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FROM THE PAGES OF SPANISH LITERATURE TO THE CINEMA SCREENS OF THE WORLD. Don Quixote as a bridge between countries and cultures

Since its first editions, Cervantes' novel was a world-wide hit and every country had so much fun with its hero and his misadventures. Even they fit him to their particular visions of life, transforming an undisputedly Iberian character into a universal one, who was much the same as someone completely different. In this essay we have tried to synthesize the different ways Cervantes' heroes have been portrayed by world cinema, classifying them thematically in the following sections: *The Silent Quixote*, *The Social Quixote*, *The Mystic Quixote*, *The "Real" Quixote*, *When Sancho is the Star*, *The Animated Quixote*, *Don Quixote in Catalonia*, and *Don Quixote Never Dies*.

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1. The page and the frame

Since the appearance of its first editions, Cervantes' novel has known world-wide success and every country has enjoyed having fun and making fun of its hero and his misadventures. They even fit him into their particular views on life, by transforming an undisputedly Iberian character into a universal one that is as much the same as they are as someone

completely different. In their own way, both *Don Quixote*—the Spanish novel, and Don Quixote—the Spanish character (his faithful Sancho included in the package) have built many bridges with other countries' cultures.

As occurs with so many famous novels, there is no film adaptation of *Don Quixote* that could be considered truly faithful to the original. Leaving aside useless criteria for the comparison between cinema and literature, let us consider the motives that work against any pretense of fidelity. First, the novel's very structure, disarrayed and full of subplots that break the conventional rules of cinematic story-telling, requires that, in order to not confuse the viewer, it is perfunctory to focus on a limited number of characters whose adventures must be adroitly interwoven with each other. That is why in most versions the narrative concentrates on the novel's best known or most colorful incidents: if there is one that never fails, it is the adventure of the windmills, the quintessence of quixotic imagery and presented in many films by the screenwriter as the climax of the story.

Another extremely serious problem, especially if we look at it from Hollywood's perspective, is the hero's personality and his physical appearance, not to mention the lack of a love interest. Don Quixote is neither young nor handsome, but an elderly deranged man who lives in a fantasy world, always making a fool of himself and whose adventures invariably end in defeat. What's more: he is in love with a woman who does not exist.

How to solve all this? Simple: dignify him, make him endearing, convince us that he's the one who is right and not those who attack and ridicule him. The most drastic attempt at adaptation is the tragic Don Quixote of Russian origin, an idealistic victim of the "realism" of petty-minded people. In order to introduce a female character, the imaginary Dulcinea is identified with the simple peasant Aldonza Lorenzo, but with the personality of the ugly and boorish servant Mari-

tornes, a crude adulteration accepted as faithful to Cervantes, especially since the premiere in 1940 of the French drama *Dulcinea* by Gaston Baty: due to this interpretation, many people think that Aldonza is an important character in the novel and also the real inspiration for Don Quixote's amorous reveries, or even that Dulcinea in person appears in the text!

Another way of indulging in a little romance would be to divert love affairs to secondary characters, with whom one could create several pairs of lovers: Cardenio and Luscinda would be the most appropriate example, but it might also be useful to invent a courtship between Don Quixote's niece and bachelor Sansón Carrasco.

If this type of amorous subterfuge does not work, the filmmaker could attempt to rely on the novel's humorous content and give greater importance to Sancho's character; in fact, it is not uncommon to see the squire stealing his master's scenes in any number of quixotic films, especially if he is played by a popular comedian. A sometimes forgotten detail is that Don Quixote's and Sancho's physical appearance, the former as being tall and slender and the later as short and fat, seen more in later interpretations (in particular the beautiful drawings by Gustave Doré) than in Cervantes' imprecise description. In addition, Sancho is fundamental in one of the incidents in the novel, one that rarely ceases to appear in a film adaptation: his misadventures as governor of Barataria. In general, the scenes at the Dukes' court are always the most spectacular part of the movie, where the producer endeavors to show the amount of money he has spent.

Finally, another problem originating from the literary source is the hero who dies in bed and repentant of his follies, which is entirely unsuitable on film. Solutions: if the screenwriter chooses the "light" version, the hero is pardoned and remains ready for new adventures, while in the "tragic" version his death reaches epic proportions and has a strong symbolic value, as the failure of truth and honesty against evil.

2. The Silent Quixote

Since his very first appearance, Cervantes' hero has dazzled readers all over the world and every culture has interpreted him according to its own idiosyncrasies. It is no surprise that the initial attempts to bring him to the newly-born art of cinema were made abroad. The first known approach to the novel was a 1903 400-meter-long Pathé production. Another more elaborate version by the same company followed in 1913 (España 2007:). But the novel's first major adaptation came from Denmark (although using Spanish scenery) as a vehicle for the comic duo formed by Carl Schenstrøm and Harald Madsen.

