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Johnson, Carroll B.

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Is There an Author in this Text? Sidi Hamid Benengeli, *Don Quijote* and the Metafictional Conventions of Chivalric Romance

The 98th Faculty Research Lecture, UCLA

Carroll B. Johnson

One of the most interesting aspects of *Don Quijote*, and one that most endears Cervantes's work to us at the beginning of the theoretically hip twenty-first century, is the simultaneous presence in the text of a fiction (the story of Don Quijote and Sancho, and their adventures), and a metafiction (the story of the book itself, how it comes into existence, and what its ontological status and concrete properties are).

In 1983, I took seriously the question of Don Quijote's madness and attempted to study its etiology and course in light of the categories proposed by modern psychoanalysis. The result was a book whose immediate effect was to practically forestall any further professional advancement at UCLA, but which has come to form part of the established orthodoxy within the broader context of Cervantes studies. That book was the result of taking seriously certain elements of the fiction; today, I want to attempt to take seriously the metafiction.

Chivalric romance, the popular adventure genre that Cervantes is parodying in *Don Quijote,* has a well-defined metafictional tradition. Virtually, all the books of chivalry recount the story of their own origins, and how they came to be in the hands of the reader. The Castilian romances all purport to be the work of a trustworthy historian who has found a pre-existing manuscript written in a foreign language, which contains the fiction itself, which he then either translates himself, or causes to be translated, and then presents to the reader in the reader's language.

It is generally accepted that the *topos* of the found manuscript, the foreign language, and subsequent translation goes back to stories of

the Trojan War that circulated in late Antiquity and the Middle Ages. Scholarship then traces the presence of this *topos* through the medieval Grail romances and the Arthurian tradition up to the sixteenth-century Castilian romances of chivalry. The idea is to locate these books within a culturally prestigious and textually complex tradition that reaches back to the founding event of European narrative.

Chivalric romance is the literature of Christian European feudalism. Its ideological function is to celebrate the ethics, values and exploits of the warrior aristocracy that ran Europe during the Middle Ages. The extraordinary popularity of chivalric romance in the sixteenth century is a function of the transition from medieval to early modern civilization, and the rise of new classes and new forms of social and economic organization that began to displace the warrior aristocracy as the protagonist of history.

With *Amadís de Gaula* (1508), we enter the orbit of the enormously popular Castilian romances of chivalry that constituted Don Quijote's favorite reading. Garci Rodríguez de Montalvo presents himself in 1508 as the editor of the first three *libros* of the work, and as the translator of the fourth. Everyone seems to distinguish between Libros 1-3 (Montalvo really an editor of real preexisting texts), and Libro 4 (Montalvo the author of a work of fiction which he presents as a preexisting text). This is *Las Sergas de Esplandián* (1510), which recounts the exploits of Amadís's son, Esplandián. According to Montalvo, the book was found buried in a stone tomb beneath a hermitage not far from Constantinople. It was written on parchment in a language that turned out to be Greek. It was brought to Spain by a Hungarian merchant. Sure it was. The fictional author is a certain Maestro Elisabat, a character in the earlier books, who claims to have personally witnessed the "sergas" he sets down. I should point out that California, where we live and work, was actually invented by Montalvo and existed in the *Sergas de Esplandián* years before it was discovered on the ground by an expedition sent from Mexico by Hernán Cortés.

In order to save time and avoid confusion, let me just say that of the eighteen Castilian romances of chivalry published between 1508 and 1589, thirteen purport to have been written originally in Greek, and one each in Latin, English, an unspecified foreign language, and Arabic. It is worth noting the overwhelming presence of Greek as the presumed original language.

One of the interpretative difficulties that arise is due to the fact that some of the texts we read are well and truly modernized versions or translations; that is, the phantom pre-text is real. Other texts we read are based on fictional, nonexistent, truly phantom pre-texts. And as always, when it is a question of texts, there is no internal evidence in the text we read that allows us to identify and distinguish the real from the truly phantom pre-texts. With a few notable exceptions, scholarly tradition dismisses this question, and prefers to consider the found manuscript, its original language and author, as aspects of a generic convention, one of the defining features of chivalric romance.

However, in many instances the story about the found manuscript is true. The early Renaissance, the very period when the phantom manuscript versions of *Amadís*, of *Esplandián,* and the rest were being discovered in fiction, witnessed the discovery of such fundamental and absolutely real texts as Aristotle's *Poetics* and Heliodorus's *Aethiopic History*.

