

From Making of to “Generic Oddity”: The Case of *Lost in La Mancha* (Keith Fulton and Louis Pepe, 2002)

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“It’s a sad, sad world” (51:41): this off-camera comment fits to a nicety the “case” of Fulton and Pepe’s *Lost in La Mancha*, but only ironically so. Their film is – or was supposed to be – a documentary (what we now call a making of) shot about and around Terry Gilliam’s long-expected adaptation of Miguel Cervantes’s *Don Quixote*, but when the film was eventually abandoned both directors turned it into something quite different, the record of what critics would call the *unmaking* of Terry Gilliam.¹ The result was not that sad since it led to the production of a very unexpected kind of film, telling how the adaptation whose production it was supposed to document turned out not to be made. This “unmaking” of both Gilliam and the film lends a very particular, autonomous status to *Lost in La Mancha*, which it could never have claimed as a mere making of. It stands at the threshold of two cinematic genres, being both a potential *making of* relating the production of the film (until we realize the film is not going to be made eventually) and a *documentary* about the failure to make it – hence it occupies an uneasy position at the crossroads, which is itself thematised in its narrative construction. My aim here is to research the way the film deals with this status and manages to maintain an ambiguous attitude both towards its topic (whether or not Gilliam’s film will be completed) and towards its very nature (partly realistic documentary, partly metafictional comment on the way a film is – not – shot and produced). By this study I mean to show how Fulton and Pepe’s film plays out our beliefs as to how a postmodern film (necessarily) stages its own reflexive nature (as cinema *on* cinema) and also how this belief is manipulated so as to point to the limits of our “knowledgeable” approach of postmodernism. This study of the surprisingly reflexive quality of the documentary will be organized

¹ David Sterritt and Mikita Brottman, “*Lost in La Mancha: The Making, Unmaking, and Remaking of Terry Gilliam*,” in *Terry Gilliam Interviews*, edited by David Sterritt and Lucille Rhodes, Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 2004, 208-19.

around three points: the way it mixes reality with fiction; the way it adopts a self-conscious mode of representation; and the way it repeatedly introduces shows within the show to embody this reflexive discourse. In all these cases, the documentary stands at the intersection between a mere realistic record and an aesthetic reconstruction.

Reality and Fiction

Before tackling the core topic of the treatment of the in-between status of the film, a few words ought to be said about the story it relates – the story of the failure to shoot a film.² When director Terry Gilliam decided to shoot an adaptation of Cervantes's *Don Quixote*, co-starring Johnny Depp and entitled *The Man Who Killed Don Quixote*, he had intended to suggest a very personal view of the source work. For instance, the character of Sancho Panza was supposed to be replaced by Toby Grisoni, a twenty-first century marketing executive thrown back through time, whom Quixote mistakes for Panza. Filming first began in 2000 but was blighted by an eerie sequence of accidents. Military flyovers drowned out the dialogue, flash floods washed away the set, and then one of the film's stars, French actor Jean Rochefort, was taken ill, having to be airlifted to hospital after suffering a hernia. Insurers decided to stop the shooting, making it one of the costliest cinematic projects of all time never to reach completion. Clearly, the status of the film changes when it becomes obvious that Gilliam's project is about to fail. A crucial question remains – does it really fail or is it not somehow transferred onto the documentary? What I mean is that as we gradually come to understand that the project is not going to be made, the film consistently comes to equate the image of Gilliam fighting the "windmills of reality" (a phrase he will coin himself at the end of *Lost in La Mancha*) with his subject matter, Don Quixote himself. This analogy is not simply suggested, it becomes a literal message from the film, conveyed for instance when the production designer Benjamin Fernandez explicitly compares Gilliam to Cervantes's hero, on the ground that he is too idealistic (17:23). Thus, there *seems* to be a constant intrusion of fiction upon reality, as if the role of the missing Don Quixote (Rochefort being taken ill) was performed by Gilliam himself. Beyond this explicit comparison, I wish to show more specifically how the film visually includes this dimension, which is unanimously acknowledged in the critical debate on the film.³ In the scene which follows the episode where Gilliam understands that there is something wrong with Rochefort, we see his gradual disappointment and anger at the situation as he knocks into stones; then we have a shot of Johnny Depp dressed as Sancho Panza/Toby Grisoni looking at Gilliam's attitude, and seemingly sharing in, sympathizing with his discouragement. This scene clearly points to the equation between Don Quixote and Terry Gilliam, as Depp seems to pity him as a thwarted director – just as Sancho Panza pities Don Quixote as a thwarted idealist.

