

TOWARDS A TRANSMEDIAL RECEPTION OF A NOVEL AND ITS FILM ADAPTATION: SANTIAGO RONCAGLIOLO'S *LA PENA MAXIMA*

HACIA UNA RECEPCIÓN TRANSMEDIAL DE UNA NOVELA Y SU ADAPTACIÓN CINEMATOGRÁFICA: *LA PENA MÁXIMA* DE SANTIAGO RONCAGLIOLO

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Abstract: Santiago Roncagliolo's *La pena máxima* (2014) explores the link between football and national identities in Peru and Argentina, highlighting how their totalitarian regimes used the 1978 World Cup to improve their reputations. Given that this novel was adapted for the cinema (Michel Gómez, 2022), the question arises of how these problematic national images are reproduced in the movie and how they are interpreted by the critics for both media in Peru. Unlike the reviews of the novel, those that focus on the film concentrate on the formal aspects and do not delve as deeply into the social and political implications of the plot. In this way, the reception not only seems to be influenced by the medium to which it refers, but also ends up shaping the national images themselves.

Keywords: Imagology. Reception. Transmediality. *La pena máxima*. Santiago Roncagliolo.

Resumen: *La pena máxima* (2014) de Santiago Roncagliolo explora el vínculo entre el fútbol y las identidades nacionales de Perú y Argentina, destacando cómo sus regímenes totalitarios utilizaron la Copa del Mundo de 1978 con el fin de mejorar sus reputaciones. Dado que la novela fue adaptada al cine (Michel Gómez, 2022), se plantea la cuestión de cómo esas imágenes nacionales problemáticas se reproducen en el cine y cómo son interpretadas por la crítica que se dedica a ambos medios en el Perú. A diferencia de las reseñas sobre la novela, las que tienen como objeto la película se centran en los aspectos formales y profundizan menos las implicaciones sociales y políticas de la trama. De este modo, la recepción no solo parece ser influida por el medio al que se refiere, sino que también termina plasmando las propias imágenes nacionales.

Palabras clave: Imagología. Recepción. Transmedialidad. *La pena máxima*. Santiago Roncagliolo.

Introduction

In *La pena máxima* (2014) Santiago Roncagliolo (Lima, 1975), who is also famous for his works about the Peruvian civil war such as *Abril Rojo* (2006) and *La cuarta espada* (2007), links the mysterious murder of a man carrying a child in Lima to the context of football. Not only is the structure of the novel based on the different matches of the 1978 World Cup taking place in Argentina, football also ends up playing an important role in the political intrigues that are revealed throughout the narrative. This central position of football is a way for the narrator to deconstruct the national images of Peru and Argentina by tackling the violence used by the military regimes of both countries and exposing the corruption that was involved in the World Cup. The deconstruction of national images and its translations into French and Dutch have already briefly been explored within the context of reception studies, involving the concept of imagology.

In 2022, the cinematographic adaptation of *La pena máxima* by the French-Peruvian director Michel Gómez (Marseille, 1959)¹ was released, which allows for a more transmedial perspective within reception studies and invites us to take a look at the influence of the medium on the perception of the national image that is presented in the story. Before performing a transmedial comparative analysis of the quantitative and qualitative reception data, we will first consider how football and national images are connected and presented in Roncagliolo's novel. This will be followed by an examination of the structural differences between the movie and the novel, as well as an adaptation of the theoretical framework to facilitate a comparison of the qualitative reception data for both the cinematographic adaptation and the original novel.

1. National images in Latin American football narratives

As this article aims to study the reception of national images through the case study of Santiago Roncagliolo's novel and film *La pena máxima*², we will first consider the broader context of general Latin American football fiction. Looking at the important role football plays in this Latin American cultural field, we will then clarify how the representation of this sport constructs national images in this specific literary and cinematographic work.

1.1. Football and national images

After being popularized among university elites in England, football arrived in Latin America at the end of the nineteenth century thanks to the upcoming English industrialization and international trade (Arbena, 2000: 83). Ever since the sport became well-known all over the world, it has been interpreted in very different ways. While, in the beginning of the twentieth century it was considered an artistic manifestation of avant-garde, soon its moral correctness was questioned by many intellectuals. From 1930 onwards football served as a vehicle for sportswashing by totalitarian regimes, as it

1 Michel Gómez is mainly known for his telenovelas *La Perricholi* (1992), *Los de arriba y los de abajo* (1994), *Qué buena raza* (2002), and *Demasiada belleza* (2003).

