The Vanishing of Angelica: Ariosto, Cervantes, and the Economy of Gratitude

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TWO QUOTATIONS from Ariosto’s Orlando furioso figure in four different chapters of Cervantes’s Don Quijote. Cervantes’s acknowledgment of his debt to Ariosto comes as no surprise for the reader: the Orlando furioso is constantly beneath the surface of the novel, placed on the shelves of Don Quijote’s library, recited by heart by the protagonist, and performed when the hero goes mad in the Sierra Morena.¹ Yet these quotations share an unusual trait. Each one is reproduced twice in the novel, each time openly presented as quotations of another text. The first quotation is from canto XXIV of the Orlando furioso, when Isabella and

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Zerbino find out about Orlando’s madness (OF XXIV, 57, 7–8: “Come volesse dir: nessun la muova / che star non possa con Orlando a prova”). The second quotation, which also appears twice in Don Quijote, is from canto XXX, when the narrator decides not to follow Angelica’s path and abandons her (OF XXX, 16, 7–8: “E de l’India a Medor desse lo scettro, / forse altri canterà con miglior plettro”).

We will return later to the specific quotations and their contexts. But how is the reader supposed to interpret the repetition? Why are these quotations to be found in different places? What is the relationship between these passages and the literary works as a whole? This essay aims to answer these questions and proposes an investigation of the intertextual relationships between Ariosto’s and Cervantes’s texts. Scholars have thoroughly scrutinized the relationship between Ariosto and Cervantes. They have focused on how Don Quijote’s madness originates in the frenzy of Orlando, and on how themes, episodes, and narrative techniques in Cervantes’s novel relate to Ariosto’s poem. Yet, these two repeated quotations from the Orlando

2. Ludovico Ariosto, Orlando furioso e Cinque canti, ed. Sergio Zatti and Remo Cesariani, 2 vols. (Turin, 1997). Henceforth, citations to this work will be given as OF followed by the canto, stanza, and line numbers.


have never been read as a system. I argue in fact that they are meant to be read as pieces of a single puzzle: the text is asking readers to recollect these scattered fragments and make sense out of the resulting form. Even though these quotations represent two different episodes in the Orlando furioso, I believe that they bring to the forefront one unique theme: the problematic nature of ingratitude in the realms of love, which ties the quotations to one another and to Don Quijote by way of the character Angelica, the cause of Orlando’s madness and the quintessential object of the knights’ desire.7 Through her rejection of Orlando’s love, Angelica’s actions problematize the relationship between the knights’ virtue and the expectation that she reward their service with her feelings—a relationship that underpins chivalric society as a whole.

The pattern formed by the quotations to Ariosto’s poem in Don Quijote indicates a widening rift between chivalric society, which depends on predictable forms of action and reward, and a model of society based instead on individual freedom, in which choices are made independent of previous obligations. By investigating this tension, I expand on recent works on the importance of gratitude within the history of ideas and, more specifically, in the Orlando furioso.8 In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, gratitude stood at the center of the idealized world of courtly


society. This standing was upheld in part by denouncing its absence. Thus, it is easy in the *Orlando furioso* to find many examples of ingratitude: Bireno abandons Olimpia because he is cruel and forgets about her love and efforts; Orlando’s madness is presented as a punishment from God because the hero has not put his skills, a gift from heaven, into action by helping Charlemagne’s army against the pagans; and Ruggiero, the supposed hero, overlooks Bradamante’s efforts to save him and constantly ignores her feelings.

At the visual level, the *Orlando furioso*’s first edition, published in 1516, testifies to the importance of gratitude. In that edition, a mysterious motto—*pro bono malum* (“evil in return for good”—appeared on the second page, at fol. a2v. Included within an illustration of bees who are intent on making honey, this enigmatic sentence has been related by scholars to the poet’s relationship to the Este family, to life at court in general, to the narrative in its entirety, and to the ungrateful nature of humankind. Although some doubts about the meaning of this image still remain, recent contributions have confirmed that Ariosto’s intention was to place

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9. See Santoro, “Lidia o dell’ingratitudine,” 53, quoted and discussed in Zatti, *Il Furioso fra epos e romanzo*, 148. In his chapter, Zatti further develops ingratitude in relationship to poetry, the poet, and his patrons. Residori (“Sur l’ingratitudine,” 3–4) emphasizes the importance of ingratitude in sixteenth-century works and treatises: the *De ingratitudine fugienda* by Giovanni Antonio Campano (1495), the *Tratato contro a la ingratitudine* by Vespasiano da Bisticci (ca. 1490), the *Asinus sive de ingratitudine* by Giovanni Pontano (1507), the *Capitolo de ingratitudine* by Niccolò Machiavelli (1507–12), the *Commedia dell’ingratitudine* (1518–19) by Giovan Battista Dell’Ottonaio, and Lilio Gregorio Giraldi’s *Liber adversus ingratos* and *Libellus quomodo quis ingrati nomen et crimen effugere possit* (published in 1548, composed ca. 1520). Three years after the publication of Cervantes’s *Don Quijote*’s first part, the ballet *Il ballo delle ingrate* by Claudio Monteverdi was first performed in Mantua for Francesco Gonzaga (1608).

10. See Maldina, “Ariosto, l’ingratitudine.”


13. Ariosto’s patron, Ippolito d’Este, to whom the poem is dedicated, is implicitly accused of being ungrateful because he did not reward the poet properly. See Lodovico Ariosto, *Satira* I, ed. Cesare Segre (Turin, 1987), lines 139–44: “Ruggier, se alla progenie tua mi fai / sì poco grato, e nulla mi prevaglio / che debbio far io qui, poi ch’io non vaglio / smembrar su la forcina in aria starne, / né so a sparvier, né a can metter guinzaglio?” See Santoro, “Lidia o dell’ingratitudine,” 299.
this image at the beginning of his edition and to foreground the motto as a key to the work as a whole, referring to the many instantiations of ingratitude in the poem as well as to the proportion between actions and rewards in human life.\textsuperscript{14} By fleshing out the centrality of gratitude, this motto introduces my investigation of Cervantes’s debt to Ariosto.

The first passage that Cervantes quotes from Ariosto describes the outcome of Orlando’s madness. As a premise to our inquiry into \textit{Don Quijote}, I would like to discuss the concept of ingratitude in the \textit{Orlando furioso} as a whole and explore how the concept works in the context of this specific quotation.

Cervantes’s first borrowed quotation comes from canto XXIV, which is both the midpoint of the \textit{Orlando furioso} and its turning point. Orlando has just found out that Angelica has married Medoro. He discards his weapons, takes off his armor, and goes mad. After a while, two lovers—the knight and Orlando’s dear friend, Zerbino, and his beloved Isabella—approach this same site. Like investigators at a crime scene, they find the knight’s armor on the ground and deduce Orlando’s madness through indirect clues. Zerbino decides to hang Orlando’s weapons on a pine tree with a sign stating that these objects belong to Orlando. Whoever wants the weapons, the sign says, should challenge Orlando to a duel (\textit{OF} XXIV, 57):

\begin{quote}
Quivi Zerbin tutte raguna l’arme,
e ne fa come un bel trofeo su ’n pino;
e volendo vietar che non se n’arme
cavalier paesan né peregrino,
scrive nel verde ceppo in breve carme:
—Armatura d’Orlando paladino;—
come volesse dir: nessun la muova,
che star non possa con Orlando a prova.
\end{quote}

For Zerbino and Isabella, the scattered arms are an indication that something ominous has happened to Orlando. In the chivalric tradition, swords and horses often have names, and people usually fight to gain their possession; they are the exclusive marks of the knight who carries them.\textsuperscript{15} Thus, when we read the story of a knight clumsily chasing his horse, as Rinaldo does in the first canto of the \textit{Orlando furioso},


we are looking not only at a description of action but at one of characterization: Rinaldo is missing his horse Baiardo just as he is missing his chivalric dignity.  

Understanding the symbolic value of Orlando’s weapons helps the reader grasp the enormity of the loss—a loss that itself seems to underscore what Orlando perceives to be Angelica’s transgression. As soon as Orlando believes that Angelica has been ungrateful, he not only goes mad but also forfeits his identity. His nakedness manifests the lack of self.