Although Danish, they were extremely popular in every European country, but with different nicknames: in Spain they were known by the German one of "Pat and Patachon", while in France they were called "Doublepatte et Patachon", in Holland "Watt in 1/2Watt", in England "Long and Short", etc. The names were designated by their very contrasting physical appearance: Schenstrøm, the lanky one, was known in his country of origin as *Fyrtårnet*, which means "lighthouse", while Madsen, the short and chubby one, was called *Bivognen*, "trailer" (*Fy og Bi* as a couple). It is a shame that no one remembers them today because they have, at the very least, the honor of being the only really successful comic duo in European cinema before 1940, acting in more than three hundred films between 1921 and 1929, almost all under the direction of their discoverer, Lau Lauritzen. In the late twenties, they tried to gain entrance to the American market (with the alias of "Ole & Axel"), but this attempt failed miserably.

In the spring of 1926, the two actors and Lauritzen arrived in Spain ready to shoot the duo's most ambitious film in real Spanish locations, a lavish adaptation of *Don Quixote* for which no expenses would be spared. It should be remembered that in those days it was unusual for any film company to work outside

of its own studio and in a foreign country. For Pat and Patachon, it was a chance to garner more renown, to prove that they were more than just two clowns, impersonating characters that fit their physical characteristics perfectly. The Danes traveled the “Don Quixote Route” for five months: Puerto Lápice, Alcázar de San Juan, Campo de Criptana, etc., with some side trips to more distant locations, such as Seville or Granada (Fernández Cuenca 1948: 180-186). The script is amazingly true to the letter of the original, to the point that it almost seems like a rough draft of the first Spanish-produced and revered version from 1948.

When it premiered in Copenhagen on October 23, 1926, the Lauritzen-Pat-Patachon’s *Don Quixote* was the best and most respectful version of the novel to date, but that did not prevent cold and even derogatory comments by Spanish critics when it was released in Spain in December of the following year.¹

3. The Social Quixote

In 1933, acclaimed Austrian filmmaker G. W. Pabst directed in France (studio and locations) the first great film version of the novel, a French-British coproduction in which the hero was played by an opera singer, the famous Russian bass Fyodor Shalyapin (usually cited with the French transcription of his name, Fédor Chaliapine), while the remainder of the cast differed, according to each version’s language. The script does not faithfully follow the novel, but it is truly exemplary: it summarizes and sketches in just eighty minutes the many pages of the original, creating an authentic cinematic spectacle which is never a straitjacketed homage or a pseudo-theatrical adaptation.

¹ See, for example, the reviews by Juan Antonio Cabero (*Heraldo de Madrid*, December 28) and José Sobrado de Onega (*El Sol*, also December 28), or the later recollections by Luis Gómez Mesa in *Primer Plano* (no. 96, August 11, 1942).

However, its approach is altogether serious, to the point of being tragic, with a total absence of the original's ironic component. Don Quixote is presented as an epic hero fighting (vainly, of course) against political and religious powers. It was by no means a literal adaptation, but a free interpretation which shared many of the social and political concerns in Europe at the time. Two moments are especially representative of this approach. The most obvious one is the burning of the books, placed at the end of the film, which can be seen as a literal allusion to contemporary Nazi practices. More subtle and original is the windmill scene, which follows directly after another climactic one in which the hidalgo is humiliated by the noblemen and prosecuted by a ferocious inquisitor who shares a remarkable resemblance to *Cardinal Niño de Guevara* immortalized by El Greco. When Don Quixote hears the peasants complaining about their masters' abuses, he automatically identifies the make-believe giants with the tyrants and exploiters of the working class. Visually, this scene has the distinction of leaving Don Quixote stuck to one of the mill's arms after having charged it, an event to which Cervantes makes no reference at any time in his text but that has remained in the popular imagination and has been reproduced in subsequent film adaptations.

Since Chaliapine was an opera star, another of film's delights is hearing his magnificent voice, even though he was already nearing the end of his career (he died in 1938 at age 65). He was chosen not only because of the high demand for musical films at that time, but also for having starred in the premiere of Massenet's opera *Don Quichotte* in 1910. The producers asked Maurice Ravel to compose the soundtrack, but the negotiations with the veteran composer (who would soon finish his career, in the depths of mental alienation) fell through and his melodies were not used. The task went to Jacques Ibert, who composed a series of beautiful and illustrative songs that never are an impediment to the story, on the contrary: they are

one of the high points of this adaptation and give an unusual grandeur to the finale, when we see the first page of Cervantes' book appearing from the ashes and created by a reverse editing of the initial burning, and hear Chaliapine singing (the original French is more beautiful): "If all the books have brought me death / one book will make me live forever / I will live a phantom life / and therefore be immortal / Such is the fate and the glory / of poor Don Quixote."²

4. The Tragic Quixote

Translations played an important role in the transformations of foreigners' perceptions of Don Quixote. The German translation by Ludwig Tieck (1799) was probably the first to obscure the satirical component and turn Don Quixote into a martyr for the eternal struggle between idealism and materialism. This image was etched deeply in the minds of German intellectuals, including some that can hardly be considered romantics, at least in the more traditional sense of the term: Karl Marx, for example, was always a staunch admirer of the Ingenious Hidalgo.³

The most radical transformation of Don Quixote's character was made in Russia, especially in the very liberal translation by Vasili Zhukovsky (1806). Dostoevsky saw him as a kind of "holy fool", a *yurodivy*, and transformed him into Prince Myshkin, the Christ-like hero of *The Idiot*. This Christ-like image has been reproduced frequently in movies: one of the most graphic can be seen at the end of the controversial (and somewhat

² The responsible for the visual effects was that celebrated specialist in silhouette animation, Lotte Reiniger.

