Scriptural Authority in the *Quixote*: Target for Subversion?

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Abstract

The Quixote is potentially subversive because it questions the authority of books of chivalry and even history. As such, Cervantes's work casts a shadow of uncertainty over all that has been held sacred in the western world, including the Bible. This paper examines whether Cervantes intentionally misleads or holds a subversive view of Scripture, and whether such an interpretation is accessible in the text. It is argued that Biblical allusions are not the target of his attacks; they are the arrow that carries them.

Few who have read the *Quixote* beyond the mimetic level would have trouble recognizing the ironic, playful and even subversive nature of the text. Parr notes in Don Quixote: *An Anatomy of Subversive Discourse,* that "*Don Quixote* is a potentially subversive document because it calls into question not only the authority of books of chivalry, but also of translations and, equally important, of history itself as a reliable medium for truth" (37). As such, Cervantes' great work potentially casts a shadow of uncertainty over all that has been traditionally held sacred in the western world, including the Bible.[1]

However, the position taken here is that Cervantes' treatment of the Sacred Scriptures is more restrained—he is not so much ambivalent toward the Bible as he is stylistically ambiguous. Perhaps this is why Castro has suggested that there is a hypocritical vein in Cervantes as he conceals his true feelings regarding religious matters: "Cervantes es un hábil hipócrita, y ha de ser leído e interpretado con suma reserva en asuntos que afecten a la religión y a la moral oficiales; posee los rasgos típicos del pensador eminente

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durante la Contrarreforma" ("Cervantes is a skillful hypocrite, and must be read and interpreted with great care in matters that affect official religion and morality; he possesses the typical characteristics of the eminent Counter-Reformation thinker"; *El Pensamiento* 244).[2]

Whether, in fact, Cervantes intentionally misleads or holds a subversive view of Scripture (which we may distinguish from "religious matters"), and whether such an interpretation is accessible in the text, is the topic of this investigation. Therefore our study assumes a perspective on the ingenious knight that must in some way consider Cervantes' authorial intention. Hirsh's notion of meaning (a principle of stability in an interpretation) and significance (embracing a principle of change) provides a helpful model ("Three Dimensions" 198). For Hirsch, meaning is that which "cannot exceed or arbitrarily delimit the conventional semantic possibilities of the symbols used" ("Three Dimensions" 205). Significance, on the other hand deals with the way in which particular interpreters apply and appropriate meaning. His emphasis is significant: "Intention is a subject that refuses to go away, despite having been banished by W. K. Wimsatt, Northrop Frye, Paul Brest, Jacques Derrida, and Michel Foucault, to list a few of the imposing names" ("Transhistorical Intentions" 550).[3]

One important reason not to abandon the notion of intentionality in the *Quixote* comes from Parr's recent article, "*Don Quixote:* Kind Reconsidered." He concludes that the dominant genre or kind in the *Quijote* is satire. Parr lists six of Hidget's criteria for satire, and one cannot help but recognize the implications for intention that are implied in the second criterion: "the target of the satire is always something external to the text itself and is ordinarily some contemporary issue" (143). Although satire need not always be premeditated, it clearly carries the probability of purpose toward a recipient or, "an intended response," as Close has it (193).

By extension then, satire that is allegorized from later readings and interpretations of the work must be of the same stripe. This assertion leads us back to Hirsch—a major champion of intentionality—who suggests some combination of original referentiality and current consensus ("Transhistorical Intentions" 565). He speaks to this issue by connecting allegory to the way transhistorical interpretations are assigned to texts, noting that "An allegory is wrong if it is untrue to the spirit of the original intent. Interpretation must always go beyond the writer's letter, but never beyond the writer's spirit" ("Transhistorical Intentions" 588). In other words, where Miguel de Cervantes sets up a dichotomy between legitimate sources

such as the Bible and spurious ones like books of chivalry and bad translations, a modern interpreter might, by analogy, distinguish between reliable writings and popular media fare, tabloids, political speech writing, and so on. In summary, I offer Hirsh's ethical maxim for interpretation:

