humanities

MDPI

Article

Trembling Curiosity: Sex and Desire in *El curioso impertinente* and *Carne trémula*

Bruce R. Burningham

Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures, Illinois State University, Normal, IL 61790-4300, USA; burningham@ilstu.edu

Abstract: There is a longstanding connection between "curiosity", "desire", and "sexuality". This connection can be found in texts as diverse as works of scripture like the Hebrew Bible and the Quran as well as in contemporary works of critical theory. Miguel de Cervantes explored such a connection more than four centuries ago in *El curioso impertinente*, an exemplary novella embedded in the 1605 part one of *Don Quixote*. Through a comparative reading of Cervantes's *El curioso impertinent*, Pedro Almodóvar's 1997 film *Carne trémula* (itself a free adaptation of Ruth Rendell's 1986 novel *Live Flesh*), and Luis Buñuel's 1955 film *Ensayo de un crimen*, this essay analyzes the intersection of curiosity and desire—inflected through the lenses of both Girardian and Lacanian theory—in order to explore the fundamental role not just of curiosity in early modern Spain, but also in the representation of modern (and postmodern) sexuality.

Keywords: curiosity; triangular desire; Miguel de Cervantes; *El curioso impertinente*; Pedro Almodóvar; *Carne trémula*; Ruth Rendell; *Live Flesh*; Luis Buñuel; *Ensayo de un crimen*; René Girard; Jacques Lacan

1. Introduction

"Explore your curiosity". So reads the exterior signage of a particular sex shop in a nondescript Midwestern town. Such a tagline, of course, is meant to draw in potential customers by reassuring nice, middle-class passersby that any temptation they may feel to venture inside this establishment is by no means an indication of some presumed prurience but merely a sign of their (perfectly understandable) inquisitiveness. Still, the wording of this inviting euphemism does not prevent readers from correctly understanding this coy turn of phrase to really mean "explore your desire". Thus, this artful tagline reveals the extent to which curiosity and libido are intimately connected, both psychologically and discursively. For instance, Peter Carruthers (2018) notes that "in the burgeoning recent literature on curiosity in cognitive science, curiosity is defined as a *desire* to know or experience things" (p. 132; my emphasis). He then goes on to characterize curiosity as a "desire-like state" that involves what he calls a "physiological *arousal*" (p. 136; original emphasis). But the recognition of the linkage between curiosity and sexual desire is certainly not limited to cognitive science, nor is it particularly new. As Ahmed al-Rahim (2022) notes in an essay on curiosity and the gaze in medieval Islam, "The gaze, or the act of seeing the other and the awareness of being seen, has a storied history in the Islamic tradition. In the Quran, the gaze or glance [...], along with the 'amorous eye' and its attendant curiosity, is associated with the 'lust of the eye' or 'ocular fornication or adultery'" (p. 465). Indeed, within the traditions of all three Abrahamic religions, the connection between curiosity and sexuality can be said to go all the way back to the Garden of Eden[1], where the "forbidden

check for updates

Received: 3 January 2025
Revised: 9 February 2025
Accepted: 10 February 2025
Published: 14 February 2025

Citation: Burningham, Bruce R. 2025. Trembling Curiosity: Sex and Desire in *El curioso impertinente* and *Carne trémula*. *Humanities* 14: 33. https://doi.org/10.3390/h14020033

Copyright: © 2025 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

fruit" symbolizes the temptation of both knowledge and sexuality, since after partaking of the fruit, Adam and Eve are suddenly aware of (and pointedly ashamed of) their nakedness. Moreover, let us not forget that the Hebrew Bible itself also links sexuality and knowledge in its usage of another coy euphemism (often called "carnal knowledge") to describe the sex act.

> "'Knowing' is a euphemism for the sexual act in many languages, deriving from the biblical Hebrew usage. [. . .] Sexual knowledge is the key to the biblical story of Eve. The awareness of sexual difference is the fruit of knowledge, and after the Fall, Genesis imagines sex in a new and striking way: 'And Adam knew Eve his wife'. The metaphor of sex as knowing cannot in this context be accepted as a euphemism—'modesty of language', as some commentators have called it. In the first chapters of Genesis, the same [Hebrew] verb, 'yada', means to know and distinguish between moral categories and to be aware of one's own and another's physical difference (nakedness)." (Donger 2001, n.p.)

And, of course, it is not coincidental that European variants of the 2014 US reality-TV show *Dating Naked* were often titled something like "Adam Seeking Eve" (or, in its Spanish version, just *Adán y Eva*)[2], nor that the name of one particular online adult superstore is precisely named Adam&Eve.com. In this way, we can trace a trajectory that leads directly from curiosity to knowledge to sex (or, conversely, from curiosity to sex to knowledge)[3]. In either case, "curiosity" serves as the prime catalyst in this process.

2. *El curioso impertinente*

As many readers already know, *El curioso impertinente* (sometimes translated into English as the "Tale of Foolish Curiosity") is one of the many intercalated narratives embedded in the 1605 first part of Cervantes's *Don Quixote*. Unlike the other intercalated stories of part one, however, which are narrated when Don Quixote and Sancho encounter some new character who launches into a digressive tale usually unconnected to the mad knight's mission to restore the Age of Chivalry, *El curioso impertinente* exists precisely as an intradiegetic written document[4]. Some thirty-two chapters into part one of *Don Quixote*, the title character and Sancho arrive once more at the inn of Juan Palomeque, this time in the company of Dorotea, the Priest, and the Barber, where they are presented with a trunk (left behind by a prior unnamed traveler) that contains—among other texts—a manuscript titled *El curioso impertinente*. After discussing which of these various texts should be burned, the Priest decides that this particular manuscript, with such an intriguing title, should be read aloud to help them pass the time. In this way, the next three chapters of *Don Quixote* are given over—almost in their entirety—to the text of yet another of the novel's "found" manuscripts (the most important of which, of course, is Cide Hamete Benegeli's original "Don Quixote" manuscript that is said to be found inside a box of rags in a bazaar in Toledo).

Set in Florence, Italy, *El curioso impertinente* tells the story of two friends named Anselmo and Lotario, who are so close, in fact, that everyone in the city simply knows them as "los dos amigos" (the two friends) (Cervantes 1978, 1: 399). At the beginning of the tale, Anselmo falls in love with a beautiful young woman named Camila, whose virtue is beyond reproach, and with whom he soon weds. In response to this marriage, Lotario finds himself in the position of being what we might today call a "third wheel" and thus starts to spend less and less time at Anselmo's house. At this point, however, the story takes an unexpected turn. Anselmo approaches Lotario to enlist him in a plot to test Camila's virtue by asking his friend to try to seduce Camila in his absence. Lotario attempts to dissuade Anselmo from engaging in this foolish and dangerous course of action, but Anselmo will have none of it. Under continued pressure from Anselmo, Lotario outwardly appears to consent to the plan, but then only pretends to seduce Camila by telling Anselmo that he has done so and that she has passed the test with flying colors. When Anselmo

eventually discovers that Lotario has made no bona fide attempts at the seduction of his wife, he reproves his friend, who finally—and genuinely—acquiesces. The rest of the tale plays out (in brief) as follows. Lotario eventually succeeds in seducing Camila. Attempting to create subterfuge that will keep Anselmo from discovering the truth, Camila and her maid Leonela stage a scene in which Lotario pretends to woo Camila and in which she pretends to stab herself (actually drawing blood) in order to convince Anselmo that she has remained faithful to him. Later, when Anselmo catches a glimpse of Leonela's lover exiting the house early one morning, Camila herself becomes worried that she is about to be found out, so she finally flees the residence, hoping to run off with Lotario. Lotario, however, decides instead to deposit Camila in a nunnery, where she eventually dies of sadness and melancholy. Meanwhile, Lotario himself ultimately dies in battle somewhere far off, while Anselmo remains alone in his empty house, where he too soon dies of a broken heart (in the very midst of writing his own confession), now cognizant of his own foolish curiosity.

The scholarship published on *El curioso impertinente* is appreciable, and it is not necessary to gloss it here[5]. That said, it is worth pausing to briefly discuss one of the primary critical threads that this exemplary novella has famously generated, particularly as it relates to the intersection of curiosity and desire. In his book, *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel* René Girard (1965) invents the term "triangular desire"—which will become the cornerstone of what is now called "mimetic theory"—to describe Don Quixote's "surrender" to Amadís de Gaula when it comes to choosing the objects of his own desire. Says Girard of the novel's title character: "The disciple pursues objects which are determined for him, or at least seem to be determined for him, by the model of all chivalry. We shall call this model the *mediator* of desire" (pp. 1–2). Speaking more specifically of *El curioso impertinente*, Girard argues that, in much the same way, Anselmo needs Lotario as a "mediator" in order to confirm his own desire for Camila: the hero "pushes the loved woman into the moderator's arms in order to arouse his desire and then triumph over the rival desire. He does not desire *in* his mediator but rather *against* him" (pp. 50–51; original emphasis).

A number of critics have taken issue with Girard's theory as it relates to both *Don Quixote* and to *El curioso impertinente* (and, again, it is unnecessary to gloss the full range of this scholarship)[6], but Girard's approach to what Luis Avilés (2024) calls "impertinent desire" is indicative of critics' treatment of the relationship between Anselmo and Lotario. Indeed, glossing Girard, Steven Hutchinson (2006) argues that in order to really know Camila ("conocer a la *otra*"), Anselmo needs Lotario ("utilizará a su *doble*"), even though the test will ultimately result in the destruction of his marriage (p. 129; original emphasis). Alternatively, Hutchinson argues, we might even read Anselmo's wife-testing as a means to deliberately destroy the marriage and thus demonstrate that no woman is worth his friendship with Lotario (Hutchinson 2006, pp. 129–30). In this regard, a number of critics have even offered queer readings of *El curioso impertinente*, arguing that its true love story is really between Anselmo and Lotario themselves. For example, in his book-length study of "male jealousy", Louis Lo (2008) notes: "If Anselmo's obsession is associated with a repressed homosexual desire, his curiosity is driven more by the desire of sex with his friend Lothario, than to test his wife's virtue" (p. 73)[7]. Still, while Cesáreo Bandera (2006) acknowledges that "There is nothing in the text that would clearly prevent us from assuming some sort of latent homosexual desire in Anselmo", he also stresses that, either way, the centrality of the relationship between "los dos amigos" is the main point of the narrative (p. 188). Which brings us to Pedro Almodóvar's *Carne trémula*.

