oyeron como si estuvieran al pie de la torre. Y lo mejor que tiene es que no es nada melindrosa, porque tiene mucho de cortesana: con todos se burla y de todo hace mueca y donaire. Ahora digo, señor Caballero de la Triste Figura, que no solamente puede y debe vuestra merced hacer locuras por ella, sino que, con justo título, puede desesperarse y ahorcarse; que nadie habrá que lo sepa que no diga que hizo demasiado de bien, puesto que le lleve el diablo. Y querría ya verme en camino, sólo por vella; que ha muchos días que no la veo, y debe de estar ya trocada, porque gasta mucho la faz de las mujeres andar siempre al campo, al sol y al aire. [I, 25]

“I know her very well,” said Sancho, “and I can say that she can throw a metal bar just as well as the brawniest lad in the village. Praise our Maker, she’s a fine girl in every way, sturdy as a horse, and just the one to pull any knight errant or about to be errant, who has her for his lady, right out or any mudhole he’s fallen into! Damn, but she’s strong! And what a voice she has! I can tell you that one day she stood on top of the village bell tower to call some shepherds who were in one of her father’s fields, and even though they were more than a half a league away, they heard her just as if they were standing at the foot of the tower. And the best thing about her is that she’s not a prude. In fact, she’s something of a trollop: she jokes with everybody and laughs and makes fun of everything. Now I say, Señor Knight of the Sorrowful Face, that your grace not only can and should do crazy things for her, but with good cause...

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*Serrana* is both the name of a Spanish poetic form and of its main character: a woman who lives in the mountains or forests, who exhibits some masculine and/or uncivilized features, and who competes with men or attacks them due to an unfortunate love.
you can be desperate and hang yourself; there won't be anybody who knows about it who won't say you did the right thing, even if the devil carries you off. And I'd like to be on my way, just for the chance to see her; I haven't seen her for a long time, and she must be changed by now, because women's faces become very worn when they're always out in the fields, in the sun and wind.”

The more we read the description, the more we are aware of an anxiety that is also sexual in nature. Don Quixote being an old and thin man who is frequently beaten up by peasants and mule drivers, we have to wonder about what makes Aldonza attractive for him. We have to remember that, even though the love of Don Quixote for Dulcinea is idyllic, it comes from a previous moment in which it was Aldonza, the peasant, who attracted Alonso Quijano, the gentleman: “en un lugar cerca del suyo había una moza labradora de muy buen parecer, de quien un tiempo anduvo enamorado, aunque, según se entiende, ella jamás lo supo, ni le dio cata” [I, 1] [“It is believed that in a nearby village there was a very attractive peasant girl with whom he had once been in love, although she, apparently, never knew or noticed”].

Several Cervantistas (Carroll B. Johnson among them, in his book *Madness and Lust*) have noted that this sexual anxiety is related to Don Quixote's age and to his poor physical condition. The physical difference between the two characters underlines the most physical level of interpretation of the Augustinian metaphor of the different grains that form the bread of community, because such community cannot be built when the converging seeds are not equally nurturing or strong, and therefore they cannot be adequately mixed. The problem around the figure of Dulcinea is that both she and Don Quixote are depicted as “bad seeds”: she is too masculine, he is too old and weak; her origins are dubious, and since he falls in love with her, his kinship is questioned as well; she is a peasant to laugh at, he is a madman who is the constant victim of jokes. The only possible union is the one that takes place in the text, in the humorous moments in which their unlikely love is brought to the scene.
Another form of precedence that is questioned is related to the double status of Don Quixote as a knight and as an hidalgo. From the psychological point of view, one of the causes for anxiety is the presence of expectations and models up to which a subject cannot live. When placed in a situation in which high expectations are involved, the subject reacts with fear and anxiety. The problem is that generally it is the very subject who has created the model and the expectations that trigger his anxiety. In the case of Alonso Quijano/Don Quixote, the expectations are high in both worlds. We tend to be more familiar with the imaginary sphere, in which he has set the stakes high in accord with the super-human descriptions of the knights in his books, who are meant to perform successfully both on the battlefield and with their lovers, but there are also high demands in the world of the gentleman, where a man is expected to be a man first because he belongs to the male gender, second because he belongs to a social class that is supposed to be superior to others (at least superior to that of the peasants, for what matters to the relationship between hidalgos and pecheros in Alonso Quijano’s lugar), and third because he is a subject of a conquering power, and as such has the right and duty of carrying a sword. There are several ways to relate these expectations to food and to the joke about Dulcinea. First, there is the tension between the firm, strong hand of Dulcinea, trained to salt pork and throw the bar, and the weakening hand of the knight. According to the model, a damsel’s delicate hand should be guarded by a strong masculine hand. In the case of Alonso Quijano, however, strength has diminished due to his aging and also to the changes in his diet once he has decided to become a knight. Second, the tension is established between the conquered Morisca and the Spanish conqueror, whose habits and beliefs are believed to be superior. Third, there is a transposition between the active and the passive roles: at the beginning of the novel, Alonso Quijano is introduced as a consumer/receiver of food, and in the Arabic note, Dulcinea is presented as a producer/giver. Isolated, the action of curing pork could be read as
submissive if we consider the possibility of Dulcinea/Aldonza being a Morisca, because she would be involved in preparing a product destined for the Old Christian table, but read along with the general description of Aldonza, it acquires several notes of irony.

Two different manifestations of the anxiety of belonging take place in the moment in which the manuscript is found. One is related to the Moriscos, the translator and probably Dulcinea, who show the difficulties of proving an authentic conversion. The other comes from Cervantes, the author-character, and from Alonso Quijano. Cervantes brings to the foreground a problem of reliability. When he discovers the manuscript, he comments about the story of Don Quixote, as told by Cide Hamete Benengeli:

Si a ésta se le puede poner alguna objeción cerca de su verdad, no podrá ser otra sino haber sido su autor arábigo, siendo muy propio de los de aquella nación ser mentirosos; aunque, por ser tan nuestros enemigos, antes se puede entender haber quedado falto en ella que demasiado. [I, 9]

If any objection can be raised regarding truth of this one, it can only be that this author was Arabic, since the people of that nation are very prone to telling falsehoods, but because they are such great enemies of ours, it can be assumed that he has given us too little rather than too much.

The narrator, then, plays with the uncertainty of the source and with the need to base all his story upon a non-Christian source, and by doing so creates in his Castilian-speaking readers a certain uneasiness because, like the Moriscos who eat pork in the story, they are indulging in the guilty pleasure of reading a story written in the language and by the hand of an “enemy.”

In the realm of the characters, the anxiety experienced by Alonso Quijano has a similar cause. If Dulcinea is a Morisca, he is dedicating his efforts to a damsel whose Christianity is in dispute.

In the first part of Don Quixote, the responses to the anxiety of belonging are mediated through food and humor. If the translator and Dulcinea are New Christians, they can laugh, escape the Muslim laws and introduce pork in their existence. Even though the source is not “pure,” the narrator decides to use it, to pay for the translation with raisins and
wheat, and to sing praises to Cide Hamete from time to time. And the solution of Alonso Quijano is to defend Dulcinea’s imaginary kinship and relocate her in the world of chivalry, where it is courage and love that are praised.\(^{21}\) Some of the conflicts, nevertheless, are not completely solved, and they reappear later in the novel. Outside the fictional world of *Don Quixote*, the relationship between Christians and Moriscos follows a different path.

### 4.3. Salt, Wine, and Ham Bones

A change of narrative attitude occurs between the first and the second part of *Don Quixote*. The narrative voice is slightly bitter and resentful, especially when it comes to dealing with the apocryphal *Quixote* published by the still mysterious Alonso Fernández de Avellaneda. Gone is the playful resource of the interpolated *novelle*, and the characters seem to be obsessed with disenchantment. Even *Don Quixote* begins to recover from his delusions. Sancho gains recognition, not only because he fulfills his wish of ruling an island, but

\(^{21}\) The love between a Christian knight and a Moor woman is a topic in chivalric ballads. As explained earlier, even before the introduction of Cide Hamete’s manuscript, in his first sally Don Quixote identifies himself with Abindarráez, the Moor protagonist of the chivalric legend of Abindarráez and the beautiful Jarifa, sung in ballads and told in the novel *El abencerraje*. In the same episode, Don Quixote also believes he is Valdovinos, another knight who is in love with a Moorish damsel. Cervantes comments that this story is “known to children, acknowledged by youths, celebrated, and even believed by the old, and, despite all this, no truer than the miracles of Mohammed” [I, 5], where the problem of dealing with stories of Arabic origin is stated again.

One of the ballads dedicated to Valdovinos is a dialogue between the knight and his lover. The knight appears concerned because he is hiding his love from his Emperor, and because he is breaking the Christian law. One of the main concerns of the knight is related to dietary laws and prohibitions. These are the last verses of the ballad:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{mas vos mora y yo cristiano} & \quad \text{But you’re Moor and I am Christian,} \\
\text{hacemos muy mala vida} & \quad \text{And this is not a good life,} \\
\text{comemos la carne en viernes} & \quad \text{For we eat our meat on Friday} \\
\text{lo que mi ley defendía} & \quad \text{Just the sin my law prescribes.} \\
\text{siete años había, siete} & \quad \text{It is seven years, yes, seven} \\
\text{que yo misa no la oía;} & \quad \text{That I have not gone to Mass.} \\
\text{si el emperador lo sabe} & \quad \text{If the Emperor sees my doings} \\
\text{la vida me costaría.} & \quad \text{I would pay them with my life.} \\
\text{−Por tus amores, Valdovinos,} & \quad \text{−For your love, oh Valdovinos,} \\
\text{cristiana me tornaría.} & \quad \text{into a Christian I would turn.} \\
\text{−Yo, señora, por los vuestros,} & \quad \text{−And for yours, my noble lady,} \\
\text{moro de la morería.} & \quad \text{I’d become a Moorish man.}
\end{align*}
\]
because the narrator pays more attention to him. Humor turns more cruel and painful for both protagonists. Defeats are less and less joyful. Death awaits in the end. The possible causes as well as the effects of these changes have been widely studied by Cervantes scholars. Some are attributed to changes in the life and fortune of Cervantes, others to the evolution of the text itself. In the episodes and passages related to food, changes are undoubtedly relevant. The narrator of the second part keeps reminding us that the structure is more neat now, and he even corrects some confusing passages from the first part. We perceive him as a more serious craftsman, and this attitude translates into the realm of foodstuffs. As readers, we attend several banquets, a practice that is absent in the first part, where we witnessed symbolic feasts but were not allowed into the world of the rich the way we are in the Quixote of 1615. And what we see and hear there is certainly symptomatic, as we have seen in chapter 3.

Following the traces of food in the story, however, we encounter something else. In the middle of a novel that, using many parodic resources, criticizes different practices of exclusion, we find a puzzling scene marked by signs of welcoming and inclusion. It is a relatively brief episode with further resonances in the plot. Despite the general ironic tone, that harmonizes with other scenes we have discussed in the previous chapter, the contrasting optimism and the literal laughter we hear in this specific passage seem to indicate that, for a brief moment, both narrator and characters seem to have found a way out of the anxiety of belonging.

The episode is found in chapter 54, and presents the encounter between Sancho Panza and his neighbor, the recently expelled Morisco Ricote. After a mock battle and other tricks played by the courtiers of the dukes, Sancho decides he does not want to be the governor of the island Barataria anymore. As we saw in chapter 3, one of his reasons for leaving office is the impossibility of getting a decent meal. Riding his donkey, the squire
leaves the unfortunate island, which is not surrounded by any sea and may as well be a village. On the road he encounters a group of six German pilgrims who are singing and asking for charity. Food is present from the beginning of the scene because Sancho’s first impulse is to give away half of the bread and the cheese he is carrying, which happen to be all the food he has left. Immediately they ask for money, and Sancho confesses he does not have any. He is about to leave them behind when one of the pilgrims recognizes Sancho and is visibly happy to see him. He identifies himself as Ricote, his former Morisco neighbor and owner of a store in Sancho’s village. Sancho asks about his current garments and manners, and expresses his concern about seeing him after the expulsion, since Ricote is breaking the law and can be severely punished. Ricote promises to give him details, but first they decide to eat. They leave the road, sit on the floor and improvise a meal with the content of their bags. They share bread, nuts, cheese, ham bones, olives, and something Sancho sees for the first time: caviar. They also share generous amounts of wine, although Sancho and Ricote eat more and drink less. The other pilgrims fall asleep, and then Ricote takes Sancho apart and recounts the expulsion. He admits that the King was right, because Ricote himself had seen that many of his fellow Moriscos were indeed plotting against Spain. He confesses that he had foreseen the expulsion and that, as a consequence, he had decided to leave Spain first to look for a place to live, and to hide a treasure where nobody, not even his family, could find it. His change in garments and manners has to do with this preparatory trip in which he has discovered that Germany is a good place to live, and his reasons to come back are related to the search for his treasure and for his family. Sancho informs his neighbor that Ricote’s brother-in-law has taken his wife and daughter to Algiers, and Ricote reaffirms his decision to look for the treasure before meeting his family. He invites Sancho to follow him, but Sancho declines, given his recent experience with wealth and power, and given that he has to reunite with his master.
Even though at the end of the chapter Sancho and his neighbor part ways, the story of the Morisco does not end there, and this brings us back to the question of the importance of Ricote and of the meal that comes along with his appearance for the development of the plot in the second part of *Don Quixote*. On this occasion, food operates as the “anchor to reality” described in chapters 1 and 2, but this function gains in complexity here because the communal meal that Sancho shares with the German pilgrims and Ricote (which is a reminder of the ones that happened in the first part of the novel, especially the one with the goatherds) is the first step toward the ending. Starting with the moment in which Sancho renounces his dream of being a governor and goes back to eating and drinking as a peasant, the novel is marked by disenchantment. It is not the one Don Quixote expects during the second part (the “disenchantment” of Dulcinea, whom he has seen transformed into an ugly peasant by the beginning of the volume), but a disenchantment of the characters with their roles.\(^{22}\) Sancho comes back to reality first, eating, drinking, and seeing that outside the island and the chivalric world events like the expulsion have consequences. Later he meets his master and goes back to the roads for a short time, heading to Barcelona, and there Don Quixote finally and literally hits bottom, in the unfortunate battle with the Knight of the White Moon. The last “happy encounter” Don Quixote witnesses before his final defeat is the one of Ricote with his daughter, aboard a galley and after an adventure at sea with the outcome of a love story between the Morisca and a Christian man who is held captive and whom Don Quixote wants to help. This is, indeed, his last attempt to behave like a knight. But he is defeated before he can act. The Christian gentleman is rescued by others, and the Morisca and her father try to remain in Spain without the knight’s help. Don Quixote is headed toward his own death.

