Introduction

Cuzco, Peru, 1570. As Viceroy Francisco de Toledo makes his formal entrance into the city, he is greeted with elaborate pageantry. In the main square, once site of the Inca festivals, a Moorish castle and an enchanted wood have been erected for the celebration. The mock-Moors emerge from the castle to capture young women at a fountain, only to be pursued by valiant Christian knights, who engage them in fierce mock combat. The conquistadors play "themselves." The Moors are played by the Indians.

Bristol, England, 1613. To celebrate Queen Anne's visit, the city stages a water-combat between a Christian ship and two Turkish galleys. After a lively mock battle, the "Turks" are brought as prisoners before the Queen, who laughingly observes that they are "not only like Turks by their apparell, but by their countenances." [1]

The representation of an encounter with the other is always fraught with difficulties. To mime such an encounter is also, fundamentally, to set the self adrift in a space where identity becomes nothing but props and costume. The two examples above convey some sense of the complexity of intercultural performance on early modern imperial stages. In the first, a time-honored Mediterranean script is produced in an American setting, casting the natives of the New World as the Islamic bogeymen of the Old.[2] Yet by 1570 the Indians playing Moors in Cuzco were almost certainly baptized Christians, a product of the evangelization much touted by Spaniards as their justification for the Conquista, and hardly "the infidel." The casting stretches the limits of verisimilitude, and the staging of continuity between two very different Spanish enterprises actually displays the contradictions between available story-lines and available actors. If the Indians can represent the Muslims, have the Spaniards in fact succeeded in their evangelical mission? If, on the other hand, they cannot, then at whom is the violence of Spanish conquest aimed, and why? Perhaps the "infidel" Indians are simply standing in for their unbaptized brethren, or perhaps their very participation in the Spanish performance marks the success of the Conquista. Yet the elaborate rehearsal of Old World quarrels in the New raises important questions about the often contradictory

roles that Spain plays as a colonizing power, and the identities available to its imperial others.

The second episode is even more tantalizing. Here, there is no problem with the script: a straightforward battle against a clear enemy – Islamic pirates – on a vulnerable site on the coast of England. Nor is there any difficulty in casting the right actors – or is there? The problem seems to lie in the fact that the English are only too well suited for the roles of Turks and pirates. Even when they remove their props and "apparell," they *still* look like Turks, as the Queen does not fail to point out. Are they wearing blackface, in an effort to create a racialized difference? Do they merely look uncouth, tanned by the sun and fresh from the "combat"? Or does the identification in fact go deeper? The role that sticks to these English Turks evokes the problematic afterlife of privateering in Jacobean England, where the illicit exploits of renegade corsairs threatened to collapse the distinctions between English friend and Muslim foe. Although the English had embraced state-authorized piracy as an imperial strategy during the reign of Elizabeth, James vehemently renounced such tactics. Nonetheless, English renegades continued to swell the ranks of the corsairs, crossing the geographic and religious boundary of the Mediterranean to establish their bases on the Barbary Coast. When, after the Bristol performance, James' foreign queen humorously identifies the English actors with the Turks they "merely" represent, she belies the difference between self and other that the mock-battle ostensibly stages. The imitators, Anne pointedly suggests, are too much like the imitated. Behind the humor of the moment lies a recognition of the fragility of English identity.

As the above examples suggest, scenes of elaborate cultural mimesis register the contradictions involved in translating the scripts for the emergent empires to new locales. Over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as Spain and England expanded into New World empires against a background of continued European struggles against Islam, the transatlantic and Mediterranean exchanges attendant upon such expansion became increasingly complex. This project proposes a critical reading of identity and difference – constantly invoked in those exchanges – as volatile and pliable relations between cultures, rather than as necessary correlatives of traits inherent within

them. It exposes the intricate relations of imitation and contradistinction among the emerging European empires and would-be empires, as well as between them and their non-European others. Different national experiences – such as England's and Spain's – prove to be interconnected even as these nations pursue their own process of individuation.

