

The Chiasmatic Links Between the Cave of Montesinos and the Clavileño Episodes in *Don Quixote*

Song No*

국문초록

본 논문은 소설 돈키호테의 몬테시노스의 동굴과 클라빌레뇨 에피소드 사이의 교차적 연관성을 분석합니다. 두 에피소드는 현실과 환상 사이의 경계를 모호하게 만드는 중추적인 계기로 작용하여 회의론과 신뢰론에 대한 이해를 풍부하게 합니다. 심층 분석을 통해 이 논문은 이 두 에피소드가 소설의 핵심 주제인 내러티브의 신뢰성과 진실의 구성 사이의 복잡한 상호 작용에 어떻게 기여하는지 탐구합니다. 이 분석은 주인공이 미지의 세계와 만나는 것, 경험의 주관성, 그리고 개인의 현실을 형성하는 데 있어 스토리텔링의 역할에 초점을 맞춥니다. 더욱이 이 에피소드에 담긴 풍자적 비평을 고찰하여 사회적 경신과 환상을 향한 인간의 경향에 대한 세르반테스의 통찰력을 드러냅니다. 돈키호테와 산초 판자의 대조적인 경험은 현실과 허구의 구분을 더욱 복잡하게 만듭니다. 그들의 내러티브

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의 상호 연결성을 인정함으로써 이 논문은 스토리텔링이 진실에 대한 우리의 이해를 어떻게 형성하는지 강조합니다. 궁극적으로 소설 돈키호테는 단순한 모험 이야기의 경계를 넘어 인간의 본성, 내러티브의 진실성, 그리고 스토리텔링이 인간의 현실 인식에 미치는 중요한 영향에 대한 심오한 탐구를 제시합니다.

주제어 : 교차적 연관성, 서사의 신뢰성, 환상, 회의론, 스토리텔링과 인식

In the intricate narrative of *Don Quixote de la Mancha* (with the first part published in 1605 and the second in 1615), the episodes of the Cave of Montesinos (Chapters 22 and 23 of Part 2) and the Clavileño (Chapter 41 of Part 2) transcend simple plot diversions, emerging as essential to the novel's structural and thematic essence. They establish a chiasmatic link, serving as critical junctures that pivot the novel's exploration into the nebulous boundary between reality and illusion, thus deepening our understanding of belief and skepticism.

The Cave of Montesinos invites readers into both the literal depths of the earth and the figurative depths of Don Quixote's mind, weaving reality with threads of myth, legend, and unwavering conviction. This solitary journey into the abyss stands as a crucial moment in the story, where Don Quixote's descent mirrors his inward quest for enlightenment, embodying the novel's key themes.¹ This exploration, an introspective

1 Julia Domínguez, "A Window onto the Heart: Cervantes and the Cardiocentric Self," *Hispanic Review*, 91(4) (2023), p.519.

journey deep into *Don Quixote*'s essence, reveals the complexity and inner turmoil he harbors. Here, Cervantes skillfully creates a space where time is fluid, and chivalric heroes come to life, allowing Don Quixote to commune with the echoes of his chivalric idols. This episode underlines the narrative's examination of how individual belief can forge a reality as tangible as the physical world,² challenging readers to question the demarcation between what is real and what is imagined.

In the narrative fabric of *Don Quixote*, the juxtaposition of the Cave of Montesinos and the Clavileño episodes illustrates a chiasmatic exploration of societal credulity and the human penchant for embracing the fantastical. The subterranean voyage, rooted in introspection and the quest for chivalric truth, contrasts sharply with the aerial escapade orchestrated by the Duke and Duchess, a critique veiled in the guise of adventure.³ This skyward journey, while outwardly a spectacle of grandeur, inwardly satirizes our collective inclination to suspend disbelief when faced with narratives presented with conviction. Through this contrived flight, Cervantes navigates the terrains of belief and skepticism, exposing the malleability of reality and our eagerness to forgo disbelief for the sake of narrative immersion.

These episodes, emblematic of *Don Quixote*'s thematic heart, underscore the dialogues between reality and fiction that define the novel. They reveal Cervantes's strategic use of narrative to delve into existential inquiries central to the human condition: the essence of reality, the

2 Américo Castro, *Hacia Cervantes* (Madrid : Taurus, 1967), p.439.

3 Anthony J. Cascardi, "Image and Iconoclasm in *Don Quijote*," *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 82(5) (2005), p.609.

influence of beliefs on our perception of the world, and the potential fluidity of the boundary between fact and fantasy. These narratives are pivotal for charting the development of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza as they traverse a world in which their own stories intertwine, engendering a nuanced interplay of doubt and conviction. At the heart of my analysis is Don Quixote's entreaty for reciprocal belief in their experiences, underscoring the intricate relationship between their personal journeys and their understanding of reality: "Sancho, just as you want people to believe what you have seen in the sky, I want you to believe what I saw in the Cave of Montesinos. And that is all I have to say."⁴ This plea illustrates the chiasmatic links between descending into one's psyche and ascending into the fabric of collective myth. This interplay enhances the narrative's examination of storytelling's authenticity and feasibility,⁵ critiquing not just the fantastical concept of aerial travel but also mocking the justifications that might legitimize such phenomena within fiction's realm. Ife articulates that dismissing the possibility of flight does not eliminate its presence in literature, shedding light on Cervantes's nuanced engagement with narrative and thematic strategies to probe the constructs of truth, belief, and the crafted realities within *Don Quixote*.⁶

To explore the chiasmatic connection between the Cave of Montesinos and the Clavileño episodes—each acting as critical points that shed light on the novel's deep questioning of the line between reality and illusion—

4 Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quixote* (New York : HarperCollins, 2003), p.727.

5 B. W. Ife, "Air Travel in Cervantes," *Cervantes: Essays in Memory of E. C. Riley on the Quatercentenary of Don Quijote* (London : Routledge, 2005), p.67.

