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MABEL DEARMER'S APPROACH TO CERVANTES'S NOVEL IN HER PLAY *DON QUIXOTE. A ROMANTIC DRAMA*

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Abstract: *This article analyses, with the specific tools of comparative literature, the way Mabel Dearmer's play* Don Quixote. A Romantic Drama *(1916) revisits Miguel Cervantes's novel* The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote of La Mancha *(1605/1615). It discusses the work of this less known English novelist and playwright as a modern adaptation which successfully offers the Knight of the Sad Countenance the ending she believed he deserved, imbuing her text with intertextual echoes from the English pastoral tradition and the Byzantine adventure novel.*
Keywords: *comparative literature, Don Quixote, Mabel Dearmer, Miguel de Cervantes, rewriting*

1. Introduction: Mabel Dearmer

Jessie Mabel Pritchard White (later Dearmer) was an English novelist and playwright, as well as an author and illustrator of children's stories. She was born on March 22, 1872, in White of Caernarvon (Wales), and died on July 15, 1915, at the age of 43, after leading an exciting life (Bailey 2017).

Mabel White was educated in London by W. G. Willis, until she entered the Hubert von Herkomer School of Art in Bushey, London, in 1891.There she was to study for only one year, because she abandoned her training to marry the Reverend Percy Dearmer, a socialist priest with whom she would share her life, a life characterised by intense cultural and political activity, as well as by her unconditional commitment to socialist, pacifist, and feminist ideals. Percy Dearmer was vicar in Lambeth, South London, until he was appointed minister of the Church of St. Mary the Virgin on Primrose Hill in 1901, where they resided until 1915 and raised their two sons, Geoffrey and Christopher. For a woman of her time, Mabel Dearmer travelled a lot: she visited France, Italy, Germany, Tobago, British Guyana, and Venezuela.

During World War I, her husband volunteered as a chaplain of the British Red Cross and she accompanied him, as a nurse of the Third Relief Unit for Serbia in April 1915 (Mitchel 1965), stopping en route in Athens. But in Serbia, Mabel became ill with typhoid fever in June and died of pneumonia on July 15 of the same year (Dearmer 1915).

Diana Maltz, professor in the Department of English Studies at the University of Oregon, does not include *Don Quixote: A Romantic Drama* on the list of the author's plays in her online biography of Mabel Dearmer:

> Inspired by a passion play she attended in Germany in 1910, she founded the Morality Play Society in 1911, mounting productions of her plays *The Soul of the World* (1911) and *The Dreamer* (1912). Adept at directing children in parish Christmas plays, she revised her *Noah's Ark Geography* as a children's play, entitled *The Cockyolly Bird* and published as a book in 1914. She also staged multiple productions of her *Brer Rabbit and Mr. Fox* (1914). (Maltz 2012: 4)

This is a curious omission, given that, in 1916, it was already included in Stephen Gwynn's edition of Mabel Dearmer's *Three Plays* and, in 1999, Jill Shefrin included it in the bibliography of her lecture "Dearmerest Mrs. Dearmer" (1999: 47), in which Dearmer is praised as a playwright in the following terms: "When George Bernard Shaw saw her morality play, *The Soul of the World* (1911), he wrote to her, 'You are one of the few people living who can write plays'" (Shefrin 1999: 36). Gwynn adds that, "had she survived, she would have ended up with her own professional theatre" (idem: 37).

Then, if Mabel Dearmer was a promising playwright, what happened to her *Don Quixote*? Why was it not published until after her death? Stephen Gwynn offers us the answers to those questions in the foreword to his 1916 edition: "Her dramas, written to be acted, appeared singly in book form to accompany performances; and 'Don Quixote,' the earliest written, remained unpublished because unplayed" (Gwyn 1916: 1). Gwynn praises the beauty of that work and confesses that he does not understand why it was not taken to the stage by any director (idem: 3). In fact, that may have been due to several factors: Victorian drama was scarce at the end of the nineteenth century due to the prevalence of fiction, although Oscar Wilde's plays were exceptionally successful; with Edwardian drama, there was a growth of realism secured by the introduction of contemporary social problems and their naturalistic treatment. Besides, a new genre that had started in the Victorian age gained ground until after World War I: the Edwardian musical comedy. In this context, Dearmer's romantic drama was probably not very appealing for the stage. The fact that it has not been performed ever since, as well as the realization that scholarship on this play is virtually non-existent led me to focus on it as my object of study.