\(^{22}\) Worth underlining is the paradox of seeing Sancho, whose apparent task throughout the second part is to “disenchant” Dulcinea, taking into his hands, as a character, the structural task of disenchanting himself, his master, and the reader to conclude the story.
As we have seen, when the first part of *Don Quixote* was published, speculating and joking about the Morisco origins of the characters was a symptom of the anxiety of belonging. Although the Moriscos were the target of those jokes, their relationship with other Spaniards seemed to be one of relatively pacific coexistence, as is depicted by Cervantes in his agreement with the translator of the Arabic *Don Quixote*. People still remembered the rebellion of the Alpujarras, that was especially significant because it had increased the Morisco population in Castile, but historians agree in affirming that the Moriscos from La Mancha were not regarded as belligerent or especially dangerous. When the second part of the novel was published, the situation had changed, and the Moriscos were not subjects of laughter anymore. They were subjects of hatred or pity, because with the ascent of Philip III to the throne, the threat of expulsion had turned into a decree made public in 1609, four years after the publishing of the first part of *Don Quixote*. That year, Moriscos were expelled from Valencia, and in 1614, one year before the second part of the novel would be printed, they were expelled from Castile.

The expulsion of the Moriscos was a traumatic event that affected all parties involved. For the expelled, it meant the deprivation of households, fortunes, land, and nation, and the beginning of a pilgrimage through Europe and North Africa in search of new places to settle. For the kingdom that expelled them, the expulsion meant a sudden loss of population (around 300,000 Moriscos left Spain between 1609 and 1614) and of a large amount of qualified labor. Diverse approaches to the history of seventeenth-century Spain agree on the economic impact of this decision in specific areas such as Valencia and Seville, but its psychological and social impacts are still difficult to assess. It is possible to

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imagine that the expulsion affected many Spanish subjects who had to deal daily with the anxiety of belonging, either by themselves or through their acquaintances. If many Spaniards of mixed origins were already aware of the fact that any suspicious activity could lead to an interrogation by the Inquisition, and that they should be prepared to prove their purity of blood, the expulsion probably added more tension. Francisco Márquez Villanueva considers this aspect and relates it to Cervantes himself:

¿Cuántas expulsiones puede soportar un pueblo sin desintegrarse o sin volverse en parasito de sí mismo? Cervantes, salpicado probablemente de alguna mácula de linaje y de una forma u otra, hombre sin sitio en aquella España de 1609, entreveía tal vez un torvo futuro, preñado de infinitas exclusiones y discordias fratricidas, hacia el cual se daba un firme paso con los decretos de Felipe III y de su “Atlante” el de Lerma.24

How many expulsions can a people bear without disintegrating or becoming a parasite of itself? Cervantes, probably spattered with some kinship stain and, one way or another, a man without place in that Spain of 1609, had a glimpse of a dark future, full of infinite exclusions and fratricidal discord, the decrees of Philip III and his “Atlas” Lerma being the first step toward it.

This observation remains valid even if we take into account Jean Canavaggio’s reflections on the place of Cervantes’s ethnic origins within his works. Even if he was not experiencing the anxiety in his own person and family, the creation of such a character as Ricote shows that he was aware of the anxiety of belonging in the case of the Morisco population, and that he could perceive tensions in his society because of the decree of expulsion. If Americo Castro is right and in the 1605 novel Cervantes had managed to introduce characters who did not belong to the sphere of Old Christian Spain, such as the translator of the manuscript and maybe Dulcinea, in the second part the effect is accentuated because the encounter between

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24 Francisco Márquez Villanueva, Personajes y temas del Quijote (Madrid: Taurus, 1975), 306. Márquez villanueva uses the word “Atlante” (Atlas) ironically in the passage. This surname comes from Cervantes’s writing. In his posthumous novel Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda, a Morisco character who is loyal to Spain foresees the expulsion and, reacting against his own kin, poetically directs an apostrophe to the young Philip III and to his counselor, the Duke of Lerma, demanding the definitive decree. In this speech, the Morisco calls Lerma “nuevo Atlante del peso desta Monarquía” (“The new Atlas who carries the weight of this Monarchy”).
Sancho and Ricote takes place in a Spain that has been declared free of the Morisco presence (although many Moriscos remained or returned), and even sung in poetry as such.\textsuperscript{25}

In the Spain of the late Cervantes, the kitchen seems to be the last bastion that Moriscos resist abandoning even after being expelled. Their hands, and sometimes the memories of what those hands used to cook, keep feeding the declining kingdom. An announcement of this could be seen in \textit{Don Quixote} through the hand of Dulcinea, but there are other printed testimonies of this presence. Concretely, the \textit{Arte de cocina, pastelería, vizadochería y conservería}, written by the head cook in Philip III's court, Francisco Martínez Montiño. In this book, published in 1611, in between the publishing of the two parts of \textit{Don Quixote} and two years after the first decree of expulsion, Martínez Montiño presents several recipes that relate to the Morisco world, at least by name: two very similar recipes to prepare hen, “Gallina morisca” and “Gallina a la morisca,” a pastry made of dates, and especially an exhaustive explanation in two parts on how to make, and then how to properly cook couscous. In this case, Martínez Montiño still uses the word \textit{alcuzcuz}, closer to its Arabic origin.

In the “Gallina morisca” recipe we reencounter those ingredients that were much appreciated by Cervantes's characters:

Asarás un par de gallinas, y luego harás los cuartos: y cortarás un poco de tocino en dados muy menudos, y los freirás muy bien hasta que estén blancos, y echale un poco de cebolla picada muy menuda, y ahogarás las gallinas con este tocino, y cebolla, echale caldo quanto se cubran, y echale un poquito de vino, un poco de vinagre: y si hubiera un poco de manteca fresca se le puede echar. Sazona con todas las especias:

\textsuperscript{25} See for example Gaspar Aguilar’s epic poem \textit{Expulsión de los moros de España por la S.C.R. Majestad del Rey Don Felipe III, nuestro Señor}, published in 1610. Critical edition: Gaspar Aguilar, \textit{Expulsión de los moros de España}, ed. by Manuel Ruiz Lagos (Seville: Guadalmena, 1999). It has to be noted, however, that the decree of expulsion allowed Morisco children younger than six years old to stay, only if the father was an Old Christian and the mother was Morisca, and not vice versa. According to James B. Tueller, even this was a decision that had to do with food: “Idiáquez believed that Morisco children younger than fifteen should be required to stay. Lerma disagreed believing that only those seven and younger should stay. The members of the theological council wondered where the milk would come from to feed so many infants.” James B. Tueller, \textit{Good and Faithful Christians} (New Orleans: University Press of the South), 163.
Roast a pair of hens, and cut them in quarters: and cut a little of bacon diced very small, and fry them well until they are white, and add a little of finely chopped onion, and cover the hens with this bacon, and onion, pour stock until they are covered, and pour a little wine, a little vinegar, and if there is a little fresh lard it can be added. Season with all the spices: in this dish do not add eggs. It should taste a little acid: if you want to add some chopped vegetables, you can do so.

As with the jokes around Dulcinea curing pork, it is possible that, given the ingredients, the word “morisca” is being used in a symbolic way, since the hen is mixed and fried with bacon, and then cooked in wine, vinegar, and lard. As we have seen, with the exception of vinegar, these were all problematic ingredients for the Morisco population, so the idea of mixing, frying and boiling poultry along with all of them can be read either as the expression of the project of assimilation of the Moriscos in Philip II’s reign, or yet as one more humorous comment about the Moriscos’ endogamy and “tocinofobia.” But, since there is no indication of this humorous twist and no other reflection about the dish is made in Martínez Montiño’s writing, there is also the possibility of this dish actually coming from the Moriscos. If this is the case, there is certainly no difference in it between forbidden and non-forbidden ingredients, so there is nothing in its preparation to be hidden, and it could be equally prepared inside a house or outside, for everybody to see. In other words, there is nothing to hide, and therefore no reason for persecution. It is important to remember that Martínez Montiño’s book is, according to its author, the fruit of years of experience in the Royal kitchens, which means that couscous, dates, and *gallinas moriscas* were probably found in the menu of the dignitaries who would later decide to expel the Moriscos from Spain. Beyond these culinary contradiction and speculations, the recipes from the Royal palace are useful

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here to understand better the way Morisco traditions found their way into the Spanish society.

In the first part of *Don Quixote*, the hand of Dulcinea becomes visible through the quality of its labor. Cervantes’s writing leads the eyes of his readers to the hand, and through the hand, to the woman who skillfully prepares and preserves food. In the second part, the return of the expelled becomes visible through the figure of Sancho’s neighbor Ricote, and as soon as he starts speaking, he underlines his former occupation, his participation in labor, to be recognized: “—¿Cómo y es posible, Sancho Panza hermano, que no conoces a tu vecino Ricote el morisco, tendero de tu lugar?” [II, 54] [“How is it possible, my brother Sancho Panza, that you don’t know your neighbor Ricote the Morisco, a shopkeeper in your village?”]. Through this declaration it is possible to see how labor and economic significance reopen the gates that seemed to be closed by the expulsion. In *Good and Faithful Christians*, James B. Tueller observes a connection between the insistence of some regions in defending “their” Moriscos and the wealth they possessed:

... many prelates and city councils responded [to the decree of expulsion] with a defense of their Moriscos. For example, both the Cathedral Chapter and municipal council of Ubeda in Andalusia wrote in about the Moriscos living there ... Of course, the city had an economic motive in this concern. Without mentioning their interest directly, they pointed to one very old Morisca who had lived a good Christian life and had property valued over 1,000 ducats. She had no heir and had already been demonstrably charitable. The municipal council of Ubeda did not want to lose her estate, nor the tax contributions of the other families. Did they then exaggerate her good Christianity to gain an exception or was her generosity merely linked to her true conversion? In either case the Ubedano definition of good Christian was quite different from the royal viewpoint.27

In fact, it is Ricote himself who declares shortly after that he is looking for a hidden treasure, an affirmation that simultaneously reinforces some of the prejudices held by the Old Christians against the Moriscos and makes the economic significance of this group visible.

Carroll B. Johnson attributes the choice of the name of Ricote by Cervantes as a resource to underline his hidden wealth, interpreting the ending -ote as an augmentative to the word rico (rich), with the same derogatory/comic effect that this ending has in the name of Don Quixote. However, both Francisco Márquez Villanueva in Moros, moriscos y turcos de Cervantes, and Antonio Domínguez Ortiz and Bernard Vincent in their Historia de los moriscos, note that one of the areas in which Moriscos managed to stay with the help of the local Old Christians and priests was the Ricote valley, in Murcia:

En el valle de Ricote también quedaron bastantes [moriscos], unos legalmente, entrando en casas religiosas o contrayendo matrimonio con un cristiano viejo. Otros (all y en otras partes de España) ausentándose, escondiéndose, disimulándose entre las tropas de mendigos, peregrinos, gitanos maleantes y bandidos.28

Many [Moriscos] stayed in the Ricote valley, some legally entering religious institutions or marrying Old Christians. Others (there and elsewhere in Spain) managed not to be found, hiding, merging with the legions of beggars, pilgrims, gypsy, criminals and bandits.

The final lines of this description coincide with the situation of Ricote when he encounters Sancho, which reinforces the connection. The Moriscos from Ricote were among the last to be expelled from Spain: the final order for the forceful departure of 2500 people was given by Philip III to the Count of Salazar in 1613. As previously shown at the moment of baptism, Morisco children were registered as Morisco or Moriscote, so the historical reasons for Cervantes’s choice of this name seem to be justified.

Ricote’s participation in Spain through labor is a subject to which we will return later in this chapter. But to have a clear picture of the significance of the episode in which the Morisco appear, it is necessary first to analyze in detail the roles of food in the encounter.

The beginning of the roadside meal in which Sancho and the pilgrims participate is similar to the one described by Cervantes in Rinconete and Cortadillo.

28 Antonio Domínguez Ortiz and Bernard Vincent, Historia de los moriscos: Vida y tragedia de una minoría, 250.
Tendiéronse en el suelo, y, haciendo manteles de las yerbas, pusieron sobre ellas pan, sal, cuchillos, nueces, rajas de queso, huesos mondos de jamón, que si no se dejaban mascar, no defendían el ser chupados. Pusieron asimismo un manjar negro que dicen que se llama cavial, y es hecho de huevos de pescados, gran despertador de la colambre. No faltaron aceitunas, aunque secas y sin adobo alguno, pero sabrosas y entretenidas. Pero lo que más campeó en el campo de aquel banquete fueron seis botas de vino, que cada uno sacó la suya de su alforja; hasta el buen Ricote, que se había transformado de morisco en alemán o en tudesco, sacó la suya, que en grandeza podía competir con las cinco. [II, 54]

They stretched out on the ground, and with the grass as their tablecloth, they set out bread, salt, knives, nuts, pieces of cheese, and bare hambones that could not be gnawed but could still be sucked. They also set out a black food called cabial that is made of fish eggs and is a great awakener of thirst. There was no lack of olives, dried without any brine but good-tasting and flavorful. What stood out most on the field of that banquet, however, were six wineskins, for each of them took one out of his bag; even good Ricote, transformed from a Morisco into a German or Teutonic, took out his own wineskin, comparable in size to the other five.

