

REVIEWS

De Armas, Frederick A. *Cervantes, Raphael and the Classics*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998. 241 pp. (and illustrations).

Frederick de Armas has long been interested in Cervantes's play *La Numancia*, written in the 1580s before the formula of the "tragicomedia" dominated the Spanish stage. While there are other experiments with tragedy, Cervantes's "emerges as the single great Aristotelian tragedy of the Spanish Golden Age" (79). The aim of this book is to explore fully the drama's problematic issues of genre as well as of ideology, always within the context of classical sources. According to the author, Cervantes's staging of the fall in 133 B.C. of the Celtiberian city to the Roman forces of Scipio Africanus is very much more than a dramatization of the episode as described in his historical source, Ambrosio de Morales's *Corónica general de España*. Remarkable—and at times not substantiated—claims are made of learning and influence on Cervantes's *Numancia*, mythologizing and allegorizing, gleaned from the writer's humanistic studies as well as from his own Italian sojourn during the years 1569-75. The sources posited are not only verbal, but also visual: Professor de Armas argues that the Vatican frescoes of Raphael (as well as those of his disciple Giulio Romano) were crucial to Cervantes's interpretation of this particular event in Spanish history. Cervantes, transformed in this study from an *ingenio lego* to an erudite *sabio humanista*, is presented as one engaged in a process of *aemulatio*, which "includes the (re)vision of an ancient model through a more modern perspective" (138).

The first four chapters deal with the relationship between painting and drama, a subject to which I shall return. Then tragic and epic models are discussed. Aeschylus's *The Persians* is posited as an inspiration because it focuses on the vanquished (the Persians), rather than on the victors (the Greeks), just as *La Numancia* emphasizes the plight of the Numantians, rather than the alleged victory of the Romans. But we must ask, is there such a similarity? For the Athenian audience this was a contemporary event (the play was staged in 472 B.C., eight years after the Battle at Salamis in which many citizens had participated), and a sympathetic portrayal of their Persian enemies was a radical innovation; for the Spaniards the events belonged to a distant, legendary past, and their national identification was with the vanquished, whose noble portrayal would have been a source of pride rather than discomfort. De Armas resolves this conundrum by generalizing the significance and extending it forward in

time. It is the rhythm of the rise and fall of empires that is at stake: "Just as Aeschylus may have been warning his own people 'already tempted toward its own later imperialistic *hubris* by a *daimon* as deadly as that of Xerxes' (Arrow-smith 1981, x), so Cervantes may be warning the rising Spanish Empire of its *arrogancia*" (89). The observation is made that in neither play is the leader of the opposing forces (Xerxes; Scipio) denigrated; rather both are praised for their leadership, though shown to suffer from excessive pride (90-93). This is so, but Cervantes need have gone no further than his historical source for a balanced presentation of Scipio, at once "áspero" and "terrible de su natural condición" (43), yet at times demonstrating "prudencia y gran destreza" (46) and even "blandura" (47) (that is, acts of kindness) (*Corónica general de España*, vol. 4 [Madrid: B. Cano, 1791-92]).

The problem remains of Cervantes's possible acquaintance with the alleged source text: the Latin translation? A summary in a compendium? (86-87). We are informed that one of the Greek manuscripts of Aeschylus brought to Italy after the fall of Constantinople wended its way to Messina, Sicily, where Cervantes was hospitalized (1571-72) during his recuperation from the battle of Lepanto. This fact leads to the following improbable suggestion: "Like the fictional narrator of *Don Quijote*, Cervantes could have paid someone to translate the manuscript. The many months spent in the hospital would have provided him with ample time to contemplate the political and artistic implications of Aeschylus's play" (88). De Armas admits that other "less interesting" possibilities, such as translations into Latin, are "more likely" (89). This issue is not resolved, except to conclude that Cervantes "could have known *The Persians*" (89).

Though modeling after *The Persians* is not proved, a comparison between the plays leads to interesting generic considerations. Is *La Numancia* a tragedy or a tragicomedy (*comedia*)? If the focus is on the Numantians, de Armas concludes, it bears the hallmarks of a tragicomedy, for the heroic collective death culminates in the birth of a new empire. If, on the other hand, the focus shifts from the city as collective hero to the individual, the admirable Roman general Scipio, the play qualifies as a tragedy. (The general's fatal flaw of *hubris* turns victory into defeat by conquering a city with not even one survivor). In an effort to reconcile these contradictory classifications (tragedy or tragicomedy) and waylay any hint of imperfection in the play, the author of this study contrives a startling solution. Following a discussion of Homeric resonances in the *Numancia*, de Armas contends that, in spite of transgressions from a perfect epic plot (for its story is double rather than single [100-01]) and from ideal tragic form (by the inclusion of various acts of horror, such as cannibalism), the stature of the play is in no way diminished, for key aspects establish "*La Numancia* as a work that transforms the dictates of the *Poetics* and creates two tragedies of the first rank within one theatrical text. These two stories are structured around the two greatest virtues of the epic hero, *sapientia* [exemplified in Scipio] and *fortitudo* [exemplified in the Numantians]" (114-15). We are, it seems, dealing with two plays rather than one. In the end, however, this supposed transgression of the Aristotelian mandate—however interesting and novel—seems more a product of the critic's will than the result of authorial intent or practice.

