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Cervantes and *Don Quijote* at Home and Abroad

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Do resonances of Cervantes's frustrated attempts to be granted a royal appointment in the Spanish Indies filter into the "Quijote"? Can the author be glimpsed in the novel of which he is also a reader? What holds Don Quijote and Sancho Panza together and gives this episodic novel its coherence? Attuned to the rich conversational exchanges between the two protagonists, I argue that Don Quijote's escalating promises and Sancho's dogged pursuit of an island to govern, together with the triangulated relationship of Don Quijote, Sancho, and the imagined Dulcinea, result in what can rightly be called Cervantes's anti-anthem to America.

Few academic honors compare with entering the rolls of the Josephine Waters Bennett Lecturers; for that privilege and this publication, I am grateful to the Renaissance Society of America's Board of Directors; its consecutive Presidents, Mara R. Wade and Nicholas Terpstra; its Executive Director, Carla Zecher; and *Renaissance Quarterly's* Managing Editor, Ellis Light. In taking Cervantes's *Don Quijote* as my topic, I consulted frequently with my distinguished colleague, Roberto González Echevarría, Sterling Professor Emeritus of Hispanic and Comparative Literatures, Yale University, whose intellectual generosity and mastery of the *Quijote* are registered in his monographs and his online Yale Open Course. The site of the 2023 RSA Annual Meeting—San Juan, Puerto Rico—was encountered by Christopher Columbus in 1493, and, in 1615, a different, fully fugitive island was revealed by Miguel de Cervantes.

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INTRODUCTION:
CARIBBEAN ISLANDS AND CHIVALRIC FANTASIES

BECAUSE THE 2023 RSA Annual Meeting was held in San Juan, Puerto Rico, I begin with a story about this island that was reported by Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés (1478–1557) in his *Historia general y natural de las Indias* (General and natural history of the Indies, 1535).¹ The Taínos of this island, which they called Borinquén, were deeply troubled by the destruction wrought by the Spanish on the neighboring inland of Hispaniola and wondered if those conquistador-invaders were so successful because they did not die. To find out, the Taínos performed the following experiment which, because of its daring, one may find a little quixotic. The assembled chiefs (*caciques*) and warriors of Borinquén signaled to an unsuspecting young member of the Spanish military expedition, by name of Salcedo, that they would gladly carry him and his gear across the Guanajibo River that lay in his path on the way to the goldfields of San Germán on the southwestern part of the island. Salcedo accepted, and when they had ferried him halfway across the river, they dunked him, held him down, and, in fact, drowned him. Then they dragged his lifeless body up onto the shore and admonished him, “Get up, Señor Salcedo, and forgive us for having fallen and dropped you while crossing the river.” Señor Salcedo made no reply. So, the Taínos left his body in the sun for three days, until it smelled powerfully bad. When the corpse was horribly deteriorated, they were persuaded that Sr. Salcedo would not awaken again. This gave them confidence to repulse the Spanish invaders, which they did, but without achieving the outcome they desired.²

Apart from being a historian and the administrator (*alcalde*) of the fort in Santo Domingo on Hispaniola, Oviedo was also the author of a book of chivalric fiction titled *Claribalte*, published in Valencia, Spain, in 1519. As Oviedo’s first published work, this chivalric tale follows a providential plan in which the knight sets out to combat evil; its moral lessons recall Garcí Rodríguez de Montalvo’s (ca. 1450–ca. 1505) introduction to the classic Spanish chivalric romance, *Amadís de Gaula* (Amadis of Gaul, 1508).³ The *Amadís*, in turn, alluded to the tradition of mirror for princes literature, a notable example of which was *De Regimine Principum* (ca. 1277–80) by Giles of

¹ Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés, 2:99–100 (1.16.8).

² This armed resistance occurred in 1511, probably under the leadership of the *cacique* Agüeybana and his allies, but it was easily crushed, and the Taínos subdued, by Juan Ponce de León and his mounted troops: Rogoziński, 29; Rouse, 155.

³ Composed in the fourteenth century, *Amadís de Gaula* was published in Zaragoza in 1508 under the name Garcí Rodríguez de Montalvo, but from the Roman edition of 1519 onward, the name credited was Garcí-Ordóñez. See Eisenberg, 30; Souto, xxviii.

Rome (ca. 1243–1316). Revealing Oviedo’s concern for the politics of his own time, Claribalte’s adventures take place in Albania, France, England, Italy, and Constantinople, but it is the sea that opens out onto the work’s otherworldly enchantments.⁴

Also in 1519, Bernal Díaz del Castillo (ca. 1495–1584), a Spanish foot soldier in Hernán Cortés’s expeditionary force to conquer Mexico, caught his first sight of the Aztec capital, México-Tenochtitlan, the island city in Lake Texcoco. In his *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España* (True history of the conquest of New Spain, 1632), Bernal Díaz recalled that he and his fellow soldiers had been astonished at the sight, and that it had reminded them of the enchantments of *Amadís de Gaula*.⁵ This remark has often been misread, assuming that Bernal Díaz was speaking as a soldier, imagining himself as a knight errant. But, in fact, he was speaking as a writer, his point being that he could describe to his readers those “never before seen, never even dreamed of” sights only by referring to the world of fiction that he and his potential readers shared—namely, the exceedingly popular books of chivalric adventure. “It is not surprising that I write this way because we were seeing things never before seen, never even dreamed of,” he writes, adding later that if he wrote about the daily battles in which he and his fellows had participated, his account would be too prolix: it would make readers think that they were reading an *Amadís*—that is, a work of chivalric fiction.⁶

As Oviedo and Bernal Díaz affirm, chivalry was not dead in the sixteenth century; it had simply taken on other forms. From military history we learn that, as with the Crusades, the hold of chivalry over the imagination long outlasted the relevance of its international code of military training and behavior: “The creation of new orders of knighthood by princes—‘national chivalries,’ as they have been called—enhanced this tendency.”⁷ A pertinent example is the British Order of the Garter, which was founded by Edward III in 1348; Elizabeth II presided over the induction ceremony for her final time in 2022.⁸ England’s was the second secular monarchical knightly order to be established in Europe, the first having been the Orden de la Banda (Order of

⁴ See Rodilla León, 28–29, 35, 37.

⁵ Bernal Díaz’s *True History* was first published by the Mercedarian Order a half-century after the author’s death. He had written it decades after the Spanish conquest of Mexico of 1519–21, beginning only in the 1550s after reading (and interpreting) major accounts of those events; he worked on his manuscript until his death in 1584. Adorno, 153–64, 179–85.

⁶ Díaz del Castillo, 1:260 (chapter 87), 2:30 (chapter 151).

⁷ Hale, 37.

⁸ Queen Camilla, then the Duchess of Cornwall, and the former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Tony Blair, were inducted that year; King Felipe VI of Spain and King William-Alexander of the Netherlands had been so honored in 2019.

the Band) founded by Alfonso XI of Castile in 1330, which set the general precedent for Edward and his father's proud half-Castilian lineage.⁹ From the history of literature, as Ángel Rosenblat argues, chivalric literature—begun gloriously in Spain with *Amadís de Gaula* and brought to its definitive end by the *Quijote*—constitutes a fundamental cycle in the history of European culture. Even with the advances in experimental science and geographical and natural knowledge brought about by the Renaissance and exploration of the Western hemisphere, chivalry persisted as the living core of the satires of Ariosto and Cervantes, and it never died out completely.¹⁰ From the history of literary readership, we know that such books were all the rage in Spain throughout the sixteenth century; from the reign of Charles (1500–58), who ruled as Charles I of Castile from 1516 to 1556 and then as Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire from 1519 to 1556, through that of Philip II (r. 1556–98), works of chivalric fiction were enjoyed by gentlemen, soldiers, learned men, and many cultured women.¹¹ Charles V himself was a devoted reader.¹² Sixteenth-century readers and the audiences to whom they read (both male and female) loved stories of chivalric fantasy.