3. *Carne trémula*

Released in 1997, and loosely based on Ruth Rendell's English novel *Live Flesh* (1986, from which Almodóvar's film takes its English-language title)[8], *Carne trémula* is a

complex narrative that essentially tells the story of a love triangle consisting of David de la Paz (Javier Bardem), Elena Benedetti (Francesca Neri), and Víctor Plaza (Liberto Rabal). Early in the film, we are introduced to Víctor, who arrives unannounced at Elena's apartment bearing gifts in the form of a pizza. The two had apparently "hooked up" at a party the week before and had agreed to meet up again on the evening in question, although Elena has clearly forgotten about this prior commitment. When she tries to brush off Víctor, an altercation ensues in which she pulls a gun and orders him to leave. When the gun accidentally goes off, a neighbor calls the police, and David, along with his partner Sancho (José Sancho), arrives on the scene. Following a tense stand-off, during which Víctor briefly takes Elena hostage, Sancho rushes Víctor, who—we are initially led to believe—shoots David in the chaos. At this point, the film basically jumps forward some six years into the future, during which temporal leap Víctor has served time in prison for the shooting, and David (who is now paralyzed from the waist down) has formed a romantic partnership with Elena.

This early "hostage standoff" scene essentially tracks the opening of Rendell's novel, although Almodóvar has made a few significant changes, including changing the name of one of the main characters. In Rendell's original novel, Víctor is Victor Jenner, and David is David Fleetwood. But Elena's original name in Rendell's novel is actually Clare Conway, a name that Almodóvar has assigned to Sancho's wife Clara (Angela Molina), while the name of the woman taken hostage is Rosemary Stanley, who really plays no further role in Rendell's novel after the opening chapter. Moreover, in the opening scenes of *Live Flesh*, Victor is really a violent sex offender who, having just raped a woman, climbs through an unlocked upper window in Rosemary's apartment building, where he eventually takes her hostage. Meanwhile, David arrives on the scene with a full contingency of other police officers, who cordon off the building and demand that Victor give himself up. In an attempt to rescue Clare, David also sneaks into the building but is unintentionally shot by Víctor, who is taken completely by surprise at David's sudden arrival in the hallway behind him. As with *Carne trémula*, *Live Flesh* then jumps forward several years, and we again catch up with Victor upon his release from prison and with a paralyzed David who, again, has paired up with Clare.

But it is at this point that the two narratives diverge greatly. From Victor's release from prison onward, Rendell's novel exists as a kind of psychological study of his mental breakdown as he tries to cope with life in a rundown halfway house. As Paul Julian Smith (2014) comments, "Almodóvar rejects the rape motif offered him by Rendell [. . .] and with it Rendell's cod psychology" (p. 159). Or, as Carmen Pérez Ríu (2017) puts it, "in Rendell's text much of the narrative is configured as the musings, recollections and misperceptions of Victor's mind as he wanders through the streets of Greater London" (n.p.). In this regard, Rendell's discourse often gives itself over to Victor's stream-of-consciousness as he stalks David (who has now become a famous author and whom Victor blames for his present situation) and attempts to seduce Clare as a way of exacting a kind of vengeance by taking something away from his presumed rival. In this way, Rendell's novel can be read precisely as a narrative performance of Girard's triangular desire. Victor's interest in Clare is primarily driven by David's function as Girardian "mediator". Meanwhile, in Almodóvar's cinematic narrative, Víctor's post-incarceration life does indeed cross paths several times with those of both David and Elena, but the structure of Almodóvar's character interrelationships is much more complicated than that of the single, simple triangle presented by Rendell. Indeed, as I will argue, *Carne trémula* can be read as an exploration of Girard's triangular desire "cubed". For, while Almodóvar's film still contains the triad of David, Elena, and Víctor, it also includes two other triads, both of which revolve around Sancho's wife, Clara.

As the film progresses, we learn that prior to the shooting in Elena's apartment, David had actually been having an affair with Clara and that Sancho himself seems to have fired the shot that paralyzed David by pushing Víctor's finger against the trigger during the struggle at the apartment. Moreover, even while Víctor remains obsessed with Elena, he also manages to enter into an affair with Clara, who remains deeply unsatisfied with her marriage to Sancho, given that, as Gwynne Edwards (2001) rightly points out, Sancho functions as a pointed critique of "old Spain", symbolizing "a typical macho traditionalist who believes that a woman's place is in the home and who cannot face the possibility and, in his own eyes, the blow to his self-esteem of losing his wife to another man" (p. 167).

In this regard, the difference in meaning of the disparate titles of Rendell's original novel and Almodóvar's cinematic adaptation is telling. While Rendell's "*Live Flesh*" may subtly evoke notions of sexuality, her novel goes out of its way, as Thomas Deveny (2000) points out, to define this term medically as directly related to a neurological disorder: "the meaning of the novel's title has nothing to do with eroticism. Rather, it refers to the tick or muscular spasm of Victor's lip as he looks at himself in the mirror" (n.p.). Or, as the novel itself narrates: "A muscle worked at the corner of [Victor's] mouth. Chorea, it was called, 'live flesh'" (Rendell 1986, p. 112). Meanwhile, Almodóvar's title, one that suggests the "trembling flesh" of carnal anticipation, clearly drips with sexual desire, as the coy nudity of the film's original marketing poster makes abundantly clear[9]. Indeed, the importance of this sexualized reading of Almodóvar's Spanish title was emphasized even before production began when, in an interview with Maruja Torres (2004), he indicated that he was specifically setting up his new film "within the realm of desire" (p. 117).

4. *Ensayo de un crimen*

Before entering into a closer examination of *Carne trémula*'s treatment of curiosity and desire, a brief exploration of one of the film's other important intertexts is in order here. Readers familiar with Almodóvar's body of work will recognize his penchant for "quoting" the work of other filmmakers. For instance, not only does his 1988 film *Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios* (*Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*) include visual shots that are reminiscent of James Whale's (1935) *Bride of Frankenstein* and Alfred Hitchcock's (1954) *Rear Window*, it also includes various clips from Nicholas Ray's (1954) *Johnny Guitar*, which we see projected on a screen in the production studio's editing room where Pepa (Carmen Maura) and Iván (Fernando Guillén) separately work to create the Spanish dubbing for this English-language film (Almodóvar 1988, 00:04:39+; 00:09:46+). For its part, *Carne trémula* includes a segment of Luis Buñuel's (1955) film *Ensayo de un crimen* (*The Criminal Life of Archibaldo de la Cruz*), which can be seen playing on the television set in Elena's apartment in the moments leading up to the early hostage scene (Almodóvar 1997, 00:16:05+). This appearance within Almodóvar's narrative of Buñuel's film—which itself is based on Rodolfo Usigli's (1944) novel also titled *Ensayo de un crimen*—might be read as both an autobiographical nod to Buñuel and a meta-cinematic commentary on *Carne trémula* itself[10], since both films exist as loose adaptations of prior novels[11]. But I think there is something more going on here.

Buñuel's *Ensayo de un crimen*, which Steven Marsh (2004) characterizes as "a brilliantly droll parody of the Hollywood crime thriller" (p. 65), narrates the story of Archibaldo de la Cruz[12]. In one of the very early scenes of the film, which occurs at some unspecified moment during the Mexican Revolution, we meet the young Archibaldo ("Archi") in his upper-middle-class home. His mother gives him a music box that plays the tune of Emil Waldteufel's "El príncipe rojo" ("The Red Prince") and then instructs Archi's governess to tell him a story while she goes out for the evening. In response to this instruction, the governess tells Archi that this music box is special in that it can grant him his desires. Moments later, a stray bullet enters the house and kills the governess, suggesting to Archi

that the music box does indeed respond to his desires. Years later, Archi comes across this music box in an antiques store and manages to buy it. This purchase initiates a sequence of events whereby Archi's infatuation with several women who happen to cross his path eventually end up dead (much like his childhood governess), including a nun that we meet in the film's opening scene, who accidentally falls down an elevator shaft as Archi chases after her with a straightedge razor.

Caryn Connelly and Lynd (2002) argue that Archi's "sadistic longings to murder women" highlight Buñuel's avant-garde ideals, which "utilize unconscious desires to confront bourgeois sensibilities" (p. 234). Andrew McKenna (2019), for his part, argues that "In *Ensayo de un crimen* we witness the impassive portrayal of a 'love quest' in which the protagonist's desires are enacted as murderous" (p. 24). Indeed, in one particular scene from *Ensayo de un crimen*, which is clearly seen playing on Elena's television set in *Carne trémula*, Archi has lured a woman named Lavinia into his home with the express purpose of killing her (Almodóvar 1997, 00:21:49+). But when some of her friends suddenly arrive and whisk her away, Archi is left with no other recourse but to burn her in effigy in his kiln in the guise of a mannequin that looks just like Lavinia (given that Lavinia had served as the artist's model for the mannequin's fabricator).

Of course, while Archi certainly desires—and, indeed, plans—to kill all these various women, their deaths are not legally attributed to him by the judge to whom he ultimately confesses. But even though he does not succeed in enacting his murderous intent, his mental state necessarily demonstrates the psychological connection between desire and death. Camilo Hernández Castellanos (2017), for instance, notes the way in which Lavinia and the mannequin not only point to the cadaver as a "fetish" (p. 122) but also to the importance of the "doubles" that sit at the border of life and death (p. 114). Also, regarding the fetishism that recurs in several of Almodóvar's films, Shaila García Catalán and Rodríguez Serrano (2021) argue that "el fetichismo se origina en los misterios del cuerpo y en un intento de negar la falta" (p. 101). Or, as Sidney Donnell (2001) succinctly puts it: "Desire in Buñuel's films manifests itself as an insatiable appetite, a constant craving, or a Lacanian lack" (p. 54)[13].

Well-known philosopher and Lacanian film theorist Slavoj Žižek (2006) follows a similar train of thought when he discusses the way in which Scottie Ferguson (James Stewart) effectuates a complete makeover of Madeleine Elster (Kim Novak) in Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1958) through which Madeleine ultimately becomes the uncanny doppelganger of the "deceased" Judy Barton. Such an intense makeover, argues Žižek, underlines the "extreme violence"—the "mortification of woman's desire"—that lies at the heart of both Archi's and Scottie's obsessions (Žižek 2006, Part 2, 00:17:51+): "It is as if in order to have her, to desire her, to have sexual intercourse with her, with the woman, Scottie has to mortify her, to change her into a dead woman. It's as if, again, for the male libidinal economy, to paraphrase a well-known old saying, the only good woman is a dead woman" (Žižek 2006, Part 2, 00:18:12+)[14]. The same, as we shall see, could also be said of both *El curioso impertinente* and *Carne trémula*[15].

