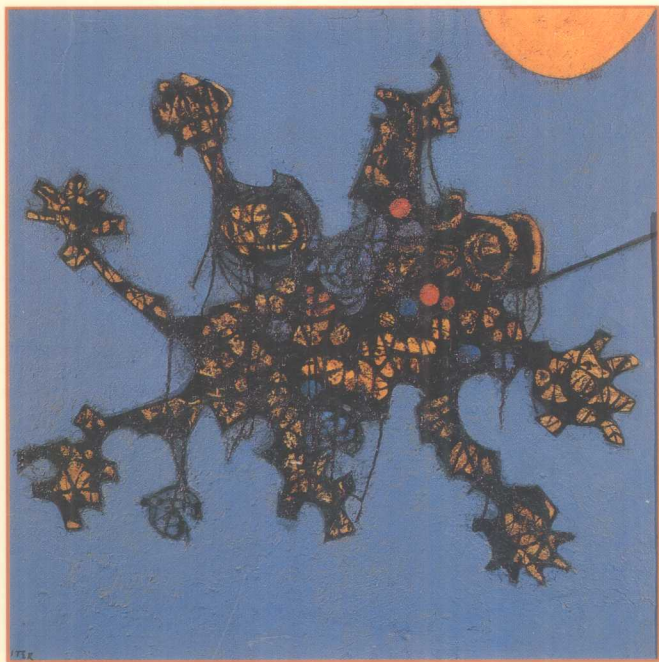


# DON QUIJOTE

MIGUEL DE CERVANTES



TRANSLATED BY BURTON RAFFEL  
EDITED BY DIANA DE ARMAS WILSON

A NORTON CRITICAL EDITION

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Miguel de Cervantes  
DON QUIJOTE



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A NEW TRANSLATION  
BACKGROUNDS AND CONTEXTS  
CRITICISM

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## Editor's Introduction

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In an endearing appeal to his readers, Sidi Hamid Benengeli — the Arab historian and pseudo-author of *Don Quijote* — asks to be celebrated not for what he wrote but for what he refrained from writing (II.44).<sup>1</sup> To introduce a novel that has generated, down some four centuries, a staggering tradition of multilingual and polycultural commentary, one must cultivate Sidi Hamid's restraint. If *Don Quijote* needs a commentary to be understood — as its own hero suggests in a classic moment of metafiction (II.3) — this is scarcely the place for it. After a brief survey of Cervantes's life, I shall confine my remarks to three aspects of *Don Quijote*: the romance fictions it critiques, its generic transformation of these fictions into the first modern novel, and the connections between this novel and the newly discovered Americas.

The long and tangled history of the modern novel begins in Europe, and it begins with Cervantes. Hailing him as the inventor of a new genre, many critics have categorized *Don Quijote* as “the first great novel of world literature,” or “the first modern work of literature,” or “the archetypal novel.”<sup>2</sup> Two postmodern novelists, their lives and writings continents apart, have tried to account for Cervantes's legacy “to the entire subsequent history of the novel.” The Czech novelist Milan Kundera, who regards *Don Quijote* as “the first European novel,” celebrates Cervantes for teaching us “to comprehend the world as a question.” And the Mexican novelist Carlos Fuentes, who embraces Cervantes as the “Founding Father” of Latin-American fiction, applauds the ethical stance through which he “struggles to bridge the old and new worlds.”<sup>3</sup>

The writer who offered us this new way of reading the world, Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, was born in 1547 and into a lifetime of continuous adversity, privation, and poverty. As the fourth child of a luckless

