

## Autobiography, Pseudo-Autobiography, Life-Writing, and the Creation of Fiction in Quevedo's *Buscón*.

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Francisco de Quevedo (1580-1648), was one of seventeenth-century Spain's most important writers. His output was extremely varied: religious texts, political pamphlets and commentaries, economic and political advice to the king and his favorites, translations from Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, love poetry, metaphysical poetry, satirical verse, personal letters, and a series of famous dreams and visions. Perhaps more important than Quevedo's themes was the highly charged style (known as *conceptismo*) in which he wrote. A fine example of Quevedo's *conceptista* style is his picaresque novel called the *Buscón*. In this novel, one of the three masterpieces of the Spanish picaresque genre along with *Lazarillo de Tormes* (1554) and *Guzmán de Alfarache* (1598), Quevedo outlines the life of a low-class character (Don Pablos, the *pícaro*) and shows how Pablos's birth and background (Pablo is of *converso*, i.e., Jewish origin) deny him the financial and social progress he desires.

I would like to begin my discussion of autobiographical elements in the *Buscón* with a rhetorical question: why does Antonio Gómez Moriana, in his excellent study *Discourse Analysis and Socio-Criticism: The Spanish Golden Age*,<sup>1</sup> devote less than two pages to Quevedo's *Buscón*? The question is particularly important when we consider the amount of space he dedicates to *Lazarillo de Tormes*, to the development of confessional discourse in the first-person singular, and to the Spanish Picaresque Novel in general. When I add that the first four chapters of *Discourse Analysis* have as their titles or subtitles (1) The Subversion of Ritual Discourse; (2) Intertextuality, Interdiscursiveness, Parody: On the Origins of Form in the Picaresque Novel; (3) Autobiography and Ritual Discourse: The Autobiographical Confession before the Inquisition; and (4) Narration and Argumentation in Autobiographical Discourse, I am sure that it will be readily agreed that Gómez Moriana could, and should, have written more on the *Buscón*.

I would like to propose, in answer to my rhetorical question, not that we return to that modern anathema "an individualistic subjectivism that affirms the position of the uttering subject as the true organizing demiurge or creator of the [in the case of the *Buscón*, pseudo-] autobiographical text, of biography, and of history in general" (AGM 60), but that we accept the conclusions drawn in Gómez Moriana's *Epilogue* and attempt to join together, in one study, four apparently differing fetishes: the historic person of the author, the socioeconomic and historico-cultural context, the text as pertinent object of study, and the reader or subject of the reception of the literary text (AGM 149).

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<sup>1</sup> Antonio Gómez Moriana, *Discourse Analysis as Sociocriticism: The Spanish Golden Age* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993) 179. Subsequent references will be noted in parentheses in the text after the abbreviation AGM.

In the case of Quevedo's *Buscón*, I would suggest further that intertextuality is so complicated that no single text emerges as an Urtext (AGM 67). In the absence of a single (or even multiple) intertextual model, I propose that the rather unusual Urtext with which one is confronted in the *Buscón*, is the text of Quevedo's own lived experience.

Further, there is a clear difference between the *Lazarillo* which, with its intricate structural and thematic balance and its ironic self-reference, shows evidence of what Gómez Moriana refers to as "long term memory structure" (AGM 67) and the *Buscón* which, in its lack of narrative structure, in its fragmented, often incomplete episodes, and in its language in which witticisms feed off one another, *carpe verbum*, in a shark-like frenzy, shows evidence of "short term memory structures" (AGM 60).

Thus, when we consider to what extent there is autobiographical material in Francisco de Quevedo's *La vida del buscón llamado don Pablos*, the text immediately sets a series of questions: (1) Can the *Buscón* in fact be considered in any way autobiographical? (2) If so, whose autobiography is related in the *Buscón*? (3) Can we distinguish clearly between autobiography and pseudo-autobiography? (4) Can we distinguish the elements drawn from the author's life and establish where the author has selected from his own lived experience and where he has created fiction? (5) By extension, to what extent is "life-writing" present in the *Buscón*? (6) May the *Buscón* be considered a *roman à clef* to which we have lost the key? (7) If so, what characters, if any, can we recognize and replace in their historical context? (8) And finally, what was the reaction of Quevedo's contemporaries to the *Buscón*? How did they read it? How did they see the relationship between author and protagonist?

Clearly, while Quevedo's *Buscón* can be considered ambiguous enough to fall into the category of any text in which "the author *seems* to express his life and his feelings,"<sup>2</sup> it does not meet the strictest terms under which autobiography can be defined, for we all know that Francisco de Quevedo's *La vida del Buscón llamado don Pablos* was written by don Francisco (and not by don Pablos); in addition, it is almost impossible for the modern reader to equate don Francisco and don Pablos and, by extension, don Pablos is not a real person. Quite obviously the *Buscón* is not the life of a living subject told in retrospect by that same real subject in the first-person singular. It is, therefore, not an autobiography. It does, however, present us, as I will attempt to show, with a great deal of ambiguity.

