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Adapting Don Quixote: Terry Gilliam's Picaresque Journey in the Film Industry

Jonathan Fruoco

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Terry Gilliam has often been unfairly described by the media as a 'cursed' filmmaker, a curse that has expressed itself in various ways throughout his career (the death of Heath Ledger while shooting *The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus*, multiple wars with his producers, going over budget, etc.). But his most notorious and spectacular failure to date still remains his attempt to adapt *Don Quixote*, during which everything that could have gone wrong went wrong, from pre-production to production, eventually forcing Gilliam to stop shooting the movie altogether.

The aim of this article is to try to see what lies at the heart of Gilliam's cinematic vision and to understand that his attempts (for there have been many before and since 2000) to adapt Cervantes's novel are representative of the filmmaker's own relationship with reality and with art. Indeed, Gilliam's cinema is marked by a confrontation between the need to tell stories and to live as much as possible in one's imagination, with the harsh reality of the economic, industrial and bureaucratic world. He has positioned himself as the champion of impossible dreams, ready to fight for us—or with us—against “the oppressive yoke of [a] new corporate management” (*The Crimson Permanent Assurance*, 1983). And yet, despite having successfully adapted several novels into movies (*Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, 1998, *Tideland*, 2005...), Gilliam struggled for a long time to shoot his own vision of Don Quixote. One could thus ask where to draw the line at what we call an adaptation: should it necessarily be a form of art adapted, transformed into a different medium? Or a story, a legend into a painting or a sculpture? I propose to look at Gilliam's attempts to film *Don Quixote* as a form of metafilmic adaptation, in which the documentary *Lost in La Mancha* plays a vital role.

Gilliam's journey in life and art has been, as we are about to see, nothing if not picaresque. We will thus consider the possibility that Gilliam has in fact accomplished one of the most faithful adaptations of Cervantes's novel, a perfect intersemiotic transposition from art to life and life to art.

Upon reading Terry Gilliam's memoirs, one cannot help but notice that they could have been written as a picaresque novel, describing the formative strolling of a modern day *pícaro*, whose actions, both tragic and comic, form a mirror reflecting the injustices and abuses of the world he lives in. Indeed, a picaresque novel is first and foremost the autobiographical story of a character whose purpose in life is to extract himself from the social conditions he was born into and who tries to find his place in the world, no matter what the cost. He is, as Helios Jaime wrote in *Le Siècle d'Or*, “a young man without scruples who, spurred on by his precarious situation, takes advantage [...] of circumstances” (81).^[1] The *pícaro* in both *La Vida de Lazarillo de Tormes* and *La Vida del Buscón* is ready to resort to all sorts of stratagems and subterfuges to escape hunger, thirst, and poverty. His life is a continual journey, and he can be alternately beggar, servant, and thief. Yet most importantly, he embodies the rejection of social values: in a society driven by profit, the *pícaro*'s actions

reflect a certain form of hostility towards the system. Cervantes's own novel, however, was written both in reaction and as an answer to the picaresque: it has been widely associated with the genre, though *Don Quixote* does not seem to follow all of its codes. Cervantes recognizes the richness of the picaresque and borrows many of its motifs, but rejects the first person narrative and completely transforms the role of his "hero." Quixote is a delusional old man, living the end of his life in a fantasy world, not a young *pícaro* at the beginning of his own story. The confrontation between these visions is especially obvious when Quixote frees a prisoner called Ginés de Pasamonte, who tells his saviour that he has been writing the story of his own life: "So good is it," says Ginés, "that 'a fig for 'Lazarillo de Tormes,' and all of that kind that have been written, or shall be written compared with it: all I will say about it is that it deals with facts, and facts so neat and diverting that no lies could match them" (Chapter XXII). Quixote lives in a world of lies and delusions, Ginés in a world of fact, and that distinction is what makes the difference between *Don Quixote* and other picaresque novels.

