

Ovid in the Age of Cervantes [Review]

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Ovid in the Age of Cervantes. Ed. Frederick de Armas. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010. In *Hispanófila*. 167 (2013): 97-98.

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Abstract:

This book is the first comprehensive study of Ovid's influence during early modern Spain since Rudolph Schevill's *Ovid and the Renaissance in Spain* (1913). This time, fifteen specialists have contributed to a volume with a great variety of perspectives and surprising cohesiveness.

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Article:

*****Note: Full text of article below**

read the *Persiles* differently. *Cervantes' Epic Novel* confirms my old suspicions that Cervantes failed to do what he set up to, and that he failed because he did everything well.

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Ovid in the Age of Cervantes. Ed. Frederick de Armas. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010. 291 pp.

This book is the first comprehensive study of Ovid's influence during early modern Spain since Rudolph Schevill's *Ovid and the Renaissance in Spain* (1913). This time, fifteen specialists have contributed to a volume with a great variety of perspectives and surprising cohesiveness. The opening pages of the book are used by the editor to explain the unusual label employed to designate the span of time these studies cover. De Armas suggests that the early modern, or Spanish Golden Age, could be referred to as "the age of Cervantes" because this writer "has become a symbol of change, experimentation, and breaking with the past" (xi). Although this is a very problematic argument to be broadly accepted, it serves as the point of departure for this book: the consideration of Ovid and Cervantes as literary banners of their times and the celebration of the latter as legitimate heir of the former.

The volume is divided into four parts. The first section, entitled "Alternatives, diagnoses, and translations" begins with an essay about the medical and satirical writings of the Middle Ages in which Ovid's *Remedia amoris* is considered a reliable diagnostic source for curing the lovesick. The following chapters of this section study early modern approaches to *Metamorphosis* and its canonical status as an opportunity for self-fashioning through the examination the Classical heritage, taking into account the new role of science and current social issues. Finally, a lesser known text, *Fasti*, is studied for its productivity in didactic and humanistic writing of the time.

Part two of this collection, "Ovid and Cervantes," comprises three chapters that separately explore not so evident echoes reminiscent of Ovid's *Metamorphosis* in the episode of the fulling hammers (*batanes*), the interpolated tale of "El curioso impertinente," as well as in some of the characters' transformations throughout the novel. Although the chapters constitute a well tightened triad, the reader will miss a study of other Cervantine works with rich presence of Ovidian themes such as *La Galatea* or *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda*.

Part three, "Poetic Fables," is an interesting read, but there is a feeling of disconnect between some of Ovid's *Metamorphosis* tales that are referenced

and the chapters' interpretations of texts by Garcilaso de la Vega, Lope de Vega, and Cristóbal de Castillejo. The final essay is a close reading of early modern texts that reflect the cultural tensions in scientific and moral discourse resulting from interpretations of Ovid's tale of "Hermaphroditus," and the issue of the "third sex." The final part, "Ovidian Fame," deals with re-elaboration of myths for the purpose of self-fashioning and constructing poetic fame. This section studies the case of poets, Garcilaso de la Vega (*Third Eclogue*) and Jorge de Montemayor (*La Diana*), who present themselves as orphic voices. Lope de Vega (*El amor enamorado*) and Calderón de la Barca (*El laurel de Apolo*) also use the Ovidian tale of Apollo and Dafne to praise themselves and to give cautionary advice to the king in their respective court plays. Another chapter discusses the argument that Gabriel Téllez, known to the stage as Tirso de Molina, composed his miscellaneous work, *Deleitar aprovechando*, as a public repudiation of Ovidian traditions that he had previously followed. The last chapter of this book is a fascinating study on Juan de Miramontes Zuázola's *Armas antárticas* (1608-9). Here, a former African slave claims Apollo and Andromeda as ancestors of his nation, which serves to whiten his past by linking it to Classical Antiquity. In this way, Miramontes makes the Ethiopian community a worthy opponent for the Spaniards by elevating their victory through a connection to the Ancient world, which also gives the story a classical heritage and noble literary genealogy.

In summary, the reader should know that this book is a stimulating collection of studies about the presence of Ovidian themes in "the age of Cervantes," and although it does not provide a comprehensive study of Ovid's influence, it certainly invites further scholarship.

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Muñoz Ogáyar, Jorge. *Y al séptimo día descansó: Arturo Pérez-Reverte, creador de universos posmodernos*. Murcia: Nausícaä, 2009. 202 pp.

Y al séptimo día descansó es un libro que se acerca críticamente a parte de la narrativa de Arturo Pérez-Reverte. A través de un primer análisis textual pormenorizado de cinco novelas [*El maestro de esgrima* (1988), *La tabla de Flandes* (1990), *El club Dumas* (1993), *La piel del tambor* (1995), *La carta esférica* (2000)], y otro posterior encaminado a explorar las adaptaciones cinematográficas de las mismas, Muñoz Ogáyar propone revelar y delinear ciertos rasgos posmodernos presentes, de acuerdo al autor, en cada una de las obras ya mencionadas. Con estas novelas, señala Muñoz Ogáyar, Pérez-Reverte es