Novel into Essay: Fuentes' *Terra nostra* as Generator of *Cervantes o la crítica*

Fuentes' *Terra nostra* (1975) is a vast, generating text, one that creates multiple "mirror texts" both within and outside of itself. One of the titles originally considered by Fuentes for this work was "Renacimiento," and indeed, birth and rebirth on the levels of human reproduction, cosmic origin, and artistic genesis constitute a major theme of this narrative *summa* of the Mexican author. The strange, prodigious communal birthing present at the very beginning, the birth at the end of a new androgynous being and of a New World as Polo Febo and Celestina unite in order to re-populate the universe; the obsessive but continually frustrated attempts of Isabel, wife of King Felipe, to create an heir, even resorting to a pact with the devil; the birth of new worlds, as Fuentes evokes the cosmogony of the indigenous peoples of America, the birth of new ages, as the novel takes place at the end of the year 1999, to herald the second millenium—all of these births are paralleled by another important genesis evoked by Fuentes—the exact moment of the creation of a new era in the novel, the moment of Cervantes' inspired creation of *Don Quixote*. Like *Terra nostra*, the work that in large measure influenced it, Fuentes' essay *Cervantes o la crítica de la lectura* (1976) exemplifies the awesome totality of *Terra nostra* extended even further—to encompass both the creative and the critical spheres.

Cervantes o la crítica, like its "parent text," is an *obra abierta*. Open in that its time span is from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century, open in that within the space of only one hundred pages it ranges over history, philosophy, physical science, theology, painting, film, literature, economics and linguistics; open in that it analyzes Cervantes not only within the context of his own epoch, that of Spain of the Counter-Reformation, but also as the double of James Joyce and even as the Founding Father of the Latin American Boom. In order to demonstrate the importance of this imaginative and provacative essay, our investigation will concentrate on three of its salient characteristics. First we will analyze the work as an explanatory text, as a crucial guide to the mammoth and intricate *Terra nostra* and also as an eloquent defense of this "total novel" against the critics who have been overwhelmed by it and who, many times, have reacted only to the surface structure and to the most prominent of the characters and settings, such as the authoritarian Felipe and the lugubrious Escorial. Fuentes' essay, in which key figures and basic theme of *Terra nostra* are presented in a highly condensed form, underscores *Terra nostra* not as several critics have viewed it, as a work written by a despotic authorial presence, or as a grandiose *opus* in which Fuentes deliberately sets out to monumentalize himself, but rather as a narrative of freedom—as an exuberant affirmation of the all-expansive power of the imagination, one that monumentalizes not the author but

literature itself, in an age in which the size, scope, and stature of the novel have all vastly diminished, and in which the novel as a result has in many instances been reduced to a partial, rarefied, or even a trivialized artistic form.

If, as some critics have maintained, *Terra nostra* is one of Fuentes' least read novels, it is nonetheless one of his most controversial. The declarative statements, the linear, expository language that predominate in the essay bring into bold relief the incidents and characters that in the novel are engulfed in a whirlwind of narrators, times, and places, all of which incessantly shift, blend, and then separate again, and all conveyed to the reader by a convoluted, baroque prose style. The labyrinthine world of the novel is permeated by fantasies—dreams, hallucinations, nightmares, supernatural occurrences, paintings that not only speak but that constantly change their content and that finally dissolve and flow out of their frames. The complex welter of ideas, images, and worlds that is *Terra nostra* is reduced to a manageable form in *Cervantes o la crítica*, a work that in many ways is inseparable from the novel. As a text by an author that focusses on one of his creative works, offering the aesthetics behind that creation, Fuentes' *Cervantes o la crítica* parallels the process of self-reflexiveness that is exemplified in the works of other leading authors of the Boom. Julio Cortázar, for example, elaborates on the aesthetic principles behind the creation of *Rayuela*, in the bits of narrative, relegated to the "Capítulos prescindibles" that are really just the opposite, in that they are essential to our understanding of *Rayuela*, called the Morelliana. Named after the experimental writer Morelli, a persona of Cortázar himself and a character in *Rayuela*, the Morelliana, like *Cervantes o la crítica*, have also appeared as a separate text, published under the title *La casilla de los Morelli*.

Second, we will discuss *Cervantes o la crítica* as epitomizing one of the dominant characteristics of Fuentes' art—the quest for unity: unity between indigenous and *criollo* Mexico, unity between Mexico and *la madre patria*, Spain; unity between Hispanic and English literary traditions; and, finally, in an age in which the basic humanistic disciplines remain fragmented and often severely isolated from one another, resulting in the increasingly marginal role of the humanities in modern, technologically oriented society—unifying these disciplines, all of which are essential for a complete understanding of both *Terra nostra* and for that of the seventeenth century *novela totalizante*, *Don Quixote*. Perhaps as the result of his family background as the son of a diplomat, perhaps as an extension of his own professional endeavors in diplomacy, when he served as ambassador to France, Fuentes constantly strives to reconcile diverse figures, forces, ideologies and cultures that many Latin American intellectuals have perceived in terms of polar opposites: Cortés and Moctezuma, Quetzalcóatl and Tezcatlipoca, Mexico and Spain.

