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## ‘Yo sé quién soy’: Don Quixote, Don Diego de Miranda and the Paradox of Self-Knowledge<sup>1</sup>

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Although contemporary scholars have generally recognized the pervasiveness of paradox in *Don Quixote*, no one has yet undertaken a systematic investigation of paradox as a rhetorical strategy in Cervantes' most famous work.<sup>2</sup> Part of a larger study in progress, my brief essay centers specifically on the paradoxical problem of self-knowledge, which Cervantes sets in bold relief in chapters 16–18 of Part II. Those

<sup>1</sup> The following essay is a revised version of a paper delivered at the Fifth Annual Southern California Cervantes Symposium, held at Pomona College, April 17, 1993. My sincerest thanks to Michael McGaha.

<sup>2</sup> The subject of Cervantine paradox is already latent in an important study by Manuel Durán, *La amigüedad en el 'Quijote'* (Xalapa: Universidad Veracruzana, 1960). A study of the encounter between Don Quixote and Don Diego de Miranda that centers, not specifically on the problem of self-knowledge, but on the *cuerto loco* paradox, is Francisco Márquez Villanueva, “El Caballero del Verde Gabán y su reino de paradoja,” *Personajes y temas del 'Quijote'* (Madrid: Taurus, 1975), 147–227. As will become apparent, I owe a great debt to this essay, although my reading of these episodes differs in many important respects from that of Márquez Villanueva. A discussion, with ample bibliography, of paradoxes involving both the tale of *Don Quixote* and its protagonist is found in Daniel Eisenberg, *A Study of 'Don Quixote'* (Newark, DE: Juan de la Cuesta, 1987), pp. 188–193. Other studies that note the centrality of paradox in *Don*

chapters narrate Don Quixote's four-day encounter with Don Diego de Miranda, whom the protagonist *reportedly* calls "El Caballero del Verde Gabán."<sup>3</sup> After examining the problem of self-knowledge in that encounter, I shall simply suggest, rather than discuss in any detail, how Cervantes' dramatization of the problem not only reveals his open, dialogic system of paradoxy, but also relates to his treatment of such issues as the complex relations between character, reader and text.

## I

In Cervantes' day, paradox was chiefly understood in light of its etymology, as a statement that runs contrary to convention or received opinion (*doxa*), thereby eliciting a response of shock or wonder (*admiratio*) in the beholder, who is forced to observe and cooperate in the undoing of his common-sense assumptions. As Cobarruvias defines the term:

Vale tanto como cosa admirable y fuera de la común opinión; como sustentar que la quarentena es buena, que el cielo no se mueve y que el globo de la tierra es el que anda a la redonda, etc. *Graece dicitur 'paradoxos,' admirabilis, praeter opinionem, inauditus.*<sup>4</sup>

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*Quixote* include: Joseph R. Jones, "The Liar Paradox in *Don Quixote* II, 51," *Hispanic Review* 54 (1986), pp. 183–193; and James Parr, '*Don Quixote*': *An Anatomy of Subversive Discourse* (Newark, DE: Juan de la Cuesta, 1988), especially pp. 103–119. Studies that discuss the tradition of Renaissance paradoxy chiefly with respect to Cervantes' other works are: Alban K. Forcione, *Cervantes and the Humanist Vision* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982); by the same author, *Cervantes and the Mystery of Lawlessness* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); and Adrienne Lasker Martín, *Cervantes and the Burlesque Sonnet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), pp. 79–80. The standard work on Renaissance paradoxy is Rosalie Colie, *Paradoxia Epidemica* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966).

<sup>3</sup> It is worth noting that Don Quixote is never quoted as using this sobriquet for Don Diego. It is the narrative voice, presumably Cide Hamete, who claims, without direct quotation, that Don Quixote accorded Don Diego such a knightly epithet. As I shall discuss presently, despite such false clues from the narrator, the passages about the encounter between the two *hidalgos* reveal that, after carefully scrutinizing Don Diego, Don Quixote considers that other character to follow a very different "profession" from his own, one which the protagonist fails to specify—probably because the profession of a more than moderately wealthy, rural *hidalgo* falls outside his chivalric schemata.

<sup>4</sup> Sebastián de Cobarruvias, *Tesoro de la Lengua Castellana o Española* (Madrid: Ediciones Turner, 1984; orig., 1611), p. 852.

A closely related, but more general, acceptation that figures in most literary manuals defines paradox as an apparent contradiction which, upon examination, actually reveals a hidden, startling truth. It is important to stress, however, that the apparent contradiction of paradox occurs only in the surface meaning of the opposing statements, each of which is found to be true in some sense or to a certain degree. Paradox therefore uses the language of apparent nonsense to express startling "truths" that exceed the bounds of logic and propositional discourse.

A third meaning of paradox is technically called "antinomy": an insoluble contradiction in which asserting the truth of a particular proposition necessarily entails asserting that proposition's falsity.<sup>5</sup> The prototypical antinomy is the Paradox of the Liar, which asserts, in effect: "This statement is false."<sup>6</sup> Clearly, if that statement is false, it is also true, in the same sense and to the same degree. For my purposes here, it is important to bear in mind that what renders antinomies insoluble is their wholly internal reference and their self-contained quality. Beyond their utterly fixed terms, there remains no logical or semantic space, and no other level of abstraction, which permit an assertion of even partial truth or falsity.

One of the chief sources of paradox literature in the West is Plato's *Parmenides*.<sup>7</sup> Through a barrage of paradoxical utterances, the dialogue not only treats of such eminently philosophical questions as "unity and diversity," "likeness and unlikeness" and "being and non-being." It also provides a model of Plato's rhetorical art, including a *practical* model for the training of novice orators. As Parmenides says to the young Socrates:

There is an art which is called by the vulgar "idle talking," and which is often imagined to be useless; in that art you must train yourself, now that you are young, or truth will elude your grasp.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> On the distinction between paradox and antinomy, and on the antinomies related to the Paradox of the Liar, see Willard V. Quine, "The Ways of Paradox," *The Ways of Paradox and Other Essays* (New York: Random House, 1966), pp. 3–20.

<sup>6</sup> Among the more recent studies on the Paradox of the Liar, see: Charles Parsons, "The Liar Paradox," *Journal of Philosophical Logic* 3 (1974), pp. 381–412; Robert L. Martin, *The Paradox of the Liar* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970); also by Martin, *Recent Essays on Truth and the Liar Paradox* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984); and John Bariwise and John Etchemendy, *The Liar: An Essay on Truth and Circularity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

<sup>7</sup> See Rosalie Colie, *Paradoxia Epidemica*, pp. 7–8.

<sup>8</sup> Plato, *Parmenides*, in *The Republic and Other Works*, B. Jowett, tr. (New York: Doubleday, 1973), p. 379.

Parmenides goes on to demonstrate that, simply put, this art consists in arguing opposite sides of a question. "Truth" is thus shown to lie, not so much between, as beyond extremes, each of which is in some way deficient, at once partially true and partially false. Further, truth is also shown to prove elusive and paradoxical, as set forth in the dialogue's startling "conclusion" about what the truth *seems* to be:

[Parmenides]: Let this much be said; and further let us affirm what seems to be the truth, that, whether [the] one is or is not, [the] one and the others [plurality] in relation to themselves and one another, all of them, in every way, are and are not, appear to be and appear not to be.  
[Socrates]: Most true.<sup>9</sup>

In his *Of Learned Ignorance* (*De docta ignorantia*), written in 1440, Nicholas of Cusa adopted an equally paradoxical approach to questions of truth, albeit within a Christian intellectual framework. A clear echo of Socrates' knowing only that he knows nothing, and the Pauline distinction between worldly and godly wisdom, the title of Cusa's first chapter reads: "How Knowledge is Ignorance."<sup>10</sup> Yet such ignorance becomes increasingly "learned," hence increasingly unknowing, through reflective contemplation of the created order, which unfolds in time as a perplexing admixture of unity and plurality, likeness and unlikeness, being and non-being—a *coincidentia oppositorum*, or an alternately conflicting and harmonious blend of contraries.<sup>11</sup>

A source of paradox literature that is much closer in both time and spirit to Cervantes' masterpiece—and a work which Cervantes surely knew—is Erasmus' *The Praise of Folly*.<sup>12</sup> Modeled after the clas-

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 429.

<sup>10</sup> Nicholas Cusanus, *Of Learned Ignorance*, Germain Heron, tr. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986).

