Published in final edited form as:

Hispania. 2014 March ; 97(1): 113–124. doi:10.1353/hpn.2014.0023.

Embodied Cognition and Empathy in Miguel de Cervantes's *El celoso extremeño*

Elena Carrera

Queen Mary, University of London, UK

Abstract

This article examines the portrayal of cognitive experience in the published version of Miguel de Cervantes's short story *El celoso extremeño* (1613), drawing both on recent studies of empathy and current debates about the inseparability of cognition and emotion. It considers how cognitive experience is marked by particular bodily sensations and shaped by internal representations (i.e., mental images) that are closely tied to emotions such as fear, jealousy, joy, and sorrow. Paying particular attention to the ways in which the narrative underscores the characters' limited sensory experiences and their defective understanding of each other's positions, the article argues that this provides the reader with the opportunity to simulate mentally his or her own challenging situations, faulty judgments, and injudicious actions. While being invited to use his or her imagination and judgment to enjoy being placed in a position of greater power and knowledge than the characters, Cervantes's reader is also encouraged to consider the possibility of not knowing and to accept the limits of empathy.

Keywords

El celoso extremeño; embodied cognition/cognición encarnada; empathy/empatía; imagination/imaginación; Juan Huarte de San Juan; Juan Luis Vives; mental simulation/simulación mental; Miguel de Cervantes; sensory experience/experiencia sensorial

Miguel de Cervantes's *El celoso extremeño* (1613) is an exemplary tale of deception. The text echoes similar stories about foolish old men marrying young women, which leads the readers to expect that Leonora, the inexperienced young wife, will be seduced by the handsome young intruder, Loaysa. The story ends, however, with a twist: Felipo de Carrizales, the over-jealous and foolish 68-year-old man, is deceived into believing that a full seduction has taken place and he dies before finding out what the reader knows about his wife's last-minute fight to defend her honor. The marital relationship between old Carrizales and Leonora, who is fifty-four years younger than him, seems doomed from the start, not only because of their age disparity but also because of his lack of trust, his extreme fears, and his overcautiousness. This tale has received a great deal of critical attention, particularly with regard to trust. Alison Weber, for example, has examined Carrizales's lack of trust from a psychoanalytical point of view, emphasizing his "obsessive personality" and his "sense of

guilt” (35). Edwin Williamson in turn, has argued that communication between author and reader can only be imperfect, affirming that “el lector nunca puede estar seguro de saber las intenciones del autor ni tampoco éste puede asegurarse de que sus intenciones trasciendan a sus lectores sin malentendidos” (796), and that this is underscored in *El celoso extremeño* by the lack of sympathy and trust between its main characters: “[E]l matrimonio de Leonora y Carrizales no logra establecer ese vínculo de mutua simpatía y confianza que podría servirnos de paradigma de la posible comunicación trascendente entre el autor y el lector” (814). In this article, I will revisit the notions of trust and sympathy in light of recent debates on embodied cognition and empathy in order to show how, in contrast to the marked distance that the burlesque tone of the traditional cuckold’s tales had created towards their characters, *El celoso extremeño* invites readers to empathize with the characters’ limited embodied experiences and cognition.

One of the main critical approaches to the exemplarity of *El celoso extremeño* has involved seeking to establish what moral lessons can be drawn from it, searching for the “misterio escondido” advertised by Cervantes in the “Prólogo al lector” of the *Novelas ejemplares* (65). As Michael Nerlich and Anthony J. Cascardi have noted, a number of prominent Cervantists (most notably Américo Castro) have emphasized the Christian moral teaching of the stories and have paid greater attention to Cervantes’s claim that he does not wish to inspire any “mal deseo o pensamiento” than to his suggestion that he is offering a game, a “mesa de trucos,” for the healthy entertainment of readers (Cascardi 49–51; Cervantes 64; Nerlich 26). The playfulness of Cervantes’s narrative techniques in the *Novelas ejemplares* has been undervalued by such influential scholars as Alban K. Forcione, who warns that “both games and romances” might create an “undiscriminating audience, united in a crude experience of empathy and repugnance” (“Afterword” 350). He goes on to suggest that “critical detachment” is preferable to the kind of empathetic responses elicited in the “mob” by political propaganda films and by mass entertainment like bullfighting and rock concerts (350).

Forcione’s emphasis on critical detachment results in a form of moral exegesis of *El celoso extremeño*, which involves interpreting some of the characters as allegorical demonic types.¹ Paul Lewis-Smith has also read *El celoso extremeño* in allegorical terms, seeking to offer a “non-empathetic [and] ... intentionalist interpretation” (205). He contends that Leonora resembles “the historical Jesus” because she is “falsely accused” and suffers “because of the sins of others” (203). He interprets Carrizales as a “mythic embodiment of the conflict between the essential demand of Christianity in all its forms—the surrender of the self, of the individual human will—and the egotism of human nature in its mass of fear and desire” (200). Yet such moral and intentionalist approaches seem reductive in light of the unsettling effects this tale has had on its critical readers. As A. F. Lambert has noted, “Cervantes is letting go of the reader’s hand to push him into a world where unproblematic readings do not work and ready-made moral schemes are not entirely adequate” (230). As Stephen Boyd has argued, in the *Novelas ejemplares*, Cervantes “deploys his own version of the Socratic method to disorientate his readers, forcing them to wonder at and question what they may

¹Acknowledging his indebtedness to Forcione, Steven Wagschal has focused on the construction of the tale’s old protagonist, Carrizales, in relation to pathological and anti-Semitic stereotypes (*The Literature*).

previously have taken for granted” (26). Boyd goes on to state that Cervantes uses a variety of strategies to engage readers in an active process of understanding the stories and themselves (41). For William H. Clamurro, *El celoso extremeño* “especially disturbs its reader because we simultaneously feel superior to and separate from the follies of its protagonist and yet recognize a part of ourselves in his all too plausible desire for certainty, contentment, and peace” (189). Such claims suggest that it is possible for the scholarly reader to be both critical and empathetic. It is perhaps time to move away from the negative view of empathy offered by Forcione and Lewis-Smith and to take into account significant recent reevaluations of this notion.

