

The many moral defects of Sancho from the perspective of Virtue-Ethics: Aristotelianism, Stoicism, Platonism and Skepticism

Daniel Lorca
(Oakland University)

Anthony J. Close, in his influential article “Sancho Panza: Wise fool”, points out that Sancho’s moral character in part II improves. For example, he writes: “Sancho [in part II] never is or becomes a paragon of saintliness. Yet his failings are venial [...] and his generosity and moral sense can earn him such epithets as *Bueno, cristiano, discreto* and *sincero*” (335). He also writes: “Sancho’s intellectual advancement in Part II consists in large part in an awakening of moral responsibility” (335). However, given that Close’s aim is to explain Sancho as he appears in part II, the critic provides little evidence of Sancho’s moral character in part I, which means that his analysis is incomplete. The question, therefore, is this: why has Sancho’s moral character in part II improved, as compared to his moral character in part I? The purpose of this paper is to answer this question.

In order to find an answer, the paper takes into account the four main moral theories of the period: stoicism, skepticism, aristotelianism and neo-platonism. Those four theories are applied systematically to Sancho’s character in part I in order to show that, indeed, according to those theories his character is horrible. Then, once his moral vices in part I are visible, it will become possible to show that most of those vices are no longer present (or significantly attenuated) in part II; therefore, the main argument in this paper does not depend on my own moral judgments regarding Sancho’s vices and/or virtues, but on *the four main moral theories* of the period. In order to keep this paper as short as possible, it is focused only on the most important prescriptions of the four theories. In other words, the discussion is not exhaustive because there is no need: if it can be shown that Sancho, in part I, violates the most important teaching of the four most important theories of the period, then, at the time he was written, any reader would have come to the conclusion that Sancho’s character in part I is terrible, and also (as we shall see later on in the paper) that his character in part II has improved a lot.

To avoid confusion there is one preliminary step that must be taken before we can focus our attention on Sancho’s moral character. It is important to keep in mind that morality during the period meant something completely different to what we mean today. Therefore, if we are to apply the four main moral theories of the period to Sancho’s character, we must do so according to the meaning of the word “moral” of that period, not ours.

The general meaning of morality during the 17th century

The purpose of all virtue-ethics (such as platonism, aristotelianism, stoicism and skepticism) is to improve one’s character to produce a life that is worth living. For example, this is how Alasdair C. McIntyre explains the origin of the word “moralis”:

In Latin, as in ancient Greek, there is *no* word correctly translated by our word ‘moral’ [...]. But ‘moralis’ like its Greek predecessor ‘*ēthikos*’—Cicero invented ‘moralis’ to translate the Greek word in *De Fato*—means ‘pertaining to character,’ where a man’s character is nothing other than his set of dispositions to behave systematically in one way rather than another, to lead a particular kind of life. (37)

Therefore, morality and character are fundamentally tied according to virtue-ethics. This close connection can also be seen in the glossary of terms included by Terence Irwin in his translation

of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, which reads “character, *ēthos*, *ēthikos*” (389). This entry shows that for Aristotle character is so important that he conflates “ethics” and “character”; therefore, the goal of morality in this system is to *improve* one’s character in order to obtain a better life.

The importance of character in morality can be fully appreciated, for example, if we simply take a look at the approach taken by moral authors during the period. Virtually all the books regarding morality were treatises offering advice to improve one’s character. In today’s world we would think of those books as self-help, or perhaps psychological advice, but during the 17th century (or, for that matter, for the past 2000 years of recorded history, up to the 18th century), those books were considered moral advice, precisely because the aim was to improve character. Thus, and for example, Erasmus’s *The Education of a Christian Prince* offers advice to educate princes as Christians, or Castiglione’s *The Courtier* offers advice about how to become the perfect Courtier, or Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics* offers advice about how to cultivate virtues and avoid vices, and so on. Even the kind of advice the authors of the 17th century offer to improve character shows its importance as it relates to the production of a happy life (a worthy life, a life in which the agent realizes his/her full potential). For example, Antonio de Guevara was heavily influenced by the stoic tradition, and his book *Aviso de Privados* includes advice that touches all the aspects of life: how to be a good host (Chapter 3); how to behave during the ceremonies in court (Ch. 5); how to greet other nobles and to visit them (Chapter 6); how to eat (Chapter 7); how to choose friends (Chapter 8); and even how to dress (Chapter 8).