In addition, the same period saw the rise of printing and the consolidation of the vernacular languages as the vehicle of cultural transmission. This means that Europe was suddenly flooded with real translations of texts written originally in Greek and Latin. And if that weren't enough, chivalric romances written originally in French were being translated into Castilian (*Lanzarote del Lago*, *Búsqueda del Santo Grial*).

Virtually, the entire corpus of chivalric romance is presumed to consist of refunditions or translations of what I've been calling "phantom pre-texts." The study of these works has naturally been the study of the extant versions, what I call "the text we read." How could it be otherwise? The only text available for reading or study is "the text we read." Nevertheless, I would like to shift the focus temporarily to the phantom pre-text itself. In some cases, and certainly in the case of the *Quijote*, the fiction of the text we read invites us to take the metafictional phantom pre-text just as seriously as we take the fictional existence and adventures of the hero. That is, we are invited to approach the fiction and the metafiction in the same spirit, and treat them both with the same respect. With that in mind, we can begin to take seriously the "device" of the fictional author and the found manuscript.

François Delpech situates the relation between the text we read and the phantom pre-text within the general context of what he calls

"the motif of the book hidden and discovered," a literary device whose purpose is to confer authenticity and prestige on the work that is in fact offered to the reader. Delpech argues that whether or not the phantom pre-text exists in fact is irrelevant, that what matters is the space of real or fictional intertextuality that is opened up, the effects of perspectivism and distancing that are achieved, and the manipulation of the reader's points of reference. The shadowy presence of the phantom pre-text has a powerful effect on the reader's relation to the text she/he reads.

Delpech goes on to relate the motif of the hidden book found to the revelation of secrets. The theme of the discovery of ancient texts hidden in enclosed spaces has deep roots in the oldest traditions of the multicultural Iberian Peninsula, and the rediscovery of the importance of textuality in the Renaissance merely served to revitalize and resemanticize this cultural-representational substratum.

The secrets contained in the hidden texts, and revealed only to a few select initiates, are the essential knowledge of the universe, the answers to the Great Questions. The corollary assumption is that essential knowledge can only be secret. The widespread diffusion of the motif of the hidden book with its essential secret knowledge is related to the enduring presence in Iberian culture of what Delpech calls a subterranean current of hermetic representations, common to Christians, Muslims, and Jews; and existing in alchemical, kabbalistic, and magical writings.

A chain of transmission reaching from ancient Sumer to Jewish revelation (Moses and his tablets, Ezekiel's vision, the initiation of Enoch) to the visionary ascent of Mohammed and receipt of the Qur'an, to what has been called "Islamic Gnosticism," culminates in the belief in a secret book, composed before the beginning of time, and containing the entire history of the universe: past, present, future. This secret book is also a sacred book, the Celestial Book, the eternal, inexhaustible archetype of all the revealed books, which are merely excerpts written on parchments or tablets. From the occidental perspective, it is not difficult to assimilate Plato's notion of essences and representations to this scheme. On the oriental side, Luce López Baralt identifies this book in Islamic scripture (Qur'an 68.1) as the writing of the "supreme pen of God" (al-qalam al-a'la) on the "well-preserved tablet" (al-lawh al-mahfuz).

In the syncretic environment of Hellenistic civilization, the idea of the Celestial Book became associated with Egyptian notions of

magical inscriptions hidden in temples and tombs, and buried in pyramids. In this way, the heavenly book comes down to earth, and goes underground; and there is established a symbolic equivalence of ascension and catabasis.

Delpech's illuminating and impeccably documented study concludes with a summary. An incorporeal but nonetheless real and above all true book, that contains the secrets of the universe, exists in fragmented and degraded form in a number of material, physical texts, available only to initiates, and hidden in enclosed or subterranean spaces. The "fictitious authorship and found manuscript device" of chivalric literature turns out to have an impressive, and impressively serious pedigree.

The foregoing raises the phantom pre-texts of chivalric tradition to a status of at least equal importance to the record of the heroes' adventures. As we know, the job of every reader of narrative is to reconstruct the story (what is presumed to have happened) on the basis of the discourse (the text we read). At the metafictional level, the reader's job is the same: to reconstruct the virtual or phantom pre-text, on the basis of the actual text.

