

***Don Quixote* as a Cartoon in Cultural Translation: From Spain to Japan and Back Again**

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Don Quixote became a cultural export soon after its first publication in Spain in 1605 and 1615. During the rise of cinema at the start of the twentieth century, the novel's longstanding international recognition made it a desirable subject for filmmakers across Europe. With the arrival of household television, the trend of cultural exportation continued with a wider reach yet slower pace. Between April and September of 1980, Tokyo Channel 12 in Japan broadcasted 23 episodes of an animated series called *Zukkoke Knight Don de la Mancha* (ずっこけナイト ドンデラマンチャ), which roughly translates as *Bumbling Knight Don de la Mancha* (ashipro.jp). The cartoon was made by Ashi Productions and features a bipedal zoomorphic version of Don Quixote, a sort of red-nosed dog with long springy hair. Sancho Panza's assigned species is less clear, something like a dog-bear-like creature. He is best described as akin to one of Disney's cartoon Beagle Brothers, only with hair that looks like a brown and curly two-tone fright wig. Despite the characters' cartoon-animal appearance, they still ride a horse and donkey. Their clothing, with Don Quixote in armor, make them an unmistakable match for Cervantes's creations. The cartoon diverges widely from the novel in the nature of the series' adventures and supporting characters. Only the introductory episode is obviously faithful to the novel, detailing Don Quixote's obsession with books of chivalry, his pursuit of Dulcinea, and the adventure of the windmills. The remainder of the series is "por lo general autónomo con respecto a la novela, por más que algunas situaciones nos traigan algún eco de esta" (González and Medina, 952). *Zukkoke Knight* appears so culturally different that it was deemed "too exotic" by one critic to merit any close examination in his latest edition of the compendious *Cervantes en imágenes* (129).

The Japanese cartoon might have languished in obscurity were it not re-exported from Japan and transmitted into the Hispanic world, thanks to a California-based distribution company called Ziv International. Under the title *Cuentos de la Mancha*, the cartoon was dubbed in Spanish by Intersound in Hollywood and regularly broadcast in Spain, Mexico, Colombia, and Chile during the 1980s. Through this re-distribution, the cartoon found new life and became an indelible part of many childhood memories, serving as a culturally-mediated introduction to Cervantes's iconic duo. Perhaps because of its 'exotic' nature and lack of faithfulness to the original subject matter, *Zukkoke Knight Don de la Mancha* and its Spanish dub have been mostly ignored by *cervantistas*. One must also consider that the only accessible versions of *Cuentos de la Mancha* are VHS recordings uploaded to YouTube. This is because the program has stopped broadcasting, is not available on DVD, nor found on any commercial streaming platforms. At the same time, the factors that keep the cartoon somewhat hidden are the same that make it a fascinating example of cultural translation. The following study will look at: 1) how key elements of *Don Quixote* were incorporated in an *anime*-style cartoon; 2) how the cartoon was subsequently translated back into Spanish for countries with previous knowledge of the characters; and 3) how ultimately this translation left a lasting impression on many young viewers during the 1980s.

The very first Japanese book translations of *Don Quixote* were partial and heavily modified (Saitou, 486), and the first direct-from-Spanish version was published as late as 1962 (Nishida, 460). Keeping this in mind, it is natural that a Japanese children's cartoon would not be

too faithful to the original, especially given the difficulties in translating the central protagonist from one medium to another. For Blas Matamoro, who charitably calls *Zukkoke Knight* “relativamente relacionada con Cervantes” (57), the reality of Don Quixote’s psyche is untranslatable to the big screen. “Su exacerbado sesgo ficticio se acentúa hasta la caricatura,” and “su comicidad suele caer sin esfuerzo en la chabacana tontería” (52). One can infer that this is true for television as well. Therefore, *Zukkoke Knight* must be taken at face value for what it is: a cultural translation of Cervantes in which the most cartoonish elements of the novel are preserved while the rest (realism, psychological depth, accurate literary references, etc.) are cast aside. I employ ‘cultural translation’ in the manner prescribed by Crystal S. Anderson in the context of *anime*; it is a process that “uses one ethnic culture to interpret another. It is not merely the exchange of cultural matters; it is a cultural interaction contextualized by the traversal of national boundaries.” It relies upon a cosmopolitanism that results in an “awareness of particular histories and unpredictable blendings that go beyond consensus and conflict” (5).