5. Girardian Triads

Edwards (2001) has argued that "the centrality of the theme of sexual obsession to *Live Flesh* and to Victor in particular is further underlined" by Almodóvar's reference to Buñuel's film (p. 168). Indeed, as Ernesto Acevedo-Muñoz (2007) insists, "the parallel in Almodóvar's scene is especially telling, for the twenty-year-old Víctor will now also associate a criminal and a sexual memory, which leads to a severe trauma" (p. 172). Or, as Carolyn Wolfenzon (2006) puts it: "Para Usigli, la Revolución genera un trauma en el inconsciente de los mexicanos; para Buñuel, es un telón de fondo que sirve como pretexto para encubrir los deseos ocultos del hombre, un medio para desenmascarar uno de los

tabúes de la sociedad: la relación entre sexo y muerte" (p. 38). Yet, what interests me about *Carne trémula*'s deliberate intertextuality with *Ensayo de un crimen*—beyond just the nexus of what Sigmund Freud (2011) calls Eros and Thanatos (p. 242), which is also a major theme of *El curioso impertinente*—is the fact that Buñuel's film can also be read as an exploration of a set of three "curious" love triangles with Archi standing at the very center of each. Setting aside both Archi's governess and the nun, *Ensayo de un crimen* shows Archi inserting himself into the relationships of three women and their paramours, with deadly effect in nearly all cases. He inserts himself into Willy Cordurán's relationship with Patricia Terrazas, who commits suicide shortly after Archi fantasizes about killing her. He inserts himself into the relationship between the elderly Chucho and the younger Lavinia (whom we have already discussed and to whom we will return). And he inserts himself into Alejandro Rivas's relationship with Carlota Cervantes, who is shot by her married lover (i.e., Alejandro) on the very day of her planned wedding to Archi (who, not coincidentally, has also fantasized about shooting her at the wedding). And, in this, the (perhaps unintentional) intertextualities between *El curioso impertinente*, *Ensayo de un crimen*, and *Carne trémula* begin to emerge.

Like *Ensayo de un crimen*, *Carne trémula* contains a set of three love triangles. The first—the David/Elena/Víctor triad—is the one most closely related to Rendell's original novel. But even before the coming into being of what will become the central triad of the film following Víctor's release from prison, Almodóvar's film posits a prior love triangle that exists between Sancho, Clara, and David. Significantly, this earlier triad is the one most reminiscent of *El curioso impertinente* (particularly given that the name "Sancho", like the surname "Cervantes" in *Ensayo de un crimen*, inevitably evokes *Don Quixote* and thus serves to enlarge Almodóvar's semantic field to also include cognitive associations with Anselmo, Lotario, and Camila). Like "los dos amigos" from *El curioso impertinente* (or even Don Quixote and Sancho themselves), Almodóvar's two police detectives, David and Sancho, are a connected pair, given their intimate status as law enforcement "partners". Indeed, the close relationships that form between law enforcement partners are often treated as a kind of "marriage". For instance, in a *USA Today* news story about the retirement of two long-time Indianapolis homicide detectives, Diana Penner (2013) says: "More than one colleague describes them as like an 'old married couple'—they finish each other's sentences, sense each other's moods, bicker and goad each other—but never really argue" (n.p.). Likewise, in an article in *Police Chief Magazine*, tellingly titled "Thriving Intimacy in Law Enforcement Relationships: Obstacles and Resiliency", Cyndi Doyle (2019) offers relationship advice to police officers. Yet, if Doyle's counsel is meant to be directed toward the officers' private lives, her rhetoric often effaces—perhaps deliberately—the boundaries between the personal and the professional:

> "In law enforcement lingo, it's essential to believe that one's partner has your 'six'. This is built on the belief that each partner acts and thinks to maximize the benefit to each other and not in self-interest. [. . .] Commitment to one's partner means loving their attributes and growing an appreciation for those things that might otherwise be an irritation. This is also acting and believing that both partners are in the relationship for the long haul." (n.p.)

Carne trémula's opening scenes of David and Sancho out on patrol do indeed treat the two as if they were an old married couple. We see the pair out on a nighttime patrol, driving around the streets of Madrid. Sancho is at the wheel. But he is also actively drinking, much to the consternation of David, who tries to cajole his partner into putting away the bottle. We later learn, of course, that Sancho already suspects David of having an affair with Clara, but his current act of drinking and driving while on duty is simply not presented as some kind of anomaly that might disturb anyone's concern for either public safety or professional

ethics. Later, during the standoff that occurs in Elena's apartment, both David and Sancho pull their guns on Víctor, who is holding Elena at gunpoint, and demand that Víctor drop the weapon. As the situation continues to escalate, however, David begins to sense that there is a real danger that an inebriated Sancho may very well shoot Víctor no matter what he does. So, David actually turns and points his gun at Sancho, demanding that he, too, drop his weapon. Shortly thereafter, when Sancho rushes Víctor and falls to the floor in an attempt to wrestle the gun away from him, Sancho uses the chaotic moment to shoot David by pressing Víctor's finger against the trigger.

Here, of course, we may wonder about Sancho's motivation for shooting David and whether this impulse might be connected to Anselmo's insistence that Lotario attempt to seduce Camila in *El curioso impertinente*. Does Sancho shoot David as an act of revenge for David's affair with Clara? Or is the catalyst for this shooting Sancho's sense of betrayal, which is brought on by David's turning his gun on Sancho? In other words, is the deeper betrayal here not the fact that David has been sleeping with Clara, but rather that (in the words of Doyle) David does not have his partner's "six" when push comes to shove? Again, as with *El curioso impertinente* (at least in Bandera's interpretation), what is perhaps of primary importance in Almodóvar's film is not the relationship between Sancho and his wife, but the relationship between Sancho and David (Bandera 2006, p. 188)[16].

But this brings us to the third of the film's three "curious" triads: Sancho, Clara, and Víctor. At the same time that Víctor—like Archi before him—is loosely inserting himself into David and Elena's relationship (most directly by getting himself hired as a teaching assistant at the orphanage where Elena works), Víctor also enters into a sexual relationship with Clara, who, during his years of incarceration, has attempted to separate herself from the hotheaded Sancho. As Víctor's relationship with Clara develops, she spends more and more time at Víctor's house and even becomes a kind of sexual tutor to her inexperienced paramour. In this regard, Almodóvar's Sancho/Clara/Víctor triad subtly reinscribes Rendell's original David/Clare/Victor triad back into his cinematic narrative. Indeed, within the discourse of *Carne trémula*, the David/Elena/Víctor triad and the Sancho/Clara/Víctor triad exist as phantom reflections of each other, "doubles" that Almodóvar has created precisely by splitting Rendell's original male character into David and Sancho and her original female character into Elena and Clara, with Rendell's un-bifurcated Victor pivoting between both these triangles.

By way of comparison, in Rendell's original novel, once Victor has been released from prison, and sometime after he has insinuated himself into the lives of David and Clare, Victor and Clare eventually engage in sexual intercourse. Rendell's novel suggests that the respective motivations for these two characters' tryst are as follows. Victor, who is a convicted sex offender and who has already started to fall back into his old ways, is attracted to Clare because she represents, perhaps, a path toward social rehabilitation whereby he might actually hope to have a stable and genuine relationship with a woman[17]. Clare's motivation, however, is decidedly more libidinous. In *Live Flesh*, David's paralysis has also left him emphatically impotent.

> "In the middle of the newspaper article, just when the reader might have started thinking that being paralysed and confined to an orthopaedic chair for the rest of one's life wasn't so terrible after all, Fleetwood said, 'I supposed the worst thing is what most people don't think of, that I'm impotent, without sex. I can't make love anymore and it's pretty unlikely I ever will. People forget that that gets paralysed too, they think it's solely a matter of not walking. It's the hardest thing to bear because I like women, I used to love women, their beauty, you know. That's all lost to me in a real sense, I have to face it. And I can't marry, I couldn't do a woman that sort of injury." (Rendell 1986, p. 57)

And while Clare has many times asked David to marry her (partly out of pity), she is no doubt as sexually frustrated by the current situation as he is. Thus, in Rendell's novel, Clare's sexual encounter with Victor, which she almost immediately regrets, has less to do with her attraction to Victor—although, she does tell him, "I like you Victor, you're attractive too, very physically attractive" (Rendell 1986, p. 218)—than with David's sexual incapacities. In this way, Almodóvar's channeling of Rendell's David/Clare/Victor triad into his own Sancho/Clara/Víctor triad maintains the sexual dynamics of Rendell's original while still preserving a separate narrative thread for his David/Elena/Víctor plot line[18].

In this regard, *Carne trémula*'s primary love triangle nevertheless diverges greatly from that of Rendell. In the first place, Almodóvar's Víctor is generally depicted as an innocent victim of circumstance. He initially arrives at Elena's apartment at her invitation (even if she no longer recalls extending it), and the gun in question actually belongs to Elena. Moreover, as we have said, we eventually learn that it is actually Sancho who engineers the shot that paralyzes David. In David's case, while he is indeed consigned to life in a wheelchair, he is in many ways the physical antithesis of Rendell's more cerebral David (whose fame derives from having published a book about the very case that brought about his paralysis). Almodóvar's very athletic David, in contrast, becomes a celebrated Paralympian who plays wheelchair basketball in connection with the 1992 Summer Olympic Games held in Barcelona, and who even obtains an advertising sponsorship contract with "Champion" apparel, which we see in a billboard image that recalls Michael Jordan at the height of his fame (Almodóvar 1997, 00:32:57). More to the point, whether or not Almodóvar's David is actually impotent, the film nonetheless depicts him—in contrast to Rendell's David—as sexually active, suggesting that he routinely brings Elena to orgasm through cunnilingus. As Edwards (2001) rightly notes, "for all his disability, he appears to make her happy" (p. 169). Indeed, in contrast to Almodóvar's chauvinist Sancho, and within the film's political allegory of Spain's transition to democracy, Víctor and David are specifically represented as "reconstructed, 'new men'" (Allinson 2001, p. 88). Thus, in contrast to Rendell's Clare, Elena's decision to have sex with Víctor in *Carne trémula* is motivated less by her own sexual frustrations than it is by the same kind of pity that motivates Clare to want to marry David in Rendell's original: Elena feels responsible for everything that has happened to Víctor ever since that fateful night when he first showed up at her apartment. This is not to say, of course, that Elena does not enjoy her sexual encounter with Víctor. But when David confronts her about her infidelity, expecting to hear that she is planning to abandon him in favor of Víctor, Elena replies that she intends to stay with David because he "needs her more" (Almodóvar 1997, 01:22:01+). This admission of pity wounds David, who then attempts to use Sancho's own jealousy toward Clara to take out his revenge on his new Girardian rival (essentially repeating Sancho's earlier gesture of using someone else as his "trigger man"). In the end, however, David cedes the field (and hence Elena) to Víctor and disappears to Florida, where the film suggests he will find a new life.

6. The Color of Desire

Again, Lo (2008) includes chapters on both *El curioso impertinente* and *Carne trémula*, but in neither chapter does Lo explicitly connect one to the other. This is unfortunate since the two texts have a great deal in common (certainly enough for Lo to have included both in his monographic study of male jealousy). A meaningful reading of the interplay between these two texts can thus be teased out if one pays particular attention to the color palette of *Carne trémula*'s production design, including its costuming, lighting, and scenery. Almodóvar's film is framed by two sequences that take place precisely at Christmastime. In the film's opening sequence, we see the circumstances of Víctor's birth (Almodóvar 1997, 00:00:21+). His mother (Penelope Cruz) is a prostitute who goes into labor during the wee

hours of a bleak 1970 January morning and ends up delivering Víctor on a Madrid bus. The film's final sequence shows a pregnant Elena, accompanied by Víctor, being driven to the hospital in a taxi (Almodóvar 1997, 01:34:30+). It is again Christmastime, but the streets of Madrid are no longer empty and bleak; instead, they are now teeming with both pedestrians and holiday cheer. In this way, the film deliberately contrasts the social circumstances of Víctor's own birth during the waning years of the Franco dictatorship with this imminent delivery of a new child that symbolizes the birth of a new, vibrant, and democratic Spain. And in between these two discursive "Christmastime bookends", the color palette of Almodóvar's entire film prominently features the colors red and green.

