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Comparing *Tirant* and *Quijote*. Four Plays of the Second Half of the Twentieth Century

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I. Introduction

Tirant lo Blanch and *Don Quijote de la Mancha* are two masterpieces that reflect in different ways the ideals, cultural codes and the imaginary connected to chivalric literature at the time these works were written. As it is well known, they have a peculiar reciprocal relationship and they have inspired numerous theatrical adaptations. The Mediterranean theme, interpreted in different ways in both texts, also reemerges in these works and constitutes another shared element, which is reworked with specific aims and in an original way.

When we analyze some of the fundamental characteristics of the two novels (which is useful in order to compare them to their theatrical adaptations), we must highlight that *Tirant* is exempt from the lack of realism and excesses that are typical of those *libros de caballerías* that Cervantes mockingly derides in *Don Quixote*, particularly in the episode of the book scrutiny.[1] While the two novels seem to identify themselves with the chivalric ideals, *Tirant* does so with measure and a certain level of verisimilitude, whereas *Don Quixote* points out the degradation of some of the derivations of this

1 In the curate's words in Cervantes's novel: "By right of its style it is the best book in the world. Here knights eat and sleep, and die in their beds, and make their wills before dying, and a great deal more of which there is nothing in all the other books" (I, 6).

genre. In addition, the treatment of the Mediterranean is rather different in both and it highlights the peculiar relationship between them. In the Valencian novel, one of the main *topoi* of the chivalric genre, the journey, is central to its plot and construction (Martines) and consequently *Tirant* is represented as a worldwide figure who moves throughout the Mediterranean in verisimilar contexts, vicissitudes and ways. Conversely, in Cervantes's novel the figure of Don Quixote (DQ) represents the parodical exhaustion of this theme, as is typical in the late examples of this genre. As a consequence, he is portrayed as a more 'local' figure who journeys through La Mancha, Aragon and Catalonia to be finally defeated by the Caballero de la Blanca Luna on the Barcelona beach, thus limiting drastically his own Mediterranean experience. In fact, that experience is reduced to this sole and decisive episode of his adventures. One of the main themes of the genre, the limitless chivalric journey, is fundamental for the structure, the plot development and the behaviour of the protagonist of the Valencian novel. While in this chivalric novel the journey is seen from a verisimilar perspective, it is presented in excessive format in less accomplished chivalric books. By contrast, Cervantes offers us in *Don Quixote* more circumscribed itineraries, so much so that DQ does not move too far from his familiar environment and his more 'exotic' journey is the final one to Barcelona. Thus, as one of our first conclusions, the relationship between *Tirant* and *Don Quixote*, while one of proximity, highlights some deep differences: the first of these is the internal development of chivalric ideals and cultural codes, which are constructed in the Valencian novel in a verisimilar and measured way and are deformed in Cervantes's novel with the aim of criticizing the degradation experienced by the genre in many of its late examples.

Drawing on these elements, we will proceed to analyse how the relationship between the two novels is reflected in the theatrical adaptations examined here. These adaptations involve profound reinterpretations and remarkable syntheses of their sources, for the writers are faced with complex source texts, whose rich and elaborate structure reflects the chivalric ideology of their time. We will study how each playwright uses the source text in order to recreate its narrative structure and the internal dynamics of the characters in an original way and with specific aims. Moreover, we will examine how each playwright establishes a link with the source text, its themes and characteristics.

We will focus on four plays, namely Joan Sales's *En Tirant lo Blanc a Grècia. Òpera bufa*; Josep Maria Benet i Jornet's *Història del virtuós cavaller Tirant lo Blanc*; Antonio Buero Vallejo's *Mito*; and Alfonso Sastre's *El viaje*

infinito de Sancho Panza. We should also stress the fact that while *Don Quixote* acquired early on the character of a masterpiece and became a classic, during and after the dark parenthesis of Franco's dictatorship *Tirant* was utilized in the defense and recuperation of the Catalan imaginary as an expression of collective cultural and identity roots, thus representing an inspiration for various adaptations that emphasize this aspect.[2]

II. Joan Sales, *En Tirant lo Blanc a Grècia. Òpera bufa*

In 1958, Sales (1912-1983) presented the farce entitled *En Tirant lo Blanc a Grècia o qui mana a can Ribot* (Sales 1990; Pasqual), which was defined by Ferran Soldevila as a "comèdia on triomfa l'esperit de lleugeresa i d'alegria" (Sales 1972, inside flap).[3] Another operatic version in three acts, *En Tirant lo Blanc a Grècia. Òpera bufa* with score by Joan Altisent (1891-1971), was based on the first farce (Gómez Muntané; Ferrando Morales 2012, 2014 and 2015). According to the author himself, this opera "només ha estat representada ... parcialment i en audicions privades" (Sales 1972, 11). Sales brings to the stage the chivalric novel with the aim of making it relevant and accessible for the audience of his time. This popularizing or divulgative exercise allows the novel to reach diverse audiences. The opera affirms the continuity with the past and the strong ties of twentieth-century audiences with their cultural and identity roots, of which it constitutes one of the main artistic-literary expressions. The author achieves his aim and he succeeds in introducing *Tirant* to a wide audience to the point that his operatic adaptation became a point of reference for further adaptations of the novel in the final years of the Francoist period and during the *Transición* (Folch i Pi; Triadú; Garcia i Raffi).[4]

According to Maria Aurèlia Capmany, in his first theatrical adaptation of the novel, Sales "va entrar en el meravellós edifici literari ben decidit a endurse'n aquells elements que li fornirien una comèdia vodevilesca [...] plena d'un

2 This includes plays, novels, operas, documentaries, films, comics, videos, ballet, etc., up to Calixto Bieito and Marc Rosich's recent futuristic version with music by Carles Santos, *Tirant lo Blanc. Òpera retaule per a catorze veus i orgue*, presented at the Frankfurt Buchmesse 2007 and staged in 2008 at the Teatre Romea di Barcellona. For a review of *Tirant lo Blanc*'s adaptations, see http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/portales/joanot_martorell_i_el_tirant_lo_blanc/edicions.

3 Staged at the Palau de la Música Catalana and, then, at the Teatre Romea in Barcelona by Agrupació Dramàtica de Barcelona, directed by Jordi Sarsanedas (Camps and Arbós 2010, 213, note 217).

4 Among the plays, it is worth mentioning Capmany 1974 (staged in 1971) and Capmany 1977 (intended for children).

erotisme feliç i sense màcula de pecat ni de remordiment" (Capmany 1989, 8). The same consideration can be made for his next adaptation of the novel as an opera buffa, which retains and recreates some elements of the source text in order to entertain the audience and elaborate the love theme in full, making it the *fil rouge* or common thread of the various elements of the play (Soldevila). According to this original perspective, the author constructs the characters following the conventions of the opera genre, presenting couples of characters that develop the love theme in different ways: irrepressible passion (Tirant and Carmesina), intrigues and sensuality (Plaerdemavida), the grotesque and untrustworthy antagonist (Viuda Reposada).

