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HOW DON QUIJOTE TRAVELLED TO THE AMERICAS. METAMORPHOSIS OF THE SPANISH NATIONAL HERO IN TEXTS BY RUBÉN DARÍO, CARLOS FUENTES AND KATHY ACKER

Cómo Don Quijote viajó a las Américas. Metamorfosis del héroe nacional de España en textos de Rubén Darío, Carlos Fuentes y Kathy Acker

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RESUMEN: Pocos héroes de ficción simbolizan un carácter nacional como Don Quijote en el caso de España. En este trabajo se investiga su adaptación a los contextos étnicos, históricos y culturales de las Américas, dando interés particular a los mecanismos de transtextualización en el cuento *D. Q.* de Rubén Darío (1899), en *Terra Nostra* de Carlos Fuentes (1975), y en la novela *Don Quixote which was a dream* (1986) de la Estadounidense Kathy Acker. Como demuestran los tres textos, la figura se inscribe perfectamente en diferentes circunstancias ideológicas y culturales gracias a la elasticidad del mitologema Don Quijote. Destaca el hecho de que los textos americanos vayan más allá de

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la versión decimonónica del Quijote con su falso romanticismo caballeresco, poniendo de relieve las ideas humanísticas del original que tras el Renacimiento habían sido olvidadas.

Palabras clave: Don Quijote, héroe nacional, transtextualidad, americanidad, locura, utopía.

ABSTRACT: Only a few fictional heroes symbolize a supposed national character in the way Cervantes' Don Quijote does in the case of Spain. His adaptation to the ethnic, historical and cultural contexts of the Americas is discussed in this paper, focusing especially on the mechanisms of transtextualization in the short story *D. Q.* by Rubén Darío (1899), in *Terra Nostra* by Carlos Fuentes (1975), and in Kathy Acker's «post-feminist» novel *Don Quixote which was a dream* from 1986. These three texts demonstrate that due to the elasticity of the mythologeme Don Quijote, this fictive figure is to function under different ideological and cultural circumstances. It is remarkable that all of the texts go beyond the 19th century version of Don Quijote, liberating the figure from all the false romantic chivalry and exposing the humanistic ideas of Cervantes' novel which had been left behind following the Enlightenment.

Key words: Don Quijote, national hero, transtextuality, americanness, insanity, utopia.

Introduction

Miguel de Cervantes' Don Quijote is a literary hero full of ambiguity and ambivalence, whose openness to nearly every kind of reception has made him a mythical figure, a «mythologeme» after Jung and Kerény, that means, one of «aquellos relatos que, aun siendo ya bien conocidos, todavía son susceptibles de reformulación» (Varela Iglesias 2007, 12). As a consequence, Don Quijote has experienced a plethora of different readings and re-writings:

> La recepción de orientación realista tiende a ver en esta obra una *sátira*, la recepción de orientación idealista tiende a ver una *idea ejemplar*. Los autores de la primera dirección subrayan el carácter *ridículo* de los disparates de un loco, los autores de la segunda el carácter *noble y esforzado* de quien está más allá de la cordura. La recepción realista condena a nuestro héroe a ser un personaje de un *pasado* que hay que evitar, la recepción idealista hace de Don Quijote un héroe del *futuro* que hay que imitar (Varela Iglesias 2007, 43).

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Beyond the traditional European hermeneutic frame, this essay focuses on three examples of re-writings in the context of the Americas: The short story *D. Q.* by Rubén Darío (Nicaragua), first published in 1899 (further D. Q.), *Terra Nostra* by the Mexican author Carlos Fuentes (1975) (further TN), and Kathy Acker's novel *Don Quixote which was a dream* (USA, 1986) (further Quixote). The aim of this comparative study is to demonstrate the American topics of the three hypertexts (after the terminology of Gérard Genette); in order to detect these I will delve into the transtextual relation with the hypotext *Don Quijote* (further DQ) by exploring the common points and differences of the four texts. The comparative parameters are, first of all, the structural characteristics, mainly the narrative perspective, and then the thematic dimension, with special emphasis on Don Quijote himself as a hero, the historical framework and the role of the «locura», the madness. After examining these key points, the «Americanness» of the American texts as a *differentia specifica* in comparison with the well-known, 19th-reception of Don Quijote as a Spanish national hero will be discussed. The aim is to demonstrate how the literary figure becomes functionalized within new historical and cultural ambiances which differ considerably from the conditions of its genesis at the beginning of the 17th century and of the later reception during the following four hundred years.

1. Structures in american re-writings of Don Quijote

The complex narrative situation of *Don Quijote de la Mancha* is already widely recognized, so it is not necessary to unfold again Cervantes' intelligent construction of narrative voice, compiler, translator and inserted stories told by the figures in the text. Also, it is a text of high auto-referentiality because the second part (1615) is not only an answer to Alonso Fernández de Avellaneda's continuation of 1614 but is in a continuous dialogue with the first part. For example, when Sancho Panza has a discussion with his master about the fact that he, Dulcinea de Toboso and Don Quijote live a lot of adventures in a novel with the title *El Ingenioso Hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha*[1] and provides the reader with the first interpretations of Don Quijote's behaviour: «–En lo que toca –prosiguió Sancho– a la valentía, cortesía, hazañas y asumpto de vuestra merced, hay diferentes opiniones: unos dicen: "Loco, pero gracioso"; otros, "Valiente, pero desgraciado"; otros,

1. I use the edition by Martín de Riquer, Barcelona, Planeta, 1987.

"Cortés, pero impertinente"; y por aquí van discurriendo en tantas cosas que ni a vuestra merced ni a mí nos dejan hueso sano» (D Q 594).

Clearly, the ambivalences of structure and contents are founded in the novel itself, and Cervantes has anticipated here the two main streams of its reception, the heroic and the comical[2]. But this thematic aspect will be discussed below; first of all, the organization of the material will be the centre of interest.

1.1. The first part of Rubén Dario's short story *D. Q.* is written in the first person and leads the reader to a military camp near Santiago de Cuba, where a desolate Spanish troop is waiting for a relief army from Spain. When these troops arrive, depression is overcome and everyone is eager to fight. The reader perceives this scenario through the eyes of one of the soldiers; thus, the recipient is involved in a general atmosphere of fraternization and common will to wipe out the enemy from the north. In this way, the text marks the distance between the group (including the reader) and the only outsider, who is not named and introduced as an outsider:

> Todos éramos jóvenes y bizarros, menos uno; todos nos buscaban para comunicar con nosotros o para conversar; menos uno. Nos traían provisiones que fueron repartidas. A la hora del rancho, todos nos pusimos a devorar nuestra escasa pitanza, menos uno. Tendría como cincuenta años, mas también podía haber trescientos. Su mirada triste parecía penetrar hasta lo hondo de nuestras almas y decirnos cosas de siglos. Alguna vez que se le dirigía la palabra, casi no contestaba, sonreía melancólicamente; se aislaba, buscaba la soledad; miraba hacia el fondo del horizonte, por el lado del mar. Era el abanderado. ¿Cómo se llamaba? No oí su nombre nunca (D. Q. 36).

