

EXECUTING THE WILL: THE END OF THE ROAD IN *DON QUIXOTE*

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One might speak—a bit ironically, perhaps—of the lingering death of Alonso Quixano the Good. In chapter 74 of Part II of *Don Quixote*, the country gentleman turned knight errant suffers from melancholy and depression brought about by defeat at the hands of the Knight of the White Moon, sleeps for some six hours, and awakens disillusioned. His sanity restored, he rejects the literary romances that had led him to cast himself in the chivalric mode. Near death, he claims to see the light of reason. The spiritual path replaces the earthly course, the knightly quest, and he returns to God's text. The good man is articulate, even eloquent, on the subject of his conversion. He makes a clean break from the traps (and from the trappings) of fiction, while those who are near him and those who narrate his story continue to call him Don Quixote, to cling in some way to his fictional identity. Certain readers, like the friends and narrative personae, seem inclined to probe the validity, or at least the impact, of the transformation, while others do not. In *A Study of "Don Quixote,"* for example, Daniel Eisenberg warns us that Cervantes does distinguish between what should be read ironically and what should be taken at face value, and he takes the final redemption quite seriously, as part of a message about salvation.¹ Ruth El Saffar similarly finds in Cervantes's works an increased emphasis on the eternal, on man's confrontation with his own destiny, a struggle which reflects the author's development as well as that of his characters.² Not surprisingly, Cervantes shows an interest in endings, and Alonso Quixano's movement from madness to perception need not be seen as detached from the artist's sense of mortality, nor, indeed, from his intimations of immortality. The report of the death in the last chapter of the novel is not grossly exaggerated, but one could argue that the solemnity of the occasion may be marred by the statement in the prologue to Part II

which attributes the protagonist's demise to an intrusion into the creative space of the author, in the form of an unauthorized sequel.³ What could be termed the deep structure of Alonso Quixano's death is founded on two premises, one theological (or philosophical) and the other literary. Cervantes seems to set up a contest of sorts between text and pretext, between—if you will—literature and life. The key to the double-edged death of the protagonist may be found in the compatibility, rather than in the separation, of the prologue and the final chapter of Part II.

Given the complexity and the profundity of *Don Quixote*, it would seem reasonable to maintain that the description of the events surrounding the death of Alonso Quixano should be reduced neither to the author's desire to "kill off" Don Quixote (and thus to prevent the publication of other spurious continuations) nor to a fusion of creator and character. That is, Cervantes does not dispose arbitrarily of the knight errant, nor does he forsake the protagonist in order to inscribe himself, whether consciously or unconsciously, into the narrative situation. To what extent do personal factors and to what extent does the issue of verisimilitude affect the ending of *Don Quixote*? What are the rhetorical strategies of the concluding chapter, and who is the ultimate object of redemption? The answers lie, I would submit, in the space between the purely satiric and the purely symbolic.

In *The Chivalric World of Don Quixote*, Howard Mancing contrasts the passive nature of Alonso Quixano with the active pursuits of Don Quixote. He notes that the country gentleman makes only two decisions in the course of the narrative: he trades his empty existence for the life of a knight errant, and he rejects the chivalric career. Unlike his alter ego, Alonso Quixano is not an engaging figure. His only meaningful act—the only thing that differentiates him from other mediocre people—is to become Don Quixote.⁴ The trajectory of Don Quixote leads him from imitation of the deeds and the rhetoric of chivalry to self-knowledge. Part II of *Don Quixote* represents what Mancing calls the protracted final stage of an evolutionary process that substitutes the willful transformation of reality in Part I into a humanity born of—to use a term from the text—disenchantment. For readers to acknowledge Alonso Quixano, they must renounce Don Quixote, and vice versa. According to Mancing, the choice should not be difficult.

In the spirit of dialogue, I would like to point out what I would consider several potential problems in Mancing's exemplary reading of the *Quixote*. Without doubt, Don Quixote is superior to Alonso Quixano, yet, it may be argued, not so much by force of character but because the book is about him. That the madman is more entertaining than his sane counterpart is hardly surprising. Mancing's interest in defending the one

against the other makes the conclusions a bit contradictory. Mancing works to establish the positive influence of Don Quixote's actions. As master of Sancho Panza, to cite one case, he allows the squire to master self and circumstance; he educates him and enriches his life. Furthermore, "it is Don Quijote who exposes to the reader the envy, pettiness, and insensitivity of the priest and the barber, the frivolousness and vindictiveness of Sansón Carrasco, and the moral bankruptcy of the idle rich ducal pair" (214). If this is possibly an overstatement of Don Quixote's powers and of his role in the novel, the treatment of disillusionment suggests a wish to humanize the overtly literary character, in a sense to bring him back into the domain of Alonso Quixano. Mancing is one of a group of critics who view the ending of *Don Quixote* as consistent with the comprehensive structure of the narrative. As Don Quixote "shares increasingly in the everyday world of Sancho Panza and the rest of us" (215), he is, in essence, distancing himself from the chivalric world and priming himself for the conversion to his former identity. In these terms, death becomes the culmination of a progression toward self-knowledge and, at the same time, and somewhat ironically, proof of the superiority of the deluded character over his unimaginative double. For Mancing, Alonso Quixano belongs to a society marked by repression and conformity, but how can the final knowledge of self be detached from a return to sanity, a return to so-called reality? Don Quixote "exposes" very little in Part II. He is, in fact, deposed of authority by readers of Part I, who gradually mold him into the passive Alonso Quixano. The dream is, in a manner of speaking, the end of the dream of Don Quixote. The live Don Quixote obviously is more intriguing than the moribund Alonso Quixano, but what are the broader implications of the death? How can one reconcile the particular features of the narrative with Cervantes's personal judgments and with his reaction to the Avellaneda sequel?