2 In addition to *La pena máxima*, another novel by Roncagliolo, *Pudor* (2004) was also filmed (Tristán and David Ulloa, 2007) and there are plans to do the same with *Abril Rojo* (2006) and *La noche de los alfileres* (2016) (Javier Fuentes-León, 2026 and 2028 respectively).

was illustrated by Mussolini, who used the 1934 World Cup in Italy for fascist propaganda (Cappa, 1998: 8-10) or by Videla, who seized the 1978 tournament in Argentina as an opportunity to redeem the damaged reputation of his country. Soccer was only able to regain its position in Latin American literature when, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the cultural focus shifted from the political polarization that was induced by Cold War to topics of everyday reality, such as drug trafficking, internal political conflicts, violence or sentimentalism, among which football perfectly fitted in. This tendency took shape in the works of 'Post-Boom' authors like Eduardo Galeano, Eduardo Sacheri, Martín Kohan, and Santiago Roncagliolo as well as in emblematic soccer movies such as *Golpe de estadio* (Sergio Cabrera, 1998) or *Mi mejor enemigo* (Alex Bowen, 2005), to only name a few, and eventually led to «the intellectualization of football» (Carrión, 2006: pp. 30-31).

This socio-cultural impact of football is also emphasized by Nadel as he explains that this sport can help «to shape the narrative of nation and gender, of race and politics» (2014: 243). National football styles, such as the Argentinian 'la nuestra', the 'criollo' style that subordinates the direct British approach to technical and artistic playing skills, are a demonstration of how this sport underpins nation building. In many Latin American countries winning a football match is not good enough: «While players and coaches want to play a technically sound game, fans expect beauty, skill, and panache» (2014: 43). Playing by their national style, Latin American football teams introduce characteristics they associate with their nation while also transcending their «inferiority complex in the face of Europe and construct[ing] a sense of national pride» (Wood, 2017: 58).

As football is thus closely connected to nation building, the analysis of narratives such as *La pena máxima* fits in with the perspective of imagology. This discipline developed within the field of comparative literature and «deals with discursive articulations of national, cultural, or ethnical characterizations, that is, with representations of national character called ethnotypes» (Van Doorslaer, 2022, p. 109). Instead of trying to define what nation, nationalities and national characteristics are and to consider them as empirical entities —an essentialist approach which was prevalent in the nineteenth century—, imagology looks at how they are represented in literary discourses, in «an intertext, a sounding board of other textual related instances» (Leerssen, 2007: 26). From such a viewpoint, the present novel and the study of its intercultural transfer will enable us to pursue an important objective of imagology, which «is to describe the origin, process and function of national prejudices and stereotypes, to bring them to the surface, analyse them and make people rationally aware of them» (Beller, 2007: 11-12).

1.2. National images in *La pena máxima*

La pena máxima (2014) presents some revolting images of both Argentina and Peru through a narrative centered around the 1978 World Cup in Argentina. The book's chapters are based on the matches played by the Peruvian team and the final between Argentina and the Netherlands. Moreover, the various matches and their TV broadcasting have a direct impact on the course of the narrative. While the majority of the Peruvian population is watching the World Cup, Joaquín gets shot down in the streets of Lima while he was transporting a child. It is his friend Félix Chacaltana who ends up trying to solve the mysterious circumstances of his death while also discovering the ugly truth about the violent methods used by the Argentinian and Peruvian government to get rid of their political enemies.

Roncagliolo's novel therefore uses football to express heavy criticism towards the military governments of both countries instead of boosting the national sense of pride, as was described in Wood (2017: 58). It represents Argentina as a violent nation led by a dictatorship that wants to enhance its reputation through sportswashing by organizing the World Cup and also by winning it. To this end Argentina bribes Perú, which gives away the semifinals by losing by an improbable 6-0 score. Peru, on the other hand, is presented as an opportunistic accomplice, as it receives in return Argentinian collaboration in the elimination of its own political enemies, illimited supplies of grain, and most of all, the children of assassinated opponents of the military junta in order to address the needs of Peruvian childless couples. The novel thus uses the 1978 World Cup to «[undertake] an exploration of what the event might reveal about the facilitation of political violence on one hand and the simultaneous construction of national narratives on the other» (Wood, 2017: 186).

As has been pointed out by Snauwaert, the tracking of such «ethnotypes» in the novel is relevant not only when performing a «textual analysis», but also from a «contextual» perspective «in the reception history of a text» (Flynn *et al.*, 2016: 3 as cited in Snauwaert, 2021: 10). Consequently, the present study will use Snauwaert's findings (2021) about the perception of Argentina and Peru in the intercultural transfer of the novel in order to take into account the reception of the cinematographic adaptation of *La pena máxima*. Such an approach should enable us to determine to what extent reception of national images is influenced by the medium.

2. National images and reception studies

Within the field of translation and reception studies, it is remarkable that most of the scholars take literary novels as their object of investigation, while they currently neglected audiovisual translation. This subfield has only started to claim a more prominent place within academic research during the last few decades, challenging the «traditional and static views on (often literary) translation, the unicity of authorship, and the monodirectional hierarchical relationship between source text and target text» (Van Doorslaer, 2020: 141). Even though analyses of adaptations from novel to other media are certainly not new. No later than 1952 Lester Asheim already formulated 39 distinctive features for novels and movies. The most notable point of difference is the restricted length of movies as it leads to a simplification of the plot or to the omission of certain material of the novel (Asheim, 1952: 260). These elisions often affect the «subplots, of conflicting interests, of complexities, relationships, and additional evidence which enrich and expand the novel» (Asheim, 1952: 271). Moreover, Asheim claims that social criticism also tends to be partially lost as the action and advancement of the plot are the primary interest of movies (1952: 268). Many years later, Linda Hutcheon abandoned the notion of 'simplification' as it did not do justice to the new perspectives each medium has to offer: «When we adapt, we create using all the tools that creators have always used: we actualize or concretize ideas; we simplify but we also amplify and extrapolate; we make analogies; we critique or show our respect» (Hutcheon, 2004: 110). The emphasis on the role of the adapter shows an increasing interest in adaptation as a creative process that takes benefit of the typical characteristics of the different media and simultaneously emphasizes the relevance of its reception.

