

y sentido del humor, en el que Orta y Ruano, además de otros interlocutores, se convierten en personajes literarios. El diálogo es, evidentemente, una estrategia para defender la autoridad que le había proporcionado la experiencia, pero también es literatura. De ahí el cuidado de Loureiro y Carvalho por respetar la voz de García de Orta, su forma distendida de hablar, su tono fresco y didáctico, a veces paciente, otras, claramente impaciente, pero también serio cuando ha de dejar las cosas meridianamente claras. Orta domina la persuasión de la retórica de estirpe aristotélica, a la vez que recurre al uso renacentista del diálogo para crear un ambiente donde fluyan conversaciones de gran erudición, mientras entran y salen de escena otros interlocutores (criadas, cocineras, otros médicos, pacientes, informantes, mercaderes...). No era tarea fácil modernizar ese registro oral y coloquial, de gran protagonismo, sin desvirtuar los modos y las formas originales.

Tras los anexos ya aludidos, el volumen se cierra con tres utilísimos índices, onomástico, geográfico y temático. Ojearlos es fascinante, porque se llega a la conclusión de que, en sus conversaciones, García de Orta y Ruano recogen el mundo entero y empujan a iniciar la lectura para saber del aloe, del alcanfor, de la piedra armenia o de la raíz de la China, aprender cómo se cura la lepra, cuál es la mejor manera de cazar un elefante o por qué está tan triste el árbol triste. Todo está ahí, en esa larga charla sobre el mundo natural, en ese encuentro de dos amigos muy sabios en la lejana Goa de hace quinientos años.

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Vicente Pérez de León. *La ciencia de Cervantes.* Leiden, Brill (Foro hispánico 71); 2023. 418 p. ISBN: 9789004518292. 123,95 €

This book is full of surprises. Despite its title, for example, it contains little science of the kind many readers will expect. "Baroque science," alluded to many times, is not defined until page 299, a seeming afterthought. Medicine is important, but the famous physicians of Cervantes' lifetime (e.g. Juan Huarte de San Juan or Francisco Valles) are not. Scholasticism is a cornerstone of Pérez de León's analysis, but neither Francisco de Vitoria nor Domingo de Soto make an appearance. Among the scholastics in this book, Francisco Suárez is the most interesting case.

Pérez de León analyzes in great detail the “desarrollo del estudio fenomenológico del mundo sensible,” a process that for Martin Heidegger begins with Suárez; for Pérez de León, however, Suárez is mentioned only as the author of *De superstitione*. At once personal and ambitious, infuriating and engaging, *La ciencia de Cervantes* argues passionately about the ethics of mediation and the role of authority in the apprehension of truth.

One of the book’s central claims is that the new science demanded new literary genres. These were typified by the “sueño neoplatónico contrautópico,” which allowed readers to apprehend truth through truth-likeness or verisimilitude. Another important claim is that Cervantes’s contemporaries recognized the enormity of his literary innovations. In this vein, the first chapter examines the reception of Cervantes’s works within an ethical framework that Pérez de León describes as a tension between “entremesación” and “ejemplarización.” The chapter contrasts Salas Barbadillo, who understood and praised Cervantes’s exemplary works, and the pseudonymous Alonso Fernández de Avellaneda, who transposed the world of *Don Quijote* into that of a vulgar, cruel *entremés*. Pitted against each other are freedom of conscience (defended by Cervantes) and the repressive “oligarquías antimeritocráticas” who conspire to keep the inhabitants of Spain from perceiving the truth (p. 62). To counteract the hegemonic forces of mystification —Church and State— a new social order is necessary: Cervantes, Pérez de León explains, hoped for “la creación de un arbitrista tribunal de comedias para paliar el exceso de obras favorecidas y de mala calidad” (p. 77). In this Platonic fantasy, a “poeta-censor” would intervene to guarantee a vulnerable public’s access to truth and thus “mejorar la República a través de una honesta y no engañosa representación literaria” (pp. 34, 113).