A critique based on the distinction between Don Quixote and Alonso Quixano must recognize a corresponding distinction between characterization per se and the role of character in the thematic or ideological coherence of the text. In this regard, it may not be as important to study the psyche of Don Quixote as to analyze the book itself as metaphor or microcosm. The novel not only reflects the world but grafts itself onto the world. The author in control of the death knoll for his protagonist will respond to the exigencies of plot and to stimuli within and beyond the text. The prologue to Part II promises the reader a Don Quixote "dead and buried," and one can seek a connection (a "fit") between the death foretold and the chronicle which follows and between grafts that bespeak changing circumstances for creator and creation.

In the introductory sections of his old-spelling control edition of *Don Quixote*, R. M. Flores discusses the intervention of printers and compositors in the published product, together with questions of authorial modifications and slips. Anything that would help to explain why Cervantes and his novel do what they do has obvious significance, but one may wish to limit the examination to evidence within the text. While the results of Flores's approach have a fundamental bearing on literary history, the problem of unity—and specifically, the relation of allusions to Don Quixote's death and the actual death of Alonso Quixano—is an internal matter, a component of what Roland Barthes terms the "writerly" text, which gives a type of co-authorial status to the reader.⁵ *Lazarillo de Tormes* is an ideal writerly text, a text that combines ambiguity with anonymity. The absence of an author makes this a narrative without an accompanying biography that could predetermine meaning, as the "New Christian" readings of *La Celestina* demonstrate.⁶ A spurious sequel to *Guzmán de Alfarache* brings Mateo Alemán into the authentic second part. By emplotting himself into the continuation, the author justifies the expanded context, legitimizes the fusion of fact and fiction, of life and art. Alemán incorporates the theft of his literary property into Guzmán's story, and the self-referential allegory exposes the pseudonymous author of the false second part. Whereas Fernando de Rojas may be "read into" the *Celestina* and Mateo Alemán "written into" *Guzmán de Alfarache*, Cervantes is neither absent nor quite so explicit a presence in *Don Quixote*. The captive's tale in Part I and the references to Avellaneda in the prologue to Part II, for example, give voice to his experience, but the situations are reinvented, reproduced in narrative form in the first instance and restated in rhetorical terms in the second. The prologuist is clearly not Cide Hamete Benengeli, and he is closer to the real Cervantes than is the prologuist of Part I. He is more distanced from the account of the Arab historian, and from the fictional premises of the text and the earlier prologue, but his commentary establishes the scope of the second part and orients the reader toward the demise of the protagonist. The question at this point is not so much whom to believe as how to believe them all.

L. A. Murillo focuses on the Quixano/Quixote dichotomy as a means by which Cervantes can have it both ways. The death has a sacrificial dimension: "The death of Alonso Quixano the Good in the time and place of story perpetuates the existence of Don Quixote the mythical entity and celebrity whose fame the narrator apostrophizes to the very close of his book. . . . Quixano dies in this exemplary manner so that the fame of Don Quixote can live on intact in its proper sphere, the world of fiction" (261). To support Murillo's argument, it can be noted that

Alonso Quixano is created, or at least named with certainty, only at the end of the narrative. The man who becomes Don Quixote is not as vital to the story as the man who gives up his life for his chivalric counterpart, his significant other. The last will and testament is, for Murillo, "a prosaic antithesis to the poetic illusion released and consumed in [Don] Quixote's chivalry" (260). The man of flesh and blood (and this is, of course, another story) dies to allow the fantasy to survive, but the separation seems difficult, if not impossible, to sustain. Friends and neighbors, public functionaries, and, it may be noted, the author of the chapter headings confuse the penitent madman with his former self. When all is said and done, the narrator informs us that "at last Don Quixote's end came" (Cervantes 1981, 829).⁷ On the one hand, what Murillo considers the expiatory act of Alonso Quixano—the very act of dying, a gesture aimed at discrediting the illusion born of madness—complements Don Quixote's rejection of his knightly quest for the mental and spiritual well-being of the country gentleman. On the other hand, neither measure is successful. The description of the death mixes the players and the metaphors. Who dies, and who lives on? Is the new chivalry abandoned or elevated? Is life superimposed on art, or vice versa? What are the markers that would indicate the author's stance regarding victory and defeat?