It was a short step between reading (or being read to) and the other entertainments that mimicked and sometimes mocked chivalry, such as the formal events of the Castilian court throughout the first half of the sixteenth century. The formal entry of Charles I in Valladolid in 1517 and 1518, and the wedding in 1544 of his son Prince Philip (later Philip II) and the Infanta María of Portugal, were both celebrated with figures and events taken directly from the books of chivalry. For the royal nuptials, Luis Cortés, the son of the Marquis del Valle Hernán Cortés (1485–1547), played the role of the Caballero de la Sierpe—one of the epithets of the fictional knight errant Palmerín de Oliva—and led in procession a coach carrying the “wise enchantress, Urganda la Desconocida.”¹³ Such events were celebrated not only in Spain but also in the Indies. In October or November of 1607, only two years after the *Quijote*'s original 1605 publication, the formal arrival of the new viceroy of Peru, the Marquis de Montesclaros Juan de Mendoza y Luna (r. 1607–15), was

⁹ Rogers, 131, 133–34.

¹⁰ See Rosenblat, ix–x.

¹¹ These included Isabel la Católica, the mother of Saint Teresa de Jesús, and Santa Teresa herself. See Chevalier, 74–78, 87; Eisenberg, 41, 92–97.

¹² Charles V enjoyed a lifelong fondness for chivalric literature and, honoring his Burgundian heritage, read Olivier de la Marche's (ca. 1405–1502) *Le Chevalier délibéré* (1483) in the original French and its Spanish translation by Fernando Acuña as *El Cavallero Determinado* (The resolute knight, 1553): see Alvar, 183. After the emperor's death in 1558, his son Philip II authorized another edition by Acuña that was published in Barcelona in 1565.

¹³ Chevalier, 80–81.

heralded by a fantastic reception featuring Don Quijote and Sancho Panza. Attendees would have seen the Indies-born son of Spanish parents, Roman de Baños, dressed as the Inca Prince Atahualpa, being carried aloft a traditional Inca litter. He and his company were followed by an impersonator of Don Quijote, in his guise as the Knight of the Sad Countenance, accompanied by his local village's priest and barber and by Sancho Panza, who recited a few verses for the occasion. The event's reporter did not reproduce the rhymed couplets that the Sancho impersonator recited because they were too raunchy.¹⁴ A masque (*mascarada*) celebrated in 1621 in the capital of the viceroyalty of New Spain featured "all the knights-errant of history and fiction," with Don Quijote, Sancho Panza, and Dulcinea del Toboso bringing up the rear. All the knight-impersonators bore lances, shields, and helmets, and they were followed by the enchantresses "Melia la Encantadora" and "Urganda la Desconocida." Sancho and Dulcinea were played by unmasked mounted horsemen who frolicked about and sported the "most ridiculous costumes ever seen."¹⁵ These New World festivities underscore the early arrival of the *Quijote* to the Indies, as Francisco Rodríguez Marín and Irving A. Leonard long ago determined.¹⁶

CERVANTES AT HOME: DON QUIJOTE AND SANCHO ON THE ROAD

One of Cervantes's greatest innovations in the *Quijote* was to compose it largely of verbal exchanges, not as formal dialogues but rather as conversations, which in their spontaneity could take any new direction at any time. In the *Quijote* there are no conversations richer, more delightful, or, occasionally, more disturbing than those between Don Quijote and Sancho Panza. For that reason, my reading of the *Quijote* will exploit Cervantes's conversational prose. I do so in the conviction that the best way to represent Cervantes's novel is through its fictional voices. My objective is to highlight those utterances that I find worthy of reflection and, most often, worthy of enjoyment. Since the seventeenth century, and particularly since the eighteenth, there have been many English translations of the novel, but I have provided my own translations.

I now turn to Don Quijote and Sancho as they appear in Cervantes's masterpiece. First, I wanted to find the narrative dynamic of the novel from within

¹⁴ Rodríguez Marín, 107, published the event's account (*relación*), in which its reporter remarked: "Sancho echó algunas coplas de primor, que por tocar en berdes no se refieren [Sancho recited some juicy couplets which, because they are off-color, will not be reproduced here]." Unless otherwise noted, this and all other translations are my own.

¹⁵ González Obregón, 254.

¹⁶ See Adorno's introduction in Leonard, xviii–xix.

the work itself—that is, how does Cervantes pull all his episodic storytelling together into a coherent whole? The *Quijote* does not belong to the genre of the picaresque because it is not a novel of loosely connected episodes and little character development. On the contrary, Cervantes's principal protagonists are developed and transformed, and I wanted to find the link, or hinge, that holds Don Quijote and Sancho together even as they pull in different directions. My second aim was to query whether there was a muted, if not hidden, dimension to Cervantes himself: as the author of the novel, yes, but also as an observer of the action of the novel—in short, Cervantes witnessing his own work as its reader.¹⁷ One might compare him to an artist walking incognito through his own gallery exhibition, observing its viewers and the works they are looking at. In the visual arts one might think of the penetrating, tightly focused gaze of the Spanish Baroque artist Diego Velázquez (1599–1660), observing and portraying himself in the royal domestic scene of the magnificent *Las Meninas* (1656). Cervantes could become his own reader because he had invented the novel's fictional narrator Cide Hamete Benengeli, and most importantly because he could read his published 1605 novel as he prepared its second part, which was published in 1615.¹⁸ In short, I was looking for a self-portrait of Cervantes, of his earlier, but also coincident, self, his muted ruminations on his own experience. This is Cervantes at home.

The Spanish Baroque poet Luis de Góngora y Argote (1561–1627), in his *Soledades* (Solitudes, 1613) celebrates the Strait of Magellan as “the hinge that links two oceans, henceforth found ever and only one.”¹⁹ The Spanish word is *bisagra*, and in seeking the *bisagra* that holds Don Quijote and Sancho together, I found it in the related nautical motif of the island: Don Quijote's promised reward to Sancho of an island to govern, and Sancho's obsession with obtaining it. Sancho always refers to the island, as does Don Quijote, using the archaic term *ínsula*, from the Latin *insula*.²⁰ Although Sancho is unaware of the

¹⁷ González Echevarría, 2015b, 48–72, has demonstrated how Cervantes, as his own reader, revisited and rewrote certain key narrative clusters of the novel's part 1 in part 2, thus making them—and the novel itself—more complex.

¹⁸ The publication of Andrés Fernández de Avellaneda's spurious sequel in 1614 provided a foil of a different kind. Avellaneda titled his work *Segundo tomo del ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha, que contiene su tercera salida y es la quinta parte de sus aventuras* (Second volume about the ingenious gentleman Don Quijote de la Mancha which contains his third sally-forth and constitutes part five of his adventures, 1614). Don Quijote and Sancho learn about it in part 2, when they encounter two of its readers: Cervantes, 999–1004 (2.59).

