In the early 1600s, Philip III reinstated Valladolid as the capital of the declining imperial Spain, just as it had been during the time of some of Philip’s most illustrious ancestors (Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand, Emperor Charles V, and, briefly, King Philip II). At the time, Valladolid was a populous, modern, and vibrant city, boasting elegant palaces, beautiful plazas, numerous temples and, to use the words of early modern Spanish historian Matías de Novoa, “ricas fábricas para la hospitalidad”. One of such sites for hospitality in Valladolid, and an important one for that matter, was the Hospital de la Resurrección, outside the then emblematic Puerta del Campo where dignitaries were duly welcome to the city, and adjacent to the building that became in 1603 the residence of soldier-poet Cervantes.

It is leaving this Hospital that we first encounter ensign Campuzano in Cervantes’ Exemplary Novel, El casamiento engañoso. Still convalescing from syphilis, Campuzano walks with difficulty through the Puerta del Campo into Valladolid, using his sword, the soldier’s hall-
mark, as a walking-stick. There, he runs into his friend, the licentiate Peralta, who invites him over for lunch so he may catch up on the recovering soldier’s life. Campuzano tells him of how he met and married Estefanía de Caicedo, thinking she had plenty of goods, but ended up cuckolded, abandoned, penniless, and syphilitic. The experience was not all that bad, goes on the ensign, because while at the hospital he overheard and transcribed a conversation which took place between the hospital’s guardian dogs, Berganza and Cipión. He asks his incredulous friend to read it, and thus the following novella, *El Coloquio de los perros*, begins. Once Peralta is done reading, he praises the writing for its aesthetic value and sanctions his friend’s determination to write the second part of the colloquy. Finally, the two friends leave Peralta’s house to go for a walk at the Espolón, one of the city’s beautiful promenades.

Scholars have commonly approached *El casamiento* in terms of its generic models and of how Cervantes departs from them. Thus, the novel has been linked to picaresque narrative, to confessional literature, to miracles, to theatrical interludes, to romance, and more recently to soldiers’ tales. I would like to suggest in this essay that this novella is also a sustained reflection on the construction of gender, and particularly of masculinity.

Regarding the echoes of soldiers’ narratives in *El casamiento*, Rupp has identified analogue qualities in real life seventeenth-century soldier Alonso de Contreras, author of an autobiographical piece, and in the fictional ensign Campuzano. To be sure, both have a penchant for telling stories to validate and increase their reputa-

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4 One of the main functions of early modern Spanish general hospitals was to take in people suffering «[…] de calenturas, de heridas, de mal francés, locos, niños expósitos» (Cov., Tesoro, p. 1073).
5 Alonso Cortés, 1918, pp. 45-46.
7 Forcione, 1984, pp. 131-145.
8 Sánchez, 1993, pp. 163-178.
tion, for looking poised by ways of publicly blazoning items of finery, and for acquiring wealth at any cost. Moreover, if Contreras shows his ingenuity «in entrapping adversaries at sea and in asserting command over his subordinates»\(^{13}\), Campuzano’s cunning is patent in his scheming against Estefanía and in the «artificio [...] y la invención»\(^{14}\) of his «Coloquio». There are, however, striking differences between soldiers’ narratives and Campuzano’s story\(^{15}\). Whereas Contreras proudly recounts the exploits leading him to important posts in the army and in the Order of Malta\(^{16}\), Campuzano’s deeds —courtship and marriage to Estefanía on the one hand, and listening and recording the talking dogs’ dialogue on the other— bear no relationship to warfare. To be sure, soldiers’ tales such as Contreras’ *Discurso*, Bernal Díaz del Castillo’s *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España*, or Diego García de Paredes’ *Breve suma*\(^{17}\), are adventure narratives wherein the soldier realizes himself through the frontiers of the Spanish empire, whereas Campuzano appears not in the perimeter, but rather at the very epicenter of the empire.