<sup>11</sup> A Neoplatonist thinker, Cusa therefore shares later Neoplatonists' view of the cosmos as a *discordia concors*. For a study of this view in relation to *Don Quixote*, see Leland Chambers, "*Harmonia est Discordia Concors: The Coincidence of Opposites and Unity in Diversity in the Quijote*," *Cervantes, su obra y su mundo, Actas del I Congreso internacional sobre Cervantes*, Manuel Criado del Val, ed. (Madrid: EDI-6, 1981), pp. 605–615. For an excellent discussion of Renaissance Neoplatonism, including the place of Cusa, see Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought: The Classic, Scholastic and Humanist Strains* (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), pp. 48–69. A fine discussion of Cusa's thought can be found in Frederick Copleston, *A History of Medieval Philosophy* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1972), pp. 314–324.

sical type of "paradoxical encomium,"<sup>13</sup> Erasmus' work seems often to "conclude" that many species of "folly" are wisdom, and that folly is at once good and bad, laudable and despicable. Yet the viciously circular text resists anything akin to univocal interpretation, owing primarily to its status as an exaltation of folly pronounced by Folly herself. Indeed, the character's declamation presents an extreme case of self-reference, self-praise, self-love (*philautia*) and a lack of self-knowledge, which casts even its seemingly "truthful" utterances in doubt.

## II

In *Don Quixote*, the question of self-knowledge is hardly an incidental issue. Indeed, Cervantes' work provides an instance of art that is about, for and against itself—involved by turns in praising

<sup>12</sup> The first scholar to argue in favor of Cervantes' likely exposure to the *Folly*, whether through his teacher, López de Hoyos, the original Latin text, or translations in either Italian or Spanish, was Américo Castro, *El pensamiento de Cervantes* (Barcelona: Editorial Noguer, 1972, orig. 1925), especially pp.51, 114, n. 62, and 170. Following Castro's lead, later studies that cite clear affinities between *Don Quixote* and Erasmus' best known fiction include: Antonio Vilanova, "La Moria de Erasmo y el prólogo del Quijote," *Collected Studies in Honor of Américo Castro's Eightieth Year* (Oxford: Lincombe Lodge Research Library, 1965), pp. 423–433; and Marcel Bataillon, "Un problème d'influence d'Erasmus en Espagne. L'Eloge de la Folie," *Actes de Congrès Erasme, 1969* (Amsterdam: Académie Royale Néerlandaise, 1971), pp. 136–147. Studies that deal more generally with the influence of Erasmus, and Christian humanism, on Cervantes are: Américo Castro, "Erasmus en tiempos de Cervantes," *Hacia Cervantes* (Madrid: Taurus, 1967), pp. 222–261; Marcel Bataillon's now somewhat outdated chapter, "El erasmismo de Cervantes," *Erasmus y España*, A. Alatorre, tr. (México: Colegio de México, 1966), pp. 777–801; Francisco Márquez Villanueva, *Personajes y temas del 'Quijote'*; Alban K. Forcione, *Cervantes and the Humanist Vision*; also by Forcione, *Cervantes and the Mystery of Lawlessness*; and Antonio Vilanova's revised and augmented edition of *Erasmus y Cervantes* (Barcelona: Lumen, 1989, orig.1949). A splendid critical edition and translation of Erasmus' *The Praise of Folly*, with good bibliography, is that of Clarence H. Miller (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979).

<sup>13</sup> On the generic and rhetorical tradition behind Erasmus' work, see Clarence Miller's "Introduction," *ibid.*, pp. ix–xxv. Erasmus himself provides a litany of his sources in his "Prefatory Letter to Thomas More," *ibid.*, pp. 1–5. Two standard studies on the paradoxical encomium as a distinct genre are: Arthur S. Pease, "Things Without Honor," *Classical Philology* 21 (1926), pp. 27–42; and Henry Knight Miller, "The Paradoxical Encomium," *Modern Philology* 53 (1956), pp. 145–178.

and ridiculing its own wisdom and folly. It seems fitting that a text which playfully takes the measure of its own identity and ontological status should include a cast of parodic characters who are wrestling with the delphic and Socratic dictum: "Know thyself."

In particular, the self-conscious narrative of the episodes involving the protagonist and the man in green leads both the reader and Don Diego to engage in a process of self-examination. In a manner that seems to anticipate later critical reception of his work, Cervantes startles his "*desocupado lector*" into a critical response of self-examination, obliging him to practice something very much like what Parmenides would call the apparently "useless" art of "idle talking." For Cervantes seemingly casts those episodes in the form of a dialectical debate between two contrary readings—one "hard," the other "soft," on both the protagonist and his chivalric ethos.<sup>14</sup>

According to the first reading, Don Diego would seem to represent an "exemplary," Christian figure.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, in his introductory remarks to both the knight and the squire, the man in green describes himself in a manner that broadly follows the same pattern of the description in the first chapter of Part I, where we read about an *hidalgo*, whose name is disputed among the various "autores que deste caso escriben."<sup>16</sup> The protagonist's polar opposite—or so it would seem—Don Diego gives his full name, his place of origin and a description of his very different social status, which is "más que medianamente rico" (II, 16; 153). His favorite pastimes ("ejercicios" [*ibid.*]) include hunting and fishing, once again recalling, and reversing, the description of the *hidalgo* in the book's opening chapter. Further, Don Diego hastens to clarify that he would never hunt with, say, a "galgo corredor" (*ibid.*): "no mantengo ni halcón ni galgos, sino algún perdigón manso, o algún hurón atrevido."

<sup>14</sup> On such contrary critical views of the protagonist, see John J. Allen, *Don Quixote: Hero or Fool?*, 2 vols. (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1969, 1979).

<sup>15</sup> In his general study, *Don Quixote* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 48, Anthony Close states: "I have no doubt that Don Diego is meant to be seen as an exemplary figure." This does not mean that Close perceives the encounter between Don Quixote and Don Diego as a univocal instance of authorial moralizing (*ibid.*, p. 52): "However—and this this is the point that I wish to stress—the dialectical opposition of life-styles in the episode involving Don Diego is not explicitly resolved; it is simply presented and left to the discreet reader's judgement."

<sup>16</sup> Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *El ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha*, Luis Murillo, ed., 2 vols. (Madrid: Castalia, 1978), v. 1, p. 171. Future references will be to this edition, cited by part, chapter and page number. For example: I, 1; 171.

More interestingly, in a manner similar to the protagonist, Don Diego chooses to define himself according to his choice of reading matter, contained in his personal library. As against the protagonist, however, Don Diego's collection, "hasta seis docenas de libros" (*ibid.*), is primarily composed of works of Christian devotion and honest entertainment. Also contrary to the protagonist, yet in perfect conformity with both Christian humanists and Tridentine moralists, he says that "los [libros] de caballerías aún no han entrado por los umbrales de mis puertas" (*ibid.*).<sup>17</sup> He actively cultivates the virtue of religion by attending daily Mass and keeping his devotions to the Blessed Virgin. He strives to live the moral virtues by avoiding occasions of sin and idle gossip. He also exercises the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity (*ibid.*): "confío siempre en la misericordia de Dios nuestro Señor"; and "reparto de mis bienes con los pobres." Nonetheless, he never boasts of his good works, "por no dar entrada en mi corazón a la hipocresía y vanagloria" (*ibid.*). He lives the social virtue of hospitality by frequently dining with friends and entertaining them (*ibid.*): "son mis convites limpios y aseados, y no nada escasos."

Don Diego would also seem an archetype of both marital fidelity and parental love, spending most of his time at home, he says, "con mi mujer, y con mis hijos" (*ibid.*), and hoping that his son will pursue a career in either Law or Sacred Theology, "la reina de todas [las ciencias]" (*ibid.*). It seems, too, that his purity of heart leads him both to recognize and praise the Christian simplicity of Sancho, just as his humility leads him to confess (*ibid.*): "No soy santo, sino gran pecador." What is more, in the three chapters devoted to Don Diego, that temperate gentleman seems to exemplify the most important cardinal virtue of prudence or *discreción*<sup>18</sup>—

<sup>17</sup> For a thorough discussion of the aesthetic and moral critiques of the romances of chivalry, with ample bibliography, see Alban K. Forcione, *Cervantes, Aristotle and the 'Persiles'* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), pp. 11–48. Also see Martín de Riquer, "Cervantes y la caballerescas," *Suma Cervantina*, J. B. Avallé-Arce and E. C. Riley, eds. (London: Tamesis Books, 1973), especially pp. 279–284.