¹⁹ Góngora y Argote, 37. Translation by Gilbert Cunningham. The original Spanish text is: “la bisagra, aunque estrecha, abrazadora de un océano y otro, siempre uno”: Góngora y Argote, 36.

²⁰ González Echevarría, 2015a, 286.

term's linguistic and literary pedigree, Don Quijote has in mind Amadís's squire Gandalín, who becomes the ruler of the "Firm Island" (*Insula Firme*).²¹ This referred, no doubt, to Garci Rodríguez de Montalvo's play on the expression *terra firme*, from New Latin, meaning literally "solid ground" or "dry land," which I will contrast later with Góngora's locution, "fugitive island" (*isla fugitiva*). The island fantasy draws together Don Quijote's antiquated chivalric ideals and Sancho's newly acquired aspirations for position and wealth. At the end of the prologue of part 1 (1605), Cervantes writes that he does not expect readers to sing his praises for acquainting them with so noble and honorable a gentleman as Don Quijote, but he does want them to express gratitude for their acquaintance with "the famous Sancho Panza, his squire," who brings together all the graces of squirely virtue that are scattered throughout the motley assemblage of the frivolous books of chivalry.²² I will do so, after taking a look at Don Quijote himself.

Alonso Quijano's transformation into Don Quijote takes a little longer than a fortnight. He starts by cobbling together an ancient helmet, which he augments with cardboard; after a week's work, he whacks it a couple of times with his sword to ill effect and then strengthens it with iron. Just as the Taínos did not perform a second experiment with another Señor Salcedo in Oviedo's history of Borinquén, Señor Quijano does not test for a second time the helmet that he has twice repaired.²³ It takes him four days to name his mount, the sad old horse (*rocín*) that he will call Rocinante, and eight days to name himself Don Quijote de la Mancha, proudly taking as his surname the reference to his native La Mancha.²⁴ His next task is to name his lady; it was thought, our narrator says, that he had in mind one Aldonza Lorenzo, a good-looking peasant girl from the village of Toboso, who had never paid him any attention. So the freshly minted Don Quijote creates the name Dulcinea del Toboso, which, to his way of thinking, is "musical, original,

²¹ Cervantes, 186 (1.20).

²² "Yo no quiero encarecerte el servicio que te hago en darte a conocer tan noble y tan honrado caballero; pero quiero que me agradezcas el conocimiento que tendrás del famoso Sancho Panza, su escudero, en quien, a mi parecer, te doy cifradas todas las gracias escuderiles que en la caterva de los libros vanos de caballerías están esparcidas [I don't expect you the reader to be grateful for the service I am providing by acquainting you with such a noble and honorable gentleman [as Don Quijote], but I do expect your gratitude for introducing you to the famous Sancho Panza, his squire, in whom, in my judgment, are brought together all the squirely graces that are scattered throughout the motley assemblage of the frivolous books of chivalry]": Cervantes, 14 (1.prologue).

²³ Cervantes, 31 (1.1).

²⁴ Cervantes, 32 (1.1).

and significant.”²⁵ He gets himself knighted by a confused but amused and obliging innkeeper and, after a couple of failed adventures, proclaims to one of his well-meaning neighbors, who is helping him hobble home, that “I know who I am . . . and I know, too, that I am not only capable of bettering those whom I have mentioned, and many others as well, because my exploits will far exceed all that they have achieved, either jointly or separately taken.”²⁶

His transformation is all but complete, but for one more element, a squire—and, concomitantly, a witness. He recruits Sancho Panza. Now I turn to Don Quijote in his role as the tutor or mentor to Sancho—one might even say his enchanter. And Sancho is clearly enchanted by the idea of becoming the governor of an island. His show-me skepticism is always met by his impatient, ever-escalating desire. Don Quijote’s first two conversations with Sancho are crucial. In their first interview, Don Quijote assures Sancho that his reward will be to become the governor of an island. Sancho immediately draws himself up and accepts.²⁷ In their very next conversation, as they leave their village and ride out onto the Montiel Plain, the first words that come from Sancho’s mouth, as he rides along on his donkey, carrying himself “like a patriarch,” are: “Make sure, your mercy, lord knight errant, that you do not forget about the island that you have promised me, because I will know how to govern it, no matter how large it may be.”²⁸ With this reminder, Don Quijote ups the ante and suggests that, in fact, Sancho may become the king of his very own kingdom—that is, if both their lives are spared, Don Quijote may in some six days conquer a kingdom with others attached to it, and Sancho would be fit to be crowned king of one of them.²⁹ Sancho doubts only whether his wife is up to being a queen; he suggests that the title of countess would suit her better, and even that, not without difficulty and the help of God and good friends.³⁰

Sancho’s self-puffery continues to balloon. When Alonso Quijano’s niece interrogates Sancho, much later, she starts with,

“May you choke on those confounded islands,” replied the niece. “Drratted Sancho! What are islands, anyway? Are they something to eat, you great glutton, you living sweet tooth?” “They aren’t something to eat,” replied Sancho, “but something to govern and to rule better than any four high court judges could ever govern as many cities.”³¹

²⁵ Cervantes, 33 (1.1).

²⁶ Cervantes, 58 (1.5).

²⁷ Cervantes, 72 (1.7).

²⁸ Cervantes, 73–74 (1.7).

²⁹ Cervantes, 62 (1.7).

³⁰ Cervantes, 74 (1.7).

³¹ Cervantes, 561 (2.2).

Don Quijote assures Sancho that God will grant him whatever is most fitting, and he adds: “Whatever you do, do not accept anything less than the rank of *adelantado*.”³² An *adelantado* was a military commander, a royally granted appointment from the time of Alfonso X in the thirteenth century through the Spanish conquests in the Americas; when successful, such military commanders were typically promoted to the rank of governor of the area conquered.³³ Such contracts were granted for the Castilian conquest of the Canary Islands in 1478 and 1480, and the use of the post in the Indies quickly followed, starting in 1501. All the Spanish expedition leaders one might name—starting with Christopher Columbus, his brother Bartolomé Colón, and onward—were successively, sometimes simultaneously, appointed to the dual ranks of military commander and civil governor.

Readers of the *Quijote* are familiar with Sancho’s mock appointment as the governor of the pretend island of Barataria in part 2 of the novel.³⁴ But most are probably not aware that Sancho hammers away at Don Quijote some 150 times over the course of the two parts of the novel, about forty times in part 1 and almost three times that number in part 2. Yet for all of Sancho’s obsessive harping, he is always ready to trade in the promise of an island governorship for something that will more easily bring him wealth and comfort. In part 1, he hopes that the recipe of a wonderful healing balsam might bring him prosperity and an easy life: “But tell me, is it costly to make?”³⁵ His most hallucinatory proposal comes in part 2. After Don Quijote’s and his “flight into the skies” on the wooden horse Clavileño, Sancho asks the deceiving duke, “If your grace would be willing to give me the smallest part of heaven, even though it were no more than half a league, I would take it with greater willingness than the biggest island in the world.”³⁶ The duke replies that he cannot give a piece of heaven to anyone, but he does suggest that the island, “with the riches of the land,” will allow Sancho to obtain “those of heaven.”³⁷ The duke meant, no doubt, that Sancho could obtain heaven’s riches for the price of an indulgence—that is, the commutation of some

³² Cervantes, 74 (1.7).

³³ García de Valdeavellano, 507–08; Adorno and Pautz, 1:390–91, 3:419.

