

Modern Languages & Literatures Bellini Colloquium

Don Quijote without Don Quijote

Timothy A. McCallister

Visiting Assistant Professor of Hispanic Studies



Since the publication of Miguel de Cervantes' *El ingenioso hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha* (1605), two questions have hung over the novel. First, how could an obscure tax collector with a scant publishing record have written it? Second, how does the work hold together? The episodes that make up the first half of the novel, of a crazed hidalgo-turned-knight-errant tilting against the indifference of early modern Spain, give way in the second half to a different constellation of characters, plots, and literary textures. If the title character is not playing a peripheral role, he is altogether absent. The tendency during most of the four centuries of *Quijote* criticism has been to conclude that Cervantes was a middling genius drawing inspiration from an unsystematic muse.

The talk will propose a new answer to these two questions, embarking on an excursion in over-reading not unlike the one that sets the novel in motion.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 3:30 PM
WASHINGTON HALL 315