1. Cervantes himself divided into four parts the volume now called *Don Quijote*, Part I (1605). He titled his 1615 continuation “Segunda parte” [Second Part], but he made no internal divisions there except chapters. Following this nomenclature, most critics traditionally divide *Don Quijote* into Part I and Part II, and they parenthetically cite from the text by part and chapter number, as above. Raffel has translated the two traditional “parts” into “volumes” in order to maintain the “parts” of the 1605 text.
2. Citations, seriatim, from Georg Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel*, trans. Anna Bostock (1971; rpt. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1977), p. 88; Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, trans. of *Les Mots et les choses* (New York: Vintage, 1973), p. 48; and Robert B. Alter, “Mirror of Knighthood, World of Mirrors,” in *Don Quixote: Miguel de Cervantes*, The Ormsby Translation, rev., ed. Joseph R. Jones and Kenneth Douglas (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1981), p. 973.
3. Milan Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, trans. Michael Henry Heim (New York: Penguin, 1981), p. 237; see also Kundera's “Depreciated Legacy of Cervantes,” in *The Art of the Novel*, trans. Linda Asher (London: Faber and Faber, 1990), pp. 3–20. Carlos Fuentes, *Don Quixote, or the Critique of Reading* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1976), pp. 9 and 48.

barber-surgeon living at the margins of accepted Spanish society and even, at one point, in debtor's prison, the young Cervantes experienced a rootless childhood marked by repeated Dickensian flights from creditors. Although born in a famous university town near Madrid, Alcalá de Henares, he was never to enjoy a university education. Instead, he joined the military, lost the use of his left hand while fighting against the Turks at Lepanto (1571), was seized by Barbary Coast pirates en route home from the wars, and spent over five years as a captive in an Algerian *bagnio*.

Upon his return to Spain, as a maimed veteran whose ransom had beggared his family, Cervantes soon discovered that his postwar career prospects were grim. In 1580 — the year of Cervantes's liberation from captivity — Philip II annexed Portugal, with all its possessions in Africa, Brazil, and the East Indies, to an unwieldy empire that already included vast New World holdings. Despite the spread of Philip's dominions, stretching from Naples to the Philippines, Spain's imperial glory showed visible signs of fading. The steady flow of gold and silver from the American colonies had produced, in the metropolis, a wildly inflationary economy. The idea of emigrating to the New World took root in Cervantes's mind during these lean years. A document in his own hand — an application to the Council of the Indies in 1582 for a colonial post in America — was found this century in the Spanish archives at Simancas. Evidently nothing came of this application, since Cervantes was forced to accept work as an itinerant tax collector, wringing quotas of wheat and fodder and olive oil from resistant Andalusian villages. Some of these provisions were targeted for Philip's Invincible Armada, scheduled to attack England in 1588. In yet another petition submitted in 1590, Cervantes begged to be considered for any one of various posts then vacant in the Indies: the comptrollership of the Kingdom of New Granada, or the governorship of a province in Guatemala, or the post of accountant of galleys at Cartagena, or that of magistrate of the city of La Paz. This last petition was brusquely rejected: in its margins some functionary wrote the utopian response, "let him look around here for some favor that may be granted him."<sup>4</sup>

Instead of America, Cervantes landed in the Royal Prison of Seville. The innocent victim of a bankrupt financier holding his state funds, he was jailed briefly in 1592 and continued, for a decade, to tangle with the Treasury over a shortage in his tax-moneys. As the Prologue to Part I of *Don Quijote* teasingly suggests, the idea for the novel, though hardly the manuscript, may have been engendered during his incarceration. *Don Quijote* was published in 1605 and was an immediate success, both in Europe and America. Hundreds of documented copies of the first edition crossed the Atlantic the same year of publication. In 1607 — just as Jamestown, Virginia, was struggling to become the first permanent British settlement in the New World — a small mining town in the highlands

4. For the whole text of Cervantes's 1590 application, see José Toribio Medina, "Cervantes americanista: Lo que dijo de los hombres y cosas de América [Cervantes Americanist: What He Said about the People and Things of America]," in *Estudios cervantinos* (Santiago de Chile: Fondo Histórico y Bibliográfico José Toribio Medina, 1958), pp. 535–36.

Montaigne, the inventor of the essay, who called these books "wit-besotting trash."

