El Cid Study Guide

El Cid by Marcel Charles Andrade

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Introduction

The *Cantar de mio Cid (El Cid)* recounts the heroic deeds of the Cid, an exiled member of the lower nobility who wins back his king's favor by battling the Islamic inhabitants of Spain. Based on the exploits of a historical personage, Rodrigo (Ruy) Diaz de Vivar, who lived from 1040-1099, this epic offers an important example of the interaction of history and literature in the Middle Ages.

The *Cid* is best known for its interweaving of irony, heroic drama, and a rare strain of realism that incorporates multifaceted portraits of Moors, Jews, and Christians. One of the oldest Spanish documents in existence, it is also the only Spanish epic to have survived almost intact. It is contained in a fourteenth-century manuscript, which bears the date 1207, most likely referring to an earlier version of the poem that was copied in the later book. Several accounts of the Cid's life, however, exist before this epic poem was written in manuscript form. Two Latin poems, one written before the Cid's death, and the other just after, chronicle his life. He is mentioned in Arabic sources, and his fame endured throughout the Middle Ages, in works of varying quality.

The *Cantar de mio Cid* has been well-received as a work of literature for several centuries. The French dramatist Pierre Corneille's famous version of the poem (Le *Cid,* 1637) demonstrates its lasting popularity in Europe. Printed editions of the poem have existed since the eighteenth century; a ground breaking newer edition (1908) was published by the prominent Spanish medievalist Ram6n Menendez Pidal. Menendez Pidal's influential work on the *Cid* ensured an international critical audience for this epic. A poem which treats basic themes such as national and religious identity, family honor, and personal prowess, the *Cidhas* earned a lasting place in the ranks of great world literature.

Author Biography

Intense scholarly debate has raged over the question of the identity of the *Cid's* author. Critics are divided into two camps, the "traditionalists" and the "individualists." The former group, led by Ramon Men6ndez Pidal, believes that the poem was composed as an oral composition soon after the historical Cid's death, and was written in a manuscript only later, thus negating the importance of the idea of a single author for the poem. The "individualists," on the other hand, (championed most recently by Colin Smith) insist that a single, brilliant author wrote the poem in 1207. Some critics point to Per Abbad, the name that appears at the end of the poem, as the author, although the text states that this personage "wrote" the text *(escrivo),* indicating that he was the copyist rather than the author. Opinion on the subject is so divided that individualists tend to call the work the "Poema" of the Cid, whereas traditionalists entitle it the "Cantar," or Song of the Cid, to emphasize its oral origins. The interpretation of the text varies widely according to the stance of a given critic with regards to the text's authorship and the author's intentions.

The person who wrote the 1207 version of the text was undoubtedly a talented author. The individualist school (especially the British Hispanists) insists that the author had extensive knowledge of the law and the Bible, and used written historical documents to bolster the more historically sound sections of the epic. Traditionalists tend to discount all three of these claims, maintaining the oral nature of the transmission of this information during the presumed era of composition, which, for Menendez Pidal, was around 1140. In addition, they note the archaic nature of the language of the 1207 text itself. Despite the quality of this literary text as it has come down to us in its single manuscript, the traditionalist viewpoint has prevailed in recent years. This view is bolstered by research by "neo-traditionalist" scholars who draw on new findings in the oral tradition in literature by scholars such as Albert Lord and Milman Parry, who suggest that the written versions of the most famous epics that we possess are but one manifestation of a chain of oral versions. The debate about authorship has dominated epic research during the past century, but with increased understanding about the role of orality in medieval literature and new scholarship about the status of the author in this era, the problem can be approached in new ways.

Plot Summary

First Cantar

The unique manuscript of the *Cantar de mio Cid* is missing its first folio (manuscript page), and so the poem begins by describing the Cid's reaction to the news of his banishment. From contemporary Latin histories and from a note later in the poem (laisse 9), we discover that the reason for the Cid's banishment is the accusation by King Alfonso VI that the Cid had embezzled money collected from the Moors for the king. This is the second time that Alfonso banished the Cid, and the missing folio might have described this event. The manuscript text itself begins by showing the Cid weeping when he leaves his home village, Vivar, and enters Burgos, a town to the south. He sees crows flying and interprets them as an omen of his ill fortune. The townspeople of Burgos watch him ride by with his ally, Minaya Alvar Fanez. A nine-year-old girl is the only person who dares to address him, telling him that the townspeople have been forbidden by the king to offer aid to the Cid. After praying at the church of Saint Mary, the Cid leaves Burgos, and pitches his tent outside the city walls. The "worthy citizen of Burgos," Martin Antolfnez, provides supplies for the party and joins the Cid. Together they plan how to get money to support themselves, deciding to take advantage of two Jewish moneylenders, Rachel and Vidas. Martin Antolfnez returns to Burgos, finds the moneylenders, and gives them two beautifully-decorated chests filled with sand. He proposes to pawn these chests for a sum of money, and the moneylenders agree to give 600 marks, and to not look into the chests for a year. Gleeful at having tricked the moneylenders, the Cid and his companions head to San Pedro de Cardena, where they meet Dona Ximena (the Cid's wife) and the Cid's daughters. The Abbot of the abbey (Abbot Don Sancho) is delighted to see the Cid, and promises to care for the ladies until the Cid can return. At the abbey, he is joined by 115 knights. Dona Ximena prays for her husband's safety, and the Cid parts from his family with great sadness. With promises of great rewards to all, the Cid and his party leave the abbey and travel through Castille, gathering great numbers for their army. During the voyage, the Cid is visited by the angel Gabriel in a dream, who tells him that he will be successful in his campaigns. After crossing a mountain range, they leave Alfonso's lands and thus enter Moorish territory.

When the Cid and his army arrive at the Moorish town of Casej6n, they ambush the residents and capture the town. Minaya, in particular, distinguishes himself. After dividing the wealth between his men, the Cid and his army leave Casejdn, partly to avoid border conflicts with Alfonso. When they arrive at the town of Alcocer, they again decide to invade it. The Cid's army besieges the city for fifteen weeks, and then, short of food and water, they pretend to give up and strike camp. When the inhabitants of Alcocer see the army leaving, they are delighted and leave the city to pursue them. The Cid seizes the opportunity and attacks the Moors, thereby winning the town. His army occupies the town and forces the Moors to serve them. Inhabitants of the neighboring towns, frightened, tell the Moorish king of Valencia that the Cid threatens their safety, and the king sends an army to attack and besiege the Cid for three weeks. The Cid's army prepares for battle, and Pedro Bermiidez is given the honor of carrying the Cid's

flag. Pedro disobeys the Cid's orders to wait until given the command to attack the Moors, and charges into battle. The Cid and his army follow, and the Moors are defeated, leaving great wealth in horses and armor for the Cid. The hundred horses and a large quantity of silver that the Cid wins is immediately sent to Alfonso, as tribute, and to the abbey at Cardeiia for the care of the Cid's family. The Cid then sells Alcocer back to the Moors and continues to Valencia. En route, he captures several more towns, and is distinguished by his generous treatment of his victims. In the meantime, Minaya has brought the horses to Alfonso, who is duly impressed but refuses to pardon the Cid. The count of Barcelona hears of the Cid's exploits and wrongly believes that he is despoiling the count's territory. He attacks the Cid, but is captured. The count, deeply embarassed, refuses to eat until the Cid releases him.

Second Cantor

The second third of the *Cid* begins with the capture of several more towns, including Murviedra, before the Cid turns his attention to Valencia. The people of Valencia attempt a pre-emptive strike against the Cid, but he is assured of his God-given victory, and summons every ally he can to combat the people of Valencia. He captures more towns, plunders the countryside for three years, and finally attacks Valencia itself. He invites anyone who wants to participate in taking the city to join him, fights a great battle, and wins the city. After dividing the booty, the Cid sends Minaya again to visit Alfonso and the abbot of Cardeiia. At the same time a French churchman, Don Jerome, joins the Cid, who appoints him bishop of Valencia. As a reward for the capture of Valencia, the king agrees to allow the Cid's family to join him in exile. The Cid's growing reknown in Alfonso's court, however, provokes the jealousy of Count Garcia Ordonez. The high-born Infantes de Carrio'n, on the other hand, consider marriage with the Cid's daughters an advantageous match, and send their greetings to him via Minaya. Minaya takes the ladies from the abbey and escorts them to Mendaceli where they are met by the Cid's Moorish ally, Abengalbdn, who takes them to Molina, where he is governor. They then travel to Valencia, where the Cid welcomes them. The Cid makes a great impression on onlookers with his flowing beard and marvelous horse, Babieca.

King Yusuf of Morocco, in the meantime, is furious when he hears of the capture of Valencia, and brings an army from Morocco to retake the city. With his wife and daughters as witnesses, the Cid with his four thousand knights defeats the fearsome army of fifty thousand. The Cid wins an immense amount of wealth from this battle, including the Moroccan king's cloth-of-gold tent. Minaya once again goes to Alfonso to beg pardon for the Cid Alfonso is delighted at the news of the Cid's victory and by the fantastic present of two hundred horses, which again annoys Garcia Ordonez. The king, this time, pardons the Cid and annuls his banishment. The Infantes, in their turn, decide to marry the daughters of such a wealthy and successful man, and ask the king to speak on their behalf with the Cid. Minaya reports this news back to the Cid, who agrees reluctantly to the marriage. All the parties agree to meet on the banks of the Tagus river. When the Cid arrives in front of the king, he dismounts, kneels, and pulls up a mouthful of grass with his teeth as a sign of his great humility before his lord. Alfonso is greatly affected, and pardons the Cid publicly. The marriages are subsequently

arranged, and great festivals are organized in honor of the marriages. The Cid gives the Infantes swords to symbolize his kinship with them, and the marriages are thus begun with great promise.

Third Cantor

The Infantes, married for several months, are deeply embarrassed when a captive lion belonging to the Cid escapes in his palace. While they hide under a couch and behind a wine press, the Cid catches the lion with his hands and puts it back into captivity. The court subsequently jeers at the Infantes for their cowardice. In the meantime, King Bricar of Morocco attempts to renew the failed attempt to retake Valencia. The Cid sees the coming battle as a chance for the Infantes to distinguish themselves and regain their lost prestige, but they are only able to do so by convincing Pedro Benmidez to support their falsely boastful claims of prowess (this passage is missing in the manuscript, but can be reconstructed through consulting other sources). In the battle, Bishop Jerome proves his bravery, and the Cid wins the battle and kills Biicar. The Cid praises God when he hears the reports of his son-in-laws' bravery in battle, but his followers remain skeptical of their courage and continue to tease them. Frustrated and angry, the Infantes plot revenge, and ask permission to leave the court, ostensibly to return to Carri

Their first stop is at Molina, where they meet the Moor, Abengalbdn. Although Abengalbon treats them with great respect, the Infantes plot to kill him. The plot is foiled, and Abengalb6n expresses his disappointment with the Infantes. The party continues, and soon the Infantes send their travelling companions ahead so as to carry out their plot against the Cid's daughters. When they are alone with their wives, the Infantes beat them senseless and leave them for dead. Felez Munoz, the Cid's nephew, is suspicious of the Infantes' intentions, and returns to find the Cid's daughters unconscious in the woods. He quickly takes them back to the town of San Esteban where they regain their health. In the meantime, the Infantes have returned to Alfonso's court, where the king is greatly disturbed by their boasting of their humiliation of the Cid through beating his daughters. The Cid hears the news, and mulls it over for a long time before swearing vengeance. The Cid's daughters return to Valencia via Molina, where they are again hosted by Abengalbdn. The Cid sends his vassal Muiio Gustioz to present the Cid's claim to King Alfonso. The king is considered to be responsible for the situation, since he had recommended the marriage. The king agrees to summon the Infantes and order them to give satisfaction to the Cid, which takes place in a court of justice in Toledo. Here, a great company of legal scholars, high government officials, and court members assemble to seek justice. The Cid arrives with his most faithful retainers, and enters the court, making a favorable impression on the onlookers He has tied a cord around his long white beard so that no one can pluck it—a mortal insult—on purpose or accidentally. Thus the proceedings begin.

The Cid first demands the return of his swords, to thus annul this symbol of kinship. He gives these swords to Pedro Benmidez and to Martin Antolinez. Although the Infantes believe that this is the only price they will have to pay, the Cid then continues. He

demands the return of the money that was given to the Infantes when the marriage was contracted, and they reimburse him by giving him horses and property, borrowing what they no longer own. Then the Cid states his final claim: he challenges the Infantes to a duel against his own champion. At this point, many insults are flung by both sides, accusing the Infantes of cowardice and the Cid of his low birth. According to the Infantes, the Cid's daughters were of too low birth to marry those of the house of Carrion. Finally, the challenges are met, and on a field umpired by specially-chosen judges, the Infantes meet the Cid's champions. Pedro Bermddez first defeats the Infante Fernandez, who surrenders. Then Martin Antolmez defeats the Infante Diego, who fears the Cid's sword, Colada. Finally, Mufio Gustioz nearly kills Ansur Gonzalez, brother of the Infantes; the latter's father is obliged to intercede to save his son's life. With the field won, the Cid declares himself satisfied, and returns to Valencia. Seeing his good fortune, the high-born princes of Navarre and Aragon negotiate with Alfonso to marry the Cid's daughters. This marriage is carried out, to the benefit of the entire family of the Cid. The kings of Spain, according to the author, are all related to the Cid through these marriages. The scribe completes the manuscnpt by signing himself

Characters

King Bucar of Morocco

In a second attempt to recapture Valencia from the Cid, another Moorish king fails in his attack and is killed by the Cid.

El Cid Campeador

See Rodrigo (Ruy) Diaz de Vivar

Infantes de Carrion

The deceitful Infantes are portrayed as cowardly members of the upper class who, seeing the Cid's swift rise in the king's favor, contract marriages with the Cid's daughters, Elvira and Sol. After being embarrassed and subsequently taunted by the Cid's court when they are frightened by a lion and hide under a couch, the Infantes take their wives from Valencia, then beat them and leave them for dead in the woods. When the Cid obtains justice for this insult, his family is assured a place in the heirarchy of lineage that makes up Spanish medieval society. The historical Gonzdlez brothers actually did not belong to this high level of society and were not married to the Cid's daughters.

Dofia Ximena Diaz

See Ximena

Rodrigo (Ruy) Diaz de Vivar

Modeled after a historic personage who lived from c. 1043 to 1099, Rodrigo Diaz is the hero of this epic poem. Named the Cid, for the Arabic word

Sayyidi, or "leader," with the epithet "campeador," meaning "master of the field," Rodrigo Diaz appears in the poem as an invincible military leader. He was born into the lower nobility *(infanzon)* in the small town of Vivar, near Burgos, and was a vassal to the king of Spain. In the poem, this low social status is of great importance, for the Cid is a true social climber, gaining social status by successfully amassing wealth and thus power. When he marries his daughters to the high-born *infantes* and later to the kings of Aragon and Navarre, successfully fighting for his family's honor in the third *cantar,* his success as the founder of a new and great lineage is guaranteed. Unlike most epic heroes, he is depicted as an older man, with a white beard that is a source of great pride and prestige. He is portrayed not only as a military hero, but also as a family man,

during tender scenes with his wife, Ximena, and his daughters, Elvira and Sol. Generous with his retainers, who join him so as to take part in the amassing of wealth that comes with winning battles against the Moors, the Cid also wins back favor with his king, who had banished him, by sending him extremely valuable gifts. Rodrigo is also a Christian hero in the poem and is shown to be victorious as a Christian who struggles righteously against the "infidel," although the historical Cid once was allied with a Moorish emir. By drawing on all the qualities of a traditional epic hero: generosity, religious superiority, clannishness, military prowess, and loyalty, the author of *El Cid* is able to enhance the already stellar status of a historical hero.

