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Review of: Estrategias temáticas y narrativas en la novela feminizada de María de Zayas

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Juan de la Cuesta, one must recognize that “de aquellas prensas salieron los únicos textos legítimos, y aun posibles, del *Quijote*” (198). María Dolores Rincón González concerns herself with “Literatura neolatina en tiempos de Cervantes.” As she approaches a rereading of *Don Quijote* from the perspective of Latin philology, she observes a continuum from classical writers to Renaissance authors and theorists, which attests to a well-read and voraciously curious Cervantes.

The second part opens with a 100-page essay by Dámaso Chicharro, “La prolongación cervantina en el siglo XVIII español: Donato de Arezana y su *Don Quijote de la Manchuela*.” First published in Sevilla in 1767 under the pseudonym Cristóbal Anzarena, the fictional narrative was one of a series of eighteenth-century homages to Cervantes’s novel. Chicharro offers insights into the art of *imitatio* in the age of Enlightenment: “Don Quijote es en el XVIII, mayoritariamente, una figura ridícula y extravagante, estafalario, pero no siempre y tampoco en entera claridad” (283). Rafael Alarcón Sierra treats “El *Quijote* modernista” in a review of the work of three authors—Unamuno, Maeztu, and Azorín—for whom *Don Quijote* would be a watchword and a key intertext throughout their careers. They would simultaneously keep the knight errant alive and reinvent him. Gracia M. Morales Ortiz brings the novel into a new realm in “La aventura quijotesca en la nueva narrativa latinoamericana.” Her relatively brief but ambitious commentary makes the ideological point, argued primarily via Carlos Fuentes, that *Don Quijote* and Latin America share, in various manifestations, the quality of instability. For Morales Ortiz, to resign oneself to being Don Quijote means “la triste constatación de todos los obstáculos que desde los países del ‘Primer Mundo’ se le siguen imponiendo a estas naciones, para impedir su libre desarrollo” (410). Carmelo Medina Casado surveys “Traducciones del *Quijote* al inglés y su influencia en la novela inglesa.” The names of Thomas Shelton, Tobias Smollett, J. M. Cohen, and John Rutherford figure most prominently in the discussion of translations. The 20 pages devoted to the influence of *Don Quixote* on English literature (not just the novel) are necessarily sketchy. The two essays on iconography—José Manuel Lucía Megías’s “El *Quijote* en imágenes: Un recorrido por la lectura coetánea” and Carlos Alvar’s “Don Quijote más allá de Cervantes”—are informative and richly illustrated. Lucía Megías looks at drawings of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as a source of the reading and reception of the novel, and he defines four basic models (Dutch, French, English, and Spanish), going from entertainment to canonization, through which to classify the iconic tradition of *Don Quijote* in this period. Alvar takes pictorial representation to the twentieth century, including poster art, advertisements for films, and cartoons. This is a wonderful complement to the preceding essay and to the volume in general.

In sum, the book provides a large and diverse collection of commentaries, a gift from Spain in honor of the anniversary. Elegantly presented, it is an *homenaje* in the most literal sense.

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Alcalde, Pilar. *Estrategias temáticas y narrativas en la novela feminizada de María de Zayas*. Newark, DE: Juan de la Cuesta, 2005. Pp. 141. ISBN 1-58871-071-8.

Pilar Alcalde’s stated thesis in *Estrategias temáticas y narrativas en la novela feminizada de María de Zayas* is that “Colocamos a Zayas por tanto dentro del mismo contexto del resto de los autores de la época, pero a la vez la comparación permitirá definir la diferencia de Zayas respecto a los demás autores y textos calificados como masculinos al contrario que el suyo que puede definirse como femenino” (11–12). To that end, Chapter 1 (“Evoluciones del género de la novela corta en el siglo XVII en España”) places Zayas in context with her male contemporaries such as Cervantes, Lope de Vega, Tirso de Molina, and Pérez de Montalbán, among others; Chapter 2 (“El discurso femenino de María de Zayas: análisis de la diferencia”) examines Zayas’s feminine discourse as contrasted with her male counterparts; Chapter 3 (“La construcción de las heroínas de Zayas”) explores Zayas’s female protagonists in terms of martyrdom and physical violence; and Chapter 4 (“El convento como solución espacial y narrativa a la violencia”) discusses the

author's use of the convent as an escape from male-perpetrated violence against women.

