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Knighthood and anti-heroic behaviour in the figures of Falstaff and Don Quixote

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Manner makyth the man

-William of Wykeham

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Introduction

The purpose of this dissertation is to analyze the literary figures of John Falstaff and Don Quixote in their correlation with knighthood while also considering the aspect of anti-heroism. Albeit the two figures belong to very different literary contexts and the theme of anti-heroism is anachronistic, the dissertation aims to find consistent similarities and divergent points in the two texts.

The first part will be devoted to understanding knighthood in its historical contexts; it is important to emphasize that the time span considered is between the eleventh- and the sixteenth-century and as such, the documents provided to comprehend the reality of this period have to be evaluated with caution. As it will be reiterated throughout the dissertation, many are the instances in which the dichotomy amongst reality and literature is overturned; because of this relation, they frequently influence one another as it will be demonstrated. While this phenomenon does not facilitate a clear interpretation of medieval sources, it is only partially responsible; authors of that timeframe have been reported biased given their political or religious affiliation and as such, the veracity of historical writings and chronicles has to be considered carefully.

The second part will briefly describe the traits of heroes and anti-heroes as they will provide a better understanding of the figure of the knight. The theme of anti-heroism will especially offer a different perspective when analyzing the two literary protagonists.

After a separate study on Falstaff and Don Quixote correlated to what has been explained in the first two chapters, the dissertation will provide a compared analysis between them. Three core topics shall be closely examined: the relation of the two characters with knighthood, their correlation with the theme of anti-heroism and their interpretation of reality and representation. Whereas Falstaff perceives his own reality and adapts to it, Don Quixote, in an almost contrasting fashion, fabricates his own reality basing it primarily on books. Their different approach shall be then extensively explained and discussed given the fact that it constitutes the cornerstone of this research.

A common point between the two authors may be considered the date of *Don Quixote*'s first English translation. Originally published in 1605, as Edwin Knowels states[1], its first translation in any language was in fact in English by Thomas Shelton in 1612, seven years later. Shakespeare's *Henry the Fourth Part 1* was written no later than 1597. For the purpose of this dissertation, primarily interested in the figures of the Falstaff and Don Quixote, the quandaries and suppositions regarding *The history of Cardenio* or *Cardenno*, the lost play presumably written by John Fletcher and William Shakespeare and performed during 1612-1613 by the King's Men[2], shall not be considered. While speculations on the subject may prove interesting, they would diverge too much from the core topic.

[1] Knowles, "*Thomas Shelton, Translator of Don Quixote,* Studies in the Renaissance", Vol. 5, p. 160.
[2] Marchitello, "*Finding Cardenio"*, ELH, Vol 74, No. 4, pp. 966-967.

Chapter One: Knight and knighthood, origin and evolution

In this chapter I will be exploring the figure of the knight and the chivalric values, how they were perceived at the beginning of the tenth century and how they evolved until the end of the Renaissance period. It is important to note that these traits have a somewhat different connotation in the contemporary society; they derive mostly from cinematic stereotypical constructs and feature for example the selfless knight in shining armour that must save the princess or fight whole armies singlehandedly. Similar scenes are also depicted in literature; while part of the dissertation will be dedicated to understanding the figure of the knight, it is essential to be aware of the uncertain reliability of medieval sources and texts. It is arduous to mark a difference between the figure of a real knight, and what he did in antiquity, and his representation through literary texts considering the time frame that is being taken into account.

The keyword that will be emphasized during the following chapters is precisely *representation* since the perception of the knight, his characteristics and what he stands for will be deduced from literary works. One of the most important ones that will be quoted is William Caxton's translation (dated 1483-1485 ca.) of Ramon Llull's *The book of the Ordre of Chivalry.* Alongside this treaty, different works of scholars and academics will be examined such as Mario Domenichelli's *Cavaliere e gentiluomo – Saggio sulla cultura aristocratica in Europa (1513-1915),* Maurice Keen's *Chivalry* and Raymond Kilgour's *The decline of chivalry*. The aim of this chapter is to explore the themes and characteristics of the knight, alongside their representations, so that they may be compared in the following chapters with the ones embodied by two literary protagonists, Sir John Falstaff and Don Quixote of La Mancha.

1.1 Semantics

Modern-day dictionaries typically define a knight as either a man of high social rank who was under the obligation to fight for his lord in the Middle Ages or as someone who has been invested with a special honorific title by a king or

queen. While this definition is inadequate for the purposes of the dissertation, it already associates the word knight with a certain degree of prestige or, in the very least, with social status.

More appropriately for the purposes of this inquiry, an etymological dictionary[3] indicates the English *knight* as "a youth, servant or man at arms". The Germanic and Proto-Germanic languages share many similarities of the definition because of their linguistic proximity; hence Dutch indicates the *Knecht* as a "servant or a waiter", the Danish *Knegt* is a "servant or knave", the Swedish *Knekt* is a "soldier or a knave" and the German *knecht* indicates a "man-servant". Furthermore it is indicated that the "Anglo-Saxon suffix -eht, -iht is adjectival. Probably cn-eht is from cn-, weak grade of cen-, Idg. gen-, as in Greek γέν-os, kin. Thus cn-eht may = cyn-eht, i.e. belonging to the 'kin' or tribe; it would thus signify one of age to be admitted among the men of the tribe." While originally the word knight was only partially associated with the figure of the warrior, it was also related to that of the servant, possibly indicating the later division between knight and squire. In fact the word *squire*, in Middle English *squyer*, was etymologically a shield-bearer, but it was also most commonly used to indicate a youth that could learn the trade and become a knight himself.

The etymological definition also quotes the significance of the coming of age of the youth and the trial to become an adult. The rite of passage is a social element, also featured in the folkloristic aspects of most European countries, that is analogous to the act of knighting, also known as dubbing; this ritual will be explained further on.

Nevertheless, from the etymological point of view of Latin-based languages, there are certain differences. As Domenichelli[4] explains in his research, *cavaller*, *cavallero* and *cavaliere* derive from the Latin *caballarius*, which in turn originates from the word *caballus.* Differently from the word *equus* that connoted the normal horse, *caballus* was used to indicate the gelded or castrated horse and they were used either as carthorses or as draft horses. In the north of France, *cheval* lost its negative connotation and those who used them

[3] Skeat, *An Etymological Dictionary of the English Language,* p. 11.
[4] Domenichelli, *Cavaliere e gentiluomo Saggio sulla cultura aristocratica in Europa (1513-1915), pp. 16-18.*

became *chevaliers*, the same ones that in Medieval and Renaissance Latin were known as *miles*. Even though *miles* originally indicated either foot-soldiers or simple infantry, the term gradually changed during the eleventh and twelfth century so as to indicate a more precise class. In Maurice Keen's words,

> In the first place we find the word *miles* being used with a more limited military sense than it had in classical Latin, to denote now specifically a mounted warrior. We find it used occasionally in this way by Richer, at the beginning of the eleventh century; in the accounts of the first crusade at the century's end it has become a normal meaning, and the *milites* are distinguished clearly from the foot soldiers.[5]

There was still however a social distinction between *miles* and *nobilis*. The linguistic process with which the term *knight* reached the specific social class connotation that is being referred was more gradual. In Domenichelli's words,

> Il termine antico francese *chevalier* originariamente indicava soltanto un gruppo di guerrieri a cavallo. Solo in un secondo tempo iniziò a identificare, con lo status sociale, un codice e poi uno stile di comportamento e di vita. Questo stile e questo codice – che si possono riassumere forse sotto l'unico termine di 'onore' – vengono fortemente enfatizzati fino a forgiare l'ideale cavalleresco e l'ideologia di classe della nobiltà. [6]

On one hand, being a knight meant to identify with certain ideals, on the other one, it also meant to belong to a cast or a class. This ideology and subdivision of classes also had its roots in the division of power within a state and the different functions diverse social groups had. Domenichelli explains this by placing together the words *knight* and *gentleman*:

> 'Cavaliere' e 'gentiluomo' sono termini che definiscono un modello di umanità superiori per sangue, per merito, per educazione, per virtù collettiva e perseguita

[5] Keen, *Chivalry*, p.27.

[6] Domenichelli, *Cavaliere e gentiluomo,* p. 17. Translation: The antique French term *chevalier* originally indicated merely a group of horseback warriors. Just in a secondary moment it started to identify, with the social status, a code and then a way of life. This way and code – that can be possibly summarized with the term 'honour' – were heavily emphasized until the point they became the knighthood ideal and the class ideology of nobility.

> o, di contro, ereditata, congeniata. Entrambi i termini provengono dal medioevo e fanno riferimento, nella società d'ordine, alla classe dei *bellatores*, dei guerrieri, coloro che hanno il compito di difendere la terra lavorata dai contadini, i *laboratores*, mentre l'altro ordine, quello degli *oratores*, ha il compito dello studio e della preghiera.[7]

An initial partition of society in the Middle Ages is marked in this passage, distinguishing between clergymen, peasants and soldiers. While it is not completely accurate to say these were actual classes, for the sake of commodity this term will be used throughout the dissertation. Thus, in medieval times, knights constituted a class or a caste on their own. They were superior to common soldiers or infantry since their rank was either gained or, more commonly, inherited. Accordingly, in the conception of feudal power, this marks the importance that lineage had during the Middle Ages; it steadily became clearer that birth also conditioned a man's life. It follows that not just anyone could become a knight: achieving this rank was considered an honour and to some extent it was associated with nobility. Amongst the obligations of the knights there was the defence of the kingdom. The vassalage between the king or lord and his knights will be explained subsequently focusing also on the social concepts and main ideologies of that period.

Other words evolved alongside the word *knight* in Europe. While in Italy there was no clear connotation between cavalry and the chivalric code, there was however a distinction between *cavaliere* and *cavalleggero*, similarly to the French distinction between *chevalerie* and *cavalerie* and the Spanish one between *caballero* or *caballista* and *jinete*. In German, the words *Reuter* and *Reiter* identified the warriors on horseback (riders or cavalryman in general), but the chivalric virtues were to be found in the *Ritter*. "This is what, in legal texts, the word *Ritter* (the equivalent of the French *chevalier*) means: a member of a lesser

[7] Domenichelli, *Cavaliere e gentiluomo,* p. 17. Translation: Knight' and 'gentleman' are terms that define a model of humanity superior by blood, worth, education or collective virtue, either perused or, on the contrary, inherited. Both terms derive from the Middle Ages and refer to the category of *bellatores*, or warriors, the ones that are tasked with defending the land worked by the farmers, or *laboratores*, while the order of the *oratores*, has the obligation of study and pray.

aristocracy clearly defined apart from nobility's higher echelon."[8] Finally, in English, the word *rider* simply indicates a man on horseback, while the word *knight* derives from the Anglo-Saxon *cniht* as previously explain. The fact that towards the eleventh century the word *knight* assumes the meaning of a warrior on horseback is also connected to the social and financial status: only those who had financial resources could afford a horse and a set of armour. The virtues connected to the world of knighthood derived however from French chivalry.

A final linguistic point to underline is the strong affinity between the word *knight* and the etymological importance of the word *gentleman* or *gentilhomme*. Deriving from the Latin *gens*, this term indicated those who had a noble descent, hence the importance for a knight to be of a good lineage. This semantic concept is similar to the German *Edelmann* and the Spanish *hidalgo*.

From these latter linguistic considerations, it may be surmised that being a knight did not only entail pertaining to a certain lineage, hence the so-called blood right, but also implied following a series of precepts.

1.2 The Knight: precepts, obligations and characteristics

This subchapter will explore the key characteristics of knighthood and what they represented. What has been said thus far with regards to the figure of the knight was mainly referred to a medieval society where castes were already established; to further understand how the figure of the knight came to be, a further step back is needed. Knighthood must be considered in its overall complexity and how it simultaneously evolved throughout Europe and not as a localized phenomenon: as Keen says, "chivalry was nurtured in France, it took its shape in a European context. It gained currency as the sustaining ethos of warrior groups, identified on the one hand by their martial skill as horsemen, on the other by a combination of pride in ancestry and status in traditions of service."[9]

I will be focusing my endeavors only on concepts that will then be analyzed in correlation with the two literary works stated in the introduction. For the purpose

[8] Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 36.
[9] Ibid. p. 42.

of the dissertation, some related topics will be considering as common knowledge and will not be further explained. Accordingly, the function of the *trobadours* as composers and performers of the Middle Ages and their significance in the noble courts will not be explored. Suffice to note that they were the main protagonists to circulate *chansons de geste* and poems, many of which were related to knightly themes, throughout the royal European courts.

It is arduous to determine historically when mere soldiers became full-fledged knights. According to Scaglione,

> knighthood was a rather late development of the feudal system, which, although its immediate origins can be traced to the eight century, reached its peak in the twelfth – the time of the flowering of "chivalry" or knightly ethos. The *milites* were recognized since A.D. 980 as a separate secular "class" or *ordo*, distinct from the *rustici* and immediately below the *nobiles*, until they eventually became part of the nobility.[10]

Similarly to what Domenichelli said about the *bellatores*, it may be surmised that at the end of the tenth century and for the following two hundred years, a class of warriors steadily gained a significant importance and became knights. It is however significant to bear in mind the continuous interactions and implications between history, culture and literature. Because of this constant exchange, it proves difficult to establish a defining line between literature and reality and this in turn becomes problematic for historians for instance. In Keen's words,

> how is he [the historian] to set about relating a model drawn from a world of fiction and fantasy to the real world which is his business? The pages of romance plunge him immediately into realms unfamiliar to history. […] The romance storytellers are quite open in their admission that their matter is 'outrageous'. The wind that sighs over their enchanted ground blows away the humdrum limitations of the stage on which real life is enacted. An ideal of knighthood culled from what appears so often to be essentially a literature of escape is scarcely a promising model for a social historian to make much of.[11]

[10] Scaglione, *Knights at court,* pp. 17-18.
[11] Keen, *Chivalry*, pp. 2-3.

Albeit the dynamic concerning literature and reality renders the distinction between factual truth and poetical fabrication problematic, from a social perspective this mutual exchange may be further explored. According to this consideration and Keen's warning, Scaglione adds:

> Literary historians have long agreed that social questions are central to the Arthurian texts, since these texts ostensibly frame individual destinies within social bonds and duties. Dealing with Occitan literature, even the results of formal criticism (by, say, Robert Guiette, Roger Dragonetti, and Paul Zumthor) have turned out to accord with the analysis of social and moral thematic content as practiced by a Pierre Bec or an Erich Köhler. To relate literature to society is productive for both literary history and social history because, just as social structures condition literature, so literature can condition social behaviour. This is particularly true of chivalry and courtliness.[12]

The Carolingian and Arthurian cycles are good starting points to analyse the figure of the knight. The *chanson de geste* placed its protagonists in a bygone time; through this distancing, the medieval society was able to appreciate the chivalric virtues that were narrated in the genre: "In an age which looked instinctively to the past for examples of wisdom and of virtuous living, the literature which retailed these traditional stories underpinned the values of chivalry by providing them with a faultlessly antique and highly evocative pedigree."[13] It was in this time frame, from the end of the eleventh century until the beginning of the thirteenth century, that knighthood flourished. Many are the social and historical events that conditioned the evolution of knights and their representations.

It is also in this time span that religious and Christian themes started to intertwine with the concept of knighthood and to crystallize; at the beginning of the eleventh century they did not share many elements. "The influence of crusading ideology on the ethic of cavalry, in its formative period, was obviously powerful, but we must be careful, as we pursue the origins of the religious strand

[12] Scaglione*, Knights at court,* p. 3.
[13] Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 102.

in chivalry, not to confuse the two or to conflate them."[14] With the Council of Clermont held in 1095 and Pope Urban II's call to arms that would result in the First crusade, the church authorities started to come to terms with the warrior's place in society. The crusades created a religiously acceptable social and historical framework for the Christian knight to be fighting the heathen enemy. Until that moment, the position of the Church was not in favor of warlike behavior: "In the preaching and propaganda of the crusade itself the concept of the Christian mission of knighthood as and order emerges with absolute clarity. The crusade is presented, indeed, in terms of a positive transformation of the knightly way of life."[15]

These religious shifts changed many dynamics in the European courts and they had repercussions in literature as well: "The same interweaving of Christian with heroic and secular motifs become characteristic of the treatment of the crusade in chivalrous narrative and poetry."[16]

Accordingly, the Carolingian and Arthurian cycles are profoundly marked by Christianity. While referencing the *Chanson de Roland* and the *Chanson de Guillaume*, amongst others, Keen states:

> They are soldiers at once of God and of their earthly lords. Christ's example on the cross is an inspiration to their courage; but to fight courageously is also their secular duty. They are 'Christian soldiers' because they are both Christians and knights, and not because of any special commission that the authority of the church has given them.[17]

A religious aspect that is featured in the Arthurian cycle is, for instance, is the search of the Holy Grail: "The Grail story not only made it possible for chivalrous romance to become a vehicle for Eucharistic mysticism: it was also the medium through which the chivalrous story of Arthur and his knights was linked into the sacred history of Christianity.[18] The persistence of not only emphasizing the

[14] Ibid. p. 45.
[15] Ibid. p. 48.
[16] Ibid. p. 55.
[17] Ibid. p. 51.
[18] Ibid. p. 118.

chivalric values of a distant past, but also linking them to a sacred theme recognized in King Arthur his importance as ideal king and paragon of virtues. In Köhler's words,

> Il regno di Artù costituisce un mondo in cui in pratica esiste solo una cavalleria che ha posto sullo stesso piano le proprie rivendicazioni politiche e i principi della più nobile ricerca etica umana, grazie ad una continua moralizzazione dei concetti giuridici feudali. *Chevalerie, leauté, justice, honer, usage, foi, coustume, don, largesce*, tuitti questi nobili doveri cui è tenuto Artù, il re ideale, a causa dello spostamento di significato che li colloca su un piano di generica moralità, fanno quasi dimenticare che esprimono delle norme giuridiche feudali molto concrete.[19]

As the scholar reports, the key elements that marked knighthood were also a set of concrete juridical. Deriving from medieval French, they were: chivalry, loyalty, justice, honour, traditions or customs, faith and charity or generosity. All these moral obligations that Arthur would have had to uphold are associations that in the modern-day cinematic representation of the "knight in shining armour" make perfect sense.

There are however other important symbolisms associated with the Arthurian cycle, as for instance the equality represented by the round table. "One literary function of Arthur's round table was clearly to be an emblem of the equal terms of which all knights, great and humble, mixed at his board once they had, by prowess or service, won their right to a place there."[20]

There was a strong ideological connection between being just and being honourable, and this in turn led to being charitable and pious. Piety is correlated with the above mentioned religious theme, but as Scaglione notices, there were other threads of the same narrative current:

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[19] Köhler, *L'avventura cavalleresca – Ideale e realtà nei poemi della Tavola Rotonda*, p. 18. Translation: The kingdom of Arthur is a model in which exists practically only one type of knighthood that has its place on the same plane with the political claims and of the principles of the most noble of human ethic research. This is because of a sustained moralization of the feudal juridical concepts. *Chevalerie, leauté, justice, honer, usage, foi, coustume, don, largesce*, all these noble obligations that Arthur, the ideal king, was required to uphold, because of a shift of meaning that puts them on a generic moral plane, make it almost forgettable that they represent concrete feudal juridical norms.

[20] Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 30.

> Beyond the literary forms that in shifting ways partook of the common themes, there were three types of "chivalry". There was, first, a Christian knighthood, cantered in northern France and reaching its consciousness in 1050-1100. This was followed by a courtly knighthood and finally a courtly love. The latter two matured in southern France and beyond by 1150-1180. The three phenomena are distinct and partly antagonistic. Nonetheless, they converged and thrived side by side, leaving their imprints on ways of thinking, feeling, speaking, writing, and reading for several centuries.[21]

These types of perceived chivalry were only partially antagonistic; by evolving more or less during the same time-span, many were also the elements that they shared as yet another sign of the continuous interaction between reality and literature. One important theme that characterized knighthood was courtly love; good manners and gallant behavior linked the figure of the knight with that of the gentleman. "The conception that chivalry forged of a link between the winning of approbation by honourable acts and the winning of the heart of a beloved woman also proved to be both powerful and enduring; western culture has never since quite shaken itself free of it."[22] This research of approval on behalf of the beloved woman was also present in the *chansons*, and it was also linked to an erotic dimension. As Keen states,

> Arthurian romance became in consequence a chief vehicle of that teaching which harnesses to the idea of chivalrous adventure the erotic force of sexual love, to act as the motor of endeavor for the knightly hero. It held up countless models to support Geoffrey de Charny's precept, that it is good for a man at arms to be in love *par amours*, because this will teach him to seek higher renown in order to do honor to his lady.[23]

While the *chansons* themselves only give a partial and poetical interpretation of knighthood and the adventurous deeds correlated with it, not many are what contemporary society would indicate as proper treaties on the life

[21] Scaglione*, Knights at court,* p. 6.
[22] Keen, *Chivalry*, pp. 249-250.
[23] Ibid. p. 116.

of knights. The literary works that are considered important testimonies on this topic are the anonymous poem *Ordene de chevalerie* (written presumably around 1220), the *Livre de Chevalerie* written by Geoffroi de Charny (written in the early 1350s) and *Le libre del orde de cauayleria* by Ramon Llull (written between 1279 and 1283). While the first two books shall remain only mentioned, the dissertation will focus on *Le libre del orde de cauayleria* (from now on The *Book of the Order of Chivalry*) in its 1484 translation by William Caxton. Llull's success is also attributed to his life; "in his youth, Ramon delighted in chivalrous accomplishments, wrote songs after the manner of the troubadours, and led, it would seem, a fairly profligate life."[24]

The *Book of the Order of Chivalry* is a codification of knighthood rules, costumes and symbolisms. It follows the journey of a squire as he is riding to court to be knighted; upon encountering a hermit, he inquires on the precepts of a good knight. Among the many things that are required of a knight, the squire is informed that he needs a horse, armour, and a servant of his own. Among the virtues, first and foremost it is paramount for a knight to be a defender of faith: "The offyce of a knyght is to mayntene and deffende the holy feyth catholyque / by the whiche god the fader sente his sone in to the world to take flesshe humayne in the gloryous vyrgyn oure lady saynt Mary."[25]

A heavy emphasis on the importance of religion and faith is noticeable. Even though Christian knighthood was a type of chivalry that developed between 1050 and 1100 in France, Llull lived almost two centuries later in Palma de Mallorca; themes such as religion were still perceived with great intensity in many parts of Medieval Europe.

The *Book of the Order of Chivalry* continues by describing the obligations of a good knight such as the importance to protect his lord, the virtue of upholding justice and the significance of training himself in the art of arms while also not neglecting the virtues that embellish the soul. Courage is also paramount; defending the weak and helpless was an expected obligation. The vilest thing for a knight was dishonour:

[24] Ibid. p. 8.

[25] Caxton, *Book of the Order of Chivalry,* p. 24.

> A knyght ought more to doubte the blame of the people and his dishonoure / than he shold the perylle of dethe/ & ought to gyue gretter passion to his corage than hongre ne thurste / hete ne cold maye gyue to his body.[26]

Llull also gives an explanation of the different weapons and pieces of armour a knight had to have at his disposal and does so while attributing a specific symbolism to each and every piece of equipment. Hence the sword bestowed on him had to have the "semblaunce of the crosse and to vaynquisshe and destroye the enemys of the crosse by the swerd" (pp. 76-77). The spear at his disposal was to "sygnefye trouthe, and the yron or hede of the spere sygnefyeth strengthe" (p. 77). On the other hand the helmet was the "hatte of steel or yron giuen to the knyght to sygnefye shamefastnes" (p. 77) or dread of shame while the chainmail was to "sygnefyeth a castel and fortresse ageynst vyces & deffaultes" (p. 78). The description continues by identifying the entire armamentarium and paraphernalia of the knight. In a similarly symbolical fashion, the spurs become swiftness and diligence, the mace strength and courage, the dagger trust in God, the shield the office of knighthood, the gauntlets thankfulness, the banner a mark of honour and the bridle restraint. Possessing these armaments distinguished the knight from a mere soldier and it was so even before Llull's time, as Keen mentions: "Carolingian texts make it clear that a vassal's possession of 'complete arms' distinguished him from the ordinary freeman who was only expected to possess a spear and a shield."[27]

It is unclear if the mentioned connotations were identified and shared in equal measure by all the knights by the end of the thirteenth century. Nevertheless, considering the education afforded by the nobility and by the most privileged knights, it is probable that some of these symbolisms, even if with a certain degree of variations, were common knowledge amongst them.

One key point in Llull's treaty are the seven virtues a knight has to have, divided between theological and cardinal: Faith, Hope, Charity, Justice, Prudence, Strength or Steadfastness and finally Temperance (pp. 90-108). While

[26] Ibid. p. 62
[27] Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 67.

the virtues are enumerated, the knight is also simultaneously admonished against the seven sins that go against the life style of the good knight. While it is probable that the symbolism behind the knight's equipment might have varied or have even been less known, it is quite possible that Medieval society had a better understanding of the theological and cardinal virtues. Since they were part of a systems of beliefs, all Christians were supposed to have them while knights were supposed to embody them.

