



Utopia and Counterutopia in the "Quixote"

José Antonio Maravall

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Long recognized in the Spanish-speaking world as a masterpiece in the sociology of literature, José Antonio Maravall's classic study of Spain's greatest novel and the socio-political circumstances out of which it arose is presented here in its first English translation.

Maravall's book will be an invaluable aid to Cervantes's many English-speaking readers who seek to understand more fully the meaning that Don Quixote must have had for its first readers. Maravall's readers may be surprised to learn that Cervantes's protagonist, seen with 17th century eyes, is not nearly so eccentric as might be thought on first reading. He is, according to Maravall's thesis, an incarnation of a reactionary utopianism sufficiently widespread to have inspired Cervantes to satirize it in his masterpiece. It is not just Don Quixote's madness that is laughable. His political and social ideals as well as his inopportune efforts to arrest what he sees as the contagion of modernity are also open to satire.

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