Elvira

Elvira is one of the Cid's daughters, who is married to one of the Infantes de Carrion, and then to the king of Navarre. In fact the historical Cid's daughter was named Cristina, and it was her son who became king of Navarre.

Dona Elvira

See Elvira

Minaya Alvar Fdnez

Minaya is the Cid's "good right arm," and is yet another of his nephews. He is the first of the Cid's allies to be mentioned, but his historical counterpart did not accompany the Cid into exile, but rather remained in Alfonso VI's court.

Ansur Gonzalez

Ansur is the brother of the Infantes. He appears during the final duel to support his brothers' claims and he criticizes the Cid for his low birth.

Diego Gonzalez

See Infantes de Carrion

Fernando Gonzalez

See Infantes de Carrion

Felez Munoz

Felez is one of the Cid's nephews, and is his ally and champion. He is the character who first discovers the Cid's daughters after their beating, and takes them back to their father. There is no historical record of this character.

Count Garcia Ordonez

Ordonez is the ally of the Infantes and the bitter enemy of the Cid, rather like Ganelon in the *Song of Roland,* Although he boasts of his noble lineage, the Cid reminds him that he pulled the count's beard in the past, a mortal insult.

Rachel

One of the two moneylenders who provide the initial source of money for the Cid, who needs capital for his period in exile. The Cid tricks them into believing that he has placed all his wealth in two sand-filled chests, and they are persuaded to lend him money while being forbidden to open the chests. The antisemitic portrayal of the Jewish moneylenders is a commonplace in medieval texts.

Sol

The Cid's second daughter, who also marries one of the Infantes de Carrion, and then the king of Aragon. The historical Sol, named Marfa, married the count of Barcelona and perhaps the son of the king of Aragon. She died around age 25.

Dona Sol

See Sol

Muno Gustioz

Muho Gusuoz is an ally of the Cid, his "criado" or member of his household, and, historically, Ximena's brother-in-law. In the final duel, he defeats Ansur, the Infantes' brother.

Don Jerome

The historical Bishop Jerome was Jerome de P6ngord, who was brought to Spain by the bishop of Toledo to help reform the Spanish church. He became the bishop of Valencia in 1098. In the poem, Jerome is a fighting bishop who, like Archbishop Turpin

in the *Song of Roland,* takes part in the battles while guaranteeing eternal salvation to the fighters.

Pedro Mudo

See Pedro Bermudez

Vidas

One of the two moneylenders who provide the initial source of money for the Cid, who needs capital for his period in exile.

Ximena

The Lady Ximena is the virtuous wife of the Cid. Although she is left behind in the Abbey of Cardefia with her daughters during the first part of the epic, she later joins her husband in Valencia, where she is met with a joyful welcome. The unusually close relationship between the Cid and his wife is expressed when they first are separated: "Weeping bitterly, they parted with such pain as when the fingernail is torn from the flesh." Ximena is portrayed as a devoted wife who prays for her husband's safety in an eloquent speech early in the poem. The historical Ximena was the daughter of the count of Oviedo and first cousin of King Alfonso VI, although this is not mentioned in the text. She brought her late husband's remains to the monastery of San Pedro de Cardena near Burgos in 1102. In later versions of the Cid legend, it is Ximena who attracts the most attention; in Pierre Corneille's *Le Cid,* she is the epitome of the tragic heroine.

King Yusuf of Morocco

King Yusuf comes from Morocco to fight the Cid and thus to regain Valencia, a plan which fails. The historical Yusuf was Yusuf ibn Tesufin, first Almoravid caliph of Morocco (1059-1106), and he did not come to Valencia to recuperate it, but rather sent his nephew. The author is clearly amplifying the action to make the Cid's deeds appear even more stunning.

Themes

Nobility and Class

An epic about a highly successful social climber, the *Cantarde mio Cid* has much to say about the concept of nobility. For example, the Infantes de Carritfn are characterized as members of the upper nobility; they have vast land-holdings and enjoy high status in King Alfonso's court. They marry the Cid's daughters for their money, but later describe these marriages as "concubinage," implying that this match is null and void because of the vast difference in class between the Infantes and the Cid, According to medieval Spanish law, those of illegitimate birth cannot legally marry, and can only be concubines, rather than legitimate wives. The hint of illegitimacy can be found in lines 3377-3381, where the brother of the Infantes, Ansur, implies that the Cid is the son of a miller. In the later romances of the Cid, the tradition notes that the Cid's father raped a miller's wife, who gave birth to the Cid. The allusion to bastardy on the part of the Cid and, by extension, his daughters, makes the theme of nobility even more dramatic, especially when someone of such low birth garners enough allies and supporters to challenge the insults to the Cid's family's legitimacy flung at them by the

highest stratum of society. When, by the end of the poem, we are informed that, after the Infantes are soundly defeated, the Cid's daughters' marry princes whose alliance causes them to be related to subsequent kings of Spain, we know that the Cid, as a self-made man, has "arrived." Nobility, then, does not simply stem from one's birth into a social class. An individual, according to the *Cid,* can work to augment one's status as a person of quality. One way to do this, in medieval Spanish society, is to demonstrate great generosity.

Generosity and Greed

The definition of a "gift economy" is an economy in which an individual gains prestige by giving gifts. These economies are illustrated, for example, by the "potlatch" festivals in which the chief of certain Native American tribes of the Pacific Northwest gives away huge amounts of money and other forms of wealth. In the *Cid,* the hero proves his worth by, literally, giving it away. This epic is rilled with itemized lists of each piece of war booty that the Cid and his followers win after each battle; the Cid himself is careful to use his fifth of the winnings to send magnificent presents to the king to, essentially, buy back favor. The Cid also is generous with the Church, sending money regularly to the Abbey of Cardena to assure God's favor. In addition, he is generous even with his victims, allowing the residents of one of the cities that he conquers to return to their homes, and freeing Ramon Berenguer, count of Barcelona, from captivity. An interesting exception to the Cid's generosity is the repayment of Rachel and Vidas, the Jewish moneylenders who are themselves shown to be especially greedy, and whom it seems the Cid never pays back. The Infantes of Carridn, the Cid's typological opposites, are noted for their lack of princely generosity. By the end of the epic, however, the Cid is

proven to be a man as worthy as King Alfonso when the king is forced to admit that the Cid's generosity embarrasses him (1.2147). It is more noble to give than to receive in this society.

Cowardice and Bravery

Just as generosity is the mark of a noble man, bravery in battle is likewise an important characteristic of the ideal hero. The Cid, of course, is the epitome of the brave warrior, using tactics and courage to defeat armies of superior numbers. Bravery, like generosity, is not necessarily linked with one's inherited social status. The comic episode in which the Infantes de Carrion hide under a couch and behind a wine cask when a lion escapes illustrates the importance of bravery in this epic. The Cid is able to tame the lion—the symbol of courage itself—because he is a personage of extraordinary bravery himself. The cowardly Infantes, on the other hand, shirk their duties in battle and invent lies to cover their own lack of courage in episodes that demonstrate how unworthy they are as knights.

Honor

The important traits of courage and generosity fall under the general rubric of a noble man's honor. A man of worth, according to the *Cid,* must work to preserve his honor. In the Cid's case, he has lost a certain amount of honor by being banished by his king, but he manages to recuperate it by being extraordinarily generous and courageous in battle against the Moors. On a more symbolic level, a man's honor can be seriously damaged if personal insults pass unavenged. The Cid's long, flowing beard is so impressive because it has never been pulled—a mortal insult punishable by death. He notes with pleasure that Count Garcia Ord6fiez's beard has not grown back after suffering pulling by the Cid, implying irreparable damage to his personal honor. The Cid is careful, in public appearances, to keep his beard tied with a cord so as to avoid even accidental pulling. Honor is not only a masculine trait: women such as Ximena and her daughters are portrayed as honorable ladies through their religious faith and their faith in the Cid. The daughters, although they are humiliated by being beaten by the Infantes, regain their honor when it is defended in duels by the Cid's men against the Infantes. The proof that their honor has been regained is revealed in the subsequent advantageous marriages which have been arranged for them.

Race Conflict

One of the most curious themes of the *Cid* is the problem of race relations, in particular the coexistence of Christians and Moors in Spain under the Reconquest. The Cid's conquest of Valencia was a somewhat isolated success against the Moors during Alfonso VI' s reign, which was characterized by a general gaining of ground on the part of the Moors after initial Christian successes. Moors in the *Cid* are portrayed alternatively as the fearsome pagans who prove terrifying in battle with their war-drums,

or as the magnanimous Abengalb6n, the Moorish governor who welcomes the Cid and his family and who proves a useful ally. The relativistic treatment of the Moors, some of whom revere the Cid as much as the Christians, stands in contrast to other portrayals of Christians and pagans, as well as to the treatment of Jews in the *Cid,* who are depicted as stereotypes. In a text told by a Christian narrator, it is interesting to discover a measure of cultural relativism,

Style

Meter

Discussions of the *Cantar de mio Cid's* narrative technique tend to revolve around the unusual irregularity of the epic's meter. French epic, for example the *Song of Roland,* is characterized by its regular, assonanced ten-syllable lines. The French epic is organized in "laisses," or unequal blocks of text that are grouped by their assonance, that is, the similarity of the last vowel of the line. Additionally, each line has a strong hemistich, also known as the "caesura," or pause between the first four syllables and the final six. Thus, in *The Song of Roland:*

Rollant est proz e Oliver est sage; Ambedui unt merveillus vasselage (11.1093-94)

The narrative technique of the *Cid* does share some similarities with this pattern. The epic is constructed of 152 assonanced laisses with a strong hemistich. Thus:

De los sos ojos tan fuertemientre llorando, tornava la cabega'e estavalos catando (11 1-2)

However, as this example indicates, the length of the verse is extremely irregular, and is termed "anisosyllabic." The verse length in this poem can vary from eight to twenty-two syllables. This irregularity has puzzled critics who attempt to locate the variance in meter to the original source of the epic. P. T. Harvey and A. D. Deyermond compare the epic to the oral literature researched by Milman Parry and Albert Lord. When collecting epic songs from the "singers of tales" in Yugoslavia, these scholars noted that, while the meter of the songs remained regular when they were sung, when the researcher requested that the singers recite the works without singing, the meter became irregular. Harvey and Deyermond theorize that the *Cid* may have been originally collected from a recited, rather than a sung, source, which might explain its metrical irregularity.

The Epic Epithet

The epic as a performed literary form tends to present characters as representatives of certain human traits. One technique that works to emphasize these specific characteristics is the epic epithet. This technique forces the reader/listener to concentrate on the most important traits of a given personage. The Cid, for example, is""Bl de Bivar," "the man from Vivar," emphasizing the importance of the Cid as a landowner and locating him within a matrix of local politics. He is the good "Campeador," "master of the battlefield." King Alfonso, interestingly, recieves few epithets while his relations with the Cid are antagonistic. When he pardons the Cid, he receives more favorable epidiets. Important places, such as Valencia, can also receive epithets.

Ring Composition

The form of many epics, as oral literature, is shaped, according to some scholars, by the characteristics of oral memory and composition. Specifically, patterns of repetition, formulaic expressions, standard themes such as battles, marriages, and reconciliations emerge. Often, a circular pattern that serves as a frame adds shape and clarity to the narrative. The *Cantar de mio Cid* has such a shape according to Cedric Whitman and Walter Ong. The first Cantar, for example, reveals ring composition. In line 1, we learn of the adversities and anguish resulting from the Cid's exile and of the convocation of vassals; and later, in lines 48 through 63, we hear of the benefits and jubilation resulting from the Cid's conquests and of the increase in number of his vassals. Similarly, this type of repetition of themes and ideas can be seen in lines 2 through 22, with the departure from Castile accompanied by ill omens and the promise of masses, and in lines 40 through 47, which depict the return of Minaya Alvar Fanez to Castile with favorable omens and masses paid. Ring composition draws the listener's attention to important parallels in the work, and is a device commonly used in oral literature.

Historical Context

Spain and Feudalism

The shape of Spanish society, as opposed to the situation in France, was not strictly or formally organized by feudal ties that linked a lord to a vassal who, in return for protection, provided military services. Although the social structure in Catalonia (the northeastern corner of Spain) was influenced by France, the northwest was original. The fine gradations of northern feudal society in Spain, become a more or less direct relationship between a man and his king. As the *Cantarde mio Cid* shows, the sign of the lord-vassal relationship is the kissing of hands. The reason for this less-stratified shape of society has to do with the Reconquest of Moorish Spain and with the resettlement of the lands taken from the Moors. Peasants occupied these frontier lands, often taking up arms to defend their new territory, militia-style. The king, on the other hand, retained his power as warlord, as the organizer of these campaigns against the Moors. The kings of the Spanish provinces ruled effectively over their comparatively small kingdoms, thus remaining in touch with their subjects. Northern feudal society is characterized by two factors: the vassal-knight's monopoly of military duty, and the dominance of the various ties of vasselage—the dependance and reliance of one man on another—over other forms of government. Spanish society, organized to combat a numerous and formidable enemy, rather than to maintain interior peace, took on a different shape. In the *Cid,* written down in the early thirteenth century, the emergence of the state as a larger organizing force can be charted in the evolution of the portrayal of King Alfonso who, once he pardons the Cid, acts as an arbiter between warring clans. The people who made up Spanish society then included the Christians, who organized themselves in "households" (made up of *criados),* and who were classified as *ricos hombres* or wealthy men; *infanzones ,* also called *caballeros* (the Cid is an *infanzon);* and knights. There were two types of peasants: the serfs, or *solariegos,* were tied to the land and were not free to move, whereas the *behetrias* were freemen, and sometimes moved to the borderlands to become "peasant knights."

Late Twelfth-Century Politics and the 1207 CM

One of the most important recent studies of the cultural context within which the *Cantarde mio Cid* was written is Maria Lacarra's 1980 study on history and ideology in this epic. She considers the poem a frankly propagandists work that functions as a denunciation of an important Leonese family whose ancestors were hostile toward the Cid. The historical background of the tension between the powerful Beni-Gomez family and the historical Cid seems to uphold this theory. During the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries, a power struggle developed between the provinces of Castile and Leon. The historical Cid was involved in one phase of these developments. The Cid was the head of the armies of King Sancho II of Castile, but upon Sancho's death, his brother, Alfonso VI, became king of Castile and Leon. Alfonso cultivated relations with the obviously talented Cid, marrying his cousin Ximena to the Cid and verifying his land holdings in Vivar. Alfonso sent the Cid to collect tribute from the Moorish king of Seville

in 1079. While in Seville, the Cid confronted Garcia Ord6nez, who was attacking Seville in the company of the king of Granada. The tension between the Cid and Garcia Ordonez is charted in the epic, and is expanded to reflect the clan feud that marked Castillian politics of the late twelfth century.