The choice of popularizing the novel and reinterpreting it as an *opera buffa* determines the new narrative structure: the plot unfolds in Constantinople and revolves around the war against the Turks as well as around the love story between the protagonists. The serious elements of the plot, those of a political and military nature, are treated with gravitas; conversely, when the love theme emerges, the comic or *buffo* element acquires more relevance, thus justifying the choice of genre (*opera*) and subgenre (*opera buffa*) for this particular adaptation. The comic-humorous element becomes central and it is developed by means of a peculiar presentation of situations and through the dynamics among characters, their language and gestuality, music, *canto* and dance. The central role of the comic element also causes the overturn of the *denouement* of the source novel: the plot ends with the proclamation of Tirant as future emperor and the tragic end is substituted by a happy one. The characters taken from the source text are the Emperor, Carmesina, Plaerdemavida, Tirant, Hipòlit—in the adaptation he is the protagonist's cousin—, the Viuda Reposada and the Duke of Macedonia, together with the Seneschal, the Patriarch, the Astrologist, the Ambassadors of France and the Republic of Venice as well as other secondary characters. Going through this list, it becomes clear that their function and their comic potential also derive from their physical appearance (the emperor is "decrèpit," the Duke of Macedonia has "uns mostatxos com els d'en Dalí;" Sales 1972, 11). This strategy produces a well-accomplished comic-humorous *crescendo*: the opera goes from the serious tone of the I Act—which develops the military theme—to the appearance and gradual increase of the comic streak from the II Act onwards—as the love theme becomes more prevalent—, which culminates in the III Act, a true triumph of humor and comedy.

The plot begins in the Imperial Palace, where Carmesina finds out that Plaerdemavida has written a letter to Tirant, who is in Sicily, pretending to be the princess and begging him to save the empire. Therefore, Sales disregards

the first part of the novel (Chapters 1-114) and changes the episode of the desperate request for help against the Turks in order to establish a firmer link between the military and love subplots. The ambassadors of France and the Republic of Venice make their appearance, emphasizing with their untrustworthy presence and their antagonism against Tirant the political-military subplot (they represent the themes of betrayal and political interference). The seneschal is portrayed as a cowardly figure who is more worried about himself than the well-being of the empire, and the Duke of Macedonia is shown as an inept, defeated by an enemy whose advance he cannot check. All these figures evoke an atmosphere of political crisis and serve to intensify the determinant role of the protagonist, even before he enters the stage. The astrologist announces an imminent salvific event; Hipòlit arrives and, while standing at the top of the palace, he points at the Catalan fleet commanded by his cousin Tirant, who arrives surrounded by the *almogàvers*. The reference to Catalan Medieval history becomes even more evident when, in order to describe his native land (which, in this adaptation, is Catalonia), the knight claims: "Reina del mar i lliure i forta / és tal la terra d'on fills som / que ni un peix passa si no porta / el seu senyal damunt el llom" (Sales 1972, 31). The line is a clear echo of what, according to Desclot's *Crònica*, Admiral Roger de Llúria might have said after his victory against France in the Battle of Roses and the Formigues Islands. This was a decisive moment in the history of the Crown of Aragon, which ended in 1285 (after the ensuing Battle of the Col de Panissars) the crusade against the Crown that had been spearheaded by France and the papacy.[5] The tone and vicissitudes of the first scenes demonstrate that in the I Act the military theme prevails with the increasing antagonism between Tirant and the Duke of Macedonia (betrothed of his cousin Carmesina) and the plots in which the ambassadors are involved. From the II Act onwards the love theme with its various nuances becomes progressively more important (the dynamics of the couple Tirant-Carmesina, the antagonism of the Viuda Reposada and her separating role with regards to the aggregating role of Plaerdemavida) and intertwines with the military theme. Then, the situation is overturned in the III Act, when the love theme becomes predominant and the serious tone gives way to comedy. In the crucial moment, when a decision has to be made on how to face best the Turkish threat, Tirant burns the vessels on which he arrived (end of Act

5 "No sol no em pens que galera ne altre vaixell gòs anar sobre mar menys de guiatge del rei d'Aragó; ne encara no solament galera ni lleny, mas no creu que nengun peix se gòs alçar sobre mar si no porta un escuta amb senyal del rei d'Aragó en la coa per mostrar guiatge d'aquell senyor rei d'Aragó" (Bernat Desclot, *Crònica*, § 156).

I). The episode is a reference to another topos also present in the Catalan Medieval historiography. Thus, Ramon Muntaner narrates in his *Crònica* the episode of the sinking of the vessels of the *Companyia catalana* deployed in Gallipoli (in Thrace) in order to avoid any possibility of retreating and abandoning the battlefield, that is to say the need to face the enemy even in conditions of absolute inferiority (§ 219). Here again, a symbolic event is evoked (which refers to the moment of maximum expansion of the Crown of Aragon in the Mediterranean basin) that has acquired over the years the status of legend in the Catalan collective imaginary and, thus, a profound identity value.

At this point, Carmesina takes the lead of the empire (Act II); this discrepancy with the source text also serves the purpose of intertwining the military and love themes: once the Turkish threat is defeated, the plot shifts more and more towards the love theme until it becomes predominant, stressing the comedy elements of the plot and orientating the adaptation towards the *opera buffa* subgenre. The comic aspect is emphasized through the exchange of lines, gesturality and music, as highlighted in the numerous stage directions (which show the shift from a serious to the facetious tone and the amplification of the comic-humorous elements) and clearly demonstrates the adscription of the play to the *opera buffa* subgenre. In this way, proverbs, popular and colloquial sayings, witty and juicy remarks appear with increasing frequency in the dialogues. For instance, Carmesina alludes to skirmishes with Tirant and claims that "li falta encara palla i temps a aquesta nespra" (Sales 1972, 79) or Plaerdemavida replies "ja ho diu la gent: viure per veure" (Sales 1972, 83). When talking to the Duke of Macedonia and referring to the entrance of other characters into the imperial gynaeceum, Plaerdemavida remarks that "podrem dir [...] que com més serem més riurem" (Sales 1972, 87). The Viuda Reposada expresses the foolishness of something she has just heard by saying that "això no tè ni suc ni bruc" (Sales 1972, 101). She also refers to how appearances are illusory with the similitude "res no s'assembla tant al sucre mirat per fora com la sal"; in addition, when she talks about the straightforward manners of Catalan people, she maintains that "amb franquesa deuen dir pa quan és pa i vi quan és vi" (Sales 1972, 105). This linguistic and stylistic register is also used by other characters. For example, Tirant remembers that in the letter he has received from Carmesina (written in fact by Plaerdemavida) "s'hi sentia la mà d'una sàvia princesa" and Carmesina says to herself "la Plaerdemavida sap fer tots els papers!" (Sales 1972, 44); later she bursts out saying that "el cap d'una rival només fa bo de veure clavat al cim d'un pal" (Sales 1972, 69), which is an expression that doesn't befit a young