The romances of chivalry display a fairly constant repertoire of literary types: knights and squires, lords and vassals, dwarfs and giants, hermits and ogres, phantoms and enchanter, and — most crucial to the genre — damsels in distress. In between jousting in tourneys or questing for grails, chivalric heroes indulge in much violent swordplay. Although amputations are legion, magic potions, a staple of these plots, function like crazy glue to restore limbs to their owners. Trials by ordeal abound, and the virtuous, or at least the virtuous bloodlines, always prevail. Perhaps the key code in romance is the pervasive polarity of good and evil (the good guys versus the bad guys) with little ambiguity of character. Traces of the most popular agents of chivalric romance — either Arthurian (King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table) or Carolingian (Charlemagne and his Twelve Peers) — still haunt our own best-seller lists. Less well known to Anglo-American readers, however, are knights like Don Quijote's beloved Amadís of Gaul, so popular that he produced a robust crop of generational sequels, of literary sons and even grandsons.

As the opening chapter makes clear, Don Quijote lives by the book. Reinventing himself as a knight-errant, he creates Dulcinea as his supreme fiction, a disembodied woman who becomes "the lady of his thoughts." The naive reading of this otherwise cultivated village gentleman — we might call it his *bibliomania* — leads him to imitate, at every crux, the idealized heroes of his cherished romances. The text presents its hero's magnificent obsession as a kind of addiction. The notion of books as addictive may seem quaint to an age all too familiar with other forms of substance abuse. An assessment of *Don Quijote* as "the first and greatest epic about addiction," however, conjures up a parade of romance addicts like Flaubert's Emma Bovary. In Emma's favorite books, invariably about love affairs between sensitive lovers and their damsels in distress, "there were gloomy forests, broken hearts, vows, sobs, tears and kisses," and, in the high chivalric mode, horses were "ridden to death on every page."<sup>7</sup> Don Quijote anticipates not only Madame Bovary but also, in our day, those legions of readers who devour a volume a day of "bodice-ripper romances," or those masses of television and computer addicts, hooked obsessively on their soap operas or on their ghostly "*affaires des modems*."

But Don Quijote is not *Don Quijote*. Although Cervantes's hero is a credulous reader, the novel he inhabits is a revolutionary book. One of its refrains — "Each man is the child of his deeds" — challenged a Spanish ruling class committed to an ideology of inherited blood. *Don Quijote* displaced, for its age, the aristocratic and authoritarian formulas of traditional stories with the ambiguity and relativity of a new kind of narrative — the novel — what Hegel would call "the epic of the middle-class world." Melville, who in a stirring apostrophe aligns Cervantes with An-

7. Susan Sontag made the remark about addiction in *The Boston Globe*, Book Section, March 9, 1986. Gustave Flaubert, *Madame Bovary*, trans. Francis Steegmuller (New York: Modern Library, 1957), p. 41.

drew Jackson, would move that middle-class epic into even more democratic vistas when he conferred the honors of knighthood upon a simple crew of fishermen. *Don Quijote*, with its dialogic structures and great range of innovation, revolutionized the art of narrative. The contemporary novelist Robert Coover claims that Cervantes's stories "sallied forth against adolescent thought-modes and exhausted art forms, and returned home with new complexities."<sup>8</sup>

What were some of these complexities? In the Prologue to Part One of the novel, a fictionalized Cervantes announces his abdication of literary paternity: *Don Quijote* is not his child but his stepchild. By yielding the narration of his text to a cry of authors, he debunks both authorship and authority, allowing himself to be drowned out by numerous surrogates: a phantom author, editors, translators, censors, an apocryphal novelist attempting to capitalize on the success of Part One, and even ourselves. Challenging the prevailing norms for citing illustrious authorities, Cervantes returns authority to the subjective reader. Not unlike hypertext today, Cervantes urges us to participate in authoring his book: "Reader, you decide," is one of the narrator's most engaging imperatives (II.24).

Cervantes even makes *Don Quijote* participate in these interactive games. In Part Two, the knight meets characters who recognize him as the hero of Part One, a text by then enjoying wide circulation in print. Overnight, *Don Quijote* becomes the hero of his own chivalric romance. This, in its day, was truly novel: a fictional character who worried about his own representation, who wondered whether the author had depicted his "platonic loves" indecorously, whether he had discredited the purity of his lady, and — most vertiginous of all as we are reading Part Two — whether the author had, in fact, promised a Part Two! In the wake of writers like Pirandello and Borges, critics have applied the term *metafiction* to this kind of self-conscious narrative, a fiction which exposes its own techniques. The roots of metafiction do not go back to *Tristram Shandy*, as critics committed to an English "rise of the novel" sometimes suggest, but to *Don Quijote*: Laurence Sterne himself invokes his debt to "the easy pen of my beloved Cervantes."