The fact that Depp is shot in his costume further blurs the limits between fiction and reality: the actor feels sorry for the director but so does the character for the hero of the tale. We should note this scene is present but reversed when Gilliam screens the footage from the film where Sancho is pulling his horse ahead, and obviously suffering – there he sympathizes with him as another figure of Don

² *Lost in La Mancha*. Directed by Keith Fulton and Louis Pepe. With Terry Gilliam, Johnny Depp, Jean Rochefort, Philip A. Paterson, Nicola Pecorini, Tony Grisoni. Production Design: Benjamin Fernandez. Editing: Jacob Bricca. Production: Quixote Films, Low Key Productions, Eastcrot Production, 2002. DVD. Haut et Court 2003.

³ Brigitte Adriaensen, "Getting Lost in La Mancha: The Unma(s)king of Gilliam's *The Man Who Killed Don Quixote*," *International Don Quixote (Studies in Comparative Literature)*, 2009: 251-70 (see page 263); Sidney Donnell, "Quixotic Storytelling, *Lost in La Mancha*, and the Unmaking of *The Man Who Killed Don Quixote*," *Romance Quarterly*, 53, No. 2 (2006): 92–112: 103.

Quixote sorry to witness what he has imposed upon his companion (1:20:47).

The film then stages a blurring of fiction and reality, which works as a compensatory movement. As *Don Quixote* cannot be adapted into *The Man Who Killed Don Quixote*, then it seems the elements of fiction which were to be present in the projected film have found a safe harbour in the documentary. Fiction has migrated into the once realistic making of. Yet it should be noticed how the fictional elements that are integrated into *Lost in La Mancha* do not stem only from Cervantes but also from Gilliam's past *œuvre*. Chief among these are the cartoon-like episodes which are taken up from his Monty Python period and which are present in *Lost in La Mancha* through two main devices. First, the animated sequences which pop up in the film from time to time refer to this period; they appear either when Gustave Doré's illustrations of *Don Quixote* are used to comment on the scenes about to be shot by Gilliam, to explain the context of these scenes in the novel *or* when the past career of Gilliam is alluded to. According to Donnell, this may have a soothing effect on the spectator: "The Gilliamesque animation offers viewers comic relief from what is otherwise a realist documentary that dissects the misery of failure."⁴ This significantly realigns Gilliam on the fictional level since his past is dealt with formally in the same way as the story of *Don Quixote* is reminded to the viewers – as if Gilliam was a fictional character like Don Quixote in fact. More significantly still, the whole of the film is punctuated by episodes which I would define as contaminated by a cartoon aesthetics, when for instance assistant director Phil Paterson mimics masturbation to express his utter helplessness in front of the situation which is getting out of control – or when he slaps his own face (58:58) or again, when Gilliam looks so flabbergasted by circumstances that he adopts a very cartoon-like pose. This is again an invasion of reality by fiction: as if the Monty Python aesthetics had become a normal standard of representation, as if people behaved in reality as in cartoons.

The topic of fiction and reality is helpful to present the in-between status of *Lost in La Mancha*, which is both a fiction on Gilliam as a Quixotic figure *and* a realistic account of his attempt at adapting Cervantes. But we should not forget that this topic is not necessarily where the two directors are most reliable, since their presentation of Gilliam as Quixotic is also a biased presentation, as critics recognized and as the film itself suggests; at one point (1:25:21), co-writer Tony Grisoni even says: "No director is gonna start a picture saying, 'We may never get through this.'" Yet, the extent to which Pepe and Fulton distort reality to fit a predetermined Quixotic vision of Gilliam is also in itself a thorny issue. Donnell for instance thinks the initial scene shows Gilliam as a helpless director lost in his creation,⁵ whereas Adriaensen, following La Brétèque's contextual explanations,⁶ identifies this *incipit* to a scene of open-air theatre that relates the film to a Spanish background.⁷ However we may choose to read the invasion of fiction in the film – as a total or partial distortion of reality by the filmic discourse – the topic of this blurring of the limits between fiction and reality puts to the forefront, in a reflexive way, the filmic discourse as a discourse on the manipulation of images and by images.

A Reflexive Discourse

⁴ Ibid, 104.

⁵ Ibid, 105.

⁶ François de La Brétèque, « *Lost in la Mancha* d'Orson Welles à Terry Gilliam: Se perdre dans la Manche pour retrouver le cinéma, » *Cahiers de la Cinémathèque*, 77 (2005): 33-41.

