

*Del teatro a la novela: El ritual del disfraz en las "Novelas ejemplares" de Cervantes.* Eduardo Olid Guerrero.

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This study of Miguel de Cervantes's *Exemplary Novels* (1613) looks at costumes and theatrical elements found throughout the stories. Olid Guerrero pairs the novels into six topics: veils of madness, the theater of rape, imposed masks (noble children brought up in impoverished circumstances), transvestism, feminine fear, and, finally, a chapter dealing with the last two novels of the collection. Olid Guerrero brings to his study much of what has been written about the *Exemplary Novels* in recent years in dispersed articles. He does not tackle feminist interpretations of *The Force of Blood*, for example, but he does use some of these readings in his own analysis. The theater trope is a fruitful backdrop for analysis of the most salient novels. Olid Guerrero brings to each grouping other critical perspectives as well, which he presents at the beginning of each chapter.

Olid Guerrero seeks to show how characters embrace a certain theatrical character, and in this way are able to hide their identity or even embrace a new one in order to fulfill their destiny; in many cases, the essential aspects of those characters are unchanged, even though they might change their costume. This interpretative analysis is different from many readings where the novels are perceived to have impossible transformations, like the *Gypsy Girl*, *The Colloquy of the Dogs*, or *The Glass Licentiate*, which are considered more substantive than those derived from the Italian novellas. In fact, his point of view is to look at the novels as a game where identities are switched. Performance theory is particularly interesting to his point of view. Olid Guerrero switches to other historical points of view as well, as in the last chapter where López Piñero's history of science in Spain in the seventeenth century takes center stage. These nontheatrical texts allow a more inclusive approach. The final result is more of a review of the novels and criticism adding to his insights.

Olid Guerrero notes the various uses of costumes to hide from others, to disguise oneself momentarily, and to effect character transformation. If, as Cervantes asserts in the prologue, the novels are a mere game or distraction, Olid Guerrero wants to see it as a posthumanist game that does not lead to deep self-knowledge by Spanish seventeenth-century characters. The reader will be entertained by the complex symbols, theatrical gestures, and confusion caused by character transformation through theater-like signs that Olid Guerrero finds throughout the texts.

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