To Western viewers, it may appear strange that Don Quixote becomes a dog and Sancho is turned into a rotund Disney-style dog-bear, but these portrayals are simply part of “Japan’s rampant tendency to animate and anthropomorphise entities of all kinds” (Occhi, 561). In iconic terms, Don Quixote is brave and foolhardy; Sancho is gluttonous and pacifistic. Their essences, in terms of worldwide reputation, can be translated as if the characters were abstract entities. Japan is dominated by a culture that can produce a catlike-but-not-a-cat creature to embody cuteness and femininity like Sanrio’s Hello Kitty. In the case of popular government mascot Kumamon a bearlike-but-not-a-bear creature can represent both cuteness and the entire prefecture of Kumamoto (Occhi, 562). *Zukkoke Knight*’s dog-Quixote and dog-bear-Sancho belong to the same tradition, with Dulcinea being the only recurring human character in the series. Two supporting characters, Dulcinea’s father Carabos and her servant Notre Dame, are both portly dog-bears – for lack of a better descriptor – like Sancho, albeit with droopier faces and less of his cuteness. Dulcinea’s appearance is meant to evoke a European ideal of female beauty in cartoon form, with her pale skin, bouffant blonde hair, and wide blue eyes. Rocinante and Sancho’s donkey mainly act like animals, but they occasionally perform human gestures and pull faces for comic effect.

Zukkoke Knight is identifiable as *anime* through some key visual and aural effects, especially when Don Quixote is enraged and enters combat. While the program features plenty of motion from the characters on the screen, it frequently freezes movement in a tradition adopted from *manga* (comic books) and brought to moving pictures through the cartoon series *Mighty Atom* (*Astro Boy* outside of Japan) in the 1950’s (Steinberg, 10). *Zukkoke Knight* liberally employs freeze-frame and speed lines to emphasize movement while the actual animation frame remains static, appearing for a moment like a *manga* panel. Throughout the series, Don Quixote’s emotions are emphasized through a close-up of his eyes when they reveal anger, love or confusion. A current eBook for aspiring *manga* artists gives advice that perfectly matches the moods conveyed in the 1980’s *anime*: “Some different eye styles include: infatuation or love/doe eyes, star struck eyes which are mainly stars for the eyes, confusion and dizziness which is generally just a spiral. Then you have angry and vengeful, which can contain flames for the eyes or just wide, empty circles” (Bauer, 65). The backgrounds for *Zukkoke Knight*, while of a much lesser quality than those in films made by the famed Japanese Studio Ghibli, manage to portray similarly lush green hills and clear blue skies dotted with fluffy clouds. Action and comic movement of *Zukkoke Knight* are punctuated and emphasized by a variety of sound effects, but there is one that stands out as particularly Japanese. It is the *shing* sound of a sword clashing and,

since we are in an unrealistic cartoon universe, a sword being drawn from its scabbard. Across all of *anime*, the effect is so popular and heavily associated with the genre that sound designer Akash Thakkar has published a video tutorial on how to produce the “Epic Sword *Shing*” from scratch (Thakkar). In *Zukkoke Knight*, whether slashing with his sword or charging atop Rocinante with his lance, Don Quixote is often held in freeze-frame accompanied by the *shing* sound in classic *anime* fashion. This combination of two canonical *anime* tropes, one visual (freeze frame) and the other aural (the ‘shing!’), mark *Zukkoke Knight* as culturally Japanese.

The opening and closing musical themes for *Zukkoke Knight* present a fascinating example of cultural translation under strong pop-culture influences. The opener, “Dondera ondo chōshi detemasu” (ドンデラ音頭調子出てますか, “Don de la [Mancha], will the tune come out?”) is a mixture of *pasodoble* and march that leads with Spanish-style horns but is dominated by a specifically Japanese *enka* style of singing. In an e-mail correspondence with Dr. David Hughes at SOAS University of London, he explained that “*Ondo* is a standard term for a folk song (min’yō) that accompanies dance; many *enka* use that word in their titles.” Hughes pointed out that the “Don, Don!” chant at the end of the opening song’s chorus echoes a “common oral imitation of a large *taiko* [drum].” The shout thus creates a pun on the Spanish honorific “Don” to communicate a feeling of folksiness and fun that nicely aligns with the archaic charm of Don Quixote’s iconic image.¹ The closing song, (“Koya no ichibanhoshi” 荒野の一番星, “The First Star in the Wilderness”) is a loping Country and Western song with strings and 1950s-style female background harmonies, but the lead is sung in the same *enka* style as in the opener. As Yūsuke Wajima writes, *enka* is an “invented tradition” of sentimental pop-music that affects a folksy and emotional tone through “*kobushi* (melisma or vibrato) and *unari* (groan)” (71, 77). Such neo-folk music can draw on different traditional influences. One of these is Min’yō (民謡), which is often associated with nostalgia for simple village life (Hughes, 243). Taken in their entirety, the bicultural and translated elements for both credits-sequence songs create multiple layers of connotation that faithfully allude to Don Quixote as a striving adventurer, folk-hero, and wanderer of dusty plains from a bygone era. Simultaneously, the up-front *pasodoble* retains a vestige of Spanishness that emphasizes the character’s origins to the listener.

