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REALITY AND ILLUSION IN
MIGUEL DE CERVANTES' DON QUIXOTE
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REALITY AND ILLUSION IN MIGUEL DE CERVANTES' DON
QUIXOTE AND JOHN BARTH'S THE SOT WEED FACTOR

Illusion is an integral part of Miguel de Cervantes' Don Quixote and John Barth's The Sot Weed Factor. It plays an important part in both the characters of the protagonists, Don Quixote and Ebenezer Cooke, respectively, and in the lives and actions of several of the secondary characters. Furthermore, the reader of these works himself is influenced by the aura of illusion and fantasy which surrounds all the actions in these novels. The idea of illusion and fantasy that is so prevalent colors the way in which the reader identifies with these characters and their deeds. In both of these novels it is important to measure the value of the illusions which seem almost to dictate the action. The rise and fall of both Don Quixote and Ebenezer Cooke's illusions parallel in many ways and demonstrate their value to the holder of the illusion in strikingly similar ways. What is more, these illusions are of such strength that they influence significantly the lives of several characters close to the protagonist. The intrusion of reality comes only after the main character has become totally disillusioned--only after every remnant of the illusion is gone, for as long as there is any shred left, both Don Quixote and Ebenezer will cling to it. It is quite significant how dependent the protagonists are on their illusions in order to function.

While it is necessary to use the entire text of The Sot Weed Factor in order to follow and evaluate Ebenezer Cooke's

illusion and its effects and consequences, Part II is of more importance than Part I in Cervantes' work in evaluating Don Quixote's dream. Don Quixote as a character changes very little from the beginning of Part I to its conclusion. However, in Part II, he undergoes changes in both his character and the reader identifies with him and in his illusion. This paper, therefore, will deal mainly with Part II of Don Quixote.

ILLUSION AND THE PROTAGONIST

In both Don Quixote and The Sot Weed Factor, the illusion of the protagonist seems to cause much of the action and interaction among characters. It also seems to be the major motivating force in the protagonist's life. Both characters are unable to recognize reality and, consequently, they create a world out of their fantasy. They are removed from reality.

This sense of removal from reality is reflected in Ebenezer Cooke in The Sot Weed Factor. The reader is fully aware from the beginning that Ebenezer is unable to recognize reality. In explaining Ebenezer's education, Barth provides a clue to Ebenezer's character.

. . . . Because learning had been for him [Ebenezer] such a pleasant game, he could not regard the facts of zoology or the Norman Conquest, for example, with genuine seriousness, nor could he discipline himself to long labor at tedious tasks. Even his great imagination and enthusiasm for the world were not unalloyed virtues when combined with his gay irresolution, for though they led him to a great sense of the arbitrariness of the particular real world, they did not endow him with a corresponding realization of its finality. . . . He admired equally the sanguine, the phlegmatic, the choleric, the melancholic, the splenetic, and the balanced man. . . . The man (in short), thanks both to Burlingame his tutor and to his naturel proclivities, was dizzy with the beauty of the possible.¹

These characteristics of Ebenezer's personality are manifested in the two aims which he sets for himself. The first of these is an aesthetic one and the other is moral in nature. Ebenezer decides that he will be a lyric poet and as a necessary obligation, he must remain a virgin. He falls in love with Joan Toast, who is a London whore, and he vows that

he will remain chaste for her sake.

. . . as cold Semele priz'd Endymion,
 And Phaedra sweet Hippolytes her Step-Son,
 He being Virgin- so, I pray may Ye
 Whom I love, love my stainless Chastity.²

Then, he declares, "What am I? Virgin, sir! Poet, sir! I am a virgin and a poet; less than mortal and more; not a man, but Mankind! I shall regard my innocence as badge of my strength and proof of my calling: let her who's worthy of it take it from me."³ Ebenezer's decision to remain a virgin and especially his decision to choose for his object of love a woman not known for her virginity are signs that Ebenezer is not functioning in the real world. As he defends his virginity with "overblown mock-epic gusts of language,"⁴ it becomes obvious to the reader that Ebenezer is denying the reality of the situation. Perhaps he can remain a virgin for the rest of his life. He can accept Joan Toast as a sort of "sullied Beatrice"⁵ because he can alter the reality of his world to fit his needs.

Ebenezer's vision of Joan Toast is not the only thing which he alters to fit his world. Ebenezer's aesthetic aim is to write an epic poem about Maryland which, he tells Lord Baltimore, would immortalize:

. . . a province, an entire people--all unsung!
 What deeds forgot, what gallant men and women lost
 to time! . . . Trees felled, towns raised, a very
 nation planted in the wilds! . . . Why, 'tis work
 for a Virgil! . . . An epic to out-epic epics: the
 history of the princely house of Charles Calvert,
 Lord Baltimore . . . a Maryland, in short, splen-
 did in her past, majestic in her present, and glo-
 rious in her future.

Influenced by the Classical poets ("What were Greece without

Homer, Rome without Virgil, to sing their glories?"⁷), Ebenezer's desire to become Poet Laureate of Maryland and write a great epic poem colors his perception of reality. He writes of Maryland as he imagines it to be.

Of the voyage to Maryland, Ebenezer writes about the ship:

A noble Ship, from Deck to Pecks,
Akin to those that Homer's Greeks
Sail'd east to Troy in Days of Yore, ⁸
As we sail'd now to Maryland's Shore.