For instance (and among many other examples), the walls of Elena's apartment are painted a deep red, while the walls we later see in Clara's kitchen are green. Likewise, in the early scene in Elena's apartment, Víctor is seen wearing a red sweater, while the sheets we later see on the bed of his prison cell are of a green checked pattern. At one point, we even see Sancho back in Clara's kitchen wearing a matching green plaid shirt and a green apron. The walls of the orphanage where Elena works are also very green, and we even see Elena wearing a green sweater that matches the décor. Later, she is seen wearing a green jacket. Moreover, when Elena first "meets" the new teaching assistant (Víctor), who has been hired by the orphanage staff without Elena's prior knowledge, Víctor is seen wearing a full wolf mask, which might not be red in and of itself, but which certainly suggests Little Red Riding Hood and thus evokes the color. Likewise, David's car is also red, as is his jacket, while the city bus that shuttles Víctor around Madrid is green. At one point, Clara visits Víctor also wearing a red jacket, and when David comes to visit Elena at the orphanage, she wears a red dress for the occasion. The first time Clara has sex with Víctor, she arrives wearing a red dress, while later, when Víctor tries to break up with Clara, he wears a green shirt. At one point, even the two wheelchair basketball teams wear green and red uniforms, respectively. Finally, this interplay of red and green comes full circle at the end of the film when we see the expectant Elena wearing a green coat and a red hat as she travels to the hospital to give birth.

Red and green, of course, were not always and universally considered the colors of Christmas in all parts of the Christian world, but they have largely become so through the ubiquitous spread of Anglo-American culture across the globe (for example, despite the autochthonous Spanish tradition of the *Reyes Magos*, the orphanage includes an image of a very American Santa Claus hanging on the back of one of the doors (Almodóvar 1997, 01:34:27) and *Carne trémula* takes full advantage of this now-predominant association. At the same time, the colors red and green are not exclusively associated with Christmas; they are, in fact, symbolically multivalent. And here is where a particularly "gendered" reading of these colors within the discourse of *Carne trémula* becomes significant and where such a reading folds back on *El curioso impertinente*. In their connection with the film's male characters, red and green are the colors of jealousy, anger, and violence. We routinely speak of being "green with envy" and of jealousy as the "green-eyed monster". We also speak of being "red with rage", and we generally associate the color red with both violence and blood. In this regard, *Carne trémula*'s overlapping love triangles—like the triad at the heart of *El curioso impertinente*—are centered on male jealousy and the violence that accompanies it. Angered and jealous that David has been sleeping with Clara, Sancho engineers the gunshot that leaves David paralyzed. Angered and jealous when he learns that David and Elena have become romantic partners, Víctor hatches a plan to steal Elena away from David and then deliberately leave her jilted. Angered and jealous that Víctor has slept with Elena, David shows Sancho the photos he has surreptitiously taken of Víctor and Clara's afternoon trysts in the hopes that Sancho will take out his violent jealousy on Víctor.

Of course, Sancho nearly does just that in a late scene that is somewhat reminiscent of the ending of Almodóvar's (1986) *Matador*, where that film's two serial killers snuff themselves out in a mutual act of sexual climax. In *Carne trémula*'s case, Sancho arrives at Víctor's apartment intending to kill Víctor, only to find Clara already there. Later, having already been shot by Clara back at their apartment, Sancho kills her and then appears to be ready to shoot Víctor as well. But, at this point, Sancho unexpectedly turns the gun on himself in an act of suicide that can perhaps be read as an echo of Anselmo's death at the end of *El curioso impertinente*, and which leaves Víctor very much alive to pursue his relationship with Elena. In this regard, David's final absence at the end of *Carne trémula*, which we learn about via a postcard sent from Florida, can perhaps be read as a nod to Lotario's disappearance and eventual death at the end of *El curioso impertinente*. Certainly, Clara's farewell message to Víctor—which she writes in his notebook and in which she predicts her own imminent death—can be read as a nod to Anselmo's own final confessional account of his foolish curiosity:

> "Cuando leas esto ya estaré muerta o huyendo. No te sientas tú responsable ni me compadezcas. Desde el día que llamé a tu puerta sabía que acabaría como este barrio—estropeada y destruida. Pero no me arrepiento ni te culpo, amor mío. Antes de conocerte yo ya estaba condenada a desaparecer." (01:29:10+)

Through its various intertwining intertextualities, *Carne trémula* highlights precisely what is at stake in *El curioso impertinente*, as William Peter Evans (1995) unintentionally observes in his discussion of *Ensayo de un crimen*'s music box (whose tune, I would hasten to point out, is associated with the color red) and its violent effects: "Here, in miniature, the history of male scapegoating of women is summarized" (p. 102). Indeed, the scapegoating of both Camila and Clara—fatal victims of domestic abuse, whether physical or psychological—at the end of their respective narratives represents the epitome of Evans's history in miniature.

But in this, the red and green color palette of *Carne trémula* can also be read through a gendered lens that evokes precisely the opposite of male jealousy, rage, and violence. In connection with the film's female characters, red and green are the colors of passion, desire, and sexuality. Again, we routinely speak of the "red light district" (and it is no coincidence that Víctor's mother is initially a sex worker). Likewise, red roses are generally viewed as a symbol of love and passion. But, while the color green may certainly evoke both jealousy and envy (along with the promise of hope) across many cultures, within the Spanish tradition, green is also the particular color of both fecundity and sexuality, as Vernon Chamberlin (1968) notes: "the color green has special and important connotative value—amorous desire—in Latin countries that does not exist in the English-speaking world, though at one time it was clearly present in English literature" (p. 29). For instance, the Spanish term for a "dirty old man" is, of course, a "viejo verde" (green old man). And let us not forget the opening lines of Federico García Lorca's "Romance sonámbulo", which evoke fecundity, sexuality, and the hope of Spring at one and the same time: "Verde que te quiero verde. / Verde viento. Verdes ramas. / El barco sobre la mar / y el caballo en la montaña" (García Lorca 1982, p. 147)[19]. Indeed, Magdalena Altamirano (2015) argues that this connection between green nature, human sexuality, and fecundity in the Spanish tradition can be traced at least as far back as the Iberian medieval period:

> "[L]a naturaleza tienda a cargarse de contenidos simbólicos asociados con la sexualidad humana y la fecundidad. De ahí también que la mujer, por su nexo ancestral con la madre tierra, sea la figura dominante en los cantarcillos; es una mujer sexualmente activa, que suele desplazarse por los terrenos al aire libre y transgredir los espacios de naturaleza controlada." (pp. 110–11)

7. Agency and the Female Gaze

Viewed through the lens of Almodóvar's use of color, the three love triangles of *Carne trémula* look very different from the one presented by Cervantes in *El curioso impertinente*. In contrast to Cervantes's narrative, Almodóvar's triads do not rehearse what Diana de Armas Wilson (1987) characterizes as "two men trafficking in the body of a woman without her leave" (p. 15), nor do they explore the proposition that "a woman is good only in proportion to her temptations" (Bandera 2006, p. 187). Instead, Almodóvar's Clara and Elena are both examples of female agency. Clara, for instance, is clearly unhappy in her marriage to the drunken and abusive Sancho. And while the film does not provide any direct information on how her affair with David may have started, everything we know about Clara's personality suggests that she was clearly a willing and enthusiastic partner. For, later, when she engages in yet a different affair with Víctor, she actively instructs her young and inexperienced lover in how to please a woman. Likewise, Elena is hardly a wilting flower, tossed about on the winds (and whims) of the men in her life. When we first meet Elena at the beginning of the film, she is clearly sexually active, engaging in casual sex with any number of men, including Víctor. Later in the film, she is also the one who seduces Víctor, rather than vice versa. And it is very likely that it was she who also initiated her relationship with David, probably while he still lay in a hospital bed recovering from the gunshot wound. Even prior to this fateful gunshot, Almodóvar gives us a glimpse of Elena gazing admiringly—perhaps even "curiously"—at David during the early hostage scene as he takes her hand and pulls her out of danger (Almodóvar 1997, 00:27:20+)[20]. And while this brief camera shot of Elena's female gaze might be attributed to some kind of sudden hero-worship as the big, strong, handsome policeman rescues her from danger, this moment is central to the various love triangles at play in *Carne trémula*. In fact, this scene provides a welcome and necessary corrective to Camila's representation in *El curioso impertinente*. For as Laura Mulvey (1999) argues in her foundational and Lacanian-inflected study of both the gaze and cinematic scopophilia:

> "The cinema offers a number of possible pleasures. One is scopophilia. There are circumstances in which looking itself is a source of pleasure, just as, in the reverse formation, there is pleasure in being looked at. [. . .] Here, curiosity and the wish to look intermingle with a fascination with likeness and recognition: the human face, the human body, the relationship between the human form and its surroundings, the visible presence of the person in the world." (pp. 835–36)

In a similar fashion, roughly halfway through *Carne trémula*, in a scene where Clara asks Sancho why they do not just separate once and for all, and he responds by violently slapping her across the face, Almodóvar's camera pans across the room and shows us an image hanging on the wall of the apartment (Almodóvar 1997, 00:57:00+). It is an image of the kind of stereotypical Andalusian "Spanish beauty", featuring Ángela Molina herself in a pose that visually echoes her onscreen presence as a flamenco dancer in Buñuel's (1977) film *Cet Obscur Objet du Désir* (*That Obscure Object of Desire*). Such imagery has evoked romantic and sexualized notions of Spain ever since the creation of Washington Irving's 1832 *Tales of the Alhambra* (Irving 1993) and Georges Bizet's 1875 opera *Carmen* (Bizet 2010). There are several ways to interpret Almodóvar's inclusion of this image, both within the film in general and within this shot in particular. First, within the film, this stereotypical image of an idealized Andalusian beauty can be read as a political commentary on the sheer weight of "traditional" Spanish culture—promoted so incessantly by the Franco regime—that still hangs heavy over a country that is in the process of transitioning to a new democratic reality. This image thus contrasts starkly with the initial image presented by the film of Elena as a kind of international punk junkie who came to Spain to participate in what remained of the 1970s and 80s *movida madrileña* movement. Second, this traditional image of the "Spanish

beauty" can be read as a representation of Sancho's chauvinist expectations for his wife, ones that she is ultimately unwilling to fulfill. Moreover, this image not only contrasts with Titian's *Danae and the Golden Rain*, which can be seen hanging on the wall of Elena's apartment earlier in the film, and which provides the backdrop to Elena's own "curious" gaze during David's rescue of her (Almodóvar 1997, 00:19:15+; 00:27:16+), but it also contrasts violently with Clara's own haggard look over the course of the film, especially coming on the heels of Sancho's brutal slap just moments before.

