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ALFRED SCHUTZ

## *Collected Papers*

II

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ALFRED SCHUTZ

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II

*Studies in Social Theory*

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## DON QUIXOTE AND THE PROBLEM OF REALITY

“Under what circumstances do we think things real?” William James asks this question in one of the most remarkable chapters of his *Principles of Psychology*<sup>1</sup> and starts from there to develop his theory of various orders of reality. Any object, so he finds, which remains uncontradicted is *ipso facto* believed and posited as absolute reality. And a thing thought of cannot be contradicted by another, unless it begins the quarrel by saying something inadmissible about that other. If this is the case, then the mind must take its choice of which to hold by. All propositions, whether attributive or existential, are believed through the very fact of being conceived, unless they clash with other propositions believed at the same time, by affirming that their terms are the same with the terms of these other propositions. The whole distinction between real and unreal, the whole psychology of belief, disbelief, and doubt, is, always according to William James, grounded on two mental facts: first that we are liable to think differently of the same object; and secondly, that when we have done so, we can choose which way of thinking to adhere to and which to disregard. The origin and fountainhead of all reality, whether from the absolute or the practical point of view is thus, subjective, is ourselves. Consequently, there exist several, probably an infinite number of various orders of reality, each with its own special and separate style of existence, called by James “sub-universes.” Among them is the world of the senses or physical “things” as experienced by common sense, which is the paramount reality; the world of science; the world of ideal relations; of “idols of the tribe”; the supernatural worlds, such as the Christian heaven and hell; the numerous worlds of individual

<sup>1</sup> Vol. II, pp. 287ff.

opinion; and, finally, the worlds of sheer madness and vagary, also infinitely numerous. Every object we think of gets referred to at least one world or another of this or some similar list. Each world, whilst it is attended to, is real after its own fashion, and any relation to our mind at all in the absence of a stronger relation with which it clashes, suffices to make an object real.

So far we have considered William James. This is not the place to investigate by what means mind bestows an accent of reality on one of these sub-universes and withdraws it from others; nor how the transition from one realm of reality to the other occurs; nor, finally, what features of consciousness characterize the various provinces or sub-universes of reality.<sup>2</sup> The few sentences quoted from William James delimit our purpose, which is to analyze the problem of reality in Cervantes' Don Quixote. The thesis we want to submit is that Cervantes' novel deals systematically with the very problem of multiple realities stated by William James and that the various phases of Don Quixote's adventures are carefully elaborated variations of the main theme, viz. how we experience reality. This problem has many aspects, dialectically intertwined. There is the world of Don Quixote's madness, the world of chivalry, a sub-universe of reality incompatible with the paramount reality of daily life, in which the barber, the priest, the housekeeper and the niece simply live along, taking it for granted beyond question. How does it come that Don Quixote can continue to bestow the accent of reality on his sub-universe of phantasy if it clashes with the paramount reality in which there are no castles and armies and giants but merely inns and flocks of sheep and windmills? How is it possible that the private world of Don Quixote is not a solipsistic one, that there are other minds within this reality, not merely as objects of Don Quixote's experience, but sharing with him, at least to a certain extent, the belief in its actual or potential reality? And, finally, neither Don Quixote's sub-universe of madness nor the paramount reality of the senses, as William James calls it, in which we Sancho Panzas live our daily lives, turns out to be as monolithic as it seems. Both contain, as it were, enclaves of experience

<sup>2</sup> A first attempt to analyze these problems has been made in the writer's paper "On Multiple Realities," in *Collected Papers I, The Problem of Social Reality, Phaenomenologica*, The Hague, 1962, pp. 229-234.

transcending the sub-universes taken for granted by either Don Quixote or Sancho Panza and referring to other realms of reality not compatible with either of them. There are enigmatic and frightful nocturnal noises, there is death and dream, vision and art, prophecy and science. How does Don Quixote, how do we Sancho Panzas succeed in maintaining the belief in the reality of the closed sub-universe once chosen as the home base in spite of the various irruptions of experiences which transcend it?

Let us look first at Don Quixote's world of chivalry. Doubtless it is a closed sub-universe, and doubtless he bestows upon it the accent of reality. Again and again the ingenious knight refutes any doubt on the part of outsiders that the heroes of whom the books of chivalry give an account have ever lived and that their adventures occurred as described in the books. He has good arguments to proffer. The institution of knights errant, he explains to the canon of Toledo,<sup>3</sup> is universally acknowledged and authenticated. The story of Ferrabras took place in the time of Charlemagne, the deeds of King Arthur are recorded in the histories and annals of England, in the King's Armory in Madrid Roland's horn can be seen even to this day. Furthermore, the books which deal with the life and history of the knights describe in all details the family, time, place, action of this or that knight day by day. Based on these reports, Don Quixote can describe Amadis of Gaul with all his features, characteristics and actions so that he may say he has seen him with his own eyes. He calls this an "evidence infallible" for their existence.<sup>4</sup> In addition, is it thinkable that books printed by royal license lie? And how can one possibly doubt that giants existed in reality? In the island of Sicily shinbones and shoulder blades have been discovered of a size which show their owners were giants as tall as towers. Also the Holy Scriptures, which cannot depart from the truth by so much as an inch, know giants such as Goliath.<sup>5</sup> If we examine why, within the reality of our natural attitude, we believe in historical events we can only refer to arguments similar to those of Don Quixote: to documents, monuments, authenticated accounts by witnesses and uninterrupted tradition. And there may

<sup>3</sup> pp. 436-440. All quotations refer to the translation by J. M. Cohen, published by Penguin Books, Middlesex, 1950.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 478.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 479.