The captain is "like a briney God,"⁹ and there "ne'er were such Delights/ As met our Sea-Sharped Appetites. . ." In actuality, the trip was a nightmare for Ebenezer who was captured by pirates and was generally very badly treated.

Even before seeing Maryland for the first time, Ebenezer visualizes what it will look like. "Nay, try/ As best it might, no Poet's Song,/ Be't e'er so sweet or ne'er so long,/ Could tell the Whole of Maryland's Charms, . . ." ¹⁰ He even gives voice to noble sentiments about the "brawny Salvage [sic] Host."¹¹ These were the poetic visions which Ebenezer cherishes about a Maryland which he has seen little of and knows less about.

However, "Eben's chastity and poetic elevations are sorely tried."¹² His plantation becomes an opium den and brothel. His beloved Joan Toast is blasted by opium and syphilus. All of Ebenezer's illusions about Maryland and its people are shattered by his several brushes with death and by his innocent belief in the inherent good in everyone. It is obvious to the reader that there is evil in this world even if its perpetrator cannot be identified. "Inevitably, the gradual

furnace of . . . this world burns away Eben's illusions."¹³
 When Eben is confronted by the consequences of his own actions his illusions collapse. Through his own naivete he loses Malden, his father's plantation, which degenerates into a brothel. His protestations of love to Joan Toast cause her to follow him to Maryland where she becomes diseased. When Eben must accept his share of responsibility for these things, he must first blame Maryland for his feelings of guilt. Instead of writing The Marylandiad praising the greatness of the land and people, he writes The Sot Weed Factor in which he denounces Maryland. He writes of the voyage:

Freighted with Fools, from Plimouth Sound,
 To Maryland our Ship was bound;
 Where we arriv'd in dreadful Pain,
 Shock'd by the Terrors of the Main . . . ¹⁴

He offered a description of the Maryland planters:

In Shirts and Drawers of Scotch-cloth blew,
 With neither Stocking, Hat, nor Shoe . . .

.

Figures, so strange, no God design'd
 To be a part of Human-kind:
 But Wanton Nature, void of Rest,
 Moulded the Brittle Clay in Jest . . . ¹⁵

And finally, he condemned:

Embarqu'd and waiting for a Wind,
 I leave this dreadful Curse behind,
 May Canniballs transported o'er the Sea
 Prey on these Slaves, as they have done on me;

.

May wrath Divine then lay these Regions wast,
 Where no Man's Faithful, nor a Woman chast!¹⁶

Although Ebenezer was thoroughly disillusioned by Maryland, he was much stronger on his hold on his belief in himself as a poet and a virgin. In the beginning, it was these two things which gave a purpose to Ebenezer's life. And he

is loath to let them go. Ebenezer admits to the Miller's wife that his decision to remain a virgin is empty when she suggests that some day he will give in and it will end:

What I priz'd before hath all but lost its point,
 . . . and when I think that soon or late 'twill
 come, this end you speak of, . . . why, I wonder:
 What moral doth the story hold? Is't that the
 universe is vain? The chaste and consecrated a hol-
 low madness? Or is it that what the world lacks
 we must ourselves supply? My brave assault on Mary-
 land--this knight-errantry of Innocence and Art--
 sure, I see now 'twas an edifice raised not e'en
 on sand, but on the black and vasty zephyrs of the
 Pit.¹⁷

Ebenezer retains the twin callings of epic poet and virgin long after he is stripped of belief.

And even these two ideals are abandoned when Ebenezer finally must accept the reality that he and he alone is responsible for the consequences of his actions. He accepts Joan Toast as his wife. And despite her diseased condition, their marriage is consummated. By this acceptance of reality, Ebenezer regains Malden as well. However, he loses his virginity and is never known to write another worthy poem except his epitaph, perhaps signifying the death of his poetic ability. Ebenezer is forced to leave the world of his illusions and accept reality. However, as his illusions die so do the adventure and purpose of his life. As Barth comments toward the end of the novel, "It cannot be said that the life of any of our characters was markedly blissful; some to be sure, were rather more serene, but others took more or less turns for the worse, and a few were terminated far before their time."¹⁸ Although Ebenezer's life was a long one, with the end of his illusion, his work as an epic poet ended and his life gradually

settled in a routine of boredom.

Just as disillusionment came to Ebenezer Cooke, so too does it come to Don Quixote. Like Ebenezer's illusion which is a noble one, Don Quixote develops for himself an illusion centering on knight-errantry and its traditions. He attempts to impose the fantasy that he is a knight-errant on the world of reality. Don Quixote's illusion begins much as does Ebenezer's. The good Don is quite taken with books on knight-errantry and the exploits of famous knights just as Ebenezer was influenced by the epic poets he had read.

[Don Quixote] . . . passed his Time in reading Books of Knight-Errantry; which he did with that Application and Delight, that at least he in a manner wholly left off his Country-Sports, and even the Care of his Estates; nay, he grew so strangely besotted with those Amusements, That he sold many Acres of Arable-Land to purchase books of that kind. . .¹⁹

Don Quixote became absolutely obsessed by these books.