The plots and themes of each episode respectively support Luis Mariano González and Pedro Medina’s assertion that the series is “por lo general autónomo con respecto a la novela, por más que algunas situaciones nos traigan algún eco de esta” (952). Except for the first episode, each plot is completely disconnected from any specific narrative penned by Cervantes, and yet several key themes from *Don Quixote* remain intact throughout the series. Every episode of *Zukkoke Knight* contains the same basic plot structure. Dulcinea’s father Carabos requires her assistance to obtain some treasure on his behalf, and she must trick Don Quixote into helping her succeed. Dulcinea’s deceptions are often designed and initiated by her assistant Notre Dame, who inevitably lures Don Quixote into a fake quest by wearing a disguise and convincing the knight that Dulcinea is in danger. Sancho Panza is always skeptical and reluctant to join, but his faith in his master is strong, and so he helps him with ingenious solutions to the predicaments into which they fall. In *Zukkoke Knight*, Don Quixote’s adversaries are not only the trio of Dulcinea, Carabos, and Notre Dame, but also episodic title figures who provide the main obstacle in the greedy Carabos’s quest for wealth and status. These antagonists are extremely varied and include the following: a witch, pirates, Count Dracula, ancient Egyptians, Napoleon, Leonardo da Vinci, Emperor Nero, and Santa Claus.

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Because *Don Quixote* is an unmistakably Western source, the creators of *Zukkoke Knight* were under some obligation to make characters and settings non-Japanese. In doing so, they followed the Japanese tradition of *mukokuseki*. Andrew Dorman writes:

Mukokuseki animation is designed to be without any obvious cultural origins, presenting culture in terms of decontextualization. According to the *mukokuseki* style, characters do not always possess Japanese ethnic features, while settings and narratives may incorporate non-Japanese elements to create a culturally hybrid *mise-en-scène*. In *mukokuseki* animation, setting and subject matter adopt a distinctly European ambience. (40-41)

The varied Western-style antagonists are useful in maintaining the ‘ambience’ for Japanese viewers, while non-Japanese may find it jarring to see Don Quixote battle a lovesick Dracula in one episode and face off against a blond Napoleon in another. The manner in which *Zukkoke Knight* freely borrows from disparate fragments of Western culture is actually quite Cervantine. Also, to argue for cultural or literary coherence is to ask very much of a cartoon. In sum, to ask that a cartoon inspired by *Don Quixote* avoid *disparates* and respect the source material – whether this be historical source material for Napoleon, Bram Stoker’s Count Dracula, or Cervantes’s own creations – is to end up “buscando tres pies al gato por el gusto ajeno,” to quote Don Quixote himself (II, 10). If *Don Quixote* is the first postmodern novel, it seems appropriate that much of it is twisted out of recognition in an *anime* with heavy *manga* influences, since both of these genres lend themselves to “postmodern pastiche” (Choo, 108; Chan, 219).

