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Introduction

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In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:

Introduction

Catherine M. Jaffe (bio)

At the end of *Don Quixote* Part II, when Don Quixote and Sancho are on their way home to their village for the last time, they arrive at an inn where they contemplate some badly painted tapestries depicting Helen

of Troy and Dido. Sancho remarks:

—Yo apostaré —dijo Sancho— que antes de mucho tiempo no ha de haber bodegón, venta, ni mesón o tienda de barbero donde no ande pintada la historia de nuestras hazañas; pero querría yo que la pintasen manos de otro mejor pintor que el que ha pintado a estas.

(II, 71)¹

In the conversation that follows between the defeated knight and his squire, Don Quixote criticizes inept imitations, like Avellaneda's false continuation of *Don Quixote* (1614), that are so unlike the original that they need a caption to explain what they are. Don Quixote's comments go to the heart of what has fascinated readers of Cervantes's novel for four centuries. What is the nature of representation, and what connection does a work have to its creator and its particular historical circumstances? What is the relation between original and copy, between a text and its imitation, continuation, or translation? How do we perceive and evaluate re-presentations, imitations, [End Page 1] appropriations, and continuations of texts and characters like Don Quixote? Don Quixote himself was unnerved by the challenge Avellaneda's (false) Don Quixote posed to his identity. Immediately after viewing the badly painted tapestries, he meets Don Álvaro Tarfe, a character straight out of the pages of Avellaneda's book. Cervantes's Don Quixote—"nuestro don Quijote"² as my students invariably call him by the time we reach the novel's end—has Don Álvaro swear before a magistrate that he is the true, authentic Don Quixote.

Sancho's wager, as we now know, could not have been more prescient. As we celebrate in 2015 the publication of *Don Quixote* Part II four centuries ago, we have an opportunity to reflect once again on the profound wake left by Cervantes's masterpiece, above all in the eighteenth century. Stephen Gilman has described how "within the ocean of prose fiction there is a Cervantine Gulf Stream traceable but not rigorously surveyable."³ Indeed, Cervantes's novel and his famous

character stand at the beginning not only of the novel in the eighteenth century but also wander through other literary and artistic genres, political theories, and philosophies, and they are not limited to the Atlantic world. Throughout 2015 and 2016, the worldwide celebration of the four-hundredth anniversary of Cervantes' death has reassessed the influence, afterlives, and echoes of *Don Quixote* and its famous characters in hundreds of museum and library exhibitions, film series, television documentaries, scholarly conferences, concerts, performances, new editions, and public readings.

The four articles presented in this issue, delivered at the ASECS conference in Los Angeles in 2015, bring new perspectives and innovative critical approaches to the study of eighteenth-century quixotes and quixotisms. Collectively, these articles share a focus on how writers and readers engage *Don Quixote* in debates over the rootedness of a text in a particular national culture, history, and language, and the ways a text or character can be uprooted to circulate freely and be reappropriated by other writers for personal and even perverse purposes, by other national cultures, or be claimed for world culture. The authors study the relative value of historical and cultural authenticity and the articulation of national cultures and characters, the mechanisms of transnational exchange, and the concept of world literature. They remind us that we are never finished examining, re-evaluating, and recreating Cervantes's novel, his characters, and our own relation to them, as Sancho had predicted. **[End Page 2]**

Catherine M. Jaffe

Catherine Jaffe is Professor of Spanish at Texas State University. Her research focuses on women writers, quixotism, gender, translation, and reading in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. She is the co-editor, with Elizabeth Franklin Lewis, of *Eve's Enlightenment: Women's Experience in Spain and Spanish America, 1726–1839* (2009). She is preparing an edition and biography of María Lorenza de los Ríos, Marquesa...

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