In this context, it is tempting to interpret Orlando’s madness as the consequence of pure jealousy: if Angelica and Medoro have fallen in love, she cannot be Orlando’s beloved anymore, and so he divests himself of his weapons and clothes and turns himself into a beast (so transfigured that Angelica does not even recognize him when she comes across him). But madness in the Orlando furioso is not an irrational reaction to a sudden change of events. To its protagonist, it is rather a logical and proportional outcome in a world where the rules of stability are constantly undermined. Ariosto insists that, because of Angelica’s ingratitude, there is no space for the acknowledgment of Orlando’s virtue. Orlando performed his chivalric deeds, defeated opponents, won duels and battles, with the aim of proving his feelings and earning Angelica’s love. Since Angelica rejects his love, Orlando believes that she is ungrateful. As Orlando himself observes when he realizes that he is lying on the same bed that Angelica and Medoro had shared (OF XXIII, 128, 1–4),

Non son, non sono io quel che paio in viso:
quel ch’era Orlando è morto ed è sotterra;
la sua donna ingratisima l’ha ucciso:
si, mancando di fé, gli ha fatto guerra.

16. Zatti, Il Furioso fra epos e romanzo, 69; Riccardo Bruscagli, Studi cavallereschi (Florence, 2003), 63–64.
18. On Orlando’s quest, see Donald S. Carne-Ross, “The One and the Many: A Reading of Orlando Furioso; Cantos 1 and 8,” Arion 5, no. 2 (1966): 195–234.
20. These lines are also analyzed from a different perspective in Maria Luisa Cerrón Puga, “Ariosto, Cervantes y el jaque mate a las caballerías,” Critica del testo 9, nos. 1–2 (2006): 213–38. On Angelica’s ingratitude in relationship to Orlando, see also OF XXIII, 123, 1–4: “In tanto aspro travaglio gli soccorre / che nel medesmo letto in che giaceva, / l’ingrata donna venutasi a porre / col suo drudo più volte esser doveva.”
Angelica’s choice to love Medoro has disrupted the normative relationship between love and chivalric virtue. Orlando is dead (“sotterra”), killed by the ungrateful beloved (“ingratissima”) who betrayed his faith (“mancando di fé”).

By contrast, the two characters who find and collect Orlando’s arms represent a proportionate and measurable relationship of love and virtue. Indeed, if we go back to the moment in which Isabella falls in love with Zerbino, we find out that her love is generated by his virtue. He earns her love, as she declares, when she watches him performing valorous deeds in spectacular battles (OF XIII, 7, 1–4):

Il qual poi che far pruove in campo vidi
miracolose di cavalleria,
fui presa del suo amore; e non m’avidi,
ch’io mi conobbi più non esser mia.

Mirroring Orlando’s loss of identity because of Angelica’s ingratitude, Isabella loses her self-sovereignty because of her love for Zerbino. In the economy of virtue imagined here, love and gratitude align. Just as the knight has to reciprocate the service asked by the lord, the lady reciprocates the knight’s virtue with her feelings. By winning a duel or a tournament and, more generally, by showing his worth through chivalric deeds, which originate from feelings of love for the beloved, the most valiant knight—Orlando, Rinaldo, or Zerbino—expects the lady to recognize his value and love him back.23


22. In this perspective, it is revealing how Ariosto describes the end of Zerbino’s quest for Orlando’s arms. Zerbino finds the weapons exactly where Angelica, here described as “ingrata donna,” wrote her name on the bark of the trees. See OF XXIV, 48, 3–8: “Non è alcun luogo dove il conte gisse, / che Zerbin pel medesimo non vada. / Giunse al fin tra quegli arbori che scrisse / l’ingrata donna, un poco fuor di strada; / e con la fonte e col vicino sasso / tutti li ritruovò messi in fracasso.”

23. The conception of requited love had in the Middle Ages authoritative supporters, solid theoretical ground, and wide acceptance, as certified by Andreas Capellanus’s De amore. In Dante’s Commedia, Paolo and Francesca exemplify a similar same pattern: two lovers loving each other, both carnal sinners and readers of chivalric romances. Dante’s famous line “Amor ch’a nullo amato amar perdona” (Inferno V, 103) alludes to the proportion between feelings, by echoing directly Andreas Capellanus’s “Amor nil posset amori denegare” (De amore, II, 9) as well as Cino da Pistoia’s sonnet Pianta selvaggia, a me sommo diletto (line 14): “A nullo amato amar perdona amore.” For the presence of Dante in Isabella’s speech in the Orlando furioso, see Tina Matarrese, “Canto XIII,” in Lettura dell’Orlando furioso, ed. Guido Baldassari and Marco Praloran (Florence, 2016), 1:341–60. On the relationship between love, virtue, and nobility in Don Quijote, see the discussion in Antonio Domínguez Ortiz, “La España del Quijote,” in Miguel de Cervantes, Don Quijote de la Mancha, ed. Francisco Rico (Barcelona, 1998), 1:87–104. See also Mario Domenichelli, Cavaliere e gentiluomo: Saggio sulla cultura aristocratica in Europa (1513–1915) (Rome, 2002), 77–150.
Yet Angelica rejects Orlando. In refusing to acknowledge Orlando’s virtue with her feelings, from Orlando’s perspective she upends an essential moral logic. For Ariosto, her disregard for chivalric value exemplifies a broader crisis in the relationship between love and chivalry, gratitude and patronage.\(^{24}\) Ingratitude is the crux of a shift from automatic obligation to desire disconnected from previous commitments. This shift also undermines the patronage network on which Ariosto depended, a system based on exchanges of favors, support, and rewards, and will be a central concern in Cervantes’s reading of Ariosto’s poem.

The effects of overturning such a system of expectations and rewards is apparent in Angelica’s choice after she consistently rejects not only Orlando but Ruggiero, Sacripante, and all the other knights: she falls in love with a humble infantry pagan, Medoro.\(^{25}\) Rinaldo, who also loves Angelica, blames her at the end of the poem in a few revealing words before briefly going crazy himself (\textit{OF XLII}, 45, 1–4):\(^{26}\)

\begin{quote}
Ha sempre in mente, e mai non se ne parte,
come esser puote ch’un povero fante
abbia del cor di lei spinto da parte
merito e amor d’ogni altro primo amante.
\end{quote}

Rinaldo shares Orlando’s viewpoint. As he specifies, the problem is not that Angelica is in love with another knight but specifically that Medoro is neither a knight nor a Christian.\(^{27}\) He does not deserve her love. In not recognizing any value (“merito”) in the chivalric deeds Rinaldo and Orlando have undertaken to win her love, Angelica calls into question the contest itself.

The episode where Ruggiero saves Angelica from a sea monster in cantos X–XI deepens this questioning, serving as an additional example of unmet expectations.


\(^{25}\) On armies and infantry in the cinquecento, especially in Spain, see at least Raffaele Puddu, \textit{Il soldato gentiluomo} (Bologna, 1982).


of gratitude but also as a critique of those assumptions. In short, what happens when a knight’s expectations are not supported by the value of his service?

After saving her from being devoured by a sea monster, Ruggiero expects Angelica to reward his service. As he clumsily divests himself of his armor, however, Angelica disappears with the help of her magic ring. Ruggiero immediately laments Angelica’s ingratitude and starts wandering around like a fool. A closer look at this episode reveals that Ruggiero’s expectations are ambiguous and problematic. First, he tries to rape Angelica while his beloved Bradamante is still suffering and looking for him. Second, the disproportionate nature of his demand emerges from his duel with the sea monster: Ruggiero wins thanks to Atlante’s magic shield, not his weapons; when the monster is stunned, he is not even able to wound it. Finally, his victory is fleeting, since Olimpia will soon be imprisoned and offered to the sea creature just like Angelica. The case of Ruggiero and Angelica may thus be counted on either side of the social shift explored first by Ariosto and later by Cervantes.

The narrator of the Orlando furioso might be considered a liminal case himself. Immediately after Angelica falls in love with Medoro, the narrator acknowledges that she has been ungrateful to her suitors (OF XIX, 31–32):

O conte Orlando, o re di Circassia,
vostra inclita virtù, dite, che giova?
Vostro alto onor dite in che prezzo sia,
o che mercé vostro servir ritruova.
Mostratemi una sola cortesia
che mai costei v’usasse, o vecchia o nuova,
per ricompensa e guidardone e merto
di quanto avete già per lei sofferto.


