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Wheels, Windmills, and Webs
Don Quixote's Library and the History of Reading

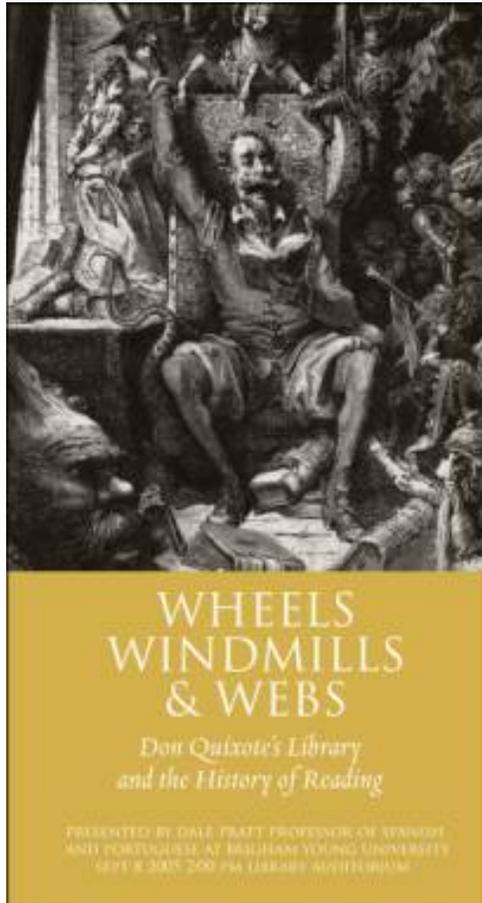
House of Learning

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Thank you very much. Years ago, I took a Spanish class in which the professor would very frequently go off on interesting but wholly extraneous tangents, sometimes taking up 20 or 30 minutes of class time with his stories or advice. One day he made some fascinating comments about Don Quixote, again taking 30 minutes of time we might have devoted to the subject of the course. At the end he said, "When a Spanish professor starts talking about Don Quixote, you know he doesn't have anything else to say." Perhaps after this lecture you might agree with him. I'd like to thank you all for coming. The first inkling of this project came 3 or 4 years ago as we discussed in the peninsular section of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese how we might best celebrate the 400th anniversary of the publication of the first volume of Don Quixote. Many events will take place on campus this semester with Spanish plays by the theater department and the Spanish department, a major scholarly conference on Don Quixote, an exhibition at the Museum of Art, and a forum address by the president of the Cervantes Society of America. The lot I drew, however, was to curate an exhibition for the library's Special Collections. I believe I got the best assignment. Not because it was easy, since I've gnashed my teeth over the project, but because Don Quixote is one of those 2 dozen or so books in the history of world literature that we truly ought to call special.

More important, however, is the personal dimension of this project. I have met and worked with quite a few wonderful people whose help I will acknowledge now. I am very grateful to my friend Derek Johnson, European curator for Special Collections, for sharing my wonder as he took me into the vault to show me the library's treasures. Derek and I also share an interest in the history of science and hope to collaborate in the future. Sean McMurty, who we've already acknowledged, exhibitions designer and another friend, who's taken my ideas about how the exhibition should look and refined them into something truly remarkable. And thank you Shawn for all of the many hours of midnight oil. Mel Smith and Devin Asay from the Humanities Computer Center have produced the forest green internet section of the exhibition, which we'll see and they did a tremendous job. Finally, Jason Yancy, a student, graduate student of ours, did all of the set design and the woodworking, building 3 windmills and a working Renaissance reading wheel. And kept it all within budget. And Jason is a genius. Thanks also to the people to the Library Exhibition Committee, chaired by Scott Duvall. And thanks as well to the College of Humanities for coming up with the money. Thanks to John Rosenberg, who years ago guided me through my first reading of Don Quixote, and thanks to my wife Valerie. There was a period of time, for about 5 or 6 years when Valerie and I alternated teaching Don Quixote every winter semester. As you may imagine, this dramatically affected our social and family lives. We have spent many hours laughing over passages, citing funny things Sancho says, and struggling with how to teach this massive book in an effective way.