Whether the *anime*’s creators intended it or not, the repeated plot structure is also more reminiscent of Cervantes’s creation than one might initially think. In Dulcinea’s deceptions, the head screenwriter Akiyoshi Sakai was repeating the schemes of the barber and the priest, as well as Sansón Carrasco, who use disguises and attempt to manipulate Don Quixote by appealing to his chivalric obsession and sense of adventure. The main distinction between novel and cartoon, beyond the absurd adversaries mentioned above, is that the quests in *Zukkoke Knight* are driven by Carabos’s greed. In Cervantes’s novel, they are driven by a desire amongst Don Quixote’s friends to bring him home and cure his madness. In both cartoon and novel this is a metanarrative element. Secondary characters join Don Quixote in creating a story-within-a-story, mirroring a fantasy world shared by a few within a reality shared by all. Scholars have argued that *Don Quixote*’s many *palizas* anticipate modern cartoon violence (Riley, 210; Miguel, 98), but the repeated fight scenes in *Zukkoke Knight* also recognize and interpret the fact that *Don Quixote* is, though with an ironic perspective, an adventure novel (Schmidt, 222). Robin E. Brenner writes that in *anime*: “Most of the time, the framework of the story is an excuse for elaborate and inventive action sequences, from fighter pilots zooming through space to the elegant, lethal dance of samurai duels” (142). This description recalls the *canónigo*’s long list of questionably entertaining features within the books of chivalry, including “tanto género de encantamentos, tantas batallas, tantos desafortados encuentros” (I, 49). The wacky and violent adventures of *anime* can also be described by the *canónigo*’s judgment on the *comedia* genre as well: “son conocidos disparates y cosas que no llevan pies ni cabeza” (I, 48). During their process of cultural translation, the Japanese creators of the *anime* have managed to carry over many thematic and generic elements of *Don Quixote* to another format. In doing so, they have effectively recovered the novel’s pre-Romantic Anglo interpretation, reclaiming “that *Don Quixote* was a silly book with a silly hero” (Knowles, 111).

There is one sequence that repeats itself in every episode and defies attempts to label it an act of cultural translation. At the same time, it does inadvertently evoke the metaliterary spirit of Cervantes's novel. To set the plot in motion, Dulcinea is inevitably visited by a sort of bat-winged bird monster named Cassette, whose body integrates with a VCR to play a tape that will explain Carabos's latest dilemma. It is the most obvious science fiction element in the show. The sequence is filled with images of pistons, spinning gears, and a television monitor that plays the message and looks like an extremely modern machine with exotic robot attachments. Those familiar with children's book author Mercer Mayer's *Little Monster* series will likely recognize that Cassette's image is entirely lifted from the letter-eating Bombanat that steals a child's letter in *One Monster After Another* (Mayer). Both Cassette and Bombanat not only have bat wings and a toothy beak, but also a distinctive propeller beanie that makes the plagiarism of Mayer unmistakable. How or why Mayer's creation ended up in an *anime* is not entirely clear, although its presence not entirely baffling. The original Bombanat carries a message through the air just like Cassette, although the latter is in the form of a videotape and not paper. The incongruity of including an American children's book monster within a Don Quixote story, and additionally turning it into a VHS-playing robot, is actually to be expected in the *anime*, whose appeal is boosted by the "common presence of genre mash-ups" (Ng, 71). In another moment that involves technological anachronism, the 'mash-up' aspect of *Zukkoke Knight* is taken to the extreme. At the end of Episode 15, "The Temptation of Mona Lisa" ("Monariza no yūwaku," モナリザの誘惑), Dulcinea and her assistant Notre Dame are pursued by Leonardo in his flying machine because they have spirited away his wife Mona Lisa. The machine looks anachronistically similar to one of Alberto Santos-Dumont's creations. The perspective of Leonardo diving towards his fast-moving quarry is reminiscent of the harrowing crop duster attack in Alfred Hitchcock's *North by Northwest*. This action sequence is the height of postmodern *anime* pastiche, but also strangely faithful to Cervantes's original spirit of experimentation, which is inseparable from the madness of the novel's protagonist (Shuger, 9).