Oh se potessi ritornar mai vivo,
quanto ti parria duro, o re Agricane!
che già mostrò costei sì averti a schivo
con repulse crudeli et inumane.
O Ferraù, o mille altri ch’io non scrivo,
ch’ave te fatto mille pruove vane
per questa ingrata, quanto aspro vi fôra,
s’è costu’ in braccio voi la vedesse ora!

The text adds Agricane, Ferraù, and many others not explicitly mentioned to the
list of the scorned knights. However, although the narrator seems here to take sides
against Angelica, in the *Orlando furioso* the narrative voice is continuously ambig-
uous and often contradictory.²⁰ The most famous example of this ambivalence is
the ending of canto XXIX, immediately before the disappearance of Angelica, when
the narrator attacks women’s supposed ingratitude.²¹ He then immediately tries to
amend his mistake at the beginning of the following canto, recognizing that he lost
control and apologizing for it (*OF* XXX, 1–2):²²

Quando vincer da l’impeto e da l’ira
si lascia la ragion, né si difende,
e che ’l cieco furor si inanzi tira
o mano o lingua, che gli amici offende;
se ben dipoi si piange e si sospira,
non è per questo che l’error s’emende.
Lasso! io mi doglio e affliggo invan di quanto
dissi per ira al fin de l’altro canto.


²¹ *OF* XXIX, 73–74: “Avrebbe così fatto, o poco manco, / alla sua donna, se non s’ascondea; / perché non discerna il nero dal bianco, / e di giovar, nocendo, si credea. / Deh, maledetto sia l’annello et anco / il cavallier che dato le / avea! / che se non era, avrebbe Orlando fatto / di sé vendetta e di mill’altri a un / tratto. // È questa sola ma fosser pur state / in man d’Orlando quante oggi ne sono; / ch’ad ogni modo tutte sono ingrate, / né si trova tra loro oncia di buono. / Ma prima che le corde rallentate / al canto disugual rendano il suono, / fia meglio differirla a un’altra volta, / acciò men sia noioso a chi l’ascolta.” On this passage, see also Santoro, “L’Angelica del *Furioso*,” 126–27.

Ma simile son fatto ad uno infermo,
che dopo molta pazienza e molta,
quando contra il dolor non ha più schermo,
cede alla rabbia e a bestemmiar si volta.
Manca il dolor, né l’impeto sta fermo,
che la lingua al dir mal facea sì sciolta;
e si ravvede e pente e n’ha dispetto:
ma quel c’ha detto, non può far non detto.

Without any predictable expectation for rewards, what motivates and governs the knights’ choices in the poem? What is the proper compensation for their service? When Isabella falls in love with Zerbino, it is proof that he has bested his opponents and demonstrated his virtue. Medoro, however, is wounded when Angelica falls in love with him; he needs her to take care of him. Here we have the synthesis of a change: the beloved is not the reward for the winner, as she is supposed to be according to the Orlando innamorato of Boiardo, the work in which she was introduced as a literary character, and also according to the outset of the Orlando furioso, which set the stage for the chivalric deeds of both Orlando and Rinaldo (“la donzella / ch’esser dovea del vincitor mercede”; OF I, 10, 1–2). Angelica instead chooses the injured loser, who would die without her help. This overturning of expectations is the premise for our analysis and, I argue, the reason Cervantes uses this passage from the Orlando furioso as a point of departure for his own portrayal of chivalry.

The idea of using Angelica as the quintessential image of ingratitude was not unique to Cervantes. In one of the most famous editions of the Orlando furioso, published by Gabriele Giolito in Venice nine years after Ariosto’s death (1542), Angelica’s ingratitude stands out in the rubrics to the first canto: “In questo primo canto si comprende l’ingratitudine delle Donne sotto la fuga d’Angelica, la quale

33. It is true that her feelings for Rinaldo originate from drinking from the magic fountain of love. However, from the perspective of the knights, the Orlando furioso makes it evident that she has been ungrateful and problematizes the expectations of gratitude by implicitly asking whether they are fair. Indeed, the narrator refers to Rinaldo himself as ungrateful from Angelica’s perspective, in OF I, 75, 7–8: “nel tempo che da lei tanto era amato / Rinaldo, allor crudele, allor ingrato.”


35. Ludovico Ariosto, Orlando furioso . . . novissimamente alla sua integrità ridotto et ornato di varie figure (Venice, 1542), Aiii r.
essendo amata da quattro valorissimi Cavallieri, et ella niuno amandone, mossa solamente a beneficio di se medesima, si dimostra cortese a Sacripante.” In rejecting valiant knights, and indeed in following her own desires, Angelica embodies the tensions between her suitors’ social model and its unraveling through her legitimate desire. As the rubric suggests, ingratitude lies at the heart of a broader social perspective on value (“mossa solamente a beneficio di se medesima”). The move away from a traditional balance between service and reward is not only a narrative device or a tool for characterization; it also speaks to a profound reflection on virtue and politics that takes love as the explorative ground for such problematization.

In the *Orlando furioso* (canto XXXIV), Lidia is the only figure Astolfo speaks to during his quick descent to a Dantesque hell; her transgression is failing to reciprocate her lover’s feelings and pretending to love him in order to take advantage of his skills. The fact that the only sinner in the poem is an ungrateful lady demonstrates Ariosto’s unrelenting focus on this theme, as Lidia becomes the synecdoche for the concept of sin as a whole. At the same time, however, she is defended by the narrator, who does not want to take sides against Lidia’s freedom not to reciprocate her lover’s feelings. A similar narrative ambivalence hovers over Angelica: are she and Lidia culpable for the madness they cause, or are they the victims, stripped of personal choice by the chivalric system? The *Orlando furioso* uses these characters to probe a larger tension between a collective dependence on the obligation to reward received services and the freedom of individuals, especially but not only women, to reject such demands as illegitimate.

In short, summoned by the quotation from *Orlando furioso*’s canto XXIV and its resonances in Ariosto’s poem, the concept of gratitude allows Cervantes to connect Orlando’s madness and Angelica’s refusal with Zerbino and Isabella. Representing themselves as an ideal model of reciprocal love based on the acknowledgment

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37. See Residori, “Sur l’ingratitude,” 21, and the introduction by Girolamo Ruscelli to the Valgrisi edition in 1556, quoted by Residori: “In questo canto trentesimo quarto s’ha l’esempio d’un potentissimo et sfrenato amore nella persona d’Alceste, et, per la durezza di Lidia in non piegarsi mai per alcuno suo merito ad amarlo, si vede, non diremo noi l’ingratitudine, com’ella stessa poi la dichiara, ma più tosto la fermezza et la stabilità dell’animo d’una valorosa donna, la quale, vedendo che colui, per la risposta del padre d lei in non volergliela dar per moglie, si volge furiosamente a uscir della fedeltà debita a lui col suo signore et a far cose che tornino in tanto danno et inquietamento della donna amata, si risolve valorosamente a non indursi ad amarlo mai. Et se l’autor qui finge ch’ella di ciò sia severissimamente castigata nell’altro mondo, è da dire che avenisse per l’altre circostanze che in quella sua vendetta ella aggiunse, per condurlo a morte.”

38. See Eleonora Stoppino, “The Paradox of Helen: Genealogies and Textual Hierarchies in *Orlando furioso*, Canto XXXIV,” in *Genealogies of Fiction*, 89–115. See also the discussion in Boccaccio’s *De mulieribus claris* (chap. XXXVI), quoted on 202 n. 5.
of virtues, the lovers’ gentle gathering of Orlando’s arms becomes also an act of gratitude to the knight who had saved their lives in the preceding cantos. While gratitude and virtue are expected to work together and solidify the courtly society depicted in the *Orlando furioso*, another path rejecting gratitude as an obligation develops within the narrative with Angelica’s refusal and disappearance. This interconnection is reassessed by Cervantes, who dramatizes the impossibility of sustaining chivalry in a literary space without corresponding acts of gratitude.