⁷ Adriaensen, "Getting Lost in La Mancha," 258.

The specific narrative discourse held by the film is defined as “Quixotic” by Donnell;⁸ this refers to the polyphonic, multiple narration it evinces and which results in an indeterminacy of meaning which according to Donnell, conveys and “adapts” Cervantes’s narrative mode. To some extent, the film is metafictional, it deals not with film in general, but with cinema as an “addiction” and an escape from reality into fantasy. But it is not metafictional if we apply the term strictly, i.e., as a work of art dealing with its *own* construction, as Robert Stam suggests⁹ – here, *Lost in La Mancha* exposes the making of another film, *The Man Who Killed Don Quixote*, but it does not do so for itself, for the documentary we are watching:

Just as the *Quixote* is a novel on the making of a novel, as is clear from the Prologue of Part I, *Lost in La Mancha* is a documentary on the creative process of cinema itself. Or at least, it is so up to a certain point: because if it is clear that the hidden mechanisms of directing a movie, of the secrets of fiction and fantasy in Gilliam’s cinematography are laid bare, it is also clear that we not have to do [*sic*] with an auto-referential work on the making of *documentaries*.¹⁰

This critical debate on the truly or partly valid assertion of the film’s reflexivity reveals to us another way in which *Lost in La Mancha* holds a middle ground between two positions: not only does it stand at the crossroads between reality and fiction, witnessing how fiction (Gilliam as Don Quixote) intrudes upon reality (the story of Don Quixote becoming the story of *Lost in La Mancha*, a story of failure), but it also only partly assumes a reflexive status and seems to be focused only on the object of the film – *The Man Who Killed Don Quixote* – and not on the *subject* proper, i.e., *Lost in La Mancha* as a metafictional discourse in the making. In short, what discourse does *Lost in La Mancha* hold on its own nature as a documentary, if it does hold a discourse on it? My aim will be here to gainsay – to some extent – the contention that *Lost in La Mancha* is less reflexive than metafictional – i.e., that it deals more with *The Man Who Killed Don Quixote* than with itself, *Lost in La Mancha*. Thus, I hope to show that *Lost in La Mancha* once again crosses the frontier between documentary and fiction on another heading, i.e., it assumes the reflexive quality which is usually attributed to fiction only and not to realistically grounded documentaries.

The first point I wish to make on this topic has to do with the style of *mise en scène* adopted by Pepe and Fulton. Unlike what is expected from a documentary, the film does not try to erase the signs of its enunciation, namely the way it reformulates a story through a specific filmic discourse which cannot and does not purport to be “objective” or transparent. If we take the scene where Rochefort is suffering so much that he can hardly ride his horse (1:01:54), it becomes clear that the staging of the several clapperboards being wielded, interrupting the scene and indicating each cut that was practiced during the shooting of the scene, points to an objectification of the hindrance to Gilliam’s project *but* also to a specific desire from the documentary’s directors to emphasize this hindrance. It would have been so much easier and more usual in a mainstream approach to do without these cuts.

At no time do the directors try to downplay their direct interference with the enunciation of the film because they want this enunciation to appear. Similarly, the editing of some scenes points to this self-consciousness of style in the film. In a particular scene (1:12:27), a secretary is answering the phone

⁸ Donnell, « Quixotic Storytelling, » 98.

⁹ Robert Stam, *Reflexivity in Film and Literature. From Don Quixote to Jean-Luc Godard*, New York: Columbia UP, 1992.

¹⁰ Adriaensen, “Getting Lost in La Mancha,” 266.

and keeps repeating that they “don’t know” the date when the shooting will be taken up. This staging of failure as repeated is hardly innocent and passes for what it is: an emphasis laid by the filmic discourse on what the directors deem a crucial expression of Gilliam’s “fight against the windmills of reality,” to take up a phrase appearing later in the film. Lastly – but examples abound – the fast forward effect visible when tourists are playing around and being photographed on Don Quixote’s statue at the end of the film (1:23:31), right under, it seems, Gilliam’s apartment, has a definite aim: by this shot the film seems to mock the standstill to which Gilliam’s project has come. But the main point to be made in my perspective is the following: *Lost in La Mancha* does hold a reflexive discourse on its own nature and construction by making such explicit statements as to its style and by forsaking so obviously the realistic, “objective” prerequisite to the documentary aesthetics. As such, it cannot but be associated to metafiction as defined by Patricia Waugh as an exposure of the artificial, constructed nature of fiction, as a “laying bare [of] the device.”¹¹

