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**Neo-Stoicism and Skepticism in Part One of “Don Quijote”:
Removing the Authority of a Genre. Daniel Lorca. Lanham:
Lexington Books, 2016. ix 1 158 pp. \$80.**

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ticular attention to the theme of physical enclosure. She argues that Zayas's fictions yield allegories of the unrest that shook several Habsburg realms during the 1640s, especially Portugal and Catalonia.

As the subtitles to chapters 4 and 5 attest, Farmer grounds her study in the historiographic paradigm of decline. For support, she marshals a lengthy citation from J. H. Elliott's *Imperial Spain* in the introduction. An epilogue suggests parallels between the seventeenth-century decline that Farmer finds central to Cervantes and Zayas and social unease resulting from Spain's post-2008 crisis. While deeply appreciative of her inspired literary analysis, I would suggest a reader nuance Farmer's decline narrative with reference to Elliott's less frequently cited "A Europe of Composite Monarchies" (*Past and Present* 137 [1992]: 48–71), or better still, Richard Kagan's "Prescott's Paradigm: American Historical Scholarship and the Decline of Spain" (*American Historical Review* 101 [1996]: 423–46). What Kagan suggests for Velázquez (441–42) could be argued as well when we take stock of the literary accomplishments of Cervantes and Zayas. Both attest to the cultivation of language arts outside elite circles in the wake of the education revolution of the sixteenth century. These writers also bear witnesses to the vibrant cultural interchanges that thrived in seemingly hostile environs, whether the Algiers slave quarters that changed Cervantes or the confined domestic sphere envisioned for a woman like Zayas. Like a chivalric novel whose plot branches out through interlace, there are many stories more compelling than decline to be discovered within the literary works of early modern Spain. Farmer's layered textual analysis and suggestive conceptual framework for delving into literary experiments will be a useful guide for seeking them out in the years ahead.

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Neo-Stoicism and Skepticism in Part One of "Don Quijote": Removing the Authority of a Genre. Daniel Lorca.

Lanham: Lexington Books, 2016. ix + 158 pp. \$80.

It is no surprise that a work of the stature of *Don Quixote* continues to engender debate among scholars more than four centuries after its publication. *Neo-Stoicism and Skepticism in Part One of "Don Quijote"* by Daniel Lorca enters the fray by addressing Cervantes's intention in writing the novel and the strategy he used to achieve his goal. As Cervantes himself tells us in the prologue to *Don Quixote*, his aim in writing the novel is to do away with the popularity of chivalric romances. But did Cervantes intend to discredit an entire literary genre simply through ridicule? Or was there a more profound strategy at play? These are the questions that Lorca attempts to answer.

The book is divided into five chapters, the first of which sets up the author's argument and methodology and introduces the subsequent chapters. Chapters 2 through 4

are dedicated to examining the character of Don Quixote as he would have been seen by Cervantes's contemporaries. Chapter 5 seeks to explain the contrast between early modern readers' negative perception of Don Quixote and more recent critics more positive view of his actions.

According to Lorca, the key to understanding Cervantes's own view of his protagonist lies in seeing the author as an adherent of Neo-Stoicism, the Christianized version of classical Stoicism (control of the passions) and Skepticism (the systematic quest to rid oneself all false beliefs), exemplified in the Spanish concept of *desengaño*. Early on in the book, however, Lorca demonstrates that the character of Don Quixote lies at the opposite pole from Cervantes's philosophical system. As someone who is easily led along by his passions, and who dogmatically believes that chivalric romances are real, Don Quixote could not be more distant from his author's standpoint. Furthermore, Don Quixote's contrast with Neo-Stoicism and Skepticism is heightened by comparison to the wise shepherdess Marcela of chapter 12, who is made by Cervantes to embody all of the best elements of those systems. By arguing that Don Quixote should be seen as the "anti-Cervantes," Lorca shows why he could be considered laughable during Spain's Siglo de Oro.

If the Knight of the Sad Countenance was ridiculed in the novel's early days, how then do we explain his admiration by more recent critics? In order to do so, Lorca draws a distinction between two modes of thought: the "Golden Age way" (how an early modern reader might be expected to read and judge the work) and the "Enlightened way." The "Enlightened way" is the view shaped by the epistemological changes introduced into Western thought from the eighteenth century on and that, in the author's view, continue to define the way *Don Quixote* is read. According to Lorca, Western critics since the eighteenth century have been deeply shaped by a Kantian spirit that disconnected the pursuit of happiness from the pursuit of morality. Thus, a Don Quixote tied to an abstract yet clearly ineffective morality is seen as a hero, an idea that would have been foreign to Cervantes.

By encouraging readers to see the work through the lens of Cervantes's contemporaries, Daniel Lorca adds an important wrinkle to scholarship about *Quixote*. Graduate students and researchers wishing to wrestle with the thorny issues posed by the novel will find the work of particular interest. The book is remarkably succinct, which is an advantage, but I believe it could benefit from incorporating some of the valuable material in the extensive footnotes to the body of the book.

Although it is not necessary to be conscious of authorial intention to appreciate a work of literature, it is definitely helpful if we wish to fully appreciate the complexity of a work such as *Don Quixote*. By encouraging us to read *Don Quixote* according to the mental framework of Cervantes's contemporaries, Lorca adds another layer to our understanding of the ingenious gentleman from La Mancha.

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