Chapter XIII of Cervantes’s novel opens with Don Quijote and Sancho being awakened by a group of shepherds. They are going to the funeral of Grisóstomo, a young peasant who died because his beloved Marcela did not return his love. Vivaldo, one of the two gentlemen on their way to the funeral, asks why Don Quijote is wearing armor. Don Quijote proudly answers that he is a knight and predictably declares that there is no knight without love. At this point, Vivaldo asks whether his lady is noble, and Don Quijote immediately makes a long list of Dulcinea’s forebears. At the end of his response comes the quotation from the *Orlando furioso*’s canto XXIV, translated into Spanish (DQ I, XIII):

—*El linaje, prosapia y alcurnia querríamos saber*—replicó Vivaldo.

A lo cual respondió don Quijote:

—*No es de los antiguos Curcios, Gayos y Cipiones romanos, ni de los modernos Colonas y Ursinos, ni de los Moncadas y Requesenes de Cataluña, ni menos de los Rebells y Villanovas de Valencia, Palafoxes, Nuzas, Rocabertis, Corellas, Lunas, Alagones, Urreas, Foces y Gurreas de Aragón, Cerdas, Manriques, Mendoza y Guzmanes de Castilla, Alencastros, Pallas y Meneses de Portugal; pero es de los del Toboso de la Mancha, linaje, aunque moderno, tal, que puede dar generoso principio a las más ilustres familias de los venideros siglos. Y no se me replique en esto, si no fuere con las condiciones que puso Cervino al pie del trofeo de las armas de Orlando, que decía:*

Nadie las mueva
que estar no pueda con Roldán a prueba.

[“We would like to know her lineage, ancestry, and family,” replied Vivaldo. To which Don Quixote responded: “She is not of the ancient Roman

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families of Curtius, Gaius, and Scipio, nor of the more modern Colonnas and Ursinos, nor of the Moncadas and Requesenes of Cataluña, nor even the Rebellas and Villanovas of Valencia, the Palafoxes, Nuzas, Rocabertís, Corellas Lunas, Alagones, Urreas, Foces, and Gurreas of Aragón, the Cerdas, Manriques, Mendoza, and Guzmanes of Castilla, the Alencastros, Pallas, and Meneses of Portugal; but she is of the family of Toboso of La Mancha, a lineage so fine, although modern, that it can give a generous beginning to the most illustrious families of centuries to come. And I shall brook no reply to this except under the conditions inscribed by Cervino beneath Orlando’s victorious arms, which said: “Let no one move them / who cannot prove his worth against Roland”; 91]

The text claims here the truthfulness of Don Quijote’s argument in order to warn the audience not to contradict him. No one can say that he is wrong, just as no one can fulfill the conditions set by Zerbino for the claiming of Orlando’s weapons. However, a closer reading reveals the ambiguity of this allusion. If we go back to the Orlando furioso, we find that Mandricardo steals Orlando’s weapons immediately and kills Zerbino using Orlando’s sword. If conquering Orlando’s weapons was so easy, might it be equally easy to insult Dulcinea’s lineage? Ariosto’s readers know how Mandricardo gets Orlando’s weapons, and so they would recognize the ambiguity of Don Quijote’s sentence. But why does Cervantes quote the moment when other characters realize and react to Orlando’s madness and not the moment when Orlando himself becomes crazy? Ariosto’s lines do not focus on Orlando’s madness, which is enacted by Don Quijote in a different episode of the novel, but rather on its outcome for Isabella and Zerbino. The quotation exemplifies how Cervantes reinterprets the Orlando furioso: canto XXIV allows him first to deal with the common theme of madness, then to underline his own take on literary representation.40 Cervantes is not interested in the description of objects, per se, but in the perception of the characters, their own perspective.41

40. OF XXIV, 1–2: “Chi mette il piè su l’amorosa pania, / cerchi ritrarlo, e non v’inveschi l’ale; / che non è in somma amor, se non insania, / a giudizio de’ savi universale: / e se ben come Orlando ognun non smania, / suo furor mostra a qualch altro segnale. / E quale è di pazzia segno più espresso / che, per altri voler, perder se stesso? / Varii gli effetti son, ma la pazzia / è tutt’ una però, che li fa uscire. / Gli è come una gran selva, ove la via / conviene a forza, a chi vi va, fallire: / chi su, chi giù, chi qua, chi là travia. / Per concludere in somma, io vi vo’ dire: / a chi in amor s’inchecchia, oltr’ogni pena, / si convengono i ceppi e la catena.”

There is, I believe, an additional reason why this quote is here. After the discussion between the shepherds and Don Quijote, Cervantes moves toward a key juncture in the definition of love in his novel, the encounter with Marcela, anticipated by an allusion to the role ingratitude plays in driving Orlando mad. If we continue reading past the *Orlando furioso* reference, we realize that Marcela’s speech puts into question the role of gratitude in love and, in a way, reaffirms Angelica’s choice. It is another crucial passage in the definition of chivalry as the world where gratitude should (and could not) find its place. Let us focus on this passage.

We are still in chapter XIII when, after the dialogue between Don Quijote and Vivaldo, Marcela appears at Grisóstomo’s funeral and attacks the notion of gratitude in love. She justifies her refusal of chivalric virtue and claims that she bears no responsibility for her lover’s death. Her speech is one of the most explicit theorizations of love in Cervantes’s novel. As with Orlando’s madness, the absence of gratitude is said to have provoked Grisóstomo’s death. Angelica and Marcela are, from this perspective, equally culpable. But if the origin of the two characters is similar, their outcomes in the economy of the two works are different: whereas Angelica neither defends nor denies explicitly the importance of gratitude in the *Orlando furioso*, Marcela speaks up.

At first, she denies the connection between the lover’s worth and the beloved’s reciprocal feelings. The shepherds accuse Marcela of being cruel and ungrateful to Grisóstomo, but Marcela argues for her free will. Against the chivalric correlation between love and virtue, she defends her right not to return Grisóstomo’s love, especially because her beauty, the cause of Grisóstomo’s affection, is not her fault (*DQ* I, XIV):

> Hízome el cielo, según vosotros decís, hermosa, y de tal manera, que, sin ser poderosos a otra cosa, a que me améis os mueve mi hermosura, y por el amor que me mostráis decís y aun queréis que esté yo obligada a amaros. Yo conozco, con el natural entendimiento que Dios me ha dado, que todo lo hermoso es amable; mas no alcanzo que, por razón de ser amado, esté obligado lo que es amado por hermoso a amar a quien le ama. Y más, que podría acontecer que el amador de lo hermoso fuese feo, y siendo lo feo digno de ser aborrecido, cae muy mal el decir “Quiérote por hermosa: hasme de amar aunque sea feo.”

[Heaven made me, as all of you say, so beautiful that you cannot resist my beauty and are compelled to love me, and because of the love you show me, you claim that I am obliged to love you in return. I know, with the natural understanding that God has given me, that everything beautiful is lovable, but I cannot grasp why, simply because it is loved, the thing loved for its beauty is obliged to love the one who loves it. Further, the lover of the beautiful thing might be ugly, and since ugliness is worthy of being avoided, it is absurd for anyone to say: “I love you because you are beautiful; you must love me even though I am ugly”; 98–99]

Marcela is accused of having been cruel and ungrateful, but she claims her innocence and argues for her freedom of choice. Against the equivalence between love and virtue, she defends her right not to love Grisóstomo back. She rejects gratitude and puts into question its necessity in relationship to the physical appearance of her lover. If she is beautiful merely by chance, and if she has not been destined to love anyone, what if her lover is ugly? Is she obliged to love him back only because he loves her? It is not her fault if everyone falls in love with her beauty: she has no obligation to respond. Second, if her lover is ugly, she does not deserve to be stuck with him (DQ I, XIV):

Pero, puesto caso que corran igualmente las hermosuras, no por eso han de correr iguales los deseos, que no todas hermosuras enamoran: que algunas alegran la vista y no rinden la voluntad; que si todas las bellezas enamorasen y rindiesen, sería un andar las voluntades confusas y descaminadas, sin saber en cuál habían de parar, porque, siendo infinitos los sujetos hermosos, infinitos habían de ser los deseos. Y, según yo he oído decir, el verdadero amor no se divide, y ha de ser voluntario, y no forzoso. Siendo esto así, como yo creo que lo es, ¿por qué queréis que rinda mi voluntad por fuerza, obligada no más de que decís que me queréis bien? Si no, decidme: si como el cielo me hizo hermosa me hiciera fea, ¿fuera justo que me quejara de vosotros porque no me amabades? Cuanto más, que habéis de considerar que yo no escogí la hermosura que tengo, que tal cual es el cielo me la dio de gracia, sin yo pedilla ni escogella.