Borreguero Beltrán notes that the army attracted sixteenth century men for varied reasons, ranging from a wish to attain glory and reputation, to a thirst for riches obtained through looting, or simply as a means to survive or to climb up the social ladder\(^{18}\). Thus, while imperial soldiers such as Jerónimo de Pasamonte\(^{19}\) or Duque de Estrada\(^{20}\) enlisted to emulate their forefathers, others such as

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\(^{12}\) Molho associated the patronymic Campuzano to «los orígenes rústicos del personaje» and to the ensign’s ability to *campar* or to brag about something he is not (1983, p. 83).

\(^{13}\) Rupp, 2001, p. 374.

\(^{14}\) *Coloquio*, 1997, p. 322.

\(^{15}\) Rupp reckons that while «common soldiers told tales to their superiors for pragmatic ends; Campuzano shares his stories with a social equal for the purposes of friendship and entertainment» (2001, p. 383).

\(^{16}\) Rupp, 2001, p. 373; Pope, 1974, p. 149.

\(^{17}\) Paredes’ *Breve suma* can be read in Rodríguez Villa’s critical anthology (1908, pp. 255-259).

\(^{18}\) Borreguero Beltrán, 2005, pp. 48-56.

\(^{19}\) Pasamonte, *Vida y trabajos*, p. 7.

\(^{20}\) Duque de Estrada, *Memorias*, pp. 255-259. In these pages, the author traces the origins of his lineage starting at the times of Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius. Interestingly, the very first piece of information given in this sort of «extensión de la costumbre heráldica de colocar en el pórtico del libro el escudo de armas» (Pope,
Contreras tell of their early inclination for war and their desire to escape poverty\textsuperscript{21}. On the other hand, we do not know even remotely what compels the ensign to serve his king. For all we know, Campuzano is a soldier waiting to be levied and to shift quarters, but who instead gets married and duped in the process. His past, like Don Quixote’s, is conveniently obliterated, and while his contracting syphilis brings him closer to historical counterparts\textsuperscript{22} who also caught venereal diseases out of relationships with prostitutes, in becoming Estefanía’s dependant and getting manipulated by her, Campuzano’s soldierly manhood is called into question. Indeed, the attributes that allegedly distinguish a soldier, namely «aggression, strength, courage and endurance», which «have repeatedly been defined as the natural and inherent qualities of manhood»\textsuperscript{23}, are entirely absent in Campuzano.

Louis Combet has shown that Cervantean females engaged in amorous situations tend to be more intelligent and rational than their male partners who, in turn, lack the marks «that traditionally serve to define masculinity»\textsuperscript{24}. Thus, oftentimes men appear subjugated by women and emasculated. Clearly, in Campuzano and Estefanía’s partnership, it is the woman who takes charge of the action. Upon meeting at the Inn where the ensign is staying, it is she who approaches the ensign and sits by him. When he pleads that she allows him to see her face, which is almost entirely covered with a mantle, she first refuses and then commands him to send a page after her, who will guide him to her place the following day. As Márquez Villanueva notes, «la idea [del matrimonio] empieza por venir por entero de ellas»\textsuperscript{25}, and, contrary to the members of the infantries of Flanders, who dragged their wives, whores and children after them\textsuperscript{26},

\textsuperscript{21} In the first chapter Contreras tells how he contravened his mother, who tried in vain to place him with a silversmith, because he wanted to go to war at thirteen. He also tells of the family’s tight finances (\textit{Vida}, p. 25).
\textsuperscript{22} Rupp, 2001, p. 376.
\textsuperscript{23} Dawson, 1994, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{24} Combet, 1980, p. 101, my translation.
\textsuperscript{25} Márquez Villanueva, 2004, p. 616. See also Clamurro, 1997, pp. 254-255.
\textsuperscript{26} Parker and Parker, 1977, pp. 34-35; Parker, 2004, p. 150.
Campuzano abandons the inn where he shares a room with his comrade, Captain Herrera, and moves to Estefanía’s alleged house. When the true owner of the house arrives to discover Estefanía in bed with Campuzano—an obvious parody of a poetic dawn (alborada)—Estefanía is made her own narrator and, in fabricating a narrative lie to save the day, she is placed in control of her life and that of her husband. No longer is she the object of Campuzano’s desire, but a leading agent who goes on to filch her husband’s valueless chains and trinkets. The accent placed throughout the narrative on Campuzano’s constant pursuit of Estefanía («haced a un paje que me siga», «y así, otro día, guiándome mi criado», «Mudó mi criado el baúl de la posada a casa de mi mujer», «[…] hizo a mi criado que se cargase el baúl y que la siguiese, a quien yo también seguí», «[…] pero no tanto que dejase de tomar mi capa y espada y salir a buscar a Estefanía») underscores Campuzano’s gradual emasculation. Furthermore, in relinquishing his authority to his wife («hube de condescender con el gusto de doña Estefanía») and in refraining from carrying out the ‘exemplary punishment’ he resolved to commit upon realizing his naivety, or, for that matter, to do anything to rescue his honor, as the patriarchal system dictated, the soldier is rendered a cowardly man.