I would now like to pose the following question: in the light of the *Buscón*'s manuscript tradition, what was the anonymous author's original intent? Note the emphasis: the *anonymous* author, the *original* intent. The manuscript tradition of the *Buscón* has been set out in great detail by Fernando Lázaro Carreter<sup>3</sup> and is well known to the specialist. Lázaro Carreter edits three manuscripts: MS B

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<sup>2</sup>See Philippe Lejeune, "Le pacte autobiographique (bis)," in his *Moi Aussi* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1986) 18.

<sup>3</sup>Francisco de Quevedo, *La Vida del Buscón Llamado Don Pablos*, ed. Fernando Lázaro Carreter (Salamanca: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1965). The study of the manuscripts can be found in the Estudio preliminar, XI-LXXVIII. Subsequent references to this edition will be noted in the text after the abbreviation LC; all translations, unless otherwise stated, are mine.

[Bueno]), MS C [Córdoba] and MS S [Santander] (Lázaro Carreter, xl-xli). Both MSS C and S begin with a dedicatory letter, which is written as if it had been composed by the *pícaro* himself in an attempt to establish his own autonomy as both author and character. In spite of minor changes, MSS C and S are substantially the same.

MS Version: "Having discovered the desire which Y. E. has of learning about the various discoveries of my life, and so as not to leave room for another (as it has happened in other cases) to lie, I have long desired to send you this account, which will provide so much relief on idle occasions. And as I expect to be as long in the telling as I have been short on luck, I will be brief now" (LC 13).

Here, an attempt is made to maintain three fictions, all of which would support Lejeune's strictest definition of an autobiography: (1) the author is a real person capable of writing his own autobiography; (2) the author is the protagonist; (3) the author-protagonist writes (in prose) a true history, that of his own life. Clearly the manuscript tradition, with its emphasis on the first-person singular which links writer and character, seeks to establish, and maintain, the fiction of the genuine autobiography of a real *pícaro* written by that *pícaro*/*buscón* whose name is don Pablos.

For approximately twenty-five years the *Buscón* circulated in manuscript form. During this time we can assume that the fiction of the autobiographical account written by don Pablos was maintained to a very limited extent. Some readers would be taken in by the fiction; most, in my opinion, would have recognized, or would have been told of, the hidden hand of don Francisco de Quevedo. In this fashion, the *Buscón* would have circulated, more or less anonymously, depending on the knowledge and connections of the reader, on the underground circuit of the marginalized manuscript. How did this underground circuit work?

José María Díez Bourque has described how marginalized sociopolitical and anticlerical satire circulated in manuscript form, and his description is clearly relevant to the *Buscón*.<sup>4</sup> For Díez Bourque the manuscript version, along with the voice of the singer or reciter was a means of communication which did not come up against any form of state censure or control (DB 317). Although Díez Bourque is writing here of poetry, it is quite easy to apply his remarks to marginalized works of prose. The manuscript tradition—as I have pointed out with regard to the manuscript texts of Quevedo's poems and as Lázaro Carreter has so ably demonstrated with regard to the *Buscón* itself<sup>5</sup>—gives rise to numerous problems of authorship, chronology, ordering, textual rigor, and other errors caused by the memory (or lack of memory) of the scribes (DB 374). In spite of this, as Lope de Vega himself emphasized: "In my opinion, handwritten texts are just as textual as printed texts."<sup>6</sup> Díez Bourque, having quoted Lope de Vega in support of his argu-

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<sup>4</sup> José María Díez Bourque: "Manuscrito y marginalidad poética," *Hispanic Review* 51 (1983): 371-92. Subsequent references will be noted in the text after the abbreviation DB.

<sup>5</sup> See Lázaro Carreter's *Estudio preliminar*, especially XL-LXXVIII and my own article "Obras humanas de el divino Quevedo: A Reappraisal of Ms. 4117 of the Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid," *Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos* 11.1 (1986): 49-86.

ment for the importance of the underground, hand to hand tradition of manuscript circulation, then emphasizes that if diffusion by hand is important for poetry in general, it is the only way of diffusion for the marginalized text (DB 375).

I would like to suggest now that these remarks can apply equally well to the early, hand-circulated manuscript versions of the *Buscón*. Díez Bourque states his belief in the existence of satirical writings on politics and religion and notes the absence of sociopolitical and antireligious satire from the printed *cancioneros*. The reason is clear: Censure; state censure for political satire and Inquisitional censure for religious satire (DB 386).

If the manuscript tradition of the *Buscón* presents us with an attempt—however clumsy, however unsuccessful—to establish an autonomous, autobiography of the *pícaro*, the printed tradition of the book does exactly the opposite. In the first place, a real author, don Francisco de Quevedo, who is neither an anonymous author nor the main character, is posited by everyone, from Roberto Duport, the bookseller, to Dr. Juan de Salinas, the giver of the Licencia de Ordinario, to Juan Fernández de Heredia, the Governor of Aragón (LC 3-4). Obviously then, by 1626, Quevedo's authorship of the *Buscón* is well attested, and we must now talk in terms of a novel, a work of fiction, a pseudo-autobiography, rather than refer to the *Buscón* as a potential autobiography for the uninitiated. In the second place, the Introductory To The Reader of Roberto Duport's first printed edition, which may well have been written by Duport himself, immediately establishes the *Buscón* as pseudo-autobiography when it drives an instant wedge between the *pícaro* as author and the real author: "The author? You already know who he is" (LC 7). This wedge is driven completely home by a recent English translator who writes To The Reader, "I can just imagine how much you want to read about my delightful don Pablos, Prince of the Roving Life."<sup>7</sup> "The wittiness of don Pablos" becomes "my delightful don Pablos." The possessive adjective tells the whole story: the author and the narrative *yo* are split from the very start. Thus, in the printed tradition, the *Buscón* is, from its very first pirated edition, clearly the mock, pseudo-autobiography of don Pablos and the creative fiction of don Francisco.