6 Ife, op. cit., p.67.

my analysis begins with thorough summaries and interpretations of these segments. Rooted in the thesis that these stories create a vital link, enriching our comprehension of belief and skepticism, the study will advance to an in-depth comparison and analysis. I will examine their ventures into the unknown, analyze the subtle investigation of perception versus reality, clarify the narrative discrepancies and the inherent paradox of belief, and consider the mutual recognition of subjective truths. Additionally, my examination will delve into the thematic significance and satirical elements, leading to a conclusion that emphasizes their crucial contribution to the novel's thematic complexity. This detailed analysis seeks to offer a cohesive understanding of how these episodes act as fundamental components within the larger narrative structure of *Don Quixote*.

The Cave of Montesinos Episode

Transitioning from a broad reflection on the Montesinos's Cave and Clavileño episodes to a detailed examination, this section will focus on the first episode. Cervantes weaves a narrative within this mystical cave that stretches the fabric of reality, probing the edges of time, space, and the thin veil separating consciousness from dreams.

Chapter 22 of the second part embarks on Don Quixote's eagerly awaited journey into the depths of the Montesinos's Cave, driven by his relentless quest for adventure. This exploration is set against the backdrop of Camacho and Quiteria's wedding, an event that sees Don

Quixote lauded for his bravery. It is here that Sancho discovers Basilio's feigned injury—a tactic to win Quiteria's hand—prompting him to reflect on the morality of such deceit. Amid discussions that navigate the themes of love, financial status, and the attributes of a virtuous woman, Don Quixote shares insights that prompt Sancho to contemplate his own marriage to Teresa. The narrative transitions to Don Quixote's determined quest to unveil the secrets of the Cave of Montesinos, bolstered by the Cousin's promise to lead them to its entrance. This section brings the Cousin into the fold, a character whose fascination with chivalric and mystical tales incites a humorous debate with Sancho over the eccentricities of human curiosity.⁷

In preparation for their descent, Don Quixote equips himself with ropes and invokes prayers for Dulcinea's safeguarding. Despite foreboding signs at the entrance, such as the eerie flight of crows and rooks, Don Quixote's resolve remains steadfast. Flanked by the Cousin and Sancho, he embarks on a solemn descent into the cavern's depths, leaving his companions above, fraught with anticipation for his return. This initial plunge into the Montesinos's Cave not only escalates Don Quixote's sense of anticipation and anxiety about the forthcoming discoveries but also brings a keen focus on his emotional and physical reactions, particularly the stirring responses of his heart amidst the unknown. As the wait for Don Quixote extends, with no sign of him, Sancho's anxiety escalates until the tension is broken by the sensation of weight on the rope, indicating the knight's ascent. Upon retrieval, they find him in a

7 Helena Percas de Ponseti, "La cueva de Montesinos," *Revista Hispánica Moderna*, 34 (1968), p.383.

state akin to sleep. The debate over whether Don Quixote was truly asleep during his venture into the cave is a point of scholarly contention, with respected critics such as Avalle-Arce,⁸ Bobes Naves,⁹ Cascardi,¹⁰ and Schwalb¹¹ asserting his state of slumber. Once roused, the knight is immediately overtaken by a profound sense of melancholy for the fleeting pleasures of existence, lamenting over the fates of legendary figures like Montesinos, Durandarte, and Belerma.

Don Quixote's experience within the cave marks a pivotal moment in his narrative, leading him to a profound contemplation of life's transient delights and solidifying his commitment to his chivalric pursuits and the quest for self-knowledge. This episode, resonating with the symbolic depth of Plato's allegorical cave, acts as a springboard for introspection.^{12 13} Cascardi expands on this allegory by comparing it to a myriad of descent narratives in classical and medieval literature, stating that it "echoes the *katabasis* of Ulysses, the Platonic myth of the cave and the shadows, the descent of Aeneas, Dante's journey through Hell, and, with the rope that

8 Juan Bautista Avalle-Arce, "Don Quijote, o la vida como obra de arte," *El Quijote de Cervantes* (Madrid : Taurus Ediciones, 1980), pp.231-232.

9 María del Carmen Bobes Naves, "El episodio de la cueva de Montesinos: Hacia la cordura," *Archivum*, 67 (2017), p.119.

10 Anthony J. Cascardi, "Cervantes and Descartes on the Dream Argument," *Cervantes*, 4(2) (1984), pp.109-110.

11 Carlos Schwalb, "La cueva de Montesinos: Condensación onírica de dos textos disímiles." *Anales cervantinos*, 31 (1993), p.243.

12 Egido, Aurora, *Cervantes y las puertas del sueño: Estudios sobre La Galatea, El Quijote, y El Persiles* (Barcelona : Promociones Publicaciones Universitarias de Barcelona, 1994), pp.178-222.

13 Joe Sachs, "Introduction," *Republic by Plato* (Newburyport : Focus Publishing, 2007), p.11.

secures Don Quixote, the myth of Theseus and the labyrinth.”¹⁴ Motivated by his transformative journey, Don Quixote eagerly summons his companions, promising to unveil the extraordinary details of his subterranean sojourn.

In Chapter 23 of the second part of *Don Quixote*, the narrative unfolds with an enchanting blend of the fantastical and the implausible, as the knight relays the extraordinary events encountered within the Cave of Montesinos. This account stands at the heart of the exploration into the intricate relationship between Don Quixote’s and Sancho Panza’s subjective realities, aligning perfectly with the thesis that emphasizes the paradoxical nature of their narratives. The episode, especially through Don Quixote’s interactions with Montesinos and the narrative of Durandarte and Belerma, pushes against the confines of believability, urging a profound contemplation on the constructs of belief and the fabric of fiction. This segment highlights the novel’s deep dive into the convoluted dynamics of perception and reality, encapsulating the core inquiry into how personal truths and fictional narratives intertwine, challenging and reshaping our understanding of what is deemed credible within the realm of storytelling.

Don Quixote’s vivid description of his experience within the Cave of Montesinos transcends mere observation, ushering him—and by extension, the reader—into a realm far beyond the ordinary. His initial reaction, a mix of surprise and wonder, is encapsulated as he finds himself amidst an idyllic meadow, a stark contrast to the dark confines of the cave: “In this

¹⁴ Cascardi, op. cit., p.604.

dungeon ... I awoke and found myself in the most beautiful, pleasant, and charming meadow.”¹⁵ Despite the surreal setting, the knight is adamant about his lucidity, insisting, “I opened my eyes wide, rubbed them, and saw that I was not sleeping but truly awake,”¹⁶ suggesting a state of heightened awareness akin to a lucid dream.

