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<http://www.h-net.org/~cervantes/csa/artics-f06/wagschalsf06.pdf>

Don Quijote en el arte y pensamiento de Occidente. Ed. by John J. Allen and Patricia S. Finch. Madrid: Cátedra, 2004. 243 pp. with 195 illustrations. ISBN: 84-376-2195-X.

The stunning appearance of this glossy hardcover should not deceive: it is much more than a gorgeous, coffee table book. Indeed, it is an impressive work prepared with extreme care, years of dedicated labor, and two lifetimes of knowledge about Cervantes and his legacy.

The volume—which commemorated the 400th Anniversary of *Don Quixote* Part I—is a most welcome addition, augmentation and culmination of a project begun many years before and with which many readers will already be familiar. That is the authors' 1999 essay "Don Quixote Across the Centuries" (included in Diana de Armas Wilson's Norton edition of *Don Quixote*), in which the authors succinctly explored the history of responses to Cervantes' masterpiece in a host of countries including England, France, Germany, and Russia. That essay, and the research on which it was based, were the necessary preliminary work for this more open-ended and suggestive book.

Prefaced by two short introductory chapters—one on the project behind the book, the second on "Cervantes and the *Quijote*"—the splendidly simple and elegant mode of presentation of the next two hundred or so pages recalls Longinus' prescription that great ideas should be left bare of artifice. On the left-hand face of each page,

the editors have selected a meaningful quotation on Cervantes' *Quijote* authored by a luminary of Western thought and letters, while on the right-hand face, almost one hundred high-quality reproductions treat the reader's eyes to a cornucopia of images conceived either as artworks with the *Quijote* as theme or as illustrations of the novel. The images are taken from a variety of media, including sculpture, painting, woodcut, and drawing, and range in date from an early illustrated frontispiece—that of Lisbon, 1605 (27)—to paintings from the late twentieth century.

This book is such a feast for the eyes that it would be impossible to render it justice in just a few pages. Indeed, like Borges' map, I would need to reproduce here the entire book, with every one of the illustrations. I will offer instead just a few observations, as a prelude to the reader's leafing through its pages, pondering the quotations, and ruminating imaginatively about some of the lesser known works—such as André Masson's *Don Quijote y el carro, o carreta, de las Cortes de la Muerte* (171), depicting the scene from II, 11 in vivid color and in a surrealist-inspired style. Don Quixote, with lance in hand, charges a skeleton on his steed while being attacked by a devil from the rear. Upon closer examination—or rather, keeping the image at a greater distance from the eyes—the viewer becomes aware that the primary plot material is used to construct a composite, slightly anamorphic image of Cervantes' head in which Don Quixote's shield makes up one of the author's bespectacled eyes, while the almost three-hundred-and-sixty degree curve in Rocinante's neck forms the other.

The introductory part explains briefly the extensive research that took the duo to more than fifteen museums in at least six countries. The editors also reproduce a couple of pages from Edward Riley's famous essay "Don Quixote: From Text to Icon" (in Spanish translation). Some of the included images—like Joaquín Vaquero Turcio's ink drawing *Panorama quijotesco* (165)—bear out Riley's cogent observation that Don Quixote and Sancho have become easily identifiable from even the most minimal visual allusion. Indeed, Vaquero Turcio's drawing depicts a small, centered representation of the mounted pair with the horizon in the background and reeds and other plants in the foreground. Despite the fact that Cervantes' two characters are tiny in relation to the size of the flora and are formed with just a few impressionistic strokes in monochromatic ink, no one well-versed in Western culture could ever mistake that the object of representation was anything other than the errant knight and squire.

I have only three criticisms. The first is the lack of functionality of the quotation index. While the visual images can all be easily located in the book by page number in the index of artists and works, there is no indication of how to find the quotations, even though there is a separate quotation index—alphabetized by author—containing pertinent bibliographic information. The second is a minor lament that the artistic media are not explicitly mentioned, although this is not a terrible problem because only a few of the works are ambiguous. For instance, Daumier's *Cabeza de don Quijote* (81) is clearly an oil painting, but is Capdevila's *Don Quijote arremete contra los molinos de viento* (93) an ink drawing, an etching, or something else? My third and final criticism is ideological and deals with an issue that seems to go unaddressed. Given that

Allen's and Finch's book clearly sets out, in part, to demonstrate the universality of *Don Quijote*—through the ages, through various spaces, in multiple media—the absence of works and quotations by women is somewhat disturbing in this light. Exceptions are Elvira Gascón's painting of a Christ-like, suffering Quijote in her *Don Quijote derrotado, no vencido* (135), and María Zambrano's reflection on the similarities between Cervantes and Don Quixote (198). For the most part, whether they are from the seventeenth or the twentieth century, the overwhelming majority of those cited and reproduced are quotes and works by men. Does this absence of women's writing and art point to a less than universal appeal of *Don Quixote* though the ages in Western art and literature? I'll leave that for another author to uncover.

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