. . . He gave himself up so wholly to the reading of Romances, that a-Night he would pore on 'till 'twas Day, and a-Day he would read on 'till 'twas Night; and thus by sleeping little and reading much, the Moisture of his Brain was exhausted to that Degree, that at last he lost the use of his reason. (p. 3)

His head was now full of "Inchantments, Quarrels, Battles, Challenges, Wounds, Complaints, Amours, Torments, and abundance of Stuff and Impossibilities. . .(p. 3). Having lost his reason, Cervantes declares that:

Don Quixote unluckily stumbled upon the oddest Fancy that ever enter'd into a Madman's Brain; for now he thought it convenient and necessary . . . to turn Knight-Errant, and roam through the whole World arm'd Cap-a-pee, and mounted on his Steed, in quest of Adventures . . .(p. 4).

In order to maintain his illusion, Don Quixote must be very adept at manipulating the intruding details of reality into

the pattern of his illusion. One example of his ability to do this is the way in which he acquires equipment with which to outfit himself--"a Suit of Armour that had belong'd to his Great-Grandfather . . . from which there was a material Piece wanting; for instead of a complete Helmet, there was only a single Head-piece: However, his Industry supply'd that Defect . . . with some pasteboard . . ." (p. 4-5). Next he went in search of a horse worthy of a knight-errant and settled on a horse "whose Bones stuck out like the Corners of a Spanish Real" (p. 5). Yet to Don Quixote, Rozinante was "above all the vulgar Breed of Horses in the World" (p. 5). Now having supplied himself with armour and horse, Don Quixote needed only a lady to be the object of his love and services. And so he bestowed upon "a good likely Country Lass" (p. 6) by the name of Aldonza Lorenzo a name which Don Quixote felt would "sound somewhat like that of a Princess, or Lady of Quality" (p. 7)--Dulcinea del Toboso. After having himself dubbed a knight in an inn courtyard which he believed to be the courtyard of a fine castle and after acquiring a squire, Don Quixote embarked on one of his first great adventures--that of the Wind-Mills. Here again is an example of Don Quixote's great ability to work around reality in order to make everything support his illusion. Faced with the obvious fact that what he has just attacked are windmills rather than giants, Don Quixote justifies the change. Speaking to Sancho Pança he declares, "I am verily perswaded [sic], that cursed Necromancer Freston, who carry'd away my Study and my Books, has transformed these Giants into Wind-Mills, to deprive me of

the Honour of the Victory . . ." (p. 44). In this way, Don Quixote manages admirably to defend his illusion against the intrusion of reality throughout Part I and a majority of Part II. Even in the last chapters of the novel, Don Quixote is still willing to joust in order to defend a young woman's lost virtue. And he is also willing to answer a challenge from the Knight of the Moon, who is actually Sampson Carrasco in disguise.

This joust between Don Quixote and Carrasco seems to be the moment at which fate decrees that the Don will have few days left to practice his knight-errantry. The Knight of the Moon challenges the good Don to a joust stating these conditions:

If Victory be on my Side, thou shalt be obliged immediately to forsake thy Arms, and the Quest of Adventures, and to return to thy own Home, where thou shalt engage to live quietly and peacably for the Space of one whole Year, without laying Hand on thy Sword, to the Improvement of thy Estate, and the Salvation of thy Soul. (p. 880)

Don Quixote, in the tradition of his knighthood, accepted the challenge and was defeated. Accordingly, he held to his word, and after dispatching certain business, he returned home with Sancho Pança. However, Don Quixote could not totally give up his life of illusion. It is almost as if he lives only to fulfill his fantasies. Since he can no longer live in the illusion of knight-errantry, he will try another. Although he has been defeated, he has not lost his ability to dream. He tells Sancho:

Yet though it has cost me my Honour, I have not lost, nor can I lose, my Integrity to perform my Promise. When I was a Knight-Errant, valiant and bold, the Strength of my Hands and my Actions gave a Reputation

to my Words. Trudge on then, Friend Sancho, and let us get home, to Pass the Year of our Probation. In that Retirement we shall recover new Vigor to return to that, which is never to be forgotten by me, I mean the Profession of Arms. (p. 888).

Although he has been defeated, Don Quixote does not appear to be discouraged. If he cannot be a knight-errant for a year, he will live in another illusion. He tells Sancho:

If thou think'st well of it, we'll follow their Example, and turn Shepherds too, at least for the Time I am to lay aside the Profession of Arms; I'll buy a Flock of Sheep, and everything that's fit for a pastoral Life, and so calling myself the Shepherd Quixotis, and thee the Shepherd Pansino, we'll range the Woods, the Hills, and Meadows, singing and versifying. (p. 894).

It is not until the final chapter that Don Quixote totally rejects his illusion. Although the reader may expect this conclusion, it is a bit of a shock because it is so sudden and Don Quixote has held so tenaciously to his fantasy. He completely rejects his illusion even making certain specifications in his will "that if my Neice Antonia Quixano be inclinable to marry, it be with none but a Person, who, upon strict Enquiry, shall be found never to have read a Book of Knight-Errantry in his Life . . ." (p. 933). Upon finishing his will, Don Quixote dies. It is almost as if upon rejecting his fantasy world he no longer has any reason for existence *at all*. Why he so quickly rejects life, however, is not really clear.