³ There is no doubts that Don Quixote has always been an icon for revolutionaries. Che Guevara's last letter to his parents began with these words: "Dear old folks: Once again I feel beneath my heels the ribs of Rocinante. Once more, I'm on the road with my shield on my arm." (España 2012).

muddled) series produced by Georgian TV in 1988 under the strongly “Unamunian” title of *Life of Don Quixote and Sancho* (*Tskhovreba Don Kikhotisa da Sancho Panchosi* in Georgian, and *Žitie Don Kihota i Sančo* in the Russian-dubbed, more available version). After a succession of conventional “Holy Cards” showing the Passion and Death of Jesus, we see Don Quixote ascending literally to Heaven wrapped in a white sheet and crying “Dulcineaaa!” to the astonishment of his friends and family.

But the canonical Russian version is the 1957 Lenfilm production directed by Grigory Kozintsev and starring Nikolay Cherkasov. Dostoevski’s approach was mixed with social gibes and some quotes from Gaston Baty’s play *Dulcinea*. Of course, the vision of the Cervantine character that Kozintsev gives us is filtered through the typical prejudices and ghosts of Russian culture that had already permeated the writings of Dostoyevski or Turgenev. The novel’s irony and detachment disappear for the sake of a more tragic interpretation that turns the deranged hidalgo into a hero who fights a losing battle, a visionary in possession of absolute truth who is a victim of the selfish and petty. In this way, the Soviet film’s Quixote is not truly Cervantes’ protagonist, but rather a close relative to Prince Mishkin, “the Idiot” who Nietzsche very accurately assimilated with Jesus Christ (Frambrough 2004). Cherkasov’s wonderful performance goes in that direction, that of the redeemer who believes in goodness and justice and ends up crucified because the wickedness of mankind, and as such must be sacrificed. When the film was released in Spain in 1966, many critics were embarrassed to look at it with a traditional Spanish perspective: they valued its merits, but they did not acknowledge the character or the atmosphere.⁴

Apart from the inclusion of the episode of the lion, which has always been dispensed with in the major film adapta-

⁴ The most lucid comments came from future filmmaker José Luis Borau in *Cine-Club* no. 13 (January-February 1958).

tions, and the great importance given (obviously for its social content) to the episode of Andrés, the shepherd boy whom his master beats, with its sarcastic, almost “Buñuelian” ending, this version’s most prominent motif is its strong criticism of the upper classes. The character of Altisidora, who in the novel is a capricious and unconcerned girl without genuine malice, is modified so as to give her a repulsive and irrational cruelty, while the Duke is a clichéd, cynical and decadent aristocrat who knows that in life only power and money count. The palace scene is the climax of the action and signals the hero’s tragic end, and visually it is the most richly produced scene, with an iconography taken literally from Velázquez, to the extent that the Duke has a striking resemblance to Philip IV.

Basically, Kozintsev and his screenwriter, Lev Schwartz, offer an interpretation that strives to be as romantic as political, a combination whose main purpose is to sustain Russian cultural tradition and the Party’s guidelines. Don Quixote is crazy because he defends justice, truth, honesty, fidelity...; in other words, it is clear that his vision of life is incompatible with reality, because those in command in the real world are not the crazy but the sane, that is: the ambitious, the intolerant, the unsupportive, and the cynical. Although Cervantes expresses it in a more ironical than rhetorical way, this was as true in Don Quixote’s time as in 1957 or today, when we continue to see that the righteous are those enriched by the arms trafficking or child exploitation, those who bomb defenseless civilians in the name of who knows what values, those who consider the death penalty the best way to solve social problems, those who see it as normal that thousands of people die every day of hunger and misery... And those who disagree with them are poor lunatics, deserving of derision in the first place and of worse treatment later on.

It’s curious how traces of Quixotism appear so frequently in Russian culture. As anecdotal evidence, I would like to point out how in Mosfilm’s biopic *Tchaikovsky* (1970), directed by

Igor Talankin and coproduced by Hollywood composer Dimitri Tiomkin, the relationship between the somewhat disturbed musician and his faithful servant Alyosha is directly inspired by that of Don Quixote and Sancho, with Baroness Von Meck playing Dulcinea. (España 2011: 151)

5. The “Real” Quixote

Spanish cinema took a long time, not until the late 1940s, to remember Don Quixote; maybe it was afraid of not matching the quality of the country’s most important literary work.