When the young Alfonso VIII of Castile ascended the throne in 1158, as often happens when a child becomes king, a struggle ensued for control over his education and for control over the government. The Lara clan, staunch supporters of Alfonso VIII, were soon embroiled in a feud with the powerful Castro family, whose interests were not served by Alfonso VIITs lifelong program to unite Castile and Leon against the Moorish threat to the south. A critical moment was reached in 1195, when Alfonso VIII of Castile attacked the Moorish stronghold of Toledo. Alphonso Vm suffered a monumental defeat at the hands of the Moorish Almohad caliphs. Importantly, Pedro Fernandez de Castro, head of the Castro family, who were related to the Infantes de Carri6n and the Beni-Gomez clan, fought on the Moorish side in this battle. The Lara family, who had remained loyal to Alfonso VHI of Castile, saw Pedro's actions as traitorous to the cause of Castile and Leon. Joseph Duggan, a noted *Cid* scholar, sees the 1207 *Cantor de mio Cid* as a praise poem for the historical Cid that is also a shame poem for the Beni-G6mez family, a representative of whom was considered a traitor to Alfonso VIII, who was a descendant of the Cid himself. The Lara family, in addition, benefltted from a praise-poem about the Cid since they were also related to him through marriage. By writing a poem about the exploits of a famous fighter of Moors who, in the process of winning lands and booty, caused a rival clan to lose face, the author of the 1207 *Cid* might have been writing a propagandists poem which praised an ancestor of Alfonso VIII and the Lara clan while functioning to incite renewed efforts against the Moors after a dramatic defeat during the darker days of the Christian Reconquest of Spain.

The Reconquista

Never far in the background of the *Cantor de mio Cid is* the long history of the Spanish Reconquest of Muslim territory, which began in the early Middle Ages and was nearly completed by the middle of the thirteenth century. The last Muslim enclave, Grenada, was annexed by Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain in 1492, thus completing a long and painful reordering of the Spanish peninsula. In the early history of the Reconquest, Christian success came in direct proportion to the strength of Islamic Spain. Tension between the kings of Asturias, Castile, and Leon and the rulers of Portugal, Navarre, and Aragon-Catalonia often undermined the Christian program to gain territory, but by the end of the Middle Ages, only Portugal remained separate. With the Reconquest and the resettling of territory came accelerated development of the towns, with the consequence, among others, that Christian religious centers were reestablished, restored, and expanded. With the expansion of Christian territory, many Muslims and Jews came under Christian rule. For the most part, a relatively stable coexistence was maintained; Muslims and Jews were allowed freedom of religion and their own law codes as long as they paid regular fees (tribute) to the Christians.

Critical Overview

The critical reception of the *Cantarde mio* Cr'dmust be studied in two parts: first, the evolution of the epic itself, and how the story was retold in the Middle Ages and in later literary periods, and second, the reception of the epic by modern critics.

The Cid's heroic deeds were recorded in a Latin poem, entitled the *Carmen Campidoctoris,* around 1093, and in a shorter Latin chronicle, or historical document, the *Historia Roderici,* around 1110. Although other fragments of the story of the Cid exist in several chronicles, including the prose *Primera Crdnica General,* the *Cantarde mio Cid* is the only Spanish (Castilian) epic to have survived in near-entirety. A later text, written around 1250, bridges the gap between the epic and the romance tradition of literature: the *Mocedades del Cid* tells of the deeds of the Cid during his youth. This text is full of fanciful and romantic anecdotes about the Cid, contrasting strongly with the heroic, venerable Cid of the epic tradition. Interestingly, the epic version of the Cid's legend had almost no effect on later literature, it is the romance tradition that fed the fanciful ballads of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries The Spanish playwright Guillen de Castro's 1618 play, *Las Mocedades del Cid,* inspired Pierre Corneille to compose *he Cid* in 1637, which provoked an important literary discussion in France about appropriate literary subject matter. In these romantic versions of the Cid legend, the authors focus on the relationship between Dona Ximena and Rodrigo, with the larger historical question of the battles between Christian and Moors relegated to the background.

While the epic was never entirely forgotten— the manuscript was rediscovered in Vivar in the sixteenth century and was passed among scholars for many years—it was not until the late nineteenth century that it began to receive serious scholarly attention. The single extant manuscript is now in very bad condition, due to the use of reagents, or acids, which were applied to places in the manuscript where the ink had faded (ultraviolet lamps and infrared photography are now the preferred methods to decipher difficult-to-read documents). In the late nineteenth century, the Spanish scholar Ramon Menendez Pidal turned his attention to the work, publishing a three-volume edition in 1908-11. Menendez Pidal's dominant position in Cidian scholarship ensured the duration of critical topics that he thought were important. A scholar of the "generation of 1898," an intellectual movement that opposed the restoration of the monarchy and favored a political return to the "purified" origins of Spain, Menendez Pidal believed that the *Cid,* as the "national epic of Spain," reveals the origin of Spain's national character. He also believed that the *Cid* should be studied as an accurate historical document. Finally, he supported the "traditionalist" viewpoint that the epic had been composed gradually in the oral tradition by generations of folk poets. The search for origins, with an interest in seeking the roots of European culture, and which often led to fanciful reconstructions of literary texts, was an important characteristic of nineteenth-century philology.

Menendez Pidal's nationalist, historicist, and traditionalist views dominated the shape of Cidian scholarship for many years. The sharpest debate about this epic has involved

the battle between the "individualist" belief in a single author of the epic, versus the "traditionalist" approach, which, following Menendez Pidal and, later, Milman Parry and Albert Lord, insists that all epic literature has oral coposition at its core (see the "Author" section above). Although the "individualist" thesis has lost ground, Colin Smith's recent book (1983) demonstrates that it is not yet dead. Other scholarly problems that have attracted attention revolve around the date of composition of the poem and of its manuscript; problems of authorship; origins and influences (especially French) of the themes in the epic; the relation of the *Cid* to other types of medieval Spanish literature, including the *Romanceros* and the *Cronicas;* aesthetic evaluation of the epic as literature; mythic or folkloric aspects of the *Cid;* and finally, the application of social science methodology to the study of this epic.

Men6ndez Pidal's nationalism, the result of his political ideology, has not affected subsequent scholarship as much as his historicism. An important debate between this scholar and another eminent medievalist, Leo Spitzer, revolved around the place of history in this epic, which contains much accurate historical detail. While Mendndez Pidal thought that the *Cid* could be read as an historical document, Spitzer disagreed, writing that the fictional events (almost the entire second half of the poem) of the epic are as important as the historical elements, and must be weighed as such. In recent years, new historicist treatments have added an important facet to Cidian studies. Marfa Lacarra, in particular, characterized this epic as a propagandist^ poem in which history is rewritten in order to better present a particular clan's interest. More recently, Joseph Duggan and Michael Harney have studied larger social structures of the era, linking them to problems that are raised in the text itself. Cidian criticism seems to have nearly surpassed the individualist/traditionalist battle, and is headed in a direction that can shed light on the cultural function of literature.

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1
- Critical Essay #2
- Critical Essay #3
- Critical Essay #4

Critical Essay #1

In the following essay, Looper analyzes the "propagandistic element of epic literature," explaining how the Cantar de mio Cid *was used as a means of promoting the political and economic aims of medieval institutions long after the death of the historical Cid.*

As an epic, compared with other examples from the genre, the *Cantar de mio Cid* stands out not so much in its form as in its content as a literary reflection of history. A text that probably underwent many transformations as oral literature before it was written down by a talented poet, the *Cantar de mio Cid* shares the epic epithets, stock themes, and formulas typical of other early epics. As the tale of a heroic individual whose existence is well documented, the *Cantar* offers a unique example in the epic genre of the relationship between literature and history. The link between the Cid as a man, the legend that quickly evolved about his deeds even during his lifetime, and the use of this story as a political tool during the turbulent twelfth century in Spain, during which time the descendants of the Cid won the throne of Castile, lends itself to a fascinating reconsideration of the way literature is used to change history.

Since the *Cantar de mio Cid* does recount the tale of a famous historical figure who is also well-documented, one of the most important questions to ask about the epic surrounds the cultural and historical impetus behind its composition. Why, in 1207, was the epic first written down? Why was it again recopied 100 years later? With regards to the events that are recounted in the epic itself, one can ask why certain fictional elements were added to the historical narrative, as well as why certain historical elements were retained while others were omitted. Two interesting phenomena illustrate the way this epic was used to promote the political and economic interests of certain medieval institutions many years after the Cid died. One example of the way that the poem was used to promote the political interests of King Alfonso VIII of Castile and his allies in the late thirteenth century demonstrates the propagandists element of epic literature. A second example of the exploitation of the epic illustrates its "commercial" use: the development of a tomb-cult, a sort of tourist site at the Abbey of Cardefia, where the Cid was buried.

The hypothesis that the *Cantar de mio Cid* was written as a praise-poem for the king of Castile's (Alfonso VIII) ancestor and the king's allies, the Lara family, who were related to the Cid by marriage, has been discussed above (see the "History" section above) and is best summarized by J. Duggan, who follows Maria Lacarra in much of his argument. Duggan explains that the question of family integrity and illegitimacy, which dominates the narrative even over the conquest of Valencia—a monumental historical event—is related to the twelfth-century political struggle between Castile and Leon. It is important to remember that the historical Ximena, the Cid's wife, was of royal blood, cousin to Alfonso VI of Castile. In the epic, however, no mention is made of this, and the poet concentrates on the insults that are hurled at the Cid by the Infantes de Cara6n, who maintain that the Cid is a member of the lower class: "Who ever heard of the Cid, that fellow from Vivar? Let him be off to the river Ubierna to dress his millstones and collect his miller's tolls as usual. Who gave him the right to marry into the Carri6n family?" (11.

3377-81) The Infantes insist that the Cid's daughters are not wives, but concubines, suggesting that they are illegitimate, or are born of an illegitimate parent. Duggan shows that the poet's insistence on "clearing the Cid's name" relates to a crisis that centered on the marriages of Alfonso DC of Leon and Alfonso VIE of Castile.

A common practice in the Middle Ages was to marry a member of an opposing family to restore peace between two warring clans; the historical Ximena was married to the Cid in a peacemaking gesture on the part of Alfonso VI. At the height of the tension between Alfonso EX and Alfonso VIII, after the disastrous battle of Toledo in 1195, the pope stepped in to try to restore peace between the Christian kings so as to better combat the Muslim presence. He excommunicated Alfonso IX of Leon and his counselor Pedro Fernandez de Castro (the man considered a traitor by the Lara clan). Excommunication was a terrible punishment in this period; the victim was essentially ejected from the Christian community. Faced with this threat, in 1199 Alfonso IX agreed to marry Alfonso VIITs daughter, Berenguela, to make peace. This match, however, although it brought peace, was problematic in that Alfonso DC and Berenguela were first cousins, and thus the marriage was considered incestuous. The new pope who entered the scene at that moment, Innocent III, was particularly stubborn on the matter of incestuous marriages, and insisted that it be annulled, imposing the interdict on Leon and Castile, another terrible punishment in which no sacred services could be performed.

Alfonso DC and Berenguela refused to separate, and Berenguela eventually bore five children. These children were judged illegitimate by the pope, but Alfonso DC ignored this, naming his son, Fernando, heir to the Leonese throne. After a period of intense crisis, Fernando, the son of a daughter of Castile and the king of Leon, finally was given legitimacy by the pope in 1218, and the tension between Castile and Leon was finally ended, as it had been planned by Alfonso VIE, when Fernando became Fernando IK, king of Castile and Leon. A crisis that threatened regional stability when popes and kings clashed is reflected and resolved in a work of fiction, in which the Cid is represented as illegitimate, but manages to earn, through his intrinsic worth, the approbation of his peers and, more importantly, the approval of God. It is important to note that the Cid's champions, in the final three duels, fight for the Cid and his family's honor and win, not because of their skill in fighting, but because God wills it. The clash of church and state, illustrated by the series of interdictions imposed on Spanish regions by various popes in the late twelfth century to force them to change their dynastic politics, is resolved in the epic when God remains consistently on the Cid's side throughout his struggle with the Moors and with those who would insult his family. A political and moral message is thus sent by this text, which works to uphold the prestige of a ruler who is tainted by the hint of illegitimacy.

The link between the Church and the Cid's descendants becomes clear when one takes into account the importance of churches and monasteries for royal families in the Middle Ages. In exchange for political and spiritual support in the form of sermons preached and masses said for the benefit of a powerful family, these families often donated great sums of money for the maintenance of the resident monks. Two institutions figure importantly in the history of this epic; the first is San Pedro de Cardena, and the second is, according to Duggan, Santa Maria de Huerta. The former was powerful during the

reign of Alfonso VI (the king who interacted with, the Cid) and the latter was a newer institution, established by Alfonso VIII, who himself placed the keystone of the building in the ground, Huerta was also patronized, or given financial support, by the Lara family, allies of Alfonso VHI. Alfonso visited Huerta several times, and Duggan suggests that one of these occasions may have been commemorated by the composition of the 1207 manuscript of the *Cantor de mio Cid.* The mysterious "Per Abbad" who "wrote down" the text may refer to the Abbot Pedro I, who was Abbot at Huerta around 1203 through 1210. He might have presented it to Alfonso VIII on one of his visits in 1207.

Although the thirteenth-century copy of the text, which is now lost, may have been composed at the Abbey of Huerta, the fourteenth-century copy of this manuscript was discovered in the sixteenth century in the archives of the city hall of Vivar, the Cid's home town. Later it was borrowed by an eighteenth-century scholar and subsequently was passed around Spain for two hundred years. The history of Cardena differs from that of Huerta in that it was a Benedictine institution, rather than a monastery such as Huerta, built on a newer, reformed model. It consequently enjoyed less royal favor than Huerta in this period, since Alfonso VIQ favored the reformed model. Even a slight lessening of royal favor had serious financial ramifications for any given religious institution, and the monks of Cardena took action. P. E. Russell states that "Cardena enjoyed the favour of Alfonso VIII (1158-1214), though, in common with the other Benedictine foundations, it was now no longer closely connected with the life of the court. The monks bggan to elaborate, with small regard for historical probability, legends designed to keep alive memories of the part they had once played in the early days of the Castilian nation." ("San Pedro de Cardena and the Heroic History of the Cid," *Medium Aevum,* Vol. 27, no. 2,1958, p. 68)

One method that these monks used to maintain the prestige of their Abbey was the production of manuscripts, which served as valuable tools in the process of generating support for an element that the Abbey wanted to promote. In the case of Cardena, it was a well-known fact that the Cid had been buried there after his wife Ximena brought his embalmed remains to the Abbey in 1102. The monks of Cardena worked to aggrandize the Abbey's link with the Cid; stories circulated that not only the Cid was buried there, but also his wife Ximena and his famous horse, Babieca. The Cid's body, like that of a saint, was reported to be "incorrupted," or in perfectly preserved condition. In the *Cantor de mio Cid* itself, many unlikely details were either added or retained from the earlier version to emphasize Cardena's helpful role in the Cid's campaigns. Ximena and her daughters, for example, were housed at the Abbey in defiance of the king's orders, according to the text. The Cid is depicted as donating vast sums of money to the Abbey in his lifetime. Even the general region in which the Abbey was situated is glorified by the invention of Martin Antolfnez, the "worthy citizen of Burgos," who likewise defies the king and joins the Cid in exile.

These stones can be seen as a carefully orchestrated "advertising campaign" that resulted in attracting tourists who brought much-needed revenue to a religious institution that enjoyed less royal favor than their newer counterparts. A tomb-cult quickly developed at Cardena: people flocked there to view the tomb of the Cid, elevating his legend to the status of a saint by retelling the tales of his heroic deeds.