As far as the more recent reception studies of audiovisual translation are concerned, their main focus seems to be audience oriented (Biltereyst and Meers, 2018: 22). Finding reliable and objective sources on the reaction or opinion of the audience is, however, an issue as «anonymous film-goers left little or no written traces» (Jenkins, 2000: 170). Consulting reviews in order to consider the

audience's reaction to a cinematic work provides a more solid, written foundation but can be misleading as «these sources do not fully reflect the preferences of the audience at large» (Garncarz, 2010: 285), and rather show the opinion of a limited group of professional critics operating within their «own institutional context and interpretive rules» (Jenkins, 2000: 170). Nevertheless, the research conducted in this article will take into account such sources but complete them by using contemporary literary and audiovisual resources, such as blogs and recordings of oral interviews, which open up the limited professional group to a more diverse audience.

As we do not conduct our research from the individual viewpoint of a singular reader or spectator but from a broad socio-cultural angle (Brems and Ramos Pinto, 2013: 143), the results should reflect an opinion of a more diverse public and give us a more accurate view of which values it generally most focuses on. By doing so, we will be able to draw conclusion on changes in the perception of the national images elaborated in both media according to the cultural context they are encountered in. At this stage, we can rely on the categorization system for reception values, which has already been introduced by Andringa (2006) and has been applied in the analysis of the reception of the novel by Snauwaert (2021). As a similar categorization system for the adaptation of literature to other media has not been established yet, this study also aims to fill the gap by adapting the already existing categories for novels to cinematographic works and to provide a more inclusive and transmedial theoretical framework for reception studies.

2.1. Reception values for novels

Andringa's article on the reception of Virginia Woolf proposes categorizing certain reception values to determine which elements are the focus of the reception of a novel. According to her classification system, these reception values can be separated into four groups (2006, p. 526). The first category contains the «relational values», which include «judgement in comparison to other work [...], or to the author's earlier work» (2006: 547). These values mainly refer to contextual information about the author and influences by literary currents. Topics such as «language, style, structure, composition and the quality of translation» (2006: 547) are categorized as «formal values». When it comes to «depth, truth, moral worth, the importance of themes, or critical and emancipatory engagement», Andringa uses the category of «content values» (2006: 547). The final category that is distinguished in her work includes the effects on the reader such as «identification», «enjoyment» and «stimulating reflection» (2006: 547).

2.2. Reception values for movies

As Andringa's theoretical framework exclusively focuses on the perception of novels and given the transmedial perspective of our analysis, it should be adapted so that it also can take into account the cinematic medium. Although all of Andringa's original categories apply to the cinematic medium³, some subcategories will have to be added to offer a complete overview of which values are most present in the cinematographic reviews. In the section of relational values there is a need to

3 Although the subcategory about the quality of translation appears to be relevant in the cinematic context as such, it will not be considered in this study since the movie has not been translated nor subtitled into other languages.

reshape the category of biobibliographical aspects as the author is no longer the only agent that will be commented on in reviews, which currently may discuss the director and the actors as well. Moreover, relational values can also refer to awards the work has obtained⁴. In our case study of *La pena máxima*, this category is especially relevant for the movie as its script won the Concurso Nacional de Largometrajes Peruanos (2018), organized annually by the Peruvian Ministry of Culture with the aim of promoting Peruvian fiction filmmaking.

In the formal values section, we can also add two new categories to make the categorization more inclusive. When a novel is to be adapted into a new medium, a script must be created. This is a process that sometimes includes collaborations between the author and the director as changes have to be applied to the narrative. This collaboration and the changes that are decided on are often topics that draw the attention of the public and therefore appear in reviews as well. The making of the script is not the only process that is a popular topic of reviews, the circumstances of the actual filming procedure are also relevant. In our specific case study, filming during covid was a challenge and is therefore a common focus in reviews.

As mentioned before, there are not that many differences in the narrative between the two media, which implies the content values can stay the same. In the present case, this similarity was fostered by the active involvement of Santiago Roncagliolo, the author of the original novel, in the writing of the script. We will discuss this aspect subsequently, when we consider the structural differences between the novel and the movie. Finally, there is no need to add anything to the effects on the reader category because the issues in the narrative that evoke critical reflection, enjoyment or the experience of beauty also apply to the audience for a transmedial adaptation.