[But in the event the two are equally beautiful, it does not mean that their desires are necessarily equal, for not all beauties fall in love; some are a pleasure to the eye but do not surrender their will, because if all beauties loved and surrendered, there would be a whirl of confused and misled wills not knowing where they should stop, for since beautiful subjects are infinite, desires would have to be infinite, too. According to what I have heard, true love
is not divided and must be voluntary, not forced. If this is true, as I believe it is, why do you want to force me to surrender my will, obliged to do so simply because you say you love me? But if this is not true, then tell me: if the heaven that made me beautiful had made me ugly instead, would it be fair for me to complain that none of you loved me? Moreover, you must consider that I did not choose the beauty I have, and, such as it is, heaven gave it to me freely, without my requesting or choosing it; 99]

Marcela rescues and gives theoretical legitimacy to Angelica’s choice of lover; she mocks the immaterial love relationship of chivalric romances; and, finally, she is Angelica’s counterpart in the Quijote. The relationship between the two is explicit from the way they are depicted in Ariosto and Cervantes.43 First, when introduced by Ariosto, the princess Angelica is compared to a shepherdess (“timida pastorella”; OF I, 11, 1); then she changes her clothes in canto VII of the Orlando furioso to pretend to be a shepherdess, a form in which she also appears in sixteenth-century paintings and woodcuts.44 And this is exactly how Marcela introduces herself, as a wealthy maiden who decided to live the pastoral life.45 The shepherds who tell her story to Don Quijote define Marcela as “desagradecida,” exactly as Orlando, Ruggiero, and Rinaldo describe Angelica in the Orlando furioso.46 Marcela’s lovers write down Marcela’s name in the bark of trees (“y no hay ninguna que en su lisa corteza no tenga grabado y escrito el nombre de Marcela”), as the lovers Angelica and Medoro do in canto XXIII of the Orlando furioso.47

Cervantes quotes Ariosto on Orlando’s arms to allude to Orlando’s madness and, at the same time, to pave the way for Marcela’s theoretical intervention. The


45. Angelica appears as “pastorella” in OF XIX, 17, 1–4, before her encounter with Medoro: “Gli sopravvenne a caso una donzella, / avolta in pastorale et umil veste, / ma di real presenza e in viso bella, / d’alte maniere e accortamente oneste.”

46. DQ I, XII: “Y con esta manera de condición hace más daño en esta tierra que si por ella entrara la pestilencia, porque su afabilidad y hermosura atrae los corazones de los que la tratan a servirla y a amarla; pero su desdén y desengaño los conduce a términos de desesperarse, y, así, no saben qué decirle, sino llamarla a voces cruel y desagradecida, con otros títulos a este semejantes, que bien la calidad de su condición manifiestan.”

lines link Marcela’s idea of love to Angelica, the object of collective desire in the Furioso. But the characters of the Orlando furioso condemn Angelica’s ingratitude without even contemplating a case for her refusal; Cervantes, by contrast, confers legitimacy on Marcela’s voice. In other words, Cervantes’s characters defend Angelica’s ingratitude, which is now openly debated on the stage.

Marcela articulates her idea of love, based on the individual’s free will and supported by solid reasoning, attacking the economy of gratitude and convincing the audience of her goodness. Angelica had applied the same principles to her relationship with the valiant knights of the Orlando furioso, yet she exists in a literary work where requited love is still supposed to regulate courtly society by the protagonist of the narrative. In her world, as a woman, she is the exception. By contrast, Don Quijote is the sole character in his novel able to defend and apply the ideal of chivalric gratitude, its last romantic supporter. In Don Quijote, gratitude is present only in Don Quijote’s mind. It is owing to and enacted by his madness, distant from and rejected by the other characters. The psychological condition of the protagonists exemplifies this pattern: everyone expects Orlando to recover his role as a knight but not as a lover of Angelica; in Don Quijote, everyone asks the hero to renounce knighthood and go back to his ordinary life.

However, Don Quijote enacts chivalry even when he defends it from its opponents. When Marcela explains her position and argues for her freedom, Don Quijote protects her from her detractors, as is customary for a knight helping a damsel in distress. Still, why is he convinced that she has not been ungrateful to Grisóstomo? Why is he not defending gratitude? The reason upholds the chivalric code: to Don Quijote, Grisóstomo is not a knight; he has not proved his virtue to win Marcela’s love; he belongs to a different context with different rules. In his view, Grisóstomo does not have the right to advance a request for her love; her decision turns out to be totally just. Don Quijote will protect her decision not to fall in love. Marcela’s episode underlies this tension between chivalry and gratitude: the chivalric pretension of rewards and the impossibility of blaming the beloved if she...

48. The harquebus embodies the fading of chivalric virtues. Thanks to new technology, everyone will be able to defeat knights shooting from afar and it will no longer be possible to prove virtue on the battlefield. In Ariosto’s poem (canto IX), Orlando defeats the owner of the crossbow, Cimosco, and gets rid of the weapon. But the victory is fleeting, as Orlando himself points out, since the weapons will surely appear again in the future. On gunpowder and virtue, see Michael Murrin, *History and Warfare in Renaissance Epic* (Chicago, 1994); Ugo Balzaretti, “L’Orlando furioso in filigrana: Ravenna, le armi da fuoco, la corte, l’ascesa negata di Ruggiero,” *Aevum* 70 (1996): 563–96; and David Quint, “Dueling and Civility in Sixteenth Century Italy,” *I Tatti Studies* 7 (1997): 231–78. On this theme from Ariosto to Cervantes, see Aldo Ruffinatto, “Io mi vanto di cantare alcune stanze dell’Ariosto: ‘L’immenso potere creativo della parodia cervantina,” in *La tela de Ariosto: El Furioso en España; Traducción y recepción*, ed. Paolo Tanganelli and Cesare Segre (Málaga, 2009), 101–15, esp. 108.
rejects love, no matter the effect on the lover. After Marcela’s speech, examples of requited love based on chivalric virtues are not to be found in the action of the Quijote, although they persist in the protagonist’s mind and in the performance of characters that want to make fun of his fantasy. Circumstances have changed since the Orlando furioso. In Cervantes’s plot, Isabella and Zerbino are nothing but a reference point.

The second quotation from the Orlando furioso that Cervantes integrates into his novel recounts the moment in which the narrator decides to leave Angelica. It is a surprising turn for the readers, as one of the main characters of the poem, the object of desire of almost all the knights, exits the stage never to appear again. The narrator comments on his choice, leaves the plot open for possible continuations, and suggests an outline for a new narrative (OF XXX, 16, 7–8):

E de l’India a Medor desse lo scettro,
forse altri canterà con miglior plettro.49

These lines appear in the last chapter of Quijote’s first part, when the narrator announces that someone else will continue to write down Don Quijote’s adventures.50 He is sure there will be new sallies of the virtuous knight but has not been able to find any reliable account. The sole exception is a scroll with new episodes, which he meticulously includes in the narrative at the end of the book. The author concludes, however, that many lines were impossible to read. They have been assigned to a scholar, who is working day and night to get them published. Here we find Ariosto’s lines. Just as someone else will continue the story of Angelica, new authors will take on the task of following Don Quijote (DQ I, LII):

49. References and allusions to Ariosto’s Orlando furioso begin from the very outset of Cervantes’s novel. In the prologue of Don Quijote, Orlando sends a sonnet to Don Quijote. In another dedication note to the protagonist of the novel, Urganda la desconocida quotes the first line (“Le donne, i cavallier, l’arme, gli amori”) and the title of the Orlando furioso. See “Al Libro de don Quijote de la Mancha, Urganda la desconocida,” 21–30: “De un noble hidalgo manche- / contarás las aventu- / a quien ociosas letu- / trastornaron la cabe- / damas, armas, caballe- / le provocaron de mo- / que, cual Orlando furio- / templiado a lo enamora- / alcanzó a fuerza de bra- / a Dulcinea del Tobo-.” [You will recount the advent- / of a gentleman from La Manch- / whose idle reading of nov- / caused him to lose his reas- / fair maid- / arms, and chiv- / spurred him to imita- / of Orlando Furio- / exemplar of knightly lov- / by feats of / his arm so might- / he won the lady of Tobo; 12] See Segre, “Cuatro siglos del Quijote,” 585. On the incipit of the Furioso, see Santoro, Ariosto e il Rinascimento, 25–50; Benvenuto Terracini, Lingua libera e libertà linguistica (Turin, 1963), 27–28; Bruscalgli, Studi cavallereschi, 55–73.