But why should we attempt to distinguish between autobiography, pseudo-autobiography, and creative writing in the case of the *Buscón*? There are two principal reasons: (1) because the *Buscón* is packed with situations and people borrowed straight from the life of Quevedo; consequently, under certain circumstances, portions of the *Buscón* may be seen to be genuinely autobiographical; and (2) because there seems to have been a definite confusion, in the seventeenth century, between author and protagonist who were taken, at various stages, by various people, to be one and the same person. I will return to this second point later.

The coincidences between the real life of the author and the created fiction of the novel vary in importance from factual evidence (the repetition and commentary of Quevedo's own *Premáticas del desengaño contra los poetas güeros*) to wild spec-

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<sup>6</sup> Díez Bourque copies this quote from Alberto Blecua "El entorno poético de Fray Luis," in *Fray Luis de León*, ed. Víctor García de la Concha (Salamanca: Universidad de Salamanca, 1981) 81. I in turn quote from Díez Bourque 374.

<sup>7</sup> *Two Spanish Picaresque Novels*. Lazarillo de Tormes. Anon. The Swindler. *Francisco de Quevedo*, trans. Michael Alpert (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969) 3.

ulation (possible coincidences between Pablos's life at Alcalá de Henares and Quevedo's life as a student in the same university). I would like to begin by looking briefly at something more or less factual. Quevedo's *Premáticas del desengaño contra los poetas güeros* can be found in MS 9/764 of the Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia. Pablo Jauralde Pou<sup>8</sup> considers it to be a genuine composition by Quevedo on the grounds that (1) it was cited as a work of Quevedo in the *Tribunal de la Justa Venganza*; and (2) a version of it was included in the *Buscón*. The *Buscón* version, incidentally, is essentially the same as the manuscript except that it eliminates the introduction to the *Premáticas*, lacks items 5 and 6, and contains other more or less minor rewrites. Quevedo's allusion (via the mouth of Pablos) to himself as author of the *Premáticas del desengaño contra los poetas güeros* is, as Jauralde Pou points out (PJP 32-33), curious, to say the least. Pablos requests the cleric-poet to stop reading his verses: "For poets had been declared mad in a declaration circulated against them, written by one who had been a poet but had seen the error of his ways" (LC 114), this latter referring to Quevedo. The reasons for which Quevedo stopped writing poetry remain unclear, though they may well be tied up with the emotional crisis which seems to have resolved itself by 1613<sup>9</sup> and which generated the *Heráclito cristiano*, in the dedication to which Quevedo, at the age of thirty-three, confessed to the reader and to his aunt Doña Margarita de Espinosa, his desire for repentance. Here then are two clear textual references that can be considered autobiographical, one to the text of the *Premáticas* and the other, much briefer and much more vague, to an important, but unspecific crisis in Quevedo's own life.

The parody of the fencing master (LC, 97-109) can also be directly linked to Quevedo's life.<sup>10</sup> Perhaps the best-known account of the actual, lived incident can be found in Pablo de Tarsia's *Vida de Don Francisco de Quevedo*: Quevedo, at a literary salon, refuted Pacheco de Narváez's theories about dueling and challenged him to a fight. Narváez accepted with great reluctance, and, at the first exchange, Quevedo struck him on the head with his sword, knocking Pacheco's hat off (T 59-60). This incident caused much enmity between Quevedo and Pacheco de Narváez, as can be imagined; and, in the words of Astrana Marín they were, from then on, the deadliest of enemies (VT 150). Quevedo parodied Pacheco de Narváez ruthlessly in the *Buscón*, and in the *Sueño del Juicio Final* (where the inept fencing master is told, using the very vocabulary of his own fencing manual, to "go directly to hell and in a straight line" (VT 147). Pacheco de Narváez, in retaliation, denounced Quevedo to the Inquisition in a *Memorial* of 1630<sup>11</sup> and attacked him in

<sup>8</sup> F. de Quevedo. *Obras Festivas*, ed. P. Jauralde Pou (Madrid: Clásicos Castalia, 1981). Jauralde Pou's study of the *Premáticas del desengaño contra los poetas güeros* can be found on pp. 32-33; the text is reproduced (with copious notes) on pp. 93-98. Subsequent references will be noted in the text after the abbreviation PJP.

<sup>9</sup> See Henry Ettinghausen, *Quevedo and the Neo-Stoic Movement* (Oxford: University Press, 1972) 15. Also see my study "Some Comments on Iterative Thematic Imagery in Quevedo's *Heráclito cristiano*," *Renaissance & Reformation* 23.3 (1987), especially 249-50, and note 2, 251.

