A Playground of Reading: Readers of and in Don Quixote

Jennifer Coe

College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University

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A PLAYGROUND OF READING: READERS OF AND IN DON QUIXOTE

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Jennifer A. Coe
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Approved by:

[Signatures]

Assistant Professor of English

Assistant Professor of English

Associate Professor of Modern and Classical Languages

Chair, Department of English

Director, Honors Thesis Program
I however—for though I pass for the father, I am the stepfather of Don Quixote—have no desire to go with the current custom or to implore you, dearest reader, almost with tears in my eyes, as others do, to pardon or excuse the defects you may perceive in this child of mine. You are neither its relative nor its friend..." (I. Prologue, 9)

Whether the first-person prologist speaking in the quoted segment of Cervantes' *Don Quixote* tries throughout "his" text to caricature and mock the popular romances of the day, or to address the concept of authorship, or to explore the boundaries and non-boundaries of reading (all of which have been held by various critics), the message of this passage remains the same. The prologist—who is to be viewed as a persona created by Cervantes and not Cervantes himself—assures us that he will not ask us to assume a relational or friendly role in the reading of the text. Instead, we are free to pick at it, prod it and poke at it, be critical and fussy, distant and unimpressionable. We may remain "masters of our own houses" without allowing the text to influence our roles, our homes, or our souls (I. Prologue, 9). In short, we can feel free to remain immovable critics, reading with the sense of a lord and master over not only our homes and our souls, but over the text as well.

Considering, however, the envelopment of the literary tradition within a specific mode of normative discourse—the
acceptable and definitive manner of thinking and talking about literature—much of the narrational monologue and character conversation within Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, including that quoted above, is unnecessary. Instead of a world in which the reader of his text immediately assumes a relational role, Cervantes writes in a world in which the notions of "relationship" or "friendship" between reader and text—notions which the prologuist dismisses—are utterly foreign to both casual and critical readers. For the time in which *Don Quixote* was written was "a high-water mark of literary activity in Spain," the people of this period developing "a strong taste for criticism as a sport" (Madariaga 70). Therefore, Cervantes would have written from the assumption that his and all texts are mercilessly tossed into the domain of the inexorable critic, in which they may be prodded and poked, in which their faults are rarely pardoned or dissembled.

Judging from the massive amounts of critical material published since the time of Cervantes, it is safe to say that this critical spirit has not abated. With this spirit, in both his and our society the causes and actuality of Quixote's madness are "diagnosed" within the normative standards of sanity and reasonable living: readers as well as characters laugh at attacks on windmills and Quixote's naive trust in books of the knights-errant. In these societies incongruities and disparities are viewed as inexcusable:
readers too disapprove of strange disappearances and reappearances of donkeys and the simple vanishing of gold coins. In both his and our literary discourses, there is no dynamic relationship or friendship; and since we are only allowed to believe in a madman named Alonso Quixano, there is no Don Quixote.

Instead of Cervantes' relationship, our discourse demands a reader and a text, a subject and an object. Therefore, we find in our study and in our practice the idea of the reader as subject lording over the text as object, always reading, searching for the meaning, interpreting with the confidence of one worthy of the role. Despite the historically long theoretical and practical acceptance of this critical approach, however, a counter-movement, embodied perhaps most decisively by the deconstructionists, has recently emerged; this counter-movement projects a discourse concerning the breakdown of the subject/object, reader/text dichotomy. But it is one thing to find this breakdown in the limited confines of discourse about literature; it is another to find the breakdown both contained and discussed within a work of literature. Yet exactly this can be detected; at times an intratextual breakdown of the subject/object, reader/text dichotomy reveals itself, so that the reader ceases to be merely subject, text to be merely object. And so we find in our very texts--such as in the text of Don Quixote--a forced re-evaluation of ourselves as readers and our interaction and
relationship with the text. We find the text joining with us in our readership to form a dynamism of reader and text in which boundaries are confounded—in which the question of relationship is raised intra-textually.

In this way the text of Don Quixote draws the Prologuist's denial of kinship into a self-reflexive questioning of the very reader/text relationship which constructs its existence. When Weiger claims that "El ingenioso hidalgo... is a book about reading" (Weiger 136), he states clearly one of the foci of the action and dialogue saturating the text. Internally conscious of the question of readership and the traditional subject/object dichotomy, the structure and narrative of Don Quixote examine the placement of reader and text, their singular and (perhaps more importantly) their pluralistic relational roles, and the breakdown of traditional discursive constructions of both general and historically specific readers and texts (that is, an individual reader in relation to an individual text). Through this massive exploration of the act of reading, Cervantes succeeds in creating a playground of reader/text relationships which then assists the reader in exploring her own place and role in the reading process.

The questioning of the reader-text relationship and its traditionally dichotomous construction, while presented in the fictional mode by Cervantes, is presented in the theoretical mode by Wolfgang Iser, the German critic and phenomenologist.
Because Iser theoretically explains what Cervantes artistically illustrates, a conjunctive study is necessary here. As will be shown of Cervantes, Iser moves from a concern about literature as it is experienced by the thinking subject, "I," to a breakdown of the reader/text construction. Both Cervantes and Iser begin by exploring the placement of the text and reader in the interaction of the two.

Iser starts his exploration of this placement through a redefining of the term "literary work." The literary work, he says, has two poles: (1) the artistic—the text created by the author, and (2) the esthetic—the realization accomplished by the reader (Iser 1219). The literary work as understood by Iser, then, "cannot be completely identical with the text, or with the realization of the text, but in fact must lie halfway between the two" (Iser 1219). On the surface, reader/text placement now seems a simple matter: if I am to read Don Quixote, then the text lies at one pole, my realizations at the other, and the literary work halfway between. But though Iser is taking a step in the right direction with his redefining of the literary work, in reality these distinctions are not that simple. Iser's idea of poles and middle-grounds is deceptively concrete, for a closer look reveals that the reading process is neither a geometric nor a mathematical configuration; neither a median nor extremities can be calculated. Attempting to position the reader/text within a field of discourse, then, is infinitely more difficult than a
simple medial computation. This initial and useful attempt at positioning, followed by a collapse into confusion upon the realization that simple mathematics cannot be applied, is precisely what is embodied in the action and the discourse in Don Quixote.

