



Rachel Schmidt. *Critical Images. The Canonization of Don Quixote through Illustrated Editions of the Eighteenth Century*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999. xvii + 248 pp. ISBN: 0-7735-1754-5.

This study is of particular interest to iconographers and readers of early illustrated editions of *Don Quixote*, and perhaps of greater interest to all who deal in textual criticism of Cervantes' work. It advocates a rarely heard but convincing argument: that graphic representation of the novel is frequently subtle and penetrating, to the point that it can be held on equal footing with critical textual representations. Rachel Schmidt demonstrates, also, that the tendencies to idealize, sentimentalize, or romanticize the novel were existent, particularly in graphic forms, well before the work of the German Romantics. Rather than paraphrase I quote the following remarks from her Preface to show the development of her thesis:

"The richly detailed and pointedly satiric tapestry of sixteenth-century Spain... does not serve as the backdrop for modern adaptations, but rather is replaced by a nostalgically bucolic countryside or an empty horizon. This idealized setting stages the romancing of *Don Quixote*... In

short, Don Quixote's mad vision, the result of too much ingenuous consumption of chivalric romances, overshadows Cervantes' satiric puncturing of the genre. *Don Quixote*, the parody of a romance genre, becomes a romance in the modern popular imagination.

"The second setting for the modern Don Quixote and Sancho Panza is the broad sky and empty horizon of Picasso's painting. Against an empty landscape the pair stand out as abstractions desperately seeking significance... These readings of the text as a philosophical or theoretical work are, obviously, far subtler and more compelling than the romancing of *Don Quixote*. ... The dialog that enlivens the novel's play is reduced to dialectic. Yet this general approach... appeared in the eighteenth century and was in fact responsible for the canonization of the novel... The erudite, elevating interpretations of the neoclassical critics, expressed both in visual images and text, informed the de luxe critical editions of the eighteenth century that graced bookshelves of the cultured thinking man. The German Romantics, who furthered these readings into the dialectics mentioned above, only took a further step of assimilating satire to speculative thought.

"Significantly for this study, both the sentimental and the satirical interpretations of *Don Quixote* shaped the graphic and literary components of these... editions and, therefore, were integrally involved in the canonization of the novel. By closely analysing both components of these books, this study proposes, first, to revise the history of the reception of Cervantes' work, which until now has been focused on the German Romantic as a major turning point. When one studies these editions as a whole, considering that both visual images and critical writings represent interpretations of the text, the coexistence, conflict, and development of these readings in the eighteenth century comes to light...

"Secondly, this study highlights the productive independence of the illustration from the literary text as an interpretation that can even recast the narrative content into different generic forms. The iconography used by the artist becomes, most graphically, a rewriting through imagery of the text. The aesthetic, social, and even political interests that gave form to these rewritings, whether visual or literary, emerge from a consideration of the different interpretations juxtaposed in the eighteenth century editions when they are viewed in the light of the editorial conflicts and historical contexts giving rise to the book's production."

"For me," Schmidt adds at the end of her statement, "the deluxe editions, albeit the expensive mark of education and class, did at times serve as a public forum for the disinterested, spirited consideration of ideas and perspectives."

In Chapter 1, "Book Illustration as Critical Interpretation of the Text," Schmidt discusses "Printing and Authority," "Prints as Reproductions and Representations," "Illustrations and Iconography: Reading and Writing

Visual Images," "Traditions and Iconography," "Canonization of *Don Quixote* in the Eighteenth Century," "Canonization of *Don Quixote* within the Deluxe Editions," and "Traditions of Reading and Illustrating *Don Quixote*." Chapter 2, "The Book Errant: Seventeenth-Century Readings and Depictions of *Don Quixote*," discusses "Theatrical Burlesque: Bouttats' Illustrations of *Don Quixote*," "The Carnavalesque Burlesque," "The Carnavalesque Body," "The Transformation of Carnavalesque Laughter into Superior Giggles," "The Mock-heroic Mode: the Bouttats and Coppel Frontispieces," and "The Charm of Folly."