Don Quixote, when he must face the realities of existence, emerges into a world where death is a truth. In his fantasy world, he was generally a man brave beyond belief, but as his illusion fades, his susceptibility to fear and death increase and conquer.

The parallels between the illusions of these two men are

ILLUSION AND THE READER

In both The Sot Weed Factor and Don Quixote, the illusionary world in which the protagonist wraps himself affects the way in which the reader identifies with the main character. Furthermore, the authors of these novels present these novels in various manners in order to heighten the reader's feeling of unreality.

A major question which must occur at some point to anyone who reads John Barth's The Sot Weed Factor must deal with what exactly is occurring. Is this particular character what he or she appears to be? Is the action as the reader perceives it really what is happening? Can the reader accept everything he "sees" or is told as fact? Perhaps one of the most difficult tasks for the reader is to distinguish a real event, person, or state of affairs from what he objectively perceives as something which exists. The whole issue reduces itself to what is reality and what is illusion. At almost any given moment the reader is being deceived about something.

Barth's style, the intricacies of the plot, and the actions of several of the characters all combine to obscure reality for the reader. It is first necessary to realize that The Sot Weed Factor is a long, incredibly rambling novel filled with absurd coincidences, with scenes ranging from London taverns to Maryland plantations, with pirates, poets, and prostitutes, as well as Maryland planters, runaway slaves, and renegade Indians. The action follows Ebenezer from an English country manor to London streets, across the Atlantic to Maryland. Although Ebenezer's adventures are the ones which tie the plot

together, many sub-plots appear and reappear throughout the novel. While Ebenezer tries to regain Malden, he also becomes embroiled in political intrigues, helps to prevent an Indian uprising, aids his tutor Henry Burlingame to find Burlingame's lost father, and writes an epic poem--all while vigilantly protecting his virginity. Barth has written The Sot Weed Factor in the picaresque tradition of an episodic sequence, a vividness of detail, and a frankness of expression. Furthermore, Barth muddies the waters for the reader:

. . . the labyrinthine obscurity, and ultimately the complete impenetrability, of seventeenth-century plot and counter-plot conveys the difficulty of knowing the moral status of anything or anyone in the whole world. The many changes of pace reinforce Ebenezer's (and the reader's) epistemological quandry, for the novel ventriloquizes from one set piece to another. . . .²⁰

From poetry to prose to short stories or fabliau to a "six page bilingual cursing match in which a French and an English whore surely exhaust the metaphorical labels for their calling,"² Barth includes quite a display of his writing ability. Thus, it can be seen that both the picaresque, episodic style and the complex nature of the plot lend an air of unreality and confusion to occurrences and moral discussions.

Another contributor to the reader's inability to know what is real and what is illusion is the unknown or changing identities of many of the characters. Two of these are Lord Baltimore and John Coode, both of whom play major roles in the ideological battle between good and evil, respectively, which permeates the plot. Neither man is ever seen. Although Ebenezer believes that he has seen Baltimore, who supposedly named him Poet Laureate of Maryland, he has been tricked by one of

Burlingame's disguises. Furthermore, despite the chaos which John Coode spreads about Maryland, no one ever sees him in the time span covered by this book. Burlingame remarks that "for all his noteriety I ne'er have met the man who hath seen John Coode face to face, nor despite his fame and influence and the great trust he hath placed in me, have I myself ever seen Lord Baltimore . . ." ²² Ebenezer expresses the view which the reader has been led to believe throughout the novel. "I believe naught in the world save that Baltimore is the very principle of goodness, and Coode the pure embodiment of evil." ²³ And yet this is even in doubt when Burligame reveals evidence that Baltimore may be the very "heart, brains, and hand" ²⁴ of an opium ring working out of Malden. Whether Coode is trying to cause chaos throughout Maryland to spite Baltimore who had formerly confiscated some of Coode's land, or whether Baltimore is trying to disrupt Maryland so that the French and Indians can seize the colony and make it a Catholic base of operations is never resolved. The reader never "meets" either character and can, therefore, base his opinions only on what he "hears." Who is right? Who is wrong? What is real and what is not? There are really no answers to these questions.

Two other characters--Henry Burlingame and Susan Warren--also contribute to the unreality of the situation. Susan is a prostitute who has been ravished by opium and syphilus whom Ebenezer encounters in Maryland. For many pages, both Ebenezer and the reader are unaware that this Susan is really Joan Toast, the London whore of whom Ebenezer has become

enamoured. Henry Burlingame does not always reveal his true identity, either, and has the ability to alter his features so that even Ebenezer cannot always recognize him. The reader becomes so confused at times that it is possible to believe that even Burlingame is not Burlingame. At one point, Ebenezer's valet notes this problem:

From all I've heard from yourself and others, he [Burlingame] hath posed as Baltimore, Coode, Colonel Sayer, Tim Mitchell, Bertrand Burton, and Eben Cooke, to mention no more, and hath ne'er been found out yet! But what's the chiefest talent of John Coode, if not the same? Hath he not played priest, minister, general, and what have ye? Is't not his wont to travel always incognito, so that his own lieutenants scarce know his natural face?²⁵

Bertrand, the valet, is the only character who expresses this belief that Burlingame might be Coode. This is, however, an example of one doubt which is expressed about Burlingame's identity, and it leads the reader to doubt that that Burlingame is who he seems to be or that what the reader believes is fact is indeed really true.