Between fiction and reality, then, *Lost in La Mancha* is also stylistically trespassing the border between objective documentary and reflexive artefact. I wish to make two other developments that will help explain how the film does situate itself in a middle ground stylistically speaking – and most importantly how that situation can be considered to be a sign that it shares essential concerns with the postmodern approach concerning the blurring of frontiers between reality and fiction. First, it must be noted that apart from its style, the film can be considered from a higher vantage point to be an oddity in terms of its very nature and status, beyond the ambiguity between documentary and fiction which we already noticed. The oddity results from the fact that the voice over comment never actually reveals the fact that the film was eventually abandoned until the last scenes, more precisely until assistant director Phil Paterson says he quits (1:20:25). Donnell even claims that the spectator is bound to enjoy the film more fully if he or she is ignorant of the fact that the film was eventually abandoned.¹² It is clear that the suspense-driven “plot” does work a lot better if the spectator does not know the ultimate fate of Gilliam’s plan *but* the consistent ambiguity which is maintained in *Lost in La Mancha* throughout as to the completion or not of Gilliam’s plan is an ambiguity which is to be felt by the spectator whether or not he or she knows (by reading the DVD cover, the film’s reviews, etc.) that it tells the story of a failed attempt at adapting *Don Quixote*. Of course, this film will be made later, and released in 2018 under the initial title *The Man Who Killed Don Quixote*, but this was not part of the reception context of Fulton and Pepe’s film in 2002. The point is that *Lost in La Mancha* as an *œuvre* presents itself (nearly until the end) as a *comment* on a film (*The Man Who Killed Don Quixote*) which never came into existence. In other words, as Adriaensen remarks,¹³ the comment has taken precedence over the original work – a phenomenon which is typical of post-modern aesthetics. Postmodernism does provide indeed many similar examples, if one thinks for instance of Jorge Luis Borges’s “fake summaries” of works which never existed. It is part and parcel of a general movement of disempowerment of authorial voices and anxiety over the authority of narratives which is, again, a crucial element in the definition of postmodernism.

My point here is again to show how *Lost in La Mancha* manages to maintain an in-between status between original discourse and comment: as a documentary on *The Man Who Killed Don Quixote*, it still appears as a comment, but when we learn that *The Man Who Killed Don Quixote* was never shot (during this attempt at least), *Lost in La Mancha* becomes the only original discourse left to us about a now “lost” film. Similarly, the last sequence which appears after the credits is typical of this in-

¹¹ Patricia Waugh, *Metafiction. The theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction*, London: Routledge, 1984, 65.

¹² Donnell, “Quixotic Storytelling,” 102.

¹³ Adriaensen, “Getting Lost in La Mancha,” 267.

betweenness of the film's status. Two things ought to be noticed here. First, the use of a real credit sequence presented in a traditional way further reasserts the blurring of a frontier between reality and fiction, as if the "characters" in *Lost in La Mancha* had really been performing a part – as if Gilliam was "playing" Gilliam and ought to be credited for it in the sequence. We saw indeed the large fictional part we can attribute to Gilliam as a "character," i.e., as Don Quixote. Secondly, the giants' sequence following the end credits calls for interpretation because it is very complex. It consists of a return to a scene previously shot by Gilliam and staging the attack of Don Quixote by imaginary giants. Considered as an autonomous sequence coming *after* the film, it can be seen as the promise that the film is still not finished, i.e., that the project will be taken up and that Gilliam will work at it again very soon. Thus, it further ambiguates the status of *Lost in La Mancha* as:

1. a film that falsely presents itself as a making of dealing with *The Man Who Killed Don Quixote*,
2. a film that eventually reveals that *The Man Who Killed Don Quixote* was abandoned and constitutes itself as a reflexive comment on the failure and a study in cinema,
3. a possible "prequel" to the actual release of the film – "Coming soon" – which is said not to be abandoned by Gilliam.

Given the variety of the definitions *Lost in La Mancha* is playing with, as parts of a self-conscious exposure of its various readings, I fail to see how one could deny the reflexivity of *Lost in La Mancha* – and more importantly, this reflexivity clearly appears as the result of a particular, oriented *mise en scène* that re-attributes the (repetitive) giants' sequence at the end a new meaning through the specific location it is given in the script.