De Armas has brought to bear on the *Numancia* his knowledge of the Renaissance (both of its classics and its arcana). But on occasion the interpretations become overly ingenious. For example, Virgil is invoked for the "prophesying impulse" (116) that informs the imperial vision presented in *La Numancia*; by having the Duero's speech recall the Tiber's in the *Aeneid*, Cervantes reinforces the analogy between the rise of Rome upon the ashes of Troy and the creation of the Spanish Empire from the ashes of Numantia. This straightforward connection, noted by previous critics, is then subjected to distressing complications, motivated by the simple fact of stage directions calling for three tributary rivers (in addition to the Duero) represented by young boys. The number four consequently triggers a series of associative leaps, leading us finally to a "deeper" Virgilian source, the *Fourth Georgic* and the ocean cavern of Proteus, a figure mentioned in the Duero's speech (120-21). Because certain Renaissance mythographers questioned Proteus's authoritative truthfulness and focused instead on the potential for deception, de Armas writes that there "might be another Cervantine trick hidden in this allusion, another instance of the wiles of imitation" (122). Another instance occurs in the discussion of the Mars/Venus topos. In his demands for greater discipline from his troops (recorded in the historical source), Scipio chides that "La blanda Venus con el duro Marte / jamás hacen durable ayuntamiento" (vv. 89-90). For this the model of Aeneas/Dido is invoked, as the cares of war and demands of love compete. The analogies become ever more recondite. In Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* the goddess rises in a shell (Venus-pearl), and in his *Venus Vanquishing Mars* the goddess wears a ruby (gem of Mars) encircled by pearls. Because the Numantians toss, among other precious materials, pearls and rubies into the flames (vv. 1656-61), a *coincidentia oppositorum* (Venus and Mars) is uncovered, whereby "The Mars-Venus love affair has thus ceased to be an image of the flames of lustful passion and has become a foreshadowing of the collective and loving suicide of the men and women of the Celtiberian city, who together wish to fend off foreign domination" (164). This, in turn, adumbrates Marandro's symbolizing the Christian Eucharist, for he sacrifices himself to bring bread to his starving beloved (164).

Critical fascination with *La Numancia* in recent years has centered on the question of Cervantes's position with respect to the dominant ideology: apparently supporting it, the text nevertheless reveals itself as contradictory to propaganda. De Armas finds proof of this undercutting in both what is said, and what is left unsaid. Mentioned are the highly controversial sack of Rome of 1527 and the Duke of Alba's prevention of a second sack of Rome in 1557 after his defeat of the French armies called by Pope Paul IV. Not mentioned are the many battles against the Moors, in particular the glorious victory of Lepanto. Yet Cervantes's focus on matters Roman—to the exclusion of other events of national interest—is (perhaps *malgré lui*) unavoidable, as the correlation established is between the old Roman empire and the new Spanish one—a victory and also a revenge for the destruction of Numantia. But as de Armas as well as previous critics have indicated (I recall here Willard F. King's "Cervantes' *Numancia* and Imperial Spain," *MLN* 94 [1979] 200-21, or Carroll Johnson's "The Structure of Cervantine Ambiguity," *Ideologies and Literature* 3 [1980] 75-94), the silences

about the current theaters of war are powerfully suggestive of a resistance on Cervantes's part. The long and bloody war in the Netherlands, Carroll Johnson reminds us, was basically conducted as siege warfare (Haarlem [1572–73]; Leyden [1570])—and will continue through the century to the famous/notorious *sitio de Bredá* in 1625, which Calderón will dramatize, and Velázquez immortalize. To these extratextual historical events that sustain such inferences from omission, the author seeks additional intertextual support for a subversive reading. In Act 2 he detects the incorporation of elements (necromancy in particular) from Lucan's *Pharsalia*, which, as an "epic of the defeated," can be considered an "anti-Aeneid" (David Quint, *Origin and Originality in Renaissance Literature*, qtd. 138).

As de Armas moves us towards the last acts of the play, evoking ever more classical sources, these accumulate: "Such is Cervantes's creative sparks in Act 3 and most of Act 4, that Empedocles, Homer, Virgil, Seneca, other classical writers, Neoplatonists, and mythographers coalesce in the preparation for the destruction of the city. . . . Out of the ashes of destructive imitation arises an elusive, allusive, alluring, and altogether brilliant phoenix-like creation, which attempts to soar above the classical and Renaissance models. Reveling in anachronism, different traditions are rewoven into a tapestry that seeks to surpass the ancient sieges, to melt into one final work of art all the epic deeds and horror of war" (155).

Let us now return to the opening chapters, which offer an attractive hypothesis concerning the influence of art on literature (an inversion of the usual direction of influence, which is from verbal source to visual art). Professor de Armas states his thesis as follows: "I would argue that Cervantes's concern with the ruins of Numantia derives from reminiscences of his trip to Italy forty years [sic] earlier. . . . Although such memories of Italy are inscribed in his play, they have been altered by time and experience" (17). Thus, to give an example from the beginning pages, the table of quaternities in the Stanza della Segnatura (structured under the four elements of earth, water, fire, air) finds its correspondence in the four acts of the play, each one featuring an element. This observation then leads to the conclusion that the play's design is esoteric: "The four acts thus form a Pythagorean tetractys, their sum creating eternity through fame at the end of the play" (27).

An initial conjecture concerning the impact of Raphael's frescos on Cervantes during his Roman sojourn becomes a hermeneutic springboard. I cite some examples: "Cervantes must have become well acquainted with the Vatican" (18–19); "The Spanish poet . . . must have wanted to understand how Italian artists were able to foreground the pagan while embracing the Christian at the very center of Catholic power, the Vatican" (19); "The young writer would have treasured Raphael's images as mimetic keys for his own poetry" (22); the memory of *The Fire in the Borgo* in the Stanza dell'Incendio "may have been key to the elaboration of *La Numancia* in its epic, tragic, and archeological concerns. It may also have led him to conceive of the flames of *ekpyrosis*" (54); of Giulio Romano, who decorated the Sala di Constantino, the statement is made that "Cervantes

could well have studied him as an artist who helped develop Spain's imperial image. In a play dealing with the birth of Spanish imperialism, the Spanish playwright could very well have sought to include him" (63). (It is furthermore suggested that, because a duplicate copy of Francis I's tapestries was bequeathed to Philip II by Mary of Hungary upon her death in 1544, Cervantes may have been aware of the series entitled "The History of Scipio" based on Romano's sketches. Yet, as described by Steven N. Orso (*Philip IV and the Decoration of the Alcázar of Madrid* [Princeton: Princeton UP, 1986]) the display of tapestries—items of great luxury and splendor—was ceremonial, occasional, even seasonal (they tended to be removed in the summer). Supporting material about the display history of the series would strengthen this suggestion of Cervantine citation.)

While the initial quotation by Cervantes is proposed as conjectural, during the course of the ensuing discussion it acquires the force of certainty. For example: "Thus, most of the features taken from Raphael's and Romano's paintings went into the structuring of the work, the action and the images encountered in the *comedia*" (63–64); the supposition that changes made by Romano to Raphael's sketch of *The Battle of the Milvian Bridge* "may have played a significant role in Cervantes's imaginings" (63) becomes "Cervantes's explicit stage directions evince his desire to replicate visually upon the stage this feature [the stance for the *allocutio*] found in Romano's painting" (63). In the concluding section it is stated that "*La Numancia* brings together all three modes, utilizing the paintings of Raphael, the epics of antiquity, and the histories of Rome" (180). In fact, what does emerge clearly in *Cervantes, Raphael and the Classics* is that while the Vatican program is shown to exalt unequivocally the power of the papacy, the attitude of Cervantes to official policy and authority is "contrastive and ironic" (68).