Chapter 3, "Cervantes as Hercules Musagetes: The First Neoclassical Edition," suggests that the London J. R. Tonson 1738 two-volume Spanish "deluxe" edition sponsored by Lord Carteret "deserves to be considered the first monument to the novel's author, Cervantes." It included the first biography, commissioned of Mayáns, the first portrait of the author, by Kent, and an "allegorical frontispiece, designed by John Vanderbank, that represents Cervantes as Hercules Musagetes liberating Mount Parnassus from the monstrous invaders of fantastic literature. The publication of the Cervantine biography and portrait, as well as the sheer size and physical sumptuousness of the book, paper, binding, print type, and illustrations, mark this edition as a physical and intellectual venture intended to launch Cervantes from the realm of popular literature on to the ethereal heights of Parnassus." The topics discussed here are "Cervantes as the Champion of Spain: Mayáns' Dedicatory Letter," "Cervantes as Champion of Neoclassical Values: The Allegorical Frontispiece and Kent's Portrait of Cervantes," "An Apology for a Neoclassical Author: Mayáns' Biography of Cervantes," "The Intellectual Context of the Production of the Carteret Edition," "Cervantes as a Neoclassical Satirist of Pernicious Literature," "Don Quixote as the Mouthpiece of Cervantes," "Gesture as an Elevating Device in Vanderbank's Illustrations," "Oldfield on the Illustration as a Vehicle of Instruction and Interpretation," "The Marginalization of the Fantastic: The Cave of Montesinos Episode," "The Banishment of the Burlesque: The Adventure of the Windmills," "Illustration as Theatre," "The Illustration as an Alternative Interpretation: Vanderbank's Sancho," "Vanderbank's Dignified, Defiant Sancho...and Don Quixote as a Man of Sentiment."

In Chapter 4, "Don Quixote Every Man: Eighteenth-Century English Illustrators," Schmidt uses the statement made by Peter Motteux in his 1700 translation voicing a "universalizing interpretation of Cervantes' satirical objective that dominated the novel's reception outside of Spain in the eighteenth century.... As the producers of the Carteret edition strove so mightily to elevate *Don Quixote* from the realm of every man, the popular sphere of the lower classes, certain English contemporaries sought to elevate it to the realm of Every Man, the public sphere of the newly emerging middle class." Topics here include "The Exclusion of Hogarth from the 1738 Edition," "Fielding's definition of the Comic," "Hogarth's Conflation of the Heroic and

the Comic," "Hogarth's Illustrations," "Smollett and Hayman's [the illustrator] *Don Quixote*," and "Smollett's Biography of Cervantes." Schmidt shows that whereas Mayáns' biography discourses more on the author's writings, Smollett "describes the life of the active man." The Hayman allegorical frontispiece and other of his illustrations describing "Don Quixote's ludicrous solemnity," his "drama of the sentiments," "the reasonable deflation of follies," and the conflict of sentiment and good sense between Don Quixote and Sancho are discussed at length.

Chapter 5 is entitled "*El Quixote ilustrado: Illustration and Enlightenment in the Real Academia Edition*," and deals chiefly with that four-volume monument to Cervantes, the 1780 Ibarra. (The reader may be interested in knowing that, as presented in the reviewer's *Essays on the Periphery of the Quijote* [Newark, DE: Juan de la Cuesta, 1991], 81–96, this is the edition that Diego de Gardoquiso proudly presented to George Washington, the soon-to-be-elected President, two months after their meeting at the Philadelphia Constitutional Convention in 1787, the gift truly of the magnitude of a "gift of state.") The topics presented here are: "Cadalso's Hint of Hidden Meaning," "The Reconstruction of Cervantes' Biography," "The 1771 Ibarra Edition: The Burlesque and the Dynamic Intertwined," "The Academy Burlesqued: Cide Hamete Benengeli's Dedication to *Don Quixote* in the 1771 Ibarra Edition," "A Monument to the Author: The 1780 Real Academia de la Lengua Edition," "Cervantes as Sentimentalist and *Ilustrado* in Ríos' Analysis of *Don Quixote*," "A Heroic Don Quixote? Ríos' Analysis of the Novel," "The Controversy Surrounding the Illustrations," "The Marginalization of the Burlesque: The Vignettes," "Allegory Satirized: the Frontispiece," and "Illustration and Double Meaning in *Don Quixote*."