Now, we can come back to the corpus of chivalric texts, and to the question of which language or languages they are supposed to have been translated from. The question of the specific language of the phantom pre-texts has not been seriously considered in the scholarship devoted to chivalric romance. With the crucial exception of Greek, one non-Castilian language is apparently as good as another; the important thing is the original text's age and its foreignness. The notion of the Celestial Book, however, clearly privileges one particular language—the language of the Celestial Book—above all others. The Celestial Book is a divine revelation; its language is therefore the language of divine revelation. In fact, it is *the* Divine Language. Now, since we humans can never read the Celestial Book in its original language since it remains as forever inaccessible to us as the Real in Lacanian (and Platonic) thought, we People of the Book have to make do with the languages of divine revelation that are in fact accessible to us. In multicultural Iberia, there are three divine revelations, but only two languages of divine revelation. Judaism and Islam can locate their origin and legitimacy in specific texts written originally and provided directly by God in Hebrew and Arabic. The best Christianity can do is Greek, the language of the New Testament, a document produced,

as it were, from the bottom up, by human agents writing presumably under divine inspiration. There is no founding text of Christianity analogous to Moses's tablets or Mohammed's Qur'an. Hebrew and Arabic are simultaneously vernacular and sacred languages. Moses spoke Hebrew, and God spoke to him in Hebrew; Mohammed spoke Arabic, and God spoke to him in Arabic. But Jesus spoke Aramaic, a language that appears with extreme rarity and always accompanied by a translation in the New Testament. In fact, it might be said that Christianity itself exists only in translation.

By the sixteenth century, Jewish and Muslim culture, and political power in Iberia had been subordinated to Christian authority, and forced to accept the *true religion*. Alas, the true (or at least the hegemonic) religion is the only one of the three whose language is not a vehicle of divine revelation. To *hablar cristiano*, as the phrase went, that is, to speak a Romance dialect such as Castilian, is to speak a language with a permanent inferiority complex vis-à-vis the Semitic languages of the Iberian Peninsula. I believe it is that sense of inferiority, of existential insecurity, that drives the writers of so many of the Castilian romances of chivalry to seek their origins and legitimacy in Greek, the language of the New Testament and of occidental philosophical discourse, and to a lesser extent in Latin, the language of Christian European hegemony and high culture.

Within this context, *Lepolemo, el caballero de la Cruz* (1521) occupies a unique position. It is the only member of the corpus of chivalric romance that claims to be translated from Arabic. This suggests at first that *Lepolemo* seeks a different kind of legitimacy than, say, *Esplandián* and the others, who trace their lineage to Greek. I think, however, that *Lepolemo* is actually the most insecure and defensive of the Castilian romances of chivalry. There are two prologues, one by the fictional Arab author Xartón, and the other by the anonymous Christian translator, who came upon Xartón's text during his captivity in Tunis. The translator identifies the original language as Arabic. The double prologue defines the work as a discursive battleground where Arabic and Castilian contend, and where Arabic is finally subordinated to and covered over by Castilian, the language of the text we read. This struggle is acted out at the intradiegetic level in the story of Lepolemo's relations with his Muslim overlords: they never try to dissuade him from Christianity, and he succeeds in dissuading various of them from Islam. The final victory of occidental civilization and

Christianity occurs in the 1563 sequel, *Leandro el Bel*, and conflates the discursive and the fictional levels of the text: the Arab chronicler Xartón abandons Muslim North Africa, and physically relocates in Christian Europe, where he renounces Islam, and embraces Christianity. *Lepolemo, el caballero de la Cruz* enacts at both the intra- and extradiegetic levels the triumph of the Christian religion and its vernacular-only language (Castilian), which is shown to be superior to a genuine language of divine revelation (Arabic).

Cervantes does not begin the *Quijote* with a story of a found manuscript in a foreign language. The first eight chapters ignore that generic convention in favor of a polemic with Aristotle's fundamental distinction between history and fiction. The hero's true identity is unknown and unknowable because it has been set down in various incompatible forms by various authors (historians) who have already written accounts of him. In this context, the truth of the history is discovered to be unattainable, the Aristotelian distinction between history and fiction collapses, and Cervantes has demonstrated that the phenomenon of textualization automatically turns any text into a fiction, as Robert Scholes would observe some time later.

The "Arab Manchegan historian," Sidi Hamid Benengeli, does not make his appearance until chapter 9, where a narrative presence called the Second Author finds his manuscript in Toledo. A self-confessed compulsive reader, the Second Author attempts to read the papers, but cannot. They are written in characters he recognizes as Arabic, but which he cannot understand. After arranging for a translation, he combines the anti-Aristotelian polemic with the fictional authorship-found manuscript convention, and relocates everything within the context of the interethnic tensions that defined Cervantes's society. The Second Author, evidently a spokesman for the ruling Old Christian mentality, tells us that the hero's exploits (la verdad de la historia) are first written down by an Arab, and as everyone knows, Arabs are by nature untrustworthy. The Arab's already deficient version is written in an unintelligible language that needs to be translated, and as we also know, *traduttore, traditore*. The translation, itself an altered version of the original, which was full of lies and omissions to begin with, is then edited and presented for publication by the maurophobic Second Author, who is of course free to alter, and to omit portions of the translated text as he sees fit. By juxtaposing the Old Christian Second Author and the Moorish historian, Cervantes turns his text into a

discursive battleground on which two competing ideologies compete. We have the same situation we saw back in 1521 with *Lepolemo*, but within a very different context, and with very different results.