At the outset, the reception has already been directed to Don Quijote by the title *D. Q.*; now, the reader is provided with further clues to the identity of this strange figure by explicit references to Cervantes' hero, such as the age (1905 would be the 300-year-anniversary of the first edition of the first part of *Don Quijote*), the search for isolation, the ascetic attitude and the sad glances («caballero de la triste figura» in Cervantes' text!).

Whereas this first sketch of the hero is strictly from an exterior point-of-view without any comment, in the second part of the story D. Q. is described by the army priest, who declares at the same time distance from and familiarity with D. Q.:

2. See Strosetzki 1991, 184-185.

> Es un hombre milagroso y extraño. Parece bravo y nobilísimo de corazón. Me ha hablado de sueños irrealizables. Cree que dentro de poco estaremos en Washington y que se izará nuestra bandera en el Capitolio, como lo dijo el obispo en su brindis. Le han apenado las últimas desgracias; pero confía en algo desconocido que nos ha de amparar; confía en Santiago; en la nobleza de nuestra raza, en la justicia de nuestra causa. ¿Sabe usted? Los otros seres le hacen burlas, se ríen de él. Dicen que debajo del uniforme usa una coraza vieja. Él no les hace caso. [...] Es un buen hombre, en el fondo; paisano mío, manchego. Cree en Dios y es religioso. También algo poeta. [...] Tiene a su bandera un culto casi supersticioso. Se asegura que pasa las noches en vela; por lo menos, nadie le ha visto dormir (D. Q. 36).

Combining these two complementary presentations of the protagonist from the personal perspective of two different figures, Darío's text transports a substantial part of the ambiguous approach to the reality of Cervantes' original by imitating its multifocal narrative strategy, even in the limited space of a short story. Thus, the narrative structure supports the presentation of the protagonist as a hero of dubious character. Carlos Fuentes' monumental novel *Terra Nostra*, of course, allows, because of the mere extent of the text, a much more complex elaboration of the textual structure, coming quite close to its hypotext.

1.2. *Terra Nostra* presents an exuberant abundance of figures, motives and styles. Formally, it is divided into three parts: The first, «The Old World», gives a panorama of Spain under the rule of King Philip II in the second half of the 16th century; the second part describes the conquest of America and the confrontation with Aztec and other mythology, entitled «The New World»; the third, «The Next World», explores the possibilities of a more just, liberal and democratic utopia in the American continent. This historical narration, written in a language of baroque superabundance, is framed by a background plot starting in Paris on 14th of July 1999 and ending again in Paris on the last day of the millennium, when the world is destroyed by apocalyptical events in order to be reborn under better conditions for all human beings.

The temporal space of the plot is marked by significant historical dates such as 1492 (Columbus in America; expulsion of the Sephardim; conquest of Granada, the last Moorish territory all over the Iberian peninsula), 1521 (defeat of the bourgeois revolution of the «comuneros» by the Emperor Charles V; conquest of Mexican Tenochtitlán by Hernán Cortés) and 1609 (expulsion of the remaining Moorish population of Castile). Beside historical persons such as the Spanish King Philip II –also representative of the Spanish Habsburg kings before and after him– there is a constant presence of three literary figures: Celestina from Fernando de Rojas' *Celestina* from

1499, a witch, matchmaker and pre-capitalistic owner of a brothel; Don Juan, hero of Tirso de Molina's play *Don Juan* from 1639, symbol of sexual libertinage and lawlessness of the aristocracy; and lastly, Don Quijote, introduced by his also fictionalized creator Miguel de Cervantes as chronicler and one of the various narrating voices[3]. The fact that there is a continuous co-existence between historical and fictitious figures is symptomatic of the novel's literary discourse which continuously effaces the borders between traditional historical truth with its –supposed– objectivity and poetic or imaginary subjectivity, based on faith or myth.

The third part of TN alludes explicitly to episodes and motives from Cervantes' *Don Quijote*; Don Quijote appears literally as «Knight of the Sad Countenance» (TN 603) and his adventures are enumerated in the form of abbreviated chapter titles from the original:

> How he was knighted. The stupendous battle with the Biscayan. The meeting with the goatherds. The story the goatherd told about the shepherdess Marcela. The night with Maritornes. The adventure of the dead body. The heartless Yanguesans. The arrival at the inn we took for a castle [...] (TN 603-604).

The manifold narrative instances correspond to the changing identities of the figures. Correctly, Javier Ordiz talks about a

> estructura totalmente laberíntica, donde los personajes cambian constantemente de identidad y donde se acaba perdiendo el hilo narrativo en una complicada maraña de relatos que remiten a otros o que los incluyen en una sucesión casi inacabable en la que se pierde la pista al propio narrador (2005, 40).

Indeed, Don Quijote appears in his youth as Don Juan and –after Celestina's intervention– as lover of young Dulcinea (TN 575), because «one lifetime is not sufficient. Many existences are needed to fulfil one personality» (TN 532; see as well 568, 614). This sentence about the multiplication of lives is repeated several times and functions as a ritual formula which condenses the essence of the whole text. In accordance with this strategy of duplication, repetition and redundancy, most of the characters include other figures in themselves, or they re-appear with alternative names, so that the reader can never be sure about the identity of any

3. Ramiro de Maeztu published in 1938 already an essay titled *Don Quijote, Don Juan y la Celestina*, where he perceives these fictive figures, first of all, as symbols of the Spanish decline, see Varela Iglesias 2007, 55 and further.

particular fictitious person. Thus, the circular structure inscribed in the text, also appears on the thematic level.

1.3. Similar to *Terra Nostra*, Kathy Acker's *Don Quixote which was a dream* structurally approaches Cervantes' hypotext to a certain point. The three parts of her novel show parallelisms with the original, so for instance in the first which starts with an episode about an abortion, juxtaposed to the accoutrement of the protagonist as a knight:

> From her neck to her knees she wore pale or puke green paper. This was her armor. [...] The wheeling chair would be her transportation (Quixote, 9). [...] As we've said, her wheeling bed's name was «Hack-kneed or Hack-neyed», meaning «once a hack' or always a hack' or a writer' or an attempt» to have an identity that always fails'. Just as «Hackneyed» is the glorification or change from non-existence into existence of «Hack-kneed», so; she decided, «catheter» is the glorification of «Kathy». By taking on such a name which, being long, is male, she would be able to become a female-male or a night-knight (Quixote 10).

After this introduction, the heroine embarks on various adventures, for example «The First Adventure»: She tries to free a boy who is being beaten by an older man, reminiscent, of course, of chapter 4 in the first part of *Don Quijote*. But whereas in Cervantes' novel young Andrés is beaten again by his master as soon as Don Quijote leaves the place, in the modern version it is Don Quixote herself who sends the boy back to his tormentor and «the boy tried to enjoy the beating because his life couldn't be any other way» (Quixote, 15). This is more or less the pattern according to which most of the episodes of the first part are configurated: they evoke a specific scene in Cervantes' novel, but the episode in question is modified and emphasizes often the violence Don Quixote has to face searching for love because this is her main intention: «She would love another person. By loving another person, she would right every manner of political, social and individual wrong» (Quixote 9).