Now, what about Terry Gilliam? Where does he fit in this particular picture and how is that connected to his career and his attempts to adapt *Don Quixote*? As we will see, Gilliam has lived most of his life as a quixotic *pícaro*, and his decision to adapt Cervantes's novel, when he turned fifty, was accordingly thought of as the logical coda to his career. Gilliam's picaresque journey remarkably began with a happy childhood. He writes that missing out on the opening of Disneyland in 1954 was "about the closest I ever came to real childhood trauma. In fact, that's probably why I had to go into film-making—to acquire the deep emotional and spiritual wounds which my shockingly happy childhood had so callously denied me" (21). Being spared any childhood trauma, Gilliam spent most of his early years in the countryside, which anchored his imagination in a brutal reality. For if he has been described as a fantasist and a dreamer, Gilliam's artistic sensibility and cinematic vision have, in fact, never been cut off from the real world. They are, on the contrary, a reaction to the reality we live in, to the "messy, weird, unexpected things that only come out of the way reality works" (234). Living with animals and being in contact with death and the cruelty of the food chain thus gave him a respectful understanding of how nature works and reinforced in him the beauty of fantasy. Reading was also a huge formative experience for Gilliam, and although he loved cinema, books gave him the chance to develop his ability to adapt and visualize stories: "the great thing about reading as a spur to the imagination," he explains, "is that you're doing all the visualisation yourself. However good the author might be at painting a picture with words, the final stage of translating that mental picture from two dimensions into three is up to you" (9). Here, one can already see the future "adapter" at work. And the same thing happened with the radio. A show called *Let's Pretend* became his first gateway to the fantastical and taught him to conjure up visuals based, this time, on voices rather than written words. Surreal comedy then further forged his imagination and helped him realize that things did not have to be the way they truly are. "In terms of constructing a home for my youthful imagination," Gilliam writes, "the two sure foundations which Ernie Kovacs and Walt Disney had to build upon were Grimms' fairy tales and stories from the Bible" (10).

All these elements formed, as you can see, the basis of the surreal imaginative fantasy that would later characterize his animations and his films. Yet, Gilliam was still far from the end of his journey. Upon moving with his family to Los Angeles, he discovered that the place was far from being as dramatic as on film, but his disappointment quickly turned into contentment as his mind bridged the gap between reality and fantasy, a junction, he says, that would later be the setting of his movies (Gilliam 14). From that point on, Gilliam embarked on a picaresque journey that would occupy most of his life, from childhood until he joined the Monty Pythons. He tried to become a magician, which taught him to keep the audience on his side when the tricks invariably went wrong, developed his talents as a cartoonist, and

even worked one summer at a children's theater, where his first major adaptation had to be canceled. He worked for six weeks on a rather lavish production of *Alice in Wonderland*, a project that gradually became too elaborate for a children's theater. "My ambitious plans," he remembers, "foundered on the lack of any organisational infrastructure to help translate my vision from two dimensions into three—imagining the whole thing was the easy part, the difficult bit was the reality of actually doing it without the facilities, time, money, or basic talent to make it happen" (Gilliam 53). It apparently did not help that the children were engaging in other activities such as archery or horse riding and would spend most of their holidays not following Gilliam's instructions. He is still marked by this "formative trauma," which happened to be the first time a whole community had expected him to accomplish something, but which ended in the most "disastrous summer-camp theater productions of all time" (53). He then tried his hand at different jobs, became a cartoonist, worked for the magazine *Help!* on photographic strips and was drafted in the early days of the Vietnam war. He was forced to join the National Guard, but you will not be surprised to read that Gilliam is not the kind of person who really thrives on the order of the military. His talents as a cartoonist helped him in the army, but when his commanding officer asked him to do a portrait of his fiancée and of himself, which kept him safely in the barracks for a while, he could simply not resist the temptation to defy authority and started doing caricatures which ridiculed the officer in front of all his recruits (81). However, that was not the only time he defied authority in the armed forces. During one of the maneuvers, they were expected to "take a hill." Gilliam recalls:

I'd be running around like a kid playing soldiers, shouting "Boom!", 'Bang!' and 'Taka-taka-taka' (my best shot at a convincing machine-gun sound). "What's wrong with you, Gilliam?" an exasperated commanding officer would ask. "C'mon, these blanks are practically silent," I would reply. "If you're going to fire a gun, it should at least make the right noise." Obviously I was taking the piss, but I was also trying to make this foolishness as entertaining as possible [...] and as a result soon found myself widely acknowledged as a bit of a joke. (80)