The narrative takes a further turn towards the extraordinary when Don Quixote meets a figure who embodies the cave’s legendary essence. “[A] venerable ancient dressed in a long hooded cloak” approaches him with an invitation to explore “the marvels hidden within this transparent castle, of which I am warden ... for I am the same Montesinos after whom the cave is named.”¹⁷ This encounter not only deepens the narrative’s dive into the fantastical but also challenges the reader to navigate the thin line between skepticism and the willing suspension of disbelief. Through Don Quixote’s recounting, Cervantes crafts a narrative segment that vividly captures the essence of the extraordinary, pushing the boundaries of reality and inviting the reader into a space where the fantastical becomes momentarily tangible.

The narrative intertwining of Durandarte and Belerma masterfully blends elements of chivalric romance with a surreal literalism, delving into the construct of truth within the novel’s fantastical landscape. Montesinos’s narration of Durandarte’s saga, coupled with Durandarte’s own elegiac lament, morphs the narrative into an intricate amalgam of myth and reality. Intriguingly, Durandarte is not first introduced as a

15 Cervantes, op. cit., pp.604-605.

16 Cervantes, op. cit., p.605.

17 Cervantes, op. cit., pp.605-606.

character but as the famed sword of Roland. In the “Romance of Durandarte,” this inanimate object is given life, transforming into a valorous knight who suffers a fatal wound at the Battle of Roncesvalles. This battle, believed to have taken place in 778 near the Roncesvalles pass in the Pyrenees, marked a critical defeat for Charlemagne’s rearguard, likely due to an ambush by Basque forces.¹⁸ Facing death, Durandarte laments the heart-wrenching reality of never being reunited with his beloved. His demise prompts Montesinos, struck by profound grief, to dig a grave for him, illustrating the depth of their bond and the sorrow that accompanies loss. Upon his passing, Montesinos, overwhelmed by grief, excavates a grave for Durandarte. He then meticulously extracts Durandarte’s heart with a dagger, preserving it in a cloth to be delivered to Belerma. In the context of Cervantes’s time, the heart emerges as a potent symbol of introspection and self-examination,¹⁹ ²⁰ transforming this confluence of the macabre and chivalric valor into a compelling narrative that captivated the imagination of the public,²¹ inspiring a plethora of artistic interpretations and lending the Cave of Montesinos, located near Ossa de Montiel in Albacete, its mythical allure as the setting for one of Don Quixote’s quintessential adventures.

This portrayal of Durandarte, simultaneously deceased yet vibrantly

18 Xabier Irujo Ametzaga, *Charlemagne’s Defeat in the Pyrenees: The Battle of Rencesvals* (Amsterdam : Amsterdam University Press, 2021), pp.74-75.

19 William W. Sights, *The Heart in the Age of Shakespeare* (Cambridge : Cambridge UP, 2008), p.19.

20 Katie Barclay and Bronwyn Reddan, “The Feeling Heart: Meaning, Embodiment, and Making,” *The Feeling Heart in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Meaning, Embodiment, and Making* (Berlin : De Gruyter, 2019), pp.13-14.

21 Jonathan Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned* (London : Routledge, 1995), p.71.

alive, acts as a poignant emblem of chivalry's enduring ethos,²² setting it in stark contrast to the tangible mortality confronting Don Quixote. This juxtaposition casts Durandarte as a reflective counterpart to Don Quixote, epitomizing the essence and romantic ideals of knight-errantry. Montesinos's tribute to Durandarte, hailing him as "the flower and model of enamored and valiant knights of his time,"²³ richly enhances the narrative's contemplation of heritage, valor, and the intricate dance between life and the annals of legend.

Merlin, the iconic enchanter from Arthurian legends, assumes a crucial role in this narrative, casting the spell of ancient prophecies over the tale. His involvement in casting Durandarte, Belerma, and Montesinos into a spellbound state stands at the heart of our analysis. This investigation delves into the profound consequences of Merlin's deeds and the prophecy he bestows upon Don Quixote.²⁴ This prophecy, predicting Don Quixote's advent and the subsequent dispelling of magical curses, invites us to delve into the complex dynamics between destiny, the power of imagination, and the construct of reality that weaves through the novel's elaborate narrative structure.

Within the shadowy recesses of the Cave of Montesinos, the narrative voice in Chapters 22 and 23 of the second part of *Don Quixote* evolves into a complex entity, intertwining the experiences of the characters within the tale with the engagement of the readers beyond its pages.

22 Gloria M. Fry, "Symbolic Action in the Episode of Montesinos from *Don Quijote*," *Hispania*, 48(3) (1965), p.471.

23 Cervantes, op. cit., p.606.

24 Cervantes, op. cit., p.608.

Central to this narrative exploration is Don Quixote's masterful narration. His rendition of the events within the Cave of Montesinos stands as a singular instance of self-narration, presenting an unobstructed gateway into his soul. This episode, distinct for its directness, allows the audience an intimate glimpse into Don Quixote's inner world, unfettered by external narrative interjections. The narrative gravitates around the emblematic heart of Durandarte, transcending its role as a mere motif to become a cornerstone of introspection and a vital echo in the unfolding narrative. Through Don Quixote's meticulous portrayal of this heart, the story acquires a depth of introspective analysis, enriching the fabric of the tale and steering the narrative course of the novel's latter developments.

In the tranquil depths of the cave, Don Quixote's recounting elevates his narrative beyond mere words, crafting an immersive experience that springs to life in the reader's imagination. Cervantes's adept use of narrative techniques intricately sketches the mysterious allure of the cave's shadowy confines alongside the fantastical elements that punctuate Don Quixote's expedition. This methodological approach not only escorts readers on a journey alongside the knight but also immerses them within the cave's mystical aura, artfully blurring the lines between tangible reality and the nebulous realms of fantasy.