That easy pen avowed only one aim for itself: "to topple the books of chivalry" — that is, to undermine the kind of literature that, for centuries, had underwritten a European aristocracy grounded on feudal institutions. *Don Quijote* constitutes a long meditation on the seductiveness, as well as the perniciousness, of these cognitive structures, most cruelly instanced, as Nietzsche rightly observed, by the Duke and Duchess in Part Two. In the Prologue to Part One, Cervantes announces that *Don Quijote* is aimed at "demolishing the whole false, irrational network of those chivalric romances," a claim repeated, with laborious insistence, throughout the text. Not all readers take that claim literally: many see it as ironic, as more of a pretext, in both senses of the word, than an intention. If the degree of Cervantine irony remains arguable (irony, after all, is in the eye of the beholder), the text's advertised demolition project cannot be erased. It is not only the attack on the romances of chivalry that makes *Don Quijote*

8. Robert Coover, *Pricksongs and Descants* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1969), p. 77.

an antiromance. And it was not only Lord Byron who believed that Cervantes had "smiled Spain's chivalry away" (*Don Juan*, 13.11).

Even while *Don Quijote* was fruitlessly trying to revive knight-errantry across the arid plains of La Mancha, "Spain's chivalry" was enjoying a crepuscular resurgence in the New World. Cervantes's masterpiece has been widely read as a parody of the moribund romances of Medieval Europe, but the chivalric discourses it parodies were closely linked to the political realities of Renaissance America. As one Argentine scholar puts it, "America was the scene where chivalry rode for the last time."<sup>9</sup> Cervantes parodies — sometimes even satirizes — many of the rhetorical conventions legitimizing Spain's empire-building projects in the New World, conventions that appear repeatedly in the conquest chronicles. Recent attempts of historians to reconstruct early American colonial materials, to challenge the Anglo-oriented institutionalization of American history, may indeed make *Don Quijote* pertinent reading for a whole new generation of Americanists.

Even though he regards all comparisons as "odious," *Don Quijote* invites comparison with the conquistadors. A modern description of Columbus as "a kind of Quixote a few centuries behind his times," to cite only one of many conflation of these two figures, suggests some curious linkages between *Don Quijote* at his quirkiest and Columbus at his most chivalric.<sup>1</sup> Both men — the literary construct and the real-life explorer — exhibit a credulous and overstressed imagination; an alertness to the appearances of enchantment; a love for the ceremonies of naming; an ideology of certainties based on prescience rather than experience; a penchant for adjusting the data, as well as challenging the humanity, of informants who pass on any unwelcome intelligence; a fondness for imposing oaths on other people; and, above all, an injudicious bookishness. The Great Admiral conducted much of his "Enterprise of the Indies," in short, in compliance with chivalric formulas.

That the books of chivalry were the favorite reading material of the conquistadors was documented in 1949; that key traits in these books went on to frame many details and descriptions of the New World was articulated some dozen years later.<sup>2</sup> Since then, thanks largely to scholars ready to cross "the high seas, jungles, and deserts of colonial literary production," we have begun to understand more precisely how chivalric romance — the same genre that unhinged *Don Quijote* — related to the way Europeans wrote about their colonial experiences and even to the way they wrote about the New World peoples.<sup>3</sup> Anxious lest the books of chivalry

9. Valentín de Pedro, *América en las letras españolas del Siglo de Oro* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1954), p. 78; translation mine.

1. Tzvetan Todorov, *Conquest of America*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Harper & Row, 1984), p. 11.

2. See Leonard, *Books of the Brave*, for this documentation. Manuel Alvar cites the earlier work of Stephen Gilman (1961) and Angel Rosenblat (1961) in "Fantastic Tales and Chronicles of the Indies," in *Amerindian Images and the Legacy of Columbus*, ed. René Jara and Nicholas Spadacini (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), p. 176.