An important phase in the life of a knight was the ceremony of being knighted. Before this ceremony, he was still considered a squire. As Llull says, before being proclaimed a knight, the squire had to bathe, to confess his sins, to fast the day and pray the night before the ceremony, attend mass in the morning and then swear the oath of chivalry.

> The squyer ought to knele to fore thaulter / & lyfte vp to god his eyen corporal & spiritual / & his hondes to heuen / & the knyȝt ought to gyrde hym in sygne of Chastite / Iustyce / & of charyte with his swerd / The knyght ought to kysse the squyer / and to gyue to hym a palme / by cause that he be remembryng of that whiche he receyueth and promytteth / and of the grete charge / jn whiche he is obliged & bouden / & of the grete honoure that he receyueth by thordre of chyualry.[28]

Echoes of Christianity are present in the most important ceremony in the life of the knight and many are the symbols grounded in the ceremony: "The bath recalling baptism and signifying cleansing from sin, the white belt signifying chastity that is girded on the new knight's loins, the sword placed in his hand whose sharp edges remind him of his duty to protect the week and uphold justice."[29] Furthermore, the hands lifted towards the heavens, the repetition of the virtues he swears to uphold and the fact that he is bound by his promise, all culminate in the honour of entering the order of the knights. The ritual itself was partially an initiation, and this makes sense considering what has been said about the etymological meaning of the word knight. As Barber states, "the ceremony of

[28] Caxton, *Book of the Order of Chivalry,* p. 74.
[29] Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 64.

knighting was at the basis of both the simplest form of knighthood and the most elaborate form of chivalry. Its roots lay in the initiation ritual, by which primitive societies marked the coming of age of adolescents."[30]

Probably one of the earliest descriptions of the ceremony of knighting is that of Geoffrey the Fair of Anjou, which took place at Rouen in 1128; the source of this account comes from John of Marmoutier.

> The young man took a ritual bath, we are told. He was then dressed in a tunic of cloth of gold and a purple cloak and was led before the King. Gold spurs were affixed to his heels, a shield decorated with painted lions was hung about his neck, and a sword, said to have been forged by Weland, was girded on him by the King. All this is very reminiscent of what Lull and the *Ordene* describe. Thirty young men who had accompanied Geoffrey were made knights at the same time, and to them King Henry distributed horses and arms. A week of feasting and tourneying followed, to celebrate the great occasion.[31]

An important point that the chronicle mentions is the fact that along the Geoffrey of Anjou, other thirty men were dubbed knights. While less common in the earlier stages of this ritual, with time more and more squires will be dubbed knights together at the same time. Keen refers to this as mass promotions:

> Mass promotions suggest something else of importance too. Most earliest references to the ceremony of making a knight that are known concern very great men and their sons. […] No doubt most of those who were made knights at mass promotions were rich young men of good birth who had been nourished at court together with the principal who was to be knighted. Even so, they show how the courtly circle was beginning to widen, and hint towards another way in which the higher and lower echelons of the aristocracy were drawn together through knighthood.[32]

The merger between the different echelons of aristocracy will be important further on in the dissertation; what is certain is that with time the ceremony gradually

[30] Barber, *The knight and chivalry*, p. 25.
[31] Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 65 (from *Chroniques des Comtes d'Anjou*, ed Halphen and Poupardin, 179-80).
[32] Ibid. pp. 69-70.

changed from an initiation and a religious oath and in turn gained the value of a pledge of service a knight would offer to his lord. These knights represented a *corps d'élite* of horsemen but they also had other responsibilities, such as manning the castle or even conducting sieges during wars: "For in return for their services the greater lords had much to offer the knighthood: rewards, whether in forms of arms, money or land; or a hand towards a good marriage; or a measure of security in the enjoyment of their estate."[33] Except from the responsibilities and benefits, the vassalage was also significant for the knight for other reasons; as Scaglione points out,

> the ceremonial dubbing of knights, widely practiced from early in the twelfth century, was more than a ritual: it picturesquely symbolized a set of mental attitudes which related to the practical functions of knighthood, and it also marked the official recognition of a special status for these mounted soldiers. […] After receiving the oath of fidelity the lord gave his liege some token of what was to be the fief, a grant of land in exchange for a formal promise of military and other aid. In later times grants could take the alternative form of moneys (tenure, indenture), so that the lord would not divest himself of land ownership and the vassal would not be tied to a territory.[34]

One last consideration on knighthood regards the different chivalric orders that flourished in the courts of medieval Europe. One of the first such orders that was established was the one of the Templars that would end up fighting the Crusades. Keen admonishes about the tenuous connection between chivalry and crusaders:

> It is natural to see a connection between thee late medieval orders of chivalry and the crusading orders of an earlier period, such as those of the Temple and the Hospital, and the Spanish orders. […] The crusading orders were distinguished by their commitment to Holy War; by the ascetic vows of poverty, obedience and chastity which their members swore; and by their judicial subjection to ecclesiastical authority. In contrast, Holy War was never the sole and seldom the principal commitment of the secular orders and confraternities:

[33] Ibid. p. 29.
[34] Scaglione*, Knights at court,* p. 18.

> those admitted to them were ordinary secular nobleman who continued to lead ordinary secular lives; and, except with regard to their religious observances, these orders were subject to secular and not ecclesiastical authority.[35]

This suggest that different orders upheld different ideals, yet they "assumed the character of great political and economic institutions. Their aim was no longer in the first place the practice of chivalry; that element, as well as their spiritual aspirations, had been more or less effaced by their political and financial importance."[36] Since the ideals of the different orders are not impactful for the purposes of the dissertation and since they have already been extensively analyzed (see Barber), no further attention shall be accorded to them.

1.3 Knight-errant and tournaments

Upon considering the figure of the knight within the literary genre, the most important characteristics are the ones that regard the search for honour and glory; this attitude is crystallized in the representation of the knight-errant or the wandering knight and in his quests. The search for honour is also distinguished by the constant presence of perilous situations. While this is appropriate for literature, an explanation for the wandering knight in a real context may be found in Köhler:

> Per il ceto dei cavalieri fare la guerra non significava solo adempire ad un dovere nei confronti del signore feudale, ma costituiva soprattutto una "ragione di vivere". Perciò la guerra e il combattimento dovevano continuare a dare un senso alla loro vita, anche se ormai la fine dello stato permanente di guerra e il consolidamento di grandi principati territoriali consentivano solo una ridotta possibilità di utilizzazione del crescente numero di piccoli cavalieri. […] Il nuovo significato attribuito alla vita militare si collega all'impresa d'armi cavalleresca del singolo cavaliere errante e le conferisce nell'*aventure* una legittimazione etica.[37]

[35] Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 180.
[36] Huizinga, *The waning of the Middle Ages*, p. 83.
[37] Köhler, *L'avventura cavalleresca,* p. 93. Translation: "For the knight class waging war meant not only fulfilling the obligations towards the feudal lord, but it also represented their "reason to live". Thus, war and combat had to continue giving a sense to their lives, even if the end of a

The adventures, and the wandering in search of the, become a substitute given the absence of wars. The changing times and the shift of the role of the knight also implied a research for the role of the knight within society. This introspective approach is also suggested by Köhler: "*Aventure* e *quest* significano lo sforzo continuo, imposto dalla vita stessa, per ristabilire la relazione divenuta incerta tra individuo e società, nel senso di un "ordo" ontologico, di un accordo tra essere ed essente."[38]

There is a spatial distinction to be made, each with separate symbolic value. When a knight is described within society, there is a realistic aspect that should be considered and that depicts the knight's circumstances. As Auerbach states,

> in Chrétien, and also in the later romance of adventure and shorter verse narrative, the entire portrayal of life within feudal society is tuned to the same note, not only in the twelfth but also in the thirteenth century. In charmingly graceful, delicately painted, and crystalline verses, knightly society offers its own presentment; thousands of little scenes and pictures describe its habits, it views, and its social tone for us. There is a great deal of brilliance, of realistic flavor, of psychological refinement, and also a great deal of humour in these pictures. […] Courtly realism offers a very rich and pungent picture of the life of a single class, a social stratum which remains aloof from other strata of contemporary society.[39]

When the knight sets forth and becomes a knight-errant, the spatial dimension also changes becoming one of fairy-tale and magic. Welsh perceives this as the difficulty for the knight to find his place in society. In his words,

> knights errant mediate between bygone days and the present but still more evidently between here and there. Typically they roam upon the highways or in a

permanent state of war and the consolidation of large territorial principalities consequently implied the reduced usage of an increased number of minor knights. […] The new meaning given to military life is associated with the knightly enterprises of the single errant knight and it confers an ethical legitimation to the *aventure*."

[38] Ibid. p. 113. Translation: *Aventure* and *quest* represent the continuous endeavor, imposed by life itself, to reestablish a relation that had become uncertain between individual society, in the sense of an ontological "ordo", of a concordance between being and existing.

[39] Auerbach, *Mimesis*, p. 132.

> wilderness; their transitional role is played in borderlands, in the space between civilization and open country; the adversaries they engage may be altogether monstrous in romance, or simply far from home in a novel. […] Marginal achievements require a marginal setting, far enough away to find plentiful injustices but near enough to civilization to make the quest meaningful. The idea of justice compels a knight errant to the frontier, and the mind's eye to the origin of society.[40]

This marginal setting, mainly consisting of magical or supernatural elements, conceals a different symbolism. In Auerbach's words,

> The fairy-tale atmosphere is the true element of the courtly romance, which after all is not only interested in portraying external living conditions in the feudal society of the closing years of the twefth century but also and espeacilly in expressing its ideals. And with that we reach the very core of courtly romance, insofar as its particular ethos came to be important in the history of the literary treatment of reality.[41]

One major activity of the knight-errant consisted in participating in tournaments; to understand how they evolved from their earlier stages at the beginning eleventh century until reaching their extravagance by the end of the fifteenth century, a step back is required. The technological advancements of the eleventh century heavily influenced military tactics, this was also because of the stirrup, as Keen explains:

> The eleventh century was a very important period in the military history of the middle ages, and in the history of cavalry tactics especially. The introduction into Europe of the stirrup had since the early eight century enhanced the importance of cavalry. Stirrups gave the mounted warrior a far greater stability in the saddle and an altogether improved control of his horse. It would seem however that it was not until the eleventh century that, as a result of further technical advances, the tactic developed whereby, at a crucial point in battle, the charge of heavy cavalrymen holding their lances in the 'couched' position (tucked firmly under the right armpit and levelled at the enemy) could decide the day. […] The tournament,

[40] Welsh, *Reflections on the Hero as Quixote*, p. 70.
[41] Auerbach, *Mimesis*, p. 133.

> which at this early stage was a sort of general free-for-all for teams of mounted warriors, was a perfect training ground in the new techniques: at the same time, as we have seen, tournaments were great social and courtly gatherings. The risks involved in them were moreover economic as well as physical, since a defeated combatant could be taken prisoner, lose his horse, and have to pay ransom.[42]

The stirrups facilitated the maneuverability for knights and, in turn, also led to favor the use of cavalry over infantry in battle. The idea of the war-like tournaments is also described by Sidney Painter: "The tournament of the twelfth century differed but little from ordinary battles. When a prolonged period of peace, say six months or more, made life dull and knights feel rusty, some rich and chivalrously inclined feudal prince would decide to hold a tourney."[43] A similar consideration is shared by Keen: "Mock war and martial training are virtually inseparable from one another, and no doubt the tournament had a pre-history before that, but it is obscure."[44]

Tournaments meant not only the possibility for training or gaining wealth, but represented also part of the identity of the wandering knight. The principle of identity being reached through the process of wandering is emphasized by Köhler:

> Lo stile di vita cavalleresco-militare nella specifica caratterizzazione del "chevalier errant", senza mezzi, che passa da un torneo all'altro, da una sfida all'altra, si esprime letterariamente in tutte le sue manifestazioni e subordina ad un tipo ideale di uomo le avventure della vita itinerante, che costituiscono in quanto tali il senso stesso della vita del cavaliere.[45]

The *chansons de geste* also offer important testimonies of the role of tournaments. In Keen's words,

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[42] Keen, *Chivalry*, pp. 23-25.
[43] Sidney, *French chivalry – Chivalric Ideals and Practices in Medieval France*, p. 47.
[44] Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 83.
[45] Köhler, *L'avventura cavalleresca,* p. 94. Translation: The knightly and military lifestyle in the specific characterization of the "chevalier errant", with no resources, moving from one tournament to the next, from a challenge to the other, is expressed in literature in all its manifestations. This in turn exposes an ideal type of man to the adventures of the itinerant lifestyle that establish as such the sense of the existence of the knight.

> All the great heroes of Arthurian story were masters of the tourney. The space which the romances devote to accounts of them, which to a modern reader can only seem excessive, testifies to their importance to the knightly way of life. Because of their popularity, and because knights came together from far and wide to attend great tournaments, they were a powerful force towards generalising both the standards and the rituals of European chivalry.[46]

It is however important to be mindful of the constant exchange between literature and reality during this period and the dubious validity of factual history. Nearly all early accounts of tournaments that offer any detail come in fact from literary sources, which are open to the suspicion of having unduly glamourized the picture that they give of them.[47]

By the first quarter of the twelfth century, tournaments were already popular in northern France, but they were however still very different from the ones in seen in the late fifteenth century. A day was set, possibly two or three weeks in advance, and a wide area was chosen, usually between two townships; there were no lists or judges, safety was to be searched in 'refuges' where knights could rest, and prisoners were taken for ransom. It was legitimate to take the spoils of war by the winners. Nonetheless, as tournaments evolved, towards the end of the twelfth century certain regulations had already been implemented. As Barber states,

> any tournament was fought under certain preconditions. There were clear rules as to who was qualified to take part. Knights who had disgraced the order of knighthood were excluded at an early date, although at first only those actually guilty of criminal offences suffered under this proviso. […] He (the knight) must not only be noble, but also be prepared to live up to his status. Such was the theory.[48]

[46] Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 83.
[47] Ibid. p. 85.
[48] Barber, *The knight and chivalry*, p. 165.

On one hand, it is possible to observe how the chivalric idea of honour still remained within the rules of the tournament and how knights considered unworthy would be penalized and not permitted to compete. On the other one, a certain element of decadence of knighthood was already beginning to set.

> For all his involvement with higher ideals, the knight remained first and foremost a warrior; and he acquired his skills in arms in two ways: in real warfare, and in practice in arms off the battlefield. […] In the absence of a central organization with the means to supervise such training, it developed a formal outline of its own: the tournament. Although this brought the most enjoyable elements of war, its pomp, its camaraderie, its delight in the display of physical skill, all tournaments retained a strong element of practice in arms until the status of the knight in war proper began to decline, and they lacked sufficient impetus of their own to survive as anything more than a pageant once their relevant to real war had disappeared.[49]

There are other signs that tournaments were becoming mere pageantries of their former selves; for example knights that partook in tournaments started to use different equipment. The changes in their gear after the thirteenth century is emphasized by Keen:

> Steadily, these sports were becoming more and more divorced from the central activity which they were originally associated, real fighting in real war. Technical improvements and safety precautions, by reducing the danger of tourneying, reduced the resemblance with real battles. Important among these innovations was the tilt, the barrier dividing the lists which made it impossible for the horses of the combatants to collide accidentally; in engagements on foot the barrier across which the combatants struck at each other was a parallel innovation. […] It was for the joust that such items of equipment as the 'frog-mouthed' helm were forged (with his head encased in this, the jouster's vision was effective only when he leant forward in the saddle in the correct position with the couched lance, and his eyes were completely protected when he straightened on impact). It was only in the jousting field that such a defence as this was useful: it had no purpose in

[49] Ibid. p. 136.

> the field of war, where mobility and vision were prerequisites of good protective armour.[50]

Other similar innovations used in tournaments were blunted weapons; using them was described as *à plaisance* while fighting to the death was called *à oultrance*. This distinction still indicated a certain lingering concept of honour for the knights who chose to risk their lives.

Other aspects that changed the conception of tournaments were the facts that it had become an individual fight (when compared to its previous war-like nature) and more expensive and exclusive. The selectiveness is seen with the growing attention given to the lineage or descent of the participants. Simultaneously, as already mentioned, concern with ritual gesture and extravagance was becoming more obsessive. The culmination of the changes in tournaments came with the decision to end them altogether. This happened because of Henri II's accidental death, as Kilgour summarizes:

> It was in the sixteenth century that the lack of skill became most marked. The majority of tournaments were social gatherings, characterized by a few jousts to maintain the old traditions. The fatal accident suffered by Henri II while jousting with the Count of Montgomery, the captain of the Scotch guard, put an end to these contests, since it proved quite conclusively that such games were too perilous for unskilled players. The date of the accident, 1559, marks the end of all tournaments and jousts. A few desultory contests held subsequently were unworthy of the name.[51]

1.4 Knightly identity and social appearances

Social status was very important in the Middle Ages and knights were no exception to this hierarchy. As Scaglione states,

> Medieval and Renaissance man and woman could acquire an identity either by statute (as by the feudal, chivalric notion of nobility through blood and inheritance)

[50] Keen, *Chivalry*, pp. 205-206.
[51] Kilgour, *The decline of chivalry*, p. 39.

> or by education (as in the sociocultural making of the Renaissance courtier), but actions were always to be judged on the basis of membership in a specific social group.[52]

In a society driven by social hierarchy, the initial flourishing of the order of knights and their following decadence also had repercussions in literature. Even after its decay, the moral values of knighthood were still perceived as important and even though society did not act upon them, it still formally mimicked them. As it has been already stated, this is a sign of the importance attributed to the past, but "if the laymen of the twelfth century pictured the classical past in terms of contemporary conditions, that does not mean that they were unaware of the great space of time that divided them from it, or that it was essentially part of history."[53]

Medieval society from a certain point of view becomes a game between reality and representation, just as Domenichelli states:

> Il basso medioevo, così riassumendo, è un periodo terminale in cui la vita sociale delle classi aristocratiche è quasi del tutto un gioco di società. Se la realtà è violenta, crudele, brutale, volgare, la si trasfigura nel sogno cavalleresco, un gioco di vita o, se si vuole, un modello, letterario e di comportamento, comunque vissuto, anche se come recita. […] Eroismo e amore, onore e amore sono dunque i concetti guida di un gioco, di un modello di vita ideale, o di un vero e proprio modello di comportamento, più estetico che non etico, o etico in quanto estetico; una maschera certamente, una rappresentazione che sola, tuttavia, permette la giusta interpretazione sociale, il riconoscimento su cui si fonda la costruzione dell'identità e di cui celebrazioni di corte, feste e tornei rimangono, per secoli, il segno.[54]

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[52] Scaglione, *Knights at court,* p. 2.
[53] Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 110.
[54] Domenichelli, *Cavaliere e gentiluomo,* p. 25. Translation: The Late Middle Ages, thus recapitulating, was a culminating period in which the social life of the aristocratic classes was almost predominantly a game of society. If reality was violent, cruel, savage, vulgar, it was transfigured in the knighthood dream, a game of life or, if we want, a literary and behavioral model, lived even if it was lived as a play. […] Heroism and love, honour and love are thus the guide concepts of a game, of a model of an ideal life, or of a proper behavioral model, more esthetic than ethic, or ethic because esthetic; a mask, certainly, nevertheless a representation that by itself allows for an accurate social interpretation, the acknowledgement on which the construction of identity is based and of which the court festivities, celebrations and tournaments were, for centuries, the identifying symbols.

Accordingly, society attributes more importance to appearances rather than action, and this applies to knights as well. The emerging problem is that knighthood, up until the beginning of the fourteenth century, kept a balance between appearance and action. The appearances were maintained through the ceremonial procedures and formalities such as dubbing and oath-swearing, whereas action took the form of battles and tournaments. This is especially seen in literature as Auerbach points out,

> The world of knightly proving is a world of adventure. It not only contains a practically uninterrupted series of adventures; more specifically, it contains nothing but the requisites of adventure. Nothing is found in it which is not either accessory or preparatory to an adventure.[55]

Through their deeds knights validated their role in society, but after the thirteenth centuries, just as it had happened to tournaments, the knightly adventures also suffered a gradual deterioration. In literature, the ethical and moral knightly values endured because of the strong link that was perceived with the past, marking an interesting distinction between reality and fiction. When knighthood was at its peak, there was a continuous amalgamation between reality and literature; it is only when the chivalric ideal starts to decline that this continuous back and forth starts subsiding.

From a more psychological perspective, Domenichelli quotes Köhler when addressing the problem of the personal identity of the knight-errant. While Köhler sustains that the knight's *Entfremdung*, or alienation, is a constituent of his identity within his own wandering, Domenichelli's view is opposed to this statement:

> Straniero è ovunque il cavaliere nell'erranza che è la sua stessa patria, e il segno dell'appartenenza alla casta, all'*ordo*, sicché l'*Entfermdung*, il suo essere spaesato, non tanto costruisce la sua identità, quanto ne indica con l'esigenza, in qualche modo anche l'impossibilità.[56]

[55] Auerbach, *Mimesis*, p. 136.

[56] Domenichelli, *Cavaliere e gentiluomo,* p. 27. Translation: Everywhere he goes, the knight is a stranger in his wandering, which in turn is his own homeland and even the sign that he belongs

> […]
> Quello che pare sempre vero, quando si giunga a parlare di cavalieri, di gentiluomini, della vera *gentility*, è che il discorso è sempre al passato, un discorso anacronistico, in cui il tempo dei buoni "cavalieri antiqui" è, per l'appunto, sempre un altro.[57]

Even if Domenichelli disagrees with Köhler's concept of identity, to him it is a certainty that knights are always perceived in a past dimension. The attitude of looking towards the past for moral and ethical values is not to be understood just from a literary point of view anymore, like in the case of the *chansons*; it also becomes the representation of reality for knights after the thirteenth century, when they become even more focused on appearance and representation because of their impossibility of action. Huizinga thus sums up the difference of what was written and what was poetical inventive:

> The illusion of society based on chivalry clashed with the reality of things. The chroniclers themselves, in describing the history of their time, tell us far more of covetousness, of cruelty, of cool calculation, of well-understood self-interest, and of diplomatic subtlety, than of chivalry. None the less, all, as a rule, profess to write in honour of chivalry.[58]

1.5 The decay of chivalry

From the beginning of the eleventh century until the end of the fifteenth century there was a shift in the perception of knighthood. The tournaments were initially war-like competitions and subsequently became mere pageantries. In many aspects, knighthood saw its core characteristics crumble and idleness replace the moral values it stood for. An early indication of this change arrives

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to the class, the *ordo*; hence the *Entfermdung*, or his being lost, does not quite build his own identity as much as indicates his impossibility.

[57] Ibid. p. 29. Translation: What seems always true, when speaking about knights, gentlemen and the authentic gentility, is that the argument is always referred to a past, an anachronistic discourse, in which the time of good "antiquated knights" is, quite justly, always another.

[58] Huizinga, *The waning of the Middle Ages*, p. 65.

already towards the end of the twelfth century from the archdeacon Pierre de Blois, a vehement criticiser of chivalry. In one of his letters he states:

> To-day our warriors are reared in luxury. See them leave for the campaign; are their packs filled with iron, with swords and lances? No! but with leathern bottles of wine, with cheeses and spits for roasting. One would suppose that they were going to picnic and not to fight. They carry splendid plated shields which they hope to bring back unused. On their armour and on their saddles are pictured scenes of battle; these are sufficient for them: they have no desire to see more.[59]

Even though at the end of the twelfth century knighthood was still at its peak, an initial resentment towards it had already begun to emerge. Judging from de Blois's words, this spite seems to derive from the fact that knights had stopped maintaining their oaths. One important virtue knights were held to uphold was temperance; from the archdeacon's words it seems that the knights he is speaking of embraced certain aspects of the seven sins that Llull had admonished against, such as sloth and gluttony. The loss of the practice of chivalry, alongside the gradual decay of knightly values, is also quoted by Caxton who in 1484 ends his translation by adding this note:

> Chyualry / not vsed / honoured / ne excercysed / as hit hath ben in auncyent tyme / at whiche tyme the noble actes of the knyghtes of Englond that vsed chyualry were renomed thurgh the vnyuersal world.[60]

One key factor in this change was the fast-paced transformation that war was undergoing during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, as Kilgour explains:

> When chivalry was still a warlike institution, playing a vital part in military affairs, the brave knight could distinguish himself in battle and win personal renown. With the growth of modern war, however, in which individual feats of bravery were replaced by the collective bravery of the group, the knight had to prove his superiority to his fellows in some other fashion. Hence the spread of duelling, but

[59] N/A: Luchaire, *Social France at the Time of Philip Augustus*, translated by Krehbiel (New York, 1912), pp.273-274 as quoted in Kilgour, *The decline of chivalry*, p. 5.
[60] Caxton, *Book of the Order of Chivalry,* p. 121.