Whereas the second part is a collage of other hypotexts, the third part «The End of the Night» leads back to Don Quijote's motives and shows a highly politicized dog-Don Quixote who wanders throughout New York while discussing with other dogs. Using the old genre of the fables, Acker's novel draws a devastating portrait of a corrupted and decadent country, ruled by a capitalistic oligarchy. Beyond the similarities on a structural level, this third chapter offers in particular a holistic view of the USA in the eighties which is quite comparable to what Cervantes did at his time describing the racist, unjust and imperialistic society of the 1600s in Spain.

Like Cervantes' *Don Quijote*, Acker's novel uses a wide range of different narrative forms. Even in the first part, where the auctorial narration is developed in quite a linear manner, there are inserted stories (for instance St. Simeon's story) or dreams (Quixote 17)[4]. The collage of linear narration, inserted stories and dreams is enriched by poetry (e. g. about St. Petersburg), fairy tale (Quixote 151) or drama (e. g. *Lulu*). But the most striking characteristic of Acker's work is the extensive use of other texts, in a more or less literal quotation or as a reference to them:

> If history, the enemy of time, is the mother of truth, the history of women must female identity. The main tome on this subject or history was written by Cid Hamete Benengeli, a man. Unfortunately, the author of this work so major it is the only one is an Arab, and that nation is known for its lying propensities; but even though they would be our enemies, it may readily be understood that they would more likely have added to rather than have detracted from the history (Quixot 29).

Obviously, this passage reminds us of Cervantes'

> objeción cerca de su verdad [del texto], no podrá ser otra sino haber sido su autor arábigo, siendo muy propio de los de aquella nación ser mentirosos; aunque, por ser tan nuestros enemigos, antes se puede entender haber quedado falto en ella que demasiado (D. Q. 102).

In both versions, Arabs are unreliable information providers, but whereas in Acker's text they tend to add something to their stories, in Cervantes' they leave something out. The ironical distance is palpable in both versions, and despite being a reversal of the original («have added»), in the US-Quixote there is nevertheless a strong tie to it because of its almost literal repetition. This procedure is paradigmatic:

> Indeed, Acker's novels refuse to stay within a single plot and constantly find themselves occupying other texts. In an interview [...], Acker notes that she appropriates texts not for parodist or structural purposes, but because they «describe the particular place I want to get to». Given Acker's description of the novel as a kind of map, we can see these referenced, inserted, and rewritten texts as the product of just this sort of desirous relation to the developing text, a relation that spins off into other texts and overflows the final «construct» of the novel (Punday 2005, 15).

4. A good survey about the function of the stories and short novels in *Don Quijote* gives the study by Stanislav Zimic (2003).

Thus, *Don Quixote* goes back to the roots of writing in two senses: firstly, because the narrator presents himself/herself as a compiler, a chronicler Whose most relevant task is to collect and to organize already existing material[5], and secondly, *Don Quixote* is a text about one of the oldest themes in literary history, the metamorphosis. Both parameters condition each other in the sense that because of the presence of references to *Don Quijote*, *Petersburg, Lulu*, etc. we are confronted with several authors, narrators and compilers so that the central instance of the story-teller undergoes a constant transformation. In this way, the God-like, auctorial figure of the narrator of male texts becomes devaluated, and the text develops into a network of various, horizontally situated texts without hierarchy –in other words, a rhizome.

Comparable phenomena are to be found on the linguistic level which is distinguished by its explicit polyphony. As appropriation of male *master narratives* after Lyotard is one of the main purposes of Acker's writing in general, she creates new models of linguistic representation through the use of several registers of speech. Besides informal passages in an often shocking argot (especially when sexuality is referred to), the text contains parts of old-fashioned English (e. g. «Tell only one, for night fast approacheth, and soon it is time we shall die. The earth turneth black, and all to ice [...]» [Quixote, 151]), of a completely neutral and impersonal style (for instance, in the description of the beginning of the Spanish Republic (Quixote 202-204) or even of bilingualism as is evidenced in the poem «On Time» with its English-Latin code-switching (Quixote 47-48). Through these specific poetic tools, Acker creates a hybrid and impure language and, as a consequence, develops a rhizomatic textual tissue without hierarchization. Thus, although her text is based to a very high degree on hypotexts, Acker achieves a poetic discourse which performs the materiality of language. «You're changing something, you're transforming something and stuff gets transformed. [...] You're not representing reality, you're making a reality», she states in an interview (Ávila/Meier 2005, 7). Exactly here is again the point of encounter with Cervantes' *Don Quijote* if one takes into consideration polyphony in the sense of Michail Bachtin: Cervantes' novel confronts the reader with a real firework display of different linguistic registers, from the peasant wis-

5. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe had the same opinion about the role of the writer and refused the searching of originality he perceived especially in the romantic writers of his time: «So singt mein Mephistopheles ein Lied von Shakespeare, und warum sollte er das nicht? Warum sollte ich mir die Mühe geben, ein eigenes zu erfinden, wenn das von Shakespeare eben recht war und eben das sagte, was es sollte?», Eckermann notes on the 18 of January 1825 (Eckermann 1975, 107).

dom in Sancho's proverbs to Don Quijote's old-fashioned, pseudo-elegant knighthood's language. Furthermore, Cervantes satirized Latin-speaking professional groups, like doctors of medicine or law because he intended to write a clear and natural Castilian language, in accordance with the humanistic high valorisation of the vernacular languages. In this sense, he was a demiurge of a new poetic discourse in order to create a whole fictional universe[6]. In a comparable way, Kathy Acker's text finds an original female voice through a nomadic writing, which expresses the poetic will of deconstruction of the original male hypotext.

2. Thematic Aspects

During the Spanish Enlightenment, the «Ilustración», the reception of *Don Quijote* as a satirical-realistic novel with a hero who provoked mockery and laughter had dominated.[7] But towards the end of the 18th century, Spain recovered a consciousness of its «eternal» national characteristics; this new, anti-European *Zeitgeist* was a reaction to the French *siècle de la lumière* which had launched the *leyenda negra* about the Spanish crimes in the Americas and had missed no opportunity to criticize Spain as a repressive and backward nation. Confronted with this malevolent propaganda from the neighbour country, Spain remembered medieval heroes like El Cid and chivalrous virtues like bravery and gallantry in order to compensate for the feeling of inferiority towards the contemporary European powers France and Great Britain. «Quijotismo» became positively connotated, as an expression of an idealistic refusal of reality and an anti-Enlightenment state of mind, which was suited perfectly to the beginning of the romantic perception of Don Quijote as a national symbol of «hispanidad». It was up to the «generación del 98», however, to liberate Don Quijote from his picturesque and popular aspects by giving emphasis to the ascetic and heroic part of his personality. The year 1898 stands for the last act in a national drama, the gradual loss of the Spanish colonial domination: After a short war against the upcoming power USA, Spain had to retire from its last colony Cuba. This defeat led a whole generation of intellectuals like Azorín, Antonio Machado, Miguel de Unamuno and, a bit later, José Ortega y Gasset, to a bitter balancing of accounts with the rulers of their time who –in their opinion– were responsible for the disaster in Cuba. They functionalized Don Quijote as a counter-image to the «abulia», the irresolution of the ruling class at the end

6. See Strosetzki 1991, 125-130.
7. See Varela Iglesias 2007, 45-46.

of the 19th century. But Don Quijote also exemplified the negative side of contemporary Spain by worshipping old-fashioned chivalrous ideals and by intending to rule over other nations out of vanity and arrogance[8]. Against the over-estimation of Spain's military and economic importance, Unamuno and other intellectuals referred to the Golden Age, the *Siglo de Oro*, when Spain ruled not only as a military power, but also in arts and philosophy[9].