Still, whatever other significance this image may have for either a 1990s Spain in transition or for Clara's unhappiness within her marriage, I am particularly interested in the female gaze that this image projects to the viewer—an outward gaze that is much more reminiscent of Francisco de Goya's *Maja desnuda* or Titian's *Venus of Urbino* than it is of either Titian's *Danae and the Golden Rain* or Diego Velázquez's so-called "Rokeby Venus", where the female figures seem entirely uninterested in attracting anyone else's attention. Indeed, Almodóvar cites both Goya and Titian in this regard by providing a brief shot of Clara reclining on her sofa (wearing a bright red dress that stands in for Goya and Titian's nudity) with her hand across her belly (Almodóvar 1997, 00:56:25). For, this outward gaze of Almodóvar's wall painting of Molina's stereotypical Andalusian beauty—what al-Rahim (2022) might call her "ocular fornication" (p. 465)—serves as a visual echo of Elena's own gaze toward David at the end of the hostage scene, and it bespeaks the female agency—and active curiosity—that both Elena and Clara exhibit over the course of the film. As Mark Allinson (2001) shrewdly argues, Almodóvar's films "are self-consciously *about* voyeurism, *about* sadism, and *about* masochism" (73; original emphasis), which is precisely why David's surreptitious and voyeuristic photos of Víctor and Clara's ongoing trysts are so important to the work, and why the film can be read as a late-twentieth-century iteration of *El curioso impertinente*'s sadistic testing of Camila.

Cervantes's intercalated novella famously objectifies Camila by comparing her, first, to a diamond that might be broken; second, to an ermine that might be sullied; and, finally, to a mirror that might be damaged (Cervantes 1978, 1: 290). Indeed, in much the same way that the women of Buñuel's *Ensayo de un crimen* are depicted "as splendid, charming, doll-like figures with creamy porcelain-like complexions [who] become objects of a desire that titillates the heterosexual male libido" (Gutiérrez-Albilla 2008, p. 129), Cervantes's Camila is depicted as a kaleidoscope of fragmented desires. More importantly, she can also be read, perhaps, as a seventeenth-century version of the unrealizable "perfect wife" that Almodóvar's Sancho fantasizes about in the Andalusian beauty painting that he has installed on his apartment wall[21]. Such a fragmentation and objectification parallels what we see in several of Almodóvar's other films, ranging from the specific example found in the opening credits of *Mujeres al borde*, whereby magazine "clippings" of various female body parts such as legs, lips, or eyes, are presented to the viewer as a collage (Almodóvar 1988, 00:00:12+) to what Eduardo Urios-Aparisi (2010) calls the "metonymy" of body parts—especially "legs, abdomen including genitals, and torso" (p. 181)—which are scattered across so many of Almodóvar's films.

8. Camila and Subjectivity

Against such fragmentation, critics have often read *El curioso impertinente* looking closely for traces of Camila's integrated subjectivity somewhere in the text, a subjectivity comparable to that of Marcela who, earlier in *Don Quixote*, forcefully argues for her right to love whomever she will love (and only *if* she chooses to love), rather than be compelled by social convention to love the first man that pursues her (Cervantes 1978, 1: 185–188). Howard Mancing (2005), for instance, argues that Camila is actually the primary protagonist of Cervantes's intercalated novella in so far as "the first half of the tale is dominated by

the men, Anselmo and Lotario, whose discourse is characterized primarily by argument, while the second half of the story is dominated by the women, Camila and Leonela, whose discourse is characterized above all by narrative" (p. 11). In the same way, Mancing argues, Cervantes's Camila "transforms herself from passive object to active agent; she takes control of her life and her story and in the process relegates to secondary status the men who quibble over abstract concepts" (p. 16). Michael Gordon (2019) echoes these sentiments when he says, "Throughout the first half of *El curioso impertinente*, Camila is without voice, an object caught between her husband and his best friend, and ultimately an unwitting victim of Anselmo's wife-testing, yet she transforms herself in the second half into an agent who takes control of her own destiny" (n.p.). Yvonne Jehenson (1998), for her part, argues that Camila ultimately "takes the conservative agenda that the narrator had postulated as normal and stands it on its head" (p. 42), while Wilson (1987) argues that it is precisely through Camila's theatrical fiction (whereby, again, she convinces Anselmo that his honor remains intact by staging a scene in which she stabs herself with a dagger rather than "yield" to Lotario's advances) that "the scapegoating of her sexuality is foiled by her sudden accession to subjectivity, by her own unruly production of discourse". (p. 27). Wilson says: "Using theatre as a means of resistance, Camila confronts her husband's 'hysterics' with her own histrionics" (p. 27).

Now, while I do not necessarily disagree with any of these scholarly comments regarding Camila's emerging subjectivity, I do think that a bit more can still be teased out here. For obvious reasons related to the social mores of seventeenth-century Spain (including the threat of censorship), Cervantes could hardly provide the kind of intimate scenes of Camila's adulterous affair with Lotario that we might find in contemporary texts like Rendell's *Live Flesh* or Almodóvar's *Carne trémula*. In this regard, Cervantes describes the sex act between Camila and Lotario as minimally and as discreetly as possible: "Rindióse Camila, Camila se rindió" ["Camilla surrendered; she surrendered"] (Cervantes 1978, 1: 300). Indeed, and in contrast to the aforementioned arguments of various critics, it is precisely through its very minimalism that this description of *El curioso impertinente*'s climactic moment does rob Camila of nearly all her subjectivity, at least diegetically. This is to say, from a grammatical perspective she is obviously both the "subject" of the sentence and the "agent" of the verb's decidedly passive action. Still, Cervantes's discourse here—with its emphasis on passivity—effectively curtails Camila's subjectivity as much as grammatically possible. As Ashley Hope Pérez (2011) remarks, "the nature of the world constituted by 'El curioso impertinente' renders Camila's subjectivity generally unthinkable within its bounds" (p. 84):

> "Virtually every aspect of the relational dynamics in the text denies her subjectivity. This does not mean that Camila is not a subject, insofar as any fictional character is a subject. Rather, the critical point is that her subjectivity is unintelligible to the men and—given that their discourse defines the narrative—to the reader as well." (Pérez 2011, p. 96)

In his commentary on Stanley Kubrick's (1999) film *Eyes Wide Shut*, Žižek (2006) notes the centrality of the sexual fantasies that are related by Alice Harford (Nicole Kidman) to her husband Bill (Tom Cruise) within the cinematic narrative: "The film is the story of how the male fantasy cannot catch up with the feminine fantasy, of how there is too much of desire in feminine fantasy and how this is the threat to male identity" (Žižek 2006, Part 2, 00:37:58+). The same, perhaps, can be said of Camila. Anselmo's "test" of her virtue can be read as less a desire to prove her virtue than to prove (at least to himself) that her desire—again, her own curiosity—can somehow be contained. And yet, as Žižek also notes with regard to *Eyes Wide Shut*, the final word of the film belongs to Alice: "But I do love you", she says to Bill. "And you know there is something very important that we need to do as soon as possible. [. . .] Fuck." (qtd. in Žižek 2006, Part 2, 00:39:08+). Žižek's take on this moment is

that what underlies this final word is a defensive reaction to trauma that seeks a way out: "It's as if our inner psychic space is too wild, and sometimes we have to make love, not to get the real thing but to escape from the real, from the excessive real that we encounter in our fantasizing" (Žižek 2006, Part 2, 00:39:33+).

With this in mind, a number of questions arise regarding Camila's unnarrated tryst with Lotario. For instance, rather than simply "surrender", did she, in fact, enjoy this new sexual encounter (even if only for its novelty)? Did she immediately feel remorse for having betrayed Anselmo? Or did she instead experience some kind of thrill—perhaps a moment of "trembling flesh"—related to the partaking of a forbidden fruit? After all, Cervantes's own text raises the specter of Adam and Eve in Lotario's prior arguments to Anselmo about why he should not tempt fate (Cervantes 1978, 1: 292). Going further, did Camila and Lotario have sex twice that day ("Rindióse Camila, Camila se rindió"), or is this linguistic repetition merely a rhetorical flourish? Conversely, did she ultimately "surrender" to Lotario's amorous advances primarily due to what might be called the "aesthetics" of his wooing? After all, the conventions of both medieval courtly love poetry and the early modern pastoral novel present "wooing" less as an act of seduction and more like a poetry competition in which the "grand prize" is simply being preferred—though certainly nothing more—by the object of one's affection. Going even further still, did Camila ultimately look across the table one day—after having fended off so many of Lotario's sexual advances—and finally say to herself, "Why not"? In other words, did she make a conscious decision at this point to "explore her own curiosity", the consequences be damned?

If, as I have argued elsewhere (Burningham 2024), Almodóvar's *Mujeres al borde* ultimately provides in the characters of Pepa and Marisa a feminist response to the seventeenth-century "Don Juan" narrative that Ana Caro was simply unable—again, due to social conventions—to construct in her own day, thus requiring her Doña Leonor to ultimately marry the (effective) "date rapist" who had previously absconded with her honor (p. 87), *Carne trémula*, I think, can be read as Almodóvar's late-twentieth-century response to Cervantes's own seventeenth-century tale of "Foolish Curiosity". Having absorbed Rendell's original Clare and then bifurcated her into Elena and Clara, Almodóvar has placed both these women inside a "cubed" set of love triangles where they might explore the very curiosity—that is, the *active* desire—that Cervantes's exemplary novel ultimately denies to Camila, at least diegetically, even if *El curioso impertinente* does tepidly concede the existence of Camila's sexuality. Consider the ways in which both Rendell and Almodóvar depict the dual arousal of female desire in their texts.

