

Heinz-Peter Endress. *Los ideales de Don Quijote en el cambio de valores desde la Edad Media hasta el Barroco*. Pamplona: Ediciones Universidad de Navarra, 2000. 182 pp.

It is always fruitful to reconsider the chivalric sources and themes of *Don Quijote*, since they were the substance from which Cervantes created his enigmatic and mythical character. Endress here proposes to show how the ancient ideal became broader and more personal within Don Quijote's purview. Part of that amplification has to do with Don Quijote's social and political outlook as it progressed beyond that of the medieval knight-errant. His specific postulates, according to Endress, are promoted originally in the *edad dorada* speech of I, 10, and then built upon throughout the rest of the work, maintaining conformity with the thought of Erasmian humanists.

Endress emphasizes the fact that Don Quijote is not just a dabbler in old books but instead uses them to spawn a utopian blueprint for the remainder of his life. Endress finds in his summation of the *discurso* that it is a masterpiece of rhetoric lacking the critical attention it deserves. After a review of its literary depth (the speech proves that Don Quijote is steeped in traditions created and recreated by Ariosto, Tasso, Guarini, and Sannaza-

ro, as well as the Bible and the Ancients), he stresses the speech's convergence of the chivalric and pastoral in the myth itself, where the blending of the two would bring about a new conception of chivalry.

Initially, according to Endress, the speech reveals Don Quijote's ability to sharpen his focus. He establishes the limits of the pastoral function in the myth and measures it against the broader application of the golden age of knight-errantry, beginning with King Arthur. The overall effect is the running together of these and other legends to find what lies beneath Don Quijote's discrete mythology. Thus Endress may reason that the joining of the golden age myth and the Renaissance utopia is not new in Don Quijote's rhetorical conceptualizations, but that the *novelistic* combination of both into a chivalric utopia, beyond a confluence with the pastoral, is original. Hence a new alchemy from the two revered ideals.

In a practical sense, Endress finds that chivalry is a literary idea in which Don Quijote wants to participate (i.e., the epic). At first he obstinately maintains its principles, which are out of touch with his small-town environment. For that reason he had been thought of as absurd, extravagant, and one-dimensional. However, he later becomes a realist, which means that he learns at what point his mission will cease to be purposeful for his contemporaries. Subsequently, in Part II he becomes acutely—and sadly—aware of the unfortunate metamorphosis (enchantment) of Dulcinea. The world around him, which is morally inferior and prosaic, attains greater force against his ambitions and imposes rock-solid resistance, beginning with the deceptions of the disguised “enchanters” of the inn of Part I.

Endress is correct to state that Don Quijote's inexperience partly engendered his madness. However, Don Quijote's naivete continues far beyond the *edad dorada* speech, in which Endress sees a major change in Don Quijote's thinking. Although the speech may have helped Don Quijote to temper the militancy of his incipient career, Endress expects too much too soon of Don Quijote.

While the utopian formula is fundamental to Don Quijote's thinking, Endress further points out that *Don Quijote* is a product of a Baroque era of unstable and troubled attitudes. In the period after 1600 political decline, the closing of Spain to Europe, and a failed economy made life an everyday uncertainty for the Spaniard. As cultural historians repeatedly have said, all things seemed bathed in the half-light of illusion. Accordingly, by rethinking the *edad dorada* speech in this context, Endress is able to view it more as a byproduct of Don Quijote's skepticism than as an evocation of a mythical past. A strong indication of Don Quijote's newfound wisdom is the calculated linguistic play that uses narrative distance from his subject. First, Don Quijote exaggerates the abundant generosity of Nature, and then come his

words and expressions that signify awkward or inappropriate thinking (e.g., the incestuousness suggested in the speech) along with hyperbole and irony. These are signs that the monolithic age of gold has begun to crack.

Endress thus places the knightly conceptions in their proper contexts of irony. But despite that irony, he persists in believing in the profound seriousness of the *discursa*, and the reader is left with the problem of where Don Quijote's purification of the chivalric ideals begins and ends. Many have offered answers, and what has puzzled readers for generations is that there may not be definitive solutions. Endress's reply comes in the form of framing Don Quijote's conception as an amplification of the chivalric model through the inner strength of his will, since Don Quijote's individualistic conviction is closer to the Renaissance paradigm rather than its being a vestige of the medieval collectivism residing in the golden age myth. For Cervantes, the myth evolves into a motive for self-perfection, a goal Don Quijote would always maintain. This is central in Renaissance philosophy and crucial to Don Quijote's Castiglionian power to harness the universal "science" of knight errantry leading to that self-perfection.

The contradiction of ideal and irony, however, is not traced fully in Endress's book. For him the Cervantine enigma is a deep-seated antipathy with which Cervantes often plays. Further, for Endress, the figure of Don Quijote awakens the sympathy of the reader and suggests the enduring values of chivalry, which had emerged in Spain centuries earlier during the Reconquest. Therefore, the ideals, despite their historical constancy, are unworkable and perhaps, due to their anachronism, unknowable in Don Quijote's world.

Endress believes that when Don Quijote dies he does not let his beliefs slip through his fingers. But the critical-historical focus has now changed from that of unfettered idealism to the belief that Don Quijote saw through the rather thin banter and mockery of which he became a target. Does he make an art out of chivalry? Yes, but there are few among his contemporaries who understood it, and those skeptics would not let Don Quijote thrive. Don Quijote's mission is a benign one, but one that ultimately loses its power in the light of reality and gives way to ambiguity. However, the ambiguity that gives rise to Don Quijote's cynicism is given less attention after Chapter 4 of Endress's book ("La ironización desde la perspectiva barroca"), falling short in this critic's overall picture.

In an appendix Endress analyzes the prologue to the 1605 *Quijote*. Apparently this essay is only tangentially linked to the rest of the book. Endress reviews the questions of authorial voice, fictitious narrator, and distance set forth in the prologue that will become a central focus of Part I. He delves into the problem of Cervantes as the stepfather of his fiction, separat-

ing himself from the work and also from its readers. The problem suggested in the prologue is, why did Cervantes write so playfully about a novel he had composed with such deep sensitivity? Endress opposes the views of those who claim that the answer may be found in Cervantes' indifference to his audience: On the contrary, Cervantes' aim was to *provoke* a reading of his work because of his strong faith in its originality. Ultimately, Cervantes makes fun of prologues themselves, asking why they should be necessary at the same time that he is intentionally using one for his own profit. This doubleness is a hallmark of *Don Quijote*, so it is no wonder that ironic language is employed in the first lines of the prologue.

The value of this appendix is Endress's sorting out of the various viewpoints about the thorny question of Cervantes' humor, which takes flight in the prologue. Here we are left with another Cervantine enigma: since the prologue is an instrument often used by writers to promote their works, why does Cervantes use his to repel his readers?

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