In an article entitled "The Three Deaths of Don Quixote: Comments in Favor of the Romantic Critical Approach," A. G. Lo Ré examines the final chapter of the *Quixote* in light of specific references to the death of the protagonist. The essay stresses the interplay of Don Quixote and Alonso Quixano, although the central thesis relates more to the idealism of the text than to differentiating aspects of character. In Lo Ré's opinion, while the contrite Alonso Quixano regains his sanity, he cannot undo the physical suffering caused by melancholy. He disavows himself from the foolish enterprise but cannot escape its consequences. At this stage, he is redeemed but not saved. The schizophrenic self leaves itself open to deconstruction, in the sense that Don Quixote remains an influence even after the recantation, to the extent that he is named as the deceased. Lo Ré's reading relies on Don Quixote's penultimate statement to Sancho Panza: "Forgive me, my friend, that I led you to seem as mad as myself, making you fall into the same error I myself fell into, that there were and still are knights-errant in the world" (828). In contrast to the critical consensus, Lo Ré does not view the statement as an expression of regret for errors committed but as an apology for the current state of chivalry. Don Quixote has misjudged the way in which the world would react to the reemergence of chivalry, not the value of chivalry per se, or the more abstract notion of social idealism. This

perspective links the reading to what has been called the "Romantic approach" to *Don Quixote*.⁸ For Lo Ré, the "three deaths" of Don Quixote contain clues to Cervantes's thoughts as he completed the novel.

The first of the deaths is found in the final chapter of Part I. Although the author of the history can locate no written documentation of a third sally, tradition has it that Don Quixote continued to pursue adventures. It is known that he was present at jousting tournaments in the city of Zaragoza, but little can be discovered regarding his death until an elderly physician produces a leaden box with parchment manuscripts in Gothic script and in Castilian verse, which tell of the knight's achievements and refer to his burial. The author appends the epitaphs and eulogies composed by the Academicians of Argamasilla. Lo Ré sees this allusion to the death of Don Quixote as consistent with the satirical tone of Part I: "Our would-be knight is roundly mocked even in death, which death is befitting the entertaining parody Cervantes intended to write," a parody with "no profound message or significance . . . at this point" (25). There is, in fact, no mention in chapter 52 of how Don Quixote dies. Oral tradition provides "no particulars," and the appendix includes "all that could be read and deciphered," that is, very little indeed, from the leaden box (402). The last section of the chapter notes that one of the academicians has labored over the worm-eaten parchment in the hope of publishing the events of the third sally, but the first chapter of Part II returns the narrative control to an ally of Cide Hamete Benengeli, now ready to inform us further. Not only is the conclusion to the first part open rather than closed, but Cervantes does not seem bound by its presuppositions. The academician is forgotten at once, the age of the manuscript is one of an infinite number of temporal discrepancies (or games) in the novel, and, with no analogue of the marketplace discovery in Part I, chapter 9, Cide Hamete becomes the historian of the third sally.

The second example is based on an allusion to Don Quixote's death in Part II, chapter 24. Commenting on the charge that the protagonist's account of events in the Cave of Montesinos may be apocryphal, Cide Hamete writes in a marginal note that "I see no way of accepting it as true, as it so much exceeds all reasonable bounds," even though "it is impossible for me to believe that Don Quixote could lie, since he is the most truthful gentleman and the noblest knight of his time." Relieving himself of the burden of proof, he leaves the judgment to the reader. He does mention that "some maintain, however, that at the time of his death [Don Quixote] retracted and said he had invented it all, thinking it a perfect match for the adventures he had read in his histories" (558). The digression leads Lo Ré to surmise that

Cervantes evidently had in mind here an ending in which Don Quixote would admit to play-acting in this and perhaps in other instances. . . . This death, one can suppose, would have been less vague and less comic than the first, but less dramatic than the last, and probably leading to a denouement still fairly appropriate to the parody being written.

Nonetheless, the constancy of Don Quixote seems little by little to threaten the burlesque spirit of this second death, and this posture "was beginning to leave no room for falsehood or pretense" (26). For *Lo Ré*, chapter 57, wherein Don Quixote and Sancho leave the palace of the duke and duchess, marks a turning point. At this crucial juncture, Cervantes moves from the second death to the third.

Don Quixote cannot die as a mere buffoon, nor can he simply admit to roleplaying. As he departs from the ducal residence, his discourse reflects an emerging doubt, a sense of sadness and foreboding, juxtaposed within the comedy but increasingly serious. The cause of this change is the publication of the Avellaneda sequel in the fall of 1614, assumed to be the time Cervantes was writing this portion of the text. Don Quixote's defeat at the hands of Sansón Carrasco ends with the pathetic cry, "Drive thy lance home, sir knight, and take my life, since thou hast taken away my honor" (787). *Lo Ré* notes a lack of humor in the scene, a sign that mockery has lost its conviction in the text. The false continuation forces Cervantes to look beyond the ironies of *imitatio* in order to justify his art, in order to demonstrate the superiority of his creation over the intrusive sequel. If *Don Quixote* is conceived as a mock-heroic version of chivalric romance, its own subjection to satiric re-creation causes Cervantes to replot the literary (or the metaliterary) scenario. In the final chapters, Don Quixote suffers humiliation after humiliation, with few comic twists, with a pervasive gloom, but without giving up his idealism. According to *Lo Ré*, "the continuing strength of his beliefs is such as to make one think that Cervantes himself, who has come to admire and defend his character—perhaps now even identify with him—is formulating an ending that now may be against his own inclinations" (33). The writer, "it would seem, has gradually come to accept the idea that his knight is suffering real grief, and now he is going to allow Don Quixote to die of that same grief" (34). Standing behind the disillusioned idealist is the author, no longer in a position to deride the principles that guide Don Quixote. Cervantes,

having wanted to believe—shown in the manner in which he has lovingly treated his character and brought about Don Quixote's

final, unfunny, gracious death—Death Three—[is] evidently, in the last pages, just as disillusioned, despite his forced attempt at humor, as ever any of the Romantics will have thought him to be. (36)