This phenomenon is not an isolated one: Russell notes that "The gradual turning of a lay (e.g. not religious) figure into a hagiographical (e.g. saintly) one as a result of a tomb-cult was clearly a general phenomenon." ("San Pedro de Cardena and the Heroic History of the Cid," *Medium Aevum,* Vol. 27, no. 2, 1958, p. 67). The steady stream of pilgrims to visit the tomb of a popular hero or a saint generated considerable wealth for the church or monastery that housed the relics, or remains, of a popular hero. These pilgrims also ensured the survival and elaboration of these heroic legends, in that they learned the story of the hero during their pilgrimage and returned home to retell it. Perhaps the manuscript was produced as yet another piece of written—and thus more plausible—proof that the relics were indeed worthy of popular veneration

The *Cantor de mio Cid* offers a unique demonstration of how literature about a historical figure can reflect and even influence local politics and, later, generate revenue for a medieval tourist site. Heroic stories continue to be used to draw parallels between the present and the past. The 1961 Hollywood movie *El Cid* could be interpreted as a reflection of the American public's veneration of their own heroic leader, John F. Kennedy, who, with his wife, shed glory on an empire of their own. Thus an epic can be generated for the most self-serving of reasons.

Source: Jennifer Looper, for *Epics for Students,* Gale Research, 1997

Critical Essay #2

In the following excerpt, Burshatin examines the status of Moors as portrayed in the epic and the metaphoric and symbolic roles filled by Moorish characters in the work.

The image of the Moor in Spanish literature reveals a paradox at the heart of Christian and Castilian hegemony in the period between the conquest of Nasnd Granada in 1492 and the expulsion of the Moriscos by Philip III in 1609. Depictions fall between two extremes. On the "villifymg" side, Moors are hateful dogs, miserly, treacherous, lazy *and* overreaching. On the "idealizing" side, the men are noble, loyal, heroic, courtly—they even mirror the virtues that Christian knights aspire to while the women are endowed with singular beauty and discretion.

Anti-Muslim diatribes are fairly common and predictable: they are flat and repetitive in their assertion of Old Christian superiority over every aspect of the lives of Muslims or crypto-Muslims. Any sign of cultural otherness is ridiculed; the conquering caste, insecure about its own lofty (and, more often than not, chimerical) standards of *limpieza de sangre* ("purity of blood"), laughs away whatever trace of old Hispano-Arab splendor might remain in the Morisco. Or, conversely, the uneasy master recasts wretched Monscos as ominous brethren of the Ottoman Turk.

The truly vexed problem, however, consists in determining the meaning of idealized Moors in historiography, ballads, drama, and the novel. Roughly speaking, modern criticism divides into two camps in attempting to explain this curious phenomenon of literary infatuation with a cultural and religious minority subjected to growing popular hostility, Inquisitional hounding, and economic exploitation. I will call one camp "aestheticist" and the other "social."

In the "aestheticist" view, what counts above all else is the expansiveness of the Spanish soul, which is so generous to its enemies of eight centuries' standing that it buries the hatchet and fashions them into models of the courtly and chivalric. No Christian knight is more adept at arms than Abindarraez; no lady is ever lovelier than Jarifa, Daraja, or Ana Felix.

The "social" interpretations render literary phenomena as pamphlets for "peaceful coexistence." They argue, often persuasively, that chivalric or sentimental narrative in Orientalist garb hides a subversive message available only to the *cognoscenti*—New Christians, crypto-Muslims, and crypto-Jews—in need of consoling or intent on dismantling the dominant culture. This literary fashion may well have been encouraged by aristocratic patrons wary of sacrificing faithful and hard-working vassals to the Church-inspired zealotry of Charles V's heirs. Some of the strongest dissenting voices belonged to Aragonese seigneurial patrons, whose fondness for *Maurophilie litteraire* may have come from a political conservatism rooted in profitable *mudejar* traditions. Aragonese lords of Morisco vassals may thus have nurtured the proliferation of Moorish "positive role models." Some scholars argue that seigneurial protectors of Morisco tradi-

tions might have sought to lift the sagging image of their New Christian subjects by conjuring up aristocratic Moors of yore. Still, the Morisco was as much of an outsider in sixteenth-century Spain as he would have been in the golden Nasrid Granada romanticized in literature.

Turning from the "social" apercus on the possible origins of the sixteenth-century Moorish novel to the earliest vernacular instances of the discourse on the Moor, we find one of the most uncanny expressions in premodern literature of the power of representations. In the *Poema de mio Cid,* composed some time around 1207, the exiled hero's return to the fold takes the form of an ever widening but essentially redundant displacement of the Moor. And, as in the sixteenth century, the Moor in the *Poema de mio Cid* falls between extremes of the dehumanizing and the fanciful: either he is reduced, metonymically, to an item of value in the booty lists carefully drawn by the hero's *quinoneros* ("officers in charge of counting and distributing booty"), or he is the reassuring and Orientalized projection of the hero's sway over reconquered lands. Grounded in conquest and reiterated tests of valor on the battlefield, the discourse of the conqueror also displays a twofold drift: on the one hand, writing is an instrument of surveillance, the means of recording all the wealth taken from Moors and then allotted to the Cid's fighters; on the other hand, the conqueror produces a poetic language belonging to the class of propagandisuc gestures and calls to arms *(pregones)* which is essential to the seizure and, later, to the defense of Valencia.

The Cid is a soldier turned poet when he describes an army of Moors as a pageant of Moorish service that proclaims the Cid's presence—and not the Moors'—in a reconquered landscape. This metaphoric transformation of a Moorish menace into a hyperbolic statement of Moorish devotion to the conqueror takes place in Valencia, at the tower of the alcazar, where the proud conqueror has taken his wife and daughters to contemplate their vast estates. But into their vision of wealth and familial pleasures now intrude King Yiicef s North African hordes, encamped around the city they hope to seize for Mafomat ("Muhammad"). The threat is a Moorish version of the Christian Reconquest, and it is therefore all the more horrifying to the women after their uncertain years in the monastery at Cardena, outside Burgos, away from the Cid. Model father and husband that he is, the Cid soothes the women by translating his proven force of arms into a reassuring metaphor of Moorish service:

Su mugier e sus fijas subiolas al alcacar, alcavan los ojos, tiendas vieron fincadas: "? Ques esto, Cid' !Si el Cnador vos salve!" "!Yamugier ondrada non ayades pesar Riqueza es que nos acrece maravillosa e grand, 'a poco que vimestes presend vos quieren dar, por casar son vuestias fljas: aduzen vos axuvar!"

(He led his wife and daughters up into the castle; they raised their eyes and saw the tents pitched. "What is this, Cid, in the name of the Creator'" "My honored wife, let it not trouble you' This is great and marvelous wealth to be added unto us; you have barely arrived here and they send you gifts, they bring the marriage portion for the wedding of your daughters ")

Confident of his military and political savvy, the warrior as poet turns an image of Moorish force into a projection of his own overwhelming presence. Moorish weapons, tents, and horses exist in the poem only to be detached from armies whose defeat is episodic and invariable. In the Cid's proleptic metaphor, "Riqueza es que nos acrece maravillosa e grand," the tension between the ominous beating of Moorish battle drums and the hope of making worthy marriages for his daughters in the court of Alfonso VI of Castile and Leon is swiftly resolved in the ensuing battle, which bears out what the poem's implied audience has come to expect of its hero.

The Cid's metaphor makes two rhetorical thrusts. One is the proleptic shorthand that captures the development of the plot it describes. The second is the metonymic reduction of the Moor, whose presence ("riqueza es ("this is ... wealth")") in the conqueror's universe of discourse is illusory, relegated to the spoils that *quinonems* can describe in their lists. But the heuristic fiction, which the metaphor gives rise to, dresses epic force in Orientalized garb. Once the Moor is defeated in battle, the role of the Moor in discourse is to enhance the prestige of the hero and his world. Not for nothing does the adjectival form *morisco* undergo a semantic shift in the work. First, it describes a coveted cloak which one of the duped Jewish moneylenders requests:

Rachel a mio Cid la manol ba besar: "' Ya Campeador en buen ora cinxiestes espada! De Castiella vos ides pora las yentes estranas; assi es vuestra ventura, grandes son vuestras ganancias, una piel vermeja *morisca e ondrada* Cid, beso vuestra mano en don que la yo aya." (my emphasis)

(Raquel has kissed the hand of My Cid: "Ah, Campeador, in good hour you girded on sword' You go from Castile forth among strangers. Such is your fortune and great are your gains; I kiss your hand, begging you to bring me a skin of crimson leather, *Moorish and highly prized.")* (my emphasis)

Later, as the hero sweeps over Muslim lands, the adjective *morisco* aptly describes the manner in which the Cid puts his own stamp on booty and people: beaten *mows* point to *moriscos,* and both are the undifferentiated names for the Islamic defenders which the *Poema de mio Cid* marks for defeat.

Esta albergada los de mio Cid luego la an robada de escudos e de armas e de otros averes largos; de los *moriscos* quando son legados ffallaron .dx. cavallos.(my emphasis)

(My Cid's men have looted from this camp, shields and arms and many other things; they counted sixty horses in the booty taken from *Moriscos.)* (My translation, my emphasis)

Thus, the idealized Moor and the items listed by *quinonems* —congener to the romanticized Moor— presuppose one another in the conqueror's meta-phoric language. The Cid's exemplary Moorish vassal Avengalvon, probably the first of a long line of idealized Moors in Spanish literary history, also displays elements of this complex interplay between the logic of the poet and that of the *quinonero.*

To imagine the besieging Almoravides at the walls as an already beaten yet prestigious foe is a powerful device, but it becomes more vividly so when seen in the wider context of the Western epic tradition. The exchange of words between the Cid and his wife, Ximena, as they watch the armies below is a discrete reworking of the classical *teichoskopia*—the view from/on the wall. This topos, as in the *Iliad,* marks a shift in point of view, emphasis, and theme. In the *Poema de mio Cid* the broadening effect of the classical *teichoskopia* is masterfully turned into an Orientalizing trope. As viewed from the walls, the besieging warriors— shouting heretical war cries of "Mafomat!" and beating thousands of battle drums— are turned, simultaneously, into chattel *and* romanticized subjects not to be feared but counted and possessed. In the guise of a poet, the hero produces a powerfully self-centered caption to the fearsome sight below. The *teichoskopia* thus furnishes the privileged vantage point from which the hero enacts his sway over Muslim adversaries. High above the enemy, within sight of vast land-holdings and wealth, the hero now empowers his discourse with the ability to redefine, at will, bristling motifs of Moorish force and to imbue them with "Cidian" meaning and a reassuring sense of harmony and continuity.

This total dominion over the Moor—the linking, through *teichoskopia,* of metaphor and sword, the Moor as chattel *and* as romantic Other—is a key moment, both in shaping the Spanish Orientalist tradition and in fostering the ideological solidarity characteristic of the epic. All those who participate in the social mobility and expansiveness of the vigorous frontier world of Castile and its hero feed on the beaten Moors: the townspeople of Burgos, the fighting bishop don Jerome, the Cid's intrepid followers, and even Avengalvdn, the Cid's ever loyal Moorish vassal. Catalans, Leonese, members of the old aristocracy, duped Jewish moneylenders, and Moorish enemy all constitute an opposition handily negated by the Cid and his band, exiles whose ostensible return to the fold actually initiates a new society and an ethos nurtured by "object values" taken from their antagonists and reinscribed in their own—the conqueror's—universe of discourse. The univocity thus achieved also manifests in the continuity of language and world: mobility over vast stretches of frontier territory coincides with the frequent *pregones* ("recruiting propaganda"), booty lists are homologous to epic catalogs of warriors; and narrative equivalence of wealth and authority, the forceful and the sacred, displays the scope of epic consolidation.

Source: Israel Burshatm, "The Moor in the Text: Metaphor, Emblem, and Silence," in *Critical Inquiry,* Vol. 12, No. 1, Autumn, 1985, pp. 98-118.

Critical Essay #3

In the following excerpt, Duggan traces the action in this epic work and discusses differences between it and other Romance epics, concluding that the heroes of such epics, though they possess less than ideal lineage, attain nobility and legitimacy through their actions.

The *Chanson de Roland* and the *Cantor de mio Cid* are often compared, but usually for the wrong reasons. The Spanish poem has a documentary quality about it, and the single poetic version which has survived the Middle Ages, in a manuscript identified as the product of one Per Abbat, a scribe, was composed within a hundred and eight years of the hero's death The *Cid* is thus much closer in narrative type to, say, *Garin le Loherain* or to the *Canso d'Antiocha* than it is to the *Roland,* which in its earliest extant form is at least three hundred years removed from the historical events it reflects and which is marked by notable geographical and temporal distortions. What justifies considering these two poems together is that they both incorporate myths looking back to a foundation, the *Cid* for the Spanish kingdom born of the union of Leon and Castile, and the *Roland* for the Carolingian Empire.

The relationship between literature and history underlies notions of the epic to a greater extent than it does conceptions of other genres. During the last hundred and fifty years certain models of that relationship have been dominant. For the Romantic critics, the people spoke by and large as if with one voice, and the role of individual poet-craftsmen who gave form to that voice was usually passed over. More than any other type of poetry, the epic embodied the people's sentiments, preserving the memory of heroes to whose model it had looked in the past for leadership in life and an exemplary way to die. Because of constant rivalry between modern France and Germany, two powers which were at least theoretically united in Charlemagne's empire, the question of whether the French populace was more closely linked to a Germanic or to a Roman ancestry preoccupied scholars who were concerned with the origins of the French epic. Even those who were cognizant of the Franco-Prussian War's distorting effects on French intellectual life may register surprise at the formulation found in the second edition of Leon Gautier's *Les Epopees francaises:* the French epic is surely of Germanic origin, Gautier tells us, because its leading female characters are utterly without shame and their actions must thus be based on Germanic models of womanhood. The myth of origins itself—and here I use "myth" in the pejorative and popular sense of a belief which is not backed up by verifiable facts—is a historical concept conditioned by political and intellectual categories which are now outmoded. It is no secret that questions formerly asked about origins are now more often framed in terms of manifestation or development.

But all too often the issues posed by the giants of nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century scholarship—Gautier, Gaston Paris, Joseph Bedier, Ram6n Men6ndez Pidal, and others—are still being discussed in the same terminology which they bequeathed to us. In particular the perception of history as a sequence of striking events brought about by the potentates of this earth has survived largely intact in the

work of many literary scholars concerned with the relationship between epic and history in western Romania. In the framework of their interpretations, great personages manipulate the epic to support their own drive for hegemony. Bedier's idea that the French epics were first created in the eleventh century through a collaboration between clerics and poets seeking to promote the fame of certain shrines situated along the great pilgrimage routes derives from a related view of history in that it posits that the motivation and working habits of medieval poets did not differ from those of later and better documented authors: witness Bedier's pronouncement that a masterpiece begins and ends with its author, his comparison of the *Roland* with Racine's *Iphigenie,* and his citation of LaBruyere's statement that making a book is no less a feat of craftsmanship than making a clock. But eleventh-and twelfth-century poets could not have worked in the same ways as those of the seventeenth, because the processes of poetic creation are a function of social, economic, and intellectual circumstances which vary from period to period and from one type of society to another. The manner in which a poet creates is conditioned above all by what French historians of the *Annales* school call *mentalites,* perceptual categories which shape the way in which phenomena are viewed. Substantial though they be, differences in educational background and in political and social milieu are less important than diversity in mental framework, a basic and all-pervasive variance that prevents us from reconstructing adequately the world view of medieval poets.