> *Unless there is a powerful overriding value in disregarding an author's intention (i.e. original meaning), we who interpret as a vocation should not disregard it* [author's emphasis]. Mere individual preference would not be such an overriding value, nor would be the mere preferences of many persons. ("Three Dimensions" 207)

Two important questions arise from the preceding observations: Do authorial and literary processes at work in the *Quixote* naturally produce a weakened view of Biblical authority? And secondly, if that premise cannot be demonstrated in the text of the *Quixote* itself, must we not question the legitimacy of interpreting beyond the spirit of the text as some post-structuralist thought is inclined to do? Now clearly any reader can take his/her "pleasure" in the text, to borrow Roland Barthes's term, but this kind of subjectivity does not satisfy the larger issues of the relationship between meaning and intention addressed by Hirsch ("Transhistorical Intentions" 556), or for that matter, a response to Fish's thought on interpretative communities.

In his study of interpretive communities, Fish states that a reader is "a member of a community whose assumptions about literature determine the kind of attention he pays and thus the kind of literature 'he' makes" (11). But then these assumptions originate (where else?) in the interpretive community of which the author himself is a part in varying degrees. Given this circle, I suggest that it is possible to know something about the original text's reception and intention. An author does not write in a vacuum, but expects to be understood or interpreted in a reasonably predictable and conventional way; hence Don Quixote's creator invented his eccentric protagonist in such a way as to enable his audience to "write" his text as very good implied readers indeed. After all, the Biblical allusions found in the text are also imbedded in the receiving-producing community.[4]

To restate the question under consideration: Is the creator of the man of *La Mancha* trying to undercut the bases of Judeo-Christian authority, or is this perceived subversion just a by-product of his apparent belief

in free will, his desire to foster discreet readers, and an irresistible bent toward satire? My position is that it is unlikely that Cervantes has deliberately or unconsciously subverted the authority of the Bible in the *Quixote*. Following are arguments that underpin my thesis, some of which may at first seem self-evident, but they are foundational to my argument.

In the prologue to book 1, Cervantes (the dramatized author) insists that he will not abuse the use of the "Divina Escritura" ('Divine Scriptures') by quoting verses like so many and cluttering his book with commentary (10)—he will leave that to others. Nevertheless, this dramatized author does give instruction for the prudent use of the Bible and classical authors. Certainly, without the frequent allusion to Biblical ideas, the *Quixote* would be a very different work.

In fact, Cervantes assumes a general Biblical knowledge on the part of his audience. For example, in the case of the "oveja" ('ewe') (408; bk.2, ch. 21) when the rich Camacho wants to steal Quiteria away from Basilio, there is a subtle reference to the episode of David and Bathsheba and the unfortunate Uriah, who is sent to die on the front lines of battle and sacrificed on the altar of David's lust (2 Sam. 11, 12.1-12). The moral of the story needs no further justification—as far as the listeners and readers are concerned, it is wrong because there is a Bible story to prove it.

The *Quixote* is replete with general Biblical references, although they are usually employed with playful irony. One such example occurs when Sancho hobbles Rocinante's front feet to prevent Don Quixote from charging into the night:

> —Ea, señor, que el cielo, conmovido de mis lágrimas y plegarias, ha ordenado que no se pueda mover Rocinante; y si vos queréis porfiar, y espolear, y dalle, será enojar a la Fortuna, y dar coces, como dicen contra el aguijón (99; bk. 1, ch. 20).
> "Look you, sir," quoth he, "Heaven's on my side, and won't let Rozinante *[sic]* budge a foot forwards; and now if you will still be spurring him, I dare pawn my life, it will be but striving against the stream; or, as the saying is, but kicking against the pricks." (120)[5]

This is an obvious reference to Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus in Acts 9.5 when Jesus speaks to the resistant Apostle-to-be:

"Dura cosa te es dar coces contra el aguijón" ("it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks"). Although to be sure, it is used here with more comic than cosmic ramifications.