<sup>18</sup> On the various uses of *discreción* in Cervantes' works, often with ironic overtones, see Margaret J. Bates, *'Discreción' in the Works of Cervantes* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1945). For a discussion concerning the precise distinction between "prudence" and *discreción* in the time of Cervantes—a distinction that broke with the formerly synonymous meaning of the two terms in medieval works of moral theology—see *ibid.*, pp. 14–17. As virtues, rather than simply as qualities of mind (e.g., shrewdness), the two terms continued to be used interchangeably. Regarding the character of Don Diego, I think it important to bear in mind that Cervantes is playing on two related no-

always and everywhere the quintessence of the golden mean. It would seem that his chief concern is, and should be, to remain as he is: orthodox, sane, sober. Paraphrasing Fray Luis de León, one may choose to dub him "el perfecto casado," a character who seems to emerge directly from either the philosophy of Christian Epicureanism, as described by Erasmus and his followers,<sup>19</sup> or even from the Catechism of the Council of Trent.<sup>20</sup>

By contrast, the identity of his counterpart is fully bound up with romances of chivalry, which makes Don Quixote a negative *exemplum* of secular and pernicious reading. On numerous occasions, the protagonist claims to make a religious vocation of knight-errantry. His devotions to Dulcinea are a blasphemous parody of

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tions of the term "prudence." The first, classical acceptance relates to the most cardinal (*cardo* in Latin means "hinge") of all the cardinal virtues (the others being justice, fortitude and temperance), and denotes both the ability and the readiness to suit the proper means to a morally praiseworthy end. Thus, prudence is the *sine qua non* of all the virtues; it orders actions toward their proper ends. The classical virtue of prudence may often involve risk and necessitate decisive action. The second, "decadent" acceptance of prudence denotes a self-serving tendency to avoid risk and to decide only in favor of such actions as will benefit oneself. Both forms of prudence are grounded in a type of "foresight" (*pro-videre*): one suiting means and actions to objectively good ends; the other suiting means and limiting actions to subjectively beneficial ends. Implicitly, Don Diego, a decadent, pre-bourgeois version of the *caballero*, implicitly claims to live the classical virtue of prudence while, in fact, adhering to the more self-serving type. I submit that this decadent form of prudence lies at the heart of what Márquez Villanueva ably describes as Cervantes' moral critique of Erasmus' Christian Epicureanism ("El Caballero del Verde Gabán," pp. 173–174). For a thorough discussion of the classical understanding of prudence, in contradistinction to its more modern acceptance, see Josef Pieper, *The Cardinal Virtues* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1966), pp. 3–40.

<sup>19</sup>Francisco Márquez Villanueva ("El Caballero del Verde Gabán," pp. 168–175) convincingly argues that Don Diego's moral philosophy derives from Christian Epicureanism. Although I subscribe to this reading in the main, I also believe that Cervantes ironically adds such elements of Tridentine religiosity as daily attendance at Mass and Marian devotion to reinforce the impression of Don Diego's self-proclaimed sanctity. The typical portrait that Cervantes has Don Diego draw of himself, moreover, aims less at describing a particular philosophical posture than a popular misunderstanding of what virtue and sanctity entail. That Don Diego is attempting to emulate his own understanding of Erasmus' Epicurean philosophy is true, as Márquez Villanueva shows. But one ought to avoid implying that Don Diego is a careful student of Erasmus.

<sup>20</sup>Helmut Hatzfeld sees Don Diego as a typical example of Tridentine piety and Ignatian spirituality in *El 'Quijote' como obra de arte del lenguaje* (Madrid: Imprenta Aguirre, 1966), pp.135–136, 184. A similar view is put forth by Joaquín Casaldueiro, *Sentido y forma del 'Quijote'* (Madrid: Insula, 1970), pp. 259–265.

authentic Christian worship, and he never once attends Mass. Buoyed by his recent defeat of the Knight of the Mirrors, he boasts hyperbolically to Don Diego about his heroic deeds and his published history (II, 16; 151):

[Y] así, por mis valerosas, muchas y cristianas hazañas he merecido andar ya en estampa en casi todas o las más naciones del mundo. Treinta mil volúmenes se han impreso de hi historia, y lleva camino de imprimirse treinta mil veces de millares, si el cielo no lo remedia.

He will thus continue to seek vainglory and pride as a *summum bonum*, directing all his energies toward the acquisition of lasting fame and renown. Indeed, in his final advice to Don Diego's son, Lorenzo, Don Quixote implies that the vainglorious desire for fame is properly the chief motivation behind the actions of both poets and knights errant (II, 18; 176):

[P]ara llegar a la inaccesible cumbre de la Fama, no tiene que hacer otra cosa sino dejar a una parte la senda de la poesía, algo estrecha, y tomar la estrechísima de la andante caballería.

He lives on the margins of established law and society. He shows nothing but insolence toward Sacred Theology, deeming both his own profession and poetry to be superior to the true queen of sciences (II, 18; 171): "Es una ciencia [la andante caballería] . . . que encierra en sí todas o las más ciencias del mundo." He pursues everything but the golden mean, as confirmed in his adventure with the lions (II, 17). In that case, by excess, his rashness vitiates the cardinal virtue of courage or fortitude; and, in virtually all his actions, Don Quixote is shown to be extravagant, choleric and unrestrained (II, 16; 151): "entreguéme en los brazos de la Fortuna." Far from exercising the virtue of hospitality, he fosters no desire for a settled, familial life. Moreover, he proudly tells Don Diego that he has pawned his entire estate (*ibid.*): "empeñé mi hacienda." Lacking both a home and a wife, he is enamored of a poetic commonplace, remotely inspired by the person of a local peasant girl, Aldonza Lorenzo. So, confirmed in both his heresy and his lunacy, he seems to represent what one may call "el más imperfecto de los célibes," the world's most imperfect celibate.

Even their physical appearance underscores the opposition of the two characters. Don Diego's young and frisky "yegua tordilla" is a clear opposite to the haggard Rocinante. Don Diego is handsome, ruddy, clean and impeccably dressed, in contrast to an un-

kempt Don Quixote, whose exceedingly gaunt body and dried flesh are quite probably filthy and foul-smelling. Their similarities seem purely accidental: both men have thin faces (Don Diego is said to be of "rostro aguileño," though not of "rostro enjuto," like his contrary); both are *hidalgos*; both herald from la Mancha; and both are either in or near their fifties.

### III

Yet, such a "hard-headed" assessment of the two characters is clearly based on a reading that focuses solely on first impressions. It is for this reason, I believe, that Cervantes has the embodiment of the *doxa* fall on its knees in the character of Sancho Panza, who begins to worship and kiss the feet of Don Diego as though he, Don Diego, were truly "un santo a la jineta" (II, 16; 154)—a view that corresponds to Don Diego's self-definition, and that the squire doubtless shared, in essence, with some of Cervantes' contemporary readers.

There is indeed another side to the question of Don Diego's "exemplary" virtue. What one observes in these chapters is the progressive undoing of Sancho's, and perhaps the reader's, first impressions, as well as Don Diego's original self-definition. In fact, if we scrutinize Don Diego's stated principles in light of his actions, we find him wanting from both a religious and moral point of view. Despite his praise of theology and discriminating reading, he parenthetically mentions that he *skims* profane books more than devotional works, and does so chiefly in search of "arresting" and "startling" inventiveness (II, 16; 153): "Hojeo más los que son profanos que los devotos, como sean de honesto entretenimiento, que deleiten con el lenguaje y admiren y suspendan con la invención."<sup>21</sup> Hence Don Diego's failure to provide a single citation from any of the works; and hence his commonplace generalizations about those works' presumably edifying content and graceful form. The opening proclamation about his litany of virtues amounts to his parasitically thanking God that he is unlike the rest of men, thereby making him almost as guilty as Folly herself of *philautia* and pride. Moreover, he stresses only the negative side of virtue: avoid idle gossip; shun hypocrisy.<sup>22</sup> He makes only token gestures of compas-

<sup>21</sup> On this point, see Carroll B. Johnson's interesting observations in *Don Quixote: The Quest for Modern Fiction* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1990), pp. 97–98.

<sup>22</sup> See Francisco Márquez Villanueva, "El Caballero del Verde Gabán," p. 169.

sion, giving occasional alms, rather than displaying the prescriptive "predilection for the poor" of traditional Catholic doctrine (*ibid.*): "reparto *de* mis bienes con los pobres" (emphasis added), he says; and not "reparto mis bienes." His usual guests are, like Don Diego himself, "limpios y aseados" (*ibid.*)—living emblems of middle-class cleanliness and politeness. Though Don Diego claims to spend his days with his wife and children (in the plural), the protagonist's specific question about the number of children in the wealthy *hidalgo's* family forces the latter to admit (II, 16; 154): "Yo, señor don Quijote . . . tengo un hijo."<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, what is easily his greatest breach of charity, he says that he would probably consider himself more fortunate never to have been a father at all, since his only son, Lorenzo, has chosen to pursue a career in what his father thinks the frivolous, pseudo-science of poetry. Don Diego seems disappointed, at bottom, that Lorenzo has failed to emulate his father's social conformism (*ibid.*): "no porque él sea malo, sino porque no es tan bueno como yo quisiera " (emphasis added).