In studies on the *dd,* a similar reliance on the concept of history as a sequence of noteworthy occurrences prevailed. While Men6ndez Pidal appreciated the import of political events and the effects of Muslim pressure on the kingdoms of northern Spain, he gave less attention in *La Espana del Cid* to social and economic forces; although he took great pains to establish the geography of the epic Cid's progress from Burgos to Valencia, he seldom referred to medieval conceptions of time and space which contribute to the skewing of geographical reality. Pidal's achievements in filling in the backdrop against which the historical Cid acted are undeniable, and even his detractors make use of the data he collected. His discussion of the *Chanson de Roland's* manuscripts is a masterful treatment of how medieval texts recorded from oral tradition differ radically from what we in the twentieth century normally mean when we speak of a text, and as such it contributes in a major way precisely to that history of mentalities which is so regretfully lacking in the *Espana del Cid.* In reading the *Cantor de mio Cid* with greater attention to its social aspects and to the relationship between political and economic history, I believe one can approach with greater hope of success a realization of the poem's significance.

Dealings between men as they are represented in the *Cid* cannot all be subsumed under the terms "vasselage" or "feudalism." Social relationships are marked by an economic give and take which mirrors a particular state of society best qualified as a "gift economy" in which exchanges of money and goods take place continually, but not under the conditions which one normally calls "economic" in the modern sense. The historian Georges Duby has drawn upon ideas developed by the socio-anthropologist Marcel Mauss to sketch out a description of exchanges in the early and high Middle Ages which can illuminate the meaning of gift-giving and other processes of the eleventh- and twelfth-century economy as they are reflected in the *Cantor de mio Cid.*

Conquests and the payment of various types of feudal dues and rents supplied political leaders and fighting men of that period with an abundance of wealth beyond what was needed for their sustenance. The economic workings of society required that such wealth be circulated to others, with the result that generosity in its distribution was not merely an option open to the powerful, but an uncodified obligation. Recipients of seignorial largess were not all of a lower rank then benefactors: gifts from inferior to superior were also immensely important. At the top of the social pyramid the king was forced to have at his disposal sources of wealth which he could dole out to those who came to test his liberality, and while conquest and plunder provided much of this wealth, so did the offerings of lesser men. The relationships whose existence was fueled by these gifts were of a mutually beneficial nature. Gift-giving was probably never considered to be disinterested. Between military men and their followers, of course, service was commonly exchanged for largess; tributes guaranteed against attacks; even stipends and legacies made in favor of the Church brought a return, in the form of divine favor. The economic system sustained by this movement of commodities and coin in many cases had no relation to mercantile trade, but nevertheless effected a flow of goods which maintained the poor, supported significant numbers of able-bodied if occasionally idle monks, provided motivation for the warrior class, and acted in general as a cementing element in the social edifice.

While the gift economy dominated in the early Middle Ages, its main traits were still present in the period 1050 to 1207, that is during the Cid's career and the time in which the poem in all probability took shape in something close to the form in which we have it. More than one observer has called the Cid a bourgeois hero, the poem a bourgeois epic. Such a formulation could only be based upon the conviction that obsession with wealth is a monopoly of the city-dwelling, mercantile class; as Duby has shown, this is manifestly untrue for the eleventh and twelfth centuries. No hero in all of epic literature is as concerned with money and possessions of various kinds as is the Cid, but his insistence on the prerogatives of nobility is unmistakable. Even the most cursory recital of the poem's themes confirms that economic interests dominate the *Cantor de mio Cid* to an extent unmatched in the Romance epic, and yet the outcome of the social process set in motion by the hero's acquisition of wealth is attainment of the very highest level of the aristocracy.

In tracing the motivations for actions in the *Cid,* one is forced to consult the prose version found in the *Cronica de Veinte Reyes,* since the poetic text as found in Per Abbat's manuscript lacks a beginning. The chronicle tells us that King Alfonso of Leon and Castile believed the accusations of evil counsellors to the effect that his vassal Rodrigo Diaz of Vivar was withholding from him tribute that was supposed to have been delivered subsequent to a mission to Seville and Cordova. While he was in Seville, Rodrigo had defended Alfonso's tributary against an attack from Cordova, and had earned by his prowess and magnanimity the honorific "Cid Campeador." Whatever the historical Alfonso's motive for exiling the Cid, the poet responsible for the Per Abbat text assumes that popular opinion lent credence to the accusation that the hero had profited at his lord's expense. After receiving six hundred marks from the Jewish money-lenders Rachel and Vidas in exchange for two chests which supposedly contain money but are

actually full of sand, the Cid is financed and ready to face his exile which he will begin with a series of raids.

That an epic poem should devote any attention at all to how a military campaign is funded is extraordinary, let alone that negotiations should occupy a major scene. Why is the poem anomalous in this respect? In placing the *Cid* in the context of medieval Romance epic, one must refer primarily to the one hundred or so French works which are extant, a preponderance of evidence against which the three fragmentary Spanish poems and the half-dozen Provencal titles represent comparatively little. Allowance should be made, first of all, for differing social conditions. Undoubtedly the landed estate, the classic base for feudalism of the French variety, played a lesser role in Spain than it did north of the Pyrenees. In addition, whatever benefit might accrue from possession of a territorial foothold was denied to the Cid in his exile. A more important factor is also at work, deriving both from the particular circumstances of peninsular history and from the epic's role as a genre which holds up models for emulation. In the expanding world of northern Spanish Christendom, in which land was available for capture by force from the Arabs and in which one of the chief political problems was how to motivate fighting men to leave familiar surroundings so as to take advantage of the military inadequacies of weak and fragmented Muslim principalities, the *Cantar de mio Cid* furnishes the exemplary model of a noble of relatively low rank rising to the highest level of the social hierarchy without having at his disposal the power base of the landed estate. The poem is both an entertaining tale of military prowess and an economic and social incentive for ambitious Castilian knights of low rank and narrow means.

The acquisition of booty, its proper distribution among the knights and soldiers, the appraisal of precious objects, and the use to which wealth is put join together to form one of the poem's major thematic complexes. The poetic Cid achieves his reintegration into the social fabric directly through economic power, and succeeds in proportion to his personal enrichment, beginning with the unhistorical raid on Castejquinoneros, officials whose job it was to divide and count the spoils. Repeatedly and as early as the first major engagement the fighting men are termed *ricos.* As lord, the Cid receives a fifth of all plunder.

The relative worth of objects is of less interest than what their possession connotes in social terms. In the *Cid,* wealth and fame are closely linked, from the hero's first proclamation inviting others to join him in his exile, which frankly appeals to the desire for *rritad,* through the marriage of his daughters Elvira and Sol with the heirs of the house of Carridn, to the climax at the court scene in Toledo where the Cid is dressed in his most luxurious finery. Throughout the poem he displays his wealth by bestowing gifts on those who surround him, although he is never seen receiving them. The outstanding examples of interested gift-giving are the three embassies which carry extravagant offerings to King Alfonso. In return the Cid receives first the lifting of the king's official displeasure, then that his wife and daughters be allowed to join him in Valencia, and finally full pardon and, without his having requested it, his daughters' marriage to the heirs of Carrion.

The link between wealth and honor is nowhere more apparent than in the hero's dealings with the heirs. The villainous motives of this pair are epitomized when they accept booty from the victory over King Bticar in spite of having acted in a cowardly fashion on the battlefield. The five thousand marks that come to them on this occasion lead them to the mistaken belief that they are now rich enough to aspire to marriage with the daughters of kings and emperors. Whereas for the Cid courage brings material benefits in the form of possessions which can then be exchanged for the prerogatives of birth and can even, in a sense which I will discuss shortly, compensate for the inadequacies associated with doubtful lineage, for the heirs of Carridn high birth conveys an intrinsic value which makes it unnecessary for them to put themselves to the test of battle. As they leave Valencia supposedly to escort their wives to Carri6n, the Cid gives them more wealth in the form of a bride-gift: three thousand marks and the precious swords Colada and Tiz"Mios averes se me an levado que sobejanos son, 'mo *me puede pesar con la otra desonor."* This preoccupation with worldly goods as a symbol of intrinsic worth continues during the court scene at Toledo. The Cid makes three legal points against the heirs of Carridn, of which the first two concern possessions: that they return the two swords, and that they give back the bride-gift of three thousand marks. The third point is a moral accusation, but it is framed in an economic metaphor: the brothers are worth less, since they struck their own wives. The key term *menosvaler* sums up emblematically the relationship between wealth and honor, economic and moral "worth."

The poem ends in a curiously unhistorical fashion. The Cid's daughters will become queens of two kingdoms, according to the poet, who returns to this theme just before he refers to the Cid's death:

Los pnmeros (casamientos) fueron grandes mas aquestos son mijores;

a mayor ondra las casa que lo que pnmero fue!ved qual ondra crece al que en buen ora nacio quando senoras son sus fijas de Navarra e

de Aragon Oy los reyes d'Espana sos parientes son

The Cid's historical daughters, Cristina and Maria, married respectively Rarrnro, lord of Monz6n in Navarre, and Ramon Berenguer III, Count of Barcelona. Thus neither of his daughters became queen, and they did not marry the infantes of Navarre and Aragon, although confusion on these points is conceivable in a poet composing in the mid-twelfth century or later since the son of Cnstina and Ramiro became King of Navarre in 1134 and Barcelona was united to Aragon in 1137. Questions of title are not generally obscure to contemporaries, so that it is likely the poem was composed in a form not too far from the one in which we have these lines long enough after 1137 for people's memories to have become clouded regarding the chronology. In any event it is more than surprising that a poet who knows the names of the Cid's minor historical associates, such as Pero Vermudez, Mufio Gustioz, Martin Munoz, Alvar Salvadorez, and Diego T611ez, should err on whether the hero's daughters were queens, and of what political entities. His inaccuracy on these points, although partly justified by later historical developments, at the very least exaggerates the Cid's rise to respectability

among the very highest class of nobles. Why should a singer of the twelfth or early thirteenth century be so intent on depicting his hero's meteoric ascent as to represent the Cid's immediate progeny as queens at the risk that some members of the audience would recognize the error"' The answer to this question provides an explanation for the poet's concern with the acquisition of wealth, gift-giving, and other economic phenomena.

Let us return to the court scene. There are two heirs of Carrion, each of whom is challenged to single combat by one of the Cid's men, who will use the swords Colada and Tizdn in their respective duels so that, fittingly, the two brothers will be tested by the very instruments which they received under the false pretense of marriage-alliance with the Cid. But unexpectedly a third duel is proposed, provoked by Asur Goncalez, elder brother to the heirs of Carrion, who enters the palace and flings an apparently gratuitous insult at the Cid:

"'Hya varones 'Quien vio nunca tal mal? IQuien nos darie nuevas de mio £id el de Bivar! 'Fuesse a Rio d'Ovirna los mohnos picar e prender maquilas commo lo suele tar! ?Quil darie con los de Carrion a casar?"

This curious intervention might at first seem to be only an attack on the hero's position at the low end of the noble hierarchy, since as an infanzon he was entitled to collect feudal dues on the use of mills which came under his jurisdiction. But as Menendez Pidal points out, mills were prized possessions of the seignorial class. Asur Goncalez is probably not simply assimilating the Cid's possession of a mill to the actual operations performed by the miller, for as rude as such a quip might be, it would hardly justify a challenge to mortal combat such as Muno Gustioz subsequently proffers, nor is it equal in weight to the outrage of Corpes which will be avenged by die other two duels which are to be fought on the same occasion. The *maquila* was a portion of wheat given to the miller in return for his services, and the Cid as an *infanzdn* would hardly be expected to receive recompense under that rubric, although he would take other types of payment from a miller working under his jurisdiction. Asur Goncalez's words convey a far greater affront, an innuendo about the Cid's birth, suggesting that he is descended from a miller and thus entitled to a miller's pay. Verse 3379, scornfully exhorting the Cid to go to his mill on the river Ubierna, the location of Vivar, and roughen the millstones, can only mean that for Asur Goncalez the Cid *is* a miller. A person of such low rank would indeed be ill-advised to aspire to a marriage tie with the powerful combat family of the Vani-G6mez.

An obscure legend, preserved primarily in the *romancero,* has it that the Cid was the illegitimate son of Diego Lainez, and one version reports that his mother was a *molinera.* The agreement between this detail and Asur Goncalez s otherwise senseless insult can hardly be coincidental. Acceptance of the Cid's daughters as queens of Aragon and Navarre would be convincing proof that his accomplishments transcended and annuled the disadvantages of his bastardy. Asur Gongalez's defeat at the hands of the Cid's vassal shows that God approves of the hero's deeds in spite of the fact that he was conceived out of wedlock, for the duel takes the form of an ordeal.

The *Cantar de mio Cid* differs from the other extant Romance epics in its author's obsession with the acquisition of wealth, then, not only on account of the differing social and political conditions of Reconquest Spain, but because, unlike most of the heroes whose legends are recounted in poems belonging to this genre, the Cid does not enter the struggle with his honor intact. The amassing of riches and their proper use allow him to rise to the dignity and rank which great nobles of unblemished descent, such as the heirs of Carridn, could claim by birth. He is a king by right of conquest, excelling in knightly virtues that might well have been called into doubt by his maternal ancestry. Seen in this light, the *Cantar de mio Cid* is the story of how courage and prowess are transmuted into economic power, and wealth into lineage, the highest in Spain. As such it is a message to the lesser nobles of Castile, because if the Cid, whose line of descent was in question and whose king exiled him from his land, could raise his kin to the level of royalty through his participation in the Reconquest, then other nobles of his class could legitimately aspire to the same heights of success in invading Arab-controlled lands which enjoyed, despite their political troubles, the most prosperous economy in medieval Europe at this time.

The obscure allusion to Rodrigo of Vivar's bastardy calls to mind a similarly fleeting reference in the Carolingian foundation myth as it is found in the Oxford manuscript of the *Chanson de Roland.* I refer, of course, to Charlemagne's Sin. As with the Cid ..., the question of Roland's parentage is clouded. Neither die poet of the Oxford *Chanson de Roland* nor the one who composed the extant *Cantar de mio Cid* devotes more than a passing allusion to the issue of the respective hero's birth; it is nonetheless intriguing that in each case the problem of illegitimacy surfaces. In societies such as these where kinship is a pervasive social bond, and in which a person is considered to be legally responsible for acts committed by his kinsmen—above all in a genre in which lineage, one of the two principal meanings of the term *geste,* is one of the most important determinants of character—illegitimacy, whether it results from royal incest or simply from a paternal liaison with a commoner, represents a most serious deficiency. Roland's case differs from the Cid's in obvious ways. Nevertheless I believe that as widi the *Cantar de mio Cid,* the meaning of the Oxford *Chanson de Roland* in its social context is closely linked with the theme of the hero's birth.

While historians of the Romance epic, dominated by a concern for origins, formerly sought to isolate the historical kernel preserved in each work, a focussing of attention on *how singers have distorted history* and on the circumstances or purposes which have led them to do so will undoubtedly teach us more about the genre's function in society. Modern political forces tend in sometimes subtle ways to appropriate for themselves the "tale of the tribe," as Ezra Pound characterized epic. This deformation of the past is an interesting phenomenon in itself, and its study will enable us to compensate in part for a collective wish to see the past in certain ways. The philologist's task is to appreciate medieval uses of epic legends, although at the same time he realizes that total awareness of them is unattainable. No one knew the Cid tradition as manifested in epic, chronicle, and *romancero* better than Menendez Pidal, but he failed to see the meaning of a key element in the *Cantor de mio Cid,* one without which the poem's ending is a puzzle. B6dier was aware of the motif of Charlemagne's Sin, but, oblivious to the Oxford poet's admonition against ignoring it, he did not consider it to be

an important theme. One cannot help thinking that these giants of scholarship were little inclined to pursue clues leading to revelations which might be considered unflattering for the foundation myths of their respective nations. Not that either one was consciously engaged in obfuscation. Rather in one instance the political and intellectual climate fostered by the Generation of '98, and in the other a propensity to identify Roland's Franks with the French, may have left no scope for the idea that the greatest of heroes were tainted by the circumstances of their birth or that the "national" epics, *nos epopees* as both Gautier and Bedier preemptively referred to them, could have such a theme among their key interpretive elements.