> at the expense of the old chivalric spirit. The point of honour rapidly became associated with a bullying and arrogant spirit, in many cases degenerating into a gentlemanly assassination. The single combats of chivalry were ruled, at least, by strict etiquette, with every endeavour being made to secure equality of weapons and fair play in general.[61]

It is important to note the fact that the heroic bravery of the single knight shifted to the bravery of the collective in battles while in tournaments the exact opposite happened. Amongst other things, a common practice was also the use of expendable armies and the use of mercenaries. This gradually gave the knights fewer opportunities to demonstrate their prowess and their skills, which theoretically they were meant to hone constantly. It is probable that this dynamic also discouraged many knights from continuing their previous way of life, hence incurring in the spitefulness of people such as Pierre de Blois. It would seem that chivalry was destined to fall short of its ethical function, as Huizinga emphasizes:

> The conception of chivalry as a sublime form of secular life might be defined as an aesthetic ideal assuming the appearance of an ethical ideal. Heroic fancy and romantic sentiment form its basis. But medieval thought did not permit ideal forms of noble life, independent of religion. For this reason piety and virtue have to be the essence of a knight's life. Chivalry, however, will always fall short of this ethical function.[62]

The most important factor of the changes of medieval society in regards with knighthood are to be found at the end of the thirteenth century. On one hand knighthood became less a question of chivalric values and more a question of social and economic status.

> At the end of the thirteenth century, just at the time when the shift of emphasis away from knighthood toward the hereditary capacity to receive knighthood is becoming clearly and generally apparent, we begin for the first time to come across a new kind of document, the royal or princely letter which confers nobility

[61] Kilgour, *The decline of chivalry*, p. 5.
[62] Huizinga, *The waning of the Middle Ages*, p. 67.

> on one who is not noble by descent. Rare at first, these grants or patents of nobility become gradually more and more common. They ennoble not only the individual concerned, but all his descent in the future. As a rule, they are specific in mentioning, as one of the privileges of noble status, the capacity to take knighthood.[63]

Consequently, this meant that knights had the status and the prestige but not the intention of following the knightly precepts. These pseudo-knights were not part of the higher echelon of nobility, as Keen explains:

> There is an economic factor that needs to be taken into account here as well, and which also helps to render the flamboyance of later medieval chivalry, which to us can seem so bewildering, more intelligible. Within the ranks of the nobility, that sector of society to which this flamboyance made its appeal, disparities of income were widening in the late middle ages. At one extreme the higher nobility, the sort of men whose patronage paid for the extravagance of the *pas d'armes* and of chivalrous feasts, were becoming richer. They were beginning to constitute a kind of super-nobility, as Philip de Mézières perceived when he distinguished apart, among the nobles, the princes of the blood and the great lords and barons as an estate within an estate, separated from what he called the 'common run' of nobles, knights, esquires and gentlemen.[64]

By the beginning of the fourteenth century it had become increasingly harder for the 'common run' of nobility to keep their status and wealth; the efforts to maintain a certain lifestyle were also hindered by the higher costs of labor and the costs of war. The knight, being part of the lesser nobility, had to face these dynamics; finding his role in society was becoming increasingly harder as he could not rely anymore on being a knight-errant considering the exclusivity of the tournaments.

Furthermore, at the end of the fifteenth century the advances in military technology and the changes in tactics rendered the knights close to obsolete in the battlefield. The proportions of the armies changed considerably, employing

[63] Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 145.
[64] Ibid. p. 217.

more archers, handgunners and pikemen; because of coordinated drills, pikemen were very effective against cavalry.

While other scholars consider these elements as sign of decadence, Keen perceives them as a shift in the appearance of knighthood:

> Late medieval chivalry was exhibitionist and extravagant – often to the point of vulgarity – in its ornate and imitative tendencies, and that has given it a bad name. From an aesthetic point of view perhaps this bad name is in part deserved, but it is not a sign of decadence. This was an age in which ritual still played a vital part in social life, was indeed still the way in which men registered some of their most important social obligations to one another.[65]
>
> The opulent ceremonial and the colorful robes and insignia of the secular chivalric orders are by no means the whole basis of the criticism of late medieval chivalry, that its exaggerated concern with outward forms is a symptom of loss of contact with serious values. […] For it is not necessary to regard them as signs of frivolity: one can equally well look on them as natural by-products of the rise of heraldic science, and of chivalrous learning. If the latter be nearer the truth, formalizing and imitative tendencies need no longer be interpreted as sings of loss of contact with ideals, but rather as sings of the growing consciousness of the richness of chivalry's secular tradition.[66]

Notwithstanding the position on either decay or shift of appearance, it is clear that by the end of the fifteenth century the role of the knight in society had changed. To further appreciate this drastic shift, the last part of the dissertation will briefly explore the life of William Marshal, a real knight that lived at the end of the twelfth century.

1.6 A historically real knight

The last subchapter, in an intent to verify what has been said thus far regarding knighthood, will present parts of the life of William Marshal, born in 1146 or 1147 and died in 1219, knight of modest descent who rose to title of first

[65] Ibid. p. 216.
[66] Ibid. pp. 200-201.

Earl of Pembroke. It will be based on Sidney Painter's work who analyzed the biography of Marshal's life. The importance of this chronicle is also mentioned by Barber:

> The biography of William Marshal, written with the help of his squire by a jongleur at the end of Marshal's long and brilliant career, is the only survivor of a possibly extensive number of poems on current events, most of which were composed as news items to be recited by travelling minstrels on their rounds.[67]

William Marshal, while being the son of a minor baron, succeeded in gaining a very important social status. The *Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal*, written in the Anglo-Norman language, was commissioned to a nameless trouvère by Marshal's son; the manuscript was published by Paul Meyer in three volumes from 1891 to 1901. While the prestige he acquired in the latter part of his life is undoubtable, the subchapter will be focusing on Marshal's earlier days and on how he became a knight.

During the civil war of succession between Empress Matilda and King Stephen, John fitz Gilbert, known also as John Marshal, gave up his fourth son, William Marshal, as collateral to King Stephen who was besieging Newbury Castle in 1152. Since John Marshal was holding the castle in name of Matilda and understood the dire situation he was in, not having enough men to defend the post nor enough provisions, he asked for a truce offering his son as a guarantee. However, John Marshal had no intention to honour the agreement; he fortified the post and gambled on the gentle nature of King Stephen not to kill his son. Stephen in fact did not have the heart to kill the five or six year old William Marshal; thus the young boy became the King's guest for a couple of months and even played "knights" with him, as the chronicle reports. It is mere speculation to say if this episode actually occurred or if it was merely an invention of the trouvère. What is certain is that after peace was established, William Marshal was returned to his family unharmed:

[67] Barber, *The knight and chivalry*, p. 136.

> Meanwhile the boy was growing rapidly. Within a few years the Marshal family would be forced to consider his future. If the romances of the time are to be believe, it was customary for a baron of any importance to entrust his sons' education to some friendly lord. John Marshal decided to send William to his cousin, lord of Tancarville and hereditary chamberlain of Normandy. […] Being himself (Tancarville) a well known knight and a frequenter of tourneys, he was well fitted to supervise the military education of his young kinsman and to give him a good start on his chivalric career.[68]

Many of the prerequisites that have been mentioned thus far are well visible in the life of William Marshal; while being merely the son of a minor baron, he however has the rite of blood. Furthermore, at the age of thirteen he started to serve Tancarville as a squire, enabling him to learn first-hand the lifestyle of a knight. As stated, the period of apprenticeship was paramount; not only was the squire forced to master the use of the sword, lance and shield but he also had to tend to his lord's horse, clean and polish the arms and armour and also physically harden his body. As Painter notes,

> While the chain mail of twelfth century was far lighter and less cumbersome than the plate armor of later times, the mere wearing of it required considerable physical strength. To be able, as every squire must, to leap fully armed into the saddle without touching the stirrup, was a fear which must have required long and rigorous training.[69]

William Marshal spent eight years as a squire and at the age of twenty-one he was quite possibly impatient to demonstrate his worth as a knight. In the summer of 1167, during the war between Henri II and Louis VII of France, the constable of Normandy and the lord of Tancarville was sent on behalf of Henri II at the battle of Drincourt. Tancarville decided that it was time to see William Marshal's worth as and proceeded to knighting him and bringing him along:

> William's induction into the order of chivalry was attended by little of the ceremony usually associated with eh dubbin of a knight. Dressed in a new mantle, the young

[68] Painter, *William Marshal Knight-Errant, Baron, and Regent of England*, pp. 16-17.
[69] Ibid. p. 17.

> man stood before the chamberlain, who girt him with a sword, the principle emblem of knighthood, and gave him the ceremonial blow.[70]

Other than the mantle and the girting, there is no mention of further formalities as seen with Llull's work. Probably, given the lack of time and the incoming war, the ritualistic element was considered less important; there remained only the formality of being dubbed knight. Alongside the Earl of Essex, the armies defended Drincourt and William gave show of his prowess in battle. He upheld the important virtues of a true knight such as courage and strength but he had not considered the more financial aspect of war-waging.

> William had fought to save the town rather than to make prisoners who could pay him rich ransoms. With this in mind the earl of Essex addressed the young knight – "Marshal, give me a gift, a crupper or an old horse collar." "But I have never possessed one in all my life." "Marshal, what are you saying? Assuredly you had forty or sixty today." The hardened warrior was gently reminding the novice that war was a business as well as a path to fame.[71] [Hist. 827-1162]

This exchange is important to understand not only the moral and ethical implications in the life of a knight, but also the importance of the financial aspect that came with it. Making a profit is not something seen very often or at all in literature, almost as if it would be beneath the valiant figure of a knight; the monetary aspect of war marked however a crucial facet in real life.

Once lord Tancarville thought that Marshal had learned the lesson, upon hearing about a tournament that was going to be held near Le Mans (knights of Anjou, Maine, Poitou, and Brittany would oppose those of France, England and Normandy) he decided to give William a horse and let him participate in it. With this tournament William Marshal acquired his fame and also, mindful of what he had been taught, he proceeded to capturing knights and thus also gained a conspicuous part of wealth:

[70] Ibid. p. 20.
[71] Ibid. p. 22.

> This tourney was not to be one of those mild affairs in which everything was arranged beforehand even to the price of ransoms, but a contest in which the vanquished would lose all they possessed. […] Each of the captured knights was forced to surrender all his equipment. William gained war horses, palfreys, arms, and armor for his own use, roncins for his servants, and sumpter horses for his baggage. His first tournament had been highly profitable.[72]

Philippe de Navarre, as Painter reports, in 1220 similarly sustained the importance for the knight to hone his skill and not fall prey to vices:

> In his youth a man should use without laziness or delay, his prowess, his valor, and the vigor of his body for the honor and profit of himself and his dependents; for he who passes his youth without exploit may have cause for great shame and grief. The young nobleman, knight, or man-at-arms should work to acquire honor, to be renowned for valor, and to have temporal possessions, riches, and heritages on which he can live honorably.[73]

Considering what has been said about the subsequent period of decadence of knighthood and analyzing this initial materialistic approach to life, it is understandable how this attachment to earthly possessions clashed with some of the intended principles of the figure of the knight.

After the wealth gained with the tournament William Marshal tries to settle down in England but that lifestyle was not meant for him; he participates in the campaign in Poitou where he is given first-hand a taste of the true hardship in the life of a warrior since he is imprisoned. There he succeeds in gaining the favor of Eleanor of Aquitaine leading to being set free. The book goes on to describe the life of William Marshal and his many exploits, how during 1170 and 1173 he instructed his master, the young king Henry Plantagenet, in the ways of chivalry and how he was not only a valiant bodyguard but also a good strategist.

Considering the life of William Marshal as the archetype of every other knight would not be advised given the fact that his fortune was much greater than any other common soldier. Nonetheless in his earlier days he was similar to many

[72] Ibid. pp. 23-24.
[73] Novare, *Les Quatre Âges de l'homme*, ed M. de Fréville (Paris, 1888), 38-9 as quoted in Painter, *William Marshal,* p. 30.

other young knights and he stood for such chivalrous virtues as courage, loyalty and honour. He spent his life between the battlefield and the medieval courts. “The courtly element in the twelfth-century image of knighthood is an aspect that requires emphasis. In a broad sense *courtoise* implies manners fitting to a court, and it is striking how much William the Marshal’s world is a world of the court as well as of the camp.”[74] Accordingly the aspect of courtly love was present throughout Marshal’s life span, just as Painter points out:

> God and Woman, the church and the troubadour cult of Courtly Love, were beginning to soften and polish the manners of the feudal aristocracy. For a long time the church had demanded a knight to be pious, now ladies were insisting that he be courteous. If a squire hoped to be acceptable to such devotees of the new movement as Eleanor of Aquitaine and her daughter, Marie of Champagne, he must learn some more gentle art that that of smiting mighty blows. If he could not write songs, he could at least learn to sing them. Finally the professional creators and distributors of the literature witch embodied these new ideas, the trouvères and jongleurs, were formulating another knightly virtue – generosity.[75]

Historically real life influenced literature, or at least a form of literature that was delivered primarily in an oral fashion, and in turn literature influenced aspects and customs of the daily life of a knight. This continuous interaction will be a chore theme that will be further examined within the figures of Falstaff and of Don Quixote.

[74] Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 21.
[75] Painter, *William Marshal,* pp. 17-18.

Chapter Two: The figure of the hero and the anti-hero

This second chapter will verge on the heroic protagonist in literature. It will therefore compare the common themes and traits of the hero with what has been said thus far regarding the knight since he represents, in his own way, the embodiment of what a hero is supposed to be. The analysis will also take into considerations the traits of his counterpart, the anti-hero. These characteristics will then be used to examine the figures of Falstaff and Don Quixote.

There are several in-depth studies on the figure of the hero, with particular emphasis on the epic genre, that will be only mentioned in this chapter. An example is Joseph Campbell's *The hero with a thousand faces*: while providing a brilliant analysis of the structure of mythological narrative, it extends to a wider geographical dimension than the one discussed in this dissertation. On the other hand, Dean Miller's *The epic hero*, who also considers some of Campbell's theories as well as combining them with Propp's morphology of folk tales, will be quoted because it also provides examples of the knightly archetypes.

Given the antiquity of the epic genre, it is important to underline the initial orality of the later texts:

> Songs have become texts, in more or less the following stages:(a) a performance, which may be casually recorded (that is, recalled in whole or in part) by the auditors; (b) the creation and reception of a firm or standard text, an "edited" version of an originally oral version of the song/epic; (c) the identification and collection of surviving texts, the reconstruction of manuscripts, and other technical operations involved in the reception of text. […] Problems of translation then arise between newer and older forms.[76]

The folkloristic aspect is equally important when discussing the epic genre, as shown in Vladimir Propp's studies. Upon considering the coming-of-age and the trials of valor elements of the future hero, it is evident that these *topoi* are also present in knight-related literature, although more accentuated in the ceremony of dubbing, "the initiation ritual, by which primitive societies marked the coming

[76] Miller, *The epic hero*, p. 27.

of age of adolescents."[77] In regards to the narrative scheme of the trials, Miller explains:

> Here the hero is required to "go and find" something as an essential part of his growth into and self-identification within the "matured" state of herohood. Some association with the process of the rite de passage seems clear enough: the hero follows that sequence of separation, testing, and reintegration common to those initiatory rites that mark the passage between ascriptive childhood or adolescence and full male adulthood.[78]

To better understand what is meant by hero, English writer Thomas Carlyle explains how the "Universal History" was made possible because it followed the history of "Great Men" and further explains how these men became the heroes of their time; he then proceeds to categorise them in different types based on the historical period they lived in and what they represented. While his reasoning takes into consideration historical figures as well as literary ones, Carlyle states that the hero "is the living light-fountain, which it is good and pleasant to be near"[79]. In this analogy the hero, either a real man or a fictional character, becomes "the light which enlightens, which has enlightened the darkness of the world; and this not as kindled lamp only, but rather as a natural luminary".[80] The fact that his mere presence is a positive influence will be an import factor in the analysis of the hero.

2.1 The hero

To better understand the figure of the hero, this dissertation will take into account Bowra's and Miller's works on heroic and epic poetry. This will enable the cross-referencing of the characteristics of the hero with those of the knight.

[77] Barber, *The knight and chivalry*, p. 25.
[78] Miller, *The epic hero*, p. 166.
[79] Carlyle, *On Heroes and Hero Worship,* p. 239.
[80] Ibid. p. 239.

> The first concern of heroic poetry is to tell of action, and this affects its character both negatively and positively. […] If it has a central principle it is that the great man must pass through an ordeal to prove his worth and this is almost necessarily some kind of violent action, which not only demands courage, endurance, and enterprise, but, since it involves the risk of life, makes him show to what lengths he is prepared to go in pursuit of honor. For this reason heroic poetry may be concerned with any action in which a man stakes his life on his ideal of what he ought to be. The most obvious field for such action is battle, and with battle much heroic poetry deals.[81]

If one of the most important characteristics of heroic poetry is the focus on action and battle, the "ordeal" creates the narrative ploy to allow the hero to show his prowess. The words used by Bowra such as courage, endurance and enterprise have also been used to describe the traits a knight was suppose to have in Lull's *The book of the Order of Chivalry*. Lull also quotes the pursuit of honor and the importance for the knight of being prepared to stake his life on this ideals. Facing the "perylle of dethe", he should "gyue gretter passion to his corage than hongre ne thurste"[82]. The generic term *hero* may applied to many literary protagonists, and one of them is undoubtedly the knight.

In his analysis, however, Bowra refers more to the mythical dimension of heroes. There is a dividing point between myth and epic, although it is difficult to distinguish it, and concerns mainly the intervention of divine powers, as Miller explains:

> If there is to be an absolute line drawn between the "hero in myth" and the "epic hero"(a line that may very well be forced), it will usually separate that area where the gods and their overarching "cosmic history" operate, and that zone in which man ostensibly stands alone in his unique story, or history, responsible for it and for himself. Definitions of myth, as they stress the grand themes emplaced there, tie the mythic hero in special ways to these divine forces, plans, and confrontations. Strictly speaking this hero is a representative, even a pawn, of the

[81] Bowra, *Heroic Poetry*, p. 48.
[82] Caxton, *Book of the Order of Chivalry,* p. 62.

> vast inhuman potencies, and his destiny is constrained (and may be formed) by the whim of divine cosmogones and supernatural arbiters.[83]

The shift features a larger emphasis on the reactive actions of the hero when faced with his circumstances rather than his submissiveness to divine intervention. Consequently, the epic genre seems to depict a more historical reality: "The historical label seems to refer in some way to a narrative structure describing, or at least using as a model, real and human actors and their actions."[84] The actions narrated in the epic genre loosely draw on the bounds of historical reality because it also preserves supernatural elements to some extent:

> At the same time, however, the word "historical" need not necessarily imply a strict transcription or organized transmission of "real" events: it may simply be set in sharp contrast to the figures and forces of myth. […] The role of the supernatural is reduced here, though never completely eliminated, and the protagonist-hero can actually be placed in a more or less identifiable time frame.[85]

Furthermore, rather than focusing on the bulk of the army and the dynamics of war, in heroic poetry the dimension of the narration shifts onto the individual and follows him along his hardships and misadventures. A classic example of heroic poetry that follows this rule is the *Iliad,* although the myth element is still present; nevertheless, the war in the *Iliad* serves to create the framework for the action in which the main characters, or heroes, undergo their trials and show their prowess or suffer their fate. Knight-related literature proceeds according to a similar style, but exhibits the "real and human actors and their actions" that Miller mentions. Bowra further analyzes this action:

> In the poetry of heroic action leading parts are assigned to men of superior gifts, who are presented and accepted as being greater than other man. Though much of their interest lies in what happens to them and in the adventures through which they pass, an equal interest lies in their characters and personalities. Their stories are more absorbing because they themselves are what they are. […] Heroes

[83] Miller, *The epic hero*, p. 31.
[84] Ibid. p. 34.
[85] Ibid. pp. 34-35.

> awake not only interest in their doings but admiration and even awe for themselves. Since heroic poetry treats of action and appeals to the love of prowess, its chief figures are men who display prowess to a high degree because their gifts are of a very special order.[86]

These heroes are the "men of superior gifts" that Carlyle had mentioned and the so-called "light-fountain" poetically represents the way that heroes act as a beacon for others. In the *chansons de geste* king Arthur represented the paragon of these virtues and was depicted as that same beacon of light; his knights, by extension and affinity, are bestowed with the same traits. In the Middle Ages, the epic genre starts to intertwine with the figure of the knight, as Miller's explains,

> the production of knightly hero-tales (if not, in the strict sense, of what we can precisely call heroic epic) continues throughout the medieval period and follows the general pattern of creating variations on traditionally received and identified narratives and texts, especially in the Arthurian tradition.[87]

The perception of a hierarchical structure, as well as the increasing importance attributed to loyalty and chivalry, also creates a difference in the epic genre with a new set of symbolic representations.

> These later, newly devised or revised knight tales display no smoothly monolithic figure, but instead emphasize one or a number of modular if not ideal characteristics: foolish impetuosity, amorousness, naiveté, even stupidity, and the awkward or perverse figure of the antihero is now possible, for reasons that need more exploration. […] Something more on the subject of chivalry seems to be called for. This idea of chivalry is complexly bound up with our heroic subject, and yet to some degree escapes the limits of the heroic entirely, to gain an attitudinal life of its own, one showing often contradictory effluxes of its different components.[88]

[86] Bowra, *Heroic Poetry*, p. 91.
[87] Miller, *The epic hero*, p. 12.
[88] Ibid. p. 12.

Two important spheres that start to permeate this new genre are the political and religious one. On one hand, "religion-based heroism, self-sacrifice and martyrdom, and the recovery of certain scriptural images of God-justified 'heroic' violence, are part of this historical shift."[89] On the other, the hierarchical structure also lead to an evolution of the hero as a champion, as Miller analyses it:

> The first role of the hero as champion is to stand for the king; he is the hero fastened into the structure of kingship, usually placed between the sovereign and external threat, or sometimes taking the place of the king in certain legal and quasi-legal proceedings. The king's champion operates within that Mitraic valence of monarchy (sovereignty) in which kingly power can in fact be delegated. In both real and symbolic terms the champion's heroic potency is converted into an instrumentality not under his own control, and therefore he is made vulnerable in certain specific ways. This vulnerability is taken up as the core theme of certain epic treatments, and the unfortunate results for the hero-champion are exemplified in the fate of Roland and Olivier in the Chanson de Roland.[90]

In myth, the prowess of the hero is very important but usually is a sign of either divine intervention, being favored by a deity or a number of supernatural elements. In knight-related literature, although prowess may be connected with a heavenly predilection, it is usually the sign of hard training. In Barber's words, the knight "acquired his skills in arms in two ways: in real warfare, and in practice in arms off the battlefield."[91] The importance of the knight's skill with weapons is also quoted by Miller:

> The hero is always, and must be, a prodigy at weapon play, but his combats and confrontations tend signally to emphasize the trial of strength (especially with the sword in Europe, Eurasia, and the Near East) or the trial of skill or accuracy (meaning, in the same area, the thrown spear or possibly the drawn bow).The hero-knight of the medieval canon, horsed and armored, can combine the two in his skillful manipulation of the lance from the saddle.[92]

[89] Ibid. p. 15.
[90] Ibid. p. 182.
[91] Barber, *The knight and chivalry*, p. 136.
[92] Miller, *The epic hero*, pp. 206-207.

Furthermore, it is through action and adversity that heroes forge their personal code: “Their characteristics, behind the multiplicity of individual types, are fairly constant: they live by a fierce personal code, they are unyielding in the face of adversity; moderation is not their forte, but rather boldness and even overboldness. Heroes are defiantly committed to honour and pride.”[93] Hence they are distinguished because of the courage they have when faced with peril: “Recognition of the heroic attributes therefore takes pride of place over the more particularized and perhaps abstract bit of data that happens to be the heroic appellation: ‘fame’ replaces ‘name’ or nearly so.”[94]

These traits constitute the core of the external dimension of the hero, but other than the effects of his presence on others, it would be also important to understand the motive behind them. As Bowra states, “heroism for its own sake is perhaps exceptional. More commonly heroes devote their talents to some concrete cause which provides scope for action and an end to which they can direct their efforts.”[95] The same may be said about knights: chivalry for chivalry’s sake was perhaps exceptional. It is just possible to speculate on the concrete causes behind a knight’s actions: they may have been financial as in the case of the first war-like tournaments, amorous as for the courtly love genre or even others. Nevertheless, there exists an internal dimension which is linked to the moral nature of the hero and, as Brombert notes, this has been interpreted differently by scholars:

> Diversity of opinion and contradictions characterize most attempts at delineating the “moral” nature of the hero. Friedrich Schiller believed that the hero embodies an ideal of moral perfection and ennoblement (“Veredlung”). Thomas Carlyle saw heroes as spiritual model guiding humanity, and thus deserving of “hero worship”. And Joseph Campbell, in our own day, describes the thousand-faced hero as capable of “self-achieved submission”, and willing to five up life for something larger than himself.
>
> But there are less-exalted views. For Johan Huizinga, the hero was only a superior example of *homo ludens*, projecting in his endeavors the human impulse to excel in

[93] Brombert, *In praise of antiheroes*, p. 3.
[94] Miller, *The epic hero*, p. 198.
[95] Brombert, *In praise of antiheroes*, p.105.