be well-founded disputes among the historians of the world of Don Quixote, such as his controversy with the crazy Cardenio over the question whether Master Elisabat was or was not Queen Madasima's lover.<sup>6</sup>

Knight errantry is first of all a way of life. It fulfills a heavenly mission. Knights errant are "God's ministers on earth, and the arms by which His justice is executed here."<sup>7</sup> In this iron age it is their profession to roam the world, righting wrongs and relieving injuries.<sup>8</sup> But chivalry is not only a way of life, it is a science, more, the queen of all sciences, which comprises all or most sciences in the world. He who professes knight errantry must be a jurist and know the laws of person and property; he must be a theologian so that he may give the reasons for the Christian rules he professes; a physician and especially a herbalist in order to prepare a flask of the balsam of Fierrabras, of which a few drops heal a knight cut through the middle, provided the parts are fitted together before the blood congeals;<sup>9</sup> an astronomer to know by the stars how many hours of the night have passed and in what part of the world he is; he must know how to shoe a horse, how to mend a saddle, how to swim. And above all, he has to be a maintainer of truth, although its defense may cost him his life.<sup>10</sup>

This world of chivalry has its own legal and economic system. Knights errant are exempt from all jurisdiction, their law is their sword, their charter their courage, their statutes their own will.<sup>11</sup> Where have you ever heard of a knight errant being brought before a judge, however many homicides he may have committed? What knight errant ever paid taxes, customs or toll? What tailor was ever paid by him for a suit of clothes? What warden who received him in his castle ever made him pay his score? <sup>12</sup> And most certainly they did not pay wages to their squires. They made them governors of some islands or rulers of one or the other conquered kingdom.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>6</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 198.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 158.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 582f.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 410.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 410.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 511.

This sub-universe is characterized by peculiar modifications of the basic categories of thought, namely space, time, and causality. The kingdom of Micomicona in Ethiopia,<sup>15</sup> the Empire of Trapezunt<sup>16</sup> are well determined geographic concepts; the second region of air, where hail and snow is born, and the third of fire, where lightning and thunderbolts are made<sup>17</sup> are established by celestial physics. And all these places can easily be brought within reach: the sage, necromancer or magician who looks after the knight's affairs – and certainly every knight, to be a true one, has such a friend<sup>18</sup> – picks him up in his bed and next day he will be a thousand miles away from his place; or he sends him a chariot of fire or a hippogryph or Clavileño, the wooden horse, or an enchanting boat. Otherwise it would be impossible for a knight fighting in the Armenian mountains with a dragon to be saved at the last minute by his friend who was just a moment ago in England.<sup>19</sup> Don Quixote spends four nights in the cave of Montesinos, although those who wait for him at the entrance of the cave state that he was away a little more than an hour<sup>20</sup> – a problem similar to that which in our day Bergson has analyzed in discussing the time concept of Einstein's theory of relativity.<sup>21</sup> All this is due to the work of the enchanters, the friendly and the hostile ones, who fulfill in Don Quixote's sub-universe the role of causality and motivation. Their activity is the basic category of Don Quixote's interpretation of the world. It is their function to translate the order of the realm of phantasy into the realms of common-sense experience, to transform the real giants attacked by Don Quixote, for instance, into phantoms of windmills. Enchanters, so we learn, can transform all things and change their natural shapes. But, strictly speaking, what they change is the scheme of interpretation prevailing in one sub-universe into the scheme of interpretation valid in another. Both refer to the same matter of fact which is, in terms of Don Quixote's private sub-universe, Mambrino's miraculous helmet, and, in terms of Sancho

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 252.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 731.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 270.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 271.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 620.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. the dialogue between Pierre in the flying missile and Paul waiting at the gun in *Durée et Simultanéité*, Paris, 1922.



Panza's paramount reality of everyday life, an ordinary barber's basin. Thus, it is the function of the enchanters' activities to guarantee the coexistence and compatibility of several sub-universes of meaning referring to the same matters of fact and to assure the maintenance of the accent of reality bestowed upon any of such sub-universes. Nothing remains unexplained, paradoxical or contradictory, as soon as the enchanter's activities are recognized as a constitutive element of the world. But to Don Quixote the existence of enchanters is much more than a mere hypothesis. It is a historical fact proved by all the sacred source books reporting on matters of chivalry. Of course, this fact is not verifiable by ordinary means of sense perception. For magicians never allow themselves to be seen,<sup>22</sup> and it is clear that the axiom of enchantment, which makes the reconciliation between the sub-universe of phantasy and the paramount reality possible, cannot itself be subjected to a test originating within one of these sub-universes.

Our enlightened age is certainly not prepared to accept the agency of invisible enchanters as a principle of explanation of the occurrences and facts in the causal structure of the world. To be sure, we acknowledge the existence of invisible viruses, or of neutrinos or of an "Id" in the sense of psychoanalysis as the causal source of observed phenomena. But who would dare to compare these findings of our scientists with the activities of the enchanters of the madman Don Quixote? Yet, in the latter's theory, the activity of invisible enchanters has a great advantage over the explanatory principles of modern science just mentioned: the enchanters themselves have their motives for acting as they do and these motives are understandable to us human beings. Some of them bear the knight malice because they know through their art and spells that in the fullness of time Don Quixote will conquer one of their favorite knights in combat and that they will not be able to gainsay or avert what Heaven has decreed.<sup>23</sup> But friendly enchanters also interfere: the sage who is on Don Quixote's side shows a rare foresight in making Mambriño's helmet, that object of immense value, appear to every one a barber's basin, thus protecting its owner from persecution by all

<sup>22</sup> *Don Quixote*, p. 126.