The different versions of the *Chanson de Roland* have taken on various meanings for their singers and audiences. To the late eleventh-century noble French public, however, about to heed Urban II's exhortation that it follow in the footsteps of the epic Charlemagne to recover the Holy Land from the Arabs, Roland is an exemplary hero because he was able to overcome the impediments of his birth. To Castilian singers whose lords had to resort to unique forms of land tenure in order to encourage repopulation of border territory vacated by the retreating Muslims, the Cid represented an ideal model, achieving for his descendants access to the highest level of society although he may himself have been a bastard Both these heroes, deprived of the privileges of irreproachable ancestry, acquired legitimacy in the eyes of the epic public through their own actions, (pp. 231-32)

Source: Joseph J Duggan, "Legitimation and the Hero's Exemplary Function in the 'Cantar de Mio Cid' and the 'Chanson de Roland'," in *Oral Traditional Literature- A Festschrift for Albert Bates Lord,* edited by John Miles Foley, Slavica Publishers, 1981, pp. 217-34

Critical Essay #4

In the following excerpt, Menendez Pidal examines the similarities and differences between the historic Cid and the title character of the epic. He also comments on the historical and literary contributions of both figures.

As an epic hero the Cid stands in a class by himself. History has little or nothing to say about the protagonists of the Greek, Germanic or French epics. From the ruins revealed by learned excavators we know that the Trojan War was an event that actually took place at Troy, so that the excavations confirm and illustrate the veracity of Homeric poetry. But we shall never know anything about Achilles, nor, for that matter, about Siegfried, whom we can only suspect to have been an historic personage, as Giinther, the King of Burgundy, at whose Court Knemhild's husband loved and died, undoubtedly was. The historians of Charlemagne assure us that Roland, Count of Brittany, really existed; but beyond this fact all we know of him is his disastrous end. Those heroic lives will for ever remain purely in the region of poetry and intangible for the purpose of historical analysis. The Cid, however, is a hero of a very different type. From the height of his idealism he descends with a firm step on to the stage of history to face unflinchingly a greater danger than had ever beset him in life, that of having his history written by the very people on whom he had so often waged war and by modern scholars who as a rule show even less understanding than the enemies he humiliated.

For the Cid, unlike the other heroes, did not belong to those early times when history still lagged far behind poetry. The broad stream of poetic creation along which Achilles, Siegfried and Roland glide, may be likened to a mysterious Nile whose sources have never been explored; whereas the epic river of the Cid may be traced to its earliest origins, to the very heights above their confluence, where poetry and history rise. Philological criticism enables us to explore primitive history and takes us back to the poetry of the hero's own age, the works inspired either by bis deeds or by a vivid recollection of them. This contemporary poetry, which has come down to us about the Spanish hero but not about the others, may help to complete our historical knowledge of the heroic character, just as, when it agrees with the records, that poetry has helped us to establish the facts of the hero's life.

Renan is utterly mistaken when, in docilely acknowledging the divorcement by Dozy of the poetic from the historic Cid, he considers that "no other hero has lost so much in passing from legend to history." For the truth is that history and poetry, if taken to mean duly documented history and primitive poetry, showrare agreementin characterization, in spite of the fact that on no other epic hero has the light of history shone more relentlessly. Often, indeed, the character of the real Cid is found to be of greater poetical interest than that of the traditional hero. Legend achieved much that is of poetic value, but it left unworked many veins that appear in the rock of the hero's real life in the rough, natural state in which the beauties of nature occur.

Much has been written about the "heroic age" and the society and culture of those barbaric and lawless times, when pride in personal glory and lust for wealth overruled all

other feelings. Yet to my mind, the heroic age, in the widest sense of the term, is distinguished by one essential characteristic only, and that a literary one; it is the age in which history habitually takes on a poetic shape, the age in which an epic form of literature arises to supply the public want of information about events of general interest either of the time or the recent past. This epic form of history, of course, only appears in primitive times, before culture has reached the stage of producing erudite works in prose; as historiography advances, the epopee loses its pristine vigour.

But in Spain, the scene of the last heroic age of the western world, that age coincided with the historic age, and epic poetry continued to be the vehicle for conveying the news of the day down to the time of the Cid despite the fact that history had already reached a fair stage of development. Thus, in view of the difference in time and circumstance separating the heroic age of Spain from that of other countries, it is not to be expected that the mind of the Campeador would work in unison with that of Beowulf. And so it is that we do not claim to have discovered in the Cid *the* heroic, but merely *an* heroic, character. Our main interest will lie in obtaining a close view of a hero, the last hero to cross the threshold from the heroic to the historic age.

The most modern trait in the character of the hero, who lived during this period of transition, is his loyalty. His is not the loyalty of a vassal in the rude heroic ages to the lord for whom he fought; it is the loyalty of a vassal to a king who persisted in persecuting him, a virtue that none of the other persecuted heroes of epic poetry possessed. The Cid of reality, though exiled, remained true to his king; though grossly insulted by Alphonso, he bore with him and treated him with respect. According to law, he owed no fealty to the King, and yet his loyalty was unswerving. Though the King was openly hostile to his occupation of Valencia, he placed the city, to use his own phrase, "under the overlordship of my lord and king, Don Alphonso." These words are recorded by the Arab historian and are echoed in the old *Poem,* where Alvar Hanez is sent by the Cid to offer the conquered city to the King in spite of his having obstinately refused to lift the ban of exile.

This attitude would be incomprehensible if, as is possible, we were to assume that the motives of the Spanish hero were purely personal. True, all heroes, whether of Greek, Teutonic, or Romance poetry, act under the impulse of personal honour and glory; indeed, the personal motive is so strong that, in the French epic, notwithstanding the highly developed national spirit, the hero who rebels against the King when offended by him, is constantly glorified. But if, on the other hand, the Cid of poetry is on all occasions respectful towards his royal persecutor, it is because the longed-for pardon means reconciliation with "fair Castile," which he puts before his personal pride. The King and his country, his native land, to him are one and the same thing. And so the Cid of history appears eager and, at times, over ready to be reconciled with Alphonso and at the same time distrusts Berenguer and is slow to accept his proffered friendship.

The fact that, contrary to the custom established in the law and poetry of the time, neither the Cid of history nor the Cid of fiction makes war on his king but remains loyal to him, shows the extent to which the hero subordinated personal motives to love of country, thereby betraying a spirit practically unknown to the heroic types of older epic

poems. This same patriotism also finds expression in his famous resolve to reconquer the whole of Spain and even, as the old poem maintains, lay Morocco under tribute to King Alphonso.

The Cid, who refrains from retaliating against his king although authorized by mediaeval law to do so, and who ignores the monarch's insults at Ubeda, is equally anxious to avoid an encounter with the King of Aragon or Berenguer, to each of whom he makes friendly overtures before adopting an aggressive attitude. He grants generous terms to the defeated Valencians, in spite of their repeated infringements of the treaty of surrender; he returns a lawful prize taken from the Moorish messengers when on their way to Murcia; and finally, he refuses presents of doubtful origin when proffered by Ibn Jehhaf.

The Cid of poetry, coming at a later time than the other epic heroes, also displays this moderation, which is the outstanding virtue of the *chivalrous* type that succeeded the *heroic* type of the earlier ages.

But, in depicting him as constantly moderate, poetry diverges from fact. For when the real Cid's patience was exhausted, his violence knew no bounds. When he realizes that loyal submission is all in vain, he devastates the lands of Alphonso's favourite vassal; when repulsed by Berenguer, he sets the etiquette of the Court of Barcelona at naught; when the Valencians persist in siding with the Almoravides, he passes from the greatest clemency to the greatest severity. He was, indeed, ever apt to go to extremes. As soon as he had captured Berenguer, his attitude to him at once changed from rancour to the utmost generosity. Enigmatic and capacious, he loved to play with an adversary, as when he scorned the offer of the royal gardens at Valencia, only to seize them later at a most unexpected moment.

The thirst for treasure which he shares with the heroes of barbaric times, has already been referred to; it forms a strange contrast to the generosity he showed on other occasions.

The Cid, as a representative figure of his race, was tightly bound by atavistic ties of both ritualism and superstition. History and poetry agree that he was guided by omens. The birds of prey that crossed his path foretold to him the result of his exile, of the fording of a river, of his daughters' journey. This superstitiousness was deeply engrained in men-at-arms, though it frequently gave rise to rebuke, such as that which Berenguer hurled at the Cid at Tevar.

According to the *Poem,* the Cid was addicted to ritual. In a moment of great emotion, on his return from exile, he does homage to the King by biting the grass, which is a very ancient symbol of submission To publish the grief he felt at his unjust banishment, he swore he would never again cut his beard, well knowing that thereby he would make both Moors and Christians talk. To go unshorn as a sign of grief was an old and common custom, but the Cid observed it so faithfully that he came to be called "Mio Cid, el de la barba grant." The whole Court of Toledo was astonished to see him appear with his beard pleated, a well-known though rare sign of deep mourning; then, hardly has

justice been done to him, when he unravels his beard and resumes his normal appearance. Not that he was ever a slave to tradition. He was an innovator in all he did, whether in combating the traditionalism of Leon, abandoning the tactics generally adopted by Spaniards and Burgundians, in order to overcome the Almoravides, in promoting the reform of the clergy, or in revolutionizing, as he actually did, heroic poetry.

The Cid's detractors paint him as a mere outlaw, a bandit who knew no honour; but both the Arab and the Latin historians agree with the early poets that his whole career was governed by his attitude to the law. Here again we find the Cid combining the characteristics of the two epochs, the heroic age and the chivalrous age that followed it.

When the chivalrous ideal had been perfected and formulated, it was held to be the duty of a knight to defend the rights of the weak, with the result that a knowledge of legal matters became a knightly accomplishment. Chivalric literature, from its birth to its death, bears this out. Old Gonzalo Gustioz of Salas, in enumerating the attainments of his deceased son, speaks of him as "learned in the law and fond of judging," and the last perfect knight, Don Quixote, also acts as a judge and shows that he possessed a thorough knowledge of the law.

The Cid on several occasions gave evidence of this knightly accomplishment: when acting as counsel for the monastery of Cardena; as judge at Oviedo, where he interpreted Gothic law and inquired into the authenticity of a deed; and again when drawing subtle distinctions in the drafting of a fourfold form of oath. The Cid of poetry likewise pleaded his cause with skill and method before the court of Toledo.

The Cid always applied the law, according to its loftiest conception. In his youth, as champion of Castile, he fought out the legal duel against Navarre, and at Santa Gadea he exacted the oath, no doubt in the same capacity. Later, when aggrieved by Alphonso, as an exile, he had two legal courses open to him, to make war on his sovereign or to seek reconciliation. He chose the second course throughout. Availing himself of the means afforded by mediaeval law for regaining royal favour, he twice hastened to the aid of his king; on a third occasion, he attempted to clear himself by the ordeal of a legal oath. It is only when all these attempts at reconciliation have failed and he has been made to suffer fresh and more grievous wrongs, that he exercises his right to make war on the King's lands; and, when this time comes, the heavy hand of the Campeador achieves what his moderation had steadfastly failed to do. But to call the Cid an enemy of his country, as Masdeu and Dozy call him, is simply absurd.

Owing to this failure to recognize his two distinct lines of conduct, the Cid's relations with the Moors have also been misunderstood. His attitude to the Spanish Moslems may be summed up in his own declaration: "If I act lawfully, God will leave me Valencia; but if with pride and injustice, I know He will take her away from me." Even the usually malevolent Ibn Alcama admits that the Cid dealt very fairly with the Valencians. But when, in their anxiety to remain under Islam, the Moors of Spain called in the Africans, the Cid perforce took up a different stand: thenceforth the war could only end in the expulsion of the invader and the complete submission of the Spanish Moors.

The contrast between these two lines of conduct is most pronounced during the Valencian revolution, when on the assassination of his protege King Al-Kadir, the city was handed over to the Almoravides. The Cid launches forth on the siege of Valencia, his greatest military enterprise, as an act as much of justice as of policy, and he determines not to rest until he has punished the regicide and driven out the African intruders. On the expulsion of the Almoravides and the surrender of the city, he begins by treating the Valencians with benovelence; but, when he finds that they continue to intrigue with the Africans, he ceases to respect Moslem law and resorts to the mailed fist of the conqueror. His detractors attribute this change of conduct to mere arbitrariness, but the fact remains that it was based on political justice.

Although poetic exaggeration clothes all heroes in the mantle of invincibility, it is surprising to find that, so far as the Cid is concerned, fact agrees with fiction.

The fame that the Cid enjoyed amongst his contemporaries is expressed in the name of *Campeador* or "victorious," given him by Moors and Christians alike; in the phrase "invictissimus princeps" used in the Valencian charter; and in the "invincibilis bellator" of the *Historia Roderici,* which adds that he "invariably triumphed." Further, the *Poema de la conquista de Almeria,* composed in Latin some fifty years after his death, says of the hero: "... of whom it is sung that no foe ever overcame him."

Ibn Bassam himself emphasizes the Cid's extraordinary victories, typical instances of which were the combats at Tamarite, where he overcame odds of twelve to one, and at Zamora, where alone and unaided he defeated fifteen knights. But the exceptional superiority of the Campeador was never more patent than when he tackled the Almoravides as an entirely new and hitherto invincible military organization. He alone, at Cuarte and Bairen, was successful against the invaders, routing their armies and taking a great number of captives; he alone was able to conquer Valencia, Almenara and Murviedro in spite of their determined opposition. This contrast is in itself sufficient to bring out in full relief the military genius of the ever victorious Cid.

At times the hero found himself in situations so desperate that to all others everything seemed lost, when of a sudden his keen vision would descry the hidden opportunity that led to success. In emergencies such as a surprise attack by night he would tremble with excitement and grind his teeth; whenever there was the prospect of a battle his heart would leap with joy ("gaudenter expectavit"). The poet is at one with the historian when he tells of the hero's fierce glee on sighting the imposing array of the Almoravides: "Delight has come to me from overseas."

The Cid's infallible tactics on occasions struck panic into his enemies. Latin and Arab historians relate how the host of Garcia Ordonez at Alberite, the mighty *mehalla* of the Almoravides at Almuzafes, and the knights of Ramon Berenguer the Great at Oropesa were all routed without daring even to face the Cid. The battle of Cuarte also suggests panic among the enemy. Legend seized upon this terror-striking ascendancy of the hero to suggest that no Saracen could meet the eye of the Cid without trembling.

The Cid's chroniclers narrate the personal share he took in all his enterprises. The extent to which he exposed himself upon the field of battle is shown by the many mishaps he suffered and the narrow escapes he had. In the sphere of government, he assumed many duties; he administered justice at Valencia several times a week and he it was who exposed the bad faith of the envoys sent to Murcia. His extraordinary powers of organization are seen in the rapid rise of Juballa from a smouldering ruin to a flourishing city and in the way he rebuilt and enlarged the suburb of Alcudia.

His prodigious and unremitting energy enabled him to master the highly complex problems of Eastern Spain that had baffled the Emperor, Alvar Hanez, the Kings of Aragon, Saragossa and Denia and the Counts of Barcelona. In face of their futile claims, he established and tenaciously maintained his protectorate over the coveted and disunited region. When his work had been twice undone, he patiently built it up again in spite of seemingly insuperable difficulties presented, in the first place, by the jealous rage of Alphonso and, in the second, by the ambition of Yusuf.