3. See Rolena Adorno, "Colonial Spanish American Literary Studies: 1982–92," *Revista Interamericana de Bibliografía* 38 (1988), 170; and "Literary Production and Suppression: Reading & Writing about Amerindians in Colonial Spanish America," *Dispositio* 11, 28–29 (1986), 15–19. See also the cross-cultural work of Jorge Albistur, James D. Fernández, Mary Gaylord, Roberto González-Echevarría, Roland Greene, George Mariscal, Walter Mignolo, and James Nicolopoulos.



corrupt the natives — who might be unable to distinguish romance from true history — Philip II, even prior to assuming the throne, had issued an official prohibition in the Indies of books “such as those about *Amadís*.”<sup>4</sup> Years later Cortés’s chronicler, Bernal Díaz del Castillo, would famously compare the dazzling first sight of Tenochtitlán, today’s Mexico City, to the marvels narrated in *Amadís* — that prominent book in Don Quijote’s library. As the common cultural referent of the age, in short, chivalric romances like *Amadís* not only dominated Spain’s politics of representation but also provided America with some of her most poetic place names, such as California and Patagonia.

An earlier American translator of *Don Quijote*, Samuel Putnam, announced in 1949 that much remained to be done in tracing Cervantes’s influence in America, where it seemed to be “less than elsewhere.”<sup>5</sup> I would begin, instead, by tracing America’s influence on Cervantes. Although earlier scholars had nodded to Cervantes’s many references to America — to Mexico and Peru, parrots and alligators, tobacco and cacao, cannibals and Caribs — more generative connections between *Don Quijote* and the New World have been emerging since mid-century. In the 1950s, a Peruvian historian categorized *Don Quijote* as “a benevolent satire of the conquistador of *ínsulas* or Indies.” By the sixties, a Colombian scholar was proposing a connection between Don Quijote (in his saner persona as Alonso Quesada) and Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada, explorer of El Dorado, founder of the Kingdom of New Granada, and governor of Cartagena — places in the Indies where Cervantes applied for work. By the seventies, an Italian scholar had catalogued some of the conquest chronicles that were available to Cervantes. By the eighties, a North American scholar, discussing the “chivalric textuality” being parodied in *Don Quijote*, linked its hero to “the first conquistadors and seekers of new worlds.” And by 1992, the Columbian Quincentenary, at least one writer wondered whether the existence of *Don Quijote* would have even been possible “without the Discovery.”<sup>6</sup>

To align the first modern novel with the imperial process that produced the conquistadors — men who acted out “the impossible dream” in the New World — will require further study of the Amerindian cultures vanquished by Spain’s colonial chivalry. One of these cultures is eulogized in Alonso de Ercilla’s *La Araucana* (1569–1589), an epic about Spain’s American wars in Chile that Cervantes strategically placed in Don Quijote’s library, where it is evaluated, and saved from the bonfire, during the famous scrutiny of the books (I.6). That *Don Quijote* owes much to the chronicles of conquest of America — that it serves, indeed, as a textual manifestation of Spanish imperialism — has begun to take on greater

4. José Toribio Medina, *Biblioteca Hispano-Americana*, 7 vols. (Santiago de Chile, 1898–1907), vol. 6, pp. xxvi–xxvii.

5. “Introduction,” *The Portable Cervantes*, trans. and ed. Samuel Putnam (New York: Viking, 1949), p. 27.

6. Cited, seriatim, are Raúl Porras Barrenechea, *El Inca Garcilaso en Montilla* (1561–1614) (Lima: Editorial San Marcos, 1955), p. 238; Germán Arciniegas, “Don Quijote y la conquista de América,” *Revista Hispánica Moderna* 31 (1965), pp. 11–16; Stelio Cro, “Cervantes, el ‘Persiles’ y la historiografía indiana,” *Anales de literatura hispanoamericana*, vol. 4 (Madrid: Universidad Complutense, 1975), 5–25; Daniel P. Testa, “Parodia y mitificación del Nuevo Mundo en el *Quijote*,” *Cuadernos hispanoamericanos* 430 (April 1986), pp. 63–71; and Pedro Acosta’s rev. of Roa Bastos’ *La vigilia del Almirante*, in *El Tiempo*, “Lecturas dominicales” (Bogotá, July 4, 1993).

interpretive importance. Cervantes's text is, in many ways, an absorption of and a response to some of these chronicles, whose bravely pretentious and often fictitious exploits have been repeatedly, if preposterously, called "quixotic."

