



Adventures in Paradox: Don Quixote and the Western Tradition (Studies in Romance Literatures)

Charles D. Presberg

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Cervantes's *Don Quixote* confronts us with a series of enigmas that, over the centuries, have divided even its most expert readers: Does the text pursue a serious or comic purpose? Does it promote the truth of history and the untruth of fiction, or the truth of poetry and the fictiveness of truth itself? In a book that will revise the way we read and debate *Don Quixote*, Charles D. Presberg discusses the trope of paradox as a governing rhetorical strategy in this most canonical of Spanish literary texts.

To situate Cervantes's masterpiece within the centuries-long praxis of paradoxical discourse in the West, Presberg surveys its tradition in Classical Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the European Renaissance. He outlines the development of paradox in the Spanish Renaissance, centering on works by Fernando de Rojas, Pero Mexía, and Antonio de Guevara. In his detailed reading of portions of *Don Quixote*, Presberg shows how Cervantes's work enlarges the tradition of paradoxical discourse by imitating as well as transforming fictional and nonfictional models. He concludes that Cervantes's seriocomic "system" of paradox jointly parodies, celebrates, and urges us to ponder the agency of discourse in the continued refashioning of knowledge, history, culture, and personal identity.

This engaging book will be welcomed by literary scholars, Hispanists, historians, and students of the history of rhetoric and poetics.

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