As to the moral virtues, if Don Quixote is culpable of an excess of fortitude known as rashness, Don Diego is shown to suffer from the defect of cowardice.<sup>24</sup> For it is ultimately out of cowardice, rather than rightful caution or sanity, that he fails to keep Don Quixote from what appears to be certain death in the latter's adventure with the lion. To be sure, Don Diego tries to dissuade the protagonist from the rash confrontation; yet he does so, again, in a politely conformist manner that not only misrepresents Don Quixote's profession of knight-errantry, but also appeals to a calculating, self-serving notion of prudence, leaving no room for decisiveness or heroism (II, 17; 161):

Señor caballero, los caballeros andantes han de acometer las aventuras que prometen esperanza de salir bien dellas, y no aquellas que de en todo la quitan; porque la valentía que se entra en la jurisdicción de la temeridad, más tiene de locura que de fortaleza. Cuanto más que estos leones no vienen contra vuesa merced; ni lo sueñan: van presentados a su Majestad, y no será bien detenerlos ni impedirles su viaje.

<sup>23</sup> As one may infer from the religiously orthodox, Epicurean lexicon of Don Quixote's question (see *ibid.*, p. 172), the knight is well aware of the kind of archetypal self-portrait that Don Diego is attempting to convey (II, 16; 154):

Preguntóle don Quijote que cuántos hijos tenía, y díjole que una de las cosas en que ponían el sumo bien los antiguos filósofos, que carecieron del verdadero conocimiento de Dios, fue en los bienes de la naturaleza, en los de la fortuna, en tener muchos amigos y en tener muchos y buenos hijos.

<sup>24</sup> For a classical, Aristotelian and Thomistic summary of the virtue of fortitude, see Josef Pieper, *The Cardinal Virtues*, pp. 114–141.

Don Diego's idea of virtue commands no authority and he is woefully ignorant of his audience; thus his rhetoric fails from a lack of both *ethos* and *pathos*. Further, both his rhetorical failure and his meager efforts contrast ironically with his boastful promise to Sancho (II, 17; 160): "'Yo haré que no lo sea" (i.e., "atrevido"). Apparently saving his most "powerful" rhetoric for last, Don Diego is paraphrased as providing a final bit of advice to Don Quixote, yet seeming to adopt a tone more suitable to a gentlemanly debate than to an admonition against imminent suicide (II, 17; 162):

Otra vez le persuadió el hidalgo que no hiciese locura semejante que era tentar a Dios acometer tan disparate. A lo que respondió don Quijote que él sabía lo que hacía. Respondióle el hidalgo que lo mirase bien; que él entendía que se engañaba.

The reader also learns how Don Diego faintly realizes, but finally shies away from, his duty to intervene—once again, for reasons of calculating, self-serving prudence ("cordura") (*ibid.*):

Quisiera el del verde gabán oponérsele; pero viose desigual en las armas, y no le pareció cordura tomarse con un loco, que ya se lo había parecido de todo punto don Quijote.

In other words, Don Diego calculates, not the means necessary to bring about a morally sound end—i.e., the extreme case of saving a man's life, which requires extreme measures—but only the risk to his own person. What is more, he is the one, mounted on his light-footed *tordilla*, to lead both Sancho and the wagon-driver in frantic flight (*ibid.*):

[E]l cual [don Quijote], volviendo a dar priesa al leonero, y a reiterar las amenazas, dio ocasión al hidalgo a que picase la yegua, y Sancho al rucio, y el carretero a sus mulas, procurando todos apartarse del carro lo más que pudiesen, antes que los leones se desembanastasen.

Earlier in the narrative, it was also his cowardice that led Don Diego, sporting a scimitar, to flee from Don Quixote and Sancho on the road, and to offer a lame excuse (complete with dramatic irony) for doing so (II, 16; 150): "De verdad, que no me pasara de largo si no fuera *por temor* que con la compañía de mi yegua no se alborotara ese caballo" (emphasis added).

In sum, without the theological virtue of charity, there can be no sanctity. And our self-proclaimed Christian exemplar is lacking in the cardinal virtues of justice (in particular, toward his own son) as well as fortitude.

Regarding his physical appearance, I believe that a simultaneously conflicted and unifying semiology is at work in the portrayal of Don Diego's attire, which, unlike the *hidalgo's* conventional house, is described in notable detail (II, 16; 149–150):

un gabán de paño fino verde, jironado de terciopelo leonado, con una montera del mismo terciopelo; el aderezo de la yegua era de campo, y de la jineta, asimismo de morado y verde. Traía un alfanje morisco pendiente de un ancho tahalí de verde y oro, y los borceguíes eran de la labor del tahalí; las espuelas no eran doradas, sino dadas con un barniz verde; tan tersas y bruñidas, que, por hacer labor con todo el vestido, parecían mejor que si fuera de oro puro.

In his very specific interpretation of Don Diego's appearance, Francisco Márquez Villanueva claims that the "motley," the "tropical" glossiness, and the general "tono chillón" of the character's outfit derive from the Northern European model of dress for jesters and buffoons.<sup>25</sup> That critic goes so far as to say that "don Diego de Miranda viste como un papagayo."<sup>26</sup> In response to Márquez Villanueva and others, Gerald Gingras argues that Don Diego's choice of material ("paño fino"), his color coordination (green with patches of tawny velvet) and even his choice of spurs (gold burnished with green) were typical of the rural Spanish *hidalgo*, thereby revealing Don Diego's conservative tastes.<sup>27</sup> In my view, there is no reason to deny that the underlying theses of both contrary readings, and those of other readings, are plausible, up to a point, though applicable at different stages of the the unfolding narrative. In view of Cervantes' perplexing description, it is unnecessary to decide conclusively whether his attire marks Don Diego as either perfectly sane and wise or perfectly mad and foolish.<sup>28</sup> As

<sup>25</sup> "El Caballero del Verde Gabán," pp. 219–223.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 220.

<sup>27</sup> "Diego de Miranda, 'Bufón' or Spanish Gentleman? The Social Background of His Attire," *Cervantes* 5 (1985), pp. 129–140.

<sup>28</sup> As Márquez Villanueva himself argues ("El Caballero del Verde Gabán," pp. 224–226), Don Diego embodies Cervantes' version of an Erasmusian *cuervo loco* paradox. For this reason, I find it perplexing that he should insist on a univocal interpretation (favoring folly and madness) of the character's clothing. The same scholar again takes up the subject of Don Diego's attire in "La locura emblemática en la segunda parte del *Quijote*," *Cervantes and the Renaissance*, Michael McGaha, ed. (Newark, DE: Juan de la Cuesta, 1980), pp. 92–96, insisting on the same unproblematic, univocal interpretation of the character's appearance. In this article, Márquez Villanueva states more than once that the

his garments paradoxically reflect, Don Diego can just as rightly be seen as both sane and mad to some degree. In other words, Cervantes' description, presumably transmitted to the reader through the fictional filters of Cide Hamete, the translator, the "segundo autor" and an "editor persona,"<sup>29</sup> is "clear" only in its perplexity and conflictedness.

Another disputed point is whether the time-honored association in Spanish between the color green and lechery, as in the expression *viejo verde*, is at all relevant in the case of Don Diego, self-appointed archetype of marital fidelity.<sup>30</sup> Arguing, not just from the colors of the outfit, but from imagery that relates to emblematic symbolism, Percas de Ponseti asserts that Don Diego is ultimately meant to be seen as a shifty philanderer—on the prowl, and with much to hide—whose clothing and mount symbolize his deceitfulness through the imagery of chameleon-like disguise and camouflage.<sup>31</sup> Again, no univocal answer is possible in this regard, since there is no textual evidence of Don Diego's alleged sexual dalliance. The reader remains tantalizingly uninformed about Don Diego's recent whereabouts, although the character has clearly not been hunting, since he is lacking both his "perdigón manso" and his "hurón atrevido." Further, the reader remains equally uninformed about whether Don Diego's reference to his "children" (hijos) was, perhaps, a Freudian slip. Arguing along these lines, one may also choose to recall the excuse he improvised for riding past Don Quixote and Sancho on the

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"verde" of the character's "gabán," and not just the general tone of his appearance, is "chillón," an assertion for which there is no textual evidence. Presumably this scholar means to imply that green, as such, is intended to be seen as a "loud" color.

<sup>29</sup> I borrow this term from James Parr, *'Don Quixote': An Anatomy of Subversive Discourse*, p. 10 and *passim*.

<sup>30</sup> See V. A. Chamberlain and Jack Weiner, "Color Symbolism: A Key to a Possible New Interpretation of Cervantes' Caballero del Verde Gabán," *Romance Notes*, X (1969), pp. 1–6, cited in Francisco Márquez Villanueva, "El Caballero del Verde Gabán," pp. 150–151, n.4.