> competition, and illustrating the "playfully" passionate desire to master the self, to face hurdles and tests, and to be victorious.[96]

The Renaissance provides instances where the heroic traits that have been quoted previously are almost overturned:

> and of course it was what we have to call a Renaissance mentality that not only produced the greatest satire on heroic chivalry, in the form of Cervantes' pathetic Don, but also, in Shakespeare, a towering verbal gift that imprinted itself on the very definitional matrix describing dramatic heroism.[97]

While this is not the anti-hero that will be explained in the following subchapter, the dissertation shall use the previous passages as a basis to further explore the figures of Don Quixote and Falstaff.

2.2 The anti-hero

As opposed to how extensively the figure and traits of the hero have been explored, much less attention has been given to the character of the anti-hero. It has been analyzed in regards to a more recent literature; its traces can be found some traces in literature of the middle of the 1800's, although the genre has developed especially in the twentieth century. Since the perception of the anti-hero was influenced by the characteristics of the hero taken into consideration, the evolution of the latter also conditioned the former; the two figures must be considered side by side.

Even if the suffix *anti-* would imply to consider the opposite traits of what has been said about the hero, that is hardly the case. The exact opposite of the word hero is the so-called "villain", hence the antagonist, whereas the anti-hero still remains a protagonist in his literary world with presumably negative qualities. The anti-hero could still be a "man of superior gifts" and he would still have to

[96] Ibid. p. 4.
[97] Miller, *The epic hero*, pp. 15-16.

face different vicissitudes, but he would not necessarily be represented as that "light-fountain" that Carlyle quotes or gain the appreciation of others.

It is only with the 1999 seventh edition of Abrams' *A Glossary of Literary Terms* that the lemma anti-hero is added to this dictionary; previous iterations of the glossary did not present it. The voice anti-hero is here defined as "the chief person in a modern novel or play whose character is widely discrepant from that which we associate with the traditional protagonist or hero of a serious literary work. Instead of manifesting largeness, dignity, power, or heroism, the antihero is petty, ignominious, passive, ineffectual, or dishonest."[98] Generosity, dignity and heroism are all traits that had been also mentioned by Köhler when describing Arthur, the epitome of knighthood.

Antiheroic protagonists are usually referenced to the period of dissolution after the Second World War; main exponents of this period are found in literary works such as Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita*(1955), Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* (1961) and especially in Samuel's Beckett's dramas and *Trilogy*. However, non-heroic protagonists have also been used in other genres, such as the picaresque novel. There seems to be a distinction between the anti-hero as analyzed within the post Second World War literature and literary characters that have a non-heroic behavior. This may be because of the anachronistic perception of the anti-hero when confronting literature prior to the twentieth century. Nevertheless, one of the first instances in which the word was used to describe in a literary work the characteristics found within Abram's glossary was in 1864. The protagonist of Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Notes from the underground* says that "a novel needs a hero, and here there are purposely collected all the features for an anti-hero, and, in the first place, all this will produce a most unpleasant impression, because we've all grown unaccustomed to life, we're all lame, each of us more or less."[99] This precocious anti-hero, almost a century ahead of the dissolution period and the unpleasant impression he leaves on others, confirms the antithesis on

[98] Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms, p. 11.*
[99] Dostoevsky, *Notes from the underground*, p. 112.

Carlyle's definition of hero: the "light-fountain, which it is good and pleasant to be near"[100] becomes unpleasant and even repugnant.

An important correlation with the figure of the antihero is the paradox and the deliberateness creating such a character. As Brombert points out quoting the very same passage from *Notes from the underground*, "the last pages of Dostoevsky's narrative explicitly associate the word 'antihero' with the notion of paradox. The deliberate subversion of the literary model is associated with the voice from the underground challenging accepted opinions."[101] This is followed by the distinction between unheroic characters and anti-heroes:

> The lines of demarcation separating the heroic from the unheroic have become blurred. Raymond Giraud, some forty years ago, justly observed that the "unheroic heroes" of Stendhal, Balzac, and Flaubert were the prototypes of heroes of inaction such as Proust's Swann and Joyce's Leopold Bloom. Ninetieth- and twentieth- century literature is moreover crowded with weak, ineffectual, pale, humiliated, self-doubting, inept, occasionally abject characters – often afflicted with self-conscious and paralyzing irony, yet at times capable of unexpected resilience and fortitude. Such characters do not conform to traditional models of heroic figures; they even stand in opposition to them. But there can be great strength in that opposition. Implicitly or explicitly, they cast doubt on values that have been taken for granted, or were assumed to be unshakable.[102]

Despite the negative characteristics an anti-hero may poses, Brombert points out the importance of their resilience. The anti-hero is not destined to triumph like the hero; he is more akin to the victim than the protagonist, and yet his endurance makes him become the main character.

In 1962 Rosette Lamont wrote about a conversation she had with Ionesco and what the French-Romanian writer had explained about the so-called heroes of his plays. Lamont observes the metamorphosis the characters undergo and what in turn it implied for present-day society:

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[100] Carlyle, *On Heroes and Hero Worship,* p. 239.
[101] Brombert, *In praise of antiheroes*, p. 1.
[102] Ibid. p. 2.

> If we examine the works of contemporary writers, we are struck with the shift which has occurred in the image of the hero. The traditional concept no longer applies to our times. In the past the hero was the shining example of society. Whether he was myth turned to reality, or reality become myth, he was "the man or woman who has been able to battle past his personal and local historical limitations to the generally valid, normally human forces." (Joseph Campbell, The Hero with a Thousand Faces) As spiritual leader, warrior, saint, intellectual seeker after truth, the hero of society was to guide humanity towards values shared by all, but best expressed in one. But in an era in which the very existence of humanity is threatened with destruction, the hero cannot, indeed must not, represent his society. The unusual man or woman, the person with greater insight and vital forces, becomes a rebel or a monster.[103]

This refers to the period of dissolution after the Second World War as previously mentioned and emphasizes the need for a hero that did not in fact represent society. There was no need for a pariah of knightly virtues such as King Arthur because the traditional values were felt as unreliable. In Neimeh's words,

> Modern anti-heroism in the early twentieth century is a response to the uncertainties of people about traditional values; it is a response to the insignificance of human beings in modernity and their drab existence; it is a feature of modernism and its zeitgeist. With rapidly changing times and cultural upheavals, the human race questioned moral values. Coherent meaning was lost, and essences were devalued within an atmosphere of cultural decline. Hence, people tried to find meaning in a confusing life, to construct a pattern, or to impose some order on a world they could neither control nor understand.[104]

The anti-hero, with his resilience, becomes a character that opposes the "atmosphere of cultural decline" that Neimeh infers; he may not succeed, in fact in most cases he is destined to fail, but the fortitude he represents is crucial. Two decisive characteristics to understand the figure of the antihero are humour and irony: "The humour with which many anti-heroes are treated may have provided the comic endurance necessary for dealing with changing times."[105] Brombert

[103] Lamont, "*The hero in spite of himself"*, p. 73.
[104] Neimneh, "*The Anti-Hero in Modernist Fiction: From Irony to Cultural Renewal"*, p. 75.
[105] Ibid. p. 88.

also speaks about models that are no longer relevant and a paradoxical nostalgia for heroic values and concludes:

> The ironic memory of the absent or unattainable model acts as a steady reminder and as an incentive. The very notion of the "antihero" depends on such a memory. Herbert Lindenberger put it well when he observed that the antihero is possible only in a tradition "that has already represented real heroes". The reason is that such a memory acts as more than a foil; it suggests a yearning, perhaps even a quest. In an age of skepticism and dwindling faith, an age marked by the pervasive awareness of loss and disarray, the deliberate subversion of the heroic tradition may betray an urge to salvage or reinvent meaning.[106]

For the purpose of this dissertation, Falstaff and Don Quixote shall not be identified with the word anti-hero. This is due to the fact that not only this term is anachronistic, but it would also be improper considering the characters themselves. As such, Falstaff will be identified as "unheroic" or an "unheroic knight" mainly because of his sense of self-preservation and lack of heroism. On the other hand, Don Quixote will be referred to as a "hero upside-down"; this expression derives from an article by J. M. Sobré and implies that while the knight of the Sad Countenance is in fact heroic, the effect is reversed. This terminology was chosen out of commodity because it distinguishes more clearly between the two protagonists; further explanations shall be provided in the third chapter upon cross-referencing what has been said thus far with Falstaff and Don Quixote.

2.3 The picaresque character

The picaresque character derives from a background of folkloristic stories, as Molho points out:

> (El pícaro) en su primera encarnación emerge, por supuesto, de un fondo de historietas populares. Pero, a partir del momento en que Lázaro de Tormes dice "yo," es decir, en el momento mismo en que nace a la literatura, cesa de pertenecer al folklore: rompiendo con su anterior existencia de personaje de

[106] Brombert, *In praise of antiheroes*, pp. 5-6.

> chascarrillo, se convierte en el portavoz de una forma de pensar seria que se encarna en él, que estalla en sus palabras y gestos burlones, aun siendo los mismos de la marioneta folklórica de antaño.[107]

This encounter between modern and folklore elements is further explained by Cesáreo Bandera as he takes into account Mikhail Bakhtin:

> Bakhtin knew, of course, the significant formal differences between the modern novel and the old folkloric forms. Such formal differences were important to him because they were expressions of radically different socioeconomic conditions. Nevertheless, in his view, the primitive intentions and ultimate social purposes that animated the old forms continued to be valid with the new forms of the novel. There is no fundamental incompatibility between the old and the new. There is, indeed, something of a suprahistorical affinity between the modern novelist and the old folkloric characters, "the rogue, the clown, and the fool," typically victimized, marginalized characters, precisely because the modern novelist also places himself or herself outside the epic discourse, the discourse or "monoglossia" of the dominant power.[108]

Three are the main picaresque novels that defined the genre and that are almost contemporary of Cervantes. They mark an important passage and a shift in genre as Peter Dunn explains:

> The picaresque novel develops, in part, as an alternative viewpoint, a vision of the world from below by a narrator unlike the reader. Works such as the anonymous *Lazarillo de Tormes* (1554), Mateo Alemán's *Guzmán de Alfarache* (1599, 1604), and Francisco de Quevedo's *El Buscón* (1626) grant a momentary release from a restrictive atmosphere and from literary prescriptions. The

[107] Molho, *Introducción al pensamiento picaresco*, p. 11. Translation: The picaro character emerges initially from a background of popular tales. But from the moment when Lázaro de Tormes says "I," that is to say, from the very moment he is born to literature, he ceases to belong to folklore: breaking away from his earlier existence as a joke character, he becomes the spokesman for a serious mode of thinking that becomes embodied in him and burst in his words and joking gestures, even though they are still those of the old folkloric puppet.
[108] Bandera, *The Humble Story of Don Quixote – Reflections on the Birth of the Modern Novel*, p. 72.

> protagonists err, but their creators protect themselves by providing social justice for the offender and moral justification for the censor.[109]

The description of the picaresque genre presents a similar attitude to the novels that deal with antiheroic protagonists as mentioned previously; they both strive to go against social expectation. An important difference is however represented by the fact that the former is forced to provide social justice for its protagonists, whereas the latter aims to emphasize this social nonconformity.

The pícaros are particular types of characters who present traits of the unheroic protagonists: "they were part adventurer, part tramp, part jack-of-all-trades, part confidence tricksters. Their very versatility makes it impossible for us to find one word to fit them in their various guised and at the diverse stages of their careers."[110] Their nonconformity to social standards is partially given by their platitude of roles and partially by their mischievous nature. They are strongly associated, especially from an etymological point of view, to beggars and to the lower stratum of society. Maurice Molho provides an explanation of their core features:

> un mendingo, un indigente forzado por necesidad a pedir limosna. Las resonancias peyorativas de que están cargadas se explican fácilmente si se piensa que en una sociedad que identificaba la miseria con el vicio, toda piltrafa social se convertía automáticamente en objeto de sospecha o de desprecio. […] Son 'picaños' o 'pícaros' los vagabundos, saqueadores y estafadores que viven a costa de una región y pululan alrededor de la gente de bien, en espera de una limosna o de una ocasión de cometer una fechoria.[111]

Pícaros were social rejects, doing whatever they could to survive; the link between them and knighthood is noted by José Cela:

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[109] Friedman, *The antiheroine's voice: narrative discourse and transformation of the picaresque*, p. xi – Introduction.
[110] Dunn, *The Spanish picaresque novel,* p. 11.
[111] Molho, *Introducción al pensamiento picaresco*, pp. 14-15. Translation: a beggar, a pauper that by necessity is forced to ask for alms. The pejorative resonance is easily explained upon considering that a society that identified misery with vice, social rejects were converted in an object of suspicion or scorn. […] Picaños or pícaros are the vagabonds, burglars and swindlers that lived on the expense of good people waiting for alms or the occasion to a misdemeanor.

> El pícaro es especie parasitaria, pero el caballero – la especie parasitada – no lo rechaza sino ante los démas y de labios afuera, esto es, no más que externa y aparentemente; el cavallero necesita al pícaro tanto como es necesitado por él, y en el acoplamiento, en la simbiosisdel uno y el otro (y del clérigo y del funcionario), debe rastrearse el inestable – y duradero – equilibrio de la sociedad española de aquel tiempo.[112]

The implications of the symbiotic relationship between knight and pícaro are present when analyzing the figure of Don Quixote. Nevertheless, the knight of the Sad Countenance does not actually belong the this cathegory:

> Si bien Cervantes trató en varias ocasiones el tema del pícaro, no escribió un solo relato basado en problemática picaresca – problemática de la que no aparta su mirada, pero que recusa, sin poner en duda por ello la existencia del pícaro como personaje literario. A sus ojos es un personaje y nada más, es decir, un mito, del mismo tipo que los caballeros andantes, cuyo recuerdo trastorna la razón de Don Quijote.[113]

As such, the theme of the pícaro shall not be further explored since it would not provide additional useful information. It merely represents one possible bridge between the figure of the Don Quixote and the antihero.

The following step is to separately analyze the characters of Falstaff and Don Quixote and then proceed to cross-referencing them with what has been stated thus far.

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[112] José Cela as quoted in Alonso, *Novela picaresca Española – Tomo I*, p. 19. Translation: The pícaro is a parasite species, but the knight – the parasitized species – does not reject it, if not only in front of others, and only superficially so which is peculiar. The knight needs the pícaro as much as the latter needs him, and in this pairing, in the symbiosis between the two must be traced back the unstable – and durable – equilibrium of the Spanish society of that time.

[113] Molho, *Introducción al pensamiento picaresco,* p. 124. Translation: Although Cervantes treated in various occasions the theme of pícaros, he did not write any stories on the picaresque problematic – a problematic that did not take his eyes off, but that he rejected, without however doubting the existence of the pícaro as a literary character. In Cervante's eyes he is a character and nothing more, a myth of the same type as the one of the knight-errant, the recollection of which disrupts Don Quixote's reason.

Chapter Three: John Falstaff and Don Quixote

This chapter will provide a comparison between the figures of John Falstaff[114] and Don Quixote of La Mancha[115]. Although these characters belong to diverse literary genres, they share interesting similarities in their connection to knighthood, but also in their perception of their own self: Falstaff, based on the historical figure of John Oldcastle, is a knight that denies his own knighthood, whereas Don Quixote is convinced he is a knight despite his circumstances.

The first two sub-chapters will provide a separate analysis of the two characters: Falstaff will be considered in his relation with the historical figure of John Oldcastle, whereas Don Quixote will be studied based on an examination of passages in the book. These sub-chapters are concentrated on the single characters and will only introduce important aspects that will be then used in the last part which will be devoted to cross-referencing the two figures; it will likewise emphasize their relation with what has been previously stated about knighthood and anti-heroes.

3.1 John Oldcastle and John Falstaff

Upon considering the life of John Oldcastle, the historical figure John Falstaff is based upon, understanding what sources are reliable and what are not is problematic. For the biographical details, Alice-Lyle Scoufos's book *Shakespeare's typological satire: a study of the Falstaff-Oldcastle problem* will be used as a guide. In regards to the sources, "the material for a biography of Sir John Oldcastle must be handled with caution and objectivity, for neither the contemporary writers, who were primarily of the orthodox clergy of that day, nor the Tudor apologists were partial in their views."[116] This is due mainly to the fact

[114] All the quotation used throughout the dissertation are taken from Shakespeare, 2002, *King Henry IV Part 1*, London: The Arden Shakespeare, edited by David Scott Kastan.
[115] The critical edition used is the 2004, *Don Quijote de la Mancha*, Madrid: Real Academia Española. An English translation by James Montgomery of these passages shall be provided as a footnote.
[116] Scoufos, *Shakespeare's typological satire: a study of the Falstaff-Oldcastle problem*, p. 44.

the writers of the fifteenth- and sixteenth century were either intent on accusing or praising John Oldcastle, according to their different religious or political convictions: “Therefore, the most reliable information concerning the knight is that drawn from the official government files or from those contemporary writers who have no moral or propagandistic point to make”.[117] Hence, the chronicle-related aspects of Oldcastle’s life are more reliable. To sum up Scoufous’s research[118], Sir John Falstaff was born in Herefordshire between 1360 and 1378. Although his father, Richard Oldcastle, was knighted in 1399, the family had little in material possessions other than the manor of Almely near the river Wye. His grandfather represented Herefordshire in Parliament for the years 1368 and 1372 as well as his uncle, Thomas Oldcastle in 1390 and 1393. By 1400 Sir John, made knight, accompanied Henry IV on an expedition to Scotland and was retainted in the royal service. He was employed by the king in the Welsh affairs of the next years where he came into close contact with young prince Henry. In 1404 he was returned to Parliament as knight of Herefordshire and in 1406 served as justice of peace. In 1408 he became sheriff of the county.

From a historical point of view, John Oldcastle was in fact a knight, just as his father who had been the first one to be dubbed in his family. This is reminiscent of the importance of lineage for knighthood; while it is not explained how the title was gained, it is apparent that although not being nobility or having an excess of wealth, the Oldcastle family was not poor. In 1409, John Oldcastle, twice widower, married Joan Cobham, daughter of John, third Baron of Cobham. By doing this he gained wealth, social status and the right to attend Parliament as one of the lords temporal. The focal point in Oldcastle’s life was however his affiliation with Lollardy:

> The first official record we have of Oldcastle’s suspected Lollardy is a letter written in April 1410 by Archbishop Arundel to the dean of Rocester complaingin that an unlicensed chaplain was preaching Lollardy in the churches of Cooling, Halstow, and Hoo. S p46 – the chaplain was presumed to live with Lord Cobham, but not much more is known about the incident expect of a temporal interdict on the

[117] Ibid. p. 44.
[118] Ibid. p. 45.

> churches. Direct evidence of Oldastle's involvement with the Lollard movement comes from a letter of congratulation written by Oldcastle himself and sent to Wok of Waldestein in September 1411 to the leaders of the reform party in Bohemia. "Oldcastle's letter is in Latin and is filled with exhortations to perseverance and endurance; it reveals also that Oldcastle accepted without reservation the doctrines of Lollardy.[119]

Except for being part of a military contingent that was sent by Prince Henry to assist the duke of Burgundy in the conflict with the Armagnac faction, not much more is known about John Oldcastle until his convocation by Henry IV in 1413:

> On the first day of his (Oldcastle's) convocation a chaplain named John Lay, "who had celebrated mass for Lord Cobham", was called before the registrar to produce his ordination papers and his license to preach. He excused himself, saying that his papers were in Nottingham, and the case was postponed. We hear nothing more of it, but it seems by now to have been common knowledge that Oldcastle was sheltering the unlicensed preachers.[120]

On the 20th of March, King Henry IV died; the convocation was postponed till June. While Archbishop Arundel requested Oldcastle's condemnation because of his affiliation with Lollardy, it is reported that Henry V was more lenient and tried to change the knight's mind. John Oldcastle was inflexible on his stance: "one chronicle suggests that Oldcastle at this time attempted to convert the king. Such obstinacy resulted at length in a complete breach of friendship between king and subject."[121] The knight left the court at Windsor without permission and shut himself in the Cooling Castle in Kent. Summoned by Arundel to answer for the charge of heterodoxy, he did not reply; because of this behavior he was arrested and imprisoned in the Tower of London. On the 23rd of September, as he was brought before the judges, he presented the following statement:

> "I Johan Oldcastell knyght, Lord of Cobham, wole that alle crysten men wyte and understode, that y cleps Almyghty God in to wytnesse that it hath be, now is, and

[119] Ibid. pp. 46-47.
[120] Ibid. p. 47.
[121] Ibid. p. 48.

> ever, with the help of God, schal be myn entent and my wylle, to byleve, feythfully and fully, alle the sacramentys that ever God ordeyned to be do in holly chirche."[122]

Although in his particular context it went against church principles, the unyielding motivation for his ideals did in fact characterize John Oldcastle. The knight continued stubbornly to uphold his views concerning the sacraments and penances while using a vague language to iterate them. When Arundel insisted on a clearer statement, he refused to elaborate. As the questioning continued, two days later he finally gave a straightforward reply: "His answer concerning the adoration of the holy cross was that Christ, not the cross, should be worshipped. He stated that contrition rather than confession was necessary for salvation, that no one possessed the power of the keys unless he followed Christ in purity of life and living, that the pope himself was a very antichrist, and so on."[123] This led him to be immediately condemned as a heretic although he was leniently granted forty days to renounce his heresy.

On the 19th of October 1413, Oldcastle escaped and started planning an aggressive countermovement to overthrow the church and state. The 11 January 1414 indictment marked the Lollard leader for treason on accounts of conspiring to kill the king and to make himself reagent; the following day an insurgence was scattered in St. Files Field where he escaped again. As Henry V prepared for his French campaign, understanding the difficulty of managing both a battle and the rebellious situation, a proclamation of grace was issued towards the end of April 1415. Fearing a trap, John Oldcastle did not respond: instead, along with Richard, Earl of Cambridge, Henry, Lord Scrope of Masham and Sir Thomas Gray of Heron he designed to declare Henry V an usurper. Their intention was to place young Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March, on the throne: "at the same time they planned to restore young Henry Percy, Hotspur's son, to his heritage, thus incurring the favor of the northern counties. They planned also to let the Scots in at Roxburgh to increase their forces, to arouse the Lollards under Oldcastle, and

[122] A/N: Netter, Fasciculi Zizaniorum, p. 445 in Scoufos, *The Falstaff-Oldcastle problem,* p. 49.
[123] Scoufos, *The Falstaff-Oldcastle problem,* p. 49.

to draw upon the rebel strength of Glendower, if possible."[124] Nevertheless, the conspiracy failed. On the 1st of December 1417, Oldcastle was caught and carried to London. On the 14th, Chief Justice Hankford read his indictment of treason and Archbishop Chicle read the sentence of excommunication:

> It is reported that Oldcastle was asked if he could present reasons why the sentences should not be carried out. It is reported that Oldcastle talked at first of mercy, saying that vengeance belonged only to God. At length, being directed to answer more to the point, Oldcastle declared that the present regime had no right to pronounce judgment, that he was a loyal subject of the true King Richard who was living in Scotland. Parliament immediately declared that the sentence of death should be carried out. Oldcastle was drawn to St. Giles Field on a hurdle, hanged in chains, and burned as a traitor to God and to the king. Before his death it is reported that Oldcastle asked Sir Thomas Erpingham to secure tolerance for the Lollards if he should return to life in three days. This promise of resurrection brought a considerable crowd of Oldcastle's followers to St. Giles Field on the appointed day where they awaited the miracle; when Oldcastle failed to appear, they gathered his ashes to rub in their eyes.[125]

One important link between Oldcastle and Falstaff is the foreshadowing that the fictitious knight is subjected to, based on the life of the real one. For example Prince Henry says to Falstaff "thou shalt have the hanging of the thieves, and so become a rare hangman" (I. ii. 63-65) or when the knight replies "By the lord, I'll be a traitor then, when thou art king" (I. ii. 138-139); these are clear examples of anticipation regarding Falstaff that were actually referred to Oldcastle. It is very likely that the audience was aware of this connection between play and historical reality:

> Shakespeare's allusions to the Oldcastle legend take the form of foreshadowing remarks, usually made by the prince, which are saturated with dramatic irony, for the playwright has given Prince Hal an awareness of the true nature of the Falstaff-Oldcastle character and his ultimate treasonable end. Shakespeare can develop his Sophoclean mode of irony against the chronicle background. His

[124] Ibid. p. 54.
[125] Ibid. pp. 55-56.