<sup>23</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 65.

those who would understand its true meaning.<sup>24</sup> And it also happens, for instance in the miraculous adventure with the enchanted boat, that two powerful enchanters meet in opposition, one frustrating the other's design.<sup>25</sup> Here we have all the elements of Greek theology at the time of Homer: the envy of the gods, their intervention in favor of their protégés, their struggle for power, their subjection under inevitable fate. To be sure, if we introduce the enchanters into the causal chain, we cannot solve the Cartesian doubt about whether the world is governed by an evil genius or by God. But we are sure that whatever happens, happens reasonably, that is, within the motivation of the enchanters. We might be tempted to speak of a non-Hegelian dialectic in a similar way in which we speak of a non-Euclidian geometry.

These are the main features of Don Quixote's closed sub-universe upon which he has bestowed the accent of reality, his home-base from which he interprets all the other provinces of reality. But this his private world comes into contact with the world of his fellow-men, and both, Don Quixote and the others, have to come to terms with the conflicts arising between the disparate schemes of interpretation prevailing in each of them. In the description of the various adventures Don Quixote meets on his three expeditions Cervantes shows in a highly systematic way the typical solutions for this problem and it would be a rather tempting task to analyze them step by step. This purpose cannot be achieved within the frame of the present paper. We have to restrict ourselves to a general survey and to the analysis of a few adventures.

The social world which Don Quixote meets on each of his three expeditions takes a radically different attitude to his private world of phantasy, which is to him a highly meaningful one, but a world of madness to his fellow-men. On the first short expedition Don Quixote is alone. He is merely involved in an inner dialogue with the unknown sage, whoever he may be, who will commit the chronicle of his deeds to future generations. But otherwise Don Quixote remains undisturbed master in his sub-universe; he is not refuted by the behavior of his fellow-men who, as Cervantes

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 204.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 661.

states, "fall in with his humor." <sup>26</sup> To Don Quixote there is really a fortress with towers in shining silver, a dwarf's trumpet announcing the approaching knight, beauteous maidens taking the air at the castle's gate, and a castellan. Only to the observer there is an inn, a swineherd blowing his horn, two women of easy virtue and an innkeeper. Nothing and nobody, however – to revert to the quotation from William James at the beginning – starts a quarrel by saying something inadmissible which would contradict the experience held by Don Quixote to be true. The innkeeper receives him in a way appropriate for a knight, permits him the watch of arms, performs the ceremony of knighting him; nor do the silk-merchants on horseback, who are reluctant to acknowledge without proof that Dulcinea is the most beauteous maiden, or their muleteer behave in a way incompatible with the pattern of interpretation taken for granted in the world of chivalry. Thus, Don Quixote's actions remain performable within the paramount reality of daily life in spite of his phantastic motives, and no enchanters are needed to reconcile the disparate schemes of interpretation.

The activity of the enchanters appears for the first time during the interlude between the first and second expedition when the priest and the barber try to cure Don Quixote by burning his books and walling up his library. This event is explained as the work of Don Quixote's archenemy, the magician Freston, and the knight understands this perfectly well, taking it as a real occurrence. From now on he uses the fact of enchantment in order to maintain the accent of reality on his private sub-universe of chivalry if this world clashes with the paramount reality of those of his fellow-men who come in contact or conflict with him. For on this second expedition Don Quixote is no longer alone. He has to establish a "sub-universe of discourse" with the fellow-men with whom he shares a face-to-face relationship within the world of common sense. This refers first of all to Sancho Panza, his squire, the representative of everyday thinking who has always a treasure of proverbs at his command, in order to explain everything in terms of knowledge just taken for granted. But if the things and occurrences experienced by both of them are interpreted in accordance with different schemes of inter-

<sup>26</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 25.

pretation, are they still *common* experiences of the *same* objects? Our relationship with the social world is based upon the assumption that in spite of all individual variations the same objects are experienced by our fellow-men in substantially the same way as by ourselves and vice versa, and also that our and their schemes of interpretation show the same typical structure of relevances. If this belief in the substantial identity of the intersubjective experience of the world breaks down, then the very possibility of establishing communication with our fellow-men is destroyed. In such a crisis situation we become convinced that each of us lives in the impenetrable shell of his solipsistic prison, the Others becoming mere mirages to us, we to the Others, we to ourselves. There are two possibilities: either experiences of the objective world turn out to be mere illusions (and in Don Quixote's terminology this means that the enchanter has transformed the objective world); or I myself have changed my identity (and this means I am enchanted myself). On the other hand, it is precisely the assumed activity of the enchanters, who change and alter all our deeds and transform them according to their pleasure, which leads to the effect that what seems to Don Quixote Mambriño's helmet appears to Sancho as a barber's basin and to another as something else.<sup>27</sup> This is not to Sancho's liking. To him, the neopositivistic empiricist, the pains in his shoulders caused by the blanket-tossing in the inn vouch for the reality of his tormentors, the innkeepers and the muleteer, and he refuses to accept Don Quixote's explanation that they were phantoms in an enchanted castle. Where you start recognizing people who have names, there is no enchantment involved, says he. But slowly Sancho accepts the knight's scheme of interpretation. Enchantment is to Sancho at least plausible, and at the end of the second part, after Don Quixote's defeat by the Knight of the Moon, it becomes a fact. "For all this episode seemed to him to be happening in a dream and the whole business to be a matter of enchantment."<sup>28</sup> With great skill Cervantes shows this transition and the devices by which a common sub-universe of discourse is established between knight and squire. Both have good arguments for explaining away discrepancies. Don Quixote admits that Sancho is not a knight