In parallel, Sancho Panza emerges as a prominent voice of skepticism, grounding the fantastical elements of Don Quixote's story. His doubt acts as a critical counterbalance to Don Quixote's unshakeable belief, underscoring the narrative's exploration of truth versus fiction. We delve into the profound significance of Sancho's skepticism, considering its instrumental role in challenging the reader's suspension of disbelief.

Sancho effectively becomes the reader's surrogate, casting doubt on the veracity of Don Quixote's extraordinary experiences and thereby inviting critical reflection on the fine line that separates truth from fiction within the novel.

The Clavileño Episode (Chapter 41)

In the Clavileño episode, Sancho and Don Quixote find themselves at the heart of an intricate ruse masterminded by the Duke and the Duchess. Blindfolded, they mount the wooden horse Clavileño, purportedly soaring 3,227 leagues skyward to battle the fearsome Malambruno, in a quest to liberate the Dolorous One (Countess Trifaldi) and her bearded maidens from an enchantment. The portrayal of Clavileño brims with technological or scientific undertones, enhancing its ethereal quality. Don Quixote labels it a "machine," emphasizing its fantastical essence: "Let whoever is brave enough climb onto this machine."²⁵ This depiction not only accentuates the episode's whimsical nature but also subtly critiques the period's fascination with scientific discovery and the uncharted.

The backdrop for this adventure is enriched by the preceding chapter's thorough exposition on the mythic flights of legendary horses from medieval tales, preparing Don Quixote and Sancho for their anticipated journey into the unknown. The knight reflects on the magnitude of their adventure with a sense of gravity, reminding Sancho, "You see now,

²⁵ Cervantes, op. cit., p.718.

friend Sancho, the long journey that awaits us; only God knows when we shall return or what facility and opportunity this business will afford us.”²⁶ Aboard *Clavileño*, Don Quixote and Sancho are blindfolded—a requisite for the illusory voyage aboard *Clavileño*. Their envisioned ascent, steeped in the Ptolemaic cosmos, transcends mere empirical observation, veering into the realm of profound contemplation. Sancho, guided by an insatiable curiosity and a quest to pierce the veils of secrecy, surreptitiously lifts the edge of his blindfold, and he saw the earth was “no larger than a mustard seed, and the men walking on it not much bigger than hazel nuts.”²⁷ This moment, steeped in subterfuge, not only underscores the perceived distance from their terrestrial origins but also prompts a reevaluation of reality from such a towering vantage point. Entwined in the illusion of their aerial escapade, both Don Quixote and Sancho entertain the conviction of their flight, transcending the boundaries of the estate beneath them. Sancho’s confusion deepens as he ponders his ongoing auditory connection with the onlookers, despite their supposed distant traverse from the ground. This blend of imagined flight against a backdrop of legendary narratives delves into the interplay between fantasy and reality, exploring the human quest for discovery and comprehension of the unknown.

The knight’s response to the squire’s doubts encapsulates the unique nature of their journey: “Pay no attention to that, Sancho, for since these things and these flights are outside the ordinary course of events, at a distance of a thousand leagues you will see and hear whatever you

²⁶ Cervantes, *op. cit.*, p.720.

²⁷ Cervantes, *op. cit.*, p.725.

wish.”²⁸ This retort shines a light on the adventure’s imaginative aspect, suggesting a venture into the realm of pure conjecture. The narrative ensures readers of the protagonists’ tangible presence, a fact underscored by the narrator and corroborated by the reactions of those witnessing the event.

The uncertainty of their flight fades as palace servants utilize large bellows, creating artificial gusts that lend credibility to their perceived journey, effectively erasing any lingering skepticism. The simulated gusts lend credence to their sensation of movement, with their mutual assessment of time elapsed offering an improvised gauge for the perceived span of their voyage. Convinced of their ascent to the second layer of the atmosphere, Don Quixote and Sancho Panza find themselves filled with anxiety as they anticipate entering the fire zone, potentially risking incineration: “we are approaching the second region of air where hail and snow are born; and if we continue to rise in this fashion, we shall soon come to the region of fire, and I do not know how to adjust the peg to keep us from going so high that we are burned.”²⁹ This apprehension showcases Don Quixote’s struggle to grapple with the technology behind Clavileño’s control peg—a reflection of his broader challenge in reconciling with technological mechanisms.³⁰ This part of the narrative deepens the exploration of human perception and the fine threshold between reality and illusion, prompting reflections on the extent of human exploration

28 Cervantes, op. cit., pp.722-723.

29 Cervantes, op. cit., p.723.

30 Iván Jaksić, “Don Quijote’s Encounter with Technology,” *Cervantes*, 14(1) (1994), p.76.

and our innate desire to push the limits of our experiences.

Sancho, too, becomes ensnared in the illusion of ascent, his lamentations about the heat supposedly scorching his beard being spurred by Don Quixote's account. The climax of their escapade is reached when palace attendants set off fireworks hidden within Clavileño, catapulting the wooden horse upwards with such force that its passengers are ejected, offering a palpable corroboration of their perceived journey.

Despite sharing this experience, their stories diverge upon scrutiny. Sancho reveals to the Duchess that, despite supposedly approaching the fiery zone, he attempted to verify their situation firsthand. Yet, his narrative teeters on precarious grounds, as there's no evidence to suggest either the removal of their blindfolds or an actual departure from solid ground. This contrast between their described experiences and the narrative's established reality delves into the conflict between perception and truth, inviting readers to evaluate the credibility of stories and the influence of belief in shaping our perceptions.

Questioning the veracity of the events as narrated and assuming the narrator's reliability, it emerges that Clavileño, incapable of flight, remained earthbound throughout the escapade, displaced only by the fireworks' blast. This revelation sparks a critical inquiry: Is Sancho fabricating an elaborate story, or is his account trustworthy? From the outset, the narrative encourages readers to consider Sancho's down-to-earth accounts as more reliable in contrast to Don Quixote's fantastical tales.³¹ Nevertheless, it's imperative to recognize moments when

31 Augustin Redondo, *Otra manera de leer el Quijote: historia, tradiciones culturales y literatura* (Madrid : Castalia, 1997), p.441.