The problem is a logical one. The inferences are valid, but the premise upon which they are based is not convincing. To express it in architectural terms: an elaborate and dazzling structure is constructed, but the base is not solid. Readers might feel more comfortable if Raphael were not in the title itself, as though the premise of influence and inspiration on Cervantes were proved and could be stated as fact.

All in all, this critical study displays creative ingenuity. *Cervantes, Raphael and the Classics* enjoins us to return to the *Numancia*—and to enjoy "the pleasure of the text."

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Brink, André. *The Novel: Language and Narrative from Cervantes to Calvino*. New York: New York University Press, 1998. 373 pp.

Brink's book focuses on fifteen novels from the seventeenth through the twentieth centuries. It begins with Cervantes's *Don Quixote* and Madame de Lafayette's *La Princesse de Clèves* and continues with two eighteenth-century

works, Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders* and Denis Diderot's *Jacques the Fatalist and His Master*. Three novels of the nineteenth century follow: Jane Austen's *Emma*, Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, and George Eliot's *Middlemarch*. It ends with eight twentieth-century works: Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice*, Franz Kafka's *The Trial*, Alain Robbe-Grillet's *Le Voyeur*, Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing*, Milan Kundera's *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, A.S. Byatt's *Possession*, and Italo Calvino's *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler*.

The wide-ranging temporal barriers and linguistic and cultural distances are crossed by means of a two-fold unifying premise, that what has been traditionally "regarded as prerogatives of the Modern and Postmodern novel . . . [the] exploitation of the storytelling properties of language, *has in fact been a characteristic of the novel since its inception*" (7: emphasis his); and, alternatively, that so-called postmodernist novels, far from being experimental, are actually conventional, given the precedent of their early forbears.

The argument is not new. It has been raised, with variations, by such critics as Ann Jefferson (in *The Nouveau Roman and the Poetics of Fiction*, 1980), who posits that all novels, experimental and traditional, can be read "as a laboratory of narrative" (17), and more obliquely by Gerald Graff who asserts that literary fiction reveals truth because it discloses the unreality of both literature and reality. Literature thereby "holds the mirror up to unreality (*Literature Against Itself: Literary Ideas in Modern Society*, 1979: 179). Brink is different, however, in the wide sampling of the novels he analyzes, in his close reading of them, and, most impressively, in his grasp of the languages in which the texts were written. His pointing out the inadequacy of particular translations is never pedantic but is, instead, in the service of a better understanding of the original.

This is an ambitious project. It seems initially contradictory. Its premise, that the novel has foregrounded since its inception what we now call a modern or "post-modern" self-conscious use of language, seems antithetical to the basic postmodernist dictum that totalizing and unifying arguments of this kind can no longer be tenable. Yet, given minor failures in Brink's attempt to fit some of the novels within this apparently circumscribed argument, he nevertheless succeeds. Some of the "postmodernist" techniques upon which he focuses in analyzing the earlier novels include their foregrounding of narrative as story, their arbitrary re-telling of different versions of the same events, their highlighting the indeterminacy of all truth claims, their challenge to the logocentrism Derrida describes as prevalent from Plato onward in Western modes of thinking about reality, their focus on language as a random system of culturally—and socially—specific signs, and their positing of language as self-referential.

Primarily Bakhtinian in his emphasis on the novel as "a multi-linguaged consciousness," Brink nevertheless expands the Russian theorist's view to incorporate Derridean, Barthesian, and Lacanian views, especially, in his analysis of the inter-textuality of word and world in each novel. Whether we label these narratives "classical," "traditional," or "realistic," for Brink each foregrounds the unreliability of language as always already "other," as resistant to notions of originality and authorial authority.

"The narrativation of language" (17), as Brink puts it, fashions the twentieth century novels; language is therefore conceived as "translation" in *Don Quixote*, "as a web of social deceit" in *La Princesse de Clèves*, as "gender trap" in *Moll Flanders*, as "dialogic tension" in *Jacques the Fatalist and His Master*, as "a parlour game" in *Emma*, as "scandal" in *Madame Bovary*, as a "system of quotations" in *Middlemarch*.

Since the twentieth-century novels with which the book ends naturally lend themselves easily to an analysis of the self-conscious use of language, the present review will focus primarily, though not exclusively, on how Brink applies his argument to the earlier novels. That is, the argument that the modern and postmodern emphasis on the self-referentiality of language is indicative of the novel since its inception, as is the notion of language as polyvalent, unreliable, and ludic.

In the discussion of *Don Quixote*, Brink focuses on Cervantes's use of floating signifiers. "It is in the *naming* of reality that Don Quixote transforms what is not into what *may be*" (21: emphasis his), thereby making of both fiction and reality mere linguistic constructs always already predetermined by the chivalric word/world of an earlier era. The problem of what constitutes original and what copy is exemplified in the fact that *Don Quixote* is supposedly a translation from an "original" Arabic, and that the original itself stems from the lying pen of a Moor who himself questions the veracity of his narrative, as in the adventure in the cave of Montesinos (and, as all *Cervantistas* know, throughout Part II as Cide Hamete marvels at what Sancho and Don Quixote are now made to say and do). Brink sees the notion of language further complicated in II:xliv when the translator admits he has left gaps by refraining from translating what he read in the original Arabic manuscript.

In Part II both authorial authority and reality itself are seen as unreliable in the ludic episode with the Duke and Duchess. Reality is what playacting constructs the real to be; language is constitutive of word and world in *Don Quixote*. Don Quixote himself has no *personal* experiences. Conflated into chivalric discourse, all his experiences are articulated in the form of "language experienced as *translation*, as *alien*, as *the language of others*" (31: emphasis his). For Brink, both the author and the seventeenth-century reader of *Don Quixote* simply share an old Spanish narrative tradition of "era y non era," itself already a translation from the Arabic narrative formula of "kan ya makan."