One way to enter the book and Don Quixote's world is through his library. Don Quixote's library in the Renaissance Scholar's Reading Wheel, or book wheel, have become for me key metaphors for understanding the history of reading. The reading practices of modern day internet surfers share much with the Renaissance scholars and their successors, the 18th century encyclopedists, and with Don Quixote. The exhibition wheels, windmills, and webs traces the history of reading, starting with examples of early texts in a variety of genres, moving through an extended analysis of Don Quixote's library and other texts closely related to it, to a display of some of the important texts that were deeply influence by Don Quixote in the centuries following his publication. At the same time, the exhibition seeks to show how 21st century readers have

come to emulate Don Quixote's style of reading as they surf the internet. And so displays a reading wheel, Don Quixote's library, the 18th century encyclopedia, and a simulated internet surfing session with multiple open windows. My involvement with this project has led me to reconsider some theoretical aspects of reading, analyzing individual readings of Don Quixote in some very specific contexts, to review how Don Quixote himself reads and interprets the books in his library, and to meditate on the future of reading.

To read is to interpret a representation of ideas or information. Each reader brings an individualized set of memories, strategies, context, skills, and expectation to the encounter with the text. Every text is fraught with intertextuality, myriad planned or unplanned connections with other texts, each an artifact of language, related by context, time, geography, language, and expectations. The reader and the text bring potentialities to the reading experience and the outcome depends on the reader's skill in exploring the possibilities of the text. Like a construction project, the reader/worker arrives at the construction site every morning to find materials and plans to build a building. The worker brings a tool belt of reading skills and knowledge about previous construction projects or reading experiences he or she has worked on. The finished product depends on the blueprints, the materials, and the worker. Some workers bring special tools to the task. Others bring only a hammer. And I have known a few of those. Some are neophytes, and some come simply to smash. At the end of the project, the building might be a cottage, a house with an oversized edition, a mansion, a church, or a temple. Or perhaps it turns out to be a shack or just a stack of ruined pieces of wood with nails sticking out all over.

In all cases, the interaction between the author, the text, and the reader (and the author is dead to us as we read) constitute our reading. As our expectations change, not just the cultural horizons which help establish ours and theirs but also our expectations of reading itself, our experiences change. As our readings change, so do we. Vladimir Nabokov recounts the legend that, quote, "One sunny morning, King Phillip III of Spain, upon looking from the balcony of his palace, was struck by the singular behavior of a young student who was sitting on a bench in the shade of a corn oak with a book. And frantically clapping his thigh and giving vent to wild shrieks of laughter. The king remarked that the fellow was either crazy or was reading Don Quixote." Close quote. Some readers might say, as Nabokov probably would, that the best evidence the fellow was crazy is that he actually was reading the massive Don Quixote. I, however, have loved the book since the first time I read it, and each time I read it again, I come to love both its principle characters and its author. We might ask, how many books Phillip III's laughing student has read? What life experiences he brings to the reading? And contrast them with my own, or with Nabokov's, who called Don Quixote a crude and cruel book. There have been many, many, many readers of Don Quixote in the last 400 years. Critics, authors, students, the educated gentry, and the one that we might call today -- the lay reader, and whom Cervantes called, "el desu qu pado lector," or "the idle reader." As we study how all of them read, we can uncover details from the history of reading. I'd like to read now from the diary of one of those millions of readers, a Jewish man named Adam, uh, Czerniakow. And forgive me if my pronunciation is incorrect. From 1927 to 1934, Czerniakow served as a member of the Warsaw Municipal Council. And in 1931, he was elected to the Polish Senate. On October 4, 1939, a few days after the city surrendered to the Nazis, he was made head of the 24-member Judenrat, the Jewish Council, responsible for implementing German orders in the Jewish community. Most of

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the residents condemned his stance toward the Nazi occupation. In 1942 the Nazis ordered the Judenrat to provide them with lists of Jews and maps of residences in preparation for mass deportations to Treblinka. On July 22, 1942, the Judenrat received instructions that all Warsaw Jews were to be deported to the east at the rate of 6,000 per day, with the names supplied by the Judenrat. Failure to comply would result in the immediate execution of 100 hostages, including employees and friends, and even Czerniakow's wife. Some exemptions were made, and Czerniakow spent the day pleading for exemptions for the children at the orphanage, to no avail. He went -- he went to his office and committed suicide with a cyanide pill. His suicide note read, "I can no longer bear all this. My act will prove to everyone what is the right thing to do." Czerniakow kept a diary from September 6th, 1939 until the day of his death. It was put -- published in 1979 in English as "The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniakow: Prelude to Doom." Bear with me please as I read a few passages.