<sup>27</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 204.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 890.

and, therefore, subject to other laws; <sup>29</sup> perhaps his fear prevents him from seeing and hearing right <sup>30</sup> ; if Sancho stealthily followed the two flocks of sheep for a short while he would discover that they were re-transformed into two armies as described by Don Quixote.<sup>31</sup> On the other hand, Sancho is inclined to believe that the Knight's misfortunes are due to the fact that he has broken a solemn oath; <sup>32</sup> or perhaps that he has power over real giants, but no power at all over phantoms.<sup>33</sup> And having discovered that he has to accept enchantment as a scheme of interpretation in order to establish a universe of discourse with Don Quixote. Sancho learns to express himself like a follower of the Greek skeptic philosophers. He corrects several times his original statement that what Don Quixote declares to be Mambriño's helmet is just a barber's basin, and worth a *real* if it's worth a farthing. "It's like nothing so much as a barber's basin. Just like it, it is."<sup>34</sup> And later on, <sup>35</sup> he speaks even of a "basin-helmet." Toward the end of the first part, <sup>36</sup> the story of this adventure is used to develop, like in a *stretto* of a complicated fugue, the main theme of inter-subjective reality in new elaborations. In the inn – to Don Quixote an enchanted castle – all the main actors of the story have assembled. The barber, the former owner of the basin-helmet, which Don Quixote had acquired in due combat, appears and claims his property and also the pack-saddle which Sancho on this occasion has taken away from his mule. The company in the inn decides to carry the joke further and confirms to the despair of the robbed owner that the object in question is, as Don Quixote maintains, a helmet and not a barber's basin. An expert opinion, furnished by master Nicholas, Don Quixote's barber friend, corroborates this finding. The former owner cannot understand how so many honorable gentlemen can possibly say that this is not a basin but a helmet. But if this is right, he argues, then the pack-saddle of his mule must be a horse's harness since Don Quixote maintains that he had met him riding a silver colored

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 138.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 142.

<sup>33</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 252.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 162.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 395.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 404ff.

stead. In terms of formal logic this argument is perfectly correct. Don Quixote refuses to interfere in the matter of the pack-saddle because this does not refer to a question of chivalry, and he, being a knight, might be subject to the spells in this enchanted castle. He admits that the thing looks to him rather like a pack-saddle, but he leaves the decision to the others because their understanding will be free and they will be able to judge the affairs of this castle as they really are and not as they appear to him, Don Quixote. Those who are in the plot affirm by secret vote that the object is not the pack-saddle of a mule but the harness of a horse. The former owner, under whose eyes the objects have turned into a helmet and a horse-harness, is more than perplexed, but, as a good democrat, he submits to the majority vote, stating: "Might is right." A bystander, taking the role of a scientific observer, is, however, not satisfied. If this is not a concerted joke, he cannot understand how intelligent men can insist that these things are not a basin and a pack-saddle. Such a statement goes against obvious truth and good sense, and the whole world won't convince him to the contrary. As a sound method to decide such an argument, a general battle starts between the parties. "At last," comments Cervantes, "the uproar was quelled for a time, the pack-saddle remained a harness till Judgement Day, and in Don Quixote's imagination the basin remained a helmet and the inn a castle." <sup>37</sup> The abyss between the two sub-universes can neither be overcome by formal logic, nor by consent of the majority, nor by military victory.

The second part of the novel, written ten years later, transposes the dialectic of intersubjectivity into a new dimension. If during the first two expeditions Don Quixote met fellow-men, he encountered them in a face-to-face relationship, and none of the partners had previous knowledge of the other. But before Don Quixote starts for his third expedition the history of his earlier adventures was described in a book read by the greater part of the persons he was to meet. This anonymous audience of readers has formed an ideal type of Don Quixote's personality and his ways of acting and reacting; they expect from him a certain type of behavior, which includes his expectations of their reactions, and they are prepared to orient their own behavior toward the

<sup>37</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 408.



knight in such a way that it might be interpreted by him as an adequate response to his own actions. In order to humor him and to establish with him a universe of discourse, they build up within the reality of their daily-life-world a world of play, of joke, of make-believe and "let's pretend," which, so they hope, will be taken by Don Quixote as reality in terms of his private sub-universe. But since they never bestow upon their make-believe world the accent of reality, they cannot succeed in establishing a universe of discourse with Don Quixote and, consequently, they cannot enter into a true social relationship with him. This leads, as we shall see, to the personal tragedy and the downfall of the knight.

His personal tragedy is first of all due to the weakening of his faith in Dulcinea's reality. When Sancho learns that the knight's lady Dulcinea of Toboso is nobody else than the farmer's daughter Aldonza Lorenzo, he doubts everything the enamoured knight has stated of her. "Do you think," Sancho, the knight answers, "that the Amarylisses, Phylisses, Sylvias . . . and all the rest the books . . . are full of, were real flesh-and-blood ladies, and the mistresses of the writers who wrote about them? Not a bit of it. Most of them were invented to serve as subjects for verses . . . I am quite satisfied, therefore, to imagine and believe that the good Aldonza Lorenzo is lovely and virtuous and, for my part, I think of her as the greatest princess of the world."<sup>38</sup> And here Don Quixote makes a statement which is at the core of our problem and surpasses in its logical boldness all the paradoxes of Russell's theory of classes which can also be found in Cervantes' novel,<sup>39</sup> as Hermann Weyl has already pointed out. "*To make an end of the matter, I imagine all I say to be true, neither more nor less.*" This is the basic axiom which identifies truth with existence in the particular sub-universe upon which the accent of reality has been bestowed.

