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## Communicating with the Past via Javier Cercas' *Las leyes de la frontera*

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Just as with his most recognizable novel, *Soldados de Salamina* (2001), Javier Cercas again places a fictitious version of himself in *Las leyes de la frontera* (2012), as the character of Ignacio Cañas or "Gafitas." He recounts to a reporter his memories of being part of the *quinqui* gang of the notorious delinquent Zarco during the summer of 1978, after having crossed over to the other side of the tracks (in this case the river Ter) to the *barrio chino* of Girona (Catalonia, Spain). As Cercas recalls his own experiences as a youth in Girona, the novel simultaneously develops through the intertextual lens of José Antonio de la Loma's cycle of *quinqui* films from the late 1970s and early 1980s based on the life of the famous Catalan delinquent, El Vaquilla (Juan José Moreno Cuenca).

On the heels of the renewed interest in these films from the Transition period of the late 1970s and early 1980s, the popularity of this novel, and the recently remastered Blu-Ray collections of the *quinqui* films of De la Loma and Eloy de la Iglesia, director Daniel Monzón released his cinematic adaptation of Cercas' novel in late 2021 in cinemas in Spain and digitally on Netflix in the U.S. In a break from the original films, he opted for professional actors without a criminal history. Several critics, such as Tom Whittaker (2020 intro.), have observed that the phenomenon of the *quinqui* films reflects a sensationalizing of the celebration of the newfound freedoms of Spanish youth and overexaggerated fears of crime and violence during the years of the transition from dictatorship to democracy following the death of General Franco. I argue that Monzón's film allows its audience to enjoy the more liberating aspects of these earlier films, by creating an homage to this cycle, set in the same period, and in a familiar setting to fans of these movies. While the films of the Transition were accused of glorifying violence, high-speed chases, sexual freedom, and drug use, the contemporary film provides more of a nostalgic yet remorseful look at this period, through a commendable recreation of the original aesthetic. It is a fitting visual representation of the cinematic novel by Cercas and highlights the complexity of interplay between the written and filmic forms.

We have also seen in recent years the appearance of several scholarly texts devoted to the *quinqui* phenomenon following the publication of Cercas' novel, such as Juan A. Ríos Carratalá's. *Quinquis, maderos y picoletos* (Sevilla 2014); *Fuera de la ley* (Granada 2015), ed. by J. Florido Berrocal, et. al; Tom Whittaker's *The Spanish Quinqui Film* (Manchester 2020); and *Quinqui Film in Spain* (London 2020), ed. by Jorge González del Pozo. In popular culture, several neo-*quinqui* films have surfaced, such as Carlos Salado's *Criando ratas* (2016), which is low-budget but incredibly realistic. It was released on YouTube and reached more than a million views in the first year, making it one of the most successful Spanish films of that year. In 2018, Juan Vicente Córdoba produced the documentary-style *Quinqui stars*, and the self-proclaimed "kinki rapper," el Coleta, has released the albums *Yo, el Coleta* (2015), a direct homage to el Vaquilla's biographical film, and 2018's *Neokinki*. Nonetheless, Cercas and Monzón both argue that they set the novel and film in 1978, because they believe that one must view the *quinqui* phenomenon as the product of a specific place and time. As youth they were both fascinated and terrified by the *quinquis*, who were very much a part of their world.

Mery Cuesta, of the Universitat Pompeu Fabra, organized the 2009 exhibit *Quinquis of the 80s* at the Centro de Cultura Contemporànea in Barcelona, which inspired Javier Cercas to begin writing *Las leyes de la frontera*, imagining himself as someone who could have been a *quinqui* in his youth. He was also inspired by the yet unpublished

*Vint-i-cinc anys i un dia* (2013) by the Catalan writer, Carles Monguillod, who had been a lawyer for el Vaquilla. Cercas also relied heavily on Moreno Cuenca's prison memoirs *Hasta la libertad* (2001).

