Disobedient Practices: Textual Multiplicity in Medieval and Golden Age Spain ed. by Anne Roberts, Belén Bistué (review)

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y preciso en torno al desarrollo del concepto de novela que existió antes de la publicación de los *Orígenes*, algo que sitúa a Menéndez Pelayo dentro del debate en torno a la ficción en prosa que venía articulándose en Europa y en España desde la publicación del *Traitté de l'origine des Romans* (1670) del abad Pierre Daniel Huet. El artículo del profesor Barrientos permitirá al lector situar las teorías de Menéndez Pelayo en torno a la novela en el contexto de otros tratadistas europeos como Hugh Blair o August Wilhelm Schlegel, además de otros pensadores españoles sobre la materia como Munárriz.

Por su parte, Leonardo Romero Tobar analiza la huella de los *Orígenes* en la crítica literaria inmediatamente posterior a la obra que nos ocupa, destacando su inmediato impacto en las publicaciones filológicas de mayor relevancia internacional y su asimilación mimética (no siempre reconocida) en las historias literarias posteriores a la aparición de los *Orígenes*, aspecto abordado por Antonio Martín Ezpeleta desde la perspectiva de la tradición historiográfica literaria española, cuyos manuales muestran una clara deuda con algunos de los postulados de Menéndez Pelayo.

Finalmente, cabe destacar que los editores del texto, Raquel Gutiérrez y Borja Rodríguez, ofrecen un texto cuidadísimo en el que apuestan por la *editio prínceps*, empleando los textos definitivos y pasados a limpio que Menéndez Pelayo debió de remitir a la imprenta, brindando al lector un texto que, en palabras de ambos investigadores, "reproduce con la mayor fidelidad posible las palabras de su autor" (cxxiii). No se puede pedir mucho más a una edición que se encuentra claramente a la altura de la importancia de este texto en la tratadística sobre la novela desarrollada en España.

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Roberts, Anne and Belén Bistué, editors. Disobedient Practices: Textual Multiplicity in Medieval and Golden Age Spain. *Juan de la Cuesta, 2015. ISBN: 978-1-58871-261-5.*

Anne Roberts and Belén Bistué's volume provides numerous examples of subversive literary discourse from the Iberian Peninsula. The volume holds together nicely by focusing on literary works with purportedly veiled meanings

or redirections of purpose, even though the composite of the chapters ranges extensively over centuries of time and a variety of historical situations.

The first section of the book gathers together examples of philosophical and religious multiplicity. Emilio González Ferrín analyzes Ibn Tufayl's *The Self-Taught Philosopher*, written in the 1160s, as the first European novel. González Ferrín questions the characterization of Ibn Tufayl as one who supported rigidity and exclusivity in a time when Almohad fundamentalism held sway. For the author, Ibn Tufayl wrote carefully and subversively. Although Ibn Tufayl covered his novel with a veneer of Avicennism to make it acceptable in the eyes of the power structure of his day, he also showed an "ethical personalism" that ran contrary to the orthodoxy of his time. According to González Ferrín, Ibn Tufayl shows his true colors by quoting eastern authorities such as al-Gazali, a problematic figure due to his mystical tendencies. Ferrín also shows the influence that Ibn Tufayl's work had on subsequent European novels (including *Robinson Crusoe*, *Gulliver's Travels*, and *The Jungle Book*, among others) and on strands of philosophical thought.

Michelle M. Hamilton provides the next study, "From Conversion to Consolation: Iberian Christian, Jewish, and Muslim takes on the Trinity," which shifts the conversation forward over three hundred years from the previous chapter. Hamilton discusses the writings of the Mancebo de Arévalo, a Muslim who lived and wrote of a wise woman, the Mora de Úbeda, who used an allegory to teach a Nasrid prince how to focus on the eternal state of his soul and not on worldly affairs. In so doing, Arévalo used and repurposed a Christian concept that originated in St. Augustine and that had been used by Ramón Llull, Alfonso de Valladolid, Vicente Ferrer, and other authors to try to persuade Muslims, Jews, and Christians to believe in the Trinity. In the sixteenth century this fundamentally Christian allegory about Memory, Will, and Intellect (joined by Reason) had been transformed by the Mancebo into an allegory to strengthen Muslims in their own religious faith. The textual multiplicity analyzed by Hamilton thus demonstrates the existence of countercurrents against the push for unification in fifteenth-century Spain, and how an embattled group absorbed concepts intended to convert Muslims to Christianity and instead transformed those ideas into texts designed to strengthen the faith of Muslims.

In chapter 3, Francisco Peña Fernández moves forward into the seventeenth century, demonstrating how a Spanish play, *El justo Lot* by Álvaro Cubillo de Aragón, reimagined the story of Lot to subversively push back against the authority

of the king. In the play, Aragón avails himself of the New Testament phrase that calls Lot a just man to position Lot as a hero. Lot's actions no longer work against the will of God. Rather, Lot's designs undermine and subvert the authority and power of a vicious king. Cubillo's use of a biblical text and Christian reasoning allows him to give a seemingly moral, orthodox lesson—obedience to God, which sometimes implies disobedience to worldly powers—all the while offering a veiled critique of the current monarch. It should not be surprising that the majority of the play's messages that push against earthly authority are uttered by biblical prophets, particularly since the Old Testament abounds with descriptions of unrighteous monarchs and includes stories like that of Esther, in which a righteous individual carefully manages a king's attitude in order to protect her own people. In his discussion, Peña Fernández provides extensive and nuanced commentary on how to interpret the biblical story in ways that demonstrate the subversive goals of Cubillo's play.