3. Transmedial adaptation of *La pena máxima*

Now that we have expanded the categories of reception values introduced by Andringa (2006) into a more inclusive framework, we can use it for our transmedial research. As *La pena máxima* first appeared in 2014 and was later adapted into a movie (2022), this case study offers us the possibility not only to look at the difference in numbers of reviews written on both media (quantitative analysis), but also at the difference in values that are mentioned or emphasized (qualitative analysis) based on the adapted categories of Andringa. Before we do so, however, it is necessary to take into account that the plots of the two media *La pena máxima* appeared in are essentially comparable. This parallelism, which will enable us to perform a coherent reception study and to assess the impact of both media in this process, is reflected in the significant similarities between the characters portrayed in the novel and in the movie as well as in the continuity of aspects of content and structure, which in both works only differ due to some slight and occasional shifts of focus.

3.1. Similar characters

As the original author of the novel was actively involved in the writing process of the script, reshaping the story to fit the new medium and ensuring that the movie did not lose the most essential

4 Although they play a more ostentatious role in the film world, such awards are also common in the literary context. It would thus be useful to include this value systematically in the reception study of novels as well.

themes and the atmosphere of his novel (Fangacio Arakaki, 2022), the movie adaptation shows similarities to the novel in many ways. While the movie simplified some plot lines by focussing more on the pace and the thriller genre according to the findings of Asheim (1952: 260), the story did retain the main tensions between personal morality and political corruption in, for example, the character of Chacaltana. Both the novel and the movie portray this character as an innocent and dutiful young man who gradually gets entangled in the violence performed by his country.

These tensions are not only seen in the protagonist but are also reflected in the supporting characters, who each show different aspects of the aforementioned moral and political conflict. Chacaltana's boss in the archive, for example, avoids dealing with corruption by deliberately ignoring it, which allows it to persist without challenge. His avoidance shows how corruption can flourish when people refuse to take responsibility. Chacaltana's mother, although closely linked to traditional Catholic values, does not concern herself with these larger social problems. Instead, she focuses on more personal matters, like interfering in the relationship between her son and his progressive girlfriend, highlighting a disconnect from the pressing issues around her. Finally, Almirante Carmona, a high-ranking military leader, represents the height of corruption. He is directly involved in violent acts, showing just how deeply corruption is embedded in positions of power. Despite the difference in medium, these characters continue to occupy the same roles in both the novel and the film, highlighting the tension between morality and corruption in both versions.

3.2. Minor shifts in structure and content

In terms of the structure, the movie largely follows the same sequence of events as the novel does with some minor chronological adjustments. Such slight change occurs, for example, when, Chacaltana confronts admiral Carmona about the torture he witnessed during his travel to Argentina after which the admiral is shot in front of his eyes (Roncagliolo, 2014: 330-337). Even though this scene is integrated in one of the last chapters of the book it is moved to an even later moment in the film (Gómez, 2022: 01:33:28 - 01:33:45) to heighten dramatic tension and create a stronger narrative climax, which emphasizes the thriller aspect of the story. In other words, the main structure of the novel and its chapters remain unchanged although the movie make some small chronological alternations in order to enhance the pace and the tension of the story.

The film adaptation shifts the focus from Peru's World Cup obsession and political turmoil to a suspenseful thriller but still follows the novel's structure, with chapters based on the different World Cup matches. In order to heighten the tension and put emphasis on the thriller genre, the movie uses close-ups and a travelling camera perspective. These techniques dramatize, for example, the scene where Chacaltana discovers the body of his friend Joaquín. A close-up captures the shock on Chacaltana's face as he realizes his friend has been murdered, while the travelling camera creates the impression of walking alongside him as he cautiously approaches the body (Gómez, 2022: 00:16:50 - 00:17:30). Additionally, the movie tends to give more attention to the romantic storyline between Chacaltana and his girlfriend. This subplot, which serves to humanize Chacaltana and shows the changing Peruvian society —mainly through the generational difference between Chacaltana's very Catholic, strict, and closed-off mother and his outgoing, expressive, and sensual girlfriend— takes up a lot of screen. All together, these minor shifts do not affect the gist of the story and allow us to compare *La pena máxima*'s reception in both media from a consistent and relevant viewpoint.

4. Transmedial reception of *La pena máxima*

When comparing the reception study of the novel with the one of the movie in an exhaustive way, it is appropriate to adopt both a quantitative and a qualitative perspective. This implies that we will first consider the number of reviews, newspaper articles, interviews and blogs that have been published about both versions of *La pena máxima*, after which we will use Andringa's categories to obtain qualitative insights as well. For the novel, both the quantitative and qualitative analyses build on the article by Snauwaert (2021) in which the four categories of Andringa are used to analyse the reception of Roncagliolo's novel. Combining Snauwaert's (2021) data and the data we collected from the reception study on the cinematographic adaptation, we will be able to perform a transmedial and transcultural comparative analysis.