2.1. In accordance with the historical circumstances, Rubén Darío evokes in his short story the 19th century Don Quijote: in the above quoted sentences by the priest of the troop, the reader learns about his religiousness, his belief in the legitimacy of the fight for Cuba and his worship of the flag, the national symbol of the Spaniards. The combination of these attributes refers, first of all, to Don Quijote as a national hero in the way the Spanish intellectuals of the 19th century perceived him.

But the text also goes further towards the ideals of the Golden Age, when it underlines the ideal symbiosis of the poet with the fighter in one person as it was propagated in the times of Calderón, Lope de Vega and Cervantes[10]. Another hint at the Golden Age comes through the allusion to the deep religiousness of Darío's hero, and particularly in the reference to Santiago which evokes associations linked with the history of Spain and its fights against interior or exterior enemies[11]. At any rate, the reader of *D. Q.* perceives the parallelism between the contemporary circumstances and former ones.

The utterances about «nobleza de nuestra raza» and «justicia de nuestra causa» again point to the Golden Age and to similar concepts of Spanish superiority which found extreme expression in the laws of the «limpieza de sangre», the «pureness of blood». This official racism –whose executive was the Holy Inquisition– with all its excluding mechanisms against Non-Spaniards and Non-Catholics has its origin in the time just before the expulsion of the Jews in 1492 and evolved during the 16th century into a perfect

8. After Strosetzki 1991, 186.

9. See Varela Olea 2003, 24-25.

10. The author of *Don Quijote* himself personified this double-face ideal: He fought in 1572 in the battle of Lepanto, lost one arm and spent five years as a prisoner in Algeria (see Strosetzki 1991, 16); these experiences appear as «moorish novel» in the first part of the *Don Quijote* (chapter 39-41); about the interwoven novels, see Zimic (2003).

11. This saint has the surname «Matamoros» because he used to appear during the long period of the «conquista» of Spain at the side of the Christians, helping them to defeat the Arabs. In the 16th and 17th centuries, of course, this re-conquest of Spanish soil for the Christians had come to an end, continued, however, in Northern Africa and in the eastern Mediterranean Sea where the old trading routes now lead through the Ottoman Empire and had become highly dangerous.

repressive system to control heterogeneity of race, religion, opinion or ideology. Thus, Spain had a long tradition in «othering» and in persecuting every kind of alterity; consequently, the text uses this knowledge of history by presenting the US-American enemy at the moment of surrender of the Spanish army as «un gran diablo rubio, de cabellos lacios, barba de chivo, oficial de los Estados Unidos, seguido de una escolta de cazadores de ojos azules» (D. Q. 37). As Spain was to occupy every orthodox position in religious, political, historical or ideological aspect, it coincides with the logic of the text to introduce the representative of the US-army as the devil himself, as the worst kind of enemy one can imagine from the religious Spanish point of view: the absolute «other» in outlook and behaviour.

Up to this point, Darío's text seems to conform to the 19th century image of Don Quijote as a personification of the most glorious period of Spanish existence as a nation, which can be used to incite the contemporaries to overcome the decadence and depression of the fading empire. In contrast to this interpretation, however, the text disposes of other signals which reveal a deviation from the established text hermeneutics. Since there are fantastic and supernatural elements involved, this second stratum of meaning will be focused on in the next part of this study; for the moment, the main concern will be the figure of Don Quijote in Carlos Fuentes' *Terra Nostra*.

2.2. The main function of Don Quijote in *Terra Nostra*, together with Celestina and Don Juan, is to act as a symbol of the positive aspects of Spanish history which were not strong enough to overcome the repression and dogmatism personified by «Felipe, el Señor». Therefore, at the end, Ludovico implores Philip to open his eyes and to perceive history through the narratives of Celestina, Don Juan and Don Quijote: «Believe me Felipe: only there in those three books did I truly find the destiny of our history. Have you found yours, Felipe?» (TN 741).

Cervantes' *Don Quijote*, with his endless spiral of stories and storytellers, propagates the idea that history is fundamentally open, variable, and heterogeneous, always including the possibility of another course. This coincides with the original American-Aztec-perception of history as a cyclic and repetitive phenomenon which is, of course, opposite to the Western idea of history as a linear evolution with a determined telos. According to *Terra Nostra*, a historical intention is conceivable only in texts, and therefore Don Quijote, Celestina and Don Juan have this intensive presence in the third part of TN as incarnations of a utopian idea, the «Next New World»;

that is how America could have been if the Old World under Philip II had not gained victory by its repressive and dogmatic teleology[12].

Another point in common of hypo- and hypertext is the topos of searching: as Cervantes' Don Quijote searches for the ideals of a past Golden Age, so the positive figures of Fuentes' text TN are intent on finding a synthesis of Christian and other human values, beyond cultural borders,

> a new flowering of a new art that will forever defeat the fixity of icons that reflects a truth revealed only once, and forever, and instead reveal a new knowledge that unfolds in every direction for every delectation, a circular encounter between what they know and what I know, a hybrid art, temples raised in the image and likeness of the paradise we all envision in our dreams: color and form will be liberated... (TN 657).

Since the text constructs counter-images of hybridity and amalgamation and distorts linear time and space constellations, it demonstrates that history is always generated *a posteriori* by *master narratives* in Lyotard's sense. Writing, creating texts and reading are, consequently, acts of foundation, in other words, the chronicler, the author and the reader are demiurges by whom a universe is conceived which exists exclusively because of and out of them. This process involves not only the objective historical truth of the facts but also dreams, ideas, myths and hopes of fictionalized historical persons such as King Philip II and fictive figures like the peasant Sancho Panza. Thus, *Terra Nostra* presents a total vision of Spain and Hispano-America, in the words of Luis Leal: «Since the mythical are just as important as the historical, the novel becomes a *summa* that attempts to give the reader a total view of Hispanic Culture»[13]. Given further the high degrees of transtextuality, autoreferentiality and metatextuality of the text, we could just as well read TN, using Alfonso de Toro's terminology, as a «transversal-historical» novel which aims to deconstruct and contextualize history under postmodern and postcolonial circumstances[14].