There is very little documentation and no scholarship on how the Japanese-language *Zukkoke Knight Don de la Mancha* became the Spanish-language *Cuentos de la Mancha*. We only find bits of information scattered over various books, websites and internet comment forums. The most solid basis for studying the commercial workings of the translation comes from the credit sequence of each episode. They reveal a copyright date of 1982. They also note that the series is "Una producción de Ziv International, INC." with "Animación Realizada en Cooperación con Toei Animation Co. LTD." Ziv International is perhaps best known among *anime* aficionados for dubbing into English and distributing four episodes of *Captain Harlock Space Pirate* in 1981. This was done as a marketing strategy to encourage American TV stations to pick up the entire series (Camp and Davis, 349). Since *Captain Harlock* was distributed by Toei Animation as well, it seems reasonable to assume that *Zukkoke Knight* was picked up as part of a deal with Toei with an eye towards distributing a Quixote cartoon to Spanish-language broadcasters. Ziv had achieved previous success in dubbing *anime* into Spanish with programs like Nippon Animation's 1976 *La pequeña Lulú*, which had also been dubbed in English as *Little Lulu and Her Little Friends* from the Japanese "Little Lulu to chicchai nakama" (リトル・ルルトちっちゃん仲間). In 1980, Ziv had dubbed and distributed the late 1970s *mecha anime* — giant-robot cartoons — *Dino Mech Gaiking* ("Daikū maryū Gaiking," 大空魔竜ガイキング) and *Kōtetsu jūgu* (鋼鉄ジューグ) under the combined title of *Festival de (los) Robots* (imdb.com). Their repeated broadcast left an impression on many a youth in Latin America during the 1980s, as testified in Miguel Moreno Monroy's 1991 juvenile fiction book *Los niños del sube y baja*.

The young protagonist recalls how he and his friend enjoy the same programs: “Alf, Pequeña Lulú, el Festival de Robots, el Hombre Nuclear, el Conejo de la Suerte, Peebles [sic] y Bam Bam, y otros” (23). *Cuentos de la Mancha* is not mentioned, but it would have been mixed into the same rotation of cartoons on Latin American television, many of which were dubbed and distributed by Ziv International.

The first noticeable difference between *Zukkoke Knight* and *Cuentos de la Mancha* is found in the opening credits sequence. The Japanese song has been replaced by a Spanish one, not only in lyrics but in melody as well. Instead of *pasodoble*-march-*enka* hybrid, the show starts with a song with slight *pasodoble* flourishes. It mostly consists of an up-tempo rhythmic gallop with a steady guitar strum, horn stabs, and a constant clicking of castanets. The lyrics very much reflect the dominant Romantic interpretation the novel.

Don Quijote, héroe de ayer.
 Don Quijote, tu nombre vivirá.
 Sancho Panza, él te acompañará
 en tu lucha contra la maldad.
 Don Quijote, tu mundo es irreal.
 Algún día todo puede cambiar.
 Don Quijote, tu sueño vivirá.
 Don Quijote, luchando hasta el final.
 Dulcinea, su amor te entregará.
 Junto a ella, a todos vencerán.
 Don Quijote, tu mundo es irreal.
 Algún día todo puede cambiar. (www.ouvirmusica.com.br)

The song is credited to the prolific television songwriting partners Haim Saban and Shuki Levy but is sung by ‘Capitán Memo,’ who was probably the actual composer. ‘Capitán Memo’ is the stage name of Chilean singer-songwriter Guillermo Aguirre, a man so well known for his renditions of cartoon themes that uses dozens of them to produce entire concerts for adoring fans (eluniverso.com). The lyrics of “Don Quijote” in Spanish are much more triumphant than those of Etsuo Suzuki’s Japanese lyrics sung by Fumio Otsuka. The opening song “Don de la [Mancha], will the tune come out?” focuses on the protagonist’s undying belief in his cause with the refrain of “believe/trust [me]” (‘Shinjite,’ 信じて). The same song insists that this belief must remain firm despite Don Quixote’s bumbling or failure, conveyed in the expression “shippai zukkoke” (失敗 ずっこけ). It combines the word for ‘failure’ (‘shippai’) with ‘zukkoke’ (‘foolish,’ ‘bumbling’) from the show’s title and more accurately refers to the program’s crazy antics than Aguirre’s Spanish translation. In an interview with Chilean radio station Cooperativa, Aguirre mentioned that he and Haim Saban wrote more than 300 songs for television at a rate that allowed little time for polished lyrics (youtube.com). Nevertheless, the overwhelming use of assonant rhyme in Aguirre’s translation still manages to honor Spain’s enduring *romance* (ballad) tradition and conveys a certain pride in the cultural patrimony of Spanish literature.