<sup>10</sup> Pablo de Tarsia, *Vida de Don Francisco de Quevedo y Villegas*, facsimile edition by Melquíades Prieto Santiago (Aranjuez: Ara Jovis, 1988) 58-59; subsequent references will appear in the text after the abbreviation T. Another famous version is that of Luis Astrana Marín, *La vida turbulenta de Quevedo* (Madrid: Gran Capitán, 2nd ed., 1945) 146-50; subsequent references will appear in the text after the abbreviation VT.

<sup>11</sup> *Memorial de D. Luis Pacheco de Narváez, Maestro de Armas de Felipe IV, Denunciando al tribunal de la Inquisición cuatro libros de D. Francisco de Quevedo*. Reprinted in *Obras completas de don Francisco de Quevedo*, ed. L. Astrana Marín (Madrid: Aguilar, 1932) II (*Verso*), 1043-54. Subsequent references will be noted in the text after the abbreviation AM.

the *Tribunal de la Justa Venganza*<sup>12</sup> (1632) in which he launches an analysis (which we will study in some detail) on Quevedo's antireligious and anticlerical statements.

But the question now is, in retaliation for what? First, there is the real life scandal of the unsatisfactory (from Pacheco de Narváez's point of view) duel; (2) then there is the matter of Quevedo's witty, yet spiteful and hurtful, verbalisms at the end of said duel; then come (3) the vicious parodies, not only of the duel, but also, in violent attacks ad hominem, of Pacheco de Narváez himself; and finally (4) there are Quevedo's intertextual parodies on the thought and vocabulary presented in Pacheco de Narváez's books.

The ambiguous relationship between autobiography and literary creativity can clearly be seen at this point. The parody of the fencing master may well have its roots in an episode drawn from the author's own life, but there are other factors (some literary, some personal, some retaliatory) which must be taken into account. Even so, the way that the fencing master is described, the absurdity of his actions, the parody of the language that he uses, all these contribute to a dehumanizing process, a process of reification that eliminates all reference to lived truth.<sup>13</sup> William Clamurro, incidentally, employs reification and talks of the "pervasive shift from fictionalization to *cosificación*—the way in which objects take precedence over persons, in which persons are presented as fragmented grotesque ensembles, and in which the human element is continually reduced to surface and mechanism" (C 45). At this point, it should be noted that the same can be said for the description of Dómine Cabra. Whether or not Cabra actually represents one of the many masters that Quevedo was taught by during his school years (a highly dangerous, unproven, undocumented, and probably undocumentable piece of speculation), Dómine Cabra, the literary creation, is literally that: a verbalized shadow creature made up of words, a walking patchwork quilt of errant vocabulary, so farfetched that he bears only the most distant relationship to a human being, let alone to a personal, lived reality. He is clearly a case, as Clamurro has described him of words recreating and reproducing themselves by feeding on other words (C 42-61).

There are other fictional characters within the *Buscón* who can be related to Quevedo's real life. One of them is Don Diego Coronel. The relationship between don Pablos, don Diego Coronel, and don Francisco de Quevedo has been set out in most succinct fashion by Carroll B. Johnson who asks who were those Coronels to whom Quevedo showed such extreme hatred?<sup>14</sup> Although the history of the

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<sup>12</sup> *El Tribunal de la Justa venganza* can be found in Quevedo, *Obras Completas*, ed. Astrana Marín, 1099-1163. The attack on the *Buscón*, twenty-three distinct charges mostly relating to Quevedo's alleged attacks on religion, the clergy, and the church, can be found on pages 1110-24.

<sup>13</sup> See William Clamurro, "The Language of the *Buscón*," in his *Language and Ideology in the Prose of Quevedo* (Newark, Delaware: Juan de la Cuesta, 1991) 42-61. Clamurro emphasizes *cosificación* (from J. Corrales Egea's "La novela picaresca," *Insula* 24 (1969): 15, which in turn supports Maurice Molho's use of the term *chosification* in *Romans picaresques espagnols* (Paris: Gallimard, 1968.) Subsequent references will be noted in the text after the abbreviation C.

<sup>14</sup> Carroll B. Johnson, "El Buscón: D. Pablos, D. Diego y D. Francisco," *Hispanófila* 51 (1974): 1-26. See also Henry Ettinghausen, "Quevedo's *Converso Pícaro*," *Modern Language Notes* 102.2 (1987): 241-54; and Agustín Redondo, "Del Personaje de Don Diego Coronel a una nueva interpretación de *El Buscón*," *Actas del Quinto Congreso Internacional de Hispanistas* (Bordeaux: P.U. de Bordeaux, 1977) II, 699-711. Subsequent references will appear in the text after the abbreviation J.

Coronel family is long and complicated, Johnson attempts to focus the role of the Coronels within the recurring thought-patterns of Quevedo's likes and dislikes. Johnson then shows how the Coronel family name disappeared from the south of Spain in 1353 only to reappear again in Segovia on the June 15, 1492 when Abraén Seneor, a Jewish financier and adviser to Queen Isabel, is baptized as a Christian in the Monastery of Guadalupe, receiving the family name of Coronel (J 12-14).