In the second part of the novel the Duchess receives Don Quixote in the "let's pretend" world she has carefully built up for him. She refers to the aforementioned statement of the knight which she read in the published first part, as well as to the fact that Don Quixote never met Dulcinea, and expresses doubt of Dulcinea's

<sup>38</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 210.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 798f.

real existence. "God alone knows," answers Don Quixote, "whether Dulcinea exists on earth or not or whether she is phantastic or not phantastic. *These are not matters whose verification can be carried out to the full.* I neither engendered nor bore my lady, though I contemplate her in her ideal form, as a lady with all the qualities needed to win her fame in all quarters of the world".<sup>40</sup> Only merchants of Toledo going to buy silk in Marcia want the knight to show them Dulcinea, or at least a portrait of her, before they are willing to admit that she is the most beautiful maiden.<sup>41</sup> Only a Sancho dares to admit to Don Quixote during the third expedition, when they look in vain for Dulcinea's palace in Toboso, that he too has never seen the peerless lady and that his seeing her and the reply he brought to the knight were of his invention. But that is not enough. Three country girls on their donkeys come along the road, and Sancho describes them to Don Quixote as the princess Dulcinea in all her glory, accompanied by her damsels, riding hackneys as white as snow. But Don Quixote, to his despair, can only see village-girls on their donkeys, - at least they look so to him<sup>42</sup> - and he is inclined to doubt his own immediate experience. Most certainly the enchanters have put clouds and cataracts into his eyes and *for them alone and no others* have changed Dulcinea to a poor peasant girl. Yet there is still a more horrible possibility. Perhaps, the enchanter has at the same time turned him, Don Quixote, into the appearance of some spectre to make it abominable for Dulcinea's sight.<sup>43</sup> This is the same problem handled by Kafka in his novel, *Metamorphosis*, in which a man finds himself one morning transformed into a gigantic bug. Don Quixote starts to doubt his own identity. The situation becomes more complicated by the fact that later on Don Quixote, in the vision he has in the cave of Montesinos, sees Dulcinea transformed into the peasant girl and comes to the conclusion that she must be enchanted, transformed, not only for him but also to Sancho and everyone else.<sup>44</sup> However, he is in doubt and remains in doubt whether what he saw in the cave of Montesinos was reality, dream, or pure fiction

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 680, italics added.

<sup>41</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 50.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 529.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 530.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 522.



of his own making. He asks the prophesying ape of Master Pedro<sup>45</sup> and later on the enchanted head<sup>46</sup> whether the account he gave of his experiences in the cave was truth or dream, imagined or real and twice receives the answer that it was a mixture of both. For even within the sub-universe of Don Quixote's private world there is the possibility of dream and imagination, a world of phantasy within the world of phantasy; even in this sub-universe the frontiers of reality are gliding, even here there are enclaves mirrored into it from other sub-universes.

To Sancho who knows that the whole story of his first and second encounter with Dulcinea is just his own invention the situation seems perfectly clear, and Don Quixote's recital of his vision in the cave of Montesinos convinces him finally beyond doubt that his master was out of his mind and mad on all counts.<sup>47</sup> But his righteous conviction is shaken when he confesses later on<sup>48</sup> to the Duchess that he just made Don Quixote believe his encounters with Dulcinea and that her enchantment is no more true than that the moon is a green cheese. The Duchess answers that in her opinion Sancho's tricking scheme was the invention of the enchanters, that the peasant girl is really and truly Dulcinea, and that it was good Sancho who was deceived though he may think he was the deceiver. The Duchess takes, therewith, the Hegelian point of view of the "cunning of Reason," which makes man unwillingly and unknowingly a tool of its higher purpose. This possibility Sancho has to admit and also that if the Duchess is right he has to believe what Don Quixote contends he had seen in the cave. But, says Sancho, it must have been contrariwise as the Duchess says. It can't be presumed that he, Sancho, could invent such a shrewd trick on the spur of the moment with his poor wits, and his master can't be so mad as to accept something so far beyond all probability on his weak persuasion. The truth may be that it was a peasant girl he saw, he took her for a peasant girl and a peasant girl he judged her to be. But if it was Dulcinea it can't be laid to his account, only to that of the very active and exceedingly meddling enchanter at work.<sup>49</sup> Sancho's admission

<sup>45</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 637.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 874.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 621.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 689.

<sup>49</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 690.

of the possibility that his empirical peasant girl, whom he has transformed into a fictitious Dulcinea, was perhaps indeed the noumenal Dulcinea, completes the dialectic of the intersubjective experience of reality.

