

Alberto Sánchez. *Don Quijote, ciudadano del mundo y otros ensayos cervantinos*. Valencia: Institució Alfons el Magnànim, 1999. 156 pp.

This book comprises five of the author's essays that deal with *Don Quijote*, gathered from monographs and articles that have appeared in collections of essays and in journals. Although these essays have appeared in other works, it is convenient for the scholar who wishes to study them that they appear in one book. The book itself is small in size and the essays are very well researched and offer scholars of Cervantes readily accessible information, some of which is a review of the ideas that several important scholars have contributed to *Quijote* studies. Although Sánchez takes a more Romantic or "soft" view of *Don Quijote*, he summarizes, albeit briefly, the writings of some critics who take an opposing stance.

Sánchez devotes two of the five chapters to the writings of Blasco Ibáñez and Azorín respectively, the former as a nineteenth-century novelist and the latter, Azorín, as a member of the Generation of 1898. Sánchez makes the point that these two writers were not *cervantistas*, but rather belong to a group that he defines as "cervantófilos" and to which he devotes the section of his book. The other three chapters deal with specific influences on Cervantes' novel, as well as the contribution to Cervantes studies by writers of the Generation of 1898 such as Ramiro de Maeztu and Miguel de Unamuno, in addition to the ideas offered by José Ortega y Gasset. In the last chapter Sánchez does include the ideas of John J. Allen, Anthony Close, and other contemporary Cervantes scholars. The last section of the chapter is a study of the novel's diffusion and how it reflects Spanish society.

Chapter 1 ("*Don Quijote*, rapsoda del romancero viejo. Un romance va-

lenciano en el *Quijote*") contributes valuable information to those who research and teach the *Quijote*. Sánchez makes the case for a direct link between the *romancero* and the "génesis del *Quijote*" (7). Sánchez reviews the information presented by Menéndez Pidal about the *entremés* that could have inspired Cervantes' novel: "Los primeros pasos de don Quijote, singularmente el capítulo Quinto, fueron inspirados por el anónimo y mediocre 'Entremés de los romances'" (7). He mentions scholars such as Luis A. Murillo who support this thesis, and presents Murillo's thesis that Cervantes also had the "Romance de Lanzarote" in mind in the composition of *Don Quijote*: "Cervantes encontró aquí el tratamiento cómico del amor caballeresco y las relaciones entre el caballero y las damas" (8). Sánchez makes the point that Cervantes learns in these "romances nuevos" to reduce the concept of courtly chivalry to comic and familiar tones. One of the examples that Sánchez offers to support this is the figure of Quintañoña, a Castilian creation found in these ballads. Another example that helps support his thesis is how Lancelot rides on a donkey instead of a horse. Sánchez also makes the etymological link between Lanzarote and Quijote. Another important point made by the author is that in the scrutiny of Don Quixote's library there are no "florilegios ni recopilaciones de romances viejos o nuevos" (9). However, Sánchez adds that, in spite of this, Don Quixote is still "un glosador del romancero viejo, que se inclina a la desmitificación cómica de sus héroes" (10). Sánchez goes on to study the linguistic and stylistic contributions of the *romancero* using Menéndez Pidal's seminal study as his source. He writes: "En las páginas del *Quijote* abundan las reminiscencias fraseológicas del romance," which would include the familiar expressions of the common language (11). These expressions include the famous "En un lugar de la Mancha," which according to Rodríguez Marín can be found in a ballad. Sánchez includes in his text the passage from the ballad that contains the above-mentioned words (13). He also cites the ballads from the Carolingian cycle, "Romance de Valdovinos," and "El Marqués de Mantua." Other ballads discussed are "Romance de doña Urraca" the "Romance de las guerras civiles de Granada" (16). Also mentioned are the "Romance de Durandarte y Belerma" and the Carolingian ballads surrounding the characters of Montesinos, Gaiferos, and Melisendra (25). He even identifies several of Sancho's proverbs as having their origins in ballads, as well as Don Quijote's advice to his squire before the latter assumes the governorship of Barataria (17). Sánchez makes the case for the ballad origins of accounts such as the braggart soldier Vicente de la Rosa, and even for Don Luis and Doña Clara. One point of interest in this chapter is what Sánchez establishes as a "posible alusión a un romance valenciano" in *Don Quijote* II, 1. Sánchez identifies the "romance del cura que en el prefacio avisó al rey del ladrón que le había robado las

cient doblas y la su mula la andariega” (18) as one of the many lost ballads that were sung by the common people. He adds that Cervantes had many contacts and friends in Valencia and that he was acquainted with *valenciano*. Sánchez at this point notes the Valencian origins of the tale of the rich widow (I, 25) and the tale of the goats (I, 20).