I think that after the first eight chapters, Cervantes decided to make a statement on the most explosive and divisive socio-cultural-political issue of his time: the presence, status, and future of the Morisco population in Spain. More immediately, I think the sudden and otherwise inexplicable presence of Sidi Hamid Benengeli as the responsible historian is the result of the recent appearance, in the 1590s, of a series of concrete texts related to the Morisco presence in the Spanish national prehistory and the present.

In 1492 Fernando the Catholic conquered the Nasarid Kingdom of Granada, eliminating the Muslims as an organized political presence in the Peninsula. You can read all about it in Salman Rushdie, *The Moor's Last Sigh*. Immediately following the military victory, the Catholic monarch signed a treaty with his new subjects, whereby he agreed to recognize and respect their culture, their religion, and their civilization. By 1499, however, he had decided that he had been too liberal, and that his newly-acquired Muslim subjects needed to be subject to the same requirements as his former Jewish subjects. The Muslim population of Granada was ordered to convert to Christianity, and the resulting New Christians were now called Moriscos. During the administration of the Emperor Charles V, various attempts were made to integrate the Morisco population into the majority Old-Christian culture. Financial incentives were offered to Old Christians who were willing to marry Moriscas, and to move into what had been the old Muslim quarter of their cities, with virtually no success. A pattern was established: a minority Morisco community (actually the majority in places like the old Kingdom of Granada) struggled to preserve its cultural identity—language, religion, customs and traditions, costume—in the face of an official policy of enforced conformity, which included police incursions into living quarters, arrests of suspected terrorists, and all the other aspects of this kind of program we have become all too familiar with in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries: racial profiling, ethnic cleansing, homeland security.

In 1567, the ethnic and religious tensions created by the policies of his Catholic Majesty came to a head. The Morisco population of Granada simply revolted against Old Christian political hegemony. Its leaders retreated into the mountainous region south of Granada

called the Alpujarra, and a state of civil war prevailed for about two years, when the rebellion was finally quashed by Don Juan de Austria, the illegitimate half-brother of Philip II, and perhaps the ablest military commander in Europe at the time, who incidentally would be Cervantes's commander-in-chief at the Battle of Lepanto in 1571.

The Alpujarra revolt shook the country. It revealed the fragility of Old Christian control of the state and the people. It revealed the vulnerability of the national territory to invasion not only by Muslims from nearby North Africa, but also by the Evil Empire itself, in the form of the Ottoman sultan's janissaries, who were in fact called in by their Grenadine coreligionists. It called forth some fairly draconian responses. The Morisco population of Granada was forcibly resettled around the Kingdom of Castile and integrated into communities of Old Christians. One of the principal destinations for these uprooted Grenadines was Cervantes's La Mancha. His own wife was from a place called Esquivias, which was full of resettled Grenadine Moriscos. The wife of one of his closest friends, the poet Pedro Laínez, was a Morisca named Juana Gaitán. El Toboso, the home of the fictional Dulcinea, was a place almost totally populated by Moriscos. Sancho Panza's friend and neighbor Ricote, who appears in *Don Quijote II*, 54, is in all probability a Grenadine Morisco resettled in La Mancha along with so many others.

So after the Alpujarra revolts, the country becomes acutely conscious of the Morisco population and its place in society. The most extreme faction called for the physical elimination of the Moriscos, beginning with the forced castration of all the men and boys. In the end, cooler heads prevailed. Over the objections of the Valencian and Aragonese aristocrats whose prosperity depended on a huge Morisco agricultural labor force, all the Moriscos were forcibly expelled from Spain between 1609 and 1614. The effect of the expulsion on the lives of individual Spaniards is dramatized in *Don Quijote II*, 54, where Sancho runs into his old friend and neighbor, the Morisco Ricote, who tells him what his life has been like since the decree went into effect. His family has been split asunder: he thinks his wife and daughter are in Muslim North Africa, while he has settled in Protestant Germany. He has also been separated from the wealth he had managed to accumulate. The text makes it clear that he is just as Spanish as his Old Christian neighbor Sancho Panza; the only difference is that he can no longer live in his own country. He has sneaked back in, in the

company of some German pilgrims and at the risk of his life, in order to find some trace of his wife and daughter, and to recover the wealth he had buried in his backyard.