The confrontation with Islam, in its many incarnations, was crucial for Europe's cultural construction of itself as a geographic and imperial center. Spain, especially, underwent the double experience of acquiring an empire while holding Islam at bay and investing enormous energies into excising Moors and Moorish culture from the newly constituted nation. The consolidation of the state – both as unified metropole and as overseas empire – was predicated largely on the attainment of religious and ethnic homogeneity. But it was not always easy to distinguish Islamic other from Christian self, and the pertinent texts evince significant anxieties about the possibility of achieving a cohesive ethnic and religious self for the emerging nation while negotiating its expansion. Because, as the case of Spain patently shows, the dynamics of individuation and national consolidation in the Old World and in the New are so intimately connected, the study of empire in this period is best approached as an investigation of *imperium,* the Roman term that denotes a state's rule not only over colonies but also over the metropole: the "home base" and its subjects.

This book examines Europe's vision of Islam as external and internal threat in a context of nascent imperialism. It does not attempt the same for Islam's vision of Europe. Instead, it supplements the transatlantic perspective on early modern imperialism with an attention to the cultural and literary situation in the Mediterranean. The exportation of epic and romance to the Americas, the adoption of Spanish religious ideology by native American writers, and the expansion of Mediterranean piracy to the Atlantic all mark the profound interdependence of these imperial and cultural arenas. The literary problems are traditional: the status of representation in the period, the translation of established forms to new and potentially disruptive contexts. Less familiar is the overriding crux, a new conception of imitative representation. Mimesis emerges as both a powerful rhetorical weapon and a cultural – i.e. not simply

literary – phenomenon.

The capacious cultural mimesis that I explore here does not, however, describe the first-order imitation among cultures which so fascinated ethnosociologists and historians of the early twentieth century.[3] Instead, it involves the deliberate representation of sameness. My reading expands mimesis from the aesthetic realm to the culture at large as it analyzes the intentionality, the power dynamics, and the political consequences of pointed imitation. The mimesis that I trace effects inclusion for marginalized subjects by challenging the construction of colonial difference, as the very distinctions on which imperial ideology depends are trumped by the production of simulacra, facsimiles, or counterfeits within the text of colonial culture. At a larger level, the deliberate imitation of both colonial and metropolitan practices and discourses threatens state legitimacy by negating its singularity. Ideology pirated or ventriloquized becomes surprisingly vulnerable – instead of reproducing it, purposeful mimesis undermines imperial claims to originary authority. Most importantly, mimetic mirrorings among emerging early modern nations challenge the process of individuation by which those nations attempt to become fully consolidated states with an exceptional claim to an imperial destiny. Imitation compromises the narratives of national distinction by emphasizing inconvenient similarities and shared heritages. In this sense, even the traditional imitation of literary precedents participates in the larger dynamics of cultural mimesis, by diluting the original force of ideology in epics that recast early modern encounters between colony and metropolis or among imperial rivals.

In our much fragmented, post-modern academy, studies of power and representation have been galvanized by careful assessments of the role of difference, both in the Saussurian–Derridian linguistic version – *différance* – and in the Lacanian/Foucauldian/post-colonial recuperations of marginalized Others. What I propose is that we consider also the political and rhetorical valence of *sameness* – identification, mimicry, reproduction. As complementary opposites, sameness and difference cannot truly be divided: the study of fidelity in representation leads necessarily to a consideration of adulteration, while accounts of imposed uniformity must generally consider the existence of

subversive mimicry, the troubling same-but-different. What advantages, therefore, does the study of cultural mimesis offer? In the first place, if mimesis is defined as an act of commission, it allows for the study of the agency involved in such a gesture. How and why do individuals or states imitate? Second, and more crucially, cultural mimesis provides a bridge across that stubborn gap between the self-sufficient, institutionally reified incarnations of "literature" and "history." Both are subject to the operations of mimesis. Yet this concept is not merely another bridge for the literary to colonize the historical field: crucial to it is the redefinition of mimesis to include non-literary phenomena, designating the calculated imitation of a model, whether by subjects, polities, or texts.

The attempt to bring together literature and history as texts characterized by rhetorical figures is hardly novel – even the New Historicism must surely yield its *new* to some *newer* before long. Hayden White's revolutionary reconceptualization of history as a series of texts existing within the "Tropics of Discourse" attempted to systematize in great detail the "mode of emplotment" of historical narratives.[4] Yet his structuralist model of discourse considered mimesis inert; it was simply the "description of the 'data' found in the field of inquiry being marked out for analysis."[5] White's mimesis is inherent in the narrative of history, and devoid of agency or power. To trot out once again the most overused of the metaphors for mimesis, it is a mirror held up by no one, and before which no one in particular is preening. As such, it corresponds to the static notion of mimesis as representation of reality, richly explored in a humanistic vein in Erich Auerbach's compendious *Mimesis* (1946). What I propose instead is a concept of mimesis as the fun-house mirror, the reflection that dazzles, the impersonator, the sneaky copy, the double agent – mimesis, that is, as a deliberate performance of sameness that necessarily threatens, or at least modifies, the original.[6]