The end of the Second World War left Franco’s Spain isolated from the rest of Europe and in a situation of extreme poverty only palliated by some more or less disinterested foreign aid. The dictatorial regime’s rhetoric tried to compensate the general decay with triumphalist slogans based on past glories and obliged the mass media to support that position: in the case of cinema, however, this was frankly difficult because individual producers (in Spain, unlike other European totalitarian systems, there never was any plan to create a state-owned film industry) did not want to risk their scarce resources on productions based solely on patriotic interest and which were never assured of making a profit. However, it turned out that among the leading production companies there was one, Vicente Casanova’s CIFESA, which had seen how the European war’s victors had blacklisted it for its supposed collaboration with the Axis and, in a clearly defensive attitude, opted to fully support the Francoist regime’s ideology. (Fanés 1981: 139-146)

In the summer of 1946, CIFESA announced its intention to make *Don Quixote* into film as a sort of monument to Spanish culture, a resounding proclamation of Spanishness against the defamatory messages coming from the new “free and democratic” Europe. Between Christmas of that year and

March of 1947, academician Antonio Abad Ojuel and director Rafael Gil worked on the script, and began shooting the first scenes in May of that year. CIFESA's boss Casanova did not spare any expense and hired the best artists and technicians at that time.

In October 1947, when the filming had been completed but the complex and slow post-production process was still to be carried out, the magazine *Radiocinema* dedicated a monographic number to the first filmic *Quixote* made in Spain, and the comments of Abad Ojuel and Gil are very enlightening about what they had intended to do and what audiences could expect. What stands out most is the effort to be scrupulously faithful to Cervantes. Gil says: "First of all I am interested in clarifying that I have not made an 'adaptation' (...) but a 'synthesis'. I believe that Cervantes, like Shakespeare or Molière, and many other classics, should not to be 'adapted'. *Don Quixote* 'is', and cannot be seen in one way or another, but only as Cervantes wrote it. There is, therefore, no such 'adaptation' but simply a cinematic synthesis of our literature's masterpiece." That is: the previous attempts, which were "adaptations" (or rather "interpretations"), have been complete fiascos; of course they were made by foreigners who did not understand anything about our idiosyncrasies. Although Gil speaks with all due respect about the 1933 French-British version, the lesser *cinéphile* Abad deals with this self-indulgence in a declaration of Hispanic faithfulness: "Only among Spaniards can we give a true and endearing version of *Don Quixote*. Remember that Danish buffoonery with Pat and Patachon, or Pabst's huge mistake in his film with Chaliapin; both were absolutely vile misinterpretations!" Not satisfied with such debatable criteria, the screenwriter stressed the point of his speech with another die-hard topic, that Cervantes' narrative is the stuff of cinema: "*Don Quixote de la Mancha*, with its action, and with its dynamism, is pure cinema, movement, sensitivity and action . . . Cervantes said

it all, he wrote it all. I think in today's world he would have been a great filmmaker."

In short: this adaptation was a lavish effort with high production values, but its morbid respect for the original deprived it of even the slightest spark of visual and/or narrative inspiration and it remains a well-edited series of pictures illustrating the main motifs of the book. In fact, neither the critics nor the public liked the film... although nobody recognized it publicly, due to the project's patriotic trappings. Surprisingly, it had an acceptable reception abroad. In New York, for example, an English-subtitled print was released in May of 1949, and *Variety's* critic (signed: "Wear."), although far from enthusiastic, praised its production values and found a certain appeal for the Latino market. What he liked best was Juan Calvo's performance as Sancho, "who nearly steals the show and possibly could have helped the overall effect if he had been permitted to figure in more importantly."

For a really good Spanish adaptation (and also extremely faithful one) we would have to wait until 1991, when Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón adapted for television the first part of the novel, with great performances by Fernando Rey and Alfredo Landa.

6. When Sancho is the Star

Because of his humorous nature and more "normal" state of mind, Sancho's character lends itself to becoming the audience favorite and providing excellent opportunities for accomplished film comedians, who sometimes "steal the show" from his master Don Quixote. We might mention a couple of examples from outside the Iberian Peninsula. On the one hand the very Sicilian Franco Franchi, and on the other a more Hispanic, but not properly "Castilian": Mario Moreno *Cantinflas*, the most popular comedian of Spanish-speaking cinema.

Sixty years after Pat and Patachón, another comic duo dared to impersonate the Ingenious Hidalgo and his squire. The Sicilians Franco Franchi and Ciccio Ingrassia (popularly known as *Franco e Ciccio*) were the kings of the Italian box office in the 1960s, working without interruption in small-budget, unimaginative slapstick comedies (frequently parodies of successful films) that enjoyed overwhelming popularity; between 1964 and 1966, Franco and Ciccio starred in no less than forty films! Like all the comic duos that have worked in the cinema, their antics were based on two well-defined personalities: Ciccio was tall, serious and sententious while Franco, somewhat shorter, was a continuous stream of grotesque grimaces.