We mentioned before that the world of phantasy is not a unified realm, that there are phantasies within phantasies, sub-universes within sub-universes, which may conflict with one another and both with the reality of daily life. An example of such a situation can be found in one of the most profound chapters of Cervantes' work in which Don Quixote attends Master Pedro's puppet show "The Releasing of Melisandra." From his books of chivalry Don Quixote knows all the details of the story of how Don Gaiferos liberates the lady Melisandra from Moorish slavery, which is to him a historical fact. At the beginning of the puppet show he criticizes certain details of the presentation as contrary to fact, for instance, that the Moorish King gives alarm signals for the persecution of the fugitives by ringing bells from all the towers of the mosques, whereas in reality, the Moors used for such purposes trumpets and kettledrums. But soon the play takes hold of Don Quixote and creates in him fear and compassion in the good Aristotelian manner. What he knew from his books as historical facts occur now, as represented by Master Pedro's puppets, under his eyes in the vivid present. While it lasts, the course of events is still uncertain and can be influenced by his interference. And seeing the pack of Moors persecuting the fugitives, he thinks that it is his duty to help so famous a king and so lovely a lady. He unsheathes his sword and rains blows with fury upon the puppet-heathenry, not heeding the exhortation of the desperate Master Pedro to reflect that these are not real Moors but only little pasteboard figures. Afterwards, when Master Pedro requires payment for the damage done to his puppetry, Don Quixote assures him <sup>50</sup> that all that had passed had seem to him a real occurrence. Melisandra *was* Melisandra, Gaiferos Gaiferos, Charlemagne Charlemagne. Therefore he was stirred to anger and conscious of his mission that as a knight errant he had to give aid and protection to the persecuted people.

Don Quixote touches here on the profound and unsolved problem of the reality of the work of art, especially of the theater.

<sup>50</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 643.

Also we, Sancho Panzas of the common-sense world, by taking our seat in the audience, are willing to shift the accent of reality from the surrounding world of our daily life to the world on the stage as soon as the curtain rises. We, too, live in a different realm of reality while the play goes on than during the intermission. Also to us Lear is Lear, Regan Regan, Kent Kent. But this reality of the events on the stage is of an entirely different kind than that of our daily life. The latter is the only sub-universe into which we can gear with our actions, which we can transform and change by them and within which we can establish communication with our fellow-men. This fundamental characteristic of the reality of our daily life – or is it merely an axiom of our bestowing the accent of reality upon it? – is precisely the reason why this sub-universe is experienced by us as the paramount reality of circumstances and environment with which we have to come to terms. We, the audience, the beholders, are powerless with respect to the reality of the work of art or the theater; as beholders we have to suffer or to enjoy it, but we are not in the position to interfere with it, to change it by our actions. Here is perhaps one of the roots of the particular phenomenological structure of the aesthetic experience. But to follow this idea up would lead too far afield. At any rate, Don Quixote, who takes another sub-universe than the paramount reality of daily life as his home-base, cannot “realize” that the world of the theater is separated from that of his private sub-universe of phantasy. Melisandra and her liberation are environmental circumstances also in his world of chivalry. Strictly speaking, we find in his adventure with the puppet show the clash between three realms of reality: that of the phantastic world of chivalry, within which a knight has to interfere in order to help a beautiful lady; that of the theater, in which all this is merely represented in the way of make-believe by living actors or puppets without admitting any interference by the audience; and third, the sad reality of everyday life, in which pasteboard figures can be smashed and in which the master of the show presents a bill for the damage that the intrusion of our dreams into the world of reality has caused.

Another adventure, that of the enchanted boat, shows the clash between three other realms of reality: the world of chivalry, of common sense, and of science. Don Quixote and Sancho, riding

along the Ebro river, find a little boat without oars, made fast on the trunk of a tree. Don Quixote thinks that this boat “without the possibility of error”<sup>51</sup> summons him to embark and to travel in the twinkling of an eye six or seven thousand miles in order to succor some noble person in distress. They tie up Rosinante and Dappel, Sancho’s donkey, to a tree, embark and weigh anchor. While Sancho is in fear and despair because he hears Dappel braying anxiously, Don Quixote thinks that they have already traveled two thousand miles or more and either have passed or will shortly pass the equinoctial line which, according to Ptolemy, the best cosmographer known, divides and cuts the opposing poles at equal distances. In order to verify this belief, Don Quixote turns to the exact methods of the natural sciences. The first method would be exact measurement with the help of an astrolabe, but such an instrument is not at his disposal. The second method is that of an experiment based upon an empirical law which so far seems to have stood the test and has therefore, as we would say in our modern language, been accepted in the corpus of geographical science. The law, discovered and tested by “the Spaniards and those who embark at Cadiz to go to the East Indies” states “that as soon as the equinoctial line has been passed, the lice die on everybody aboard ship.” Sancho just has to make this scientific experiment. If he passes his hand over his thigh and catches anything living, they shall have no doubt on the score, and if not then they have passed. Yet Sancho, thinking in common-sense terms, protests vigorously. There is no need to make this experiment, for he can see with his own eyes that they have not drawn two yards off where Dappel and Rosinante are. To this highly unscientific objection Don Quixote takes the position of the rigorous empirical scientist, who, entrenched in his sub-universe of scientific reality, requires verification of any empirical statement: “Make the investigation I ask of you, Sancho, and do not worry about any others, for you know nothing about the colures, lines, parallels, zodiacs, ecliptics, poles, solstices, equinoxes, planets . . . which are the measures of which the celestial and terrestrial spheres are composed. But if you had that knowledge, or part of it, you would clearly see how many parallels we have cut, how many signs seen, and what constel-

<sup>51</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 656.

lations we have left behind and are now leaving. Once more I ask you, feel and fish!" Sancho obeys, raises his head, looks at his master and says: "Either the test is false or we haven't got where your Worship says." 52