It savours of madness that a single man, unsupported by any national organization and lacking resources even for a day, should appear before Valencia determined upon restoring a rule that had been overthrown this second time by an enemy who had proved irresistible to the strongest power in Spain; that he should dream of doing what the Christian Emperor had failed to do, and in the teeth of the Moslem Emir's opposition. That memorable day in October, 1092, when he pitted his will-power against all the chances and changes of fortune, marks the zenith of heroism.

From which it may be gathered that, even more noteworthy than the Cid's activity and success, is his exceptional firmness of purpose. Indeed, when he first left for exile, he conceived a plan of action in the East and to its execution he devoted the rest of his life.

Ten years after the hero's death, Ibn Bassam, in apassage vibrant with mingled hate and admiration, pays the highest tribute to the superhuman energy of the Campeador:

The power of this tyrant became ever more intolerable; it weighed like a heavy load upon the people of the coast and inland regions, filling all men, both near and far, with fear His intense ambition, his lust for power caused all to tremble Yet this man, who was the scourge of his age, was, by his unflagging and clear-sighted energy, his virile character, and his heroism, a miracle among the great miracles of the Almighty.

Thus, like Manzoni in his famous ode on the death of Napoleon, the Moslem enemy bowed reverently before a creative genius that bore the imprint of God.

Nemo propheta acceptus est in patria sua

The Cid was first active in promoting the aims of Castile against Leon and Navarre. His action was decisive at a critical period of Spanish history, for thanks to his victories as the ensign of Sancho II, the political hegemony passed from Leon to Castile.

King Sancho and his ensign made an admirable combination: the king, exuberant and ambitious, his vassal restrained and capable. Together, they set out to change the map

of Spain. And, although the course of history is shaped more by collective than by individual effort, had this happy association not been brought to an untimely end by the murder at Zamora, it may safely be assumed that the African invasion would have been stayed and the Reconquest expedited by further immediate successes such as Coimbra, Coria and Toledo. This was clearly seen by the men of the time, to whom the hero's exile appeared a grave blunder on the part of the monarch. This feeling is voiced in the famous line of the old poem: "Lord, how good a vassal, were but the liege as good!"

But the King was not the only one to blame. When Alphonso was enthroned in Castile, the barons curried favour with him and turned against the Cid, refusing to admit the exile's worth. Rejected by Castile, the Campeador had to seek an outlet for his energy elsewhere. After great pains, he succeeded in forging an alliance, first with the Count of Barcelona, and afterwards, with the King of Aragon. Thus, his sometime opponents, the Catalans and the Aragonese, came to appreciate the hero before Alphonso and his Castilians.

Literature bears out this shifting of the Cid's activity and fame. As Du Meril and Mild indicate, the earliest known song of the Cid, the *Carmen Roderici,* is of Catalan and not of Castilian origin. Later, and working on independent lines, I proved—I think, conclusively—that the second poetic record, the *Poema del Cid,* was not of Old Castilian origin either, but was composed in the "extremaduras" or borderlands of Medinaceh by a *jongleur* whose pronunciation was different from that of the Castilians. Now, on deeper research into the historical sources (and again independently of the former investigations) I find to my surprise that the first historical text, the *Historia Roderici,* is also foreign to Castile. It was written on the borderland between Saragossa and Lerida, the scene of the Cid's activities in the second part of his life; and the author even accuses the Castilians of being envious of the hero and incapable of understanding him.

The important inference to be drawn from these facts is that admiration for the Cid was first awakened, not at Burgos, but in the more distant lands of Saragossa and what was later known as Catalonia, on the borders of that eastern region which he had made safe during the latter years of his life. It was during these years that Castile, which had witnessed his first exploits, yielded to the all-absorbing character of the Emperor, and the less pliant spirits of Burgos, such as Martin Antolinez, chose to follow the Cid into exile. Thus it came about that officially Burgos only recognized the heroism of her son after his fame had reached her from abroad. True, indeed, it is that "no man is a prophet in his own country," except he be some local celebrity, quite unknown outside his own narrow circle.

The idea of a united Spain, which apparently obsessed the Cid. was, as has been shown above, not of Castilian, but of Leonese origin. A change came, when a new conception of nationhood arose in the minds of Basques and Castilians, to take the place of the Leonese imperial idea, and for this change the Cid was largely responsible.

If we were to take the usual view that the idea of Spanish unity was purely Castilian, we should have to regard the Cid, as Masdeu and his followers did, solely from a Castilian angle, and, like them, we should fail to understand him. It may be true that he is the hero of Burgos, but his heroism is displayed in non-Castilian as well as Castilian aspects, and it is wrong to regard these as antagonistic. Unquestionably the Cid was the first to abandon the already worn-out idea of a Leonese empire and embrace the new Castilian aims that were to usher in the modern Spain. But when Castile, after the assassination at Zamora, bowed to King Alphonso of Leon, the Cid was compelled to strike out in a fresh direction; and it was as an exile that he outstripped his own country in fighting for the national ideal.

In spite of many vicissitudes, the Cid embodied that ideal throughout his exile, from the time when he withdrew before Alphonso, who was working for the old Leonese empire, to the time when he broke the force of the African invasion in campaigns that were frowned upon by the King of Leon and Castile.

The exclusion of the Cid from the Court and Castile served but to accentuate his position as a truly national figure; and it is significant that he should have had fighting side by side with his Castilians, the Asturian Muno Gustioz, the Aragonese knights of Sancho Ramirez and Pedro I, and the Portuguese followers of the Count of Coimbra and Montemayor. This co-operation in the common cause is recognized by the early *Poem:*

How well he fights in saddle set in gold, My Cid, the mighty warrior, Ruy Diaz, Martin Antolinez, the worthy Burgalese, Muno Gustioz, brought up by him, The good Galin Garcia, of Aragon, Martin Mufioz, the count of Mont Mayor

These lines, brief as an heraldic motto, are to Spaniards what Homer's list of ships was to the Hellenes. The fact that knights from so many parts of the Peninsula fought under his banner renders the Cid's campaigns real campaigns of Spain, and, despite the envy of the barons of Burgos, of Castile as well.

But, neither love of his home land nor his wider patriotism made the Cid narrow-minded. The appointment of a Cluniac monk to the see of Valencia shows that he welcomed western ideas as an influence that would lift Spain out of her former isolation. Such an attitude on the part of the most typical hero of Spain may give food for thought to those who, in a spirit of bigoted nationalism, would close the door to all foreign influence as being detrimental to "the descendants of Pelayo and the Cid."

The Cid was extolled, not so much for promoting Castile's hegemonic aspirations, as for his conquest of Valencia. In the early *Poem* he is frequently alluded to as "My Cid, who won Valencia,"

Dozy, in an access of Cidophobia less virulent than usual, sought to belittle this conquest by saying: "The Cid took the proud and rich city of Valencia, but what advantage did the Spaniards gain from its capture? The Cid's followers certainly won a great deal of booty, but Spain won nothing; for the Arabs regained the city on the death

of Rodrigo." Nevertheless, although he never amended the passage, the author seems to have been so convinced of its absurdity that he deleted it from the second edition of his work (1881).

In the first place, the conquest of Valencia set a great example of heroic effort. According to the Aragonese historian, Zurita, it was the most extraordinary achievement ever performed in Spain by anyone but a king. He adds that, even had the King of Castile, the most powerful monarch in Spain, engaged his whole forces in the effort, he would have found it extremely difficult to conquer so populous a city in the very heart of the Moorish country. Alphonso did, in fact, throw his whole strength into the attempt, and failed.

In the second place, Dozy, in likening the conquest of Valencia to a mere marauding expedition, is greatly in error. It was far different from the conquest of Barbastro, where the troops of the papal standard-bearer abandoned themselves to plunder and sensuality. The Cid's work was one of reconquest, and he carried it out after the manner of the Spanish kings; he reorganized the lands that he had won, restored the ancient bishopric, and established himself in the city with his family. Had he been granted the normal span of life, Castile would have seen her dream of consolidating her hold upon the old Carthaginian Province realized, and there would have been a totally different distribution of the realms throughout the Peninsula.

In spite of the hero's premature death, the results of the conquest were highly important. An extraordinary revival was then taking place in Islam. Whilst the Turks in the East were routing the Byzantines and, having captured their Emperor, were depriving him of provinces as large as Spain, the Berbers in the West were defeating and driving back the Emperor of Leon. Once again, as in the early days of Arab expansion, the Mediterranean was assailed at either end, but Europe saved the situation by the agency of the Cid in the West and the crusaders in the East.

The anxiety of Urban II at the Almoravide invasion of Spain has led to the belief that the crusades were originally planned by the Pope, in ignorance of the divided state of Islam, as a military diversion. However this may be, there is no denying that, whereas the Turks were causing concern in the East alone, the Almoravides were reckoned a powerful danger to Europe, as was proved by the great French expedition to the Ebro valley in 1087. It is clear also that the Cid, in founding his Valencian principality amidst the Moors, anticipated what the crusaders did at Jerusalem, Antioch, Edessa and Tripoli. True, the Valencian principality did not long survive its founder; but then those other Christian principalities were also ephemeral and only lasted longer because the crusaders had all Europe behind them, whereas the Cid could not even count on the help of his king. Moreover, the crusaders established their States in opposition to emirates that were considerably smaller than the Taifa kingdoms, and they soon succumbed when confronted by a coherent power such as that of Saladin; nor could the united forces of England, France and Germany, even under leaders like Richard Cceur de Lion and Philip Augustus, regain Jerusalem or Edessa. The Cid, on the other hand, built up and held his dominions in the teeth of the bitterest opposition on the part of the Taifas and Yusuf ibn Teshufin, one of Islam's greatest conquerors and head of a huge

empire, then at the height of its power. The comparison remains striking even when other factors, such as the distance of the crusaders' field of operation, are taken into account.

Finally, the dominion of the Cid at Valencia was of more immediate importance to Europe as a dam against the Almoravide flood. It is significant, though the fact has hitherto passed unnoticed, that both Ibn Bassam and the *Historia Roderid* agree that his conquest of Valencia stemmed the African invasion and prevented it from reaching the most outlying Moslem Kingdoms of Lerida and Saragossa. That was the spring-tide of the invasion and, had it flooded the Ebro basin, Aragon and Barcelona, being much weaker states than Castile, would both have suffered a greater disaster than Sagrajas. The threat of invasion held out by Alphonso VI as a warning to the French barons, might then have been fulfilled. Indeed, the German historian, V. A. Huber, though unaware of that warning, stresses the importance of the conquests by the Cid as a barrier protecting, not only Spain, but the whole of Western Europe from the Moslem peril. And from all accounts that seems to have been the general impression at the time. (pp. 418-35)

We have already pointed out how concerned the Cid was that the law should at all times be observed. That this alone surrounded him with a halo in the eyes of the people is shown by the fact that the most artistic episodes of the two principal early poems are based on a lofty conception of the law.

The final scene of the *Cantor de Zamora* depicts with great dramatic effect the taking of the oath at Santa Gadea. If there the Cid imposed his will upon Alphonso VI, it was not in defence of any personal right or privilege, such as so many mediaeval barons exacted of their king, but to protest against the usurpation of the throne and insist upon the fulfilment of the laws of succession. This scene, therefore, endured, not because of the events that gave rise to it, but because of its capital importance in characterizing the hero. As late as that tragic period of transition from the last century to the present, Joaquin Costa, while denying the Cid of armour and Tizon for fear lest his memory should again plunge Spain into warlike adventure, did not hesitate to invoke the Cid of Santa Gadea and would gladly have seen every Spaniard equally solicitous to uphold the law and at the same time demand satisfaciton from his rulers.

The *Poema del Cid* presents the great scene of the Cortes at Toledo, where, in striking contrast to the general custom of mediaeval epic, the Cid is shown forgoing vengeance in favour of the legal satisfaction afforded by the court. In my work, *Poema de Mio Cid,* I have pointed out the revolution that choice occasioned in the poetry of the time. There can be no doubt that it reflects the real outlook of the Cid and reveals in him the moral characteristics that inspired the poets.

It is astonishing to find moderation poetized as a characteristic of the most redoubtable of warriors; and yet, not only did he always subordinate his own strength to the law, but he knew how to temper justice with mercy.

The *Poema del Cid* shows a keen perception of the value of this self-restraint as a poetic theme and even suppresses the traces of violence to be found in the hero's true character. The Cid of fact, who waives his right as a nobleman to fight against his lord, provides one of the main inspirations of the poem: the loyalty of the hero, despite the unjust harshness of the monarch. Even with the great insult still smarting in his brain, the Cid speaks "well and in measured language." In this connection, the *Poem* again strikes a singular note; for, whereas the Spanish *cantares* and French *chansons* glorify the rebel exile who rode rough-shod over all who came his way, the *jongleur* of the Cid, true to the grave conception of life held by his hero, sought ideality in another direction and produced an exile of perfect bearing, moderate at all times, and showing the greatest respect for those social and political institutions that might well have trammelled his heroic energy. The hero and his poet, in imbuing the epic with this ideal, show themselves to be far ahead of their time. For centuries nobles continued to take private vengeance and make war upon their king and country, and the poets kept pace with them by singing of the violence of their heroes and even inventing, in the *Mocedades,* an insolent and overbearing Cid.

Again, the Cid of the *Poem* forbears to insist on his rights as a victor, witness his treatment of the Count of Barcelona. Anxious to make a good impression on the vanquished Moors, he treats them with generosity, "lest they speak ill of me," and, when he leaves them, they are sorry to lose his protection:

The Moorish men and maids Bless him and wish "God speed." But, must thou go, My Cid? Our prayers do thee precede.

How different a character from the Charlemagne of the *Chanson de Roland* who calls for the conversion of the Saracens by fire and sword!

The high principles of the Cid, especially at a time of resurgence of spiritual values, are thus one of the main reasons why he was sung, both at home and abroad. Already in the second half of the twelfth century German poets (informed no doubt by pilgrim *jongleurs* from Compostela) had made an obvious copy of Rodrigo de Vivar in the figure of the margrave Rudiger, who was later embodied in the *Nibelungenlied* as a model of chivalry, brave, triumphant, and loyal: Rudiger, the good, the true, the noble, who gave his life fighting for his principles against an overwhelming force.

Further evidence of the base upon which the idealization of the Cid as a hero rests, is furnished by the *Poema de la conquista de Almeria,* written about 1150, when the early gests appeared. The author, after extolling the Cid's invincibility, proceeds to show that he used his strength, not only against the threat of foreign danger, but also against the intrigues of the counts at home:

ipse Rodencus, mio Cidi saepe vocatus, de quo cantatur quod ab hostibus haud superatur, qui domuit mauros, comttes domuit quoque nostros.

The banishment of the Cid furnishes a typical instance of the instability of the social fabric. The age produced the man required, but Society banned him from his natural

sphere. A really invincible captain had arisen in Spain, only to find his efforts frustrated by the antagonistic counts of Najera, Oca and Carrion; he could obtain neither the co-operation of the Count of Barcelona to help him dominate the East, nor that of the Emperor of Leon to prevent the disasters of Sagrajas, Jaen, Consuegra and Lisbon.