Cervantes' beginnings of the exploration of placement are parodically simplistic. His stance has often been defined as critical of the romantic tradition—a definition that is both convenient and to some extent accurate. This definition is at least defensible, since as Martin de Riquer points out, the text itself states this as a purpose (895): "this book...is, from beginning to end, an attack upon the books of chivalry," states the prologuist's friend (I. Prologue, 13). Yet attributing only this purpose to the beginning of the Quixote is a reductionist stance; these beginnings can also serve as a parody of dualistic thinking on the part of readers and critics.

Notice once again the words of the prologuist: we are excused from any "familial" or relational ties with the text, leaving it open for criticism and allowing us to remain untouched residents of our own homes, untouched souls of our own bodies (I. Prologue, 9)—untouched readers who remain distinct from that which is read, only judicious and unchangeable. The literary critic and critical analysis are definitive of the very ideas stated in this Prologue. Notice that few historical extensive definitions of the critical
involve a changing of the self to accompany the reading of the text; instead the text must be analyzed while the analyst remains stable and same.1

Following these cursory beginnings at reader/text exploration, Alonzo Quixano continues the intratextual examination by going mad--thus creating Don Quixote. It is not his madness per se that is important to this discussion, however; it is instead the cause of his madness that is of interest. This cause of madness is identified by Foucault as madness by romantic identification: a madness in which what was considered fantasy on the part of the author of a text becomes hallucination on the part of the reader, in which "the writer's stratagem is quite naively accepted as an image of reality" (Foucault Madness & Civilization 28-29). Foucault uses Quixote as a fixed form of this type of madness, for his condition is the result of an abandonment of his formerly ordered life in favor of a life devoted to the reading of books of knight-errantry:

In short, he became so absorbed in his books that he spent his nights from sunset to sunrise, and his days from dawn to dark poring over them; and what with little sleep and much reading his brains shriveled up and he lost his wits. (I. I, 26)

Foucault claims that madness by romantic identification reveals "an enormous anxiety concerning the relationships, in a work of art, between the real and the imaginary" (Foucault
Madness 29). I would extend this anxiety concerning relationships to include also that of the reader and the text (which presumably follows quite closely after the real and the imaginary).

With this resulting anxiety in mind, it follows that Quixano's brief literary debut should tell a cautionary tale: if you allow too much of yourself to enter into your reading, if you allow yourself to be touched too much by the text, madness may result. The reader of the Quixote is not exempt from the warning. It is to be understood, since this is in part a mockery of chivalric romances, that the reader of Don Quixote may become like this specific reader (Quixano) within Don Quixote--nothing but a lunatic overwhelmed by the text. A reinforcement of this warning occurs when the reader discovers--during an intra-textual exploration of Quixano's books--that Quixano himself read one of Cervantes' novels! If one man went mad by becoming too involved in books by authors such as Cervantes, surely the reader of Don Quixote can also. Thus begun by narrational suggestions and continued through madness, the construction of the dichotomy quickly impresses itself upon the reader: the reader and text must be held as radically separate functional units lest roles become so confused that inaccuracy or even madness results. The role of the untouched reader is certainly not a difficult role to fill in the beginning of Part I. Quixote's actions and reactions in this section are completely laughable and ludicrous: he
turns inns into castles, prostitutes into ladies-in-waiting, windmills into giants, friars into sage enchanters. There can be no sympathy for Quixote's madness; only laughter can result. It is difficult to consider a madman kin, thus making it simple to assume a role of mastery, of lordship over both the main character and the text itself. And so the dualism of the reading subject and the textual object reigns on in Cervantes' reflexive parody.

Cervantes has attempted a reader/text placement as simple and as pretty as that initially proposed by Iser. Perhaps the mathematical configuration is slightly different: the reader is lord and master, working at the problem, constructing one pole, while the text sits submissive at the other. But the median—-Iser's literary work—does not appear to play a role in this part of the text. Cervantes' examples thus far have fed on the dualistic thinking that constructs the reader/text dichotomy—-if we do not remain lords and masters of the text, severe consequences may follow.

It is important to note that in this dualistic model, the responsibility for the consummation of the act of reading lies solely with the responsible reader. When speaking of the book-burning scene in Chapter VI, in which the priest and the barber burn Quixano's books for both his good and the good of the impressionable public, the narrator refers to the burning as "the slaughter of those innocents"—-certainly a phrase packed with emotional connotations (I. VI, 48). And
significantly, though the priest and the barber initiate the slaughter, they are in a sense redeemed by the personal information yielded during the action: both of the men have read most of the books in Quixote's library, yet neither of them has contracted Quixote's madness. They have instead been "responsible" readers, keeping their distance and remaining residents in their own homes; they have fulfilled the subject-function of the subject/object dichotomy of reading.

Or so they (and almost everyone who confronts them) think. Yet here a distinction of Iser's can break down the ostensible superiority that appears to reign in figures such as the priest and the barber. For the priest, the barber, and also the prologuist are working with a definition of "reading" that presents a singular, directed activity on the part of the reader to the text--unlike Quixano, who shifted the direction of activity so that the text proved lord and master over him. This was, after all, Quixano's mistake: he allowed the text to disrupt the directedness of reading, thereby causing his madness. Yet Iser shows that reading, whether performed by the priest, the barber, or Quixano, is not as singular and directed as it may seem:

The text only takes on life when it is realized, and furthermore the realization is by no means independent of the individual disposition of the reader--though this in turn is acted upon by the different patterns of the text. (Iser 1219)
The literary work (or what is the object in the subject/object dichotomy), then, is dependent upon "realization" (i.e., the esthetic) of the text (i.e., the artistic). This realization is dependent upon the individuality of the reader (the subject). And the individuality of the reader (subject), he says, is "acted upon by the different patterns of the text [object]"—that is, the individuality of the subject is also influenced by the patterns of the object. Suddenly, a mutual dependency arises in which boundaries are confounded. Both reader and text are simultaneously constructive and constructed; no more are either simply subject or object. And so the subject/object dichotomy deconstructs, allowing for a dynamism of activity.

