

*Don Quixote*. By Miguel de Cervantes. Trans. Tom Lathrop. Newark, DE: Cervantes & Co., 2007. xxx + 864. ISBN: 1-58977-025-0.

The four-hundredth anniversary of the publication of Part I of Miguel de Cervantes' masterpiece *El ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha* in 2005 was a year-long, world-wide celebration that included the publication of new editions and new translations, seminars, conferences, and marathon readings. Universities, colleges, institutes, and libraries were among many venues that honored this historic literary event. One of the more noteworthy publications to mark the fourth centenary of Part I was Tom Lathrop's translation of *Don Quijote*. Lathrop is a founding member of the Cervantes Society of America, whose career as a Cervantine scholar includes nearly twenty articles on *Don Quijote*, an edition of the novel, which is currently in its seventh printing, and more than thirty-five talks on different aspects of the novel at conferences and symposia. In addition, he is a linguist who has authored or co-authored books on the evolution of Spanish, the syntax of the old Spanish subjunctive, and Spanish, European Portuguese, and Brazilian Portuguese language textbooks.

Lathrop explains in the Introduction to his translation why he decided to add yet another translation to the seven translations, including three within the last eight years, that have appeared since the middle of the twentieth century: "The reason I felt justified in doing this translation is that translations are sometimes based on faulty Spanish editions, or editions that took too many liberties with the original text, fixing perceived errors, changing chapter titles, even adding text to the work" (vii). Lathrop's vast experience as a professor and scholar of *Don Quijote* and of Romance languages facilitated his translation of such a well-known and challenging text, resulting in a pleasurable edition, punctuated by numerous photographs, extensive and insightful footnotes, and fifty-five illustrations by world-renowned artist, Jack Davis.

The Introduction provides for both the specialist and the non-specialist an informative orientation to Cervantes' masterpiece. Following a section dedicated to the author's life as it relates to the novel, Lathrop writes about the fictional Cervantes, the Arabic manuscript, the secular clergy, and Avellaneda. In addition, Lathrop offers an impassioned defense of the mistakes found throughout the novel, including entire

sections devoted to the “erroneous” chapter titles and the controversy surrounding the theft of Sancho Panza’s donkey: “Cervantes, as a rule, simply does not make mistakes and he’s not careless either. Indeed he had to be particularly keen and creative in order to *make sure* everything was contradicted. Every contradiction, every mistake, every careless turn of phrase is there because Cervantes wanted it exactly that way” (xi). Lathrop concludes his introduction with a lengthy section about the translation process, including a list of the editions, translations, and dictionaries that he consulted.

One of the many challenges that a translator of *Don Quijote* faces is how to reconcile the linguistic register of an anachronistic seventeenth-century character with a style and vocabulary that do not appear overly contemporary. Lathrop is able to do so admirably, as the following example from I, 8 illustrates: “If you were a knight, as I see you’re not, I would have already punished your folly and insolence, you wretched creature” (62). In I, 21, the formal cadence of Don Quixote is also clearly evident: “His Majesty has acted like a very prudent warrior in protecting his dominions in advance so the enemy won’t find him unprepared, but if he’d take my advice, I’d tell him to try something that must be very far from his thoughts” (429).

Lathrop’s translation is, for the most part, highly accurate. For example, Lathrop does not misrepresent the word *hidalgo*. This word appears often in previous translations as *gentleman*, instead of a word closer to its true meaning, as defined in the *Diccionario de Autoridades*: “la persona noble que viene de casa y solar conocido, y como tal está exento de los pechos y derechos que pagan los villános.” Lathrop, no doubt aware of the inherent difficulty associated with a translation of the word *hidalgo* into modern terminology, leaves it in its original form and explains its meaning in a footnote in I, 1: “An *hidalgo* is a member of the lesser nobility, exempt from taxes” (17). Lathrop is also sensitive to the problematic nature of attempting to translate monetary units into English. Instead of substituting a near-equivalent English translation for the word *blanca*, for example, he leaves it in the original and explains its value in a footnote in I, 30: “The *blanca* was a coin worth half a *maravedí*, that is, worth practically nothing” (30). A third example of the accuracy of Lathrop’s translation is the word *admirado*, with which Cervantes describes Roque Guinart’s reaction in II, 60 after hearing Claudia Jerónima tell him that she murdered her fiancé. According to the *Diccionario de Autoridades*, *admirado* means “mirar una cosa con espanto de su calidad, de su valor, u de su grandeza.” Lathrop’s translation captures the essence of the verb *admirar*: “Roque, astonished at the gallantry, pluck, good looks, and initiative of the beautiful Claudia...” (785).

Lathrop’s translation contains more than a thousand footnotes that explain in detail the literary, historical, and cultural milieu that surrounds the knight’s many adventures. In II, 2, for example, Lathrop explains the dress code that society expected *hidalgos* to follow: “It was considered bad for *hidalgos* to wear mended, patched clothing, although thread-bare was all right. Mended clothing was for the working class” (439). During Don Quixote’s argument with the goatherd in I, 52, the knight picks up a loaf of bread and hits the goatherd in the face with it. Lathrop informs the reader that the bread may do more harm than the reader might think: “This is clearly not Wonder

Bread. I know from experience that Manchegan bread can be heavy, hard crusted, and with jagged points on the top, a weapon to be feared in close combat" (405).

While Lathrop does not anglicize proper names, he does translate nicknames: *dueña Dolorida—the Distressed Duenna* (II, 38; 650); *Dolorida—the Distressed One* (II, 39; 657); and *Caballero de la Triste Figure—Woebegone Knight* (I, 25; 184). In addition, titles associated with characters, for the most part, are translated as well: *condesa Trifaldi—Countess Trifaldi* (II, 38; 652) and *bachiller Sansón Carrasco—bachelor Sansón Carrasco*. The accuracy of *bachelor*, however, is questionable. I do not believe that a reader who is unfamiliar with the meaning of the word *bachiller* would know that Sansón Carrasco's title refers to his degree from the University of Salamanca. One title of note that is not translated is *don*.

Lathrop's translation is without a doubt the most esthetically pleasing one to date. Professional commercial artist Jack Davis drew the cover of the translation in addition to the illustrations that depict different scenes from the novel. In addition to Davis' drawings, there are fifty-nine photographs of places, historical figures, musical instruments, and weapons. In II, 46 (697), for example, Don Quixote finds a vihuela instead of a lute in his room. Lathrop not only explains the similarity between the two instruments in a footnote, but also he provides photographs of a vihuela and of a lute. Lathrop's translation also consists of the typographical style of the first edition of the novel wherever possible.

While the primary target audience of Lathrop's translation is students of literature in translation at the university level, non-specialists and specialists alike will find *Don Quixote* a pure joy to read. Lathrop is to be commended for producing a translation that is not only a faithful recreation of the original, but also one that is easy to read and to comprehend.

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