

## Ludic Revelations in the Enchanted Head Episode in *Don Quijote* (II, 62)

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In the series of episodes in Barcelona at the end of Part Two, Don Quijote nears the conclusion of a journey of self-discovery and, as in several other defining moments of the novel, encounters technology. Multiple clashes with the technological innovations of the Early Modern era occur throughout both parts of Cervantes' novel (Jaksic 76–77).

Technology asserts itself as a metaphor for the modern world that Don Quijote struggles to understand, beginning with the episode of the windmills, continuing through his encounters with fulling mills, artillery, water mills, and mechanical contraptions like Clavileño and culminating in the final scenes in the urban setting of Barcelona. Just before his defeat at the hands of the Knight of the White Moon, Don Quijote has two final adventures involving machines. He participates in an interview with an enchanted head and then confronts the modern

machinery of the printing industry—two distinct but complementary episodes that serve to strip away the most fundamental constructs of Don Quijote's chivalric fantasy and reveal them as illusion.

John J. Allen, following Unamuno's lead, has classified the Barcelona adventures, beginning with Don Quijote's triumphal procession into the modern city, as a *via crucis* that depicts the protagonist's arrival at the "nadir of the knight's social existence" in advance of his final downfall (Allen 49; Unamuno 467). Juan Bautista Avallé-Arce likewise interprets the Barcelona adventures as marking "un radical cambio de orientación en las vidas de [los protagonistas]" (45). While the visit to the print shop and its commercial treatment of books is recognized as an important step along Don Quijote's path to *desengaño*, the accompanying episode of the enchanted head has received less critical attention. Unamuno declared the episode impertinent, a mere "curiosidad de industria," drawing an oblique comparison to the intercalated stories of Part One for which Cervantes had been criticized (468). Far from a mere curiosity, however, the enchanted head episode plays an important role in the development of Don Quijote's character and in the novel's ongoing critique of chivalric fiction. This brief scene focuses on yet another machine, a mechanical oracular statue, and depicts the seventeenth-century practice of using ingenious devices to illustrate and reveal mysteries of nature, all in the context of the urbane parlor games so popular in Early Modern Europe among the nascent bourgeoisie. In the process, the episode strips away the illusion of enchantment, the life force of Don Quijote's chivalric existence, revealing enchantment itself to be not only a deception, but also a product of the human *ingenio*. The juxtaposition of the enchanted head and the printing press episodes establishes Chapter 62 as a bipartite deconstruction of the foundations of Don Quijote's mythical worldview, reducing chivalric books and the marvelous fictional worlds inscribed therein to products of technological innovation, commercial enterprise, and the creative imagination.

The enchanted head episode is an example of what Paula Findlen has called the *lusus scientiae*, or joke of knowledge, frequently described in scientific texts of the period and exhibited

publicly in museums (292). During the European Renaissance, scientific inquiry reveled in the playfulness of nature and devised tricks, games, and illusions that would reveal the paradoxes and mysteries of the natural world. Following in the tradition of Pliny's *Natural History*, a work often cited by humanists of the period, the emerging scientific community delighted in the ingenuity of nature's infinite variety and the existence of natural phenomena seemingly unexplained by the powers of human observation and interpretation. Like the freak shows of nineteenth- and twentieth-century carnivals and circuses, natural philosophers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries exhibited the unusual as evidence of nature's intrinsic playfulness. They investigated the bizarre internal geometry of crystals and stones that mimicked shapes and forms found in flora, fauna, and topography; they interpreted and described strange-looking sea life and fossils as hybrids of nature; and they even searched for the interred bones of giants. In the attempt to classify and categorize the natural world, Early Modern scientists expressed not only an appreciation for natural variety but also a sense of humor about their endeavor. According to Findlen:

In keeping with the Renaissance tradition of *serio ludere*, as seen in More's *Utopia* and Erasmus' *Praise of Folly*, which dealt with the most serious political and theological subjects of the day by treating them with irony and humor, the late Renaissance naturalists framed their reading of nature through a similar process of intellectual reversal and transformation that highlighted the paradoxes of the natural world. The heightened interest in *lusus* represented an attempt to reconcile ancient philosophies with new ways of seeing. Scientific jokes clearly demonstrate the new role of observation in early modern science, and what the naturalists and collectors of the period observed was *playful*. In this respect, joking can be characterized as a practice central to Renaissance science for it effectively connected the discourse on playfulness to the social experience of the naturalist-collector. (294–95)

Not only was scientific inquiry itself playful at the time, but a tradition of games also arose to exhibit and showcase natural paradoxes in a social context. The distinction between *lusus* (intellectual play) on the one hand and *ludus* (social play) on the other apparently was not drawn in the Renaissance (Findlen 292 n.), as both the intellectual and social dimensions of play seem to have been incorporated in the more frequently-used term *lusus*. Thus, the *lusus scientiae* was not only a joke of knowledge, but also the public display of scientific playfulness. By extension, the ludic dimension of scientific inquiry was associated not only etymologically but also socially with the revelation of illusion and the presentation of the ludicrous.

The *lusus scientiae* of the Renaissance was a game of science, yes, but it was also a game of illusion, as Ruth El Saffar would say in reference to *Don Quijote* ("Games" 143–44). These games frequently included tricks designed to deceive the observer and inspire a sense of *admiratio* by exploiting the newly acquired understanding of nature. Often times these parlor games sought to reveal the "miraculous" in nature, showing not only that nature itself is a marvel but also that the human intellect can create the illusion of the miraculous by exploiting the properties of nature. The games employed human ingenuity to show how nature worked and they provided ways for the initiate class to observe the workings of nature in an amusing way. Consequently such games also possessed the ability to deceive those not versed in scientific knowledge, those uneducated or ignorant of the laws of nature. The *lusus scientiae*, then, showed off the powers of technology and innovation, but also used the new knowledge of the emerging scientific revolution to entertain, and through entertainment, to delight in the creative power of the human intellect and imagination.