<sup>31</sup> See Helena Percas de Ponseti, *Cervantes the Writer and Painter of 'Don Quijote'* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1988), pp. 36–53. In this chapter, Percas de Ponseti makes a distinction between the superficially "impressionistic," and favorable, portrait of Don Diego, for which Cide Hamete is responsible, and the subtly "expressionistic," critical portrait, for which Cervantes is responsible. Indeed, as this scholar suggests, the two portraits overlap. For an earlier study on Don Diego by the same author, see *Cervantes y su concepto del arte*, v. 2 (Madrid: Gredos, 1975), pp. 332–382. As she argues in both studies, Cervantes' duplicitous portrait aims at contradicting first impressions. As I shall argue presently, his complex portrait also undoes second impressions.

road—namely, that his mare would probably arouse even Rocinante. It could thus appear that he is not only cowardly, but also somewhat preoccupied with sex. Indeed, despite this remark's expressing a plausible and typical concern of persons in the country, familiar with the behavior of horses, Cervantes draws our attention to the sexual innuendo by having Sancho (a peasant who is doubtless familiar with animal behavior) insist that Rocinante is incapable of any such "vileza" (II, 16; 150). So if the emblematic symbolism seems "clear," its function in the text is ambiguous.

Less debatable, perhaps, is the immediate consequence of Cervantes' lavishly detailed description of Don Diego as a type of seventeenth-century fashionplate. By any estimation, the striking *hidalgo's* impeccable, matching attire betokens at least a trace of vanity, which is one of the vices he claims to scorn as unchristian. Only a noteworthy degree of elegance and dash in his appearance could justify the repeated emphasis of Don Quixote's addressing him as "Señor galán" (II, 16; 150) at the start of their encounter, together with the protagonist's reported assessment of Don Diego as "un hombre de chapa" and "de buenas prendas" (*ibid.*).<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, it is before the characters exchange any words that the protagonist shows obvious surprise at the physical appearance of Don Diego, identified by his favorite color (*ibid.*): "y si mucho miraba el de lo verde a don Quijote, mucho más miraba don Quijote al de lo verde."

To continue our contrary reading, we not only notice Don Quixote's quoting from Ovid on the nobility of poetry, *est Deus in nobis* (II, 16; 156), but we also observe that he is thus putting a decidedly Christian spin, *a lo divino*, on a pagan text. So just as Don Diego's "reading" habits tended to profane the sacred, Don Quixote's tend to sanctify the profane. Furthermore, one can hardly accuse Don Quixote of failing to assimilate his sources. Without vague generalization, but quoting directly from a ballad, he first defines himself to Don Diego as a knight "destos que dicen las gentes/que a sus aven-

<sup>32</sup> Although this statement conflicts with Gerald Gingras's thesis concerning the "conservatism" of Don Diego's tastes ("Diego de Miranda, 'Bufón' or Spanish Gentleman?"), it does not conflict with the rationale behind the pertinent legal decrees ("pragmáticas") that Gingras cites in support of his arguments. Indeed, as Gingras implies, these decrees were aimed at curbing the ostentatious, extravagant habits of the *hidalgo* class. Don Diego's "conservatism" is, therefore, relative to a decadent norm. Again, his attire signals his conformism, together with the noticeable, if less than glaring, vanity of his display.

turas van" (II, 16, 151).<sup>33</sup> To the degree he is quixotic, and he is not always so, Don Quixote appears throughout the text as a paradigm of the irascible activist. Yet it is he, rather than the sober champion of ascetic devotions, who is said to esteem the wondrous, contemplative silence of Don Diego's quasi-monastic mansion (II, 18; 173): "pero de lo que más se contentó don Quijote fue del maravilloso silencio que en toda la casa había, que semejaba un monasterio de cartujos."<sup>34</sup> In his opening remarks, the ardent seeker of lasting fame and honor regrets having to describe himself at all, and closes, not with a grandiloquent "confío siempre en la misericordia infinita de Dios nuestro Señor," but with a rather self-effacing reference to his unkempt and weary appearance (II, 16; 152): "la amarillez de mi rostro y mi atenuada flaqueza."

It strikes me as no accident that, in Cervantes' text, a childless, life-long bachelor, in love with an imaginary damsel, should utter the work's most apposite words about parental love (II, 16; 155): "Los hijos, señor, son pedazos de las entrañas de sus padres, y así se han de querer, o buenos o malos que sean, como se quieren las almas que nos dan vida." No less sagely, Don Quixote urges against the tendency of some parents to force their son's choice of career; it is better that they let him "seguir aquella ciencia a que más le vieren inclinado" (*ibid.*). Never losing sight of his audience, and arguing with the utmost reasonableness—i.e., showing both *ethos* and *pathos*—Don Quixote also proffers considered and balanced praise of the virtues of poetry, beginning with the words (*ibid.*): "aunque la [ciencia] de la poesía es menos útil que deleitable, no es de aquellas que suelen deshonorar a quien las posee."

The protagonist is also far less crazy and rash than one is first led to assume by his adventure/non-adventure with the lion. With

<sup>33</sup>About these verses, Luis Andrés Murillo notes, in his edition of the *Quixote* (v.2, p. 140, n. 7): "Son o de un romance antiguo (perdido) o de la pluma de Alvar Gómez de Ciudad Real que los empleó en su traslación de los *Trionfi* de Petrarca (*Triumphus Cupidinis*, III, vss. 79–84), sin que haya en la obra original nada que se parezca a ellos." The same verses are mentioned twice in Part I: I, 9; and I, 49.

<sup>34</sup>For a masterful discussion of the sources and significance of "maravilloso silencio" in this passage, see Francisco Márquez Villanueva, "El Caballero del Verde Gabán," pp. 155–159. Also see Alan S. Trueblood, "El silencio en el *Quijote*," *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica*, 12 (1958), pp. 160–180. A more recent study on Cervantes' silences, with good bibliography on the *Quixote*, is Aurora Egido, "Los silencios del *Persiles*," *On Cervantes: Essays for L.A. Murillo*, James Parr, ed. (Newark, DE: Juan de la Cuesta, 1991), pp. 21–46.

flawless moral and *pedagogical* reasoning, Don Quixote states that he was right in attacking the lion, though he *knew* it to be a rash act (II, 17; 167): "que *conocí* ser temeridad esorbitante" (emphasis added). Following a perfect description of the classical virtue of fortitude, he goes on to give the *reason* behind his intentional madness (*ibid.*): "que así como es más fácil venir el pródigo a ser liberal que al avaro, así es más fácil dar el temerario en verdadero valiente que no el cobarde subir a la verdadera valentía." The knight finishes his lesson with a rather pointed reference to Don Diego's natural weakness (II, 17; 167–168): "créame vuesa merced, señor don Diego. . . , porque mejor suena en las orejas de los que lo oyen 'el tal caballero es temerario y atrevido' que no 'el tal caballero es tímido y cobarde.'" Neither truly a *don* nor a *caballero*, the protagonist demonstrates the most salient virtue of knighthood to the *caballero*, Don Diego de Miranda. What is more, he does so by proposing the classical, Aristotelian remedy for defective vice, which consists of compensating by way of excess.<sup>35</sup> He corrects Don Diego's reductive view of knight-errantry, a profession which the latter seems to confuse with that of a courtly knight (II, 17; 167):

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, Terrence Irwin, tr., Book 2, chapter 9, 1109b (New York: Hackett Publishing Company, 1985), pp. 52–53:

We must also examine what we ourselves drift into easily. For different people have different natural tendencies towards different goals, and we shall come to know our own tendencies from the pleasure or pain that arises in us. We must drag ourselves off in the contrary direction; for if we pull far away from error, as they do in straightening bent wood, we shall reach the intermediate condition.

Aristotle closes the second book of his *Ethics* with these words:

All this makes it clear, then, that in every case the intermediate state is praised, but we must sometimes incline towards the excess, sometimes towards the deficiency; for that is the easiest way to succeed in hitting the intermediate condition and [doing] well.

In 1109a (p. 50), Aristotle's remarks support the previous statement of Don Quixote: "In some cases the deficiency, in others the excess, is more opposed to the intermediate condition; e.g., it is cowardice, the deficiency, not rashness, the excess, that is more opposed to bravery." Also, on the remedy for either excessive or defective vice, compare Thomas Aquinas' *Commentary on the 'Nicomachean Ethics'*, C. I. Litzinger, O.P., tr., Lecture XI:C 369–381, v.1 (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1964), pp. 164–168. In paragraph 381 (*ibid.*, p. 168), Aquinas writes: "However, sometimes we must incline toward excess and sometimes toward defect either on account of the nature of the virtue or on account of our inclination. . . . Thus the mean according to which a thing is done well [i.e., virtuously] will be easily discovered."

Pero el andante caballero busque los rincones del mundo; éntrese en los más intrincados laberintos; acometa a cada paso lo imposible; resista en los páramos despoblados los ardientes rayos del sol en la mitad del verano, y en el invierno la dura inclemencia de los vientos y de los yelos; no le asombren leones, ni le espanten vestiglos, ni atemorizen endriagos; que buscar éstos, acometer aquéllos y vencerlos a todos son sus principales y verdaderos ejercicios.