What does this mean to the priest and the barber? It appears to mean simply that since they are, to some extent, inherently dependent upon the texts that they read, they neither have been nor are lords and masters of the reading process. But still more is involved here. Iser uses the analogy of a mirror in describing this "more": "The manner in which the reader experiences the text will reflect his own disposition, and in this respect the literary text acts as a kind of mirror" (Iser 1224). In some respects, this analogy is accurate, for it is evident that individual readers experience texts in very individual ways—ways dependent upon the individuality of the reader. Yet the analogy is not completely accurate, for it implies a wholeness that reading
does not involve. For example, when looking into a mirror, usually the person in front of the mirror desires only to see a portion of himself: the hair, a belt, the tying of a tie. Yet the mirror, unable to comprehend this fractioning of self, reflects the whole, so that an entirety is displayed with every reflection. A reading, however, unlike the reflection, displays only an aspect or specific aspects—a confined understanding—of the person; and this understanding has certain definite limits and boundaries of its own. Notice the priest and the barber—or even Alonso Quixano. Were we to gather a complete reflection from the ways in which they read, or only an aspect of their selves? Surely we are unable to say that we can see them, with all of their complexities, in their entireties; yet we do learn something about their character, their peculiarities. So while the reader, in the act of reading, gleans information from the text, so too does the text glean information from the reader. Reading, then, is a "two-way street." Both sides of the traditional dichotomy are "readers," and both are "texts"—the process is such a dynamic one that it is difficult to distinguish where boundaries lie or whether they even exist at all.

In fact, the terms "reader" and text" are themselves deceptively concrete, for their boundaries are so illusive that neither can be determined and fixed as one solitary definitional being. Foucault's writing about the book accurately explains this. On the one hand, he writes, the
book seems a positive entity, which occupies a segment of space, has a beginning and an end, is materially constructed in a specific manner. But on the other hand, he writes, "the frontiers of a book are never clear cut: beyond the title, the first lines, and the last full stop, beyond its internal configuration and its autonomous form, it is caught up in a system of references to other books, other texts, other sentences: it is a node within a network" (Archaeology of Knowledge 23). If one were to define this "node" as "that which is read" as the function of the text, it is clear through Iser's mirror model that more is read than only the text: a "reader" can be read also. And so the "nodes within a network" or readership are not only occupied by unified spatial-temporal, material individualizations called books; instead, they can be occupied by any spatial-temporal material individualization that fulfills a specific function.

At this point it would be useful to redefine some basic terms. The term "reading" has already been defined to describe a dynamic, creative process which involves both parties ("reader" and "text"). Yet given that it has been said that both parties are simultaneously reader and text throughout the act of reading, the terms "reader" and "text" should no longer signify concrete, spatial-temporal articles, but instead signify a positioning in action. The phrase "a positioning in action" and its ramifications for reader and text must be understood here. The "reader," when positioned
in action, is that which gleans information from something else, either passively or actively. The "text," on the other hand, is that from which information is gleaned. It is important to note here that when I constitute the text as "reader" and the reader as "text," I do not mean that the text reads in the sense that we usually mean it. I merely mean that through its writing and construction, it demonstrates and illustrates the "narrative" of the reader, an aspect of the reader's individuality. This is what is meant by the redefining of the terms "reader" and "text." Because these terms are so firmly established as signifying spatial-temporal objects, however, to change the signification of the terms would most likely be a source of confusion; I will therefore not attempt the change. Instead, the terms "reader" and "text" will continue to signify the traditional spatial-temporal objects. If, however, I need to refer to either "reader" or "text" in the sense of participants in a dynamic course of action, the terms will signal an endnote, yet this endnote will be indicated with a lettered superscript followed by a numbered superscript—signalling the reader both as to the sense of the term used and to an explanation of the sense found in the notes at the end. If the reader understands the reasoning behind the sense of the term, then it is not necessary to refer to the endnote. One will be provided for the possibility of confusion—not for the necessity of referral. Thus the terms will appear as
"reader$^1...2...n$" and "text$^1...2...n$.

With this new understanding of functionality, it is seen that the prologuist, the priest, and the barber are not the stout readers that they and others think they are. In fact, their very conception of the subject/object dichotomy in reading is in itself a reading of them. In other words, through their viewing of their roles as readers, we can begin to know something (though not everything) about them as persons—if nothing else, that they assume the role of lord and master in their reading. So by presuming to instruct others how to read, they are revealing the stuff of their "text"—they are allowing themselves to be read. This is especially significant considering their multiple roles within Don Quixote. These two are both readers and characters, both reading and being read (they read within the text yet are being read as specific characters within Don Quixote); they are read through their reading (we learn about them through their revelations regarding reading); they are both reader and text, in both literal and figurative terms.

And so the reader of the Quixote begins his journey into a long tale of reading with a touch of madness and a touch of presumption—with only Quixano-turned-Quixote and the prologuist, the priest, and the barber to act as models of reading. Yet as the novel progresses, a multitude of readers emerge from the printed word so that "the protagonist's obsession with reading [is] the point of departure for what
follows" (Weiger 136). Each reader, moreover, represents or embodies a type or model of readership$^a_1$ and textuality$^a_1$--thus complicating what at first appeared to be a cautionary tale, creating from it an exploration of both reader$^a_1$ and text$^a_1$.