Cercas and Monzón both seek to recreate the excitement of the *quinqui* phenomenon of the Transition period, but the author has often commented that his intention was to dispel the myth of the *quinquis* as heroes and expose the fact that the mythification was the product of exploitative media campaigns from which the subjects were either unable or unwilling to detach themselves. The author's alter ego, Gafitas, states to the interviewer (who is creating the book that we are reading), "I now detest those who have idealized Zarco - in truth, that is one of the reasons why I agreed to speak with you: to dispel once and for all the legends and tell the truth about him" (75). El Vaquilla's crimes from the age of twelve were frequently covered by newspapers, magazines, and tv news programs, and the four films by De la Loma from 1977 to 1985, based on his life and exploits, only helped to solidify his status in the star system. In his prison memoirs, Moreno Cuenca declares that "the masses always create myths, though they later blame you for being the one who has created the character. No man can become a myth by himself, he will always need others to praise, applaud, spoil, idealize, criticize one way or another, and mythicize, but they do not want to admit it publicly" (423). Although Cercas intended to destroy the myths surrounding the *quinqui* phenomenon rather than reflect on them nostalgically, his novel has had the opposite effect. Though I do not doubt his sincerity, it is difficult not to see the similarities with the narrator of the *Quixote* who claims that "my only desire has been to have people reject and despise the false and nonsensical histories of the books of chivalry, which [...] will undoubtedly fall to the ground" (Cervantes 940). How many members of Generation Z will discover *Perros callejeros* thanks to Cercas' novel or Monzón's film?

The first *Perros callejeros* film made the equivalent of over one million euros at the box office (Matellano 183, qtd. in Torres 78) and De la Loma had sought out the stories of young *quinquis* in the Barcelona neighborhood of La Mina. He used them as actors, most famously Ángel Fernández Franco (known as el Trompetilla), who played the role of Vaquilla in the first film, though he could not use that nickname nor refer to the real name or person of Juan José Moreno Cuenca, who was still underage. De la Loma also claimed that *his* intention was to show the true Vaquilla and dispel the myths, though his films had the opposite effect and inspired many new *quinquis* who imitated the car theft and purse snatching of the *Perros callejeros* trilogy. Mery Cuesta writes that "the delinquent constitutes the principal voice and the narrative point of view in *quinqui* cinema" (qtd. in Whittaker 9), thus galvanizing the audience's identity with the protagonists. One famous example is that of "El Jaro," the subject of Eloy de la Iglesia's 1981 film *Navajeros*, who formed a gang after seeing the first film of the trilogy in 1977 (Amanda Cuesta 24). He was subsequently killed at age 16 while attempting to rob a vehicle. The actor who portrayed him, José Luis Manzano, had been a romantic partner and even shot heroin with the film's director. He also died violently at age 29.

The reporter (writing *Las leyes de la frontera*) says that he set out to write his book to denounce the lies that had been told about Zarco and to set the record straight, but he emphasizes that one does not write the book that he wants but rather what he can. This book is and is not that (215). Cercas' character, Gafitas, tells the interviewer that a myth is a popular story that is part truth, part fiction, and which tells a truth that cannot be

conveyed by the truth alone. He observes that the myth of Zarco was not invented by just the public, but above all by the media: radio, newspapers, tv; in addition to songs and films. Gafitas bought everything that was printed about Zarco's life, watched all tv news reports, and read his memoirs and the books that were written about him. As a youth he also had an idealized view of Zarco and thought of the gang as the heroes of Liang Shan Po from the Japanese tv show *La frontera azul* (*The Water Margin* on the BBC), which arrived in Spain in 1978. A river, which symbolizes the border between good and evil, divides the population, and the Robin Hood types on one side must fight against the evil emperor that keeps them there. Gafitas was the only character who was able to freely move back and forth across this border. While Tere and Zarco were both doomed because they were born on the other side, "the wrong side of the tracks," Gafitas was able to participate in drug use, burglaries, bank robberies, and other crimes without any sort of punishment. He was able to become a successful lawyer, simply because a police inspector decided that he was worth being offered a second chance, implying that Zarco was not, because of where he had grown up. It is difficult not to see much of this novel as partly fantasy fan fiction by the author, who identifies with Gafitas, a youth who is accepted by the *quinqui* gang, enjoys sexual relations with the dangerous and attractive Tere, punishes the neighborhood bully from his youth, and faces no consequences, other than a sense of guilt and a debt to Zarco, whom he sees as having sacrificed his own liberty to allow him to remain free. Gafitas will even provide legal representation for him so that he can return the favor, but it is ultimately a transparent attempt to gain notoriety. Cercas stated in *Diálogos* that "Don Quixote and Madame Bovary, like almost all protagonists of the great novels, are, in fact, incitements to the most dangerous adventure of all, that of creating a life that is at the level of our desires" (196).