In one of the latest studies of “empathy,” Eva-Maria Engelen and Birgitt Röttger-Rössler define it as an “embodied (or bodily grounded) capacity” to take part in another person’s “affective situation” and to adopt his or her perspective (5). For Stephanie D. Preston and Alicia J. Hofelich, “empathy” refers to all the processes by which a person comes to “understand and/or feel the state of another through direct perception or imagination of their state” (“Many Faces” 25). While using the phrase “cognitive empathy” to refer to conscious attempts of an individual to understand other people, thus activating one’s personal representations of his or her situation or emotional state, Preston and Hofelich emphasize that “all forms of empathy engage some cognitive and some affective processing,” and that even highly cognitive forms of empathy involve personal, affective representations (“Understanding” 38). They also draw on the work of Lawrence W. Barsalou to argue that perception relies on neural representations that are: 1) conceptual because they encode situations and states together with their associated meaning and 2) “embodied” because their meaning is closely tied up with particular sensations, emotions, and bodily movements (38).

The embodied nature of cognition was stressed by Aristotle in the dictum *nihil est intellectu quod non prius in sensu* (“there is nothing in the intellect that has not come from the senses”), which became commonplace among medieval and Renaissance thinkers. The humanist Juan Luis Vives expanded on the idea of the embodied basis of knowledge by arguing in *De anima et vita* (1538) that the first kind of cognition relates to the external senses and that all the other types of cognition derive from it (93). In recent years, the label “embodied cognition” has been used to refer to a number of diverse psychological and philosophical approaches, from “body-centrism,” which claims that differences in cognition and consciousness can be explained by differences in embodiment, to “extended functionalism,” which uses computational analysis to study the contribution of the brain, the body, and the environment to mental phenomena (Dempsey and Shani 594–95, 598–99).² I use the label “embodied cognition” cautiously, situating my approach at a crossroads between the views on cognition and embodiment prevailing in Cervantes’s context and contemporary debates on the role of the body in linking cognitive and affective experience. I intend to show how Cervantes’s portrayal of his characters’ limited understanding of each other’s intentions can be understood in light of the recent view that cognition is neither purely bodily nor purely mental, and that it is inseparable from emotion.

²On embodied cognition, see also Dreyfus and Dreyfus; Valera, Thompson, and Rosch; and Zlatev, Ziemke, and Frank. On early modern embodied thought, see Lyons.

At a time when psychologists are placing themselves at the interface between “third phase” cognitive science and phenomenological philosophy, putting forward a new model of cognition that is understood as “embodied,” “active,” and “situated” in specific sociocultural contexts (see Larking, Eatough, and Osborn), literary scholars are also focusing on a wide range of issues related to embodied cognition. Yet, although “cognitive” approaches to literature are proliferating and becoming a significant trend in early modern studies, it is important to recognize the diversity of forms of literary inquiry that can be found under the “cognitive” umbrella.³ In 2005, Howard Mancing took a ground-breaking cognitive approach to Cervantes’s *El curioso impertinente*, building upon Jerome Bruner’s ideas from the mid-1980s. Since that time, the field has expanded in so many directions that, as the special issue *Cognitive Cervantes* shows, and Mancing notes in his own contribution, “there is no one way to ‘do cognitive studies’” (“Embodied Cognitive Science” 56). In his review of recent trends within cognitive science and literature, Mancing refers to some studies on empathy and on emotion, though he singles out “theory of mind” (i.e., the understanding of what other people may think, want, and believe) as the cognitive concept that has, so far, had the most significant impact on literary studies (50). He suggests that “all cognition is embodied cognition” and puts forward the view that the “imagination” is not something extraordinary (41). It is, rather, an essential, constantly occurring activity of the human mind-brain that enables us to “simulate” not only familiar situations and events, but also new situations based on familiar ones (50).

The understanding of imagination as the human capacity for mental simulation is also prominent in the broad definition of empathy proposed by Preston and Hofelich. The idea that our conceptual systems and modes of reasoning are embodied, because they draw on the same neural and cognitive mechanisms used in perception and movement, had already been emphasized by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. They challenge the prevalence in post-Cartesian understandings of cognition of an assumed dichotomy between perception as a bodily function and conceptual thinking as a purely mental function (i.e., separate from the ability to perceive and move). They also put forward a number of influential claims, such as that “the mind is inherently embodied,” that “thought is mostly unconscious,” that “abstract concepts are largely metaphorical,” and that “reason is not dispassionate, but emotionally engaged” (3–4). Their ideas are particularly helpful when considering how intertwined the physiological and cultural dimensions of cognition are in the characters of pre-Cartesian authors, as the *Cognitive Cervantes* contributors have already begun to show.⁴ However, while acknowledging the value of the pioneering emphasis that these scholars placed on embodied cognition, it is also important to stress the affective dimension of cognitive embodiment.

³Two notable landmarks within this trend were the promotion of “Cognitive Approaches to Literature” from a discussion group to an MLA division in January 2012, and the publication of the spring 2012 special issue of *Cervantes* devoted to this approach. For some of the recent developments within the cognitive study of literature, see Bolens; Clark; Jaén and Simon; Simon, Simerka, and Mancing; and Tribble and Sutton.