Sancho's narrative deviates from truthfulness, such as his conditional acknowledgment of a helmet's existence for the spoils of an altercation with the barber. Sancho asserts that he was suspended "a span and a half" above the heavens, spending "almost three-quarters of an hour" among the "seven goats,"³² alluding to the Pleiades or "seven sisters" constellation in the sky of Taurus. This segment profoundly shifts the narrative's sense of time; akin to Don Quixote's claim of enduring days and nights in the Montesinos' cave, Sancho recounts his own venture into the cosmos and his observations of the stars. Sancho's account of time, regardless of its factual basis, vividly contrasts with the story presented to readers, subtly highlighting the characters' collective illusion aboard Clavileño and interlacing a rich fabric of reality with fantasy.

Sancho's narrative humorously mirrors the cosmological understanding of his era.³³ While his account appears to be a concoction, it stands on par with Don Quixote's description of their journey: "it is no surprise that Sancho says what he says. As for myself...I felt as if I had passed through the region of air, and even touched the region of fire, but I cannot believe we passed beyond that... and since we are not burned, either Sanch is lying, or Sancho is dreaming."³⁴ This comparison underscores the subjective nature of their experiences, inviting a contemplation on the reliability of their narratives against the backdrop of their fantastical voyage. Despite the potential for embellishment, this passage reveals a

32 Cervantes, op. cit., p.726.

33 Frederick A. De Armas, "Sancho as a Thief of Time and Art: Ovid's *Fasti* and Cervantes' *Don Quixote 2*," *Renaissance Quarterly*, 61 (2008), p.19.

34 Cervantes, op. cit., p.726.

critical examination of perception versus reality, as viewed through the lens of the era’s astronomical beliefs.

Reflecting on the insights provided by the narrator, the observations of the palace spectators—including the Duke and Duchess who play active roles in the deception—and the divergent yet interlocking accounts of Sancho and Don Quixote, we are led to a nuanced understanding that perhaps neither narrative is entirely factual, or conversely, that both possess their own form of truth. This intersection of stories fosters a sense of skepticism, yet interestingly, the narrative’s ultimate judgment, left unquestioned by the narrator, leans towards Don Quixote’s perspective. He posits a compelling argument for mutual belief in their respective experiences: “Sancho, just as you want people to believe what you have seen in the sky, I want you to believe what I saw in the Cave of Montesinos. And that is all I have to say.”³⁵ Sancho’s willingness to accept this proposal not only highlights his propensity for flexibility but also, on a deeper level, signifies the merging of their fates within the story, intertwining the strands of fiction and reality in a complex mosaic.

Analytical Comparison

The Cave of Montesinos and the Clavileño episodes adeptly examine the relationship between the individual perceptions of reality held by Sancho Panza and Don Quixote. These segments not only unravel the

³⁵ Cervantes, op. cit., p.727.

complexities of truth versus fiction but also reflect on the broader human condition, all within the framework of five critical themes: 1. the essence of exploration; 2. the construct of reality; 3. belief's varied hues; 4. the conduit of narratives; and 5. the lens of satire and criticism. The first focal point of analysis, "The Essence of Exploration," delves into the protagonists' diverse engagements with the unknown. By contrasting their physical expeditions with inner, metaphysical quests, this theme examines humanity's inherent drive to decipher the mysteries surrounding us. It underscores the dual nature of exploration—external discovery and introspective enlightenment—demonstrating how these episodes serve as metaphors for our ceaseless quest to understand the mysteries of existence and the self. The second point of comparison, "The Construct of Reality," shifts the focus to how perception shapes our understanding of the world. Analyzing the divergent experiences of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, this theme explores the subjective nature of reality, influenced by individual desires, beliefs, and societal contexts. It highlights the fluid boundary between what is real and what is perceived, emphasizing the transformative role of personal perspective in defining our sense of truth. The third topic of "Belief's Varied Hues" tackles the paradoxical nature of belief, illuminated by the contrasting narratives of Don Quixote's heavenly ascent and his descent into the Cave of Montesinos. This examination of their accounts probes the dynamics of personal conviction versus collective skepticism, challenging traditional distinctions between reality and illusion and examining the credibility and construction of narrative truth. The fourth section, "The Conduit of Narratives," captures the moment when Don Quixote and Sancho Panza

mutually recognize the validity of their subjective experiences. This agreement blurs the distinction between fact and fiction, highlighting the novel's profound investigation into how storytelling can forge shared realities and redefine the contours of truth and fiction. The fifth topic of comparison, "The Lens of Satire and Criticism," goes beyond the surface-level adventure to critique the fantastical elements prevalent in the literature of Cervantes's time, especially those involving impossible feats and magical enchantments. Through the schemes of the Duke and Duchess and Don Quixote's encounters within the chivalric tradition, Cervantes not only satirizes narrative excesses but also scrutinizes the societal and cultural constructs that give rise to such fantasies. This final theme affirms *Don Quixote* as more than entertainment; it is a pivotal work that delves into the impact of narrative on human understanding and perception, offering enduring insights into the imaginative processes that shape our view of the world and our place within it.

1. The Essence of Exploration

The anticipation and groundwork for the Clavileño and Cave of Montesinos episodes reveal distinct approaches to the unknown among the characters. The Cave of Montesinos particularly stands out as a metaphorical journey of introspection where Don Quixote, in pursuit of enlightenment, confronts and challenges conventional perceptions of reality versus dreams. This episode not only highlights Don Quixote's internal conflict "between the Real and the Ideal"—with "Real" representing the current state of affairs and "Ideal" signifying aspirational goals³⁶—but also positions the narrative as a poignant exploration within the Romantic

tradition, examining the tension between existential reality and lofty ideals. Contrary to quests driven by the pursuit of external acclaim, Don Quixote's quest is a deep dive into the psyche, probing the fuzzy demarcations between reality and fantasy, consciousness, and dream states. This allegorical venture into the cave serves as an invitation for both Don Quixote and the audience to reflect on the nature of being and the fluid boundaries separating the visible from the hidden,³⁷ offering a nuanced lens through which to view Don Quixote's journey.

