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## Cervantes Institute

Mark Axelrod

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through the 18th century passing it along to his daughter, Titia. The family continued the business until it was eventually sold to a Dutch conglomerate in 1968 which sold off part of its assets to Japanese and American interests in 1987. A vestige of the original company, now called DenMat, operates out of Santa Maria, California.

## CERVANTES INSTITUTE



After the initial publishing of *Don Quixote*, Cervantes fell into a kind of post-partum despondency. After all it was Cervantes' life's work which suddenly was lost to him. One could not blame the depression on the publication of *Don Quixote* since the novel met with popular success. Perhaps it was due to the book's lack of financial success, for even though it was critically well-received, *Don Quixote* was not going to make Cervantes enough money to dock a yacht in Mallorca. Most believe the depression was due to an accumulation of so many minor tragedies in his life: his physical disability, his enslavement, his imprisonment, his bungled financial condition, the rejection of his plays.

By 1611 it was clear no one wanted to stage Cervantes' plays and his financial situation had deteriorated to the point the family moved into

rather squalid conditions on the Calle de León in Madrid. Faced with the realization that no one wanted his plays, that *Don Quixote Pt II* was still in-progress and little was to be gained financially from his other prose, Cervantes considered the idea of becoming a therapist. This idea came at the suggestion of the Count of Lemos, Viceroy of Naples who occasionally gave money to Cervantes. The Count suggested who better than Cervantes to deal with psychological problems than the man who dealt with the vicissitudes of male menopause in *Don Quixote*. Cervantes was reluctant to embark on such a venture until the Count offered to fund a Cervantes Institute devoted to psychological problems associated with male mid-life crisis.

In 1614 the doors to the Cervantes Institute were opened and the venture was an immediate success. Cervantes quit writing fiction and devoted his creative energies to writing self-help books on a variety of subjects such as: *The Jealous Extremaduran* (which dealt with new-age methods of dealing with jealousy), *The Illustrious Kitchen Maid* (devoted to improving self-esteem for domestic economists) and *The Deceitful Marriage* (a book devoted to how to recognize and correct potential marital problems). The books all became paperback best-sellers and even outsold *Don Quixote*. However, the therapy and the writing took a physical toll on the aging Cervantes, but before he died he relinquished the rights to his dearest friend Cide Hamete Benengeli who began to franchise the institute which spread throughout Spain, then to South America and Mexico and, finally, to California where today, almost four centuries after its inception, it continues to promote mental health in Orange County.