The notion of an active, aggressive imitation has been developed in very different ways by two cultural critics of an anthropological bent. Although the work of René Girard and that of Michael Taussig could not appear more dissimilar, they share a concept of mimesis as a powerful phenomenon with definite social consequences, and one which subjects harness to their particular

goals. With his concept of "mimetic desire," Girard aims to remedy the exclusion of "one essential human behavior from the types subject to imitation – namely, desire and, more fundamentally still, appropriation. If one individual imitates another when the latter appropriates some object, the result cannot fail to be rivalry or conflict."[7] His analysis, although rich with insights on the workings of desire in triangulation and the tensions between models and anti-models, remains firmly focused on the individual when discussing Western texts. Although Girard addresses larger social interactions in pre-modern societies, he does not extrapolate from Western canonical texts to their political contexts.

Taussig's *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses* investigates mimesis as a double phenomenon: "a copying or imitation, and a palpable, sensuous connection between the very body of the perceiver and the perceived."[8] Taussig connects the history of mimesis, and especially of nineteenth-century "mimetic machines" to the experience of European colonialism, granting mimesis a real power to undermine both hierarchies and differences:

Mastery is no longer possible. The West as mirrored in the eyes and handiwork of its Others undermines the stability which mastery needs. What remains is unsettled and unsettling interpretation in constant movement with itself – what I have elsewhere called a Nervous System – because the interpreting self is itself grafted into the object of study. The self enters into the alter against which the self is defined and sustained.[9]

As Taussig envisions it, mimesis functions as a powerful weapon for non-Western subjects, challenging both the distinctiveness and the hegemony of the West. But what of mimetic reproduction among the Western powers themselves, as they strive for imperial individuation? How can we read state-sponsored imitation, or read the state and its intentions into early modern representations?

Homi Bhabha's notion of "colonial mimicry" adroitly captures the complexity of an imitation that hovers between the colonizer and the colonized, whereby the "epic intention of the civilizing mission . . . produces a text rich in the traditions of *trompe l'oeil*, irony, mimicry and repetition."[10]

Bhabha stresses the twofold power of such mimicry: "The menace of mimicry is its double vision which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority."[11] But Bhabha's account leaves little room for the agency of the colonized in producing the disruptions. How might *deliberate* imitation harness the disruptive power of colonial mimicry? As Joseph Roach has shrewdly pointed out, imitative representations are threatening in that they "raise the possibility of the replacement of the authors of the representations by those whom they imagined into existence as their definitive opposites."[12] Even more disruptively, they may suggest a substitution of the representations themselves with new imitations – *facsimiles* – that stress cultural similarity over difference.

Mimesis and Empire elaborates upon Taussig and Bhabha's key insights to study the early years of European colonialism, investigating not only the mimetic confrontations between Europe and Islam or Europe and the Americas, but also among the rival European empires, especially England and Spain. Not surprisingly, these different sets of confrontations overlap, as the Atlantic flows into the Mediterranean. Thus, for example, the English imitation of Mediterranean piracy in order to undermine the power of the Spanish empire gradually leads to increased attacks on England itself, as well as on its Atlantic colonies, by piratical subjects turned renegades. The mimetic counterfeits of pirates and renegades then complicate the attempted construction of an imperial identity based on licit transactions. As this case shows, mimesis can operate both as a weapon of the state, encouraged and promoted in the emulation of its rivals, and as a weapon against that same state, forced by imitators to relinquish its original preeminence.

Beyond the complex phenomenon of piracy, I explore the dynamics of fidelity and imitation through three principal examples of cultural mimesis in the early modern period. First, I analyze the contagion of fictionality from romance to religious texts that sorely preoccupied both moralists and writers in the Old World as well as missionaries in the New. By juxtaposing the ambivalent reception of imaginative texts in the New World to Old World literary quarrels, I suggest how the American experience altered European attitudes towards truth in literature. As Europe faced the undeniable impact of

vast new territories and, increasingly, large populations of new readers, problems of authenticity and authority became ever more pressing.