In Pérez de León’s version of history, there are two camps: on the one hand, the entrenched oligarchies that hide the truth behind a veil of Catholicism, scholasticism, and “ideas,” and on the other, Cervantes, who creates virtuous, verisimilar literature. The second chapter extends this argument dramatically, arguing that a hegemonic “discurso antisuperscioso” imposed ideological totalitarianism and induced individuals to submit to “una servidumbre voluntaria” (p. 101). This suffocated both science and the human spirit (p. 109). Pérez de León builds on the work of Luis Sánchez Granjel and Fabián Alejandro Campagne, respectively, who showed that ecclesiastics wanted to recruit physicians to join the Catholic fight against evil. Campagne even suggests that by the 1670s, some physicians such as Tomás Murillo y Velarde may have envisioned a superstition-fighting role for his profession. Pérez de León extends the arguments of Granjel and Campagne in three ways: he posits that the active collaboration of physicians and

priests was already ubiquitous well before the 1605 publication of *Don Quijote*; he contends that barber surgeons played a role in detecting evil alongside physicians; finally, he proposes the existence of an apparatus of social control made up of “agentes evaluadores antisupersticiosos” —sometimes called “mediadores,” “jueces,” or “autoridades antisupersticiosas” — authorized to “interpretar nuestra realidad” (p. 88). By proposing the existence of such a “policía del pensamiento” during Cervantes’ life, and by expanding the role of barber surgeons in the fight against superstition, Pérez de León makes it much easier to accommodate Granjel’s model to Cervantes’s *oeuvre*.

In the second chapter, *La ciencia de Cervantes* is especially emphatic that Cervantes advocated for censorship that would protect the populace from repressive ideology: “la aproximación cervantina se decanta por la necesidad de censores literarios para asegurar la ejemplaridad de las obras representadas ante el vulgo”. This new social order would be structurally identical to the old, with the poet assuming “un papel similar al de curas y médicos en el discurso antisupersticioso” (p. 103). The third chapter reproduces this basic schema: a decision between two opposed options —one freeing and modern, the other scholastic and repressive— and the need for guidance or mediation. This bifurcated world is somewhat more complex than in previous chapters because the categories are “human” and “animal” rather than the more discrete “idea” versus “truth.” Humans participate in the animal realm by being brutish, while animals may be represented as having the faculty of reason. The Church itself is populated by animals, “pastores sin incentivos para no actuar como lobos” (p. 97), but it is don Quijote, a “loco brutalizado,” who must truly be redeemed from animality “para dejar paso a un Alonso Quijano, quien podrá ser así eternamente asociado a la bondad cristiana” (p. 246). Salient in this chapter is animals’ dependence on divine reason to supplement their moral limitations, much as a poet censor saves readers from harmful literature.

Baroque science and the “sueño neoplatónico contrautópico” most clearly become objects of analysis in chapters four and five. The oneiric genre of the “sueño” introduces geographic and social realities into an experimental literary space, contrasting verisimilitude and the fantastical by representing the correct differentiation between the two via “elementos epistemológicamente científicos” (p. 356). Focusing on the dream genre allows for a comparison of the imaginative writings of Kepler, for example, and a number of passages from Cervantes’ works. In some ways, *La ciencia de Cervantes* recalls now canonical accounts of seventeenth-century pneumatics: diametrically opposed camps (plenists and vacuists) resolve disputes as much through changes to the social order as

through the direct observation of phenomena. Pérez de León, however, is no constructivist; the notion that “la verdad se puede alterar y deformar, dependiendo de la agencia y prestigio del autor,” is, he claims, “completamente incompatible con cualquier acercamiento a la evidencia científica” (p. 307).

Instead, Pérez de León invokes a different set of tropes familiar to the history of science: that northern Europe was more permeable to the New Philosophy than the Mediterranean (pp. 250, 295, 305), that “la constante propagación de los valores hegemónicos de la Monarquía e Iglesia católicas” created more barriers to scientific modernity than did Protestantism, and that within this North/South, Protestant/Catholic model, Spain was particularly impervious to science (p. 19). Pérez de León argues that the Spanish suppression of science was an act of imperial self-preservation, ensuring that no challenges to hegemonic, monopolistic, scholastic authoritarianism ever arose from technologies that “podían amenazar su propósito de mantener y reforzar la hegemonía política e ideológica de la que disfrutaban” (p. 287). This dualistic model leaves no room for casuistry, natural magic, the preternatural, or any of the other categories Spanish authors used to analyze uncertainty. This model also conjures an empire that is monolithic, suffocating, and culturally debased, one in which the “implementación del discurso antisupersticioso” was carried out by unnamed agents who pertained to unidentified yet monopolistic bureaucracies (97). Cervantes’s quest to bring light and truth to the benighted seems nearly messianic in these pages. Ultimately, however, if Cervantes’ worldview is one in which a “poeta-censor” instructs readers to “mejorar neoplatónica y ejemplarmente la ‘República’” by selecting correctly between two stark choices, and in which Literature (with a capital “L”) communicates transparently in “un lenguaje universal,” it eerily recalls its totalitarian counterpart (p. 41).

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