It is through this inability to identify characters and through Barth's style and plot structure that the reader comes to recognize the unreal aspects of The Sot Weed Factor.

Insisting upon a mock-epic distance, Barth only rarely enters; and lets his reader enter, fully into his character's suffering and loss. . . .

Of course, as he [Barth] has noted, the sense of being at several removes from reality is nothing new for the novel--'it's about where the genre began, with Quixote imitating Amadis of Gaul, Cervantes pretending to be the Cid Hamete Benengeli (and Alonzo Quijano pretending to be Don Quixote). . . .²⁰

Cervantes does seem to keep his protagonist and his reader at a distance from each other in Part I of Don Quixote. It is very easy to laugh at the Don's exploits and not to feel

upset at all when Don Quixote is badly beaten by six merchants during his first sally as a knight-errant or when he is pelted with rocks by several shepherds and loses some of his teeth. Just as Barth explained, Cervantes accomplishes this by having not only Don Quixote but himself--Cervantes--pretend to be someone else. It is difficult for the reader to identify with the Don and his illusion and misadventures when he must look at him through so many levels of explanation, interpretation, and exposition.

To the reader of Cervantes' Don Quixote, Part II offers an opportunity for the reader to identify more with the central figure than is possible in Part I. This may be due to a change in the way that Cervantes tells the story. First, the episodes which occur in Part II are generally longer than those in Part I, allowing the reader to become more involved with the action. The occurrences at the castle of the Duke and Duchess cover 27 chapters or approximately one-third of Part II. Furthermore, Don Quixote has become more the center of these adventures than he was in Part I. Cervantes presents Don Quixote as the character around whom the action centers in these episodes rather than as just a listener to the tales of adventure which someone else tells as he was much of the time in Part I. Long stories fill Part I such as the tale of "The Curious Impertinent" which the curate tells at the inn to a large crowd of listeners. This story alone covers approximately 50 pages, and during the entire tale Don Quixote sleeps in another room, except for a few moments when he attacks some wineskins. Other tales take up much

of the time in this part of the book. The tale of the Christian captive which is also told at the inn covers about 40 pages and once again Don Quixote is not even present during its telling. These are tales of adventure most assuredly but they do not have anything to do with the Don. In Part II, Cervantes changes this procedure. He attributes the inclusion of all these tales to Cid Hamete Benengeli who was supposedly the original writer of this volume, Cervantes being only the translator:

We have it from the traditional Account of this History, . . . Cid Hamete having in the Original taken an Occasion of criticizing on himself, for undertaking so dry and limited a Subject, which must confine him to the bare History of Don Quixote and Sancho, and debar him the Liberty of launching into Equisodes and Digressions that might be of more Weight and Entertainment. . . . To avoid this Inconviency, he has introduced into the first Part, some Novels, as The Curious Impertinent, and that of the Captive, which were in a manner distinct from the Design, though the rest of the Stories which he brought in there, fall naturally enough in with Don Quixote's Affairs, . . . It was his Opinion, likewise, . . . that the Adventures of Don Quixote, requiring so great a Share of the Reader's Attention, his Novels, must expect but an indifferent Reception, . . . He has therefore in this second Part avoided all distinct and independent Stories, introducing only such as have the Apperance of Episodes, yet flow naturally from the Design of the Story, and these but seldom and with as much brevity as they can be express'd.(p. 728).

Thus, such an episode as the one dealing with Camacho's wedding which has several of the attributes of the tales told in Part I of the novel is not a tale at all in Part II, but an integral part of Don Quixote's adventures in which he plays a minor part to be sure but in which he at least plays a part.

In Part II as opposed to Part I, the world in which Don

Quixote now functions is closer to the world of his fantasy. Both the Duke and The Duchess and Don Antonio Moreno of Barcelona rearrange their homes and activities in order to entertain themselves by fooling Don Quixote. They make the Don's fantasy world real. During one conversation, Sancho tells the Duchess about many of their recent exploits and from this and their knowledge of the book which had been published recounting the deeds which the Don and Sancho had done in Part I, the Duke and Duchess spend considerable time and money to play a part in the Don's illusion. They encourage him in his fantasy by supporting his beliefs in Dulcinea's enchantment, as well as other illusions. They cause considerable discomfort for Sancho by leading Don Quixote to believe that only if Sancho gave himself three thousand lashes would Dulcinea be disenchanting. They make fools of both Don Quixote and Sancho by taking advantage of the Don's gullibility and forcing him to ride on the wooden horse Clavileño in order to rescue a fake princess. They abuse their guests by fooling them, causing them physical pain, and generally taking advantage of a man who obviously could not distinguish between what was reality and what was fantasy. The reader begins to sympathize with Don Quixote. In Part I he brought any pain or exploitation upon himself and probably deserved it. However, in Part II, he becomes the object of derision and is taken advantage of for the entertainment of people who seem to have nothing better to do.

