

# Don Quixote, Figures and Philosophical Journey of Cervante's Masterpiece in Albania

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## Abstract

*The term quixotism has its origins in the famous novel of Miguel Cervantes. This study will show the meaning that this term has gained in Albania and the reasons behind its usage. Moreover, it will present the different approaches of the book on Don Quixote of La Mancha. Throughout the 20th century, the literary criticism directed towards Quixote has been influenced by various social and political events in Albania. In the current Albanian literary space, the philosophy of Quixotism and its meaning have evolved since the country's initial transition to democracy.*

**Keywords:** *Quixotism, translation, philosophy, culture, influence.*

## Introduction

In 1933, Miguel de Cervantes de Saavedra was presented to the Albanian reader with Don Quixote of la Mancha, thus opening a new Spanish cultural space which never existed before in Albania. In fact, even today it continues to provide new dimensions, from a literary perspective.

The writer, academic and diplomat Fan Noli, an important personality of the Albanian culture, was the translator of the first part of Cervantes's novel.

The publication of this particular translation was made in America between 1932 and 1933 through Mass Publications. As a significant detail to the full understanding of the novel, Noli gave it a title which is similar to the original one, without getting away from its core: *Sojliu mëndje-mprehtë Don Kishoti I Mançës*.

Don Quixote knows two "routes" in Albania. The first one took place in 1933 and the second one in 1977. The latter arose when Petro Zheji, translator and philologist, translated the second part of the book. The term "route", used by the Albanian cervantista (Cervantes scholar) Alfred Uçi, professor, is attributed to the periods in which the readers will be offered the opportunity to read the book. The

first period took place during King Zog's reign, and the second one during Enver Hoxha's dictatorship.

The translation of the second part of the novel in Albanian had the same success as the first part. Don Quixote is the most reissued book in Albania, enjoying an outstanding success among the Albanian readers, with the particularity that the reader still reads Fan Noli and Petro Zheji's translations. After 1990, with the arrival of democracy, the novel was republished in five new editions, the last in 2014, at Onufri Publishing House.

Cervantes is the most widely read Spanish author among Albanians and Quixote is the only work of Spanish literature studied in schools in Albania. Also, it is the most talked-about book by the Albanian literary criticism, since its first publication until now. We reached this conclusion after having studied with great interest the investigations of different specialists, who have analyzed from different perspectives, the reception, the influence and the transcendence of Cervantes's novel in Albania. Still, there are few studies that pretend to have found the traces that this novel has left in the literature or culture of our country. However, there is a huge amount of traces and influences of Don Quixote in Albania waiting to be discovered and analyzed.

*How was the term "quixotism" born and which was its meaning?*

The term quixotism / quixotic originates from the famous novel of Miguel de Cervantes de Saavedra, *El ingenioso hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha*, edited in 1605, as regards the first part and in 1615, as regards the second one.

In the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the term quixote / quixotism was used to define a person who does not differentiate reality from fantasy. The book was considered highly humorous as the aim of Cervantes was mocking chivalry novels prevailing at that time. For this reason, his errant knight, Alonso Quijano, was actually a common man who loses his head reading stories of chivalry, a true madman who travels the roads in search of adventure. He is accompanied, of course, by his faithful squire, Sancho Panza, who actually is a poor peasant. However, over the years, reading the Quixote has changed, as the English, since the eighteenth century, understood that the term Quixote / quixotism was not just a simple mock attack on the books of chivalry, but had to dig under that first humorous layer to find other meanings of the novel. With this new interpretation, the English Romantic movement provided the Knight of the Sorrowful Countenance the opportunity to stop being a parody and to become a tragic hero, that is, a victim of the conflict between the dreams of the individual and society which is hostile to him. In the same century, it

is intended to give an explanation of a philosophical nature, trying to unravel the ideological content of the work.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the German Romantics show us the great performances of the play, the way they understand Don Quixote, not as regards the madness of the character, but the fact of seeing him as a hero, by refusing to interpret the book as a satire and finding in it an attitude regarding the adventurous visionary zeal of the gentleman. As a consequence, the term Quixote / quixotism acquires the proportions of a hero who has the idealistic spirit and continually sees his hopes being frustrated as he faces the mediocre and petty world around him. In essence, the harsh reality that he cannot stand.