César Domínguez, Haun Saussy, and Darío Villanueva, in their preface to *Introducing Comparative Literature, New Trends and Applications* (2015: x), commenting on Borges's 1951 short story/essay "Kafka and His Precursors", explain that "Both Lodge's and Borges's examples deal with the influence of a 'future' […] literary work on a 'past' literary work" and suggest replacing "*influence* […] with *rewriting*, both in a metaphorical sense […] and a literal one", and they illustrate their point with one of Borges's examples:

> The (imaginary) late nineteenth-century / early twentieth-century French writer Pierre Menard aims to write *Don Quijote* again, exactly as it was written by Cervantes in the seventeenth century. Though Menard's *Quijote* is an exact replica of Cervantes's *Quijote* – line for line, word for word – it is not the *Quijote* of Cervantes, for many reasons. Suffice it to mention here only one. "[…] The archaic style of Menard – quite foreign, after all – suffers from a certain affectation. Not so that of his forerunner, who handles with ease the current Spanish of his time." (Borges in Domínguez, Saussy, and Villanueva 2015: 43)

Mabel Dearmer does not make Menard's mistake, since she does not write a replica of Cervantes's masterpiece, nor does she write a work influenced by it.

What she does is to rewrite it, in the form of a play, endowing the character of Don Quixote with the characteristics she considered he had – she portrays him as a wise, good-hearted and noble man, who fought for what he deemed as good and brave causes – and offering the play the ending she believed the knight errant's story deserved: he lives, being admired and treated with affection and respect. And we can see that from the beginning of her play *Don Quixote: A Romantic Drama*, when, even before the prologue, Mabel Dearmer blurts out a declaration of intent in her "Note":

> In this play Don Quixote is not only the visionary, and dreamer, but the essentially sane man. The whole action of the play is determined by his wisdom at crucial moments. He, "the madman," alters the destiny and the character of everyone concerned in the play. His madness is a distemper (always heralded by music, the "Dulcinea motif"); its beginning is shown, its culmination in the adventure with the windmills, and its end. The windmills to the audience must be dim forms; to Don Quixote they were monsters, the embodiment of the world's evil. It is only when he is shown defeated with broken sword and helmet in the light of day that they are seen to be windmills. In the adventure with the enchanter, Don Quixote is gradually returning to the "sanity" of the world. When he consents to be carried off in the cage, he has grown doubtful of himself, and half suspects that he is being duped. The Epilogue shows the agony of his humiliation, the momentary dominance of mere materialism, and the end of the final triumph of "Dulcinea," the ideal, touching the everyday world with immortal beauty. (Dearmer 1916: 10)

Her play is structured in five acts, which are called "Prologue", "First adventure: The adventure with the two armies", "The second adventure: The adventure with giants", "The third adventure: The adventure with the enchanter", and "Epilogue".

The reason for me to choose Domínguez, Saussy, and Villanueva's work to frame my approach to the analysis of Dearmer's play in comparison with Cervantes's masterpiece was not only that they offer the first critical introduction to the field of comparative literature since the 1990s, written in English, but they also analyse this discipline within a globalized context (I am examining an English work in contrast with a Spanish one) and in comparison with other arts and audio-visual media, a perspective that fits in perfectly with the study of a 17th century novel that has been adapted or appropriated into a late-19th-early-20th-century play).

In the pages which follow, this essay is structured in four main parts: "A change in the main character's nature: 'I am not mad!'", "A tribute to Pastoral literature and Byzantine novels", "A Romantic drama" and the final "Conclusions".

2. A change in the protagonist's nature: "I am not mad!"

In the first act, called "Prologue", the setting is Don Quijote's library, where the niece (here Donna Juana), the housekeeper, and the priest (here Dr. Perez) decide they should burn the evil spirits in his chivalry books. This happens after Don Quixote returns from a six-day absence, fighting what (according to him) were giants, dressed in his rusty armour, on the back of a scarecrow-looking donkey. The housekeeper objects to such a drastic idea, but the priest categorically states: "Master Quixada's sanity is more to me than a thousand books. As long as they remain here there will be no end to his madness" (Dearmer 1916: 14). The housekeeper expresses her doubts again, but starts pulling the books off the shelves

and then throwing them out the window into the courtyard. Meanwhile, Don Quixote climbs towards them, with Dulcinea in his mind, without realising what they are doing. In fact, his rapture is such that they take away the book he is holding in his hands, without his being aware. He is waiting for the news that Sancho brings him after having taken a letter to Dulcinea and, as soon as he arrives, Don Quixote asks him if she kissed it when it was delivered to her. Sancho ruins his master's romantic expectations, denying this scenario and quoting a very mundane Dulcinea: "Can't you see I'm winnowing, blockhead!" […] "Put it down on that sack till I've done." (idem: 17) Finally, he reveals that he "saw her reading it" after a while. To which Don Quixote replies:

> O, fair discretion!
> Unparalleled excellence!
> And what jewel gave she you at parting? (Dearmer 1916: 18)

Sancho shows signs of not understanding his lord and explains that what really happened was that the lady broke out into laughter when reading the letter, and all she gave him was an onion and some cheese.