³⁴ Interlaced with chapters devoted to Don Quijote, Sancho’s Barataria adventure begins with the duke’s promise to Sancho of the governance of one of his “extra islands” and concludes with Sancho’s eloquent renunciation of his ten-day governorship: Cervantes, 794, 973–74 (2.32, 2.55).

³⁵ Cervantes, 92 (1.10).

³⁶ Cervantes, 865 (2.42).

³⁷ Cervantes, 866 (2.42).

or all of the punishment for a petitioner's sins in exchange for monetary payment.³⁸ Between his request to Don Quijote for the recipe for a body-mending elixir and his proposal to the duke to own not an island but a tiny piece of heaven, Sancho has a few other ideas.

In tune with his escalating expectations, Sancho wants to know about the salaries that squires earned in those times ("en aquellos tiempos"). Don Quijote replies that he thinks that squires were not salaried but rather were compensated "a merced"—that is, by whatever benefices their masters chose to give them—and he admits that he is not sure how chivalry would pay in the present calamitous times ("en estos tan calamitosos tiempos nuestros").³⁹ Sancho's next gambit is to suggest that they find some emperor who is at war and offer him their services: Don Quijote can carry out his knightly duties and Sancho his squirely ones, each being rewarded by said emperor according to his respective services. Don Quijote replies that this is not a bad idea, but that they must first roam the world seeking adventures, with Don Quijote gaining so much glory that, upon going to the court of such a monarch, his fame will be immediately recognized and rewarded.⁴⁰ As if in a trance, Don Quijote then invents a lengthy, detailed narrative of such a hypothetical royal reception and its rewards, the last section of which, after the valorous knight is recognized as the son of another king ("I don't know what kingdom, because I think it's not on the map," says Don Quijote), the host king dies, his daughter the princess inherits, and the knight becomes king.⁴¹ This is the way it's done, Don Quijote implies.

When Sancho proposes finding an emperor needing Don Quijote's services, he exploits Don Quijote's thirst for fame by adding that he believes that there "would not be lacking" some chronicler to record Don Quijote's heroic deeds, and he ventures that even he, Sancho, would not be left out of such accounts.⁴² This is Sancho's first mention of his desire to be memorialized, but it will not be the last. The most delightful of these instances occurs when later, on the estate of the duke and duchess, the duchess asks Sancho if his master is not the subject of *El ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha*; Sancho replies that, indeed, "I am Sancho Panza, the squire who accompanies him, if it is not the case that they exchanged me for another in the cradle, I mean, at the

³⁸ Originating in the medieval Roman Catholic church, indulgences were granted on papal authority; despite Luther's ninety-five theses, the Council of Trent reasserted their place in the salvific process but condemned "all base gain for securing indulgences" in 1563, and Pope Pius V abolished their sale in 1567. See *Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. "indulgence," <https://www.britannica.com/topic/indulgence>.

³⁹ Cervantes, 187 (1.20).

⁴⁰ Cervantes, 193 (1.21).

⁴¹ Cervantes, 193–96 (1.21).

⁴² Cervantes, 193 (1.21).

printing press.”⁴³ His emerging desire for notoriety goes hand in hand with his tireless pursuit of an island governorship. Mesmerized by Don Quijote’s tale of his hypothetical triumph, Sancho is convinced that his reward will come soon, after the elevation of the knight to his kingship. This is what Sancho has been waiting for, and he hopes that it will come about literally (“al pie de la letra”), just as Don Quijote, the recently dubbed Knight of the Sad Countenance, has suggested.⁴⁴

Sancho does not give up, and he sees a golden opportunity in the Sierra Morena when Dorotea, masquerading as the Princess Micomicona from the kingdom of Micomicón in Ethiopia, seeks Don Quijote’s help in recovering her kingdom from the evil giant Pandafilando de la Fosca Vista.⁴⁵ (Throughout the novel, Don Quijote is deceived by those—in this instance, Dorotea—who try to bring him to the truth of his natal identity and actual circumstances.) Here Sancho’s imagination runs wild. With Don Quijote’s recently told tale in mind, Sancho imagines that his master will very shortly become an emperor because he will marry the princess Micomicona, and he, Sancho, will at the very least become the king of the princess’s kingdom of Micomicón. “The only thing that troubled him was that he would be king in a land of Blacks and that therefore the people who would be his vassals would all be Black.”⁴⁶ But that doesn’t matter; he decides that he will sell them as slaves in Spain, buying with the proceeds a title of nobility or some official royal position that will provide him with a life of ease.⁴⁷ In short,

⁴³ Cervantes, 780 (2.30). Sancho also expresses his desire to be remembered in print when Samson Carrasco tells him and Don Quijote about the published part 1 (Cervantes, 565, 567–68 [2.2, 2.3]), and when Don Quijote, at the inn which he uncharacteristically recognizes as such, overhears two gentlemen (Don Jerónimo and Don Juan) discussing the book, *Don Quijote de la Mancha*, which turns out to be the apocryphal Avellaneda sequel (Cervantes, 999–1004 [2.59]). On that occasion, Sancho is chagrined, not to say deeply offended, for being characterized as a glutton and a drunk: Cervantes, 1003 (2.59).

⁴⁴ Cervantes, 196 (1.21).

⁴⁵ Cervantes, 294 (1.29). The giant Pandafilando de la Fosca Vista squints to frighten people and because *mico* means monkey in a general way, the term suggests “to mimic” or “to mime,” thus subtly alluding to mimesis, the Renaissance doctrine of imitation: González Echevarría, 2015a, 121.

⁴⁶ “Sólo le deba pesadumbre el pensar que aquel reino era en tierra de negros y que la gente que por sus vasallos le diesen habían de ser negros”: Cervantes, 295 (1.29).

⁴⁷ “¿Qué me da a mí que mis vasallos sean negros? ¿Habrás más que cargar con ellos y traerlos a España, donde los podré vender y adonde me los pagarán de contado, de cuyo dinero podré comprar algún título o algún oficio con que vivir descansado todos los días de mi vida? [What does it matter to me that all my vassals will be Black? Does it bother me that all I’ll have to do is take charge and ship them to Spain where I’ll be able to sell them for quick, immediate cash and buy a title of nobility or some official position that’ll allow me to live in comfort all the days of my life?]: Cervantes, 295–96 (1.29).

however Black they may be, under his hand they will become white or yellow—that is, he will convert their human worth into silver or gold.⁴⁸ He also hopes that his kingdom will be located near the coast; in that way, he can more easily transport his vassals to Spain for their sale as slaves.⁴⁹ This is Cervantes's realism: the sale of enslaved Africans in Spain had begun in the fifteenth century, and enslaved Africans began arriving in America just after the turn of the sixteenth.⁵⁰

This entire *Dorotea-Micomicona* sequence conjures—without saying so—the profile of the Indies-bound opportunist, ignorant of everything except his hallucinatory obsession with wealth and comfort, to be obtained by governing. As Sancho extols: “I have heard that the kingdom’s area covers some twenty thousand leagues, has all the recourses necessary to sustain human life, and is larger than Portugal and Castile combined.”⁵¹ At the conclusion of Sancho’s governance of *Barataria*, it is revealed that he “had never bothered to ascertain whether the site of his governance was an island, a city, a town, or another kind of place.”⁵² On this point, Sancho has brought to life Cervantes’s view of royal appointees to Indies governance as reckless opportunists. The topic of royal governance in the Indies is again entertained after Don Quijote’s party, including Sancho, *Dorotea*, Fernando, and Cardenio, arrives at the inn that has been the setting for many notable occurrences, beginning with the innkeeper’s mock ceremonial knighting of Don Quijote.