At the time when he was writing his play, Cervantes hid the essence of his creation, and wanted readers to find it themselves. The meaning conceals not only the history of Spain, but also his personal history. And as he reads his text, the reader can see that Don Quixote is full of life experiences, such as the ones Cervantes found in his own existence. He transmits these life experiences under a hidden meaning with the intention that his characters be not only Dantesque or victims of compassion even though Cervantes was a master of simplicity.

Ortega and Gasset in his *Meditations of Quixote* (1924-1925), wrote: "Will there be a deeper book than this humble burlesque novel?"<sup>1</sup>

Cervantes' motto in his *Don Quixote* was "Freedom is the most important gift that God gave man".<sup>2</sup> Undoubtedly, behind this statement lies a whole latent philosophy that announces that his work is not meant only to entertain the public. Each reader gives his own interpretation taking into account what they have experienced before opening "Don Quixote", as the author did.

### *Why was Don Quixote translated into Albanian?*

There is no document showing the presence of Spanish literature in Albanian before the 19<sup>th</sup> century. According to the documents found in the National Central File (folder 10, page 11), the first novel translated into Albanian dates back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This translation has a certain religious character as it was translated by a clergyman and poet, called Andre Mjeda, educated in the Jesuit school, Society of Jesus, at the Monastery of the Carthusian of Porta Coeli, Valencia.

Don Quixote is the second Spanish book that was presented in Albanian, translated from Spanish, as we said above, by Fan Noli after *The Shack* of Vicente

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<sup>1</sup> J. Ortega y Gasset, *Meditaciones de Quijote (Meditations of Quixote)* (Madrid: Espasa, 1982), 90-91.

<sup>2</sup> Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quijote de la Mancha* (Don Quixote of La Mancha), ed. Dir. Francisco Rico (Barcelona: Critica (Instituto Cervantes), 1998, II, cap. LVIII), 1195.

Blasco Ibañez in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Noli had ended his political activities and devoted himself to the ecclesiastical function, to his historical and literary studies and to translations. Even in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, he had translated Ibsen and Shakespeare's works.

Don Quixote did not arrive by chance to the Albanian lands. In the introduction to the novel, Noli says: "In Albania, this novel will be understood better than in any other country because there, at every turn, one can find Don Quixotes and Sancho Panzas".<sup>3</sup> According to Noli, the monarchical Albania, with its population battered by the feudal class of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, was much alike to the medieval Spain. On the other hand, the translator himself encourages readers with these words: "No one dies without reading Don Quixote, because it is a good gift for the reader. It is impossible to read Don Quixote and to remain dissatisfied or bored".<sup>4</sup>

We wanted to emphasize that this introduction is like a letter of justification, where the translator clearly offers all the reasons to focus on the Albanian language. The main reason is to culturally emancipate the Albanian reader by reading a novel which was popular worldwide. Also, Noli intends to guide the intelligentsia by providing tools of how to react to the bad political and social situation in Albania, that is, seeks to give appropriate instructions to the Albanian intellectuals of how to interpret the example of medieval Spain. Noli offers the reader his personal model of reading, his analysis and his point of view. Don Quixote, according to Noli, was a man of lost ideals, representing the social decay, fighting against the logic and the possibility of carrying on his shoulders the destiny to change the world and find the essence of what was lost. Briefly, he adapts the work to the Albanian reality of the beginnings of the century.

This introduction continued to provide the Albanian reader with the reading model until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Over time, the reading of Quixote evolved and the comic aspect was left aside in favour of many other elements where is identified the depth of the work. Thus, Don Quixote needs a deeper approach, like the surface of a lake hiding a surprising deepness.

