> appeared, and with that inimitable Wit and Humor turned all this Romantick Honour and Love to Ridicule, the *Spaniards*, he said, began to grow ashamed of both, and to laugh at Fighting and Loving... and the consequences of this... this *Spaniard* would needs have pass for a great Cause of the Ruin of *Spain*.[2]

Such perceptions as Temple's are eloquent testimony to the fact that, from very early on, *Don Quijote* was perceived to have extraordinary cultural power. It was never just a funny book. Giving a satisfactory account of the nature of its influence is, however, a complex matter. Modern Hispanic literary historians are more likely to see *Don Quijote* as symptom rather than cause of the decline of Imperial Spain; the proscription of duelling by the Council of Trent in its December 1563 session might have had more effect on the chivalric code than did Cervantes, and the structural economic weaknesses resulting from managing a huge European and American empire certainly had more effect on Spain's decline. Cervantes was not the first writer to parody knight-errantry. In England, chivalric works were from early on written hand-in-glove with parodies of them—witness the fourteenth-century example of Chaucer's tale of Sir Thopas in the *Canterbury Tales*.

Nevertheless, a persuasive case can be made that the publication of *Don Quijote* was one crucial factor—there were others—in the creation of an early modern sense of what medievalism was.[3] Writers of Shakespeare's generation shared a sense of their *not* being medieval, a sense partly created by Cervantes' depiction of the irrelevance of that era to modernity, his deflation of the classical-medieval romance hybrid. The 'metatextuality' of *Don Quijote*, its simultaneous narrative progression and citation of the chivalric and epic/romance sources being sent up by the developing story (Montalvo's *Amadís de Gaula* (1508), Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* (1532), Fernández' *Belianís de Grecia* (1547), Moraes' *Palmerín de Inglaterra* (1547) and a host of others), heightens an awareness of the textual nature of all fiction. Books, in short, are made of other books. Several explanations have been given for Shakespeare's turn towards a self-consciously ironic form of romance in his late career. Some scholars now consider that the discovery of Cervantes may be the single most important consideration.[4] The tale of the Curious Impertinent inset into *Don Quijote*, so similar to the plot in *Cymbeline* in which Posthumus tests the virtue of his beloved Innogen with disastrous results, is not normally adduced as a source. Boccaccio's *Decameron* (*c.*1351) is a source common to both Cervantes and Shakespeare, but given the historical proximity, it is possible that Shakespeare's interest was rekindled by the Spanish version.

[2] Sir William Temple, *Miscellanea. The Second Part. In Four Essays* (1690), 70.

[3] See Bart van Es, 'Late Shakespeare and the Middle Ages', in Helen Cooper, Ruth Morse, and Peter Holland (eds), *Medieval Shakespeare: Pasts and Presents* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 45–9; van Es points out that the antiquarian William Camden in 1605 was the first writer to use the term 'middle age[s]' in our modern sense (43–4).

[4] Valerie Wayne, '*Don Quixote* and Shakespeare's Collaborative Turn to Romance', in David Carnegie and Gary Taylor (eds), *The Quest for Cardenio: Shakespeare, Fletcher, Cervantes, and the Lost Play* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 217–38.

Cervantes, it appears, assisted in the creation of a new period that would make possible what we now recognize as the modern novel. How did Cervantes' writing influence the genesis and development of the English novel? That is the substance of the present chapter.

Don Quijote and the *Novelas ejemplares* in English Literary Culture

During the pre-novelistic period of English literary culture, it was in the theatre that Cervantes had his most significant effect. His most influential writings, *Don Quijote* and the *Novelas ejemplares* of 1613, were published at a time of exceptional English interest in Spanish culture—a country reopened to diplomatic relations in 1604 after nearly half a century of continuous rivalry and warfare. When James VI of Scotland ascended the English throne in 1603, a speedy end to Elizabeth's Spanish wars was a strong expectation placed upon him, duly delivered by the Treaty of London ratified in Valladolid in June 1605. On the return of the diplomatic mission to London, a wave of Cervantic enthusiasm commenced, the year 1607 defining a 'Cervantic moment' in English theatrical culture, as evidenced by the fact that Beaumont's *Knight of the Burning Pestle*, George Wilkins' *The Miseries of Enforced Marriage* and Thomas Middleton's *Your Five Gallants*, published in that year, all refer to *Don Quijote*. Culturally Hispanophile connections were being ardently pursued by John Fletcher, Shakespeare's collaborator on a play now lost, probably called *The History of Cardenio* and based on the Cardenio story from *Don Quijote*. Through his earlier collaborator Francis Beaumont, a cousin of Henry Hastings, fifth Earl of Huntingdon, Fletcher gained the patronage of a kinship group—Hastings and the Sidneys—who had long been interested in Spanish romance and culture more broadly.[5] Ben Jonson shows familiarity with *Don Quijote* in his plays and poetry by 1610; before that, sometime around 1606–7, arguably the most significant homage to Cervantes in the entire history of his reception commenced. Thomas Shelton, an Irish Roman Catholic who had spent much of his life in exile in Spain and the Spanish Netherlands, began to translate the first part of *Don Quijote* into English. That translation, published in 1612, remains the bedrock of subsequent English *Quijotes*. Cervantes' continuation of *Don Quijote* into a second part, published in Madrid in 1615, would also be rapidly Englished—a translation often assumed to be Shelton's, but only dubiously so. Stronger candidates are the translators Leonard Digges and James Mabbe, who both contributed commendatory verses to the Shakespeare first folio, and were in Spain during the period 1611–14. Mabbe, sometime Secretary to Sir John Digby, England's ambassador to Spain, published in 1640 the first translation of six (out of

[5] Alexander Samson, '"Last thought upon a windmill": Cervantes and Fletcher', in J. A. G. Ardila (ed.), *The Cervantean Heritage: Reception and Influence of Cervantes in Britain* (London: Legenda, 2009), 223–33.