CERVANTES ABROAD: DON QUIJOTE AT THE INN

Now assembled at the inn, Don Quijote, Sancho, and the other guests listen to a former infantry captain’s account of his capture and enslavement by the king of Algiers following the Christian victory at Lepanto in October of 1571.⁵³ The captain’s name is Ruy Pérez de Viedma. He tells them about another captive, a Spanish soldier named Saavedra, whose heroic conduct reflects quite closely the testimony given on Cervantes’s behalf about his five-year Algerian captivity.⁵⁴

⁴⁸ Cervantes, 296 (1.29).

⁴⁹ Cervantes, 315 (1.31).

⁵⁰ Phillips, 137–40. By 1501, African slaves had already been introduced into the islands of the Antilles: see Adorno and Pautz, 2:415–16.

⁵¹ Cervantes, 314 (1.31).

⁵² “Que él nunca se puso a averiguar si era ínsula, ciudad, villa o lugar la que gobernaba”: Cervantes, 959 (2.54).

⁵³ This is the interpolated narrative, “Donde el cautivo cuenta su vida y sucesos [In which the captive tells about his life and deeds],” which is commonly known in English as “The Captive’s Tale”: Cervantes, 399–439 (1.39–41).

⁵⁴ Cervantes, 410 (1.40), makes a passing reference to his own captivity when the narrator of “The Captive’s Tale” recalls a certain Saavedra, the surname that first appears in Cervantes’s

One of the listeners, speaking on behalf of the assembled party, says that the captain's account was so unusual, so engrossing, and so suspenseful that they all would gladly listen to it again.⁵⁵ Cervantes has just walked through the gallery containing his own self-portrait. Here, the historical Cervantes recalls his past experiences as soldier and captive, and trembles at the remembrance of the trauma they produced. This is Cervantes abroad.

After night falls, a coach arrives at the inn, and a squire inquires if "His Honor the Judge" can be accommodated for the night. Dressed in the garb that identifies him as a high court judge (*oidor*), this newly arriving gentleman is accompanied by his beautiful daughter of about sixteen years of age. Upon entering the inn, Don Quijote welcomes them to the "castle" with a speech about how lettered learning as well as knightly valor are therein welcomed, leaving the new guests stunned.⁵⁶ The judge, whose name is Juan Pérez de Viedma, is bound for the Indies. He is to take up a position in the Real Audiencia de Nueva España—that is, the highest (and highly powerful) civil and criminal court in the Mexican viceroyalty. From the moment that the military captain and former captive, Ruy Pérez de Viedma, lays eyes on the judge, he recognizes him as his younger brother; the identification of Juan Pérez de Viedma is confirmed by his servant.⁵⁷

The judge has received news that a fleet is soon to depart from Seville for New Spain; he must be on it.⁵⁸ Yet we have time to learn something about his family. His younger brother, the youngest of the three Pérez de Viedma siblings, had emigrated to the silver-rich viceroyalty of Peru and become wealthy, so that the scholarly brother (the *oidor*) has been able to pursue university studies quite comfortably and "reach the position in which he finds himself now"—that is, Indies-bound with an all-powerful, royal judicial appointment.⁵⁹ Don

marriage documents in 1586 and 1587 and in *El trato de Argel* (Life in Algiers, 1581–83): Garcés, 286, 303. Garcés, 287 and 396, relates its post-Algiers use to Roberto Jay Lifton's theory about trauma radically altering the traumatized subject, creating a second *I*. Adding another dimension to Cervantes's use of "Saavedra," López-Baralt, 415–21, points out that it not only rhymes phonetically with a surname common in North Africa (*Šayb ad-dīrā'*, pronounced *Šhaibedraa'*), but also that, as a phrase, it refers to a "damaged arm"; she concludes that during his Algerian captivity Cervantes was likely hailed and summoned by the term as applied to his incapacitated left hand, injured at the Battle of Lepanto.

⁵⁵ Cervantes, 439 (1.42).

⁵⁶ Cervantes, 441 (1.42).

⁵⁷ Cervantes, 441 (1.42).

⁵⁸ Cervantes, 445 (1.42).

⁵⁹ Cervantes, 444 (1.42). One of the most notable features of Spanish colonial governance was the enormous power and prestige of its professional judiciary. See Parry, 227–41.

Quijote is at a loss. Here he meets someone who is not part of any plan to deceive him, but he is nevertheless deceived by the truth that he cannot register: the existence of Spain's New World empire and therefore its bureaucratic governmental apparatus. Without saying a single word, Don Quijote listens attentively to the proceedings, but, being unable to make heads or tails of it, decides that these very strange matters must be chimeras from the world of knight errantry.⁶⁰ This is Cervantes, walking through the gallery again, reflecting on his own naïveté about his hopes, long ago lost, to go to the Indies with a royal appointment. Like the fictional Ruy Pérez de Viedma, Cervantes's historical path had been the military one, ending with his five-year enslavement in Algiers, from 1575 to 1580.⁶¹ Meanwhile, Cervantes the author sends Don Quijote outdoors to stand guard over the castle, lest some giant or other roguish scoundrel attack, and he sends Sancho to sack out on his gear, probably getting the best sleep of them all.⁶²

What makes the starkly awake Don Quijote and the snoring Sancho Panza "ever and only one"?⁶³ Their ideals, focused respectively on the resuscitation of chivalric values and the pursuit of material gain, are not identical. But neither are they so far apart. Don Quijote and Sancho's bond resides in their explicit agreement to believe one another, which is definitively firmed up after the sky-ride on the wooden horse *Clavileño*: "Sancho, if you want me to believe what you saw in the heavens, I want you to believe me regarding what I saw in the cave of Montesinos."⁶⁴ They have bought into each other's fantasies. This is not so different from the private entrepreneurs who led the Spanish conquest expeditions to the Indies, the minor nobility who signed on, and others much less fortunate—including an untold number of enslaved Africans—who had no choice in the matter.⁶⁵ Like Sancho, all they had to provide were high hopes

⁶⁰ Cervantes, 445 (1.42).

⁶¹ Cervantes's ransom in 1580 was paid by his family, including his sister Andrea, as supplemented by Fray Juan Gil's use of the general ransom fund of the Trinitarian Order: see Canavaggio, 80, 84; Garcés, 196. The ransom had been set excessively high because Cervantes was thought to be an elite with close ties to Don Juan of Austria: see Garcés, 159. This misunderstanding came about because, after five years of military service, Cervantes departed for Spain in 1575 carrying letters to support his petition for royal reward from the fourth Duke of Sessa (Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba) and Don Juan de Austria: see Canavaggio, 69.

⁶² Cervantes, 446 (1.42).

⁶³ Góngora y Argote's (36–37) poetic evocation of the Strait of Magellan as the hinge (*bisagra*) uniting two oceans, making them "ever and only one" ("siempre uno"), succinctly characterizes the relationship between Don Quijote and Sancho.

⁶⁴ Cervantes, 865 (2.41).