#### *What does quixotism mean in the Albanian context?*

In Albania, Don Quixote was considered a reading for young people, given the burlesque nature of the work of Cervantes. This is not surprising since the first

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<sup>3</sup> Fan Noli, "Introdukta" (Introduction), *Don Kishoti I Mançës* (Don Quixote of La Mancha), (Tirana: Naim Frashëri, 1975), 5.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*.

intention of the author in writing this novel was to parody the novel of chivalry, prevailing at that time. The reader only saw the ridiculous characters that commuted burlesque actions in real contexts. The story mentioned many times an old gentleman upset by his uninterrupted reading of chivalric romances, unaware of his strength or the sense of the ridiculous, decides to impose his chivalric ideals in a world that had already outgrown those codes and survived only in the pages of books. However, Alonso Quijano insists that his fantasies come true. However, this was not the only reading of Don Quixote, as we already mentioned above.

A year after the publication of the book in America, and a few months after it was available in Albania in 1934, in the most popular newspapers in the country, two groups of intellectuals – political opponents – wrote some articles where they presented their political, ideological and social views. Albania was a monarchal country which had ended the Republican regime since 1924. For the first time, the terms quixotism, quixotic were used in newspaper articles. Republicans paved the way of the Albanian political monarchal class towards progress. Accordingly, the interpretation of Cervantes' work is required in terms of whether Quixote is the symbol of decadence.<sup>5</sup> The Albanian intelligentsia had begun a major political debate focusing on the best democratic ideal for the future of the country.<sup>6</sup>

In different historical and political moments of Albania, Quixote has been read, has been assessed, has been seen and has been treated from different perspectives. To illustrate this, we can say that until the 1990s, as we lived under a dictatorship, Don Quixote was read as the regime commanded, without any possibility for the readers to think by themselves.

The story began with the interpretations of the translator of Noli's book, in which he looked as Quixote did, to all of the representatives of the feudal class of the country, by identifying them with the misadventures of Cervantes' antihero. Next, the communists called the foreign Democrats "Quixote" and thus, their actions were branded as "quixotic".

After World War II, Albania was for 45 years under the Communist dictatorship. The regime imposed its will, the main feature of which is the lack of the freedom of expression. Literary criticism was fragile, standardised and too controlled. Its voice was insecure and self-conscious. So, we usually saw that the updates of Cervantes' work were dependent of the reality of Albania. Quixote's character represented the social class that had lost power and wanted to return to

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<sup>5</sup> T. Zavalani, "Don Kishotë apo pionierë?" (Don Quixotes or pioneers?), *Illyria*, June 24, 1934.

<sup>6</sup> Alfred Uçi, *Filozofia e Donkishotizmit* (The philosophy of Donquixotism), (Tirana: Akademia e Shkencave, 2010), 334.

reoccupy their political position or their status of international bourgeoisie. The philosophy of Don Quixote has been interpreted and misinterpreted, simplified and complicated according to the political moment until the end of the dictatorship of Hoxha.

Kadare, the Albanian writer who won the Prince of Asturias Award for 2009, said in the same year that Don Quixote “was the only one that communist regime failed to stop; for the easiest thing in the world was just stopping, prohibiting. Don Quixote, as a book and as a living character, was so popular in Albania as if it had engendered him itself. Don Quixote pierced the Albanian border because it was, among other things, independent”.<sup>7</sup>

We have carefully selected some definitions made by personalities of the Albanian literary criticism in the season of the dictatorship, to create the aesthetic thought of the moment and thus, to better understand the vision of that period.

In 1955, Androkli Kostallari, a great personality of the Albanian language, states that “the quixotic philosophy, has become synonymous with crazy dreams, with the inability to orient in the historical background and with the political blindness”.<sup>8</sup>

In 1966, Myzafer Xhaxhiu, an Albanian philologist and writer, states that “as Cervantes was an idealist, he could not understand the role of revolution. It is the only way that can change political systems. Cervantes does not understand the revolution as an instrument. He believes that in every complicated situation, there is a positive solution to be found, in the presence of honest and energetic people”.<sup>9</sup> Without a doubt, his analysis is consistent with the ideology of that historical period in Albania.