In *La Princesse de Clèves*, Brink focuses on the inadequacy of language. Since the norm of language here is deceit, the reader needs to turn to other sign-systems for truth claims. But all sign-systems are shown to be unreliable. In what is familiar from Jakobson's model of sender/message/receiver, Brink focuses here on the arbitrariness of reception once a code has been transmitted. Consequently, Madame de Lafayette's renunciation of the court and her withdrawal into the convent is posited not only as ambiguous (as has traditionally been done), but as a Derridean "combination of *absence* and *distance*" (60: emphasis his).

In *Moll Flanders*, the "floating signifiers" in *Don Quixote* become "vanished signifieds" (83). The same instability of meaning, this time of language as rhetoric, "as an instrument . . . of domination and persuasion" (82), is focused

upon in Defoe's novel. Once again Jakobson serves Brink well. This time it is in Moll's privileging of the speech act over its content, in her constructing both reality and her survival through language. Michel de Certeau's distinction between the "strategies" of the strong and the "tactics" of the powerless would have made Brink's argument in this context even more convincing.

Studying *Jacques the Fatalist and His Master*, Brink foregrounds the use of metanarratives and of intertextuality in Diderot's interrogation of reason, and of the notion of destiny (his "Great Scroll of Destiny") and free will, of what is "real," and what "fictitious," of what is precise and what intermediate. Brink shows how Diderot subverts the essentialism of these binaries, pinpointing them as *produced* "through [the] infinitely variable and unstable processes of dialogic interaction" (102).

In *Emma*, Brink focuses again on gaps and absences as he has in *La Princesse de Clèves*. This time the emphasis takes the form of what is not said in the novel. Since language is part of a hypocritical society that playacts, the unsaid in *Emma* becomes important. This is especially so in the gypsy scene which critics have always pointed out as strange and out-of-place. For Brink, however, it is purposeful. It serves his argument that language, though revealed as play and devised to create charades and pretenses, is foregrounded as hiding another reality, a potent absence hinted at precisely in the gypsy scene. It is the reality of "another system of meanings behind the [linguistic] façade" (115).

The focus in the analysis of *Madame Bovary* is on the inadequacy of language as already devaluated by others. Language is seen as a social force, already corrupted when used for private expression and destructive to those who attempt to deviate from the social definitional norm it expresses (135).

In *Middlemarch*, observations are highlighted as simply translated views proffered as truth claims. But the novel's multiplicity of viewpoints makes it, instead, an accretion of quotations and linguistic claims which come "from elsewhere, point elsewhere, refer to a source located elsewhere" (150). *Middlemarch* is therefore seen to embody the Derridean *iterable*, a repetitive narrative in which nothing is said and in which no story is original.

With *Death in Venice*, feminist discourse enables Brink's analysis. Aschenbach's obsession is seen as both the repression of the feminine and its return full-force in the person of the feminized Tadzio. The bookish Aschenbach, from this perspective, reads the body of "the beautiful girlish boy of flesh" intertextually, as a Hyacinthus, a Narcissus, a Hermes. Tadzio becomes an impossible copy of the always already, a mere pastiche of Aschenbach's literary models.

Beginning with Kafka's *The Trial*, we enter precisely that world of modernist and postmodernist characteristics upon which Brink bases his argument. Whereas the earlier novels have been seen as presenting an incipient exploitation of language as ludic, deceptive, polyvalent, inadequate, etc., with Kafka and the novels that follow, we are shown how the full-fledged characteristics we attribute to the modern and postmodern novel were already present in varying degrees in the previous narratives. In *The Trial*, the focus is on "its inability to communicate sense" (195: emphasis his), on the randomness of its events, the absence

of points of reference, of cause and effect, and, above all, on its meaninglessness. In Robbe-Grillet's *Le Voyeur*, it is the dissolution of language that is foregrounded. Binaries coexist unproblematically: an elitist aestheticism is juxtaposed to the illusory "urge to democratise the novel" (207); a non-existent relation between signifier and signified is emphasized; and futile attempts at epistemological solutions and at language as meaning-producing are highlighted. In Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, it is upon the testing of the validity and limits of language as writing that Brink focuses in discussing the author's creating and undoing, his "[h]acer para dehacer" (sic 235, 238, 252) of his narrative world.

In Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing*, a feminist position is once again adopted as Brink focuses on the "otherness" of "another's" language for the female in the narrative, "specifically [on] a woman's experience of (male) language" (253: emphasis his). The Lacanian distinction between the maternal Imaginary Order and the Symbolic Law of the Father serves his re-interpretation of the argument that *Surfacing* signifies that women have no other language but the "other's." For Brink, additionally, the distinction is used to show how Atwood transcends essentialist binarisms in *Surfacing*.

Kundera's *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, with its insistence on the Nietzschean notion of "eternal recurrence," of "*Einmal ist keinmal*," lends itself to Brink's emphasis on postmodern non-linearity. The notion of recurrence also works in A.S. Byatt's twentieth-century fictional scholars' attempt to reconstruct the lives of two equally fictitious Victorian poets in *Possession*. Both novels highlight the notion of origin as illusory, of historical truth as culturally-specific. In Calvino's *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler*, the existence of a master narrative is seen as no longer possible. The reader becomes complicit in the process of writing a text whose very *modus operandi* emphasizes that there are no beginnings or ends in narrative, that all texts come from other texts, that all words come from other words. Unlike previous critics who have highlighted Calvino's novel as the immemorial pursuit of the female as prey, Brink plays it instead for laughs. He sees it as a book "looking at itself in the process of emergence" (324), a book that eludes any definitive meaning, provoking "the reader into revolt against phallogocentric textual authority or finality" (329).

Brink has created his analytic model, as all literary criticism inevitably does. And, as Ihab Hassan points out in the *Right Promethean Fire* (1980), as critics we then proceed "to 'discover' the affinities of various authors and different moments with [our constructed] model" (108). The book does not escape this sense of constructedness, but in the process of producing the affinities between modern and postmodern novels and their predecessors, Brink nevertheless combines an impressive knowledge of critical theory and of the target languages of the novels he analyzes, with close and convincing readings of the texts themselves. All this in a highly readable and unpretentious manner.

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Frenk, Margit. *Entre la voz y el silencio (La lectura en tiempos de Cervantes)*. Biblioteca de Estudios Cervantinos 4. Alcalá de Henares: Centro de Estudios Cervantinos, 1997. 148 pp.