Such "ejercicios" belong to an entirely different order from Don Diego's *pastimes* of fishing and hunting for small game. More important, the ethos of Don Quixote, erstwhile promoter of lunacy and heresy, stresses the positive and heroic side of all the virtues, whereas Don Diego's ethos stresses only the negative, Epicurean admonition: "nothing in excess."<sup>36</sup> Indeed, as the Church had firmly established by Cervantes' time—and as every informed Catholic knew since the time of St. Isidore of Seville (530?–636)—virtue lived to a *heroic* degree was, and still is, the very definition of sanctity and the standard for canonization.<sup>37</sup> The seemingly obvious *doxa* of Sancho's popular wisdom and of Don Diego's first attempt at self-figuration and self-knowledge thus seems to collapse upon critical examination.

#### IV

Nonetheless, we would be mistaken to think that Cervantes' narrative undermines one set of hypotheses only to leave another intact. The text both elicits and frustrates the reader's attempt to decide which of the two characters is morally superior. Like every element and image in the chapters devoted to narrating their en-

<sup>36</sup> Speaking of the ideal knight errant's heroic virtue to Don Lorenzo, Don Quixote states (II, 18; 171–172):

[H]a de estar adornado de todas las virtudes teologales y cardinales, [. . . ] y volviendo a lo de arriba, ha de guardar la fe a Dios y a su dama; ha de ser casto en los pensamientos, honesto en las palabras, liberal en las obras, valiente en los hechos, sufrido en los trabajos, caritativo con los menesterosos, y, finalmente, mantenedor de la verdad, aunque le cueste la vida el defenderla.

On the Epicurean adage, "nothing in excess," see Márquez Villanueva "El Caballero del Verde Gabán," p. 177.

<sup>37</sup> St. Isidore's formula in the *Etymologies* (I, 39, 9) is: "For hero is the name given to men who by their wisdom and *courage* are worthy of heaven" (emphasis added), quoted and translated in E. R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, Willard R. Trask, tr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), p. 175. On the history of the canonization process, and the centrality of "heroic virtue," see "Canonization of Saints (History and Procedure)," *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, v. 3 (New York: McGraw Hill, 1967), pp. 55–59.

counter, both characters—at the level of word, deed and physical appearance—are rife with paradox; that is, the characters, their interaction, their appearance, their mounts, the physical objects of their surroundings—all represent a blend of alternately conflicting and converging contraries, a *coincidentia oppositorum*. Likewise, the two contrary readings I have summarized here are at once contradictory and complementary, the object of praise and censure, parody and exaltation, both preserved and undone in the text.

As suggested earlier, both characters try to define themselves according to a belief system derived from their preferred form of exemplary literature. Let me now add that, in Cervantes' text, a character is shown to be mad, and impervious to the paradoxical nature of truth, to the extent that he insists on remaining what one may call, paraphrasing Peter Dunn, a stable sign within a closed semiotic system; that is, in the measure that he futilely attempts to collapse, in his own person, the distinction between life and discourse, and especially between experience and fiction.<sup>38</sup> For Don Quixote, the semiotic system is chivalric romance; for Don Diego, it is secular and devotional literature of the Christian Epicurean and Tridentine varieties.

The case of Don Diego is, of course, far less extreme than that of Don Quixote. Yet it is significant that the reader is given the opportunity to observe Don Diego at a stage of his life which resembles that of Don Quixote in the first chapter of Part I, when the protagonist named himself, his horse and his lady in accord with the semiotic system of knight-errantry. Like Don Quixote's initial self-fashioning—indeed, a form of self-creation—Don Diego's original self-definition is conveyed in an atemporal or habitual present, in perfect accord with his own semiotic system of exemplarity (Ii, 16; 153): "Soy un hidalgo . . ."; "paso la vida con mi mujer . . ."; "tengo hasta seis docenas de libros . . ."; "alguna vez como con mis amigos . . ."; and so on. Indeed, Don Diego presents himself as a man virtually exempt from history, and as little less than an archetype: integral, whole, complete.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Dunn makes a similar point, but without suggesting that this attitude is the measure of a character's madness or folly, in a comparison between Ginés de Pasamonte's self-naming and Don Quixote's naming of himself, Dulcinea and Rocinante, in "Cervantes De/Re-Constructs the Picaresque," *Cervantes* 2 (1982), pp. 119–120. As Dunn astutely observes (*ibid.*, p. 119), Ginés de Pasamonte, like Don Quixote, "aspires to make his life total discourse, to abolish the difference between story and diegesis, between the teller, the telling, and the told."

<sup>39</sup> My thanks to Carroll Johnson, whose insightful questions led me to clarify my observations on this aspect of Don Diego's self-portrait.

Unlike the self-styled knight, however, Don Diego is shown to be capable of reassessing his original position in the face of “startling,” “arresting” occurrences. The *hidalgo*, who is certainly more the Gentleman than the Knight of the Green Coat, reveals his fundamental sanity in that he ultimately acknowledges the sound reasoning of Don Quixote on such matters as the nobility of poetry, and religious and moral virtue, judging the protagonist to be “un loco que tiraba a cuerdo” (II, 17; 166), or in the opinion of Lorenzo, a “loco entreverado” (II, 18; 173)—a paradoxically “mixed” breed of lunatic, given to lucid intervals. So to speak, Don Diego stands as one of Cervantes’ *cuerdos entreverados*, a fundamentally sane man, given to momentary, sometimes severe lapses of moral folly. More important, however, Don Diego shows a capacity for reflective *admiratio* and awe, when confronted with actions that challenge his formerly untested assumptions (*doxa*)—that is, when brought to a state of aporetic crisis concerning the very precepts after which he first attempted to shape his identity.

Along these lines, there is a spate of references in these three chapters, beginning with Don Diego’s surname, which relate both conceptually and etymologically to the ideas of surprise, wonder and mystery (i.e., to the Latin verb *mirari*): “suspende,” “admirar,” “mirar,” “maravilla,” “milagro.”<sup>40</sup> Of particular interest in this chain of signifiers is the itinerary of Don Diego’s scrutinizing gazes, his growing sense of surprise, shock and reflective wonder. At first, Don Diego is understandably startled by the protagonist’s physical appearance (II, 16; 150): “Detuvo la rienda el caminante, admirándose de la apostura y rostro de don Quijote.” Fittingly, however, it is only at the level of physical appearance that the man in green makes his *first* judgment, filled with *admiratio*, about the protagonist (II, 16; 150–151):

Lo que juzgó de don Quijote de la Mancha el de lo verde fue que semejante manera ni parecer de hombre no le había visto jamás: Admiróle la longura de su caballo, la grandeza de su cuerpo, la flaqueza y amarillez de su rostro, sus armas, su ademán y compostura.

His sense of wonder increases after the protagonist gives an accounting of himself—in *words*. Following a long, reflective pause (“a

<sup>40</sup> For words and concepts related to the verb “mirar,” including the surname Miranda, I have found especially useful the entry MIRAR in J. Corominas, *Diccionario crítico etimológico de la lengua castellana*, v. 3 (Bern, Switzerland: Editorial Francke, 1954), pp. 382–384.

buen espacio" [II, 16; 152]), during which he is clearly pondering both the appearance and the words of Don Quixote, Don Diego states (*ibid.*):

pero no habéis acertado a quitarme la maravilla que en mí causa el haberos visto. . . , antes, agora que lo sé [quién sois], quedo más suspenso y maravillado.

Likewise, Sancho's choosing to kiss the man's feet, because the squire thinks him capable of working "milagros" (*miraculi*) (II, 16; 153), provokes "nueva admiración a don Diego" (II, 16; 154). Next, he is notably impressed with the logical quality of the madman's discourse (II, 16; 157): "Admirado quedó el del verde gabán del razonamiento de don Quijote." At the close of chapter 16, Don Diego has again reached an important judgment about the protagonist, "satisfecho en extremo de la discreción y buen discurso de don Quijote" (*ibid.*), which reflects his ability to alter his opinions according to the demands of experience (*ibid.*): "fue perdiendo de la opinión que con él tenía, de ser mentecato" (emphasis added).

If this, the first of the three chapters centers on appearances and discourse ("palabras"), the next chapter most certainly centers on deeds ("hechos," "obras"), shown to be the final manifestation of discourse and the ultimate basis of Don Diego's assessment of the protagonist. In the wake of Don Quixote's confrontation with the lion, together with the protagonist's account of that pivotal, name-changing event, Don Diego (who is identified here by his significant surname, rather than by either his cloak or his characteristic color) responds with reflective, contemplative silence (II, 17; 166):

En todo este tiempo no había hablado palabra don Diego de Miranda, todo atento a *mirar y notar los hechos y palabras* de don Quijote (emphasis added).

