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[daniel.eisenberg@bigfoot.com](mailto:daniel.eisenberg@bigfoot.com)  
<http://bigfoot.com/~daniel.eisenberg>

R. M. Flores, *Sancho Panza through Three Hundred Seventy-five Years of Continuations, Imitations, and Criticism, 1605–1980*. Newark, Delaware: Juan de la Cuesta, 1982. x + 233 pp.

This is a study of the fortunes of Sancho Panza subsequent to Cervantes, followed by a chapter analyzing ‘Cervantes’ Sancho’. It is a bitter history of what the author views as misinterpretation, a study of ‘disarray, irrelevance, and repetition’, which constitute the overall picture of the topic (149). Included are three bibliographies, one of which is a chronological listing without references, 54 pages of appendices with categorized information about Sancho found in *Don Quixote*, a tabulation of the length of Sancho’s speeches, and an index of proper names.

Flores’ focus in his historical survey is to see if and by whom Sancho has been presented accurately. This is a fair question when dealing with scholarship, but he evaluates creative literature from the same perspective. Thus, a novel of José Larraz López ‘fails to throw any useful light on Sancho’s character’ (105), and we are told that ‘it is impossible to accept [a novel of Jean Camp] as a genuine continuation of Cervantes’ novel’ (105). Flores praises Tolkien because ‘in most... respects the characters of Tolkien and Cervantes are alike’ (108). The question of why a novelist, dramatist, or poet should be expected to be faithful to Cervantes is never addressed, nor is the validity of authorial interpretation and intent explored. Even aside from this, the treatment of creative literature is incomplete, and relies heavily on secondary sources: thus, the discussion of seventeenth-century Spanish images of Sancho is based exclusively on the summary notes in Miguel Herrero García’s *Estimaciones literarias del siglo XVIII*. Leopoldo Rius, in his *Bibliografía crítica de las obras de Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra*, 3 vols., rpt. (New York: Burt Franklin, 1970), II, 255–318, has 103 imitations of *Don Quixote*, only a small minority of which are treated by Flores; thus he has missed, among others, the *Historia del más famoso escudero Sancho Panza, desde la gloriosa muerte de D. Quixote de la Mancha hasta el último día postrera hora de su vida* (Madrid, 1798), *Sancho Pança, gouverneur, poëme burlesque* (Amsterdam, 1738), and *Die Geschichte Sancho Pansa* (Leipzig, 1754). Also lacking is R. Yve-Plessis, *Sancho, Comédie lyrique* (Paris, 1897), which includes, according to Palau, a bibliography on Sancho in the theatre. In addition to these obscure works, there is no discussion of the Sancho figures in the works of Mark Twain—*Huckleberry Finn*, *A Connecticut Yankee*—whose use of Cervantes has long been known.

More thorough is Flores’ treatment of modern scholarship, the work of what he labels ‘professional critics’; I have noted only the lack of Buenaventura Piñero’s *Devenir social de Sancho Panza*

(Caracas, 1976). What many readers will find disturbing, however, is Flores' approach and tone. Rather than looking for contribution, he looks for error; he would seem to be more interested in finding the deficiencies in the few studies he praises than the value in the many he attacks. Those whom he finds deficient he ridicules; thus, for example, Romero Flores' study 'might have thrown light on numerous aspects of Sancho's personality, but...does not add anything new' (90); his book is a 'hodgepodge' (91). John J. Allen 'nearly falls into the clutches of the Romantic interpretation' (100); Flores' comment on Thomas Mann is 'What nonsense!' (149). It is alarming to find, in such a hostile and negative survey, an admission that these critics may not have been quoted accurately ('I realize that some of these quotations might not do full justice to the perhaps less simplistic opinion critics have about Sancho' [102]). In contrast with Anthony Close's critical scrutiny of interpretations of Don Quixote, Flores makes no attempt to understand how so many could be so wrong about Sancho; he is content with telling us that most of twentieth-century scholarship should be regarded 'more as coruscations enriching literary fiction than as contributions to literary criticism' (84), and that 'the contradictions we find even within the same monograph are so blatant, that it is impossible to see the true Sancho amongst the scores of distorted and incomplete images of him being reflected in this critical house of mirrors' (101).

The dismissive tone could perhaps be accepted if Flores had given us the truth which he so clearly believes to have discovered. In order to arrive at Cervantes' Sancho, and to remedy the deficiencies found in almost all his critical predecessors, Flores resorts to studying the text (149), which he repeatedly chides previous scholars for ignoring. His data are compiled in 34 appendices in which information about Sancho, removed from its context, is catalogued and categorized, under such headings as 'love of food', 'wordplay', 'sayings and proverbs', etc. Since these are not intended to be exhaustive (115), it would be unfair to point out statements which are omitted, although one misses a discussion of the principles of selection followed.

Now, the weight of current Cervantine criticism is to see Sancho, like Don Quixote, as a figure with two sides; a *tonto discreto* or wise fool, who begins as stupid and ridiculous, but gains wisdom and stature as the work progresses. Flores disagrees with this interpretation, as, for him, Sancho is a static and unchanging character (134), an exclusively positive one. Thus, for example, Sancho does not misuse proverbs (117–21), and is neither a glutton (117) nor a coward (130). A consequence is that Don Quixote and Sancho 'are not a pair of opposites' (139); the quixotification of Sancho is 'merely another critical mirage' (139). If Sancho seems to be stupid, it is because he is pretending, deliberately and consciously, to be so (127–38, 140–43). If he seems to misuse proverbs, he is misusing them on purpose (121). With this approach, of course, anything can be anything else. We have here the Romantic approach to Sancho: he is to be admired, not laughed at, unless he is trying to be funny.

Contrary evidence is sometimes explained, but more often it is

just ignored. We can accept, according to Flores (138), neither the evidence of Cervantes' characters nor the narrative voices, when they are critical of Sancho. Don Quixote's repeated statements about Sancho's stupidity and cowardice, the view of everyone in his town (II, 52) that he was a *porro*, the different narrators' statements ('de muy poca sal en la mollera' (II, 7); 'era tonto' (II, 30), for example), all these can only mislead the uncritical reader. This approach cannot be refuted in a review; I have elsewhere (in Chapter 4 of my forthcoming book, *A Study of 'Don Quixote'*) devoted several pages to merely one of Flores' claims, that 'Sancho is happily married to Teresa Cascajo' (115), although he says of her 'no es muy mala, pero no es muy buena' and 'súfrala el mesmo Satanás' (II, 22).

Although Flores sometimes makes helpful observations, as in his comparison of the treatment of Sancho in different countries (22), *cervantistas* who do not share his view of Sancho – and few of them will – can have little use for this book. Pertinent is the advice of Don Quixote in 'uno de los importantes capítulos de toda la historia': to be 'afable, bien criado, cortés y comedido y oficioso; no sobervio, no arrogante, no murmurador y, sobre todo, caritativo' (II, 6).

D. EISENBERG

*Florida State University, Tallahassee.*