In the interpolated novel, *El curioso impertinente* ("The Impertinent Busybody"), Lotario has recourse to the Bible to defend his reasoning with Anselmo (192-93; bk. 1, ch. 33). He discusses Adam, and then in order to give weight to his arguments, jumps to the New Testament (1 Cor. 12). Here, he mentions Christ as head of the Church and the metaphor of spiritual gifts as the source of wholeness in order to make his point with his impertinent friend. Lotario further scolds the stubborn Anselmo by comparing him to a Moor, incapable of understanding reasoned Biblical truth (189; bk. 1, ch.33). The commonplace of Scriptural authority is not questioned here.

There are many more such examples that show a general acceptance of background Biblical authority. For example, Descouzis treats the theme of "fame-vainglory" in the substrata of the Knight's thought as it relates to Pauline thought:

> [. . .] los hay [*critics*] que reconocen espiritualidad en el *Quijote*, pero no la pormenorizan [. . .] las aventuras que más escarnecen a Don Quijote conducen a un desenlace a tono con la espiritualidad condenatoria de San Pablo [. . .]. (37)
> [. . .] there are those who recognize the spirituality of the *Quixote*, but they do not detail it. [. . .] the adventures that most jeer at Don Quixote lead to an outcome in tune with St. Paul's condemnatory spirituality. (37)

As in the case of the general Biblical background, the "Pauline connection" is not vaunted. Descouzis correctly asserts: "La afinidad espiritual de Cervantes con San Pablo se oculta detrás de una novelística muy amena" ("Cervantes' spiritual affinity with St. Paul is hidden behind an agreeable fictional style"; 39).

Don Quixote suffers from a notable messianic complex that springs from a strong Biblical archetype based on the quest. A few examples will contribute to the development of this study. To begin with, the pseudonym assigned to Don Quixote, "el Caballero de la Triste Figura" ('the Knight of the Sorrowful Countenance'), hearkens to the messianic "Man of Sorrows"

of Isaiah 53.3. Even his second assigned title, “El Caballero de los Leones” (‘The Knight of the Lions’), could be understood as a parody of the “Lion of Judah” (Rev.5. 5). Furthermore, Don Quixote spends three days in the cave of Montesinos. Surely we cannot resist the comparison of the sign of Jonah when Christ predicted his own death and resurrection (Matt.12. 39-40). Our knight-errant clearly sees himself as a sent one (147; bk. 1, ch. 27). Thus in the *Quixote* we have the protagonist as parody of the literary divine hero—a self-styled messiah. Frye distinguishes narrative levels according to the place occupied by the hero: “We have distinguished myth from romance by the hero’s power of action: in the myth proper he is divine, in the romance proper he is human” (188). On the divine level Don Quixote’s quest parodies the messianic mission and on the human level he is only intermittently verisimilar. He therefore quickly descends to the degraded world of satire—a “bellaco harto de ajos” (“garlic satiated rogue” [my trans.) (449; bk. 2, ch. 31). Later he is trampled by pigs, and the narrator perversely notes that the swine have no respect for Don Quixote’s authority (607; bk. 2, ch. 68). The contrast to the Biblical Messiah who dispatches the Gadarene demons by sending them into a herd of swine is apparent. Hence the Biblical backdrop is essential as a point from which he falls in his quest onto the plane of satire.

Cervantes frequently uses Biblical resonance as a container for irony, word plays and subversive humor. But the Biblical allusions are not the “intrinsic end or essential point of a performance” (Close 175), for the *Manco de Lepanto* (“one-armed man of the Battle of Lepanto”). They are not the target of his attacks; they are merely the arrow that carries them.

On a more obvious level, frequent objects of authorial irony are Don Quixote’s books of chivalry. Cervantes unabashedly states his purpose in the prologue to book 1:

> Procurad también que leyendo vuestra historia el melancólico se mueva a risa, el risueño la acreciente, el simple no se enfade, el discreto se admire de la invención, el grave no la desprecie, ni el prudente deje de alabarla. En efecto, llevad la mira puesta a derribar la máquina mal fundada destos caballerescos libros, aborrecidos de tantos y alabados de muchos más; que si esto alcanzásedes, no habríades alcanzado poco. (12)