Lo Ré believes that Don Quixote epitomizes idealism, whether misplaced at times or not, and he relates the knight's struggles, and the indignities confronting him, to the hardships suffered by the author. Like Don Quixote, the disillusioned Cervantes may be ready to surrender and even to die. The "three deaths" of Don Quixote correspond to stages in the metamorphosis, or evolution, of Cervantes's conception of his work. Don Quixote as the object of satire develops character—develops into a character—and the writer appears willing to grant him a redemptive space, to allow him to admit his metatheatrical bent and thereby to reintegrate himself into society. Avellaneda's sequel disrupts this plan, and Cervantes now seems bent on his own redemption. The false continuation inspires Cervantes to reexamine his work and his life, to bring a sense of mortality into the text. There is a figurative (and prefigurative) death of comedy in *Don Quixote* following the publication of the spurious second part. The ending is a defense of Cervantes's novel and a defense of the idealistic spirit. Avellaneda's narrative promotes an ironic reversal, for Cervantes can no longer detach himself from his creation; his perspective shifts from parody to pride. A result of the new direction is a meditation on death, a drawing together of history and poetry.

The concept of the three deaths of the protagonist helps to explain the evolution of *Don Quixote*. Cervantes's decision to address the Avellaneda sequel ultimately determines a form of closure for the novel. Personal considerations and the author's identification with his character replace the ironic distance and the humor of satire. Cervantes becomes more introspective, more serious about his enterprise. The unity of the novel resides in parallel linear progressions, one involving Don Quixote and based on the quest theme and the other involving Cervantes and based on his personal response to his creation. I would like to outline an alternate reading which I believe complements Lo Ré's, but which, in the final analysis, juxtaposes the death of Quixote/Quixano not with Cervantes's preoccupation with his own destiny but with his obsession with books. In this approach, unity is a function of metaliterary aims, and an operating premise is that the "real" issues of the narrative are conveyed through—and are inseparable from—the internal rhetoric of the text. The death in chapter 74 is probably not the most important event of the novel, but, because of the critical role of irony throughout, the

ending certainly will have an impact on rereadings, on reconsideration of the message systems. *Don Quixote* is an experimental work; it brings theory into the practice of writing at the moment that praxis is being formulated and tested. For Cervantes, it would seem, incongruity is hardly a dirty word, and the configuration of the text is never stable. The presence of Don Quixote and the implied presence of Cervantes notwithstanding, the most stable feature of the novel may be its emphasis on the place of the book in the world and on the place of the world in the book. This will affect not only *who* but *what* dies in the concluding chapter.

The prologue and opening chapters of Part I of *Don Quixote* establish an angle of vision. The prologue is about the writing of prologues, about the confrontation of author and tradition. Cervantes is conscious of literary precedent—of the intertext—and of the need to create anew, to liberate himself from (to kill off) the works of the past. One may think of what Harold Bloom refers to as “the anxiety of influence,” which projects writers into battle with their poetic predecessors. The prologuist’s “friend” advises him to break with convention, to write his own rules. Chapter 1 extends this concept to the plot proper. The avid consumer of books reifies the lessons of the romances by living his readings, by replacing earlier heroes with a new type of chivalry. Like Cervantes, he rewrites the relation of theory to practice, of text to context. Mirroring theoretical debates between “ancients” and “moderns,” *Don Quixote* explores questions of genre. For both author and character, the result is imitation only to a point. The difference lies in the mediating space between repetition and invention. Cervantes comes face to face with the pastoral (Marcela and Grisóstomo), with the picaresque (Ginés de Pasamonte), and with the Italian *novella* (“The Story of Ill-advised Curiosity”), for example, just as Don Quixote sets himself against a specific chivalric model when he re-creates the penance of Amadís de Gaula. Generic mixing and literary mix-ups are testament to the tides of change. The disdainful shepherdess is more persuasive than her lover and her detractors, the rogue boasts that his life story is superior to *Lazarillo de Tormes*, the *novella* becomes an exemplary novel, and the penitential act transforms high emotion into low comedy. Grisóstomo’s suicide, Ginés’s disappearance and his reappearance as Maese Pedro, the death of the principals in the *novella*, and the unmotivated act of contrition are means by which Cervantes comes to bury, more than to praise, the intertext.