American readers may be surprised at the fair number of promotional references to their continent in *Don Quijote*. These images of economic promise mirrored the popular belief among Golden Age Spaniards that America was the place to become rich and famous. Moved by his master's illusions of omnipotence and delusions of philanthropy, Sancho wants to become both. His continuous talk of personal ennoblement — of being granted islands and governorships, of founding a dynasty, of tapping into the slave trade in order to convert his hypothetical African vassals "into silver and gold" (I.29) — allegorizes the New World even as it parodies the discourse of the conquistador. Sancho's later discovery that governing islands is "dismal" (II.13) echoes the gubernatorial experience of, among others, Columbus in Hispaniola. Don Quijote's famous Golden Age speech to the uncomprehending goatherds (I.11), on the other hand, gestures not only to ancient classical writers — Hesiod, Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Seneca, and Macrobius — but also to early modern Cubans. In a text available to Cervantes, Peter Martyr, the first historian of the New World, explained to an astonished Europe the philosophy of the "golden age" natives Columbus had encountered in Cuba: "they know no difference between Mine and Thine, that source of all evils" (*De Orbe Novo* I.3).

If *Don Quijote* allegorized Spanish exploits in the New World, the novel would soon after be deployed, by New England colonists, to satirize English exploits there. As early as 1637, barely a generation after Cervantes's death, various figures begin to advertise their readings of *Don Quijote*, available to them in English since Thomas Shelton's 1612 translation. Thomas Morton, for example, regards the attack on him by Miles Standish and other Puritan "worthies" as "like don Quixote against the Windmill."<sup>7</sup> And Cotton Mather vilifies Roger Williams — the "first rebel against the divine-church order in the wilderness" — as a violent Don Quijote, a "windmill" whirling in his head with such fury that "a whole country in America" was likely "to be set on fire."

Other, more than quixotic, forces would be setting our country on fire. Mark Twain's reading of *Don Quijote*, a few centuries later, would focus less on rebellion and more on ignorance. Huck Finn's recollection of Tom Sawyer's mocking words — "If I warn't so ignorant, but had read a book called 'Don Quixote' . . ." — offers Cervantes' book as an antidote to literalism, as a way to cope with spiteful enchanters who defraud the imagination. Representing ignorance as curable by the book, a young American protagonist reaches for an old Spanish fiction to help him make sense of a blighting social reality. Don Quijote, the would-be knight-errant whose specialty is "righting wrongs" in Renaissance Spain, takes root in the consciousness of Twain's characters, as they play out a story about racial wrongs in Middle America. Hemingway's claim that "all modern Ameri-

7. Thomas Morton, *New English Canaan* (1637), in *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, vol. 1 (New York: Norton, 1998) 212.

can literature comes from one book by Mark Twain called *Huckleberry Finn*” is both complicated and enriched by that book’s Spanish ancestor. At least one major American writer loudly acknowledged that ancestry: Faulkner claimed to read *Don Quijote* once a year — “as some do the Bible.”

Burton Raffel’s sprightly new translation invites us to do the same. If reading *Don Quijote* in the original Spanish was, for Lord Byron, “a pleasure before which all others vanish” (*Don Juan*, 14.98), reading it in Raffel’s version will prove that pleasure need not vanish in translation. In his negotiations with *Don Quijote* — which he considers “the greatest novel ever written” — Raffel operates as a cultural go-between. One anecdote may explain his translating strategy, a far cry from the mechanical “this for that” labor of philologists. After I queried his masculine personification of Death — “but it’s always *la muerte* in Spanish,” I protested — Raffel explained that when Death knocks in English, she’s a he. “*La muerte*,” he wrote, “is as emphatically masculine in English as it is in German; sure, French, Italian, Portuguese, and Latin agree with Spanish, but it’s an Anglo-Saxon world, this English-speaking one.” Death’s gender-bending here, however, should not be taken to signal an Anglo-Saxon world in this translation, whose intentions are manifestly Hispanic: “I want this translation to *sound* like it’s set in Spain — to *feel* as Spanish as possible,” Raffel continued. “It’s not a book that could have been written in English — or indeed in any other language. *Don Quijote*’s magnificence is indubitably Hispanic.”