As shown in the exemplary novel and in the episode of the goatherds, these informal, spontaneous meals are occasions used by Cervantes to gather people from different backgrounds, classes and, in this case, nations, and make their encounter possible. We can even see that the number of casual participants is repeated: the pilgrims are six, as there were six goatherds in the first part, which suggests a visual pattern for Cervantes’s roadside meal scenes. But a difference can be observed: the pilgrims and Sancho do not set apart a place of honor for anyone. They sit in a circle and no precedence is established. Sancho and the pilgrims organize their meal the way the goatherds of the first part would have organized it if Don Quixote was not present. A community of equals is established precisely in the absence of the figure who was supposed to grant this equity. As a result, the meal Sancho, Ricote, and the pilgrims share becomes the episode of Don Quixote in which the characters are closest to the model of community St. Augustine compared to the bread made of many grains.

The senses of community and equity are supported by several actions of the participants. In an article about this episode, “Critiquing the Elite in the Barataria and
‘Ricote’ Food Episodes in Don Quijote II,” Carolyn Nadeau explains that the presentation of foodstuffs in the preparatives for the meal follows a ritual order that can be found across different levels and countries in early modern societies. The author cites Ruperto de Nola’s *Libro de guisados* (Spanish edition, 1525) as one of the documents where it is stated that a service should be started by placing salt and bread on the table. As we saw in the previous chapter, this rule is kept in the books published in the early 1600s, as it appears in the passage of Diego de Granado’s *Libro del arte de cozina* mentioned before.

Nadeau reads the presence of salt as a sign of loyalty and friendship, but also as a particular mark of everyday knowledge and of social status:

> What is immediately apparent is the presence of salt. Not only do travelers carry it with them, but also all the food laid—with the exception of the walnuts—depends on salt for its flavor. In fact, the processed items of cheese, ham, caviar, and olives are all defined by salt. It preserves what was their respective natural state of milk, pork, fish eggs, and fruit, and thus converts them into long-lasting staples for the working class.\(^{29}\)

If on the table of the rich salt is part of the ritual, on the table of the workers it reveals new attributes related to its properties for preservation. Moreover, the appreciation of the value of food preserved this way can be extended to other impoverished individuals such as the pilgrims in the scene, who are not workers in the strict sense of the word, but do carry some products that are distinctive of the workers’ diet, such as caviar. Nadeau notes:

> What today we think of as the ultimate in extravagant food, constituted then, together with the picked over ham bone, meager fare for the traveling company. Like the olla podrida that crosses social barriers, fish eggs cut across social boundaries as they were both consumed as cheap food for fishermen and presented to kings throughout medieval and early modern Europe.\(^{30}\)

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This relationship has been also established by Konrad Eisenbichler, who provides some examples of the use of caviar in Italy around 1620, during the construction works in occasion of the obsequies for the death of Grand Duke Cosimo II de Medici:

The detailed expenses for food and drink given to the men working on the decorations and the set provide an insight into a working man's diet at that time. On the days before the obsequies and for a few days following, the confraternity paid for dried figs, nuts, caviar, salad, small marinated fish, bread, and wine “for the men to eat.”

Although such items may constitute an unusual diet for us today, or lead us to wonder what was the “caviar” these carpenters dined on, the records do not suggest the fare was at all unusual. Although caviar is mentioned as early as the fifteenth century as a luxury product from the East, the seventeenth-century fare given to the workers on the apparato was probably something produced locally and devised for fairly general consumption.\textsuperscript{31}

As in the case of Dulcinea, the presence and use of salt, not only for seasoning but for preservation, situates the characters socially and emphasizes the dimension of labor. The fact that both Ricote and Dulcinea are related to the use of salt may even have a historic background in which the Moor presence in Spain emerges once again. With regard to Ricote, and following Mark Kurlansky, Nadeau observes:

In the eighth century, Muslims introduced to Spain a salt-manufacturing technique that dominated the industry until the twentieth century. They invented a system of pumps and sluices that carried brine water from one pond to another as it reached various densities of salt saturation (Kurlansky 82-83). Cervantes’ timely inclusion of salt and its important food products both in Spain and abroad, as Sancho meets Ricote, the Morisco who has been banished from Spain, stands as a homage to one of the many technological advances the Muslims contributed to Spain and beyond.\textsuperscript{32}

Whether or not this homage was intentional, it directs our attention to the way Cervantes associates salt with Ricote, explicitly presented as a Morisco, and with Dulcinea, a character whose origins are not clear, but who is mentioned in the Arabic manuscript and who lives in El Toboso, a village with a significant number of Morisco inhabitants.

\textsuperscript{31} Konrad Eisenbichler, \textit{The Boys of the Archangel Raphael: A Youth Confraternity in Florence, 1411-1785} (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 283.

\textsuperscript{32} Nadeau, Op. Cit., 68.
Both in the case of the note about Dulcinea’s “good hand” and in the scene with Ricote, salt is linked to preservation. In the latter, preservation acquires a new value since it is used for traveling, a practice shared by the men who are sitting together. On the part of the pilgrims, at least nominally, these practices are linked to the Camino de Santiago, the route to the sanctuary and tomb of St. James in Santiago de Compostela. Even though it is not clear if Ricote’s companions are real pilgrims or just German “picaros” who are trying to get some money or food—this is the order of their requests to Sancho—they are described as pilgrims, which means that for the scene their identity as a group is marked by their traveling. On Sancho’s part, he may as well be used to traveling since he is a peasant from La Mancha. Given this background, the rituality of placing salt first both on the table of the lords and on the table of the poor serves to recognize the value of this ingredient, but especially in the latter case it also contributes to the effect of community achieved in this meal.

The principle of community that, albeit briefly, links the characters in this meal works through different levels and ways of convergence. One of them is their recognition as members of unprivileged classes, as has been described above. Other forms of encounter have to do with habits and practices that work as bridges between nationalities, rejoining on the one hand the two Spanish characters, and, on the other, bringing together Germans and Spaniards.

In the encounter with Sancho, Ricote’s actions are presented in the same terms used by the defenders of the Moriscos who stayed in Spain after the expulsion to justify their presence. James B. Tueller provides some examples:

. . . both the Cathedral Chapter and municipal council of Ubeda in Andalusia wrote in [sic] about the Moriscos living there. Two letters defended the Moriscos as “never having been processed by the Holy Office, but always living as Catholic Christians
attending mass, *partaking of the sacraments* and living with great piety” [Archivo General de Sevilla, Estado 229, 23 January 1610; del cabildo de la iglesia de Ubeda]33

One of the first papers to arrive at court was from the bishop of Valladolid. In sworn testimonies reliable witnesses affirmed that Martín Alonso, a Morisco tanner, was a Catholic Christian. Juan Suárez, a Jesuit priest, testified that during the twenty years he had known him, Martín knew all the prayers, confessed and *partook of the sacrament.* Martín’s neighbor, Antonio de Azaburu, did not even know that Martín was a Morisco. Another neighbor and fellow, Joaquín Pérez, watched him go to mass every morning at the Church of San Francisco. Joaquín also knew that Martín “*fasted during Lent,* refrained from bad conversations, reprimanded those who swore, won indulgences and was admitted to the confraternity of Saint Lupercio, even though everyone knew he was a Morisco.” [Archivo General de Sevilla, Estado 225, Folio 49, 25 August 1610]34

The Bishop of Valladolid was unable to examine all the Moriscos in his diocese, but he ordered the notary, Juan de Vega to conduct investigations in other cities . . . The report declared that the Moriscos had attended mass, confessed regularly, partaken of the host on Holy Days, lived among Old Christians, *eaten pork,* *drunken [sic] wine* and known the Christian doctrine. [Archivo General de Sevilla, Estado 225, Folios 47-48, 4 September 1610]35

In all these examples, religion and ingestion appear as intimately linked. “Partaking the sacrament,” which in other words means breaking the Holy bread and drinking the Holy wine is presented as the most reliable sign of sincere conversion since it has to do with incorporating the symbols of the Christian religion to the body. In the last example this goes even further and comes closer to the scene described by Cervantes. Good Christian Moriscos are described as those who eat pork, besides receiving the host, and drink wine even when it is not the consecrated wine of the communion.

But communion seems to be indeed present in the scene, according to Caroline Schmauser, who reminds us of the definition of the term by Covarrubias. Schmauser focuses on the moment when all the pilgrims take out their wineskins and drink wine, and


34 Ibidem, 203. My emphasis.

35 Ibidem, 204. My emphasis.
the narrator comments that the Morisco was transformed into a German, and based on these details she suggests:

Son varios los aspectos que nos indican el carácter de Santa Cena que adquiere el banquete: el empleo del verbo ‘transformar’ (no en Covarrubias) en relación a la aparente transformación de Ricote de morisco en ‘alemán’ o ‘tudesco’, el hecho de que los peregrinos se queden dormidos después de la cena y quizás también el hecho de que sean seis peregrinos, la mitad de los apóstoles, los que van juntos caminando.36

Several aspects indicate the character of Holy Supper of the banquet: the use of the verb *transformar* [to transform] (not present in Covarrubias) related to the apparent transformation of Ricote from Morisco to “German” or “Tudesco,” the fact that the pilgrims fall asleep after eating, and maybe also the fact that six pilgrims, half of the number of apostles, form the group of those who are walking.

Even though the interpretation of the passage in the present study is different regarding the Biblical event to which Cervantes may be referring, as it will be explained later, it is possible to agree with Schmauser about the religious background of the scene and the choice of the foodstuffs with the symbolic intention of joining together Christians from different nations.

One of the first critics to highlight the relationship between eating, drinking and Spanish identity in the episode of Ricote is, again, Américo Castro. In the last part of his essay “La palabra escrita y el *Quijote*” (“Written Word and *Don Quixote*”), which is part of the volume *Hacia Cervantes*, he shows that the special treatment of eating and drinking sets Ricote apart from the other pilgrims, since he carries a huge *bota* whose size would be inversely proportional to Ricote’s genuine interest in wine. These observations are followed by Carroll B. Johnson, who points out:

Américo Castro elucidated the semiosis of the ham bones and the wineskins the pilgrims carry with them as a kind of passport or safe-conduct through a Spain defined by purity of blood and an obligatory state religion. Ostentatiously eating

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36 Caroline Schmauser, “Ricote, Sancho y los peregrinos (*Don Quijote* II, 54): Comunicación verbal y no verbal en los encuentros interculturales,” in Caroline Schmauser and Monika Walter, eds. *¿‘Bon compañero, jura Di!’?: El encuentro de moros, judíos y cristianos en la obra cervantina* (Madrid/Frankfurt: Biblioteca Ibero-Americana/Vervuert, 1998), 79. Schmauser’s interpretation goes further to suggest other connections, proposing that Sancho could be identified with Christ, and Ricote with Judas, points that seem difficult to demonstrate following the evidence presented by the author.
ham (or sucking on the dry bones) and drinking wine in public freed one from both Muslim and Jewish “taint”… 37

However, in these interpretations of the scene the Morisco character seems to be trapped in a game of “Heads, I win, tails, you lose.” It seems that, by drinking wine, Ricote is adding an “extra” to his actions, and that this excess works both as a confirmation of his Christianity, but at the same time as a new mark of suspicion. Nonetheless, there are some points that need to be discussed about this reading. Castro suggests that the size of the wine container is used by Ricote in an ostentatious way to release him from suspicion, but this is difficult to infer from the narration, especially taking into account that there is not an instance of authority from which Ricote would be interested in hiding or simulating his status. The only “authority” that seems to focus on the detail is the narrator, because he indeed uses the word “even” when he says that Ricote grabs his own wineskin. This could suggest that the narrative voice is singling him out, but we have to take into account that immediately after using the adverb “even” the narrator uses also the words “el bueno de Ricote,” [“good Ricote”], an adjective that appears again when Don Quixote is cured from his madness and asks to be called “Alonso Quijano el Bueno.” In both cases, this expression is used as a positive term. Following Schmauser’s interpretation, then, the transformation of Ricote into a “German” does not seem to be a decoy but something to be regarded in favorable terms.

Another point to be observed relates to the effective consumption of wine, regardless of the size of the wineskins. It is true that, by the way the story is told, we as readers are led to believe that all the diners have drunk large amounts of wine, until they fall asleep. But then the narrative voice introduces this remark: “solos Ricote y Sancho quedaron alerta, porque habían comido más y bebido menos” [II, 54] [“only Ricote and Sancho were awake, because they had eaten more and drunk less than the others”]. The contents of the

botas, then, have not been consumed with celerity but with measure.\textsuperscript{38} This detail also disputes the hypothesis of Ricote using the wineskin for ostentation. It shows, instead, that Ricote knows a way of drinking that is different from his companions, and that is shared by his friend Sancho Panza. This identifies them both as Spaniards, as Carroll B. Johnson observes:

\begin{quote}
\hspace{0.5cm} . . . the wine has a second semiotic function as well. Differing drinking styles distinguish Ricote and Sancho from their companions. The Germans drink until the wine has been consumed and they pass out. The two Spaniards drink less, and instead of falling asleep they fall to conversing in Spanish. They are identified as Spaniards by their attitude towards alcohol as well as by their language.\textsuperscript{39}
\end{quote}

In chapter 1 we saw that one of the basic processes observed by material culture scholars is the one through which consumption sets people apart, and that food consumption is especially important for this process, because it works as the mark of shared traditions, uses, and history. One of the principles related to belonging to a community has to do with being able to affirm: “We belong to the same place because we eat the same food.”\textsuperscript{40} If Ricote and Sancho coincide in these habits when there does not seem to be an external observer to control or denounce the Morisco, it has to be inferred that Ricote’s actions are the result of a lifetime habit, which coincides with the one practiced by Sancho on the same occasion. Therefore, Ricote’s attitude towards wine can be read as a visible and spontaneous sign of his belonging to Spain and more precisely to La Mancha. In this sense it can be understood as an indication of Ricote’s right to return and stay in Spain.