Chapter 2 (“Blasco Ibáñez, cervantófilo”) deals with the manifestations of the novelist’s love for Cervantes more than the latter’s influence on his works. Sánchez spends several pages reviewing Blasco Ibáñez’s life and giving summaries of his novels which have very little to do with his thesis. However, he begins to write about Blasco Ibáñez’s relation to Cervantes in the section titled “Conferenciante y cervantófilo,” focusing on the lectures that Blasco Ibáñez gave on the development of the modern novel and another one dedicated exclusively to Cervantes. The first lecture is called “*Quijote*, la Biblia de nuestra raza” and describes Cervantes’ novel as the “libro representativo del espíritu español y del espíritu de toda la humanidad” (45). Sánchez quotes from the Valencian novelist’s lecture that, “Cervantes es eterno porque encontró para su obra, en un momento de exaltación, el verdadero tipo representativo de la humanidad” (45). The author writes that Blasco Ibáñez follows Unamuno’s interpretation of *Don Quijote* in that Cervantes did not understand his own creation. Sánchez offers his reader once again a romanticized view of Don Quixote: “me lo imagino montado sobre el lomo de un inmenso libro de la Historia universal; una de las piernas del loco aventurero cae en el pasado, en la Edad Media, y otra en la Moderna” (48). Sánchez summarizes a lecture that Blasco Ibáñez presented at George Washington University in February of 1920. He offers this quote from the lecture: “Don Quijote está en todas partes. Representa las mayores virtudes humanas, el desinterés, la defensa del débil, la supresión de los sentimientos egoístas, la abnegación por los semejantes” (51).

Chapter 3 (“El cervantismo de Azorín”) presents Azorín as both a *cervantista* and a *cervantófilo*. Once again, Sánchez dedicates several pages to Azorín’s career and works. In the section called “El cervantismo de Azorín,” he finally begins the discussion of his thesis. He refers to Azorín’s writings on Cervantes as follows: “una de las tareas descollantes de la Generación del 98 ha sido la interpretación, glosa y comentario del *Quijote*” (84). Sánchez makes the valid point that “el cervantismo es una constante en la temática azoriniana” (85). He makes the correspondence between the three important Cervantine anniversaries of the twentieth century, 1905, 1916, and 1947, with the publication of Azorín’s works: *La ruta de don Quijote* (1905), the essay “El licenciado Vidriera” (1916), *Con permiso de los cervantistas* (1948) and *Con Cervantes* (1947). Sánchez adds that there are Cervantine themes in Azorín’s collection of essays, *Castilla* (1912). The rest of the chapter is a

rather detailed study of the references to Cervantes in different works by Azorín.

Chapter IV (“Don Quijote, ciudadano del mundo”) is an excellent overview of the vast popularity, influence, and diffusion of Cervantes’ novel, not only in Spain but in many countries of the world. He reviews the many editions of *Don Quijote* during the last three hundred years in Spain. These include the editions of Juan Pellicer, Hartzenbusch, Cortejón, Givanel, Suñé, Rodríguez Marín, and others, as well as those who have illustrated the novel, beginning with Gustave Doré himself (102-05). He continues in the chapter with the diffusion the novel has enjoyed in various countries of the world. He includes illustrative plates of the title pages of a number of translations of the *Quijote* which will be helpful for those who teach the novel. These include the Arabic, Chinese, Romanian, Polish, Norwegian, and even a Basque translation. Sánchez understandably devotes a large section of this discussion to *Don Quijote*’s influence in the British Isles (113-15). The rest of the chapter is devoted to the novel’s influence on the modern novel, with an impressive list of the writers and their works that it has influenced. The section “Don Quijote y los españoles” is a study of Spanish society as reflected in the novel and its many characters together with the social class to which they belong: examples are peasants, *moriscos*, hidalgos, the Duke and the Duchess. In addition, Sánchez includes an interesting discussion of the marginalized individuals who appear in the novel’s pages and what Cervantes’ attitude toward them might have been. The study closes with a brief overview of the two schools of Cervantine scholarship, the “soft” and “hard” critical studies of *Don Quijote*. With the exception of the extraneous material on Blasco Ibáñez and Azorín, several typographical errors, and the lack of identification of monographs and articles being italicized or in quotes, Sánchez’s study is a concise, interesting, informative, and well-researched study of Cervantes’ masterpiece.

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