Particularly problematical in this ludic context of revealing truth, order, and divine purpose in nature are the occult sciences. The fundamental change in outlook of Renaissance natural philosophy that was to culminate in the scientific revolution also saw the gradual discrediting of occult sciences as superstitious, unscientific behavior. In the time of Cervantes, however, natural philosophers were still grappling with the apparent contradictions in

nature that inspired widespread popular belief in the supernatural. It bears mentioning that the occult sciences were largely symbolic in aspect; astrology, magic, and alchemy all viewed nature as a system of signs pointing to other systems of mental categories (Findlen 295). For all intents and purposes, we may include Don Quijote's conception of enchantment as an occult science. Time and again we see the transformative nature of Don Quijote's belief system, in which objects and phenomena appearing in nature do not signify themselves, but rather point to other hidden meanings. As Findlen observes, there is a clear Ovidian influence on the occult sciences of the Renaissance (310). For believers in such systems, the world is an ever-changing place continually in flux and full of mysterious transformations that cannot be explained by empirical science's reliance on observation and sensory perception. Don Quijote himself refers to this metamorphic aspect of his chivalric world when he tells Sancho "las cosas de la guerra más que otras están sujetas a continua mudanza" during the adventure of the windmills (I, 8; 96). The enchanted head episode further illustrates the symbolic aspect of Don Quijote's occult belief system, as well as Renaissance science's attempt to find truth in the paradoxes of nature. For the followers of the occult sciences, natural phenomena that cannot be explained upon direct observation point toward the presence of another system, whether enchantment, or some demonic presence (which Don Antonio Moreno refers to when he raises the threat of inquisitorial persecution associated with his enchanted head). But at the end of this scene, Cervantes reveals to his reader that the enchanted head's secret is not symbolic at all. The marvelous properties of the talking statue do not merely refer to another occult system of meanings. There are no mysteries here, only deception, skillful illusion, and, of course, *ingenio*.

The enchanted head episode depicts a Renaissance *lusus scientiae*, a public demonstration of the powers and paradoxes of nature. As in the seventeenth-century parlor games of which Findlen speaks, a group of educated men with privileged information use their knowledge of nature to construct a machine that manipulates natural laws to give the illusion of magic or the miraculous. While those in the know can marvel at the human inge-

nuity of constructing such a device, those not initiated in the secret are deceived by the illusion. The episode begins with a set-up, paralleling the structure Cervantes uses to prepare the fictional audience in his *entremés* of group deception, “El retablo de las maravillas.” Don Antonio Moreno, identified by Cervantes as a man who enjoys pastimes that entertain without “perjuicio” or “daño de tercero” (II, 62; 1132–33), takes don Quijote by the hand into a dark, sparsely-furnished room, “en el cual no había otra cosa de adorno que una mesa, al parecer de jaspe, que sobre un pie de lo mismo se sostenía, sobre la cual estaba puesta, al modo de las cabezas de los emperadores romanos, de los pechos arriba, una que semejaba ser de bronce” (II, 62; 1134). This passage describes not only the physical attributes of the enchanted head, but also focuses its description on superficial appearances without ever revealing the statue’s true substance or construction. The table *appears* to be of jasper (“al parecer de jaspe”), the head itself is *in the style* of Roman bust statuary (“al modo de las cabezas de los emperadores romanos”), and formed of a material that is *similar* to bronze (“que semejaba ser de bronce”). Cervantes here gives the reader fair warning of the deceptive nature of this device prior to Don Quijote’s interview with it, just as Don Antonio advises his friends of the secret of the head’s mysterious power in advance of Don Quijote’s deception.<sup>1</sup>

Don Antonio then explains to Don Quijote the marvels of the statue, first taking care to be sure that no unwelcome interloper is watching or listening. Shutting the door, he swears Don Quijote to secrecy. Don Quijote will become privy to “una de las más raras aventuras, o, por mejor decir, novedades que imaginarse pueden, con condición que lo que a vuestra merced dijere lo ha de depositar en los últimos retretes del secreto” (II, 62; 1134). Indeed, an air of secrecy and silence surrounds this enigmatic, faux-bronze head, which, as Don Antonio later will reveal, reflects fear of inquisitorial persecution, in keeping with the common reception of the *lusus scientiae* as explainable only by demonic or super-

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<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of Don Antonio as “character-author,” see El Saffar (*Distance* 103–04). Bruce Wardropper (“Intencionalidad” 685) analyzes the complex relationships between Don Antonio, Roque Guinart, and Ricote.

natural forces.

As in prestidigitation, when a magician, for example, passes his hand (or his assistant's) over his magic box to show there are no strings, ultimately distracting the observer from the true nature of the trick, Don Antonio takes Don Quijote's hand and guides it over the bronze head and table so he can be sure of its authenticity. The simple action of touching a device fabricated for illusion recalls Don Quijote's pledge at the beginning of Part Two, "ahora digo que es menester tocar las apariencias con la mano para dar lugar al desengaño" (II, 11; 714). Don Quijote first asserts this empiricist desire to employ sensory perception and direct observation as a manner of achieving *desengaño* when he encounters the theatrical troupe about to perform "Las cortes de la muerte." This pledge soon becomes an apt description of the overall trajectory of Part Two of the novel as he is forced to accept the contradictions of reality all around him en route to the final scene of *desengaño* on his deathbed.<sup>2</sup> In a sense, Don Quijote's expressed desire to test the truthfulness of appearances early in Part Two leads directly to these final adventures in Barcelona, when he encounters the enchanted head, is forced to recognize books as commercial products in the print shop, and is defeated by the Knight of the White Moon.