His experience in the National Guard and the perspective of being sent to Vietnam then encouraged him to tell the Army that he was being transferred to the obviously non-existent European bureau of *Help!* in 1965. Far from the "institutional incompetence" of "capable authority" (83), he embarked on his most picaresque journey yet. He bought himself a motorbike in North Africa, which prophetically became his own personal Rocinante. Cervantes describes Don Quixote's horse as 'the first and foremost of the hacks in the world' (Chapter 1), all skin and bones, and Gilliam recognizes that his bike was "possessed by the spirit of Don Quixote, because it seemed to be doing everything it could to humiliate" him (Gilliam 94). He drove off into Spain, and within an hour hit a dog and crashed in front of a bar, where the locals cauterized his wounds with a bottle of liquor. Now deprived of front headlight, he had to follow as close as possible any car that came by so as to be able to see the road by night. The bike would then stop every now and then, especially when he had to drive up a hill, it would continually run out of petrol, which convinced Gilliam that it was a demon sent to destroy him. Once in Barcelona, he decided to act first:

When night fell I got all the guys and girls from the hostel to march up with me for the act of sacrifice, but the infernal machine got the better of me one more time. The petrol cap I'd never been able to loosen had now come undone of its own accord. Most of the fuel had leaked out so the grand explosion I'd planned to impress everyone with was now not going to happen. Luckily there was just enough fuel remaining to get a fire going, so I pushed it off the cliff with just enough aplomb to save face. (94)

Of course, the place was an area well-known for smuggling operations, so the minute the bike went up in flames, the police were all over the place, which forced Gilliam to hide for over an hour in a bamboo thicket...

These are but a few examples of the many events associating Gilliam with the picaresque, well before he directed his first movie. Yet this little detour by his formative years, as entertaining as it may be, helps us get a better look at how his mind works, where his art comes from, and also contributes to our understanding of him as a modern iconoclast. His fantasies enable his characters—and himself—to escape, but they are also a reaction to the world. How could one not think about Don Quixote and Rocinante when faced with Gilliam's journey through Spain? He was not simply on a holiday; he was genuinely fleeing the grasp of the army and lying to the Government in order to live the way he wanted to live. And it is this fantasy that turned the *pícaro* into an authentically quixotic figure: his aim is not to take advantage of the world but to make it a better place by showing us its beauties and its darkness. "When you grow up—as I did—reading Grimms' fairy tales and the Bible," Gilliam explains, "there's no question that you see it as your duty to change the world for the better. And I think that's why, for all my frequent recourse to irony and/or sardonic sarcasm, my films have always been repositories of idealism—both in terms of the process of making them and of the subject matter of the films themselves" (199). Writing about picaresque irony, Caroline Pascal remarks that such a text is built upon a supplantation of reality by a deception used to force readers to become aware of the existence of a narrow interstice between truth and lies, "the difficult space of fiction" (qtd. in Carrasco 104). A picaresque novel thus proposes a mixed vision of reality, both comic and tragic, and which provokes a bittersweet reaction. This literary anamorphosis is one of the specificities of picaresque comedy: a change of perspective on a particular event changes the event and our reaction to it, making us both laugh and cry (Pascal qtd. in Carrasco 108). And once more it is particularly difficult not to see that this definition applies perfectly to most of Gilliam's films. Adaptation is both a process and a product, as Linda Hutcheon famously remarked. In Gilliam's case, it has always seemed to be a process during which he not only adapts a book or a script (that he may, or may not, have written) into a film but during which he also communes with his main character and then tries to adapt the world to his fantasies. Indeed, an adapted text is not something that should be merely reproduced; on the contrary, it is interpreted and transformed into a reservoir of diegetic, narrative and axiological instructions that the adapter is liable to use or ignore (Gardies 68-71). Before he can become a creator, the adapter must be an interpreter, for the creative transposition of a story is "subject not only to genre and medium demands [...] but also to the temperament and talent of the adapter" (Hutcheon 84). This delicate balance of fantasy, reality, and iconoclasm, is the very essence of a Gilliamesque artistic sensibility, an extension of Cervantes's own vision of the picaresque, amplified by Gilliam's artistic voice. And it is consequently unsurprising that when he finally started directing movies, Gilliam became, somehow, the victim of a magical process whereby "the making of the film becomes the story of the film" (58). As he explains, "I would never have found myself in the director's chair [...] without an approximately equal and opposite propensity for imagining my way into pre-existing narratives. This staple resource of the child's imagination is one I have adapted to become the motor of my adult life" (58-59).

Two movies seem especially revealing of Gilliam's pre-*Quixote* career and show that his later attempt to turn Cervantes's words into moving pictures was actually inevitable. Indeed,

both *Brazil* and *Baron Munchausen* had Gilliam painting the portrait of societies where fantasy is the only possible escape[2] and forced him to fight his own personal windmills.