The difference between morality in the 17th century and the morality of today (in the United States and Europe, at the least), is captured with precision by John M. Cooper when he discusses the stoic tradition:

[According to the stoic tradition] the thought that in doing a virtuous act one is doing it because it is commanded by the universal law and by universal reason applies just as much, and in exactly the same way, to what one does in maintaining an appropriate diet or tending to one’s daily hygiene or working hard at one’s profession or behaving charmingly at a dinner party, as it does to what, according to one contemporary usage and the dominant one nowadays anyhow among philosophers, we could call *moral* decisions and actions –treating the other fairly and considerately, standing for moral principle when that is inconvenient and one’s associates or more generally one’s fellow citizens would gladly override it [...] The notion of “duty” among the Stoics covers a vastly wider range that it does, for example, for Kant: it covers, in fact, crucial aspects of the whole of one’s life and virtually everything one does, if one is truly virtuous. (277)

To sum up: we must keep in mind that morality during the 17th century meant “to improve one’s own character in *all aspects of life*, in order to obtain a life that is worth living”. Thus, when we assess Sancho’s moral standing from the perspective of the 17th century, we must do so by focusing on his character and see whether or not it produces a worthy life according to the main theories of the period. Relevant question to this kind of morality are, for example: does he treat others with respect, according to their station? Is he a coward or not? Is he greedy or generous? In general, the question is this: which are his vices and virtues, so that we can decide his moral standing? As we shall see, in part I it is very clear that his character does not produce a worthy life according to the abovementioned theories, but this changes to a significant extent in part II.

Sancho from the perspective of stoicism in part I

During the period stoicism is neo-stoicism, which is a combination of stoicism with Christian thought. There is no need to take into account the Christian aspects of neo-stoicism because the stoic components suffice to carry out the analysis.

According to the stoic tradition the agent must control the passions to improve his/her character. In other words, when the agent is able to keep his passions under the control of reason then he obtains the right kind of character. As noted by Copleston, the stoics maintained that the presence of one virtue implied the possession of all virtues (or, alternatively, having one vice implies having all vices):

The Cardinal Virtues are Moral Insight [...], Courage, Self-Control or Temperance, and Justice. Those virtues stand or fall together, in the sense that he who possesses one possesses all [...]. The Stoics in general adhered to the principle that the Virtues are indissolubly connected as expressions of one and the same character, so that the presence of one virtue implies the presence of all. Conversely, they thought that when one vice is present, all the vices must be present. (397-8)

Therefore, if the agent is able to control the passion, or, which is the same, if the agent is able to live a life guided by reason, then he or she will possess all the virtues and live a worthy life.¹

It is very clear that in part I Sancho is unable to control his greed (a strong passion). For example, he thinks that he will eventually obtain a kingdom, and then he concludes that if the kingdom is inhabited by black people, he will sell them in Spain to obtain riches (314). At the end of part I he tells his wife that he likes being a squire because he stays in hotels without having to pay: “es linda cosa[...] visitando castillos, alojando en ventas a toda discreción, sin pagar ofrecido sea al diablo el maravedí” (539). His greed is also evident when he encounters the Barber and the Priest from his village after leaving his master in the mountains alone (to do penitence): he thinks that the Barber and Priest want to bring don Quijote back to his home not because they are worried about him, but because they are *jealous* of the glory the knight will obtain with his feats, and also of the *riches* Sancho will have once he has a kingdom:

[Sancho explains to the Barber and Priest] donde reina la envidia no puede vivir la virtud [...] si por su reverencia [y el barbero] no fuera, ésta fuera ya la hora que mi señor estuviera casado con la infanta Micomicona, y yo fuera conde, por lo menos, pues no se puede esperar otra cosa. (500)

The examples show that Sancho is very greedy, a strong passion. If we keep in mind that according to the stoic the control of the passions is the most important prescription to obtain the right character, it is clear that Sancho, according to the stoics, cannot be considered moral or virtuous.

Sancho and skepticism in part I

In general, the four moral theories considered in this paper agree that the emotions ought to be approached with suspicion, and that the emotions can only produce a happy life if and only if they are under the control of reason. The stoic and the skeptic agree that greed is a strong passion

¹ The importance of controlling the passions (greed, power) according to the stoic is captured beautifully in Fray Luis de León's stoic poem “Vida Retirada”. He uses an extended metaphor: on the one hand, the worthy life is the life of the few sages in the world “los pocos sabios que en el mundo ha habido (5)”, a life away from the world, in a simple garden with a simple table: “a mi una pobrecilla / mesa, de amable paz bien abastada / me baste (71-3)”; on the other hand, a life of greed and power is associated with a trunk floating aimlessly in the sea in the middle of a storm: “téngase su tesoro / los que de un flaco leño confían (61-2);” therefore, the key to a worthy life according to the stoic ideal is to control the passions, especially greed power and not relevant in this paper, sexual desire.

that should be abandoned to obtain the right kind of character, but *the reasons* advanced by the skeptic are not the reasons given by the stoic.