While Gafitas is to some extent an *alter ego* for the novelist, he is a unique character in that he is not from one of the marginalized neighborhoods that have produced figures such as Jaro, Vaquilla, Torete, or Zarco. He is raised by two middle-class parents and his life does not end tragically. He does not spend time in prison or suffer any illnesses due to drug abuse or sexual practices. Aside from the novelist's autobiographical details, we must also turn to Juan G. Gamella's *Story of Julián: Memories of Heroin and Delinquency* (1990). These memoirs have many points in common with *Hasta la libertad*, with regards to drug use and incarceration, but what Julián shares with Gafitas is that he lives with his parents in a working-class neighborhood (in Madrid, not Barcelona) and his father is a bricklayer. The family is unaware of the extent of their son's criminal activity as a bank robber, burglar, and drug abuser. At age 15, he met Ángel, a cousin of one of his older brother's friends, who dressed in the *quinqui* fashion and took him to meet his delinquent friends from the neighborhood. They robbed a small safe from a restaurant where Julián had worked, and they introduced him to hashish for the first time. These events are nearly identical to Gafitas' introduction to the *quinqui* world of Zarco and Tere. The juvenile characters are also presented with similar descriptions in Cercas' novel. Julián quickly learns to drive and to steal cars. La Chelo taught him to hotwire cars and took the initiative in his first sexual encounter at age 16. After that he recounts a sexual encounter in a bathroom stall with a young woman named Anabel, most likely Cercas' inspiration for Gafitas' first encounter with Tere in the video arcade where he worked. Julián's relationship with his parents is also similar to that of Gafitas. His father is constantly

working, does not understand his rebelliousness, and he even strikes him when he arrives home without taxi fare. His mother explains his behavior by stating that he did not rob because he needed the money, but rather out of a sense of adventure. He was restless and always needed to stand out somehow. Even though Gafitas did not experience prison time or suffer from addiction, like Julián, he was able to distance himself from the neighborhoods of his youth thanks to the ongoing support of his family.

Finally, Julián speaks of how they robbed chalets during the holidays by ringing doorbells and asking for random names to determine whether the homes were occupied. We see this exact same action in Cercas' novel and in *Perros callejeros 3*. Tere and Zarco had utilized Gafitas for this operation because he spoke Catalan and his appearance did not cause suspicion. Zarco was the only member who was not a *charnego*, someone who had moved to Catalonia from another area of Spain, however he only spoke Castilian Spanish. The novel also associates the Catalan language with the democracy and prosperity that arrived following the transition. In the documentary *Los jóvenes del barrio* (1982), the kids on the street in the Canyelles neighborhood of Barcelona all admit that they do not speak Catalan and do not understand the reporter when questioned about Catalan independence. Most of them were from families that had emigrated from Andalusia or Murcia. Cercas' himself arrived in Girona from Cáceres (Extremadura) at the age of four.

Additionally, the similarities between Cercas' Zarco and the famous Vaquilla are more than striking. Zarco and Vaquilla were both from Barcelona, not Girona, and had spent time in La Modelo prison before age 16, even though this was forbidden by law. Vaquilla's prison memoirs (2001) and the autobiography of his youth (1985) both begin as picaresque novels, recounting his birth to a father he never knew and a stepfather, Antonio Moreno, who gave him his last name but was murdered by the Civil Guard when he was only four, leaving his mother to do whatever was necessary to survive. He was expelled from elementary school for stealing supplies and his mother, shortly thereafter, left him to his uncle. By the age of ten he was stealing cars with his older half-brothers in La Mina. Zarco confides in Gafitas that he left elementary school at age 7 and never knew his father. They had killed his stepfather years earlier, his brothers were all in jail, and his mother just tried to survive.

There were several movies based on the life of el Vaquilla played by other actors, most notably his childhood friend from La Mina, the real-life delinquent Ángel Fernández Franco in the *Perros callejeros* trilogy. Whittaker adds that "The frequent confusion between subject and its surrogate, the real-life self and its fictional counterpart here only added to the self-reflexive mode of performance for which much of *cine quinqué* would become known. As well as living in the same barrio, both delinquents developed a passion for fast cars (and stealing them) from a young age" (30). We now have not only Ángel, el Torete, playing Vaquilla, but also Zarco, who is in turn played on screen by a delinquent, to add to the confusion. In Cercas' novel the films *Muchachos salvajes* (by fictional director Fernando Bermúdez) are about Zarco's gang and there is even a character called Gafitas, who was recruited to the gang as a cover because he appeared innocent, and no one would suspect him of criminal intentions. The actor who played Zarco in these movies was also said to be a delinquent. The final crime that Zarco's gang attempts in the summer of 1978 is the bank robbery in Bordils. The bank had a time release vault

with a fifteen-minute time delay, which is exactly what happened to Vaquilla when he was a teen and went to prison for his initial six-year stretch.