This book by the well-known Margit Frenk consists of a brief introduction, seven succinct chapters, a select bibliography, and two indices. As the author indicates, all chapters but the last were published earlier (in 1991, 1982, 1986, 1984, 1991, and 1992, respectively). Nevertheless, the separate studies give the reader a complete and suggestive vision of the oral aspects that inform not only Cervantes's most important novel but, also, the most significant literary genres of his period: the short story, the lyric poem, the play, and the epistle. In addition, Professor Frenk's book, in spite of a modest aside («No pretendo-ni podría-hacer una crítica de la crítica textual, sino sólo de su carácter limitante» [57]), in effect destabilizes and questions philological practices which we might take for granted and which the author demonstrates to be quite ineffective when one tries, for instance, to do an impossible *stemma* of poems or even stories (*cuentos*) which were meant to circulate orally as ephemeral events and not as fixed or permanent (written) "texts."

Some of Margit Frenk's ideas with respect to orality are based on seminal works of Rivers, Díez Borque, Ife, Moner, Iffland, Ong, Goody, and Schön, as she points out. Moreover, what stands out after one finishes *Entre la voz y el silencio* is the consistent trajectory of the "living" word throughout the ages before it "dies" in the silence of the written page and the solitary modern reader. As the author points out, «Poco a poco la letra va dejando de ser depósito de la voz. El libro habla cada vez más mudamente a un lector cada vez más sordo» (86). Frenk traces the silence of the modern reader to St. Ambrose, who, in the fourth century surprised St. Augustine by his unusual manner of reading. Eventually, of course, the primary rhetorical practice of *actio* or *pronuntiatio* became secondary as readers learned to read almost completely in silence. Although the author entertains several important moments in time when the final switch to silence was established (in the nineteenth century), she notes, with Iffland, that Don Quijote, unlike the other characters of the novel, reads in silence and, in this manner, anticipates the modern reader.

The solid scholarship of this work and the highly suggestive thoughts it provokes, with respect to other genres that would seem to lie beyond the scope of this text (e.g., radio, television, opera, the internet, and other media that rely on what Ong calls "secondary orality"), would not prevent one from imagining that perhaps a brief allusion to Derridean *écriture* or Kristeva's Semiotic realm as it pertains to the sensorial aspects of language, might not have been impertinent as an interesting addendum to this otherwise superb work. Yet Margit Frenk's book clearly does not need additional material to prove its point, namely, that in the process of change from the oral to the visual the modern reader has lost the sensorial aspects of language and the sense of community that once accompanied the now mostly solitary activity of reading.

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López Navia, Santiago Alfonso. *La ficción autorial en el Quijote y en sus continuaciones e imitaciones*. Prólogo de Alberto Sánchez. Estudios Europeos 4. Madrid: Universidad Europea de Madrid-CEES, 1996. 285 pp.

Con admirable precisión y claridad López Navia nos ofrece en esta revisión de su tesis doctoral (Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 1990) un estudio de las funciones de Cide Hamete Benengeli como autor ficticio y recurso paródico haciendo caso omiso, lo cual es muy de agradecer, de filigranas narratológicas y laberintos teóricos.

No es poca la tinta que se ha derramado recientemente en peregrinos argumentos y razones sobre las voces autoriales del *Quijote* y en particular, por supuesto, sobre la naturaleza y papel de Cide Hamete en la ficción. López Navia prefiere remitirnos al texto con certeza y abundancia y remontarse como base de su investigación a las prácticas y modelos narrativos hallados en los libros de caballerías, comparando las categorías "sabio," "autor," e "historiador" allí presentes. Así, comienza su estudio advirtiendo y notando los antecedentes paródicos de Cide Hamete como narrador ficticio, lo cual nos ahorra de paso considerables elucubraciones críticas realizadas con frecuencia fuera de la historia literaria como contexto. Tras pasar revista muy juiciosamente a la evolución crítica del tema en los estudios cervantinos y sus aportaciones al respecto desde 1675, López Navia examina sucesivamente la significación múltiple del autor ficticio Cide Hamete, las posibles claves onomásticas y el valor textual del recurso en la estructura narrativa del *Quijote*.

En la segunda parte de su estudio López Navia analiza el recurso del autor ficticio como elemento de imitación literaria desde Avellaneda hasta nuestros días. Traza las raíces del recurso en los libros de caballerías y analiza las diferentes funciones de los autores ficticios del *Quijote* así como sus variaciones en las numerosas imitaciones, continuaciones y ampliaciones de la obra cervantina en las que aparecen los descendientes de Cide Hamete, tanto en España como en Hispanoamérica. De considerable interés es la sección que examina las situaciones narrativas, funciones textuales y categorías autoriales (85-88) de donde se deriva una muy satisfactoria explicación del papel de Cide Hamete como recurso literario en los libros de caballerías y como clave paródica de esas ficciones pseudohistóricas en el *Quijote*, "con todas las singularidades que la intencionalidad irónica añade" (42).

Es de notar que para no caer en exageraciones o vaguedades el autor clasifica con típica precisión el corpus que le ocupa desde una perspectiva temática, excluyendo certeramente aquellas obras que no caen dentro de su categorización en cuanto ampliaciones, continuaciones e imitaciones, para concentrarse en los textos en los cuales es posible reconocer sin lugar a dudas una variante del recurso paródico cervantino, y relegando a su vez a un interesantísimo y útil apéndice obras que, aunque emparentadas con el *Quijote*, carecen de ficción autorial definida. El "Apéndice bibliográfico" incluye 43 obras de las cuales se nos ofrece, para posterior consideración, una breve reseña de su contenido (269-82).

Ni que decir tiene que tanto su carácter sistemático y ordenado, su atención a los textos, sus aportaciones analíticas, así como la extensa labor de investigación y recuperación de obras oscuras u olvidadas nos lleva a reconocer y apreciar el valor crítico del estudio de López Navia, que como apunta su prologuista, Alberto Sánchez, obtuvo en su día como tesis doctoral la máxima calificación. Obra científica, minuciosa en sus consideraciones y prudente en sus juicios, que no dudamos en recomendar y alabar.