> Let your diverting stories be expressed in diverting terms, to kindle mirth in the melancholic, and heighten it in the gay: let mirth and humour be your superficial design, though laid on a solid foundation, to challenge attention from the ignorant, and admiration from the judicious; to secure your work from the contempt of the graver sort, and deserve the praises of men of sense; keeping your eye still fixed on the principal end of your project, the fall and destruction of that monstrous heap of ill-contrived romances, which, though abhorred by many, have so strangely infatuated the greater part of mankind—mind this, and your business is done. (xxviii)

He also chooses an apparently rational man of the Church to carry out his harangues against the books of chivalry that entertain but teach nothing of value. One can argue that the dialogue in chapter 5, Book 1 approves the burning of certain useless reading material as though it were heretical (35; bk. 1, ch. 5). A number of people who are significant to the old would-be knight, including his niece, are concerned over his literary neurosis. Later on, the *Canónigo* ("Canon")seeks to persuade the weary Don Quixote that the Biblical book of Judges and other trustworthy histories are viable alternatives to the books of chivalry and just as exciting (289; bk. 1, ch. 49). Don Quixote quickly comprehends the point of the homily is that he should read books that entertain *and* teach, but then—with the point quite lost—recites a long list of knights and historical champions as though he were reciting a list of heroes of the Faith. The response of the *Canónigo* seems particularly crucial to understanding the question of Don Quixote and subverted authority: "Admirado quedó el Canónigo de oír la mezcla que don Quijote hacía de verdades y mentiras" (290; bk. 1, ch. 50)("The canon was much astonished at the medley Don Quixote made of truths and fables" [350]).

The canon of the established literature of the day is not being called into question here; rather, it is the peripheral works of doubtful redeeming virtues. This marginalized pseudo-canon has been placed on trial and found wanting, as is Don Quixote's ability to discriminate.

Nevertheless, history is witness that it was not the moralizers and churchmen like the Canon, but rather the art of Cervantes himself that succeeded in dethroning the light reading fare of the day. Martín de Riquer

commemorates the superiority of a formidable literary game over moral pronouncements:

> Pero fue Cervantes quien lo hizo en realidad y con auténtica eficacia, y quien dispuso un auto de fe tal que acabó para siempre con un género literario contra el cual tronaban en vano, desde hacía tres cuartos de siglo, moralistas y autores graves, procuradores en Cortes y teólogos. (70)
> But it was Cervantes who really accomplished it with authentic efficiency, and who set out a sacramental play that for once and for all finished off the literary genre that they thundered against, for three-quarters of a century, moralists and serious writers, court procurators, and theologians. (70)

Beyond discrediting books of chivalry, Cervantes also attends to other targets such as the Church. However, unlike the *Lazarillo*, for example, where anticlericalism is rampant, Cervantes is more measured when he satirizes the clergy or popular religious perception and practice.[6] Such is the case with the pedantic Primo, who along with many arm-chair theologians of the day, "strained at gnats" in their search for origins (411; bk. 2, ch. 22). Nevertheless, the tone of the *Quixote* is generally respectful toward the official Church, even when spoken from the untrustworthy mouth of Don Quixote himself: "que yo no pensé que ofendía a sacerdotes ni a cosas de la Iglesia, a quien respeto y adoro como católico y fiel cristiano que soy," (96; bk. 1, ch. 29) ("I did not in the least suspect I had to do with priests [lit.: "had offended"], whom I honour and revere as every good Catholic and faithful Christian ought to do" [115]). This passage does not strike me as particularly ironic, but rather apologetic, expressing Don Quixote's reluctance to offend the Church. Furthermore, in light of Valdivielso's remarks in the *Aprobación* of book 2, it seems highly unlikely that anything undermining either the authority of the Church or of the Holy Scriptures would have escaped this official: "no contiene cosa contra nuestra Fe Católica ni buenas costumbres: antes muchas de honesta recreación y apacible divertimiento, que los antiguos juzgaron convenientes a sus repúblicas" ("it contains nothing against our Catholic Faith or good manners: rather, much that is honest recreation and pleasant entertainment, that

the ancients judged appropriate to their republics"; 310; bk. 2 [my trans.]). Perhaps, as Castro suggests, his defense of orthodoxy is a bit overeager (*El pensamiento* 255), and his separation of divine and human letters makes him suspect (*El pensamiento* 248). Nevertheless, the fact that Cervantes is a multifaceted writer and skilled satirist, does not automatically make him a hypocrite who conceals his real feelings about spiritual matters just to save his own skin and not provoke the Inquisition. To the contrary, he actually may be introducing an understated questioning of the Inquisition itself after the model of Erasmus.