Readers may find some jarring exceptions in Raffel’s attempts to match, in English prose, what he calls Cervantes’s “matchless original.” He does not follow, for instance, Golden Age transcriptions of common Arabic names, a practice now widely rejected as forming part of colonialist discourse. The Spanish “Cide Hamete” is accordingly replaced by “Sidi Hamid,” a name that readers familiar with Arabic will recognize as the best transcription available of the colloquial (Maghrebi) Arabic. Nor does Raffel follow the Spanish monetary system of Cervantes’s day, e.g., *escudos*, *reales*, ducats, or doubloons. His “Translator’s Note,” however, explains his strategy in this regard.

Although a character in the novel rightly foresees the fame of *Don Quijote* as universal — “There will be no nation on earth,” says Samson Carrasco, “and no language spoken, in which it will not have been translated” (II.3) — it is left to the hero himself to discuss the art of translation. When Don Quijote visits the print shop in Barcelona, he remarks, to a profit-minded Italian translator on the premises, that reading most vernacular translations “is rather like looking at Flemish tapestries on the wrong side.” This sweeping indictment excludes two historical translators, the hero goes on to explain, whose skill leaves in doubt “which is the translation and which the original” (II.62). Although highly sensitive to his own representation in print, Don Quijote would have surely welcomed Burton Raffel to his visionary company of skillful translators.

I wish to thank the University of Denver for a Graduate Work Study grant that funded an invaluable assistant to my editing labors: the gracious,

anticipatory, and superbly efficient Cynthia Kuhn. This project also owes much to the kind counsel and expert reading of Michael McGaha, editor of *Cervantes*, who not only supplied invaluable information about avoiding offensive translations of Arabic names and titles, but also provided a long and useful list of *errata* in the trade edition of this translation. I am deeply grateful to John J. Allen, former president of the Cervantes Society of America, for sharing with me various artistic representations of Don Quijote. I am also grateful to Ralph di Franco, Professor of Spanish at the University of Denver, whose expertise on the *Romancero* clarified for me Don Quijote's imitation of various ballads. I also wish to acknowledge the contributions of my graduate students — too many to thank personally, but, like Don Quijote, you know who you are — in a series of courses on the multiple rises of the novel. Without the timely and confident urging of Carol Bemis, editor of the Norton Critical Series, I would have long ago foundered. The last days of proofreading this volume were graced by the arrival of Amalia Theodoredis, "*prenda querida de mi alma*," to cite Cervantes on newborns. Finally, let me mark the great debt I owe to my husband, Douglas B. Wilson. Even without professing knight-errantry, he has remained — to borrow Don Quijote's own self-analysis — "magnanimous, gallant, bold, calm, [and] patient" (I.50) — during the various trials and captivities of this editing project.

Diana de Armas Wilson  
University of Denver  
October 2, 1998

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## Translator's Note

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No one can reproduce Cervantes's style in English. Not only is his prose uniquely magnificent, but the very music of Spanish, its syntactical structures, and the thrust and flavor of its words, are literally untransportable into any other language. Syntactical organization being however the most basic hallmark of prose style — the stamp of a writer's mind — I have made it my special concern to re-create, as closely as possible, the organization of Cervantes's sentences. Neither this nor any other device can adequately capture Cervantes's style, but I have tried to track the movement — the pace; the complexity, or simplicity; the degree of linguistic density; the structural transitions — of *Don Quijote's* inimitable prose. I have also worked hard to match the rhetoric of that prose, as I have tried, when I could, to find reasonably exact verbal equivalences. I have been scrupulously careful not to mute Cervantes's dazzling irony, nor have I consciously suppressed, bowdlerized, or altered anything.