12. See Borsò 2003, 133.
13. Cited in Orduz 2005, 99.
14. «Einige Merkmale des transversal-historischen Romans wären (vgl. A. de Toro 2000) etwa ihre Transtextualität, d.h. eine dekonstruierende Dialogizität mit zahlreichen textuell-historischen Referenzen, begleitet von einer Autoreferentialität und von einer permanenten Metatextualität, die uns Auskunft über die Quellen, über die Auswahl des Materials, über den diskursiven Entstehungsprozess, über die Konstruktion von Geschichtsdiskursen und das Verhältnis zwischen Referenz und Schriftlichkeit, zwischen Schriftlichkeit und Oralität, zwischen Faktizität und Imagination, zwischen Geschichte und Fiktion gibt» (Alfonso de Toro 2003, 75-76).

Don Quijote acts in TN as a historical and a mythological figure, pointing at a determined historical period: Spain's Golden Age. But the whole text deconstructs the images of glory and power later generations –after the decline of the Spanish empire– projected on it. TN hence regains Don Quijote as he was conceived of by Cervantes, that is, as a symbol of humanistic tolerance and open-mindedness in sharp contrast to the religious and ideological dogmatism of its epoch. Beyond that, however, Fuentes' utilization of Don Quijote shows again the elasticity of the myth because he provides this figure with characteristics contradictory to the writers of the generation of the 19th century. Instead of putting him in the context of medieval national heroes like El Cid or Pelayo as the 19th century used to do, Fuentes puts him in the company of Don Juan and Celestina, thus directing the reception clearly to the lost beginnings of liberalism, freedom and even atheism in 16th century Spain. The extinction of this early little flame of self-determination hindered two centuries later the evolution of a real Enlightenment in Spain and lead the just independent states of Latin America into this vicious circle of violence, poverty and dictatorship of which the consequences are still palpable. With this approach, Fuentes' Don Quijote as a utopian hero of a better world is not so far from Kathy Acker's deconstructive elaboration of Cervantes' protagonist by transforming him into a female and a bitch.

2.3. Like both of the other authors, Kathy Acker presents Don Quijote as a figure with several metamorphoses, as in Cervantes' novel. Among the various hypertexts, Acker's text is one of the few which converts the male hero into a woman[15] and –as far as I know– the only one with a bitch:

> Finally Don Quixote understood her problem: she was both a woman therefore she couldn't feel love and a knight in search of Love. She had had to become a knight, for she could solve this problem only by becoming partly male. [...] Did she really have to be a male to love? [...] Therefore, who am I?' she asked St Simeon.
> «Who cares».
> «Of course, I'm not interested in personal identity. I mean: what is to be a female?».
> «To be a bitch», the dog answered (Quixote 29).

Don Quixote is a text that refuses unequivocality, presenting the protagonist as a being partly a man, a woman, and a female dog. Furthermore, it introduces a fictional universe which partly consists of dreams, visions and

15. See Genette 1993, 409.

imagination, and partly of historical and political facts. In this contradictory landscape the heroine tries to find her own materiality as a proof of her own existence beyond representation. As she experiences a gap between words and things, as she was taught at school –«Your words mean nothing to me, like the words of all the teachers I've ever had. Words mean nothing» (Quixote 163)–, she starts her trip to reality by exploring her own body, feeling from sexual pleasure to pain (Quixote 166-171). Knowing oneself in this context signifies perceiving one's own reactions at any given moment, switching off every sort of memory, trained behaviour or cultural overlays, in order to shape one's personality:

> I'm scared because I have or know no self. There's no *one* who can talk. My physical sensations scare me because they confront me with a self when I have no self: sexual touching makes these physical sensations so fierce. I'm forced to find a self when I've been trained to be nothing (Quixote 171).

Dealing with the materiality and physicality of the body is –according to *Don Quixote*– to overcome the «split between mind and body» (Quixote, 46) of which the priority without any doubt is situated in the neglected emotional side, that is, the knight's search for love. Thus, the main theme of the novel is precisely the longing for a reality with a space for love and desire, that is beyond «their reality» which «is still throbbing out its death throes: linoleumed halls/white laced curtains/a drab carpeted sitting-room/ paint drips like the end of the world/a bird cage/your eyes are reduced to petty binoculars/your lips are chastity-belts [...]» (Quixote 194). Reality in Acker's text is, in summary, the reality of the physical materiality of the protagonist's body, transforming thus the repressed and exploited female body into a self-confident subject which, however, only with difficulty is able to conquer a space to live in properly (see Quixote 207).

Why Don Quijote? Certainly, because of the challenge that signifies writing about or against such an important, established piece of literature, especially by a female author who cannot move freely in an established male context of discourse[16]. Myths, including literary myths, are *master narratives* par excellence, and precisely for this reason they provoke more

16. «Während Autoren sich von vornherein in einem durch illustre Vorgänger hoch legitimierten Traditionszusammenhang bewegen, können Autorinnen sich in diese männliche Traditionslinie nur mit großen Schwierigkeiten einschreiben. Ebenso wie eine lange Traditionslinie eine Last und Entmutigung für Autoren darstellen kann, so kann die fehlende Traditionslinie auch eine Chance für Autorinnen bedeuten, eine eigene, originelle Sicht auf das Verhältnis von Mythos und Geschlecht zu entwickeln» (Stephan 1997, 10).

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than any other literary motive or topos, the transformation, the parody, the re-formulation, the «Arbeit am Mythos» according to Blumenberg[17]. Acker deconstructs Cervantes' text from a gender point of view but in spite of the radical metamorphosis of the protagonist, as far as ideas and political intentions are concerned, her text is situated quite close to Cervante's. What falls «victim» of her destroying forces, is the 19th century Don Quijote, but in no way is there a *demontage* of the incarnation of the then out-of-fashion humanistic ideals of Cervantes' hero. Insofar, I would not agree with Medeiros-Lichem, when she concludes that *Don Quixote*

> es una anti-narración que deconstruye el arquetípico canónico y le inyecta una nueva mirada en una obra que expresa la agonía de nuestro tiempo a través de la indagación introspectiva de una mujer en la búsqueda del paraíso perdido, llámese éste Amor, Verdad o Significado en la existencia humana (2007, 264).

In my opinion, Acker's novel aims not at the deconstruction of Don Quijote as Cervantes conceived of it, but at the 19th century version as it was constructed under the conditions of a declining empire. *Don Quixote* explicitly criticizes nationalism, imperialism, repression of certain parts of the population, corruption, or lack of humanistic ideals, in summary, the hegemonic discourse of the ruling US-American class; Cervantes, at his time, had intended the same, of course by different literary means and aiming at another Empire. What looks like a parody of the knight, in fact is a parody of the *a posteriori* conception of Don Quijote as a Spanish national hero.

3. «Locura» –What Is Insanity?