By integrating the challenges to the writer into the novel, Cervantes moves away from the illusion of reality which will mark later narrative. Matters of history and manners of truth, plays of perspective and fiction

within fiction, consequences of the printed word and memories of oral culture all contribute to the imaginative construct that is *Don Quixote*. Cervantes explores the peculiar rhetoric of writing and reading. It seems clear that he recognizes that the processes by which the work of art captures reality are intimately linked to reality, but that they are not one and the same. The image of the graft suggests that the literary object represents (re-presents) reality through its own recourses. Paradoxically, Cervantes approaches the real by way of distancing devices and by exaggerated attention to the mechanics of reading and writing. The role of humor in the text is fundamental, not because seventeenth-century readers focused on this element (as critics such as Peter Russell have pointed out), but because Cervantes has chosen to present the ideas of *Don Quixote*—profound ideas, to be sure—in a comic mode. The consistently comic tone of the discourse may increase response to the processes and messages of the text while reducing empathy for the characters as people. One may be sensitive to issues and yet laugh at ridiculous situations; the wounds in *Don Quixote* are, in a manner of speaking, paper cuts. The allusion to Don Quixote's death in the last chapter of Part I gives more weight to problems of transmission, of gathering historical data, than to the hero's fall. The temporal confusion and especially the burlesque poetry of the fictitious academicians place the death in the realm of parody. The ending leaves an opening for more adventures. The manuscript and the work of the academic community do not seem to be part of a master plan, given that Cervantes disregards them as he begins the continuation. Ironically, the journey to Zaragoza remains in the scheme, which will be modified at a later date.

A dominant motif of Part II of *Don Quixote* is the reception of Part I. Early in the first part, Don Quixote contemplates the history which will record his exploits. When the book becomes a reality, he concerns himself with the accuracy of the portrayal, with his public self. Through his corps of narrators, Cervantes writes the critique of Part I into Part II. In dialogue with Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, Sansón Carrasco describes varied forms of response. Notably, the second part is inhabited by readers of the 1605 *Quixote*, including the Duke and Duchess, who orchestrate the major portion of the episodes. The active reading of others controls the events; they direct the movement of Part II as Don Quixote does in the first part. Another reality that bears on the structure of Part II is the publication of the Avellaneda continuation. Cervantes cancels the trip to Zaragoza, a feature of the spurious sequel, in favor of a stay in Barcelona, where the knight and his squire visit a printing establishment where proofs of the unauthorized history are being corrected. In chapter 59, two readers of the false second part verify that

the real Don Quixote and Sancho have little in common with their fictional counterparts, and in chapter 72, a character from the Avellaneda version puts into writing, before a magistrate, a renunciation of the "other" Don Quixote. This may be Cervantes's way of killing off the competition, if less elaborately and less personally than Mateo Alemán had done in *Guzmán de Alfarache*. Because the false second part is, in essence, an elaborate response to Part I, its publication is a most fortuitous event for the second part of *Don Quixote*, if not for Cervantes.

Inwardly-directed reader response and criticism are logical developments of the literary self-consciousness of *Don Quixote*, I. Not only do many of the characters imitate the reading habits of the protagonist, but they demonstrate how differently people read and how reading influences actions and perspective. The existence of Part I in the real world heightens the complexity (and the irony) of the play of truth and fiction, madness and method. The passive country gentleman becomes a (hyper)active knight as a result of his reading. When others read about him, they too begin to view the world as stage. While he remains an actor, they usurp his power as playwright and director. This change, present early in Part II and intensified in the episodes in the ducal palace, anticipates the return to the village and to the passive identity. One could define the movement in the novel as from the literary to the metaliterary to the metacritical. Part I is about the origins of the text and about the intricacies of the creative process. Part II is about the rewards and about the underside of literary success. And both parts, needless to say, are about life, presented through the recourses of art. The Avellaneda sequel is, in turn, the perfect bridge between life and art.

In the transitional chapter 58, which takes place on the road to Zaragoza, Don Quixote rejoices in his freedom (from Altisidora and in general), examines (without incident) a set of saints' images carried by villagers, comes upon a group of neo-Arcadians (including a self-created shepherdess who has read the first part of his history), and is trampled by a herd of bulls. One can only conjecture what kind of adventures would have presented themselves at the jousts, had he traveled to Zaragoza. The presence of Avellaneda's book at the inn in the following chapter leads Don Quixote to vow not to set foot in that city but to proceed to Barcelona, where, as Don Jerónimo informs him, similar tournaments are held. For whatever reason, such parallel adventures never materialize. Don Quixote meets the legendary robber Roque Guinart, who takes him seriously and who arranges a gracious reception for him in Barcelona. Don Antonio Moreno, his host, takes him less seriously but does treat him with courtesy. The Avellaneda sequel raises its ugly specter at the printer's—and Don Quixote may once again

condemn it as an abomination—but only briefly, for knight and squire become involved in the rescue of the future son-in-law of their Morisco acquaintance, Ricote. Don Quixote's defeat at the hands of the Knight of the White Moon occurs as the release of Don Gregorio is being played out. Don Quixote and Sancho enter into a rather sophisticated dialogue on the theme of resignation. The knight is saddened by his fate, but the Duke and Duchess invade his contemplative space, and their messengers whisk him away to the palace. The vanquished knight has lost much of his zeal,⁹ but not his chivalric spirit. He is still committed to serving Dulcinea and to renouncing the Avellaneda sequel (which shows up in the devils' tennis game in Altisidora's dream), to be dealt with in a definitive manner in the Don Alvaro Tarfe episode of chapter 72.