According to the skeptic the most important rule to obtain the right kind of character is to not be under the influence of belief that are false or can be false. The experiential existence of not being under the influence of any falsehood is liberating according to this approach. On the other hand, if the agent is preoccupied with false beliefs (that is, things that are unimportant) then he or she will live a life of constant worries and disappointments.² As we shall see below, thinking that riches is a good (or a bad) thing is a false belief according to the skeptic, so the best thing to do is to let go of that dichotomy; therefore, all the examples of Sancho's greed above are not only violation of stoic doctrine, but also examples of his violations of skepticism. There is, however, an example that is especially well suited to illustrate Sancho's violation of skepticism. To understand the force of the example we need to take into account the words of Sextus Empiricus, a skeptic who lived during the Roman Empire, and whose writing were re-discovered during the renaissance and became very influential. Sextus Empiricus writes:

For the person who believes that something is by nature good or bad is constantly upset; when he does not possess the things that seem to be good, he thinks he is being tormented by things that are by nature bad, and he chases after the things he supposes to be good; then, when he gets these, he falls into still more torments because of irrational and immoderate exultation, and, fearing any change, he does absolutely everything in order not to lose the things that seem to him good. But the person who takes no position as to what is by nature good or bad neither avoids nor pursues intensely. (28)

The skeptic recommends that we suspend judgment instead about the value of things, neither thinking that they are good or bad, so that we obtain a character unburdened by the passions, and hence we obtain a happy life. The episode of Cardenio's suitcase demonstrates that Sancho is not following the advice of the skeptic.

Sancho and don Quijote find the suitcase in Sierra Morena. It is obvious that the object has been there for a long time because it is rotten: "una maleta asida a él, medio podridos, o podridos del todo, y deshechos" (233). The knight orders Sancho to open the suitcase. They find shirts, a diary, and gold coins. Don Quijote wants the book and orders Sancho to keep the money: "mandóle que guardase el dinero y lo tomase para él" (233). Sancho is very happy about this: "bendito sea todo el cielo que nos ha deparado una aventura que sea de provecho!" (233). A few pages later we learn that Sancho is obsessed with the suitcase:

[...] pasaba Sancho la maleta, sin dejar rincón en toda ella [...] que no buscase, escudriñare e inquiriese, ni costura que no deshiciere [...] porque no se quedase nada por diligencia ni mal recado; tal golosina había despertado en él los hallados escudos, que pasaban de ciento. Y aunque no halló más de lo hallado, dio por bien empleados los vuelos de la manta, el vomitar del brebaje [...] y toda la hambre, sed y cansancio [...] pareciéndole que estaba más que bien pagado. (235-6)

² As I explain in detail in my book *Neo-Stoicism and Skepticism in Part One of Don Quijote: Removing the Authority of a Genre* (2016), Cervantes was very familiar with skepticism (see, for example, Chapter 2, pages 19-46). Maureen Ihrle captures with precision the skeptical method to obtain a worthy life: "the skeptic feels the only reasonable solution to the dilemma is to suspend judgment on all matters and live undogmatically, in accord to the customs and laws one perceives without making any judgment as to their absolute truth or falsehood" (14). Two very useful sources regarding skeptic thought are Barbara Simerka (in the context of Renaissance literature (1997) and Richard H. Popkin (1964) in the context of Renaissance philosophy.

This is a violation of skeptic doctrine (the first part of Empiricus's advice): instead of being happy and obsessed with the contents of the suitcase, Sancho should not have been concerned.

Later the discussion between Sancho and don Quijote returns to the suitcase. The knight wants to find the owner because he wants to talk with him. Sancho, on the other hand, does not want to find him because if he is found, then he is afraid that he will have to return the contents of the suitcase: "Harto mayor sería no buscallo; porque si le hallamos y acaso fuese el dueño del dinero, claro está que lo tengo de restituir" (237). Therefore, Sancho is willing not to look for the owner so that he can keep something he knows that it does not belong to him. By contrast, a goat herder who lives in the mountains does exactly what the skeptic recommends: he left the suitcase alone, even though he must have seen it several times, since it is rotting away: "también la hallé yo -respondió el cabrero-; mas nunca la quise alzar ni llegar a ella, temeroso de algún desmán y de que no me la pidiesen por el hurto; que es el diablo sutil" (238).

At this point it is important to realize that right after listening to what the goat herder said, Sancho lies. It is a very big lie: "Eso mismo es lo que digo -respondió Sancho-: que también la hallé yo, y que no quise llegar a ella con un tiro de Piedra: allí la dejé, y allí se queda como estaba" (238).

Next in the episode, the goat herder confirms the identity of the owner: "lo que sabre deciros de lo que me habéis preguntado [sobre la maleta]; y entendido que el dueño de las prendas [la maleta] que hallastes es el mesmo que vistes pasar [Cardenio]" (240). Yet, even though Cardenio has been with Sancho and don Quijote, for a few days in the mountains and at least two days in the *venta* (491), which means that Sancho has had plenty of opportunity to return the money and all the contents, he never does.

Finally, when Sancho encounters the Priest and the Barber and tells them what happened to him and his master in the mountains, Sancho omits telling the truth about the suitcase:

siguieron su camino, guiándolos Sancho Panza; el cual les fue contando lo que les aconteció con el loco que hallaron en la sierra, encubriendo, empero, el hallazgo de la maleta y de cuanto en ella venía; que, maguer que tonto, era un poco codicioso el mancebo. (273)

All of this shows that Sancho is obsessed about not losing the money because he thinks that money is good (very good). If we now go back to the thoughts of Sextus Empiricus, this is precisely what the philosopher warned his audience *not* to do. First, the person (Sancho) is worried about obtaining what he thinks is good (money), and then, when that good is obtained, the person (Sancho) is obsessed about not losing it, going to extreme lengths to keep it. In Sancho's case, those lengths include telling a big lie, omitting saying the truth, and not returning the money to its rightful owner even though he knows that he should. He is a thief, a criminal. The skeptic will therefore conclude that Sancho's attitude with what he considers to be good (money) does not lead to a happy life because instead, it is the reason for lies and a crime.