50. As Ariosto and Cervantes both recognize that they are originating a tradition, they are also aware of their own reworkings of the past. Ariosto’s poem was already a continuation of Boiardo’s Orlando innamorato, and Orlando himself was a character with a flourishing tradition in the Middle Ages. Cervantes was also familiar with the continuations of Ariosto’s poem, such Luis Barahona de Soto’s Las lágrimas de Angélica (1586), which also appears in Don Quijote’s library (DQ I, VI).
Estos fueron los versos que se pudieron leer; los demás, por estar carcomida la letra, se entregaron a un académico para que por conjeturas los declarase. Tiénese noticia que lo ha hecho, a costa de muchas vigilias y mucho trabajo, y que tiene intención de sacallos a luz, con esperanza de la tercera salida de don Quijote.

Forsi altro canterà con miglior plectio.51

[These were the verses that could be read; in the others, the writing was worm-eaten, and they were given to an academician to be deciphered. Our best information is that he has done so, after many long nights of laborious study, and intends to publish them, hoping for a third sally by Don Quixote. “Forsi altro canterà con miglior plectio”; 449]

The very same lines reappear at the outset of Don Quijote’s second part, published ten years later in 1615.52 We find Don Quijote commenting on the love relationship between Orlando and Angelica, specifically on Orlando’s physical appearance. Don Quijote is back home and has not healed from his chivalric madness. The parish priest, arguing against Don Quijote, claims that he knows why Angelica refused Orlando: he was incredibly ugly. Don Quijote points out in anger that Angelica was so ungrateful that it is a miracle none of Ariosto’s imitators have defamed her yet.53 After his comment, Ariosto’s lines are presented again to the reader, translated into Spanish (DQ II, I):54

—Esa Angélica—respondió don Quijote—, señor cura, fue una doncella destraída, andariega y algo antojadiza, y tan lleno dejó el mundo de sus impertinencias como de la fama de su hermosura: despreció mil señores,

51. In this case, I have decided to preserve the quotation as it appears in the Spanish original edition and in the modern English translation by Grossman, which is corrected in Rico’s edition to “Forse altro canterà con miglior plectro.”

52. Prologues, beginnings, and endings are the moments where authors confess their most significant debts, catch the reader’s attention, and try to encapsulate the very core of their work. See Corrado Bologna, “Prologo ai prologhi,” in Alessandro nel Medioevo occidentale, ed. Piero Boitani, Corrado Bologna, Adele Cipolla, and Mariantonia Liborio (Milan, 1997), 5–15.

53. Molinaro, “Sin and Punishment,” 40, shows how in Ludovico Dolce, Il primo libro di Sacripante (Venice, 1536), Angelica is considered a prostitute (I, 32) and condemned by Time for her ingratitude (VIII, 54). She shares the same destiny in Vincenzo Brusantini’s Angelica innamorata (1550), as Finucci points out (“Lady Vanishes,” 141). In the Marfisa, Pietro Aretino argues that Angelica should have been punished for her ingratitude. See Pietro Aretino, Tre primi canti di Marfisa . . . nuovamente stampati e istoriati (Venice, 1535), esp. III, 33; 67; 70–71; 78–79. I am grateful to Federica Caneparo for the reference to Pietro Aretino.

54. On this repetition, see Selig, “Cervantes/Ariosto”; and Ferroni, “Forse altri canterà.”
mil valientes y mil discretos, y contentóse con un pajecillo barbilucio, sin otra hacienda ni nombre que el que le pudo dar de agradecido la amistad que guardó a su amigo. El gran cantor de su belleza, el famoso Ariosto, por no atreverse o por no querer cantar lo que a esta señora le sucedió después de su ruin entrega, que no debieron ser cosas demasiadamente honestas, la dejó donde dijo:

_Y cómo del Catay recibió el cetro_ 
quiza otro cantará con mejor plectro.

[“Angelica, Señor Priest,” responded Don Quixote, “was a pleasure-seeker, a gadabout, and a somewhat capricious damsel, and she left the world as full of her impertinences as it was filled with the fame of her beauty: she scorned a thousand brave and intelligent gentleman and was satisfied with a little beardless page who had no property or name other than a reputation for gratitude because of his loyalty to a friend. The great singer of her beauty, the famous Ariosto, did not dare or wish to sing what happened to the lady after she so ruinously gave herself to Medoro, for they could not have been overly virtuous things, and he left her at the point where he says: ‘And of how she gained the scepter of Cathay, / perhaps another will sing in a better style’”; 467]

Don Quijote’s rage is not unexpected. It originates from the priest’s argument, which supports Angelica’s ingratitude. According to Orlando and Don Quijote, Angelica is a threat to the acknowledgment of virtue, and virtue disregarded leads to madness. They are lawyers crafting a defensive case for gratitude. But for the priest, Angelica embodies a commonsensical principle: if Orlando is ugly, her refusal is perfectly logical. She is not compelled to give her love back to anyone, not even to the most valiant knight of the Christian army. Between the lines, the priest returns to Marcela’s defense from the first part of the novel, where the quotation about Zerbino hanging up Orlando’s arms occurs (DQ I, XIII). The priest and Marcela share a similar approach. They both deny the connection between love and value. In their perspective, it is possible to be both the most valiant knight as well as incredibly ugly and to be rejected by the beloved despite the deeds enacted for her. As the parish priest replies to Don Quijote, who gave a physical description of the knights (DQ II, 1): 55

55. For Don Quijote’s description of the knights, see DQ II, 1: “‘De Reinaldos’ respondió don Quijote ‘me atrevo a decir que era ancho de rostro, de color bermejo, los ojos bailadores y algo saltados, puntoso y colérico en demasía, amigo de ladrones y de gente perdida. De Roldán, o Rotolando, o
“Si no fue Roldán más gentilhombre que vuestra merced ha dicho” replicó el cura, “no fue maravilla que la señora Angélica la Bella le desdeñase y dejase por la gala, brio y donaire que debía de tener el morillo barbiponiente a quien ella se entregó; y anduvo discreta de adamar antes la blandura de Medoro que la aspereza de Roldán.”

[“If Roland was not more of a gentleman than your grace has indicated,” replied the priest, “it is not surprising that Señora Angelica the Fair scorned him and left him for the elegance, spirit, and charm that the downy-cheeked Moorish lad to whom she gave herself must have possessed, and she was wise to fall madly in love with Medoro’s gentleness rather than Roland’s harshness”; 467]

If the beloved has the obligation to respond automatically to the knight’s virtue with her feelings, then there is no space for individual desire or freedom. Instead of a courtly world that systematically rewards virtue, Marcela and the priest believe that gratitude creates a cage. Its rules are not encouragement to perfection; they are harbingers of the annihilation of pleasure.

The two quotations alluding to Angelica’s departure from the poem are certainly a way of paying homage to Ariosto and to the literary tradition he represents, a means of tying the story of Don Quijote to chivalric literature. But they are also an authorial statement on the novel. When Don Quijote announces that none of the imitators defamed Angelica as she deserved, he implies that his story will take on that task.56 Cervantes signals that his work will be different from Ariosto’s poem and uses the vanishing of Angelica to bring her story to a new ending. After Angelica’s disappearance, the Furioso becomes the story of Orlando getting his wits back, the Christian army defeating the pagans, and the victory by Ruggiero over Rodomonte. The narrative focuses on the attempt to reconstruct a fragile balance in the court of Charlemagne. In other words, the ending of Ariosto’s poem leaves

unwritten the option the author should have pursued: an inquiry into the relationship between ingratitude and chivalry, an investigation of the very reasons that led to the extinction of this class. Cervantes quotes Ariosto’s lines about the disappearance of Angelica because his rewriting of the *Furioso* is the natural consequence of Angelica’s presence. It is the outcome of the conflict between a courtly structure embodied by gratitude and the destabilizing force of love. The discussion of Angelica’s ingratitude at the beginning of the second part of the *Quijote* resonates with Cervantes’s choice to present her departure from Ariosto’s poem by translating these lines into Spanish. Whereas the ending of the first part of the *Quijote* alluded to Ariosto by preserving his own words in Italian, now Cervantes absorbs Ariosto within his pages; he reworks the *Orlando furioso* within the space of his novel. On the contrary, the ending of the *Furioso* shows how it is possible to integrate Orlando, Ruggiero, and Rinaldo within the court once Angelica is far away with Medoro.