It is generally recognised that Miguel de Cervantes' protagonist seems to be a deranged person who is unable to differentiate between reality and fiction. Contrary to Quijote's obvious «locura», his servant Sancho Panza is a down-to-earth peasant who always positions himself in the real world. But at second sight, one discovers –particularly in the second part– that things are not so simple: Don Quijote clearly perceives, for instance, the malevolent play with him at the count's court whereas Sancho is blinded by the wish to be the governor of the promised island. In the course of the text the reader gets confronted with the «sanchificación» of Don Quijote and the «quijotificación» of Sancho Panza; that signifies that the superficial interpretation of Quijote and Sancho as a dichotomizing pair which personify

17. See Stephan 1997, 249-250.

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dreams, visions and madness, *respective* sense of reality and materiality, does not correlate with the intention of the text –and this complex narrative strategy finds an echo in all three texts we are discussing.

3.1. Rubén Darío's *D. Q.* obviously introduces a further stratum of meaning which goes beyond the seemingly chivalric and heroic attitude of the unnamed protagonist; this second level consists of the unsocial and unheroical behaviour of the protagonist on the one hand, and the fantastic elements in the plot on the other. Through this second stratum, the text questions the justification of the literary myth Don Quijote as a model of Spanish national virtues.

Darío's Don Quijote is definitely provided with heroic properties such as braveness, asceticism, eagerness to help, love for his religion and nation[18]. In contrast to these positive characteristics, however, in the quotation above the reader learns that he shows quite an arrogant attitude towards his comrades and that he worships the flag in a highly «superstitious» manner, which is contradictory to his obviously strong Christian faith. Similarly, the priest condemns D. Q.'s dreams to conquer Washington and to put the Spanish flag on the Capitol as «irrealizables» (D. Q. 36); thus, in a comic reversal, the priest is more realistic about the military perspectives than the soldier. The suicide he commits at the bitter moment of surrender expresses a degree of despair that is not compatible with a real hero's mind and –again– not permitted for a real Christian. So I would agree with López Navia's judgment: «La reacción del abanderado es profundamente quijotesca por su significado último, pero menos propia del genuino don Quijote que la que, en forma de fiera y desigual batalla, contra el ejército estadounidense, acaso hubiera esperado el lector» (2005, 83). As a consequence of these reactions, the protagonist turns out to be anything but a complete hero; on the contrary, he excites suspicion as to his earnestness and the quality of his character. With this kind of ambivalence, D. Q. is distanced from Cervantes' Don Quijote, who in all his madness is always an authentic and trustworthy fictive figure and whose comportment follows an inherent logic.

The suspicious personality of D. Q. is even more accentuated by the fantastic elements in the story that suspend the inner-textual reality. First of all, D. Q. himself is described in a way that permits associations with the supernatural, so for instance, the information that he needs neither sleep nor food is reminiscent of ghosts or phantoms. The allusion to his uncertain age

18. For the history and different types of heroes, Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949) is still a basic and always helpful study.

–from fifty to three hundre– can be placed in the same realm. As a climax, the soldiers hear «un ruido metálico, como el de una armadura» when he throws himself into the abyss (D. Q. 38). This idea of the protagonist wearing a metallic armour like a medieval knight has been prepared earlier («coraza vieja», see quotation above), so that the suspicions of the reader are confirmed by the metallic noise as if a man in an armour has hit the ground. By quoting the first sentences of the original *Don Quijote*, the priest –who personifies reality and empiricism in the story– draws the final conclusion of all the allusions before leading the imagination of the reader to Cervantes' hero. But again, even the identifying of the hypo-text under the short story is not able to end with all the questions and doubts aroused because it stops at the point where Cervantes' text admits that there is no sureness about the real name of this «hidalgo».

Finally, the reader is left with the ambiguity of the whole story that makes him doubt the configuration of Don Quijote as a Spanish national hero. At first sight, the text's strategy uses the «ikonische Konstanz» of Don Quijote[19], that is, his age, his appearance and certain characteristics in his social behaviour. But this works only because of the high text-awareness of Darío's contemporary readers who had already been educated by nearly a hundred years of Don Quijote's reception to perceive him as a mythical national hero[20]. Thus far, the text utilizes the specific 19th century perception of the literary Don Quijote as a foundation for a new metamorphosis that deconstructs the former one. Thus, Darío's text confirms once again the challenge of Don Quijote as a figure who provokes continuously new «Arbeit am Mythos» after Blumenberg, in other words, new adaptations, formulations and variations, always keeping constant icons and structures.

19. Hans Blumenberg (1996) defines «ikonische Konstanz» as that part of a mythologem which is not variable but remains constant; in general, it consists of a determined pattern of icons with great resistance against change, see Blumenberg 1996, 165-167.

20. Bernd Hüppauf stresses the fact that every myth is a social event and does not survive without social agreement: «Mythos setzt eine spezifische Aufnahmebereitschaft der Beteiligten voraus, die nichts mit einem "kindlichen" oder "Natur"-Zustand der Menschen, sondern mit stillschweigenden gesellschaftlichen Übereinkünften zu tun hat. Ein Wahrheitsgehalt wird dem Mythos durch die an ihm Beteiligten zugestanden, weil und solange er ihren kollektiv definierten Interessen entspricht. Das Wahrheitsmoment ist letztlich im Wunsch nach gegenseitiger Bestätigung und einvernehmlicher Kommunikation, nicht in der Suche nach widerspruchsfreien Antworten auf bedrängende Fragen zu suchen. [...] Mythos konstruiert Wirklichkeit für alle Mitglieder der Gesellschaft, und die Art seiner Konstruktion lässt auf die Tiefenstruktur der tatsächlich erlebten Wirklichkeit in einer Gesellschaft schließen» (Hüppauf 1983, 511).

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Relying on a long tradition in readings of Don Quijote, Darío questioned the contemporary national-heroic interpretation of Cervantes' protagonist by creating an ambivalent figure whose backwardness, arrogance and depression could be identified as the disease of his time. Darío's Quijote is the symbol of the anachronistic behaviour of the Spaniards which lead the whole country into the catastrophe of the loss of Cuba as the climax of a long, painful process of decline. With the national hero Quijote committing suicide, the text makes clear that the old ideals and methods can no longer help to assure Spain a position in the club of the ruling nations. Thus, this suicide marks a final end –but also the chance of a new beginning under different conditions. In this way Don Quijote, constructed by Cervantes as an anti-hero to point to the problems of his time, transformed into a national hero with virtues of a glorious past during the 19th century, regains his origin and re-plays the role which he was conceived for: an admonisher for humanistic and universal ideals in a time of excessive nationalism.

3.2. To understand the undetermined narrative situation which dominates in *Terra Nostra* by Carlos Fuentes it is instructive to have a look at Cervantes' hypotext, because the first phenomenon drawing one's attention is the uncertainty as far as name and place of the hero are concerned. «En un lugar de la Mancha, de cuyo nombre no quiero acordarme» –so starts the story immediately provoking the question for what reason this narrating «I» prefers not to remember the name of the hero's place. A few sentences below, the reader learns that the protagonist has the surname

> Quijada, o Quesada, que en esto hay alguna diferencia en los autores que deste caso escriben; aunque por conjeturas verosímiles se deja entender que se llamaba Quejana (D Q 31; 33).