Sancho and aristotelianism in part I

The most obvious fact is that Renaissance society is by its very nature aristotelian. It is hierarchical, and depending on who one is within society, the relevant virtues change: we will not have, for example, a peasant acting like a king, or demanding to be treated like one, and vice-versa, because it would not be fitting to their station/character in either case. Sancho is therefore violating one of the basic tenets of his society because he thinks that he is qualified to be something that is outside of his station. This violation is clear not only during the first meeting between don Quijote and Sancho (where Sancho voices his desire to rule a kingdom, thinking

that he is well qualified), but also at the very end of the book when he and his wife have a conversation: “vos me vereis presto conde, o gobernador de una ínsula, y no las de por ahi, sino la major que pueda hallarse” (539). This, in an aristotelian society, is insane:³ it shows that Sancho no longer knows how he ought to be, in accordance with his station.⁴ His insanity in an aristotelian society is clarified further when he tells his wife at the end of the tale that she will have vassals: “y aun te admirarás de órte llamar señoría de todos tus vasallos” (539).

Sancho is acting with his wife in the same way that don Quijote was acting in relation to him, as Sancho understands don Quijote’s actions; more specifically, don Quijote, on many occasions, told Sancho that he is ignorant and stupid (“necio” and “simple”), and that is precisely what he tells his wife at the end of the book: “no es la miel para boca de asno”(539) and “basta que te digo la verdad, y cose la boca” (539). Thus, the connection is obvious: his lack of understanding of who he is in society and how he should act is due to the influence that the knight had in him.

Sancho’s lack of understanding of how he should act in society has far reaching consequences in an aristotelian society, especially in the area of friendship. According to Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics* there are two kinds of friendship: complete and incomplete. Only the former is perfect friendship, and it can only exist among equals. Perfect friendship, therefore, can no longer be obtained by Sancho, precisely because he is acting outside of his own station; More precisely, those that are equal to him will not want to be his friend because Sancho is not acting as *their equal*, and vice-versa: Sancho can no longer be friends with those of his own station, because he thinks that they are no longer *his equal*.⁵

Regarding the incomplete friendships, according to Aristotle there are two kinds, for pleasure and for utility:

Those who love each other for utility love the other not in himself, but in so far as they gain some good for themselves from him. The same is true of those who love for pleasure . . .

Hence these friendships as well [as their friends] are coincidental, since the beloved is loved no in so far as he is who he is, but in so far as he provides some good or pleasure.

And so these sorts of friendships are easily dissolved, when the friends do not remain similar [to what they were]; for if someone is no longer pleasant or useful, the other stops loving him. (1156a20,10-20.

³ It might be worth pointing out that Sancho’s belief is insane even in a society that is not aristotelian, such as ours. Imagine, for example, someone with no education at all who is convinced that he or she is qualified to be the mayor of *the best* city in the United States. If that person is deluded in our society, then that state of mind is even more noticeable within aristotelianism. Also, the fact that in *Part II* it turns out that Sancho is an excellent governor is irrelevant in this section because the goal here is to explain Sancho in *part I*. The fact that in part II he is a good governor is evidence that his moral character has changed.

⁴ The work of Claude Chauchadis about the honor-system during the reign of Phillip II (1984) serves as further support for the claim that to understand Sancho’s conduct from a moral point of view we must take into account that his society is aristotelian in nature. In his authoritative study, which takes into account more than ninety moralists of the period, Chauchadis explains that according to the moralist of the time, the peasants were excluded from the honor system as a means of advancement. Thus, Chauchadis concludes that “if the peasant wants to elevate him or herself above his or her condition, he or she becomes the object of critique” (166, my translation) and “by the name of the moralist, a good peasant is a peasant that stays in his place and that, with his or her work, allows his or her neighbors to eat” (166, my translation). It should be noted that Sancho is violating both principles: he wants to elevate himself (which leaves him open to criticism) and he is not staying put in his village, as he should.

⁵ Aristotle describes perfect friendship as it applies to the aristocratic class most of all, thinking that enough wealth and leisure-time are necessary to obtain it (see, for example, 1156b, 25-30). Therefore, strictly speaking, Aristotle’s explanation of perfect friendship does not apply to Sancho. However, if we keep in mind that Sancho thinks that he is qualified to be an aristocrat (a governor), then my application of perfect friendship to him becomes reasonable.

The information in brackets, in this citation and in all the rest from Aristotle, is from Martin Ostwald, the translator).