Darcy Donahue has examined the ways in which both spouses use clothing and accouterments in order to «lure the other into a relationship based primarily upon material need».

Estefanía draws her mantle over her face, thus concealing her identity (it is not until he visits her at her place that Campuzano discovers that she is approximately thirty years old, and not very pretty), and flaunts rings on white hands as bait. The ensign in turn looks dashing draped in his soldier regalia—a plumed hat, a colorful uniform, and a fake gold chain. Donahue argues that the story represents sartorial manipulability for cross-social impersonation purposes as well as to assume different identities in a culture that placed too much emphasis in appearances. Indeed, both Estefanía and Campuzano differ from doña Clementa Bueso, the real owner of the house where the couple had been briefly living, and an authentic aristocrat, whose luxurious traveling attire is profusely described, as is that of don Lope, the gentle-

27 A rather similar process occurs in «El curioso impertinente» (Mancing, 2005).
man accompanying her: «Entró con ella [i.e. Clementa Bueso] el señor don Lope Meléndez de Almendárez, no menos bizarro que ricamente vestido de camino»\textsuperscript{31}. Like Campuzano in his military apparel, don Lope looks \textit{bizarro} in his traveling attire with the difference that the don’s garb is genuinely rich.

But the pervasive presence of dress, adornments, fabrics, and linen does more than signal the manipulability of attire to «produce the desired image of wealth»\textsuperscript{32}. As an identity flag, clothing points at a subject’s class, lineage, and gender, and thus it occupies a central place in scenes of passing, as Barbara Fuchs has demonstrated. Indeed, Cervantes does not only expose the dangers of misreading dress and attributing any given individual an invalid socio-economic worth. He also shows how finery, coupled with other props and ornaments, can serve to enact different forms of masculinity and femininity, and to create fictions of identity\textsuperscript{33}. Estefanía, for one, performs the role of indecent lady when she enters the inn, a site reserved for lowlifes, all mantled up and genteel looking, and engages in conversation with the ensign, inviting him to have a page follow her home\textsuperscript{34}. Later, however, she turns to the role of compliable wife, a role sanctioned for women by patriarchal discourse, as she explains to Campuzano: «busco marido a quien entregarme y a quien tener obediencia; a quien […] le entregaré una increíble solicitud de regalarle y servirle»\textsuperscript{35}. Accordingly, using «un tono de habla tan suave que se entraba por los oídos en el alma»\textsuperscript{36}, she boasts about her property, her culinary talents, her ability to govern her house, and her frugality, thus bringing forth an image of ‘perfect wife’ that would have made even Fray Luis de León proud.

As for Campuzano, the military appearance that first spurs Estefanía’s interest, quickly gives way to that of a courtier, and his resolve