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Cervantes, Miguel de. *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda*. Edición de Carlos Romero Muñoz. Madrid: Cátedra, 1997. [Letras Hispánicas, 427]

This is, as the introduction states, the first truly critical edition of Cervantes's second most important work. It is also the culmination of thirty years of persevering scholarship, starting with *Introduzione al Persiles* (1968), and including *Para la edición crítica del Persiles* (1977). Much of the material from these earlier studies is incorporated here in condensed form, along with a wealth of additional information, either based on Romero's extensive reading in the literature of the Golden Age or culled from other editors and commentators. Both for its carefully-edited text and for the copious notes (over 1,800 in all), this far surpasses all previous editions. It is simply the text to have for anyone seriously interested in *Persiles*.

Romero focuses on the text and its language, with correction and explication given priority over interpretation. No detail is too minute to attract his attention, and he is at his best when explaining that the word *antiparas* in the prologue is not an erratum for *antiparras*, spectacles, but refers, rather, to a kind of leather breeches or chaps worn over a one's clothing when working or traveling; or that the *sierras de agua* observed by the protagonists in Aranjuez are not, as most have believed, mountainous waves caused by overpowering river currents, but the ingenious water-powered sawmills built there in 1588-93, which had become something of a tourist attraction. While Romero occasionally admits the necessity of emending the *princeps* (always scrupulously annotating when he does), more of his energy is spent defending the 1617 edition against unnecessary changes based on a later linguistic standard. What emerges for the reader is a heightened awareness of the baroque elegance of the prose of Cervantes's last-completed work.

The notes concerning sources compliment this textual criticism, emphasizing the erudition which went into *Persiles*, Cervantes's vindication of his ability to write in a 'serious' style, as opposed to the 'comic' *Don Quijote*. This is the first edition which annotates all of the observed parallels with Heliodorus, along

with a number of new ones discovered by Romero himself. The use of geographical-ethnographic treatises and miscellanies, such as Olaus Magnus's *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus* and Torquemada's *Jardín de flores curiosas*, is carefully documented. In a more polemical vein, Romero rejects Schevill and Bonilla's widely accepted claim that Cervantes relied on the *Comentarios reales* (1609) of El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega for details in his image of the Northern Lands. Even where the customs evoked are Amerindian, rather than Scandinavian, as in the case of ritual human sacrifice, Romero convincingly argues that other, earlier sources, such as Fernández Oviedo or López de Gómara, could have served as well (or better).

The import of such questions concerning sources has to do with the dating controversy surrounding *Persiles*, a vital issue for our understanding of Cervantes's development as a writer. Does he return to romance after writing Part One of *Don Quijote*, as Ruth El Saffar insisted? Or should we think of romance and its comic parody as two styles he practices interchangeably, as Gonzalo Sobejano has argued? We may never know when Cervantes wrote the books he brought out in rapid succession after the success of the 1605 *Don Quijote*, but in the case of *Persiles* we can at least say that the problem has never before received such equanimous treatment. Romero gives full consideration to all the available hypotheses before presenting his own theory: Cervantes began *Persiles* after reading El Pinciano's *Filosofía antigua poética* (1596) and finished the first two books in 1599, when he abandoned the work until 1615. Though Romero gives no explanation for the long hiatus, an obvious possibility presents itself. Just as its composition may have been inspired by the publication of one book, so its abandonment could have been the result of another, catastrophic initially for Cervantes: that of *Guzmán de Alfarache* (Part I, 1599). How could he have continued to write elegant fantasies about noble characters in exotic lands after Alemán's mordant, socially relevant satire? The problem thus raised of the relation between idealized romance and sordid everyday life would ultimately lead to the composition of *Don Quijote*. In the meantime, *Persiles* would have to wait. So the curious back-and-forth in Cervantes's trajectory presents itself as a complex dialogue with the literary theory and practice of his day.

Concerning the coherence of the events which make up the historical background of the action of *Persiles*, Romero argues for a strict internal chronology of 1557–59, classing all events which do not fit as 'anachronisms.' The primary deficiency of this approach is its circularity. Certainly the announcement of Charles V's death (1559) as 'news' and the 'prophecy' of Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* (1575) indicate that the action takes place shortly before the completion of the Council of Trent. To insist on greater exactitude in the determination of the time of the action is as arbitrary as the popular view that the chronology is essentially incoherent. Must we commit ourselves to the idea that Cervantes had the specific dates 1557–59 in mind and planned the action of *Persiles* to coincide with them? Romero also offers the suggestive idea of a 'double chronology' at work in *Persiles*; that is, certain events which refer simultaneously to the time of the story and to the present of writer and reader. This would seem to imply an intentional juxtaposition between the present and a moment from the recent

past. If Cervantes chose to set his story in the waning years of what J.H. Elliott once termed the 'open' Spain which preceded the Counter Reformation, presumably it was to emphasize a contrast with his own day. Romero's double chronology, which emerges especially in the last two books of the work, points perhaps to a tacit rejection of the 'closed' Spain of the seventeenth century.

Yet to the extent that Romero offers any overall interpretation of *Persiles*, it is precisely as an expression of the ideals of the Counter Reformation. His historicizing approach, which situates Cervantes's text within a vast network of topoi, idioms, and textual references, tends intrinsically towards interpretation in terms of the prevailing ideology of Baroque Spain. Romero is justifiably impatient with those who see irony wherever an idea repellent to our sensibility is expressed, such as support for the expulsion of the Moors or anti-Semitism. It is true that this convenient hermeneutic 'magic wand' is often evoked without textual evidence, to make Cervantes say whatever the critic wants him to, in a fashion reminiscent of Don Quijote's Moorish enchanters. Even so, Romero goes too far in the opposite direction, losing sight of the distinction between the author and the narrator, whose opinions are attributed directly to Cervantes. In the case of the Morisco raid, moreover, there does seem to be some irony in the fact that while pious speeches celebrating the village's 'Christianization' by abandonment are put into the mouths of the two new-Christian Moors who remain behind, the old Christians of the town, the priest and the scribe, demonstrate no sign of religious fervor. In fact, the scribe's very soul is said to be preoccupied by his concern over the damage to his property, and the priest remains silent. Admittedly, the irony here does not so much serve as a defense of the Moriscos as it constitutes an implicit condemnation of the hypocrisy of their oppressors.