Don Quijote has changed Sancho to the point that Sancho now thinks that he deserves a kingdom, which makes him think that he is better than the people around him; therefore, Sancho is no longer pleasant nor useful to those of his own station, and consequently, given that friendships of pleasure and utility are easily dissolvable according to Aristotle, the people that Sancho knew and were his incomplete friends will no longer want to be friends of that kind with him. From that point on, we can only imagine Sancho alone, dreaming of his future kingdom. If we now consider that according to Aristotle “friendship is not only necessary, but also fine” (1150a10, 30), it is clear that Sancho’s new disposition is causing him great harm.

Aristotle’s conclusion that imperfect friendships are easily dissolvable when people change has survived the test of time. It is hard to remain friends with someone who is no longer pleasurable or useful. Sancho fits this profile: I cannot think of anyone who would want to be his friend when we consider that by the end of the tale, he becomes very arrogant. For example, he tells the priest that he is jealous, and also, he basically tells his wife that she is ignorant and stupid. One might say that Sancho has a superiority complex, and therefore he will have difficulties with his friends.

In addition, Sancho is violating three basic aristotelian principles. First, he is wrong about the nature of the best life (a worthy life, a perfect life, a happy life), and his mistake stems from his basic greed. At the beginning of the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle explains that the best life is the pursuit of happiness, and that consequently, depending on what we think “happiness” is, our conception of the best life will change. He then proceeds to explain that some conceptions of happiness are clearly wrong, which entails that the best life will not depend on those (wrong) conceptions of happiness. One of the three wrong conceptions of happiness he describes is the pursuit of riches: “The money-maker’s life is in a way forced on him [not chosen for itself]; and clearly wealth is not the good we are seeking, since it is [merely] useful, [choiceworthy only] for some other end” (1095b30, 5). Thus, Sancho, because he is greedy, is confused about the nature of the best life.

Second, we need to take into account Aristotle’s conception of a vice. For Aristotle, a vice is a deviation from the mean. Generosity is a virtue which is associated with two vices:

In giving and taking money the mean is generosity, the excess wastefulness and the deficiency ungenerosity. Here the vicious people have contrary excesses and defects; for the wasteful person spends to excess and is deficient in taking, whereas the ungenerous person takes to excess and is deficient in spending” (1107b, 10-15).

All the evidence regarding Sancho’s greed presented earlier on indicates that Sancho’s vice in part I is ungenerosity.

Third, according to Aristotle the best life can only be obtained if the passions are under the control of reason, and not the other way around. For example, Sancho is not an excellent person because “the excellent person judges each sort of thing correctly, and in each case what is true appears to him” (1113b, 30-31). Aristotle also writes “the worst person, therefore, is the one who exercises his vice towards himself and his friends as well” (1130a10, 7-8), and “we cannot be intelligent without being good” (1144b, 36), and “this [best good] is apparent only to the good person; for vice perverts us and produces false views about the origins of actions” (1144b, 33-35).

The three main points of aristotelianism mentioned above are closely tied together: Sancho's vice, ungenerosity, is tied with his lack of understanding of the best life, and his confusion about the best life is the result of his vice taking control of his intelligence, which in turn prevents him from judging the things that his master says correctly. In short, he listens to his master because his vice confuses him, to the point of moral insanity.

If we add it all up, then Sancho's bad (immoral) character according to aristotelianism becomes evident: he does not know who he is in society any longer, without the possibility of any kind of friendships, confused about the best kind of life, ruled by a vice that makes him unintelligent, and obsessed with a non-existent kingdom.

Sancho and neo-platonism in Part I

Marsilio Ficino introduced the concept of "platonic love" based on a study of Plato's dialogues. It is central to his philosophy because it captures not only the way in which a human loves God according to his interpretation of Platonic ideas, but also how non-sexual human love (i.e., friendship) ought to be. Platonic love illustrates Sancho's unworthy character according to this philosophy.

First, this is how Ficino explains the way in which humans are compelled to love God:

The splendor of the highest good is refulgent in individual things, and where it blazes the more fittingly, there it especially attracts someone gazing upon it, excites his consideration, seizes and occupies him as he approaches, and compels him both to venerate such splendor as the divinity beyond all others, and to strive for nothing else but to lay aside his former nature and to become that splendor itself. (222–23)

In other words: the beauty that is God moves us to love Him (She, It?), to be near him, for no other reason that He (She, It?) is God (perfect beauty).

Sancho offers his own version of Ficino's thought. The discussion takes place when don Quijote explains to Sancho that he loves Dulcinea. He loves her only because she is who she is (beauty) without expecting any other reward: "a servilla por solo ser ella quien es, sin esperar otro premio de sus muchos y otro deseos sino que ella se contente" (334). To this explanation Sancho responds with his version of Platonic love as it relates to God, and he makes clear as that he is not capable of loving God in that way:

con esta manera de amor -dijo Sancho- he oido yo predicar que se ha de amar a nuestro Swenor, por sí solo, sin que nos mueva esperanze de gloria o temor the pena. Aunque yo le querría amar y servir por lo que pudiese [es decir, hacer por mí]. (334)

Therefore, Sancho knows in simplistic terms how we ought to love God according to neo-platonism, but he incapable of doing so: he says that he prefers to love Him not in Himself and for Himself, but for what God *could do for him*.