4.1. Reception of the novel

The reception study of the novel is centred around five cultural fields: the source culture (Peru) and four target cultures that play an important role in the narrative (Argentina and Spain) or that are an important market for the translations of the novel (France and the Netherlands). We will put the emphasis on the results that came forward for the Spanish-speaking cultures⁵ as these data will serve as a coherent starting point for a comparison with the movie later on. Such an approach is also justified since the quantitative analysis shows that most reviews come from the Spanish-speaking countries—and, despite the Argentinian and Peruvian setting of the plot, mainly from Spain (Snauwaert, 2021: 12)—, which makes sense as that is the language of the original novel.

In order to find out which reception values are most present in which cultural contexts, the qualitative study subdivides Andringa's criteria into operational subcategories. While the category of effects on the reader merely refers to the experiences of beauty, enjoyment, and stimulation of reflection proposed by Andringa and the formal values stick to her subdivision between «language, style, structure, composition and the quality of translation» (2006: 547), the relational values distinguish biobibliographical aspects about the author from poetical principles that take into account the literary context and currents. The values that need to be adapted the most to the specific novel that is being analysed, however, are those that have to do with its content and cover its main issues. These are football and politics, operation Condor—a right-wing covert campaign of political repression and terror coordinated by South American dictatorships during the 1970s and 1980s—the three dictatorships (Argentinian, Peruvian and Spanish) that play an important role in the narrative and the crimes against humanity they committed, and also induce subcategories such as «the international repercussions of totalitarian politics», and «the exotic perspective from which Latin America is usually considered (Snauwaert, 2021: 13).

The majority of the reception values that appear in these reviews are connected to the content of the narrative, which is also the most relevant aspect from the viewpoint of imagology. While the themes discussed in the Argentinian cultural context are rather limited, the Peruvian and Spanish

5 The non-Spanish-speaking cultural fields tend to focus more on relational and formal values. The French sources do not mention the Peruvian complicity in the violence and some even make mistakes when describing the events. The Dutch sources, on the other hand, offer more detailed arguments and denounce the violence in a much stronger way (Snauwaert, 2021: 13-16).

contexts give a more nuanced and detailed perspective including themes like the Peruvian complicity and the parallels with the Spanish dictatorship of a few decades earlier. In general, the political annotation of football and the suspicious defeat of Peru against Argentina receive most attention. The number of Spanish reviews focussing on the different dictatorships and the Peruvian complicity indicate that this is a perspective that is shared amongst the reviews from the Spanish cultural context (Snauwaert, 2021: 16).

4.2. Reception of the film adaptation

In order to gain insight into the influence of the medium in the reception study of *La pena máxima* and its consequences for the national images of the culture involved, our analysis of the cinematographic medium will follow the quantitative and qualitative methods that were used for the novel. As mentioned before, the focus is on the reception in the Spanish-speaking cultural fields given that there is no translation available of the cinematographic version nor does it include subtitles to make it accessible in languages other than Spanish. By only including the Spanish-speaking cultural context, we are able to make a consistent comparative transmedial analysis, starting from similar conditions. The following table shows the absolute number of reviews that was encountered in each cultural context⁶.

Number of reviews Cultural context	Newspapers and journals	Oral interviews	Blogs	Total
Argentina	<i>Infobae</i> (1)	/		1
Peru	<i>El Comercio</i> (3) <i>RPP</i> (2) <i>Diario Correo</i> (1) <i>Perú21</i> (1) <i>La República</i> (1) <i>El peruano</i> (1) <i>Nexos</i> (1) <i>Revista Cocktail</i> (1)	<i>Caretas</i> (1) <i>Cinescape</i> (1) <i>La Mula TV</i> (1) <i>La República</i> (1) <i>RPP</i> (1)	<i>Cinescape</i> (1) <i>Cinestación</i> (1)	18
Spain	/	<i>Cadena Ser</i> (1)		1

Table 1. Number of reviews about the cinematographic adaptation of *La pena máxima* per cultural context

When looking at the three Spanish speaking countries, we notice that almost all of the 20 reviews on the adaptation have been published in Peru itself. Therefore, it becomes clear that there is

⁶ Articles that merely mention the work by name without further discussion as well as articles that are copied from other are not considered, as they do not contribute meaningful insights into the narrative or its adaptation.

indeed an important difference between the quantitative reception of the cinematographic adaptation and the novel, which had most reviews published in Spain. Consequently, it becomes clear that the novel has had a much wider transnational reception. The most plausible reason for this is difference in publication date and place: while the novel was published many years ago (2014) and has since been translated into multiple target-languages, the movie has only recently (2022) been made available in Spanish on a location-limited streaming platform (Paramount+)⁷. Apart from highlighting differences in the transnational reception of both media, these quantitative data also reveal how different cultural contexts engage with the main themes of *La pena máxima*. In the Peruvian context, the number of reviews for the film adaptation increased, while in Spain, the reception diminished to just a single review. This could give the impression that Peruvian critics took the opportunity to continue addressing social issues, using the film as a platform to denounce the violence of that turbulent period in the country's history once again years after the novel was published.