One of the consequences of the Alpujarra revolt and its aftermath was the appearance of several texts, both literary and non-literary, whose subject is the history and legitimacy of the Arab-Islamic presence in the Iberian Peninsula. We have to keep in mind that the land belonged to the Muslims, and was called al-Andalus for seven centuries before the Christians took it away from them, and now the descendants of those Muslims find themselves in the position of more or less humbly asserting their right to be there.

The first of these texts are the so-called "leaden tablets of the Sacro Monte" and the "parchments of the Torre Turpiana," discovered in 1588 and 1590 in the ruins of what had been a mosque in Granada. Then came a presumed historical work entitled *Historia verdadera del rey don Rodrigo* by the Morisco Miguel de Luna, published in 1592, a revisionist version of the officially consecrated mythic beginnings of the modern Spanish Christian state. Finally, Ginés Pérez de Hita's fictionalized version of the last days of the Nazarid Kingdom of Granada, *Guerras civiles de Granada*, appeared in 1595.

My thesis is that it is Cervantes's consciousness of this sociopolitical reality and the suddenly important textual tradition that derives from it that motivated him to "moriscicize" his own text, to make it engage the most pressing social problematic of his era.

Both the *Guerras civiles de Granada* and the revisionist *Historia verdadera del rey don Rodrigo* purport to have been written in the Arabic language by Arab historians, and translated later into Castilian. Both works also reveal a textual genealogy of sufficient complexity to have fascinated Cervantes. The *Historia verdadera* especially has to be lurking in the gestation of *Don Quijote*. Although opposed to it in many ways, Cervantes's text is imposible without Luna's *Historia verdadera*.

The link between the two is what has come to be known as the "Granada forgeries," as L.P. Harvey proposed back in 1974. Luna was one of two Morisco scholars who were hired to translate the *Pergaminos de la torre Turpiana* and the *Libros plúmbeos del Sacromonte* into Spanish. Scholarship in general now considers that in all probability he and his colleague Alonso del Castillo were in fact the coauthors of both documents.

The Granada documents were part of a campaign, foredoomed to failure, by the Moriscos of Granada to assert their legitimacy as Spaniards, and their right to be in Granada. The documents purport to date from long before the Muslim invasion of 711, and they purport to document that Granada and its inhabitants had been evangelized at approximately the same time the body of Saint James the Apostle was supposed to have washed ashore up in Galicia. The present population of Granada, logically, would be the descendants of those very Old Christians. The documents further reveal unsuspected theological similarities and compatibilities between Christianity and Islam. Taken as a whole, the Granada forgeries are a pathetic attempt to arrest the tide of history, which had clearly turned against the Morisco population, by laying claim to a history that "out-Christians" the Old Christians' own history. Scholarship has preferred simply to dismiss them as a not very sophisticated hoax.

Both Américo Castro and L.P. Harvey consider that Cervantes, in his European-rationalist mode, had nothing but contempt for the Granada forgeries, that he was in effect ridiculing the Grenadine ecclesiastical establishment that continued to take them seriously even after they had been officially discredited by Rome. I would like to propose a different reading, one that resituates Sidi Hamid Benengeli more sympathetically in the context of his relationship to the Second Author.

The text we read calls Sidi Hamid an "Arab Manchegan historian" (1, 22). As a Manchegan, he is Don Quijote's *Landsman*. In order to have written about Don Quijote, he must have lived in La Mancha contemporaneous with or subsequent to him. Locating Sidi Hamid Benengeli in time and space identifies him as a Morisco. Even scholars outside the Morisco-cultural studies theoretical orbit, such as James Parr, agree that Sidi Hamid Benengeli is "no exotic Middle Easterner, nor even a North African, but ... a Manchegan Moor, ... perforce a *Morisco*." His identity as a Morisco has consequences for the kind of manuscript he might plausibly have been able to produce. Most probably, Sidi Hamid Benengeli's manuscript is not written in the Arabic language, as all of us, including Parr in the very act of identifying Sidi Hamid as a Morisco, have always assumed. For the text to have been written in Arabic in La Mancha, Sidi Hamid Benengeli would have had to have been a participant in the brilliant culture of Muslim al-Andalus which was extinguished politically in 1492 and which began to be squeezed to death culturally in 1499, when

Fernando the Catholic abrogated the promises he had made to his new Muslim subjects. An Arabic text of the history of Don Quijote, whose exploits occur in the 1590s and after, would have to antedate the events it recounts by at least a century.