Conversely, the Clavileño episode weaves a narrative steeped in mythical flights from chivalric lore,³⁸ preparing for an adventure beyond the tangible world. Don Quixote, the eternal optimist, together with Sancho, enticed by the potential of governance over Barataria, set forth with a clear mission: to rescue the Dolorous One (Countess Trifaldi) and her enchanted companions. Don Quixote's reflections on the journey's uncertainty and vastness are imbued with a mix of anticipation, excitement, and apprehension, emblematic of venturing into the unknown.³⁹ Sancho's narrative, recounting his celestial observations, presents a stark contrast, emphasizing a shared illusion aboard Clavileño and blending reality with fantasy.

36 James Iffland, "On the Social Destiny of *Don Quijote*: Literature and Ideological Interpellation: Part I," *The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association*, 20(1) (1987), p.21.

37 Edward C. Riley, "Metamorphosis, Myth and Dream in the Cave of Montesinos," *Essays on Narrative Fiction in the Iberian Peninsula in Honour of Frank Pierce* (Llandysul : Dolphin, 1982), p.111.

38 Christina Cole, "Mechanisms of Wonder: The Performance of Marvels in *Don Quixote* Part II," *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 98(1) (2021), pp.25-26.

39 Cole, op. cit., p.27.

These contrasting narratives delve into the human inclination toward the unknown. The Clavileño episode explores the thrill of external exploration and adventure, while the Cave of Montesinos offers a reflective, inward quest into the depths of consciousness and reality. Together, they highlight the dual nature of human exploration: the outward pursuit of new frontiers and the inward journey for self-discovery and enlightenment. This duality embodies the comprehensive human quest for knowledge, whether it resides in the vastness of the cosmos or within the intricate depths of our own psyche.

2. The Construct of Reality

The sensory illusions in the Clavileño episode serve as a metaphor for the human tendency to believe in the fantastical, highlighting the era's fascination with new scientific frontiers. On the other hand, the Cave of Montesinos episode delves into Don Quixote's solitary encounter with a reality that transcends the physical, questioning the very fabric of time and existence, and illustrating the subjective nature of reality.⁴⁰ In the Clavileño episode, Don Quixote and Sancho Panza embark on a supposed flight on a wooden horse. This journey, fueled by sensory illusions and the characters' willingness to suspend disbelief, becomes a profound commentary on the human propensity to embrace the fantastical. The use of bellows to simulate wind currents and the detailed descriptions of their ascent through various atmospheric layers serve as metaphors for humanity's fascination with the unknown and its relentless pursuit of

40 Marsha Collins, "Playing with Time: Asynchronicity in Don Quijote," *Cervantes*, 36(1) (2016), p.52.

scientific discovery. This episode illuminates the era's growing fascination with new scientific frontiers, illustrating how the thrill of exploration frequently obscures the distinctions between fact and fiction, reality and illusion. Such interpretations, shared by various critics, lead Howard Mancing to liken this episode to the realm of science fiction,⁴¹ highlighting its forward-looking engagement with the unknown and speculative. The manipulation of sensory experience prompts a questioning of the experience's authenticity, underscoring the fluidity of reality and how belief can be molded by aspirations and expectations.

On the contrary, the Cave of Montesinos episode presents a different exploration of perception versus reality. Here, Don Quixote descends into a cavernous realm where he encounters figures from chivalric legends, experiences that challenge conventional notions of time and existence. Unlike the external manipulations in the Clavileño episode, Don Quixote's journey into the cave is a deeply personal exploration of a reality beyond the physical world. This segment ventures into the realms of temporal fluidity⁴² and spatial elasticity, where Don Quixote's experiences dissolve the barriers between reality and dream, and historical accuracy and mythic narrative, revealing the deeply personal nature of perception and the realities we construct. Lauer suggests a thorough examination of the text, both preceding and following the episode, for a deeper comprehension.⁴³ These contrasting episodes highlight the subjective

41 Howard Mancing, "The Don Quixotes of Science Fiction." *Don Quixote: The Re-Accentuation of the World's Greatest Literary Hero* (Lewisburg : Bucknell UP, 2017), p.137.

42 Chad M. Gasta, "Cervantes's Theory of Relativity in *Don Quixote*," *Cervantes*, 31(1) (2011), p.54.

nature of our reality, influenced by individual desires, beliefs, and contextual settings. The external illusions of the Clavileño adventure contrast sharply with the introspective depth of Don Quixote's expedition into the Cave of Montesinos, suggesting a reality that extends beyond the tangible to the metaphysical.

Through these juxtaposed narratives, Cervantes beckons readers to ponder the essence of belief, the shaping force of narrative on perception, and the fragile boundary dividing reality from illusion. These stories reflect the era's intrigue with the expanses of human understanding and the limitless scope of imagination, emphasizing the conflict between the observable and the invisible, the factual and the fantastical, and compelling us to deliberate on the mechanisms through which our perceptions of reality are crafted and the pivotal role of storytelling in this creative process.

3. Belief's Varied Hues

The culmination of the Clavileño flight and the descent into Montesinos's Cave highlights the fundamental paradox of belief, revealing a significant disparity between the experiences recounted by Don Quixote and Sancho Panza. This contrast not only examines the trustworthiness of their accounts but also delves into the complex relationship between personal belief and widespread doubt, ultimately questioning our understanding of reality.

43 Lauer, A. Robert, "Descendit Ad Infema: Don Quixote's Descent into Hell and the Name-of-the-Father," *Cervantes and Don Quixote: Proceedings of the Delhi Conference on Miguel de Cervantes* (Hyderabad : Emesco, 2008), p.110.