Castro himself also observes that Cervantes is tinged with Erasmian humanism (*El Pensamiento* 263). Fajardo echoes this sentiment: "se ha señalado la constante presencia del erasmismo en las diversas obras de Cervantes como un elemento imprescindible para la cabal interpretación del *Quijote*" ("The constant Erasmian presence has been pointed out in Cervantes' various Works as an indispensable element for accurate *Quixote* interpretation"; 604).

Erasmus was well known for his high view of Scripture; and accordingly, "por su tendencia hacia un cristianismo interior, basado en las Sagradas Escrituras"
("for his tendency toward an interior Christianity, based on the Holy Scriptures"; Fajardo 609).[7] Traces of Erasmian thought on religion are frequently evidenced in the *Quixote* as the following explanation by Fajardo indicates:

> Por supuesto, estas características no se encuentran en forma pura en Cervantes por efecto del tiempo y de la Contrarreforma. Pero sí se encuentran aquí y allá, a veces abiertamente, a veces desfrazadas, alusiones que son resultado de la influencia de su maestro erasmizante, don López de Hoyos. (609)
> Of course, these characteristics are not found in pure form in Cervantes due to the effect of time and the Counter Reformation. But they definitely are found here and there, sometimes openly, sometimes disguised, allusions that are the result of the influence of his Erasmian teacher, don López de Hoyos. (609)

There can be no doubt that Cervantes is a skilled subversive satirist, but to suggest that he knowingly subverts the Bible may raise problems

concerning his Erasmian connection. We may well ask, however, if at times he does so mischievously. Wolford offers a cautionary point, suggesting that the closer to the original a parody becomes, "that is, the better it is written, the more difficult it becomes to distinguish it from the original" (205). In the case of Cervantes, his artistry and strategies with ambiguity are such that we must always carefully observe the line of demarcation.

It is also important to note that Cervantes really has a high view of reality. The concept of the "loco-cuerdo" ("crazy sane person" 'wise fool') has solicited much erudition, but in short, it speaks of a literary game. Behind all of the feigned shifting reality in the *Quixote* stands an author who reminds us that relativity is not really what the work is about; on the contrary, it is about replacing an archaic world view with another, more realistic one (Wolford 198). Don Quixote does apparently change realities as when he steps into the pastoral world; however these are literary modes within the text that have little to do with the reality known by and connected to the historical author's frame of reference. Cervantes never intends the reader to follow Don Quixote into his fantasy world, rather he keeps us grounded with reminders that art is afoot. A good example of this is when the Barbero mentions *La Galatea* of Miguel de Cervantes (39; bk. 1, ch. 6). Literary art which is self-conscious tends to maintain perspective both inside and outside the text. In the *Quixote*, which is just such an example of early metafiction (Cf. Parr, *An Anatomy* 152), Cervantes deliberately distances the reader from excessive identification with the characters and their world.

When we come to the adventure of the *yelmo* 'brass basin', which represents an alternate perception of reality for Don Quixote, the narrator interrupts with, "Es, pues el caso que el yelmo, y el caballo y caballero que don Quijote veía era esto: [. . .]" (106; bk. 1, ch. 21) ("Now the truth of the story [concerning the barber's basin, the horse, and the knight] was this: [. . .]" [129]), thus reminding the reader not to chase wily barber-basin helmets outside of his own brick and mortar world. The point is driven home even further in the discussion on page 133 of book 1 regarding wizards. Sancho's slowness to understand has a strong echo in the Gospels where Jesus becomes weary with the mental lethargy of the disciples who still fail to recognize fully who he is (John 14.9). This talk of wizards and perception is also a blatant parody of the Biblical concept of faith. Sancho must buy into this nonsensical "caterva de encantadores" ('host of wizards') to be truly initiated into these hypothetical alternate realities, but our practical

squire, being a bit too earth-bound, will have none of it.