⁶⁵ See Adorno and Pautz, 2:414–22.

and their own gear. Also, Don Quijote's affirmation of the heroism of past ages includes the relatively recent historical past. While Don Quijote is unable to comprehend the notion of Spain's colonial domination in the Americas, he does not fail to place the captain-conquistador Hernán Cortés in his pantheon of chivalric heroes. In discoursing on the time-honored topic of fame, he offers a litany of the deeds of ancient Roman heroes and, in naming modern ones, he cites the example of Cortés, whom he calls, in an ambiguously ironic play on words, "the very courteous Cortés."⁶⁶ Cervantes is walking through the gallery again, satirizing here the obsequiousness with which the super-wealthy—particularly the rich Spanish returnees from America (called "indianos")—were treated.

SANCHO ON HIS ILLUSORY ISLAND

How far does Cervantes take his critique of Spain's New World enterprise? Don Quijote and Sancho's arrival at the estate of the duke and duchess seems to open a new and hopeful horizon for them. For Don Quijote, the extravagant reception at the ducal estate marks "the first day that he knew and believed that he was a real knight errant and not a made-up one, because he now saw himself being treated like the knights of past centuries."⁶⁷ Don Quijote's pleasure contrasts with his pronouncement at the start of his life errant, mentioned early in part 1, when he likened himself to the legendary and historical heroes of chivalry and declared that he would match and exceed the great deeds of all of them. Now his point of reference is not his library of chivalric books or the peers who disguise and present themselves to him as knights errant; it is instead the testimony of the duke and duchess, who, because Don Quijote recognizes them as the aristocrats that they are, make him feel—for the first time—that he is a real-life knight errant and not a pretend one. For all his careful preparations, self-help soliloquies, and promises of what one day he would achieve (but had not yet accomplished), here on the ducal domain he is met with the acclaim of dozens of witnesses to his apparent accomplishments and renown. For Sancho it means that, at last, he will become the governor of an island. He is told that the island's name is Barataria, in reference to *barato* meaning "cheap," because he has gained his island at so little personal expense.⁶⁸ (But *barato* also means "deceit.") Sancho is hailed with great pomp, taken to the church for an act of

⁶⁶ "El cortesísimo Cortés": Cervantes, 605 (2.8).

⁶⁷ "Y aquél fue el primer día que de todo en todo conoció y creyó ser caballero andante verdadero, y no fantástico, viéndose tratar del mismo modo que él había leído se trataban los tales caballeros en los pasados siglos": Cervantes, 784 (2.31).

⁶⁸ Cervantes, 888 (2.45).

thanksgiving, and given the keys to the supposed island. Not knowing how to read, he has to have the official proclamation by which he takes formal possession of his domain read aloud to him. When he asks just who this “Don Sancho Panza” is, and is told that it refers to him, he rejects it, stating that he is plain Sancho, as were his father and grandfather. “They were all Panzas, without the addition of *don* and *doña*, and I imagine that on this island there are more dōns than stones; but never mind because God understands me and, if I rule for four days, I will wrench out these dōns who, to the people who live here, must be as annoying as mosquitos.”⁶⁹ Sancho prevails, not unlike the common individuals who emerged as powerful rulers in the earliest decades of Spain’s long history in the Indies. The provincial secretary Hernán Cortés and Francisco Pizarro (1478–1541), the illegitimate son of captain Gonzalo Pizarro, both ended up with titles of nobility as lords of vast domains.⁷⁰ But, in Cervantes’s creation of Sancho, there is an important difference.

For the novel’s experiment in governance, Don Quijote is the theorist, Sancho the practitioner. Don Quijote, as mentor, advises Sancho, at great length—two full chapters—about the proper conduct of his governorship.⁷¹ The Indies-bound judge (*oidor*) had befuddled Don Quijote, but he is not in doubt about the principles of justice. Sancho, exasperated by his master’s endless speechifying, declares that if Don Quijote thinks him unfit for the task, he will renounce his governorship immediately.⁷² Deeply impressed with Sancho’s reasoning, Don Quijote replies that, because of the principles of fairness and decency that Sancho espouses, he, Sancho, is equipped to be the governor of a thousand islands: no theory or science can match him (!).⁷³ Sancho then proceeds to adjudicate all the cases presented before him, revealing his ability as someone possessing a solid, practical, and keen knowledge of human nature as well as a clear moral compass. No academic degrees necessary; it is moral

⁶⁹ Cervantes, 889 (2.45): “Todos fueron Panzas, sin añadiduras de dones ni doñas; y yo imagino que en esta ínsula debe de haber más dones que piedras; pero basta: Dios me entiende y podrá ser que si el gobierno me dura cuatro días yo escardaré estos dones, que por la muchedumbre deben de enfadar como los mosquitos.” I have inserted into my translation the standard English phonetic symbol, *ō* (which rhymes with *bone*, *known*, etc.), to make the English version of the Spanish *don* rhyme with *stone*.

⁷⁰ Charles V conferred on Hernán Cortés the title “Marquis of the Valley of Oaxaca” in the viceroyalty of New Spain, and he granted a marquise to Francisco Pizarro in the viceroyalty of Peru, but the latter was assassinated before he chose the location of his future estate from among the vast highland territories available to him. See Hemming, 251.

⁷¹ Cervantes, 865–77 (2.42–43).

⁷² Cervantes, 876 (2.43).

⁷³ Cervantes, 876–77 (2.43).

character that matters, says a silent, smiling Cervantes, as he walks through his picture gallery again.

If Don Quijote and Sancho together form a *bisagra*—that is, a hinge that joins them as a single entity—what holds the overarching novel together? We have two through lines: Don Quijote wants Dulcinea to be disenchanting, and Sancho wants his island governorship, which he will receive only upon disenchanting Dulcinea. Lest we forget, Sancho was Dulcinea's enchanter: having come much earlier upon three peasant women mounted on their donkeys, he kneeled down before one of them and, to Don Quijote's astonishment, proclaimed her to be Dulcinea, but enchanted.⁷⁴ From then on—this episode was early in part 2—Don Quijote anxiously hopes to find the means to disenchant Dulcinea; if he succeeds, he thinks, he will have no reason to envy even the greatest deeds of the most valorous knight errant of centuries past.⁷⁵ The linchpin, the *pasador del eje* of our *bisagra* or hinge, is the prophecy of the “wise Merlin.”

But where does this Merlin come from? The master sorcerer is first mentioned by Don Quijote when he narrates his visit to Montesinos's cave;⁷⁶ he reports afterward that Montesinos and his companions have been enchanted by Merlin, who has predicted that they can be restored to their rightful state by the great “Don Quijote de la Mancha, who with greater ability than those of past centuries, has resuscitated the long-forgotten knight errantry.”⁷⁷ The ducal company learns a little later about Sancho's invention of the enchantment of Dulcinea because big-mouthed Sancho has proudly confessed it to the duchess.⁷⁸ Merlin is then conjured and costumed, in the flesh, by the duke and duchess's majordomo, who becomes a principal player in their deception.⁷⁹ This Merlin leads to the most startling of Dulcinea's transformations, not as a garlic-scented peasant girl but as a beautifully genderqueer figure in the person of the page: “She seemed to one and all to be too beautiful, but yet had a

⁷⁴ Cervantes, 617, 619–20 (2.10).

⁷⁵ Cervantes, 659 (2.15).

⁷⁶ Cervantes, 725 (2.23).

⁷⁷ Cervantes, 727 (2.23). Except for the figure of Merlin from medieval English tradition (e.g., Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae*), Montesinos and the others are all drawn from the Carolingian and Arthurian cycles of epics and popular legends: see González Echevarría, 2015a, 242.