The use of the Arabic language by the Moriscos was prohibited by the pragmatic of 1567 coincident with the Alpujarra revolt, but the Moriscos had been losing Arabic for perhaps a half-century before. All the scholarly sources agree that by 1600 the Moriscos were generally ignorant of Arabic, with regional exceptions in rural Aragón and urban Valencia and Granada. Their ignorance forced them to contravene the prohibition on translating the Qur'an, a matter of the greatest seriousness, as Anwar Chejne reports:

> The doctrine of the divine origin of the Qur'an connotes the divine origin of the Arabic language itself, making it a unique language whose expression cannot be duplicated by any other tongue—hence, the prohibition of committing the Qur'an to any foreign language, on the ground that such translation would distort not only the beauty and sonority of Arabic, but the actual meaning of the Qur'an itself. This prohibition presented a dilemma for non-Arabic speaking Muslims and particularly for the Moriscos, unwilling to compromise their faith and yet unable to maintain knowledge of Arabic.

This in turn leads to the conclusion that the manuscript the Second Author discovers in Toledo is not in fact written in Arabic, but in Aljamía, a dialect of Spanish spoken by the Morisco community and written in Arabic script. For purposes of comparison, we might say that Aljamía is to Spanish as Yiddish is to German. The word derives from Arabic *ayamiya* 'foreign language,' in turn derived from *a'yam* 'barbarous, foreign.' Like the Greeks, the Arabs identified any language other than their own (and Hebrew), as "barbarous."

There is a disagreement among those scholars who identify Sidi Hamid Benengeli as a Morisco, and who want to make something of it, as to the language of his manuscript. Cervantes's text nowhere identifies the original language that Sidi Hamid Benengeli wrote in as Arabic. The Second Author reports that the manuscript he found, bundled up to be fed to silkworms, was written in "characters I recognized as Arabic, but which I could not understand."

Within Cervantes's metafiction, the discovery that Sidi Hamid Benengeli wrote in Castilian, in Arabic script, that is, in Aljamía, permits us to locate his manuscript within the canon of Aljamiado literature. It is one of a very few texts written in Aljamía to have had the good fortune of being transliterated into standard Spanish, and made available to the monographic Spanish-reading community.

The text we read is the Second Author's paraphrase of the Morisco's transliterated version of Sidi Hamid Benengeli's original text. Sidi Hamid's original is a virtual text, in the sense that it only exists in translation. It is the work of a member of a culturally impoverished, socially, and politically subordinated minority that has been overlain, made to disappear, by its "actual" version, which is the Castilian text offered by the Second Author. This process is akin to what Jean Baudrillard describes with the terms reversed, as "the liquidation of the Real and Referential," and "the extermination of the Other" by the Virtual. Baudrillard uses the suggestively pertinent phrase "ethnic cleansing" to describe the eclipse of the Real and Referential by the Virtual. I think the two versions of the *Quijote*, Sidi Hamid Benengeli's and the Second Author's, suggest that Plato was right after all, that the physical, palpable, sensible world (or text) is not the real one, but only what Plato would call a representation and Baudrillard would call a simulacrum. The simulacrum, that is, the Second Author's text, displaces and obliterates the real one, which is accessible only through a powerful and sympathetic act of imagination. Except that it is repeatedly brought to the reader's attention by the Second Author's frequently disparaging commentary. That is, it is supposed to disappear, but it won't, thanks to the Second Author's compulsive attempts to discredit it. It remains as a shadow presence, like the unassimilated Morisco population, whose linguistic expression in Aljamía exactly mirrors (or is the model for) what we observe in the *Quijote*: a hybrid form that reveals its underlying duality in the act of attempting to conceal it. The model of virtuality has recently been used to describe the Morisco community in general. (cf. Barbara Fuchs, "Virtual Spaniards: The Moriscos and the Fictions of Spanish Identity." *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* 2.1 (2001): 13–26).

This is how I see the relation between Sidi Hamid Benengeli's original and the Second Author's overlay version in *Don Quijote I*. In Part II things are different. As Freud discovered when he

attempted to transfer his discoveries concerning sexuality and the Oedipus complex from boys to girls, the second reality is different from the first one, and much more complex. In 1614, Luna's *Historia verdadera* was superseded as a principal intertext by the continuation of *Don Quijote* by an anonymous writer who signed himself Alonso Fernández de Avellaneda. This is not the place to enter the discussion concerning his true identity, recently reanimated by the theories of Martín de Riquer as reactivated by Alfonso Martín Jiménez. Avellaneda's Second Part changed the rules. Cervantes's Part II is a response to Avellaneda's, as Stephen Gilman and now more insistently James Iffland have shown. But, again like Freud and female sexuality, it's not that simple. Cervantes's Second Part engages Avellaneda's, and it simultaneously reacts to its own First Part. This latter relation has been well studied; I want to concentrate here on the Cervantes-Avellaneda connection.