⁴For instance, Cory A. Reed takes a contextualist approach to show how Don Quijote and Sancho’s cognitive adaptations are embodied in their physical interactions with their environments. Wagschal (“Smellscape”) draws on Lakoff and Johnson, and on neurobiology and evolutionary genetics, to propose a transcultural and transhistorical cognitive analysis of the representation of olfaction in *Don Quijote*. Isabel Jaén draws on Vives’s and Huarte’s ideas on the mind and its development in relation to habits and environmental influences to analyze Sancho’s cognitive development.

Among the literary scholars who have studied the role of affect in cognition, Suzanne Keen has promoted the traditional definition of empathy as a “vicarious, spontaneous sharing of affect” (4), while also noting its cognitive component: “we feel what we believe to be the emotions of others” (5). On the one hand, Keen’s observation refers to the ability to distinguish between one’s own affective state and that of another person, a crucial element of empathy that distinguishes it from similar instances of sharing of affect, such as emotional contagion (the most basic form of empathy). On the other hand, she implicitly suggests that there is a discrepancy between the emotions we attribute to others and the actual emotions of others. That is to say, empathy is not based on factual information, but on impressions and beliefs that are subject to error, as I hope to show through my analysis of *El celoso extremeño*.

Embodiment: Sensory Experience and the Imagination

Throughout the text of *El celoso extremeño*, the cognition of the old protagonist, Carrizales, is represented as being at odds with the world around him. At the beginning of the tale, he is immersed in his own thoughts, memories, and imagination, during his sea voyage to the Indies. He is so caught up in his stormy discursive reasoning, “pasaba consigo esa tormenta,” that he is unable to notice his surroundings until the wind moves him off his seat (Cervantes 177). Later in the narrative, there are two crucial moments in which we are told that Carrizales is overpowered by what he sees: first, when he has a quick glimpse of the young Leonora at the window and decides to marry her, despite the fact that he is sixty-eight years old and she looks no older than fourteen, and second, when, after a year of marriage, he finds her sleeping in a young man’s arms. On both occasions, Carrizales’s imagination takes over: his perception of Leonora relies on internal representations about the dangers of marital life that evoke (and are provoked by) feelings of fear and jealousy. We readers are told that, prior to his first encounter with Leonora, his conceptual representation of marriage is already shaped by his innate physiological (“natural”) disposition to extreme jealousy: “de su natural condición era el más celoso hombre del mundo, aun sin estar casado, pues con sólo la imaginación de serlo le comenzaban a ofender los celos, a fatigar las sospechas y a sobresaltar las imaginaciones” (179). As soon as he marries Leonora, his jealousy takes over: “apenas dio el sí de esposo, cuando de golpe le embistió un tropel de rabiosos celos, y comenzó sin causa alguna a temblar” (180). Again, his cognitive experience, as he anticipates future threats, is at odds with what is actually happening around him. Such descriptions of the impact of Carrizales’s imagination in making him shake can serve to illustrate Barsalou’s idea that internal representations are embodied and that their meaning is closely tied up with particular emotions and sensations.

Although Carrizales’s ensuing decisions are represented as consequences of his extreme jealousy, they can also be interpreted as evidence of his lack of empathy. The latter approach seems particularly fruitful since he appears to embody the two factors that, according to Preston and Hofelich, can prevent empathy from occurring: when one is not motivated to understand the other person and when there is a “lack of shared experience” (“Many Faces” 28). The young Leonora clearly shares none of the experience of Carrizales, who appears to have been a money-wasting womanizer until he was forty-eight. At this advanced age, he began to mistrust women: “se iba tomando una firme resolución ... de proceder con más

recato que hasta allí con las mujeres” (176–77). He spent another twenty years amassing a fortune in Peru before meeting Leonora on his return to Spain. Now, confronted with Leonora’s youth, and her family’s modest social status, he feels confident that he can shape her mind: “encerraréla y haréla a mis mañas, y con esto no tendrá otra condición que aquella que yo le enseñare” (Cervantes 179). He seeks to control her sensory experience by shutting her up in a house with no windows to the outside world, from which all male creatures, including male cats and dogs, are barred. He places her in the care of two young maids, a *dueña* (‘governess’) and six slaves (four *moriscas*, or Moors, whose faces he brands, and two black girls who do not speak Spanish). He expects them to attend to her and to ensure that no one else comes into the house, not even the old black eunuch slave who guards the house and remains confined to the stable, between the turnstile and the locked front door.

Rather than trying to understand his young wife’s point of view, Carrizales seeks to impress her visually by purchasing costly tapestries, carpets, canopies, and cushions, which he believes to be unmistakable signs of his wealth. He also gives her many rich garments, which greatly contrast with the plain clothes to which she had been accustomed in her parents’ house (180). To compensate for the fact that he only allows Leonora and her servants to leave the house to go to church with him on Sundays and feast days, at dawn (so that they cannot not be seen), he buys them anything he thinks they might fancy, and spends time trying to please them by showering them with gifts (180). When they become obsessed with baking sweets and eating them, he provides them with more sugar and honey than they need, expecting that this form of entertainment will prevent them from thinking about their confinement: “sin tener lugar donde ponerse a pensar en su encerramiento” (182). This is consistent with the medical view, noted by Cervantes’s contemporary Juan Huarte de San Juan, that “la vida regalada,” or excessive indulgence in sensory pleasures, would have the effect of diminishing intellectual capacity (124).

At first sight, Carrizales appears to be an empathetic and solicitous husband, purchasing anything his wife might wish to have: “solo se desvelaba en traer regalos a su esposa y en acordarle le pidiese todos cuantos le viniesen al pensamiento, que de todos sería servida” (Cervantes 183). However, he is not really interested in understanding her desires, but in controlling them by asking her to focus her mind on the material goods that he is able to provide. By controlling Leonora’s desires and aspirations, he feels protected against the cleverness and malice of others: “pareciéndole que había acertado a escoger la vida mejor que se la supo imaginar, y que por ninguna vía la industria ni la malicia humana podía perturbar su sosiego” (183). Nonetheless, the emphasis he places on controlling the sensory experience of his wife, servants, and slaves, “porque no tenemos ventanas a la calle para poder ver ni oír a nadie” (194), also prevents him from realizing that the walls can be penetrated by sound.

