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Reviews

Millennial Cervantes: New Currents in Cervantes Studies. Ed. Bruce R. Burningham. New Hispanisms. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2020. 306 pp. ISBN 978-1-4962-1762-2

Millennial Cervantes brings together nine essays by notable scholars in a rewarding, wide-ranging collection capably edited by Bruce R. Burningham, whose ample introduction to the volume offers much more than the usual obligatory summaries of the essays to follow. Burningham's crisp précis of the transformative shifts in Cervantes studies over the last fifty years could be profitably assigned to students unfamiliar with the field, and he contextualizes each essay with an historical overview of its methodology and substantial supporting bibliography.

Burningham divides the volume's contents into three groups. The first of these, "Cervantes in His Original Contexts," examines the *Persiles* and *Don Quijote* in relation to discourses of Cervantes's own era. In "From Literary Painting to Marian Iconography: The Cult of Auristela in Cervantes's *Persiles y Sigismunda*," Mercedes Alcalá Galán approaches Cervantes's last novel as "not a Christian epic but rather a poetic epic, a monumental reflection on the possibilities and limits of literary and artistic representation" (18). Alcalá Galán contextualizes the novel's ekphrastic accounts of Auristela's multiple, self-begetting portraits within the politicized Spanish embrace of Mary's Immaculate Conception and its visual iconography, arguing that the ambiguities and contradictions of the "cult of Auristela" offer a commentary on the power and deployment of images in Counter-Reformation Spain. In the second essay, "'Dios Me Entiende y No Digo Más': Nominalism, Humanism, and Modernity in *Don Quixote*", Rosilie Hernández turns to a perennial preoccupation of *Don Quijote* studies: the nature and the philosophical underpinnings of its unmistakable, startling modernity. Taking as one point of departure Leo Spitzer's classic essay on perspectivism in the novel, Hernández makes a strong case for reading *Don Quijote* through the lens of William of Ockham's theological nominalism, in which God was declared unknowable through logic and "the logic of universals was replaced by the logic of radical individuality" (29), and nominalism's manifestations in a Petrarchan humanist agenda that Alonso Quijano ultimately fails to realize in his doomed quest for a stable, lasting, individual self. In a sharp turn away from the theological, Sherry Velasco concludes the opening section with a rollicking analysis of the character names invented by Don Quijote in the imagined battle between the ovine "armies" in I.18. To the certain delight of future university students preparing class presentations, "Obscene Onomastics and the Sheep Army Episode of *Don Quixote*" focuses on the ribald connotations of the names that Don Quijote improvises during his narration of the imaginary, dust-obscured combat. Drawing upon both Western erotic literature (the *Carajicomedia*, the

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"Romance Trágico," and the Italian *Cazzaria*) and Arabic sex manuals, Velasco teases out a subtext for this episode and the events surrounding it that persuasively interweaves the sexual and the political. Cervantes's ingenious onomastics are never dull, but rarely do they provide so much cheerfully bawdy fun as in this essay.