Second, I explore the bitter rivalry between emerging empires, especially Spain and England, to portray themselves as the true inheritors of Rome, assuming the epic mantle of empire. The representation of *imperium* carried great weight in the late sixteenth century, at a time when England was painfully conscious of its own imperial belatedness with respect to Spain; when Philip II's Spain, though possessed of huge territories, was perennially bankrupt; and when all European empires – actual or aspiring

– stood in awe of the non-European contenders, the Ottoman Turks. Whereas the European imperial rivalries have been well charted in the historical vein by Anthony Pagden, and in the literary by David Quint, I juxtapose the more self-consciously literary texts with other documents to articulate the role of Islam as a third pole in such mimetic exchanges. As the literary imitation of Roman epic intersects with the military imitation of imperial strategies on both Mediterranean and transatlantic stages, the ensuing homologies complicate European claims to national distinctiveness.

Third, I investigate the Spanish casting of the conquest of America as a reiteration of the *Reconquista* of Spanish territory from the Moors – a wishful analogy, given the unresolved conflicts between these Mediterranean antagonists in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The mimetic equation of Reconquista and Conquista is particularly vexed in its temporality. When the historian and colonial official Francisco López de Gómara writes in his early *Historia general de las Indias* that "The conquest of the Indians began after that of the Moors was completed, so that Spaniards would ever fight the infidels," he justifies the current conquest as a logical continuation of the previous one.[13] The power of the comparison thus depends on the truth of the Spanish contention that the Peninsular struggle against Islam ended with the fall of Granada in 1492. But Spain's confrontation with Islam was far from resolved in the sixteenth century; in fact, the Islamic threat seemed to be everywhere. While Spain continued to resist Ottoman encroachments on its European empire in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Peninsula itself was subject to repeated raids by Barbary corsairs. To address

the relentless threat of Islam, Charles V established a series of military outposts in North Africa, which subsequently proved almost impossible for Spain to defend. Philip II's incorporation of Portugal in 1580 was a direct result of the disastrous "crusade" waged by the Portuguese in Morocco, where the young sovereign, Dom Sebastião, was killed. In Spain, the years 1568–71 saw the uprising of the Moriscos, those Moors who had remained after the fall of Granada and who were driven to revolt by the increasing pressures of cultural control. These internal others were maddeningly like, yet unlike, "true" Spaniards, an ambiguity that would not be resolved even with the final expulsion of the Moriscos from the Peninsula in 1609. When they rebelled, Spain confronted its own invasion by the Ottoman Turks, in alliance with the Moriscos and the North African Moors, as a real and horrifying possibility.

But the problems with the Conquista/Reconquista analogy go beyond the question of temporality. There is also the contemporary obfuscation of Spanish history by critics who unquestioningly echo the sixteenth-century mimetic sleight-of-hand.[14] As María Rosa Menocal has pointed out, when researchers in our own time uncritically rehearse the supposed repetition of the Reconquista in the Conquista, and celebrate the "authentic" Spanishness of both, they participate in a construction of Spain as singlemindedly Christian, free of the Semitic "taint."[15] This negates not only the rich multicultural experience of medieval al-Andalus, which Menocal painstakingly reconstructs, but also the deliberate, calculated mimetization of one conquest into the other as a sixteenth-century strategy to encourage Spanish efforts at expansion and cultural homogenization on both the American and the Mediterranean fronts. Clearly, the version of the Reconquista on which the analogy depends is as much a fantasy as the rhetorical equation between the two phenomena. Yet while the illusory Reconquista of legend by no means corresponds to the realities of medieval Spain, the historical revival of it as a model to galvanize the Spanish not only in the New World but also in the Mediterranean is undeniable.

While the chapters that follow chart different intersections of mimesis and empire, the problems outlined above echo throughout. Chapter 1, "Truth, Fictions, and the New World," functions as a kind of preamble to discussions

of the imperial rivalry between England and Spain. It analyzes Torquato Tasso's late fantasy of a Christian empire in *Gerusalemme liberata*, to suggest how the author's anxiety about the role of the marvelous in his epic can be linked to European fears about the dynamics of reading and religious truth in the New World. The Spaniards forbade imaginative literature – mainly chivalric romances – in the Americas, with statutes explaining that such fictions might confuse the natives, who were supposed to be reading biblical "truths" instead of literary lies. Yet the censorship suggests also that Spain was particularly concerned that native readers would draw their own conclusions from the tales that inspired the conquistadors. What did the Spanish fear that such readers might discover about the culture in which they were being indoctrinated? The chapter traces the metropolitan anxieties about American reading at work in Tasso's famously tortured decisions about the role of the marvelous in his Christian epic. What seems on the face of it a purely European discussion about the ideological implications of romance comes into sharper focus when juxtaposed with anxieties about the marvelous worlds that Europe was attempting to digest while Tasso wrote.