Finally, we will view *Cervantes o la crítica de la lectura* as an imaginative exercise, one whose original style—its repeated use of antithesis, its exuberant pyramiding of images, its poetic re-creation and constant doubling of Cervantes, who is evoked as the double of Columbus, the soul-mate or

perhaps even the soul-sharer of William Shakespeare, and as the author of Borges, just as Borges in turn becomes the author of Pierre Menard who in his turn completes the circle by authoring the *Quixote*; and even the contemporary of James Joyce, demonstrates how this unique work of Fuentes is both critical and profoundly artistic. Just as in the essay, Fuentes in *Terra nostra* provides an elaborate re-creation of Cervantes, who appears as both *cronista*, the court historian of Felipe, and also as idealistic, Utopian visionary. Cervantes is re-created as both character within *Terra nostra* and as the author of this text. The Cervantes created by Fuentes is a bridge figure, one who although forced to fight against the Turks at Lepanto nevertheless identifies strongly with their culture and seeks to preserve it. Fuentes' Cervantes is an expanding character in both the essay and the novel; in *Terra nostra el manco de Lepanto* can be identified with another *manco*, this one found in the New World—Polo Febo, another character who throughout the narrative acquires many identities—New World Pilgrim, Quetzalcóatl, modern version of Cuauhtémoc, and finally, the Adam to Celestina's Eve. At the outset of *Terra nostra* Polo Febo appears as but a marginal figure, occupying the lowly social position of sandwich-board man, yet he will turn out to be the New World idealistic center of the work—the equivalent to Cervantes in the Old World. A seeming outcast in society at the beginning of the twenty-first century, Polo Febo's marginality reflects that of the historical Cervantes in seventeenth century Spain. It is significant that both characters are evoked in terms of the founder figure—Polo Febo/Quetzalcóatl as the founder of a new civilization, both after the holocaust of the Conquest of Mexico and, in the twenty-first century, after the apocalypse with which *Terra nostra* concludes; Cervantes as the founder of the new era in the novel. Perhaps the most profound doubling of Cervantes in *Terra nostra*, one which is clarified in the essay through Fuentes' focus on the intense idealism of *Don Quixote*, is his indirect fusion with the spirit of the benevolent god Quetzalcóatl. Unlike *La región más transparente* (1958), a far more pessimistic novel than *Terra nostra*, ruled by the presences of the dread deities Coatlicue and Huitzilopochtli and suffused with the insatiable demand for blood sacrifice, the guiding spiritual presence of *Terra nostra* is Quetzalcóatl, the ancient Toltec god of the sun and god of life and love, and significantly, the god of the artists and the artesans, the god of the same creative spirit so profoundly manifested by Cervantes.

Throughout Fuentes' work, the past, evoked as a powerful, often inescapable force, whether this be the ancient indigenous past as in *La región más transparente*, the epoch of the Conquest, as in *Todos los gatos son pardos*, the colonial past, as in *Una familia lejana*, or, as in *Terra nostra*, the Rome of Tiberius and the Spain of the Hapsburg dynasty, is not presented for its own sake but in order to illuminate contemporary Mexico or contemporary Latin America—and, as occurs in *Terra nostra*, to presage the Latin America of the distant future. So too is Fuentes' extensive analysis of *Don Quixote* in *Cervantes o la crítica* designed to demonstrate the contem-

poraneity of this Golden Age text. Evoked as a novel that is conscious of itself as a novel, that requires a plurality of readings, that is an open, heterogeneous creation, that portrays multiple levels of reality, that ruptures the "orden épico que reprimía las posibilidades de la ficción narrativa," Fuentes' version of *Don Quixote* emerges as a *nueva novela*, leading us to the final doubling of Cervantes into the figure of Fuentes himself. Through his literary eclecticism, his skillful integration of Italian epics like Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, Cervantes universalized the Spanish novel. And, just as Cervantes' work is uniquely Spanish and yet international, so also is Fuentes' work, so preoccupied with the nature and meaning of his country, both uniquely Mexican and yet extraordinarily cosmopolitan. Perhaps more so than any other Latin American novelist, Fuentes' art of the novel parallels what Octavio Paz has achieved for Latin American poetry—the attainment of universality. Like Cervantes with the Spanish novel, Fuentes, one of the "prime movers" of the Boom, has forever altered the course of Latin American fiction.

The publication of *Cervantes o la crítica* has disconcerted some of the critics, who view this exegesis by the author of his own work as usurping the role of the impartial critic, or at the very least as an attempt to dominate the critic in his approach to the novel. Yet this dramatic metamorphosis of Fuentes into a major critic of his own work, echoing the all-encompassing role that Agustín, the dramatist in Unamuno's play *Soledad*, establishes for himself as "autor, actor, y público," is but the logical extension of the all-encompassing effort present in the conceptualization of *Terra nostra*. Some of the critics have maintained that Fuentes desires to diminish or even totally to control the reaction of the reader, reducing him to a puppet manipulated by an all-powerful but hidden authorial presence. Yet we may also interpret Fuentes' motives as seeking both to give away his sources, commenting extensively on those sources in order to indicate to the reader possible ways of approaching his work, challenging that critic to arrive at his own conclusions, and stressing, as we have seen, the basically protean, open, freedom-seeking and problematic shape of the novel—thus creating a space into which the critic can enter. Rather than being rendered superfluous, the critic in fact is privileged by this second work, for he or she can now draw immediately upon a wealth of source material to aid him in coming to grips with the complexities of *Terra nostra*. Fuentes has significantly altered the role of the scholar-critic. Instead of laboriously having to track down the sources that the author has done his best to conceal, or as in the case of Miguel Angel Asturias when queried about the influence of James Joyce on *El señor presidente* even to deny, the investigator of *Terra nostra* is the recipient of Fuentes' proud display of his sources—which range from Pre-Columbian literature to Umberto Eco, from Erasmus to Américo Castro, from *Las siete partidas* of Alfonso X to Keyne's *A Treatise on Money*, and from Bernal Díaz to Ortega y Gasset. Far from suffering from any "anxiety of influence," Fuentes' self-assurance in listing his sources for *Terra nostra* at the end of *Cervantes o la crítica* reflects the fact that with