The hilarity of the prologue is present not only in the way the priest, the housekeeper, and the niece try to get rid of books without Don Quixote seeing them do it, but also in the verbal exchanges of Don Quixote and Sancho, where, as in Cervantes's work, Don Quixote's noble expectations contrast with Sancho's crude reality, which is still interpreted by his lord as something wonderful, since Don Quixote's response to Sancho's words is none other than "This is not a dream. I swear it is not a dream. Say, good squire, have you no word of praise for your lady?" (idem: 18). To this, Sancho, after thinking about it for a while, replies: "Hum! Well, I will say, Master Don Quixote, that Madam Dulcinea is the best hand at salting pork in all Toboso" (ibid.). At the end of his verbal exchange with Sancho, Don Quixote realises that the book he had in his hands is missing, and so are all the other books on his shelves. When his niece explains that they were taken by an enchanter on a dragon, it is enough for Don Quixote to smell the smoke of the pyre where his books were burning in the courtyard for him to immediately identify that enchanter as a magician named Freston, his enemy. This triggers his reaction that puts him in the epic mode, as he calls Sancho to bring him his weapons in order to engage in combat. And when his niece tries to stop him, Dearmer has Don Quixote deliver a beautiful monologue on madness, in which he invokes his heroes from chivalry books, from Amadis to Arthur, imploring their help:

> Yet a doubt haunts me —Mad!— they say —He's mad!
> Power stirs with me. My soul's mightiness
> Could compass all the world, engulf deep seas,
> Out-soar the highest hills, and make the stars
> My spangled trophies. Yet they say: He's mad!
> Mad! Mad! Aldonza —ah, the Queen Dulcinee,
> The veritable Queen of joy and love!
> Yet, what said Sancho? —I grow faint to think,
> This solid globe of earth sinks to a dream,
> And dreams take substance. Yet —I am not mad!
> Why not believe my reasonable sense
> Rather than Sancho's judgement? I've a soul

And he a body, there the difference lies.
The world cries "Madman!" Well, let the world go.
Men have grown mad for love, for lust, for gold;
I will go mad for honour.

Then he invokes the knights-errant, the walls of the stage disappear in the darkness, and, as the light goes out, all the mentioned knights march in, with their names on their banners. The protagonist continues naming them one by one, to the sounds of music. The scene ends with Don Quixote invoking his Dulcinea, because to her call he comes "crowned" (Dearmer 1916: 25), rather than armed as a "knight".

In Cervantes's novel, the curate and the barber examine Don Quixote's library in chapter VI. The intertextual intervention is already strong, as Cervantes makes these characters revise and comment on his books, to see which are dangerous and should be burnt, but select, for saving, among other volumes, the four books of *Amadis de Gaul*, because, according to them, they are the best of the chivalry books. The rest of the books are burnt by the housekeeper in chapter VII, who blamed some Muñatón for it, whom Don Quixote would be ready to identify as Fristón.

In the novel, instead of a monologue on madness, in part II, chapter I (Cervantes Saavedra 2018: 458-59), Don Quixote evokes the famous knights-errant of chivalry books, as he laments that there are no such men left in his time and misses the golden age of chivalry.

Mabel Dearmer took all those elements from chapters VI and VII of the first part of the novel, and from chapter I of the second part, and rewrote them, creating the first act of her play.

It is worth pointing out that Miguel de Cervantes might have been inspired by Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam's essay *In Praise of Folly* – printed in 1511, where he argues that only through madness will man know how to reason correctly – when he created his Don Quixote. And we should not forget that, in the seventeenth century, both in England and in Spain, it was generally thought that insanity led to death (Boulton and Black 2012; González Duro 2021). That is probably the reason why Cervantes's Don Quixote has to die at the end of the novel: because he has been mad for the better part of it. However, the great popularity of this novel in eighteenth-century England, which explains the increasing cult of chivalry in 19th century England (Eisenberg 1987), leads to the Romantic interpretation of Don Quixote's psyche and deeds, that turns the character's madness into idealism (Close 1978). That Mabel Dearmer's play has a romantic flavour is something she even states in its very title, and, hence, she offers us an idealised interpretation of the knight's presumed madness. Therefore, it is not surprising that the above-quoted monologue on madness uttered by Don Quixote, in heart-felt blank verse that could very well have been written by Shakespeare himself, should remind us of one of Hamlet's famous utterances – another reputed fake madman, by the way. Unfortunately, Dearmer's contemporaries never had the chance to enjoy Don Quixote's monologue, since, as already mentioned, the play has never been performed.