The narrator stresses the significance of the role of the magistrate and the notary in the dismissal of the false second part. The two functionaries give legal authority to Don Alvaro's statement, put in writing "with all the formalities required in such cases, at which Don Quixote and Sancho were highly pleased, as if such a document were of great importance to them, and as if their words and deeds did not plainly show the difference between the two Don Quixotes and the two Sanchos" (820). On his last night on the road, Don Quixote concerns himself with Sancho's penance on behalf of the enchanted Dulcinea. Before his arrival at the village, he approaches every woman he encounters to see if she might be his lady. Despite adversity, he sustains the heroic mold. He believes that he has vanquished his literary enemy and disenchanted Dulcinea, which means that the genuine second part of his history will record a pair of major triumphs to compete with the defeat in armed combat. In chapter 73, he informs the priest and Sansón Carrasco that he will spend the time away from chivalry in the pastoral mode. The implication is that after the year as a shepherd he will resume his knightly enterprise.

As the last chapter begins, Don Quixote's future remains open. His imagination and his penchant for living by literary models are strong. He has saved Dulcinea and his reputation as a public figure. His defeat is vexing but temporary, his projected victories postponed but still within the realm of possibility. The pastoral alternative will be an interlude, nothing more. Don Quixote has not given up on chivalry. In the final section of chapter 73, he says that he feels ill and asks to be put to bed, and this is the passage leading to death. In chapter 74, the narrator attributes Don Quixote's fever to either melancholy or divine will. His friends blame the illness on grief over the defeat and on lack of proof regarding Dulcinea's disenchantment. They attempt to animate him, but sadness weighs too heavily on his soul. Then come the dream and the

change of heart. Alonso Quixano calls for a notary to record the confession of his chivalric madness, receives the sacraments, and dies. The last words of Cide Hamete do not focus on Alonso Quixano's Christian death or on his rejection of the romances of chivalry. In the famous apostrophe to his pen, the Arab historian aligns himself with his subject—"For me alone was Don Quixote born, and I for him; it was his to act, mine to write"—against Avellaneda, "that pretended Tordesillesque writer who has ventured or would venture with his great, coarse, ill-trimmed ostrich quill to write the achievements of my valiant knight" (830). Cide Hamete expresses his hope that Avellaneda and other "malignant historians" will let Don Quixote rest in peace and then returns to the original pretext of the narrative, that its sole purpose has been to dissuade the public from reading books of chivalry.

It could be argued that the final chapter of *Don Quixote* is the source of mixed messages, which would by no means make it inconsistent with the rest of the text. The prologuist of Part I labors over the conventions of narrative fiction, not of history, and over public reaction to literature; the "true history" has its origins in chapter 1. Similarly, the prologue cites the overthrow of chivalric romance as the goal of the composition, while the text pretends to be the historical record of the three sallies. Don Quixote is the object of mockery and the object of praise. Cide Hamete never abandons the would-be knight for the repentant Christian. Although at the end he complies with the first prologuist's statement of purpose, he refuses to undermine the accomplishments of "my valiant knight." Alonso Quixano does not enter the discourse of Cide Hamete, and, for the historian, the body in the grave belongs to Don Quixote. From one point of view, it may be noted that while satire demands detachment, Cide Hamete cannot seem to distance himself from the figure enmeshed in the reading of unworthy books. From another, it is difficult to understand why the historian would cross into the territory of the first prologuist by speaking of moral values and of satirical ends in the concluding sentences. The fusion of ideas, voices, and narratees at the end makes for unity within incongruity and may lead to a reopening of the question of intention (which is valid as a question if not as an answer). How can theology and parody work toward the same ends? Who has the ultimate authority over the discourse? And are all readings equal?

For some readers, the aging author responds with increasing empathy to his creation. He personalizes, or shares, the death scene with the character. For others, Cervantes strikes a death blow to the romances by mocking them and by having Don Quixote proclaim his liberation from them. The motives may be literary or spiritual, for the evil books distract

good Christians from worthwhile pursuits, from the deeds that would allow them to win salvation. "Romantic" readers tend to focus on the idealism of Don Quixote and on the symbolic resonances of his discourse. They may condemn the books yet glorify the lofty aims of the reader. When Lo Ré maintains, for example, that Don Quixote never loses his idealistic spirit, the argument distinguishes between the actor and the deed, or between a negative stimulus and a positive response. I agree with Lo Ré that the ordeals of the third sally do not crush Don Quixote's enthusiasm, but I am not convinced that the author—or, more correctly, the text—is as protective of the protagonist as the idealist interpretation would suggest. In *Don Quijote, Symbol of a Culture in Crisis*, Bryant L. Creel points out that Cervantes is not against chivalry as an abstract standard, but against the corruption of chivalric ideals in his own day. Don Quixote represents both the purity of the tradition and its ludicrous extremes. While this is a valid perspective, its context is sociohistorical rather than literary, just as those approaches that stress the state of Don Quixote's mind are psychological rather than literary. The second part of *Don Quixote*, I would submit, is not about the declining status of chivalry or about the growing weakness of the protagonist but about the power of the book, and specifically about the power of Part I.