"September 6, 1939. I could not sleep from midnight to 5 in the morning. September 7, 1939. Burdened with backpacks, all kinds of people set out for the unknown. September 8. Restless night. September 9. Saturday. Shellfire. September 10, 1939. I joined the Civil Guard; a rain of bombs went to the Jewish Community Office. September 11. During the night, the orphanage at, uh, Jagiellońska Street was smashed to smithereens. Radio appeal to the population to make lint bandages. Could there be a shortage even of those? Parenthetically, this brings to mind the following" -- this is him talking -- "parenthetically, this brings to mind the following passage from Don Quixote about a soldier.' They will replace a tasseled doctor's cap made of lint upon his head, to dress some wound from a bullet passing through his temples, or leaving him maimed in arm or leg.'" Close quote. Continuing with Czerniakow. Same day. "Horse meat. Amere Rzewuski's famous steed. After guard duty, Yas, his son, leads a blind man home under fire. Again, in October, he was made the head of the Judenrat. November 14, 1939. At 7 a.m. at the community, the labor battalion is being paid, getting ready for a meeting with Batzabatari Settlement, etc. Went to the SS. The matter of deportation is no longer being entertained. More and more complications between the ethnic Germans and the Jews. Accusations that the Jews owe money and do not pay it back. I received summonses for Jews to present themselves at the SS. It is the community's responsibility to deliver the summonses. Tomorrow, I am ordered to appear at 8:30 at the SS for discussion with Batz on getting the community organization going. They gave permission today to withdraw, uh, 30 s -- 30,000 zlotys from the discount bank. What would have happened if they did not abandon the plan for resettlement? Their recriminations from the Jews would have been unbearable. November 15, 1939. A cloudy morning. It is now 6:30. It is pouring. I must be at the SS at 8:30. This is November. On the 30th I will be 59 and going on 60. Once, long ago, I made a theoretical plan to divide my life into 3 parts. One, study and play. Two, accomplishments. Three, reconciled with God and at peace with myself. Fate would have it otherwise. Since 1905, I, who never exploited anyone, and never lived at anyone's expense, have been paying for those who did just that. Anyway, people like me are legion. I go to bed every day, according to police hours, at 9. As a result, I wake up at 2 and sleep only intermittently until 6 in the morning. When I am awake, I read Don Quixote. How much we need you, errant knight, today. My head is bursting from all the complaints. In Annopol all the unemployed and homeless Jews were thrown out of the public shelters. I now have to cope with 4 small towns, the hospitals, orphanages, Annopol, and on top of it all, the mentally ill. My head is spinning." Close quote.

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Andre Malro once said that, quote, "Only 3 books: Robinson Crusoe, Don Quixote, and The Idiot are truly meaningful to the survivors of prisons and concentration camps." Close quote. These survivors read in ways fundamentally different from Nabokov, or Phillip III's student, or us today. And what of Czerniakow, who clearly hoped to salvage things by collaborating to an extent with the Nazis? We might ask ourselves how reading Don Quixote affected Czerniakow, if he saw his work in the Judenrat as quixotic. And how did he hope his errant knight might help if he suddenly appeared in the Warsaw ghetto, lance at the ready? I doubt Czerniakow laughed much as he read Don Quixote in those dark times. Perhaps the most he could do was nod or grimly smile and shake his head.