In such a context it is relevant to observe which reception values are most focused on in reviews in the different Spanish-speaking cultural contexts, both about the novel and the corresponding movie. A qualitative analysis of the cinematographic version of *La pena máxima* will make it possible to compare which values are emphasized in the reception of the two different media. Table 2 reproduces the results in the same way as the data from the study of Snauwaert (2021, 13-14), which are listed in the column 'Novel'⁸. The number of reviews that include a certain value is indicated both as an absolute frequency (AF) and a relative frequency (%).

Cultural context	Argentina AF (%)		Peru AF (%)		Spain AF (%)	
Reception value	Novel (total 3)	Movie (total 1)	Novel (total 6)	Movie (total 18)	Novel (total 12)	Movie (total 1)
1. Relational values						
Biobibliographical aspects		1 (100)	2 (33,3)	10 (55,6)	4 (33,3)	1 (100)
<i>Author</i>				1 (5,6)		1 (100)
<i>Director</i>				7 (38,9)		
Actors		1 (100)		7 (38,9)		
Poetical principles	1 (33,3)			2 (11,1)	5 (41,7)	
Awards				5 (27,7)		
2. Formal values						
Language						
Style			1 (16,7)	8 (44,4)	1 (8,3)	
Structure			1 (16,7)		1 (8,3)	

7 It should also be taken into account that the novel was published just before the 2014 World Cup in Brazil, which might have sparked an increased audience interest. The movie, on the other hand, was published before the (controversial) 2022 World Cup that took place in Qatar, a country with a limited affinity with football and with Latin America.

8 The criteria "international repercussions" and "exoticism", used in Snauwaert's analysis of the novel's reception, have been omitted from this table as they apply solely to the analysis of the novel's translations

Composition	1 (33,3)		1 (16,7)	3 (16,7)	6 (50)	
Script	1 (33,3)			8 (44,4)		1 (100)
Circumstance of filming				6 (33,3)		1 (100)
3. Content: themes						
Football and politics	3 (100)		5 (83,3)	8 (44,4)	7 (58,3)	
Operation Condor	1 (33,3)		3 (50)	7 (38,9)	6 (50)	
Crimes against humanity	1 (33,3)		2 (33,3)	5 (27,7)	4 (33,3)	
Argentinian dictatorship	2 (66,6)		2 (33,3)	9 (50)	8 (66,6)	
Peruvian complicity			6 (100)	5 (27,7)	4 (33,3)	
Spanish dictatorship			1 (16,6)		7 (58,3)	
4. Effects on the audience						
Enjoyment						
Stimulation of reflection			2 (11,1)			
Experience of beauty						

Table 2. Qualitative reception: absolute frequencies (AF) and relative frequencies (%) per cultural context

When it comes to the Argentinian⁹ and Spanish¹⁰ reviews, we are talking about very small numbers for both countries (Argentina: 1, Spain: 1). At first the lack of formal values seems most striking, but it soon becomes clear that the other categories are not very present either. We can see, for example, that none of the reviews go into detail about any of the political background. Within the Argentinian cultural context, the article —only including a relational value— was published in the aftermath of the death of Ismael Contreras, the actor playing the role of Chacaltana's boss Arturo (Redacción Infobae, 2022). Therefore, it merely focusses on Contreras' achievements instead of going into detail about the movie. In the case of the Spanish cultural context, the one oral interview dealing with the cinematographic adaptation focusses mainly on biographical information about Roncagliolo and how he experienced working on a movie during the Covid pandemic (Roncagliolo, *Cadena Ser*, 2022).

Most of the reception of the cinematographic adaptation thus comes from Peru itself. We can already notice that many of these Peruvian reviews¹¹ included the new categories that we added to

9 The title of the Argentinian newspaper article about the cinematographic adaptation of *La pena máxima* is: «Ismael Contreras: actor y dramaturgo peruano falleció a los 77 años», *Infobae*, 24 January 2022.

10 The title of the Spanish oral interview about the cinematographic adaptation of *La pena máxima* is: «Santiago Roncagliolo y sus cruasanes bajo», *Cadena Ser*, 16 January 2022.

11 The titles of the eleven Peruvian newspaper articles about the cinematographic adaptation of *La pena máxima* are: «Santiago Roncagliolo confirma que se realizará la película de su novela *La pena máxima*», *RPP*, 11 September 2019; «Ismael Contreras, reconocido actor peruano y dramaturgo, falleció a los 77 años», *Diario Correo*, 25 January 2022; «Santiago Roncagliolo: “La historia cambia el sentido de las novelas”», *El Peruano*, 6 March 2022; «*La pena máxima*: lanzan tráiler y afiche de película basada en novela de Santiago Roncagliolo», *El Comercio*, 20 June 2022; «*La pena máxima*: una nueva película que lleva el ADN de la Ulima», *Nexos*, 9 July 2022; «Michel Gómez presenta el trailer de su nueva película *La pena máxima*», *Revista Cocktail*, 19 July 2022; ««*La pena máxima*»: habla director de cinta basada en novela de Santiago Roncagliolo que combina política y fútbol», *El Comercio*, 21 August 2022; «Michel Gómez: “Me gusta mucho el thriller político”», *La República*, 21 August 2022; «Michel Gómez: “He tratado de luchar siempre contra el racismo y la exclusión”», *Perú21*, 24 August 2022; «*La pena máxima*: protagonistas hablan de sus oscuros personajes en el thriller político», *RPP*, 1 September 2022; «*La pena máxima*