Inaccurate Empathy: Hearing and Touching

After a year of marriage, Carrizales has become complacent. He is so immersed in the good life that he imagines he has achieved, that he is unaware of the effect that his house may have on passersby. Meanwhile, the young Loaysa sees the house and immediately wishes to understand why it is always locked: “[A]sestó a mirar la casa del recatado Carrizales, y

viéndola siempre cerrada le tomó gran deseo de saber quién vivía dentro” (185). This turning point in the narrative echoes the old man’s earlier experience of being dazzled when he first saw Leonora at the window (179). Now, however, there is nothing to see. Impelled by his curiosity, Loaysa learns of the old man’s jealousy and the young wife’s beauty, and decides to break into the house to enjoy the pleasures he imagines: “le encendió el deseo de ver si sería posible expugnar, por fuerza o por industria, fortaleza tan guardada” (185). He seeks to persuade the old black eunuch to make a hole in the wall that will only be visible to a malicious and suspicious eye: “que a no ser mirado con malicia y sospechosamente no se podía caer en el agujero” (191). He can, thus, be seen to embody the “malicia” from which Carrizales believes he has protected himself (183).

Loaysa facilitates his entry into the house by drawing the attention of Luis, the old black eunuch guard, and engaging his senses of hearing and touch. He first entices him by singing popular ballads of Moorish men and women, happy music, “sones alegres y regocijados” (186). Keen to hear the singing, Luis adapts the position of his body to the task of listening: “poniendo los oídos por entre las puertas” (186). His fully embodied response to the alluring sensory stimulus demonstrates that he is so eager to enjoy the music that he could give up one of his arms to be able to unlock the door (186). Through the door, Luis hears Loaysa’s deceitful words, the flattering lies, and the false pretence that Loaysa will teach him to play the guitar in less than a fortnight. Through the sense of hearing (the sense Aristotle had associated with teaching and learning), he becomes so affectively connected to Loaysa that he abandons his role as the house’s guard to help him break in.

Forcione suggests that Loaysa passes on to Luis the “traditional demonic instruments of the hammer and tongs” by taking a “serpentine posture” (50). This interpretation seems to be primarily derived from the critic’s knowledge of shared cultural representations (such as the image of the snake from Genesis). Although there is no textual evidence suggesting that Loaysa is lying down, Forcione’s allegorical reading is consistent with the earlier veiled reference to the devil, “el sagaz perturbador del género humano” (Cervantes 185). The first encounter between Loaysa and Luis likewise illustrates two key aspects of empathy as outlined by Preston and Hofelich: that empathy can be inaccurate when “target and observer appraise the event differently,” and that the observer’s empathetic responses are affected by the ways in which the feelings are expressed (“Many Faces” 28). Loaysa’s false display of helplessness, disguising himself as a crippled beggar, not only serves to enhance Luis’s empathetic response, but also leads the old man to appraise his intentions incorrectly. The reader sees the situation from the perspectives of both Loaysa and Luis, and thus maintains a critical distance, while perhaps enjoying this game of persuasion, seduction, and deceit.

For instance, the reader might experience a certain degree of pleasure in being told that Carrizales does not see the hole that Loaysa has persuaded Luis to carve by the door hinge. On the one hand, it is difficult to feel sympathy for a character like Loaysa, who has been introduced as a wealthy, idle, and suave young man: “gente ociosa y holgazana ... gente baldía, atildada y meliflua” (Cervantes 184–85). On the other hand, however, the reader may be able to empathize with Loaysa’s plan to break into the house because his success in doing so will confirm his or her own judgment that Carrizales is a foolish old man. The hole,

furthermore, can be understood as a metaphor for the old man's foolishness, which may create a sense of complicity between the young intruder, the old slave, and the reader.

In contrast to the multiple viewpoints offered by the narrator, Luis's cognitive experience seems limited to bodily sensations. After hearing Loaysa's instructions on how to break the lock, he feels his fingertips itch with the anticipated excitement of playing the guitar: "que ya me comen los dedos por verlos puestos en la guitarra" (191). On his first eye-to-eye encounter with Loaysa, he is wonderstruck at seeing his crutches and rags. He is quickly reassured by the hug and the kiss Loaysa gives him, as well as by the wineskin and the box of sweet preserves the young man places in his hand (192). Forcione sees Loaysa's kiss as the "demonic kiss" of a "demonically beautiful intruder" (39–40, 48), though it can also be understood in more literal terms: as part of Loaysa's effective use of the sense of touch to communicate with the old Luis in a fully embodied way, now that they are no longer separated by the locked door. His display of (false) friendliness does seem to form part of a calculated strategy intended to manipulate the old slave's empathetic response and thus guarantee his complicity.

There is a second kiss, which Forcione sees as a "demonic" act on Loaysa's part, though it seems to be given by Luis, as an exuberant and fully embodied expression of joy and appreciation: "abrazóle el negro, y dióle un beso en el carrillo, en señal del contento que le había causado la merced prometida" (Cervantes 195). Here, as in the later scene in which Luis is depicted holding his guitar close to his chest and strumming it, as he sweats with fear (211), the focus on the old slave's bodily sensations allows the reader to empathize with his cognitive-affective states.