The Show Within the Show

The film's reflexivity then revolves around the way *Lost in La Mancha* constantly questions and redefines its own status regarding its topic – the making and unmaking of *The Man Who Killed Don Quixote*. This feature assumes a form which I wish to examine as a last part of this analysis, i.e., the presence of a *mise en abyme*, or the staging of a show within the show.

This is a recurring feature throughout *Lost in La Mancha*, in the sense that while we are supposed (at first) to watch a documentary record of a film production, this record repeatedly involves scenes in which the actors and the crew members become in their turn spectators to another show embedded within the first-level narrative. In short, we are watching a film in which "characters" (this term refers to real-life actors but also to Gilliam himself, e.g., as he is dealt with as a Quixotic character) are presented within other shows. A typical example takes place when the investors come to visit the set and – as things are not improving – we feel a growing tension among the crew as to how they will judge the advancement of the project. This culminates in the sequence where Depp (as Toby Grisoni) is supposed to be pushed by a very reluctant horse, which makes Gilliam angry in front of the investors (1:07:55). Here, we have two levels again: the investors witness the difficulties encountered by Gilliam and his crew, *and* we witness the tension that results from the situation. The first-level narrative – the story of the film being shot, including the investors' visit – meets with a second-level narrative – the scene itself with Toby Grisoni. True to say, this kind of embedding of narratives recurs each time, for instance,

Gilliam screens unedited footage from the film: we often see him watching parts of the film. But more generally *Lost in La Mancha* tends to develop this kind of *mise en abyme* by stressing situations in which crew members witness other kinds of “shows,” not only sequences from *The Man Who Killed Don Quixote*.

A case in point lies in the sequence where a conference is organised among the crew, with producers explaining how they intend to cope with the present difficulties they encounter. This sequence is duplicating the spectators' situation by attributing a relatively passive watching position to the crew themselves. Similarly, the scene of Depp's long-expected arrival on the set is the occasion for the same kind of development (38:40). In this sequence, Depp suggests his own contribution to the script by proposing that his character, when he is transplanted to seventeenth-century Spain, cries out “Cut” as if he believed he were in a fictional world, on a shooting set. A number of readings have to be made about this scene. First, it shows Gilliam is losing control of the metafictional dimension of his film, as Adriaensen suggests:

[...] Johnny Depp himself suggests that his character should shout “cut” when he is attacked by Don Quixote and his guards. It is not really surprising that this suggestion does not come from Gilliam himself: even if he seems quite enthusiastic about Depp's idea, this kind of metafictional interruptions in his fantastic story does not seem to have been meant to occupy a prominent place in *The Man Who Killed Don Quixote*.¹⁴

Depp suggests the change because he is becoming more aware of this dimension, contrary to Gilliam who is slowly being integrated within the film not as a “master narrator” but as a quixotic character. Secondly, this scene again makes Gilliam and Paterson spectators to the show Depp as *the* star is treating them to. Thirdly, the constraint felt in this scene between Gilliam and Paterson – their hinging on Depp as a major star whose contribution to the film will largely determine its success – further reasserts the fragility of their enterprise and bears an ill omen towards its fulfilment. They cannot but agree with Depp's suggestion because cinema – and *The Man Who Killed Don Quixote* in particular – hinges on a fragile combination of circumstances, money, and artistic drive, a combination of which the star system is an essential element. Once again, the show within the show formulates a reflexive statement on the nature of cinema.

But how is this statement a feature of *Lost in La Mancha* as a reflexive work bearing not on another film but on its own status? In other words, is Adriaensen right when she claims that *Lost in La Mancha* is not truly metafictional because it examines cinema in general and does not question its own status? I think the critic herself has answered the question by noticing that the voice over in *Lost in La Mancha* is narrated by Jeff Bridges, the actor who performed in Gilliam's *Fisher King* (265). By using Bridges in this part, Pepe and Fulton implement an underlying development of *mise en abyme*, or show within the show, i.e., the trespassing from one narrative level over another one, whereas logically (or in a more mainstream approach), both should have been kept separate. Using Bridges suggests that the actor from *Fisher King* has become real, has shifted levels from fiction to reality, just as Don Quixote keeps invading reality and “contaminates” Gilliam. This feature also often appears when the shot sequences from *The Man Who Killed Don Quixote* are inserted within *Lost in La Mancha* without the usual changes in lighting and image quality – as if the two levels had fused. This overlapping of narrative

¹⁴ Adriaensen, “Getting Lost in La Mancha,” 258–259.

levels – in technical terms a metalepsis, according to French theoretician Gérard Genette¹⁵ – again inscribes *Lost in La Mancha* within a discourse that tends to deny narrative barriers, just as the duplication of the spectators' position in the various instances of *mise en abyme* opens the path for precisely this kind of confusion. This is maybe the best way of showing what *Lost in La Mancha* makes of its topic in terms of questioning our spectators' position not only towards Gilliam's project, but also towards itself.