Such long adventures as the one at the castle of the Duke and Duchess give the reader an opportunity to observe Don

Quixote for extended periods of time in his world of fantasy which is frequently not possible in Part I. In Part I, the episodes are interrupted often by the intrusion of reality which keeps the reader from being able to recognize the Don in his illusionary world. When the reader feels that he may be beginning to understand why Don Quixote acts the way he does in his illusion, the reality of the situation breaks in and interrupts the feeling. The author will not let the reader dwell in Don Quixote's realm long enough to develop a rapport with the knight. The author must constantly remind the reader that Don Quixote is mad. In an episode very near the beginning of the novel, Don Quixote and several others are on their way to the funeral of Chrysostome. The Don expounds on his theories of knight-errantry as the group travels. Rather than allowing the reader to accept for a time Don Quixote's world, he is repeatedly told that the various travelers think the Don ^{is} mad. ". . . And even the very Goat-herds and Shepherds were now fully convinc'd that Don Quixote's brains were turn'd topsy-turvy (p. 79), and . . . You may be sure the Traveller's were sufficiently convinc'd of Don Quixote's Frenzy" (p. 75). In Part II, however, the reader can exist in Don Quixote's world without being constantly reminded that he is insane. This closeness and sympathy for the Don make it easier for the reader to understand Don Quixote's illusion and to follow it.

In their various ways, both Barth and Cervantes heighten the effect of their protagonist's illusions on the reader by giving him a taste of the unreal world or by creating sym-

pathy for their character. They supply the feeling of unreality and challenge the reader to identify *and* place a value on the unreal as well as the real.

ILLUSSION AND THE SECONDARY CHARACTERS

In both Don Quixote and The Sot Weed Factor, the illusion of the main character is, of course, an integral part not only of the personality of the protagonist, but of the plot as well. This illusion is an important influence on the lives of many of the secondary characters. An illusion as great as the one held by Don Quixote or by Ebenezer Cooke one that could control the very course of their lives--must surely have an effect on the characters around them. Most of the secondary characters affected by this illusion seem to fall into three basic categories. The first is the innocent bystander or passerby who is drawn into the illusion unwittingly and without his consent. These characters are numerous in the episodic structure of Don Quixote. The second category consists of those characters who become--for one reason or another--followers of the main character and who find their lives profoundly and lastingly affected by the illusion. The final group of characters affected by the illusion are those who foster the fantasies of the protagonist and take advantage of him and his illusion for their own reasons. All three types of secondary characters and their reactions to the illusion can be found in Don Quixote and The Sot Weed Factor.

Don Quixote abounds in the first category of character, the innocent bystander. Because the book is episodic in nature as picaresque novels are, many of the people in Don Quixote's adventures participate in only one adventure and then drop completely from sight. Occasionally they

reappear, but frequently they just happen to be there when the good Don decides to have an adventure. One such encounter occurs in Part I. Having just been knighted by the keeper of an inn, Don Quixote hears what he fancies to be "an effeminate Voice complaining in a Thicket" (p. 20). Obviously, the good Don is excited at the thought of his first adventure. "I thank Heaven (said he when he heard the Cries) for favouring me so soon with an Opportunity to perform the Duty of my Profession, and Reap the fruit of my Desires"(p. 21). Don Quixote then proceeds to save a servant boy from a beating by his master, and upon learning that the master owed the boy "nine Months Wages, at seven Reals a Month. The Knight having cast it up, found it came to sixty-three Reals in all; which he order'd the Farmer to pay the Fellow immediately. . ."(p. 21). The farmer agreed to do it; but, no sooner did the knight ride out of view, then the country-man caught the young boy and beat him until "scarce any Signs of Life were left in him"(p.22). In this particular case, the innocent bystander who received Don Quixote's aid actually fared worse for it. Not all of the bystanders who are helped by Don Quixote fare ill, however. In Part II, Don Quixote decides to free some men whom the king has sentenced to be slaves and row in his galleys. Don Quixote orders the guard to release them "for 'tis a hard Case to make Slaves of Men whom God and Nature made free; and you have the less Reason to use these Wretches with Severity, seeing they never did you any Wrong. Let'em answer for their Sins in the other World . . ."(p. 158). Where-

upon the knight freed all the galley slaves by force which was very good for the convicted men, but not so good for Don Quixote and Sancho Pança who are later plagued by these criminals on a couple of occasions. Both the young boy and the galley slaves are examples of the abundant instances in Don Quixote when innocent bystanders are pulled into the Don's world of illusion.

The instances of innocent bystanders being pulled into Ebenezer's illusion are not so abundant in The Sot Weed Factor. Although the plot by nature is somewhat episodic, most of the people who are involved reappear again and again and seem to play some important part in the overall plot. There is an instance now and then, however, when Ebenezer's desire to support his illusion causes trouble for those about him. Just before his departure for Maryland, Ebenezer decides to purchase a notebook in which to record his observations of his trip and of the land. However, he cannot decide what kind of notebook he wants and finds himself even more confused by the shopkeeper:

A cardboard binding is cheap and hath a simple forth-right air; but leather is hardier for traveling, more pleasing to behold, and more satisfying to own. What is more, I can give ye unruled sheets, such as free the fancy from mundane restrictions, accomodate any size of hand, and make a handsome page when writ; or ruled sheets, which save time, aid writing in carriages or aboard ships, and keep a page neat as a pin. Finally, ye may choose a thin book, easy to carry but soon filled, or a fat one, cumbersome to travel with but able to store years of thought 'twixt single covers.²⁷

Ebenezer's inability to make decisions, and his desire to be quickly on his way to Maryland and his fantasy world cause

Ebenezer finally to attack the shopkeeper with a sword and to snatch a journal from the counter which happens to be the shopkeeper's account journal. Ebenezer's illusion influences his behavior in this incident. Before he became Poet Laureate of Maryland, Ebenezer was weak. After receiving this honor, however, he begins to assert himself and his illusion as though he has found an identity for himself. And he pulls others into his illusion.