The double allusion to the vanishing of Angelica presents Cervantes’s work as a continuation of the *Orlando furioso*. But it also allows Cervantes to claim originality for his own *Quijote*, enabling a direct attack on the spurious story by Alonso Fernández de Avellaneda, which came out in 1614 after the publication of Cervantes’s book (1605). As we have seen, at the end of the first part the narrator opened the adventures of Don Quijote to potential followers by quoting Ariosto. At the outset of the second, he brings back to the reader’s attention the same passage from Ariosto that closed the first book. Ariosto’s lines become a gate of authenticity, sealing off the genuine novel against attempts by authors who tried to take on the task. In the following chapters, Don Quijote and Sancho comment on the originality of their story and criticize Avellaneda’s version explicitly. But what becomes clear later

57. In Cervantes’s time, knights were progressively losing their leading role on the battlefield, but chivalry had incredible prestige in games and rituals of the ruling classes. See Ortiz, “La España del *Quijote*,” 27; Hugh Trevor Roper, *Princes and Artists: Patronage and Ideology at Four Habsburg Courts* (New York, 1976), 39; Beer, “La mossa del pedone,” 109–29; Craig Taylor, *Chivalry and the Ideals of Knighthood in France during the Hundred Years War* (Cambridge, 2013).

58. See Brownlee, “Cervantes as a Reader of Ariosto,” 226: “By choosing the Ariostan verse both to end part 1 of the *Quijote* and to begin part 2, after having clearly discredited all previous Spanish continuators, Cervantes is implicitly, yet unmistakably, establishing the *Furioso* as a programmatic subtext for the *Quijote*. The transition of this verse . . . to pure Spanish is . . . an indication that Cervantes presents his own work as the authentic Spanish continuation of Ariosto.”

59. This choice is more surprising if we consider what happened in the first part of the *Quijote* (bk. I, chap. VI), in which the village priest and the barber scrutinize Don Quijote’s bookshelf to determine which books are dangerous to his health. The canon admits that everyone should read Ariosto in the original Italian, and the Spanish translation of the poem by Jerónimo Jiménez de Urrea (1549) was not up to the task.

is first implied at the beginning of the second part: Cervantes is the only author entitled to bring the adventures of Don Quijote to their end and, at the same time, to claim Ariosto’s inheritance.

We have finally arrived at the last of the four quotations in Cervantes’s novel. At the end of Don Quijote’s chivalric adventures, we encounter again Zerbino gathering the weapons of Orlando (DQ II, LXVI). Don Quijote has just escaped from Barcelona. As he flees from the city, the melancholic knight evokes the fall of Troy and announces the end of his chivalric deeds. All of a sudden, he discusses with Sancho the possibility of hanging up his arms and releasing their horses, continuing their quest on foot. So symbolically laden a choice would have consequences for the characters. Exhausted, Don Quijote decides to hang his armor on a pine tree, just as Zerbino did with Orlando’s (DQ II, LXVI):

—Señor—respondió Sancho—, no es cosa tan gustosa el caminar a pie, que me mueva e incite a hacer grandes jornadas. Dejemos estas armas colgadas de algún árbol, en lugar de un ahorcado, y ocupando yo las espaldas del rucio, levantados los pies del suelo, haremos las jornadas como vuestra merced las pidiere y midiere, que pensar que tengo de caminar a pie y hacerlas grandes es pensar en lo escusado.

—Bien has dicho, Sancho—respondió don Quijote—: cuélguense mis armas por trofeo, y al pie dellas o alrededor dellas grabaremos en los árboles lo que en el trofeo de las armas de Roldán estaba escrito:

Nadie las mueva
que estar no pueda
con Roldán a prueba.

[“Señor,” responded Sancho, “traveling on foot is not so pleasant a thing that it leads or moves me to travel a great distance each day. Let’s leave this armor hanging from some tree instead of a hanged man, and if I can sit on my gray, with my feet off the ground, we’ll travel whatever distances your grace asks for and decides, but if you think I’ll walk great distances on foot, you’d better think again.” “You have spoken well, Sancho,” responded Don Quixote. “Let my armor be hung as a trophy, and beneath it, or all around it, we shall carve on the trees what was written on the trophy of Roland’s arms:

‘Let no one move them
Who cannot test his own against Roland’”; 894]
Here, though, Don Quijote suddenly changes his mind and decides not to leave his weapons. But the fact that he even considers the possibility of leaving his arms is revealing. This time, the parallel with the *Orlando furioso* delineates a clear difference: Zerbino hangs up Orlando’s weapons because the knight has gone mad and run away naked. It is a service prompted by gratitude, an attempt to preserve the weapons and to allow the hero to recover his place within the court. For Don Quijote, to renounce his weapons symbolizes the end of his madness.  

Ariosto’s passage on Orlando’s weapons was already mentioned, as we have seen, in Don Quijote’s encounter with Vivaldo (*DQ* I, XIII). The reader is invited to go back to the episode and investigate the reasons behind such a link. First, the earlier instance alluded to Dulcinea’s lineage. Don Quijote explained that to deny her nobility would be akin to removing Orlando’s arms from the tree. The recurrence of the quotation connects Dulcinea’s lineage to the knight’s weapons. As a knight, the only things Don Quijote needs are a recognizable set of arms and an honorable lady to love; Dulcinea and the weapons are the two necessary conditions for his adventures. But at this point in the novel, both sides of the coin are debased. As Don Quijote contemplates the possibility of leaving his weapons, he also prefigures his farewell to his beloved and her lineage.

While alluding to Don Quijote’s farewell to arms, the quotation is also a prelude to something else: ingratitude, as we will see shortly, is again back in the spotlight. After the dialogue with Sancho, Don Quijote faces a new adventure in the castle of the Duke and the Duchess, where a beautiful maiden named Altisidora has apparently been murdered. Her death is actually a charade in which the whole castle participates, setting the stage to playfully deceive Don Quijote. The cause of Altisidora’s death is said to be nothing less than Don Quijote’s ingratitude: Altisidora died because she loved Don Quijote and he did not requite her feelings. We should by now be familiar with this outline. As Grisóstomo passed away because of Marcela (*DQ* I, XIII), Altisidora fictitiously died because the ungrateful knight did not requite her love. The *Orlando furioso* makes the relationship explicit, as the lines on Zerbino gathering Orlando’s arms anticipate both episodes. Altisidora and Grisóstomo are killed by the ingratitude of their lovers; Don Quijote and Marcela are the indifferent murderers.

Two additional clues confirm the role of the *Orlando furioso* in the story of Altisidora. The poem was already evoked when Altisidora tried to seduce Don Quijote for the first time a few chapters earlier. When she rebukes the knight for

61. Don Quijote has just been defeated by the Knight of the White Moon, whose name alludes to Astolfo’s journey to the moon in the *Orlando furioso*. This mission allows Orlando to recover his wits. On this parallel, see Cerrón Puga, “Ariosto, Cervantes y el jaque mate,” 224.
his cruelty and indifference, she brings in another character from Ariosto, Bireno, whose name is translated in a refrain that closes every stanza of her song (DQ II, LVII):

Escucha, mal caballero,
detén un poco las riendas,
no fatigues las ijadas
de tu mal regida bestia.

Mira, falso, que no huyes
de alguna serpiente fiera,
sino de una corderilla
que está muy lejos de oveja.

Tú has burlado, monstruo horrendo,
la más hermosa doncella
que Díana vio en sus montes,
que Venus miró en sus selvas.
Cruel Vireno, fugitivo Eneas,
Barrabás te acompañe, allá te avengas.