Zarco gives a press conference in La Modelo prison in Barcelona in 1983 after a frustrated prison break developed into a notorious uprising. Vaquilla was the leader of the uprising in the same prison in 1984 in which prisoners, after they could not escape, spoke with members of the press, and presented their demands. They released their four hostages only after the prison supervisor brought them all large amounts of heroin which they injected on camera using a shared needle. The novel also refers to the failed escape from the Lleida 2 prison with Zarco face down on the asphalt in Barcelona on live TV. Exactly like Vaquilla in his famed tv appearance, they had been chased by helicopters and he shouted at the cameras, while on the ground, that he had a bullet lodged in his back. There was also a movie about Zarco's life, *La verdadera vida del Zarco*, in the Ocaña penitentiary. This is exactly what happened with Vaquilla's autobiographical film, *Yo, el Vaquilla*, directed by De la Loma, narrated by Vaquilla himself from Ocaña, and presented on TVE's program *La tarde* with a live performance by Los Chichos. Moreno Cuenca had initially wanted *Yo, el Vaquilla* to be titled *From the Other Side of Society*, which seems to have been a possible source of inspiration for the title adopted by Cercas.

Zarco had spent more than 24 years in prison. He was only accused of homicide twice and each time was absolved. Vaquilla constantly repeated that he was originally sentenced to six years but that it became thirty because of his attempted escapes and conflicts that he had while imprisoned. He often stated that he was guilty of no blood crimes, but he had in fact run over a woman multiple times, resulting in her death, when he was thirteen. We are told that as soon as Zarco arrived at a new prison, the guards would conspire to make his life as difficult as possible. This was the same for Vaquilla, because of his reputation as a movie star, a leader inside of the prisons, and as someone who often denounced the guards to the press. Just like Vaquilla, Zarco had participated in several prison uprisings, organized hunger strikes, filed complaints against prison guards, and injured himself physically as a sign of protest.

Zarco's wife, María Vela, is based on the woman who was married to Vaquilla for two years in the 1990s, Isabel Faya. María had sent Zarco letters in prison when he was a media star. She also kept alive the romanticized, idealized vision of Zarco as a noble young man, who was brave and generous, and condemned by poor circumstances of birth to a life of delinquency. Both María and Isabel were divorced and had a young daughter when they met their future incarcerated husbands. To obtain his release, he needed to find a job and marry María. He viewed her as his last admirer and saw marriage as a necessary step towards freedom, and nothing else. Vaquilla had claimed in his memoirs that his wife, Isabel, was older and unattractive and that he also married her merely to help his efforts to secure his release, though he truly loved her daughter and even adopted her. Both María and Isabel publicly advocated for the release of the prisoners, but each became addicted to the fame that they enjoyed as a celebrity spouse. Both marriages fell apart and Zarco and Vaquilla had to return to prison for automobile theft following their release. Just before Zarco's death, he told Gafitas about his mother (who still lived in Gerona), and his three older brothers - three *quinquis* that he met when he was eleven or twelve. All three had died in a violent manner a decade earlier, under the exact same circumstances as each of Vaquilla's older brothers. For example, Zarco's brother, Joaquín, crashed into a moving truck in Barcelona while he fled from the police

in a stolen car. Vaquilla's brother Miguel, who acted in *Perros callejeros 2*, also crashed a stolen car in Barcelona while being shot at by the *Guardia Urbana*. Zarco's oldest brother, Juan José (the same name as Vaquilla), died falling from a rope while suspended from the window of the prison hospital in Madrid. This is exactly what happened to Vaquilla's oldest brother, Julián, in 1986. Lastly, his middle brother, Andrés, was shot by police at a checkpoint after robbing a bank, in the same manner as Vaquilla's brother, Antonet, in 1994.