la nueva narrativa Latin American authors have finally established their own *terra nostra*, their own new Golden Age of literary achievement, which Fuentes underscores through his direct link of Cervantes and the New World literature of the twentieth century. The artistic achievement of the Boom becomes, literally in the case of *Terra nostra*, symbolically in the case of other writings of Fuentes and in that of the prodigious achievements of García Márquez, Vargas Llosa, Alejo Carpentier, Cabrera Infante, José Donoso, Julio Cortázar, Jorge Luis Borges, Juan Rulfo, and many others, the flowering of Spain in the New World—a genuine and sustained rebirth of the Spanish Golden Age. Therefore, rather than being embarrassed to reveal their sources for fear of again, as has occurred so many times in the past, being branded as practitioners of *literatura refrita*, they can now openly acknowledge—as have done so Vargas Llosa and Julio Cortázar in addition to Fuentes—the myriad, world-wide influences on their art.

In a major sense, Fuentes' essay is a complementary text to the dark, asphyxiated world of sixteenth and seventeenth century imperial Spain that is both chronicled and devastatingly caricatured by Fuentes in *Terra nostra*, and that has led some critics to claim that Fuentes seeks to perpetuate the *leyenda negra* of Inquisitorial and absolutist Spain. In *Terra nostra* as in *Cervantes o la crítica*, Fuentes does not fall into the simplistic, Manichean attitude of either glorifying or debunking Spain but instead presents Golden Age Spain in all of its complexity and paradox—epitomized by the extraordinarily complex figure of Felipe II, who is not only a synthesis of the Hapsburg rulers of Spain, from Carlos I to Felipe II to Carlos II, el Hechizado,[1] but also a personification of the inward-turning, self-divided, tormented soul of Spain down through the centuries. In his essay as well as in *Todos los gatos son pardos* and *Terra nostra*, Fuentes constantly breaks down the facile dichotomies so often adhered to by both historians and writers of fiction in their portrayal of the Conquest—accounts of the oppressors and the oppressed, the civilizers and the barbarians, the dichotomy of either the enlightened *conquistadores*, boldly and triumphantly bringing civilization to the perverted, ignorant savages, or of the cruel, rapacious, and degenerate *conquistadores* decimating and enslaving the innocent, helpless New World peoples. Fuentes instead sees the nobility—and the savagery—present on both the Spanish and the Aztec sides of the Conquest. The Conquest of Mexico, for Fuentes the most important event in the history of his country because it altered the face of the nation irrevocably, is evoked in the language of incessant paradox—death of one civilization, Aztec Mexico—and birth of another: the *mestizo* Mexican nation. And Fuentes emphasizes the great contributions to preserve the indigenous civilization made by Sahagún, Motolonía, and Las Casas:

> Qué terrible conocimiento el del instante mismo de nuestra gestación, con todas sus ternuras y crueldades contradictorias; qué intensa conciencia . . . qué magnífico dolor: nacer sabiendo cuánto debió morir para darnos el ser; el esplendor de las antiguas civilizaciones indígenas. España, padre cruel: Cortés. España, padre generoso: Las Casas.[2]

It is true that the novel presents a far darker portrait of Hapsburg Spain than does the essay. In *Terra nostra*, the emphasis is on the degeneration of the Hapsburg line—the sadism, necrophilia, and madness that are so powerfully portrayed. Yet, in *Terra nostra* and, more explicitly, in the essay, are also depicted the glorious cultural achievements of Golden Age Spain. In both novel and essay there is a marked contrast between the closed, stifling space of annihilation—the physical space of Felipe's negative creation, the Escorial, that symbolizes the obsessed and morbid space of his constricted mind—and the space of freedom, the space that is political, represented by the rebellion of the *comuneros* in 1521; amatory, symbolized by the escapades of Don Juan, portrayed as a rebel who constantly undermines the ascetism and suppression of the passions enforced by Felipe, and, in a major sense, artistic. Through his discussions in the essay of *La Celestina*, *El burlador de Sevilla*, and *Don Quixote*, and through his evocation of Cervantes as an iconoclastic writer, one who in his art undermines the rigid patterns of the Spain of the Counter-Reformation, Fuentes makes clear what in the novel often is more problematic—the primacy of the artist both in the New World and the Old, and art as a force of freedom that ultimately prevails over political and military authoritarianism both in Spain and in Latin America, in the New World republics that Fuentes sees as marred by the dictatorship and oppression inherited from the absolutist Spain of the sixteenth century. In both essay and novel, Fuentes eloquently affirms the purpose of art as complementary to the tragedy of history, as an affirmation of the utopian, democratic, and sensual history that Spain and the New World should have had but were denied. In *Terra nostra*, this alternative, idealized history is stunningly dramatized through the "theater of memory" of Valerio Camillo and in the options to create a Utopian society given by Mihail-ben-Sama to Felipe. As Fuentes declares in the essay:

> Porque la historia de España (y podríamos añadir: la historia de América Española) ha sido lo que la historia ha negado a España. El arte da vida a lo que la historia ha asesinado. El arte da voz a lo que la historia ha negado, silenciado. (82)