Despite the overall conservatism of his own interpretation, Romero's edition is an invaluable tool for anyone interested in developing a well-grounded reading of *Persiles*, whatever their ideological or theoretical inclinations. Among the many resources he places at the reader's disposal are an exhaustive list of editions and translations, and the best bibliography on *Persiles* available. His introduction offers an excellent general orientation in the history of *Persiles*-criticism, with special attention to recent work. The notes systematically record much information which could be useful in several avenues of critical speculation. For example, Romero documents the unacknowledged censorship which he discovered in the 1617 Lisbon edition, in which references to witchcraft and numerous other passages relating to Christian doctrine were expunged.

Many of the notes point to the remarkably varied genre-affinities of different episodes, indicating such connections as those between the Fishermen's Isle and the bucolic, between Periandro's Tale and heroic or chivalric literature, between some of the episodes in Spain and the *entremes*, and between the French chapters of Book Three and Arthurian literature. However, there is no attempt to address the significance of the multigeneric composition of the work. In this regard, Steven Hutchinson's *Cervantine Journeys* (1992) provides a helpful model, in which the different physical locations, corresponding to different genres, constitute separate fictional worlds linked by the linear trajectory of the protagonists' journey. *Persiles* thus poses a question familiar to the reader of *Don*

Quijote: what happens when the stylized worlds of the imagination collide? What happens to characters as they move from world to world? One answer, for the attentive reader of *Persiles*, is that inconsistencies creep in, the famous *deslices*, more frequent here than in any of Cervantes's other works. The lapses which punctuate the text have generally been viewed as defects, and it may be that Cervantes would have eliminated many of them if he had had time. But for that very reason they are valuable evidence of his method of working. In a 1972 article, Rafael Osuna attempted a catalogue of authorial errors in *Persiles*. Romero mentions all the lapses in Osuna's list, while adding quite a few more. Almost all of the numerous inconsistencies in *Persiles* are noted here, making it easier to view them as a whole and to ask what they reveal about this work.

Many of the contradictions can be more clearly understood if they are mapped onto the system of fictional worlds through which the protagonists travel. A character in one world may be dramatically transformed by passage into another, where a different representational mode predominates. The extremely ugly fisherwoman of Book Two, Chapter 10, which takes place in a bucolic world, where the fisherman Carino falls in love with her *spiritual* beauty, is transformed, by Chapter 16, into an extremely beautiful maiden. At this point we are on the maritime chivalric sea of Periandro's adventures, where she has been stolen by pirates. Here the value of her spiritual beauty would be meaningless if it were not visible as physical attractiveness; hence the transformation. To take another example, which Romero did not catch: in Book Four, Chapter 1, the collector of *aforismos peregrinos* tells us he wrote the *illiterate* Bartolomé's aphorism and signed his name for him; in Chapter 5, his 'picaresque' letter from a Roman jail appears, with no explanation of how it was written. Under the corrupting influence of the *mujer liviana*, Luisa la Talaverana, Bartolomé has moved from innocent country rustic to full-fledged urban *pícaro* in the space of a few chapters, and, not unlike the original Lazarillo, has mysteriously learned to write and produced a first-person autobiographical narrative. An exhaustive study of all such contradictions in *Persiles* would reveal, as Casaldueiro argued half a century ago, that expectations about mimetic consistency derived from realism have hindered full appreciation of the richness of Cervantes's kaleidoscopic technique. It may well be that a thorough investigation of the heterogeneity of the fictional universe of *Persiles* would contradict the ideological closure Romero, like many before him, sees at the root of Cervantes's last work.

Romero's edition closes the period of Cervantes studies which began in 1971 with the publication of Alban K. Forcione's *Cervantes, Aristotle, and the "Persiles"*, the study which established a definite place in the canon of Cervantes's works for his posthumous romance. This imperfect masterpiece, alien to our sensibility in ways Cervantes's greatest work is not, has finally been edited with the care and scholarship it deserves. In trying single-handedly to make up for centuries of neglect, however, Romero has taken on an enormous task, one perhaps too great for the efforts of a single individual. Having set for himself the overwhelming goal of keeping a running record of the variants in all the editions ever published, Romero assigns a symbol based on the place of publication to every edition or translation of *Persiles* (M16, for example, is Schevill and

Bonilla's edition; M23 is Avalle-Arce's; AH is the 1994 edition published in Alcalá de Henares by the Centro de Estudios Cervantinos with Florencio Sevilla Arroyo and Antonio Rey Hazas as editors); the editors themselves receive another designation: S-B, AA, SA-RH. A double system of notes is used: the lettered notes simply give the information concerning variants, using the symbols for the different editions; a high percentage of them are accompanied by numbered notes explaining Romero's reasoning, in which the editors' names (or their abbreviations) are used. This system of annotation is too cumbersome, even for him, and he frequently makes mistakes in using his own extensive set of abbreviations, sometimes rendering his notes incoherent. For example, the letter 'S' by itself should stand, according to the list of abbreviations, for Rudolph Schevill, while the 1971 abridgment edited by Emilio Carilla and published by Anaya in Salamanca is 'Sa'; but in practice, Romero forgets and uses 'S' for both. In a number of cases, the reader cannot untangle the correct meaning of a note without help from other editions or Romero's previous publications. I do not personally perceive the need for including in the notes all the variants ever produced by any editor; focusing on the most important editions would have been enough, perhaps, and would have obviated the need for so many confusing abbreviations. Purged of its errors (which are simply too numerous), Romero's edition of *Persiles* would stand as a shining example of the best Golden Age scholarship has to offer, reason enough, in itself, to reread *Persiles*. To maximize its value, I believe Cervantists should communicate to Romero the editor's and typist's errors so that they can be eliminated from future reprints, for, though I grant they might be interesting if they were Cervantes's own, as it is they only obstruct our efforts to understand and enjoy the final fruits of his genius.

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González Echevarría, Roberto. *Major Authors on CD-ROM: Miguel de Cervantes*. CD-ROM. Woodbridge, CT: Primary Source Media, 1998.