Thus the parodic nature of the beginning of Don Quixote quickly changes into a challenge--a challenge that comes not from the reader, but from the Quixote itself when other readers are introduced to the narrative--and the challenge is both directly and indirectly involved in the writing of the text. The introduction of multiple authors occurs at the end of Chapter VIII when the narrator suddenly declares that he, "the second author of this work," cannot continue with the story being told (Don Quixote's battle with the Biscayan) because "the author of the history...could find nothing more written about these achievements of Don Quixote than what has already been told" (I. VIII, 64). Here a new dimension is introduced. Suddenly the narrator of the Quixote is no longer an author, but a second author, and a confusion regarding the functionality of the second author results: "As second...how is he an 'author' rather than an editor or copier?" (Flores 101). This question may be carried one step further by adding "reader" to "editor or copier." And the answer becomes that he is all of these in one. The persona of the second author is then himself a reader who serves as a model of dynamic readership within the Quixote.

Two aspects of the second-author's role as reader$^a_2$ should
be noted. The first is that he is a reader\textsuperscript{a2} who was obviously touched by that which he read. At times he certainly seems to believe devoutly in the tale—or "history"—that he has read: "I say, then, that in these and other respects our gallant Don Quixote is worthy of everlasting and notable praise" (I. IX, 66). That he has been influenced by the text is in itself evident by the fact that he is now bothering to rewrite it, to recreate it with his own touch. He is, then, in some ways the gullible reader who accepts all as true, who tries to live the text in his own way—the antithesis of the untouched critic. The second-author is, to an extent, much like Quixano: the text of the "original" Don Quixote has so touched him that he feels compelled to take his own esthetic to create another literary work. With Quixano, this work meant madness; the second-author, however, merely writes a literary work in a recognizable and socially acceptable form. Just as Quixano's "production" is a reading of himself, so too is the second author's production a reading: the very "author" of the Quixote fulfills the functions of the text\textsuperscript{a2}.

To an extent. The second notable aspect of the second-author is that he is at times critical of Cide Hamete, the "original author." The first instance of this is at the end of Chapter VIII, when Don Quixote's battle with the Biscayan is prematurely ended. Instead of accepting the terms of the "original" manuscript, the second-author questions the text, refusing "to believe that so interesting a history could have
been allowed to lapse into oblivion" (I. VIII, 64). He even accuses the original author of "spoiling the whole episode" (I. VIII, 64). Here a gap is left in the narrative—a gap which the reader\textsuperscript{a3} must fill. Is the original author qualified in his role as historian? Is he to be trusted? These questions are compounded further when the second-author calls Hamete a liar and faulty historian, questioning the truth of an episode:

If any objection can be raised as to its truth, it can only be because its author was an Arab, since lying is very common among those of that nation....[W]here he could and should have licensed his pen to praise so worthy a knight, he seems to me deliberately to have written nothing. (I. IX, 67–68)

With this questioning of competency, the reader\textsuperscript{a3} is left to question the validity of the entire work. Is the text and all that is related within it simply lies; are too many important facts left unmentioned? Again, these internalized questions are noticeable gaps which the reader\textsuperscript{a3} is left to fill in on her own, just as the second-author did on his own. With this as a beginning, the text continues to leave gaps for the reader\textsuperscript{a3} to fill in. In attempting to fill these gaps the reader\textsuperscript{a3} places herself such that her role can neither be defined as reader\textsuperscript{a3} or text\textsuperscript{a3}, but instead as a dynamic force within a process.
Explaining this idea of the filling-in of gaps and its role in all texts (in *Don Quixote* gaps are especially abundant), Wolfgang Iser says first that a gap occurs in the text whenever "the flow is interrupted and we are led off in unexpected directions" (1222). The effect of these gaps is that it gives us as readers\(^3\) the opportunity "to bring into play our own faculty for establishing connections" (Iser 1222-1223). Iser then writes that "these gaps have a different effect on the process of anticipation and retrospection...for they may be filled in different ways" (1223). Of course, each individual reader will fill in the gaps in a different fashion, individually excluding or considering other possibilities, filling in as he reads--allowing for innovative reading on both sides:

In this very act the dynamics of reading are revealed. By making his decision he implicitly acknowledges the inexhaustibility of the text; at the same time it is this very inexhaustibility that forces him to make his decision. (Iser 1223)

Through this mutual determination, then, the reader\(^4\) and the text\(^5\) create together the literary work in a massive act of dynamism. On the one hand, the reader will act as reader\(^3\) through the filling in of the gaps; on the other hand, the text will also act as reader\(^5\) through using the individual constructions as "reading material." The boundaries between the traditionally constructed "reader" and "text," then, are
confounded again. Consequently, Iser's gaps expand--through their expansiveness--the breakdown of the reader/text dichotomy still further simply by calling out for formulation, for a reader-devised compensation and filling of the textual holes and ravines.

As the text continues, however, far more gaps are left for the reader to fill in--gaps involving a countless number of intra-textual readers. The first of these was the narrator or second-author. His role and positioning are complicated further, however, when he discovers the original manuscript detailing the adventures of Don Quixote, written by Cide Hamete--an Arab. With the introduction of a foreign language, the narrator requires a translation of the manuscript, adding still another reader to the creation of the Quixote. Translators are rarely thought of as actual readers, yet the fact cannot be denied that in order to translate, one must read. And so we learn about the type of reader that the translator is, and still more gaps are left to be filled.

The translator first begins to take shape before the account of the conversation of Sancho Panza and his wife Teresa regarding his governorship. The narrator here relates that the translator claims that the account is merely apocryphal due to Sancho's sophistication of speech and argument (II. V, 447-448). The translator's role continues and even grows, however, in the account of Don Quixote in the castle of the Knight of the Green Overcoat. The original
manuscript, the narrator says, contains a full description of Don Diego's mansion, yet the narrator refuses to translate it, claiming that it is unnecessary to the story (II. XVIII, 519)! Then later we discover that others ("they") claim that the translator failed to translate a section of the manuscript correctly and fully (II. XLIV, 661-662). (The question of the identity of the "they" will be addressed shortly.) With this the reader is left with many gaps to fill. Is the account of Sancho's conversation to be believed? Which details of a story-telling are necessary, which aren't, and who is qualified to make that choice? Did the translator leave out any other sections, considering them also unnecessary? And worst of all: was the Quixote often wrongly translated? Of course, these questions are moot in an external construction in which Cervantes is sole author. But within the inner workings of the text with which the reader must grapple, these questions are alarming, and serve as large gaps which must be filled.