Even though the term has little meaning in postmodern thought, it is important to understand that Cervantes kept himself grounded in the "real" world in order to establish a reference point for his elaborate game plan—an amusement that would feature an outrageous knight errant unleashed on the world. There must be a standard against which to measure—like the prophet Amos's plumb line—or it would be pointless to attempt to discredit the books of chivalry. This is why Cervantes continually signals to the reader that Don Quixote has a serious problem with confusing authority. The mixed-up knight has taken a type of existential leap by establishing the *órdenes de caballería* ("orders of knights") as his authoritative backdrop (135; bk. 1, ch. 14). He takes himself so seriously that the standards of knighthood have acquired a weight equal to that of the Bible as a rule of faith and practice.

However, Don Quixote's law frequently leads him to Pharisaism. His refusal to help the Innkeeper's daughter because of a knightly commitment to Micomicona hearkens to the Pharisaic practice of *Corban*, roundly criticized by Jesus (Mark 7.11). On other occasions Don Quixote refuses to consider a raise for Sancho because such things are not to be found in the books of chivalry (345; bk. 2, ch. 7). Nevertheless, this ironic treatment of Don Quixote's firm belief in chivalry doesn't surface when he goes to the Bible and the Church for backing. His analysis of Maese Pedro's monkey is probably based on a general understanding of Biblical injunctions against witchcraft and he is genuinely surprised that the Inquisition has not intervened (428; bk. 2, ch. 14).

Not only does Don Quixote inappropriately equate different kinds of authority, he also confuses theoretical and practical considerations. Let us consider the case of the "galeotes" ('galley slaves'). He erroneously applies a belief in free will (very possibly voicing a parody of Cervantes' own view) to the situation of these criminals who are being taken to the galleys against their "will" (114; bk. 1, ch. 22). This is a most interesting situation, because Cervantes often subverts authority (writing, history, poorly translated Arabic manuscripts, etc.), but it would be ludicrous to assume that he is subverting the right of the king to punish prisoners simply because on a word play level it contradicts the philosophical abstraction of *libre albedrío* ("free will"). Thus, as in the case of reality (Sancho knows that the Lion is real [387; bk. 2, ch. 17]), Cervantes plays with the idea of free will in order to set up a mini carnival with the "galeotes," but he does not subvert it.

For similar reasons I question whether Cervantes is attempting to subvert the authority of the Scriptures in the *Quixote* on any level. Biblical parody is more likely a stylistic technique. For example, the presence of 12 "maids" who accompany the countess Trifaldi may not represent the pinnacle of parody, but the idea of "the twelve" as a kind of inverted apostolate is nevertheless an amusing one (479; bk. 2, ch. 38). There are also several examples of "Quixotic beatitudes:" "¡Dichoso tú sobre todos los escuderos del mundo!" (354; bk. 2, ch. 10) ("Happy thou, above all the squires of the universe!"[432]), and "¡Venturoso aquel a quien el cielo dió un pedazo de pan, sin que le quede obligación de agradecerlo a otro que al mismo cielo!" (561; bk. 2, ch. 58) ("Happy the man whom Heaven has blessed with bread, for which he is obliged to thank kind Heaven alone!" [744]). Even though some may accuse Cervantes of bordering on the irreverent, these are only harmless stylistic games that add a lighthearted touch of irony and familiarity to the text.

A more significant possibility of subversion appears in several specific passages of Book 2. During Don Quixote's discussion with the Barbero regarding the existence of giants, the Bible is brought in as an infallible witness to confirm the reality of giants:

> —En esto de gigantes –respondió don Quijote—hay diferentes opiniones, si los ha habido, o no, en el mundo; pero la Santa Escritura, que no puede faltar *un átomo en la verdad* (my emphasis), nos muestra que los hubo, contándonos la historia de aquel filisteazo de Golías, [. . .]. (324; bk. 2, ch. 1)
> "Whether there ever were giants or no," answered Don Quixote, "is a point much controverted among the learned. However, Holy Writ, that cannot deviate an atom from truth, informs us there were some, of which we have an instance in the account it gives of that huge Philistine, Goliath, [. . .]." (386)