Reading affects us. It affects our moods, our understanding, our thoughts and feelings. It affects our bodies. Remember the strained eyes, the loss of sleep, the search for the right position in the chair or the bed or under the tree? The hunger pains when we just couldn't put the book down? Reading has become one of the great metaphors. The angels read of our works, good and evil in books of life. Natural philosophers read the book of nature. Scanners read barcodes at the store. St. Augustine, in a crucial moment in his life, heard a child's voice calling out, "Toll e legga," -- "take it and read." Which he took as a message from God. His subsequent reading converted him to Christianity and had a dramatic impact on the West. In Lehi's second vision in The Book of Mormon, verse 8 of the -- of -- the first chapter, I believe. Jesus himself presents the prophet with a book in which he sees and reads many great and marvelous things. In contrast, some of the first sinners Dante and Virgil encounter in the inferno are there because of reading. Paulo and Francesca read The Tale of Lancelot and Guinevere and read, quote, "Read no more that day," close quote, because the book itself acts as the go between for their sins. I once came across a book in the Cornell Library by Manwell Puieg, titled, "Conenasio Eterno Para el Quienquiera Lee Estas Paginas." "Eternal Damnation Upon Whoever Reads These Pages." I couldn't help but sneak a peek. I'll let you know at the judgment bar how that one turns out. All right?

Madam Bovarie, a female Don Quixote, seeks escape from her mundane life by reading some scores of romance novels. As does Anna Osores, a Spanish Emma Bovarie, in La Rahenta, the greatest of Spain's realist novels. Another reader sought a different kind of escape, in this case, from the extreme difficulties caused by the contests of different parties of religionists. And if it were not for his reading, which entered with great force into every feeling of his heart, none of us would be in this library today. The earliest extent text beyond Cavarte, deal with business transactions. One of the cuneiform tablets on display today records regular temple offerings of both grain-fed sheep and grass-fed sheep from an individual named Al Lulul. Cuneiform, or wedge-shaped characters impressed in the clay, represent the first recorded writing and are thus the first known texts created expressly to be read, as opposed to being viewed as artwork. Writing genres soon expanded to include epic and lyric poetry, sacred writing, theater, philosophy, histories, epistles, political texts, theology, apologetics, commentaries, and eventually narrative fiction. Although it was not always important, and sometimes difficult for readers to be able to distinguish between genres of writing as we would understand them today, the basic question of the purpose of the text, to instruct, incite, or entertain, for instance -- did carry great weight in reading. Don Quixote's style of reading, as well as reading practices involved in web surfing, can obscure the original purpose of a text. With Don Quixote and with the internet, facts become entertainment, and vice versa. In the first 5 chapters of Don Quixote,

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Cervantes' hero goes mad, reading chivalric novels from his library, which he has stocked by selling off pieces of his land. He sets forth as a knight errant, modeling his actions and rhetoric on his readings. Chapter 5 ends with a neighbor bringing him home, wounded, and in a delirium in which he sees his friends as characters from his novels. In chapter 6, the friends, a curate and a barber, pull the books from the shelves, read out the titles, save a few, and burn most of the rest. The chapter constitutes an elaborate literary critique, as the curator pines on the relative merits of the books, all of which were published in the real world, mostly in the 1500's. The book burning resonates with the inquisitions Altos da Fay, in which heretics were burned at the stake, and with Covono Rola's censorship activities and bonfires of the vanities in Florence. Increasingly, as the chapters progress -- as chapter progresses, the curate and the barber lose patience, and consign many books to the flames without even glancing at the titles. The destruction of the library does not restore Don Quixote to sanity, rather it gives him a new pretext to exercise his madness. For now, he must seek out the wizard who has stolen his library. Throughout the rest of his novel, Don Quixote demonstrates a remarkable ability to connect his adventures in 17th century Spain with passages from his novels. He even weaves passages from different novels together, to create composite personalities he can emulate.