Sancho, instead of loving God in Himself, is satisfied with being a *cristiano viejo*, and this is enough for him because his lineage permits him to obtain power and wealth: "sea par Dios -dijo Sancho-; que yo cristiano viejo soy, y para ser conde esto me basta" (215). This message is repeated by the end of part I, when once again his claim to be an old christian is associated not with God, but with status and power: "aunque pobre, soy critiano viejo, y no debo nada a nadie; y si ínulas deseo otros desean cosas peores [...] y dejando de ser hombre puedo venir a ser papa, cuanto más gobernador de una ínula" (501). Thus, according to Sancho, the value of being a christian is not platonic love, not only because he is incapable, but also because for him, what is good about being a christian is having access to wealth and power.

Second, Ficino maintains that another manifestation of platonic love is love among friends. According to Ficino, platonic love takes place when the friends love each other through their love of God. More precisely, he writes:

Since friendship strives by mutual consent of the lovers to cultivate the Soul through virtue, it is apparently nothing but a perfect concordance of two Souls in the worship of God [...]. Therefore there are not two friends only, but always necessarily three, two human beings and one God. (279)

Sancho, however, is not don Quijote's friend in that way in the first part, for at least two reasons: first, his friendship is not grounded on virtue, or beauty, but on greed, because he serves his master to obtain profit. All of the numerous examples given above of his greed serve to illustrate the point; and second, even if we say that Sancho and don Quijote's friendship is in some way tied to virtue (and not only profit) the union of the friends *through God* is lacking. The lack is made evident when we realize that at no point in the entire first part there is mention of God in any situation that could be interpreted as indicating that the squire and the knight are friends. It should be noted as well that at the end of the first part, when Sancho is explaining why being a squire is pleasant to his wife Juana, he does not mention the knight at all (let alone friendship), he even lies calling himself "honrado" when at the same time the reader knows, thanks to the suitcase incident, that he is a liar and a thief.

To sum up, Sancho in part I is violating two important aspects of neo-platonism, as that philosophy was understood by the most influential figure of the period. He not only does not love God as God ought to be loved, but also, *if* he loves God, he does so for profit. Furthermore, he is not friends with Don Quijote through God, but it appears that his main reason to be friends with the knight is, once again, profit.

Sancho's character in Part I: summary and further elaboration

Cervantes went through the trouble of creating Sancho in part I with a terrible character. It is reasonable to conclude that result was intentional because Sancho's character is not bad according to one moral theory, but according to all four major theories of the period. Furthermore, his goal was intentional because Sancho's violations are egregious: it is impossible to be a stoic if at the same time one is extremely greedy; it is impossible to be a skeptic without suspending judgment about whether riches are good or bad; it is impossible to be an aristotelian without knowing one's place in society and without friends (among other reasons), and finally, it is impossible to be a neo-platonic without loving God's beauty and having obtaining friends through the union with God. As mentioned in the introduction, the analysis offered here is not exhaustive, but the violations mentioned are significant enough to make the conclusion strong: in part I, Cervantes gave Sancho a terrible character intentionally. It follows then that according to the morality of the period, it would not have been difficult to reach the conclusion that Sancho's is immoral. In today's world, however, we no longer value morality according to neo-stoicism, skepticism, aristotelianism and neo-platonism (as a matter of fact, most people do not know what they are with enough precision to make moral judgments); therefore, in today's moral climate, the conclusion that Sancho is immoral is not as easy to reach.

There is another reason why I think Cervantes gave Sancho a terrible character according to four moral theories in part I. We need to keep in mind that during the period, the norm was not to subscribe to one main philosophical tendency over the other, but rather to borrow from each to improve character. In other words, the thinkers of the period were practical, in the sense that their goal was not necessarily to reach absolute theoretical consistency, but rather, to offer

opinions from several traditions in order to offer good, practical advice; thus, it was very common to combine neo-stoicism with skepticism.⁶ We also have in Castiglione's *The Courtier* a combination of aristotelianism with neo-platonism, and so on.⁷ In short, the moral philosophy of the period was *eclectic* to reach practical results, and consequently, if Cervantes wanted to give Sancho a bad character, then he could not have relied on only one theory, precisely because the spirit of the time was eclecticism; on the contrary, to satisfy the spirit of the times, he had to give Sancho a bad character according to all the main tendencies of the period. The fact that he did so shows an enormous level of sophistication from his part. Basically, Cervantes created a Sancho in part I that any reader of the period would have no difficulty at all recognizing that Sancho was immoral.