In Johnson's opinion, it would have been very difficult for Quevedo not to have known the Coronel family, especially as they had distinguished themselves, amongst other things, in the field of humanism (J 16). Further, the historic Coroneles—together with the fictitious don Diego Coronel—attend the University of Alcalá de Henares at the same time as don Francisco de Quevedo (J 25). And again, as Johnson shows, there were other members of the Coronel family present at Alcalá de Henares while Quevedo was studying there. What, if any, real life episode linked Quevedo to the Coroneles? What relationship existed between the Coroneles and Quevedo that would cause our author to parody them, as he does in the *Buscón*, beneath the traceable name of Don Diego Coronel? More, as Ignacio Arellano has pointed out, before publication, and sometimes even before wider circulation in manuscript form, authors and editors were given to rewriting and, in the process, to "cleansing" texts of real names that might incriminate the writer and cause real difficulties with state censors and Inquisition.<sup>15</sup> Given this fact, it is in some ways surprising that a traceable family name would appear in such a potentially scandalous work as the *Buscón*. Unfortunately, no documentary evidence has been discovered thus far to link Don Diego and Don Francisco more closely; but given the average autobiographer's tendency, when writing creative fiction based on a lived experience, to write and rewrite a personal event until it is no longer recognizable as reality and has changed into the purest fiction (though based on a more or less recognizable mustard seed of fact) we are, I think, entitled to speculate further. We must think then of personal experiences, lived out and written, revised and rewritten, until fact and fiction have become blurred and the past, a past with which we are uncomfortable or of which we are ashamed, which we glorify or romanticize, which we deform or mutilate, or satirize scandalously, is changed into an unreality, with which we can compromise and live, or on which we can take our revenge.

Given the fact that there is little or no established documented proof, so much hinges, 350 years later, on speculation; yet it is delightful to speculate on some of the recurring characters in Quevedo's early works. In addition to the several parodies of the fencing master, the parody of the Coronel family, the figures of the young girl, the aunt, and the impoverished student recur. We rediscover them, for example, in a slightly different set of poses, in the Fifth letter of the *Cartas del Caballero de la Tenaza* (1601): "They tell me, Lady, that only the other day, you and your aunt mocked my misery . . . I am amused by what Lady Oak-Tree mumbled with her one incisor and half a molar—'What a sad-faced proto-student! And what looks! He reeks of the dog and wouldn't give away a dime even if you burned

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<sup>15</sup> Ignacio Arellano, "La poesía burlesca áurea, ejercicio de lectura conceptista y apostillas al romance <Boda de negros> de Quevedo," *Filología Románica* (1987-88): 259-76. See also, my article, "Quevedo's Poetic Creativity: Some Comments on a Newly Discovered Manuscript Version of 'Contaba una labradora,'" *Modern Language Notes* 101.2 (March, 1987): 383-84.

him alive!"<sup>16</sup> Once again, the subject of marriage, seemingly so distasteful to the misogynistic Quevedo, is mentioned, and the *yo* of the *Cartas*, after receiving some kind of marriage proposal from the young lady to whom he is addressing the letters, pens his reply in which he complains that talk about marriage spoils relationships, that he is destined to be a bachelor ("I have a bachelor's face and a widower's condition"), and that women do not stay with him for long ("for a dozen women don't last me two weeks"); finally he gives the lady this piece of advice: "Get married elsewhere; for I am determined to die in my own home, where spiders frighten me less than mothers-in-law" (T, XXI, 84).

The putting down of the lady continues in letter XXIII; and note that, given the verbal abuse he showers upon his lady, witty though it may be, I find it almost impossible to think of of the writer of the *Cartas*, even though he calls himself a *caballero*, as that polite adornment of polished society: a gentleman! In this letter, the lady seems to be trying to take unfair advantage of her *Caballero* by playing on his better instincts and announcing her pregnancy. His reply is rude and distasteful: "You tell me, Lady, that you are pregnant, and I believe you, for the exercise that you take would lead you to no other end . . . You give me to understand that you have gifts of mine within your belly, and that could well be for you haven't had time to digest the cakes I brought you for tea" (T, XXXIII, 84). Quevedo's verbal abuse of women is basically the same throughout all his satirical writing. "And I don't want to shack up with a lineage, I want to bed a woman; for sleeping with the grand-daughter while sustaining the whole family tree is just too much for me" (T, XI, 81), he writes in the *Cartas*, while his antifeminine sentiments in the *Buscón* are just as strong and perhaps even more coarse: "In the course of the conversation I found out that my beloved would have run great risk in Herod's time on account of her innocence. She knew nothing at all! But then I don't want women for their wisdom and good council, but rather to go to bed with them. For old and ugly and wise is like going to bed with Aristotle or Seneca or a book. And thus I look for women who have the right parts in the right places; for even fools seem wise if they know how to please me" (LC 228).

In 1981, when I realized that the young lady to whom the *Cartas* are addressed is called Lisa in letter III of the Ruan edition ("*Adios, Lisa. Hoy día de ayuno.*") and *mi señora doña Isabel* in an unnumbered letter published in the *Obras Completas* (FB 85), I speculated further, in romantic mode, along the lines of an affair between a young, impoverished student and a beautiful young lady who, for a variety of reasons, was forced to marry a richer and older suitor. After the breakup of the affair, the student, still in love, would have written first the more-or-less adoring *Canta sola a Lisi* (a cycle of love poems to the Beloved) and then the more-or-less despairing *Heráclito cristiano* (a religious-moral cycle of repentance dedicated to his aunt). Now, however, I realize that Quevedo's writing at this critical juncture in his life clearly moved in at least two radically opposed directions: first, the bitter-sweet, disillusioned love poetry written to Lisi which culminates, perhaps, in the poems of anguished repentance found in the *Heráclito cristiano*,<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> F. de Quevedo, *Cartas del Caballero de la Tenaza. Obras Completas*, ed. Felicidad Buendía, I, 79-86; subsequent references will appear in the text after the abbreviation FB. Carta V is on p. 79. Subsequent references to the *Cartas* will appear in the text after the abbreviation T.

<sup>17</sup> On the possible relationship between Lisi, Lisa, and the Caballero de la Tenaza, see my article "Lisa, Lisi, and the Caballero de la Tenaza," *Boletín de la Biblioteca de Menéndez Pelayo* 56 (1981): 215-24. See

and second, the embittered satire, laden with vicious verbal witticisms, to be found in both the *Cartas del Caballero de la Tenaza* and the *Buscón*.

If there are links between the *Cartas*, the *Buscón*, the *Canta sola a Lisi*, and the *Heráclito*, I now realize that they are not going to be found at the level of one young lady (the improbable Lisi!) to whom Quevedo wrote poetry for twenty-two years and to whom, obsessed, he returned again and again in one form of writing or another. Rather, even in the *Cartas* there are disquieting suggestions that Quevedo may well have shared an extremely active sex life with a large number of ladies with what moral, paternalistic society would call in patriarchal mood "doubtful moral standards." Thus, in letter X, apparently written to the *Caballero* by his lady and titled *De La Atenazadora* we read of a lover who has fallen into temptation and courted another lady (T, X, 80-81). The signs then of a changeable *Caballero* are present within the *Cartas*. They are also present within the *Canta sola a Lisi* where, although the main poems are directed to Lisi, the variants often contain the names of other women, sometimes two and three names to a poem.<sup>18</sup>

What can we say of Pablos's relationships with the opposite sex in the *Buscón*? A great deal of attention has been directed to Pablos's courtship of Doña Ana. She would fill, to some extent, the romantic ideal of a reasonably attractive lady who seems to have lots of money and whose bloodlines, according to the witty conceit of her mother and aunt, "owe nothing to" anyone's in the land. She and her family, in their turn, are attracted to Pablos on account of his pretence to moneyed status. The reality however is very different: on the one hand, a lady of *converso* family, looking for a good match, preferably, it seems, with a moneyed Old Christian; on the other hand, a penniless *converso* vagabond, with a falsified identity and pretensions to the good life at the expense of his wife-to-be! The delicious irony of the biter bitten sees Pablos, Doña Ana, and seemingly Don Diego himself, all caught in similar webs of deceit for Don Diego, as recent criticism has repeatedly pointed out, is not the person he seems to be when critics first held him up as a model for Pablos to follow.<sup>19</sup>

But Doña Ana is not the only woman courted by Pablos in the *Buscón*. In Book III alone Pablos can be associated, in one way or another, with at least nine different ladies. These are—in order—(1) Flechilla's married sister; (Lázaro Carreter, 179-81); (2) the two ladies in the shop (Lázaro Carreter, 182-84); (3) the two daughters of the jailer (Lázaro Carreter, 203-06); (4) the innkeeper's daughter, "a pale-faced blond," whom he nearly marries (LC 207-15); (5) Doña Ana, whom he tries to marry (LC 226-42); (6) the old lady with whom he seems to be caught in bed: "They came into my room, and as they saw me in bed, and her with me" (LC 243-47); (7) the actress (LC 254-62); (8) the nun (LC 264-71); and (9)

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also Gareth Walters, "The Renunciation of Love: the *Heráclito cristiano*," in *Francisco de Quevedo: Love Poet* (Cardiff/Washington: University of Wales Press/ Catholic University of America Press, 1985), and my review in *Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos* 12.3 (1988): 523-24.

<sup>18</sup> See Francisco de Quevedo, *Obra poética*, ed. J.M. Bleuca (Madrid: Castalia, 1969), vol. 1. Poem 507, for example, contains the names Lisis and Lisarda; poem 508 contains the names Lisi, Lisis, Flori and Floris; poem 509, Lisi and Aminta, and poem 510, Lisi and Elisa.

<sup>19</sup> See for example, T.E. May, "Good and Evil in the 'Buscón': A Survey" in his *Wit of the Golden Age* (Kassel: Reichenberger, 1986) 29-52, especially 35-37.

Grajales, the prostitute from Seville, with whom he crosses the Atlantic (LC 279-81).

What does this string of women tell us of Pablos? That he is a fickle opportunist who will take women where and when he can find them for their money and the joy of their bodies. The opposite sex means little else to him. Does Pablos the character share this attitude towards women with Quevedo the person? This is a leading question and there can be no definitive answer to it. However, the evidence in the *Cartas del Caballero de la Tenaza*, in the *Buscón*, and in the *Canta sola a Lisi*, is that Quevedo, the self-confessed misogynist, was obsessed with the recurring image of men who exploited women sexually and economically whenever they were able to do so. The unpleasant portrait of seventeenth-century society that we obtain from two of these works, the *Buscón* and the *Cartas del Caballero de la Tenaza*, is that at all levels, and especially at the lower levels in this, the poorest of all societies, survival was all; consequently, men exploited women, women exploited men in their turn, and money was king.

This brings us to the episodes depicting student life at the University of Alcalá de Henares. We know for a fact that Quevedo went to university at Alcalá de Henares. What relationship do the various episodes described in the *Buscón* have to Quevedo's own lived life? Alas: once again there are no documents, no records; and thus we will probably never know exactly how to define the episodes from student life described in the *Buscón*. There are many possibilities: (1) Did all of these exploits really happen or were some more likely to have happened than others? (2) Was Quevedo a participant in them? (3) In all of them or only in some of them? (4) To what extent were they fantasized and recreated? (5) Did Quevedo witness them without playing a part in them? (6) Were they merely wishful thinkings, things that might have been? (7) Could they have been jokes, pranks, that circulated by word of mouth? (8) Were they intertextual, literary parodies? (9) Were they created fictions that sprung whole from Quevedo's undoubtedly fertile brain? Certainly, Quevedo's picture of student life at Alcalá de Henares has a ring of truth to it. All these tall tales might well indeed have sprung from the seed of a real event, however exaggerated in the retelling. Good creative writing (of a particular sort and style) produces exactly that ring of truth, that feeling of authenticity. This does not mean that any of the Alcalá de Henares episodes were an authentic, autobiographical part of Quevedo's student experiences. In fact, as with the parody of the fencing master, by the time Quevedo's deforming technique of fragmenting images as though they were seen in a distorting mirror has accomplished its task, the opposite is probably true.

One important fact should be noted at this point. Pablos is described as a poor student, servant to a reasonably well-to-do master. Any intimate link between don Pablos and don Francisco is broken when it is remembered that Quevedo, at the time of his university studies, was by no means a poor student.<sup>20</sup> In fact, he was reasonably well-off. I quote from the will of his maternal grandmother, Felipa de Espinosa: "I also begged for a pension so that my grandson Francisco de Quevedo might study in more comfort. And His Majesty granted him one of

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<sup>20</sup> Domingo Ynduráin makes this point in "El Quevedo del *Buscón*," *Boletín de la Biblioteca de Menéndez y Pelayo* 62 (1986): 77-136.

150 ducats a year."<sup>21</sup> What was Quevedo's annual pension of 150 ducats worth in contemporary money? According to Crosby and Jauralde Pou (*Quevedo y su familia*, 398), the following salary tables pertained to Spain at that time:

Average salary for a labourer.....	3-4 reales per diem
Annual salary of a government official.....	100 ducados
Widow's pension (high ranked official).....	100 ducados
Salary of a middle order official.....	100 ducados
Salary of a high ranked official.....	200 ducados
Salary of a high official.....	400 ducados
Pension requested by Quevedo.....	800 ducados
Pension he was given.....	400 ducados

To these figures should be added, then, the pension of 150 ducats conceded to don Francisco by the King, so that he could continue his studies in some comfort. Felipa de Espinosa's definitive or second will was dated 22 February 1596. It is reasonably safe to assume that Quevedo's 150 ducats, half-way between the salaries of a middle ranked official (100 ducats) and a high-placed official (200 ducats) would have seen him through university without undue financial worries. In spite of this, we all are very much aware of how life-styles change and how money is devalued during periods of high inflation. Given these variables, it is extremely difficult to be certain of the exact financial status of Quevedo during his university days, especially if he was living it up or living beyond his means, a not unknown situation, even for today's students.

I would like to return to a point that I made earlier but left in abeyance: some of Quevedo's contemporaries, I suggested, were unable to distinguish fact from fiction, the author from the character, Don Pablos from Don Francisco. This is particularly true of Luis Pacheco de Narváez, who in 1630, denounced Quevedo to the Spanish Inquisition in a *Memorial* which was published by Astrana Marín (AM, 1043-54). His denunciation contains an attack on four books by Quevedo, the second being the *Buscón* which is denounced on twenty-three counts and is prefaced by a general statement which speaks of Quevedo's dishonesty, his obscene, coarse, and horrible words, and his mixing of the divine and profane (AM 1046). Pacheco de Narváez limits himself to resuming the text and adding a very brief commentary on what he considers to be its sacrilegious nature; thus, when Pablos describes the horse in the *Rey de Gallos* episode as being so thin that you could see its abstinence and penance (LC 27), Pacheco denounced Quevedo on the grounds that fasting and penance are the way in which humans make atonement for their sins; human beings are rational, horses are not. To say that horses are rational and can do fasting and penance is to go against the teachings of Mother Church (AM 1046).

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<sup>21</sup> For a full account of the life-style and fortune of Quevedo's family at this time, see James O. Crosby and Pablo Jauralde Pou, *Quevedo y su familia en setecientos documentos notoriales (1567-1724)* (Madrid: Edad de Oro, 1992). The will of Quevedo's maternal grandmother is reproduced on pp. 256-57. An extremely useful table of approximate price equivalents is set out on pp. 397-99. See also, Josette Riandière la Roche, *Nouveaux documents quévédiens* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1992) 80-85.

In *El Tribunal de la Justa Venganza* (published in 1632), the same charges recur as in the *Memorial*. This time, however, Pacheco de Narváez seems to have sought for (and found) the help that was missing from the earlier document. The tribunal raised against Quevedo contains a priest, and it is the priest who launches the most severe attacks against Quevedo on the grounds of blasphemy and sacrilegion. Thus, this same passage (that of the horse thinned by fasting and penance) is denounced again, but this time the attack, led by the priest, takes a much more serious tone. The priest is scandalized by Quevedo's attack on religion and has recourse to the Church Fathers, amongst them St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Augustine, to prove the error of Quevedo's ways. Mentioning don Francisco de Quevedo by name, the priest is shocked by Quevedo's attribution of human qualities to an irrational beast (AM 1110-11). The punishment recommended for Quevedo at this stage is that he be confined within the walls of a convent and forced to learn his Catechism (AM 1112).

Here, the inability of Pacheco de Narváez's priest to distinguish between author and character is in evidence. Quevedo would probably argue in his own defence, as we would, that it was not Quevedo, the author, describing the horse, but Pablos, the character; thus any potential sin of the author would be passed on to the character. However, Pacheco's priest would not accept that argument. First, charges numbers 4 and 5: ". . . Quevedo writes on folio 15 that having arrived at an inn, he found two ruffians with some painted ladies and a priest bewitched by their odour and adoring at their side" (AM 1112). Further "when ruffians and sinning women had supped, the priest gnawed those bones the flesh of which the whores had devoured" (AM 1112).

The priest is very upset by this attack on the clergy and he attributes it not to Pablos, the *pícaro converso*, but to Quevedo himself: "Only the mouth of Don Francisco de Quevedo, of whom David spoke, when he said in psalm 13 'That a serpent's poison lies beneath his tongue' could accuse a priest of what he himself and no other would do, for his tongue is his pen and his pen is his tongue; he speaks as he writes and he writes as he speaks, and his deeds imitate his written and spoken words" (AM 1112). Here, then, we have the complete confusion of author with character. In effect, Pacheco de Narváez, through his mouthpiece, the priest, goes one step further in this process of identification, for he identifies the deeds of the characters in Quevedo's *Buscón* with Quevedo's own life, "and his deeds imitate his written and spoken words."

Before we leave charges 4 and 5, I would like to enumerate the punishments recommended for Quevedo by the Tribunal at this juncture. The Tribunal has already recommended that he be confined to a monastery; in addition, on the first three Fridays he should be taken into the refectory naked from the waist up, and "each Friday he should be whipped by all the clerics in turn, from the exalted prelate to the most humble novice." But this isn't all, next he should be stretched out across the entrance to the church, and priests and those in religious orders should walk over him singing the words of Psalm 92: *Super aspidem, et basiliscum ambulabis, et conculcabis leonem et draconem*. What humiliation! But that isn't all; next, novices and lay clergy should trample his mouth with their feet saying the verse from Psalm 58 (King James Version) which reads: "Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth; break out the great teeth of the young lions, O Lord." The punish-

ment is still not over; for suggesting that the priest would ride away on an ass, there is further humiliation; now it is ordered that he should be taken to the orchard and there forced to work the waterwheel for ten hours with a straw bridle in his mouth; then a lay brother is to whip him, to make him go faster. But what if there is no waterwheel in the monastery? That is taken care of too: if there is no waterwheel, he should be tied in the stables and fed the sustenance of the animals, whose place he has taken! (AM 1113).

And now, like the picture of Quevedo, attired as a mule and pulling at the waterwheel, we have come full circle. Some of our initial questions we have been able to answer, some must languish in the realms of the unknowable until such time as more documentation can be found. Meanwhile, on the basis of what I have presented, the evidence of the Tribunal seems overwhelming: at least one group of Quevedo's enemies, be it accidentally or deliberately, clearly did not distinguish between Quevedo and his literary creations. Thus, in the same way that Quevedo actually *was* the Caballero de la Tenaza, so he *was* the Buscón for some of his contemporaries. Elements of autobiography, pseudo-autobiography, and life-writing are all clearly present in Quevedo's *Buscón*; however, the lack of documented evidence together with Quevedo's deforming verbal techniques make it virtually impossible to determine with any accuracy the exact relationship between lived experience and creative fiction.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>An early version of this paper was read at McGill University, Montreal, on 7 March, 1994. I would like to thank Professor Victor Ouimette and Dr. David Boruchoff (both of McGill University) for encouraging me to continue with my research on Francisco de Quevedo.