Don Chisciotte e Sancio Panza, released in 1968, is one of their best films, with a diminished presence of the roughest aspects of their comic style and an undeniable effort to raise the level of their previous interpretations. Although the atmosphere is more Southern Italian than Castilian (the director Gianni Grimaldi was also Sicilian), the incidents in the novel are staged with a good deal of fidelity and even with some verve. Since Franco is much more expressive, it is not surprising that Sancho takes on much more prominence than Don Quixote, although it must be acknowledged that Ingrassia's characterization always avoids overdoing the Hidalgo's comical traits. Sancho's role as Governor of Barataria not only allows the actor to showcase his talent, but is also an excuse to unmask the upper classes' evil deeds: the supposedly ignorant squire has all the nobles imprisoned when he sees that they only want to use him for their self-interested machinations. On the other hand, Sancho's efforts to aid his master are much more effective than in the novel; for example, in the galley slaves episode. When the squire sees that Don Quixote's stance is going to end in serious trouble for both of them, he pretends to be on the side of the bandits and chains the hidalgo (which provokes that funny one-liner, "Tu

quoque Sancho”), thereby sparing him the stoning Cervantes had prepared for him. In short, the script creates a feeling that is more optimistic than pathetic and, in the end, the hidalgo and his squire have the way open to new adventures that perhaps will not end as badly as in the novel and may even change society in some way.

In the early 1970s, Cantinflas was the indisputable star of Spanish-speaking cinema and only acted in films produced by him and conceived as showcases for his talent. After having left behind the early years of vindicating the lower strata of Mexican society, his character had become an example of civic virtue, often giving into the temptation to reprehend his audiences about the need for honesty and hard work as requirements for the social progress. The result of a particular obsession about dignifying his on-screen image is *Don Quijote cabalga de nuevo* (1972), a tribute to the masterpiece of Spanish literature, esteemed as much in the so-called “Mother Country” as in all the Spanish-speaking countries in which Cantinflas had millions of followers. The fact that his film about Don Quixote (or rather about Sancho Panza) was something special for him can be seen by his choice for the director, who was not his stalwart supporter Miguel M. Delgado but the more pretentious Roberto Gavaldón.

But in spite of the Mexican comedian’s control, the very mediocre script (by Carlos Blanco, a Spaniard) does not show a great deal of interest in enhancing Sancho’s character. Cantinflas’ presence on screen may be far better than that of Fernando Fernán Gómez, who plays Don Quixote, but most of his interventions are forced, not especially funny (either because of lack of interest by the scriptwriter or because his typical *tirades* were already very well-known and did not create the same effect as in earlier films) and, above all, they add practically nothing to the narrative, which focuses relentlessly on the titular hero and only enhances Sancho by extending somewhat the Barataria episode so that his character can

enjoy absolute prominence in these scenes. The ending, at least, manages to wrap up the film by giving the impression that Sancho has been the hero. After the disappointment with Altisidora in the Dukes' house, Don Quixote receives a shock that restores his reason and makes him decide to return home, but Sancho, after much insistence, manages to convince him that his mission (*their* mission, to be proper) is to help the weak and continue with their usual follies. When Don Quixote again loses the sanity he had briefly recovered, Sancho exclaims triumphantly: "Cured!" It's the only really funny line in the movie.

7. The Animated Quixote

After what we have mentioned previously about the Spanish adaptation from 1948, it is not difficult to understand that the most faithful animated version of *Don Quixote* must also be Spanish. Its author was Cruz Delgado, one of the most hard-working cartoonists in Spain, who created commercials, shorts, feature films, and television series from 1964 to the end of the 1980s with a an artistic level that deserves great praise because he constantly had to deal with the technical and economic woes which are commonplace in the world of Spanish animation. With a younger audience as the main target, in 1978 Delgado conceived the ambitious idea of adapting *Don Quixote* as an animated series for Spanish Television. Unfortunately, due to budgetary troubles created by the requisite artistic quality and technical expenses, the more than acceptable first ten chapters of the 1979-80 season would deteriorate progressively to its lowest point in the last episodes of season two, which had to be completed somewhat hastily. However, despite its flaws, it has been one the most internationally successful Spanish animated film series. The television version consists of 39 episodes, but there is also

a “theatrical” version in two parts of 92 and 94 minutes, in which four episodes have been edited out.

With a curtailed didactic objective, but more interesting from an artistic perspective, are some of the foreign versions. Of special interest are two from Eastern Europe with a very different approach. The most avant-gardist, with a design that is diametrically opposed to Walt Disney, is without question the *Don Kihot* (1961) by Yugoslav Vlado Kristl. His Don Quixote is a tubular structure, Sancho is a little ball and his enemies (a whole army of policemen) are a set of squares and circles. Unlike the original character, here the hidalgo overcomes all his opponents, including the unavoidable windmills. The picture is almost abstract (if you stop the images, only geometric elements are visible), but the narrative has the traditional persecutory structure of so many American cartoons and its message remains quite clear. Kristl made it in the Zagreb-Film studios in a semi-clandestine way, at night and without permission from the authorities, and supported only by a pre-contract with some German producers. This meant a fine for Kristl and the studio manager, as well as the banning of the film, although after pressure from the Oberhausen Film Festival —closely linked to the East Countries cinemas— it was authorized a few months later and was screened at several festivals, impressing both the critics and the public. Today it has still not lost its capacity to surprise us, and in 1980, in Zagreb, specialists from around the world declared it among the ten best animated films in the history of cinema. In spite of its uniqueness, Kristl’s film is not really an isolated case, but must be valued in the context of what might be called the “Zagreb School”, which at the time produced remarkable films, such as Dušan Vukotić’s *Surogat* (1961) or Nedeljko Dragić’s *Idu dani* (1969).