Although he is probably overstating his views out of courtesy to his listener, Don Diego tells Don Quixote, at the end of the chapter (II, 17; 168): "todo lo que vuesa merced ha *dicho y hecho* va nivelado con el fiel de la misma razón" (emphasis added). In any event, it seems that Don Diego disagrees with those readers who would dismiss the protagonist's actions as *simply* rash. Don Diego gives every indication of realizing that, in Don Quixote, he is pondering a moral and rational paradox. His continuing meditation on both the words and deeds of the newly-dubbed Knight of the Lions also provides the occasion for a conversation of respectful intimacy with his son (II, 18; 170):

No sé lo que te diga, hijo—respondió don Diego—; sólo te sabré decir que le he visto *hacer* cosas del mayor loco del mundo, y *decir* razones tan discretas, que *borran y deshacen* sus hechos; háblale tú, y toma el pulso a lo que sabe, y, *pues eres discreto*, juzga de su discreción o tontería lo que más puesto en razón estuviere; aunque, para decir verdad, antes le tengo por loco que por cuerdo (emphasis added).

It is appropriate that Don Diego should be the one to observe that the protagonist's words "undo" the apparent lunacy of his deeds. For, in a compelling instance of paradoxical reversal, it is through this very "deed" of respectful conversation with Lorenzo that Don Diego manages, if only in part, to "efface" and "undo" the folly of his formerly harsh "words" about his son. Here, as elsewhere, Don Diego shows himself to be the convex image—the complementary and non-exclusive opposite—of Don Quixote.

At the level of "life" and experience, and perhaps owing in part to the advice of Don Quixote, Don Diego seemingly begins to overcome the most notably unjust and uncharitable rigidities of his discursive, semiotic system. In a descriptive scene containing paradox at the level of both statement and structure, the protagonist and his squire depart from the home of the Miranda; both Don Diego and his son are shown standing together in a shared state of reflective wonder and amazement over the paradox of Don Quixote (II, 18; 177):

De nuevo se admiraron padre y hijo de las entremetidas razones de don Quijote, ya discretas y ya disparatadas, y del tema y tesón que llevaba de acudir de todo en todo a la busca de sus *desventuradas aventuras*, que las tenía por fin y blanco de sus deseos (emphasis added).

Paradoxically, then, despite his many shortcomings, the erstwhile skimmer is portrayed, outside his library, as a mirror, albeit an imperfect mirror, of the judicious reader. And his experience within the fictional frame is remarkably analogous to our own outside it. For Don Diego's assessments to deserve the modifiers "reflective" and "judicious," he had to entertain the possibility of "truth" contained in the radically opposed ethos of Don Quixote, in keeping with a dialectical method that, as discussed earlier, traces back to Plato's *Parmenides*. But, in Cervantes' text, such dialogue is never confined to an exchange of abstract ideas or mere words (without deeds) between characterological types. Rather, in these chapters, what one may call Cervantes' overarching spirit of dialogism extends to the deeds, visual imagery, physical surroundings, and the

unfolding process of verbal and non-verbal interaction between two individualized and paradoxical characters—characters who are progressively rendered in their individuality, despite their own attempts to remain as timeless archetypes.

Furthermore, as individual readers, our contrary readings, one favoring the ethos of Don Diego, the other favoring the ethos of Don Quixote, as that of the model Christian “hero,” lead us to understand the same “truths” about Don Diego that he *may* come to understand about himself. Increased knowledge for the reader is textually represented as self-knowledge, or potential self-knowledge, for Don Diego. For readers of Cervantes’ text, arguing two sides of a question takes the form of contrary readings. For Don Diego, it takes the form of an encounter with a contrary character: his mirror in age, appearance, folly, regional origin and social status. Don Quixote’s passing through “los umbrales de [sus] puertas” was the the “startling,” experiential equivalent of Don Diego’s reading the romances of chivalry.

Significantly, his experiential “reading” translates into Don Diego’s starting to alter his social conformism. He shows a truly charitable and respectful “predilection” for Don Quixote and Sancho, sharing his home, his goods, his friendship and his familial life with guests who are nothing if not “poor,” unable to return the favor, and who are far from “limpios y aseados.” That the protagonist’s presence in Don Diego’s home is a startling disruption of the usual routine is plainly shown in the reaction of both Don Lorenzo and Doña Cristina (II, 18; 169): “Madre y hijo quedaron suspensos de ver la estraña figura de don Quijote.” Although it ranks among the many things left unwritten, one is tempted to ponder what Don Diego’s neighbors must have thought about his choosing to entertain such unusual guests. Thanks in no small measure to Don Quixote’s appearance, words and deeds, but also thanks to Don Diego’s attitude of openness and generosity, the protagonist’s visit to the home of the Miranda represents nothing less than the paradox, or the apparent *impossibilia*, of a chivalric-Epicurean, “domestic” adventure.

If, in another instance of dramatic irony, Sancho overstates the case of Don Diego’s virtue in thinking that the latter “debía de hacer milagros,” it is nonetheless true that these chapters contain a series of marvels (*mirabilia*) bearing on the incipient transformation of the man in green. Thus, his surname, Miranda, not only signalizes the appearance of such extraordinary marvels in the most seemingly ordinary circumstances, thereby inviting one to “mirar” and “admi-

rar", to gaze intently and wonder reflectively, to become increasingly aware and self-aware; but, even more reflectively, the name also draws readers' attention, by means of the gerundive inflection, to the "things *continually* to be wondered at" when they adopt this character's perspective, and when they recognize the specularity of the text, as well as Miranda as a mirror of themselves. For Don Diego represents a fellow "reader" (judge) of Don Quixote. Ultimately grounded either inside and outside the fictional frame of Cervantes' text, Don Diego and the reader are involved in an analogous adventure, an analogous internal debate, an analogous dialogue, an analogous process of self-examination and self-reflection.

Revealing truths beyond the two extremes, the unfolding story of Don Diego's momentary crisis paradoxically upholds, undoes, conflates and enlarges such formerly rigid contraries as sacred and profane, sanity and lunacy, poetry and history, action and contemplation, vice and virtue, and especially self and other. For, if they so choose, one paradox that readers, more than Don Diego, come specifically to understand in these chapters is that self-knowledge takes the form of an unfolding, social and dialogic enterprise. To be sure, the process of Don Diego's reflective wonder about the appearance, words and deeds of the protagonist, as well as his subsequent judgments and actions, jointly mark at least his temporary willingness to ease the fixity of his semiotic system, which was responsible for his *sancta mediocritas* and his static, archetypal, understanding of self.<sup>41</sup> But, to paraphrase Close, the character of Don Diego is far from resolved.<sup>42</sup> There is no guarantee, and no indication, that he will later act on what he began to learn from his encounter with Don Quixote.

From the standpoint of the self-satisfied mediocrity and physical cowardice contained in his ethos, the character's *first* name, Diego, contrasts him ironically with Santiago Matamoros, Spain's

<sup>41</sup> On Neo-Epicurean *aurea mediocritas*, see Márquez Villanueva, "El Caballero del Verde Gabán," p.161. Lurking beneath this doctrine, of course, is lukewarmness, one of the chief enemies of the spiritual life, associated with worldly riches, first denounced in the book of *Revelation* (3: 15-18), in John's letter to the seventh church at Laodicea:

I know all about you: how you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were one or the other, but since you are neither, but only lukewarm, I will spit you out of my mouth. You say to yourself, "I am rich, I have made a fortune, and have everything I want," never realizing that you are wretchedly and pitifully poor, and blind and naked too.

<sup>42</sup> Anthony Close, *Don Quixote*, p. 52.

religious *archetype* of the Christian hero—indeed, the quintessential “santo a la jineta.” It is hardly accidental that the “tawny velvet” of his cap and cloak is described as “terciopelo *leonado*” —another, more cryptic, reference by Cervantes in these chapters to the idea of lion turned pussycat. But, if the name Diego suggests ironic censure of folly (cowardice), that name may also contain a paradoxical note of praise. One must bear in mind the clear affinity between Spain’s semi-official, chivalric understanding of “heroic virtue” and Don Quixote’s derivative ethos of knight-errantry. It is because of the affinity between those two conceptions of “sanctity” that the protagonist’s laughing at Sancho’s assessment of Don Diego as just such a “santo” amounts to Don Quixote’s scornfully dismissing Don Diego as any type of “knight.”

Yet it will also be remembered that, in the chapter devoted to Don Quixote’s examination of the icons, the protagonist is unsuccessful in his efforts to maintain the equation between sainthood and knighthood. His lack of success in this regard is especially evident in his contrived description of St. Paul (II, 58; 473): “caballero andante por la vida, y santo a pie quedo por la muerte.” Indeed, the sainthood of Paul fails to fit within the unyielding rigidities of Don Quixote’s semiotic system. So, the protagonist’s ethos of heroism may be an effective mirror for Don Diego, but is hardly superior, or free of defects.<sup>43</sup> It is in this light that one may come to understand that the name, Diego, also indicates the apparently contrary, double-minded purpose of satirizing a quixotically facile equation between heroic virtue or manliness, on the one hand, and military prowess and vain temerity, on the other. In short, the doubly satirical name may be taken to allude to a certain strength of *character* (an interior and enlarged form of Santiago-like fortitude) that this Diego reveals after pondering the cogent lunacy of the Knight of the Lions—a lunacy which posed a bracing challenge to the cowardice first intimated in his habit of pious skimming.