Clearly, the sub-universe of scientific interpretation of the world clashes here with that of common sense. But we do need the activity of enchanters to reconcile them. There remains still the possibility outlined by the great methodologist Sancho: the test might be false. If the theory that all lice die when the ship crosses the equinoctial line is an empirical law, and if it turns out that the line has been crossed indeed, although lice are found, then the law has been invalidated by this single contradictory fact and has to be eliminated from the corpus of science and to be replaced by a better founded one. This is so because the closed sub-universe of scientific reality, although necessarily different from that of common sense, of everyday life is, also necessarily, tied to the process of empirical verification within the common-sense world in which we live and which we take for granted as our paramount reality. On the other hand, our seeing with our own eyes Rosinante and Dappel is no objection to the scientific requirement of ascertaining our location within the universe in terms of the scientific realities of colures, lines, ecliptics, etc. And if it turns out that our seeing Rosinante was just a delusion, a mere appearance or phantom, then the scientific explanation, in order to be valid and real in terms of the sub-universe of science, has to keep open, if not to explain, the *possibility* of such delusion within the paramount reality of common sense. But still more interesting is the insight that also the fictional sub-universe of Don Quixote knows "matters of fact" and beliefs, permitting controlled analysis and empirical verification and that it is compatible or incompatible with the sub-universe of science to the same extent as our world of common sense. To be sure, in terms of the latter the "matters of fact" in the world of Don Quixote's fictitious space, in which we can travel several thousand miles in the twinkling of an eye, is still a location within the whole universe, the same universe which can be described in terms of the scientific system of colures, lines, ecliptics, etc.

The most penetrating analysis of the problem of delusion and

<sup>52</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 659.



perception and of intersubjectivity as a constitutive element of reality can be found in the chapter which describes the voyage of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza on Clavileño, the wooden horse. Unfortunately, space does not permit a detailed description of the events at the Court of the Duke and the Duchess, who, by establishing a "let's pretend" world, carefully prepare this extraordinary adventure, which, in my opinion, constitutes the acme of the saga of Don Quixote. Don Quixote is advised that a wooden horse, Clavileño, has been sent by a magician in order to carry the knight and his squire through the air to a distant kingdom where an afflicted lady has to be re-instated in her rights. Don Quixote and Sancho are installed on the back of the wooden horse and blindfolded. As instructed, the knight turns the wooden peg which supposedly sets the horse in motion, and the voyage begins. In the most refined way, devices are prepared to make the delusion of flying plausible to our travelers, who, of course, do not leave the ground. People shout: "Now you are beginning to mount and soar to the astonishment of all of us below!" "Now you are in the air already, cleaving it more swiftly than an arrow!"<sup>53</sup> Sancho, still thinking in terms of common sense, wonders: "How can they say we're flying so high when their voices reach us here, and they seem to be speaking just beside us?" "Pay no attention to that," answers Don Quixote, "for as these matters of flights are out of the ordinary course of things, you will see and hear what you please a thousand miles away." Rightly Don Quixote points out that the scheme of interpretation in terms of common sense reality is no longer applicable to situations, which by transcending this reality, void the axiomatic foundations of all possible explanations valid within the sub-universe just left. Blindfolded as we are when plunging into the realm of the transcendental, we cannot check the testimony of our fellow-men by our own sense perceptions. It is the same problem which, nearly at the same time as Cervantes, Shakespeare has dealt with in the grandiose scene in *King Lear* when the blinded Gloucester is induced by Edgar to believe that he has jumped from the cliff of Dover to end his life but survived.<sup>54</sup>

Don Quixote, on his immovable horse, feels a breeze striking

<sup>53</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 730.

<sup>54</sup> IV, 6.

him, caused by bellows operated by the duke's servants; he feels warmth, thanks to pieces of tow easily lit by them. Applying this scientific knowledge to explain his sense impressions in terms of the realm of phantasy, Don Quixote tells Sancho his conclusion that they must have reached the third region of the air, the region of fire where lightnings and thunderbolts are prepared. Sancho decides to take off the bandage covering his eyes, when an explosion occurs, after which the travelers find themselves again at their starting point. The Duke and the Duchess have with delight followed the dialogue of the travelers during their voyage and are, after its end, eager to learn from them what they experienced while riding Clavileño. They are exactly in the position of a modern psychologist in the laboratory who experiments with his subjects, using the so-called auto-kinetic phenomenon. The well-known psychologist Muzafer Sherif, for instance, instructs his subjects that in the darkened laboratory a light (which is physically stationary, of course) will move to the right or left as the case may be; thereafter he checks the answer given by the individual and finally repeats the same experiment in group-situations, in which each subject reports his judgement aloud, thus influencing the others' statements and being influenced by them. First Sancho has to report, and his story resembles very much a wild science-fiction tale of our times. He maintains among other things that they have reached the celestial constellation Capricorn and that he played for an hour with the "seven she-goats" of which it is composed, while Clavileño waited for him, etc. But Don Quixote was with him. As in Professor Sherif's experiment, he heard Sancho's tale. Can he confirm it? "As all these matters and all such happenings are out of the order of nature," he says, "it is no wonder that Sancho says what he does. I can only answer for myself".<sup>55</sup> In order to reach a celestial constellation they would have had to pass beyond the region of fire. They may have touched it, but it is unbelievable that they have passed it. This cannot be without being scorched. "So seeing that we are not burned," Don Quixote concludes, "either Sancho is lying or Sancho is dreaming." It is highly interesting that Don Quixote, who is fully aware that the whole adventure is out of the order of nature, refers to this very order of nature to establish

<sup>55</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 733.

the premises of his perfectly logical conclusion. Would it not be possible that the wizards who constructed Clavileño permitted the crossing of the fiery region without being burned? This is a very important point: in order to explain the inconsistencies between two sub-universes, we have to resort to the interpretational rules constitutive of a third one, although we know very well that either realm is separated from the other and irreducible to the third. But Don Quixote still keeps open the possibility of Sancho's having been dreaming. He knows from his own vision in the cave of Montesinos how difficult it is to establish the border line between fiction and reality. He approaches Sancho and whispers in his ear: "Sancho, if you want me to believe what you saw in the sky, I wish you to accept my account of what I saw in the Cave of Montesinos. I say no more."<sup>56</sup>