The reader is also invited to think of the detrimental effects of wine on Luis's cognitive ability: "[B]ebió con tan buen talante de la bota, que le dejó más fuera de sentido que la música" (193). Loaysa's argument that wine drunk in moderation, "con medida," causes no harm is humorously echoed by the limited understanding showed by Luis in his literal interpretation of this phrase: he knows how much wine can be held in a jug and in a wineskin (190). The humor intensifies as Luis recounts how often he is given wine: while critical readers might be able to work out from his account that he is given six liters of wine a day, he does not seem to have a precise idea of the extent of his drinking. His cognitive experience of wine is fully embodied, and leaves him no room for cool detached calculations.

The whole account of how Luis comes to be deceived by Loaysa is infused with humor: "y, como el pobre negro tenía cuatro dedos de vino sobre los sesos, no acertaba traste; y con todo eso, le hizo creer Loaysa que ya sabía por lo menos dos tonadas; y era lo bueno que el negro se lo creía, y en toda la noche no hizo otra cosa que tañer con la guitarra destemplada y sin las cuerdas necesarias" (193). In emphasizing how much Luis enjoys drinking, and how happy he seems with his guitar playing, this humorous passage can distract readers from thinking about the inhuman living conditions of slaves like Luis, while also suspending their moral judgment of Loaysa's actions. Furthermore, even though readers might be aware of Loaysa's deception and Luis's delusion, they might be moved by empathy, or by what Joseph P. Forgas names "affect infusion" (39), to assume that Luis

deserves the rewarding experience that the music provides, after having been locked up for a year in the small stable, with the mule, being able to move no further than to the hay loft. Indirectly lured by Cervantes's wit, readers can take a cognitive leap to anticipate how Luis might help Loaysa bring music and excitement to the house, and how this help might be instrumental in counteracting the extreme enclosure to which Carrizales has subjected his wife, maids, and slaves.

When the women in the house hear Loaysa's pleasurable music and see his well-proportioned young body, they compare him to their internal representations, which are based on limited prior experience with men. Their cognitive processes can be understood in light of the views propounded by Renaissance humanists like Vives, who noted that the use of the intellect is not an innate capacity, but that people learn to construct abstract categories through the experience of seeing and describing separate things, and then linking them to one another, drawing on previous sensory experience to observe similarities between present and absent objects (87). This is exactly what Leonora and the young maids and slaves do when they are confronted with Loaysa. The first time they see him, through the peephole, his beauty seems extraordinary: "y como había tanto tiempo que todas tenían la vista a mirar al viejo de su amo, parecióles que miraban a un ángel" (Cervantes 198). The second time, when they are sitting around him and are almost able to touch him, they interpret his beauty in terms of their prior experiences of gustation and the ordinary, material objects associated with beauty. They praise his teeth as being whiter and more beautiful than peeled pine nuts: "¡mal año para piñones mondados que más blancos ni mas lindos sean!" (207). They compliment bits of his body as if they were cooking a fricassee: "ésta alababa la boca, aquella los pies, y todas juntas hicieron de él una menuda anatomía y pepitoria" (208). This humorous summary underscores rather effectively the disparity between the women's embodied conceptual representations of beauty, linked to their particular sensory experiences, and the readers' own ideas and images of beauty.

The few narratorial references to Leonora's prior actions emphasize that she is young and naïve: "aun dio con su simplicidad en hacer muñecas y en otras niñerías, que mostraban la llaneza de su condición y la terneza de sus años" (182–83). On the one hand, her intelligence is undeveloped because she is young: "del poco ingenio que los pocos años encierran" (218). On the other hand, she lacks experience, which, as humanists like Vives have noted, is crucial to the development of good cognitive ability. In distinguishing between the people who are good at making complex inferences and those who simply tend to follow the path of the senses, Vives emphasized that such cognitive differences are the result not only of innate ability (*ingenium*), but also of experience and education (65). Leonora, as we are told, has not yet experienced sexual pleasure: "comenzó a gozar como pudo los frutos del matrimonio, los cuales a Leonora, como no tenía experiencia de otros, ni eran gustosos ni desabridos" (182). Therefore, she cannot be expected to understand complex, non-literal situations such as Loaysa's ambivalent promise: "nunca mi intento fue, es, ni será otro que daros gusto y contento en cuanto mis fuerzas alcanzaren; y así, no se me hará cuesta arriba este juramento que me piden" (205–06).⁵ She misunderstands his promise of "gusto" because she has no embodied knowledge of the sexual meaning of this word.

When Leonora finally sees Loaysa, she quietly hears the compliments uttered by the servants about his teeth being whiter than pine nut kernels and his green eyes being like emeralds. While the maids could only draw from references to cooking ingredients and jewels that Carrizales had been giving them to keep them happy, Leonora can compare Loaysa's physical appearance to that of her husband: "sola Leonora callaba, y le miraba, y le iba pareciendo de mejor talle que su velado" (208). Later, Marialonso entices her to touch Loaysa and feel the pleasure of being held in his arms, and blesses her, bursting out into incongruous, devilish laughter, "echándoles la bendición con una risa falsa de demonio" (213). She also uses her body to encourage Leonora, taking her by the hand and leading her almost by force into the room in which Loaysa awaits her. If Leonora is not persuaded by what she hears, she is moved by Marialonso's forceful touch.

Lack of Empathy: Touching, Not Hearing

Whereas Luis and Leonora act in response to words that they hear but do not fully understand, Carrizales is characterized by his inability to hear. This is first evident when Luis remarks that the old man's bedroom is so far from the front door that he will not be able to hear him hammer (190). Later, after Marialonso pushes a tearful Leonora into the room where Loaysa awaits her, the narrator calls the reader's attention to the fact that Carrizales is fast asleep: he is unaware of what is happening in his house and unable to hear the questions the narrator might have asked him, "si él lo oyera" (213). Upon waking, Carrizales first uses his sense of touch to try to find Leonora in the dark, "tentó la cama por todas partes," and then carefully leaves his room, "andando pie ante pie por no ser sentido" (214). When he then sees Leonora asleep in Loaysa's arms, and wrongly assumes that she has had sex with him, his error is not based on a literal interpretation of what he sees, but on his anxiety about marriage and his feelings of jealousy. The pain and anguish caused by what he imagines has happened lead him to collapse back into his bed. This, in turn, leads Leonora to believe that he is still under the effect of the opiate ointment she had rubbed on him during his sleep.