The conclusion is entitled "Goya and the Romantic Reading of *Don Quixote*," and includes the following sections: "The Transformation of Satire," "The Janus Face of Goya," "The Episode of the Braying Asses," "Cracks in the Edifice of Reading: Alonso Quijano Reading" (the segment is illustrated by Goya's famous, anachronous drawing), and "*Rara penitencia*."

In her Preface Schmidt indicates being disconcerted at times in that the "detailed and pointedly satiric tapestry of sixteenth-century Spain... does not serve as the backdrop for modern adaptations, but rather is replaced by a nostalgically bucolic countryside or an 'empty horizon' leading to *Don Quixote*, the parody of a romance genre [becoming] a romance in the modern popular imagination." This is a nicely-put summation and complaint, but one which is valid only in part. Since Cervantes' changed depiction of and his feelings toward his character after Chapter 57 of Part II, one can account for this seeming failure and misinterpretation. I have explored this change in an article, "The Three Deaths of Don Quixote" (*Cervantes* 9.2 [1989]: 21–41). My contention has been and still is that this change is an understandable and acceptable development. Critics, graphic or textual, and readers have probably held both views (generally known as the "funny" versus the "sad") since

Part II was published—and read to its end. In another of my notes (*Cervantes* 9.1 [1989]: 75–83) I have suggested that the sad face of Don Quixote as it appears on the frontispiece of De Rosset's French translation of Part II (Paris, 1618), could very well have been deliberately prompted by the translator himself, having taken careful note of the unusual, unexpected end to Part II. This change in character and in approach to the character which takes place, naturally—and I think convincingly—leads to the development of Don Quixote as the disillusioned idealist of the Romantics. Cervantes' afterthought, as disturbing as it may be to some, has to be seriously considered. Don Quixote's madness, the basis of the satire, serves, as Sancho says, merely "for coin." The lack of stress on the satiric aspects of the novel noted can be forgiven and the idealistic turn of events better understood and allowed.

Schmidt's choice for a second setting for the modern Don Quixote and Sancho is "the broad sky and empty horizon of Picasso's sketch... where the pair stand out as abstractions desperately seeking significance." The implication here is that Picasso has chosen the background for his sketch with his solitary, isolated personages serving as "abstractions desperately seeking significance." I refer to still another of my notes in *Cervantes* (12.1 [1992]: 105–10) in which I surmise that Picasso very probably used a Spanish craftsman's nut and bolt statuette as the model for his sketch, a model which needed no background. The sketch could indeed lead to an *assumption* that it represents Don Quixote and Sancho drawn against a barren landscape as "abstractions seeking significance," but it is really doubtful Picasso had this in mind as he drew it.

Putting aside loose kinds of categorizations and the sometime determination as to what may be on an artist/illustrator's mind, I find Schmidt's research still very worthy, extensive, and thought-provoking. Her conclusions give deserved added importance to the graphic image as a critical interpretive device, and it perforce throws more welcome light on the "funny" versus the "sad" interpretations of *Don Quixote* which will continue being debated. The copies of the engravings used are numerous, sharp, simply but beautifully presented, and serve very well to substantiate the premise that they can be called *Critical Images*, and that these images led to the canonization of Don Quixote in the eighteenth century. The book makes for a welcome addition to any Cervantes collection.

Anthony G. Lo Ré
University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill