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REVIEWS

Jean Canavaggio, ed., *La invención de la novela: seminario hispano-francés organizado por la Casa de Velázquez (noviembre 1992–junio 1993)* (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez 1999) 317 pp.

At the beginning of his essay “Cervantes y la ‘invención de la novela’: estado de la cuestión,” Michel Moner insightfully affirms, “Cervantes scholars know all too well that the exegetical labor which has proliferated regarding Cervantes’s work, and especially his narrative, is today so abundant that it seems rather to render more difficult than facilitate access to the texts”(233) (reviewer’s translation). Indeed, the entire field of studies regarding the novel during Spain’s *Siglo de Oro* seems to be one that has been plowed over again and again ever since the publication of Menéndez Pelayo’s monumental *Orígenes de la novela* at the beginning of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, as the current collection of essays demonstrates, a “soil” as rich, dynamic, and conflictive as the literary production of early modern Spain is still capable of giving up treasures to an industrious and worthy seeker.

As set forth in the book’s presentation, this volume is the fruit of a joint Spanish/French seminar that was organized by the Casa Velázquez in Madrid during the 1992–1993 academic year. Edited by the eminent French hispanist Jean Canavaggio, the seminar set for itself a threefold objective: a) to gather together a group of scholars who, from various standpoints and for many years have been researching the narrative praxis in what is referred to as Spain’s Golden Age of literature (sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) and its theory; b) to create a balance sheet of what has been done in this field during the decade of the 1980s, and more exactly, the state of the question from which new perspectives for study could be opened; c) awaken, among young researchers in Spain and France, a renewed interest in the subject, and in light of further interventions and of the debates that took place, foment and stimulate new investigations (9). The first two mentioned goals are quantifiable. The third, which is more problematic, will only be judged through the passing of time.

The book contains thirteen contributions and is divided into two parts, which, according to its editor, correspond roughly to a division between “renaissance narrative” and “post-renaissance narrative” (10), though unfortunately this demarcation is not clearly defined. If there is a distinction to be made between the two partitions of the collection, perhaps it would be possible to say that many of the entries in the first

half deal with concerns of a more historical nature: Juan Manuel Cacho Blecua, in “El género del Cifar (Cromberger, 1512),” attempts to shed light on the nature of the *Libro del cavallero Zifar*—a work fundamental for understanding the development of chivalric literature in Spain from medieval times to the sixteenth century—by examining a rare edition of this work published in 1512. Ana Vian Herrero, in “El *Diálogo de las transformaciones de Pitágoras*,” uses this sixteenth-century satirical novel to trace the origins of the picaresque genre to ancient Greek satire. In “Montemayor, entre romance y novela: hibridismo de géneros y experimentación narrativa en *La Diana*,” Asunción Rallo Gruss proposes that the originality of Montemayor’s creation can only be understood in the context of his friendship and exchange of ideas with authors such as Nuñez de Reinoso, Feliciano de Silva, and Bernardim Ribeiro, and the resulting intertextuality with their respective works. Rounding out the first half of the collection is an essay by Maxime Chevalier on the relation that connects the enigmatic composition known as *Lazarillo de Tormes* with the folkloric tradition, highlighting the difficulties that arise when one tries to fit a literary creation of such tortured originality into the category commonly understood as “folklore.”

The contributions to the second half of the book are of a rather more interpretive nature and tend to focus on problematics related to either the picaresque novel (in particular *El Buscón* and *Guzmán de Alfarache*) or Cervantes’s literary production. Pablo Jauralde Pou seeks to unravel the complicated question of the genre of Quevedo’s picaresque account by examining its narrative spaces, in particular the moments of spoken word, highlighting the brilliant capacity of the young Francisco de Quevedo in crafting his tale. Monique Joly, in an interesting investigation of the possible intertextualities linking Cervantes’s work and that of Mateo Alemán (“Cervantes y la picaresca de Mateo Alemán”), suggests that at least three of the *Novelas ejemplares* represent reactions to an early reading by Cervantes of *Guzmán de Alfarache* (276). In “La coherencia textual del *Quijote*,” José Manuel Martín Morán reaches the conclusion that, among other things, what gives unity to the story of the *hidalgo* from La Mancha is actually its fragmentary nature, expressed in dialogues, as a type of commentary on the acts and words of others and the interpolated accounts within the novel (304).

Of the thirteen essays, three are devoted to bibliographical concerns: the first by Victor Infantes is entitled “La narrativa del renacimiento: estado de las cuestiones.” Happily, Infantes specifies that for the pur-

poses of his essay, “renaissance narrative” corresponds to works appearing from 1487 until the publication of the first tome of *Don Quijote* in 1605. Michel Cavilac, known for his far-reaching volume on *Guzmán de Alfarache*, provides an extensive bibliography of recent research on the picaresque genre and the issues arising from it in “Problemas de la picaresca: 1979–1993.” Finally, Michel Moner contributes a summary of recent Cervantine studies in the above cited “Cervantes y ‘la invención de la novela’: estado de la cuestión.” While quite useful for anyone wishing to bring himself or herself up-to-date on scholarship through the mid-1990s, such a study suffers from a flaw of timing, given that it was written just too early to take into account the now indispensable *Don Quijote* edited by Francisco Rico (Crítica 1998) with its accompanying critical apparatus.

Though, as stated earlier, this volume is dedicated to bringing forth recent scholarship regarding the novel in early modern Spain, the reader is struck that once and again the names of such groundbreaking figures as Ramón Menéndez Pidal, Américo Castro, and Marcel Bataillon emerge, showing that even today those seeking to blaze new trails in the pursuit of Golden Age scholarship must still take into account the paths marked out by such pioneers.

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