What follows is a great example of the lack of empathy between husband and wife. When Leonora shakes him to wake him up, he utters words that are clear to readers but inaudible to Leonora. Initially, there is a certain degree of emotional contagion (the most precarious form of empathy) between husband and wife, when she perceives a whining tone to his voice, places her face against his, hugs him, and asks him what is wrong. Nonetheless, she soon develops her own affective state, when he tells her that he feels pressure in his heart and that he fears he is about to die, and she concludes that it is due to the opiate ointment she had deceitfully rubbed on him. The sight of her ailing husband makes her weep because she assumes his state is the result of her actions.⁶ Carrizales sees her weeping and responds with a mad laughter: "reíase él con una risa de persona que estaba fuera de sí, considerando la falsedad de sus lágrimas" (216). But then he, too, sheds tears. His ignorance of the fact that

⁵This narratorial comment may imply that Carrizales is impotent, as Avilés (85), Castro (214), El Saffar (43), Wagschal (104–50), and Weber (46) have suggested, though it is possible to argue that the phrase "como pudo" simply points at the physical difficulties related to his very advanced age, and that there is no conclusive textual proof of Carrizales's impotence.

⁶After all, as Irene Albers has noted, the opiate can be seen as a plausible cause for his deteriorated state of health and his ensuing death (220).

she has used an opiate prevents him from interpreting his wife's tears as a sign of her guilt. His erroneous assumption that she has deceived him also precludes the more straightforward interpretation of her tears as evidence of sadness.

Noting Cervantes's emphasis on Carrizales's inability to understand how Leonora feels, Lambert has read her tears as proof of "genuine" grief and "some kind of love" (230). Williamson has seen Carrizales's tears as an expression of his affliction in feeling betrayed, and hers as evidence of her guilt: "ambos están profundamente dolidos: el marido por la supuesta traición de su mujer, Leonora por un sentido de culpabilidad al ver que el ungüento que facilitó su extraña aventura con Loaysa ha podido dañar la salud de su anciano esposo" (807). Weber has, in turn, interpreted Carrizales's "persistent failure to respond appropriately to Leonora's mirroring emotions" as an inability to feel basic trust (48–49). Within the cognitive framework in which I situate my reading, it can be argued that Carrizales's and Leonora's seemingly empathetic tears are just the effect of their lack of knowledge about each other's actions and their lack of understanding of each other's feelings. Leonora is unaware that her husband has seen her asleep in Loaysa's arms and thus fails to understand his position. Her tears simply mirror his, and can thus be seen as an example of emotional contagion, a basic form of empathy devoid of cognition: "con no más ocasión de verlas derramar a su esposo" (Cervantes 217). Carrizales, by contrast, is primarily expressing self-pity, based on mistrust: "por ver cuán fingidamente ella las derramaba" (217). In the end, he comes to realize how foolish he was in marrying Leonora, and refers explicitly to how their age gap makes their mutual empathy (*com-padecerse*) almost impossible: "mal podían estar ni compadecerse en uno los quince años de esta muchacha con los casi ochenta míos" (218). Confronted with their inability to understand each other, the reader is perhaps able to empathize with their helplessness, while deriving pleasure from being drawn into this wonderfully crafted narrative.

Right until the end of the story, the reader's attention is directed to the characters' limited ability to hear and to listen. When Leonora hears from Carrizales, in the presence of her parents and Marialonso, that he has seen her in the arms of a handsome young man, she faints, as if her body lacked the strength to hold on to this cognition. Her unconscious state prevents her from hearing Carrizales: he blames Marialonso and the young lover, and declares his intention to write a "Last Will and Testament" in which he would increase her dowry by a hundred percent and entreat her to marry Loaysa. Having spent his first year of marriage erroneously believing that he could know what his young wife wanted without listening to her, he continues to deceive himself by thinking that she will want to marry Loaysa after his death.

Carrizales's and Leonora's ability to communicate with each other is highly precarious and seems to be primarily based on the sense of touch: while she is still unconscious, he kisses her on her face, faints, and falls on the floor next to her, with his face touching hers. When they both regain consciousness, and she hears about the will, she throws herself at his feet and claims that she has only offended him in thought, while showing awareness that he might not believe her words: "puesto caso que no estáis obligado a crearme ninguna cosa de las que os dijere" (220). These words are also found in an earlier extant version of the story, known as the Porras manuscript (dated 1606), in which the young wife is fully seduced. In

this version, however, the reader might expect Leonora to tell her husband that she did fight to protect her honor. But instead of explaining her point of view, she faints again, allowing her old husband to hold on to her senseless young body. He dies of grief, seven days later, without knowing what the readers of this tale will know about his wife's last-minute victory over the young man he assumes to be her lover, and about her refusal to marry him.

At the end of this version of the tale, the narrator makes an unexpected claim: "sólo no sé qué fue la causa que Leonora no puso más ahinco en disculparse" (Cervantes 221). This claim gives verisimilitude, an appearance of truth, to the story. Challenging the existing literary conventions that granted omniscience to the narrator, it also helps to construct a highly empathetic narratorial figure, endowed with the desire to understand the affective situations and perspectives of others. Moreover, the claim encourages readers to continue to exercise their own empathy in seeking to understand Leonora's motivations.