> technique at this point is quite similar to that used by the ancient Athenian tragedians who adjust the details of their heroic myths to fit their dramatic audience well informed in the legends of the past.[126]

Yet, the figure of John Oldcastle constitutes only part of Falstaff's character; his monologue on the essence of honor may lead one to consider him as a knight that relinquishes the moral values and code I have analyzed in the previous chapters. This interpretation is not shared in the same way by other scholars. Baker, for instance, argues that

> it is only the critic without a sense of humor that ever regards the Falstaff of Henry IV from a serious standpoint and gravely debates whether he was a coward! What does it matter that Falstaff ridicules chivalry, honor, truth-telling, and bravery in battle? He is not to be taken seriously. As Professor Bradley has pointed out, he is not a subject for moral judgments, for he is a wholly comic character.[127]

The admonition not to subject Falstaff to moral judgment or to consider his stance as serious is to be taken into account. As Auden comments, the aim is to understand what this stance is while also exploring the comical aspect of the character: "In *Henry IV* Shakespeare intrudes Falstaff, who by nature belongs to the world of opera buffa, into the historical world of political chronicle with which his existence is incompatible, and thereby, consciously or unconsciously, achieves the effect of calling in question the values of military glory and temporal justice as embodied in Henry of Monmouth."[128] Falstaff is a comical character that purposely disrupts the essence of the historical play. Through his nature and irony, Falstaff also succeeds in addressing or even questioning certain values, such as military glory and temporal justice, but also the chivalric spirit and moral code of knighthood. While achieving this, his own position also becomes precarious, as Torrance notes:

[126] Ibid. p. 74.
[127] Baker, "*The two Falstaffs",* p. 472.
[128] Auden, *The dyer's hand, and other essays,* p. 221.

> The comic celebrant's injection into the adverse world of history deprives him of his privileged sanctuary and demands new qualities of heroic assurance and belligerent self-assertion, for here the odds are not in his favor. Falstaff rises magnificently to the occasion, yet in his total dependence on the Prince's continued good will he is vulnerable as no comic hero has been before.[129]

The relationship between the Prince and Falstaff is unstable, not only because of the historical foreshadowing that has been explained, but also because of the comical nature of the knight set in a historical play. Falstaff's stability as a character is but temporal: "only the prolonged but temporary disorder of history permits Falstaff to reign unchallenged in his seemingly autonomous sphere, for in the perspective of history an order that eludes all social constraint is mere anarchy."[130]

There is however more to the comical quality of Falstaff than the fact that he is purposefully out of place in a historical play. His criticism is not aimed only at the values of temporal justice, military glory or knightly values, but rather at a universal spectrum of virtues, as well as vices. He constructs this irony starting from himself because he is invulnerable to it: "Falstaff is impervious to mockery because he laughs unrestrainedly at himself and immune to ignominy because he makes it his glory."[131] Not only is he mocking how seriously these values are considered, but he is also proud of it:

> Falstaff is an actor of another kind who zestfully projects himself into whatever role he undertakes. Where all life is play the player's self is the sum of his roles, for without distinction of true from false parts there can be no deceit. […] His object is not to deceive but to confound. He mocks the serious world not by railing at its defects ab extra, but by incorporating and magnifying its follies in his own preposterous person; he makes a laughingstock of virtue as well as vice by mimicking both in hyperbolic dimensions and inviting others to laugh at themselves in him. He is consistent in nothing but paradox and constant only in fluctuation; his individuality is the multitudes he contains.[132]

[129] Torrance, *The comic hero*, p. 120.
[130] Ibid. p. 123.
[131] Ibid. p. 124.
[132] Ibid. p. 123.

Within the plethora of roles that Falstaff interprets, it is possible to analyze those that are linked to the depiction of the knight and to the anti-heroic genre. As previously mentioned, the anti-hero has been used to describe a character that evolved with the period of dissolution after the Second World War; thus, it would be anachronistic to label Falstaff as such. Referring to Falstaff as a knight is equally misleading, for he presents himself as a roguish character with valiant qualities. For these two motives I shall be referring to the Shakespearean protagonist as an "unheroic knight" and analyze the text using this perspective.

From the very moment he is on stage, Falstaff does not conceal his nature of a thief. Upon asking the Prince for the time and being told that for his gluttony time is of no concern, he replies:

> Indeed, you come near me now, Hal, for we that take purses go by the moon and the seven stars, and not 'by Phoebus, he, that wandering knight so fair'. And I prithee, sweet wag, when thou art king, as God save thy grace – majesty, I should say, for grace thou wilt have none – (I. ii. 12-17)

"You come near me", a phrase borrowed from fencing, represents already the battle of wits between Falstaff and Hal, denoting the fact that even though the prince's reply is good, it has missed its target. It is a first sign of what an elusive opponent Falstaff can be given his dialectic abilities. In this passage he also states that he "takes purses", in other words that he is a thief, and does so with the darkness of the night; furthermore it creates a duality between the thief that goes by the moon and the knight that goes by the sun. Furthermore, as it may be read in the version of *The first part of King Henry IV* edited by Herbert and Judith Weil, a footnote states that Shakespearean commentator George Steevens (1785) "detected a possible allusion to the wandering knight of the sun in *The Mirror of Knighthood*, a romance translated in 1578 by Margaret Tyler". The affiliation with thieves is also present in the following passage:

> Marry then, sweet wag, when thou art king let not us that are squires of the night's body be called thieves of the day's beauty. Let us be Diana's foresters, gentlemen

> of the shade, minions of the moon. And let men say we be men of good government, being governed as the sea is, by our noble and chaste mistress the moon, under whose countenance we steal. (I. ii. 22-28)

From the very beginning, Falstaff rejects his association to knighthood; being able to interpret different roles, he is also able to assume the language of the knight, jousting for instance in battles of wits. His puns act almost as a justification for his actions: “squires of the night’s body” creates one more juxtaposition between knights that go by the sun and thieves that go by the moon, and “being governed as the sea” also indicates that Falstaff acts out of his own will.

There are other instances where connections between Falstaff and the representation of the knight are noticeable. When devising the plan to trick Falstaff the Prince says: “Sir John stands to his word, the devil shall have his bargain, for h was never yet a breaker of proverbs. He will give the devil his due” (I. ii. 112-114). For a knight, respecting promises and abiding by their vows is essential; it is one of the most important traits along with devotion and courage. In Falstaff’s case, courage does not come from an actual representation of it, but rather from a narrative description of the same. After the Prince and Poins set the trap for Falstaff and rob the money he had just previously stolen, they witness how he exalts a counterfeited truth:

> I am a rogue, if I were not at half-sword with a dozen of them two hours together. I have scaped by miracle. I am eight times thrust through the doublet, four through the hose, my buckler cut through and through; my sword hacked like a handsaw – ecce signum! I never dealt better since I was a man. All would not do. A plague of all cowards! Let them speak. If they speak more or less than truth, they are villains and the sons of darkness. (II. iv. 158-166)

Falstaff brags about an encounter that did not actually take place; through the way he describes the scene, he depicts himself as being a brave knight although in reality he merely fled to save his life. The dichotomy between knight and thief is reiterated: the paradox consists in Falstaff declaring that if his words are not true he should be considered a rogue: “By his conscious self-parody of faults as open and palpable as his lies Falstaff flagrantly exhibits the vices that

others labor to conceal, even from themselves, under names like honor, and it is thus that he poses his gravest threat to the equilibrium of the social order."[133] He continues not only by claiming that his lies are true, but also by exaggerating them:

> FALSTAFF: Nay, that's past praying for, I have peppered two of them. Two I am sure I have paid, two rogues in buckram suits. I tell thee what, Hal, if I tell thee a lie, spit in my face, call me horse. Thou knowest my old ward – here I lay, and thus I bore my point. Four rogues in buckram let drive at me—
> PRINCE: What, four? Thou saidst but two even now.
> FALSTAFF: Four, Hal, I told thee four.
> POINS: Ay, ay, he said four.
> FALSTAFF: These four came all afront, and mainly thrust at me. I made me no more ado, but took all their seven points in my target, thus! (II. iv. 184-195)

The enemies he faces become nine, then eleven; the scene is comical because of how exaggerated the account is and also because the crescendo in the numbers demonstrates that he is not telling the truth. When he is finally confronted by the Prince and told who robbed him, his mastery of words and lies enables him to remain consistent with his story. Falstaff states that he knew the truth all along:

> By the Lord, I knew ye as well as he that made ye. Why, hear you, my masters, was it for me to kill the heir-apparent? Should I turn upon the true prince? Why, thou knowest I am as valiant as Hercules. But beware instinct. The lion will not touch the true prince. Instinct is a great matter. I was now a coward on instinct. I shall think the better of myself and thee during my life – I for a valiant lion, and thou for a true prince. But by the Lord, lads, I am glad you have the money! Hostess, clap to the doors! Watch tonight, pray tomorrow! (II. iv. 259-269)

Falstaff, from being a rogue by moon at the beginning, then comically assuming the characteristics of a valiant knight, now transfigures himself in Hercules, the strongest and most courageous of ancient heroes. This instant lasts but a

[133] Torrance, *The comic hero*, p. 132.

moment because afterwards he reverts to a man devoted to earthly pleasures as he refers to money and further on to drinking.

As the story progresses, the Prince is to fight in the ensuing revolution and appoints Falstaff to help him. As a captain, Falstaff is able to forcibly recruit or draft others; he however abuses this power to take bribes and not to recruit wealthy citizens, and thus ends with an army of unfit soldiers: “And now my whole charge consists of ancients, corporals, lieutenants, gentleman of companies – slaves as ragged as Lazarus in the painted cloth, where the glutton’s dogs licked his sores” (IV. ii. 23-26).

On the battlefield, the Prince tells Falstaff to say his prayers before the war begins. The knight, assuming a different role, almost as a child says that he would prefer if it was bed-time and all well. The Prince replies with a proverb by telling Falstaff he owes God a death and exits the scene. The unheroic knight remains on stage and delivers the monologue on honour:

> 'Tis not due yet – I would be loath to pay him before his day. What need I be so forward with him that calls not on me? Well, 'tis no matter; honour pricks me on. Yea, but how if honour prick me off when I come on, how then? Can honour set to a leg? No. Or an arm? No. Or take away the grief of a wound? No. Honour hath no skill in surgery, then? No. What is honour? A word. What is in that word honour? What is that honour? Air. A trim reckoning! Who hath it? He that died a' Wednesday. Doth he feel it? No. Doth he hear it? No. 'Tis insensible, then? Yea, to the dead. But will it not live with the living? No. Why? Detraction will not suffer it. Therefore I'll none of it. Honour is a mere scutcheon: and so ends my catechism. (V. i. 127-140)

In this instance he is not just a knight, but also a mortal character that understands his life may be in peril because of that same honor others die for. As a knight, he is supposed to risk his life for his lord as well as for glory and honor, but as a man he fears his possible death. The valiancy of honour should spur him forth in the battlefield, but Falstaff enquires on its validity. Since honor is just a word, and that word is nothing except air, it would not help him survive. The unheroic knight points out that the dead are insensible to such a concept. He has no need for a sentiment that is not different from a scutcheon, a humble heraldic

device similar to a coat of arms, which was either carried in a funeral procession or hung in a church to pay homage to the dead. In Torrance's interpretation,

> now, few men have known better than Falstaff the power of words to fabricate reality, and we might expect him to concede that capacity to honor. But honor is a word expropriated by the enemy; a word used not to discover but to conceal; a word without any relation to the actions performed in its name; a word, in short, belied by the living and insensible to the dead.[134]

As a character, Falstaff disrupts the nature of the historical play, puts into question the values of knighthood and in his monologue asks the audience about the validity of moral principles and what they represent. Whereas a knight was supposed to follow a set of principles and have faith in then, the unheroic nature of Falstaff substitutes them with a more important one, self-preservation. The grim spectacle of death as a result of honour is emphasized by the description of what is left on the battlefield by Falstaff:

> Though I could scape shot-free at London, I fear the shot here, here's no scoring but upon the pate. Soft! Who are you? Sir Walter Blunt - there's honour for you! Here's no vanity! I am as hot as molten lead, and as heavy too. God keep lead out of me, I need no more weight than mine own bowels. I have led my ragamuffins where they are peppered. There's not three of my hundred-and-fifty left alive – and they are for the town's end, to beg during life. (V. iii. 30-38)

The wordplay on lead may also refer to the foreshadowing mentioned at the beginning of the subchapter; once again, Shakespeare reminds the audience of the death the knight will suffer. Falstaff knows that only death awaits those who pursue honor; for this reason, as he is fighting, he feigns his own demise, and by doing so he will continue living. In passing, the Prince notices the fallen companion, comments on his death, and moves on. When Falstaff rises, surprising the audience who were unaware of his ploy and becoming detached

[134] Torrance, *The comic hero*, p. 131.

from the tragic implications of the sequence, he replies to the words of the Prince who is no longer there:

> Embowelled! If thou embowel me today, I'll give you leave to powder me and eat me too tomorrow. 'Sblood, 'twas time to counterfeit, or that hot termagant Scot had paid me, scot and lot too. Counterfeit? I lie, I am no counterfeit. To die is to be a counterfeit, for he is but the counterfeit of a man who hath not the life of a man. But to counterfeit dying, when a man thereby liveth, is to be no counterfeit, but the true and perfect image of life indeed. The better part of valour is discretion, in the which better part I have saved my life. Zounds, I am afraid of this gunpowder Percy, though he be dead. How if he should counterfeit too and rise? By my faith, I am afraid he would prove the better counterfeit. Therefore I'll make him sure; yea, and I'll swear I killed him. Why may not he rise as well as I? Nothing confutes me but eyes, and nobody sees me. [*Stabs the body]* Therefore, sirrah, with a new wound in your thigh, come you along with me. (V. iv. 110-128)

Falstaff's wordplays and multiplicity of roles continue: he identifies in death the final payment and discusses the implications of feigning death. With his words he subverts the roles of the dead with the living: death becomes the counterfeit of life. Since he is near the body of Hotspur that had just been killed by the Prince, Falstaff asks himself what would happen if the dead knight would also rise just like he had done. The unheroic knight decides to use the situation to his advantage and say that it was him that killed Hotspur: this would be possible because nobody is there to witness it. "Nothing confutes me but eyes" (V. iv. 125) also creates a distinction between level of the play and that of the audience: the spectators are the eyes that may confute his lie. This is another example of how Shakespeare plays between the dimensions of the stage and of reality.

When the Prince reenters the scene, Falstaff drops the Hotspur's body and, upon being confronted about it, he replies:

> Didst thou? Lord, Lord, how this world is given to lying! I grant you I was down, and out of breath, and so was he, but we rose both at an instant, and fought a long hour by Shrewsbury clock. If I may be believed, so. If not, let them that should reward valour bear the sin upon their own heads. I'll take it upon my death, I gave

> him this wound in the thigh. If the man were alive, and would deny it, zounds, I would make him eat a piece of my sword. (V. iv. 145-153)

This appears as a final ploy to make a profit for something that has not been done; it would also be ignominious and unfathomable for any knight that would consider himself such. Through his bravado, Falstaff even implies that the Prince is the one that is lying, thus subverting once again their roles. Furthermore, he sustains his fabrication by showing proof in the form of the wound he had made on the corpse of the dead man and hinting that the counterproof may only be provided by that very same body. This audacity is what distinguishes the character of Falstaff: he is courageous as a valiant knight when lying but his values are the exact opposite, making him a good example of unheroic or anti-heroic behavior.

3.2 The literary character of Don Quixote

Scholars have analyzed in depth all aspects of the Don Quixote considering its importance in literature; this sub-chapter aims to summarize only the fundamental points on the Cervantinian protagonist in relation with his being a knight. Similar to what has been said about Falstaff, while it is anachronistic to define Don Quixote as an antihero, his unconventional behavior is heroic because of the character's conviction but failure stands within his actions. For this reason J. M. Sobré provides a better definition:

> Don Quixote was conceived, and is presented, as a hero upside-down; in his figure we find a careful, studied antithesis of the epic hero. Even in the unimaginable case that no windmills or flocks of sheep ever appeared in the novel, Don Quixote, the character, would still be a parody of books of chivalry.[135]

Don Quixote looks up to the values of a previous age similarly to what knights and knight-related literature had done with their own past. This

[135] Sobré, *Don Quixote, the Hero Upside-Down*, p. 128.

phenomenon constitutes an important comical element when analyzing the text: "The true comic heroism of an age that had ceased to live in accord with its own beliefs, Cervantes clairvoyantly saw, lay not in defiance of society's values but in the insane endeavour to uphold them in practice."[136] Accordingly, Don Quixote's reality is the futility of practicing an attitude that was considered obsolete; while Falstaff should have been a knight of action but replaces that dimension with words and justifications, the Cervantinian protagonist behaves in the opposite manner:

> Unlike his scandalous predecessors, the chivalric Spaniard sets forth not to challenge the dominant values of his age but to defend them. In his eyes there is nothing more sacred than the honor flaunted by Falstaff, and he spurns all conscious dissimulation or falsehood. Modeling himself on the famous knights of romance he more nearly resembles Achilles or Galahad in his high aspirations and noble ardor than Odysseus or Reynard, and by his "imagination proper to madmen" he recalls not Falstaff but the impetuous Hotspur, for whom reality was forever smaller than his smallest thought.[137]

Don Quixote is heroic on purpose but comical by accident whereas Falstaff is comical on purpose and may only be considered heroic because of his fabricated truth, as it shall be explained in the last part of this chapter.

The Cervantinian protagonist acts according to how he perceives his own reality and this unsettles the equilibrium of those who see the world as it is; this in turn emphasizes the comical aspect of the narration. The two dimensions that are juxtaposed are reality, or better yet the reality perceived by all the other characters, and the ideal; accordingly, Quixote's obstinacy to see only the ideal world of knights makes him appear lunatic:

> "In its simplest form of lunacy of the addle-brained hidalgo seems an involuntary obsession, spawned by infatuation with novels of chivalry, that incapacitates him from distinguishing between his native La Mancha and the never-never land of

[136] Torrance, *The comic hero*, p. 145.
[137] Ibid. p. 144.

> romance. Reality and the ideal are two distinct matters which Don Quixote absurdly confounds."[138]

The confounded distinction between Quixote's present reality and the ideal past is a facet that has been analyzed by many other scholars. In Domenichelli's words,

> quello che capita con il *Quijote*, è che l'attualizzazione non è affatto implicita, ma invece assolutamente esplicita e giocata tutta nella follia del cavaliere dalla triste figura che è, come assai giustamente dice Martín de Riquer, una vivente anacronia, un vivente anacronismo. Don Chisciotte rivive nel presente il passato mitico, mimetizzato, del medioevo cavalleresco o, nella sua follia, egli recita, ricomponendo per la contemporaneità i tratti di modello proveniente da un medioevo fantastico che egli, evidentemente, ha ragione di preferire al presente. E tutta la comicità del libro scaturisce da questo patente iato di inattualità incarnato in Don Chisciotte come vera e propria anomalia del tempo.[139]

Thus, Don Quixote becomes a time anomaly for his attachment to the past, and that past refers to a time when the morals values that were preached were also practiced. Through the adventures of the Cervantinian protagonist the period of decadence of chivalry may be observed: "The gulf between profession and practice in an increasingly secularized Christian world made hypocrisy the characteristic vice of the age and demanded a comic challenger radically different from the guileful impostors of a less convoluted time.[140] This is a symptom of the same behaviors of the anti-heroes that was mentioned previously, without its sharing all the qualities: Quixote's attitude shows a great resilience, does not conform to traditional standards, and the positive qualities he upholds are only

[138] Ibid. p. 157.
[139] Domenichelli, *Cavaliere e gentiluomo,* p. 256. Translation: What happens with *Don Quixote* is that the actualization is not at all implicit; it is explicated in the madness of the knight of the woeful countenance. This is, as Martín de Riquer rightfully says, a living anachronism. Don Quixote relives in his present the mythical past, disguised as the Middle Ages of knights; in his folly he acts according to the characteristics of a medieval model of fantasy that he reassembles based on his contemporaneity and that he evidently prefers to the one of his present. The entirety of the comical aspect of the book comes from this powerful discontinuity of outdatedness incarnated in Don Quixote as a true temporal anomaly.
[140] Torrance, *The comic hero*, p. 146.

perceived by himself. Albeit not being "petty, passive or dishonest", his dignity and heroism are not perceived by the other characters. In this case, it is the reader that perceives the humiliation he faces and not the character himself. His intention is not to defy society, as Torrance explains:

> The true comic heroism of an aged that had ceased to live in accord with its own beliefs, Cervantes clairvoyantly saw, lay not in defiance of society's values but in the insane endeavors to uphold them in practice. The effort demands, in fact, a defiant spirit, and by his dedication to so audacious an undertaking the Christian knight reveals a surprising resemblance to comic heroes less altruistic in temper.[141]

Don Quixote longs for a past time and this longing constitutes a 'spiritual' part of a whole that Domenichelli identifies as shared with Sancho Panza: "Così, se Don Chisciotte rappresenta il lato 'spirituale', diciamo così, di quel codice decontestualizzato, Sancho ne rappresenta il sogno materiale di arricchimento, di fortuna materiale, di potere."[142] Sancho is equally important in the depiction of the portrait of the knight: he is the squire a knight must have, although his role is even more complex considering his use of proverbs and the fact that he counterbalances the nature of his master.

Other aspects of the figure of the knight become important in the analysis of Don Quixote's figure: "The romances of chivalry are the descendants of the epics, their heroes are the grandchildren of Achilles, Odysseus, Aeneas, or Roland; Don Quixote, as a hero, as an unlikely hero, can only be properly understood within the epic tradition."[143] His madness derives directly from reading too many books on chivalry, but he should not be condemned for this. In Sobré's words,

> Don Quixote surpasses his fellow characters mainly in his madness, not in any quality. Critics who insist on the great values incarnated in the knight must

[141] Torrance, *The comic hero*, p. 145.
[142] Domenichelli, *Cavaliere e gentiluomo,* p. 263. Translation: If Don Quixote represents the spiritual part of that decontextualize (knightly) code, Sancho reppresentes the material dream of becoming reach, material wealth, or power.
[143] Sobré, "*Don Quixote, the Hero Upside-Down"*, pp. 128-129.

> consider his madness under a positive light: Don Quixote is a complete fool; his folly, however, is the most sublime of virtues in this rotten world; therefore Don Quixote is saintly, a sublime hero-or so this reasoning goes.[144]

The "living fountain of light" that Carlyle had used as a comparison while speaking about heroes, in Don Quixote's case is his virtue to ostentatiously oppose to a rotten world. Nevertheless, it is that same resilience, combined with the fact that he is not understood by the other characters, that makes him more akin to the anti-hero as it shall be explained in the last part of the chapter. His madness makes him follow the example of an errant-knight who follows his code out of his own volition. Arsenio Rey describes this attitude:

> El caballero cervantino, amparado en su locura, sale a campear la justicia por sí mismo, sin ponerse al servicio de un rey o señor; no se detiene a predicarla ni encargarla a los demás, pues, aunque sea paradójico el decirlo, se halla cosciente de la inutilidad de las prédicas y consejos. El ideal que él propunga se halla diseminado por todo el *Quijote*, muchas veces en forma alusiva y otras claramente indicado.[145]

Don Quixote does not preach his morals: he merely stands by them. He is so convinced of the importance of justice that he is among the few heroes depicted that does not seem to have an ulterior motive. His resolution however is, or at the very least appears, a parody:

> En su declarada parodia de los libros de caballería, Cervantes utiliza los más variados métodos del ridículo, y uno de los más comunes es recurrir a fórmulas del ideal caballeresco. El espíritu caballeresco de que estaba saturada la Europa medieval, según Johan Huizinga, era mucho más intenso en España por el incesante pelear contra el moro. Una prueba evidente de ello son las numerosas órdenes de caballeros que por entonces surgieron: Calatrava (1158), Alcántara

[144] Sobré, "*Don Quixote, the Hero Upside-Down"*, p. 129.
[145] Rey, "*Don Quijote, paladin de la justicia militante"* in Criado (edited by) *M. Cervantes su obra y su mundo*, p. 587. Translation: The cervantinian knight, protected by his madness, roaming for justice's sake, without serving a king or lord; he does not stop to preach or instruct others, and even though it may be paradoxical to say, he finds himself conscious of the futility of giving sermons or advice. The ideal that he advocates is disseminated throughout all of the *Don Quixote*, many times in an allusive form and other clearly indicated.