\textsuperscript{38} In “Spanish Culinary History in Cervantes’ ‘Bodas de Camacho’ “ (Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos, 29 (2), 2005, 347-61), Carolyn Nadeau observes that in the second part of Don Quixote measure is one of the main characteristics Sancho Panza exhibits, not only with Ricote, but especially in the oversized banquet at the failed wedding of Camacho.

\textsuperscript{39} Carroll B. Johnson, Cervantes and the Material World, 52.

In the case of Ricote, wine is consumed along with pork. If these items, taken separately, are marks of conversion, their effect increases when they work together. As Carolyn Nadeau reminds:

That religious travelers would take wine with their meal is to be expected but that Ricote also carries his own wineskin and partakes in the drink call attention to his renunciation of Islam and conversion to Christianity. Drinking wine and consuming ham were expressly forbidden in Ice de Gebir’s *Brevario sunni*, the fifteenth-century *aljamiado* text that Muslims across Spain referred to and that transmitted Islamic culture to practicing Muslims for generations. Here, in the section on “Principal Commandments and Prohibitions,” Ice writes, “Do not drink wine or any other intoxicating thing. Do not eat pork, nor any carrion flesh, nor blood, nor any suspect thing” (Harvey 88-89). Even for those who had officially converted, changing centuries-old cultural traditions was a more difficult process. That Ricote drinks wine and eats ham without hesitation or further explanation shows that his conversion is not superficial but culturally confirmed.41

In Judaism and Islam, the ingestion of determined foodstuffs affects directly a subject’s purity, as it is prescribed by the Torah and the Qur’an. Purity, then, is not only perceived by others, but by the superior eye of Divinity. As Nadeau explains, if Ricote is able to do what he does, it is because he has converted. In this sense, Ricote’s actions seem to respond to the words of Jesus to his followers after a dispute with the Pharisees about purity and eating:

“And when he had called all the people unto him, he said unto them, ‘Hearken unto me every one of you, and understand: There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man.’ ” [Mark, 7: 14-15]. In Christianity, purity through abstinence from ingesting specific foodstuffs is not essential as it is for the Mosaic and Islamic laws. From the Christian perspective, being able to eat and drink anything is seen as an act of freedom. It is important to observe that there is an adverse effect linked to this initial benefit. With the narrative—and critical—treatment of characters such as Ricote, the unnamed translator of *Don Quijote*, and even Dulcinea we can see how a potential sign of belonging may turn into a new mark of

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41 Carolyn Nadeau, “Critiquing the Elite in the Barataria and ‘Ricote’ Food Episodes in Don Quijote II,” 69.
differentiation and potential persecution, as soon as not exercising the “free” action of eating pork makes of any “tocinófobo” a suspect of inauthentic conversion. But among these characters, Ricote stands out because he overcomes this problem more evidently, almost in spite of the way the narrator describes his actions. If what we know about Dulcinea is that she can salt the pork (as explained before, we never know whether or not she eats it), Ricote eats the meat of the animal and sucks its bones. This is something that cannot be completely qualified as superficial or enacted since he is actually ingesting that meat or marrow, and drinking that wine, making them part of his material being. This would not be thinkable if he were only pretending, because this practice goes against a religious law that is cardinal for practitioners of the Islamic faith. What is worth underlining is the fact that, by eating and drinking the way he does, Ricote equates being Christian with being Spaniard.

At this point, we can observe that, even though Ricote’s appearances in the second part of Don Quixote are relatively brief, his actions around food work as an inverted image of the ones performed by Alonso Quijano in the first part of the novel. The hidalgo moves from the habit of a Castilian and Old Christian diet toward one that supposedly fits better his condition as a knight. He does not abandon entirely his eating habits, but he modifies them for the purposes of traveling, of showing penance, and of demonstrating he is as able as his heroic models to endure the challenges of the chivalric life. Ricote, instead, comes from the Morisco diet, questioned by the Old Christian community, and from eating habits related to traveling, to adopt the Christian diet, both as a pilgrim and as a Spaniard. Ricote does not want to be a hidalgo, but he chooses to remain a subject of the kingdom, given that he still declares his loyalty to the king, and that he eats and drinks as other Christian Spanish subjects do. The paths of these two characters have two different points of arrival. However, the reasons for their actions are similar. Both are engaged in practices that are intended to
symbolize what they have decided to be. These decisions constitute what Stephen Greenblatt calls “self-fashioning”:

. . . self-fashioning acquires a new range of meanings: it describes the practice of parents and teachers; it is linked to manners or demeanor, particularly that of the elite; it may suggest hypocrisy or deception, an adherence to mere outward ceremony; it suggests representation of one’s nature or intention in speech or actions.\footnote{Stephen Greenblatt, \textit{Renaissance Self-Fashioning from More to Shakespeare} (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), 3.}

In fact, when presenting this concept, Greenblatt describes the dinner table as one of the places where self-fashioning takes place, and this observation gives us more elements to conclude that Cervantes was conscious of the implications of introducing Ricote’s return to Spain through a “food scene.” Alonso Quijano and Ricote can be described as two different but complementary cases of self-fashioning, and the ending of their stories suggests a reconsideration of the idea of community: the old knight goes back to his \textit{hidalgo} name and habits, but he knows he will die soon, so his material properties are willed to his niece, the housekeeper, and Sancho (here the narrative voice declares that in the middle of sorrow they find time to eat, drink, and discretely celebrate). Except for the possible marriage of the niece, there is no emphasis on the continuation of the \textit{hidalgo} family after Alonso Quijano’s death, the sole condition established by the gentleman in his will being that his niece marries a man who knows nothing about chivalry novels. In Ricote’s case, it is suggested that he will use his remaining fortune to help his daughter marry a Spanish nobleman. These acts of generosity remind us that, consciously or not, Cervantes applies the same epithet, “el bueno,” to the protagonist of the story and to the Morisco Ricote. In the end, their “goodness” is translated into their helping to maintain the Christian community by giving money and goods to their heirs, no matter if they belong to a specific class or have a determined background. As a matter of fact, in the case of the expected marriage between

\footnote{Stephen Greenblatt, \textit{Renaissance Self-Fashioning from More to Shakespeare} (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), 3.}
Ana Félix, Ricote’s daughter, and the Christian noble Don Gaspar Gregorio, we find again an evocation of St. Augustine’s reference to the different seeds that grow into the Christian community. On the other hand, Ricote’s claim of belonging to Spain allows us to re-read Ricote’s motivation to stay in the country. When he talks to Sancho Panza, he declares that he is returning to look for a treasure he has hidden. In this aspect, the story and the figure of Ricote seems to be rooted in the way Spaniards regarded Moriscos. Both the documents written during the expulsion in their defense and the many satirical texts that mocked them coincide in describing the Morisco habits of saving and treasuring goods. But as frequently happens with Cervantes, the commonplace is turned into a narrative device that modifies the established meaning. When Ricote’s treasure is recovered, this task is not shown as his ultimate goal anymore. It is presented as something to be invested, consumed, to help Ricote and his daughter remain in Spain, so the young woman can marry Don Gaspar and thus consolidate the connection to the land. This twist in the plot, which grants the Morisco a new chance to belong and to reinforce his ties with Spain through the marriage of his daughter, echoes what was previously seen at the improvised table with the pilgrims: Ricote and his daughter stay because they consider themselves part of the community.

The relationship between Ricote and Sancho as Spaniards contrasted with the German pilgrims is marked by the different proportions of food and wine consumed, but it is still a difference within a group of men who share similar beliefs. Many aspects of this relationship can be considered to relate the episode to a religious framework. To begin, there is a detail that many readers of the episode underline: Sancho’s skill in speaking a lingua franca with the pilgrims. This is a skill we see for the first and only time:

Cuatro veces dieron lugar las botas para ser empinadas; pero la quinta no fue posible, porque ya estaban más enjutas y secas que un esparto, cosa que puso mustia la alegría que hasta allí habían mostrado. De cuando en cuando, juntaba alguno su mano derecha con la de Sancho, y decía:

–Español y tudesquí, tuto uno: bon compañero.
Y Sancho respondía:
—*Bon compañero, jura Dí.*

Y disparaba con una risa que le duraba un hora, sin acordarse entonces de nada de lo que le había sucedido en su gobierno; porque sobre el rato y tiempo cuando se come y bebe, poca jurisdicción suelen tener los cuidados. [II, 54]

The skins were tilted four times, but a fifth time was not possible because they were now as dry and parched as esparto grass, something that withered the joy the pilgrims had shown so far. From time to time one of them would take Sancho’s right hand in his and say:

*“Español y tudesqui, tuto uno: bon compañero!”*

And Sancho would respond:

*“Bon compañero, jura Dí!”*

And he burst into laughter that lasted for an hour, and then he did not remember anything that had happened to him in his governorship; for during the time and period when one eats and drinks, cares tend to be of little importance.

The phrases pronounced by these men sharing wine underline three aspects of their current encounter: unity based on sharing, (i.e., equity between Spaniards and Germans), companionship, and an interjection swearing in the name of God, uttered in this common language. This interjection has an emphatic function and, since it closes the dialogue, it also sounds like a confirmation of this unity in the name of the Christianity these men share.

Sancho’s loud laughter echoes the one of the Morisco translator in the first part. The narrator emphasizes at that point the relaxing effects of eating and drinking, and through these effects, the suspension of Sancho’s concerns, and even of the story itself. Sancho momentarily forgets his failed government and his pending reencounter with Don Quixote, which are the two threads that are keeping the plot together. It is one of the few points in the story where we hear the laughter of a single character, and even though there is not a perfect symmetry with the Morisco’s laughter of the first part, this one is placed in a decisive moment of the plot, the beginning of the disenchantment.

This euphoric state that leads Sancho to laugh and speak in a previously unheard language finds its correlation in another biblical episode that takes place after the death of Christ. In the first chapters of the Acts of the Apostles, we are told the story of Pentecost,
when Jesus’s disciples are reunited and the Holy Spirit manifests itself in the form of tongues of fire and makes them speak different languages. The detail that brings us back to our scene is the reaction of the people around the house where the apostles are gathered, as it is told in Acts, chapter 2, verse 13: “Others mocking said, ‘These men are full of new wine.’ ” The narrator of Don Quixote opens, then, the possibility of reading the event of sharing wine as a moment of spiritual communion, in which a new language is developed. This moment is marked by parody because in the biblical account Peter will immediately correct this impression by assuring that their recently acquired skills are not the result of drinking but of divine inspiration, while in the case of Sancho, Ricote and the pilgrims it becomes clear that wine is making it possible for the encounter and the conversation to run smoothly. And yet, as a reinforcement of the unique character of the gathering, the name of God is pronounced in the new language.

While Ricote speaks, the narrator insists twice on his Castillian intonation. This falls far from other literary depictions of Moriscos, where their misuse of language or the introduction of Arabic words are underlined.\(^{43}\) This proper use of the Castillian language underlines Ricote’s belonging to Spain and acts along with the signs we have discussed previously. But because of his companions and because of the scene where all drink wine, it can be assumed that Ricote speaks the lingua franca as well, so we have a character who communicates with two different forms of Christianity, the one practiced in Spain, and the one practiced in Germany. The use of wine, then, has a deeper significance: the bota and its content operate as a link between these forms. Nadeau underlines Ricote’s choice of Germany following Márquez Villanueva and Johnson:

\(^{43}\) A very extreme example is Quevedo’s satirical text “La confesión de los moriscos.” Another example, less radical but still marked by distance is the characterization of the Moriscos, especially the gracioso Alcuezuz, in Calderón de la Barca’s play El tuzani de la Alpujarra, which he sets in the Alpujarras at the time of the rebellion of 1568-1571.
Citing Marquez Villanueva, Johnson recalls the religious significance of Ricote’s site of relocation in the Peace of Augsburg, the first permanent settlement for the coexistence of Lutherans and Catholics in Germany. Although Carlos I (V) opened the diet, he refused to attend the proceedings due to the inevitable religious compromises and the impossibility of securing a unified religion within his empire . . . The economic significance lies in the fact that throughout most of the sixteenth century, Augsburg was one of the banking centers of Europe that rapidly exhausted Spain's capital that came from America.44

Economic and religious interests overlap in this scene, and create the image of a religious form of practice in which coexistence goes along with prosperity. A state of recognition and tolerance turns out to be economically good for the community where it is practiced, and this seems to underline that even though in numbers the expulsion may not have been significant, especially in La Mancha, it was still regarded as an economic and spiritual loss by some Spaniards, and among them Cervantes, at least at the time when he wrote this episode.

In the meal shared by Sancho, Ricote, and the German pilgrims we see the convergence of traditions about eating and drinking with ideas about labor and the accumulation of goods as signs of belonging. The conceptions from both fields come from the same source: a Christian Europe through which Ricote circulates with some extent of freedom because he seems to have understood that there is a dimension of value he can use in his advantage. He shows his worth by reminding Sancho of his status as a merchant and of his accumulation of goods, and in the narrative present of the scene he reaffirms these conditions by performing specific acts of consumption that are significant to establish his connection to the Christian culture. In Ricote’s case we see how the Augustinian metaphor of the grains is changed into an effective device for circulation, and into a possible response to the question of belonging. This device does not only operate in the form of value or accumulation, but through subtle mechanisms of identification that seem to become visible with especial effectiveness through the description of eating and drinking habits.

4.4. The Other Roadside Meal

If we use the most general terms available to describe what happens in the encounter between Sancho and Ricote, we come up with this outline: A group of pilgrims, including Ricote, encounters Sancho on a road. They are apparently strangers to each other, but suddenly recognition occurs: Ricote reveals his identity to Sancho. As a result of this recognition, the characters stop and share a roadside meal, in which food plays an important part in establishing a community and creating equity among the participants. Then they part ways.

The key element in the scene is equity through sharing. All characters partake of the meal, and at that moment, they are equal, there is no concern for precedence. For a very brief moment, they all belong to the same community. It is still presented as a Christian community, since the name of God is invoked, but for the first and only time in the story, there are no hierarchies among the participants, because none of them represents directly or indirectly any superior power, human or divine. The symbolic table does not have and does not need a head.