In 1977 is to be found the first statement which puts into question the above-mentioned definition. Perikli Jorgoni, a philologist, poet and translator, is the first to disagree: “We always say the same phrases: it is cartoon, it is quixotic, it is utopia. But these claims have to do with the aesthetic value of the figure of Don Quixote. Yes, his dreams are funny and burlesque, but you have to think through what Unamuno says: if life is a dream, let me live it as if I were immortal”.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Ismail Kadare, “Don Kishoti në politikën e shekullit të XX. Fjala e shkrimtarit në Bibliotekën Kombëtare të Madritit 1994” (Don Quixote in the politics of the XXth Century. The speech given by the writer at the Madrid National library in 1994), *Unaza me kthetra* (Tirana: Onufri, 2004), 43.

<sup>8</sup> Androkli Kostallari, “Miguel Servantes” (Miguel Cervantes), *Zëri i popullit*, April 27, 1955, 7.

<sup>9</sup> Myzafer Xhaxhiu, “Demaskonjës i reaksionit feudalo- katolik” (Revealer of the feudal-catholic reaction), *Drita*, Octobre 16, 1966.

<sup>10</sup> Pericli Jorgoni, “Një monument i letërsisë botërore” (A monument of the global literature), *Revista Nëntori*, XI (1977), 158.

In 1990, Aurel Plasari, a literary scholar, translator and literary critic commented that "...we can deduce that in the interpretation of Noli there is a lack of analysis of the work". Plasari tried to extend the aesthetic frame of the novel, introducing the reader to the aesthetic thinking of Ortega y Gasset, Unamuno, and many others.<sup>11</sup>

In a few studies or trials of the 1980s and 1990s, it was mentioned that the book did not only represent the decline of the Spanish society, but that idea was not deepened enough. Truthfully, it did not cause any debate about it but for the first time, and, 50 years later, Don Quixote began to change in appearance.

After the 1990s, in Don Quixote and his philosophy we do not see just the humour, irony, burlesque or the Spanish decadence. No one tries to extract Don Quixote of its historical and cultural context, but the biggest concern was how to understand this profound philosophy which had already appeared since the 17<sup>th</sup> century. We can therefore say that the novel has a new interpretation: for some it will remain just a piece of entertainment highlighting the insanity of the protagonist while for others the errant knight became a hero for his visionary attitude is directly related to the adventurous eagerness, if the man's idealistic spirit kept on thwarting his hopes.

In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century new attitudes appear as regards Cervantes' character, with critics seeing in Don Quixote the reflection of the patriotic ideal which lifts the spirits of a country in crisis and in full post-dictatorial democratic transition, which seems to be too long. Some people find in this book, and they are right, a plea of personal freedom and an attack on conventional authority. On the other hand, we also found a tendency for a more personal reading.

Somehow, the errant knight and the readers are not that different. The Albanian literary criticism strives to give the explanation of a philosophically calm nature unravelling the ideological content of the work, the significance of its main characters, the value of their symbols and a thousand possible implications with various themes of culture and literature itself.

Professor Uçi says what the word quixotism means to him. According to him, Cervantes materialized the "quixotism" in both characters. Don Quixote becomes ridiculous and comic for failing to adapt to the reality around him, touching the border of insanity. Cervantes is intelligent and human, this is the main reason why he does not leave his main hero at the mercy of loneliness. Therefore,

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<sup>11</sup> Aurel Plasari, *Don Kishotit zbret në Shqipëri, dhe vepra të tjera të letësisë së krahësuar* (Don Quixote comes to Albania and other pieces of comparative literature), (Tirana: Naim Frasheri, 1990), 80.