3. A tribute to pastoral literature and Byzantine novels

The second act, entitled "First adventure: The adventure with the two armies", takes place in a forest, and the first character on the scene is the beautiful

Dorothea, dressed as if she were a young man, singing, and explaining to the audience how exceptional it is for her to look like a man.

As Sancho and Quixote, who have gone out in search of Freston the magician, step on stage, Dorothea hides. Other characters arrive, making Don Quixote state he shall not let anyone pass until he admits that the unparalleled Dulcinea del Toboso is "beauty's queen" (Dearmer 1916: 28).

Cardenio arrives first, and he ends up succumbing to the knight's request, after Sancho advises him that he should humour his master, because the latter is crazy and believes he is a knight errant (29). Meanwhile, Dorothea leaves her hiding place and is taken for a boy by Don Quixote. Then she runs to Sancho and hears from him his master's curious definition of a knight errant: "A beggar to-day and an emperor to-morrow" (30).

Suddenly, Cardenio realises that Dorothea is a woman, and she is prompted to tell them about her misfortune: how her husband betrayed her with another woman and tried to compensate her with jewels, but she was not able to forgive him and fled away to hide from him.

Cardenio then tells them about his own misfortune: how, when he was about to marry his beloved, the Duke of Andalusia's son came and, with his riches, conquered the family of the lady and the lady herself. When Dorothea asks if the nobleman and his lady got married, Cardenio answers that he does not know. At the end of their conversation, they discover that Lucinda, Cardenio's beloved lady, is the woman for whom Dorothea's husband, the son of the Duke of Andalusia, left her. Don Quixote encourages her to take revenge on her husband, but she refuses. Then the knight offers to find him and tries to contain Cardenio's yearning for revenge by telling him that trust is bought with confidence and love with love (36). Cardenio expresses his surprise at the wisdom of Don Quixote's words, which contrasts with the insanity of his actions. To reinforce this impression, Dorothea confesses she sees in him only "a knight and a true gentleman" (38).

Don Quixote does not see any adventure in this situation, because it lacks the extraordinary elements he likes to expect from his readings, but a music that he hears in his head tells him something is going to happen, so he waits. He soon sights the dust raised by two armies and rushes against them, although they turn out to be nothing other than herds of sheep.

In this first adventure, Mabel Dearmer rewrote chapters XXIII, XXIV and XXVIII-XXXII of Part I of Cervantes's novel, containing the story of Cardenio – making its protagonists look up to the knight errant as a wise man – and finished the adventure with the episode of the armies that turned out to be herds of sheep, taken from chapter XVIII in the novel. The playwright combined two pastoral stories (Holloway 2017) included by Cervantes: the bucolic wandering of Dorothea and Cardenio in the forest on the one hand, and the comic episode with the sheep mistaken for armies by Don Quixote, imbued by the English pastoral tradition, on the other. The English pastoral tradition was initiated by John Lyly's *Endimion* (1579) and was continued, to mention but a few representative authors, still in the 16th century, by Sir Philip Sidney, Edmund Spenser, Christopher Marlowe, and William Shakespeare; in the 17th century, by John Fletcher, Emilia Lanier, Ben Jonson, John Milton, Andrew Marvell, and Katherine Philips; in the 18th century, by Alexander Pope, Thomas Gray, George Crabbe, and Robert Burns; and in the 19th century by Percy Bysshe Shelley and Matthew Arnold (Gifford 2019).

While in Cervantes's novel, Cardenio and the account of his misfortunes are introduced in chapter XXIII, far before Dorthea appears for the first time in chapter

XXVIII, Dearmer makes Dorothea – cross-dressed as a boy, as in the novel – enter the stage before Cardenio. Then she hides, but, when found, she tells her story before Cardenio reveals his. The playwright might have chosen to do this, on the one hand, due to a matter of economy, since being on stage, while Dorothea offers the account of her misfortunes, Cardenio is enabled to resort to a process of recognition that makes it unnecessary for him to offer the account of his story as well. On the other hand, having Dorothea reveal her version of the story before Cardenio's confers her more prominence. This is very relevant, since it is going to be Dorothea who will insist, throughout this play, on Don Quixote's nobility and wisdom – unlike in Cervantes's novel, where these characters see the knight errant as deluded and out of touch with reality.