⁷⁸ Cervantes, 807 (2.33).

⁷⁹ González Echevarría (2015a, 265, 271), creates the critical category of “internal authors” for the characters who move the plot of the novel forward. The majordomo is one who does so by organizing and writing the scripted verses of the pageant in which Merlin appears, by enacting the figure of Merlin and, later, that of Trifaldín, the squire of the (also invented) Countess Trifaldi.

masculine ease and a not-very-womanly voice.”⁸⁰ The majordomo-cum-Merlin promises—threatens—the means for the disenchantment of Dulcinea: it will be on Sancho Panza’s backside, when he administers to himself 3,300 lashes.⁸¹

In reply to this challenge, Sancho gives a long speech suggesting that he will not comply. “And now it is demanded of me not as a squire but as a governor; . . . requesting that I whip myself of my own free will, which is about as likely as me becoming an Indian chief!”⁸² The duke reminds Sancho that he is not yet a governor and that, in fact, he will not become one unless he self-administers the 3,300 lashes.⁸³ Sancho soon afterward claims that he’s given himself five lashes, but the duchess tells him that mere slaps do not count.⁸⁴ Sancho tries to negotiate payment from Don Quijote for this service, but Don Quijote refuses, saying that if he were to pay Sancho in a manner commensurate with the deed, all the treasure of Venice and the wealth of the silver mines of Potosí would be inadequate compensation.⁸⁵ (Sancho’s task is finally completed, not at the expense of his flesh but at that of the bark of a forest of trees.⁸⁶)

While Don Quijote venerates the traditions of earlier times, and Sancho is nearly delirious with the prospect of rewards that originate in Don Quijote’s chivalric worldview but seem to be presently available, both acknowledge the here-and-now present. Don Quijote refers to the “present calamitous times” and extols the “the very courteous Cortés,” yet does not recognize the high court judge bound for the Indies, and suggests that paying Sancho for his whipping would exceed all the riches of Venice and the mineral wealth of Potosí.⁸⁷ Sancho has described Aldonza’s flying leap onto her donkey as a skill that could teach a Mexican horseman a thing or two, and he has asserted that he would be as likely to whip himself of his own free will as to become a *cacique*.⁸⁸ These

⁸⁰ Cervantes, 825 (2.35).

⁸¹ This requirement appears in the final verses of the poem recited by the duke’s majordomo, presenting himself as the sorcerer Merlin, who refers to Sancho’s “posaderas,” which is the polite form of *nalgas*—that is, buttocks. Cervantes, 824 (2.35).

⁸² Cervantes, 827 (2.35): “[N]o solamente piden que se azote un escudero, sino un gobernador; . . . y vienen a pedirme que me azote de mi voluntad, estando ella tan ajena de ello como de volverme cacique.” I have used “Indian chief” for the English, but Sancho—that is, Cervantes—uses the Taíno word *cacique*, which means “native lord.” I add to my translation the phrase “and now” to emphasize Sancho’s rhetorical expression of the outrageousness of this proposal, especially given his recent mock elevation in social status.

⁸³ Cervantes, 827 (2.35).

⁸⁴ Cervantes, 830 (2.36).

⁸⁵ Cervantes, 1084 (2.71).

⁸⁶ Cervantes, 1093 (2.72).

⁸⁷ Cervantes, 187 (1.20), 605 (2.8), 1084 (2.71).

⁸⁸ Cervantes, 621 (2.10), 827 (2.35).

references to Spain's Indies are few, but clear. Cervantes has penciled them in so lightly that readers can easily miss them, or, if seeing them, consider them to be mere slips of the authorial hand.

Regarding Cervantes's own experiences, Garcés and Sola have shown that Cervantes had appealed to the crown for benefices (*mercedes*), presenting his own petitions and the witnessed testimonies of others pertaining to his military service and Algerian enslavement.⁸⁹ These actions spanned the years from 1580 to 1590 and included the occasional support of influential parties in Spain's royal administration.⁹⁰ In his final petition of 1590, Cervantes summarized what he described as his twenty-two years of service to the crown.⁹¹ Still, his petition was rejected within two weeks, with the brief, dismissive, "Let him look for something around here."⁹² Canavaggio doubts the seriousness with which the former soldier Cervantes filed his petition in 1590, and he takes as evidence the words of Carrizales, the protagonist of Cervantes's short novel, *El celoso extremeño* (The jealous old Extremaduran), that the Indies provided a safe haven for desperados, swindlers, murderers, and the luckless of all sorts.⁹³ But Cervantes tendered his first petition to the Royal Council of the Indies in 1582, and his composition of the *Novelas ejemplares* (Exemplary novels, 1613) began in the early 1590s and appeared in manuscript around 1604.⁹⁴

I do not doubt the seriousness of Cervantes's appeals. Nor do I believe that he had only a vague awareness of Spain's America. His time in Seville, starting in 1587, would have given him an encyclopedia of information, gossip, and lore about the Indies. In fact, the positions that Cervantes sought in 1590 were not insignificant, but they were available, and they had the advantage of being outside the viceroalties' capitals of Mexico City and Lima, so Cervantes may have thought they provided greater opportunity for him. After his final petition to the Royal Council of the Indies was turned down so quickly after its

⁸⁹ Garcés's *Cervantes en Argel* (Cervantes in Algiers), the augmented version of her English-language monograph of 2002 of the same title, is the indispensable source for all matters pertaining to Cervantes's Algerian captivity, its personal consequences, and its literary outcomes; Sola provides the actual sworn testimonies of Cervantes's witnesses and supporters.

⁹⁰ Garcés, 221–22 and 230–43, examines these activities, noting Cervantes's gratitude to the "illustrious Don Antonio de Eraso, member of the Royal Council of the Indies in Lisbon" for his support, and she analyzes Cervantes's *El trato de Argel* and *Los baños de Argel* (The dungeons of Algiers, 1589–90), which were written during this period.

⁹¹ Canavaggio, 135, transcribes in full this petition of 1590.

⁹² "Busque por acá en que se le haga merced": Canavaggio, 137.

⁹³ Canavaggio, 136.

⁹⁴ "*Rinconete and Cortadillo* and *The Jealous Old Man from Extremadura* had already been collected in a manuscript anthology, the so-called Porras manuscript, now lost, compiled for the Archbishop of Seville, Fernando Niño de Guevara, around 1604": Ife, 1:vii.

submission, his hopes for emigration to America must finally have been crushed. Given that the *Quijote* was written and published well after the evaporation of Cervantes's aspirations to emigrate, his unequivocal references to the Indies—however sparing—are not insignificant. On the contrary, I consider them to be evidence for the argument that I will now make.

