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Stanislav Zimic. *Los cuentos y las novelas del Quijote*. 2nd ed. Madrid: Iberoamericana–Vervuert, 2003. 349 pp. ISBN: 84-8489-105-4.

In his erudite study *Los cuentos y las novelas del Quijote*, Stanislav Zimic challenges the often repeated assertion that the interpolated tales could be extracted without substantial detriment to the rest of the plot. Contrary to the well-known assertions by diverse writers on the topic—among them Unamuno, Madariaga, Russell, Parker, and Percas de Ponseti—Zimic sustains, in an innovative re-adaptation of the Romantic approach, that the

intercalated tales in *Don Quixote* are not mere interludes embedded in a haphazardly chaotic narrative, but rather, critically integral to the aesthetic, thematic, and novelistic structure. In this painstakingly documented study on the intercalated stories, digressions, and interruptions in *Don Quixote*, Zimic devotes due attention to the most frequently studied episodes of the novel, while incorporating into his thesis multiple aspects from episodes that might otherwise be overlooked by even the most discerning reader. *Cervantistas* will welcome Zimic's book with much enthusiasm, especially for his detailed analysis of Cervantes' artistic technique of interweaving multiple plots and descriptive *minutiae* without sacrificing the complex depth of the characters.

In Chapter 1, "Consideraciones generales sobre las 'novelas y cuentos' de la Primera Parte del *Quijote*," Zimic summarizes the efforts throughout the centuries to interpret *Don Quixote*, noting that there are numerous extraneous parts in the novel that cannot be easily explained according to a coherent thesis on novelistic structure. Questioning the validity of Cide Hamete Benengeli's parodic condemnation of the "novelas," both "sueñas" and "pegadizas," of Part One, Zimic demonstrates that Cervantes' aesthetic intention figures prominently in the Canon of Toledo's discourse on the Aristotelian structure of the balanced *fábula*, a critical concept that Cervantes embraced and executed in the novel's narrative form. Put simply, Cervantes crafts his book as an intricate web of unified intercalated tales and digressive adventures that come to exemplify the seemingly tenuous yet resilient marriage of theory and practice. Zimic persuasively maintains that Cervantes craftily interweaves the many narrative threads with supreme and subtle mastery, thus creating "una inquebrantable armónica cohesión de todos los materiales novelísticos, sabia, artísticamente entretajidos" (27). Cervantes' artistic genius lies in this perfect harmony of structural unity and narrative variety.

To this end, Zimic offers an exhaustive catalogue of instances that evince Cervantes' art of interweaving multiple narrative threads within the elaborate fabric of the novelistic structure. Among the many topics that Zimic analyzes we find the elusive psychological complexity of Cervantes' characters (with particular attention given to Cardenio and Anselmo, those two curiously conflicted men); the novel's parodic intent of simulating the structure of the tangential, interrupted, and fragmented adventures in chivalric romance; and the dialectic between life and literature. Of particular note is the assessment of Cervantine characters as conscious imitators of literature, what Zimic terms "literaturización": the incarnation of fantastic literature in quotidian reality.

The appraisal of Grisóstomo's death in the pastoral interlude of Part One forms the crux of Chapter 2, "La 'muerte de amores' de Grisóstomo." Zimic synthesizes the varied opinions on the incurably despondent shepherd's untimely demise, revising Américo Castro's assertion that Cervantes does not

explicitly allude to Grisóstomo's suicide in the narrative prose, but rather in the verses of the "Canción desesperada." Zimic, ever perspicacious of Cervantine nuances, suggests that in addition to Grisóstomo's song of desperation (poetry), there are also references to his suicide in the prose, specifically evoked by the euphemistic use of "murmurar," which conveys the "unspeakable" nature of Grisóstomo's desperate act. Based on a series of discerning observations about what is said concerning Grisóstomo's death, Zimic arrives at the conclusion that the feigned shepherd, suffering from "una auténtica locura patológica" (57), executed a premeditated suicide, as is revealed by his song of desperation. Zimic also underscores the complexity of Marcela's discourse and actions, disagreeing with critics who not only fail to see in them much intertextual influence by San Juan de la Cruz's mysticism and Fray Luis de León's abstract poetry, but who also categorize her as a conventional archetype of pastoral literature. Contrary to those who have viewed Marcela as incomprehensible for shunning men, Zimic emphasizes that the misunderstood shepherdess is in search of an "absolute liberty" of a sublime and abstract kind.

