

From: *Cervantes: Bulletin of the Cervantes Society of America*, 28.1 (Spring, 2008): 211-14.
Copyright © 2008, The Cervantes Society of America.
<http://www.h-net.org/~cervantes/csa/artics08/Stones08.pdf>

Zenón Luis-Martínez and Luis Gómez Canseco, eds. *Entre Cervantes y Shakespeare: sendas del Renacimiento/ Between Shakespeare and Cervantes: Trails along the Renaissance*. Newark, Delaware: Juan de la Cuesta, 2006. 351 pp. ISBN: 1-58871-104-8

This assemblage of eleven high-quality essays, seven in Spanish and four in English, is one that every Cervantista and many a Shakespearean will want to own. The articles are the fruit of a symposium held in Huelva in 2004, but it is apparent that they have been reworked for publication, making the book more than a mere proceedings. Written mostly by established scholars, however, the essays only rarely break new ground. Exceptional in this regard is Richard Wilson's strong reading of the ghostly presence of Catholic miracles and Spanish pilgrimages in *All's Well that Ends Well*. His original and clever take makes one want to see the play afresh. Daniel Eisenberg convincingly rehabilitates John Bowle, the pioneering eighteenth-century English scholar who assiduously studied the *Quixote*, and in the process "came closer to replicating Cervantes' reading than anyone has" (55). A list of Bowle's firsts (twenty-one of them by Eisenberg's reckoning) is impressive: the first to number the lines of the *Quixote*; to annotate it fully; to index words and proper names; to map Don Quixote's Spain; to grant Cervantes the stature of a "classic" author, and so on. Bowle's Achilles heel was to overestimate his expertise in Spanish, and Eisenberg similarly opens himself to criticism for too often insinuating his own voice into an essay that rightfully belongs to the Englishman. The first truly comparative essay in the collection is that of Pedro Javier Pardo García, who views *Tom Jones* and *Vanity Fair* as emulations of Cervantes. Fielding's work has been seen in this way before, but Thackeray's only rarely. In tracing the transition from one literary milestone to another, Pardo García also has much of inter-

est to say about Smollett, Sterne, Austen, Eliot and Dickens, always with the *Quixote* acting as a springboard for the rise of the novel.

José Montero Reguera does for the twentieth-century writer, translator of Shakespeare, and Golden Age critic Luis ASTRANA MARÍN what Eisenberg does for Bowle, that is, he restores him to a deserved place of primacy among scholars and biographers of Cervantes. Like Bowle, ASTRANA MARÍN shrunk from politics but not from rivals, and was a bit too full of himself, yet enough time has passed since the Spaniard's death in 1959 for such sins to be mostly forgivable. In addition, ASTRANA MARÍN made the claim that is a *raison d'être* of this entire collection of essays: "Jamás se entenderá completamente a Shakespeare si no se relaciona con nuestra literatura del Siglo de Oro" (132). With this essay, then, the first part of the book, called "Cruces de Caminos/ Crossroads," comes to a close. The rest of the volume is called "Sendas Paralelas/ Parallel Paths," although the distinction between the two approaches is not always clear. The fact that women are nearly absent as authors (there is one author and one co-author) is probably a reflection of a sad fact of the profession of *cervantismo*, yet surely a female Shakespearean scholar or two could have contributed to this project.

Two essays in the second part take up common motifs in Shakespeare and Cervantes: blood and *locura*. Roland Greene's article veers to some degree away from social, medical and religious constructs in order to forward the question, "How does the concept of blood get reinvented in the late sixteenth century to take fresh account of the material, the liquid itself?" (142-3). The critic's gaze comes to rest on *The Merchant of Venice* and a handful of bloody (or apparently bloody) episodes from *Don Quixote*. As contemporaries, argues Greene, Cervantes and Shakespeare both "recognize in blood a concept under revision, and register that revision for a less learned, more diverse audience than an earlier generation of writers had" (156). Valentín Núñez Rivera's "Perfiles de la locura en Shakespeare y Cervantes" links buffoonery with insanity, insofar as each allows for a certain liberty of action and expression. Seen in Cervantes as an Erasmian inheritance by way of Orlando's fury and Amadís' melancholia, "La locura se convierte ... en un método perfecto de exposición dialéctica para los humanistas; el loco funciona como instrumento de investigación de la naturaleza humana" (186). For *Don Quixote* and the *Licenciado Vidriera*, insanity becomes, at least temporarily, "una fórmula de realización personal, ... un modo de ser más auténtico, que los eleva de la alineación y el rechazo social, de la vida gris y frustrada de los cuerdos" (204-5). The second half of this article treats authentic and faux fools and madmen in *Twelfth Night*, *Hamlet* and *King Lear*, but suffers from the fact that all quotations, some of them quite lengthy, are in Spanish.