lady of blue blood. Moreover, the emperor breaks down the fourth wall and, with the help of his gestures and the music from the orchestra, addresses the audience directly and makes fun of the Duke of Macedonia, his ridiculous moustache and his terrible snoring (Sales 1972, 70-71); tout de suite, he seems concerned about the fact that "si li [the Duke] pugés la mosca al nas (així se l'emportàs el mateix Satanàs), podria moure en so de guerra..." (Sales 1972, 74). In order to kill the emperor, the Duke conspires with the astrologist, who shows him a lethal potion that has to be poured into the emperor's ear (a reference to *Hamlet*). Upon the arrival of the seneschal and the ambassadors, the astrologist, "rient baixet" (Sales 1972, 76), extracts and hides back repeatedly in his clothes the vessel containing the poison, with a comic effect accomplished through his gestures, while the duke makes plain the plot to everyone. Indeed, gesturality plays a decisive role in attaining the comic or *buffo* effect. Thus, when Plaerdemavida urges Tirant to write a love letter to Carmesina, the stage direction states: "En Tirant s'asseu i mossega la ploma, rumiant" (Sales 1972, 93). The girl then helps him suggesting "poseu: «Ah, cruel!» com tothom" (Sales 1972, 94) and Tirant ("dubdant si ho escriu") tries to draft something but he hesitates ("«M'heu destrossat la vida...» No sé si és així"), while Plaerdemavida urges him by exclaiming "La fareu tan contenta! I què us costa de dir! Au, escriviu-ho de seguida" (Sales 1972, 95). Finally, she concludes that "potser seria bo baixar de les altures i si la voleu fer completament feliç parlar-li tot passant dels mobles i del pis, del col·legi on fareu anar les criatures" (Sales 1972, 95-96). The adaption has preserved the dynamics between Plaerdemavida and Tirant as it occurs in the source text: the young woman is confident and resourceful and she urges to action a protagonist whom love has made hesitant. However, in this opera their relationship acquires humorous tones and it is used to soften the dramatic tension. At this point in the scene, the erotic element also enters the stage, expressed through a series of salacious exchanges: the seneschal says to the duke, who is considered a womanizer, that "no pot passar sense algun tall que es fon de tendre" (Sales 1972, 78), referring to his young conquests; Plaerdemavida, who is courted by the duke, maintains that she would give herself to him when he will be "coronat devant al poble i la noblesa, sobretot coronat, d'alló més coronat" (Sales 1972, 79), alluding to the fact that he is betrothed to Carmesina, who will cheat on him with Tirant and will ultimately leave him; then, making fun of the passion felt by the Viuda Reposada for the male protagonist, Plaerdemavida reports that she has heard her whispering: "Aquest cor meu era tot cendra i per tu torna a ser un fogó!" (Sales 1972, 83); when the Viuda tries to denigrate Carmesina in the eyes of Tirant, she

reveals to him that "està més flaca que aquell faraó de la vaca" and that, in order to sustain her, she prepares for her every day "sis ous batuts amb sucre i llet," while the protagonist "neguitós, seu, s'alça, es passeja, torna a seure, es treu l'espasa, li dóna llustre amb l'alè, se la frega amb la màniga, etc.," and then he bolts out saying "m'excusareu. Tinc els minuts comptats. M'espera el Basileu, m'esperen els soldats" (Sales 1972, 109); the Viuda warns him one last time "us daran gat per llebre i garsa per perdiu" (Sales 1972, 110) and offers a comic description of knights-errant, based on a typical medieval *topos* (cfr. Orazi 2014): "Els cavallers errants en això són tots uns; sense *cum quibus* ni possibles, sempre van a fer cap, pobrets, tan oportuns a on hi ha princeses disponibles" (Sales 1972, 88). The duke tries to convince the Viuda that Tirant loves her and, faced with her disbelief, explains (in reference to Carmesina) that "no és la primera princesa a qui diu «bah»" (Sales 1972, 91), that is to say, that she is not the first princess that Tirant spurns.

The plot then moves to the gynaeceum of the imperial palace (Act III) with the adaptation of the episode in which the Viuda makes Tirant believe that Carmesina has a sexual relationship with the black gardener Lauseta (who is in fact Plaerdemavida disguised in drag). In Sales's opera, Plaerdemavida and Hipòlit, Tirant and Carmesina converge to the garden, where they all meet for the bizarre finale. The language becomes increasingly colourful and expressive: when Hipòlit disguises himself as a black eunuch, Plaerdemavida tells him that, in that attire, "no et coneix ni la teva tia" (Sales 1972, 115); the young man, confused, confesses that "només sé que vaig de bòlit" (Sales 1972, 117); when Tirant sees what is happening, he bursts out: "No hi ha proverbi fals! Déu sempre dona faves a qui no té queixals" (Sales 1972, 116), with a humorous sexual reference to the eunuch; disappointed, he uses a semi-serious tone when reviving another typical *topos* of the chivalric genre: "Llei de l'errant cavalleria és que jo ara em faci ermità; gran penitència faré allà" (Sales 1972, 126), echoing the same parody of *Quijote* I, 25-26, when the protagonist decides to retire to Sierra Morena (Díaz Migoyo). The Viuda—loyal to her original role in the source text— keeps discrediting Carmesina in the eyes of the protagonist, insisting on the social differences between the two of them and on its negative consequences "Ves que no us fes fregar les lloses de palau!" (Sales 1972, 136), since it is fair for a knight to be taken care of by his beloved, "que trobi sempre a punt el dinar i el sopar" (Sales 1972, 137), utilizing an increasing satirical and mocking tone. The duke decides to marry Carmesina in a conniving manner and claims in a pompous tone: "Tot sigui per l'Imperi i la Religió i pel mànec de la paella" (Sales 1972, 143). As in the novel, Plaerdemavida acquires a central role in the play: she orchestrates two

secret weddings, she convinces the duke that he is going to marry Carmesina, and convinces the Viuda that she is going to marry Tirant; nevertheless, in a foreseeable and comic reversal, the duke ends up marrying the Viuda. At this point, the two choruses (the one formed by the ladies and the handmaids and the one composed of the knights and eunuchs) begin a pantomime in which gestures, singing and dance emphasize the *coup de théâtre*. Carmesina can marry Tirant, now that she is finally free from the commitment incurred with the duke, who, feeling disappointed, climbs up the garden fence, bursts into laughter and abandons the bride (the Viuda), who also jumps the wall and runs after him because she doesn't want to lose her new husband. The pantomime resumes: the emperor crowns Tirant and reverses the tragic ending of the source novel because, as he claims, "en una òpera bufa que vulgui alegrar el poble faria mal paper el botxí" (Sales 1972, 168). Therefore, as the stage direction states, "la comparseria, immòbil fins ara, reprèn de sobte i *molto vivace* el ball i la pantomima" (Sales 1972, 172). Everybody rejoices in the happy ending and the curtain falls.