In the Clavileño episode, the Duke and Duchess skillfully concoct a false escapade for Don Quixote and Sancho, blending sensory deceptions with dramatic fireworks to craft an entirely imagined yet convincingly real adventure. According to Creel, this episode represents the pinnacle of ridicule and jest directed at the knight and his squire during their stay at the ducal palace.⁴⁴ This narrative echoes the Trojan horse motif—amidst a tapestry of legendary flying steeds—by introducing Clavileño, a wooden horse packed with rockets, a sharp deviation from Troy’s horse concealing warriors.⁴⁵ This setup precipitates a chaotic landing for the duo, highlighting the machination’s pivotal role in the ruse. Through this episode, a thoroughly immersive yet wholly artificial narrative unfolds, reflecting the strategic employment of misleading artifacts in literature. Upon their return, their accounts diverge: Don Quixote clings to a fantastical version of their journey, while Sancho expresses skepticism, hinting at his awareness of the experience’s constructed nature. This variance not only demonstrates the fluidity of belief under the influence of compelling illusions but also the subjective nature of narrative, revealing how easily reality can be shaped and reshaped.

Conversely, the Montesinos’s Cave episode deepens this exploration of belief, with Don Quixote’s account of his subterranean encounters challenging the boundaries of the known world. His descriptions, filled with chivalric and mythological imagery, starkly contrast with Sancho’s

44 Bryant Creel, “Palace of the Apes: The Ducal Chateau and Cervantes’ Repudiation of Satiric Malice,” *Don Quijote across Four Centuries: 1605~2005* (Newark : Juan de la Cuesta, 2006), p.91.

45 Sarah Finci, “Clavileño y la tradición de los viajes celestes,” *Cervantes y las religiones* (Madrid : Iberoamericana Editorial Vervuert, 2008), p.745.

doubt, grounding the narrative and questioning the authenticity of Don Quixote's experiences. The clash between Don Quixote's firm belief in his fantastical encounters and Sancho's skepticism underscores the subjective lens through which we view reality, teetering on the edge of fantasy.

These episodes, emblematic of the novel's inquiry into the reliability of narrative and the potency of storytelling, provoke reflection on the essence of truth and the role of belief in shaping our reality. The contrast between Don Quixote's vivid imaginings and Sancho's grounded skepticism serves as a microcosm of the novel's broader dialogue on the interplay between reality and imagination, urging readers to consider the impact of narratives on our perception of the world.

Cervantes navigates these narrative discrepancies with finesse, inviting readers into a contemplation of truth and fiction's murky confluence. The dynamic contrast between Don Quixote's enchantment with the extraordinary and Sancho's insistence on the tangible reflects the novel's meditation on belief's power, the fabrication of reality, and the magnetic pull of fantastical tales, encapsulating Don Quixote's profound commentary on the human condition and the enduring fascination with the worlds beyond our own.

4. The Conduit of Narratives

Both the Clavileño and the Cave of Montesinos episodes reach their zenith in a critical exchange where Don Quixote calls for the reciprocal acknowledgment of their subjective truths, proposing a mutual belief in their recounted adventures. This key moment, marked by Sancho's

acquiescence to Don Quixote's request, significantly muddles the distinction between reality and fiction, epitomizing the core argument of this analysis concerning the interwoven reliability of their tales and the scrutiny of storytelling's feasibility.

These segments in *Don Quixote* are not merely adventurous narratives but profound inquiries into the demarcation between reality and the imagined, climaxing in a crucial dialogue that emphasizes the acceptance of subjective truths. In this exchange, Don Quixote's entreaty for Sancho Panza to reciprocate faith in their personal experiences encapsulates the novel's deep dive into the credibility of narratives and the feasibility of storytelling. This consensus not only obscures the lines between the tangible and the fantastical but also sheds light on the novel's expansive thematic exploration of perception, belief, and the crafting of truth.

Throughout their fantastical escapades, Don Quixote and Sancho Panza traverse a realm filled with imaginative elements and questionable realities. The orchestrated illusion of the Clavileño flight and the mysterious descent into the Montesinos's Cave each stretch the limits of the protagonists' perceptions, prompting readers to question the essence of truth. These intertwined narratives craft a complex mosaic of belief and doubt, encouraging introspection into the essence of the tales we embrace and the truths we hold dear.

Don Quixote's plea for shared belief in their narratives—"Sancho, just as you want people to believe what you have seen in the sky, I want you to believe what I saw in the Cave of Montesinos. And that is all I have to say"⁴⁶—distills the quintessence of their collective foray into the realms of make-believe and actuality. This request extends beyond a mere appeal

for acknowledgment, signifying a deep recognition of the subjective nature of their experiences and the substantial value of individual truths. Sancho's compliance with this appeal exemplifies the narrative's inquiry into the legitimacy of storytelling, underscoring the intricate interplay between personal perception and shared reality.

This recognition of subjective truths signifies an important moment in the story, obscuring the distinction between reality and imagination, and reflecting the novel's thematic exploration of truth's fluidity. It highlights the transformative potential of storytelling, positing that a narrative's authenticity is not rooted in its factual accuracy but in its ability to connect with and resonate with its audience. This concordant moment between Don Quixote and Sancho Panza stands as a testament to Cervantes' timeless examination of storytelling, belief, and the fabrication of reality.

Furthermore, this dialogue extends beyond the confines of their adventures, evolving into a broader philosophical reflection on the nature of truth and the impact of belief on our perception of the world. It challenges readers to reflect on how our perceptions are shaped by the narratives we construct and accept, emphasizing the complex interplay between perception, imagination, and the creation of truth, all nestled within the enchantment of literature.⁴⁷

46 Cervantes, op. cit., p.727.

47 Michael Ross Gordon, "The Wormhole of Montesinos: Don Quixote's Cave Adventure as a Tale of Science Fact and Fiction," *Cervantes*, 41(2) (2021), p.100.

5. The Lens of Satire and Criticism

The Cave of Montesinos and Clavileño episodes in *Don Quixote* transcend mere adventurous narratives to embody a sophisticated critique and satire of the notions of aerial ascent and mystical enchantments within the domain of literature. These segments, integrated smoothly into the narrative, allow Cervantes to probe deeply into the concepts of truth, belief, and the construction of realities, reflecting the novel's examination of the credibility of storytelling and its complexities.

Through the fantastical flight aboard Clavileño and the descent into the mystical Cave of Montesinos, where Don Quixote interacts with legendary figures of chivalry, Cervantes skillfully mocks the grandiose exploits typical of chivalric romances prevalent during his era. These episodes not only satirize the exaggerated adventures of such tales for their implausibility but also delve deeper into the influence of storytelling on the perception of reality.⁴⁸ It is through this lens of satire that Cervantes explores how personal beliefs and the fabric of imagination blend to form our perceived reality, a theme vividly portrayed in Don Quixote's unwavering adherence to chivalric values and Sancho's gradual acceptance of his master's fantastical world as their shared reality.