As utopian and ephemeral as it appears, this structure creates a particular effect of balance in the text. Its exceptionality would be enough reason to stop and re-read it, but there are more elements to consider, especially if we read the episode and the novel to which it belongs in the context of other works of art produced around the same years. The encounter between Ricote and Sancho could be considered another roadside meal, like the ones of the first part, but this reading would be incomplete if we did not consider the antecedent of other meals in which we can find the reference to a preceding text, as we did with the scene in which Don Quixote shares a meal with the goatherds.
In the New Testament, a different sequence of recognition related to a roadside meal is told in the Gospel of Luke, and confirmed in a few words by Mark. Luke writes that after the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth, two of his disciples are walking toward the town of Emmaus when they are joined by another man, to whom they tell the events that led to the death of their master, and the way some rumors are circulating about his resurrection. Seeing that the day is coming to an end, the disciples invite their companion to stay with them and share supper. He accepts. At the table, he blesses and breaks the bread, and hands it to the two men. Only then do they recognize him as Jesus, and at that moment, he disappears.

Despite the fact that only two Evangelists refer to this encounter, the importance of the scene for the Christian community has been underlined because it appears as the first occasion after the death of Christ when the community reconstitutes itself in the act of sharing a meal. Theologians still dispute whether or not the actions of Christ should be considered Eucharistic, because some of them are not sure if the blessing of the bread is part of the Jewish tradition or part of the ceremony created by Jesus in the Last Supper. However, we do know that between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Eucharistic interpretation was favored, among others, by the Flemish Jesuit exegete Cornelius Cornelii a Lapide. As Creighton E. Gilbert points out:

[Lapide] gives the word “blessed” in the text its own separate exegesis, a rare emphasis, and starts by saying that Christ’s blessing here consisted of “converting the bread into his body, as in the consecration of the Eucharist.” It cannot, he explains, be considered as the ordinary blessing of food at the beginning of a meal, which is not Eucharistic, because he did it in the middle of the meal, when he was about to vanish; therefore it is “sacred and eucharistic.” He then quotes many authorities, including Augustine’s Harmony of the Gospels and one of the sermons already cited. Augustine, in the Harmony, besides asserting that the breaking of bread led to the recognition, had also brought in the text of I Corinthians 10:17 about our being all one bread and one body, to deduce that Christ wished to be known only to those who took part in his body, that is, in the church, whose unity in the sacrament of the bread Paul commends.45

Moreover, Gilbert underlines that this interpretation affected directly the way the scene was represented in art: paintings from the Middle Ages and from the early Renaissance tend to depict the scene with the bread already broken, while those from the period we are discussing tend to focus on the moment of the blessing and recognition.

A first connection between the scene described by Cervantes and the Supper at Emmaus can be established from the fact that this biblical passage is used as a reference in several paintings of the early seventeenth century. Many of them underline the role of food in a special way: instead of focusing on the bread that is broken by Christ or even on the figure of Christ, these paintings circumscribe the scene to a small portion of the painting, as if it were seen through a window or in a picture within the picture, while in the foreground another scene takes place. This main scene takes place in a kitchen, where servants are preparing a meal.

As Julián Gállego has explained, one of the functions of a “painting within a painting” is to provide the key to understand the scene. Although this resource is found mainly among Flemish painters, it is precisely the moment when it is used in Spain that leads me to relate its use to the role of the roadside meal in Don Quixote. The Spanish paintings that explore this technique are produced by Francisco Pacheco and later by his son-in-law Diego de Velázquez within the years in which the two parts of Don Quixote are being written. The first experiment, and probably the first painting by Velázquez, is in fact a kitchen scene that includes a small representation of the Supper at Emmaus. The image offers as many layers of meaning as the words by Cervantes about Dulcinea and Ricote, and these layers are still being discussed nowadays. Since even the title of the painting is in dispute, it will have to be put aside for a moment, so the analysis can focus on the work of art. Or rather on the works of art, because there are two versions of this painting (figures 34 and 35).
Both versions represent the same character standing behind a table, surrounded by culinary utensils. The character is dark-skinned, has dark eyes, and the hair is partially covered by a white headdress. The clothes are simple: a dark jacket with tones of green and black is worn over a white shirt, from which the viewer can only see one sleeve and a little piece of the front, through an opening in the jacket that seems to be produced by the
movement of the character, slightly bending forward, toward the table and the viewer. There is also an ochre-toned waistband or apron. The rest of the garment is hidden by the table. The character's gaze is directed to the right, and seems to fall on one of the pieces that rest on that side of the table, a white clay pot and a beaten copper pan. The head is tilted, the eyebrows are slightly raised. On the table, near the center, there is a small, closed package. The wrapping is white paper, twisted at the ends. Other paintings, as well as texts from the period, tell us that this kind of package was sold in the market, and that it contained spices.

On the right side we see a decorated pitcher that is being held by the character, and resting upside down on the table, another one that seems made of dark clay. Next to these pitchers, two white shallow bowls rest over a darker one, and beneath them we see two smaller bowls, one white, one dark. Slightly in front of the stacked bowls lies a head of garlic, and behind it, a mortar and pestle. In both paintings we see on the right (the character's left) a basket that contains a piece of white cloth, hanging from the wall next to the central figure. Since all utensils appear upside down and there is only one ingredient in sight, the viewer can assume either that the character has finished the work at the kitchen, or that the process of preparing a meal is about to start.

The main difference between the two versions is found on the left side. On one version (figure 34), there is only a dark wall, while in the other (figure 35) there can be seen a wooden frame, and within the frame, two men sitting around a table, and the hand of a third one, whose body has been left outside of the painting. It is worth noting, however, that there does not seem to be any evidence of the canvas being cut in either of the versions of the

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46 The material Velázquez intended to represent cannot be determined because of the condition of both paintings.

47 Peter Cherry observes that the unrolled sleeves seem to indicate that the character is about to serve outside the kitchen in the moment depicted (Cf. Arte y Naturaleza, 125). This note makes sense if we compare the painting to Cristo en casa de Marta y María, another kitchen scene painted by Velázquez in which one of the characters, with rolled sleeves, is using a mortar and pestle.
painting.⁴⁸ These men are just outlined, but their features and actions are identifiable. The one who occupies the center in this frame has long hair, a beard, a halo over his head, and his hands are slightly raised over the table, as if he were emphasizing what lies on the table. The other man’s body leans forward expectantly, in a position that looks attentive and tense. His head is raised slightly toward the face of the first man, and his right hand starts a sign of surprise, while his left hand clenches around something, or into a fist. The left hand of the other subject (the single hand being the only part of the body we observe) seems to be pointing at the man in the center. The man in the center and his actions are evidently the center of the surprise and the conflict (figure 36).

Figure 36. Diego Rodríguez de Silva y Velázquez, *Kitchen Scene with the Supper at Emmaus*, 1618-20, detail.

Actions related to the process of preparing, serving and consuming food are the essential elements represented in the two versions of this kitchen scene, including the scene within the scene that appears in one of them. The emphasis is put on the face and hands of the individuals who perform the actions, which seem to be related. Since the character in the main scene is about to begin or has just finished work in the kitchen, and the ones in the background are sitting around a dining table, we can assume that what is happening in one of the spaces has a resonance in what happens in the other.

A significant detail in reviewing the art historical literature about these two paintings is that neither the gender nor the race of the main character can be determined with certainty. Both aspects need to be addressed to better explain the intricacies of belonging related to this painting. Regarding gender, the conflict begins in what seems to be one of the first notices about the work, a reference in the third volume of Antonio Palomino’s *Museo pictórico, El parnaso español pintoresco laureado* (c.1724):

... se ve un tablero, que sirve de mesa, con un alnafe, y encima una olla hirviendo, y tapada con una escudilla, que se ve la lumbre, las llamas, y centellas vivamente, un perolillo estañado, una alcarraza, unos platos, y escudillas, un jarro vidriado, un almirez con su mano, y una cabeza de ajos junto á él; y en el muro se divisa colgada de una escarpia una esportilla con un trapo, y otras baratijas, y por guarda de esto un muchacho con una jarra en la mano, y en la cabeza una escopieta, con que representa con su villanísimo trage un sugeto muy ridículo, y gracios.

... we see a board that serves as a table, with a stove, and over it, a boiling pot, covered with a bowl, and we can see the fire, flames, and sparks lively, and a tinned pot, a pitcher, some dishes, and bowls, a glazed jug, a mortar with its pestle, and a head of garlic next to it, and on the wall, hanging off a peg, a basket with a cloth, and other trinkets, and this is kept by a boy with a jug in his hand, and a headpiece on his head, which, along with his very bumpkin-like costume, makes of him a very ridiculous and amusing figure.

In this brief passage, dedicated mainly to comment on Velázquez’s first bodegones, the character is described as a boy. The distribution of the elements on the table suggests a coincidence between Palomino’s description and the works we are discussing. Nevertheless, other details of the description, such as the inexistent stove, pot, and flames, make it still difficult for art scholars to establish whether the painting and the description match, especially considering that, as previously explained, the physical analysis of both versions does not suggest cuts or similar interventions. Therefore, Palomino’s referring to the character as “un muchacho” turns out to be inconclusive, but it simultaneously opens the possibility of reading two different backgrounds for the character in the painting: the female role as cook, and the male role as servant or “pícaro.” Most contemporary art historians (Antonio Gállego, Gridley McKim-Smith, and Javier Portús, among the ones mentioned in this and previous chapters) tend to favor the hypothesis of a female character, but a detail observed by Peter Cherry—that the character has the sleeves rolled down, which suggests work outside the kitchen—opens the debate again, because, as seen in the cookbooks, as well as in other paintings of the period, a servant who works around the lord’s table (in the version with the Supper at Emmaus, “the Lord’s table” acquires a new meaning) might likely be male.

Regarding the character’s background, Peter Cherry proposes:

. . . es significativo que la protagonista de Velázquez sea una humilde criada doméstica, quizás incluso una esclava y, por lo tanto, representante de los estratos más marginados de la sociedad sevillana. Además, sus negros rasgos sugieren que es una conversa católica.  

. . . it is significant that the main character in Velázquez’s painting is a humble domestic servant, maybe even a slave, therefore a representative of the most marginal strata of the Sevillian society. Besides, her black features suggest that she is a Catholic conversa.

50 Peter Cherry, Arte y naturaleza: El bodegón español en el Siglo de Oro (Madrid: Fundación de Apoyo a la Historia del Arte Hispánico/Fundación Airtel, 1999), 126.
Cherry’s position addresses the darkness of the character’s skin and, departing from it, establishes the character’s social condition, both as a slave and as a Catholic convert. Gridley McKim Smith describes the same character in similar terms, but leaves the door open for another interpretation:

The figure’s African ancestry complicates the reading of hairdressing conventions. Possibly the implication is that this servant is a Morisco or someone of Moorish descent, and the recent expulsion of the Muslims from Spain in 1611 might have been part of the unspoken associations of the viewer of about 1618.\(^{51}\)

In this case, we should note that this passage comes from one of the most exhaustive analyses about the making of the two versions of Velázquez’s *Kitchen Scene*. The article addresses specifically the problems of determining the race and gender of the main character, given that the painting can be situated within two different traditions: the Flemish kitchen scene, that usually depicts women, or the picaresque genre in literature and painting, that depicts young boys who used to work in seventeenth-century kitchens. But even through such a rigorous and scientific study on the painting, the Morisco or African background of the main character cannot be established.

Whichever the cultural origin of the character, a point of agreement is that he or she is a New Christian, and this particularity is what allows us to discuss the relationship between food and belonging in the years in which the elderly Cervantes and the young Velázquez lived. In both versions of the work of art, the emphasis is placed, as with Dulcinea, on the ability of the character to add flavor to food. While Cervantes chooses salt as his single ingredient, Velázquez decides to lead the sight of the observer towards two ingredients: a paper package containing spices, right in front of the character and in the central part of the foreground of the scene, and a head of garlic on the lower right area, and also closer to the plane of the observer. The placing of these elements is important in terms of composition.

By placing the small package in the center and using white to paint it, the painter directs the attention of the observer to that point.

Velázquez situates the head of garlic next to the mortar and pestle, creating in this way a visual link between the ingredient and the tool that is used to transform it into a condiment, and adding dynamism to the scene, because the attention and the movement of the character is directed toward the right, while the movement of the composition in the apparently unattended left side is directed towards the center of the composition thanks to the organization of the elements: in a progression that involves volume and illumination, the head of garlic, closer to the viewer, attracts attention to the mortar, the mortar to the pestle, and the pestle, with its brightness and tilt, creates a sight line that redirects the eye back to the head of the servant, illuminated and highlighted by the stark white of the headdress piece. If a very basic sentence could be made to explain the content of Velázquez’s kitchen scene, following this composition, it would be: “This is the one who mashes the garlic in the kitchen.” The one who does so is the one who transforms ingredients, through labor, into dishes or, in other words, the one who turns materials into products. What makes us consider the character’s actions carefully is the possible re-signification of her (or his) contribution to the process of production of food, because, interpreted from this point of view, the painting shows a person who holds the position of servant and the role of Spanish subject by displaying skills related to cooking or serving, as suggested by the space and utensils in the painting.

An aspect that is not frequently explored when studying food and culture is the fact that usually the product, especially if it is praised and considered as responding to the expectations of the community, tends to overshadow the subject that prepares it. This is observable in seventeenth-century Spain and its dominions overseas. In chapter 1 we saw briefly that although some accounts testify to the reservations conquistadors and colonizers
had regarding the products they found in the New World, there were usually no objections when native American or black servants prepared and served the dishes to which they were accustomed, the same way there were few or no biases when female servants from these origins serve as wet nurses.52 The same principle works both in the case of Dulcinea and of the servant represented by Velázquez if we regard the products of their labor from the Old Christian point of view. The ham cured by Dulcinea can represent a problem of consumption for Moors and Moriscos, but it is consumable without any regrets by Christians. The same may occur with any product that comes from the table, the pans or the mortar and pestle manipulated by the servant in Velázquez’s painting: the color of her skin keeps generating discussion, but the context of the painting allows us to assume that whatever she is about to cook or has cooked, in the case of a female servant, or whatever he is going to take to the table, in the case of a male character, will be served and consumed on a Christian table. The fact that the product of these characters’ labor cannot be distinguished from another one produced by Old Christian hands posits again the question of the relatively autonomous life of commodities, but this time in the sense that this autonomy makes all hands that produce them equal, which means that at least part of the equity preached by St. Augustine is achieved, not through religious but through economic principles. In this sense, the relationship between the labor of the servant in the kitchen and the potential Christian consumers of the food the character will produce or has produced remains significant whether or not there is a religious image in the background, and operates equally in both versions of the work of art.