In the episode of the enchanted head, Don Quijote reminds us that he has not abandoned his chivalric model while experimenting with observation and empiricism throughout Part Two. Don Quijote shows us that he is still trying to have things both ways: he admits he is beginning to learn from experience, but he stubbornly holds onto a central belief derived from his creative distortion of chivalric romances: that the world can be transmuted, affected, influenced by supernatural enchantment. In

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<sup>2</sup> E. C. Riley (167) writes that the shift from reliance on written authority to observation in seventeenth-century Europe could be a theme for studying *Don Quijote*, and Part Two in particular. I propose that Don Quijote's development as a character parallels the epistemological change from scholasticism to empiricism, as he progresses along the path to *desengaño*. Various significant moments in this progression coincide with episodes involving machinery or technological imagery, as in the enchanted head episode. I am presently completing a book-length study of such scientific and technological imagery in *Don Quijote*.

fact, enchantment itself is the one aspect of chivalric discourse that the ersatz knight never renounces during Part Two of the novel. Despite his increased contact with the quotidian reality of seventeenth-century Spain, his recognition of modern institutions and philosophies, his failure to hallucinate, his avoidance of violent adventures, and his growing understanding of his own anachronism, Don Quijote perseveres in his belief in enchantment. The desire to see Dulcinea disenchanting becomes the knight's primary motivation throughout Part Two. Enchantment, which he attributes to the romances of chivalry, forms the core of Don Quijote's belief system, and it is precisely enchantment itself, as an occult science, that is revealed as a hoax during the encounter with the enchanted head.<sup>3</sup>

Having ascertained for himself and for Cervantes' reader that Don Quijote still clings to his belief in the non-Christian supernatural, Don Antonio explains the head's secret in terms of enchantment:

Esta cabeza, señor don Quijote, ha sido hecha y fabricada por uno de los mayores encantadores y hechiceros que ha tenido el mundo, que creo era polaco de nación y discípulo del famoso Escotillo, de quien tantas maravillas se cuentan; el cual estuvo aquí en mi casa, y por precio de mil escudos que le di labró esta cabeza, que tiene propiedad y virtud de responder a cuantas cosas al oído le preguntaren. Guardó rumbos, pintó caracteres, observó astros, miró puntos, y, finalmente, la sacó con la perfección que veremos mañana; porque los viernes está muda, y hoy, que lo es, nos ha de hacer esperar hasta mañana. En este tiempo podrá vuestra merced prevenirse de lo que querrá preguntar; que por experiencia sé que dice verdad en cuanto responde (II, 62; 1135).

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<sup>3</sup> Howard Mancing ("Bendito" 113–14) has observed that *Belianís de Grecia*, second in popularity in its time only to *Amadís de Gaula*, is most likely the source of Don Quijote's preoccupation with enchantment. Enchantment does not appear in all, or even most, chivalric romances, but is prominent and complex in its development in *Belianís* in ways notably similar to *Don Quijote*.

Despite his detailed description of the “*encantadores y hechiceros*” involved in the fabrication of the oracular head, and the astrological signs and precise mathematical calculations under which its creation took place, Don Antonio never actually claims prophetic, oracular powers as the head’s primary virtue. Rather, he simply claims that the head will “respond” to any questions asked of it, suggesting that the power of speech itself is the primary “*maravilla*.” As in “*El coloquio de los perros*,” Cervantes here proposes an implicit association between enchantment, the marvelous, and speech. The power of speech is considered especially miraculous when it is used not for backbiting and idle gossip, as Cervantes’ dogs would discover, but for the revelation of truth hidden by the deceptive outer trappings of social conventions. There is a clear association between speech and the revelation of truth in this episode as well. Don Antonio qualifies his own fabricated miracle of speech by claiming the statue’s ability to respond coherently and truthfully (“*por experiencia sé que dice verdad en cuanto responde*”). As we will see during Don Quijote’s interview with the head, such responses include a recognition of the interlocutor and a contextual understanding of the question being asked, but avoid any attempt at prognostication.

The next day, the interview takes place. Consistent with Cervantes’ other texts about group deception, the narrator makes it clear that some of the characters possess advance knowledge about the trick and how the device functions, while others remain ignorant, as the objects of the joke. This arrangement accurately depicts the presentation of the *lusus scientiae* in the late Renaissance. It distinguishes two categories of participants: the *discretos* who will praise the mechanical device’s illusion, recognizing that it emanates from the skillful human manipulation of natural phenomena, and the *ignorantes*, who, unaware of the technological principles at work, will be deceived into believing in enchantment because of their ignorance.<sup>4</sup> Don Antonio and

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<sup>4</sup> El Saffar (*Distance* 115) describes a similar dichotomy of *sabidores* and *ignorantes* as characteristic of the many jokes and tricks that characterize Part Two as a whole.

some of his acquaintances collude in the operation of the head, while Don Quijote, Sancho Panza, and the women with whom the knight had danced the night before are the acknowledged objects of the deception. Consequently, the questions asked of the head can be answered by anyone with prior knowledge of the participants. Don Antonio asks how many observers are present, who they are, and other questions easily answered by anyone with foreknowledge. Beyond acts of simple identification, however, the enchanted head is unable to respond, stating clearly "yo no juzgo de pensamientos" (II, 62; 1139) and later "yo no juzgo de deseos" (II, 62; 1140). When Don Quijote and Sancho ask questions involving such judgment calls, the head responds only in the most generic of fashions. Responding to Don Quijote's attempt to reassure his doubting self on the question of what happened in the Cave of Montesinos, the head replies, "hay mucho que decir; de todo tiene" (II, 62; 1140). Sancho's request for information about his future is likewise answered with conditional generalities bordering on the nonsensical, "Gobernarás en tu casa; y si vuelves a ella, verás a tu mujer y a tus hijos; y dejando de servir, dejarás de ser escudero" (II, 62; 1141).

Indeed, the only confident prediction the enchanted head can make involves a question about enchantment itself. When asked whether Dulcinea will ever be disenchanting, the head predicts, "los azotes de Sancho irán de espacio; el desencanto de Dulcinea llegará a debida ejecución" (II, 62; 1140). Reasonable speculation and knowledge of Sancho's temperament allow the head to expect the squire's whipping to proceed slowly, but the confidence expressed in the ultimate disenchantment of Dulcinea effectively contrasts with the generic approach to the other questions. Given that the enchantment of Dulcinea exists only in Don Quijote's imagination, the head's prophecy is not only a safe bet to make, but also serves Don Antonio's spirit of "sin perjuicio" by reassuring the doubtful Don Quijote that his personal torment will soon be over. This ruse, in effect, does him a favor by relieving him, at least in part, of the one preoccupation that had been his true obsession throughout his misadventures in Part Two.