Far from venturing into the *mare magnum* of critical speculations surrounding Anselmo, that quintessentially curious impertinent, Zimic offers in Chapter 3, "El curioso impertinente: la voráGINE de la desconfianza," a clear view of the protagonist's pervasive mistrust, the tragic flaw at the root of his ill-conceived test and subsequent downfall. Zimic summarizes the many judgments passed on Anselmo, ranging from an inherent neurosis or hysteria to a pronounced perversion or inferiority complex. While he aptly examines the psychological complexity that drives Anselmo's neurotic obsession with proving both Camila's unwavering fidelity and Lotario's steadfast loyalty, Zimic conjectures that Anselmo's premarital "pasatiempos" must have been those typical of a predatory bachelor. In his otherwise illuminating interpretation of this intercalated story, Zimic fails to see Anselmo's patent inclination toward voyeurism as an erotically gratifying obsession, believing instead that the *curioso impertinente* is simply ignorant of the increasingly evident affair between Camila and Lotario.

The intricate web of the star-crossed lovers who meet in both the Sierra Morena and Juan Palomeque's inn constitutes the focus of Chapter 4, "Los amores entrecruzados de Cardenio, Luscinda, Dorotea y Fernando." While critics have seen many sources from which Cervantes drew inspiration for the intricate stories pertaining to these inauspiciously paired lovers—including books of chivalry, pastoral novels, novellas, and theater (*comedia nueva*)—Zimic points out that not much attention has been given to Cervantes' indebtedness to Greek romance, which becomes readily apparent upon careful examination of the most salient characteristics of *Don Quixote's* plot, characters, and narrative structure.

Zimic analyzes the narrative interruptions integral to Greek romance, in addition to such basic components as the technique of complementing the parts of a story by having different speakers tell their own versions of it (a form of perspectivism *avant la lettre*); the distinctive interruptions and links that tie one chapter to the next (which in Cervantes' case also becomes a parody of chivalric romance); the prevalence of minute details; and the nexus of fortuitous encounters that tend to have, as their culmination, the ubiquitous *anagnorisis*. However, as Zimic clarifies, Cervantes not only competes with Heliodorus, but surpasses him by refashioning the Greek romance for modernity and imbuing it with a literary and moral exemplarity. While there is an element of chance and twists of fate in both Greek romance and *Don Quixote*, Cervantes demonstrates his novelistic innovation by subordinating pure chance to the compelling will and psychological complexity of the individual characters.

Taking issues with studies by eminent *cervantistas* such as Percas de Ponseti and Márquez Villanueva, in Chapter 4, "El sueño del cautivo," Zimic adheres to the literal interpretation of Zoraida's allegedly sincere conversion to Christianity. Zimic bolsters this portrayal of Zoraida in order to underscore her important role in the Captive's tale, considered as a political, historical, social, and autobiographical testimonial. Insisting that the critics who judge Zoraida as insincere have not read the text properly, Zimic contends that she cannot be accused of "mariolatría," an excessive devotion to the Virgin, since she also mentions "Alá" and simply asks "Lela Marién" to intercede on her behalf. Even more untenable is Zimic's appraisal of Zoraida's vision of her old Christian slave as a mystical experience akin to the one experienced by Saint Teresa. Equally unsustainable is Zimic's view that Zoraida's love for the Virgin serves as a viable substitution for her dead mother as well as a justification for abandoning both her home and father. Believing in the absolute Christian faith that Zoraida exhibits—"a todas luces, la fe religiosa de Zoraida es ortodoxa, firme, constante" (148)—Zimic argues that Zoraida validates the sincerity of her newly found faith by showing her unconditional love for the Captive.