After the presence of the translator confuses things, Cide Hamete himself steps in with his own gap. After Don Quixote relates his adventures in the cave of Montesinos, the narrator writes that the translator said (this is already confusing) that Cide Hamete left a note in the margin saying that he did not know whether Quixote's story was true, for on the one hand he could not believe it except as apocryphal, yet on the other he did not know how Quixote could come with the
story in such a short period of time. And so the original author himself leaves the reader with yet another gap—through the narration of the cave of Montesinos—to fill in as to truth or falsity, validity or invalidity.

And even within this complex web of intra-textual readers (which now include Alonso Quixano, the prologuist, the priest and the barber, the narrator, and the translator) we find another category of readers—readers who can number as few as one or as many as the Spanish population. These readers can only be referred to as the pronoun "they," for that is all that they are called. As Weiger has demonstrated, at times the narrator appeals not to Cide Hamete, nor the translator, but that which "they" say about Don Quixote—raising many questions in the process. "They" are referred to in three instances throughout the course of the novel. The first of these references is during what might almost be called an aside, when the narrator notes that a certain carrier who shared an inn-room with Quixote was particularly mentioned by Cide Hamete because he was a friend of his, "and they even say was in some degree a relation of his" (I. XVI, 107). The second reference is made during a reflection on the great friendship that existed between Rocinante and Dapple, when the narrator adds that "they say the author left it on record that he likened their friendship to that of Nisus and Euryalus" (II. XII, 485). And the third reference is in connection with the translator, for when the narrator
maintains that the translator did not properly translate the account given by Cide Hamete, he does so by the authority of what "they" say: "They say that in the true original of this history, as Cide Hamete wrote this chapter—which his interpreter did not translate as he wrote it" (II. XLIV, 661-662).

Obviously this strange inclusion of a mysterious "they" who claim to know that which the narrator cannot know from the translated manuscript presents yet another gap for the reader\(^3\) to fill. On what grounds can "they" speak authoritatively? How has the narrator come to hear what "they" say? Are we to accept what may be merely idle gossip as living law? Perhaps, if we question the authority of "they," the translator did not translate wrongly—perhaps that is only a vicious rumor spread by an ignorant "they." At this point, the gap becomes an alarming ravine—our reading involves the simultaneous questioning of "they" and the translator. Further, what if the narrator depends on what "they" say more then he admits; what if a better part of the text revolves around what "they" say? With this startling introduction of further readers, the gaps widen still more, calling into question for the reader\(^3\) the entire text of Don Quixote.

These characters within the Quixote, then, fully embody Iser's gaps, causing the reader to become still more active, filling in the gaps, reading in her own unique manner. And with this reading, she becomes her own text\(^3\), being read
through the gaps that she fills in.

The intra-textual reading involving the various readers already mentioned and the gaps which they produce, however, does not end this tale of reading. For another model of readership arises which offers more than the filling in of gaps—it involves a blatant creative tendency by a reader that is allowed within the confines of the text. Iser begins to theoretically propose this textual act when he quotes and comments on the writings of John Dewey in *Art as Experience*:

"For to perceive, a beholder must create his own experience"....We look forward, we look back, we decide, we change our decisions, we form expectations, we are shocked by their nonfulfillment, we question, we muse, we accept, we reject; this is the dynamic process of recreation.

(Iser 1228)

In a sense this is the filling of gaps; but in a sense it is much more. Notice that here there is even more of an autonomy of readership—the reader's no longer needs gaping holes within the text to be a creator of the text. All the reader's needs instead is herself and the text, for with these two she can, in her own individualized fashion, make decisions, question, accept and reject. Even such actions as changing decisions and being shocked by the nonfulfillment of expectations is an act of dynamic readership and recreation, for shock and nonfulfillment are themselves individual actions and
reactions; they illustrate the dynamic quality of reading all the more. These ideas are taken to an extreme by this other model of readership—the marginal notation—that truly recreates that which is read.

When the narrator originally asks that his newly-bought manuscript be translated from the Arabic—before he realizes that this manuscript contains the "History of Don Quixote of La Mancha, written by Cide Hamete Benengeli, an Arab historian"—the translator at first begins to laugh (I. IX, 67). Both narrator and reader discover that the cause of his laughter is a marginal notation in the manuscript, which reads, *This Dulcinea del Tobosa so often mentioned in this history, had, they say, the best hand of any woman in all La Mancha for salting pigs* (I. IX, 66). Here we have another example of what "they" say. But more importantly, we have encountered yet another reader (for this note may be said not to have been written by Cide Hamete, given that when marginal notations are given by the original author, they are cited as being so). And this reader, quite remarkably, commits two astounding acts of dynamic readership. First, he interjects his own bit of information: that Dulcinea has quite a hand for salting pigs. But his insertion is quite a bit more serious; for his insertion asserts that Dulcinea, not Aldonza, has quite a hand for salting pigs. Since it may be safely concluded that Dulcinea is a product of Quixote's madness, how can any reader properly assert anything external about her?
Yet in an extremely unique fashion, the author of the notation has illuminated the act of reading still further: having read about Dulcinea, having read about Aldonza, this reader draws from personal experience his own conclusions—not even waiting for a gap, but instead creating a situation for individual fulfillment. This particular reader\textsuperscript{a8}, then, has continued to create a creation, giving Dulcinea a reality outside of the text, continuing the writing by filling in a gap which was not presented. This unknown reader\textsuperscript{a8}, then, is the most extreme reader\textsuperscript{a8} short of Alonso Quixano himself—for he continues to create in his unique way, therefore revealing the "stuff" of his text.