(1166), Santiago (1170), además de los Templarios (1143) y los Caballeros de Malta (1462) venidos de fuera.[146]

The parody of Don Quixote being a knight, too old at that, and living in a society that has left knighthood in its past, contributes to creating only a part of the Cervantinian protagonist; the knight of the Sad Countenance is aware of his own defeat more by his circumstances than that of the beatings he receives during his adventures:

> Nearly every adventure of Don Quixote ends in defeat, but so is the course of his entire career rooted in defeat. When Don Quixote declares he knows who he is, he has already been defeated, and not merely in the drubbing he has received from the muleteers. He is too old to be a knight errant and too poor, and he lives in an unheroic age. In his original conception he is already a man defeated by life, if only in the sense that his time has past.[147]

The description of Don Quixote also creates part of the irony of the character. In the prologue, the main character is presented as a "hijo seco, avellanado, antojadizo y lleno de piensamientos varios y nunca imaginados de otro alguno"[148]. Except for *hijo*, that also means *son* and may have a sentimental connotation that the author gives to his character, Don Quixote reflects the traits of a withered man; a man who does not have much but who is a dreamer nevertheless. Further on, only a few words are added to his description: "un hidalgo de los de lanza en astillero, adarga antigua, rocín flaco y galgo corredor"[149]. The fact that chivalry books are responsible for the hidalgo going mad is stated from the very beginning: "En resolución, él se enfrascó tanto en su

[146] Ibid. p. 586. Translation: In his declared parody of books on knighthood, Cervantes uses the most varied methods of radicalization, and one of the most common is utilizing the principles of knightly ideal. The kinghood spirit that was saturating Medieval Europe, according to Johan Huizinga, was more intense in Spain because of the constant battles against the Moors. Evidence of this are the numerous knightly orders that followed: Calatrava (1158), Alcántara (1166), Santiago (1170), besides the Templars (1143) and the knights of Malta (1462) that came from outside.

[147] Welsh, *Reflections on the Hero as Quixote*, p. 174.

[148] Cervantes, Part I, Prologue, p. 7. "lean, shriveled, and fanciful offspring full of various ideas never dreamt of by anyone else".

[149] Ibid. Part I, Ch. 1, p.27. "one of those old-fashioned hidalgos who always have a lance in the rack, an ancient buckler, a skinny nag, and a swift greyhound for hunting".

lectura, que se le pasaban las noches leyendo de claro en claro, y los días de turbio en turbio; y así, del poco dormir y del mucho leer, se le secó el celebro de manera que vino a perder el juicio."[150]

The most striking element of the first chapter is that the protagonist decides to become a knight-errant; Cervantes implies it is due to the fact that the hidalgo was so absorbed by his readings that it results in his irrational behavior. Both the literary and meta-literary dimension of the *Quixote* are confronted in this chapter: on one hand, there is the perceived reality within the text, the hidalgo himself reading novels on knights; on the other one there is the perceived fantastical-reality of knighthood. In this case, there are only two dimensions that clash; further on the fracture between realities will be even more accentuated.

In chapter six not only do the barber and the priest, who are burning Don Quixote's books, argument on how much they are authentic, but they also talk about Cervantes as the writer of *La Galatea.* In fact the priest is a good friend of his. Here the passage from the reader's reality to the one depicted in the book and the ones of the romances quoted in the book becomes undistinguishable. These different levels of reality and literature react with one another throughout the entire novel: there are other instances when Cervantes is mentioned as well as aspects of imprisonment which have happened in the author's life or scenes where yet again the authenticity of chivalric novels is questioned, such as in chapter thirty-two by the priest and Cardenio. To further amplify these levels, there is the fact that Cervantes introduces Cide Hamete Benengeli as the "real author and historian" of the novel and the second part of *Don Quixote* also directly address the apocryphal version of Avellaneda; the Knight of the Sad Countenance will even encounter a character from this version and interact with him. These endless layers create the complexity of the novel.

By the end of the first chapter the hidalgo's own perception of his world makes him become someone else:

[150] Ibid. Part I, Ch. 1, pp.29-30. "In a word, Don Quixote became so engrossed in his books that he spent all his nights from dusk until dawn, and all his days from dawn until dusk, poring over them, so that from little sleep and much reading his brain dried up and he finally lost his wits."

> En efecto, rematado ya su juicio, vino a dar en el más extraño pensamiento que jamás dio loco en el mundo, y fu eque le pareció convenible y necesario, así para el aumento de su honra como para el servicio de su república, hacerse cavallero andante y irse por todo el mundo con sus armas y caballo a buscar las aventuras y ejercitarse en todo aquello que él había leído que los caballeros andantes se ejercitaban, deshaciendo todo género de agravio y poniéndose en ocasiones y peligros donde, acabándolos, cobrase eterno nombre y fama.[151]

The decision to set forth as a knight-errant reflect the traits of what has been said in the first two chapters of this dissertation, mainly the search for fame and glory; what differs is that he neither serves a lord or a king nor possesses the appropriate tools. He does not have a horse, but a nag, he cleans his great-grandfather's suit of armor and fashions a visor for a helmet that is incomplete. He succeeds in reinventing himself: four days it takes him to name his nag Rocinante and another eight days to rename himself as Don Quixote of La Mancha. The Spanish text adds a layer of meaning that is lost in translation: not only is there a wordplay on "Rocin-" (nag) plus "-ante" (before) implying a metamorphosis of the horse, but also the name "Quijote" is similar to "Lanzarote" (Lancelot), thus causing an even greater affinity with the world of chivalry. Lastly, Don Quixote decides that a knight should also have a paramour: hence, he decides that Aldonza Lorenzo, a farm girl that reportedly he once liked, will be the lady he loves and renames her as well. Dulcinea del Toboso will represent the aspect of courtly love that has been mentioned in the first chapter. The importance for a knight to have a woman to dedicate his love to is also mentioned in other parts of the novel, for example in chapter thirteen when Don Quixote says:

> Digo que no puede ser que haya caballero andante sin dama, porque tan proprio y tan natural les es a los tales ser enamorados como al cielo tener estrellas, y a

[151] Ibid. Part I, Ch. 1, pp.30-31. "In short, once his wits were gone, he conceived the strangest notion any madman had ever conceived, namely, he deemed it necessary and proper, not only for the increase of his own honor but as a service to his country, to become a knight-errant and travel throughout the world, armed and on horseback, in quest of adventures, performing all those deeds he had seen knights in his books perform: righting all manner of wrongs and exposing himself to battles and dangers, so that by resolving them he would win for himself everlasting fame and renown."

> buen seguro que no se haya visto historia donde se halle caballero andante sin amores; y por el mesmo caso que estuviese sin ellos, no sería tenido por legítimo caballero, sino por bastardo y que entró en la fortaleza de la caballería dicha, no por la puerta, sino por las bardas, como salteador y ladrón.[152]

Don Quixote adamantly believes in an indissoluble correlation between the figures of the knight and his lady. In this case, narrative fiction prevails over perceived reality; this conviction is even further emphasized later on when he decides to go mad for Dulcinea. In his reasoning, Don Quixote understands that it was normal for a knight to be so enamored with his lady that he would even lose his own wit because of his ardent feelings. While still maintaining his perceived sanity, or the rationality he is convinced to possess, he decides to go crazy as an act of devotion. In his mind, if he is willing to voluntarily become crazy for Dulcinea, there are no limits to what he would do for her when sane. This scene happens in chapter twenty-five. His justification is: "y esa es la fineza de mi negocio, que volverse loco un caballero andante con causa, ni grado ni gracias: el toque está en desatinar sin ocasión y dar a entender a mi dama que si en seco hago esto ¿qué hiciera en mojado?"[153]

Upon setting forth for adventure, Don Quixote realizes he has not been knighted:

> Mas apenas se vio en el campo, cuando le asaltó un piensamiento terrible, y tal, que por poco le hiciera dejar la comenzada empresa; y fue que le vino a la memoria que no era armado caballero y que, conforme a la ley de caballería, ni podía ni debía tomar armas con ningún caballero, y puesto que lo fuera, había

[152] Ibid. Part I, Ch. 13, p. 114. "I declare it to be an impossibility for knights-errant not to be enamored of some lady, for it is as proper and natural for them to be in love as for the heavens to have stars. Surely a history has never existed in which there was a knight without a lady, but in the event that there might have been some individual knight who lacked one, he would not be considered an authentic knight but an impostor who had made his way into the fortress of said knighthood, not by the front gate, but over the wall like some highwayman or thief."

[153] Ibid. Part I, Ch. 25, p. 236. "and therein lies the subtlety of my enterprise, because a knight-errant who goes mad for a reason deserves no praise or thanks. The essential thing is to go mad for no reason at all, to make my lady understand that if I can do such a thing when dry, what can't I do when wet?"

> de llevar armas blancas, como novel caballero, sin empresa en el escudo, hasta que por se esfuerzo la ganase.[154]

The ritual of dubbing was very important in the life of the knight, just as Lull had already written, and Don Quixote realizes this immediately; the word "ley" further emphasizes its importance, not as a mere ceremony but as an actual legal obligation. The hidalgo decides that he will ask the first person he will encounter to knight him, as it was customary in times of necessity; he will do so at the inn he will encounter that very same evening, but before that he will wander an entire day without meeting anyone. The fact that during his very first hours as a knight-errant he does not encounter any quests is seen as part of Don Quixote's own ironical figure, as Sobré points out:

> Don Quixote's first adventure is precisely the fact that he has no adventures. Very unlike the true knights errant, Don Quixote manages to ride in full armor for an entire day encountering no one. This is, of course, well in the plan of writing a parody of the books of chivalry, but it points to one aspect of the parody which is often disregarded: the fact that the parody is present in the figure of Don Quixote himself without any need for what is generally referred to as "reality."[155]

It is not surprising that Don Quixote will end up being dubbed a knight by the innkeeper he finds at the end of his first day of fruitless adventures, as he asks the proprietor to take special care of his horse. Although Don Quixote has a nag for a mount, he treats it with utmost attention, according to the traditions of chivalry that have been previously explained.

Further on, after he suffers his first defeat and is returned home, Don Quixote also is reminded about the importance of having a squire, so he employs Sancho Panza:

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[154] Ibid. Part I, Ch. 2, p. 34. "But no sooner did he find himself on the open plain than he was assailed by a terrifying thought, so terrifying in fact that it nearly caused him to abandon the barely begun enterprise, for he suddenly remembered that he was not yet a knight, and according to the laws of chivalry, he could not and must not take up arms against any knight whatsoever. And even after becoming one, he would have to wear plain armor—he being a novitiate—without any device on his shield until such time that he earned one by his prowess."

[155] Sobré, *"Don Quixote, the Hero Upside-Down"*, p. 127.

> En este tiempo solicitó don Quijote a un labrador vecino suyo, hombre de bien —si es que este título se puede dar al que es pobre—, pero de muy poca sal en la mollera. En resolución, tanto le dijo, tanto le persuadió y prometió, que el pobre villano se determinó de salirse con él y servirle de escudero. Decíale entre otras cosas don Quijote que se dispusiese a ir con él de buena gana, porque tal vez le podía suceder aventura que ganase, en quítame allá esas pajas, alguna ínsula, y le dejase a él por gobernador della. Con estas promesas y otras tales, Sancho Panza, que así se llamaba el labrador, dejó su mujer y hijos y asentó por escudero de su vecino.[156]

Sancho's choice to follow Don Quixote, while he is being promised islands or kingdoms, contributes to creating the comical dimension of the narration.

There are many instances when the Knight of the Sad Countenance explicitly states his purpose, or the one he believes in: he fully understands that the golden age of knights has faded, but he makes it his objective to resurrect it on his own. Two good examples of his unyielding determination are given in chapter twenty when speaking with Sancho Panza and in the first chapter of the second part, as he is about to set forth once again, and explains his motives to the barber:

> Sancho amigo, has de saber que yo nací por querer del cielo en esta nuestra edad de hierro para resucitar en ella la de oro, o la dorada, como suele llamarse. Yo soy aquel para quien están guardados los peligros, las grandes hazañas, los valerosos hechos. Yo soy, digo otra vez, quien ha de resucitar los de la Tabla Redonda, los Doce de Francia y los Nueve de la Fama, y el que ha de poner en olvido los Platires, los Tablantes, Olivantes y Tirantes, los Febos y Belianises, con toda la caterva de los famosos caballeros andantes del pasado tiempo,

[156] Cervantes, Part I, Ch. 7, p. 72. "During this period, Don Quixote was wooing one of his neighboring farmers, an honorable man (if such a term may be applied to one who is poor) but one quite short on brains. In the end, he talked to him at such great length, used so much persuasion, and promised him so many things that the poor soul decided to go with him and serve as his squire. Among other things, Don Quixote told him he should be ready and willing to join him, because they might possibly have an adventure in which he would win some island quicker than you could bat an eye, and he would make him governor of it. With these and other such promises Sancho Panza (this being the farmer's name) left his wife and children and enlisted as his neighbor's squire."

> haciendo en este en que me hallo tales grandezas, estrañezas y fechos de armas, que escurezcan las más claras que ellos ficieron.[157]
>
> […] solo me fatigo por dar a entender al mundo en el error en que está en no renovar en sí el felicísimo tiempo donde campeaba la orden de la andante caballería. Pero no es merecedora la depravada edad nuestra de gozar tanto bien como el que gozaron las edades donde los andantes caballeros tomaron a su cargo y echaron sobre sus espaldas la defensa de los reinos, el amparo de las doncellas, el socorro de los huérfanos y pupilos, el castigo de los soberbios y el premio de los humildes."[158]

One point that has been considered in the first part of this dissertation is the division between *laboratores*, *bellatores* and *oratores*, a common medieval conception. Cervantes also reiterates it:

> Quiero decir que los religiosos, con toda paz y sosiego, piden al cielo el bien de la tierra, pero los soldados y caballeros ponemos en ejecución lo que ellos piden, defendiéndola con el valor de nuestros brazos y filos de nuestras espadas, no debajo de cubierta, sino al cielo abierto, puestos por blanco de los insufribles rayos del sol en el verano y de los erizados yelos del invierno. Así que somos ministros de Dios en la tierra y brazos por quien se ejecuta en ella su justicia.[159]

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[157] Ibid. Part I, Ch. 20, p. 175. "Sancho my friend, I would have you know that I was born by heaven's decree into this iron age of ours to revive the age of gold, commonly known as the Golden Age. I am the one for whom are reserved perils, great accomplishments, and valiant deeds. I am, I say, the one destined to resurrect the Knights of the Round Table, the Twelve Peers of France, and the Nine Worthies—the one who will consign to oblivion the Platires and Tablantes, the Olivantes and Tirantes, the Febos and Belianises, and that whole horde of famous knightserrant of ages past by performing in the present age in which I find myself such prodigious deeds, wonders, and feats of arms that they will eclipse the most brilliant ones ever performed by them."

[158] Ibid. Part II, Ch. 1, pp. 555-556. "I simply tire myself out trying to show the world the mistake it is making in not resurrecting that happy age when the order of knighterrantry was in flower. This depraved age of ours, however, does not deserve to enjoy such benefits as those enjoyed during the ages when knights-errant took it upon their own shoulders to assume the responsibility for the defense of kingdoms, the protection of maidens, the support of orphans and wards, the chastisement of the haughty, and the reward of the humble."

[159] Ibid. Part I, Ch. 13, p. 112. "By this I mean that ecclesiastics in complete peace and repose pray to heaven for the earth's well-being, whereas we knights and soldiers bring to fruition what they merely pray for, and we defend it by the might of our arms and the edge of our swords, not under a roof but out in the open, where we become the target of the unbearable sun of summer and the biting cold of winter. We, therefore, are God's ministers on earth and the instruments through whom His justice is carried out."

Don Quixote acknowledges the importance of *bellatores* as knights and protectors of people; his conviction lies within the fact that while priest pray God for peace, in fact soldiers are the ones that make it possible.

Lineage is another important point of knighthood; Don Quixote identifies a duality between those who have risen up from insignificant nobility to the vertex of the social pyramid and whose who were at the top and slowly felled into decadence, as it is pointed out in chapter twenty-one:

> "Porque te hago saber, Sancho, que hay dos maneras de linajes en el mundo: unos que traen y derivan su decendencia de príncipes y monarcas, a quien poco a poco el tiempo ha deshecho, y han acabado en punta, como pirámide puesta al revés; otros tuvieron principio de gente baja y van subiendo de grado en grado, hasta llegar a ser grandes señores; de manera que está la diferencia en que unos fueron, que ya no son, y otros son, que ya no fueron"[160]

The novel consists of endless levels of merging realities and fictions; Don Quixote creates his own reality entirely based on chivalric books. In turn, this impedes him to perceive his own dimension but also signifies that his new created reality is limited by what he has read. His formalities are created by knightly behavior, as are his oaths:

> Que yo os juro por la fe de caballero y de cristiano de no desampararos hasta veros en poder de don Fernando, y que cuando con razones no le pudiere atraer a que conozca lo que os debe, de usar entonces la libertad que me concede el ser caballero y poder con justo título desafialle, en razón de la sinrazón que os hace, sin acordarme de mis agravios, cuya venganza dejaré al cielo, por acudir en la tierra a los vuestros.[161]

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[160] Ibid. Part I, Ch. 21, pp. 196-197. "You should know, Sancho, that there are two kinds of pedigrees in this world: those persons who trace their descent from princes and monarchs but whom time has diminished little by little until they end in a point, like a pyramid turned upside down; and others who have a humble beginning but continue to rise from one rank to the next until they become grandees. Thus the difference is that some used to be what they no longer are, while others have become what they formerly were not."

[161] Ibid. Part I, Ch. 29, p. 290. "I give you my word as a gentleman and a Christian that I shall protect you until I see you in possession of Don Fernando. If I fail to persuade him through reason to recognize his obligation to you, I shall exercise the right that is mine by virtue of my position as a gentleman and shall with the proper credentials challenge him to a duel by reason of the

The limitation nevertheless stands not only in formalities and behavior, but also in the impossibility to accept any other reality than that of knighthood; from this process stem most of the difficulties Don Quixote encounters. The Knight of the Sad Countenance hence is not bound by any other judicial realities, and in response to the military peacekeeping association of Santa Hermandad he juxtaposes the fictitious reality of books; since Don Quixote has never read of a knight that had paid for his stay at an inn, he assumes that he is not supposed to either. Upon being accused in chapter forty-five, his fervent indignation relies exactly on these considerations:

> ¡Ah, gente infame, digna por vuestro bajo y vil entendimiento que el cielo no os comunique el valor que se encierra en la caballería andante, ni os dé a entender el pecado e ignorancia en que estáis en no reverenciar la sombra, cuanto más la asistencia, de cualquier caballero andante! Venid acá, ladrones en cuadrilla, que no cuadrilleros, salteadores de caminos con licencia de la Santa Hermandad, decidme: ¿quién fue el ignorante que firmó mandamiento de prisión contra un tal caballero como yo soy? ¿Quién el que ignoró que son esentos de todo judicial fuero los caballeros andantes y que su ley es su espada, sus fueros sus bríos, sus prem áticas su voluntad? ¿Quién fue el mentecato, vuelvo a decir, que no sabe que no hay secutoria de hidalgo con tantas preeminencias ni esenciones como la que adquiere un caballero andante el día que se arma caballero y se entrega al duro ejercicio de la caballería? ¿Qué caballero andante pagó pecho, alcabala, chapín de la reina, moneda forera, portazgo ni barca? ¿Qué sastre le llevó hechura de vestido que le hiciese? ¿Qué castellano le acogió en su castillo que le hiciese pagar el escote? ¿Qué rey no le asentó a su mesa? ¿Qué doncella no se le aficionó y se le entregó rendida a todo su talante y voluntad? Y, finalmente, ¿qué caballero andante ha habido, hay ni habrá en el mundo que no tenga bríos para dar él solo cuatrocientos palos a cuatrocientos cuadrilleros que se le pongan delante?[162]

unreason he has shown you, not giving any thought to my own grievances, whose requital I shall leave to heaven so I can deal with your grace's here on earth."

[162] Ibid. Part I, Ch. 45, p. 473. "Because of your base, vile minds you wretches don't deserve for heaven to let you share in the benefits that flow from knight-errantry, nor to be shown the sin and ignorance in which you wallow when you fail to respect the image, let alone the presence, of any knight-errant! Come, you thieves masquerading as officers, you highwaymen licensed by the Holy Brotherhood, tell me: who was the ignoramus who signed a warrant for the arrest of a knight such as myself? Who was the one who did not even know that knights-errant are exempt from all court

In this lengthy passage Don Quixote repeatedly questions officers that dare defy his own authority as a knight; it is a demonstration of his utter conviction of his own reality, status and values.

Don Quixote's knightly standards are also well represented in chapters forty-two and forty-three of the second part where Sancho Panza is counseled on how to reign an island; the first chapter concentrates on the more ethical aspects of sovereignty while the second one deals with how one has to also take care of oneself. Some of the most important points Don Quixote explains are the importance of having faith in God and fearing Him, remembering and being proud of one's own ancestry, being guided by virtues and not being arbitrary in matters of law. Minor details in chapter forty-three that may seem insignificant but are equally worth mentioning are for example the importance of being clean and keeping ones fingernails trimmed, having the appropriate attire, not eating excessively and so forth. The two chapters represent the spiritual and physical spheres a governor is supposed to practice and preach, but they are being explained from the perspective of a knight thus mostly applying to the chivalric world.

3.3 Comparing Falstaff and Don Quixote

The first characteristic that will be explored upon analyzing the figures of Falstaff and Don Quixote is their contrasting relation with knighthood. They both declare their intentions and purposes from the very first time they are presented:

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orders, since their sword is their law, their prowess their charter, and their own will their statutes? Who was the simpleton, I say, who did not know that there is no certificate of nobility with as many privileges and immunities as the one a knight-errant acquires the day he is dubbed a knight to devote himself to the arduous profession of chivalry? What knight-errant ever paid taxes when he sold some article, or when some royal personage was wed, or when he passed through a tollgate or sailed down a river; or simply because he was the king's vassal? What tailor ever charged him for making his clothes? What governor of a castle ever received him into his castle and then asked him to pay for his stay? What king ever refused to seat him at his table? What damsel ever failed to fall in love with him and yield herself utterly to his will and pleasure? And finally, what knight-errant has there ever been on this earth or ever will be who will not be courageous enough to administer singlehandedly four hundred whacks to four hundred officers of the Brotherhood who dare show themselves in his presence?"

Falstaff does not pretend to be a knight and admits to be a rogue and a "squire of the night's body", whereas Don Quixote is firmly convinced of his knighthood and acts accordingly like the protagonists of the many books he has read.

One of the most important characteristics for a knight that Lull had emphasized is to "mayntene and deffende the holy feyth catholyque"[163]. Although faith is important for knighthood, religion is not as impactful for the two characters and assumes a secondary role; Falstaff would rather defend his own life and interests and does so repeatedly while Don Quixote frequently attacks friars or innocent people mistaking them for other individuals. The knight of the Sad Countenance however does not do so on purpose; it is mainly because of the reality he has created for himself. He firmly believes in the values of knighthood and while his intentions may be pure, the execution is erroneous; as Torrance argues "the Chivalrous Spaniard sets forth not to challenge the dominant values of his age but to defend them.[164]"

Don Quixote ponders for several days before giving a name to himself, to his horse and to his self-proclaimed paramour. This naming process ends however with the added comical effect given the strong correlation with the name of Lancelot and the fact that his horse is actually a nag (*rocín*). Furthermore, another peculiar detail that contributes to creating the irony of the knight is that he does not give a name to his sword, unlike the chivalry books that he had certainly read. In *The book of the Ordre of Chivalry,* Lull attributes different symbolisms to the weapons knights use while also providing a list of their equipment. Despite the attention with which Don Quixote handles his equipment, his gear might be defined worn out at best: his horse is a battered nag, the visor of the helmet he had before putting a barber's basin on his head was made out of pasteboard and in chapter eight he even breaks his lance, a knightly weapon, being forced to fabricate a makeshift one from a tree branch and the shattered tip. On the other hand, Falstaff's only constant paraphernalia is the bottle of sack; even in the midst of the final battle, when Hal asks him for a sword, Falstaff is

[163] Caxton, *Book of the Order of Chivalry,* p. 24.
[164] Torrance, *The comic hero*, p. 144.

only able to produce a holster in which the pistol is substituted by a bottle of sack (V. iii. 55).