Whatever Clare may have initially thought of Victor in *Live Flesh*, when he finally does come to accept his own culpability with regard to David's paralysis, Clare approaches Víctor and quietly embraces him in what seems to be little more than a gesture of kindness and empathy on her part: "Clare had come in and without a word taken him in her arms. She held him lightly at first, then with increasing tender pressure, her hands moving on his back, up to his neck and head, to bring his head into the curve of her shoulder. His lips felt the warmth of her skin. He heard her murmuring gentle comforting things" (Rendell 1986, pp. 168–69). Yet, before this gentle embrace is through, Rendell nevertheless gives us a clear hint of the way in which Clare's empathy will soon become her curiosity: "Holding her now, letting her hold him, indeed pressing his body into hers with a voluptuous abandonment as he had yielded it in the past to warm water or a soft bed, he felt the last thing he would have expected, a swift springing of sexual desire. He was erect and she must feel it" (Rendell 1986, p. 169). Clare immediately disengages, but her newly kindled curiosity will eventually overcome any reticence she may have initially felt, as the novel describes in a later chapter:

> "The hungry anxious look she had that he couldn't define. He had never seen it in a woman before. He had never before taken a woman in his arms and cupped her head in his hand and brought her face to his and kissed her lips. [. . .] She responded to his kiss quite differently from that last time, for he felt she was as desirous as he. Her kiss explored his mouth and her body pressed its curves into his hard muscles and vulnerable nerves. [. . .] She left the room and when he followed she had disappeared. [. . .] He drew a deep breath and opened a door and saw her waiting for him, sitting naked on the side of her bed, lifting her eyes to meet his, extending her hands to him without a smile."
>
> (Rendell 1986, p. 206)

While such a description—which comes at a chapter break and thus functions as a kind of cinematic fade-to-black—certainly approaches the types of more explicit narratives that we often encounter in modern romance novels, it is still a far cry from Cervantes's very discrete "Rindióse Camila, Camila se rindió". But, at the same time, Rendell's novelistic fade-to-black does highlight the important progression we analyzed earlier whereby curiosity leads to knowledge leads to sex.

Carne trémula, of course, stages its own scene of Elena's budding curiosity, and it also does so precisely at the very moment that Elena learns the truth about David's paralysis: that Sancho, in fact, pulled the trigger and that Víctor has been an innocent victim of circumstance all along. At this point in the film, Víctor finds Elena sitting on a bench in the orphanage's playground (Almodóvar 1997, 01:07:20+). She confesses to him that David has told her what really happened, and then she comments about how much Víctor must hate her. He responds by insisting that this is not true. But, at the same time, he does admit that while he was in prison he hatched a plan to get his revenge on both David and her: he would become the best lover in the world ("el mejor follador del mundo" [Almodóvar 1997, 01:08:17]); after which, he would proceed to seduce Elena, give her the best night of sex in her life (thus making her fall in love with him), and then leave her high and dry in the full knowledge of just what she was missing. In other words, Víctor's revenge would be to sexually frustrate Elena while cuckholding the impotent David in the process. Elena's response to Víctor's confession of this plan—which is to say, to his mention of potential sex with someone who is decidedly not impotent—piques a curiosity in her that was already on subtle display in an earlier scene when, while receiving oral sex from David, she unexpectedly blurts out that she saw Víctor earlier that day at the cemetery (Almodóvar 1997, 00:41:00+). Elena will eventually explore this newfound curiosity to its fullest when, a few days later, she shows up unannounced at the orphanage one night, wearing both red and green, and initiates a night of lovemaking with Víctor that will (ironically) bring his plan to partial fruition, since it is now she who requires Víctor to agree to never see her again after this night (Almodóvar 1997, 01:13:27+). Unlike *El curioso impertinente* and *Live Flesh*, however, *Carne trémula* will stage this sex scene as a kind of nude and highly choreographed sensuous "dance" set to the music of Chavela Vargas's "Somos" ("Somos un sueño imposible / que busca la noche. . ."; "Somos dos seres en uno / que amándose mueren") (Vargas 2007). Following this night of trembling curiosity, the film then shows us the dawn breaking across the Spanish sky, with Elena getting up to dutifully return to her husband, but not before enjoying the lingering scent of Víctor on her body as she showers away the experience back at her apartment.

Thus, in contrast to Camila in *El curioso impertinente*, both Rendell's Clare and Almodóvar's Elena actively seek out sex with their respective Lotarios; which is to say, neither of them can be said to passively "surrender". And both are represented not only as clearly enjoying themselves but are also far more sexually experienced than either of their respective Lotarios. In short, and despite the fact that Almodóvar's Clara does ultimately

perish as a scapegoat in the service of Girard's model of triangular desire, *Carne trémula* provides us with an antidote to all the death and sadness that occurs at the end of *El curioso impertinente* by allowing Almodóvar's Elena—finally—to actively pursue her Lotario and then head off with him into a brighter future filled with hope for a better life. And in this regard, *Carne trémula* ultimately reinscribes—though in a less ironic way—the "happy ending" imagined by Buñuel in *Ensayo de un crimen*, where Lavinia eventually meets up with Archi along the bank of a river and the two walk away hand in hand on the road to happily-ever-after. As Connelly and Lynd (2002) point out with regard to Buñuel's deconstruction of the conventions of melodrama, but which might be said to apply equally to Almodóvar's deconstruction of the conventions of the crime thriller (and, along with them, the underlying conventions of *El curioso impertiente*): "Lavinia—whatever the post-diegetic future may hold for her—is, within the film, not punished for her sexual precocity, and her character therefore bucks up against the conventions of melodrama: she is not supposed to end up in a happy relationship" (p. 243).

9. *Carne trémula* and Lacanian Desire

Yet, *Carne trémula*'s final scenes serve to "trouble" Girard's theory of triangular desire rather than reconfirm it. In other words, Almodóvar's film—precisely because of its overlapping love triangles—wants to have things both ways at one and the same time. But, as Ashraf Rushdy (1993) shrewdly observes, within Lacanian theories of libidinal economy, "what we desire, we shall never have" (p. 49). Thus, on the one hand, as an exploration of the dynamics of triangular desire that play themselves out in *El curioso impertinente*, *Carne trémula* (at least with regard to one of its three love triangles) opts for an ending remarkably similar to that of Cervantes. For, just as happens in Cervantes's story of Anselmo, Lotario, and Camila, Almodóvar's narrative of Sancho, Clara, and David also ends with all three characters effectively "dead" at the end: Sancho kills Clara before turning the gun on himself, and David disappears from the narrative almost entirely. Indeed, during *Carne trémula*'s final "happy ending" sequence involving Víctor and Elena, all that remains of David is a disembodied voiceover—what Ian Whitmarsh (2017) might call a "substitute by displacement" (p. 1245)—that accompanies the postcard from Florida. And it is precisely David's discursive absence from the film that makes possible Almodóvar's imagined "bright future" for a democratic Spain in the form of Víctor and Elena's new baby.

On the other hand, however, this particular denouement in and of itself highlights a clear problem. Because neither Víctor nor Elena formed part of *Carne trémula*'s original Cervantine love triangle, their "happy ending" does nothing to resolve the real triangular desire that lies at the heart of Almodóvar's text and that plays itself out in the increasing violence that spins out of the respective Sancho/Clara/David and Sancho/Clara/Víctor triads. Indeed, Víctor and Elena's ongoing relationship at the end of the film—like David's phantom postcard and voiceover—represents something of a Lacanian "object a" that, in the words of Cindy Zeiher (2017), "stands in for desire" and that exists as the residue of a curiosity that simply cannot be satisfied. In other words, as Maire Jaanus (2013) notes, "the structure of desire exposes desire as unrealizable or overwhelming or exposes realized desire as insufficient" (p. 44). Or, as Henry Sullivan (1996) argues, such a Lacanian remainder, which stems from a "loss of *jouissance*", is caused precisely by "the trauma of being split away from a primordial oneness" (p. 184). And in this way, *Carne trémula* itself functions as a kind of "object a" in relation to its precursor texts, splitting and doubling its "curious" subjects throughout a cinematic performance of what Graham Wolfe (2011) might call a Lacanian "infinite deferral" of death (p. 199) and what Renata Salecl (1997) characterizes as a desire that always "has to remain unsatisfied, endlessly going from one object to another, positing new limits and prohibitions" (p. 19). For

Rikki Morgan-Tamosunas (2002), Almodóvar's film "is predicated on the dynamics of loss and recuperation: loss of the object of desire and attempts to win it back" (p. 188–89). This is certainly true. But, in its nearly endless bifurcation and duplication of Cervantes's Anselmo, Lotario, and Camila (into Víctor and Elena, and Archi and Lavinia, and David and Sancho and Clara), *Carne trémula* demonstrates that even happy endings and bright futures are forever haunted by the trauma of their deadly doubles.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Data Availability Statement: Data is contained within the article.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Notes

1 For more on the relationship between curiosity and Eve, see Brantlinger (1972, p. 358), Evans (1995, pp. 104–5), Kenny (1991, p. 272), Lo (2008, p. 79), and Parga Linares (2020, p. 33).

2 The original Dutch name of the program was *Adam zoekt Eva*. Other international titles include *Adam sucht Eva* (German), *Adam recherche Ève* (French), *Adam og Eva* (Danish), *Aatami etsii Eevaa* (Finnish), *L'isola di Adamo ed Eva* (Italian), *Ádám keresi Évát* (Hungarian), and *Adão e Eva* (Portuguese).

3 On the connection between discovery, knowledge, and sexuality, see also DeNicola (2017, pp. 48–50).

4 Scholars believe that this Boccaccio-inspired novella was one of the several, largely independent narratives that Cervantes had been working on at the time, and that he decided to lend this particular story to his *Don Quixote* project, while leaving the rest to be published together several years later in a 1613 collection titled *Novelas ejemplares* (Hahn 2001, pp. 213–14). See also Aylward (1982, p. 30), Brown (1981, p. 797), Casalduero (1967, pp. 102, 113), Cotarelo y Mori (1920, pp. 62–63), and Ford (1928, p. 36n).

5 See, for example, Alcalá Galán (2022), Arbesú Fernández (2005), Avalle-Arce (1961), Barbagallo (1994), Flores (2000), Gerli (2000), Gil-Oslé (2009), Ife (2005), Laguna (2007), McCallister (2014), Sánchez Sempere (2022), Santa Aguilar (2015), Sieber (1970), Wardropper (1957), and Zimic (1994).

6 On the limits of Girardian theory within religious and theological studies, see Andrade (n.d.). Regarding Girard and early modern Spanish literature, see the debate between Ciriaco Morón-Arroyo (1978) and Cesáreo Bandera (1979).

7 On homoeroticism in *El curioso impertinente*, see also Amat (1997) and Holcombe (2024).

8 For the sake of clarity, throughout this essay, I will refer to Rendell's novel using her original English title *Live Flesh*, while referring to Almodóvar's cinematic adaptation using the Spanish *Carne trémula*.

9 Almodóvar's choice of word in his title is likely influenced by the fact that Rendell employs the word "trembling" several times over the course of her novel in relation to sexual excitement (Rendell 1986, pp. 62, 169, 202, 209, 223).

10 In his own analysis of this film, Ernesto Acevedo-Muñoz (2007) notes that Liberto Rabal is "the grandson of Buñuel regular Francisco Rabal" (p. 171), an actor who also appears in *Átame* (*Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!*) (Almodóvar 1989). Likewise, Acevedo-Muñoz points out that Ángela Molina is "another Luis Buñuel actor who appeared in his 1977 film *That Obscure Object of Desire*" (p. 173), the significance of which will become apparent.

11 On Buñuel's adaption of Usigli's novel, see also Martínez Herranz (2016).

12 The main character in Usigli's original novel is named "Roberto de la Cruz". Buñuel's decision to change this name to "Archibaldo" represents another way in which *Carne trémula* engages in dialogue with Buñuel's precursor text.