Shortly after the introduction of this extreme model of creationary reading, however, the reader of the Quixote encounters two very different models personified (interestingly enough) by Quixote himself. After he had gone mad through the reading of knight-errantry, he finds himself a disruptive force within the reading process due to his habit of interjecting his own thoughts and feelings (that is, being a dynamic reader\textsuperscript{a9} and text\textsuperscript{a9}), therefore externally enacting that which most people do inwardly. The first of these times occurs during a moment of Sancho's story-telling. During his tale of the shepherd and the shepherdess, Sancho carefully instructs Quixote to keep a close count of the goats that the fisherman carried across the river Guadiana—instructions which Quixote fails to follow. When Sancho then asks his
master how many goats had been carried thus far, and Quixote answers that he does not know, the tale abruptly ends—all on account of Quixote's failure to enter into the terms of the story. The second of these disruptive readings is in the midst of Cardenio's tale, which was not to be interrupted by orders of Cardenio himself, and which Quixote nonetheless interrupts in order to opinionize on books of knight-errantry. With this interruption, the tale ends just as Sancho's had, and Quixote is left in suspense as to the ending. Once again he fails to meet the terms of both story and story-teller, interrupting with his own thoughts, opinions, and creations, and thus the story can no longer be. Here the text of Don Quixote again presents an extreme in readership models: a model in which there can be no creation, no readerly interjection. In fact, in this model, the reader cannot be active, nor can the text—both must instead remain constant unto the course of the tale, creating a constrained dynamism and thus no reading.

So far several of Cervantes' models of readership have been discussed in their various functional roles: the dualism presented at the beginning of Part I with the prologuist, the barber, the priest, and Alonso Quixano; the act of filling gaps left by such readers as the narrator, the translator, Cide Hamete, and the mysterious "they"; and the act of creation in reading as represented by the conflicting messages of the marginal notation and Don Quixote. Yet Cervantes'
grand playground of reader/text interaction reaches beyond itself in Part II, in which readers abound and play, experiment and wonder, determine and create.

It is fairly well known that in the midst of writing his second part, Cervantes was confronted with an apocryphal second part, written by Alonso Fernandez de Avellaneda, which continued the stories of Cervantes' heroes—though Quixote was now many absurd things (for example, no longer in love with Dulcinea), and Sancho now a glutton and a fool. Left somehow to finish his second part despite Avellaneda's already published second part, Cervantes chose to confront the apocryphal text within his own text. Therefore, within Part II of Cervantes' Quixote, Part I has already been published and read by all of the characters, as well as Avellaneda's Part II. With this inclusion of two actual texts as part of the fictional world, Cervantes offers in Part II a novel set of models of readership for the present reader to explore.

It is first important to note, once again, that in Part II, Part I has already been published and widely read; all of the characters, therefore, are also readers—readers of the "history" of Don Quixote as detailed in Part I. Note also that this Part I is presumably identical to the Part I that we have just read: the Part I that we read by Miguel de Cervantes. This makes these characters into particularly unique readers, since they are the readers of the author who creates them, of the tale which leads to their creation. They
are simultaneously reading and created. Iser explains this phenomenon in terms of the drawing of boundaries; previously only the boundaries of the text had been spoken of, but Iser also talks of the boundaries of the self: "If reading removes the subject-object division that constitutes all perception, it follows that the reader will be 'occupied' by the thoughts of the author, and these in their turn will cause the drawing of new 'boundaries'" (Iser 1231). This drawing of new boundaries, radical as it already seems, is actually even more radical since in the act of reading the sensory placement of the "I" changes, the formulation and the ideological positioning of the self alters—not simply during the reading act, but forever in the life of the reader:

Every text we read draws a different boundary within our personality, so that the virtual background (the real "me") will take on a different form, according to the theme of the text concerned....(Iser 1231)

Iser later speaks of the change in the real "me" as the reformulation of the self—or a re-creation of the self. Recreation may appear to be inherently different from creation, but are they not in essence the same? A creator may both create out of nothingness (creation) and out of somethingness (re-creation)—yet both are the act of creating. What may be said, then, of the characters of Part II who are created through their reading?

Consider, for example, the Duke and Duchess who "kindly"
take Quixote and Sancho into their home, treating Quixote as a true knight-errant and giving Sancho an island to govern--because they had read Part I and simply wanted to have some fun playing games and tricks with their gullible guests. On an intra-textual level, their re-creation is manifested through their actions upon the knight and his squire: how might the visit have gone differently had they not read the protagonist's Part I? In that scenario, the two would most likely have been treated by the Duke and Duchess as they had been treated in the majority of their former encounters--as madmen worthy of abuses, beatings, and humiliations. Yet because the couple had read the first part, their actions were quite different; they had been re-created, just as we all are re-created through the act of reading.

The re-creation of Duke, Duchess, and other Part II characters transcends the intra-textual, however, into the meta-textual. As was previously mentioned, the charactericity of these readers is intimately connected with their intra-textual reading act. It may seem obvious that the creation of these characters was enacted so that they may be readers--that they were created through their readership--but the ramifications of this fact are momentous in the act of reading of all texts, including Cervantes'. For Cervantes created countless characters through their readership--through their reading, they are created--just as we as readers are created through our reading. And so Cervantes and his text
not only create their intra-characters, but create us as readers\(^7\) and texts\(^7\) as well. His text, then embodies the transformation of the "I" to display clearly the re-creation and re-formation of the boundaries of the self.