the errant Knight always accompanies Sancho Panza, which is a variant of the quixotism. At the beginning, Sancho mocks and laughs at the follies of his master. However, he ends up being “quixotised”, transformed to the point of wanting to be the ruler of an island.<sup>12</sup> According to professor Uçi, “No one can escape from the influence of quixotism... The quixotism means a combination of intelligence, wisdom and folly. The quixotism is the understanding of the visionary, the dreamer, the idealist”.<sup>13</sup>

Professor Ali Aliu, an Albanian from Macedonia, scholar of the Albanian literature, supports the idea that Don Quixote is a literary work in which the philosophical content is vital, insisting on the presence of embryos of the existentialist philosophy throughout the novel of Cervantes. The existential philosophical theme concerning the problems of life and death, the social moral responsibility and social indifference of the human being, guilt and innocence, the earthly and heavenly world, conviction and truth are reflected in the heroes’ attitudes and behaviours.<sup>14</sup>

*Which is the actual reading of Quixote?*

By now, the reader makes his own reading of Don Quixote. The character also has a wealth of information on his philosophy: studies, workshops, publications. There are no ideological constraints, the state no longer imposes its official release, the freedom of speech allows us to find and expand the most qualified and scientific thinking that the Albanian literary criticism benefits of lately.

Nevertheless, Don Quixote has become a great hero who does not have “compassion” for his own creator because he is now able to live apart from him. Elapsing the season when he is a comic and laughable character, the genius of the novel is exactly this one: we are not dealing with a crazy zany, but with a wise and discrete man of good speech. This dual perspective of the character is the major contribution to the creation of Cervantes, even to the point that “Don Quixote”, as a character or a work of art, lives without the help of his creator.

Don Quixote is so popular that he is known as a figure and as a character by each and every Albanian. Don Quixote is known without being read, exists independently of the book which he used to live through.

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<sup>12</sup> Uçi, *Filozofia e Donkishotizmit*, 334.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>14</sup> Ali Aliu, *Don Kishoti shqiptar, Një histori ndryshe e letërsisë shqipe* (The Albanian Don Quixote, a different story of the Albanian Literature), (Tirana: Toena, 2010), 19.



However, the politics continues to have a negative view of him, as when a politician is labeled "Quixote", his image is automatically denigrated, humiliated. On the other hand, the Albanian intelligentsia is proud to label the Albanian literary figures as "Don Quixotes" of the Albanian culture.

Kadare feels a great swell of pity to see the name of Don Quixote mentioned by politicians, and being given a pejorative sense. "The politicians who mention his name have neither his level nor his nobility".<sup>15</sup> "There are a lot of Don Quixotes in the Balcans," said Kadare. "Our character is quixotic, in the best sense of the term because I, as a writer, appreciate in Don Quixote not only his madness, but the phantasmagoria, that beautiful delusion that has to do with freedom".<sup>16</sup>

In 1993, Jorgo Bllaci, a translator and writer, wrote: "If someone encouraged me to choose between Quixote and Sancho, I would say Quixote without hesitation".<sup>17</sup>

Kim Mehmeti, a renowned novelist, essayist and translator, wrote a wonderful essay on the researcher in Albanian literature, describing him as "Ali Aliu, the Don Quixote of the Albanians in Macedonia".<sup>18</sup>

The writer and literary scholar Ali Aliu published in Macedonian and later in Albanian an anthology where have been included the best internationally known authors of Albanian literature of the last two centuries. The work is entitled "*Don Kishoti shqiptar. Një historical ndryshe e letërsisë shqipe*", (*The Albanian Don Quixote. A history of the Albanian literature counted differently*). Ali Aliu considered as being heroes the Albanian writers that lived in Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia such as Kadare, Agolli, Poradeci, De Rada, Frashri, Azem Shkreli, Ali Podrimja, Noli, Konica, Arapi, Luan Starova, Spahiu, Kim Mehmeti. They are the genius part of our nation, like Don Quixote presented the great creativity of Cervantes.<sup>19</sup>

### *The footprints of Don Quixote in the Albanian literature*

The history of the Spanish literature in Albania is not very old, and started from the powerful influence exerted by Cervantes' literature on the writers and translators of the twentieth century.