Both characters are not meant to be warriors: while the Shakespearean protagonist would use his words and manipulations to escape from any kind of perilous situation, the Cervantinian one would run directly towards it ending up beaten in the process. Both of them share however a sense of pride, although they have a distinct way of boasting their deeds. Falstaff tends to exaggerate his lies: a clear example is in the fourth scene of the second act where although public and actors alike know the factual reality of how he fled when he was attacked by the disguised prince, he insists on his courageous battle. He amplifies the magnitude of his false duel by increasing the number of enemies he had to face. Falstaff brags about a deed he knows for a fact is a lie, as he does in other circumstances, and even when confronted with counter-proof he succeeds in making his version of the story prevail. On the other hand, Don Quixote boasts a reality that is his own: while he himself is convinced of the veracity of what he has done, the characters that surround him are not. His approach differs substantially from that of Falstaff because he also embeds in his words the style of knight-related literature. Cervantes also combines different elements in the way Don Quixote brags, either with the intent of parody or to emphasize specific traits of knighthood. For example, at the very beginning of his journey, the Knight of the Sad Countenance fantasizes on how a writer would describe such scene and proceeds to depicting himself while using a high-flown style. In other instances, the way he brags is interspersed either with the piety required of a knight or with aggression towards characters who do not believe the authenticity of his deeds and claims. Don Quixote's outburst against others is an exaggeration of the indignation that knights demonstrated in literature upon being challenged, hence this may be perceived as another parodistic element.

Another important aspect regarding knighthood is the ritual of dubbing. Falstaff states that he is a rogue and, because of this, similar rituals are of no consequence for him. Even his self-proclamation as a "squire of the night's body" is merely a wordplay and has only comical value. He is however expeditiously

given by the Prince the control of a small contingent of troops that he will have to enlist:

> Jack, meet me tomorrow in the Temple hall
> At two o'clock in the afternoon.
> There shalt thou know thy charge and there receive
> Money and order for their furniture. (III. iii. 198-201)

No ceremony is presented on stage and it is quite probable that for similar lower charges there were no formalities. The dubbing ceremony is instead paramount for Don Quixote who, after setting out, "suddenly remembered that he was not yet a knight, and according to the laws of chivalry, he could not and must not take up arms against any knight whatsoever."[165] The fact that he was dubbed improperly by an innkeeper could even lead to a counterargument on the validity of his adventures.

One last consideration regarding the relation of the two protagonists with knighthood concerns the figure of the knight-errant. In the case of Don Quixote it is clear what his intentions are as he repeatedly states them: "I am a knight from La Mancha named Don Quixote, and it is my calling and profession to travel throughout the world righting wrongs and redressing injuries"[166]. Welsh gives a more profound insight on this process of traveling throughout the world:

> knights errant mediate between bygone days and the present but still more evidently between here and there. Typically they roam upon the highways or in a wilderness; their transitional role is played in borderlands, in the space between civilization and open country. […] Marginal achievements require a marginal setting, far enough away to find plentiful injustices but near enough to civilization to make the quest meaningful.[167]

This introspective view places an emphasis on the wandering of the knight, or his being errant, and establishes that it is not limited to spatiality, but also to time.

[165] Cervantes, Part I, Ch. 2, p. 34.
[166] Ibid. Part I, Ch. 19, p. 122-123.
[167] Welsh, *Reflections on the Hero as Quixote*, p. 70.

Similar to what has been seen with the literary figure of the knight in the Carolingian and Arthurian cycles, their stories refer to a past era.

A divergence point may be seen with the two characters in these different types of errantry. Upon considering the temporal aspect, Don Quixote always refers to that golden age of knighthood, a past based on books that he perceives as truthful; he even repeatedly states that his mission is not only to right the wrongs and redress injuries, but also to "revive the age of gold"[168] of knighthood. On the other hand Falstaff is more focused on self-preservation; from a temporal perspective this may be interpreted as an outlook towards his present or even his future. When confronted with the spatial distancing between civilization and highways or wilderness that Welsh analyzes, there is yet another point of divergence: Falstaff intention as a "highwayman" is to rob other people considering the fact that what he does is for own-interest whereas Don Quixote's intentions, although meant to uphold justice, always result in doing more harm than not. In other words the intentions of the two characters contrast. An episode from Sydney Painter's study on the life of William Marshal might add clarity to what motivated knights in reality; since after a long battle the young knight William Marshal had not taken any ransom from the enemies he had conquered, the Earl of Essex reminded him that for them "war was a business as well as a path to fame"[169]. This point could distinguish between the nature of reality that Falstaff perceives and the fictitious nature of knighthood books that constitute Don Quixote's vie of the world. This separation would also justify the Shakespearean character's self-preservation and manipulation for personal interests as well as unveil the motives behind the Cervantinian protagonist's actions. Don Quixote's reality is based on books and as such the materialist element is either inexistent or veiled because their objective was to depict an idealist world based on heroism.

Furthermore, there is a different layer in the representation of highwayman as Hapgood notes:

[168] Cervantes, Part I, Ch. 20, p. 175.
[169] Painter, *William Marshal*, p. 22.

> The contemporary glamor of the highwayman, for example, is basic to the humor of the Gadshill affair. Highway robbery, Aydelotte shows, was "a kind of thieving which seems to have been considered fit for a gentleman". Because it required a high degree of courage as well as craft, it stood preeminent among the various "laws" of the Elizabethan underworld. […] Falstaff certainly possesses the wit for this calling, and the rank. His manhood, fortitude, courage, and boldness, however, are something else again; and Shakespeare makes the most of the disparity between Falstaff and the glamorous role he assumes.[170]

This romanticized aspect of the courageous highwayman, almost recalling the figure of Robin Hood, creates however a contrast with Falstaff. His wit is better suited for verbal interactions and his courage is emphasized by his bragging rather than his actions.

With the considerations of what has been explained in the second chapter, the following step of this comparison is to examine the behavior of the two protagonists and their relation to the theme of heroism. In Lull's words, a knight "ought more to doubte the blame of the people and his dishonoure / than he shold the perylle of dethe"[171], hence there is no greater shame for a knight than dishonour. Falstaff does not consider honour as a virtue: in fact, he says that it is merely a word, no more than air. For this reason he may be considered as an unheroic knight. It is probably debatable to consider him a coward, although he avoids fighting by any means necessary, but what seems evident is that he values life more than an honourable death; furthermore, he is the first one to joke about his own shortcomings. As Torrance explains, "Falstaff is impervious to mockery because he laughs unrestrainedly at himself and immune to ignominy because he makes it his glory."[172] The Shakespearean protagonist is also concerned, as previously explained, about his personal gain: upon recruiting the soldier for his contingent, he deliberately selects wealthy people so that he may accept their bribes. In a critical situation when the country is in revolt, Falstaff's speculation results in him leading an army of unfitted soldiers of whom he says himself "indeed I had the most them out of prison" (IV. ii. 40-41). He understands perfectly

[170] Hapgood, "*Falstaff's Vocation"*, pp. 92-93.
[171] Caxton, *Book of the Order of Chivalry,* p. 62.
[172] Torrance, *The comic hero*, p. 124.

well that the men he recruited will eventually die because of this and even cynically tells the Prince “Tut, tut, good enough to toss; food for powder, food for powder. They’ll fill a pit as well as better. Tush, man, mortal men, mortal men” (IV. ii. 64-66). His repetition may be interpreted also a sign of feeling pity on his behalf but, more than not, these lines represent a firm grasp on reality. Falstaff’s actions also satirize the well-known abuses of the Elizabethan recruiting system, but from the character’s point of view they merely represent a way to assure his own survival.

On the other hand, Don Quixote vehemently abhors dishonour and in fact would face any perilous situation to contrast any kind of affront. Nevertheless, he only perceives said signs of disrespect because of the reality he created for himself and many of the characters he faces are innocent. These kind of confrontations set the basis for the knight’s madness and as such for the comic aspect they create. In Sobré’s words, “it is not a realistic portrayal of life that brings about the figure of the mad country gentleman; it is the upside-down hero who causes well founded reality to enter the pages of the book.”[173] His actions are heroic in his own perception yet they are not so for the characters he encounters and for this reason he is an upside-down hero.

Maurice Bowra explains this by analysing heroic poetry:

> Aa central principle it is that the great man must pass through an ordeal to prove his worth and this is almost necessarily some kind of violent action, which not only demands courage, endurance, and enterprise, but, since it involves the risk of life, makes him show to what lengths he is prepared to go in pursuit of honor. For this reason heroic poetry may be concerned with any action in which a man stakes his life on his ideal of what he ought to be. The most obvious field for such action is battle, and with battle much heroic poetry deals.[174]

Unlike Falstaff who bases his enterprises on half-lies and would not take risks, Don Quixote is in fact courageous, continuously puts himself in danger believing in his noble cause and his endurance is remarkable. Even though the

[173] Sobré, “*Don Quixote, the Hero Upside-Down”*, p. 139.
[174] Bowra, *Heroic Poetry*, p. 48.

Cervantinian protagonist would stake his life on his ideals, he is put however out of place because of the relation between the past he sees and the present he is in. While "heroes awake not only interest in their doings but admiration and even awe for themselves"[175], the only interest Don Quixote receives is because of his madness.

Another point of interest for this analysis is the element of modern anti-heroism. While this is a genre that developed in the period of dissolution after the Second World War and it would be erroneous to retroactively consider it in a previous time frame, there are in fact important characteristics that may be thus analyzed. Just as Bowra admonishes, it is difficult to distinguish between what is considered heroic and what is considered unheroic:

> The lines of demarcation separating the heroic from the unheroic have become blurred. […] Ninetieth- and twentieth- century literature is moreover crowded with weak, ineffectual, pale, humiliated, self-doubting, inept, occasionally abject characters – often afflicted with self-conscious and paralyzing irony, yet at times capable of unexpected resilience and fortitude. Such characters do not conform to traditional models of heroic figures; they even stand in opposition to them. But there can be great strength in that opposition. Implicitly or explicitly, they cast doubt on values that have been taken for granted, or were assumed to be unshakable.[176]

A first important point to examine is the resilience of the protagonists. While Falstaff, recognizing his own mortality, escapes when he is in danger and even hides under a dead body for survival's sake, Don Quixote is repeatedly beaten up because of how he ill-interprets reality, but never ceases to rise up again. While the approach of the two characters is directly opposite, they both show a certain degree of fortitude. Another point worth mentioning is the fact that anti-heroes, through their actions, cast doubt on certain values as Bowra mentioned. In the case of Don Quixote this may be perceived in the fact that he sees those values in a past time, more precisely in the golden age of knighthood. Falstaff on the other hand questions certain principles in a broader way, for instance when

[175] Bowra, *Heroic Poetry*, p. 91.
[176] Brombert, *In praise of antiheroes*, p. 2.

he ponders on the significance of honor: “Modern anti-heroism in the early twentieth century is a response to the uncertainties of people about traditional values”[177].

A further perspective may be analyzed in regards with the character of the pícaro. As Molho argued[178], although Cervantes was mindful of this theme, the knight-errant Don Quixote did not pertain to this category. It is important to mention that “Lazarillo was translated into English in 1586, and from its great popularity and an allusion in Much Ado about Nothing we can conclude that Shakespeare very probably knew the book.”[179] As such there are certain characteristics derived from the picaresque genre that intersect with Falstaff as Herbert point out:

> Typical of the *picaro*'s behavior, Falstaff's deeds seem devoid of ambition. What he takes, he consumes. [...] When he appears in Act Iv, he has already managed to convert into cash his authority to levy troops: 'I have got in exchange of a hundred and fifty soldiers three hundred and odd pounds.' He speaks of impressing 'a commodity of warm slaves', and commodity they have been for him as he earns a speedy profit on trading them (IV.2.I3). […] This attitude toward other people, one which by implication denies to them any value above the material and finds its expression in a diction which equates people with stuff, is, as we saw earlier, a hallmark of the picaro's sensibility and language. Falstaff's criteria of value are precisely those of the picaro - does it provide, does it contribute to survival?[180]

[177] Neimneh, “*The Anti-Hero in Modernist Fiction”*, p. 75.
[178] Molho, *Introducción al pensamiento picaresco,* p. 124.
[179] Rothschild, “*Falstaff and the Picaresque Tradition”*, p. 14. A/N: 'Ho, now you strike like the blind man. 'Twas the boy that stole your meat, and you'll beat the post' (Much Ado about Nothing, 1. I . 84). The reference has all the elements of an episode in Lazarillo, but no exact parallel. In his New Variorum edition of the play (Philadelphia, 1871) H. H. Furness notes that the fit is not right. He continues: 'It is possible, however, that this horrid practical joke of Lazarillo may be the material out of which Benedict's story was made. There is no jest at all resembling either of them [the version in Lazarillo and that in Much Ado] in The Hundred Merry Tales or in any of the numerous Jest-books, reprinted by W. C. Hazlitt. At the same time, we must remember that Lazarillo de Tormes was translated in 1586 by David Rowland, and has been always a popular, well-known book, as is proved by its very many editions. Possibly, the foregoing story may have been floating in Shakespeare's memory and he "twisted so fine a story" to suit the occasion' (p. 78, note).
[180] Ibid. p. 18.

Falstaff's materialistic self-interest and instinct of preservation however would not make of him a full-fledged pícaro; because of the way he is able to encompass different roles, he is also able to assume the picaresque one in particular. As such, his catechism would merely represent an echo of the genre. Paradoxically, through this consideration, Falstaff would be closer to the figure of the Spanish pícaro than Don Quixote mainly because of the latter's constructed sense of sense of altruism. Don Quixote would perceive in Falstaff's behavior an ignoble and loathsome approach, to be disdained by a true knight.

The representation and interpretation of reality are key factors upon considering both characters: Falstaff is fully aware of his reality, mocks it, exaggerates it and manipulates half-truths and half-lies to his own advantage, whereas Don Quixote creates a different reality built on his own fictitious perception that is based on knight-related books and because of this he is considered mad.

There is an evident gap between the reality represented in Cervantes's masterpiece, that could also be representative of the authors' concrete life, and the one that Don Quixote creates for himself. In the knight's perspective, these two segments merge creating a different dimension; thus, knight-related literature also limits his view:

> *Don Quijote* creates a literary world, showing us that literature can encompass everything. Literature is a total reality, different from so-called reality but a reality nonetheless, and *Don Quijote* teaches us that this literary totality depends not so much on the resources of the other reality as on those of literary reality. The realistic novelists of the nineteenth century attempted to recreate objective reality through the written word. Cervantes told us early in the seventeenth century that this is impossible; that is, he told us what the avant-garde novelists of the twentieth century are espousing: the literary analogue of objective reality cannot nor should it strive to be exact, and to a certain extent, an exaggeration of the differences may be more effective than a close approximation.[181]

[181] Friedman, "*La casa de los celos: Cervantes' dramatic anomaly"* in Criado (edited by) *M. Cervantes su obra y su mundo*, pp. 281-282.

Friedman argues that the objective reality, which realism advocated for later on, and what should be considered a faithful representation, is unattainable; Cervantes instead projects his protagonists towards literature and towards the past. The innumerous fragmentations and amplifications of realities created by Cervantes, as mentioned previously, are also important: not only is the authorship made voluntarily dubious by the introduction of Cide Hamete Benengeli, but Cervantes mentions himself and Avellaneda within *Don Quixote*. This distortion creates a further metafictional reality in a book that, by its nature, sees a protagonist who does not distinguish between fiction and reality. Lastly, to add an even more profound layer to this metafictional stratification, Cervantes adds certain characters such as Ginés de Pasamonte, possibly a satire of the real Jerónimo de Pasamonte although not demonstrated, and the fictional character of Álvaro Tarfe, a friend of the Don Quixote from Avellaneda's apocryphal version. The knight of the Sad Countenance does not distinguish between these different layers; in fact, the biggest limitation of creating the perception of the world he produced based on kinghood literature is that he does not differentiate between literary characters and historical figures, as shows the following passage:

> —Pues yo —replicó don Quijote— hallo por mi cuenta que el sin juicio y el encantado es vuestra merced, pues se ha puesto a decir tantas blasfemias contra una cosa tan recebida en el mundo y tenida por tan verdadera, que el que la negase, como vuestra merced la niega, merecía la mesma pena que vuestra merced dice que da a los libros cuando los lee y le enfadan. Porque querer dar a entender a nadie que Amadís no fue en el mundo, ni todos los otros caballeros aventureros de que están colmadas las historias, será querer persuadir que el sol no alumbra, ni el yelo enfría, ni la tierra sustenta; porque ¿qué ingenio puede haber en el mundo que pueda persuadir a otro que no fue verdad lo de la infanta Floripes y Guy de Borgoña, y lo de Fierabrás con la puente de Mantible, que sucedió en el tiempo de Carlomagno, que voto a tal que es tanta verdad como es ahora de día? Y si es mentira, también lo debe de ser que no hubo Héctor, ni Aquiles, ni la guerra de Troya, ni los Doce Pares de Francia, ni el rey Artús de Ingalaterra, que anda hasta ahora convertido en cuervo, y le esperan en su reino por momentos.[182]

[182] Cervantes, Part I, Ch. 49, pp. 505-506. "Well, I for my part," said Don Quixote, "find that the one who is mad and bewitched is none other than your grace, for you have ventured to utter all

In this case, Don Quixote is arguing with a priest on literary reality and is baffled when the truthfulness of knight-related books is questioned. He places side by side figures such as Amadís de Gaula and Guy of Burgundy, Achilles and Charlemagne and so forth; fiction and reality intertwine in his mind and these characters are equally real. For the Cervantinian protagonist it is enough to believe in the narrations to make them true and it is not an isolated instance and this concept is repeated by the knight throughout the book

Don Quixote's perceived reality is only possible because it enters in conflict with the common reality of the other characters of the book. The complexity of the text is aggravated when considering the third level of reality, that of the reader, as Friedman points out:

> The *choques* of *Don Quijote* all have to do with reality, from a certain perspectives a forgotten element in the novel. Cervantes' protagonist leaves what may be termed concrete reality to enter a literary reality, or rather, a fiction. And it is precisely this fiction which forms the basis of Cervantes' statement a brilliantly ambiguous fiction which serves as an appropriate analogue of the mistermed objective reality and challenges the reader's conception of reality.[183]

Not only does Don Quixote create his own reality, but by doing so he also challenges the perspective of the readers. Stern refers to this phenomenon as a solipsism but also provides a counterargument to what has been said; he states

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those blasphemies against an institution that is so well received by the world and considered so authentic that anyone who would deny it, as you have done, deserves the same punishment you say you give the books you read that make you angry, for to attempt to convince anyone that there never was an Amadís or any of those other venturer knights, with whom the histories are overflowing, is like trying to persuade him that the sun does not shine, ice is not cold, and the earth does not sustain life. What intellect anywhere could persuade a person that what happened between Princess Floripes and Guy of Burgundy was untrue, as well as the episode of Fierabrás and the bridge at Mantible, which took place in the days of Charlemagne? I swear by all that is holy that it is as true as the fact that it is now day; but if it were not true, then there must never have been a Hector or an Achilles, or a Trojan War, or the Twelve Peers of France, or a King Arthur, who was changed into a raven and has remained so to this very day, when his return to his kingdom is expected momentarily."

[183] Friedman, *La casa de los celos: Cervantes' dramatic anomaly* in Criado (edited by) *M. Cervantes su obra y su mundo*, p. 283.

that the model Don Quixote has fabricated for himself is functional as long as it does not enter in contact with others perspectives:

> the author's (Cervantes) stratagem is to encourage the solipsistic claim, and in following it up to falsify it. For the barber's basin as Cervantes presents it isn't an isolated bit of reality for very long, and as soon as it makes its appearance as the property of people who live, and are shown to live, outside of Don Quixote's noble vision, it becomes again the barber's basin it has always been. The claim on behalf of the solipsism is made – it couldn't otherwise be falsified; the life of Don Quixote is a challenge (among the most poignant in all literature) to our customary notions of reality, but the challenge is rebutted at every point. Don Quixote leads his stories against a multiplicity of facts, of which the fact that the barber's basin is a barber's basin is one. As the objective reality is established, so its subjective totality (the false, unstable totality of solipsism) breaks up into a series of misunderstandings, misinterpretations, and mistakes, for these alone are the forms under which solipsism becomes available to the realistic mode: the delusion which realism portrays is never total. […] Each catastrophe is the necessary practical proof – and realism requires and is susceptible to no other – that the 'reality' Don Quixote has constructed in his mind form the debris of old books doesn't work. Or rather, that it works only so long as it doesn't come into sustained contact with the 'constructs' of other minds, 'constructs' which have the advantage of being shared by many people, a whole age (at which point it ceases to be relevant to call them 'constructs').[184]

If Don Quixote creates his own reality based on chivalric books, Falstaff understands his own in its entirety and multiplicity but choses to alter it through half-lies and half-truths. While Don Quixote is of one mindset and has to face a multiplicity of realities, Falstaff has one reality and faces it by amplifying his personality to the extent of interpreting a multitude of roles. Falstaff's fabrications have the function to manipulate the circumstances of that only reality to his liking and advantage:

> All life for Falstaff is a play outside time; in making the play overt, however, he seals his triumph by imposing his theatrical terms on the others. Their meager

[184] Stern, *On Realism*, pp. 144-145.

> facts have failed to trammel his outrageous fictions, so fiction will now reign unchallenged.[185]

By manipulating half-truths and half-lies, Falstaff can adapt and assume different roles. His realism derives from the fact that he is not tethered to philosophical concepts, although there is a certain shrewdness in his observations, he is more concerned with his own mortality and personal gain. Furthermore, Falstaff's true weapon are words; he does not merely use lies, but rather he exaggerates them. His continuous use of hyperboles is emphasized by his corporal abundance and is a combination of layers of representation:

> He[Falstaff] is particularly skilled in hyperbole, or what we would ordinarily call exaggeration, or just plain lying. His speeches are self-conscious thrustings beyond the ordinary and commonplace. The fact that he is a fat man gives a literal meaning to his hyperbole. He is a gormandizer with an unquenchable appetite for food and drink.[186]

Another keyword in the analysis of the representation of reality within the two literary works is counterfeit. Don Quixote perceives a different reality and Falstaff manipulates lies to create his, but there are two exceptions that should be considered. After counterfeiting himself as a dead soldier in order to survive, Falstaff rises up and observes the dead body of Hotspur. His reflections are related with the ephemeral nature of life:

> Counterfeit? I lie, I am no counterfeit. To die is to be a counterfeit, for he is but the counterfeit of a man who hath not the life of a man. But to counterfeit dying, when a man thereby liveth, is to be no counterfeit, but the true and perfect image of life indeed. (V. iv. 110-128)

[185] Torrance, *The comic hero*, p. 126.
[186] Charney, *Shakespeare's Style,* p. xvi.

Falstaff underlines that he has survived by feigning death and by doing so his reality persists; it is yet another instance of the importance of self-preservation. He perceives that if one were to willingly die in the name of honour, he would counterfeit, or deny, his own life. Falstaff's actions in this regard are the opposite of Don Quixote's. There is however an exception where the Cervantinian knight counterfeits his own reality: in chapter twenty-five he voluntarily decides to act as a madman and by doing so demonstrate his devotion to Dulcinea. "El toque está en desatinar sin ocasión y dar a entender a mi dama que si en seco hago esto ¿qué hiciera en mojado?"[187]. His self-imposed madness is a counterfeit of his normal condition, which paradoxically is perceived by others as being mad.

However, Falstaff succeeds in going beyond the concept of counterfeit as opposed to death. There are other instances in the play where imitations are portrayed, this being done by other characters. This aspect was considered by Richard McGuire upon analyzing the importance of the play-within-the-play. The most important instances of counterfeit are thus summarized and explained beginning with fourth scene in act two where Hal and Falstaff interchange roles:

> Falstaff's last remark to Hal before the sheriff enters after the play-within-the-play is, "Never call a true piece of gold a counterfeit." The word "counterfeit" anticipates Falstaff's long soliloquy on "counterfeiting" in Act V after he has pretended to be dead. But this connection is perhaps the simplest of all of them, for "counterfeiting" is one of the central images in the play. Nearly every main character at one time or another is involved in such an action. The King was a pretender to the throne who usurped Richard II's rule; before he was king, he pretended to be kinglike when Richard was most unkinglike. The King has several "counterfeits" dressed in his colors and armor at the battle. Edmund Mortimer is also a pretender to the throne. Glendower, for all his brave words, does not appear at the battle on the pretense that he cannot raise an army for fourteen days. There is Falstaff, whose "counterfeiting" leaves us with a finally ambiguous character. We know that he is the representative of vice, but he is also "Sir John Falstaff, Knight", and a member of the King's party. He says of himself when he is "counterfeiting" the King, "If that man should be lewdly given, he deceiveth me" (II. iv. 42I-422). At the battle, he pre- tends to have been killed and then to have

[187] Cervantes, Part I, Ch. 25, p. 236. "The essential thing is to go mad for no reason at all, to make my lady understand that if I can do such a thing when dry, what can't I do when wet?"

> killed Hotspur. The dual nature of his character leaves us with an ambiguous figure, and when Prince John says of Falstaff's lie, "This is the strangest tale that ever I heard" (V. V. I53), our only reply is Hal's: "This is the strangest fellow, brother John."[188]

The ubiquitous presence of counterfeit within the *The first part of King Henry IV* is important because it also represents Falstaff's aptitude to embody the ability of imitation, especially through his presence, and make it reverberate throughout the entire play.