One more significance must be noted from Part II in order to gain the full impact of the act of re-creation. When Cervantes learned of Avellaneda's false *Quixote*, he obviously had to respond to it in order to publish his own Part II. He did so by injecting Avellaneda's version into his own work, thus necessitating that his own characters respond to the former. Then in Chapter LXXII, an interesting twist occurs: Cervantes makes the characters of the false *Quixote* real--so that intra-textually there is a false Don Quixote, a false Sancho Panza, false friends and enemies wandering around the Spanish landscape simultaneously to the real characters' wanderings. His deft responsorial move is manifested when Quixote and Sancho meet a character from the false *Quixote*: Señor Don Alvaro Tarfe, a "great friend" of the false Quixote (II. LXXII, 818). These characters (the false Quixote, false Sancho, and Tarfe), though created by Avellaneda, are not (despite even their falseness) merely created fictions; within Cervantes' text, they are undeniably real. The implication of the characters' reality, of course, is that created selves are not fictional in nature.

Notice the complexity of Cervantes' move. He first takes two sets of fictional characters and attempts to argue the
validity and reality of one over the other. In the end he cannot do this— in the end, both sets of characters are undeniably real, both internally and externally (in the thoughts of the readers of the two texts). Through this example, Cervantes artfully illustrates that creation does not mean fictionality; indeed, the scene with Tarfe not only questions the distinctions between reader and text, but through this questioning, also questions the distinctions between fiction and reality. Constructed selves, then, are not merely fictional in nature. Instead, the reading process and that which is reconstructed through it directly affect the construction of reality, blending the fictional and the real into a web of complexity that cannot be untangled.

* * *

"We must also question," writes Foucault, "those divisions or groupings with which we have become so familiar" (The Archaeology of Knowledge 22). And so we have quite completely done. At the beginning, some common dichotomies were deconstructed, dissolving the barriers between the subject/object, reader/text dualities even as they are constituted. This deconstruction continued, however, to include the reader/character, author/character, author/reader, and so forth. Now, continuing the chain, the final dichotomy of reality and fiction is broken down, ceasing to be constructed as distinct entities and continuing as blended and intermingled ingredients which, in the end, themselves
construct that which is regarded as experience.

The answer to the question of placement of "reader" and "text" in the act of reading, then, is virtually non-existent given the non-existence of the dichotomies which normally shape the question. Instead of a pat answer involving Iser's medians or the solutions of Quixano, the barber, or the priest, we find that placement is interdependent upon a multitude of factors (including reader, text, reader, text, author, character, etc.) as combinational units and their own unique methods of interaction. Reading, then, in its complete potentiality, is more of an experiential concept and less of a definitional one.

Even Cervantes, though, with all of his different and extreme models of readership, limits this intermingling of fiction and reality, and of experience vs. definition. Notice that Quixote, besides his partial role as one reader-model, has another important and distinct role: that of madman. In spite of his humor, his good intentions, and his gentle disposition, he remains a madman— with all of its implications— until the end of the novel, when Quixote again becomes Alonso Quixano, deploining all books of knight-errantry and his former behavior. Surely, with this textual conclusion, Cervantes must have sensed a limit in the deconstruction of boundaries. This limit he created for us in the character of a landlord.

The scene is the inn at which Quixote, Sancho, the priest
and the barber, Cardenio, and Dorotea are staying. They, with the landlord and his family, are discussing books of knight-errantry in Quixote's absence. The landlord argues for the truth of these books, making him, in the eyes of others in the crowd, "almost fit to play a second part to Don Quixote" (I. XXXII, 247). Yet in the end, still maintaining the truth of his books, he assures the others that he will not "become lame on the same foot...Don Quixote limps on":

No fear of that...I won't be so crazy as to make a knight-errant of myself, for I see well enough that things are not what they used to be in those days, when they say those famous knights roamed about the world. (I. XXXII, 248)

The answer to the limit, then, is answered quite clearly by Cervantes' character: fiction and reality may be non-dichotomous within experience, but that fiction which is properly incorporated into experience must be consistent with experience--so that becoming a knight-errant long after the days of knight-errantry is indeed ludicrous. Consistency, then, is the only limit in experiential, dynamic reading--beyond that, anything goes.

Incidentally, the theoretical and textual movement of this essay has much to say about itself and about myself as its author and as reader of Don Quixote. Notice that though I begin with the basic premise that the subject/object, reader/text dichotomy is a false construction, I still present
myself in relation to *Don Quixote* as the subject presenting important information about the object of study. And I admit that this is not only the way in which I have presented myself; it is the way in which I perceived my relation to the text much of the time. Yet a correlation can be drawn, I believe, between myself and a character within the *Quixote* that will illustrate my own arguments upon myself--thus incorporating me into my own theoretical judgments.

The strongest and most obvious correlation is between myself and the second author. Within his readership, the second author read a manuscript, accepted some sections, cast judgment on others, and felt compelled in the end to rewrite (re-create) the narrational experience. Just so have I. I too read, accepted or judged, and in the end felt compelled to produce this, my own re-creation of the text. Just as the second-author was influenced by a mysterious "they" ("they say"), so have I been influenced, though I name my "they" and call them critical sources. And just as this second-author's production allows him to be read, just as the text acts as a partial mirror which gleaned information and a narrative from the individual, so does my production allow me to be read. The essay, I believe, tells a part of my narrative, and in reading it you also read me. In this way, then, through my particular brand of readership, I have opened myself up as text, my words and images being exposed to both myself and others.
The cycle does not end here, however. For this essay, which is both literally and figuratively my text, immediately opens up a new circle of readers and texts which involve you, the spatial-temporal reader of this spatial-temporal text. Your individualized response to this work will certainly reveal the "stuff" of your own text.