Gafitas had worried for two decades that Tere and Zarco believed that he had snitched to the police about the bank robbery, because that is how his character was able to escape in the movie made about them. He was also portrayed as a traitor in the second volume of memoirs by Zarco, *La música de la libertad*, (modeled after Vaquilla's *Hasta la libertad*). The interviewer told him that he had confused his own life with his character in the film, but Gafitas still believed that Zarco had saved him by allowing him to flee as he could not escape the police with a twisted ankle. Gafitas also fixates on the love triangle between their three characters in the film *Muchachos salvajes*. As his lawyer, Gafitas affirmed that "At times I had the impression that Zarco did not tell me what he remembered but what he remembered having told in his memoirs" (336), even though he claimed that the writer Jorge Ugal made him lie in the first volume. "Ugal," by the way, is the surname of Vaquilla's older siblings, who all died tragically before him. When Cercas speaks about the novel as an art form, he emphasizes that what is most important is what it does not tell you. Just as in *Soldados de Salamina*, we never learn who spared Sanchez Mazas' life, in this book we never learn whether Tere was truly the informant. We do not learn with whom she was truly in love, and we do not know whether she aspired to "cross over" to the other side of the *frontera*. We also never learn whether it was Zarco who killed the former teen bully from Gafitas' neighborhood. Cercas has stated that he wants his novels to be "easy to read yet difficult to understand," such as is the case with his favorite novel, *Don Quixote*. He adds that "The Quixote [...] is the best novel ever written [...] but only an honest reader gets this - that is, one who reads for pleasure and not out of an obligation - after a second or third reading" (*Diálogos* 83-84).

Zarco confesses to Gafitas that he is incapable of believing his comparison to the show *La frontera azul* and the myth of the bandits with honor. He does not believe that the only difference between them is the side of the river where they were born, that society is to blame and that he is innocent of everything. Gafitas "realized that Zarco was over, the character had disappeared, and the person feebly remained, that *quinqui* who was alone, sick, and done with" (341), akin to Don Quixote on his deathbed when he becomes Alonso Quijano. The police inspector tells us that Zarco, like Vaquilla, died of complications from AIDS in either 2005 or 2006, he cannot recall. Tom Whittaker writes that a member of the Civil Guard set up a meeting in 1975 between the director De la Loma and Ángel Fernández Franco and Juan José Moreno Cuenca 'el Vaquilla,' who were just 15 and 14 at the time. When Ángel died of complications from AIDS in 1991, Vaquilla was asked to make a statement to *Interviú* magazine to confirm or deny the rumor that he was also dying of AIDS. He stated that he and Ángel had grown up together and were like brothers (30). Zarco promoted his own perspective, but he was also the result of many different points of view and different sources, which were all incomplete, partial, and problematic. Gafitas felt deep down that Zarco never believed his character, that he was the Robin Hood of his day. Similarly, Don Quixote says, "I know who I am ...

(43)" [*and who I may be if I choose* - the latter part misquotes but correctly summarizes Cervantes' original text]. It was a character that the public insisted that he continue to play. Upon his death, the myth was finalized. The myths of the dead last longer. The proof, he tells the interviewer (the journalist writing the novel we hold in our hands), is that you are here today asking me about him. He died of AIDS in either 2005 or 2006, the warden cannot recall. Moreno Cuenca similarly died in 2004 of cirrhosis, due to complications from AIDS, hepatitis, and frequent heroin use.

After Vaquilla's release from prison, he was arrested in 1996 and the *El País* headline read "El Vaquilla can't escape his legend." He stole a parked car from a garage and crashed it into a tree. Even though he was still married with Isabel, a junky named Inés was waiting for him, with a knife in her purse. They stated that he was addicted to drugs and fame. He was a victim of his own legend. His first stolen car was at age 10 and he could not let his reputation go. In Cervantes' second volume, Don Quixote is spurred on to continue the behavior of the character he created in the first volume by fans, people who have read or are familiar with his earlier adventures. Vaquilla cannot reform or leave the character behind. People, including celebrities, who have seen him on television or in the newspapers, write him letters and seek to visit him in the prisons. We see this confusion in *Perros callejeros 2* where, just after dying in a car crash in the first film, the character el Torete goes to a film premiere in Zaragoza to see that very film. However, he now plays himself, Ángel (a.k.a. *El Trompeta*), and Bernardo Seray plays *El Vaca* (Vaquilla). He apologizes for the fact that he could not play himself in the first movie, but Vaca replies that perhaps he will do another one. In the third part, both Vaca and El Torete by chance enter the same bank at the same time to rob it. This is reminiscent of Don Quixote and Sancho meeting characters from Avellaneda's false *Quixote* in Cervantes' second book. We have a type of infinity mirror. We do not know where reality starts, where myth begins, or who is the real actor or the real delinquent, especially since many of the actors were delinquents as well. The second *Perros callejeros* film plays out several scenes from the lives of Ángel and Vaquilla. After the youth snatch a woman's purse, they must quickly drive in reverse to escape the police. In the process, they run over the victim, just as Vaquilla did as a child. Later in the film, Ángel robs a car for some of his friends, who then use it to hold up a gas station and kill the attendant. When they are arrested, they tell the police that Ángel was with them, but he was, in fact, in Zaragoza watching the premiere of his own film. This happened in real life and De la Loma had to testify on his behalf. Vaquilla's brother, Miguel, was also accused of having been there, but he was also at the premiere signing autographs. At the end of the movie, it is Ángel who is intentionally run over by a vengeful prison guard. He lies stretched out on the pavement, exactly as Vaquilla will after his escape from Lleida 2 prison five years later in 1984. At the end of the third movie, it is Vaquilla himself who is killed by the police. Once more, we have the infinity mirror of life imitating art and vice versa.