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<sup>15</sup> Kadare, "Don Kishoti në politikën e shekullit të XX," 43.

<sup>16</sup> Ismail Kadare, "Don Kishoti në Ballkan" (Don Quixote in the Balkans), *Shekulli*, March 2, 2005, 18.

<sup>17</sup> Jorgo Bllaci, "Midis Sanços dhe Kishotit do të zgjidhja pa ngurim këtë të fundit," (Between Sancho and Quixote I would choose without hesitation the later), *Drita*, May 9, 1993, 12.

<sup>18</sup> Kim Mehmeti and Ali Aliu, "Don Kishoti i shqiptarëve të Maqedonisë" (The Don Quixote of the Albanians in Macedonia), *Gazeta Shqiptare*, January 28, 2007, 24, 25.

<sup>19</sup> Aliu, *Don Kishoti shqiptar*, 14, 15, 19.

The presence of Don Quixote in Albania is notable in the works of Kadare, Dritëro Agolli, Bonds Bulka, Q. Buxheli, M. Kallamata, K. Kosta, Niko Nikolla and B. Bubani. Cervantes' burlesque and grotesque were so favoured by Albanian authors because they covered through them some truths which were impossible to report during the years of the dictatorship.

The Albanian literary criticism encounters in the characters of Agolli's novel, *Shkëlqimi dhe rënia e shikut Zylo*, the updating and matching of the two archetypal characters of Cervantes' work in the Albanian literature. Don Quixote can be considered one of the models and one of the most important sources of this author's narrative technique. In his analysis, the philologist, aesthetician and cervantista Uçi establishes a significant link between the two novels which connects them in terms of content and aesthetic values and also in terms of the effect they have on the Albanian reader. Similarly, in his study he comments Cervantes' influence and the quixotic reminiscences.<sup>20</sup>

In Kadare's works, *The General of the Dead Army*, *The Monster and The Palace of Dreams* (by now translated into Spanish by Ramon Sanchez Lizarralde) we can notice the burlesque and the grotesque concepts of life according to Cervantes' model.

Don Quixote, as a character, is part of some novels, poems and plays written in Albanian by authors from Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia. These are literary creations that have a humorous and clever sense for children and young people (see bibliography).

### *The legend of Cervantes in Albania*

Albanians like to believe in the legend according to which Cervantes spent several years of his captivity in an Albanian town called Ulqin, where he fell in love with an inland young girl. Although this legend has been passed down from generation to generation, there is no historical document that can confirm it, although it already has the support of many personalities of the Albanian literature and culture. Many myths have been fruits of archaeological findings and of cultures that were considered mere fables, without a real support. Nevertheless, this particular legend has found a place of prestige in the collective memory of the community.

Kadare, the Albanian writer the most translated into Spanish, personally stated more than once that Cervantes spent some time in Ulqin, an Albanian city

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<sup>20</sup> Alfred Uçi, "Shtegtimi i Don Kishotit në Shqipëri" (The journey of Don Quixote in Albania), *Zëri i popullit*, January 14, 1995, 3, 4.

that after World War II became part of Montenegro, but which has always been inhabited by Albanian communities. What is proven is the fact that Cervantes was taken prisoner by the pirate called Arnaut Miami, in 1575. "Arnaut" means Albanian, in Turkish. At that time, the Turkish Empire was very large and Albania was part of it, but not much is known about Miami, neither of his piratical activity.

Kadare, in his essay dating back to 2001, *Quixote in his double life*, states he has chosen to believe in the legend, trying to find the root of the truth,<sup>21</sup> while Moikom Zeqo, a folklorist, writer and philologist, reminds us that the old name of Ulqin was Dulqin, very close to the name of Dulcinea,<sup>22</sup> and Servet or Sarvet is also very close to that of Cervantes. The population of the city called the captive Sarvet or Sevet.<sup>23</sup> In the 12<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, the city of Ulqin was on all maps called Dulchinio, Dulchin, very close to Dulqin Dulcinea (As d- preposition meant direction). Perhaps, says the folklorist, Cervantes' novel used these names in memory of these difficult years spent in prison.