A completely different aesthetic and ideological concept underlies the Soviet production *Osvoboždennyj Don Kihot* (1987), directed by Vadim Kurchevsky, one of the leading

filmmakers from the Soyuzmultfilm studio founded in 1936 in Leningrad. The script is based on Vladimir Lunacharsky's 1923 play by the same title, which reinterpreted the Quixote story from a revolutionary perspective. (Lunacharsky 1972) After the episode in which the galley slaves ("galeotes" in Spanish) are liberated, the knight and his squire are arrested and taken to the Dukes' palace, where they are mocked. The *galeotes*, presented more like political dissidents than vulgar criminals, assault the palace, free Don Quixote and are ready to give the aristocrats the punishment they deserve. But the hidalgo, always on the side of the downtrodden, refuses to act against those who have offended him, thus arousing the wrath of the revolutionaries. However, one of the leaders lets him go, because he knows that his attitude is the result of his innate goodness: when there is equality and justice in the world, Don Quixote will receive the homage he deserves as a champion of the humiliated and oppressed, but in a highly unstable political situation there is no room for tolerance with class enemies. In fact, when Don Quixote and Sancho leave the castle, reactionary forces are already besieging him with total material superiority... This film doesn't use animated characters but animated puppets, using the stop-motion technique utilized by special effects masters Willis O'Brien or Ray Harryhausen. However, if one had to look for its main aesthetic influence, it is undoubtedly the Czech Jiří Trnka... who throughout his life spoke on many occasions about making an animated *Quixote*!

8. Don Quixote in Catalonia

Although the characters and locations of Cervantes' novel are undisputedly Castilian, the only town that Cervantes mentions by its real name and praises as such is a Catalan one: "Barcelona, the treasure-house of courtesy, haven of strangers, asylum of the poor, home of the brave, champion

of the wronged, pleasant exchange of firm friendships, and city unrivalled in site and beauty.”

Apart from some studies (of debatable historical rigor) that try to attribute a Catalan origin to Cervantes, it is certainly true that Don Quixote's creator always remembered with great affection his stay in Barcelona, supposedly in a house with a view to that Mediterranean Sea that was the scene of the battle of Lepanto, one of the key moments in Cervantes' life. All the pages of the novel that take place in Barcelona have a near-documentary, realistic feeling absent in the rest of the novel, where the locales are totally imaginary and not even the hero's town has name or place. However, the Barcelona scenes from the second part of *Don Quixote* have never enjoyed any prominence in the cinema. The 1948 “official” Spanish version was forced to include the episode, but over the superimposed title that reads “Barcelona” you hear well-known folk music (already used in previous scenes)... from Cantabria! For that reason it is interesting to remember Maurizio Scaparro's *Don Chisciotte* (1984).

One of the most ambitious and beloved projects of this renowned Roman stage director was his production of *Don Chisciotte*, for which he got the collaboration of Spanish writer Rafael Azcona (Scaparro, Azcona 1992). It was conceived as a multimedia spectacle in the sense that it consisted of a staged performance and a filmed recreation which in turn had two different versions, one in the form of a five-part television series and the other as an almost two-hour feature film. The theatrical version premiered on July 3, 1983 in Spoleto, at the *Festival dei Due Mondi*. The television series and, to a lesser extent, the film version are basically a record of what was intended to be a daring experiment establishing Don Quixote's relationships with the world of theatre. It was shot in Cinecittà with a splendid décor that recreated in a stylized way the stage of the Teatro Argentina in Rome. Despite the production's decidedly avant-gardist approach, the plot

follows the novel's episodes with extreme fidelity, although, as had happened in previous adaptations, it totally discards Cervantine irony and prefers the hero's tragic dimension, presenting him as the utopian who longs for an imaginary Golden Age without being at all aware that he lives in an Age of Misery and Darkness. The always wide-open eyes of actor Pino Micol give us the feeling of a desperate search for something that he will never find. The participation of the Catalan group *Els Comediants* in the Barcelona scenes is a key part of the show, because it gives vivid color and movement to a deliberately gray and static spectacle. The Midsummer's Night Festival they stage is undoubtedly fanciful and anachronistic, but it fulfills its role of remembering adequately, for the first and only time in the Quixotic adaptations to film, the important role played by Barcelona in the novel, where the Hidalgo first discovers not only the sea, but also the printing press where they are producing copies of his adventures... in Avellaneda's apocryphal version!