In the case of *Brazil*, both Gilliam and his producer Arnon Milchan engaged in a historical battle with the head of Universal Pictures, Sidney Sheinberg, to have him release the director's cut of the movie. As Jack Mathews remarks, *Brazil* is still today a "textbook example of how the creative process is so often subverted by commercial interests in Hollywood" (Mathews 1). The film has often been described as Orwellian, but Gilliam's ambition was not to criticize and attack a social system limiting individual freedoms; what he wanted to show was that bureaucratic societies provoke an inevitable loss of passion, inducing people to surrender their individuality so that they can be assimilated by the system that feeds them. The heart of *Brazil* is accordingly about that unnatural drift toward conformity, which inevitably costs us our humanity as we turn a blind eye to the injustices and horrors committed by the system. Gilliam's hero in the film, Sam Lowry, is the perfect example of a passionless bureaucrat, whose only escape from reality is his fantasy. But when he finally meets the girl he was dreaming about, a suspected terrorist, his reaction is to enter into conflict with the system: "[a]s he falls in love, he takes bolder and bolder actions, and begins to regain his passion and humanity, until the system reacts defensively to quash him" (Mathews 22). Gilliam's imagination has always been stimulated by enclosed worlds with their rules and hierarchies, and *Brazil* gave him his first major opportunity to react against such well-defined social structures (Gilliam 22). Sadly, although he finished the movie on time and on budget, and edited a version accepted by Fox for the European market, Universal and, more precisely, Sidney Sheinberg, deemed the movie too long for American audiences and demanded a happy ending. The head of the movie corporation ironically wanted the movie to end on what was initially shot as a fantasy sequence, with Sam living happily ever after with his girlfriend. Gilliam, on the other hand, fantasist that he is, ended that dream sequence with a brutal return to reality: Sam has only escaped in his dreams, in order to save himself from the fact that his girlfriend has been shot and that he is in prison, being tortured. Once again, fantasy was meant to help Gilliam reflect reality: "he'd taken his most cynical views on Bureaucracy in the 20th Century and exorcised them all in a satirical fantasy about the myth of individual freedom—apparently only to serve it up as a self-fulfilling, self-destructive professional and personal prophecy" (Mathews 12). Gilliam became Sam Lowry, reacting violently against Universal, while Sidney Sheinberg willingly accepted the role of Jack Lint, Sam's friend and torturer, asking Gilliam to let him be "the friend that tortures you" (Mathews 78). Sheinberg refused to release the movie in America and started editing it on his own, while Gilliam worked on a shorter cut that would suit the American market. But although the director won his battle, three versions of the same movie existed for a while: the European version, the director's cut, and Sheinberg's cut. In that context, one can wonder who is the real adapter in a film? The screenwriter, the director, or the editor? Indeed, the editor works on the construction of the film, he "identifies and exploits underlying patterns of sound and image that are not obvious on the surface" (Walter Murch qtd. in Ondaatje 10). Editing has, accordingly, long been considered as the true voice of cinematic discourse, most notably by Russian formalist filmmakers such as Sergei Eisenstein. The Universal version of *Brazil* is, as a result, not so much a shorter version of Gilliam's film, as its adaptation: an adaptation both to the requirements of the studio (length of the movie) but also to the sensibility of the producer (happy ending).

Gilliam's battle with Universal was thought of as largely quixotic, most notably by Orson Welles. His victory, however, was a surprise, albeit one that would have consequences on Gilliam's career. In the case of *Baron Munchausen*, his next film, things became much more dramatic and saw Gilliam abandon Sam Lowry's shadow to follow in the footsteps of

the Baron himself. In the film, Munchausen is accepted by everyone as a legendary character whose fantastical adventures are considered to be nothing more than legends. Thus, when the real Munchausen (an old and dying man) arrives, nobody believes in him, or in the veracity of his tales, except for a little girl. As he is dying, he says: I'm tired and the world is tired of me," a feeling that was then shared by Gilliam himself (218). But, as Andrew Yule writes, his intrepid efforts "to translate the free-spirited, dramatic and romantic adventures of Baron von Munchausen to the screen is in itself a fascinating tale of the 'reality' of Hollywood filmmaking—and a lesson in the price of achieving a dream" (iv).