The fragmented nature of reality of *Don Quixote* derives from its form and content, but the intention behind them remains to be discussed. While comparing the Cervantinian knight to other literary works such as *The Pickwick papers*, *Madame Bovary* or *The idiot*, Alexander Welsh inquires if the intent was truly satirical:

> Watchful readers have long observed that the priest and the barber preserve from the flames *Los cuatro de Amadís de Gaula* and other books that have inspired Don Quixote, and the attack on romances implicit everywhere in the novel is partially dispersed by the discriminating literary discussions. The hero has learned what he knows of the world not only from bad romances but from the best.[…] Don Quixote and, to some extent, Joseph Andrews may be called satires on the confusion of literature with reality, but further reflection shows the inadequacy of this formula also. […] As long as some of the behavior that Don Quixote imitates from books is meritorious (and most of the behavior he admires is meritorious), the resulting action differs from satire. Books usually do uphold ideals for us to follow, and Don Quixote's actions therefore call into question more than simply a confusion of book and reality. If the formula is broadened to say that quixotic fictions are satires on human aspiration, it may loosely cover Don Quixote and other quixotic novels, but the world "satire" becomes less useful, since Cervantes and his followers do not attack efforts to behave ideally.[189]

Satire would thus be an exaggeration and would not fit the character and behavior of Don Quixote. Although the categorization is not that of satire, the irony and

[188] McGuire, "*The Play-within-the-Play in 1 Henry IV"*, p. 52.
[189] Welsh, *Reflections on the Hero as Quixote*, p. 18.

comical value of the text is evident. Furthermore, Cervantes used irony not only to challenge the readers view, as previously reported, but it also had a didactic effect, as Williamson points out:

> Con la ironía narrativa pudo reconciliar Cervantes la admiración con la verosimilitud, resolviendo en la práctica uno de los mayores problemas literarios de la época. La admiración solía buscarse en lo inusitado y extraño, creándose un gusto fácil por los sucesos fantásticos. La ironía, sin embargo, siempre parte de lo conocido sólo para contradecirlo con lo insospechado sin tener que incurrir en lo inverosímil. El giro sorpresivo de la ironía le permite a Cervantes tanto asombrar como aleccionar sin salirse del marco de la verosimilitud ni someterse a las perspectivas del vulgo. Al mismo tiempo, el esfuerzo por rebasar las miras de sus lectores representa un nuevo aguijón creativo para la imaginación del escritor.[190]

The irony that challenges the readers expectation is the very same that refers to a past in which the behavior of Don Quixote was followed not only by him but by all society. While in the case of the knight of the Sad Countenance irony is something that is projected upon the character, with Shakespeare it is Falstaff who projects irony through his manipulations. The affinity between Don Quixote's truths and Falstaff's lies is also mentioned by Torrance:

> Therefore, although his insistent sincerity sets Don Quixote apart from the great virtuosos of mendacity from Odysseus to Falstaff, his truth paradoxically resembles their lies in its challenge to the accepted platitudes and practices of his age. A madman's truth is by nature inventive; it complicates reality by multiplying its potential significations in defiance of single-minded attempts to

[190] Williamson, *"Debajo de mi manto, al rey mato": inspiracion e ironía en el Quijote* in Criado (edited by) *M. Cervantes su obra y su mundo*, p. 598. Translation: Cervantes was able to reconcile authenticity with admiration through the use of narrative irony, practically solving one of the biggest literary problems of his epoch. Admiration was usually sought in the unusual, creating an easy taste for the fantastic genre. Irony, nevertheless, always begins with what is known to then contradict it with the unsuspected without no necessity the unusual. The surprising effect of irony allowed Cervantes to both astonish and teach (the reader), without abandoning authenticity or subduing to the perspective of the masses. At the same time, the effort to exceed the reader's perspective represents a new creative stimulus for the imagination of the writer.

> circumscribe it within conventional limits. It is a truth that affirms imagination and discloses itself through masquerade.[191]

I would surmise that Falstaff and Don Quixote equally create a different reality for themselves: in the first case, it is a reality of fabrication that features the use of lies for survival and personal gain, whereas in the latter case it is a reality of fiction, one that acts almost as an escape to a past and better dimension and that does not accept its current conditions. A key element that may be helpful to distinguish between these two dimensions is awareness. This awareness is shown by Falstaff through what he says, his puns and jokes, his witty remarks:

> Although he self-consciously fashions himself after literary and cultural traditions, Falstaff's sense of self is nevertheless not established through acts of faithful reminiscence. On the contrary, Falstaff exhibits at every turn an awareness that he deals in imaginary commodities – in jokes, speeches, performances erasing and replacing the ones that went before – just as the early modern theater did.[192]

The concept of awareness of a fictional character is rendered perceptible when it becomes an embodied experience as Francis Knapp points out:

> Yet Falstaff's and Cleopatra's awareness and pleasure are of course fictions – two more fictive properties, in themselves no more or less concrete than grossness or cowardice of "infinite variety". What they lack is precisely what makes nonfictive instances of awareness and pleasure genuinely concrete – quite simply, the fact of embodiment. Real awareness, real pleasure, are concrete precisely because they are not just concepts but are embodied experiences, which in this context in only to say that, unlike concepts, they are inseparably bound ti the spatial and temporal conditions of the bodies in which they occur.[193]

Falstaff is aware of his own schemes and to a degree it might be argued that he was also written to be aware of his own fictional nature; he understand his very nature of a character and through this he is able adapt to different roles. On the

[191] Torrance, *The comic hero*, p. 164.
[192] Karremann, "*The Drama of Memory in Shakespeare's History Plays"*, p. 113.
[193] Knapp, *Literary Interest: The limits of Anti-formalism*, p. 64.

other hand Don Quixote does not possess the same cognition because his very awareness is within the reality he has created. While analyzing the carnival elements present in Shakespeare's *Henry IV*, Hugh Grady makes a comparison that might be helpful in regards to what has been said thus far:

> Falstaff "creates for himself and his companions a fictional, utopian projection of self similar to that of his thin counterpart in Don Quixote, the knight-errant, with, of course, important similarities to Sancho Panza, for Falstaff's utopian self is a pampered, self-indulgent recipient of bodily pleasures more like Quixote's squire in that regard than like his thin master. […] Unlike Quixote's mad vision, however, Falstaff's seems to contain within itself some tacit knowledge of its own fictionality, some unspoken acknowledgement with his fellows in fantasy that this is, after all, a grand joke, based actually on an inversion of the situation which everyone, including Falstaff, knows to be the case.[194]

A more introspective view on what has been said regarding the different perception of realities that the two characters are subjected to and the concept of counterfeit might be explored with the notion of representation from a semiotics point of view. "Representation is not, however, an open-ended process. It is constrained by social conventions, by communal experiences, and by other contextual factors."[195] The correlation between signs and ideals is accordingly noted by Marcel Danesi:

> Signs give shape to formless ideas, not in an arbitrary fashion, but rather in response to inferential processes that are tied to our experience of reality. Knowledge systems vary throughout the world, but on closer scrutiny, this variation is superficial. Beneath the surface of these systems are sign creation processes that reflect universals regarding how reality is perceived. The problem is that we never get the 'whole picture' at once. This is why special theories of the physical universe are possible and highly useful whereas general ones are not. In other words, our knowledge systems can only give us partial glimpses of reality.[196]

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[194] Grady, "*Falstaff: Subjectivity between the Carnival and the Aesthetic"*, p. 614.
[195] Danesi, *The quest for meaning - A guide to semiotic theory and practice*, p. 123.
[196] Ibid. 133.

Danesi further emphasizes the importance of coincidence when experiencing reality; it is a type of serendipity with which signs are contemporarily formed are interpreted. A similar deconstruction may be applied to the characters of both Falstaff and Don Quixote. On one hand, it may be inferred that the Spaniard knight lacks the ability to make new discoveries: since the world he projects for himself is based on the antiquated mentality of knighthood and predated books, he is unable to shape new ideas regarding his world. Don Quixote's experiences, although fragmentary because of the way Cervantes structured the story and supplemented it with minute details of both fiction and reality, are crystalized in a mythical past and as such he does not even poses the 'partial glimpses of reality' Danesi describes. On the other hand, Falstaff's ability to exaggerate reality and give the 'formless ideas' a shape of his choosing would explain why he is still perceived as such a complete character; he is surrounded mostly by characters who, compared to him, seem almost flat and this also enhances his abundance on stage. The 'glimpses of reality' that are hence portrayed for the audience in *Henry IV First Part* are not the separate ones of each individual, but rather an engrossed perception of Falstaff's reality or of his reality imposing on that of the other characters.

These are the cornerstone elements that in different degrees intersect and also distinguish the characters of Falstaff and Don Quixote. They are both knights and not knights, improper heroes of their own stories and fabricators of either one different reality or a plethora of realities, soothed for themselves and their own needs.

Chapter Four: Conclusions

The aim of this dissertation was to corroborate the different correlations and divergent points between the characters of John Falstaff and Don Quixote within the themes of knighthood and anti-heroism. As such, the first part was dedicated to researching and better understanding these topics. The evolution of knighthood as a socio-historical cast spans in a timeframe that may be identified beginning in the eleventh- and lasting until the sixteenth-century, when after a period of decline lost its importance and became a more symbolic hierarchy. This period of decadence was probably due to a variety of factors, such as a shift in military tactics that also implemented countermeasures for cavalry, and a different perception of moral values. It is also important to mention that this phenomenon was occurring, even if in different degrees, in almost the entirety of Medieval Europe. For the purposes of the research, it was important to identify the most accurate information and summarize the key concepts that were subsequently used in the analysis. Ramon Lull's *Book of the Order of Chivalry*, written between 1279 and 1283, provided an important historical document on the symbolisms, equipment and procedures of knighthood; this material was then cross-referenced with in-depth analysis by important scholars such as Mario Domenichelli, Maurice Keen and Johan Huizinga among others. The first chapter hence also explored the importance of the ceremony of dubbing, how knights used war-like tournaments not just for practicing and honing their skill but also to make a profit and finally the decay of knighthood. A further point of speculation concerned the figure of the knight-errants, typically represented in books and not reality; this analysis led to infer a strong connection between the knight-errant and the temporal dimension of a bygone day, a consideration that was useful upon deconstructing the character of Don Quixote.

One important consideration that emerged from the first chapter was the fact that after the eleventh century, especially in the Arthurian and Carolingian cycles as well as in other books, the theme of knighthood underwent a continuous amalgamation between reality and literature. It was only in a second moment, when chivalric ideals started to decline, that this back and forth started to subside.

The second chapter was supposed to analyze the theme of anti-heroism and its ramifications. To do so, it was first important to understand the origins of the hero; the research led to scholars such as Dean Miller and Maurice Bowra and it was mainly concerned with epic poetry. To arrive at the figure of the anti-hero based on these considerations proved more difficult; it is important to note that anti-heroism is a genre that developed especially during the period of dissolution after the Second World War. In other words it would have been anachronistic to identify John Falstaff and Don Quixote with similar characters; following this reasoning, different semantics were employed. Falstaff was referenced to as an "unheroic knight" given his sense of self-preservation and lack of heroism, whereas Don Quixote was identified as a "hero upside-down" based on J. M. Sobré's article. The effect of the Spaniard knight's actions, despite his heroic behavior and sense of altruism, is always reversed

While researching the theme of anti-heroism, the dissertation encountered a noticeable lack on the subject. Although scholars such as Victor Brombert or David Simmons studied the figure of the anti-hero in separate and more contemporary literary genres, for instance in correlation with the American novel of the Twentieth century, their research has not proven as useful for this dissertation. As such, a more in-depth analysis of the general traits of the anti-hero, their evolution, or even of their constituents, may prove interesting for research topics. These studies could even be applied to previous literary iterations; while they would not symbolize a former genesis of the anti-hero mainly because of the precise collocation in a fixed historical and literary timeframe, they could however enable a diverse interpretation of certain literary characters.

The third and final part of the dissertation was aimed at understanding the two characters before comparing them. John Falstaff was analyzed primarily as a historical figure based on Alice-Lyle Scoufos's book *Shakespeare's typological satire: a study of the Falstaff-Oldcastle problem*; these considerations were then expanded upon with an examination on the quotes from the first part of *Henry the Fourth*. Similarly, aspects relating to knighthood and heroism were quoted from *Don Quixote* when investigating the figure of the Knight of the Sad Countenance.

The fulcrum of the cross-reference between the two characters was hence based on three main points: their correlation with knighthood, their relation with the theme of the anti-hero and the interpretation of reality in the two literary works.

Whereas Falstaff is able to assume the role of the knight and is even appointed as the general of a contingent of troops, he in fact declares on multiple times his essence of a roguish character; he merely brags about being a knight when he is able to use it towards personal gain. On the other hand, Don Quixote is firmly convinced of his knighthood and attempts repeatedly to demonstrate his worth by constantly interpreting his circumstances to imitate what he has read in books. His attitude, while noble at heart, makes him a knight only in his own constructed reality; the effect of his actions however is always detrimental towards the people he interacts with.

The attitude of the two characters in relation to heroism is almost diametrically opposite: Falstaff would take action only when it would be in his own interest and it may even be argued that he is a coward whereas Don Quixote's intent is genuinely altruistic. Don Quixote embodies the noble traits of a knight, his personality is devoid of malice and would voluntarily risk his life without asking for something in return.

This dissertation has proven that reality and the representation of reality are also important factors when discussing the two characters. Don Quixote succeeds in creating a personal reality that only he is able to perceive; this is not a reinterpretation of the antiquated knight mentality but rather the fact that he immerges himself so much in a fictitious reality based on books that he is unable to distinguish it from his own. Cervantes also creates a greater fragmentary perception of reality through narrative techniques: he attributes the story to Cide Hamete Benengeli, an Arabic writer, inserts real historical characters, directly accuses the apocryphal second part of Avellaneda's *Don Quixote* and so forth. Falstaff, on the other hand, has a certain degree of awareness and it may even be implied by analyzing his monologues that he understands his nature of a theatrical character; because of this self-awareness, he is able to adapt his roles accordingly. This process of counterfeit is also present throughout the entire play: it may be traced for instance in the subverted highway robbery scene, when

Falstaff and Hall mutually change their roles, culminating in the Shakespearean protagonist's monologue on the fact that death is the real counterfeit, for it is the counterfeit of life. Falstaff's rhetoric is also an important component of counterfeit: it is through a process of exaggeration that the he succeeds in getting what he wants.

The last consideration to be made is that the two characters, while sharing various interesting aspects, have an almost opposite approach. Don Quixote is projected towards a mythical past and lives a fragmented reality that only he is able to perceives whereas John Falstaff, because of his sense of self-interest and survival, projects himself towards the future while full-heartedly enjoying his present. Falstaff's reality is one that he deeply understands and manipulates for his own benefit while Don Quixote is immersed in his own without a possibility of escape.

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Riassunto in italiano

L'obbiettivo della ricerca è di esaminare le somiglianze e i punti di divergenza tra Falstaff e Don Chisciotte con particolare enfasi sui temi della cavalleria e dell'antieroe.

La prima parte quindi prevede l'approfondimento del fenomeno della cavalleria. Considerando l'evoluzione storico-culturale di questa classe, un primo problema riscontrato è la delimitazione temporale e geografica della stessa. Gli albori della cavalleria come fenomeno più complesso che semplici guerrieri a cavallo potrebbe essere rintracciati verso la fine del decimo secolo; il periodo di massimo sviluppo si riscontrerebbe tra il 1100 e il 1300, mentre negli anni successivi e fino al sedicesimo secolo è possibile notare un costante declino. Questa decadenza della cavalleria è dovuta a un concatenazione di eventi tra i quali i cambiamenti di carattere strategico-militare, che prevedevano anche l'uso di balestre e alabarde per contrastare l'efficacia e la mobilità delle divisioni equestri, e anche una trasformazione nel sistema di valori. Dopo il quattordicesimo secolo, i cavalieri diventano sempre più rappresentativi e simbolici che parti fondamentali dell'esercito. Da un punto di vista geografico, la cavalleria si è sviluppata nella maggior parte dell'Europa medievale. Considerando la mole di testi e informazioni riguardanti quest'argomento così vasto, è stato importante selezionare i testi più rappresentativi e adatti ai fini della ricerca e concentrare l'attenzione soprattutto sulla Spagna e Inghilterra medievale. *Il libro dell'ordine della cavalleria*, scritto da Raimondo Lullo tra il 1279 e il 1283, si è rivelato utile in quanto non solo indica molti dei rituali e dell'equipaggiamento dei cavalieri, ma provvede anche importanti dettagli sulla simbologia di questi. I paragrafi citati da Lullo sono poi stati confrontati con i lavori di studiosi importanti tra i quali Mario Domenichelli, Maurice Keen e Johan Huizinga. Altri temi sviluppati oltre all'importanza dell'equipaggiamento del cavaliere e alla cerimonia di investitura sono stati l'uso di tornei simili a guerre ai fini non solo dell'addestramento ma anche del guadagno economico e la decadenza della cavalleria. Un ulteriore punto di interesse che è stato analizzato riguarda la figura del cavaliere errante e la sua correlazione con la dimensione

temporale di un passato ideale; le considerazioni ricavate si sono dimostrati utili per la decostruzione del personaggio di Don Chisciotte.

Una argomentazione emersa in base al primo capitolo riguarda il rapporto tra realtà e letteratura: dopo l'undicesimo secolo, soprattutto nei cicli Arturiani e Carolingi, come del resto anche in altri libri di cavalleria, il tema della cavalleria si interseca con quella della realtà storica. In questo primo momento la realtà e la letteratura si influenzavano costantemente prendendo in prestito elementi e comportamenti l'una dall'altra; solo in un secondo momento, con il declino dell'ideale cavalleresco, questo interscambio ha iniziato a diminuire di intensità.

Lo scopo del secondo capitolo è stato quello di approfondire il tema dell'antieroe e le sue ramificazioni. Per fare ciò, è stato importante prima di tutto analizzare la figura dell'eroe a partire dal genere epico; le ricerche di studiosi quali Dean Miller e Maurice Bowra si sono dimostrate fondamentali. È importante sottolineare che la tematica dell'antieroe, oltre ad essere già accennata alla fine del diciannovesimo secolo, si è sviluppata a tutti gli effetti nel periodo di dissoluzione in seguito alla seconda guerra mondiale. Per questo considerazione sarebbe anacronistico identificare i personaggi di Falstaff e Chisciotte come antieroi e si è scelto invece di adoperare una terminologia diversa. Falstaff è stato indicato quindi un cavaliere 'non-eroico' (in inglese 'unheroic knight' identifica meglio il concetto di questa negazione) per via del suo spiccato senso di sopravvivenza e mancanza di eroismo. Don Chisciotte invece, secondo la precisazione di J. M. Sobré, è stato definito un 'eroe al contrario' ("hero upside-down") dato che nonostante il suo comportamento sia eroico, sono le sue circostanza a non richiederlo; l'effetto delle sue azioni, nonostante l'interpretazione di Chisciotte che crea una realtà diversa, è sempre contrario a quello desiderato dal cavaliere.

Il lavoro di ricerca ha riscontrato delle difficoltà a rintracciare materiale per quanto riguarda la categoria dell'antieroe applicata ad altri generi letterari o comunque ad altri personaggi. Anche se questo tema sia stato analizzato separatamente da scrittori come Victor Brombert o David Simmons, i loro studi sono risultati tuttavia incentrati su argomenti diversi, come ad esempio la figura dell'antieroe nella letteratura americana del Novecento, e sono risultati solo

parzialmente utili ai fini di questa tesi. Secondo questa considerazione, la una proposta di un'analisi più approfondita e mirata del genere dell'anti-eroe, o persino dei singoli elementi costitutivi di esso, potrebbe provvedere argomenti di ricerca degni di nota. Queste indagini non vorrebbero indicare in alcun modo una genesi precedente dell'antieroe, bensì uno studio con un cambio di prospettiva di certi personaggi letterari come d'altronde è stato fatto per Don Chisciotte e Falstaff.

L'ultima parte della tesi prevede prima un approccio di ricerca separato sui due personaggi per concludere con il confronto. Di conseguenza è stata studiata la figura storica di John Oldcastle, al quale il personaggio di Falstaff è inspirato, in base al libro di Alice-Lyle Scoufos *Shakespeare's typological satire: a study of the Falstaff-Oldcastle problem*; le considerazioni emerse sono poi state integrate con citazioni e osservazioni a partire da *Enrico IV, Parte prima*. In modo analogo si è indagato sulla figura di Don Chisciotte a partire dal testo e poi integrando saggi e articoli accademici.

Il fulcro dell'analisi comparata tra i due personaggi si è basato su tre punti fondamentali: il loro rapporto con il tema della cavalleria, gli elementi che potrebbero essere ricondotti alla figura dell'antieroe e la interpretazione della realtà all'interno delle due opere.

È stato osservato che mentre Falstaff è in grado di assumere una molteplicità di ruoli, tra i quali quello del cavaliere, e riceve persino il comando di un contingente di truppe, lui stesso dichiara molteplici volte di essere solamente un furfante; vanta doti cavalleresche, che d'altronde non possiede, quando sa di poter approfittare della situazione e ricavare un guadagno. Don Chisciotte è invece fermamente convinto della propria identità cavalleresca a prova ripetutamente a dimostrare il proprio valore e coraggio; affronta situazioni che la sua mente costruisce e percepisce come avventure cavalleresche, ma che sono irreali e alla base hanno solamente le scene dei libri letti dal Don. Il suo atteggiamento, anche se simbolico dell'onore cavalleresco, fa di lui un cavaliere solo nella propria immaginazione; l'effetto delle sue azione è quasi sempre dannoso verso i personaggi con i quali interagisce.

Il comportamento dei due protagonisti in relazione al tema dell'eroismo è quasi diametralmente opposto: Falstaff agirebbe solamente per proteggere i propri interessi o per guadagnarci mentre le intenzioni di Don Chisciotte sono genuinamente altruistiche. Don Chisciotte incorpora le qualità degne di un cavaliere e il suo carattere è privo di malizia o cattive intenzioni; rischierebbe volontariamente la propria vita senza richiedere qualcosa in cambio. Falstaff, da canto suo, afferma l'insensatezza di rischiare la propria vita in nome dell'onore, una qualità che per lui è priva di sostanza, niente di più che semplice aria.

La tesi ha riscontrato un ulteriore punto essenziale per confrontare i due personaggi: la realtà e la sua rappresentazione. Don Chisciotte riesce a creare una realtà personale che solo lui percepisce; non si tratta della reinterpretazione consapevole dell'antica mentalità cavalleresca, bensì della sua totale immersione in una realtà fittizia che si costruisce e che non è in grado di distinguere da quella effettiva. Cervantes inoltre aggiunge una molteplicità di strati a questa realtà mediante tecniche narrative. Sono buoni esempi di ciò l'inserimento dell'arabo Cide Hamete Benengeli come scrittore originale dell'opera e quindi la traduzione di questa, l'uso occasionale di personaggi storici, la diretta accusa da parte dello scrittore alla seconda parte apocrifa del *Don Chisciotte* di Avellaneda e persino l'uso di uno dei personaggi fittizi di questa opera all'interno dell'ultimo capitolo. Falstaff invece predispone di una certa consapevolezza della sua situazione e si potrebbe persino argomentare che si rende conto della propria identità di personaggio teatrale; grazie a questa sua abilità è in grado di interpretare molteplici ruoli e quindi di alterare o 'contraffare' se stesso. Il tema della contraffazione è presente all'interno di tutto l'*Enrico IV*: si può rintracciare nella sovversione dei fatti durante la scena della rapina dove Falstaff rimane a sua volta derubato, è presente quando Falstaff e Hall scambiano i propri ruoli creando una dimensione metateatrale, culminando infine nel monologo con il quale Falstaff indica la morte come la vera contraffazione in quanto essa è la contraffazione dell'uomo vivo. L'abilità retorica di Falstaff è un'altra componente della contraffazione: è attraverso l'esagerazione della realtà che lui riesce a manipolare la situazione e ricavare ciò che vuole.

Una ultima considerazione che la tesi considera importante puntualizzare: nonostante i vari aspetti che i due protagonisti condividono, sono contraddistinti da un atteggiamento quasi diametralmente opposto. Don Chisciotte è proiettato verso un passato quasi mitico e vive una realtà frammentata che solo lui riesce a percepire mentre John Falstaff, per via del suo forte senso di interesse personale e sopravvivenza, si proietta verso il futuro sfruttando al meglio il proprio presente. La realtà di Falstaff è una che lui stesso comprende profondamente e una che riesce a manipolare per il proprio beneficio mentre Don Chisciotte è immedesimato nella propria senza possibilità di scampo.