The book Don Quixote casts a long shadow of influence over the Western literary tradition. Shakespeare reportedly wrote a play called *Carlenio* now lost, after a character in Cervantes' book. Spanish golden-age dramatist Pedro Calderon de la Barca mentions or recites Don Quixote in over half of his works. And the fundamental theme of Don Quixote, the confusion between reality and appearances, forms the basis of his most famous work, "La Veda Sueno", or "Life is a Dream". Henry Fielding's "Joseph Andrews" and "Tom Jones" each owe much to Cervantes' style, so much that the subtitle of "Joseph Andrews" reads, "Written in the imitation of the manner of Cervantes, author of Don Quixote." Laurence Sterne fills "Tristram Shandy" with experiments with the conventions of narration, following in his metafiction a line of Cervantine influence different from the one that inspired Fielding's comic realism. And so on, through the romantics, Flaubert, Dickens, Dostoyevsky, Galdos, Twain, Unamuno, Borges, Fuentes, Garcia Marquez, and a host of others. Cervantes probably did not intend for the most famous image of the novel, Don Quixote tilting at the windmills, to become the iconic stand-in for the whole novel. Yet the passage clearly delineates the themes of appearances versus reality. With Don Quixote seeing giants and the narrator, and Sanchos seeing windmills. Excuse me, Don Quixote seeing giants, and the narrator and Sanchos seeing windmills. It also follows immediately after the episode with the book burnings, and for that reason I have chosen the windmill as a principle motif for the exhibition. The books in the library lead directly to Don Quixote's adventure with the windmills. Sancho, who has just joined his master, cannot believe his eyes when he sees Don Quixote charge.

"Take care, sir!" cried Sancho. "Those over there are not giants, but windmills, and those things that seem to be arms are their sails, which when they are whirled around by the wind turn the millstone."

"It is clear," replied Don Quixote, "that you are not experienced in adventures; those are giants, and if you are afraid, turn aside and pray, whilst I enter into fierce and unequal combat with them."

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Commending himself most devoutly to his -- devoutly to his lady Dulcinea, whom he begged to help him in his peril, he covered himself with his buckler, couched his lance, charged at Rocinantes, full gallop, and rammed the first mill on -- in his way. He ran his lance into the sail, but the wind twisted it with such violence that it shivered the lance into pieces and dragged both rider and horse after it, rolling them over and over, sorely damaged.

"God help us!" cried Sancho, "did I not tell you, sir, to mind what you were doing? For those were only windmills! Nobody could have mistaken them unless he had windmills in his brain."

"Hold your peace, Sancho," replied Don Quixote, "the affairs of war are above all others, subject to continual change. Moreover, I am convinced, and that is the truth, that the magician Friston, the one who robbed me of my study and books, has changed those giants into windmills to deprive me of the glory of victory. Such is the enmity he bears against me. But, in the end, his evil arts will be of little avail against my doughty sword."

Don Quixote here interprets, or reads, what has happened according to his preformed conception of how the world works. He thinks back on chivalric romances he has read to come up with a suitable explanation for his defeat at the hands of windmill. Earlier in the book, when he has sallied without his squire, Don Quixote has not seemed to settle on a specific identity for himself. I'm going to read a long passage here, but it's my favorite, and I think that it clearly outlines what is going happen in the future of reading.

"Seeing that he couldn't stir, he resolved to have recourse to his usual remedy, which was to think of some incident from one of his books. His madness made him remember that -- the, of the Marquis of, of Mantua and Baldwin, whom Carloto left wounded on the mountainside, a story familiar to children, not unknown to youths, celebrated and even believed by old men; yet for all that, no more authentic than the miracles of Mohammed. Now this story, so he thought, exactly fitted his present circumstances. So with great display of affliction, he began to roll about on the ground and to repeat in a faint voice the words that the wounded knight in the wood was supposed to have said:

Where art thou, lady of my heart, that for my woe, thou dost not grieve? Alas, thou do knowest not my distress, or thou art false and pitiless.

In this manner, he repeated the ballad until he came to those verses that say:
O noble Marquis of Mantua, My Uncle and liege lord!

By chance, there happened to pass at that very moment a peasant of his own village, a neighbor who was returning from bringing a load of wheat to the mill, and he, seeing a man lying stretched out on the ground, came over and asked him who he was and what was the cause of his sorrowful lamentation. Don Quixote, firmly believing that the man was the -- the man was the Marquis of Mantua, his uncle, would not answer, but continued reciting his ballad, which told of his misfortunes, and of the loves of the Emperor's son with his wife just as the book relates it. The peasant was amazed to hear those extravagant words, then taking off his visor, which had been broken to pieces in the drubbing, he wiped the dust off his face, no sooner had he done so that he recognized him and said, "Master Quixada" (for that must have been how people called

him when he had his wits and had not been transformed from a staid gentleman into a knight-errant), "who left you in such a state?"