Andringa's categorization system. Many titles give away the interest of the reviewer in the biobibliographical information concerning the director —«Michel Gómez: Me gusta mucho el thriller político» (Miranda, *La República*: 2022) or «*La pena máxima*: habla director de cinta basada en novela de Santiago Roncagliolo que combina política y fútbol» (Fangacio Arakaki, *El Comercio*, 2022)— and the actors, as we can read in «La Pena Máxima: protagonistas hablan de sus oscuros personajes en el thriller político» (Redacción RPP, 2022) or «La Pena Máxima: película protagonizada por Emanuel Soriano llega a la pantalla grande en agosto» (Redacción, *Perú21*, 2022).

The formal values are also more present here than in the Peruvian reviews about the novel. Not only do the reviews put more emphasis on the thriller genre (style value) —which is, as mentioned before, a central element of the cinematographic adaptation— but there are also many references to the script and circumstance of filming. When it comes to the script, the reviews often emphasise the collaboration that took place during its development:

Todos los años, CREA recibe propuestas de películas para trabajar en conjunto, historias que podrían necesitar una co-producción [...] De la mano de Julio Wissar, director de CREA, se analizan las propuestas hasta llegar a aquella que señalan como interesante y con posibilidad de llegar más lejos que a salas de cine en el Perú. En el 2020, una de ellas fue *La pena máxima* (Granda, *Nexos*, 2022)¹².

As the filming process took place during the Covid pandemic and around the time of the 2021 Peruvian general election, its practical struggles are a common topic as well: «Gómez cuenta que no faltaron las dificultades. Después de todo, eran los días postelectorales y las calles del centro de Lima estaban tomadas por los fujimoristas que gritaban fraude y los ronderos que apoyaban a Pedro Castillo» (Miranda, *La República*, 2022)¹³.

Regarding content values, globally the same topics are addressed across both media. For instance, the novel's reception reflects on complicity during the dictatorship, as shown by Mendoza's remark:

Es verdad que la dictadura peruana no fue tan masivamente criminal como las del Cono Sur, pero cuando tu vecino es un asesino y tú no haces nada, terminas por ser cómplice. Y Perú

llegó al streaming: ¿dónde ver la película peruana?», *El Comercio*, 31 July 2023. The titles of the five interviews are: «“Entrometidas”, por Maritza Espinoza y Patricia Salinas: Entrevista a Santiago Roncagliolo», *La Mula TV*, 1 March 2022; «Michel Gomez presenta su próxima película *La pena máxima*», *Caretas*, 5 August 2022; «El productor y director Michel Gómez nos abre las puertas de su casa a días de estrenarse *La pena máxima*, protagonizada por Emanuel Soriano, en todos los cines del país», *La República*, 21 August 2022; «Entrevista: Elenco peruano nos cuenta todo sobre *La Pena Máxima*», *Cinescape*, 30 August 2022 and «Película *La pena máxima* ya está en los cines a nivel nacional», *RPP*, 1 September 2022.

- 12 «Every year, CREA receives proposals of films to work in collaboration, stories that might need a co-production [...] Under the guidance of Julio Wissar, CREA's director, the proposals are analysed until they reach the one that they consider interesting and with the possibility of going further than cinemas in Peru. In 2020, one of them was *La pena máxima* [our translation]» (Granda, *Nexos*, 2022).
- 13 «Gómez says that there was no lack of difficulties. After all, it was post-election days and the streets of central Lima were taken over by Fujimoristas shouting fraud and the ronderos supporting Pedro Castillo [our translation]» (Miranda, *La República*, 2022).

fue cómplice de cooperación con la dictadura argentina en casos de desapariciones, torturas y secuestros (Mendoza, *El Comercio*, 2014)¹⁴.

Similarly, reviews about the film adaptation share this reflection: «Nuestro país alberga un pasado violento que ha sido plasmado en el cine, tanto para presentar estos hechos como así también sus consecuencias» (*Revista Cocktail*, 2022)¹⁵.

Reception studies of both media also highlight shared reflections on other values, such as the connection between football and politics, the various dictatorships, and Operation Condor. For example, the reviews of *El Comercio* not only describe how the novel portrays the atrocities and the corruption the Argentinian and Peruvian governments are responsible for and consequently consider it «as a way to settle the score with the nation's history» (Snauwaert, 2021, 17), but also pay attention to the intersection of sports interests and politics as far as the film is concerned.