Miguel Unamuno, in his wonderful commentary on Don Quixote, interprets this statement of the knight as the expression of the highest magnanimity of his candid soul, since Don Quixote is well convinced that what he experienced in the cave of Montesinos was true and what Sancho tells cannot be true. But another interpretation is possible. Don Quixote is convinced that only the experiencing self can judge upon which sub-universe it has bestowed the accent of reality. Intersubjective experience, communication, sharing of something in common presupposes, thus, in the last analysis faith in the Other's truthfulness, animal faith in the sense of Santayana; it presupposes that I take for granted the Other's possibility of bestowing upon one of the innumerable sub-universes the accent of reality, and on the other hand, that he, the Other, takes for granted that I, too, have open possibilities for defining what is my dream, my phantasy, my real life. This is the last insight into the intersubjective dialectic of reality, it seems to me, and therefore the climax in the analysis of this problem in Cervantes' work.

This is also the turning point in the personal tragedy of Don Quixote. With the explosion of Clavileño – or better with the impossibility of establishing intercommunication in the sub-universe of phantasy – he loses his magic power of self-enchantment. Faced with Sancho's lies he feels the *hybris* he committed

<sup>56</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 735.



in intermingling reality and phantasy in his recital of his adventures in the cave – the terms “reality” and “phantasy,” here used from the point of view of the reality of Don Quixote’s private world. He feels that he has transgressed the self-established frontiers of reality of his private province and that he has indulged within its limits in dreams, intermingling thus two realms of reality and sinning against the spirit of truth, the defense of which is the first task of the knight errant. When he returned from the Cave of Montesinos, Don Quixote spoke like his younger brother Segismundo in Calderon’s “*La Vida es Sueño*”: “God pardon you my friends,” says Don Quixote, “for you have robbed me of the sweetest existence and most delightful vision any human being ever enjoyed or beheld. Now, indeed, I positively know that the pleasures of this life pass like a shadow and a dream.”<sup>57</sup> Yet the transcendental experience that life might be a dream does not only put in question the common-sense reality of everyday life but of any sub-universe taken for granted so far. The true tragedy for Don Quixote is his discovery that even his private sub-universe, the realm of chivalry, might be just a dream and that its pleasures pass like shadows. This creates not only a conflict of consciousness which thus becomes, in Hegel’s words, an “unhappy” one, but also of conscience, especially so when the Clavileño adventure proves that even Sanchos are capable of intermingling elements of dreams with their reality of everyday life. Don Quixote’s insight that only mutual faith in the Other’s terms of reality guarantees intercommunication, his appeal to Sancho to believe his visions if he wants his own to be believed, is a kind of declaration of bankruptcy; and the knight’s final words on this occasion. “I say no more,” heighten the tragedy of this unhappy consciousness and conscience. It is his bad faith which in the remaining chapters leads to his downfall and the destruction of his sub-universe. He becomes aware of the reality of everyday life, and no enchanter helps him to transform it. His capacity to interpret the common-sense reality in terms of his private universe is broken. Whereas the disenchantment of Dulcinea fails, his own succeeds completely. The great process of disillusionment consists in a piecemeal withdrawal of the

<sup>57</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 614.

accent of reality from his private sub-universe, the world of chivalry. This world – to revert to William James' statement with which this study opened – clashed finally with the realities of everyday life to such an extent that this mind had to make the choice of which to stand by. After having maintained vigorously his original choice through all his adventures, after having developed a scientific system – or even perhaps a kind of theology – of the magic activities of the enchanters, whose mission is to reconcile the contradictory schemes of interpretations, he loses faith in this fundamental principle of his metaphysics and cosmogony. He finds himself at the end a homecomer to a world to which he does not belong, enclosed in everyday reality as in a prison, and tortured by the most cruel jailer: the common-sense reason which is conscious of its own limits. The intrusion of the transcendental into this world of everyday life is either denied or dissimulated by common reason. But it shows its invincible force in the experience of all of us that the world of everyday life with its things and occurrences, its causal connections of natural laws, its social facts and institutions is just imposed upon us, that we can understand and master it only to a very limited extent, that the future remains open, undisclosed and unascertainable, and that our only hope and guidance is the belief that we will come to terms with this world for all good and practical purposes if we behave as others behave, if we take for granted what others believe beyond question. All this presupposes our faith that things will continue to be what they have been so far and that what our experience of them has taught us will also stand the test in the future. Having lost with his knight errantry his heavenly mission, Don Quixote has to prepare himself after his spiritual death for his physical end. And so he dies, no longer Don Quixote de la Mancha, but Alonso Quixano the Good, a man who considers himself of clear judgment, free from the misty shadows of ignorance with which his dwelling in the province of phantasy has obscured it.<sup>58</sup> Samson Carrasco, in his epitaph, says of him that he lived as a fool and yet died wise. But does not the meaning of wisdom and foolishness depend upon the sub-universe within which alone these yardsticks are valid? What is foolishness, what

<sup>58</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 936.

wisdom in the whole universe which is the sum total of all of our sub-universes? “We have only to commend ourselves to God and let fortune take what course it will,” says Sancho,<sup>59</sup> who, in spite of all temptations of the transcendental, remains deeply rooted in the heritage of common sense.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 169.