Zimic regrettably chooses not to mention Zoraida's rather calculating and unsympathetic abandonment of her father, Agi Morato, whom she leaves on a deserted beach to die. In fact, the critic justifies Zoraida's crafty scheme by painting Agi Morato as a Muslim "fanatic" who could not find it in his heart to love and accept his newly converted daughter. Exonerating Zoraida from any ruse on her part, Zimic heaps praise on the newly-converted "María," whom he considers to be an exemplary Christian. Despite the quite literal reading of Zoraida's conversion and motives, Zimic is correct in emphasizing that the Captive's tale fits nicely within the framework of history and fiction in *Don Quixote*.

Chapters 8 through 13 consist of Zimic's suggestive reading of the stories from Part Two. Zimic sustains that these episodes, while at times very difficult to categorize by genre, do indeed constitute intricate plots, many of which contain allusions to literary and folkloric traditions. In these last chapters of his book, Zimic offers a significant contribution to Cervantine scholarship by analyzing the fusion of madness and sanity that characterizes the protagonist, that lucidly mad hidalgo who embodies Erasmus' concept of paradoxical folly. On the heels of studies by scholars such as Bataillon, Vilanova, Castro, and Márquez Villanueva, Zimic observes that Part Two reveals a distinctly Erasmian influence, especially if we examine the many "treatises" and "essays" that Cervantes novelizes in several instances, such as the portrayal of Sancho as the "wise fool" and Don Quixote's numerous discourses on war, princes, and good government. Further elaborating on what numerous critics had sustained throughout the twentieth century, Zimic demonstrates how in this second part of the novel Don Quixote progressively becomes more "cuerdo" than in Part One, exhibiting lucid intervals of sanity and wisdom: "son...mucho más numerosos los casos de su lucidez, discreción y cordura que los de su locura" (215).

Along the lines of the paradoxical folly manifested throughout the novel, Zimic studies the carnivalesque ambiance of the Duke's and Duchess' "casa de placer" in Chapter 11, "Los duques y Doña Rodríguez: una carnavalización carnavalizada." This "carnivalization" in the episodes at the ducal palace becomes apparent in the mockery and tricks played on Don Quixote and Sancho, all of which ultimately results in both a gratification and a purgation, a new beginning. Zimic points out that in these episodes, Don Quixote indeed embodies the Erasmian concept of the wise fool, evinced by his paradoxical mixture of sage and foolish acts.

Of particular note is Chapter 12, "El drama del morisco Ricote: historia trágica de un amor incomprendido," in which Zimic presents a rather literal interpretation of a highly complex character, Ricote the *morisco*. Based on his perception of Ricote as being entirely "Spanish" in his speech, dress, and customs, Zimic interprets quite literally the *morisco's* words of support for Philip III's edict of expulsion of his fellow countrymen. According to this line of analysis, Zimic does not see a single trace of irony in Ricote's praise for the king's edict, nor does he capture the essence of Ricote as a hybrid figure who is at once Spanish and *morisco*. Nevertheless, Zimic concludes that this character's story is left inconclusive and open-ended, a narrative technique that creates considerable suspense.

It should be noted that this second edition is in fact an unchanged reprint of the 1998 edition; it is nonetheless of a significance worthy of note at this time. In this wide-ranging study of Cervantes' forging of the first modern novel, Zimic eloquently guides the reader through a vast and intricate

web of episodes, while never losing sight of the novel's fundamental cohesion and finely wrought artistry. In the exhaustive execution of its thesis and painstaking analysis of *Don Quixote's* structure and thematic unity, Stanislav Zimic's book is a significant contribution to Cervantine scholarship.

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