Don Quixote fails to distinguish the authority of the Bible, however, with that of his books of chivalry, which for him, contain unquestionable truth: "[. . .] la cual verdad es tan cierta, que estoy por decir que con mis propios ojos vi a Amadís de Gaula" (324; bk. 2, ch. 1) ("[. . .] on the shoulders of truth, which is so apparent, that I dare almost say I have seen

Amadis de Gaul with these very eyes" [386]). In other words, Don Quixote is incapable of discriminating between different levels of authentic authority and reality as we have already seen in the case of the *baciyelmo*. True, he is a questionable witness to the trustworthiness of Scripture, but on the other hand, who would really take him seriously as a detractor, given the caricatured and fractured nature of his mind? The context of each passage must be studied carefully to determine when Don Quixote's discourses are something the author likely wants the reader to take seriously.

Nonetheless, Parr makes a telling point by directing the reader to a comparison between the usages of the word "atom" in the passage cited above on giants, and a commentary by the editorial voice in chapter 10 (*An Anatomy* 37):

> Finalmente, aunque con este miedo y recelo, las escribió [that is, Cide Hamete writing about Don Quixote's *locuras*] de la misma manera que él las hizo, sin añadir ni quitar a la historia *un átomo de la verdad* (my emphasis), sin dársele nada por las objeciones que podían ponerle de mentiroso. (354; bk. 2, ch. 10)
> However, notwithstanding this mistrust, he has set down every particular, just as the same was transacted, without adding or diminishing *the least atom of truth* through the whole history (my emphasis), not valuing in the least such objections as may be raised to impeach him of breach of veracity. (432)

The juxtaposition of "un átomo de la verdad," ("a jot of truth") could very well carry a deliberate message in-between the lines to the discreet reader, or alternatively, it could be an incidental stylistic parallel. Cervantes also uses the term *átomos* in a general sense meaning roughly "details" when he, on another occasion with tongue firmly planted in cheek, describes Cide Hamete's prowess as a historian: "Dice Cide Hamete, puntualísimo escudrinador de los átomos desta verdadera historia, [. . .]" (529; bk. 2, ch 50)("Cid Hamet, the most punctual and diligent searcher after the minutest circumstances, even to the very atoms of this true history, says that [. . .]" [694]). This quote may add weight to Parr's suggestion that a subversive jab has been taken at Scriptural authority in the last two passages cited where the term "atom" is employed with evident irony. Another

possibility, however, is stylistic coincidence—the passages are separated by roughly thirty pages in the first instance and by over two hundred in the second (in the Porrúa edition). They may therefore not reflect serious ironic intent on the part of the author or the likelihood of such a reception by his contemporary interpretive community, since the variables of time lapse in writing and space of writing are open questions.We must also decide who or what is the intended target of the joke. Again, Don Quixote seems to be the most natural mark since the authorial point of view consistently characterizes him as an indiscreet reader. The Moorish version of the "Quixote Story" is also targeted for irony. Conceivably, Cervantes has set up a binary opposition: implausible Islamic reproduction/trustworthy record of Christian revelation (implied). The double-edged joke is on Don Quixote and on all that Cide Hamete represents. Cervantes mocks the "Mohammedan philosopher" who appears to have the seasons reversed as he attempts a serious discourse on *tempus fugit irreparabile* (543; bk. 2, ch. 53). The wretched Don Quixote is thus caught in a double bind: his discredited books of chivalry on one side and, at best, a spurious history being written about him on the other.

Since, as previously noted, the dominant genre of the text is mild satire, and that satire "always expresses a critical stance toward external reality" (Parr, "Plato, . . ." 170), the ironic motif seems to migrate from the satirized protagonist outward toward gullible readers with a taste for chivalry, and not overtly inward toward the more limiting world of the Scriptures as a controlling norm in society. It also moves from the satirized Moorish historian outward to a suspect Islamic world. This alternate juxtaposed reality is in opposition to the Christian concept of revealed truth within the established order.