It is significant that just as the artist—Cervantes, Signorelli, Fernando de Rojas, Tirso de Molina, James Joyce—is the major force in the essay, so too is the artist the major power—the one that triumphs over the despotism and the death force of Felipe—in *Terra nostra*. The one person eloquently to defy El Señor—and to do so with impunity is the court painter Fray Julián, like so many of the characters of *Terra nostra* a composite, multiple identity, a fusion of Signorelli and Diego Velázquez. The protean Julián is sent along by Felipe with the *conquistador* Guzmán to temper the excesses of the latter in the New World. Fray Julián thus acquires still another positive identity, as he merges with the historical figure of Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, and represents as well the other Franciscans and Dominicans who struggled to aid the defeated Indian peoples, devastated economically and spiritually by the Conquest, to preserve their language and culture. In a

dramatic encounter with the paranoid and power-mad monarch that takes place on a magical level, Julián proudly summons all of the colors and textures of his mysterious "living" painting back to him, thereby asserting the autonomy of his art. And he defiantly declares the purpose of art not to be the exclusive possession of royalty, but as a democratic phenomenon. This viewpoint is reiterated by Fuentes at the end of *Cervantes o la crítica*, as he maintains that literary art is "communal property," "la escritura es de todos":

> Los múltiples y mínimos detalles del fondo, todas las escenas del Nuevo Testamento, dejaban de ser forma discernible y concreta, se volvían otra cosa, pura luz, o puro líquido, y como un arco de luz, o un río de colores, mezclados y fluyentes, corrían por encima de la cabeza del Señor, se iban, se iban . . .
>
> "Castigadme, Señor, si crees que me robo lo tuyo; perdonadme si sólo recojo lo mío para entregarlo a los demás; ni mío, ni tuyo, el cuadro será de todos"[3]

His painting will be reconstituted, but not in Spain, rather in a new World idealistically evoked by Julián, who here is merged with the Utopian visionaries like Vasco de Quiroga and Las Casas:

> —En el nuevo mundo, en la tierra virgen donde el conocimiento puede renacer, despojarse de la fijeza del ícono y desplegarse infinitamente, en todas las direcciones, sobre todos los espacios, hacia todos los tiempos.
> (TN, 617)

Like Cervantes, Signorelli is thus re-created as a bridge figure between Old and New Worlds. The painting becomes a symbol of freedom on many levels, as it dramatizes on its everchanging canvas the many medieval heresies that Fuentes expatiates on in the essay and that he regards as products of the "novelists of the medieval ages," heretics who defied the one, official dogma to explore alternative beliefs.

Julián-Signorelli's act of rebellion against Felipe symbolizes the spirit of artistic liberty that will be transplanted to the New World and that will flourish in the works of New world artists, who in their *literatura comprometida*, a literature silenced over and over again in *la madre patria*, will carry on the tradition of intellectual inquiry and dissent that flourished in medieval Spain. New World art is thus presented by Fuentes as the continuation of the open, multiple, iconoclastic space exemplified by the medieval heretics, the visual art of Signorelli, and the writings of Cervantes.

In *Cervantes o la crítica*, Fuentes emphasizes *Don Quijote* as a self-reflexive text, as a text in which the characters are both voracious readers and beings who know that they are read. This same self-consciousness is highly important in *Terra nostra*, in which the central figure, Felipe, reads incessantly and reads about himself, just as Don Quijote does. So obsessed is Felipe by the word that he goes to the extreme of believing that all of reality is present in the written word:

Unicamente lo escrito es real. Las palabras se las lleva, como las trajo, el viento. Sólo lo escrito permanece. Sólo creeré en mi vida si leo. Sólo creeré en mi muerte si la leo. (TN, 677)

Yet, ironically, Felipe, who initially is exalted as the controller of the word, will finally be dominated by the word. Although he is successful in quashing the revolt of the *comuneros*, through his henchman Guzmán, he is psychologically devastated by the rebellion of the word. The marvellous invention of the printing press, which makes words readily available to everyone, no longer the exclusive possession of his monks and scribes, becomes the instrument of that rebellion. And, in what is another celebration of the awesome political power of Cervantes, work, the book that defies Felipe is *Don Quixote*:

—¿Los libros se reproducen?

—Si, ya no son el ejemplar único, escrito sólo para ti y por tu encargo, iluminado por un monje, que tú puedes guardar en tu biblioteca y reservar para tu sola mirada.

—Mil días y medio, dijiste, pero sólo has dado cuenta de cincuenta cuentos en veinte versiones: falta un medio día . . .

—Que jamás se cumplirá, Felipe. Es la infinita suma de los lectores de este libro, que al terminar de leerlo uno, un minuto más tarde otro la inicia, y así sucesivamente, como la vieja demostración de la liebre y la tortuga: nadie gana la carrera, el libro nunca termina de leerse, el libro es de todos . . .

—Entonces, mísero de mí, la realidad es de todos, pues sólo lo escrito es real. (TN, 610)

There is an ironic juxtaposition between the incessant fertility of the printing press and the sterility of Felipe, who cannot produce an heir—a sterility that in *Terra nostra* becomes symbolic of the exhausted, self-limiting nature of imperial Spain. Like *Cervantes o la crítica*, *Terra nostra* affirms on many levels the awesome power of the word, so that the Cervantes created by Fuentes would be able to state, in regard to Felipe, what Juan Montalvo declared in regard to another, modern dictator: the Ecuadorean García Moreno: "Mi pluma lo mató." Felipe despairs at having to begin a new battle, this one against an impossible foe. And the words, the hundreds of thousands of them that constitute *Terra nostra*, comprise another powerful text that stands against the tyranny which he incarnates:

—El poder se funda en el texto. La legitimidad única es reflejo de la posesión del texto único. Mas ahora . . .