So far as the Cid was concerned, envy acted as the most powerful dissolvent of the social bonds. The Cid was envied by many of his peers and even by his kinsmen; he was envied by the greatest men at Court, even by the Emperor himself; one and all, they rejected him from motives of pure spite to, as events soon proved, their own detriment. The charge of *in-vidia,* so often preferred by the Latin historian, connotes a lack of vision: "castellani invidentes." Such an *in-vidente* was Alphonso, who found it convenient to promote Garcia Ordonez in preference to the Cid; such also was the Count of Najera himself, who supplanted one who was better than he; such, in short, were all the counts whom the Cid had to subdue. Thus, the phrase of the *Poema de la conquista de Almeria,* "comites domuit nostros," acquires a general significance by extolling the Cid as the hero of the struggle with the jealous nobles.

In face of this blind, malignant envy, the Cid showed neither discouragement nor rancour. When exiled, he sought no direct vengeance, however much he was entitled to do so; nor did he, like Achilles, sulk in his tent and hope for the defeat of his detractors. On the contrary, he repeatedly went to the help of the King who had exiled him and, in spite of a series of rebuffs from his countrymen, took the only dignified course left open to him; he withdrew his invaluable energy to a distant field where envy and mortification could not reach him, but where he could still co-operate, whether they wished it or not, with his backbiters.

The Cid sought and found his support among the enthusiastic and loyal countrymen of the outlying districts and in the spirit of comradeship he instilled into the motley crowd that flocked to his standard; courteous towards the humble, he showed himself as deferential to his cook, when the occasion demanded, as he was firm, though respectful, in the presence of the Emperor of the two religions. In the midst of that strange host he displayed his heroism, and no sooner had he conquered a kingdom than he presented it to his unjust sovereign, by recognizing "the overlordship of his King, Don Alphonso." In seeking reconciliation with the King and humbling himself before him at Toledo in a scene to which the early poet attaches capital importance, the Cid reaches the apogee of heroism by achieving a victory over his own unruly spirit. Though his great victories had rendered him immune from his enemies, he indulged in no vain contempt, but was willing to efface himself before his mean and little-minded opponents, for he desired no more than to take the place in the social order allotted to him, as it is to every man, however eminent. Far from thinking that the sole purpose of things is to pave the way for the superman, he felt that the strongest individuality would be nothing were it not for the people for whom it exists.

Source: Ramon Menendez Pidal, in *The Cid and His Spain,* translated by Harold Sunderland, John Murray, 1934,494 p

Adaptations

The best-known modern media adaptation of the *Cantar de mio Cid* is *El Cid,* the 1961 film produced by Anthony Mann and starring Charlton Heston and Sophia Loren. It draws on later romance versions of the Cid legend, and is considered one of the finest epic films ever made. It was restored and re-released by Martin Scorsese for Miramax films, and is available on home video.

Another famous adaptation of the *Cantar,* also drawing on later texts, is the play *Le Cid* by Pierre Corneille, written in 1637 and published in translation by John Cairncross. See *The Cid Cinna; The theatrical illusion, by Pierre Corneille,* Penguin Classics, 1975.

Corneille, in turn, drew from the Spanish playwright Guillen de Castro's 1618 play *The youthful deeds of the Cid,* available in translation from Exposition Press, 1969.

At least two operas also drew on the Cid legends, including Antonio Sacchmi's *Cidde* of 1784, available from T. Michaelis, 1880; and Jules Massenet's 1885 opera Le *Cid,* Columbia Records, 1976.

Topics for Further Study

When the apparently advantageous marriages between the Cid's daughters and the high-born Infantes de Carri6n have been contracted, the daughters thank their father, saying, "Since you have arranged these marriages, we are sure to be very rich." What is the place of women in the society described in the *Cantor de mio Cid*!* Compare the different women in the epic, including Ximena and her ladies in waiting. What is the traditional role of women in epics? How is the *Cid* different? Why do you think later interpretations of the legend of the Cid concentrated so intensely on Ximena as a heroine?

The *Cid* is well-known for its relativistic portrayal of Muslims and Christians, especially compared to the contemporary epic the *Song of Roland,* where "the Christians are right and the pagans are wrong," Research the intercultural relationships between Christians, Jews, and Muslims in Spain in the Middle Ages. Try to present the points of view of each of these groups about the other communities. Have some of the stereotypes about Christian, Muslim, and Jewish cultures persisted in the twentieth century?

The *Cantor de mio Cid* displays a restless "frontier spirit" in which a growing population turns its attention to new lands to conquer. Find narratives of the American West and compare them to passages in the *Cid* that demonstrate similar attitudes towards a frontier.

The Cid, as a character, is sometimes called the "most successful medieval outlaw." Compare the legends of other outlaws, such as Robin Hood, Jesse James, Billy the Kid, Blackbeard, Jean Lafitte, Joachim Murieta, to the Cid. What is their relation to authority figures, such as King Alfonso? What function might these legends play in a given society? What constitutes a "successful" outlaw, and does the Cid qualify?

Compare and Contrast

1090s: The primarily agricultural economy of medieval Spain was influenced by the *Reconquista.* The repopulation that accompanied the capture of Moorish territory led to the establishment of fortified Christian towns which became economic centers for international trade. The *Cid,* however, depicts an archaic gift economy, in which a man's status depends on how much wealth he can win and then distribute.

1207: Towns garner increasing population and importance, trade increases, and commerce expands. The expansion of the market economy, dominated by monetary exchanges, credit, and international commerce, characterizes this period.

1990s: Spain's inclusion in the European Union shows that it has a strong economy. However, unemployment remains around 21%, the near-worst rate in Europe in 1996.

1090s: Christian culture was in the process of a great renewal, which started with the Church reforms begun in the monasteries of Cluny and Citeaux in France. Bishop Jerome, in the *Cid,* is a figure linked to these reforms; in the epic, his arrival in Spain demonstrates the effect of the French reforms on the Church of Spam.

1207: A new wave of reforms, including the movement headed by the Spaniard Domingo de Guzman, established the Dominican Order in 1215. The Dominicans were later instrumental in the administration of the Spanish Inquisition.

1990s: Spain has no state religion, but the Roman Catholic Church receives state support. The vast majority of Spaniards are Catholic.

1090s: The feudal system of government, characterized by a personal relationship between a vassal and a lord, gained ground in the eleventh and twelfth centuries in Spain. Spanish feudalism, as is demonstrated in the *Cid,* consisted of the promise of service to a lord, and was sealed by kissing the lord's hand. In Spain, however, the triangular shape of feudal society was overshadowed by the role of the king as military leader; in the epic, the Infantes and the Cid all work for the king, although they are of unequal rank.

1207: The rise of towns in the thirteenth century added a new aspect to the relationship between king and vassal, as towns demanded increasing governmental autonomy.

1990s: Spain is a constitutional monarchy, led by the popular King Juan Carlos I, who regained the throne after the dictator Franco died in 1975.

1090s: Spain in the eleventh century is noted for the sometimes uneasy cohabitation of Muslims, Jews, and Christians. The *Cid* chronicles the efforts of Christians to reclaim Muslim lands, lost in the eighth century. In Christian territory, Jews were isolated, but were also under the protection of the king. Muslims were distrusted, and were also isolated in ghettos in the cities. In Muslim territory, whose inhabitants had constructed a

specific culture, Jews and Christians enjoyed relative lenience. The relativistic attitude towards Muslims is demonstrated in the *Cid,* for example in the depiction of the Cid's moorish ally Abengalbon. The Jews, on the other hand, are shown in harsher light.

1207: The thirteenth century and the later Middle Ages are generally considered to be a period of increased oppression of minority groups in Spain. An important Church council decreed that Jews wear a distinctive dress in 1179 and 1215. A great pogrom against the Jews erupted in 1351, and the Muslims were also oppressed. In 1492 the Jews were expelled from Spain.

1990s: Today, there are about 250,000 non-Catholic Christians, around 12,000 Jews, and a growing Muslim community of over 300,000 whose numbers are increasing because of immigration from North Africa.

What Do I Read Next?

The *Song of Roland,* an epic roughly contemporaneous with the *Cantar de mio Cid,* takes place on the frontier between France and Spain, in an atmosphere of impending doom which contrasts strongly with the exhuberant conquests of the *Cid.*

Pierre Corneille's *Le Cid,* written in 1637, reflects the turbulence of France under Cardinal Richelieu and Louis XIII, more than the turmoil of Reconquest Spain.

The twelfth-century *Pilgrim's Guide to Compostela* offers a different view of medieval Spain: that of the pilgrim who traveled to Compostela on the Western coast of Spain to visit the famous shrine of Saint James.

Ibn Hazm, a theologian from Cordoba (994-1064), wrote the *Ring of the Dove,* a treatise on love. This work provides a view of the unique Arab culture that developed in Spain before the Reconquest.

The famous novel by Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote* (1605-15), tells the story of a very different kind of knight than the Cid. This novel illustrates the death throes of the chivalric romance—the descendant of the feudal epic—as a literary genre.

Further Study

Bloch, Marc *Feudal Society, 1* vols University of Chicago Press, 1961.

Marc Bloch's classic study of the society of the Middle Ages in the West includes a useful discussion of feudalism in Spain, tn Volume I, pp. 186-87.

Chssold, Stephen *"El Cid:* Moslems and Christians in Medieval Spain," *History Today,* Vol. 12, no. 5, May, 1962, pp. 321-28.

This article, written for the popular press and including interesting illustrations, was written after the 1961 film brought renewed attention to the Cid.

De Chasca, E *El artejuglaresco en el"Cantor de mio Cid,"* 2d ed. Gredos, 1972.

De Chasca offers in-depth studies of the structure, form, and meaning of this epic, with chapters on the epic epithet, number symbolism, the role of time, and the epic's cultural context Deyermond, A. D. "The Singer of Tales and Medieval Spanish Epic," *Bulletin of Htspamc Studies,* Vol 42, no. 1, 1965, pp. 1-8.

This article can be read as a companion to Harvey's 1963 article on orality and the *Cid*

"Tendencies in *Mio Cid* Scholarship, 1943-1973," in his *"Mio Cid" Studies,* pp 13-48, Tamasis Books, 1977

Deyermond presents a useful survey of Cidian scholarship in this article, Duggan, Joseph J "Formulaic diction in the *Cantor de mio Cid* and the Old French Epic," in his *Oral Literature: Seven Essays,* Barnes and Noble, 1975, pp. 74-83.

Duggan shows how the formula, a key aspect of oral literature, is present in the *Cid* as a vestige of its oral

The "Cantor de mw Cid": Poetic Creation in its Economic and Social Contexts, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 6, Cambridge University Press, 1989 In this important book, J Duggan studies the economy that is depicted in the *Cid,* a text obsessed with money, populated by characters who are "surely the most acquisitive heroes in any epic poem composed in a Romance language" (p 37) and the economy of Spain during the central Middle Ages. He also discusses the importance of lineage and legitimacy in the epic, as well as the social milieu of the poet and the possible reasons behind his choice of events to include in his text.

Hamilton, Rita. "Epic epithets in the *Poema de mio Cid," Revue de Littemture Comparee,* Vol 36, no 2, 1962, pp 162-78.

Hamilton's article is an in-depth study of the epic epithets in the *Cid* Harney, Michael. *Kinship and Polity in the "Poema de mio Cid,"* Purdue Studies in Romance Literatures 2, Purdue University Press, 1993.

Harney fills an important scholarly gap with this book, in which he draws on social science to study the idea of social class in this epic According to Harney, the *Cid* chronicles not the emergence of one social class but of the idea of class itself. In the process it also demonstrates how the invocation of transcendant power to put clans in their place indicates the emergence of the state Harvey, P. T. "The Metrical Irregularity of the *Cantar de mw Cid" Bulletin of Hispanic Studies,* Vol 40, 1963, pp 137-43.

Following Lord's suggestion that metrical irregularities in the *Cid* may be a sign of oral composition, Harvey explores the meter of this epic

Lacarra, Marfa Eugenia. *El Poema de mio Cid realidad histonca e ideologica,* Ediciones Jos6 Porrfia Turanzas, 1975.

In an important thesis, Lacarra portrays the *Cid* as a politically slanderous poem, written to debase the Beru-G

Lord, Albert B. *The Singer of Tales,* Harvard University Press, 1960. Reprint, 1971.

This classic study of epic performers in Yugoslavia gave rise to the field of oral literature; "neo- traditionalists" or "oralists" such as Duggan owe much to Lord. Note: This work was carried out under the guidance of Milman Perry, an eminent scholar of orality in the Homerian epic tradition

Menendez Pidal, Ram6n. *The Cid and his Spain,* J Murray, 1934.

Although parts are outdated, this history of the Cid and his cultural context is another seminal work by the great Spanish scholar.

ed *Cantar de mio Cid. Texto, gramdtica y vocabulario,* 3 vols., 3rd ed., *Obras completes,* Vols. 1-3, Espasa-Calpe, 1954-56

This edition of the poem is a classic, and has been used by generations of Cid scholars.

Michael, Ian, ed. *The Poem of the Cid: A Bilingual Edition with Parallel Text,* Penguin Books, 1984.

Michael's edition of the epic is one of the most accessible for students, and contains a useful introduction.

O'Callaghan, J F. *A History of Medieval Spain,* Cornell University Press, 1975

Offers an in-depth analysis of the history of the periods during which the *Cid* was composed and written.

Ong, Walter J. *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizng of the Word,* Routledge, 1982.

This is Walter Ong's seminal work in which he studies how oral literature is transformed when it is written down, and how literature which is composed as a written document differs from oral literature.

Russell, P. E. "San Pedro de Cardefia and the heroic history of the Cid," *Medium Aevum,* Vol 27, no. 2,1958, pp. 57-79.

Russell demonstrates the ties between the tomb cult of the Cid at San Pedro de Cardena and the *Cantar de mio Cid.*

Smith, Colin *The Making of the "Poema de mio Cid,"* Cambridge Cambridge University Press, 1983.

Smith's book offers the most radical and recent expos6 of the "individualist" theory of the *Cid's* authorship.

Spitzer, Leo. "Sobre el carficter histdrico del *Cantar de mio Cid," Nueva Revista de Filologia Hispamca*, Vol 2,1948, pp 105-17.

In this article, an eminent literary scholar contests Mene'ndez Pidal's approach to the *Cid* as a historical document, later obliging the latter to somewhat amend his position. Spitzer points out the unhistorical aspects of the poem, especially the episode of the beating of the Cid's daughters by the Infantes, and suggests some reasons for this fictionalization.

Webber, Ruth House."The *Cantar de mio Cid.* Problems of Interpretation," in *Oral Tradition in Literature- Interpretation and Context,* edited by John Miles Poley, University of Missouri Press, 1986, pp. 65-88.

This article includes a useful overview of the "individualist" and "traditionalist" controversy in Cidian scholarship West, Geoffrey "Hero or Saint? Hagiographic Elements in the Life of the Cid," *Journal of Hispanic Philology,* Vol. 7, no. 2, Winter, 1983, pp. 87-105.

West suggests that the Cid, as a character, shares some aspects with saints whose lives are described in hagiographical legends Whitman, Cedric H *Homer and the Heroic Tradition,* Harvard University Press, 1958.

This study of Homer contains interesting discussions of ring composition, a characteristic technique of oral literature.

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Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Epics for Students (EfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, EfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on □classic□ novels

frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of EfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of EfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

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Each entry, or chapter, in EfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by EfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an □at-a-glance□ comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

EfS includes □The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,□ a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Epics for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

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A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

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When quoting the specially commissioned essay from EfS (usually the first piece under the □Criticism□ subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on □Winesburg, Ohio.□ Epics for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335-39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of EfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. □Margaret Atwood's □The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition,□ Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Epics for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

When quoting material reprinted from a book that appears in a volume of EfS, the following form may be used:

Adams, Timothy Dow. □Richard Wright: □Wearing the Mask,□ in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

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The editor of Epics for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

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