Cervantes also plays with history in another way in the text, and specifically mocks and parodies pseudo-histories (Eisenberg 129). However, he never suggests that all history is apocryphal, even though it all deserves scrutiny. Cervantes was surely parodying the books of chivalry with their semi-invented histories and their pretense at being translations or revisions of old Spanish texts (Eisenberg 122). However, it does not necessarily follow that he is intentionally subverting Scripture because it is primarily accessible in translation form to his contemporaneous reader. In any case, the translation process that the Bible underwent in its formation was different from that parodied in the *Quixote,* and has been well documented in research more appropriate to that area of inquiry than our present

study.

Secondly, we cannot take for granted that Don Quixote's endorsement of the veracity of the Bible is ironic since on many occasions he utilizes straightforward speech and is apparently the mouthpiece of the historical author. His discourse on satire during one of his sane parentheses is one example (384; bk. 2, ch. 16). At other times he speaks in non-ironic tones of poetry, descriptive grammar, arms and letters, and a variety of other topics. In short, Cervantes, the great puppeteer of literary techniques, uses irony, satire, parody and other literary strategies at his convenience. He is nevertheless, very hard to pin down in terms of predictability. His keen sense of the game does indeed color his use of Holy Writ in innovative ways, yet he simultaneously manages to maintain a respectfully playful, but in my opinion, not subversive relationship with this most important background text.

Clearly, the modern reader may "write" subversive elements as he interprets the text according to his own historical context. Yet, my purpose has been to seek a posture that considers the authenticity of the author's intention in the referentiality of the interpretive process. In Hirsch's thought, such an interpretation should arise from Cervantes' transhistorical artistic offering in ways that are faithful to the text's integrity and self-understanding. The fusion of authorial intent with contemporary allegorization and analogy as interpretive strategies brings both the original meaning and the present significance together to fruitful contact for a deeper encounter with the text. Indeed, in consideration of the biblical intertextualities under the pen of Cervantes, the sacred writ gets a dusting-off and becomes more dynamically human and accessible, but nevertheless remains intact.

NOTES

[1] Wolford also warns us that nothing is safe from Cervantes' subversive art: "not history, not contemporary society, and not epic, for the epic requires something to replace old fictions" (209).

[2] Translations of quotes other than from the *Quixote* itself or the Bible are mine.

[3] "It was Foucault who supplied almost in passing the reason for the persistence of intention. It was in an essay whose aim was to send the author packing called "What is an Author?" Foucault coined the elegant [4] Jauss speaks of the "reconstruction of the horizon of expectations, in the face of which a work was created and received in the past" (28). He prefers to interpret a given text on the basis of a

"fusion of horizons" that takes into account its original horizon, considered and viewed inescapably from the hermeneutical perspective of the present" (30). I do not take Jauss to be suggesting total subjectivity in the interpretation of texts, since the original entrance of a text must always be included in the historical referentiality of any given interpretation by virtue of its existence and the web of interpretations and consensus that follow it into a given epoch.

[5] All English quotations of the Quixote, unless otherwise indicated, are from Doré's English version. I have referenced the English quotes by page only, as book and chapter numbers are indicated in the Spanish parenthetical references.

[6] Castro comments that "La religión, en cuanto representada por lo visible eclesiástico, es objeto de numerosas ironías: clérigos de vida regalada, cabalgando en gordas y lucias mulas; [. . .]"("Religión, as far as its ecclesiastical representation is concerned, is the object of numerous ironies: clerics of the soft life, riding on fat shiny mules; [. . .]"; *Hacia Cervantes 298*), and he follows with similar examples.

[7] Ante todo, insiste [*El enquiridión*] en que el caballero cristiano debe armarse con la oración y la ciencia de las Escrituras, teniendo como principal filosofía cristiana el "conócete a ti mismo" de los antiguos, por encerrar gran sabiduría y concordar con las Sagradas Escrituras (Fajardo 618). (Above all, it insists [the *Enchiridion*] that the Christian knight should arm himself with prayer and the science of the Scriptures, having as a Christian philosophical principle, the "know thyself," of the ancients, by enclosing great wisdom and agreement with the Holy Scriptures).

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