

REVIEWS

The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote de la Mancha. Borders Classics
Abridged Edition. Ann Arbor, MI: Borders Classics, 2006. 461 pp.
ISBN: 978-1-58726-374-3.

The Borders Classics' version of *Don Quixote* is based on Charles Jarvis' 1742 English translation of the novel,¹ and it is one of five English translations of Miguel de Cervantes' masterpiece to be published since the year 2000.² Unlike the previous four English translations, Borders Classics' *Don Quixote* is not a scholarly edition, and, linguistically, it varies very little from Jarvis' translation.

Jarvis' English translation of *Don Quijote* was the most popular version of the novel for nearly two hundred years. There were more than thirty editions by 1839, and it continued to be reprinted well into the twentieth century.³ In 1998 Oxford World's Classics published a modernized English translation of *Don Quijote* based on Jarvis' translation, which its editor E.C. Riley describes as "sensitive, careful, and full of life. It is closer in spirit and style to the original than are most recent versions."⁴ Notwithstanding the merits of Jarvis' translation, readers may discover the unnamed editor's or editors' failure to modernize

1 My review is based primarily upon Borders Classics edition of *Don Quijote* and not Jarvis' translation. For a review of Jarvis' translation, I suggest James Parr's "Don Quixote: Translation and Interpretation," *Philosophy and Literature* 24.2 (2000) 387-405. Professor Parr reviews E.C. Riley's edition (Oxford World Classics, 1998) based on Jarvis' translation. In addition, I recommend Julie Candler Hayes' "Eighteenth-Century English Translations of *Don Quixote*," *The Cervantean Heritage: Reception and Influence of Cervantes in Britain*, ed. J.A.G. Ardila (London: Legenda, 2009) 66-75.

2 *The Ingenious Hidalgo Don Quixote de la Mancha*. Translated by John Rutherford, with an introduction by Roberto González Echevarría. 2000 (without the introduction). Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 2001. *Don Quixote*. Translated by Edith Grossman. New York: HarperCollins, 2003. *Don Quijote*. Fourth-Centenary Translation. Translated and with notes by Tom Lathrop. Illustrated by Jack Davis. Newark, DE: European Masterpieces, 2007.

Don Quixote. Translated by James H. Montgomery, with an introduction by David Quint. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 2009.

3 Thomas R. Hart, Rev. of *The Adventures of Don Quixote de la Mancha*, trans. Tobias Smollett with an introduction by Carlos Fuentes. *Cervantes* 8.1 (1988): 118.

4 E.C. Riley, *Don Quixote*, by Miguel de Cervantes (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992): xviii.

Jarvis' eighteenth-century translation to be a linguistic challenge. Upon seeing the windmills, for example, Don Quijote expresses his delight to Sancho that a great adventure awaits them: "Fortune disposes our affairs better than we ourselves could have desired: look yonder, friend Sancho Panza, where thou mayest discover somewhat more than thirty monstrous giants [...]" (28). Subsequently, the knight points out the windmills to Sancho: "Those thou see'st yonder [...] with their long arms; for some are wont to have them almost of the length of two leagues" (28). Sancho's reaction upon hearing Don Quijote's desire not to accept any reward for slaying the giant Pandaflando is another consequence of the unnamed editor's decision not to modernize Jarvis' eighteenth-century translation: "'Alack!' cried Sancho, 'your worship must needs be downright crazy! Tell me, pray, do you mean to take this journey for nothing? And will you let slip such a match as this, when the dowry is a kingdom, which, they say, is above twenty thousand leagues round?'" (129). Lastly, the enchanted head's response to Sancho's query about his future may also present a problem for today's reader: "'If thou returnest home,' said the oracle, 'there shall thou be a governor, and see again thy wife and children; and should'st thou quit service, thou wilt cease to be a squire'" (424). The archaic English of Jarvis' translation allows the reader to appreciate the linguistic nuances of the original, but perhaps Borders Classics could modernize Jarvis' translation in a future edition so that a twenty-first century reader would be able to identify more closely with the text.

Borders Classics' decision to excise parts of a novel as complex as *Don Quijote*, is, at best, a difficult proposition. One of the most grievous exclusions is the narrative voice of Cide Hamete Benengeli. Consequently, the reader is not able to experience the "narrative wonderland of unrivaled genius."⁵ The absence of other material, including the prologues, the poems of the *princeps* edition, the dedications and the approbations by Valdivielso and Márquez Torres, makes it difficult for the reader, especially the one who reads the knight's adventures for the first time, to appreciate fully the intent and spirit of the novel.⁶ Furthermore, the exclusion of a table of contents and chapter titles not only affects the physical coherence of the translation, neglecting to provide the reader with contextual guidance, but it also divests the unnamed editor of the opportunity to educate the reader about the missing chapter 43 in the original Spanish version.

Jarvis' translation contains over two hundred footnotes in Part I alone, yet Borders Classics does not include a single footnote in its translation. In compar-

5 Howard Mancing, "Cervantes as Narrator of *Don Quijote*," *Cervantes* 23.1 (2003): 136.

6 Jarvis' 1742 translation does not contain the dedications to Parts One or Two. In addition, Jarvis did not include the prefatory verses to Part One in his translation.

ison, Tom Lathrop's 2007 translation contains more than 1,000 footnotes, and James Montgomery's 2009 translation has more than 300 footnotes. Without footnotes, the reader, regardless of his or her academic pedigree, may wonder at one point or another about the more than eight hundred literary, legendary and biblical characters, the historical figures, the books, and the geographic locations that Cervantes cites. Furthermore, the inclusion of footnotes that explain, for example, references to distance or to currency ("reals" and "quartil"; 449), might have mitigated the reader's inability to understand certain anachronistic vocabulary.

Borders Classics decision to publish an English translation of *Don Quijote* is certainly worthy of appreciation; any effort to ensure the literary legacy of Miguel de Cervantes and of his masterpiece is a valuable endeavor. While I do not recommend that a teacher or a scholar use Borders Classics' translation of *Don Quijote*, it does enable the first-time reader of the novel to glean its literary importance and to justify its inclusion in the Borders Classics series of great works of literature.

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