Equally important, both the character and the reader have come to observe that one’s self-knowledge and identity are neither devoid of all structure nor perfectly completed forms, but a project, like the text, that is perennially “under construction” and dialectically in the making. Indeed, with respect to the self, Cervantes dramatizes

<sup>43</sup> For Américo Castro’s famous assessment of how Cervantes viewed “santos a la jineta,” see *Cervantes y los casticismos españoles* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1974), p. 141. Arguing in a similar vein, Márquez Villanueva (“El Caballero del Verde Gabán,” p. 168) seems to overstate his case, dismissively claiming that Cervantes views “santos a la jineta” simply as “cosa de risa.”

the paradoxical need for sameness in change, and stability in instability. For, on the one hand, from the standpoint of both the character and the reader, the *momentary stability* of the logical and semantic categories governing the two opposed semiotic systems—and those governing the contrary readings—are indispensable to the *intelligibility* of the action contained in these chapters, whether that “action” comes in the form of a fictional narrative (reader) or “historical” experience (Don Diego). On the other hand, the chief defect of each semiotic system or ethos is shown to lie specifically in its static, archetypal and atemporal pretensions.<sup>44</sup> Such discursive and intellectual fixity is dramatized and thematized as a means of obviating understanding, closing one to mystery—in a fruitless attempt to “resolve” mystery—and preventing dialogue.

Don Diego’s novel attitude of dialogue with, and openness to, apparent contradiction—to a dialogic process revealing the alternating presence and absence of, say, virtue in vice, sanity in madness, self in other—leads him to invest his discourse, at least for a time, with a humanizing flexibility. Thus, if only momentarily, he enlarges his logical and semantic categories of both judgment and action. His attitude of reflective wonder (*admiratio*) and respect toward Don Quixote reveals a certain openness to novelty and paradox.

The protagonist seems entrenched in a wholly different attitude. It is doubtless true that, by the time he meets Don Diego, the protagonist seems to possess a “history” in every sense. Thus, his self-definition is cast largely in the preterite tense (II, 16; 151): “Salí de mi patria, empeñé mi hacienda, dejé mi regalo, y entreguéme en los brazos de la Fortuna.” Nonetheless, he strives to make his life narrative flow with an inexorable logic from the archetypal self-definition which begins his historical summary: “soy caballero’ destos que dicen las gentes/que a sus aventuras van’ ” (emphasis added). In fact, Don Quixote seems to believe that by uttering this archetypal definition of his ethos (coterminous with his madness), he will do away with Don Diego’s sense of amazement (II, 16; 152): “pero dejará vuesa merced de estarlo (maravillado) cuando le diga, como le digo, que soy caballero. . . .” He is, of course, mistaken in that prediction.

More significant, however, what Don Quixote says about his “historical” self is erroneous, if not mendacious. The reader remembers that he pawned only part of his estate, and that he did so, not to pursue his career as knight errant, but only to purchase more romances

<sup>44</sup> On Cervantes’ language of movement and motion, see Steven Hutchinson, *Cervantine Journeys* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992).

of chivalry. Furthermore, he left no life of luxury ("dejé mi regalo"), but a life of idle fantasy and ennui. In addition, he grossly misrepresents both the content and the success of his written "history."

Fittingly, then, chapter II, 16 begins, not with Don Quixote's encounter with the man in green, but with a vivid portrayal of his continued delusions of grandeur; with his refusing to recognize that he has not defeated a fellow knight, but a neighbor, Sansón Carrasco; and with his attributing the likeness obtaining between his enemy's visage and that of Sansón to the ubiquitous enchanters. His story and his self-ignorance have therefore proceeded in perfect consonance with his semiotic system and his original self-definition, both of which are not only fixed and closed but also in a state of continuing conflict with the physical objects, events and persons of his surroundings. If Don Quixote instances a moral paradox, it is because his lunacy is shown to be integral to his "heroism"—the partial nobility of his ideals, his fidelity, his depth of conviction. None of this, however, makes him either sane or self-aware. And Cervantes does not seem to portray his protagonist's depth of conviction, or fanaticism, as a measure of morality. But to compromise the knight's lunacy would mean compromising his ability to act as an effective mirror on Don Diego and on society; it would compromise, in other words, the wisdom contained in his particular form of madness.

What we observe in Don Diego, by contrast, is the beginning of a life narrative that is potentially different in kind. Yet, it is important to stress, these chapters resist giving readers the false solace of closure. It is true that we have seen the man in green begin to reform his attitude toward his son; and his behavior toward Don Quixote and Sancho does show some evidence of his overcoming his habits of timidity, lukewarmness and conformism. But a potential for excessive comfort and complacency continues to linger, as is evident in his vain, sartorial habits. In addition, there is another negative, if subtle, element of his portrait: namely that, if he is not a philanderer, Don Diego does seem to show a rather startling indifference toward his wife.<sup>45</sup>

Don Diego therefore remains a moral paradox as well—worthy by turns of praise and censure—an *exemplum*, as it were, of virtually every reader's moral place somewhere between vice and virtue. As we accompany Don Quixote and Sancho at the close of II, 18, we leave

<sup>45</sup> Márquez Villanueva ("El Caballero del Verde Gabán," p. 177, n. 46) views Doña Cristina as "una especie de mueble adquirido por don Diego para traer a su casa el máximo de orden y comodidad."

Don Diego in the embryonic stage of his self-awareness, of which his reflective wonder and incipient reform are, perhaps, but the first salutary phases. Hence, without denying the relevance of earlier, mixed meanings of his attire (folly and sane conservatism, vanity and conformism), I would suggest that, at this stage of the narrative, we also regard his identifying color, repeated thirteen times over the course of three chapters, in an equally traditional fashion: as a *latent* symbol, beneath the tawny velvet (a figure of comfort) and gold (a paradoxical figure of riches, maturity, spring and harvest), of surprising rebirth and *hope*. But that hope and rebirth, for character and “desocupado lector” alike, remain an open question.

In passing, it is also worth noting how, in these chapters, Cervantes structures the use of *temporal* and *spatial* settings to underscore the paradoxical quality of both his characters and his thematics. Indeed, the temporal and spatial structure of the encounter between a knight errant and a “knight” complacent—between two contrary and complementary characters, and their analogous “adventures”—reinforces the textual interplay between contemplation and action, poetry and history, being and becoming, and self and other. Moreover, the structured openness of the chapters merges the chronotypical image of Don Quixote’s quest on the road with that of Don Diego de Miranda’s days spent leisurely (or was it idly?) at home. The seminal and unfolding tale concerning Don Diego’s aporetic crisis of self-knowledge thus holds together opposing extremes of fixity and flux, harmony and discord, in a paradoxical state of cooperative tension.

## V

In sum, Don Diego’s possibility for growth in virtue, which he is hardly shown to live to a “heroic degree,” lies in his potential courage to pursue a *quest* for self-knowledge—a quest that would represent a laudable form of self-love and learned ignorance, if purged of self-referential pride, self-preference and pseudo-monastic isolation from the “other,” or the opposite, within himself. In any case, his attitude of *admiratio* and reflectiveness contrasts favorably with the complacency and *spiritual* cowardice expressed in Don Quixote’s most un-Socratic maxim, “Yo sé quien soy” (I, 5; 106), which dooms the protagonist to increased self-doubt and self-defeat.

As Cervantes’ narrative progressively reveals, it is the fixity and antinomy—the wholly internal reference and self-contained quality—of Don Quixote’s self-figuration that come to deprive him of all

semantic and social space, even as they lead his life-as-discourse to become ensnared in a vicious circle of insoluble contradictions. Indeed, for Don Quixote, every failure to reconcile his experiences with either his poetic self or his "code" provides little occasion for wonder or reassessment, but serves chiefly to increase his chronic melancholy. In part, Don Quixote represents the *reductio ad absurdum* of readers, authors and texts that futilely equate "truth," not with a quest, but with aprioristic certainty and formulaic closure.

By contrast, as thematized and dramatized in Cervantes' narrative, an openness to paradox engenders a sense of communion between self and other in a common quest for truth. But that quest pursues a necessarily elusive and unfolding truth—perhaps "infinitely" approachable and knowable in itself, yet clearly surpassing the limits of time and history, and those of our consoling fictions. Especially in these chapters, Cervantes' fictional paradox depicts seemingly ordinary encounters between self and other, and between reader, text and life, as *potential* encounters with the marvelous ("est Deus in nobis"). Hence, such encounters are not an occasion for final certainty. Instead, they call for *contemplation* in the face of unfolding mystery, and for the attendant *action* of *mutual* self-creation and self-renewal.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>I am most grateful to both Mary Gaylord and James Iffland for their comments on an earlier version of this essay.