This brings this essay to its final point. My reasons for exploring the act of reading through Cervantes' work were material, not final. Don Quixote is a unique text worthy of close examination in this area of study by virtue of the fact that it examines narratively that which people such as Wolfgang Iser or myself examine theoretically. Through its exploration of the reader and text, it exposes a multitude of models of readership, allowing the reader to investigate these models, thus realizing her own approach to the dynamics of reading, the reality of her own re-creation, and the fullness of her own textuality. This is what makes Don Quixote noteworthy. Yet Cervantes' text is not to be viewed as the final word on this subject. Any text, by virtue of being a text with a reader, naturally brings the dynamics of reading into play. And these dynamics, since it is experiential rather than definitional, will be dependent upon the disposition and content of both reader and text. This work, therefore, does not end here. Instead, it opens the door to any number of studies, both public and private, that deal with the dynamism of reading and the re-creation which
results. And so, in invitation, I end as Cervantes ended Part I of Don Quixote: *Forsì altro cantera con miglior plectro.*
Notes

'It may seem by this point that I have artificially designed a "straw man" in order to prove my own theoretical and textual point. I do not believe, however, that my definition of theoretical history and its construction of the reader as subject is completely false. In order to demonstrate this, I would first like to turn to Cervantes' own words that I partially quoted at the start of this essay:

You are neither its [the book's] relative nor its friend, your soul is your own and your will as free as any man's, you are in your own house and master of it as much as the king of his taxes...." (9)

Notice the wording of this section: it consists of the language of autonomy, freedom, and power. To say that "your soul is your own" is surely to say that control of it and its "contents" lies solely in oneself, and that nothing can touch it without permission. Furthermore, our homes are ours, and we control that which enters and that which does not; in this analogy, we have the power of kings not only over ourselves, but over that which comes into contact with us as well. This includes a text: if I do not wish to be touched by it, then I will not be touched due to the very nature of the subject/object construction.

I also wish to turn to some sources from theoretical history, beginning with the ancients and continuing through the postmodern. Plato, for example, bans poetry from his State, one
of the reason being that it appeals to our irrational side, drawing us to tears and sorrow, "feeding and watering" the passions; in other words, poetry is banned because it affects us, calling us into a relational role (Plato 27-29). (Although this is not the only reason that poetry is banned from the state, it is an important one.) There is also the long theoretical tradition begun by Aristotle's Poetics in which poetry (and art in general) is made into a science, giving the reader and critic better control over the work, while little to no outward recognition is given to its own inherent power. I would like to end this demonstration with Foucault, who repeatedly expresses our need for control and domination over the work of art and the discourse concerning it. In his work "The Discourse on Language," Foucault describes a fear associated with language and writing similar to Plato's expressions of fear. We are, he writes, anxious and uncertain in the midst of discourse; we face "uncertainty at the suggestion of barely imaginable powers and dangers behind this activity...uncertainty when we suspect the conflicts, triumphs, injuries, dominations and enslavements that lie behind these words, even when long use has chipped away their rough edges" (216). Further on, he writes of our need to control, organize, and master the "most dangerous elements" of discourse (228). He then concludes by stating that "modes of control may take on life within a discursive formation (such as literary criticism as the author's
constitutive discourse)" (233). Criticism, then, can be a mode of controlling the dangers found in the unbounded discourse found in literature. Thus both readers and critics have a historical tradition and feeling that we must indeed remain separate and untouchable, remaining master of both our souls and of the literary work as well.

a1 Each reader does not represent a spatial-temporal concept of readership and textuality, but instead a type of action within the dynamic process of reading. Further, this representation creates an exploration of possible active roles in readership and textuality as well as potentialities for dynamic reading.

a2 The second-author is, I believe, adequately demonstrated in this section as being a reader in the active sense: he gleans information from his manuscript. In responding in the way that he does, however—in producing his own work in response to his reading—he becomes a dynamic text, demonstrating his own narrative and information about himself.

a3 If a gap must be filled, it can only be done actively, not spatial-temporally. Note, however, that this action in itself constitutes active textuality.

a4 Through Iser's definition, only a reader and text in the active sense of the terms can create a literary work, since spatial-temporal articles cannot constitute something as alive and dynamic as the literary work.

a5 That is, the spatial-temporal text will be the means of
gleaning information from the spatial-temporal reader—thus acting as an active reader.

\(^a_6\) We learn about the active role that the translator fulfills through his actions as translator.

\(^a_7\) In order to create or be created in any sense of the term, the participants must be active instead of spatial-temporal terms. That stagnant articles cannot create seems self-evident and does not need to be argued.

\(^a_8\) This unknown notational author, through his process of creation, must be dynamic (as is explained in \(^a_7\)). Notice as I proceed, however, that the boundaries between reader\(^a\) and text\(^a\) become so shady that my own terms get confused, so that indicating a reader\(^a\) also indicates a text\(^a\), as is the case with this character of the *Quixote*.

\(^a_9\) The use of the term "dynamic" explains the sense of "reader" and "text" used here.

\(^a_{10}\) If there is no dynamism, than the term "reading" is changed back to the traditional use of the term. Refer to my redefinition of the term on page 12.

\(^a_{11}\) If the formulation and ideological positioning of the self alters due to the act of reading, than the participants in this act are necessarily active. To be unaltered by the process is to remain the stagnant, untouched reader presented at the start of this essay.

\(^a_{12}\) Here I am merely presenting every possible role in the act of reading.
My role as author of a work concerning the act of reading necessitates that my reading be an active, dynamic process.

I am claiming here that this essay (through its role as spatial-temporal text) and you (through your role as spatial-temporal reader), in engaging in an act of reading necessitate that this act be an active one, therefore constituting both you and this essay as reader\(^a\) and text\(^a\).

In being affected in any way by this essay, in being re-created in positioning and thought, in filling in the gaps which are inherent in this text, you are a dynamic part of the reading process, thus being gleaned of information and your own narrative. You thus fulfill the active sense of the term "text."

I simply mean that I have not explored the spatial-temporal reader and text, but instead active parts of a dynamic process.

Through the very act of realizing one's own approach to the dynamics of reading, the reality of one's own re-creation, and the fullness of one's own textuality, the reader is by necessity a dynamic, active reader.

"Perhaps another more talented poet will recount [his deeds]." Originally from *Orlando furioso*, xxx. 16.
Works Consulted


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