A few years ago, the Catalan minimalist filmmaker Albert Serra shattered what looked like an impossible-to-be-broken taboo or, at least, something extremely difficult to imagine, by making a Quixote film spoken in Catalan. Of course, it is not a faithful transcription in any sense, beginning with the title: *Honor de cavalleria*, which does not refer directly to the novel but a poem by Josep Carner⁵ (although it has been screened abroad with an alternate title, *Quixotic*) and the fact that the name of the hero is always mentioned (even by the character himself) as *Quixot*, never preceded by the traditional *Don*. Conceived in 2004 and shot and edited throughout 2005 with a budget of less than 400,000 euros, the film had a preview (with the director present) in Madrid on April 27, 2006 at the

⁵ The poem first appeared in the collection *Sons de lira i flabiol* (1927) and was inspired by the reading of Joanot Martorell's *Tirant lo Blanch* (Espadaler 1992)

National Library as the culmination of the events celebrating the IV Centenary of the publication of the first part of *Don Quixote*. It was screened at the Cannes Film Festival that same year, receiving rave reviews from French critics, who have since continued to support Serra: his last film, *La Mort de Louis XIV* (2016), is in French and its star is Jean-Pierre Léaud, of Truffaut fame.⁶

Serra's interpretation of the text is extremely original, both in concept and in form, without the slightest concern for showing the episodes known to all moviegoers: of course here there are no windmills or fake Dulcineas. The camera follows the characters wandering across an intentionally bland, featureless landscape and practically without any significant physical or verbal action taking place apart from the laconic conversations between Don Quixote and his squire in which, to be sure, the only one who speaks is the former, and not even reproducing passages from the novel, since the dialogues are invented or taken from other sources such as the books by medievalist Martí de Riquer (even the discourse on the Golden Age is rewritten and simplified). One of the longest and most original speeches is the one in which *Quixot*, feeling old and tired and about to die, asks Sancho to continue his mission of bringing truth and justice to the whole world. In spite of Serra's apparently unconcerned, lifeless gaze, and the somnambulistic expression by the actors (...or perhaps thanks to it), the scene has a strange grandeur: maybe you can't find Cervantes here, of course, but, there to be found, is one of the warmest tributes of Catalonia to the writer and his immortal character.⁷

⁶ See the ecstatic review by Philippe Azoury, poetically titled *Don qui charme*, in the cultural supplement of the left-winged French journal *Libération*, no.8040, March 17, 2007.

⁷ For a detailed account of the creative process of the film, see SERRA 2010.

9. Don Quixote Never Dies

The cinema has contributed a great deal to making Don Quixote an eternal hero who tirelessly fights against tyranny and injustice in every place and time. In a Georgian-Russian light-hearted farce, *Midjachvuli raindebi* or *Prikovannye rycari* (1999), we find Don Quixote and his squire, having just arrived from Japan, in the remote Georgian mountains, with our beloved Sancho dressed and coifed as if he had just acted in a Kurosawa film, complete with a katana sword and some mastery of the martial arts.

But the most accurate and recent cinematic example of the everlastingness of the quixotic dream must be found not in a blockbuster but in a modest, semi-amateur short produced in Jerusalem at the Sam Spiegel Film & Television School and directed by one of its alumni, Dani Rosenberg: *Don Quixote in Jerusalem*. A first cut was premiered in December 2004 in Barcelona, during the European Film Academy's Awards Ceremony, and in February the following year it was presented at the Berlinale, receiving an Honorable Mention from the jury. As if it were resuming the plot of the previously cited Georgian film, once again we find Don Quixote traveling through space and time, somewhat aged but always ready to fight against injustice. The immortal pair of Spaniards has reached present-day Jerusalem having decided to knock down the wall separating Israel from the territories of the Palestinian authority! Of course, the result of such a high adventure will be as disastrous as that of the windmills...

This five-minute film exposes, without dialogue and in a very stylized way (the charge against the wall is solved with animated drawings), a message of unquestionable nobility and good intentions . . . and with a very pessimistic second reading, because only a madman could think of destroying a wall made of hatred, not concrete.

In the end, it turns out that the windmills really are giants!

FILMS CITED IN THE TEXT

(For a comprehensive Quixote filmography, see ESPAÑA 2007, updated in HERRANZ 2016)

DON QUICHOTTE (France 1903)

Prod: Pathé. Dir & Cast: uncredited.

DON QUICHOTTE (France 1913)

Prod: Camille de Morlhon - Les Films Valetta / Pathé Frères (France). Dir: Camille de Morlhon. Cast: Claude Garry (Don Quijote), Vallez (Sancho),

DON QUIXOTE (Denmark 1926)

Prod: Palladium Film. Dir: Lau Lauritzen. Cast: Carl Schenstrøm (Don Quixote), Harald Madsen (Sancho).

DON QUICHOTTE / DON QUIXOTE (France/UK 1933)

Prod: Vador Film / Nelson Films. Dir: G. W. Pabst. Cast: Fédor Chaliapine [Shaliapin] (Don Quixote), Dorville [Henri Donane] (Sancho; English versión: George Robey).