Despite the fact that the plot unfolds in Constantinople, the theme of the journey and the Mediterranean element remain central to the play although they are moved strategically to the background. Tirant arrives in the capital of the empire after a long journey through the Mediterranean, he has his vessels burnt at port and makes numerous references to his native land (a faraway land, beyond the sea, a reign which dominates the Mediterranean, with frequent references to the *Quatre grans cròniques*).

In conclusion, Sales adapts the source text for the new audience in order to convey the message through a new interpretation and find a closer rapport with a modern audience. He transforms the novel into an *opera buffa* with the help of gesturality, humour and a comic and transgressive language that befit this new subgenre. At the same time, he remains faithful to the spirit of the source text and presents the Mediterranean as the geographical frame within which the plot unfolds.

III. Antonio Buero Vallejo, *Mito*

In 1968, *Primer Acto* publishes *Mito*, the libretto for an opera (Buero 1968b; Monleón; Santiago Bolaños). The project, which Buero began in 1966-1967 together with composer Cristóbal Halffter,[6] was interrupted but the playwright did not give up the drafting of the text, even if he was conscious of the

6 In 1987, Halffter composed *Don Quijote*, an opera with a libretto by Andrés Amorós, staged in 2000 at the Teatro Real de Madrid and directed by his son Pedro Halffter (Fernández-Souto; Halffter 2004a and 2004b; Gan Quesada).

difficulties involved in representing such an opera (Buero 1968a). The adaptation is characterized by musicality and music texture that are really suggestive, underlined several times by the stage directions, and which outline the playwright's musical concept and his particular bond with words (utilized for singing in this particular case) (Ferrante).

Buero's connection to the author of *Don Quixote* and the presence of Cervantes's references in his plays are well-known, as he himself remarked when he received the Premio Cervantes 1986 (Buero 1994). However, in this opera this connection is even stronger (Halsey; Caro Dugo). *Mito* presents a complex metatheatrical structure and the selected characters and episodes constitute an update of Cervantes's homonymous ones, while keeping their atmosphere in spite of the contemporary setting. The title refers to the figure of DQ, now interpreted as a real myth, and to the mythical image of the *visitantes* (the aliens) that obsesses Eloy, the play's protagonist. The aliens represent the materialization of the character's alienation and they are transformed from abstract entities into stage figures that embody the only possibility to establish peace and justice in the degraded society of the time.

The opera is set in the twentieth century and, like the novel, is divided into two parts. The protagonists are the actors of a theatre company that is staging an operatic adaptation of *Don Quixote*. The entire plot unfolds in twenty-four hours: after the end of the opera, the actors get ready to spend the night in the theater, until the following evening's show; indeed, the local authorities have imposed a curfew, officially in order to practise a drill exercise in the event of a nuclear attack but actually to suppress a strike. It is immediately evident that *Mito* is not an adaptation of the source text but an opera that is inspired by it. It updates some of the keys elements of *Don Quixote* and it reiterates the cultural importance that the classic novel still has today. This is demonstrated by the analogies between some of the characters of the contemporary work and those of the novel, by the way some episodes of the source text are echoed in the new version, and by preserving the double mechanism in the treatment of the theme of madness, which is first endogenous and reflects the mental condition of DQ and Eloy and then becomes exogenous and is embodied by other characters-actors on the stage. Similarly to the couple DQ-Sancho in the source text, at the beginning Simón-Sancho's pragmatism and common sense are opposed to Eloy-DQ's idealized and illusionary perception, but ultimately the former ends up believing his master: convinced of the arrival of aliens, he asks to be nominated burgomaster of the city, as Sancho became governor of the island of Bara-

taria, and he is involved in the deceit orchestrated by other characters at the bizarre Eloy's expense.

When the curtains rise, the audience sees the epilogue of the opera and the *hidalgo*'s death; then, the plot shifts to the contemporary setting, in which the characters are the employees of the theatre and the actors that were playing the opera which has just ended. This is the first metaphorical reflection of the myth. Buero constructs in this way a double *mise en abyme* through a double metatheatrical construction (Iglesias Feijoo 1982: 376; Tobar): the real viewers of Buero's play are watching a *pieza1—Mito—* in which a *pieza2* is being represented— the story of the actors on the stage— that begins with the epilogue of *pieza3*—the operatic adaptation of *Don Quixote*—; the end of *pieza2* marks the beginning of the new show, *pieza3*. The plot unfolds in the backstage and the audience sees the actors (with their backs turned against them) performing the operatic adaptation of Cervantes's novel. On the other hand, they see in front of them what happens in the backstage. At the beginning of the play the backdrop hides the actors who are interpreting the final scene of the opera about DQ, of which the audience gets to glimpse something through the backstage doors that give access to the room of the moribund man on stage. So, the spectators of *Mito* are made aware of the scene of the *hidalgo*'s death by hearing the characters' lines and the applause of those who are in the "theatre" at the end of the performance. Therefore, the audience sees from behind what the imaginary spectators of the opera that is being performed apparently see in front of them. This setting amplifies the play of perspectives of the source text with the doubling between the objective reality of the characters of the novel and DQ's imaginary reality. After the first scene, this bipolarity is projected in *Mito* through the doubling of the levels of representation: the objective reality of what happens inside the theatre and the imaginary reality of Eloy—alter ego of DQ—, accompanied by Simón as the new Sancho and the cloakroom attendant-costume designer Marta, the new Dulcinea, who is a heavenly figure for the protagonist, that is to say an alien sent to Earth in a reconnaissance mission.

During the unfolding of the plot, Buero employs music, gestures and lighting in order to embody the message of the novel, modified through the contemporary setting. Since the opening, the proceeding of the scenes is sustained by the music, which highlights the set and plot changes, presents the characters and delineates their psychological profile and their role. Music is a functional element for the unfolding of the story, for the linking of the scenes since the beginning (when DQ's death is accompanied by a female voice singing a traditional *copla*), and, throughout the rest of the opera, for

the changes of setting, always introduced by a new musical motif. In the *pieza* iconic objects of the source text appear on stage, such as DQ's sword and his spurs, which hung on the bed of the moribund character, or the barber's basin, which plays a crucial role in *Mito*. Indeed, in the adaptation the basin represents a mysterious object that allows to establish contact with aliens. This is how Eloy acquires a Quixotic personality, which is, however, grounded in the twentieth century and the reason why he will not live chivalric adventures but hallucinatory experiences.

Then, the protagonist seems to be falling asleep (which is an adaptation of the *Cueva de Montesinos* episode) and he sees six *visitantes* entering the stage singing in unison: his deep sleep populated by hallucinations insinuates doubt in the mind of the audience, who does not know how to interpret these mysterious figures because they are misled by the skilful use of lights that evoke an oneiric atmosphere. The same happens when Eloy-DQ and Marta-Dulcinea remain alone on stage and begin a love duet that culminates with a kiss highlighted by the orchestra; Marta leaves the stage and the visionary atmosphere dissolves thanks to lighting effects and is replaced by the light of an ordinary lightbulb. Ismael, one of the organizers of the strike forbidden by the government and for this reason wanted by police, enters from the back of the theatre. The man goes through the parterre, walks on stage and begins a long dialogue with Eloy. This scene represents a change of scenery and a thematic turn but also the falling of the fourth wall: the character makes his way through the audience to meet his interlocutor, eliminating the physical separation between actors and viewers. Therefore, the performance space turns into a global one and the stage, the backstage, the parterre, in fact every space of the theater becomes a space for performance.

