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Anonymous. The Life of Lazarillo de Tormes, His Fortunes and Adversities, trans. and ed. Ilan Stavans

Mary Morse

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Book Reviews / Comptes Rendus

Anonymous.

***The Life of Lazarillo de Tormes, His Fortunes and Adversities*, trans. and ed. Ilan Stavans.**

Norton Critical Edition. New York: W.W. Norton, 2016. Pp. xiii, 178. ISBN 978-0-393-93805-0 (paperback) n.p.

Lazarillo de Tormes, protagonist of the sixteenth-century novella *The Life of Lazarillo de Tormes, His Fortunes and Adversities*, is one of the most famous rogues in Spanish literature. The anonymous author's portrait of Lazarillo has inspired subsequent depictions of the *pícaro*, a trickster whose clever schemes not only benefit him but undermine and ridicule societal norms. Given the widespread influence of this novella upon the *pícaro* tradition, especially as revived in contemporary Latin American and American Latino/a literature, *The Life of Lazarillo* has received less attention in non-Hispanic countries than it should. Per the usual practice in the Norton Critical Edition series, translator and editor Ilan Stavans, Lewis-Sebring Professor in Latin American and Latino Culture at Amherst College, supplements the text with a variety of critical and contextual materials. Obviously, the translation responds to the series' perceived need for Spanish works beyond *Don Quixote* (1981) since it joins a forthcoming edition of Spanish Golden Age plays, *Sor Juana Inéz de la Cruz: Selected Works* (2014), and *Chronicle of the Narváez Expedition* by Cabeza de Vaca (2012).

Stavans admirably succeeds in making *The Life of Lazarillo* "freshly accessible to new audiences" (viii). Spare, sparkling language retains the comic bite of the original Spanish without slang that quickly could outdate the translation. In the translation itself, footnotes are minimal, used primarily to acquaint its primary audience of student readers with historical, geographic, or literary references that they may not have encountered elsewhere. Yet because the text itself is only seven chapters long, and the work was translated into English as recently as 2001 (Stanley Appelbaum, Dover) the primary justification for this new edition rests in its "Context" and "Criticism" sections. Unfortunately, the selections in these two sections seem less useful than they could be.

In the Context section, Stavans's excellent commentary on censorship during the Spanish Inquisition explains the religious and social forces that shaped Lazarillo and why the novella was included on the Inquisition's 1551 censored list. Most of the novella focuses on Lazarillo as a child escaping from a family of low reputation and a series of unscrupulous masters. Both his father and his "brown-skinned" stepfather received punishment for stealing. His mother and Lazarillo's brown-skinned brother worked as servants. Trying to find a better life for Lazarillo, his mother gave him to a blind man. The blind man, also a thief, taught Lazarillo how to steal and defraud people, but Lazarillo decided to do the same to his blind master because "I never knew a meaner, stingier man." Lazarillo's subsequent masters included a "cruel priest" who starved him, a fraudulent squire who saddled Lazarillo with his debts, a friar who gave him shoes that wore out in eight days, an indulgence seller who taught him how to fake miracles, a chaplain, and a constable. Stavans insists that "The fact that [*The Life of Lazarillo*] has a child as protagonist allowed it to point the finger in favor of the innocent and vulnerable and against the rich and powerful" (53).

Two of the contemporary Spanish texts that Stavans has selected to offer context for *The Life of Lazarillo* don't offer easily relevant connections—an excerpt from Theresa of Avila's *Way of Perfection* and "The Night Serene" by Fray Luis de León—although both represent other Spanish literature of the period. The other three—an excerpt from *Don Quixote*, the "Soldier-Prophet" by Miguel de Piedrola de Beamonte, and Juan de Luna's 1620 edition of *The Second Part of the Life of Lazarillo de Tormes*—add a better sense of why the author of *The Life of Lazarillo* required anonymity to publish such a bitter satire.

The choice of texts for Criticism likely was inhibited by the lack of available criticism of the novella in English. I applaud the inclusion of two excellent essays by Jane Albrecht on family economics (2012) and David Gitlitz on inquisitorial confessions (2000) since they place *The Life of Lazarillo* within significant contemporary critical modes. Yet the decision to include five essays published before 1980 suggests that readers can ignore these newer critical trends. For example, Luis C. Pérez's essay on uses of laughter (1952) influenced a generation of Spanish scholars but doesn't reflect the significant influence of Mikhail Bakhtin's *Rabelais and His World* since translations from the Russian were not available until much later. I particularly wonder how this generation of English-speaking readers will respond to essays related to first editions of

the works in German (Hespelt, 1932) and Russian (Lovett, 1952). If Stavans had requested new essays written especially for this volume or even included Enrique Lamadrid's "The Rogues Progress" essay upon the *pícaro* influence in Hispanic literature (1995), the Criticism section may have offered insights that better complement a skilful translation that adapts its language and style to twenty-first-century readers.

MARY MORSE

Rider University

Arnold, Matthieu.

Les femmes dans la correspondance de Luther.

Études d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses, 87. Paris : Classiques Garnier, 2017. 154 p. ISBN 978-2-406-06996-6 (broché) 29 €.

C'est une édition revue et complétée de son ouvrage publié en 1998, et intitulé de la même manière *Les femmes dans la correspondance de Luther*, que le théologien protestant Matthieu Arnold propose avec ce nouvel opus. Soucieux de mettre à jour son texte, l'auteur a tenu compte non seulement des derniers travaux qui ont été consacrés à plusieurs femmes qui apparaissent dans la correspondance de Luther (telles son épouse Catherine de Bora ou la strasbourgeoise Catherine Zell), mais il a également souhaité corriger ses anciennes traductions en s'appuyant notamment sur les progrès des éditions des lettres de Martin Bucer et de Philippe Melanchthon, ainsi que de Luther dans la Pléiade. Le tome 2 de la Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, qui couvre les années 1523–1546, comporte en effet de nombreuses lettres de Catherine de Bora (13). Fort de ces nouveaux travaux, Matthieu Arnold invite son lecteur à découvrir ou re-découvrir le rapport de Martin Luther aux femmes de son temps, au prisme de sa correspondance conservée. Soucieux de dire le vrai, l'auteur signale dans son introduction deux écueils qu'il tient à éviter : il veut montrer, tout d'abord, que la Réforme n'a pas, comme cela est trop souvent dit, « verrouillé doublement l'espace de savoir toléré aux femmes » (16) en fermant les couvents et en valorisant soi-disant exclusivement l'état conjugal. Il souhaite lutter contre les stéréotypes misogynes trop souvent accolés au nom de Luther et montrer que ce dernier a véritablement apprécié les femmes cultivées. Matthieu