Nevertheless, the religious element represented by the painting in the background cannot be left unexplored, and this is the main reason to focus on the scene within the

52 These reflections are the result of a conversation with Rebecca Earle (University of Warwick) on occasion of her talk “‘If You Eat Their Food...’: Diets and Bodies in Early Colonial Spanish America,” on March 31, 2010, at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
scene, which transforms the painting into a “bodegón a lo divino.” These terms, widespread now in Spanish studies about seventeenth-century painting, require some explanation. The expression “a lo divino” originates in the combination of an expression used by José Ortega y Gasset in an essay about Galileo and the interpretation that Emilio Orozco Díaz’s gives to these words in his preliminary study to the volume Temas del barroco (1947). As a starting point, Orozco Díaz quotes Ortega’s ideas about Ignatius of Loyola: “La Compañía de Jesús es un tercio castellano a lo divino” [“The Society of Jesus is a Castillian tercio, the divine way”].

What Ortega describes is the process of transformation of a secular institution, such as a military tercio, into a religious one by reinterpreting its principles of organization in religious terms. From this particular case, Orozco extends the use of “a lo divino” to refer to the way in which different cultural products in the Spanish Golden Age (books, paintings, music) are both prefigured and interpreted in a religious way. Orozco explains:

La Contrarreforma determina, tanto en el arte como en la literatura, un proceso de espiritualización y cristianización de los temas y motivos pagano renacentistas que continuará y culminará en pleno barroquismo. Esto es, supone la utilización de las ideas, figuras y temas renacentistas que lleva a una parcial pero íntima negación de sus ideales. Tanto en la trama imaginativa como en lo propiamente figurativo, la literatura, en este momento, se sirve de lo renacentista pagano volviéndolo a lo divino o moral.

He aquí la especial significación trascendente que para nosotros tienen las obras que en estos años se vuelven a lo divino. Todos los libros especialmente leídos en pleno triunfo del ideal renacentista –aunque alguno sea, como muy bien se ha dicho, del Libro de Caballería, floración del Renacimiento enraizada en lo medieval– se divinizaron: el Amadís, la Diana, los versos de Boscán y Garcilaso, e igualmente las composiciones tradicionales del Cancionero y Romancero popular. Y junto a ello no olvidemos la versión paralela que en la música se realiza sobre todo por obra de Guerrero.

The Counter-Reformation determines, both in art and literature, a process of spiritualization and christianization of the pagan motifs from the Renaissance that

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53 Emilio Orozco Díaz, “De lo aparente a lo profundo: introducción apresurada a una serie de ensayos y notas sobre temas del barroco,” Temas del barroco, de poesía y pintura (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1947), xxxi.

54 A tercio (sometimes referred to as the “Spanish Square”) was an infantry combat unit in the Spanish army, especially effective during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Each tercio comprised about 3000 soldiers, between pikemen, swordsmen and arquebusiers or musketeers. See Juan José Amate Blanco, El espíritu cervantino de los tercios al tercio (Madrid: Ministerio de Defensa / Adalid, 2006), 15-29.
will continue and conclude in the Baroque. This implies the use of ideas, figures and themes from the Renaissance, but at the same time a partial and intimate opposition of its ideals. Both imaginatively and figuratively, literature in this period uses the pagan subjects of the Renaissance, but taking them to a divine or moral sphere.

Hence the special signification and transcendence of the works that, in those years, turn toward the divine. All books, especially those read at the climax of the Renaissance—even though there may be some, as it has been explained, rooted in the Middle Ages—were brought to the divine sphere: Amadis, Diana, Boscán and Garcilaso’s verses, as well as the traditional compositions of the *Cancionero* and the *Romancero popular*. And let us not forget the parallel version in music, especially in the works of Guerrero.

Orozco, therefore, uses the expression “a lo divino” first to refer to literature and music (in the former realm, he mentions many books that appear in the inventory of Don Quixote’s library). Later in the same book he includes an essay entitled “Retratos a lo divino,” and another one dedicated to *bodegones*. His reflections in this book, then, seem to originate his later reflections on “bodegones a lo divino,” which extend the principle of “lo divino” to kitchen scenes in which, as happens with Velázquez’s painting, the work of art is interpreted taking into account the presence of a religious scene in the picture.

With regard to the specific religious scene chosen by Velázquez for the background of his painting, a first aspect to consider is the popularity of the theme of the Supper at Emmaus at the time of Velázquez’s creation. Recent studies allow us to determine the presence and frequency of this scene in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Spanish art. Thanks to Sarah Schroth we know that in the first inventory of the collections of the Duke of Lerma (Valladolid, 1603, by Vicente Carducho) four versions of the *Supper at Emmaus* could be found. We know that one of them was painted by Titian, another by Bassano, the third one was probably a copy of the second, and the fourth one was painted by the young prince Philip III.55 We also know that at least two of them were recorded again in further inventories, and that probably one, by Bassano, is still preserved nowadays at the Kimbell

Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas. Sarah Schroth informs us as well that “A Supper at Emmaus by an unidentified member of the Bassano family appeared in Philip II’s collection. The 1574 entrega to El Escorial records: ‘un lienzo al olio de Christo nro. s.r como se apareció a los discípulos que yban al castillo de Emaus y en el cortar de pan le conocieron de mano de Bassa.’”

The exhaustive work by Markus B. Burke and Peter Cherry Collections of Paintings in Madrid 1601-1755 identifies 12 paintings depicting Christ when he is recognized while blessing or breaking bread, mainly belonging to three collectors (Carpio, Castilla and Lemos). Most of them are anonymous works, but we are certain about three of them: one registered as “Italian,” the second as a work by Bassano, and the third one by Pedro de Orrente. In the same inventory we see 24 paintings about the journey to Emmaus, scenes depicting “the moment in which Cleopas, Peter, and Christ arrive at the gate of the city, or at the inn; Christ is asked to stay” (inventory subject 73E343), and in this case the owners are 23 different collectors. Burke and Cherry also provide this detail:

In 1620, one Lorenzo Aguado, who was a tailor, commissioned a painter, Felipe de Bau, to paint ten pictures; two of the Supper at Emaus and two of Doubting Thomas, which were copies of works he owned, two Annunciations, two paintings of the Virgin with the Sleeping Christ Child and two paintings described as the “Virgin of the Flowers.” It is not inconceivable that in placing this order Aguado has particular clients in mind.

These sources seem to indicate that Spanish art collectors and consumers were following a trend initiated in Italy. If we add that Flemish versions of the Supper at Emmaus may have been circulating in Spain around the same years, we can conclude that the scene was

58 Markus B. Burke and Peter Cherry, Op. Cit. v.1, 80-81.
probably registered in the visual memory of any Spaniard who had access to works of art, and in the repertoire of religious subjects that were discussed in or around the churches of a kingdom where Catholicism was the official religion and where the deliberations at the Council of Trent were followed with special attention.\(^{59}\)

A second aspect to consider are the sources that are more specifically linked to the creation of Velázquez’s work. The representation of the Supper at Emmaus in a small format can already be found in a print by Albrecht Dürer, part of his series *The Little Passion*, from 1509 or 1511 (figure 37). This picture seems to have been widespread in Spain and in the rest of Europe, especially considering that Dürer himself was aware of the fame and value of his prints, and that he took in his own hands the task of exporting them with his “trademark,” the monogram that can be seen in the lower left corner. Moreover, the use of Dürer prints by Velázquez as source of inspiration has been discussed by Diego Angulo in his book *Velázquez: Cómo compuso sus principales cuadros*, a source that Benito Navarrete Prieto praises in his book on the circulation of prints in Andalusia.\(^{60}\) In Dürer’s print the characters are represented in attitudes that resemble the ones found in the background painting of the kitchen scene (figure 38), and similar details can be found in both representations, such as the bearded face of the disciple on the right, the size and shape of the tablecloth and the knife on the table.

\(^{59}\) These deliberations gave Eucharist an important place, as the compilation of the Canons and Decrees of the Council shows: the subject is discussed for the first time in the thirteenth session (1551), regarding Eucharist as a sacrament, and it appears again in the twenty-first, which is dedicated specifically to communion (1562), and the twenty-second, the same year, dedicated to mass. The participation of “laymen and those not made clergymen,” including children, is one of the subjects of these two sessions.

\(^{60}\) Benito Navarrete Prieto, *La pintura andaluza del siglo XVII y sus fuentes grabadas*, 105.
The motif of the Supper at Emmaus in the background of a kitchen scene seems to have been picked up from Flemish art. Scenes that resemble the one painted by Velázquez can be seen in a drawing by Pieter van Rijk (figure 39), but especially in a print by Jacob Matham, which reproduces a painting by Pieter Aersten (figure 40). As previously explained, prints, the ones coming from Flanders in particular, were very popular among painters and were frequently used as study materials for young apprentices. Therefore, Velázquez may have been familiar with these scenes.
In both prints, the main characters are shown working in a kitchen, while the scene of the Supper at Emmaus takes place in the background. As in the literary texts, here people’s labor is emphasized. In both images we cannot help but notice the contrast between the few
elements that, because of the descriptions in the Gospels, we know are present on the diners’ table, and the opulence and variety of products displayed in the kitchen. This inversion of the scenery and the abundance in the hands of the servants also evokes the improvised feasts in Cervantes’s narratives, both in the case of Ricote’s meal with Sancho, and in the case of the meal at the house of Monipodio. In the case of Matham’s work (and, it has to be assumed, of Aersten’s original) the space in which Christ and the disciples are seated is ambiguous and we are not sure if what we see is a painting on a wall or an actual scene going on in another room. In van Rijk’s case it is clearer that the scene is taking place in another room, and the artist has compensated for its size by situating it in an upper level overlooking the whole kitchen scene.

Another artist who seems to have influenced the theme is Jacopo Pontormo, and although he does not paint a scene within the scene, one of his works (figure 41) gives us a clue about the presence of the Supper at Emmaus in these contexts:

Pontormo’s work of 1525 is certainly the most remarkable image of Christ blessing the still unbroken bread. One disciple gazes at Christ blessing the loaf, while the other concentrates on pouring red wine. Christ stares at us, as do the extraordinary onlookers behind him—the contemporary Carthusians of the convent for which the work was painted. The most senior one addresses us with an expounding gesture. This is part of the painting’s exceptional illusionism; it was apparently installed at eye level in a false door in a room described once as a dispensa, where food is distributed, and once as a foresteria, or room to receive outsiders. It was thus a place for handing out bread to laypeople, doubtless the local poor, and they are the objects of the gazes. The two disciples seen from the back as they take their bread and wine are no doubt equated with these recipients.\(^6\)

\(^6\) Creighton E. Gilbert, *Caravaggio and His Two Cardinals*, 144.
If we put together the print by Dürer, the two Flemish pictures, and this account of the places where the Supper at Emmaus may have been displayed, we begin to see ways in which Velázquez may have conceived the relationship between the main scene and the one taking place within the frame, in the background. The picture within the picture may be either a painting hanging on the wall of the kitchen, a scene taking place in the next room, or even, as it has been suggested regarding Christ in the House of Martha and Mary (figure 42), a scene reflected on a mirror.62 In any case, what is indisputable is the need to read the painting on

62 Cf. Domínguez Ortíz, Pérez-Sánchez, and Gállego, Velázquez, Cat. 2.
at least three levels: one for each scene taken separately, and one considering the relationship between them.

Figure 42. Diego Rodríguez de Silva y Velázquez, *Christ in the House of Martha and Mary* (1618-1620), oil on canvas, 60 x 103.5 cm, London, The Trustees of the National Gallery.

In any of the possibilities considered about the scene within the scene, be it a contiguous room, a painting, or the reflection in a mirror, we can think that the painter wanted his viewer to literally “see the bigger picture,” this is, to relate the small, framed scene with the one that constitutes the complete painting. Many art critics, Emilio Orozco Díaz among them, suggest that the small painting becomes a key to interpret the bigger one as a religious scene, creating in this way what Orozco calls a “bodegón a lo divino,” a still life with religious meaning.