Here the confusion is complete because the reader is not only confronted with different versions of the protagonist's name but also with the existence of different authors: The first narrator –who does not want to remember the name of the place in La Mancha– obviously is only one among other narrating instances. Thus, from the outline the reader lacks a trustworthy narrating figure and, the «I» from above turns out to be a compiler who just organizes the literary material instead of an auctorial narrator. In this way, Cervantes introduced a high degree of uncertainty and doubt into his novel; this was a necessary procedure in the time of the Counterreformation with its strict censorship. *Don Quijote* was a work that undermined, in a subtle and intelligent way the canonized ideology

of the ruling class in Spain and its subversiveness was quite evident to its contemporary recipients[21].

Contrary to the manifest madness of Cervantes' Don Quijote, in Fuentes' *Terra Nostra* the question of mental health or insanity is not really set because everyone is displaced and deranged by multiple identities, as we had seen above. In accordance with the labyrinthine personal management throughout the whole novel, Don Quijote is first of all nothing but a metamorphosis of Don Juan as an old man who is cursed by the statue of the «comendador» to live in the madness of his hallucinations because as Don Juan he had killed the father of young Dulcinea:

> [...] I was once again the young Don Juan, not the aged Don Alonso I had become in order to flee from justice, I begged and pleaded before her tomb; it was not the effigy of the maiden that moved but the statue of the father, noble sword in hand, who spoke to me and said, I wanted to kill you when you were young, but now I see you are old and worthless. I tried to challenge him anew, to invite him to dine, now gladly I would throw myself into the pit of Hell, what were phantoms to me!, but the statue only laughed, and he told me he was condemning me to something worse, that my imaginings and my reading would become reality, that my fragile bones would actually confront monsters and giants, and that again and again I would rush to right wrongs only to be cudgeled, mocked, caged, taken for a madman, and dishonoured, the mocker mocked, he laughed, ridicule will kill you, for no one but you shall see those giants and magicians and princesses, you will see the truth, but only you; others will see sheep and windmills, puppet stages, wineskins, sweaty peasant girls and piggish servants where you see reality: armies of cruel despots, giants, frightful hordes of Moors and adorable princesses: that was the statue's curse, said the old man, sinking down beside one of the coffins (TN 576).

Motives from *Don Juan* and *Don Quijote* are interwoven here and form a de-hierarchized rhizomatic structure, which plays with contradictory versions of reality and illusion and avoids reliable statements. Against the «traditional» perception, it is Don Quijote who perceives truth and reality which are, however, not necessarily the only possible ones: «Do you think I am blind? Do you think I do not recognize the real reality of things? Windmills are giants. But Celestina is not Dulcinea» (TN 531). By presenting this kind of ephemeral and oscillating image of reality, on the one hand, Fuentes' text can be read as a typical postmodern novel because of its conscious

21. See the interview with Carlos Fuentes by Barloewen 2003, 262-263.

deconstruction of master narrative texts. On the other hand, *Terra Nostra* goes far back to the typical baroque search for the essence of things beyond the dichotomy between *engaño* and *desengaño*; therefore Fuentes' work offers some of the qualities of the classical texts of the Spanish Golden Age against which it is supposed to be written. This ambivalent and contradictory attitude of the hypertext towards the hypotext is also met in the case of Kathy Acker's *Don Quixote*.

3.3. In Acker' text, madness plays an important role on different levels of meaning. Close to the hypotext, books and reading are the reason for madness; this becomes evident in a scene of the novel, after the abortion, when the protagonist is in bad health because of an infection and friends of her are discussing her behaviour:

> – «[...] I think she's lonely».
> – «Why'd she have an abortion?».
> – «All she ever used to do was to read books».
> [...]
> «What about women?» asked the feminist, but no one listened to her. While the Leftist, who never listened to anyone but himself, answered. «Books or any forms of culture're so dangerous, for they turn people mad, for instance Baudelaire or other pornographers, only our upper classes must be allowed to indulge them».
>
> (Quixote, 16)

A few sentences below, the same «Leftist» explains to her, that she read too many books as a child so that she is not normal and cannot fit into society. Of course, there are manifest signs of irony here: first of all, through the exaggeration of the influence of books, and secondly, because a «Leftist» makes these utterances, usurping the «dangerous culture» for his own «upper classes». This elitist attitude is exactly opposite to the traditional leftist and undermines in this way any prestige that left-orientated groups might ever have.

But books are only superficially responsible for Don Quixote's madness; on a deeper dimension it is her exigency to love and to be loved. This search for love in a world that is unable to love is the real insanity, and it becomes clear from the first, motto-like sentences of the novel: «[...] she conceived of the most insane idea that any women can think of. Which is to love. How can a woman love? By loving someone other than herself» (Quixote, 9). But she immediately has the experience that she gets no love in return, «because there's no possibility for human love in this world», and her need for love and to be loved is punished by society: «I had the abortion because I refused normalcy which is capitulation to social control. To

letting our political leaders locate our identities in the social». So she realizes that love is something «I can only dream about or read in books» (Quixote, 17-18).

Very close to Cervantes' Don Quijote and his anachronistic search for chivalric virtues in a pre-capitalistic and imperialistic Spain at the outbreak of decadence, Acker sends her heroine out to look for love in the middle of a cynical and corrupted Western society without any ideals or human relationships. Living in a «world of madness» (Quixote, 90), Don Quixote –like her Spanish predecessor– perceives the rest of the world as enchanted, and «"as soon as we all stop being enchanted", Don Quixote explained, "human love'll again be possible"» (Don Quixote, 102). The enchanters have names: Ronald Reagan (101, 102), Andrea Dworkin (102), Nixon or Kissinger (102 further). They are responsible for the fact that life in the USA is a «doggish life» which

> depends on unequal power relations or the struggle for power. This is the society in which we live. The life of a dog, even if the dog's dead like me, is solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, short. The condition of a dog is a condition of war, of everyone against everyone: so every dog has a right to everything, even to another dog's body. This is freedom (Quixote, 114).

Throughout the whole novel there is an oscillation between madness and enchantment between the heroine and her environment, and here is another point of contact with Cervantes' *Don Quijote*.