¿debo empezar nueva batalla, esta vez contra las letras que se reproducen por millares, y así otorga poderes y legitimidades a cuantos la poseyeran: nobles y villanos, obispos y herejes, mercaderes y alcahuetas, niños, rebeldes y enamorados? (TN, 611)

One of the salient characteristics of the essay, again reflecting *Terra nostra*, is the fervent quest for unity. Fuentes' art is a masterful art of synthesis. Indeed, Fuentes is to Mexican literature what the prodigious Diego

Rivera is to Mexican painting—a grand, exuberant synthesizer of history and myth, one who creates a panoramic simultaneity of all epochs of Mexican history, from the Pre-Columbian epoch to the era of Spanish colonization to the periods of Independence, Intervention, and Reform, to the Mexican Revolution and down to modern Mexico. Just as Cervantes in his novelistic craftsmanship is eclectic, both traditional and experimental, so too does Fuentes, both artistic descendant of Cervantes and father of a reborn Cervantes, masterfully fuse the traditional novel of plot, action, and character creation and development with the experimental narrative of multiple and fragmented times, spaces, and points of view, and with multiple languages. Cervantes is the great synthesizer of the *novela picaresca* and the *novela morisca*, the *novela de caballerías* and the *novela pastoril*, the *novela bizantina*, the *novela de aventuras*, and the *novela filosófica*. This eclecticism of Cervantes is forcefully perpetuated by Fuentes, who has stated that his own work is a fusion of—what else?—opposites—the novel of adventures, epitomized by the nineteenth century "thrillers" of Alexandre Dumas like *The Three Musketeers* and the *Count of Monte Cristo*, and the novel of language, epitomized by James Joyce's *Ulysses* and *Finnegan's Wake*.

Throughout the essay as throughout his great novel, Fuentes emphasizes both rupture and continuity. The apocalyptic orientation of *Terra nostra* exemplifies both the destruction of one world and the new beginnings, the new universe. In the essay, Cervantes, Joyce, Signorelli and, we might add, Fuentes himself—are all viewed as eclectic authors, dedicated to the principles of synthesis and accretion. Just as the ancient Aztecs, instead of demolishing their old pyramids at the end of the fifty-two year religious cycle, instead built new pyramids over the old, so too do Fuentes, Joyce, and Cervantes masterfully incorporate the historical, literary, and mythic pasts into their works. They thus not only enrich their art but, paradoxically, by incorporating the past they keep their art from ever being relegated to the past. Instead by fusing times their art achieves a timelessness:

> Cervantes desenmascara la épica medieval y le impone los sellos de la lectura crítica. Joyce desenmascara la épica total del Occidente, de Odiseo a la Reina Victoria . . . Sin embargo, tanto Cervantes como Joyce deben servirse de un orden previo de referencias a fin de apoyar en él la materia revolucionaria de sus obras. La novela de caballería en Cervantes. El mundo clásico de la epopeya homérica y el mundo de la escolástica medieval en Joyce. (98)

Similarly, Fuentes in *Terra nostra* constantly integrates past forms—the New World chronicle, the lyric lamentations of the indigenous peoples after the fall of Mexico as recorded by Sahagún, the baroque vision of seventeenth century Spain, to fortify an immense, experimental vision of what the novel can become—stretching the novel to its limits. Its ending is also both revolutionary and traditional. Male and female are fused literally, becoming a single being, one that is freed from the age-old, murderous duality of the sexes. Yet this fantastic creation that represents a new begin-

ning for humankind, is evoked in a style that is based on biblical language, the language of *Genesis*:

> parirás con dolor a los hijos, por ti será bendita la tierra, te dará espigas y frutos, con la sonrisa en el rostro comerás el pan, hasta que vuelvas a la tierra, pues de ella has sido tomado, ya que polvo eres, y al polvo volverás, sin pecado, con placer. (TN, 783)

Every new beginning in Fuentes contains the indelible mark of the past. The ritual of union that is performed at the end by Polo Febo/Quetzalcóatl and Celestina/Tlazolteotl is performed with masks, to indicate that the new beginning is also the continuation of the ancient past—as the fulfillment of the erotic and spiritual relationship between Quetzalcóatl/New World Pilgrim and Tlazolteotl that could not be consummated in the Aztec world, prostrate before the god of war, Huitzilopochtli.

In the essay as well as in *Terra nostra*, Fuentes must utilize the language of constant antitheses in order to evoke Cervantes' highly paradoxical art:

> ruptura del orden épico que reprimía las posibilidades de la ficción narrativa, la novela de Cervantes, como la pintura de Signorelli, debe apoyar su novedad en lo mismo que intenta negar y es tributaria de la forma anterior que se instala en el corazón de la novedad confusa como una exigencia de orden, de normatividad. (32)

Here we can see how Fuentes' interpretation of Cervantes is also a mirror of his own process of artistic creation. For example, Fuentes' masterpiece, *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* (1962), is both the epitome of the traditional, of *la novela de la Revolución mexicana*, as it forcefully continues a major, highly innovative current in Mexican literature that began in 1915 with Mariano Azuela, was further developed by leading Mexican authors like Martín Luis Guzmán in the twenties, by Mauricio Magdaleno in the thirties, Agustín Yáñez in the forties, Juan Rulfo in the fifties, and that even today continues to flourish in works such as *José Trigo* (1966) by Fernando del Paso and *El tamaño del infierno* (1973) by the grandson of Mariano Azuela, Arturo Azuela. But *La muerte de Artemio Cruz*, thematically a traditional novel, is at the same time one of the great experimental novels of Mexico and indeed of Latin America. Here Fuentes boldly experiements with multiple times, spaces, with fragmented point of view, as well as with continual variations in style, tempo, and tone. Similarly, one of Fuentes' most recent novels, *La cabeza de la hidra* (1978) seems on the surface to be a traditional novel, falling into the popular genre of the spy thriller. It is replete with fact-paced action, with mystery and suspense, with throat slashings and chases and shootouts and international spy rings. Yet it too, like *La muerte de Artemio Cruz*, like the highly ambiguous *Cambio de piel*, is an extremely complex, experimental novel, one that fuses action and character development with the mythic and the metaphysical, and that merges literary texts like Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens* with filmscripts like *Casablanca*.