But he kept on reciting his ballad and made no answer to what was asked. The good man then, as best he could, took off his breast and backplate to see if he was wounded, but he saw no blood or scar upon him. He managed to lift him up from the ground, and with the greatest difficulty, hoisted him onto his ass, thinking that a beast, that beast, an easier mount. Then he gathered together all his arms, not omitting even the splinters of the lance, tied them in a bundle, and lay them upon Rocinante's back. Then taking the horse by the bridle and the ass by the halter, he set off towards his village, meditating all the while on the foolish words that Don Quixote kept saying.

And Don Quixote on his part was no less pensive, for he was so beaten and bruised, that he could hardly hold himself onto the ass, and from time to time he uttered such a melancholy sighs that seemed to pierced the skies, that the peasant again felt moved to ask him what was the cause of his sorrow. But it must have been the devil himself who supplied him with stories so similar to his circumstances. For at that instant, forgetting Baldwin, he remembered the Moor Abindarraez, whom the governor of Antequera, Rodrigo de Narvaez, took prisoner to his castle; so when the peasant asked him again how he was, he answered word for word as the captive Abindarraez answered do -- Rodrigo de Narvaez, just as he had read in Montemayor de Jorge "Diana" where the story is told. And he applied it so artfully to his own case that the peasant wished he were in hell, rather than to have to listen to such a hodge podge of foolishness.

I think some of the students might think that sometimes.

This convinced him that his neighbor was mad, so he made haste to reach the village and thereby escape being further plagued by Don Quixote's long discourse; the latter ended by saying, "I would have you know, Master Rodrigo by -- de Narvaez, that the beauteous Xarifa I have mentioned is now the fair Dulcinea of del Toboso, who -- for whom I have done, still do, and shall do the most famous deeds of chivalry that have ever been, are, or ever shall be seen in the world."

To this the peasant answered, "Take heed sir, that I am neither Don Rodrigo de Narvaez nor the Marquis of s -- of Mantua, but Pedro Alonso your neighbor, and you are neither Baldwin nei -- nor Abindarraez, but the honorable gentleman Master Quixada."

"I know who I am," answered Don Quixote, "and I know that I can be not only those I have mentioned, but also the Twelve Peers of France and even the Nine Worthies, for my exploits will surpass all they have ever jointly or separately achieved."

All right, let's see here, I think I can find my spot. Sorry. In this long passage, thank you for listening, Don Quixote I think I could probably have a second career just reading Don Quixote out in the square, you know, for pennies. Don Quixote's identity shifts and shifts again as he chooses to identify with characters in situations from numerous texts. Cervantes never in fact unequivocally identifies the man we know as Don Quixote. The narrator calls him Qui Shadow Quesada the peasant calls him Master Quixana. When Sancho wants him to sign a legal document, Don Quixote refuses. At the end of the second volume, he awakens from a long and

deep fever to call himself Alonso Quixano, el bueno. But I, at least, am never certain that this identity is not just one final role for Don Quixote to play.

In the Renaissance, a machine like Agostino Ramelli's reading wheel could facilitate the extensive comparative studies of religious and philosophical texts undertaken by the humanist scholars. Using this technology, the scholar could physically organize, reorganize, catalog, and recall his or her reading, as Don Quixote did so mentally. According to Anthony Grafton, quote, "The humanist had to keep his books in order and to consult many of them at once. He needed to be able to retrieve data from a vast range of sources. The humanist could now use a book wheel, a large vertical wheel carefully geared to turn slowly and stop where -- whenever necessary. It carries books around on small rotating shelves like passengers in the cars of a Ferris wheel. The humanist who owned one could sit quietly while working through a library of texts." And I'm happy to say, we built one. And it's there, and you can try it.