Moreover, Cervantes leverages these episodes to critique the societal and cultural paradigms of his time. The Duke and Duchess's orchestration of the Clavileño escapade exemplifies the ridicule and exploitation faced by individuals who confront or deviate from societal conventions.^{49 50}

⁴⁸ Mario Martín-Flores, "De la cueva de Montesinos a las aventuras de Clavileño: Un itinerario de carnavalización del discurso autoritario en *El Quijote*," *Hispánica*, 38 (1994), p.47.

Conversely, the Cave of Montesinos represents a realm where the traditional constraints of time and space are negated, enabling Don Quixote to interact with the past in a critique of the contemporary era's estrangement from the noble principles of chivalry.

Cervantes's narrative does more than just satirize the outlandish elements of chivalric literature; it beckons readers to ponder the nature of the narratives we embrace and the realities we construct. By blurring the distinctions between the imagined and the actual, Cervantes invites a contemplation on the role of belief and storytelling in our conceptualization of the world. Central to this discourse is *Don Quixote*, a masterpiece of literature that serves not merely as a vehicle for entertainment but as a profound exploration of the human penchant for narrative.

Conclusion

In the concluding analysis, the Clavileño and the Cave of Montesinos episodes within Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote* stand as profound explorations of the complex interplay between the perceived realities of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza. These narrative arcs, distinct in their inception, converge to underscore the novel's deep dive into the realms of belief, skepticism, and the fluid boundary separating fact from fiction.

49 Roberto González Echevarría, *Cervantes's Don Quixote* (New Haven : Yale UP, 2015), p.259.

50 Jorge Latorre and Oleksandr Pronkevich, "Don Quixote and the Cold War: Differences and Cultural Bridges," *Cervantes*, 38(1) (2018), p.146.

This thematic odyssey, from the initial confrontation with the unknown to the eventual recognition of subjective truths, embodies the central thesis of this essay, providing insightful commentary on the art of storytelling and the fabrication of truth in literature.

The Clavileño episode, propelled by the Dukes' elaborate scheme, offers a sharp contrast to Don Quixote's self-driven quest into the Cave of Montesinos. This juxtaposition not only showcases their varied approaches to the unknown but also lays the groundwork for a broader discourse on perception versus reality. The Clavileño adventure, with its sensory illusions and perception of motion, metaphorically echoes the era's fascination with discovery and the allure of the fantastical.⁵¹ Conversely, the introspective descent into the Cave of Montesinos probes the subjective essence of reality, questioning established norms of time and existence. The narrative arc reaches a thematic zenith with the narrative discrepancies between Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, spotlighting the inherent tension between belief and disbelief. The fantastical flight aboard Clavileño and the detailed recounting of encounters in the cave by Don Quixote present divergent realities, further nuanced by Sancho's skepticism. Yet, the defining moment comes with their mutual acknowledgment of each other's experiences, effectively merging the realms of reality and fiction and underscoring the composite reliability of their narratives. This crucial exchange, wherein Don Quixote implores for a shared belief in their adventures, not only blurs

51 Cory A. Reed, "Scientific and Technological Imagery in Don Quijote," *Approaches to Teaching Cervantes's Don Quijote* (New York : The Modern Language Association of America, 2015), p.68.

the distinction between reality and fiction but also highlights the essay's focus on the viability of storytelling. It exemplifies Cervantes' skillful critique of narrative truth and belief within fictional landscapes,⁵² emphasizing the novel's satirical examination of chivalric romance tropes and the rationalization of fantastical phenomena like aerial ascent.

The Cave of Montesinos and Clavileño episodes, therefore, are not mere adventures but profound reflections on the nature of narrative credibility and the construction of reality. These chapters underscore a broader inquiry into the dynamics of storytelling, where Cervantes employs satire and thematic exploration to interrogate the essence of truth, belief, and the fabric of fiction. This narrative strategy not only compels readers to ponder the delicate balance between belief and skepticism but also reaffirms *Don Quixote* as a seminal work in the exploration of the human condition through storytelling. Through these narratives, Cervantes offers an enduring commentary on the power of imagination and the enduring allure of storytelling in shaping our perceptions of reality, encapsulating the novel's exploration of credibility and the intricate relationship between the subjective realities of its characters.

52 Emilio Martínez Mata, "Don Quixote in the Rise of Modern Novel: The Satirical Interpretation," *Don Quixote: The Re-Accentuation of the World's Greatest Literary Hero* (Lewisburg : Bucknell UP, 2017), p.39.

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ABSTRACT

**The Chiasmatic Links Between the Cave of Montesinos
and the Clavileño Episodes in *Don Quixote***

Song No*

This paper analyzes the chiasmatic link between the Cave of Montesinos and the Clavileño episodes in *Don Quixote*. These episodes serve as pivotal moments that blur the lines between reality and illusion, enriching our understanding of belief and skepticism. Through in-depth analysis, the paper explores how these episodes contribute to the novel's central theme: the intricate interplay between narrative credibility and the construction of truth within fiction. The examination focuses on the protagonists' encounters with the unknown, the subjective nature of their experiences, and the role of storytelling in shaping their individual realities. Moreover, it investigates the satirical critique embedded in these tales, revealing Cervantes' insights into societal credulity and the human propensity towards the fantastical. The contrasting experiences of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza further complicate the distinction between reality and fiction. By acknowledging the interconnectedness of their narratives, the paper underscores how storytelling shapes our understanding of truth. Ultimately, *Don Quixote* transcends the boundaries of a mere adventure tale, presenting a profound exploration of human nature, narrative authenticity, and the significant impact of storytelling on our perception of reality.

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The Chiasmatic Links Between the Cave of Montesinos and the Clavileño Episodes in *Don Quixote*

Key Words : Chiasmatic Links, Narrative Credibility, Illusion, Skepticism,
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