About Velázquez’s *Kitchen Scene with the Supper at Emmaus*, this religious meaning has been analyzed from different perspectives. In the words of Peter Cherry:

El tema de esta pintura sugiere una asociación general con las palabras de Santa Teresa sobre la vida cotidiana: “Cuando... empleadas en cosas exteriores, entended, que si es en la cocina entre los pucheros anda el Señor, ayudándonos en lo interior y en lo exterior”. Sin embargo . . . el episodio bíblico parece proporcionar la clave para interpretar la escena contemporánea de cocina del primer plano. En el más estricto
sentido teológico, el episodio de la Cena de Emaús representaba la celebración de la Misa de Cristo, donde Su Cuerpo Eucarístico se ofrece a sus discípulos como alimento espiritual para el alma. La marcada ausencia de alimentos en esta pintura posiblemente sugiera el concepto de alimentarse únicamente de la hostia consagrada. Basada en la asociación del encuentro bíblico de Cristo resucitado con sus discípulos, parece que Velázquez sugiere que la esperanza de la salvación a través de Cristo se prolonga a la sirvienta mora coetánea. Teniendo en cuenta el amor de Cristo por las personas comunes (Mateo 5:3), es significativo que la protagonista de Velázquez sea una humilde criada doméstica, quizás incluso una esclava y, por lo tanto, representante de los estratos más marginados de la sociedad sevillana. Además, sus negros rasgos sugieren que es una conversa católica. Su conversión, que se podría asociar por analogía al esclarecimiento de los discípulos en Emaús que reconocieron a Cristo resucitado, podría haber representado para el público de Velázquez la creencia en la universalidad de la salvación cristiana a través de la Iglesia Católica.63

[The subject in this painting suggests a general association with the words of St. Teresa about everyday life: “While . . . you are busy with external things, understand that, in the kitchen, Our Lord is also among the pots, helping us both in our interior and in our exterior.” However . . . the episode from the Bible seems to provide the key to interpret the contemporary kitchen scene in the foreground. In the most strict theological sense, the episode of the Supper at Emmaus represented the celebration of the Mass by Christ, where His Eucharistic Body is offered to the disciples as spiritual nurture for the soul. The absence of foodstuffs in this painting possibly suggests the concept of feeding from the consecrated Host alone. It seems that Velázquez, based on the association with the biblical encounter between the resurrected Christ and his disciples, suggests that the hope of salvation through Christ is extended to the contemporary Moor servant. Taking into account the love of Christ for common people (Matthew 5:3), it is significant that the main character in Velázquez’s painting is a humble domestic servant, maybe even a slave, therefore a representative of the most marginal strata of the Sevillian society. Besides, her black features suggest that she is a Catholic conversa. Her conversion, which could be associated by analogy to the enlightenment of the disciples at Emmaus who recognized the resurrected Christ, could have represented, for Velázquez’s audience, the belief in the universal character of Christian salvation through the Catholic Church.]

Here we find a different way to connect the painting by Velázquez with the scene of the meal in which the pilgrims, Sancho and Ricote participate. What relates them is a promise of salvation for the New Christians granted by their participation in the holy meal. Cherry underlines the absence of food on the table where the maid is working, and its replacement with spiritual nurturing. In this sense, it could be said that the Cervantine approach seems

63 Peter Cherry, Arte y naturaleza: El bodegón español en el Siglo de Oro (Madrid: Fundación de Apoyo a la Historia del Arte Hispánico/Fundación Airtel, 1999), 126.
more direct, given that the subject of salvation, Ricote, actively sucks the very core of the ham bones and drinks wine to prove his belonging to the Christian faith, while the relationship between the maid and the Lord's table, as we will see, must be inferred by similarities in composition between the kitchen scene and the supper scene.

The interpretation of the painting by Velázquez as a statement of salvation has been favored in a recent article by Tanya J. Tiffany, who presents an exhaustive interpretation of the relationship between the possible African origin of the character and the scene within the scene. Tiffany proposes:

[Velázquez] provided a visual interpretation of discourse on African spiritual “illumination” and developing theories of race. He reinforced these discussions of African conversion by representing the light shining on the black woman’s face. An analysis of Sevillian texts indicates that Velázquez also gave pictorial form to local exegesis on the Supper at Emmaus by comparing the sudden realization of Christ’s hopeless, unbelieving disciples with the dawning awareness of an African slave.64

Even though Tiffany uses several written documents to explain her point, for the purposes of this study it is necessary to pay more attention to those passages in which the visual elements are underlined.

The relationship between light coming from above and illuminating a character in a lower position makes it possible to follow Tiffany’s interpretation of the light as a symbol of God. Lighting indeed comes from the same side where the scene within the scene is placed, which establishes a relationship between the biblical scene in the background and the main character. However, the shadows that the objects and the character cast on the table and on the walls lead one to believe that probably there is more than one source of illumination. Tiffany’s hypothesis remains valid since the main source of light is undoubtedly higher than the illuminated objects and the character. Tiffany also considers the possibility of a relationship between the character and the scene within the scene through a reflection trick:

even though we cannot see exactly where the character is looking, there is a chance that the
servant is seeing the small scene reflected on the surface of the copper pot that lies on the
left, or on the ceramic jug placed behind the pot. Even formal similarities can be found:

[Velázquez] created a formal analogy between Christ and the woman by depicting
their poses as mirror reversals of one another, in which each figure raises one hand
and rests the other on the table. Through this visual device, Velázquez emphasized the
African woman’s status as an “image and likeness” of the Lord.65

Since other sources still debate the race and gender of the main character in the
painting, the aspects of Tiffany’s interpretation that have to do with the decision of defining
the character as female and African cannot be completely supported here. But the subtle
formal relations between the elements of the painting, as they are described in her article,
certainly can be helpful in establishing what seems to be a system of shared visual references
between Cervantes and Velázquez, in terms of representing salvation by placing a New
Christian subject next to a Christian representation. In this sense, the servant in the kitchen
is brought to the scene along with the Supper at Emmaus the same way Cervantes situates
the Morisco translator of Don Quixote next to the Cathedral of Toledo.

It is true that, as Tiffany observes, the motif of the Supper at Emmaus is frequent in
paintings of the period not only in Spain but also in Flanders and Italy. In fact, there are
undeniable similarities between Velázquez’s painting and the Flemish drawings of kitchen
scenes with the supper at Emmaus, especially the one by Jacob Matham, as noted by
Gállego, Cherry, and Navarrete Prieto. It is true also that Velázquez seemed to be interested
in this motif, since he has another painting, The Supper at Emmaus, which he dedicates
exclusively to depicting the moment of recognition.66 Moreover, it is important to remember
that one notable rendition of the subject comes from the same painter who is a pioneer of


in Memory of John M. Brealey (2005): 67-78.
still lifes in Italy, Caravaggio, whose style would influence Velázquez, Ribera and other painters. But what doesn’t seem to have been underlined enough is the scene itself, and the fact that it includes elements of a still life in the foreground because of the essential role of food in this episode of recognition.

At least three elements allow us to read the episode of the Supper at Emmaus along with Velázquez’s painting and Cervantes’s writing, particularly with the episode of Ricote: the recognition of a group of people as belonging to a community through the act of sharing a meal, the fact that this act of recognition takes place while these people stop on one side of the road in the middle of a trip, and the emphasis on labor as part of the context of the scene. It is not possible to establish if Cervantes was consciously referring to this passage of the Bible when he wrote the story of Ricote, but these structural similarities seem to work toward the same goal: recognition beyond appearances. What seems more relevant is the fact that both Velázquez and Cervantes are turning their eyes toward food as the element that makes this recognition possible. In a less spiritual reading of the scenes these artists choose to represent, what seems clear is that Old Christian food is the material element around which belonging can be established. It does not matter if the hand that prepares it belongs to a Morisco or to an African subject, as long as the dish is recognizable as belonging to the Spanish tradition. Food operates as a point of contact, but this conclusion should not be read as a conciliatory one. As Tiffany notices, several forms of power can be also recognized: the masculine power of the gaze, the power of Christian light over the dark-skinned character, the power of the master, even if he is not depicted, over the slave or servant who appears in the painting. The visualization of this power is compatible with those instances observed in the episode of Dulcinea, where she has to be recognized as Christian, Old or New, by salting pork, and especially in the episode of Ricote, where he
negotiates with the royal power that expelled him by asking for recognition through his eating habits.

As tempting as it is to interpret symbolically the absence of the scene within the scene in one of the two versions by Velázquez, and the fact that in the other one the Supper was covered for centuries before its restoration, it is probably better to approach this difference between the two versions from the point of view of its meaning within the painting as an object to be consumed. Without going as far as to relate this early modern exercise of duplication with the seriality that concerned Benjamin when he wrote about the work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction, it can still be said that the existence of two copies of this painting, both probably painted by the same hand, or at least in the same workshop, tells us that they were probably meant to be sold.

Even if neither the race nor the gender of the character can be accurately determined, what Velázquez depicts are relationships of power that share with Cervantes’s writing both attentive observation of what happens in their society and the attempt to make the New Christian subjects of the kingdom visible. These decisions about who is worth being represented can be read as aesthetic attempts to respond to the anxiety of belonging, revived in the memory of many Spanish subjects by the expulsion of the Moriscos. The reasons for these artistic responses to the expulsion can be diverse. From a biographical perspective, there is a particular aspect that seems to connect Cervantes and Velázquez. Since the publishing of Américo Castro’s works on Cervantes, the Jewish-Converso origins of the author of Don Quixote have been in discussion among Cervantistas, and this could help explain more clearly why the situation of other groups of “New Christians,” especially the Moriscos, caught his attention and led him to introduce Ricote in the second part of Don Quixote. A few years after Castro made these considerations about Cervantes, Julián Gállego published Velázquez en Sevilla, a book in which he proposed that the painter also might have been a
Converso descendent on both sides of his family tree, and this could lead us to consider that Velázquez too was especially aware of New Christian subjects because of his family and personal history, in which it has been proved that he himself had to demonstrate purity of blood. However, it is important here to underline that even if these origins were disputed, we can still judge the works by themselves and find that the concern about different groups of New Christians is equally valid. The probable Converso origins of the artists may help us understand better one aspect of their motivations, but as we have seen, there are enough theological reasons within the Christian doctrine to consider that events such as the expulsion of the Moriscos were alarming, because they questioned basic principles of community supposedly granted by Christianity.

From an aesthetic perspective, we can see that the principles of artistic creation of the period, which regarded religion as an important element, are followed here but oriented in a very specific direction: connecting the salvation of the New Christians to both the processes of producing and consuming food. In writing and in painting, the ones worthy of salvation are those who either produce products that are esteemed edible according to the religious and cultural principles of the Christian Spanish kingdom, or those who consume them according to the same principles. Morisco, Arabic, and African hands produce the food that is shared and consumed in the examples studied here, but, as we have briefly seen, the principle can be extended to other subjects, such as the indigenous people who worked as servants in the New World.

Literally or metaphorically, Cervantes and Velázquez choose to concentrate on the action of breaking bread to mark the participation of these subjects in the community. Ricote does indeed share bread, along with other products, in the meal with the pilgrims and Sancho, while the servant in the painting is presented as influenced by this action, which is performed by Christ himself in the background picture. The symbol of bread brings us back
to the figure presented at the beginning of this chapter. In the different representations discussed here, the dynamics of capital seem to work the miracle that St. Augustine preached: all types and colors of “grain” converge in the sphere of labor, especially when this labor is related to food and eating.

In the light of this figure, we can add to Pacheco’s reflections on bodegones (see chapter 1) that kitchen scenes are worth being painted not only if they are created with the skill and valentía displayed by Velázquez, but because they include the principles of salvation and inclusion. If we follow these ideas and consider that both the content of the painting and the painting itself acquire value thanks to religious connotations as much as they do thanks to the artistic skill displayed, we find points in which spiritual and economic value converge. The painting and the novel acquire spiritual value because they represent the possibility of existence of a Christian community in which all kinds of men and women can be included as long as they believe, behave like Christians, accept the invitation to the meal that represents the community, and relate one way or another to the symbolic action of breaking bread. But as we have seen, especially regarding Moriscos, “behaving like Christians” can also be the best argument to avoid the loss of men and women who actively contribute to the economy of the empire. The artistic representation of these subjects reinforces this value, but at the same time accentuates the effect of commodification. The New Christians that end up being represented in painting and writing are regarded from the perspective of labor and productivity, and as such, they are assigned value.

At the same time, this way of acquiring value implies a double character of the subjects: their potential as producers of commodities, and their character of commodity-like bearers of value, since they enter the sphere of representation in similar conditions as the objects that surround them. They become worthy for representation, worthy of the artistic glance, and worthy to be acquired as art. In the painting by Velázquez, for example, the value...
of the servant is not completely different from the value assigned to the small pack of spices
displayed on the table. In the strict sense of the work of art in which the servant exists, he
or she is an element in the composition of the bodegón. It is true that this momentary
transformation of the subject into an object makes it possible for the subject to acquire a
new type and level of value, and, if there is a positive outcome, it is that through art these
subjects become visible and therefore they are allowed to exist and to continue living within
the confines of the kingdom. The servant is worth being painted, so he or she can stay in the
painting, in the market, and in plain sight. Ricote is worthy to be transformed into a literary
character, and he stays in Spain both in the novel and through the novel. Through the work
of art, they belong. The problem is that they belong first to the work of art, and only then
do they belong to the community and to the kingdom.
Conclusion

This study has aimed to demonstrate that the representation of foodstuffs in the works of Cervantes and in paintings that are contemporary to these writings can be read from a material and therefore political perspective. By applying reading strategies from Cultural Materialism and New Historicism, it has been possible to underline the complex structures of meaning associated to food as a cultural product and to eating as a cultural practice, and show in the process that literary and pictorial scenes associated with meals can be read beyond the level of contextual information.

The materialist approach used has made it possible to observe how relationships around meals have a unique character. There are few other instances in which rules, discourses, and principles of social organization, of hierarchy, of authority, of inclusion and exclusion, are established and reinstated on a daily basis in Early Modern Spain. This unique character of relationships around meals has allowed me to re-read literary and artistic representations of everyday life politically. By doing so, I have been able to find yet another layer of meaning in Cervantes’s writing, since the attentive observations of his narrators let readers see how subjects negotiated with social hierarchies and cultural distinctions. Similar findings emerge in paintings about food, and even in those where food is an apparently trivial detail.

When we read *Don Quixote* we find that in the beginning there is a clear consciousness about the conventions and the principles that connect specific meals (such as the *olla podrida*) to a specific country, a social class (garlic-eaters and non-garlic-eaters), and even to an ethnic group (Old Christian as opposed to Morisco or Jew), as it has been shown by Américo Castro when he discusses the separation between “tocinófilos” and “tocinófobos” (baconophiles and baconophobic) in the novel; however, this consciousness is
what creates suspicion: What if the one who prepares and eats a specific food is not what he or she was supposed to be? What if Dulcinea is a Morisca even if she knows how to salt pork, since we have seen Ricote sucking a ham bone without any remorse? In the general strategy of *Don Quixote*, this suspicion is treated with humor, but at some points it reminds us that the regulation of this practice had been used to exclude and even exile men and women from the Peninsula. At the same time, the jokes in *Don Quixote* illuminate the many occasions and situations in which the initially rigid separation is turned into a porous material that allows the circulation of New Christian subjects.