Gilliam found himself working with a German producer named Thomas Schuhly, who convinced him to shoot the movie in Rome, where the costs of production would be lower to what America or England could offer. Gilliam accepted, of course, and soon realized that if he is himself a fantasist, he was now working with someone living in what Bernd Eichinger called "hyper-reality," which he usually translated in layman's terms as meaning that most of Schuhly's claims were "bullshit" (Yule 10). Nothing was organized as Gilliam wanted it to be, sets were not built, money disappeared, corruption was paramount^[3] and the filmmaker found himself blamed, probably because of *Brazil*, for one of the most disastrous shoots in the history of cinema.^[4] The set was filled with people from different nationalities and evidently, no one spoke the same language. *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen* quickly became a project as calamitous as the Tower of Babel and, as Eric Idle, a former Monty Python who played the part of Berthold in the film, remarked they were trying to make a movie with all those European nationalities, while the only thing they had successfully been able to make together for the last four-hundred years was war (qtd. in Yule 70). Gilliam started being haunted by his failure in his children's theater production of *Alice in Wonderland*: "I'd set my own rules and gone against the system and pulled it off with small budget movies time and again. Now I felt that *Munchausen* was the one I was going to get caught on" (Yule 72-73). The fate of the Baron became Gilliam's destiny, but he was ready to follow Munchausen to the bitter end. He once threatened Sidney Sheinberg to burn both *Brazil* and the Universal tower if they touched his movie; this time, he knew his priorities were right: "I will sacrifice myself", he said, 'or anyone else for the movie. It *will last*. We'll *all* be *dust*" (Yule 217). The movie was and still is a masterpiece, but sadly Columbia backed out of a major launch, refused to make 70mm prints available, and refused to spend money on its promotion... They decided the movie would not work, that it had been produced by the former executives of Columbia, that it was a product from the past... Or, to put it in another way, the new management tried to wipe the slate clean. Sidney Sheinberg had turned into the very essence of bureaucracy, but as Andrew Yule reports, if one must consider the head of Columbia, think "in terms of Horatio Jackson and his functionary", the epitome of rationality in *Munchausen*, 'and you're getting closer" (227).

From that point on, Gilliam worked on several other movies. But when he turned fifty, his connection with Quixote seemed to reach a new dimension. He had been obsessed with the character for years, without ever reading the novel, but had felt the similarities between his own cinematic vision and Cervantes's character. The association of reality, fantasy, madness, and sanity is a key element of Gilliam's cinema, and *Don Quixote* encompasses all of it, especially in our collective imagination. "Quixote struck me more powerfully," explains Gilliam, "when I reached middle-age because that's what I thought Quixote was very much about. He's an older man, he's been through life [...], he has one last chance to make the world as interesting as he dreams it to be" (Fulton & Pepe, 2003, DVD). Gilliam started reading the novel and writing his script in 1991, and with every year that passed, he became more aware that he had only filmed a few of the many movies he had in mind. Filming Quixote gradually became necessary for Gilliam, as he identified more than ever with his hero. He needed to go through this cathartic experience, with life imitating art, and Gilliam

making the world a little more like he dreams it to be. For the way Quixote sees the world is close to the way we saw it as children, with objects keeping their magical significance, which is something that appealed immensely to Gilliam. So when he started adapting the novel into *The Man Who Killed Don Quixote*, he rapidly began to change Cervantes's perspective on his story. He realized that it would be difficult to adapt a picaresque novel since, in the book, the stories are linked thematically, but there are no central plots. Picaresque novels are indeed episodic, which is difficult to transpose onto the big screen. Most people would not be able to tell the difference between the 13th and 17th centuries, so having Quixote, someone from the past, talking about an even older past and the return of chivalry would be complicated to handle and most the references would be lost on the audience. However, Gilliam found a way to adapt the story for a modern audience: he borrowed Mark Twain's idea in *A Yankee in King Arthur's Court* and created the character of Toby Grisoni, a young, arrogant and rational man, working in advertising. In the script, Toby is sent back in time, and finds himself riding with Quixote who saves him and mistakes him for Sancho Pança. This allowed Gilliam to create a plot for the whole movie, but also to add another layer of fantasy to *Don Quixote*: Toby would be the connection with a modern audience and would allow them to look at Quixote's madness through his eyes. However, unlike Cervantes, Gilliam had no desire to mock his main character or his visions. On the contrary, he decided to show his audience the world through his eyes: we would see the windmills, but also the giants. This concretization of Quixote's surreal visions through Gilliam's film lenses would reinforce the beauty of his fantasy and underline its importance, leaving us to wonder: are we seeing through Quixote's eyes, or through Gilliam's? W.K. Wimsatt explained that an "art work is something which emerges from the private, individual, dynamic, and intentionalist realm of its maker's mind and personality" (11). As we have seen, Gilliam is in most of his movies both himself and his character. Michael Taussig argued that our propensity to behave like someone else marks a capacity to be Other (19), it is through alterity that we manage to maintain sameness (129). For Gilliam, this mimetic faculty is the capacity to "copy, imitate, make models, explore difference, yield into and become Other" (xiii). Thus when Gilliam identifies with his characters, he pushes his adaptive ability to "repeat without copying, to embed difference in similarity, to be at once both self and Other" (Hutcheon 174) to fully explore the realm of imagination, with his feet firmly planted at the junction between fantasy and reality.