13 On Buñuel's *Ensayo de un crimen*, see also Donnell (1999) and Donnell (2000).

14 Gina Wisker (2019) notes a similar process in the foundational work of Edgar Allan Poe in the establishment of the detective genre itself: "Poe's own dark mixture of the romantic and the salacious offers a model for a deep-seated cultural fascination with sex and death in which women are desired, destroyed, and desired even more exquisitely when they are post mortem" (p. 184).

15 For other psychoanalytic approaches to *El curioso impertinente* and *Don Quixote*, see Cascardi (1993), González (1993), Lauer (2011), and Stroud (2015). On psychoanalytic theory and Almodóvar, see Cívico-Lyons (2014)

16 Mark Allinson (2001) rightly notes a tendency in Almodóvar's work that perhaps applies more so to Sancho and Clara than to any other Almodóvarian couple: "Where male characters assume voyeuristic or sadistic roles, this is critically questioned, and identification tends to lie with the female characters" (p. 81). Such is the case with regards to Gloria (Carmen Maura) and Antonio (Ángel de Andrés López) in *¿Qué he hecho yo para merecer esto!* (*What Have I Done to Deserve This?*) (Almodóvar 1984), but it is also true in *Carne trémula*, "where the relationship between Clara and Sancho (the most dysfunctional relationship in Almodóvar) is clearly the fault of Sancho's masculine insecurity" (Allinson 2001, p. 81).

17 Within his demented stream of consciousness, we do see Victor fully believing that Clare will somehow leave David and will run off with him so that the two can live happily ever after.

[18] And it is not coincidental that Almodóvar's Sancho/Clara/Víctor triangle, like Rendell's, also ends in death (although, again, with some modifications). In Rendell's novel, Victor eventually dies of tetanus following an untreated stab wound to the chest that he receives while trying to rape a different woman.

[19] Readers familiar with Lorca's work—particularly his best-known play, *La casa de Bernarda Alba* (*The House of Bernarda Alba*)—will recognize that the horse mentioned here functions as a symbol of galloping sexual desire.

[20] Acevedo-Muñoz (2007) groups *Carne tremúla*, along with *High Heels* (1991), *The Flower of My Secret* (1996), and *Volver* (2006), in a chapter titled "Figures of Desire: The Melodrama of Longing" (pp. 135–203).

[21] On theological, philosophical, and cultural theories of the "perfect wife" in early modern Spain, see Dopico Black (2001).

References

Acevedo-Muñoz, Ernesto R. 2007. *Pedro Almodóvar*. London: British Film Institute.

Alcalá Galán, Mercedes. 2022. Painting into Theatre: "The Suicide of Lucretia" as a Tableau Vivant in *El Curioso Impertinente*. In *Drawing the Curtain: Cervantes's Theatrical Revelations*. Edited by Esther Fernández and Adrienne L. Martín. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, pp. 243–76.

Allinson, Mark. 2001. *A Spanish Labyrinth: The Films of Pedro Almodóvar*. London: I. B. Tauris Publishers.

Almodóvar, Pedro. 1984. *¿Qué he hecho yo para merecer esto!* Madrid: Tesauro, S. A. Madrid: Kaktus Producciones Cinematográficas.

Almodóvar, Pedro. 1986. *Matador*. Mexico City: Compañía Iberoamericana de TV.

Almodóvar, Pedro. 1988. *Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios*. Barcelona: LaurenFilm. Madrid: El deseo.

Almodóvar, Pedro. 1989. *¡Átame!* Madrid: El deseo.

Almodóvar, Pedro. 1997. *Carne trémula*. Madrid: El deseo.

al-Rahim, Ahmed H. 2022. Concupiscent Curiosity of the Gaze in Medieval Islam: Qur'ān 24:30–31. In *Curiositas*. Edited by Andreas Speer and Robert Maximilian Schneider. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, pp. 465–80.

Altamirano, Magdalena. 2015. Espacios eróticos verdes en la antigua lírica popular hispánica: El vergel, el huerto y la viña. *La Corónica: A Journal of Medieval Hispanic Languages, Literatures, and Cultures* 44: 87–114. [CrossRef]

Amat, Iluminada. 1997. Doubling the Homoerotic: "El curioso impertinente" in *Don Quixote*. *Postscript: Publication of the Philological Association of the Carolinas* 14: 81–94.

Andrade, Gabriel. (n.d.)René Girard (1923–2015). *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Available online: https://iep.utm.edu/girard/ (accessed on 8 February 2025).

Arbesú Fernández, David. 2005. Auctoritas y experiencia en "El curioso impertinente". *Cervantes: Journal of the Cervantes Society of America* 25: 23–43. [CrossRef]

Avalle-Arce, Juan Bautista. 1961. *El curioso* y *El capitán*: Cervantes y la verdad artística. In *Deslindes cervantinos*. Madrid: Edhigar.

Avilés, Luis. 2024. El (des)concertado reloj de la amistad en "El curioso impertinente" de Cervantes. *Cervantes: Journal of the Cervantes Society of America* 44: 8–30. [CrossRef]

Aylward, Edward T. 1982. *Cervantes: Pioneer and Plagiarist*. London: Tamesis.

Bandera, Cesáreo. 1979. Conflictive versus Cooperative Mimesis: A Reply to Ciriaco Morón-Arroyo. *Diacritics* 9: 62–70. [CrossRef]

Bandera, Cesáreo. 2006. *The Humble Story of Don Quixote: Reflections on the Birth of the Modern Novel*. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press.

Barbagallo, Antonio. 1994. Los dos amigos, "El curioso impertinente" y la literatura italiana. *Anales Cervantinos* 32: 207–19. [CrossRef]

Bizet, Georges. 2010. *Carmen*. New York: The Metropolitan Opera.

Brantlinger, Patrick. 1972. To See New Worlds: Curiosity in Paradise Lost. *Modern Language Quarterly: A Journal of Literary History* 33: 355–69. [CrossRef]

Brown, Kenneth. 1981. *El curioso impertinente*: Una homilia novelesca. In *Cervantes: Su obra y su mundo; Actas del I: Congreso Internacional sobre Cervantes*. Edited by Manuel Criado de Val. Madrid: Edi-6, pp. 789–97.

Buñuel, Luis. 1955. *Ensayo de un crimen*. Madrid: Alianza cinematográfica española.

Buñuel, Luis. 1977. *Cet obscur objet du désir*, Greenwich Film Productions; Les Films Galaxie; In-Cine Compañía Industrial Cinematográfica.

Burningham, Bruce R. 2024. Valor, agravio y mujeres al borde. *Comedia Performance* 21: 77–89. [CrossRef]

Carruthers, Peter. 2018. Basic Questions. *Mind & Language* 33: 130–47. [CrossRef]

Casalduero, Joaquín. 1967. *Estudios de literatura española*. Madrid: Gredos.

Cascardi, Anthony J. 1993. The Archaeology of Desire in Don Quixote. In *Quixotic Desire: Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Cervantes*. Edited by Ruth Anthony El Saffar, Diana de Armas Wilson and Max Hernández. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, pp. 37–58.

Cervantes, Miguel de. 1978. *El ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha*. Edited by Luis Andrés Murillo. 2 vols, Madrid: Castalia.

Chamberlin, Vernon A. 1968. Symbolic Green: A Time-Honored Characterizing Device in Spanish Literature. *Hispania: A Journal Devoted to the Teaching of Spanish and Portuguese* 51: 29–37. [CrossRef]

Cívico-Lyons, Inma. 2014. Disruptions of the Real in Almodóvar's Films: The Psychological Perspective in *Pepi, Luci, Bom y otras chicas del montón* (1980) and *Matador* (1986). *PsyArt: A Journal for the Psychological Study of the Arts* 18: 76–90.

Connelly, Caryn, and Juliet Lynd. 2002. Happy Sadist or Latent Feminist? Un Buñuel Mexicain. *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture* 21: 233–49.
Cotarelo y Mori, Emilio. 1920. *Últimos estudios cervantinos*. Madrid: Revista de Archivos, Bibliotecas y Museos.
DeNicola, Daniel R. 2017. *Understanding Ignorance: The Surprising Impact of What We Don't Know*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
Deveny, Thomas. 2000. *Carne trémula*: An Almodóvaresque Screen Adaptation. *West Virginia University Philological Papers* 47: 129–36.
Donger, Wendy. 2001. "Carnal Knowledge". In *Fathom Archive*. Chicago: The University of Chicago. Available online: https://fathom.lib.uchicago.edu/1/777777121879/ (accessed on 29 June 2024).
Donnell, Sidney. 1999. Quixotic Desire and the Avoidance of Closure in Luis Buñuel's *The Criminal Life of Archibaldo de La Cruz*. *MLN* 114: 269–96. [CrossRef]
Donnell, Sidney. 2000. Through the Looking Glass: Reflections on the Baroque in Luis Buñuel's *The Criminal Life of Archibaldo de La Cruz*. In *Echoes and Inscriptions: Comparative Approaches to Early Modern Spanish Literatures*. Edited by Barbara Simerka and Christopher B. Weimer. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, pp. 74–97.
Donnell, Sidney. 2001. If the Shoe Fits: Buñuel, Almodóvar, and the Modernist/Postmodernist Question. *Bucknell Review: A Scholarly Journal of Letters, Arts and Sciences* 45: 52–65.
Dopico Black, Georgina. 2001. *Perfect Wives, Other Women: Adultery and Inquisition in Early Modern Spain*. Durham: Duke University Press.
Doyle, Cyndi. 2019. Thriving Intimacy in Law Enforcement Relationships: Obstacles and Resiliency. *Police Chief Magazine*. May 22. Available online: https://www.policechiefmagazine.org/thriving-intimacy/ (accessed on 9 April 2024).
Edwards, Gwynne. 2001. *Labyrinths of Passion*. London: Peter Owen.
Evans, Peter William. 1995. *The Films of Luis Buñuel: Subjectivity and Desire*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
Flores, R. M. 2000. Formación del personaje femenino en *El curioso impertinente*. *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos* 34: 331–49.
Ford, Jeremiah D. M. 1928. Plot, Tale, and Episode in *Don Quijote*. In *Mélanges de Linguistique et de Littérature offerts a M. Alfred Jeanroy*. Paris: Editions E. Droz, pp. 311–23.
Freud, Sigmund. 2011. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Edited by Todd Dufresne. Translated by Gregory C. Richter. Ontario: Broadview.
García Catalán, Shaila, and Aarón Rodríguez Serrano. 2021. La pantalla fetiche: Deseo y sublimación en *Dolor y guloria* de Pedro Almodóvar. *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* 22: 95–110. [CrossRef]
García Lorca, Federico. 1982. Romance sonámbulo. In *Obras II: Poesía*. Edited by Miguel García-Posada. Madrid: Akal, pp. 147–49.
Gerli, E. Michael. 2000. Truth, Lies, and Representation: The Crux of "El Curioso Impertinente". In *Cervantes for the 21st Century/Cervantes Para El Siglo XXI: Studies in Honor of Edward Dudley*. Edited by Francisco La Rubia Prado. Newark: Juan de la Cuesta, pp. 107–22.
Gil-Oslé, Juan Pablo. 2009. Early Modern Illusions of Perfect Male Friendship: The Case of Cervantes's *El Curioso Impertinente*. *Cervantes: Journal of the Cervantes Society of America* 29: 85–115. [CrossRef]
Girard, René. 1965. *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel: Self and Other in Literary Structure*. Translated by Yvonne Freccero. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
González, Eduardo. 1993. Curious Reflex, Cruel Reflections: The Case for Impertinence. In *Quixotic Desire: Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Cervantes*. Edited by Ruth Anthony El Saffar, Diana de Armas Wilson and Max Hernández. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, pp. 200–26.
Gordon, Michael. 2019. Innovating on Adultery: Cervantes' Camila and the Wives of Day 7 in *Il Decameron*. *EHumanista: Journal of Iberian Studies* 43: 395–406. Available online: https://www.ehumanista.ucsb.edu/sites/default/files/sitefiles/ehumanista/volume43/ehum43.gordon.pdf (accessed on 7 April 2024).
Gutiérrez-Albilla, Julián Daniel. 2008. *Queering Buñuel: Sexual Dissidence and Psychoanalysis in His Mexican and Spanish Cinema*. London: Taurus Academic Studies.
Hahn, Juergen. 2001. *Rinconete y Cortadillo* in *Don Quijote*: A Cervantine Reconstruction. *MLN* 116: 211–34. [CrossRef]
Hernández Castellanos, Camilo. 2017. El insecto y el maniquí: Alegorías de la imagen post-mortem en *Ensayo de un crimen* de Luis Buñuel. *Hispanic Review* 85: 11–32.
Hitchcock, Alfred. 1954. *Rear Window*. HollywoodT: Paramount Pictures.
Holcombe, Daniel. 2024. Secret Intimacies: Eternal Homoeroticism in Cervantes's *El Curioso Impertinente*. In *Bodies beyond Labels: Finding Joy in the Shadows of Imperial Spain*. Edited by Daniel Holcombe and Frederick A. De Armas. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, pp. 69–109.
Hutchinson, Steven. 2006. Anselmo y sus adicciones. In *El Quijote desde América*. Edited by Gustavo Illades and James Iffland. Puebla: Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, Mexico City: El Colegio de México, pp. 119–38.
Ife, Barry W. 2005. Cervantes, Herodotus and the Eternal Triangle: Another Look at the Sources of *El Curioso Impertinente*. *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 82: 671–81. [CrossRef]
Irving, Washington. 1993. *Tales of the Alhambra*. Granada: Miguel Sánchez.
Jaanus, Maire. 2013. Happiness and Madness. In *"We're All Mad Here"*. Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller and Maire Jaanus. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 43–65.