The second and final section of the volume contains five chapters dedicated to fictional multiplicity, although—as we have seen—the first section contained examples that could also have been included here. Chapter 4 moves back to the sixteenth century (or the tail end of the fifteenth century) and turns to the famous multiplicity of the *Celestina*. Anne Roberts, one of the two main editors of this volume, describes how the author of the *Celestina*, converso Fernando de Rojas (whose family had been deeply affected by the policies of Christian Spain on Jews), uses double meanings to hide his subversive intentions. At the time, Queen Isabel de Castilla had ascended to the throne and used parallels with the Virgin Mary to support the idea of a woman serving as a monarch. Rojas used his skills in jurisprudence, having gained his education as a *bachiller* in Salamanca, to use doublespeak against the monarchy. The *Celestina* has already been shown to employ double-edged language against Christianity, and Roberts demonstrates that much of this language was pointed at the Virgin Mary, and thus at the Queen herself. Roberts then skillfully delineates Rojas's clever use of encoded language in the prefatory poem to signal his intents to a converso population.

In chapter 5, Ana Benito discusses maurophobia and maurophilia in Spanish literature after the expulsion to indicate the continued multiplicity of voices and of ethnic or religious identity after that time. Benito explores Spanish literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, discussing the audiences for these works, paying attention to the social classes of those exhibiting Muslim traits in the texts, and identifying the type of cultural product created by these works. In addition to

literature, she studies prohibitions against Muslim practices along with an obvious fascination and toleration of other practices, such as prohibited cooking and eating habits and tolerated or even celebrated customs of Muslim dress. Maurophilia in literature is characterized by an idealization of Muslim figures in literature, creating personas such as that of the noble Muslim. The end of the Nasrid rule in Spain, for example, was often romantically fictionalized, portraying a life of gentility and culture. Reasons for this fascination have been suggested by many scholars, but Benito convincingly emphasizes the possibility that at least some of these authors would have been new converts with continued sympathies for Muslims. Maurophobia also permeated literature of the time, a testament to the continued power of Muslim influence and the constant concern that it would draw new converts back to their previous faith. Together these two traits in Spanish literature during these centuries witness to the multiplicity of Spanish society.

María Ester Vázquez in chapter 6 presents the image of the clown chronicler as an authorial method for creating a subversive text. Due to his costume, the clown is able to say things that most others, including the author, would not be able to express. Combining the image of a clown and its air of make-believe with the image of an honest chronicler further blurs the lines of fantasy and verisimilitude. The figure is thus portrayed as a faithful historian, building trust with the readers, but the mask allows the clown to protect the author from blame. A disinterested historian—such as a clown would likely be—is to be trusted, but is the author to be blamed if his readers end up trusting the chronicler too much, when that chronicler is, after all, only a clown? Vázquez demonstrates these traits by effectively analyzing the *Crónica burlesca del emperador Carlos V* by Francés de Zúñiga, written in the sixteenth century, showing that at times the traits of the clown were connected with the image of the Jew.

In chapter 7, Norma Ambrosina and Diego Stocco posit multiplicity in the text of *Amar el día, aborrecer el día* by María de Zayas. They refer to numerous examples of doubles or of a reality that appears as something else. There are two narrators throughout the work, causing the reader to question their purpose and whether they are at cross purposes with each other. A man, Jacinta, dresses as a woman, but still retains his masculinity. This makes the reader question his identity and what it means, possibly representing a desire to voice a different gender identity than that allowed at the time. Different modes of dress express the controls of religion set against the desire for autonomy of will. The voice of María de Zayas—represented by the figure who bears her name in the work—often remains silent when the voice

of morality and order speaks. Her life is squeezed by a corset that demonstrates her challenge to find her own voice in the face of the suffocating religious control of the age. The poetic writing is like a dream which allows the author to express a multiplicity of viewpoints, the pressure of those who lived in a time of strict religious dogmas and norms. Amborsina and Stocco's insightful chapter to a certain degree mirrors the dreamlike, flowing nature of its subject matter, written with a certain poetic beauty.

The final chapter is concerned with Cervantes's *Don Quixote* within the context of collaborative translation practices. Belén Bistué, another one of the main editors of the volume, highlights the narrator's statement that his work is a reconstruction of a record by an Arab chronicler. The chronicler's record ends prematurely without finishing the story and the narrator is forced to look for another document with the complete story, which he finds in Toledo. The complete record, however, is written in Arabic, and the narrator has to find someone to translate it. The multiplicity of authors in *Don Quixote*, then, are a source of complexity and humor in the novel (through words that are misused, mistranslated, or misunderstood), allowing multiple voices to speak, thus undermining the authority and validity of the text. This allows Cervantes to subversively question norms of his day— such as a univocal language, religion, and beliefs—without directly opposing them. Bistué effectively traces the history of this type of collaborative translation practice through preceding literary works. Historical practices of translation that were common in the Iberian Peninsula allowed for fictional representations of translation to be used in fictional works. Through all of it, the validity of a dominant language is questioned and a heterodoxy of speech is supported.

Roberts and Bistué's research about subversive literature in the Iberian Peninsula is indeed a valuable addition to the field. Although—as is almost always the case with edited volumes—not all of the chapters are equally strong, and the volume shows some unevenness of voice, the book's multiple approaches can actually serve to highlight its central purposes.

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