The third act, called "The second adventure: The adventure with giants", is set in an inn. Don Quixote is seated, having a rest after the battle, accompanied by Dorothea. While they discuss with the innkeeper about the dinner menu, Lucinda enters, breathless. They engage in conversation, and she confesses that she wants to go to a convent because of her misfortunes. She fled from a marriage that her parents had arranged, in order to be with her beloved, but eventually he abandoned her. When she reveals that her lover's name is Cardenio, Dorothea asks Don Quixote to intervene in the matter, so he tries to comfort Lucinda with wise, though cryptic, words. When he prepares to leave, in search of new adventures, Cardenio, who had been looking for Don Quixote, walks in and has a happy reunion with Lucinda, who then summarises the scene, characterising Don Quixote in the following way: "That strange knight determines all our fates". The knight errant says goodbye, and when he leaves, an officer comes with soldiers, looking for him for being mad, since he had attacked a shepherd and his flock. But, at the inn, they are sent in the opposite direction to the one the gentleman took. And Dorothea states that "if he be mad, then all great men are mad" (Dearmer 1916: 59).

In this second adventure, Mabel Dearmer rewrote chapters XXXVI-XXXIX and XLII-XLVII of Part I of Cervantes's novel, continuing with the story of Cardenio, making its protagonists admire and sympathise with the knight errant, and finishes the adventure with an added episode of the soldiers looking for Don Quixote because he had attacked the sheep. The soldiers are then diverted by the knight errant's new friends, who respect and admire him.

Scene II presents Sancho in the countryside, with the windmills blurred in the background, very far away. Cardenio enters and asks Sancho whether he is hungry or thirsty, but the servant is more concerned with his having lost his master, who appears next on the scene, fighting the windmills.

Here Mabel Dearmer offers a flashback, since she had reported the adventure of the windmills already in her prologue, rewriting the adventure introduced by Cervantes in chapter VIII of his novel, and adding the character of Cardenio, who does not appear so early in the novel.

Apart from the above-mentioned clear reference to pastoral literature, Cervantes's story of Cardenio and Lucinda also has clear traits of the Byzantine novel (Garrido Ardila 2015, since the theme to be addressed is that of the inevitable separation of young lovers, who are to meet with a series of challenges and obstacles that will put their loyalty and the strength of their love to the test. Apart from a possible wish to pay tribute to the different literary genres present in "Don Quixote", Mabel Dearmer intended to subvert the main characters in the Byzantine plot, unlike what happens in Cervantes's novel, in order to dismiss the

idea that Don Quixote was mad, and to make the characters and the public sympathise with him and admire him.

Metaphorically, Mabel Dearmer even engages the reader in a sort of Byzantine romance, since she introduces the reference to the adventure with the windmills – probably one of the most widely known –, at the beginning of the play, to separate the reader from that tale for several pages, while she engages Don Quixote in different adventures, until she finally reunites the famous episode with the windmills and the reader in act III. And, when that happens, we realise there is a new character involved in the exploit: Cardenio, who does not play a part in this episode in Cervantes's novel, but he does so in Dearmer's play, since his going after Don Quixote to take him back with them is a sign of both worry and affection.

Act four, "The third adventure: The adventure with the enchanter", presents the group of characters in the forests of the Duke. Antonio explains to Cardenio that the Duchess has invited Don Quixote in order to test his madness: if he claims he is a knight errant, she is going to put him to the test, a trial she has designed especially for him. Cardenio informs Lucinda and Dorothea about it, and they feel offended by what the Duchess intends to do and decide to offer their support to their friend, Don Quixote.

The Duchess begins to make fun of his madness in front of her guests, but, as Don Quixote is not perturbed, she decides to send someone to look for Dulcinea del Toboso and bring her to Don Quixote (Dearmer 1916: 76). But when the latter sees the country maiden, he thinks she has been bewitched by Freston, his enemy – which the Duchess, mocking him, confirms. Finally, some officers take him in a cage, but only after he leaves everyone astonished with his gentlemanly behaviour and decorum, to the point that the Duchess herself sheds some tears, ashamed of her own behaviour.