Rodolfo and Apolinar, who want to mock Eloy, appear on stage, representing also at a structural level, as in the source text, the change of perspective with the passage from Eloy-DQ's endogenous madness to the exogenous one provoked by other characters that make fun of the protagonist. The dialogue between the two, the scornful tone and the exchange of lines remind us of the typical duet of the *opera buffa* genre of the eighteenth century. The dialogue also revives other sub-themes of the *opera buffa* genre: the attraction towards a young woman, often from the lower class (Marta is an employee of the theatre; Vicky is an actress), who becomes an object of interest for more mature men (here Eloy and Rodolfo), the prank orchestrated by the two characters at the expense of another gullible and naive figure (such as Eloy), and the love skirmish (between Rodolfo and Apolinar) to get a girl (Vicky). In the same way, Simón—counterfigure of Sancho—refers to the topos of

the servant in the *opera buffa* of the eighteenth century. Then, Teresina enters the stage and begins the second love duet with Rodolfo, highlighted by a "tonal y romántico" musical accompaniment (Buero 2004, stage direction between verses 692 and 693), which ends with the two characters singing in unison, as in the tradition of the Romantic opera. The reference to the eighteenth century *opera buffa* emerges again in the scene in which the two characters are about to enter Simón's dressing room when Pedro and Micky, who had withdrawn there, exit the stage thus prompting an exchange of lines full of sexual innuendo. The following scene reprises the episode of the Dukes' Palace in the novel *Don Quixote* and the episode of the horse Clavileño: Eloy announces the imminent arrival of the *visitantes* (aliens) and, from the parterre, two mysterious figures, introduced by voices "de raro timbre metálico" (with an unusual metallic sounding) (Buero 2004, stage direction between verses 911 and 912), move forward. Their entrance marks the end of the first part.

The second part resumes where it let off: the two figures claim that they have come from Jupiter in order to subjugate human beings and the other *visitantes* from Mars; they blindfold Eloy and Simón, trick them to believe that they are getting into a flying saucer and inform them that they are navigating in space. Simón understands the prank and finds out that the aliens are Rodolfo and Pedro. Then, Eloy expresses with bitterness the disappointment generated by the tragicomic clash between reality and madness, between prosaicism and idealism, which made him such an easy prey of mockery. Once more, the scene is highlighted by the music, which sounds "sorda y funeral," lacking emphasis in its "monótona simplicidad" (Buero 2004, stage direction between verses 211 and 212). After this scene, Eloy falls asleep and hears for the last time the aliens' voice.

The music suddenly acquires a quick, syncopated and nervous tonality: the police burst into the theatre looking for Ismael, who is hidden in Eloy's dressing room. A man wearing the fugitive's clothes appears on stage and the police run after him. The true Ismael comes forth but the policemen have already shot the stranger, who turns out to be Eloy in disguise. The defeat of DQ at the hands of the Caballero de la Blanca Luna on the Mediterranean shore is substituted here by a gunfight with the police force inside the theatre, this time with a fatal result. The music creates a descending effect and the viewers' gaze follows the imaginary fall of the body of the protagonist from the gallery where he had taken refuge to the ground, accompanied by the sound of kettledrums. The entrance of the police and the chase take place in the parterre, between the audience and the stage, and there is a new break

of the fourth wall and the consequent elimination of the physical barrier between actors and audience.

As the defeated DQ in Barcelona, Eloy has to face failure and reality. However, hope prevails this time: a desperate Ismael tells him "Tú te mueres... / Yo moriré también. Somos dos locos" but Eloy replies "No es todo inútil... Aunque no lo entiendas... / Los actos son semillas... que germinan... / Germinará tu acción... También la mía" (Buero 2004, verses 534-538). Then, he expires. The technicians of the theatre hide the body in a dressing room. At the same time, the barber's basin that Eloy believed he could use to communicate with aliens once again begins to emit the melody that can be heard when the character wears it. When this happens, the light illuminates it with increased intensity and Marta picks it up and takes it away while the object keeps emitting the melody. In the meantime, in the theatre everything is ready for the opera adaptation of *Don Quixote* and the music of the show blends with the melody issuing from the basin, which is now in the dressing room. This melody is made of "doce notas cristalinas" (twelve crystalline notes) that "componen una frase sonora" (make up a sonorous sentence) (Buero 2004, stage direction between verses 342 and 343). This is perhaps the only reference to the dodecaphonic music (often employed by Halffter) that, based in part on dissonance, offers a precious element to obtain the effects described by the playwright in the stage direction. Indeed, the stage directions play a key role and show the author's musical choices as well as noises of different kinds (gunshots, the thud of Eloy's corpse, explosions, the distorted voices of the *visitantes* and the metallic sounds emitted by the basin). These noises are produced by musical instruments and acoustic effects (such as the electronic distortion of sound) that support the action: music becomes noise in the attempt to represent the action and noises mix with music, especially in the last part of the opera.

The *pieza* also outlines the journey theme and the Mediterranean element, both of which were already present in the source text by comparing them to the chivalric literature that Cervantes parodied. Indeed, in *Mito* the journey-symbol is limited to the mono-space of the theatre, in which the entire story takes place, with the exception of Eloy-DQ's and Simón-Sancho's visionary journey into the cosmos. Barcelona and the Mediterranean are not even mentioned, but they come spontaneously to the audience's mind, who remember the decisive battle between DQ and the Caballero de la Blanca Luna when Eloy is fatally wounded, transforming the original outdoor in Cervantes's scene into an indoor setting in which everything happens inside the building. This micro-space represents the synthesis of DQ's real and il-

lusionary journeys. Here those journeys are all imaginary, the result of an extreme idealism and the expression of a thirst for justice and redemption instilled in the fictional dimension par excellence: the theatre, in which everything is real and fictional and everything can be dilated and synthesized.

Therefore, Buero presents a dazed protagonist who believes in aliens to undermine his reliability and mislead the viewers. However, as the plot develops, a different situation emerges: the society in which the characters of the *pieza* live, that is to say the extra-scenic dimension represented by the world outside the confines of the theatrical building, is a disquieting environment, dominated by a violent power. It is in this distressing setting, very different from the initial apparent joviality, where Eloy is situated: he is then another DQ, another idealist who stands opposed to the degraded reality, who hopes for a better society. As in *Don Quixote*, in *Mito* the chivalric cultural code is tragically superseded by a decaying world. Taking inspiration precisely from the Quixotic myth, the protagonist sides with ethics and justice, becoming himself an iconic symbol of a sadly outdated outlook.