Sancho's moral improvement in part II

At the beginning of part II Cervantes reminds the reader that Sancho's character is flawed. The conversation happens with don Quijote's "sobrina" and "ama". They do not want anything to do with Sancho, barring him access to don Quijote. He responds as follows:

Ama de Satanás, el sonsacado, y el destraído, y el llevado por esos andurriales soy yo, que no tu amo; él me llevó por esos mundo, y vosotras os engañáis en la mitad del justo precio; él me sacó de casa con engañifas, prometiéndome una ínsula, que hasta agora la espero. (574-5)

Thus, Sancho has not changed: he is still motivated by greed since he want to see his master to get paid; however, as the tale progresses Sancho's character undergoes a transformation. This is how Anthony J. Close explains Sancho's moral improvement in part II:

The gist of Cervantes's ideas on governorship is that to be a good governor one must be a good man [...]. The quality which Don Quixote urges Sancho at the conclusion of his precepts, and which Cervantes hold elsewhere, is good intentions (DQ, II, xliii). The quality which the knight stresses at the beginning of his precepts is moral wisdom, consisting in self-knowledge and fear of God. Now Sancho's intellectual advancement in Part II consists in large part in an awakening to moral responsibility. This is not only shown in his homiletic discourses but also in his acts, particularly in the readiness that he shows, before the governorship and during it, to renounce his 'island' should climbing the social ladder endanger the salvation of his soul. (355)

I agree with Close's analysis: the fact that Sancho is willing to give up his 'island' because he does not want to risk his soul shows that his character is much improved. In addition to Close's example, there is another episode showing how much Sancho has changed. At the end of part II don Quijote dies. Before his death he explains how foolish he has been and the damage that the books of chivalry have caused him. This is Sancho's response:

-!Ay!- respondió Sancho, llorando:- No se muera vuestra merced, señor mío, sino tome mi consejo, y viva muchos años; porque la mayor locura que puede hacer un hombre en esta vida es dejarse morir, sin más ni

⁶ The combination of skepticism and neo-stoicism and its enormous influence are detailed in my book (Daniel Lorca, 2016). For example, in pages 9-11, I explain that both philosophical tendencies are present in key figures, such as Montaigne, Pedro de Valencia, Juan Luis Vives, Erasmus, Quevedo, Calderon and of course, Cervantes.

⁷ In the first three books of *The Courtier*, Castiglione explains the many virtues a perfect courtier should have, following aristotelianism for the most part; However, the virtue-eclecticism that was so common during the time is clearly present in book four, where he argues that the courtier ought to transcend in accordance with neo-platonic ideals.

más,, sin que nadie le mate, ni otras manos le acaben que las de la melancolía. Mire no sea perezoso, sino levántese desa cama, y vámonos al campo vestidos de pastores, como tenemos concertado: quizá tras de alguna mata hallaremos a la señora doña Dulcinea, desencantada, que no haya más que ver. Si es que se muere de pesar de verse vencido, écheme a mí la culpa. (1095-1096)

It is important to keep in mind that Sancho says those words *immediately after* don Quijote states the part his will in which he leaves Sancho some money:

es mi voluntad que de ciertos dineros que Sancho Panza, a quien en mi locura hice mi escudero, tiene, que porque ha habido entre él y mí ciertas cuentas, y dares y tomares, quiero que no se le haga cargo dellos, ni se le pida cuenta alguna” (1094).

It follows then that Sancho is showing a lot of concern for the well-being of his master, preferring that he not die, even after knowing that if don Quijote dies then he will keep his money, no questions asked. In short, Sancho does not want don Quijote to die even at the cost of not receiving money. It is true that the text specifies, shortly after, that Sancho is happy about his inheritance: “se regocijaba Sancho Panza; que esto de heredar algo borra o templa en el heredero la memoria de la pena que es razón que deje el muerto” (1097); but still, even if he is happy about his inheritance, it is also true that he cares genuinely for don Quijote, that he does not want the knight to die, and that he is willing not to receive the money if that means don Quijote’s death; therefore, Sancho at the end of part II is very different from the Sancho in part I. Compare, for example Sancho at the end of each part: Part I ends with Sancho telling his wife Juana, that the best part of being a squire is to stay in hotels without having to pay. Also in part I, Sancho is arrogant. Finally, at the end of part I Sancho does not mention don Quijote (as a friend or otherwise). On the other hand, at the end of part II Sancho does not appear to be arrogant at all, but rather, he cares deeply for his master. Also at the end of Part II, Sancho is no longer obsessed with money because he cares more about don Quijote.