The characters which are most profoundly affected by the illusion and most completely drawn into it are those who follow the main character. Don Quixote's faithful companion and squire Sancho Pança would fill this position. It can be argued that Sancho did not believe his master's illusion and was on more than one occasion heard to say that he was indeed a madman. However, it cannot be denied that Sancho is drawn both to his master and into his master's illusion if by nothing more than his close proximity to both. First, Sancho is presented as a plain, blunt, down-to-earth country fellow who follows the Don because he is told that "'twas likely . . . an Adventure would present itself, as might secure him the Conquest of some Island in the Time that he might be picking up a Straw or two, and then the Squire might promise himself to be made Governour of the Place" (p. 41). This promise of a governorship is repeated throughout the book. And Sancho wants desperately to believe it. He can only accept it as fact if he believes that Don Quixote's illusion is in fact real. If he does not believe it, his desire for an island will be for nothing. Of course at

times, there does seem to be a conflict in Sancho's mind. Examples of this are abundant in Part I of Don Quixote. In chapter III of Book II of Part I, Sancho is treated to some rather harsh punishment for Don Quixote's failure to pay his bill at the inn where he has spent the night. Several people at the inn decide to toss Sancho about in a blanket and when he is reunited with Don Quixote a short time later, he openly rebels against the way of life which the Don has led him into. ". . . These same Adventures which we hunt for up and down, are like to bring us at last into a Peck of Troubles, and such a plaguy deal of Mischief, that we shan't be able to set one Foot afore t'other. . . . Since we have turn'd knight-errants, . . . the Devil of any Fight you have had the better in. . . And what have we got ever since, pray, but Blows, and more Blows; Bruises, and more Bruises?"(p. 112). Yet for all his complaints, the squire is easily wooed back into Don Quixote's illusion after the episode of the sheep, however, he realizes that he is being persuaded by the Don. "You [Don Quixote] would make a better Preacher than a Knight-Errant" (p. 120). He does continue to follow The Don. Sometimes it is difficult to tell if Sancho is really accepting his role in Don Quixote's world or just acting it in order to gain his island. At the inn in which the curate tells the tale of "The Curious Impertinent," Sancho acts as though he might be accepting the role of squire to Don Quixote as he speaks with the guests; however, in speaking with the Don later he seems to be his old reasonable self. However by the end of Part I, the reader is aware that Sancho has ac-

cepted the goal of the island as his own. Even if he has not totally accepted Don Quixote's dream of knight-errantry, he has come to believe the part which involves his island. Furthermore, he begins to manipulate reality to make it fit the Don's dream. In the episode in Part II involving the three country girls in which Sancho tries to convince Don Quixote that one of the girls is Dulcinea, Sancho begins to use his knowledge of Don Quixote's illusion to manipulate the good knight. As he does this, he begins to slip more and more into a fantasy world. He never acquires the totality of belief which the Don has, but he is definitely affected by it, and is at times drawn into it. The episode of the Knight of the Mirrors presents one such instance. Although Sancho sees that the Knight of the Mirrors is really Sampson Carrasco and that his squire is none other than his neighbor Thomas Cecial, Sancho refuses to believe the evidence of his senses.

Don Quixote help'd him [the Knight of the Mirrors] to rise by the Aid of his Squire Thomas Cecial, on whom Sancho fixed his Eyes all the while, asking him a thousand Questions; the Answers to which convinced him, that he was the real Thomas Cecial, as he said, though the Conceit of what was told him by his Master, that the Magicians had transformed the Knight of the Mirrors into Sampson Carrasco, had made such an Impression on his Fancy, that he could not believe the Testimony of his own Eyes. In short, the Master and the Man persisted in their Error (p. 533).

Sancho was drawn in by his master's tale of enchanters rather than believing his own senses. Furthermore, when Don Quixote offers his fantastic tale of what occurred in the deep cave of Montesinos, Sancho cannot believe him and lays the responsibility for what the knight claims he has seen on enchantment. "Now heaven defend us, cry'd Sancho! Who coul'd ever

have believed that these Devilish Inchanters and Inchantments shou'd have so much Power, as to bewitch my Master at this rate, and craze his sound Understanding in this manner"(p. 597). Irrespective of his motive--the governorship of an island--Sancho faithfully follows Don Quixote and is drawn more than any other character into the knight's illusion. He is willing to leave his home and family and face many hardships in order to live in his part of the illusion.