Jehenson, Yvonne. 1998. *Masochima* versus *Machismo*: Camila's Re-Writing of Gender Assignations in Cervantes's *Tale of Foolish Curiosity*. *Cervantes: Journal of the Cervantes Society of America* 18: 26–52. [CrossRef]
Kenny, Neil. 1991. "*Curiosité*" and Philosophical Poetry in the French Renaissance. *Renaissance Studies: Journal of the Society for Renaissance Studies* 5: 262–76. [CrossRef]
Kubrick, Stanley. 1999. *Eyes Wide Shut*. Burbank: Warner Bros.
Laguna, Ana María. 2007. Importing the Impertinent Curiosity: A New Moral Category in English Theory. In *La huella de Cervantes y del* Quijote *en la cultura Anglosajona*. Edited by José Manuel Barrio Marco and María José Crespo Allué. Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid, pp. 73–80.
Lauer, A. Robert. 2011. Altisidora y "La ley de la madre": Una lectura lacaniana del *Quijote*". In *Visiones y Revisiones Cervantinas*. Edited by Christoph Strosetzki and José Montero-Reguera. Madrid: Centro de Estudios Cervantinos, pp. 433–41.
Lo, Louis. 2008. *Male Jealousy: Literature and Film*. New York: Continuum.
Mancing, Howard. 2005. Camila's Story. *Cervantes: Journal of the Cervantes Society of America* 25: 9–22. [CrossRef]
Marsh, Steven. 2004. Masculinity, Monuments and Movement: Gender and the City of Madrid in Pedro Almodóvar's *Carne trémula* (1997). In *Gender and Spanish Cinema*. Edited by Steven Marsh and Parvati Nair. Oxford: Berg Publishers, pp. 53–70.
Martínez Herranz, Amparo. 2016. El proceso creativo de *Ensayo de un Crimen*: Sobre la adaptación, la obsesión y la Mona Lisa. *Bulletin of Spanish Studies: Hispanic Studies and Researches on Spain, Portugal, and Latin America* 93: 657–78. [CrossRef]
McCallister, Timothy A. 2014. "El curioso impertinente" as Empiricism's Folly. *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 91: 477–92. [CrossRef]
McKenna, Andrew. 2019. Buñuel's Apocalypse Now. In *Mimetic Theory and Film*. Edited by Paolo Diego Bubbio and Chris Fleming. London: Bloomsbury Academic, pp. 17–33.
Morgan-Tamosunas, Rikki. 2002. Narrative, Desire and Critical Discourse in Pedro Almodóvar's *Carne trémula*. *Tesserae: Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies* 8: 185–99. [CrossRef]
Morón-Arroyo, Ciriaco. 1978. Cooperative Mimesis: Don Quixote and Sancho Panza. *Diacritics* 8: 75–86. [CrossRef]
Mulvey, Laura. 1999. Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema. In *Film Theory and Criticism*, 5th ed. Edited by Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 833–44.
Parga Linares, Santiago. 2020. Desire and Curiosity in *En diciembre llegaban las brisas*. *Revista de Estudios Colombianos* 56: 29–37. [CrossRef]
Penner, Diana. 2013. End of An Era for Long-Time Indianapolis Detective Team. *USA Today*. January 27. Available online: https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/01/27/detective-team-end-of-era/1868387/ (accessed on 9 April 2024).
Pérez Ríu, Carmen. 2017. Transition, circularity and haptic space in the representation of the city: From Ruth Rendell's *Live Flesh* to Pedro Almodóvar's *Carne trémula*. *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies* 31: 682–93. [CrossRef]
Pérez, Ashley Hope. 2011. Into the Dark Triangle of Desire: Rivalry, Resistance, and Repression in "El curioso impertinente". *Cervantes: Journal of the Cervantes Society of America* 31: 83–107. [CrossRef]
Ray, Nicholas. 1954. *Johnny Guitar*. Los Angeles: Republic Pictures.
Rendell, Ruth. 1986. *Live Flesh*. New York: Pantheon.
Rushdy, Ashraf H. A. 1993. Cartesian Mirror/Quixotic Web: Toward a Narrativity of Desire. *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal* 26: 83–110.
Salecl, Renata. 1997. The Sirens and Feminine Jouissance. *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 9: 14–35. [CrossRef]
Sánchez Sempere, Irene. 2022. El guitarrista y *El curioso impertinente*: Luis Landero a la luz de Cervantes. *Anales Cervantinos* 54: 249–71. [CrossRef]
Santa Aguilar, Sara Isabel. 2015. La poesía en la ficción: Una aproximación a la estructura de *El curioso impertinente*. *Hipogrifo: Revista de literatura y cultura del Siglo de Oro* 3: 285–95. [CrossRef]
Sieber, Harry. 1970. On Juan Huarte de San Juan and Anselmo's "locura" in "El Curioso Impertinente". *Revista Hispánica Moderna* 36: 1–8.
Smith, Paul Julian. 2014. *Desire Unlimited: The Cinema of Pedro Almodóvar*. London: Verso.
Stroud, Matthew D. 2015. Subjects, Objects, and Psychoanalysis: Lacanian Concepts as Pedagogical Approaches to *Don Quixote*. In *Approaches to Teaching Cervantes's Don Quixote*. Edited by James A. Parr and Lisa Vollendorf. New York: Modern Language Association of America, pp. 159–64.
Sullivan, Henry W. 1996. *Grotesque Purgatory: A Study of Cervantes's Don Quixote, Part II*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.
Torres, Maruja. 2004. Interview with Pedro Almodóvar: The Flower of My Secret. In *Pedro Almodóvar: Interviews*. Edited by Paula Woilloquet-Maricondi. Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, pp. 110–18.
Urios-Aparisi, Eduardo. 2010. The Body of Love in Almodóvar's Cinema: Metaphor and Metonymy of the Body and Body Parts. *Metaphor and Symbol* 25: 181–203. [CrossRef]
Usigli, Rodolfo. 1944. *Ensayo de un crimen*. Mexico City: Editorial América.
Vargas, Chavela. 2007. Somos. In *Somos*. Madrid: Wea Spain.
Wardropper, Bruce W. 1957. The Pertinence of *El curioso impertinente*. *PMLA* 72: 587–600. [CrossRef]
Whale, James. 1935. *Bride of Frankenstein*. Universal City: Universal Pictures.

Whitmarsh, Ian. 2017. What's Mine Isn't (and Neither Is What's Yours): Desire as Debt, the Lacanian Lack, and the Boonian Gift. *Anthropological Quarterly* 90: 1237–49. [CrossRef]

Wilson, Diana de Armas. 1987. "Passing the Love of Women": The Intertextuality of *El curioso impertinente*. *Cervantes: Journal of the Cervantes Society of America* 7: 9–28. [CrossRef]

Wisker, Gina. 2019. Desire, Disgust and Dead Women: Angela Carter's Re-Writing Women's Fatal Scripts from Poe and Lovecraft. In *The Arts of Angela Carter: A Cabinet of Curiosities*. Edited by Marie Mulvey-Roberts. Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 183–203.

Wolfe, Graham. 2011. The "Sexuation" of Sublimation: A Žižekian Approach to John Mighton's Possible Worlds". *Modern Drama* 54: 194–215. [CrossRef]

Wolfenzon, Carolyn. 2006. *Los dos Ensayo(s) de un crimen*: Buñuel y Usigli. *Chasqui: Revista de Literatura y Cultura Latinoamericana e Indígena* 35: 35–53. [CrossRef]

Zeiher, Cindy. 2017. Unbehagen: A Gallantry with Excess. *Palgrave Commun* 3: 38. [CrossRef]

Zimic, Stanislav. 1994. La vorágine de la desconfianza en la *Novela del curioso impertinente*. *Acta Neophilologica* 27: 23–47. [CrossRef]

Žižek, Slavoj. 2006. *The Pervert's Guide to Cinema 1, 2, 3*. Directed by Sophie Fiennes. Vienna: Mischief Films. Los Angeles: Amoeba.

Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.