In other words, when Gilliam started adapting *Quixote*, he not only adapted Cervantes's novel, but also the character and its universe to his own cinematic sensibility. But, as *Lost in la Mancha* shows us, and as the film had to be canceled, Gilliam gradually shifted from the role of adapter to the role of main character in the story. Indeed, when he invited Louis Pepe and Keith Fulton to film the making of *The Man Who Killed Don Quixote*, nobody expected it to turn into the making of the "unmaking" of a movie. As soon as preproduction began, the film was in complete disarray, but things really became tragic during the first week of principal photography. On day one, Gilliam realized that his extras did not know the choreography of the sequence he was meant to shoot and then F-16 planes started flying over the location, ruining the sound. On day two, a biblical storm destroyed the set, most of the gear and significantly changed the look of the desert. On day three, the insurance company defined the storm as an act of God and refused to pay for the time lost. On day four, they changed location, tried to film but the F-16s flew once more over the set. On day five, Jean Rochefort, who played Quixote, got hurt and had to be sent back to France. Days passed and it became obvious that Rochefort would never be able to come back: production was stopped, insurance companies and the completion bond company stepped in and the movie was officially abandoned... *Lost in La Mancha* shows Gilliam gradually becoming a tragic figure, fighting to keep his movie going against all odds, and ultimately failing. We have here a

unique transition from adapter to “adaptee”: Gilliam became his main character on film. Ten years after he started writing the script, he was forced to abandon his dream project, and to forfeit the rights of the movie to the insurance company. As he remarks in *Lost in La Mancha*, the windmills of reality fought back.

When he was shooting *Baron Munchausen*, Gilliam started wondering if the film industry was really about making movies, or if movies were byproducts of the system (Yule 231). For him, making films has always been the best way to express the beauty of the world as seen through the eyes of children and dreamers. Adapting *Don Quixote* was not so much something he wanted to do, as something he *needed* to do. He started writing the script in 1991, tried for a decade to shoot it and had to give up after a week of production. Now, fifteen years after *Lost in La Mancha*, and almost thirty years after he started writing the script, Gilliam finally managed to get back on his horse to save us from the desert of the real. After several new incidents that postponed the production of the movie for a few more years, and then its release (he had to fight his former producer Paulo Branco in court), *The Man Who Killed Don Quixote* was released in France in May 2018 and shown at the Cannes Film Festival, starring Jonathan Pryce^[5] (Sam Lowry in *Brazil*) as Quixote. In the film, Gilliam shows us what it means to follow one’s dreams to the end: if he previously identified with Quixote, Gilliam realized in the recent past that he was actually Sancho Pança madly following Quixote. And as Toby gradually enters Quixote’s world and starts seeing the world as the old knight sees it, so does the audience. It is only with Quixote’s death that Toby’s journey really starts: he himself becomes Quixote, fighting windmills, which the audience sees for the first time as giants too. After having followed Quixote for so long, Toby/Gilliam managed to become one with the myth. He began his life and career as a quixotic *pícaro* and has since become a Gilliamesque Don Quixote, fighting against the windmills of reality.

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Notes

[1] Translated by the author.

[2] Most of Gilliam's films could be used to illustrate this point, but a selection had to be made to avoid turning this paper into a book.

[3] Gilliam jokingly remarks that 'Italy is number four in the league of industrial nations, thanks to us. We put them back on their feet. We should be proud of that!' (Yule 218).

[4] The original budget of the movie was \$23.02 million (August 15, 1987). Its final cost turned out to be \$46.34 million.

[5] There would be a lot to say about Jonathan Pryce's presence in the movie and the connection between Sam Lowry and Quixote. Gilliam seems to have come full circle with this casting choice and logically connects his vision in *Brazil* and what *The Man Who Killed Don Quixote* stands for.