The translator-directors of *Cuentos de la Mancha*, Helgar Pedrini and Rubén Arvizu, demonstrate a similar sense of propriety as songwriter Aguirre in translating a cultural icon from Japanese back into Spanish again. The original episodes of *Zukkoke Knight* end with the last moment of the main narrative. This is immediately followed by a nearly static credits sequence

that portrays the shadows of Don Quixote and Sancho riding in profile against an enormous setting sun. In the Japanese original, the image runs for the entire credits sequence. In *Cuentos de la Mancha* Pedrini and Arvizu separate the sunset-backdrop sequence from the credits, and instead run these with series of action clips taken from different episodes. The end-credits music is the same as the opener. The directors' newly created moment before the credits allows Don Quixote to share a *refrán* with Sancho Panza in a very short exchange. From the eighteen episodes of *Cuentos de la Mancha* as recorded on YouTube, fourteen contain this tiny dialogue, but only two of the *refranes* actually appear in the novel. These two proverbs are “No es oro todo lo que reluce” and “Quién a buen árbol se arrima, buena sombra le cobija” (“Él que a buen árbol se arrima [...]” in the cartoon); but they are never uttered by Don Quixote in the novel. Nor do they form any part of Sancho and Don Quixote's many dialogues. Sancho says them to the Duke and Duchess in chapters 32 and 33 of the Second Part, respectively. The other instance of “Él que a buen árbol se arrima [...]” appears at the very beginning of the novel, in Urganda la Desconocida's dedicatory *décimas de cabo roto*. Lastly, the *dueña dolorida* Doña Rodríguez says “no es todo oro lo que reluce” when gossiping to Don Quixote about Altisidora in chapter 48 of the Second Part. The remaining *refranes* used in the various pre-credits dialogues are well known, but the sayings must have come from Pedrini and Rubén Arvizu's collective cultural memory, not from Cervantes himself. A proverb like “En casa de herrero, cuchillo de palo” is used in Spain, but also appears in specifically Latin American collections as a national expression from countries like Chile or Panama. Arvizu is Mexican, Pedrini Uruguayan, and it is possible that they were mostly drawing from their own storehouse of proverbs, much like the fictional Sancho Panza himself. Aguirre's heavily Hispanicized theme song functions as a set of bookends for each episode, while the translator-directors' supplementary *refrán* adds more Spanishness. This is perhaps to compensate for some of the strong Japaneseness that constitutes the bulk of each episode's visual and aural style. It is an attempt to preserve not only the program's Spanishness, but its Quixoteness as well, and in the process exaggerating both. In this way, Arvizu and Pedrini have entered into an “add and subtract game” in a cultural and not merely linguistic sense (Klaudy, 12). The result is a noticeable over-compensation for those familiar with the novel. It is Don Quixote who tires of Sancho's constant proverbs; not the other way around as the director-translators imagined for *Cuentos de la Mancha*.

Some changes to eliminate the foreignness of the original series are unrelated to the content of the novel because they pertain to elements that were completely invented. The schemes of Dulcinea, Carabos, and Notre Dame are Cervantine in spirit, but preserving the last two names probably would have caused some confusion. Perhaps Notre Dame is meant to evoke Victor Hugo's Quasimodo, but the connection is not clear, and would remain unclear in translation. Carabos is even stranger, since it can only be based on the evil female fairy Carabosse created by Madame d'Aulnoy and adopted by Tchaikovsky (Knapp, 37). In the Spanish version, the two secondary characters become ‘Don Carlos’ and ‘Gordillo,’ emphasizing their gangster and oafish qualities respectively. This constitutes translation ‘gain,’ the addition of information for the sake of clarity. It does not seem like it was done out of disrespect for the foreignness of the source material, which can happen in the translation of children's literature (Yamazaki, 59). It seems unlikely that Japanese children would make any direct associations with either the name ‘Carabos’ or ‘Notre-Dame,’ and so little information, if any, is lost in this cultural ‘add and subtract game.’

Critics' immediate opinions about *Cuentos de la Mancha* are difficult to recover due to the program's ephemeral nature. The cartoon left an impression on the youth of Latin America,

but it seems barely to have registered among adult commentators at the time. By searching the internet, one is able to salvage a fragment of a very clear judgment made in a 1984 issue of the weekly magazine *Cromos* published in Bogotá. The cartoon was deemed,

...un esperpento (y no precisamente a la manera de Valle Inclán) como el que trasmitió la programadora de Eduardo Lemaitre [...]. Un programa como “Cuentos de La Mancha”, donde lo mínimo es ver a don Quijote transformado en galgo y a Sancho en una especie de híbrido entre oso, mico y monstruo japonés, es totalmente contradictorio con las realizaciones de esta programadora que buscan rescatar la historia nacional. (“Cromos”)