Of course Avellaneda's book has a fictional author, and like Cervantes's Sidi Hamid Benengeli, he is an Arab. The fictitious authorship turns Avellaneda's book into another one of these virtual texts that only exist in Spanish translation, like Luna's *Historia verdadera* and Cervantes's *Don Quijote*. Scholars have in general delighted in drawing unflattering comparisons between Avellaneda's Alisolán and Cervantes's Sidi Hamid Benengeli, to conclude that Avellaneda simply didn't understand the function of the fictional author, as Cervantes did.

It is true that Alisolán is introduced in chapter 1, and then disappears until he makes a brief, inconsequential appearance in chapter 25. And at the end of his book, Avellaneda appears to have forgotten poor Alisolán completely. There is nothing like the forceful appearance of Sidi Hamid Benengeli in Cervantes's II, 74. Instead, there are references to the Manchegan archives and the diligent work of no one in particular: "Estas relaciones se han podido recoger, con no poco trabajo, de los archivos manchegos, acerca de la tercera salida de don Quijote" (462-463). However, it would be a mistake to conclude that Avellaneda is indifferent to the possibilities latent in Sidi Hamid Benengeli, or to "the Morisco question" in general.

Alisolán is presented as the translator of a text originally (and specifically) written in Arabic within a specific and limited time frame. Like Sidi Hamid Benengeli, Alisolán is modern, that is, contemporaneous with or later than Don Quijote. He is specifically identified as

an Aragonese Morisco, as Sidi Hamid Benengeli is specifically identified as a Manchegan. It may be relevant to recall that the Morisco population of Aragón was more numerous and more deeply rooted than that of La Mancha, where the vast majority of the Moriscos were settled following the Alpujarra uprising of 1567. Alisolán finds the original story of Don Quijote's adventures written in Arabic some time after the expulsion of the Moriscos from Aragón in 1609. This means that Alisolán is not the original historian, as is Sidi Hamid Benengeli, but an editor, more akin to Cervantes's Second Author combined with the anonymous aljamiado Morisco who transliterates Sidi Hamid's manuscript. This also means that the original historian, Alisolán's predecessor, was a Morisco who had not lost his command of Arabic, and that Alisolán himself also commands the sacred language of the Qur'an. This in turn suggests a regional difference, between the culturally impoverished Moriscos of La Mancha and their Aragonese cousins, a difference that Pedro Longás had noted in 1915.

Finally, these facts and this chronology suggest the first of some nagging questions. Why was Alisolán not expelled along with the other Aragonese Moriscos? It is well known that the Aragonese landowning aristocrats were dependent on Morisco agricultural labor, and that the expulsion was consequently unpopular with them. Perhaps significant numbers of Aragonese Moriscos escaped deportation. Louis Cardaillac reports that a parish priest in Tortosa, on orders from his bishop, prepared documents that allowed certain Moriscos to "quedarse como si fueran cristianos viejos."

Within Avellaneda's fiction, the status of Don Quijote's friend Don Alvaro Tarfe is even more disconcerting. He is introduced as a Morisco from Granada, "a descendant of the ancient lineage of the Tarfes, close relatives of the King, and famous in war, who became Christian after the Catholic King Fernando conquered Granada." Second question: What is this Grenadine Morisco doing wandering around in Aragón, hobnobbing with local aristocrats, getting Don Quijote released from jail on his (Don Alvaro's) recognizance and otherwise enjoying considerable social prestige and exercising considerable influence, on the eve of the expulsion? There begin to be grounds for situating Alisolán's work within a cultural context—Aragón—quite different from Sidi Hamid Benengeli's La Mancha.

Alisolán's absence from his own book is the first focus of Cervantes's reaction to Avellaneda. Everyone has observed that Sidi

Hamid Benengeli is mentioned much more frequently in Part II than he was in Part I. It is also worth noting that in Part II, but not in Part I, Sidi Hamid's original text actually bleeds through the Second Author's overlay on several occasions where the Morisco historian is allowed to speak for himself.