Under the direction of General Editor Roberto González Echevarría, Primary Source Media has digitized several editions of Cervantes's works, joining them with a powerful search engine that furnishes hyperlinks to virtually every word published by Cervantes. More than a library of Cervantine writings, the volume serves as a tool for comprehensive and precise investigations of Cervantes's words and ideas. The editors have taken special care to anticipate the needs of literary researchers, providing facsimile reproductions of first or early editions of all of Cervantes's works. The facsimile editions have also been transcribed according to the originals, without emendations, thus allowing for quick reading in modern fonts while simultaneously preserving the peculiarities of the

transcription so that readers may refer to the facsimile in cases of possibly ambiguous renderings. In addition to the facsimile editions and transcriptions, major scholarly editions of each Cervantine text have been digitized, linking the database not only to Cervantes's writings, but also to the notes and comments of the renowned scholars of the following editions: *Entremeses*, Eugenio Asensio; *La Galatea*, *Novelas ejemplares*, and *Persiles y Sigismunda*, Juan Bautista Avall-Arce; *Don Quijote* (two editions), Diego Clemencín and Francisco Rodríguez Marín; and *Viaje del Parnaso*, Miguel Herrero García. English translations of all of the works are also included in the collection.

To facilitate the work of researchers even further, González Echevarría stipulated the inclusion in the database of Carlos F. Bradford's *Índice de las notas de Diego Clemencín en su edición de El ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha* (Madrid: Imprenta y Fundación de Manuel Tello, 1885) and of Sebastián de Covarrubias Orozco's *Tesoro de la lengua castellana*. Scholars will find immediate linkage to these two references invaluable. To aid in the visualization of the *Don Quijote*, 162 illustrations have been included, most of them retrieved from Francisco López Fabra's *Iconografía del Quijote* (1879). Last on this list but first in order of appearance on the CD's Table of Contents are two insightful introductions by González Echevarría. The first briefly reviews Cervantes's life, explores the nature, sources, and repercussions of Cervantes's writings in society and in literature, and finally examines the significance of the type of production that the CD represents. The second essay describes the provenance and the relevance of the illustrations.

The product is shipped with a bilingual user's guide and two separate PC-compatible CDs (Macintosh versions are not available). The CDs are identical with the exception of the interface, one being in Spanish, the other in English. Any editorial documentation by González-Echevarría permits toggling between the two languages, regardless of the disk used. Menu-related information is determined by the interface and is only accessible in the language of the particular disk's interface. Programming limitations have dictated that certain commands and installation sequences cannot be translated from English, but in general the product is truly bilingual, and installation, though not automatic (no autoplay file), is relatively straightforward. I tried installing both disks to several drives—some of which were network drives (network licenses may be purchased)—and had no problem with the installation. With a list price of \$1995.00, I suspect that few *cervantistas* will choose to include this volume in their personal collection. In a telephone communication with Primary Source Media in December of 1998, Frank Menchaca, team leader of the creative team for the disk, confirmed that the product is targeted mainly for libraries or departmental resource centers. A web-version of the database will be available to individuals at "reasonable prices" as of January 1999 at <http://www.psmmedia.com/>.

Scholars in the field will be familiar with Cervantes's works, with the editions that I have listed above, and with the outstanding scholarship of Roberto González Echevarría. What can I say about the value of this particular product? Without a doubt the most important aspect is the ability to search such an impressive corpus for the appearance of a single word and to receive a search

output that links Cervantes to Covarrubias, to Bradford, and to modern scholars. Web-based search engines of the Cervantine corpus are, of course, available for free, as are also *princeps* editions (e.g., <http://www.csdll.tamu.edu/cervantes/>). These services, however, do not link the text to the comments of scholars or to Covarrubias and Bradford, nor do they supply the vast quantity of digital illustrations that are provided in this package. Having text and pictures in a digital format can, of course, offer pedagogical advantages. For copying, pasting, or printing the text, however, a web-ready version of Cervantes's works may be the most desirable option. The *Major Authors* CD does not allow easy scrolling from one page to another. Each page is loaded individually, and, like a book, once a page is "turned," the previous page is no longer visible. Cutting and pasting is a page-by-page process. Avoiding the problem by using the printer is not a recommendable option in light of the five-page print limit (that actually allows six pages to be printed) written into the installation program. One may also choose the "save-to-file" option; however, the same page restrictions are in force for saving to files as for printing. In addition, when printing the illustrations directly from the program menu, ink jet printers produce a solid black image, but if the file is opened in another program, for example, in Imaging for Windows 95, then ink-jet printing presents no problem. Laser printers, on the other hand, comply with the program's requirements.

One of the superficial drawbacks of the program is the limit placed on the number of windows that may be open simultaneously within the program. Each item clicked opens in a new window. As one excitedly plumbs the contents of the disk, after a very few exploratory clicks a frame pops up to inform the user that one of the open windows must be closed before other windows can be opened. The solution is simple—close a window—and the inconvenience does not reduce the effectiveness of the search engine. Perhaps, however, those accustomed to browsing the web without similar disruptions will find this interruption frustrating. This product is not a text for idle reading; it is a tool for textual analysis. Users that prefer desultory perusals to focused inquiries will find that the web serves as a cheaper and perhaps less-frustrating resource. Another drawback for those accustomed to Windows 95/98/NT is the return to Windows 3.1 mouse limitations and menu tools. There is no right clicking for simple, pop-up menus, and there is no way to change display, print, font or any other program default from within the program. The size of a window or of an image may be increased or decreased, but internal frames may not be adjusted, non-image text cannot be sized, and size selection of images (text or illustrations) does not stay the same from one page to the next.

At the rate—both in speed and in breadth—at which technology advances, it is impossible for a virtual text to anticipate and to meet all the platform and programming contingencies of a wildly diversified market. In reference to the problematic nature of this production, González Echevarría states: "It is possible that, ultimately, this CD-ROM is only an updating and dramatization of Don Quixote's madness" (Introduction: Cervantes 11). In a way, this CD is like Don Quijote (or like one aspect of Don Quijote): It is an idealistic but nonetheless worthwhile endeavor to provide *cervantistas* with a better world, all undertaken

with tools that are slightly antiquated. Like *Don Quijote*, and like all of Cervantes's writings, what is worthwhile about this product will remain valuable indefinitely (or as long as our computers allow us to use CD-ROMs). The product is probably not a program that will interest those who seek leisurely recreation, but, to follow the Unamunian perspective, it may indeed be the perfect tool to use in moments of re-creation, cultivation, or construction of interpretations of Cervantes's vast and challenging oeuvre. The product is a valuable resource, one that every library should house for researchers, teachers, and readers of Cervantes.

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