Among the scholars who have put forward possible explanations for Leonora's failure to articulate her defence, Lewis-Smith has argued that she has no way of proving that she has actively fought to protect her honor (202). Williamson has noted that there is no point in her seeking to persuade Carrizales, given his suspicious nature (807–10). By contrast, Forcione interprets this claim as the key to the novel's exemplarity in that it "dignifies" readers by freeing them from narratorial control and from their expectations (based on "literary codes and models"), and compelling them to make their own moral choices (90–91). Disagreeing with Forcione, Stephen H. Lipmann has interpreted this remark as Cervantes's way of undercutting Carrizales's and the narrator's versions of exemplarity: "the author thereby suggests that no moral can be drawn and that the significance of his fiction lies in the couple's failure to communicate" (115). Such disagreements among critics are understandable if we take the narrator's claimed perplexity as an indication "that the very words which make up the story do not entirely contain its meaning" (El Saffar 48).

Extending Williamson's suggestion that Cervantes's point is that readers cannot be sure of an author's intentions, just as authors cannot ensure that their intentions are understood by readers (796), I have shown how the author and his readers, like Carrizales and Leonora, have their own situated, active, and embodied cognitive experiences. Departing both from Forcione's allegorical interpretations and from Lewis-Smith's emphasis on seeking transcendental forms of communication with an author's mind, I have proposed ways in which critical readers might pay attention to the gestures of fictional characters and empathize with their limited forms of cognition, while enjoying being placed in a position of greater power and knowledge than them.

The concluding narratorial claim, "sólo no sé," exemplifies the view, much debated in seventeenth-century Spain, that the individual's access to knowledge is fraught. The evidence I have discussed in this article suggests that, in *El celoso extremeño*, Cervantes contributes to this intellectual debate rather persuasively by taking his own playful angle. Moving away from the burlesque tone of the traditional cuckold's tales, he uses humor to portray the limited embodied forms of cognition of characters with underdeveloped intellects. He also allows the reader to step back to consider how the characters' cognitive abilities have been artificially (and inhumanely) restricted by their enforced confinement. As

readers, we can simulate (and reflect on) how we would act if we were moved by fear, jealousy, or sorrow, if our sensory experiences were restricted, and if our intellectual capacity was left undeveloped. We can draw on our own experiences and representations of fear, jealousy, joy, and sorrow to imagine and understand the characters' affective situations, and thus perhaps agree with Clamurro's remark that we recognize in Carrizales "a part of ourselves" (189). One of the advantages of reading the *Novelas ejemplares*, as Cervantes suggests in his "Prólogo," is that they can entertain us "sin daño de barras," that is to say, without causing any harm to others (64). They provide us with the opportunity to simulate the testing situations, the faulty judgments, and the injudicious actions of fictional characters, and perhaps to rehearse our own challenging situations, and to sharpen our ability to make our own moral choices without immediate consequences. Ultimately, however, the narrator's claim, "sólo no sé," might also encourage us to consider the limits of empathy and to accept the possibility of not knowing what we cannot hear and what is left unsaid.

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to Stephen Boyd for his perceptive and encouraging comments on the final draft of this article, and to the Wellcome Trust for supporting this research as part of the project "Medicine, Emotion and Disease in History" (Enhancement Award 010974).

Works Cited

1. Albers, Irene. La razón de los desmayos en 'El celoso extremeño' de Cervantes. Escenas de transgresión: María de Zayas en su contexto literario-cultural. Albers, Irene; Felten, Uta; Gumbrecht, Hans Ulrich, editors. Madrid: Iberoamericana; 2009. p. 189-224. Print
2. Avilés, Luis F. Fortaleza tan guardada: Casa, alegoría y melancolía en *El celoso extremeño*. Cervantes. 1998; 18(1):71-95. Print.
3. Barsalou, Lawrence W. Perceptual Symbol Systems. Behavioral and Brain Sciences. 1999; 22(4): 577-660. Print. [PubMed: 11301525]
4. Bolens, Guillemette. The Style of Gestures: Embodiment and Cognition in Literary Narrative. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP; 2012. Print
5. Boyd, Stephen. Introduction. A Companion to Cervantes's Novelas Ejemplares. Boyd, Stephen, editor. Woodbridge: Tamesis; 2005. p. 1-46. Print
6. Cascardi, Anthony J. Cervantes's Exemplary Subjects. Cervantes's 'Exemplary Novels' and the Adventure of Writing. Nerlich, Michael; Spadaccini, Nicholas, editors. Minneapolis: Prisma Institute; 1989. p. 49-71. Print
7. Castro, Américo. Cervantes se nos desliza en *El celoso extremeño*. Papeles de Son Armandans. 1968; 13:205-22. Print.
8. Cervantes, Miguel de. El celoso extremeño. Novelas ejemplares. Avallé-Arce, Juan Bautista, editor. Vol. 2. Madrid: Castalia; 1982. p. 175-221. Print
9. Clamurro, William H. Beneath the Fiction: The Contrary Worlds of Cervantes's Novelas ejemplares. New York: Peter Lang; 1997. Print
10. Clark, Andy. Pressing the Flesh: A Tension in the Study of the Embodied, Embedded Mind? Philosophy and Phenomenological Research. 2008; 76:37-59. Print.
11. Dempsey, Liam P.; Shani, Itay. Stressing the Flesh: In Defense of Strong Embodied Cognition. Philosophy and Phenomenological Research. 2013; 84(3):590-617. Print.
12. Dreyfus, Hubert L.; Dreyfus, Stuart E. The Challenge of Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology of Embodiment for Cognitive Science. Perspectives on Embodiment: The Intersections of Nature and Culture. Weiss, Gail; Haber, Honi F., editors. New York: Routledge; 1999. p. 103-20. Print