The *ignorantes* viewing this spectacle want to believe in the illusion, which, for Don Quijote, validates his supernatural belief

in enchantment while reflecting his own self-doubt and his strong desire to have his innermost questions answered. In this sense, as in “El retablo de las maravillas” or Don Quijote’s encounter with Maese Pedro, the deception is contingent upon the complicity of the audience in crafting the illusion. Like these other texts of deception, the enchanted head episode makes an association between festive tricks and exposure. The trick is designed to reveal the folly in a particular behavior or system of belief—the same kind of scam most commonly recognized in Hans Christian Andersen’s tale “The Emperor’s New Clothes,” or Juan Manuel’s “De lo que contesció a un rey con burladores que fizieron un paño” in *El conde Lucanor* (Molho 47). In the case of “El retablo de las maravillas,” the deception reveals the villagers’ hypocritical preoccupation with honor and blood purity as sham, as an empty illusion (Reed 157). The episode of Maese Pedro’s puppet show, as George Haley has pointed out, intentionally blurs the line between illusion and reality, drawing attention to the metaliterary aspects of the novel and luring the unsuspecting reader into the same perilous trap as Don Quijote in believing the “reality” of fiction (105–06). In the enchanted head episode, enchantment itself as an occult science is the object of the joke, and it is shown to be nothing but an illusion produced by the human *ingenio*. Through the intervention of ingeniously constructed machinery, enchantment is revealed as a hoax, a fraud, a skillful manipulation of nature by a sophisticated, urbane class “in the know.”

After each of his games of illusion, Cervantes feels obligated to raise the issue of verisimilitude in order to undeceive his reader. Just as Cide Hamete surprisingly reveals the true identity of Maese Pedro or discloses the ingenious falsehood of Basilio’s feigned suicide, here Cervantes explains to his reader in detail the construction of the talking head’s apparatus and its function:

Con esto se acabaron las preguntas y las respuestas; pero no se acabó la admiración en que todos quedaron, excepto los dos amigos de don Antonio, que el caso sabían. El cual quiso Cide Hamete Benengeli declarar luego, por no tener suspenso

al mundo, creyendo que algún hechicero y extraordinario misterio en la tal cabeza se encerraba, a así, dice que don Antonio Moreno, a imitación de otra cabeza que vio en Madrid, fabricada por un estampero, hizo ésta en su casa, para entretenerse y suspender a los ignorantes. (II, 62; 1141)

Cervantes' narrative draws attention to the dual nature of the *lusus scientiae*, which entertains the knowledgeable class ("que el caso sabían") while astonishing the "ignorantes." Don Quijote is clearly understood to be one of the "ignorantes" in this context, not having been informed of the nature of the trick in the way that Don Antonio apprizes his friends, and Cervantes, through Cide Hamete, reveals the secret to his readers. Cide Hamete, however, contradicts Don Antonio's previous account of the talking head's construction, an account presumably approved by the elusive narrator. The narrator, if he is to be trusted, now writes that Don Antonio himself, and not a disciple of the magician Escotillo, built the enchanted head in imitation of one seen in Madrid, which was constructed by an *estampero*, a printer of engraved pictures. That an *estampero*, a man who uses machinery to fabricate artistic images, would build a mechanized talking head suggests an intriguing application of his talent and *ingenio* directed at a similar purpose: to employ a mechanical apparatus in the reproduction of artful illusions for mass consumption. Cide Hamete, Cervantes' spokesman for verisimilitude, problematizes his own truthfulness by contradicting the first account of the talking device's construction and then signals a relationship between the truth-speaking enchanted head, revealed to be a hoax, and those who make their living reproducing illusions, mechanically and otherwise. The creator of the enchanted head is no longer a magician, but rather a technician and an artist. In the tradition of Maese Pedro, Chanfalla in "El retablo de las maravillas," Campuzano and the canine storytellers of "El coloquio de los perros," and other Cervantine artists, the *estampero* who builds the enchanted head ultimately traffics in the artistic revelation of truth through the fabrication of illusion (see Forcione, "Cervantine Figure" 304–06). Further, the reference to the *estampero*, who repro-

duces engravings using the technology of the print industry, provides a subtle, motific link to the print shop episode about to follow, unifying the two parts of Chapter 62 in the context of the relationship between technology, artful illusion, and truthful revelation.

Cervantes then has Cide Hamete explain the construction and function of the device in explicit detail:

Y la fábrica era de esta suerte: la tabla de la mesa era de palo, pintada y barnizada como jaspe, y el pie sobre que se sostenía era de lo mesmo, con cuatro garras de águila que dél salían, para mayor firmeza del peso. La cabeza, que parecía medalla y figura de emperador romano, y de color de bronce, estaba toda hueca, y ni más ni menos la tabla de la mesa, en que se encajaba tan justamente, que ninguna señal de juntura se parecía. El pie de la tabla era ansimesmo hueco, que respondía a la garganta y pechos de la cabeza, y todo esto venía a responder a otro aposento que debajo de la estancia de la cabeza estaba. Por todo este hueco de pie, mesa, garganta y pechos de la medalla y figura referida se encaminaba un cañón de hoja de lata, muy justo, que de nadie podía ser visto. En el aposento de abajo correspondiente al de arriba se ponía el que había de responder, pegada la boca con el mesmo cañón, de modo que, a modo de cerbatana, iba la voz de arriba abajo y de abajo arriba, en palabras articuladas y claras, y de esta manera no era posible conocer el embuste. (II, 62; 1141–42).

The precise description of the mechanical operation of the head establishes an indelible link between technology and deception. In the enchanted boat episode, the illusory “*máquinas y trazas*” of the modern world provoke Don Quijote into uttering his first exasperated words of resignation, “*yo no puedo más,*” marking a significant step along the road to his eventual *desengaño* (II, 29; 873–74). Likewise, the “*maravillosa máquina*” Cide Hamete describes in the enchanted head episode refers not only to the machine itself, but also to the ingenious human manipulation of nature that creates a confusing and entertaining illusion. The

word “máquina” in this context and in the enchanted boat episode takes on the secondary meaning of a kind of deceptive machination associated with artifice. Both adventures involve the animation of inanimate objects via enchantment, and serve as bookends marking the progression of enchantment as a theme and its contextual association with machinery and deceptive constructions. Key to this understanding is Cervantes’ own detailed description of how the machinery operates, which breaks the illusion for the reader but leaves the protagonist deceived.

The intervention of Cide Hamete Benengeli in the revelation of the illusion of enchantment merits further discussion. How, exactly, can Cide Hamete know the internal mechanism of the enchanted head? Has he seen the device firsthand in order to be able to describe it in such detail? How can he be in the room with Don Quijote, unseen, and also be able to describe his interlocutor’s hidden chamber, which lies beneath? If we accept the literary device of the first and second authors of *Don Quijote* as Cervantes presents it to us, then the narrator’s omniscience is indeed as problematical here as in any other moment of the book.<sup>5</sup> Don Quijote and Sancho resolve the paradox at the beginning of Part Two by attributing powers of enchantment to Cide Hamete when they discover the narrator’s intimate knowledge of things “que pasamos nosotros a solas,” to quote Sancho (II, 2; 645). The fact that enchantment is revealed as a hoax by a narrator who is himself an enchanter appears to undermine his explanation of the enchanted head, an explanation which, we recall, was already problematical in its contradiction of Don Antonio’s initial

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<sup>5</sup> It is not my intention here to present in its complexity the critical debate surrounding the issue of the various “authors” of *Don Quijote*. Haley (95–96) and Allen (11–16) discuss the relationship between the “first” and “second” authors. El Saffar (*Distance* 114–39) discusses Cide Hamete’s triple-role as narrator, character, and spectator. James A. Parr (112) asserts that Cide Hamete is more a mock-historian than a narrator. Jesús Maestro (113) situates Cide Hamete within a complex narrative structure and a rhetorical system of fictional authors while also providing a comprehensive review of previous scholarship on the matter. Howard Mancing (“Cervantes as Narrator”) declares that the narrator is Cervantes.

description of the device.<sup>6</sup> Cervantes' complex narrative structure here, as in many other moments, applies principles of verisimilitude to authenticate the text and to guide the reader in the suspension of disbelief while subverting his narrator's authority in the process. Once again, Cervantes continues his ongoing commentary on the delicate relationship between author and reader and the paradoxes of ascribing truthfulness to a literary text, while drawing explicit attention to enchantment's inadequacy to explain the marvelous illusions of fiction.

Further, the breaking of the illusion is intricately bound by the implicit presence of an inquisitorial menace, which Cervantes also has Cide Hamete articulate:

Y dice más Cide Hamete: que hasta diez o doce días duró esta maravillosa máquina, pero que divulgándose por la ciudad que don Antonio tenía en su casa una cabeza encantada, que a cuantos le preguntaban respondía, temiendo no llegase a los oídos de las despiertas centinelas de nuestra fe, habiendo declarado el caso a los señores inquisidores, le mandaron que la deshiciese y no pasase más adelante, porque el vulgo ignorante no se escandalizase; pero en la opinión de don Quijote y de Sancho Panza la cabeza quedó por encantada y por respondona, más a satisfacción de don Quijote que de Sancho. (II, 62; 1142)

Don Antonio's parlor game thus has a whiff of the demonic about it. Prohibited from creating an illusion of diabolical influence, he is sworn to advise his patrons so that they might not be fooled into believing that a demonic force is at work. Nevertheless, he does not inform Don Quijote, Sancho, or the other *ignorantes*, who remain deceived, and happily so. It is interesting that Cervantes here voices inquisitorial concerns through the mouth of Cide Hamete Benengeli, an infidel. Herein lies yet another Cervantine paradox: as Cide Hamete the enchanter reveals en-

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<sup>6</sup> El Saffar (*Distance* 103–04) also acknowledges the “sabio encantador” Cide Hamete's paradoxical need to explain magic in terms of natural phenomena.

chantment to be a hoax, Cide Hamete the infidel presents the Inquisition's case against heretical tricks that create the appearance of demonic influence, such as the spectacle we have just witnessed. By having Cide Hamete utter these words, Cervantes perhaps implies that inquisitorial excess, in its zeal to protect Catholic doctrine, also resorts to the facile symbolism of occult belief when natural phenomena appear to be unexplainable.

Cide Hamete's explanation of the enchanted head shows Cervantes to be theoretically and technologically proficient enough to envision such an ingenious machine, but it should be mentioned that he was hardly the first to imagine such a device. In his detailed description of the speaking head, its technology, and its use to reveal illusion and expose superstition as fraud, Cervantes most certainly drew on a long tradition of oracular statues in written tradition and oral history. References to oracular statuary can be found in the very beginnings of western storytelling, with legendary accounts of the oracle at Delphi. It is significant that Renaissance scholarship, in its re-examination of the oracular traditions of classical antiquity, attributes the oracle's power to technology designed to give the illusion of prophecy and speech. The writings of seventeenth-century Jesuit scholars Athanasius Kircher and Gregorio de Sepibus reflect the Renaissance belief that the ancient Greeks and Egyptians "stuffed tubes into the mouths of idols" in order to trick the common people into consulting the oracles and making offerings to a privileged class of priests (Goman, n. 13).

Kircher carried the scholarly analysis of oracular statuary one step further by actually building a speaking head, which he named the Delphic Oracle and displayed at the Jesuits' *Collegio Romano*. The device, which evidently began as a simple intercom system that Kircher used from his room to communicate with servants and visitors, consisted of a series of tubes that carried the human voice from one remote area to another. Later, by placing a statue at one end of the system of tubes, Kircher created a *lusus scientiae* that playfully invited the onlooker to figure out how the speaking statue worked. The purpose of the statue was to arouse amazement and wonder, in keeping with the Renaissance doctrine of *admiratio*, which echoes the popular Spanish dictum of

the ages regarding *asombro*: “todo lo nuevo aplace.”<sup>7</sup> An excerpt from Kircher’s detailed description of his invention follows:

I adapted a conical tube, made from a length of 22 palms of sheet-iron, the speaking hole of which did not exceed 1/4 of a palm in diameter. The tube, however, had a diameter of one palm at its aperture that then grew gradually by continuous and proportional increments in diameter.... [T]his was a thing seen as completely new and unheard of by the visitors to my museum, when they heard speech, but couldn’t see who was talking. So that I would not be suspected of some prohibited Art by the astonished people, I showed them the hidden structure of the device.... The tube...now acts secretly in ludic oracles and false consultations with a hidden and quiet voice, so that nobody present is able to perceive anything of the secret technique of the reciprocal murmured conversation. And when it is exhibited to strangers even to this day, there are not lacking those who harbour a suspicion of demons among those who do not understand the machine, for the statue opens and closes its mouth as if it was speaking, and moves its eyes. Therefore I built this machine in order to demonstrate the impostures, fallacies and frauds of the ancient priests in the consultation of oracles. For while they gave their answers through secret tubes (described in the Oedipus), they urged the people to give offerings extravagantly, if they wanted their prayers to be answered. And consequently, by this fraud, they were able to greatly increase their wealth. In any case I would not deny that they also secretly involved demons in their works. (Gorman, n. 15)

Kircher’s account parallels that of Cervantes in several ways. Both writers provide a complete description of the device’s fabrication

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<sup>7</sup> José Antonio Maravall (453–54) acknowledges Spanish baroque culture’s obsession with novelty and documents several variations of the refrain coined by Lope, Tirso, María de Zayas, and other writers and thinkers of the age. Cervantes, of course, uses the phrase “todo lo nuevo aplace” in “El retablo de las maravillas.”

and operation. Both identify the sense of *admiratio*, astonishment, and wonder surrounding the statue's seemingly miraculous acquisition of the powers of speech (something "new and unheard of" for Kircher; "una de las más raras novedades que imaginarse pueden" for Cervantes). Both describe the device's association with the "prohibited Arts" and the host's desire to explain the device to others so that he would not be accused of demonic influences. And, like Cervantes before him, Kircher establishes a clear association between these kinds of deceptions and their use to reveal the truth and to discredit "false gods."

Kircher's Delphic Oracle cannot be considered a source for Cervantes' invention, as Kircher lived, wrote, and experimented several decades after Cervantes' death. Both men, however, may have had access to the same material when envisioning their respective talking heads. Kircher's most direct sources include the *Disquisitionum magicarum* of Martín del Río (published in 1599), with which Cervantes may have been familiar, as well as a widely-distributed account of oracular statuary in Giacomo Cardano's *De rerum varietate* (1557). Cardano and Del Río provided the technical blueprint for Kircher's talking machine, and cited as their own source an anecdote by Thomas Aquinas, who purportedly witnessed an oracular statue constructed by Albert the Great and destroyed it for fear that the illusion might harbor demonic influences (Jones, "Historical" 92, Gorman). Bartolomé de Las Casas, a contemporary of Cardano, included in his *Apolo-gética historia* a reference to a Roman statue of the goddess Fortuna that spoke the words of the devil; it may have been based on the Thomas Aquinas anecdote (Jones, "Historical" 90). It is thus probable that both Cervantes and Kircher drew upon some of the same source material in its multiple redactions by Thomas, Cardano, Las Casas, and Del Río. The talking head motif also appears in late medieval romance, most notably *Valentin et Orson*, which, according to Joseph R. Jones and Joseph E. Gillet, may also have inspired the Clavileño episode in Part Two of *Don Quijote* (Jones, "Historical" 94; Gillet 252).

The potential for sin in such oracular devices, it turns out, is one of degree. According to Renaissance commentaries on Thomas Aquinas, the attempt to divine knowledge is itself sinful and

dangerous, as it may invite the participation of the devil.<sup>8</sup> Thomas does grant an exception, however, to those illusions or tricks that clearly show no superstitious intentions and reveal themselves as frivolous (Thomas 297–98).<sup>9</sup> These urbane tricks, which reflect Antonio Moreno’s spirit of “sin perjuicio,” were considered to fall under the category of *eutrapelia*, or harmless entertainment. Deception was considered harmless if the trick was revealed or if the illusion served the higher purpose of being instructive in some positive way. Cervantes sees a clear relationship between the entertainment value of *eutrapelia* and its didactic power to reveal truth through illusion. As Alban Forcione has written, at the very center of the series of stories within stories in “El coloquio de los perros” can be found the tale of the witch, Cañizares, who reveals the secret of the dogs’ miraculous powers of speech to be the result of *tropelia*, or the use of illusion—magic, in this case—to transform appearances (Forcione, *Lawlessness* 47, 59). Many scholars agree that *tropelia*, in the context in which Cervantes uses it, derives from the word *eutrapelia* (also spelled *eutropelia* at the time).<sup>10</sup> Jones considers *Don Quijote* itself an extended example of *eutrapelia*, although he says Cervantes never uses the word (“Cervantes” 29). Bruce Wardropper suggests that *tropelia*,

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<sup>8</sup> The 1609 *Commentariorum Theologicorum Tomi Quatuor* of Gregorio de Valencia (1551–1603) is cited in Jones (“Historical” 101). Interesting literary examples of this doctrine may be seen in Tirso de Molina’s *El condenado por desconfiado*, or Calderón’s *El mágico prodigioso*, for example.

<sup>9</sup> The referenced passage may be found in section 2.2.168.2 of the *Summa*.