Don Quixote begins by parodying the romances of chivalry. A country gentleman, perhaps not unlike the reader in a number of ways, lets reading intrude on life. He remolds himself in order to emulate the heroes of the romances. On his journey, or quest, he encounters characters who in many cases also have been moved to action by literary models. Don Quixote acts funny, in the double sense of the term, because he is distracted, distanced from those around him; he shows little consciousness of time and place. The comedy of Part I stems from anachronism and from the willingness of others to humor the knight, to enter his world. The motif of fighting fire with fire—waging war against books, as in the scrutiny of the library—allows Cervantes to incorporate a range of literary genres, theoretical issues, and other matters into the text. The comic aspects of the first part do not keep the reader from caring about Don Quixote or from seeing how he grows from experience, but his exaggerated, literal-minded chivalry would seem to create a distance between him and the reader. The textual markers would seem to promote neither empathy in its purest form nor a serious symbolic code from which to judge his actions. If this were the case, the burlesque sonnets appended to chapter 52 would be highly offensive, but they are, instead, signs of the satire and self-conscious humor that characterize the 1605 *Quixote*.

The key to Part II, it seems to me, is the shift from the books of chivalry to Cervantes's book as the primary element of the intertext. Readers of Part I, such as Sansón Carrasco and the ducal pair, reenact in Part II what Don Quixote does in his sallies. They adopt a literary paradigm as a mode of action, and, as narrators and other characters note along the way, they become a bit mad. They escape from reality into fiction, or into metafiction. They lose perspective in their effort to control events. Fictional and real readers intersect, as do the "real" Don Quixote and the Don Quixote of the true history. Don Diego de Miranda, the most conspicuous non-reader of the first part, is sound of mind but of only negligible interest. What he does, like what Alonso Quixano does, cannot fill the pages of a book. The plot of Part I is built around pseudo-chivalric adventures, informed by literature as theory and performance. In Part II, plot cedes to metaplot, to effects produced by readings of Part I. The imaginary inner world of the published text expands to include the presence in society—in the so-called real world—of the (now aptly named) true history. Readers within the narrative invent situations in which Don Quixote may react in chivalric fashion. Don Quixote cultivates his public persona and worries about possible discrepancies between reality and representation, between the man and the verbal construct. Cervantes and his alter egos address, in commentary and in practice, the attitude of readers toward Part I. There is nothing that would fit the metacritical exercise better than a false and uncomplimentary sequel by an anonymous author.

Don Quixote opens with a critique, or a rewriting, of the conventional prologue, followed by a variation (rewriting) of the quest theme. From the beginning, literary topics interact with one another, and lessons derived from books mediate the narrative movement. If literary types and what has come to be known as media influences are the subjects of Part I, Part II expands the associative fields precisely because the intertext now includes the first part and its own dialectic with precedent. The "true history" in the first part is a comic reminder of the intricacies of emplotment. The label is a joke, albeit a most profound one. When the book appears, it becomes historical. When the anonymous sequel appears, it becomes true. As well as active readers of Part I, Part II features discussion of the flaws of the earlier tome. Don Quixote and the authorial figure(s) are concerned with what readers liked and disliked about the 1605 text. Cervantes has the opportunity to address omissions and inconsistencies in the text and to offer views on questions of structure. After the publication of the false second part, he is able to incorporate issues raised in that book into his own. Avellaneda's audacious act clearly infuriates Cervantes, but at the same time it gives

him additional ground for literary play. The spurious sequel treats Part I as Part I treats the romances of chivalry, that is, with irreverence. Avellaneda puts Cervantes on the defensive, and Part II becomes an apology of sorts for itself. Cervantes, for his part, manages a counterattack which does not (like Mateo Alemán's strategies in the *Guzmán*) throw the text out of balance. In order to prove Don Quixote's superiority over his imitator, he does not change the character of his protagonist or the premises of his narrative. Rather, he redirects the plot to prove the false history wrong (even though the last chapter of Part I refers to the trip to Zaragoza). When circumstances threaten Don Quixote's control over his destiny, the Avellaneda text redeems him. The introduction of the sequel in chapter 59 follows his stay at the ducal palace, and the signing of the affidavit in chapter 72 follows his defeat by Sansón Carrasco. The statements that attest to differences between the two protagonists are acts of affirmation for the real Don Quixote. The defeat is yet another trial, a test of his worthiness, a temporary inconvenience. He will emulate the pastoral paradigm for a year and then will return to the chivalric mode.

If one were to suggest that the events of chapters 59 and 72 distract from the mental decline of Don Quixote and thus from the psychological verisimilitude of the novel, I would argue that Don Quixote, though distraught, is never presented as undone by the defeat, that he remains optimistic about the future. The dream of chapter 74 is a *deus ex machina*, a vehicle for the off-stage conversion. In the last chapters of Part II, Don Quixote is no less blind to the real world than he was in Part I. On the contrary, he now finds greater acceptance of his exploits, which have been recorded for posterity. And if imitation in this case is not the sincerest form of flattery, it is the successful who are imitated. Don Quixote does not approach chapter 74—does not approach his death—as a human being who has lost his will to live. Literature, not psychology, is the ruling temper, the source of verisimilitude. Literary madness is not so much a form of mental illness as a method by which to show how literature operates on the mind. *Don Quixote* is about creative fantasies, about how texts affect the ways in which one perceives the world. The novel marks an awareness of the role of words and of books in life, but treats experience from the perspective of literature. What is *Don Quixote* about? It may be about everything, because it demonstrates that a literary object has the power to evoke external reality and simultaneously to pursue the inner world of fiction. It justifies the study of literature on its own terms, not as the stepchild of other disciplines. It is not about illnesses and cures but about art, about readers and writers whose passion for words is contagious. *Don Quixote* is the