At the time, television program director Eduardo Lemaitre was struggling to maintain the didactic value of the medium, while realizing that audience tastes veered away from such fare as historical documentaries, which were Lemaitre’s specialty. Two years later in 1986, at the end of a column written in *El Tiempo*, he figuratively throws up his hands and cites Lope de Vega to express his feeling of resignation: “El vulgo es necio / y pues que paga, es justo / hablarle en necio / para darle gusto” (Lemaitre). Decades later, as more critics have had the chance to weigh in, their opinions on *Zukkoke Knight* and *Cuentos de la Mancha* have softened, although not entirely. Clara Monzó describes the Japanese cartoon thusly: “Desenfadada, colorista, y poco rigurosa, esta emisión convierte a Don Quijote en un ser zoomorfo, vagamente parecido a un perro, cuyos intentos alucinados por complacer a una pícara Dulcinea buscarán provocar la risa entre el joven público” (41). As noted above, what may appear to give grounds for dismissing the cartoon as infantile is also what makes it unexpectedly faithful to Cervantes’s novel. The author himself allows for the ‘silly book’ interpretation and even refers to a young audience. When Don Quixote insists to Sansón Carrasco that his story (as told in the First Part) must require some commentary to understand it, Sansón responds: “Eso no, porque es tan clara, que no hay cosa que dificultar en ella: los niños la manosean, los mozos la leen, los hombres la entienden y los viejos la celebran [...]” (II, 3). Notwithstanding the cartoon’s lack of rigor, its lack of faithfulness to the original in its plotting and character, it made a substantial impression on ‘los niños’ of the 1980s.

In his article “In Search of Lost Time on YouTube,” Laurence Scott writes of how he was affected by watching the French-Japanese *anime Ulysses 31* in the 1980’s, contemplating death and loss in the form of a spaceship’s crew turned to stone.

Over thirty years later, YouTube returns me to this scene. I wonder now if somehow YouTube itself prompted me to think of this particular image of bereavement, one of the countless cartoonish images from my childhood. Something about the very form of YouTube — its landing page an array of unmoving faces, its sidebar of “Up next” clips a vertiginous column of old friends, hanging one above the other — shares some of the suspended glamour and pathos of poor Ulysses’ frozen comrades. There they wait for us to restore them. (16)

When Scott (15) writes that “Much of my YouTube nostalgia is explicitly, tenaciously sought,” he is not alone. Contrary to its classical meaning, most nostalgia is not sought to elicit the feeling of pain related to returning home, the *algos* of *nostos*. Quite the opposite, it can bring on a feeling of emotional, even physiological comfort (Zhou, et. al.). *Don Quixote* is perhaps not commonly thought of as a comforting novel in a nostalgic sense, even among the *literati*. Pio

Baroja wrote in a letter that he did not like the novel on ethical grounds when he read it as a student. At the time, he felt that the work harbored an antipathy towards heroism and courage (Maraña and Unsain, 135). Jorge Luis Borges fondly remembers reading the novel in English, but he thought the original read like a “pobre traducción.” What attracted Borges most to the Spanish edition from Hermanos Garnier were the red and gilt cover, annotations, and engravings (Borges, 155). Color, captivating images, and an adventurous protagonist are distilled to their bare essence in cartoons. It is easy to see how *Cuentos de la Mancha* instilled a comforting sense of nostalgia in young viewers who, unlike Pío Baroja, were able to forgive Don Quixote’s bumbling nature and guiltlessly enjoy his many sword fights and cliff-hanging chases. More than thirty years later, children of the 80s continue to seek out this Hispanic-Japanese hybrid and relive the feelings of joy produced through a multilayered cultural translation.