<sup>10</sup> The *Diccionario de autoridades* admits the two possible spellings, and defines the term as “virtud que modera el exceso y desenvoltura en las chanzas y juegos festivos, y hace que sean gustosos, entretenidos, y no perjudiciales,” this last phrase echoing Cervantes’ own description of Don Antonio’s tricks. *Autoridades* also lists an entry for “tropelia,” although the definitions (“aceleración confusa y desordenada” and “violencia en las acciones”) do not correspond to Cervantes’ usage in “El coloquio de los perros.” Some dictionaries after Cervantes’ time redefine *tropelia* as the magic of illusion or changing appearances, apparently in deference to his usage and to that of his contemporaries, like Tirso de Molina, in Golden Age literature. On etymology, see Jones (“Cervantes” 20). Bruce Wardropper (“Eutrapelia” 159–63) argues that the word *tropelia* is a derivative of *eutrapelia* commonly used in the Golden Age, as evidenced by its appearance in works by Tirso, Ruiz de Alarcón, López de Úbeda, Vélez de Guevara, and Gracián, among other literary sources.

the word Cervantes does choose to employ in the *Novelas ejemplares*, is a function of exemplarity and the author's didactic, moral purpose, and comes to denote the artistic mode Cervantes creates to express *eutrapelia* through prose fiction. Wardropper writes:

Tales ejemplos de tropelías se multiplican en cada una de las Novelas ejemplares. No hay en ellas ninguna conversión auténtica—ni de rango social, ni de personalidad, ni de especie biológica. Lo que pasa en ellas es que se quitan ilusiones.... Los cuentos forman un tejido de ilusiones juguetonas e inocentes. La tropelía resulta ser el modo artístico escogido por Cervantes para expresar novelísticamente la eutrapelia. ("Eutrapelia" 165)

In addition to describing Antonio Moreno's entertaining illusions as "sin perjuicio," Cervantes also understood such games as potentially instructive, revealing truth in the face of superstitious belief. Thus, Cervantine *tropelía* shares the primary goals of the *lusus scientiae* and represents a privatized, literary version of the public joke of knowledge, which it self-consciously depicts within the episode of the enchanted head. *Eutrapelia* or *tropelía* in the context of Cervantes' writings refers not only to the illusory nature of changing appearances, but also to the capacity such illusions have for dispelling myths and revealing the underlying truth. In both the "Coloquio" and the enchanted head episode of *Don Quijote*, the power of speech plays a particularly important role in the creation of illusion for the purpose of both entertainment and instruction.

Michael John Gorman, with specific reference to Kircher, has characterized the *lusus scientiae* as part of a "flourishing Baroque culture of special effects" in which the urbane *dass* misleads the ignorant, sometimes intentionally and sometimes not, on the basis of superstitious belief. Such differences in belief and reception inevitably lead to the distinction between social classes delineated on the basis of knowledge. Gorman writes:

if you could play the game, your identity as part of a particu-

lar social elite was confirmed. If you could not play the game, and had to assume that demonic forces were responsible for the strange effects you were witnessing, you were doomed to the ranks of the vulgar masses. In this respect, Kircher's machines had much in common with courtly emblems and enigmas, and the culture of "*sprezzatura*" which countless behaviour-manuals vainly attempted to divulge in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Like many types of joke, Kircher's machines are, we argue, inherently conservative. They rest on a shared mystery—the hidden causes behind the visible effects. To challenge the received picture of the causes operating in the natural world in response to such a machine would thus amount in a strong sense to spoiling the joke for everybody else.

While the playfulness of such parlor games speaks to their value as social entertainment, it also should be noted that the ultimate goal of the *lusus scientiae* was the revelation of truth or the celebration of human ingenuity in its manipulation of natural phenomena. In a very real sense, then, the scientific games of the late Renaissance wholeheartedly embraced the common goals of *docere* and *delectare*, instructing and delighting simultaneously. This proposition holds true for Cervantes' recreation of the *lusus scientiae* in the enchanted head episode and thereby participates in one of the novel's principal goals. Unlike the harmful, sadistic tricks played on Don Quijote by the Duke and Duchess, and the destructive satire of the idle aristocracy that accompanies it, the playful jokes of Antonio Moreno are presented as harmless games with constructive, redeeming features. Don Quijote is relieved by this joke, as opposed to the embarrassment and humiliation he suffers at the hands of the *duques*. He accepts the terms of the head's enchantment as they are presented to him, and is evidently content to do so. He even reprimands Sancho for having higher expectations of the speaking head:

—Bestia—dijo don Quijote—, ¿qué quieres que te respondan? ¿No basta que las respuestas que esta cabeza ha dado

correspondan a lo que se le pregunta?  
 —Sí basta, respondió Sancho—, pero quisiera yo que se declarara más y me dijera más. (II, 62; 1141)

Apparently, Don Quijote is satisfied with the head's display of the powers of speech: the enchantment resides in the speech act itself, not in any expectation of prognostication. Furthermore, he remains in contented anticipation of the disenchantment of Dulcinea promised by Don Antonio's crafty illusion. As if to emphasize this point, the narrator reiterates Don Quijote's satisfaction at the beginning of the next chapter, writing, "Grandes eran los discursos que don Quijote hacía sobre la respuesta de la encantada cabeza, sin que ninguno dellos diese en el embuste, y todos paraban con la promesa, que él tuvo por cierto, del desencanto de Dulcinea" (II, 63; 1146). Don Quijote is deceived by the talking head, but its consolatory prediction of the disenchantment of Dulcinea provides the knight with comforting hope, even as those in the know, including the reader, receive another instructive message: that enchantment itself is ludicrous, and belief in such a supernatural occult system is folly.

Thus, the revelation of enchantment as sham debunks the mythology or "false gods" of Don Quijote's superstition for the benefit of the reader, while simultaneously affirming this belief in the protagonist for the constructive purpose of relieving his torment. It is important to mention that this *cabeza encantada* is not, in effect, a *cabeza oracular*, as its powers of speech fall short of the ability to prognosticate. Scholars like Kircher used an "oracular" head to reveal that classical *oracles* and their prophecies were a fraud. Cervantes uses the "enchanted" head to reveal that *enchantment* is fraudulent, and to show the reader that the apparent marvels attributed to enchantment are really the technological product of human ingenuity in its playful manipulation of nature, and, by extension, the creative powers of the imaginative author. Many critics have observed that Don Quijote's obsession with enchantment represents a distortion of the role of the supernatural in most chivalric fiction.<sup>11</sup> Don Quijote deludes himself

<sup>11</sup> As mentioned above, see Mancing ("Bendito"), who ascribes Don Quijote

into seeing enchantment operating in the world, and he relies upon it as an escape mechanism in order to deny or reject aspects of modernity he does not wish to acknowledge. In giving disproportionate prominence to enchantment in his imitation of the chivalric model, Don Quijote seizes upon the most inverosimilar aspect of the romances and attempts to live by it. This paradox, of course, provides an interesting psychological dimension to Part Two, in which enchantment is established early on as a theme of particular importance.