[Oh listen, most wicked knight; / pull up your reins for a while; / do not belabor the flanks / of your uncontrollable steed. / Consider, false one, no fearsome / serpent pursues you, you flee / nothing but a gentle lamb, / one far from being a ewe. / O monster, you have deceived / the fairest, most comely maid / Diana saw in her forests, / or Venus saw in her woods. / Vireno most cruel, O fugitive Aeneas, / may Barabbas go with you; you belong with him; 829]

Bireno represents, together with Aeneas, an inconstant and cruel lover who is unable to acknowledge his beloved’s feelings. In the Orlando furioso, he seduces his beloved Olimpia and then abandons her on a desert island. He is, in Ariosto’s word, ungrateful (OF X, 2 and 4):62

E che con tante e con si chiare note
di questo ha fatto il suo Bireno certo,
che donna più far certo uomo non puote,
quando anco il petto e ’l cor mostrasse aperto.

62. Olimpia herself recognizes her obligation of gratitude; see OF IX, 26, 1–4: “Io ch’al’amaante mio di quella fede / mancar non posso, che gli aveva data, / e anco ch’io possa, Amor non mi conciede / che poter voglia, e ch’io sia tanto ingrata.”
E s’anime si fide e si devote
d’un reciproco amor denno aver merto,
dico ch’Olimpia è degna che non meno,
anzi più che sé ancor, l’ami Bireno.

Se Bireno amò lei come ella amato
Bireno avea, se fu sì a lei fedele
come ella a lui, se mai non ha voltato
ad altra via, che a seguir lei, le vele;
o pur s’a tanta servitù fu ingrato,
 a tanta fede e a tanto amor crudele,
 io vi vo’ dire, e far di maraviglia
 stringer le labra et inarcar le ciglia.

The second link to the episode of Altisidora with Ariosto and ingratitude comes shortly after her song. In the following chapter, Don Quijote implicitly comments on the encounter with Altisidora and comes back to ingratitude, struck by the conversation with his would-be lover (DQ II, LVIII):

Entre los pecados mayores que los hombres cometen, aunque algunos dicen que es la soberbia, yo digo que es el desagradecimiento, ateniéndome a lo que suele decirse: que de los desagradecidos está lleno el infierno. Este pecado, en cuanto me ha sido posible, he procurado yo huir desde el instante que tuve uso de razón, y si no puedo pagar las buenas obras que me hacen con otras obras, pongo en su lugar los deseos de hacerlas, y cuando estos no bastan, las publico, porque quien dice y publica las buenas obras que recibe, también las recompensara con otras, si pudiera; porque por la mayor parte los que reciben son inferiores a los que dan, y así es Dios sobre todos, porque es dador sobre todos, y no pueden corresponder las dádivas del hombre a las de Dios con igualdad, por infinita distancia, y esta estrechez e cortedad en cierto modo la suple el agradecimiento.

[Although some may say pride is the greatest sin men commit, I say it is ingratitude, for I am guided by the adage that says hell is filled with the ungrateful. This sin is one I have attempted to flee, as much as it was possible for me to do so, since I first reached the age of reason; if I cannot repay the good deeds done for me with other deeds, in their place I put the desire I have to perform them, and if that is not enough, I proclaim those good deeds far and wide, because the person who tells about and proclaims the good deeds that have been performed on his behalf would also recompense
them with other deeds if he could, because most of the time those who receive are subordinate to those who give: therefore God is above us all, because He gives to us all, and the gifts of man cannot be compared to those of God, for they are separated by an infinite distance; this paucity and dearth, in a certain sense, can be made up for by gratitude; 839]

Don Quijote believes that ingratitude is the worst crime in the world.63 Hell is crowded with ungrateful sinners. His attack is not surprising, since ingratitude represents, as we have seen, the earthquake that can shake the ground of chivalry and shatter human sanity. But here an additional question arises. If Grisóstomo was killed by Marcela’s ingratitude just as Don Quijote prompted Altisidora’s fictional death, why does Don Quijote not even consider the possibility of his own guilt? How can he be so certain he was not the ingrate responsible for her passing?

The difference between Don Quijote and Marcela originates from their belonging to different systems with different obligations. While defending Marcela’s freedom, Don Quijote does not even grant solid ground to Altisidora’s accusations. Altisidora pretended to love Don Quijote and wanted him to requite her feelings but did not realize that he had a previous commitment to Dulcinea. It is for her that Don Quijote performed his virtuous acts; it is in exchange for his service that she loves him back. For him, lovesickness does not cause his madness, as in Orlando’s case, but represents its consequence: Don Quijote is in love because his imagined role requires him to be. A set of rules applies automatically to his existence. He has to help people in danger. He has to hang up his weapons, believing in their symbolic value even though they are, in reality, merely harmless objects.64 He has to believe in gratitude in a world where there is no longer a place for it. But the relationship between his virtue and Dulcinea’s love exists only in his mind; it is not enacted at the level of Isabella and Zerbino, as in the Orlando furioso. In

63. DQ II, LVIII: “Yo, pues, agradecido a la merced que aquí se me ha hecho, no pudiendo corresponder a la misma medida, conteniéndome en los estrechos límites de mi poderio, ofrezco lo que puedo y lo que tengo de mi cosecha; y, así, digo que sustentaré dos días naturales, en mitad de ese camino real que va a Zaragoza, que estas señoras zagalas contrahechas que aquí están son las más hermosas doncellas y más corteses que hay en el mundo, excetando solo a la sin par Dulcinea del Toboso, única señora de mis pensamientos, con paz sea dicho de cuantos y cuantas me escuchan.” [And I, grateful for the kindness shown to me here, and not being able to correspond in kind, for I am restrained by the narrow limitations of my means, offer what little I can and am able to do; and so I say that I shall maintain for two whole days, in the middle of the king’s highway to Zaragoza, that these damsels, the feigned shepherdesses here present, are the most beautiful and courteous maidens in the world, excepting only the peerless Dulcinea of Toboso, the sole lady of my thoughts, with no offense intended to all the gentlemen and ladies who hear me; 839–40]
the novel, none but a reader who wants to make fun of Don Quijote would take down his weapons from that pine tree.

Don Quijote does not feel guilty because Altisidora’s death was not even believable from a chivalric perspective. He neither deserved nor won Altisidora’s love; she could not ask for his love as an act of gratitude. Between the lines, the episode becomes a reflection on verisimilitude. Altisidora tries to take part in Don Quijote’s chivalric world, but her role is inconsistent with the script. She loves him even though he did not perform any deeds for her. She gives him a reward despite his lack of service. And finally, she makes the adventure of the castle a tangible fiction for Don Quijote as well. As soon as Don Quijote becomes aware of the unlikelihood of Altisidora’s request and performance, his chivalric life must come to a close. If we continue reading, we will find Don Quijote back at an inn, which he no longer sees as a castle, as he had at the outset of the story, but for what it is. Defeated by the Knight of the White Moon, haunted by the fake death of Altisidora, Don Quijote gives up.

5

The two repeated quotations from the *Orlando furioso* mark the different stages to *Don Quijote* itself, giving us privileged access to Cervantes’s reworking of literary fiction. These lines, absorbed from Ariosto’s poem, silently connect different episodes of the novel under the shadow of ingratitude. At first, Zerbino’s gathering of Orlando’s weapons alludes to the madness of Orlando, caused by Angelica. But it also prepares the reader for the speech of Marcela, an attack on the centrality of gratitude. At the end of the first part and the opening of the second, Cervantes brings in the vanishing of Angelica to show how his work follows in Ariosto’s footsteps, to dare other authors to try to finish his story and then to reaffirm his own authority over his book. In the same chapter, the priest and Don Quijote comment on love by rephrasing Marcela’s argument. Finally, the first quotation appears again at the end of the novel, linking Orlando’s and Don Quijote’s arms and setting the stage for the episode of Altisidora that returns us to Marcela’s victim, Grisóstomo.

Recovered by the reader and seen together in their multiple contexts, these quotations shape a distinctive and problematic image of gratitude. Don Quijote protects this principle against an alternative model of social interactions, devoid of obligatory recognition. Yet Cervantes’s novel is not optimistic about its protagonist’s efforts. While Ariosto abandons the quintessential image of ingratitude to bring the narrative to its end, Cervantes finishes his story with the death of gratitude’s sole defendant.