DON QUIJOTE DE LA MANCHA (Spain 1948)

Prod: CIFESA. Dir: Rafael Gil. Cast: Rafael Rivelles (Don Quixote), Juan Calvo (Sancho).

DON KIHOT (USSR 1957)

Prod: Lenfilm. Dir: Grigori Kozintsev. Cast: Nikolai Cherkasov (Don Quixote), Yuri Tolubeyev (Sancho).

DON KIHOT (Yugoslavia 1961)

Prod: Zagreb Film. Dir: Vlado Kristl. Animated film.

DON CHISCIOTTE E SANCIO PANZA (Italy 1968)

Prod: Claudia Cinematografica. Dir: Gianni Grimaldi. Cast: Franco Franchi (Sancho), Ciccio Ingrassia (Don Quixote).

ČAIKOVSKIJ / TCHAIKOVSKY (USSR 1970)

Prod: Mosfilm / Warner Bros. Dir: Igor Talankin. I: Innokenty Smoktunovsky (Chaikovsky), Antonina Shuranova (Baronesa Natalia von Meck), Evgeni Leonov (Aliosha).

DON QUIJOTE CABALGA DE NUEVO [DON QUIXOTE RIDES AGAIN] (Mexico/Spain 1973)

Prod: Rioma Film / Óscar P.C. Dir: Roberto Gavaldón. Cast: Mario Moreno *Cantinflas* (Sancho), Fernando Fernán Gómez (Don Quixote).

DON CHISCIOTTE (Italy 1984)

Prod: Cooperativa Teatro Popolare di Roma / RAIDUE / SACIS / Istituto Luce / Italnoleggio Cinematografico. Dir: Maurizio Scaparro. Cast: Pino Micol (Don Quixote), Peppe Barra (Sancho).

OSVOBOŽDENNIY DON KIKHOT [LIBERATED DON QUIXOTE] (USSR 1987)

Prod: Soyuzmultfilm. Dir: Vadim Kurchevski. Animated film.

TSKHOVREBA DON KIKHOTISA DA SANCHO PANCHOSI / ŽITIE DON KIHOTA I SANČO [LIFE OF DON QUIXOTE AND SANCHO] (USSR/Spain 1988)

Prod: Kinostudiya Gruzniya-Film / Gosteleradio / Films Miguel Sánchez Infante / ETB. Dir: Rezo Chkheidze. Cast: Kakhi Kavsadze (Don Quixote), Mamuka Kikaleishvili (Sancho).

MIDJACHVULI RAINDEBI / PRIKOVANNYE RYCARI [THE CHAINED KNIGHTS] (Georgia/Russia 1999)

Prod: Qartuli Pilmi / Kino Most. Dir: Goderdzi Chokheli. Cast: Kakhi Kavsadze (Don Quixote), Givi Berikashvili (Sancho).

DON QUIXOTE IN JERUSALEM (Israel 2005)

Prod: Sam Spiegel Film & Television School. Dir: Dani Rosenberg. Cast: Shmuel Wolf (Don Quixote), Gabi Amrani-Gur (Sancho).

HONOR DE CAVALLERIA [HONOUR OF THE KNIGHTS, aka QUIXOTIC] (Spain 2005)

Prod: Andergraun Films / Eddie Saeta / Notro Films. Dir: Albert Serra. Cast: Lluís Carbó (Quixote), Lluís Serrat (Sancho).

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СА СТРАНИЦА ШПАНСКЕ КЊИЖЕВНОСТИ
НА СВЕТСКА БИОСКОПСКА ПЛАТНА.
ДОН КИХОТ КАО МОСТ
ИЗМЕЂУ ЗЕМАЉА И КУЛТУРА

Још од првих издања, Сервантесов роман је постао светски хит и све земље су се на свој начин позабавиле његовим главним јунаком и недаћама које су га задесиле. Чак су га прилагодили сопственим специфичним погледима на свет, трансформишући овог неспорно иберијског јунака у универзалног, који је увек остајао исти иако, наизглед, сасвим другачији.

На себи својствен начин, и *Дон Кихот* – шпански роман, и Дон Кихот – шпански јунак (укључујући ту и његовог верног Санча), изградили су многобројне мостове са културама других земаља.

Сачинили смо компилацију низа филмских исечака који показују различите начине на које су ове адаптације ликова које је Сервантес створио приказане у светској кинематографији. Монтажа је била тематски подељена на следећа поглавља: 1. Тихи Кихот; 2. Друштвени Кихот; 3. Мистични Кихот; 4. „Прави“ Кихот; 5. Када је Санчо био звезда; 6. Анимирани Кихот; 7. Дон Кихот у Каталонији; 8. Дон Кихот никад не умире; и, као финале: Певајући Кихот.

Кључне речи: Дон Кихот, алтернативне интерпретације, биоскоп и књижевност, Шпанија из иностране визуре.