Two texts about Spain's struggle for *imperium* – Alonso de Ercilla's *La Araucana* and Ginés Pérez de Hita's *Guerras civiles de Granada* – negotiate a variety of imitative strategies in an effort to authorize their imperial narratives. Chapter 2, "Literary Loyalties, Imperial Betrayals," shows how these texts establish their own literary and historical authority by appealing, often in a contradictory fashion, to the author's witnessing, to literary models, and to the ventriloquizing of native informants. In order to narrate the Spanish campaign against the indomitable Araucanian Indians in distant Chile, Ercilla tempers the conventions of epic with ethnographic generalizations and first-hand observation. In describing the vastness of Philip's domains, on the other hand, the author ranges far afield, introducing into his narrative an account of imperial conflicts between Spain and the Turks. Amazingly, the vision of Spain's greatness elsewhere – at the battle of Lepanto, to cite one crucial example – is afforded by an Indian magician with a crystal ball. This scene of mimesis, both literary – in its allusion to the epic tradition – and ontological – in the magician's reproduction of the world, seriously undermines the account

of Spanish greatness which the text ostensibly offers. As an instrument of empire, the European epic fares poorly in the New World, where it is challenged by both the irreducible difference of native customs and the insidious similarities between conquerors and conquered.

In Pérez de Hita's *Guerras civiles de Granada*, too, the lines between inside and outside Spain become ever fainter. The first part of the text – part romance, part historical novel, part ballad collection – describes wars between several factions of the Moors before their downfall in 1492. But the Moors themselves are portrayed as highly sympathetic and cultured figures, akin to Christian knights. Much like *La Araucana*, the second part of the *Guerras civiles* relates virtually contemporary events in which the author participates: in this case, the fighting in the Alpujarras, where Pérez de Hita helped quell the Morisco rebellion. Thus from one section to the next the Moors are transformed from fantastic chivalrous figures – virtual Spaniards – to actual historical enemies. Yet the sympathies of Part I continue to haunt Part II, so that the relationship between these two halves of an incongruous whole yields important insights into the role of cultural mimesis in the consolidation of Spain's internal empire.

For indigenous American authors, as for the Moriscos, imitative strategies served as a means to write themselves into Spanish debates over religion, ethnicity, and national identity. Chapter 3, "Lettered Subjects," analyzes how identity is constructed in two powerful texts that give voice to the indigenous experience before, during, and in the wake of the Conquista, in an attempt to seek redress from the Spanish Crown. In Inca Garcilaso de la Vega's *Comentarios reales de los Incas* and Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala's *Nueva corónica i buen gobierno*, the authors make able use of Spain's own racial and religious categories to further their own ends, inscribing themselves, chameleon-like, in Spanish mores and personas. This mimetization gets at the heart of Spanish identity, often exposing its contradictions through the very act of replicating it. Thus Inca Garcilaso constructs himself as a Spaniard based on a feudal model of individual struggle against the infidel, while resisting in general terms the Spanish identification of native Americans with Christianity's traditional Mediterranean foes. Guaman Poma, on the other

hand, renames himself a nobleman and conjures the Spanish obsession with blood purity in order to condemn the increasing adulteration of Indian blood in Peru. Here, cultural mimesis, understood as the deliberate replication of Spanish ideology, provides a powerful rhetorical weapon for writers marginalized by that same ideology.