Havayo and Chartie describe the ideal user of a contraption of this sort as, quote, "A reader who wanted to place texts side by side in order to compare and collate passages, a reader who read books in order to extract quotations and examples from them, then note down the more striking passages for easy retrieval or indexing." Close quote. Don Quixote does not have a reading wheel, but the first chapter of the novel shows that his reading practices are similar to those of the scholar. His studious reading of the chivalric novels and epic poems leaves him with an encyclopedic knowledge. Nevertheless, Don Quixote does not have the wisdom to discern the frivolity of his favorite texts, a grave problem examined throughout the book. As in the library episode, when they, uh, condemn the books, they judge between books of understanding, or *entender de biento* and books for mere entertainment, "*mero entre tenemiento*," the distinction Don Quixote consistently fails to make. Don Quixote's knowledge of chivalric texts rivals in form what Denis Diderot and his collaborator Jean d'Alembert sought to create with their encyclopedia, a *suma* of all human knowledge, organized according to secular, rational principles. The encyclopedia contains 71,818 articles by over 140 contributors. By exploring connections between the original subject and the cross-referenced articles, a reader could discover new facts and principles useful to humanity. In this type of reading, the intelligence, diligence, and curiosity of the reader are paramount. The reading wheel, the encyclopedia, and the internet each offers, each offer the reader, different ways of comparing and linking texts. Diderot himself commented on the lines of knowledge that readers of the encyclopedia could trace by following the references collected at the end of every article. Each new reference article is like a turn of the reading wheel, or a new internet link. Yet there is a danger. Too much information can cause a reader to lose focus or interest, and the truth can be hidden beneath the trivial or the extraneous. In postmodernism, *los aya* truth, under girding structures of meaning and text disappear. So too does the thinking subject, which is rather conceived of as a nexus, where texts, voices, and ideology converge to create a self that is more "other" than "I." Although these unsettling assertions are still being debated, internet reading seems to have a postmodern character. On the one hand, internet research can seem like wrenching intelligibility from chaos with the surfer providing the structure. And this is a process similar to running around, uh, inside libraries searching out and contact -- connecting physical texts. However, internet reading is also like flitting or skipping along, with little logic guiding the process. In web surfing, returning to previously read passages becomes less fluid than with reading actual books. Imagine a scripture chase, pitting someone at a computer versus a well-practiced seminary

student with scriptures in hand. I'm sure the seminary student could wipe him out. Diderot believed careful readers of his -- his encyclopedia could find new knowledge in the multifarious connections they made between articles cross-referencing other articles referring to even more articles and so on. Yet as Cervantes proves throughout both volumes of *Don Quixote*, the history of reading can also be seen as the history of misreading and misinterpretation. Surfing the internet or reading nonlinearly challenges our understanding of what it means to know something. Traditional reading entails a reader's surrender to the guiding logic of the text, the decision about whether to agree with the text comes later. Postmodern hypertextual reading, or web surfing, precludes such surrender. Because the reader determines the course through the labyrinth of texts. This power comes with a price, because nonlinearity can subvert the intelligibility of a well-reasoned or beautiful text. And what of knowledge, when our nonlinear reading incorporates texts of dubious veracity from the web? Although there have always been fabrications, hoaxes, and fictions -- in fact, there was a false continuation of *Don Quixote* -- the wealth of misinformation available on the web in infinite combinations, accessed by multitudes of readers of varying backgrounds, presents myriad possibilities for new readings and misreadings: scholarship, muddled thinking, madness, creation, and adventure.

Now, what does the future hold for reading? As we can tell from the way this library has changed in the past decade, we are looking at a potentially bookless future. Technology will one day solve the very real problems we have with reading texts from computer screens. Perhaps a small handheld computer that can imitate the convenience and comfort of a paperback book, yet still allow the hypertextual readings afforded by the internet. I am more interested in what might happen if we manage to overcome the fundamental linearity of the reading experience. *Don Quixote* preserves the linear experience of reading, following a narrative line through its circularities, doubling back, interweaving, and tangles to its conclusion. Reading on the web can be a vertiginous experience that nevertheless establishes an order, just as when reading an encyclopedia, which is etymologically a great circle, or cycle. Just as reading an encyclopedia, we can trace back where we have been. Yet the thread can be lost. What happens if technology makes it possible to incorporate an entire dictionary or an encyclopedia into an implant in a human brain? Science fiction writers like Philip K. Dick in "*Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*" and William Gibson from *Neuromancer* fame, imagine worlds in which texts can be downloaded directly into a human's mind. All parts of these texts function simultaneously. The characters know them without reading them. What will such a person be like, whose path to knowledge can avoid the bottleneck and see-like activity of the narrative line? Perhaps one day in the future history of reading, we shall be as the gods. Thank you.