Along similar lines, one of the finest essays in this group is a carnivalesque comparison of Sancho Panza and Falstaff. Applying Bakhtin's poetics almost literally to two of literature's most famous non-leading men, Augustin Redondo surprisingly manages to say something new about both. His method takes Carnival as the thesis and Cuaresma, or Lent, as the antithesis, i.e., the symbol of societal norms. As Falstaff and Sancho bounce back and forth between extremes of feast and famine, Redondo implies

an explanation of why Falstaff is destined for rejection by Prince Hal, while Sancho remains by his master's side to the end: "Falstaff a pesar del afecto que experimenta por el príncipe, no deja de ser un astuto granuja, mientras que Sancho... adquiere una auténtica dignidad, que trasciende la comicidad en varias ocasiones, en particular en el revelador episodio de la insula Barataria" (182). In other words, if the Henry plays are Hal's *Bildungsroman*, then the *Quixote* is Sancho's.

Jorge Casanova's essay on ekphrasis reveals an imaginary self-portrait of Cervantes that might serve as an argument for the superiority of writing over painting. Casanova then walks us through *The Rape of Lucrece*, who takes a painting of the siege of Troy to be an image of her violator and rips it to shreds, once again lending the illusion of reality to a portrait that is non-existent. Finally Casanova notes the generalized importance of emblems in the Renaissance, and shows how two of them—one representing an *Insani Gladius* and the other showing Opportunity/Ocasión—found their way into the *Quixote* and *The Rape of Lucrece*. Without saying so, the essay encourages the reader to look for similar devices in other literary works of the age.

Pastoral novels are the topic of Elena Domínguez Romero's essay, which casts Cervantes as one who questions both the stereotypical depiction of lovers by Montemayor and their orthodox (i.e., Counter-Reformation) depiction by Gil Polo in *La Diana* and its continuation. Shakespeare's *As You Like It* and *Love's Labour's Lost* are similarly treated as a diptych that could be compared to *La Galatea*, if only Cervantes had written the promised sequel. The final two essays in the book are quite broad in scope, and this is only fitting given that they were written (or, in one case, co-written) by the editors. Zenón Luis-Martínez sees in *Henry V*, *Othello*, *The Tempest*, *The Winter's Tale* and particularly *Pericles* an effort to accomplish in drama that which had previously been the birthright of narrative fiction; "in his late plays we find a change of direction to themes, literary problems, and aesthetic solutions that betray a poetic vision that seems closer to those genres like romance or the novel" (261). Meanwhile, Cervantes had struggled with verisimilitude in his verse romance *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda* (a conscious imitation of Heliodorus, perhaps leading him to the conviction that only a new form of prose fiction was capable of holding his ideas). Spain, the author notes, had a more sophisticated stance than England in regard to the novel and the novella in a variety of sub-genres. (The converse is perhaps also true, that England had a more inclusive stance vis-à-vis stage drama, allowing Shakespeare to attempt onstage what Cervantes was able to experiment with on the page.) The final essay in this volume is devoted to the granddaddy of them all, *The Golden Ass*, a work that both Shakespeare and Cervantes certainly read. Luis Gómez Canseco and Cintia Zunino Garrido's article is one that will send us back with pleasure to Apuleius, trying, like so many before, to find the moral in so much immorality and trace the skein of influence upon our favorite authors.

Many specialists reading this book will wish that there had been an article on this or that topic — *Cardenio*, to take one obvious example. We all want to find and explore connections between Spain and England circa 1600, colonial and cultural rivals that

they were on the edge of modernity. Fortunately, the bibliographical references in the footnotes to these essays are uniformly excellent and will guide us further along the trails of the Renaissance, until we see what it is that we want to see, or determine to make it for ourselves.

Robert S. Stone
US Naval Academy
rstone@usna.edu