Chapter 4, "Virtual Spaniards" traces a similar mimetization within Spain itself. It analyzes both licit and illicit strategies by which the increasingly persecuted Moriscos sought inclusion within the Spanish polity. In the first case, a petition to the local authorities in Granada, the Morisco leader Francisco Núñez Muley argues for the preservation of local and regional differences – in his case, Moorish, or "Grenadine" culture – against the hegemonizing impulse of centralized authority. His argument radically dissociates nationality from ethnic or religious practices, to produce a powerful syncretic figure, the Morisco Spaniard. The second set of strategies is perhaps more complex, and suggests the Moriscos' deep and conflictive desires for inclusion in the state that ostracized them. Playing on Spain's heightened anxiety about the credibility of its Christian past, Morisco authors purveyed a series of powerful fictions to the people of Granada that attempted a synthesis of Christianity and Islam. In 1595, nineteen leaden tablets in "antiqued" Arabic and crude Latin were found in Granada, apocryphal chronicles purportedly written by Arabic disciples of St. James – patron saint of Spain in its struggle against Islam – and full of prophecies about the fate of Granada. The Moriscos' mimetic reproduction of Spanish identity thereby acquires a historico-religious pedigree: the fraudulent tablets suggest that Moriscos have always been the same as Spaniards, and that Moorish otherness in fact lies at the heart of Spain. The negotiation of identity and difference in this massive hoax – one only exposed conclusively in the late nineteenth century – suggests how cultural mimesis serves to undermine totalizing notions of national identity.

As the success of the leaden tablets suggests, what can be mimicked or imitated is oddly vulnerable to subversion. In Chapter 5, "Faithless Empires: Pirates, Renegadoes, and the English Nation," I turn to the imperial rivalry between England and Spain. Although the English proclivity for piracy was a

natural continuation of the authorized privateering during the war with Spain (1587–1604), the role of pirate was hardly uncomplicated, given the tortuous maritime history of the age. Throughout the sixteenth century, Barbary corsairs carried out large-scale raids of the Mediterranean coasts, pillaging settlements and taking hundreds of captives to sell as slaves. Although these depredations were less widespread by the end of the century, the Barbary corsairs were still dangerously active. While the English had originally taken to piracy as a way to challenge the imperial might of Spain, the circulation of sensitive knowledge by English pirates who reneged quickly threatened England's own imperial aims. In the early 1600s, renegade Europeans established themselves in the Barbary States and taught the corsairs how to build and navigate ships that could sail the Atlantic. By the 1620s, the corsairs, often led by English renegades, were frequently raiding the coasts of Ireland and Newfoundland. The reflection of English piracy in this new threat to England's own empire exemplifies the unstable workings of cultural mimesis: what began as a state-sanctioned expansionist strategy eventually threatens the national borders and national identity of that very state. My argument charts the trajectory of piratical subjects' increasing independence vis-à-vis the English state – from the paradox of privateering, in which supposed private quarrels were harnessed to the service of the state, to the murky lawlessness of piracy, to, finally, the absolute break of the renegadoes. In my reading of Heywood and Rowley's *Fortune by Land and Sea*, Heywood's *The Fair Maid of the West* and Massinger's *The Renegado*, I focus on class and gender indiscretions to suggest that these plays stage the general English reluctance to abandon the aristocratic masculinity of the privateers in favor of a more fluid and performative mercantile model.

Chapter 6, "Pirating Spain," analyzes the representation of Spanish identity in literary accounts of piracy and captivity. The first part analyzes the teleological apparatus of Lope de Vega's *La Dragontea*, an epic poem on the pirate Drake. Lope's rhetorical strategy frames the English threat to Spanish possessions within the larger struggle of Catholicism against its enemies east and west, and suggests that the bedrock of Spanish identity lies precisely in the heroic endurance of their attacks. Yet while the *Dragontea*'s account of

nefarious English piracy enables the discursive consolidation of a Spanish identity that is eternally committed to the Faith, other, more ambiguous narratives of piracy and captivity often challenge the integrity of that identity. By focusing on liminal characters such as renegadoes and converts to Christianity, the second part of this chapter analyzes the fragility of a Spanish identity fundamentally based on religious difference. The representation of ethnic and religious ambiguity in Cervantine narratives of piracy and kidnapping, especially, suggests that these marginal characters pose a serious threat to a Spanish identity based on an irreproducible Christianity. Cervantes' depiction of religion and nationality as flexible, performable categories suggests the porous boundaries of a "purely" Christian Spain, whose intactness is undermined by the mimetic performance of those it would exclude.

Finally, a note on the limitations of this project. It does not fully address the Islamic or Native American dimensions of the problem, but instead focuses on texts – both by Europeans and by writers who strategically claim that status – that write themselves into a European dialogue, couching their critiques in terms that make them not only readable but persuasive to European audiences.[16] I am primarily interested in how mimesis confounds the homogenizing, exclusionist goals of the state in texts that ostensibly align themselves with that state. My focus on Europe will, I hope, yield new insights about its self-construction in relation to Islam and the particular modalities of European imperialism that affected Europe's others around the globe.