Hace poco, Juan Carlos Oblitas contó la anécdota de que Jorge Videla y Henry Kissinger bajaron a saludar a los futbolistas antes del partido. Imaginate la presión que había. Hubo muchas cosas extrañas alrededor. Algunas son leyendas urbanas, pero otras sí tuvieron que ver con acuerdos que tomaron los militares argentinos y peruanos, como parte del famoso Plan Cóndor (Fangacio Arakaki, *El Comercio*, 2022)¹⁶.

Nevertheless, if we take a look at the relative frequencies for the different topics, a paradoxical situation emerges. Whereas the quantitative analysis suggested that the large amount of reviews about the movie would give rise to a more developed sociopolitical reflection, the percentages in table 2 show that, except for the reference to the Argentinian dictatorship, all of these content values are generally more present in the novel's reception. If the mere parallels in the reception of the content in both media allow us to suppose that the reviews about the movie are willing to shed light on the country's violent past and could even point to a shared sense of collective guilt, they by no means reach the intensity with which these interpretations come forward in the articles about the novel. In this context, it is striking that the content values that cover the link between 'football and politics' and the 'Peruvian complicity' in the 1978 World Cup abuses score two (44,4 versus 83,3%) and four times (27,7 versus 100%) lower in the reception for the film than in that for the book. Most of all, the imbalance in this last category, which highlights Peru's responsibilities in the commented historical period and its possible future implications, along with the total absence of 'stimulation of reflection' in the 'effects on the audience', demonstrates that the reviews about the movie turn out to be more

14 «It is true that the Peruvian dictatorship was not as massively criminal as those of the Southern Cone, but when your neighbour is a murderer and you do nothing, you end up being an accomplice. And Peru was complicit in cooperating with the Argentine dictatorship in cases of disappearances, torture and kidnappings [our translation]» (Mendoza, *El Comercio*, 2014).

15 «Our country has a violent past that has been captured in film, both to present these events and their consequences [our translation]» (*Revista Cocktail*, 2022).

16 «Recently, Juan Carlos Oblitas told the anecdote that Jorge Videla and Henry Kissinger came down to greet the players before the match. Imagine the pressure. There were a lot of strange things going on. Some are urban legends, but others had to do with agreements made by the Argentine and Peruvian military, as part of the famous Condor Plan [our translation]» (Fangacio Arakaki, *El Comercio*, 2022).

superficial in terms of societal relevance and tend to convey a less damaged image of the country than the novel's reception.

Looking at these outcomes, it becomes clear that the medium did play an important role in the way both versions of *La pena máxima* were received. As was pointed out by Hutcheon (2004) and Asheim (1952), the compression of plot lines and the omission of material that takes place during the adaptation of a novel into the cinematographic medium has an impact on audience comprehension. The reviews about the film are inclined to emphasize relational and formal values more strongly at the expense of the content, and when they address proper content values, they give priority, according to the findings of Asheim (1952: 268), to action and the progress of the plot, skating over aspects of social criticism. Such concerns, on the other hand, were very explicit in the Peruvian reviews about the novel, which globally «consider the totalitarian regimes of Argentina and Peru as a permanent wake-up call, since they demonstrate how savageries [...] can revive anywhere, at any time» and also urge the country to take its «responsibility in barbarian conflicts» in order to «face political and social dangers in a more authentic way» (Snauwaert, 2021: 17) in the future. By avoiding a deeper exploration of the social and political implications of the story and by not calling for a moral response, the content values included in the reviews about the film eventually depict degradation of Perú's national image in *La pena máxima* less sharply than the novel's reviews. Although we are aware that the low frequencies we rely on should prevent us from making far-reaching statements, the present case finally shows that the reception seems to be largely determined by the media it covers, and that the transmedial reception generates a bias that significantly affects the national image of Peru it presents.

Conclusion

By addressing the atrocities committed during the '78 World Cup by the Argentinian and Peruvian military governments *La pena máxima* not only demonstrates the power of football to construct and deconstruct national images but also raises the question of how such images are influenced by the medium through which the narrative is conveyed. Starting from the partial adaptation of Andringa's theoretical framework, which was needed in order to perform such a transmedial reception analysis, we observed, from a quantitative perspective, that the reviews on the cinematographic adaptation are almost limited to the Peruvian cultural context. If it is true that such a concentration of publications reveals a very weak international resonance of the movie, it simultaneously suggests that Peruvian press seizes the opportunity to discuss a violent episode of the national past.

From a qualitative viewpoint, however, and in contrast with the novel's critical evaluation of violence committed by the discussed dictatorships, the movie's reception emphasizes the formal aspects and the circumstances of its own creation, while restraining itself from systematically addressing the content issues and deepening their societal implications. Even though this single case study should be complemented by similar ones before we draw broad conclusions, it demonstrates that the reception of the cinematographic adaptation differs substantially from the one of Roncagliolo's novel by paradoxically focusing on the mere national scope without properly delving into the narrative's deconstruction of the national image. Consequently, this correlation between the focus of reception and the medium it covers aligns with Asheim's (1952) and Hutcheon's (2004) insights on cinematic adaptation, but it simultaneously confirms the relevance of a transmedial approach for imagology as it leads to distinct creations of national images.

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