IV. Josep Maria Benet i Jornet, *Història del virtuós cavaller Tirant lo Blanc*

In 1988 Benet stages *Història del virtuós cavaller Tirant lo Blanc*, published the following year (Benet i Jornet 1989b). Unlike Sales, Benet states in an introductory note to his adaptation that his intention is to summarize the plot of the source text and the development of the stories of the characters, especially the protagonists, in order to reaffirm the complex and global sense of the novel (Benet i Jornet 1989a). This adaptation implies a profound knowledge of the source text and a remarkable summarizing effort, which allows the author to recast the original incisively, overlooking secondary situations and figures and creating a dramatic progression that the novel obviously can't achieve, while remaining truthful to the original message. Benet offers a personal interpretation of *Tirant*. He understands the text as a story that is, at the same time, epic and mundane, tragic and festive (Capmany 1989, 7). This adaption is an example of Benet's passionate, meticulous and realistic theatre, which succeeds in bringing to the stage the clamor of battles and the essence of love in all its nuances (true love, sensuality and sexual pleasure, anguish, consuming jealousy and cruelty provoked by disappointment). The play is also able to capture the picturesque language of the novel thanks to the use of Valencian as a means of evoquing the origin of the source text while turning Tirant into a Catalan knight (Capmany 1989, 11), as Sales did, confirming the

iconic profile of the character as an identity symbol shared by all the Catalan-speaking territories.

The adaptation contains two parts. It disregards the first section of the source text including the story of Guillem de Vàroic and begins with the episode of Tirant participating in the tournament organized by King Henry of England, in which he defeats and kills his opponent and is knighted. It is an introduction without dialogue dominated by the encounter of the two knights. Only when the opponent goes down, the protagonist delivers the first line. The action, exclusively chivalric at first, includes later the love theme. The author shapes the adaptation and its characters giving preference to love topics. Indeed, the characters are animated by passion and desire in all the love scenes (between Tirant and Carmesina, Estefania and Diafebus, Hipòlit and the empress, Palerdemavida and Ricard d'Agramunt). These scenes are portrayed through subplots that express the emotional tension between giving / not-giving themselves, diffidence, jealousy and erotic fulfillment.

The journey, especially through the Mediterranean, is another theme that supports the narrative. At the end of the tournament, a letter arrives written by the emperor of Greece who asks for help against the Turks. In this way, the adaptation disregards the stories of Kirieleison de Muntalbà (since Chapter 53) and those related to the vicissitudes in Sicily and Rhodes (until Chapter 90). Tirant boards a ship and arrives to Tripoli, he frees the city that is being ransacked by the local enemies and departs towards Constantinople (since Chapter 95). Benet links the tournament in England with a synthetic presentation of the vicissitudes in Tripoli and then with the beginning of the story which constitutes the central plot in the play, that is to say the arrival in Constantinople, the encounter with Carmesina, the antagonism with the Duke of Macedonia and the dynamics among the other main court figures (since Chapter 95). The scenery moves then to the battlefield, where the protagonist defeats the Turks, causing the resentment of the Duke of Macedonia; Diafebus reports to the emperor the victory in the Castle of Malveí (since Chapters 128), whereto the Court is transferred. There follows the first love scene between Diafebus and Estefania as well as between Tirant and Carmesina. Then, the sea-setting moves again to centre stage. Ricard warns that a powerful fleet approaches to support the Turks and Tirant decides on a night naval combat: he adds more lanterns on the vessels and tricks the enemy into believing that they are facing a huge fleet, leading to his victory. This ruse, decisive for the victory, is also a reference to Catalan medieval history and, in particular, to a key event in the history of the Crown of Aragon and one of the most important historic figures of the *Quatre grans cròniques*,

Admiral Roger de Llúria. During the naval combat against the French fleet near the Formigues Islands in 1285, during the crusade against the Catalans, Roger de Llúria used this ploy and defeated the French fleet, as recounted by Desclot (§§ 158 e 166), Muntaner (§§ 129-137) and the Catalan version of *Gesta Comitum* (Orazi 2018a; Orazi 2018b). It is no coincidence that Benet makes use of the national historiography when the thetrical text alludes to mesmerizing epic battles in order to highlight the stature of the hero and his skills as an undefeated knight and warrior, as Sales had done years before when he utilized in his *opera buffa* a statement of the admiral himself which had acquired a legendary status about the power achieved by the Catalans in the Mediterranean basin.

As in the source text, the Viuda is secretly in love with Tirant and, as the action unfolds, she devises a series of plans to split up the protagonists, trying to undermine their incipient love with lies and intrigues: her deceptions and duplicity embody the negative aspects of love (envy, jealousy, cruelty, deceit) and they serve the purpose of complicating the plots that revolve around the love theme. Despite the obstacles that are interposed between the two main figures (among which figure their own hesitations and uncertainties), we arrive at Carmesina's bath scene, when Plaerdemavida hides Tirant in her room (since Chapter 231). The setting leads to a passionate scene in which the two lovers exchange pledges of love. Then, Tirant jumps into the void to escape the emperor, who has come attracted by the voices coming from his daughter's room. This scene marks the end of the first part.

The second part begins with the lamentations of the knight, who has been wounded after a fall. Then, we go from a sort of *vaudeville* scene to reflections about love related to the relationship between Estefania and Diafebus and their rushed wedding. In the meanwhile, Hipòlit courts the empress, who ends up giving herself to him (since Chapter 259), while the Viuda introduces once again the theme of jealousy and desperation (with an episode in which she makes Tirant believe that Carmesina has a relationship with Lauseta, Chapter 283). The indignant knight embarks and Plaerdemavida catches up with him to reveal him the deceit. However, due to bad weather, the vessel sinks and the two characters land separately on the African coast (chapter 296). The theme of the journey throughout the Mediterranean appears once again and in the following scenes (Escariano, Ricard d'Agramunt's and Plaerdemavida's return, the Albanès, etc., since Chapter 297) the protagonist is portrayed as a warrior that, according to the circumstances, takes into consideration the political meaning of his actions and not only the defense of chivalric ideals. After Tirant's return to a besieged Greece (since Chapter

408), and after a new journey through the Mediterranean, the plot moves back to the court with a love scene between the protagonist and Carmesina (Chapter 437). Then, things fall apart and, as in the source text, Tirant dies and Carmesina expires on his lifeless body.

The author adapts the use of metalepsis to his play by means of this extreme synthesis, aimed at reprising the complex and rich narrative structure of the source novel and focusing the attention of the audience on the stories of the main characters. He employs masterfully the stage space and lighting: the changes of scenery take place with open curtains and they can be seen by the audience; the stage is divided into two spaces with a second elevated scenery that allows to develop in a double way the chronological dimension and the unfolding of events. In this way, Benet creates two separated and complementary environments: separate spaces that recreate the different places in which the events unfold and that allow him to show at the same time parallel stories; and different times, so that the narration is put on hold in one of the two spaces while it goes on in the other. The effect is perfected by the skillful use of lighting and gestures, when the actors move in slow motion or employ the freeze, stopping their performance during the period of time in which their storyline is on hold, and then resuming from the moment they ceased to act. This space and time structure manages to convey the deep and complex macro-story that, even summarized, represents a technical challenge that the playwright solves in an efficient and suggestive way thanks to the construction of the stage, the skillful use of visual effects, the performing talent of the actors that adapt their movements to the rhythm and the pauses of the stage narration.