Unfortunately, there is a lack of originality to Alcalde's arguments; she states the obvious and focuses on points made more succinctly by scholars before her. For example, she asserts that "la originalidad de los textos de María de Zayas radica en ser escritos por una mujer, y estar dirigidos asimismo a mujeres" (14). Although I would argue that, due to low overall literacy rates in the seventeenth century, and even lower rates among women, Zayas's chief audience was men, every major Zayas scholar from Sandra Foa to Margaret Greer, Marina Brownlee to Lisa Vollendorf would agree with this basic statement; clearly Zayas was an anomaly—a woman writing in a world of men. These critics would also agree with Alcalde that Zayas's purpose in writing as she does revolves around "la defensa de . . . las mujeres" (15), that Zayas's women "son, ante todo, víctimas" (16), and that her protagonists are "un doble modelo"—for both men and women (97). It is also a well-documented fact that Zayas's salient thematic strategies—discussed throughout Alcalde's book as major differentiating factors between Zayas and her male contemporaries—are her particularly feminine perspectives on violence against women, martyr-death, and the convent as refuge.

There are also two points about which I must disagree with Alcalde. First is her insistence that "la novela ha sido siempre transmisora de la mentira y la voz de Zayas, su voz de mujer, se fundamenta en la verdad" (41). Maybe it is true that only women can be truthful about women, but this statement seems to imply that Zayas, because of her gender, has a special and exclusive affinity to verisimilitude. One must only read the *Quijote* to see the flaw in this argument.

Second, I must differ with Alcalde's interpretation of Zayas's use of the framed narrative as principally a feminine narrative strategy: "Este marco ofrece una lectura simbólica de las narraciones como un espacio cerrado, similar al que las mujeres disponen en su vida cotidiana" (14, also discussed in Chapter 4). This statement flies in the face of a long tradition of framed narratives, written by men such as Boccaccio, that take place in enclosed spaces.

A final criticism that must be leveled here is not entirely the responsibility of the author—that is, the vast number of typographical, spelling, and bibliographical formatting errors found throughout the text. Periods are missing throughout, words are often run together, quotations are cited without page numbers (97), words are misspelled ["weather" instead of "whether" on page 108], there are grammatical mistakes ["va ocupar" on page 91], endnotes include works not found in the "Obras citadas" (82), and the "Obras citadas" pages are rife with errors and inconsistencies.

In short, *Estrategias temáticas y narrativas en la novela feminizada de María de Zayas* offers a fine introduction to and summary of María de Zayas's unique authorial strategies and techniques, viewed within the context of the male-dominated times in which she wrote. Nevertheless, more original insight would be appreciated, coupled, of course, with more accurate proofreading. Such revisions would certainly make for a more satisfying analysis of a fascinating subject.

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Castillo, David R., and Massimo Lollini, eds. *Reason and Its Others: Italy, Spain, and the New World*. Nashville: Vanderbilt UP, 2006. Pp. 358. ISBN 0-8265-1545-2.

The sixteen essays in this collection cover a refreshingly broad range of topics related to early modern Mediterranean Europe and the Americas, touching on science, culture, history and philosophy as well as the central focus of literature and verbal expression. In the introduction, the editors give a brief overview of the essays, point to the bridges which link the studies and also relate the collection's predominant themes to recent world events.

It is perhaps fitting that the first section of such a diverse collection, "Of Walls and Windows: Containment Machines and the Drive Towards the Unknown," should begin with an essay on the telescope, a technology used to span great distances. In "The Telescope in the Baroque