\textsuperscript{31} \textit{Casamiento}, 1997, p. 229.
\textsuperscript{32} Donahue, 2004, p. 110.
\textsuperscript{34} Realizing her invitation may be read the wrong way, she quickly explains «que aunque yo soy más honrada de lo que promete esta respuesta, todavía, a trueco de ver si responde vuestra discreción a vuestra gallardía, holgaré de que me veais» (\textit{Casamiento}, 1997, p. 224).
\textsuperscript{35} \textit{Casamiento}, 1997, p. 225.
\textsuperscript{36} \textit{Casamiento}, 1997, p. 224.
to seek imperial martial enterprises vanishes as the would-be adventurer becomes domesticated before he can reach Flanders. In this respect, it is interesting to note that in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the figure of the delicate courtier was much despised. One needs only recall Don Quixote’s express contempt towards courtiers whose knowledge of the world is only through maps, and who never submit to the perils and hardships afflicting warriors and knight-errants. Although at times professional soldiers did not enjoy a positive social consideration either, at least, argued military theoreticians such as Luis Collado, author of a *Plática manual de artillería* (1592), they played a pivotal role in safeguarding the *res publica*.

According to Maravall, as the bureaucratic and administrative needs of the Modern State increase, a permanent army of professional artillery and infantry soldiers takes the place of the medieval battle-hardened nobleman. But the memory of the pre-modern hero would persist in romanticized accounts of their valiant deeds, such as the string of chronicles about the Great Captain, Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba, published throughout the second half of the sixteenth century, both in and outside Spain. Furthermore, such discourses of the nation fashioned a preferred form of manliness and afforded «energized young and old males alike [...] an imaginative framework from which to think about the attractions of empire». The abundance of references in *Don Quijote* to the heroism of Spanish soldiers such as the said Great Captain, Diego García de Paredes, Garci Laso, or Manuel Ponce de León, to name a few, reflects just how easily people could be brought to believe in the superiority of those ‘real men’. Peralta’s words upon bumping into his newly emaciated-

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37 *Don Quijote*, 2005, I.13, p. 89; II.6, p. 471; II.24, p. 588. Disparaging allusions to the feminized aristocrat culminated in the connection of this figure to homosexuality and sodomy (Garza Carvajal, 2003, pp. 60-63).
41 Rodríguez Villar published four such chronicles, and mentions in his introduction that there exist many other works referring to the life of the Great Captain as well as a chain of reprints (1908, pp. iv-x). Both facts underscore the particular inflection given to heroic narratives in discourses of the nation.
42 Bayer, 2003, p. 3.
looking friend somewhat capture the admiration and respect roused by the soldier’s boldness: «¡Como quien soy que le hacía en Flandes, antes terciando allá la pica que arrastrando aquí la espada» 44.

Given that the phallic sword was used as a metonym of manliness at the time 45, Peralta’s reference to the opposition between an upward-facing pike, and a downward-facing sword can be easily read as a comment on the process of emasculation undergone by the soldier.

Campuzano’s awareness that masculinity can be performed is apparent when he informs Peralta of his conviction that a certain garment engenders a certain speech 46. Similar ideas were expressed by historic soldiers such as captain Diego de Salazar, who in the prologue to his Tratado de re militari reminds the reader that «si alguno se determina al ejercicio de la Guerra, no solamente muda el hábito, mas las palabras y voz y apariencias: y también en las costumbres y modos se deforma del uso de todos los hombres ciudadanos, que riendo demostrar que en solo su hábito, y uso más que en la buena orden consisten las militares victorias, y ferocidad de ánimo, y que los otros son pusilánimes y afeminados» 47. Lest we have any trouble recognizing the impostor behind the soldier, Cervantes makes the contrast between Campuzano and his comrade Captain Herrera, a ‘real man of arms,’ explicit: unlike the ensign, the Captain arrives in Flanders without mishap 48.

Once married, Campuzano’s dress and lifestyle change. He locks his chains, trinkets, and his best dresses and plumes, inside a trunk, 