To sum up, we have at least two episodes in part II indicating that Sancho’s character has changed: he is not only willing to give up his ‘island’ as Close explained, but also, and just as significantly, he cares more about his friend than he cares about money. Both episodes show that Sancho’s character has improved. Recall that according to the stoic, the road to a worthy life is the control of the passions (greed in the case of Sancho), and Sancho is willing to give up wealth not only to care of his soul (as explained by Close) but also to take care of his friend. Recall that according to the skeptic Sancho’s obsession with money leads him to lie and steal, but in the second part, he is no longer obsessed with money, and therefore it is not likely that he would lie or steal. Recall that according to the aristotelian Sancho’s vice of arrogance in part I is likely to make it difficult for him to sustain friendships, but at the end of part II it does not appear that Sancho is arrogant, and significantly, he cares genuinely about the death of his friend. Also regarding aristotelianism, it is significant that Sancho at the end of part two is satisfied with his station because he gave up his governorship. More precisely, he says that he does not want to rule because he prefers to do the work he was born to do, a farmer:

Abrid camino [...] y dejadme volver a mi antigua libertad; dejadme que vaya a buscar la vida pasada, para que me rescite de esta muerte presente. Yo no nací para ser gobernador [...]. Mejor se me entiende a mí de arar y cavar, podar y ensarmentar las viñas, que de dar leyes ni de defender provincias ni reinos [...], quiero decir, que bien se está cada uno usando el oficio para que fue nacido. (954)

The only theory of the period that does not seem to fit Sancho’s transformation as much is neo-platonism. On the one hand, the theory is still relevant because as explained by Close, Sancho

gave up his governorship because he wanted to take care of his soul within a religious context. This change, according to the neo-platonic, would place Sancho in the right path and as such it is a clear improvement. On the other hand, it is still the case that some aspects of neo-platonism are lacking. More specifically, according to the neo-platonic we ought to love God (beauty) in Himself (Herself, Itself), but the text at the end of part II remains silent about Sancho's stance regarding his love of God. Also according to neo-platonism, true friends must become so through their love of God, and once again, the text does not specify whether or not the friendship between Sancho and don Quijote is reached in that manner; however, even if neo-platonism does not seem to fit explicitly, it is clear that the neo-platonic would find Sancho in part I much more objectionable than in part II, since in part I he cares most of all about wealth, and in part II he cares about the well-being of his friend.

Conclusion

The motivation for this investigation was to answer this question: why has Sancho's moral character in part II improved, as compared to his moral character in part I? If we keep in mind the meaning of the word 'moral' during the period, the eclectic and practical nature of that approach to morality, and finally, the four major moral theories during Cervantes's time, then the reason for his improvement is that in part II, he follows more closely the practical advice offered by those theories. This shows that any reader during Cervantes's time would have had no difficulty understanding that there are two Sanchos. The one in part I is immoral because of his many vices, and the Sancho in part II becomes, as the tale progresses, a moral character.

Works Cited

- Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Trans. Martin Oswald. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1962 [340BC].
- Castiglione, Baldesar. *The Book of the Courtier*. Trans. Sir Thomas Hoby. New York: AMS Press, 1967 [1528].
- Cervantes, Miguel de. *Don Quijote de la Mancha*. Barcelona: Planeta, 2002 [1605 and 1615].
- Chauchadis, Claude. *Honneur Morale et Société dans L'Espagne de Philippe II*. Paris: Editions du CNRS, 1984.
- Close J., Anthony. "Sancho Panza: Wise fool." *MLN* 68 (1973): 344-357.
- Cooper, M. John. "Eudaimonism, the Appeal to Nature and 'Moral Duty' in Stoicism." In Stephen Engstrom and Jennifer Whiting eds. *Aristotle, Kant, and the Stoics: Rethinking Happiness and Duty*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996. 261-284.
- Copleston, Frederick. S. J. *A History of Philosophy. Volume 1: Greece and Rome*. New York: Doubleday, 1985 [1944].
- Erasmus, Desiderius. *The Education of a Christian Prince*. Trans. Lester K. Born. New York: Octagon Books, 1965 [1515].
- Ficino, Marsilio, *Platonic Theology*. Trans. James Hankins. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001–06 [1482]. 6 vols.
- Guevara, Antonio de. *Aviso de Privados o despertador de cortesanos*. Paris: Sociedad de Ediciones Louis-Michaud, n.d. [1545].
- Ihrle, Maureen. *Skepticism in Cervantes*. London: Tamesis Books, 1982.
- Irwin, Terence. "Annotated Glossary." In Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1985. 385-432.
- León, Fray Luis de. *Vida Retirada*. <https://poemario.org/vida-retirada/> n.d. Last consulted in Sept. 11, 2019.
- Lorca, Daniel. *Neo-Stoicism and Skepticism in Part I of Don Quijote: Removing the Authority of a Genre*. Lanham: Lexington books, 2016.
- Sextus Empiricus. *Outlines of Pyrronism*. Trans. Benson Mates. New York: Oxford University Press. 1996 (n.p) [2 AC or 3 AC]
<http://www.sciacchitano.it/Pensatori%20epistemici/Scettici/Outlines%20of%20Pyrronis%20m.pdf>
- Simerka, Barbara. "Early Modern Skepticism and Unbelief and the Demystification of Ideology in *El Burlador de Sevilla*." *Gestos* 23 (1997): 39-66.
- MacIntyre, C. Alasdair. *After Virtue: a Study in Moral Theory*. Notre Dame: Notre Dame UP, 1981.
- Popkin, Richard H. *The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Descartes*. New York: Humanities, 1964.
- Terence Irwin (glossary of terms in the nicomachean ethics)