As we have seen, thanks to the fact that in practice separations are not as rigid as power would have expected, these men and women find ways to affirm themselves through everyday practices among which preparing and eating food are prominent. In acting this way, they exhibit a behavior that could be qualified as quixotic, because the first character that reinvents himself, by transforming his diet, among other aspects of his identity, is Don Quixote. If we can follow Américo Castro’s interpretation of this initial decision, Alonso Quijano not only transforms himself into Don Quixote because he is aware of the many limitations of his status as a *hidalgo*, but because he believes in the need for changing names and practices to achieve his goal of living according to principles he considers good, convenient, and necessary to “increase his honor and to best serve his republic” [I, 1]. Following this model, many Cervantine characters decide to “materialize” their transformed self with objects and actions, in hopes that they speak on their behalf. Such a decision reveals their quixotism, and, in this sense, their belonging at least to the fictional space of the novel, because their actions evoke the ones of the main character. In the case of the New Christians, especially the Moriscos who make a “comeback” (symbolic before the expulsion, and literal after it happens), we see them reinvent themselves and establish their individual criteria about belonging to the Spanish kingdom. They, in particular, do so through food.
They endure jokes and suspicion, and respond with the strength of habit. This attitude can be read as rebellious if we admit their will to stay, or as submissive if we consider that the habits they exhibit to achieve validation are exclusively those admitted by the Christian community, but in either case we find a strong will of recognition. If there is an anxiety of belonging, it is because there is a strong desire for belonging, founded on tangible signs of legitimacy. Quixotic characters affirm—often in actions, and sometimes in discourse—that they belong to the place where their food grows, where tastes are familiar, where habits about eating and drinking, and even jokes about food make sense.

These ways of making sense, these local practices that sometimes have the character of inside jokes, are one of the paths that have led me to consider possible dialogues between literature and painting. Besides studying works from both fields for their own significance, initially the idea of crossing references seemed appropriate to help explain details and clarify interpretations. But what has become visible in the process of research is something else: a coherent system of representation in which foodstuffs play similar roles in books and paintings, and where not only the objects, but also the points of view and in some cases the visual distribution of the space enter in dialogue. What I have found is an aesthetics of representation that manifests itself through different forms of expression. The different languages used in literature and painting call for distinct approaches to each field, and this has led me to work constantly on two levels of discussion: one related to the particularities of these two forms of artistic expression, the other related to the tools and theories used to understand the works under study. Working on both levels, trying to be faithful not only to the critical terminology associated to these fields, but also to the ways in which literary and artistic theories understand cultural products, has been one of the most serious challenges throughout the process of research, especially because, as observed by several scholars, the still life is a genre that resists a narrative approach. In this sense, it has been difficult to use as
a starting point the hypothesis that paintings and writings are telling the same story. The suspension of time in still lifes suggests this is not the path to follow. A materialist interpretation offers an alternative. Books and paintings may not be telling the same story, but they share a material history. They were produced in similar conditions, in places in which ideas about art and about consumption were shared, and where a community agreed on certain values about foodstuffs as commodities, and about books and paintings as commodities. But, coming from the reflection on the limits of a narrative approach, history cannot be used only as a resource to reintroduce a narrative dimension in the stillness of still lifes so they could be compared with literary narratives. Instead, history becomes a way to give objects a voice, one that speaks from the continuous present of the painting. Due to this constant return to the present, the function of this voice cannot be completely explained with narrative categories, because these categories are conceived to analyze actions in time. Conversely, by underlining the dimension of “objecthood,” painting creates an awareness of the need to stop the narrative mechanisms and lay down the tools to read them, to look back and reflect on an object—an edible product in this case—of which we as readers may have been aware, but usually would not consider in its narrative and material value as an object and as commodity. Historicity and objecthood give foodstuffs a presence, because they trace the ways each element found its way into a picture. In many cases, history helps understand the relevance of the choices made by the painter, in other words, the reasons why he chose to offer to the viewer the uniqueness of the represented object. The introduction of these perspectives leads to a thorough reconstruction of historical moments and events that inform both literary and pictorial creations.

Following the circulation of aesthetic principles, artistic life in the Spanish Golden Age can be regarded as a dynamic world in which subjects and visual systems circulated between creators from different fields. We can speak, then, of a space in which painters and
writers did influence each other—which already enhances our vision of the period, since we look into non-literary influences in literature and non-pictorial influences in painting—and also of a vital system from which painters, writers, poets, and playwrights collected elements for their creations, and to which they contributed new elements and character types.

The reconstruction of a system of representation of foodstuffs shared by painting and literature opens two areas of inquiry. The first one is related to the visual world shared by writers and painters, and by Spanish subjects of different classes who were in contact with these works. This space is informed by religious art in churches, but also by prints sold in the streets and markets, and by book covers and illustrations. An important finding in this area is the role of estampas (prints). Widespread in Spain as well as in the rest of Europe, prints occupy a special place because they demonstrate the material connections between diverse artistic fields. In seventeenth-century Spain, woodcuts, many of them imported from Flanders, Germany, and other countries, are frequently used (and reused) as covers or illustrations in books. Estampas, therefore, can be counted among the materials to which Cervantes had access both because he was in contact with the world of printing, and because these materials are constantly reused to illustrate the covers of chivalric novels, the origin of Don Quixote’s madness. Prints provide as well a common ground of visual culture in terms of religious scenes, since they are sold in the streets for a few coins. But prints are especially significant because painters are among their most avid consumers. Young painters buy them, or receive them from their masters, to learn basic techniques and to make themselves familiar with canonical principles of representation. More experienced painters buy them as a resource, as a way to quickly solve problems of composition, or simply as templates for commissioned works. In the last case, sometimes it is the painters’ patrons who buy them, because they want a specific image for their homes or collections. In all cases, what is clear is that prints are the material and extant testimony of a visual culture that was
shared by creators of different art forms, by members of different social classes, and by subjects who found themselves on both sides of the process of producing and consuming art and literature.

The second area of exploration that derives from the study of a visual system shared by writers like Cervantes and the painters who were his contemporaries is the possibility of finding spaces where tensions, conflicts and unresolved issues converge in the description of acts of consumption related to the table. In the process of looking at the incidental appearance of an edible product in a passage or in a visual scene, the “social life of things,” borrowing the expression from Arjun Appadurai, comes to life and tells its own story. As explained, frequently this story is not the one the writer or the artist are telling in their works. It is one left there for us to reconstruct and interpret. The Marxian idea of a “fetishism of commodities” has distinct resonances in this aspect, because the foodstuffs represented in seventeenth-century paintings and writings certainly underline their symbolic and material value, but where they are especially effective is in their role as marks of social and cultural separation. Cervantes is important for understanding this dimension because in Don Quixote social and cultural differentiation through food and diet are at stake from the very first page of the story, and because this strategy emerges in the literary space before it does so in painting. Passages of Cervantes’s novel seem to anticipate the reflections on luxury offered by Juan van der Hamen, as a “portrayer” of fine edible delights, and by Antonio de Pereda in his Vanitas. Differentiation also allows us to take a step further in the attempt to reconstruct the visual system of the artists and introduce the role of cookbooks. Even though they may not have a level of dissemination comparable to the one of prints, cookbooks present themselves as new participants in the exchange of symbolic value related to food. They come from writing, but they are not narrative, and in this sense they can be compared to still lifes. They share means of transmission with literature and prints, because they all depend on
the technology of serial printing, and, being assigned a price, they share with other books the ability to distinguish buyers from non-buyers of printed materials. On occasions, they share fields with books on medicine, and agree with them about what is worth being eaten. In particular, they establish marks of class. Cookbooks associate themselves with noble kitchens, and offer advice for nobles and gentlemen about the appropriate behavior at the table. Cookbooks are one of the voices of the Early Modern civilizing process, and their criteria of nobility bring us back to paintings. Books teach the reverence of objects due to their character as symbols of status. Still lifes, especially the ones in the style of Juan van der Hamen, invite us to practice this reverence.

These are the tensions and questions that shaped my reflection on precedence.

Cervantes’s writing works as a starting point again when, besides considering the luxury of objects, we pay attention to the way characters create categories and forms of organization around foodstuffs. Regarding this aspect, his writing dialogues with painting both through collecting from tradition and through working on contemporary trends. Here history is brought into the scene to reconsider whether Cervantes had access to relevant works of art in his lifetime. The answer is still ambiguous, but the reconstruction of a dynamic visual space shows that, whether or not he was able to see originals, he was aware of the way specific subjects, related to power and hierarchy, were visually represented, and that he used some of these resources in his descriptions of scenes related to food and precedence.

Reading the visual system in which the works of Cervantes and his contemporaries circulated, foodstuffs become indexes, reminders of the existence of the subjects affected by power. Socially, the most visible subject is the *hidalgo*. Regarding cultural difference, it is the Morisco who generates more reflection, and regarding this figure it is possible to think about contrasting and complementary functions between Cervantes’s writing and the visual system to which it contributes. The contrast comes from the fact that the figure of the Morisco as
an individual, and specifically associated to food, appears mainly in Cervantes’s writing. In painting, the aspect that is underlined is the one of the expulsion, and it is usually regarded from the perspective of the power that expelled the Moriscos. They are not depicted eating, but leaving Spain, and not as individuals, but as a collective. As explained, Velázquez could be the exception, but there is not enough evidence to prove that the dark-skinned character presented in his kitchen scene is a Morisco. The return of the Morisco in Cervantes’s novels, as well as in brief passages in cookbooks, offers the double opportunity of adding one more element to the visual system I have been describing, and to find the limits of this system, since the Moriscos constitute the subject that is difficult to represent, the character that is not only absent from the still life, where there are no human subjects, but almost absent from the sphere of visual representation by Spanish artists, except for the expulsion paintings.

Absent subjects bring me to a reflection on aspects that were not part of the original project of research, but became noticeable along the way. In this sense, a field of inquiry to be further explored is the history of the representations of colonial products in Peninsular writing and painting. Up to this point, many articles have been written by different scholars to discuss the origins and meanings of specific objects and products, but a task that is still pending is the one of mapping these commodities and tracing a bigger picture about their production in the colonies, their travel from the New World to the Peninsula, their consumption in Spain, as well as their dissemination to the rest of Europe. The latter is a subject that also begs for more exploration, especially in those cases in which specific products were not incorporated immediately in the Spanish diet, but were successfully assimilated in other countries. A question that remains unanswered in this study is whether the scarce presence of American produce in art and literature can be read as a metonym of the role assigned to the colonies from which they came in seventeenth-century Spain. A
material approach suggests that it is necessary to be cautious on this subject, for many
reasons. First, because we have to take into account the physical process and the time it took
for transporting produce from the New World to the Old, or to successfully grow a plant
from the Indies in the Spanish climate and soil. In this sense, the presence of a chili pepper
or a tomato in a painting can be considered a reminder of the colonial system, but also an
achievement either in terms of preservation or of adapting produce to new climates. A
second reason to consider the role of American produce carefully is the fact that, even
though they are indeed scarce in painting, other products, some of them locally grown, are
treated in similar ways. Whether austerity was a widespread religious principle inherited from
Philip II’s court, an effect of the times of scarcity mentioned several times in this study, or
an aesthetic convention that many painters decided to follow, it does not seem to make
differences between American peppers and Castillian carrots. What gives coherence to the
system is the principle of focusing on a few elements, and this is what distinguishes the early
seventeenth-century Spanish still life from the ones produced in Italy, Flanders, and other
countries. The third reason, this one in fact discussed in these pages, is related to the visual
and culinary significance of these products in the contexts in which they have been
represented. To continue with the example of the chili pepper, it is not exactly its size, but its
color, textures, and its potential to evoke sensations in the viewer that seems to make a
painter like Velázquez choose it to appear in his kitchen scenes. Nevertheless, American
products do appear in the visual system, and this is a valid reason to reflect with more detail
on their own history, their role, their artistic and material value, the ways they relate to social
and cultural differentiation, and through this relationship, their contribution to better
understand how American subjects dealt with their own anxieties of belonging.

Books, paintings, prints, and cookbooks have allowed me to read everyday life as a
space of tensions and anxieties, but also as the place where small, sometimes ephemeral
communities are created. A meal is frequently the occasion of a truce, a brief moment of agreement, a response to the problem of inclusion of others that seems rather frail to be recorded as historical, and probably that is the reason why meals, their makers, their protagonists and their guests, especially when they do not gather around the tables of the kings or of the upper classes, are better presented from the perspective of the particular that makes literature and art possible, and differentiates them from the discourse of history. In the end, I just realize once again that Cervantes had already understood this:

During the time and period when one eats and drinks, other cares tend to be of little importance.
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Biography

Leonardo M. Bacarreza was born in La Paz, Bolivia, in 1976. There he earned his Licentiate degree from Universidad Mayor de San Andrés, in 2002. He has published the book Milonga del primer tango: traducción y lógicas de escritura en la obra de Jorge Luis Borges (La Paz, Bolivia: Ediciones Gente Común, 2005), and the articles: “Noticia de un tango escrito por Borges” (in La lagartija emplumada, revista de literatura, No. 1, La Paz: Universidad Mayor de San Andrés, Facultad de Humanidades y Ciencias de la Educación, Carrera de Literatura, 2004), “Testimonio y ficción: las transformaciones en los relatos orales ‘Del tiempo de misión’ y ‘De curas’ en territorio guarayo” (in Senderos y mojones: relatos orales cruceños. La Paz: Universidad Mayor de San Andrés, Instituto de Estudios Bolivianos, 2000), and “Jacques el fatalista: la pasión de batirse a duelo” (in Cuadernos de Literatura, 22. La Paz, Bolivia: Universidad Mayor de San Andrés, Carrera de Literatura 1998). In 2008, he was awarded the Anne T. and Robert M. Bass Fellowship. He is a member of the Modern Languages Association, the Renaissance Society of America, and the Cervantes Society of America.