true history of a book and of books in general. A truly idealistic reading of the novel may be one that sees the text as idealizing the creation and consumption of books, one that finds depth in the self-conscious humor and irony. Closure becomes a function, quite fittingly, of the intersection of life and art. The real world, in the form of a false artifact, helps to determine the destiny of the legitimate object. The paternal imagery of the prologue to Part I offers an ironic frame for the figurative sacrifice at the end of Part II. The writer begins by killing his poetic predecessors and ends by killing his creation. In the middle is an expansive critical space, the space of art as mirror to nature and to itself.

The death of Don Quixote/Alonso Quixano is calculated to please a number of factions. Romantics will understand that physical death cannot destroy lofty ideals; Alonso Quixano may die, but Don Quixote will live on. Phenomenologists, various types of analysts, and even biographers may insert the aging Cervantes into this scheme. The repentance and Christian death of the country gentleman should satisfy proponents of moral literature and censors of immoral thought. Ironists will commend the rendition of Christian death by a Moslem historian, together with the openness of the novel's closure. To what extent does Cervantes comply with his promise to kill and bury Don Quixote? Let us return to the question of metafictional idealism. The supposed man of flesh and blood, but really the shadow of a man, disappears from the text, yet he lives on in the book and in other books. He lives on because of the book, because he has lived by the book. Through his story, readers discover that books enrich and help to direct their lives. In *Reality and the Poet in Spanish Poetry*, Pedro Salinas attributes to Baroque art, exemplified in the poetry of Luis de Góngora, the capacity of the microcosm (art) to supersede the macrocosm (reality). This is, I believe, what Cervantes shows in *Don Quixote*. He privileges books, which can contain and move the world. Who dies at the end of the novel is not as important as what remains: the medium as message, the discourse as story. *Don Quixote* may be far removed from psychological realism but not from life. The protagonist need not be capable of emulating humankind in the art of dying in order to have the real world as one of his points of contact. Imagination and reality meet in the text, and their interaction and interference vitalize the proceedings. A cartoon by Mick Stevens in *The New Yorker* seems to capture this ironic essence. A woman speaking into a telephone says, "Operator, I'd like to make a person-to-person call, and I'd like to reverse the roles."¹⁰ The illusion of control marks the beginning and the end of the road. On the great stage of life, the director's chair may be the best seat in the house.

NOTES

1. See esp. the introductory section and first chapter of the study.
2. See, for example, *Novel to Romance*, xiii.
3. . . . this *Second Part of Don Quixote* which I offer you is cut by the same craftsman and from the same cloth as the *First*. In it I present Don Quixote continued and finally dead and buried, so that no one may dare bring forward any further evidence against him, for that already produced is sufficient. (Cervantes 1981, 417)
4. See *The Chivalric World*, esp. 9-13 and 210-15. Mancing cites the distinction made by Juan Bautista Avalle-Arce in *Don Quijote como forma de vida* between Alonso Quixano, who may be characterized by the verb *ser* (to be, to exist), and Don Quixote, who exemplifies the verb *valer* (to lead a worthwhile life).
5. See, for example, *S/Z*, 4. Barthes notes that "the goal of literary work (of literature as work) is to make the reader no longer a consumer, but a producer of the text."
6. The readings of *La Celestina* which emphasize Fernando de Rojas's *converso* origins show the influence of the historical theses of Américo Castro. An example is Stephen Gilman's *The Spain of Fernando de Rojas*.
7. All quotations from *Don Quixote* are from the Jones and Douglas edition of the Ormsby translation. Page numbers will refer to this edition.
8. Anthony Close, in *The Romantic Approach to Don Quixote*, offers the most comprehensive treatment of the topic. Jaime Fernández notes, for example, "Ante la muerte, el hidalgo abomina de los libros de caballerías, pero no de los grandes valores éticos, estéticos y sociales del espíritu caballeresco" (17). In a similar vein, Ellen Anderson argues that Alonso Quijano finds exemplarity in his own story. The reborn gentleman rejects Avellaneda's continuation but not Cide Hamete Benengeli's book: "As a true story of an imagined reality, it can serve as an example for readers, noble and common, *not* to imitate in their future action, a kind of anti-history" (186). Edgardo Rodríguez Juliá, in contrast, considers that "[d]evolverse la lucidez a [don] Quijote es quitarle su visión; es la dureza de la medianía de edad, es la crueldad de Cervantes novelista, el consuelo de su neurastenia" (199). Looking at the ending from the perspective of the pastoral tradition, Dominick Finello believes that Cervantes

turns the gentle art of pastoral play into a game of semicruel irony in which Don Quijote and his friends stretch bucolic exercises and duties to risible, if not absurd, limits. . . . Pastor Quijotiz is . . . a form of

self-conscious pastoral playacting by one whose life is on the wane. It is the reverse side of the simulated Arcadia, which suggests awareness of a cultural practice among those who are enjoying life to the fullest at a tender age. (178)

9. See esp. 131-47.

10. July 23, 1990: 75.