Meanwhile, Don Fernando meets Cardenio, Lucinda, and Dorothea, and he reconciles with his wife. The Duchess tries to convince the officers not to carry Don Quixote away in that cage, but they decide to complete their mission. Then Cardenio asks them to take him home to La Mancha, where his niece and housekeeper will take care of him. To spare Don Quixote the humiliation of being caged, the Duchess devises a plan for him to be caged voluntarily: Freston the magician wants him to go before him in that guise, or, otherwise, he will harm the Duchess. The promise of an adventurous scenario inspires the knight, who immediately and gallantly agrees.

In this third adventure, Mabel Dearmer continues with the story of Cardenio, in the fashion of a Byzantine novel, including the final recognition of Ferdinand and Dorothea, but, unlike in Cervantes's novel, making its protagonists sympathise with the knight errant, and follow him to the Duchess's place, to help him. Thus, she rewrites chapter XXXIII in Part II of Cervantes's novel, where the characters in the story of Cardenio do not appear anymore. At the end, Don Quixote's wisdom and good-heartedness even win the Duchess, who repents for having intended to mock him and ends up by growing fond of him and helping him.

4. A romantic drama

In the fifth act, or the "Epilogue", the housekeeper and the niece are worried about Don Quixote's wanderings, but the priest arrives, and announces the knight's safe return. All the characters express their concern about whether he has recovered his sanity, but the priest regrets Don Quixote's recovery, a state in which he feels

very unhappy, since he has lost his other world, one that gave him a purpose. The Duchess and her friends, who have travelled to La Mancha to see him, are not allowed to do it, so they hide to catch a glimpse of him from a distance.

Don Quixote asks his niece to tell him what she learned in his absence, and he marvels at her reply, because he realises that, in the end, his convictions and lifestyle were an example for her:

> I learnt that death is sometimes beautiful,
> More beautiful than life, and that to live
> Were worthless without honor". (Dearmer 1916: 94)

When Sancho calls him "Master – Don Quixote," the latter corrects him: "Nay, Quixada, now! / The name of my humility is dead" (Dearmer 1916: 94). The meaning of "humility" in this context is "humiliation" rather than "humbleness", since, having recovered his sanity, he now regrets having made his neighbour Sancho call him "Master". He also apologises for having dragged him in his madness. Now, he is left "to eat, to sleep, and then, dear God, to die!" (idem: 95), that is, Quixada is determined to forget about the Don Quixote who had been a product of his once deranged mind, to enjoy his present return to sanity and to lead a peaceful life until the end of his days.

On hearing those words, his friends come out of their hiding place to tell him how meeting him was a turning point in their lives and what a positive role he has come to play. When the Duchess's turn comes, she confesses that he has changed her life, to the point of falling irresistibly for him, in admiration for his gentlemanly behaviour, since he replaced the wickedness in her heart with love for the others. The Duchess's words lead Master Quixada to think that perhaps his Dulcinea has not disappeared completely… The play ends with his friends extolling the goodness of Don Quixote and his wisdom, refusing to allow him to disappear and revert to a state of rationality and normality.

In this part, Mabel Dearmer rewrites chapter LXXIV, the last one in Part II of Cervantes's novel, where Don Quixote recovers his sanity, rejects chivalry books, and dies. In the romantic fashion that, as mentioned above, turns Don Quixote's madness into idealism, she refuses to let him give up his gentle manners, which imitate the manners of the knights errant, and keeps him alive at the end of her play, as someone to look up to, preventing Quixada from forgetting Don Quixote, because the latter's selfless behaviour has gained him the admiration and affection of many – and very diverse – characters, whom he eventually redeemed.

5. Conclusion

Mabel Dearmer rewrites Cervantes's *Don Quixote of La Mancha*, subverting certain episodes and making the main characters sympathise with Don Quixote, including, in her play, the episodes that pay tribute to pastoral literature and Byzantine novels; she rewrites the characters in these episodes in order to serve her purpose – that of of composing a romantic drama. Thus, Cardenio, Lucinda, Dorothea, and Fernando, as well as the Duchess, end up admiring the knight errant, who is redeemed by his honest and gentlemanly behaviour. Even his niece finally realises that her uncle may not have been entirely mad and that he has something to teach her.

Mabel Dearmer wisely leads her play and, implicitly, Don Quixote's story, toward the glorious end that, from her point of view, the knight errant deserved: the

acknowledgment by the rest of the characters that his life was not ruined by madness, but enriched by wisdom and noble principles, and that his model of behaviour was one to imitate and admire.

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