As Avale-Arce contends, the diametric opposition of reality and Don Quijote's chivalric model becomes much more complicated in Part Two, as the protagonist's own interior world is divided in self-confrontation and as enchantment, the operative mechanism of his chivalric model, replicates itself in unexpected ways (51). Enchantment plays a key role in Don Quijote's psyche, as shown in the Cave of Montesinos episode, in which all of the heroes of chivalric fiction are enchanted, awaiting their deliverance at the hands of their savior Don Quijote. Enchantment duplicates itself in the episode of the enchanted boat, in which Don Quijote suddenly reveals that two enchanters now persecute him, one transforming the transformations of the other. Furthermore, enchantment in Part Two no longer serves merely to transmute windmills and inns, but to change the appearances of people's faces and heads. The book begins with the enchantment of Dulcinea, her face cruelly transformed to that of a peasant girl for Don Quijote's eyes only. Enchantment also affects the Knight of the Mirrors, whose countenance suddenly takes on the appearance of Sansón Carrasco. Enchantment and the passage of time grotesquely deform the face of the beautiful Belerma, held captive in Montesinos' cave. In all of these cases, the narrator dispels

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te's obsession with enchantment to the particular influence of *Belianís de Grecia*. Judith A. Whitenack likewise argues that the kind of enchantment used in *Don Quijote* is specific to that work and that Cervantes is selective in choosing which aspects of chivalric fiction to include in his protagonist's model (65). Bryant L. Creel writes that the romances of chivalry provide "no more to the enchantment motif than a point of departure" (22) and that Don Quijote's elaboration upon enchantment is a uniquely Cervantine incarnation of the "Platonist concept of mind exercising its capacity to 'remake reality' creatively" (25).

the myth of enchantment for the reader, showing that what appears to Don Quijote as enchantment derives from either *industria* or the creative imagination: Sancho Panza conceives of the idea of enchanting Dulcinea; Sansón Carrasco devises the ruse of the Knight of the Mirrors as a battle of wits between himself and the madman; Belerma's disfigurement is a product of Don Quijote's imagination. The enchanted head episode brings this trend to a conclusion in which another enchanted head (in this case, a disembodied one) predicts the final resolution of Don Quijote's preoccupation: Dulcinea's face will return to normal and with it, the endless persecution at the hands of the multiplying enchanters. In Part Two, therefore, Don Quijote is obsessed with enchantment and how it might function in the material world. It compounds itself and finally resolves itself in the episode of the enchanted head in a way that both delights and instructs.

Daniel Eisenberg has noted that Quixotic enchantment cannot change the nature of things, just appearances. This statement is consistent with Findlen's observation (mentioned at the beginning of this essay) of the symbolic nature of the occult sciences in the Renaissance, in which objects no longer signify themselves, but reveal hidden systems of meaning through Ovidian changes in appearance. Enchantment in *Don Quijote* may be understood as a broad metaphor for the illusory nature of reality, but, as Eisenberg correctly points out, it also functions as a kind of Cervantine *tropelía*, as a game of changing appearances that ultimately reveals an underlying truth. Don Antonio Moreno's carefully engineered speaking head is a product of human ingenuity and *industria* whose playful deception entertains, but also aids in the elucidation of a moral truth. This *lusus scientiae* showcases the power of technology and human inventiveness to create illusions that may deceive the senses, but which also reveal to the reader (if not to Don Quijote) that the occult exists only in the active human imagination. Don Quijote's misinterpretation of chivalric enchantment accentuates the divide between literature and life and cautions against confusing the conventions of the former with the realities of the latter. The enchanted head episode uses artful illusion and technological innovation to underscore Cervantes' critique of the excesses of chivalric fiction and the dangers

of misinterpreting them (and their more fantastical elements) as analogous to experienced reality.

In a sense, the *cabeza encantada* episode really does speak the truth, but not the truth that Don Quijote and Sancho expect. It participates actively in convincing Don Quijote that the disenchantment of Dulcinea will, indeed, be effective. For Cervantes' audience, it reveals the sham of enchantment and equates it with the foolishness of Don Quijote's interpretation of the chivalric enterprise. The *lusus scientiae's* opposition of *discretos* and *ignorantes* as two kinds of audiences, each receiving a different message, offers interesting parallels with the perilous process of reading chivalric fiction. If, like the *discretos* of Don Antonio's game, the discreet reader understands the conventions of chivalric fiction and is able to discern the artfulness of literary illusion, he cannot be deceived by the pernicious representation of fiction as truth. If, however, the idle reader is confounded by the verisimilitude of literary fiction, he can be deceived like Don Quijote and the *ignorantes* witnessing Don Antonio's spectacle.

For Cervantes, the danger of chivalric fiction lies in the fact that many of the *lectores ociosos* of his day do not know how to read critically, just as those who cannot approach the *lusus scientiae* with a critical mind are fooled by the realistic presentation of illusion. Don Quijote is deceived by the enchanted head the same way he is fooled by chivalric fiction into believing that enchantment operates in the world. This episode thus serves as an allegory for the act of reading and for the rhetorical process itself, insofar as rhetoric is concerned with effects and the artful devices that produce them.<sup>12</sup> The enchanted head episode illustrates the process of constructing, presenting, and receiving a rhetorical system, which, like the conventions of chivalric romance, may have undesirable effects in the untrained reader. The episode is therefore a multi-dimensional cautionary tale of literary interpretation that parallels Maese Pedro's puppet show and contributes to the ongoing critique of literary verisimilitude in both parts of Cervantes' novel. Gorman writes that the *lusus scientiae* occupies

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<sup>12</sup> I wish to acknowledge my gratitude to Iván Teixeira for his thoughtful comments on this issue.

"a ludic space between the demonic and the supernatural realms." I would argue that in *Don Quijote*, the *lusus scientiae* occupies a ludic space between enchantment and human ingenuity, and reveals that the marvels of fiction, far from adhering to the laws of the former, serve as testament to the creative and enchanting potential of the latter.

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