Terry Gilliam did make the film eventually. It was released in 2018 under the projected title and bears many similarities to the script that he was trying to shoot in the 2000s.¹⁶ Similarly, a sequel was given by Keith Fulton and Louis Pepe in 2019 to *Lost in La Mancha*, through another documentary following the production of *The Man Who Killed Don Quixote*, and entitled *He Dreams of Giants*.¹⁷ Therefore, the story was not really over after all, once the relation of the doomed project had been made in 2002. What testifies to the continuous interest in metafictional content in the "finished product" confirms Gilliam's intent to deal in that film with our sometimes fruitful, sometimes harmful, relationship to fiction in general and to cinema in particular. Thus, whereas Toby Grisoni/Sancho Panza in the 2002 attempt was supposed to be a marketing executive thrown back in seventeenth-century Spain, he is now (in 2018) a film director finding by chance a copy of his first student project film and meeting the former "star" of this project who now lives in the delusion that he *is* Don Quixote. The whole plot again revolves around the difficulty of combining the appeal of fiction and the hard reality of corruption and immorality, just as in the initial project. But the central change in the status of the main character Toby (Adam Driver) takes the metafictional dimension still further, since it becomes crystal clear that Gilliam is dealing not only with the status of fiction but with the role of cinema in reality. Such a move resonates significantly with *Lost in La Mancha*, as a work which questioned the interaction between documentary reality and fictional reconstruction. Yet the sequel to the documentary has been harshly judged by some critics like Caryn James, precisely due to the excessive stress on that question of the link between the real-life director and the idealism of Don Quixote:

Some clips from *Lost in La Mancha* efficiently fill in the background, including a scene of Gilliam wondering if it might be better to let the dream of his project stand unrealized. "I've done the film too often in my head," he says. "Is it better just to leave it there?" In the contemporary interviews, he looks at how his attitude toward the character of Quixote has changed, so that now he seems, "an older man with one last chance to make the world as interesting as he dreams it to be." Gilliam looks at himself directing today and says, "You realize you're not who you used to be," that is, a young man "talented, energetic, fast on his feet." That guy, he says. "is long dead."

These are trenchant, self-questioning moments that any artist likely experiences, but the film refuses to explore that theme deeply. While the title *He Dreams of Giants* heavily-handedly compares Gilliam to Quixote, Fulton and Pepe rarely go beyond that unoriginal observation. Instead, we're given a broad look at Gilliam's career woven into the

¹⁵ Gérard Genette, *Métalepses*, Paris: Seuil, 2004.

¹⁶ *The Man Who Killed Don Quixote*. Directed by Terry Gilliam. With Adam Driver (Toby), Jonathan Price (Don Quixote), Joana Ribeiro (Angelica), Stellan Skarsgård (the Boss), Olga Kurylenko (Jacqui). Production Design: Benjamin Fernandez. Cinematography: Nicola Pecorini. Editing: Teresa Font, Lesley Walker. Production: Recorded Picture Company, Tornasol Films, Entre Chien et Loup, Amazon Studios, 2018. DVD. Amazon, 2019.

¹⁷ *He Dreams of Giants*. Directed by Keith Fulton and Louis Pepe. With Adam Driver, Terry Gilliam, Johnathan Pryce. Editing: Bill Hilferty, Janus Billeskov Jansen, Nyneve Laura Minnear. Production: Corniche Pictures, Low Key Productions, Quixote Productions, 2019.

contemporary parts. The film is diffuse, not in an imaginatively chaotic Terry Gilliam way, but in the way of a muddled work that can't decide what it wants to be.¹⁸

Maybe what is missing in *He Dreams of Giants* is the ambiguity that makes much of the richness of *Lost in La Mancha*, where the analogy between director and character is subtle and slowly constructed. Even so, the 2002 film does point to a difficult question that is also present in the 2018 sequel, namely the possibility for the creation process itself, with all its quandaries and potentialities, to be more satisfactory than the completed work – a question that is also truly reflexive.

¹⁸ James, C. (2019). "He Dreams of Giants: Film Review," *Hollywood Reporter*, 11.10.2019. <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/he-dreams-giants-review-1251390> (accessed on 12.10.2020)