CONCLUSION: CERVANTES'S ANTI-ANTHEM TO AMERICA

I suggest that the seemingly casual, fleeting references to the Indies in the *Quijote* are purposeful, and that they signal the transformation of the former soldier's personal feelings of disappointment, resentment, and remembered trauma into the author's dialogic art. Cervantes transforms his remembered experiences into the brilliant repartee that he creates between his two protagonists, their interactions with others, and, perhaps most poignantly, their deception by the duke and duchess toward the end of the novel. But the fictional world of fantasy and enchantment cannot compete with the real world of disappointment and despair. Cervantes the military veteran and former captive unsuccessfully sought the Crown's benefices, and he was not granted a patent to cross the Atlantic and take on an institutional role in America. But the author Cervantes created two literary protagonists who experienced in fiction what the historical Cervantes had experienced in life: *desengaño*. This is not the English "disillusionment," although that is part of it; it is, more directly and bluntly, seeing the truth for what it is. It is not just the disappointment of dreams unfulfilled but the confrontation with the truth, or truths, that such disappointment brings with it. *Desengaño* is the old, metaphorically expressed scriptural phenomenon of experiencing something like "scales falling from one's eyes."⁹⁵ In his *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española* (Lexicon of the Castilian or Spanish language, 1611), the seventeenth-century Spanish lexicographer Sebastián de Covarrubias (1539–1613) put it straight: "To come to the realization that what one thought was true turns out to be false."⁹⁶

The *Quijote* portrays the overt *desengaño* of its two protagonists—overwhelming in the case of Don Quijote on his deathbed, becoming again Alonso Quijano. It is somewhat mitigated for Sancho, who is looking forward to a modest inheritance from the now dying Señor Quijano. It is muted, nearly silenced, in the case of Cervantes, the observer walking quietly through the picture gallery of his own novel. Their respective experiences reflect the varying

⁹⁵ The reference is to the conversion of Saul in Acts 9:18 (King James Version): "And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales, and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized."

⁹⁶ "Desengañarse, caer en la cuenta de que era engaño lo que tenía por cierto": Covarrubias, 458.

degrees of incommensurability between the old, chivalric, idealistic expectations that have been gilded by the passage of time, and the faraway contemporary realities that replace them, glittering with the gold and silver that seem to revivify the old days but produce instead mostly losses—most brutally for America’s native populations and for the African and African-descended peoples condemned to labor and die in the mines of Potosí and elsewhere.

Islands have perpetually enlivened the nautical interests of the literary imagination, so I turn now from *Amadis de Gaula*’s “Firm Island” to Luis de Góngora’s “fugitive island.” Physical islands have been with us since long before the first truly ancient mariner looked out over a seabound horizon and thought he saw a land-mass rising out of the water. The fugitive island is the island on the horizon that dissolves and disappears the closer one approaches it. In Góngora’s evocation of an illusory island, he refers to a seagoing craft so powerful that “there is no stormy cape that it cannot round, nor today any fugitive island that can escape its course.”⁹⁷ The book-reading duke, probably with a nod to Góngora’s *Soledades*, had assured Sancho, well before his island was granted, that it was neither “movable nor fugitive.”⁹⁸ But, of course, it was: the island imagined by Don Quijote for Sancho and given to Sancho by the duke disappeared as it materialized.

The depiction of islands and even kingdoms that did not exist (or were not “on the map,” as Don Quijote suggested about the hypothetical empire he would conquer) is an unusual part of the history of cartography that dates from the early fifteenth through the seventeenth century. This peculiar, protean genre, known as *isolarii*—that is, island maps or books—responded to interests in geography, and also history and mythology; most tended to be Mediterranean in topic and humanistic in nature, an unusual mix that also included elements of travel literature and nautical manuals.⁹⁹ A case in point that combines these interests is a map of islands in the Mediterranean, titled *Insularum aliquot Maris Mediterranei Descriptio* (Description of some islands of the Mediterranean Sea, 1570). It depicts Sicily, Malta, Sardinia, Corfu, Elba, and Zerbja, or Djerba, which is identified as “Zerbi, insula olim Lotophagitis” (the island of Djerba, formerly [known as the island of] the lotus-eaters).¹⁰⁰ Djerba was a Muslim stronghold which the

⁹⁷ “No hay tormentoso cabo que no doble, ni isla hoy a su vuelo fugitiva”: Góngora y Argote, 30.395–96.

⁹⁸ “Sancho amigo, la ínsula que yo os he prometido no es movable ni fugitiva”: Cervantes, 855 (2.41).

⁹⁹ Tolias, 263, 280–82.

¹⁰⁰ Abraham Ortelius (1527–98) produced several printings of this map, the first of which appeared in 1570: Tolias, 284n102. Ortelius credits as his source the Italian cartographer Giacomo Gastaldi (ca. 1500–60), to whom he refers as Jacobo Castaldo, inscribing on the map “Sicilia, insula descripta a Iacobo Castaldo Pedemontano cosmographo [Sicily, drawn by Jacobo Castaldo, a cosmographer from Piedmont].”

Spanish had attempted to conquer in 1510 and 1520.¹⁰¹ The “lotus-eaters” come from Homer’s *Odyssey*, book 9: eating the lotus’s “honey-sweet fruit” made Odysseus’s sojourning mariners abandon all thought of going home, preferring instead “to abide among the Lotus-eaters, feeding on the lotus”; weeping, they had to be dragged back to the ships and tied down to be prevented from remaining on that enchanting island.¹⁰²

Cervantes the author brought Don Quijote and Sancho back home, too, while the historical Cervantes, after being ransomed from his Algerian captivity, had to stay at home. America was not there for him. There was no “honey-sweet fruit,” no royal Indies appointment offered. It was a chimera, refused to him with the curt and cutting, “Let him look for something around here.” Thus it may be said that, among its many other remarkable achievements, the *Quijote* constitutes Cervantes’s unsung anthem to America. More than unsung, the novel is a silence, an anti-anthem with respect to America. Cervantes’s sleight of hand regarding Spain’s America is masterful. He leaves it unacknowledged by his principal protagonists, and when he references it, he does so only through secondary characters and fleeting references, thanks to his creation of Don Quijote, who wants to bring back the age of chivalry, and Sancho Panza, who giddily buys into the Don’s fantasies. For Cervantes, America is the land of the ultimate disenchantment, the end of vain illusions—that is, *desengaño*. Which Cervantes? Both: the historical Cervantes who gave life and breath and words to the author Cervantes, and the author Cervantes who had America in mind as he dramatized—and then watched—the unfolding hopes, adventures, and final fates of Don Quijote and Sancho Panza. I make no claim about Cervantes’s implicit or explicit references to America in his other works, but in *El ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha*, Cervantes steadfastly refuses not only to pay homage to America but also even to recognize it. No odes forthcoming here! And it all began—and virtually ended—with the promise of an island that was not there. “What are islands, anyway?” asks Alonso Quijano’s niece. “May you choke on those confounded islands!” But those who were in San Juan, Puerto Rico, on the occasion of the RSA

¹⁰¹ This small island off the Tunisian coast was identified as “las Gelves” in Spanish letters in the *Relación* (Account, 1542) of the Spanish explorer Álvaro Núñez Cabeza de Vaca and in the anonymously authored picaresque novel *Lazarillo de Tormes* (Lazarillo of Tormes, 1554); Pedro Navarro’s expedition to conquer Djerba in 1510 was defeated, but Hugo de Moncada’s expedition of 1520 seems to have been successful. See Adorno and Pautz, 2:128–31, 3:67.

¹⁰² Homer, 1:309 (9.76–104). In 1611, Covarrubias, 635, described the Spanish historical significance of Gelves (also Gerbi, Zerbi) as well as its Odyssean legacy, noting that the Navarro expedition’s disastrous defeat cost the life of Don García de Toledo, the son of the Duke of Alba, and that the island had been the ancient home of Homer’s lotus-eaters and its fruit, a source of irresistible temptation to Odysseus’s sailors.

Annual Meeting in 2023 were all lotus-eaters, enjoying the sights and sea air of the ancient island of Borinquén.

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