In *Las leyes de la frontera* we have a novel inspired by a cycle of films as well as the ancillary media. As Simone Murray states, [...] "the field of adaptation studies has by now thoroughly digested the fact that a book does not necessarily predate a screen incarnation of the same content but may in fact be derived from screen products" (41). It is only natural that we now have a film adaptation of that novel, or at least the first half. While, on the one hand, Cercas relies on the written medium of Vaquilla's prison memoirs and tabloid accounts of his exploits, the *Perros Callejeros* films provide a



source of visual and aural sources that must be adapted for the novel. How do you translate the visual aesthetics of the late 1970s, the rhumba soundtrack, and the action of high-speed car chases and overblown violence to the novel? For Jan Baetens, "the reworking of a cinematographic screenplay into a printed novel may entail quite a lot of technical and formal transformations, [but] it does not alter the essentially verbal status of the source text" (235). The first half of the book is a coming-of-age novel or *bildungsroman*, told as a series of interviews. It imitates in prose the cinematic action of the *Perros callejeros* trilogy, with the novelty of a love triangle between Tere and Zarco, both from the other side of the river, and Gafitas, a middle-class adolescent who is driven into Zarco's gang after being bullied by boys from his own neighborhood. The second half, which is pure metafiction, could not be easily adapted for the screen, as we saw with the second book of the *Quixote*. While digital technology allowed for more realistic and startling police pursuits, as well as improved quality for the musical soundtrack, Monzón reduces the second half of the novel to just a few minutes at the end and the beginning of his film. The novel's second part is much more interesting, as Gafitas is now a successful lawyer who recounts his youth and regains contact with Zarco, now a notorious delinquent that seeks him out as legal counsel. It is a reflection on the events of the first half, a form of metafiction that reflects on the novel itself up to this point. Zarco's criminal life and legal struggles within the prison system during the second half of the novel are identical in many ways to the anecdotes in Moreno Cuenca's prison memoirs. Gafitas, in his interviews, serves as a type of intermediary or interpreter who explains his youthful past with Zarco to the professional middle class, of which he is now a full-fledged member.

For Regina Schober (2019), "Adaptation has to be regarded as a complex assemblage of cross-influences rather than a unidirectional procedure between two media within an implicitly hierarchical relationship." It is also worthwhile to consider Cercas' novel and Monzón's film as a type of fan fiction that seeks to continue the story by placing the author in it with a seductive role. For Linda Hutcheon, in *A Theory of Adaption* "all fanfictions, like prequels and sequels, are mere expansions of the existing narratives, which fans write because they do not "want [...] a story to end" (9; qtd. in Bettina Soler (2019) 61-65). She further defines adaptation as a "process of creation" consisting both of "(re)interpretation and then (re)creation," (Soler 62; Hutcheon 8). Cercas has observed that he does not write historical fiction, but rather his works are a back and forth between the past and present. The past constantly changes based on our present interpretation. The novel views 1978 from the early 2000s, while the film is closer to the present. The reception of the *Perros callejeros* films continues changing based on new editions, secondary texts, fan responses, merchandise, the Cercas novel, the Netflix film, and also with new scholarly responses. The film *Outlaws* recreates the aesthetic and the spirit of the films, just as does the novel. Both forms evoke those stories and characters, allude to, recreate certain episodes, and communicate with this phenomenon of the past from the vantage point of the present.

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