The character who is most completely drawn into Ebenezer Cooke's illusion in The Sot Weed Factor is Joan Toast, whom the reader also knows as Susan Warren. Although she is not Ebenezer's constant companion as Sancho is Don Quixote's, she is so completely involved in Ebenezer's illusion that she will follow him all the way across the Atlantic Ocean to Maryland. Her life is sorely affected by her decision. Joan Toast is one of the initiating factors in Ebenezer's illusion. Because of her, he decides to remain a virgin, and she becomes the object of his adoration and love. She is but a London whore, however, and refuses to accompany him to Maryland. However, his adoration and worship as dictated by his illusion do profoundly affect Joan. Joan does not fare well in Maryland. She is diseased and addicted to opium, and her features are so altered that when she changes her name to Susan Warren, Ebenezer cannot even recognize her. Disguised, she explains to Ebenezer why Joan Toast came to Maryland. "Ye know already how she was taken with love for ye, and for your innocence . . . A dream got hold of her, such as any whore is prone to, to live her life with you in perfect chastity, and it so possessed

her that anon she vowed to follow ye to Maryland. . . and she fondly hoped ye'd have her."²⁸ But Maryland treated her unkindly. She did marry Ebenezer, but under false pretenses. She finally died from her diseases. She was fully willing to accept Ebenezer's illusion and live within it. However, the illusion was doomed from the beginning and Joan Toast had no hope of living within it.

Among the other characters in the books are those who foster the fantasies of the main character and generally take advantage of him and his illusion. In Don Quixote, there are three such people, the Duke and the Duchess and Don Antonio Moreno of Barcelona. All three of these characters disrupt their own lives and schedules in order to provide the knight with an atmosphere more conducive to his illusion. This they seem to do for their own entertainment. They are familiar with the Don and his fantasy because they have read the first part of Don Quixote. The Duke and Duchess are relatively flat characters who play practical jokes on Don Quixote and Sancho Pança as explained in the second part of this paper. It is they who create an island for Sancho to govern. They place Don Quixote in positions which hold him up to ridicule. They provide the process which Don Quixote is led to believe will disenchant Dulcinea. They attempt to interest Don Quixote in a love affair. In general, instead of becoming involved in Don Quixote's illusion as others are, they begin to manipulate the illusion for their own purposes. They begin to lead Don Quixote to do things within the realm

of his illusion which quite possibly would not have occurred to the good Don if he had been left to his own designs, such as the method of disenchanting Dulcinea. Don Antoneo, likewise, takes advantage of the illusion to entertain himself at Don Quixote's expense. He has Don Quixote interested in and awed by the enchanted head which answers all questions.

Likewise, in The Sot Weed Factor, Ebenezer's former tutor Burlingame does much to foster Ebenezer's desire to be a poet. It is Burlingame disguised as Lord Baltimore who gives Ebenezer his commission as Poet Laureate of Maryland in the first place. And he continues to encourage him on the journey to Plymouth. Burlingame does not entertain himself at Ebenezer's expense, however. Burlingame wants Ebenezer's help in Maryland. For Burlingame is looking for his true father and enlists Ebenezer's aid. And it is Ebenezer who discovers Burlingame's true identity. Of course, it is true that Burlingame does not constantly continue to use Ebenezer, but it is the many side trips which Burlingame must take which frequently prevents Ebenezer from following his own dream.

The illusions of Don Quixote and Ebenezer Cooke are strikingly parallel in several ways--the most important of which being that they provide the dreamer a purpose for his life. So strong are these illusions that many of the characters are drawn into them. Frequently this is without the consent of the bystander, but some characters are drawn so strongly that the illusion or part of it becomes almost as important to them as it is to the protagonist whose illusion it is. Certain characters are affected to the point that they will even try to manipulate the illusion. Furthermore, the writer uses various techniques to increase the feeling of unreality for the reader as well as trying to involve him deeply in the book. In all, it can be said that the illusions in these books held by Don Quixote and Ebenezer Cooke are valuable ones. They provide a world for the protagonists which allows them to function since they cannot or will not function in reality. The value of the illusions to the reader is that they allow the reader to see and evaluate the different types of secondary characters. Some are gullible and some want power, but all are affected, if not directly by participating in the illusion, than indirectly by trying to prevent it or foster it. The whole novel is permeated by the air of illusion in these books. It allows the reader an opportunity to see how much illusion, reality, and man's inability to really judge what is reality and what is not affect his life. The value and importance of illusion are integral parts of these two novels.

NOTES

¹ John Barth, The Sot Weed Factor (New York: Bantam Book, Doubleday & Co., 1960), p. 9-12.

² Barth, p. 66.

³ Barth, p. 66.

⁴ Gerhard Joseph, John Barth, University of Minnesota Pamphlets on American Writers, No. 91 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1970), p. 25.

⁵ Joseph, p. 25.

⁶ Barth, pp. 83-84.

⁷ Barth, p. 82.

⁸ Barth, pp. 192-193.

⁹ Barth, p. 193.

¹⁰ Barth, p. 251.

¹¹ Barth, p. 409.

¹² Joseph, p. 26.

¹³ Joseph, p. 26.

¹⁴ Barth, p. 495.

¹⁵ Barth, p. 496.

¹⁶ Barth, p. 498.

¹⁷ Barth, p. 680.

¹⁸ Barth, p. 805-806.

¹⁹ Miguel de Cervantes, Don Quixote (New York: The Modern Library, Random House, 1950), p. 2. Future references to this novel will be taken from this edition of the novel and will be cited in parentheses in the body of the paper by page number only.

²⁰ Joseph, p. 23-24.

²¹ Joseph, p. 23-24.

²² Barth, p. 525.

²³ Barth, p. 521.

²⁴ Barth, p. 524.

²⁵ Barth, p. 554.

roph, p. 36.

ih, p. 120-121.

th, p. 506.

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