In his play, Benet offers a synthesis of the source novel. He also pays more importance to the love theme than to the still significant military motif. In addition, he splits the time and space on the stage thanks to effective technical expedients. In this way, he safeguards the cohesion of the plot development and the combination of the main and subsidiary motifs. Among the latter, the theme of the journey and the Mediterranean elements are paramount since they consitute the main frame for Benet's adaptation and contribute to maintain intact the message of the source novel, its expressive force and ability to intrigue the audience. The adaptation inherits and recreates this message in a personal and successful way.

V. Alfonso Sastre, *El viaje infinito de Sancho Panza*

In 1983-1984, Sastre writes *El viaje infinito de Sancho Panza*, published years later (Sastre 1991) and staged in 1992 at the Seville Universal Exposition, as

part of the series of Teatro Español Contemporáneo (Saz).[7] The playwright is no stranger to the adaptation of classics through the updating of myths and characters, while maintaining the strength of the source text and conferring to the renewed figures a 'fantastic' element, such as in *Tragedia fantástica de la gitana Celestina* (de Paco 2005, 46). Cervantes is one of his points of reference and he often pays homage to the Spanish classical author (de Paco 2005, 47). In this case, Sastre reprises the entire plot of *Don Quixote* and his characters but he reverses the point of view. Indeed, in the "Author's Note" that precedes the *pieza*, he states that he had constructed the characters by taking to the extreme the so-called Quixotry of Sancho, who gives his own interpretation of the novel, overturning the metaliterary mechanism present in the source text (Sastre 1991, 5-6). The perspective is thus somehow similar to Kafka's *Die Wahrheit über Sancho Pansa*, which Sastre quotes at the beginning of the play (1991, 5).[8] According to this perspective, it is Sancho who creates the character of DQ when he materializes his own obsessions through memory. As in Kafka's short story, the mad man is Sancho, a compulsive reader of *Don Quixote*: this is the 'fantastic' dimension already mentioned, which evokes an impossible world, the only one—according to the playwright— in which it is possible that the peasant Sancho follows his delusional master and believe him to such an extent that he convinces himself that he will become the governor of an island. At the end of the first part of the source novel, Cervantes makes the narrator say that the squire "le faltaba muy poco para tener la misma enfermedad de su amo" ("he was within very little of sharing his master's infirmity") (I, 46). Sastre focuses his adaptation precisely on this aspect: the visionary is Sancho who, despite his pragmatism and common sense, gets ensnared by DQ's madness. Therefore, the play fits within the genre of *tragedia compleja* (complex tragedy), typical of Sastre, which shows the awareness of the decay of the individual, expressed through ironic, playful and even comic traits, using the figure of the *héroe irrisorio* (ridiculous hero) and emphasizing the degradation of humankind.

The *pieza* comprises two parts, as does the source text, and it is articulated in twenty-three tableaux, which confers a certain independence to the episodes. The audience recognizes Sancho's Quixotry, based on the source text, but nothing appears to be as expected: "Reconociéndose en todo mo-

7 Commissioned by Paolo Stoppa, Orazio Costa and Olimpio Musso; the Italian edition (Sastre 1987) offers a bilingual text as well as an account of the genesis of the play.

8 Short story written in 1917 and published posthumously in 1931, in which the author switches the roles of DQ and Sancho.

mento el texto cervantino [...] estamos ante otro DQ y otro Sancho Panza," "los mismos y, sin embargo, otros." Sastre argues that "la calidad de nuestro experimento" lies in this, because "en ningún modo se ha tratado de hacer una escenificación de un texto narrativo" (Sastre 1991, 6). For instance, that is the case in the presentation of Sancho's interpretation of *Don Quixote*, who "sacó de sus casillas Alonso Quijano" (Sastre 1991, tableau IX, 74, 76, 85), as does the playwright, who creates a complex metaliterary play that keeps a balance between appearance and verisimilitude in a way that is not inferior to the source text. This double interpretive possibility is presented since the opening of the play with the figure of Doctor Pedro Recio, a figure shared by the play and the source text (II, 45-53).[9] The dialectical mechanism between the realist and visionary options is triggered by a series of shared dreams in which the two characters relive the adventures of Cervantes's *hidalgo*: what seems a dream corresponds to the reality relegated to the subconscious and that reality is nothing more than an oneiric projection. The meta-reality of *Don Quixote* thus becomes an existential meta-reality and offers an opportunity to reflect on the essence of what is considered real or imaginary. In this way, the audience is led to reflect about the relationship between madness and reason, illusion and truth as well as on the essence of truth itself thanks to the effect of a distancing separation generated by the clash between the elements derived from the novel and the overturning of this same elements in the adaptation, conveyed even more effectively by the strategic use of anachronism.

As with *Mito*, the play begins with DQ's death scene and Sancho addresses to his master the same words utilized in the source text. The lights are switched off and, when they are back on again, four actors take away the *hidalgo*'s body walking through the parterre. As in Buero's play, the fourth wall is broken, the border between stage and audience is eliminated and the two spaces blend in one common dimension. Sancho, who is overwhelmed by grief, tries to hang himself but the rope snaps. Then he is forced to wear a straitjacket and becomes one of the *héroes irrisorios* (ridiculous heroes) of Sastre's *tragedias complejas*. As the audience will later find out, the plot follows a circular structure: DQ's death, Sancho's unsuccessful suicide attempt, and his confinement to a mental institution constitute the narrative framework and evoke an ambivalent situation that oscillates between lucidity and madness. (de Paco, 2005, 48). Sancho's narration develops in this ambivalent

9 Recio appears in the tableaux I-II, XXIII (that is to say, the framework that includes Sancho's account of the adventures of the couple), and XVI (with the episode of the Dukes and the horse Clavileño).

situation and the account ends in the same place where it had started—the mental hospital— and wherefrom no character ever leaves.

The lights are switched off again and, once they are back on, Sancho is in the Ciudad Real's mental hospital. He talks to Doctor Pedro Recio and introduces the perspective of the overturning of the myth (Sastre, 1991, 21; de Paco, 2005, 49). At the same time, the complex metaliterary narrative of the *pieza* begins to be delineated: Sancho states that the novel recounts in a not entirely truthful way DQ's adventures—who now is an ordinary citizen of Valdepañas— due to Cide Hamete Benengeli's inaccuracy. The doctor corrects him, stating that it recounts the "viaje fantástico" or "viaje paranoico al infinito o algo así" (Sastre, 1991, 19) of the alleged *hidalgo*. Therefore, the doctor introduces another key element: the journey theme, that is now described as "endless" and unreal, as the title states and as he himself reiterates; it is thus another chimera which in this case refers to Sancho's account of a distorted reality imagined by him, who has lost his mind.