There have inevitably been dislocations: Spanish is a very different language from English; Spanish culture and social organization are different; and in the almost four hundred years since Cervantes wrote, much has changed in all sorts of way. I have tried to keep these dislocations as small and, relatively speaking, as unimportant as possible. But readers accustomed to Cervantes's Spanish, and especially readers learned in the ways of early seventeenth-century Spain, will inevitably be pained by any loss whatever. I do not blame them. I ask them, however, to remember that straightforward lexical dislocations, though they may often seem deeply objectionable, are in truth a good deal less important than such larger matters as style, pacing, fidelity to authorial intent, and the like. To turn Spanish *canónigo* into the English "canon," e.g., would in my considered opinion betray rather than accurately transmit what Cervantes was in fact saying. Accordingly, in order to faithfully reflect Cervantes's meaning, in the alien context of twentieth-century American English, I have here translated *canónigo* as "cathedral priest." So too the seventeenth-century Spanish *capitán*, which then meant "primary commander" (and had at one time the same meaning in English: think of the phrase "captains of industry"), can no longer be properly translated as twentieth-century "captain," that word now designating a subordinate commander. I have therefore translated *capitán* as "general," that being, again, what in *our* language it actually means. Linguistic history also reveals that the German word *thaler* entered Spanish *before* it entered English, being used both in Spain and in its colonies for the Spanish "piece of eight" coin, called (after the German) a *dolar* and worth eight *reales*. It was then borrowed

— strictly, re-borrowed — as a monetary term, both in Britain and, later, in its North American colonies. (See, *inter alia*, *O.E.D.*, *D*, p. 589, col. 2, and especially the citation from Barnaby Rich's *Farewell to Militarie Profession*, 1581, and Noah Webster, *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, 1828.) With this largely forgotten history in mind, therefore, the many archaic monetary terms employed by Cervantes have been reduced to one, "dollar," well understood at that time as an English word of Spanish origin. If this is in some senses a linguistic compromise, on the facts it is clearly historically legitimated.

Especially important but utterly untranslatable material has been explained, with the utmost brevity, in square brackets incorporated into the text; there are also, both when absolutely necessary and, admittedly, at moments of sheer desperation, a fair number of footnotes. Spanish names and sounds have been retained whenever possible.

My primary text has been the edition of *Don Quijote* by Martín de Riquer (Planeta, 1980); I have consulted, though less frequently, the edition by Luis Andrés Murillo (Clásicos Castalia, 1978). I have also had constantly in front of me Sebastián de Covarrubias' *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española*, originally published in 1611 (in the 1943 edition by Martín de Riquer). Whenever contemporary scholars or lexicographers have differed from Covarrubias as to the precise meaning of a word or a phrase, I have invariably deferred to Cervantes's contemporary, who in a sense cannot be wrong, because he — unlike any of us — was there.

Inevitably, my debts to living and breathing sources are too great to list in full. I must however single out Professors Diana de Armas Wilson and Ronnie Apter, who gave me both encouragement and (exactly when I needed it) discouragement, and Philip Ward, editor of *The Oxford Companion to Spanish Literature*, who administered a useful drubbing to an early draft of the Prologue. My colleague at the University of Southwestern Louisiana, Professor James D. Wilson, had no direct hand in the translation, but it was the article on Cervantes which he commissioned from me, for *The Mark Twain Encyclopedia*, which made me acutely aware that I did not feel comfortable recommending any of the existing translations of *Don Quijote*, and thus led very directly indeed to the making of this translation.

Finally, I am deeply indebted to Professor John J. Allen, former president of the Cervantes Society of America, for a sensitive, intelligent, wonderfully detailed vetting of the entire manuscript. Nothing we mortals produce can be perfect, not even Cervantes's *Don Quijote* (though it seems to me the greatest novel any mortal, living or dead, has ever written). But after so thorough a scrubbing as Professor Allen has provided, I take comfort in the thought that whatever weeds may remain are at least well-hidden. They are of course my sole responsibility. Still, to borrow Professor Allen's words, as he finished his large labors of *cervantista* dedication, "I like to think that Cervantes would not be displeased."

Burton Raffel  
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The Text of  
DON QUIJOTE