5. Conclusions-overcoming the Hero of the 300th Anniversary

As demonstrated above, Cervantes' *Don Quijote*, as a genuine literary myth, offers a frame or a pattern in which metamorphosis of the protagonist through time and space are conceivable as long as they do not injure the figure's original integrity[22]. In this sense, Don Quijote has

22. Blumenberg (1971) defines: «Gerade wegen seiner Elastizität, ja Porosität, der Umstellbarkeit seiner Elemente, ihrer bloßen "Kontiguität" konnte die Konstanz des Grundmythos zum Phänomen seiner Rezeption werden. Der Mythos ist kein Kontext, sondern ein Rahmen, innerhalb dessen interpoliert werden kann; darauf beruht seine Integrationsfähigkeit, seine Funktion als "Muster" und Grundriß, die er noch als bloß durchscheinender Vertrautheitsrest besitzt. Wenn auch die Metamorphose alles erlaubt, ist sie doch nicht chaotisch; sie setzt vielmehr eine gewisse Strenge eines Kanons an Spielregeln voraus, die durchlaufen werden, von Privilegien, die, dem einen einaml zugewiesen, auch von dem anderen beansprucht, imitiert oder erschlichen werden» (Blumenberg 1971, 51).

been functionalized by every epoch since his first appearance on the literary stage, whether by using his critical potential (for instance during the Enlightenment, but also in contemporary texts), or as a heroic ideal in a period of decadence (like the 19th century); contemporary authors like Graham Greene or Andrés Trapiello have written transpositions and continuations which focus on the hybridity and the meta-discursive qualities of Cervantes' hypotext. The importance of the Spanish «national» characteristics –as an expression of an «imagined community» after Benedict Anderson– in the transformations varies according to the intention of the texts; they are usually overaccentuated in the 19th century and early 20th century texts or they remain in the background as in *Monsignor Quixote* by Graham Greene, for instance.

In Rubén Darío's short story *D. Q.*, Spanish heroism acts as a motor for the text, but the suicide of the hero at the end reveals the heroic pretensions as mere construction. In the line of Cervantes, Darío's text doubts the anachronistic and therefore disputable heroism and imperialistic intentions. In the hypotext *Don Quijote* the protagonist dies peacefully in bed when he perceives reality again and overcomes his *locura* that signifies in his case the hunting of old-fashioned ideals. At that moment, the conflict between *engaño* and *desengaño* is resolved because the text has marked the problems and wounds of the contemporary Spanish society and has criticised their pseudo-therapy through the ruling class of the time. But whereas the madness of Don Quijote includes responsibility for society, or even springs from it, Darío's D. Q. from the beginning is described as an unsociable type, an arrogant outsider whose heroism is based on egotism and atomism and who is unable to accept the circumstances of his life. Therefore, his suicide is a logical consequence, as a self-execution of a person whose dreams and visions have become completely senseless within his societal environment. Thus, the critical intention of the text obviously aims not at Cervantes' Don Quijote, but at the wrong heroism at the wrong time and place of the Spanish army by its ambitions to keep colonies and be an imperial power as it was in the Golden Age. On a deeper level, Darío's text also demonstrates that America belongs to the Americans, be they from the South or from the North, and that the Spanish Empire has no more reason to get mixed up in American internal affairs. D. Q.'s suicide is a radical solution, and it manifests an equally radical statement against Spanish presence in America. Thus, there is an explicit American «nationalism» in the text which aims at the continent as a whole and is directed against further European hegemonic ambitions.

In Fuentes' *Terra Nostra*, again the textual strategy of deconstruction is not directed at Cervantes' model: on the contrary, the Quijote-discourse is

utilized as an exhortation to tolerance and respect towards other ethnicities, religions or life styles. By introducing Celestina, Don Juan and Don Quijote together, *Terra Nostra* accentuates this *other* Spain with the co-existence of three cultures and religions in the Middle Ages. These three literary figures are founding figures, symbols of a better, undogmatic and open-minded Spain which was destroyed by the totalitarism of their rulers –be it the Habsburgs or the Bourbons or even General Franco. Thus far, the national Spanish part of the Don Quijote myth plays a very important role in *Terra Nostra,* not, however, in its nationalistic 19th century version but as a reference to the multicultural society existing in medieval times. This kind of society could have been build up again in the New World, and this is the conception of *Terra Nostra* of America as utopia and the point of encounter with the hypotext *Don Quijote*: both texts offer a vision of a more human and tolerant world, refusing the dogmatism and narrow-mindedness of their eras. In *Terra Nostra*, this intention is translated into a poetic strategy of fragmentation and deconstruction: established norms and values are questioned, the boundaries between different historical times and different spaces, between reality and fiction dissolve; even the identities of determined persons lose their well-defined contours, and equivocality is replaced by hybridity and alterity. The critical intention of Fuentes' text is condensed, to a considerable degree, in the figure of Don Quijote and, therefore, comes very close to Cervantes' *demontage* of the society of his time. The American surplus of *Terra Nostra* is manifested in its intention to explore the American continent as a wasted chance, which unfortunately did not receive the positive aspects of the European culture like humanism or tolerance, but had to stand the negative ones such as imperialism, barbarism and exploitation.

In Kathy Acker's *Don Quixote which was a dream* the explicit Spanish parts of Don Quijote's personality disappear while the idea of Don Quijote as a seeker of love and humanism and saver of the world is strongly foregrounded. A new element is the addition of the female; by presenting Don Quixote once as a male, once as a female, once as a bitch, the unequivocality of Don Quijote's identity reaches a poetic climax, undergoing at the same time a transfocalisation of his character[23]. Consequently, the text's deconstructive purposes aim, first of all, at a classical *male master narrative*, questioning male points-of view and pointing out female ones. Furthermore, however, the text undermines every sort of discourse of «the

23. See Genette 1993, 403 further.

powerful» in the Western world and especially in the USA by satirizing and mocking politicians and teachers as well as the well-integrated good citizens. The value system of these foundations of the Western civilization is undermined by Acker's literary discourse, firstly on a structural level by its fragmentation of the textual structure, a high degree of plagiarism and various forms of transtextuality, polyphony with a lot of obscene vocabulary and scenes to injure every taboo. On the thematic level, secondly, the liminal zones between insanity and mental health, between illusion, dream, and enchantment is explored, and all these categories are uncovered as uncertain entities, only supposed-to-be objective truths, because this perception of the world serves the ruling classes in order to keep their privileged place. Like Fuentes, Acker concentrates on inner-American affairs; her Don Quixote is a utopian figure, able to transport the positive characteristics of European society to the morally and economically corrupted US-Americans.

Without any doubt, we owe to Cervantes:

> uno de los más bellos y concluyentes alegatos contra ese género de construcciones ideológicas que imaginan haber hallado el primer motor del comportamiento humano y de la historia, el argumento definitivo que explicaría la totalidad del pasado o que determinaría hasta los mínimos detalles del porvenir,

judges José María Ridao in an article with the expressive title «Cervantes contra Huntington» (2007, 40). The texts we have focused on here can be perfectly inscribed in this space of tolerance, non-dogmatism and permissiveness that had been opened up by Cervantes four hundred years before. The reception of Don Quijote as a backward and conservative national Spanish hero was a fundamental misunderstanding which is being corrected by texts of the 20th century, for which Fuentes' *Terra Nostra* or Kathy Acker's *Don Quixote* are paradigmatic. As we have seen, their deconstructive literary discourse does not equal a deconstruction of Cervantes' *Don Quijote*, but, on the contrary, recuperates the central concern of this master work: to be a manifesto against the dogmatism and the hegemonic discourses of his time. *Don Quijote* itself was a subversive and critical novel with regard to the *master narrative* of the Spanish Golden Age; the book has found dignified successors who –each in his own particular poetic way– plead for the right of all Americans to a human, tolerant and self-determined society.

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