44 Casamiento, 1997, p. 221.
45 Covarrubias leaves no room to doubt when he defines ‘espada’ as «La común arma de que se usa, y los hombres la traen de ordinario ceñida, para defensa y para ornato y demostración de que lo son; y a los que no están tenidos en esta reputación, les dicen que traen ruecas» (Tesoro, p. 827).
46 «Estaba yo entonces bizarrísimo, con aquella gran cadena que vuesa merced debió de conocerme, el sombrero con plumas y cintillo, el vestido de colores, a fuer de soldado, y tan gallardo a los ojos de mi locura, que me daba a entender que las podía matar en el aire» (Casamiento, 1997, p. 224). According to Rodríguez-Luis, «la apariencia de Campuzano no es del tipo ideal pues depende, según él mismo, del mucho aparato de sus vestidos, y está vista a fin de cuentas irónicamente por el propio hablante cuando señala su vanidad» (1980, vol. 2, p. 41).
47 Salazar, Tratado de re militari, fol. A3.
48 «Bien se acordará vuesa merced, señor licenciado Peralta, como yo hacía en esta ciudad camarada con el capitán Pedro de Herrera, que ahora está en Flandes» (Casamiento, 1997, p. 223).
which he opens only to show his wife and thus continue with the masquerade. And for six fleeting days, he says «Pisé ricas alfombras, ajé sábanas de holanda, alumbréme con candeleros de plata; almorzaba en la cama, levantábame a las once, comía a las doce, y a las dos sesteaba en el estrado; bailábanme doña Estefanía y la moza el agua delante [...]. El rato que doña Estefanía faltaba de mi lado, la habían de hallar en la cocina, toda solícita en ordenar guisados que me despertasen el gusto y me avivasen el apetito. Mis camisas, cuellos y pañuelos eran un nuevo Aranjuez de flores, según olían, bariados en el agua de ángeles y de azahar que sobre ellos se derramaban».

This inventory of daily routines and personal care pointedly recalls the nefarious faults which, according to Lehfeldt, were condemned in numerous sixteenth and seventeenth century documents with a vested interest in constructing the ideal courtier. To wit: idleness, the subordinate position assumed in court by aristocrats, the inordinate acquisition of imported sumptuary goods, the neglect of martial practice, the immoderate consumption of food and engagement in sexual activity, and the extravagance in personal care and dress. The latter breach of decorum is particularly problematic because it signals poor property administration skills. Altogether, the ensign’s (ab)use of fine linen, of luxury domestic items, and of perfumed garments; his idleness and sexual-appetitive profligacy, symbolize the soldier’s unmanning and transvirilization as well as the economic ruin fostered by a disastrous financial management.

Clearly, at one level Campuzano’s is the story of a man whose enacted military masculinity is refashioned first into that of a man of court and later, once stripped from everything he had packed into the trunk, being only left with a vestido de camino, into that of a poor man hoping to reinvent himself as a man of letters (through the writing of short novels, like the first and second parts of the Coloquio de los perros). At a different level, however, the text ingeniously sug-

50 Lehfeldt, 2008, pp. 467-482.
51 Cartagena Calderón defines «transvirilismo» as «la transformación o el cambio de una masculinidad a otra» (2005, p. 107).
52 The ensign closes the chronicle of his ill-starred marriage with the remark «espada tengo, lo demás, Dios lo remedie» (p. 234), a conclusive statement that suggests, according to Rupp, «a soldier’s confidence in the instruments of his trade»
gests, through the sartorial transformations operated in Campuzano, that the imperial pageantry Spain purposely displayed through its gallant colorful soldiers (playfully dubbed ‘parrots’ at the time) and through rich, commodity-full enclaves such as Valladolid, is only leading to the nation’s economic collapse.

Fuchs has argued that in *Las dos doncellas*, Cervantes engages «with political and social controversies under the cloak of transvestism»⁵³. Similarly, in *El casamiento* Cervantes harnesses what Judith Butler has referred to as the performativity of gender in order to grapple with Spain’s fraught imperial construction. Indeed, Cervantes’ fictional evocation of a feminized soldier left ‘pelón’ (that is, bald and broke) in the course of a transactional mishap, in my opinion a metaphor of what awaited a masculinist nation living beyond its possibilities, would proof visionary. Like the ensign’s six–day blissful sojourn with Estefanía, which quickly faded into misery, Valladolid’s term as capital of the Spanish Empire would only last six years after which the city’s slow but steady decline set in.

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(2001, p. 379). However, this may well be less the formulation of his hope to resume a military life than an affirmation that his manhood can be reconstructed.

⁵³ Fuchs, 2003, p. 46.

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