From this moment on, the stage actions follow the protagonist's narration, who reports the adventures that he lived with DQ: he helps Alonso Quijano remember his feats, after an oneiric vision in which the protagonist of the novel appears and asks him to wake up his neighbour Alonso Quijano from an enchantment he is suffering and because of which he has forgotten his own identity as a knight-errant. Sancho ends up "por tomar lo fantástico por real y viceversa" (Sastre, 1991, 29; de Paco, 2005: 49) and at this point the roles are switched: the squire becomes the learned character that raises perplexity both in the doctor and Alonso Quijano, who in turn uses a vulgar linguistic register; influenced by the profile of the original Sancho, the doctor urges the new Sancho to behave and speak according to his social status, that of a *villano*, highlighting the anomaly of the new character.

The following scenes represent the preparation for the first sally (tableau IV), the episode of DQ's dubbing as knight (tableau V) and the battle against the giants (that is to say, the windmills that Sancho now sees as monstrous creatures). The adventure with the galley slaves (I, 22) is profoundly reinterpreted (tableau VI) and it offers a suggestive example of the kind of strategy carried out by the author with the use of anachronisms: the prisoners are accompanied by a police commissioner and two officers who wear a uniform that is "muy parecido al de un guardia civil, con su tricornio y su color verde" (Sastre, 1991, 53). Then, DQ interrogates the galley slaves: one of them claimes that he was tortured (Sastre 1991, 56-57) and another one uses the Basque language to invoke the general amnesty (Sastre 57-58). However, this has a humorous effect since DQ does not understand his interlocutors

and Sancho has to intervene to explain him what they are saying. Among the prisoners there is also Ginés de Pasamonte, who talks using an unintelligible mob jargon, increasing the comic effect and reminding us of the playwright's interest in this type of speech (Sastre 1980). The two then bump into the disciplinants (tableau VII), whom DQ sees realistically as people in a religious procession while Sancho believes to be seeing a female prisoner (a statue of the Virgin that is supposed to propitiate the rain). The scene offers the chance to introduce another anachronism, which is also a wink to the audience: the reference to the *pertinaz sequía* (persistent dought) (Sastre 1991, 67), an expression used by the dictator Francisco Franco when he inaugurated dams and therefore frequently quoted by the newscasts and documentaries that preceded the showing of the main film in movie theatres during the regime. Then, the episodes of Sierra Morena (tableaux VIII-IX), the attack against the flock of sheep mistaken for an army (tableau X), and the Inn of Maritornes (tableau XI) follow until the curate and the barber bring DQ back home (tableau XII). This marks the end of the first part of the *pieza*.

The second part begins with the second journey or sally of the protagonists (tableau XIII), when Sancho exclaims: "¡Pues vamos! Aunque sea a ninguna parte, mi señor don Quijote. También puede ser a un sitio muy raro que suelen llamar el infinito" (Sastre 1991, 94). This statement is clarified by a stage direction, according to which the journey, the destiny of the two protagonists, is the end or finale that awaits all, that is to say death (Sastre 1991, 95). The text continues with the adventure of the lions (tableau XIV), the Cave of Montesinos (tableau XV), Clavileño, the Dukes and Doctor Pedro Recio (tableau XVI), and the Island of Barataria (tableau XVII). Then, the plot moves to Barcelona (tableau XIX) with the episode of the enchanted head (tableau XVIII): the protagonists arrive at the shore, "el Mediterráneo resplandece como fondo de la escena" (Sastre 1991, 137), and the place is described as "una sucursal del Paraíso" (Sastre, 1991, 137); the Caballero de la Blanca Luna appears and the sea becomes the setting of what Sastre defines as "irrisoria tragedia" (mocking or ridiculous tragedy) (Sastre, 1991, 139) with DQ's defeat; he is set on foot "de manera irrisoria" and brought "a la aldea" (tableau XX-XXI), where he dies (tableau XXII, with a textual quote from the source text; Sastre 1991, 100). However, while at the end of *Don Quixote* Alonso Quijano comes back to his senses and recuperates his own identity, the play preserves the ambiguity between objective and imaginary reality, alternating different planes of perception: "Yo era don Alonso Quijano el Bueno, y yo era también, sin saberlo, hasta que el gran Sancho me lo descubrió, don Quijote de la Mancha; y él es un labrador, y también un famoso

escudero de las caballerías" (Sastre 1991, 148). This confers the same weight to the two dimensions— real and imaginary. At this point, the play comes back to the mental hospital (tableau XXIII): after ending his account of past adventures, Sancho announces his own death and takes his leave using some words from the Prologue of *Trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda*: "¡Adiós gracias, adiós donaires, adiós regocijados amigos; que yo me voy muriendo y deseando veros presto contentos en la otra vida!" ("Goodbye, humor, goodbye, wit; goodbye, merry friends, for I am dying and I long to see you all soon in the other life") (Sastre, 1991, 151).

In conclusion, Sastre offers an ambiguous story which fits into the 'fantastic' genre, thanks also to the circular structure of the play: the *viaje infinito* (infinite journey) of the protagonist ends with his and Alonso Quijano's death— two figures that are the result on the playright's original interpretation of the Cervantine myth. The two figures represent also in the epilogue the superimposition between author and character and the metaliterary play between creative function and created fictional entity. Moreover, the play presents the moment of DQ's defeat at the Barcelona beach, a Mediterranean shore that once again is the indispensable setting for the demise of the character and the end of his chivalric aspirations.

VI. Conclusions

Sales and Buero adapt the source text into an opera through a transgenre (from the novel to the theater) and transmedia (from literature to opera) perspective, using opposing approaches (comic opera and serious opera). In both adaptations, music plays a crucial role, thanks to the encounter with a new artistic dimension that implies a particular attention to language, expressiveness and rhythm, in a great part because of the characteristics of the libretto of the two operas, intended for singing and not for acting. Both authors select some episodes from the source texts and they elaborate them to emphasize and personalize the most salient elements of the message, be it through a metatheatrical adaptation (Buero) or through a comic-humorous perspective and the construction of a happy end (Sales). As far as Sastre is concerned, the overturning of the source text becomes total. Employing a metanarrative structure, the author presents Sancho's point of view, making him the new protagonist of the story, which Sastre represents in its entirety, as does Benet with *Tirant*, offering an extraordinary synthesis. In these two texts, the new perspective through which the adventures of the knight-errant are told (Sastre) and the experimental structure of the space-temporal element (Benet) constitute the elements that reinforce the internal cohesion

of the two adaptations. These elements also provide a sense of unity for the extreme syntheses of themes, episodes and numerous figures that populate them. In the four adaptations, all this is achieved through explicit or allusive references to the journey theme and to the wanderings and adventures of the protagonists: the Mediterranean is confirmed as the ideal macro-space, an essential setting for the two masterpieces, *Quijote* and *Tirant*; in turn, this is reflected in the four contemporary adaptations that confirm the central role of the Mediterranean, reinterpreted in each text in a peculiar way.

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