At the time of writing this article, a search for ‘Cuentos de la Mancha’ on YouTube yields most episodes from *Cuentos de la Mancha* amongst a great variety of results. The posted videos offer a rare opportunity to register reactions to the cartoon, which only survives through old VHS recordings that have been subsequently transferred to this ephemeral online format. Media corporations are quick to order DMCA (Digital Millennium Copyright Act) take-down notices when they see their products uploaded by third parties onto YouTube, regardless of whether this is done for the sake of sheer fandom, with no attention of profiting from it (Strangelove, 156). To the delight of *Cuentos de la Mancha* fans, take-down orders for these particular videos are rare. Viewers can thus return to their childhood and also form a bond with others through the comments section of each video. Amongst the roughly 300 comments posted to YouTube, perhaps the most common word to describe the viewers’ experience of rediscovery is the noun ‘recuerdo.’ It appears nearly three dozen times and clearly indicates a link between the program and the viewers’ nostalgia. ‘Infancia’ and ‘niño’ are also used quite often in the comments, linking the video to happy moments in childhood. Additionally, variations of ‘risa’ and ‘reír’ indicate that most viewers receive the cartoon as it was intended to be: a reduction of the novel’s contents, with additional material, to the essence of silliness. In a single comment, one viewer complains about the novel’s divergence, and opines that the 1979 series by Romagosa International for Televisión Española is far superior because of its faithfulness. In response, one commenter answers that there is no reason to feel bitter about *Cuentos de la Mancha*’s difference, since it was written with another purpose in mind and has its own fanbase. Twice amongst the different comments sections, viewers explain that the Japanese series inspired them to read the novel. One of these goes further by explaining that they did so because the cartoons themselves were incomprehensible. The same viewer who did not initially find comfort in *Cuentos de la Mancha* returned to see the episodes online and now finds them “genial,” giving equal praise to novel and cartoon. Only a half-dozen of the comments remark that the series is originally Japanese, a fact that seems to have escaped most of the viewers or is simply ignored by them. This lack of concern suggests that the translator-directors and voice actors were successful in creating a mostly seamless cultural translation through which the cartoon sits comfortably in the annals of Latin American Pop culture. At the same time, certain viewers versed in *anime*-translation history recognize that the program is dubbed while praising the work of the singer “Capitán Memo” and voice actor Carlos Agosti. One commenter writes that since “Don Carlos Agosti” was Spanish, his voice gave a welcome “toque ibérico” to the role of Don Quixote. Setting aside viewers’ request for more videos to be uploaded, the comments expressing least satisfaction are those that comment upon the Dulcinea character’s treachery. These complaints inadvertently refer to the courtly-love trope of the ungrateful beloved and

reveal that the Japanese creator's innovation of a "Dulcinea mafiosa" (to cite one commenter) honors Cervantes's parodic spirit in an appropriate yet unintentional manner. Despite the scattering of criticism found amongst the hundreds of comments on YouTube, the overall feeling from the commenters is one of laughter, nostalgia and gratitude. While Cervantes himself may have been referring to himself ironically as "escritor alegre" and "regocijo de las musas" in his prologue to *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda*, these descriptors perfectly match the viewers' sincere judgment of *Cuentos de la Mancha* and their continued accessibility on YouTube.

What Clara Monzó concludes about Japanese *manga* adaptations of *Don Quixote* is also true in the case of the *anime Zukkoke Knight*.

En el proceso de acercamiento a Japón, el caballero andante se ofrece con la ductilidad de un clásico, complacientemente dispuesto a adaptarse a nuevas coordenadas. Imagen y palabra, su incursión en el género del manga contribuye doblemente a la consolidación de su figura como representante del canon literario español y a la difusión de su mito entre los lectores consumidores de la cultura de masas. (46)

As *Zukkoke Knight* became *Cuentos de la Mancha* through a process of cultural translation, the personnel involved made some attempt to reinstitute a certain amount of Spanishness. But they also recognized the source material's inherent 'ductilidad' and cartoonishness that must have appealed to the Japanese creators in the first place. While demonstrating a certain degree of respect and propriety in translating the much-modified classic, artists like Pedrini, Arvizu, Aguirre and Agosti undoubtedly felt that silliness and seriousness were not only compatible but also very much in the spirit of Cervantes's original creation. If Cervantes had any mild regret about his legacy as an 'escritor alegre' and 'regocijo de las musas,' he surely felt grateful for his fan base as well. If it were possible for him to view *Cuentos de la Mancha* today, he might be surprised to see what became of his novel, and he might feel a bit misunderstood. At the same time, he might also feel some satisfaction in reading the YouTube comments, all in Spanish, that express so much joy in following the adventures of Don Quixote and Sancho, however *disparatadas* they may be. If Avellaneda was worthy of Cervantes's scorn for producing an overly cartoonish novel in the *Quijote apócrifo*, the translators of *Zukkoke Knight* might invite Cervantes's approval for their adherence to the generic demands of a literal cartoon. In response to the 1980s work of those at Asahi Productions in Japan and at Ziv International in California, the author of *Don Quixote* would at least repeat what his protagonist said about translators in general: "en otras cosas peores se podría ocupar el hombre" (II, 62).

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