The people of Ulqin told the story of Cervantes' life before the book was translated and read into Albanian. The elders of the city of Ulqin tell many stories about an educated man called Sarvet or Servet, a Spanish who had important friends in his country and who loved to write. This Spanish fell in love with a young girl from this city and it was a mutual love. The historian and philologist from Ulqin, professor Ruzhdi Ushanaku, in his book *Ulqini në gjurmët e shekujve*, supports the thesis that Cervantes was imprisoned in Ulqin.<sup>24</sup>

Cervantes himself, in his novel *Don Quixote*, Chapter XLI of the first book, mentions Arnaut Miami, besides telling the love story of one of his prisoners.<sup>25</sup> In the same issue, it is clarified that Arnaut Miami was an Albanian renegade, a corsair that seized the galley Sol in 1575, a galley in which Cervantes and his brother Rodrigo were travelling to Spain.

Ramon Sanchez Lizarralde, an Albanian translator and writer wrote: "The paths travelled by Don Quixote were, and are, as we know, sometimes surprising and even devious. That began with the invented captivity of Cervantes on the

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<sup>21</sup> Ismail Kadare, "Don Kishoti në jetën e dyfishtë" (Don Quixote and its double life), *Albania*, February 25, 2001.

<sup>22</sup> Moikom Zeqo, "Servantesi rob e dhëndër i piratëve Ulqinakë" (Cervantes prisoner and groom of the pirates), *Metropol*, November 13, 2004, 6.

<sup>23</sup> Moikom Zeqo, "Nje emër i njohur shqiptar në veprën e Servantesit" (A well-known Albanian name in the work of Cervantes), *Koha Jonë*, September 18, 1993, 6.

<sup>24</sup> Ruzhdi Ushanaku, *Ulqini në gjurmët e shekujve* (Ulcin in the centuries), (Ulcinj: Art Klub, 1991), 25-26.

<sup>25</sup> Miguel De Cervantes, *Don Quijote de la Mancha* (Don Quixote of La Mancha), ed. Manuel Fernandez Nieto (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva S. L., 2006), 475.

Adriatic coasts concluded with the Albanian naturalization of the nobleman and his squire”.<sup>26</sup>

### *Conclusion*

The presence of Spanish literature in Albania is not very old since it starts from the powerful influence exerted by the literature of the Golden Age, especially by Cervantes with *Don Quixote de la Mancha*, on the writers and translators as Fan Noli in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Thanks to this translator, the Albanians were able to learn, read and appreciate Cervantes. Nowadays, we investigate and discuss its literary influences on the trail of the footprints of Cervantes' work to see them reflected in our own literature, that is, we are talking about the possibility of a significant influence of Spanish culture in Albania, about intercultural relations and the literary reception from critics and the reading public.

It is funny how in 1977, for the first time, the two parts of *Don Quixote* were published in Albania with a circulation of twenty thousand copies sold in just a few months. Albanians have always enjoyed reading the *Quixote* while Cervantes still is the most famous Spanish author, thus converting *Don Quixote* into a myth.

The reading of *Don Quixote* has varied depending on the political, ideological moment of Albania and its philosophy has been interpreted in different perspectives, political, literary, social, etc. The quixotism, as a philosophy of the hero character, of the novel and of Cervantes himself, acquires in the 21<sup>st</sup> century some new perspectives.

In the World Book Day, April 23<sup>rd</sup>, we have seen in Tirana many Albanian personalities, students, intellectuals reading and even reciting with passion *El Quixote*. The enchanting spirit of *Don Quixote* joins in such a remarkable manner the Spanish and Albanian cultural world.

*Don Quixote* is not only a myth in Albanian, but a universal myth.

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