Three comparative studies comprise the following section: two essays positioning Cervantes in relation to English texts from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and a third examining unrealized American film adaptations. In the volume's only study of *La Galatea*, Marcia S. Collins turns to the burgeoning field of friendship/amity studies to read Cervantes's pastoral romance beside Sidney's *Arcadia*, published across the English Channel only eight years later. Collins foregrounds these contemporaneous texts' "similar concern with the triangulated bonds of love, friendship, and community" (85), and of particular interest are her considerations of the complexities of friendly rivalries and of female friendships. In the next chapter, Marina S. Brownlee examines friendship, marriage, and honor in the "Curioso impertinente," to which she applies Walter Benjamin's conceptualization of allegory as the "demolition of referentiality" (113), then looks at three of its theatrical appropriations: Thomas Middleton's *Lady's Tragedy* (also known as *The Second Maiden's Tragedy*, 1611), which doubles Cervantes's plot with a second love triangle; Aphra Behn's *The Amorous Prince or the Curious Husband* (1671), in which the playwright criticizes male misbehavior, hypocrisy, and mistreatment of women; and Thomas Southerne's *The Disappointment, or the Mother of Fashion* (1684), which condemns the "jaded and unprincipled relations between the sexes" (117). Scholars intrigued by the publication and performances of *Cardenio* (*Double Falsehood*), attributed to Fletcher and possibly in some part to Shakespeare, will hope that Brownlee further pursues this line of inquiry. To conclude this section of the volume, William P. Childers's fascinating "QuixoNation: Unfinished Adaptations of *Don Quixote* in Cold War U.S. Cinema" leaps across an ocean and a continent, not to mention centuries, to explore the ideological thrust of three attempted American film versions of the novel in the second half of the twentieth century. While many readers may already be familiar, at least by reputation, with Orson Welles's always evolving, never completed *Don Quixote*, far fewer will even have heard of Harold L. Humes's experimental 1960 *Don Peyote*, which updated Cervantes's protagonist to a homeless Greenwich Village eccentric who adopted his new identity after reading *On the Road*, or of the *Don Quixote* scripted (but never filmed) by Waldo Salt, Oscar winner for *Midnight Cowboy* and *Coming Home*. Working from archival material not previously consulted by Cervantes scholars, Childers positions all three of these efforts in opposition to the ideologically restrictive hegemony of the Cold War Hollywood film industry, proposing a model of "activist quixotism" characterized by "open-ended experimentation, the juxtaposition of past and present, and sociopolitical satire" (134).

The volume's third section, "Cervantes in Wider Cultural Contexts," begins with Carolyn A. Nadeau's survey of food in *Don Quijote* and of Spanish cuisine in America; the latter, perhaps inevitably, entails the Manchegan knight's appropriation as a culinary icon for marketing purposes. To the probable detriment of readers' credit card balances, Nadeau's entertaining, occasionally mouth-watering thumbnail sketches of Spanish restaurants, tapas bars, and chefs even includes an appendix listing dozens of such establishments across the country. In the collection's penultimate essay, the unassuming title of David Castillo and William Egginton's "Cervantes, Reality Literacy, and Fundamentalism" belies the bracing vigor of their denunciation of neoliberal orthodoxy and their prescription of a Cervantine humanist prescription for "the most irresponsible, cynical, and dangerous promise of the market society: the right to your own reality!" (204). Citing *Don Quijote*, the *Persiles*, and *El retablo de las maravillas* beside Stephen Colbert, Castillo and Egginton praise Cervantes as "a culture and media critic and a champion of the old *humanitas* ideals" (221) whose lessons in reality literacy and whose engagement with the orthodoxies of his era would serve us well in our own ideological moment of media-driven fragmentation. Finally, Burningham's own chapter elegantly and concisely synthesizes an array of ideas drawn from philosophy, history, linguistics, and the hard sciences with his close reading of specific "crossroads moments" in *Don Quijote* to argue that the novel can provide us with unique, essential insights into the present-day end of the five centuries of print culture that began with the printing press. In its place, Burningham postulates, arrives a new era of a "quasi-medieval" "cyberorality": the result of the ephemerality of tweets, text messages, snapchats, and other exchanges that, although, text-based, are less like writing than they are like "voiced words that immediately dissipate into the ether at the very moment of their utterance" (227). *Don Quijote* – a novel of competing texts and authors that ultimately had to contend with Avellaneda's own counter-narrative – provides a prescient guide to negotiating a "world where narrative authority is once again returned to anyone who wants to tell a tale" (243).

Quite appropriately, *Millennial Cervantes* gives its contributors the opportunity to offer their own Cervantine tales, in more than one sense of that adjective: persuasive narratives of textual genealogies, engagements, appropriations, and migrations. This is a substantial, provocative, worthwhile volume.

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