The two texts also react differently to the expulsion of the Moriscos. Within the fiction, life in Avellaneda's Aragón seems to go on as it always had, irrespective of the expulsion. We have already noted the ease with which Don Alvaro Tarfe moves about, his highly-placed social contacts, and so on. There is also a hilarious and ideologically fraught attempt to force Sancho to convert to Islam, with special emphasis on the perils of circumcision and dietary restrictions (351–357), as though conversion were a real possibility in 1614 (cf. Iffland, 322–325). Avellaneda aggressively denies the fact of the expulsion, while Cervantes foregrounds it and lays bare its horrible consequences, both personal and societal.

Toward the end of Cervantes's Part II, that "lying Arab" Sidi Hamid Benengeli comes forward as the guarantor of both the characters' authenticity and the "verdad de la historia," in opposition to both Avellaneda and to the maurophobic Second Author. This means, of course, that he is not a liar, nor is his text untrustworthy. As far as I know, Emilio Sola is the only other commentator who makes this crucial point (*Un Mediterráneo*, 268). In chapter 59 of Cervantes's Part II, two readers of Avellaneda's text contrast Avelleneda, not his fictional Arab author Alisolán, to Sidi Hamid Benengeli, not to Cervantes, and they declare that Sidi Hamid's Don Quijote and Sancho, not Cervantes's, are the genuine articles.

At the end, the discourse suddenly belongs to Sidi Hamid Benengeli, and as Luce López Baralt has shown, it is incomprehensible unless it is read "from the cultural coordinates of Islam" ("The Supreme Pen," 506). López Baralt interprets Sidi Hamid's pen as a version of the "Supreme Pen" (al-qalam al-a'la) of the Qur'an (68:1), which writes on the "Well-Preserved Tablet" (al-lawh al-mahfuz), which in turn contains everything that is to happen. The unalterable inevitability of Sidi Hamid Benengeli-God's pen first identifies Avellaneda's pen as false (even blasphemous), and second forecloses the possibility of any continuation. A hadith affirms "the pen has dried concerning what shall be," and even the most Islamophobic are familiar with the phrase "it is written," not to mention Omar Khayam's verses about the moving finger.

The pen's words, as projected by Sidi Hamid Benengeli, establish a necessary, organic relationship between the pen and Don Quijote himself. "Para mí sola nació don Quijote, y yo para él: él supo obrar y yo escribir, solos los dos somos para en uno." López Baralt explains the disconcerting phrase "somos para en uno," which normally refers to a betrothal, by observing that "the Supreme Pen and the Well-Preserved Tablet constitute in Islam an inviolable 'spiritual marriage'" (511). The pen makes overt reference to Avellaneda, but not to the Second Author. The final words, as López Baralt has also observed, belong not to Sidi Hamid Benengeli or to his pen, but to Cervantes himself, who recalls that "no ha sido otro mi deseo que poner en aborrecimiento de los hombres las fingidas y disparatadas historias de los libros de caballerías," which thanks to "mi verdadero don Quijote" are now doomed to extinction. The Spanish pronouns and gender-inflected endings make it clear that the speaker is no longer the feminine pen, but the masculine Cervantes.

Sidi Hamid Benengeli's virtual text now occupies the place of the Second Author's actual text, that is, the virtual text has become the genuine one. The Second Author is completely effaced, and Sidi Hamid's pen has morphed into the voice of Cervantes. It would appear that the Second Author's attempt to obliterate Sidi Hamid Benengeli's Aljamiado intertext, visible in his strategy in Part I, has been defeated, and the Second Author banished. It may be, however, that a relative balance of power has been inverted: the subaltern has become the dominant, as in Freud's famous formulation, "where Id was, there shall Ego be." And as everyone knows, that balance can be extremely precarious.

Textually, what we have been witnessing ever since Sidi Hamid Benengeli's introduction in I, 9 is a struggle for control of the discourse. Socially, this translates into a struggle for dominance, except that it doesn't really. In a diglossic, dominant/subaltern relationship such as that between Old Christians and Moriscos in 1615, the subaltern member struggles merely for the recognition and validation of his existence by the Other, just as Don Quijote's existential project turns out to be a version of the same struggle. Now, in the fiction, Don Quijote's struggle ends in failure: he is forced to renounce his project and his existence as Don Quijote. In the metafiction, it plays out differently. As we have just observed, the Second Author, the spokesman for the Old Christian Establishment, is effaced and

replaced first by Sidi Hamid Benengeli, then by Sidi Hamid's pen (and this may be the place to make the pen-phallus connection), and then by the fictionalized, textualized presence of the "real" author, returning to his own project as enunciated in the prologue to Part I.