13. El Saffar, Ruth S. *From Novel to Romance: A Study of Cervantes's Novelas ejemplares*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP; 1974. Print
14. Engelen, Eva-Maria; Birgitt, Röttger-Rössler. Current Disciplinary and Interdisciplinary Debates on Empathy. *Emotion Review*. 2012; 4(1):3–8. Print.
15. Forcione, Alban K. Afterword: Exemplarity, Modernity, and the Discriminating Games of Reading. Cervantes's 'Exemplary Novels' and the Adventure of Writing. Nerlich, Michael; Spadaccini, Nicholas, editors. Minneapolis: Prisma Institute; 1989. p. 331-52. Print
16. Forcione, Alban K. *El celoso extremeño* and the Classical Novella: The Mystery of Freedom. Cervantes and the Humanist Vision: A Study of Four Exemplary Novels. Princeton: Princeton UP; 1982. p. 31-92. Print
17. Forgas, Joseph P. Mood and Judgment: The Affect Infusion Model (AIM). *Psychological Bulletin*. 1995; 117:39–66. Print. [PubMed: 7870863]
18. Huarte de San Juan, Juan. *Examen de ingenios para las ciencias*. Torre, Esteban, editor. Madrid: Editora Nacional; 1977. Print
19. Jaén, Isabel. Cervantes and the Cognitive Ideas of His Time: Mind and Development in *Don Quijote*. Cognitive Cervantes. Simon, Julien J.; Simerka, Barbara; Mancing, Howard, editors. Vol. 32. 2012. p. 71-98. Special issue of *Cervantes*. Print
20. Jaén, Isabel; Simon, Julien J., editors. *Cognitive Literary Studies: Current Themes and New Directions*. Austin: U Texas P; 2012. Print
21. Keen, Suzanne. *Empathy and the Novel*. New York: Oxford UP; 2007. Print
22. Lakoff, George; Johnson, Mark. *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought*. New York: Basic; 1999. Print
23. Lambert AF. The Two Versions of Cervantes's *El celoso extremeño*: Ideology and Criticism. *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*. 1980; 57:219–31. Print.
24. Larking, Micheal; Eatough, Virginia; Osborn, Mike. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis and Embodied, Active, Situated Cognition. *Theory & Psychology*. 2011; 2:318–37. Print.
25. Lewis-Smith, Paul. Free Thinking in *El celoso extremeño*. A Companion to Cervantes's Novelas Ejemplares. Boyd, Stephen, editor. Woodbridge: Tamesis; 2005. p. 191-206. Print
26. Lipmann, Stephen H. Revision and Exemplarity in Cervantes' *El celoso extremeño*. *Cervantes*. 1986; 6:113–21. Print.
27. Lyons, John D. *Before Imagination: Embodied Thought from Montaigne to Rousseau*. Stanford: Stanford UP; 2005. Print
28. Mancing, Howard. Camila's Story. *Cervantes*. 2005; 25:9–22. Print.
29. Mancing, Howard. Embodied Cognitive Science and the Study of Literature. Cognitive Cervantes. Simon, Julien J.; Simerka, Barbara; Mancing, Howard, editors. Vol. 32. 2012. p. 25-70. Special issue of *Cervantes*. Print
30. Nerlich, Micheal. Introduction: Juan Andrés to Alban Forcione: On the Critical Reception of the *Novelas Ejemplares*. Cervantes's 'Exemplary Novels' and the Adventure of Writing. Minneapolis: Prisma Institute; 1989. p. 9-47. Print
31. Preston, Stephani D.; Hofelich, Alicia J. The Many Faces of Empathy: Parsing Empathic Phenomena through a Proximate, Dynamic-Systems View of Representing the Other in the Self. *Emotion Review*. 2012; 4(1):24–33. Print.
32. Preston, Stephanie D. Understanding Empathy by Modeling Rather than Organizing Its Contents. *Emotion Review*. 2012; 4(1):38–39. Print.
33. Reed, Cory A. ¿Qué rumor es ése?: Embodied Agency and Representational Hunger in *Don Quijote*. Cognitive Cervantes. Simon, Julien J.; Simerka, Barbara; Mancing, Howard, editors. Vol. 32. 2012. p. 99-124. Special issue of *Cervantes*. Print
34. Simon, Julien J.; Simerka, Barbara; Mancing, Howard. Cognitive Cervantes. 2012; 32(1) Special issue of *Cervantes*. Print.
35. Tribble, Evelyn; Sutton, John. Cognitive Ecology as a Framework for Shakespearean Studies. *Shakespeare Studies*. 2011; 39:94–103. Print.
36. Valera, Francisco; Thompson, Evan; Rosch, Eleanor. *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience*. Cambridge: MIT P; 1991. Print

37. Vives, Juan Luis. Facsimile of the 1st ed. 1538. *De anima et vita*. Sancipriano, Mario, editor. Torino: Bottega d'Erasmus; 1963. Print
38. Wagschal, Steven. *The Literature of Jealousy in the Age of Cervantes*. Columbia: U of Missouri P; 2006. Print
39. Wagschal, Steven. *The Smellscape of Don Quijote: A Cognitive Approach*. *Cognitive Cervantes*. Julien, Simon J.; Simerka, Barbara; Mancing, Howard, editors. Vol. 32. 2012. p. 125-62. Special issue of *Cervantes*. Print
40. Weber, Alison. Tragic Reparation in Cervantes' *El celoso extremeño*. *Cervantes*. 1984; 4(1):35-51. Print.
41. Williamson, Edwin. El 'misterio escondido' en *El celoso extremeño*. Una aproximación al arte de Cervantes. *Nueva revista de filología hispánica*. 1990; 38:793-815. Print.
42. Zlatev, Jordan; Ziemke, Tom; Frank, Roslyn, editors. *Body, Language and Mind, Volume 1: Embodiment*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter; 2007. Print