But it is in *Terra nostra* that Fuentes' art of synthesis achieves its maximum development. In a major sense, the Cervantes created by Fuentes in *Terra nostra*—a *persona* of Fuentes himself—is a bridge figure between two antagonistic cultures—Christianity and Islam, just as Fuentes in *Terra nostra* itself acts as a bridge figure between two other great antagonistic cultures—that of Spain and the indigenous civilizations of the New World. And just as Fuentes seeks through his art to preserve the glories of Spain, as reflected in the three great figures from her Golden Age literature—the Celestina, Don Quijote, and Don Juan, all of whom are transplanted by Fuentes to Latin America, so too is Cervantes seen as desirous of preserving the Moorish culture, which he seeks not to extirpate, as do his masters, but to synthesize with that of Christian Spain:

> miró los rasgados pendones del Islam, las menguantes lunas, las derrotadas estrellas, y él mismo se sintió derrotado porque luchaba contra algo que no odiaba y porque no entendía el odio fratricida entre los hijos de los profetas de Arabia y de Israel y porque amaba y agradecía y distinguía y salvaba los méritos de las culturas, aunque ni las crueldades de los poderes, conocía y amaba las fuentes y jardines y patios y altas torres de al-Andalus, la naturaleza re-creada por el hombre para el placer del hombre y no aniquilada para su mortificación, como en la necrópolis del Señor don Felipe; rodeado de los inextinguibles fuegos de las galeras, entonó una muda plegaria para que los pueblos de las tres religiones se amasen y reconociesen y viviesen en paz adorando a un mismo Dios único y sin rostro y sin cuerpo alguno, Dios sólo poderoso nombre de la suma de nuestros deseos, Dios sólo signo del encuentro y la fraternidad de las sabidurías, los goces, las recreaciones de la mente y el cuerpo. (TN, 253)

It is significant that the idealistic center of the Hispanic part of *Terra nostra*, Mihail-ben-Sama, Miguel de la Vida, the living fusion of *las tres castas*, Moorish, Christian, and Jew, is one of the prime subjects of the art of Fuentes' fictional Cervantes. The relationship between the *cronista* and the mysterious youth who defies the authority of Felipe and who is executed by the monarch by being burned at the stake—the fact that they are soulmates in idealism—is underscored through their sharing of the same name: Miguel. And both of these figures are reflected in another great unifying character—the new World Pilgrim, the ardent questor for a New World Utopia and the counterfigure to the ambitious, scheming, and ruthless Guzmán—himself a combination of the rapacious and oppressive *conquistador* Nuño de Guzmán and the wily, opportunistic Hernán Cortés. The anonymous New World Pilgrim, his lack of a specific name emphasizing his composite and highly mutable identity, is developed in terms of the god of love and of life Quetzalcóatl, as Fuentes, in the part of *Terra nostra* entitled "El nuevo mundo," imaginatively explores the *what if* possibilities of the Conquest. What if, instead of the false Quetzalcóatl adored by Moctezuma—the cunning, avaricious and despotic Cortés who donned the mere mask of the liberating god Quetzalcóatl but who proved

himself to be an emanation of the bellicose Huitzilopochtli, the true Plumed Serpent had indeed returned from the East where he had gone after departing from Mexico on a raft of serpents. Instead of the *conquistador* Cortés, whose purposes were to dominate, destroy, and enslave, what if the genuine Quetzalcóatl had returned to claim his kingdom in a peaceable manner—and to liberate the Indian peoples from the despotic power of the Aztecs—as indeed they fervently believed that Cortés would do?

Fuentes' New World Pilgrim is developed, like both Miguel de la Vida and Miguel de Cervantes, as a bridge figure, one who earnestly attempts to join both Hispanic and Indian cultures through his emphasis on altruism, peace, self-sacrifice, and love. Yet this transcendental figure, departing to the New World from Spain, who cannot recall his name or his specific background, but who has vague memories of desert regions and palm trees and who thus indicates that he is linked with Christ, is in Fuentes' work a fated figure—one who as the New World god Quetzalcóatl is doomed to arrive and depart endlessly from Mexico; one who throughout the ages will ceaselessly return only to be ceaselessly rejected. Even at the beginning of the second millenium, this manifestation of Quetzalcóatl is seen as once again in exile, this time in France, with the remnants of the Indian treasure, that he intends to use to support a new resistance movement. At one point in the narrative, the New World Pilgrim attempts, on the linguistic level—the only level that remains open to him—to join the two cultures that are predestined for antagonism. Here, in the eloquent, heartfelt words of the New World Pilgrim, that ring out like a prayer, that are the New World equivalent to the anguished plea for unity made by Cervantes, is found not only the guiding aesthetic principle of *Terra nostra*, that of an incessant unifying of diverse characters, epochs, cultures, philosophies, theologies, theogonie, but also the basic theme of the essay. *Cervantes o la crítica* is a document that, through the noble and, in the twentieth century, supremely noncontroversial figure of Cervantes—universally acclaimed and therefore not a symbol to New World intellectuals of Spanish imperialism, bridges the tremendous gap between Spain and Mexico, between the conquerors and the conquered. Fuentes' quest for a redemptive unity between Old World and new is startlingly dramatized through the very style of the narrative, through the words depicted in the process of linguistically blending into one another:

> Venus, Venus, Vésperes, Vísperas, Hésperes, Héspero, Hesperia, España, Vespaña, nombre de la estrella doble, gemela de sí misma, crepúsculo y alba constantes, estela de plata que unía al viejo y al nuevo mundo, y de uno me llevaba al otro, arrastrado por su cauda de fuego, estrella de las vísperas, estrella de la aurora, serpiente de plumas, mi nombre en el mundo nuevo era el nombre del viejo mundo, Quetzalcóatl, Venus, Hesperia, España, dos estrellas que son la misma, alba y crepúsculo, misteriosa unión, enigma indescrifrable, mas cifra de dos cuerpos, de dos tierras, de un terrible encuentro. (TN, 493–494)

It is important to note the spirit of reconciliation between Mexico and Spain with which Fuentes also begins the essay, a spirit that is rare in the supernationalistic literature of Mexico, because this spirit of rapprochement pervades the entire work:

> México, al reconocerse, acabó por reconocer su auténtica herencia española y defenderla con la pasión de quien ha rescatado a su padre de la incomprensión y del olvido. (9)

As opposed to the many contemporary Latin American artists and intellectuals who pride themselves on not having in their libraries a collection of Spanish literature, or who reduce Spain's vast and extraordinary literary achievement to but a few isolated authors in the Golden Age, or who, like Jorge Luis Borges, first read the *Quixote* in English and then, coming upon the Spanish original, regarded it as but "una pobre traducción"; and in contrast to the many impassioned *indigenistas* who are opposed to anything Spanish primarily because it is Spanish, Fuentes in *Cervantes o la crítica* renderes an eloquent homage to Spain, both Spain of the Golden Age and the new, democratic Spain that has emerged in the post-Franco era. The quest for the origins of the Mexican people has always been a vital part of Fuentes' art, as it has that of Octavio Paz. Many of Fuentes' works have penetratingly explored the indigenous origins of the Mexican national character; but in *Terra nostra* and in the essay, Fuentes concentrates on the Spanish foundations of the Mexican identity. In another provocative essay, included in his collection *Tiempo mexicano* and entitled "Tiempo is pánico" or "(His)Panic Time," Fuentes has emphasized the panic experienced by many Mexicans in confronting their national father. It has been repeatedly pointed out that there are no statues to Cortés in Mexico, in contrast to the monuments to Pizarro in Perú. But just as in centuries past, when the colossal, for some monstrous statue of the Aztec goddess Coatlicue—symbolic of the Indian face of Mexico—was unearthed, only quickly to be buried again, because Mexicans shuddered at and could not contemplate this dread Aztec visage of themselves—the burial strikingly symbolic of the repression for centuries of Mexico's indigenous identity, so in the twentieth century has this extreme reluctance to contemplate the national self been shifted to Spain and the tremendous Spanish heritage in Mexico.[4] Yet, unlike many of his countrymen, Fuentes has no qualms in gazing on this Spanish face of Mexico:

> El tiempo hispánico también es tiempo de México: omnipresente pero ocultado, vehículo original de la tradición occidental, tiempo de la Conquista y de la Colonia, rechazado por la Independencia y por la subsecuente confianza dada a los tiempos ingleses, franceses y norteamericanos; rescatarlo, comprenderlo, es una empresa que nos llena de pánico; preferimos negarlo o exaltarlo; aún no aprendimos a socializarlo.[5]

In works such as *Todos los gatos son pardos*, Fuentes has placed negative emphasis on the absent national father—the Spain that has continually been

domineering and aloof toward its colonial possessions, symbolized by Cortés' action of abandoning La Malinche, the symbol of Indian Mexico, and marrying a Spanish noblewoman. In *Terra nostra*, Fuentes stresses that the Spanish monarchs from the sixteenth century to the present will never visit their New World dominions—an estrangement only recently broken when King Juan Carlos finally made a visit to Latin America in the late seventies.

Yet in *Cervantes o la crítica*, Fuentes refers positively to Spain as "esa otra mitad de nuestra vida y de nuestra herencia" (11), emphasizing the solidarity of Mexico with Republican Spain. In *Terra nostra*, in *Cervantes o la crítica*, and in other essays as well, Fuentes views the Spanish language as a great unifying force between Old World and New. In his provocative essay, "El español, ¿lengua imperial, medicante o humano?", Fuentes again adopts a diplomatic, conciliatory role between two extremes—those who represent minority cultures in Spain and who attack the Spanish language as a tool of the fascist dictatorship, and, on the other hand, those in the New World, this time in the United States, who refuse to speak the Spanish language because of the stigma they attach to it as the language of the oppressed and the enslaved in colonial Spain. As both a Latin American and a Mexican, Fuentes is aware of his right, equal to or exceeding that of any other group, to condemn the Spanish language as "la lengua del imperio." Yet he refuses to do so, and instead, at the international P.E.N. conference responds to the outcries of the Catalonians who seek to substitute their own language for what they brand as: "la tiranía durante cuarenta años contra las demás lenguas peninsulares." Fuentes defends the Spanish language, characterizing it not as an oppressor but as the victim itself of the fascist Spanish regime, a language that has been "pervertida, allamada, convertida en vehículo de opresión, vaciedad y mentira."[6] Fuentes speaks as a Mexican, the product of the violent clash between Spanish and indigenous cultures with the result that the civilization, including the language, codices, architecture and many other facets of that culture were all but exterminated by the victors. Yet he makes a strong distinction between the language itself and those few who have debased it. The Spanish language for Fuentes is evoked as a great compensating force—one that in its key unifying function counteracts a whole series of devastating political, economic, and military rivalries among the diverse Latin America nations, as well as a crippling geographical isolation—forces that militate against a unified Latin America:

> Lo extraordinario es que esa lengua se haya convertido en el signo prácticamente único de la unidad y la libertad de las naciones colonizadas por España . . . Todo nos separa, sólo nos une esta lengua común de los pueblos chileno y mexicano, argentino y cubano, de los negros y blancos e indios y mestizos, de los hombres del desierto y el río, de la pampa y la cordillera.[7]

Terra nostra constitutes not only a major homage to the Spanish language in general but also to an artistic style—the baroque—that achieved a superlative development in Golden Age Spain and in contemporary Latin American literature—in authors such as Fuentes, Lezama Lima, and

Carpentier. Indeed, the definition of the baroque given by one of the characters of *Terra nostra* also constitutes a description of this dense and grandiose work itself. Ludovico describes to Felipe the positive contributions that Julián has made to the New World, chief among which is the legacy of a marvellous creative all-encompassing style:

> —¿Construyó sus iglesias, pintó sus pinturas, recogió la voz de los vencidos?, dijo con acento cada vez más angustido, Felipe.
>
> —Sí, sí afirmó ahora Ludovico, hizo cuanto dices; lo hizo bajo el signo de una creación singular, capaz según él de trasladar al arte y a la vida la visión total del universo que es la de la ciencia nueva . . .
>
> —¿Cómo se llama esa creación, y qué es?
>
> —Llámase barroco, y es una floración inmediata: tan plena, que su juventud es su madurez, y su magnificencia, su cáncer. Un arte, Felipe, que como la naturaleza misma, aborrece el vacío: llena cuántos la realidad le ofrece. Su prolongación es su negación. Nacimiento y muerte son para este arte un acto único: su apariencia es su fijeza, y puesto que abarca totalmente la realidad que escoge, llenándola totalmente, es incapaz de extensión o desarrollo. (TN,744)

Fuentes has written an important prologue to one of the works of another great Latin American master of the baroque, Alejo Carpentier. Like Fuentes, Carpentier is also a bridge novelist between New World and Old, and in works such as *Los pasos perdidos*, *Concierto barroco*, and *El arpa y la sombra*, the last being a poetic re-creation of perhaps the greatest historical "bridge" figure between Spain and the New World, Christopher Columbus, Carpentier expertly synthesizes Old World and New World visions, myths, languages, and sociopolitical realities. In his prologue to Carpentier's novel *El siglo de las luces*, which begins in the New World but ends in Spain, as the two major characters, the Cubans Sofía and Esteban, sacrifice their lives as they join the rebellion of the Spanish against the French invaders under Napoleon, Fuentes adopts an attitude of both challenge and reconciliation with *la madre patria*. Focussing this time on the literature of Latin America, Fuentes portrays it as a paradox, as both a defiance of the effete, official language of the Spanish *imperium*, the language of the New World *conquistadores*, and yet also as a tribute to the resurgent vitality of the splendid Spanish literary tradition, now being upheld by New World authors:

> la literatura en lengua española de las Américas es la respuesta común del nuevo mundo al idioma de los conquistadores y los colonizadores de nuestra tierra, una regeneración de su fuerza a partir de la experiencia americana del lenguaje, un asalto a sus ortodoxias inservibles, una falta de respeto, sí, una devolución de las carabelas cargadas de oro y excrementos verbales, pero también un retorno, en tierras de América, a la grandeza imaginativa y al riesgo literario del Arcipreste de Hita; de Fernando de Rojas, de Miguel de Cervantes, de Quevedo y de Gongóra.[8]

It is significant that once again, as in *Terra nostra* and *Cervantes o la crítica*, Fuentes stresses the literary continuity not between nineteenth and twentieth century Spain and the New World, but between Spain's greatest literary period and Latin America. Indeed, as we shall see at a later point, Fuentes sees Spain's contemporary novel as a branch of Latin American literature.

It is interesting to contrast the reconciliation with Spain advocated by Fuentes with the lacerating vision toward Spain of one of that country's leading contemporary authors, Juan Goytisolo. In Goytisolo's mordant and demythifying works, such as *Reinvindicación del conde Julián* and another novel that has a title which both parallels *Terra nostra* and is antithetical to it, *Juan sin tierra*, Goytisolo's world is one of languages and cultures in combat. It is highly significant that Goytisolo ends *Juan sin tierra* not in Spanish but in Arabic—in what is both an homage to the Moorish Spain that the dominant Spain had expelled and whose influence it had attempted to suppress, but also an indication of the cleft, the chasm between these two cultures. Fuentes, on the other hand, does not write any section of *Terra nostra* in *nahuatl* even though he treats at length the Aztec Mexico of the time of the Conquest and the indigenous theogonies, for to do so would emphasize the nonintegration of the two cultures, underscoring them as isolated and perhaps even permanently antagonistic forces, whereas Fuentes throughout his works—*La región más transparente*, *Todos los gatos son pardos*, *Terra nostra*, emphasizes the Mexican identity as the *mestizo* identity, the fusion of Indian and Spanish. Thus, in *Terra nostra*, the Aztec Emperor Moctezuma speaks in a Spanish that is in effect two idioms fused together—the Castilian lexicon and syntax, but the rhythms, repetitions, and intensifications of *nahuatl*:

> —No, no es que yo sueñe, no me levanto del sueño adormilado: no te veo en sueños, no te estoy soñando . . .
>
> ¡Es que te he visto, es que ya he puesto mis ojos en tu rostro! Y tú has venido entre nubes, entre nieblas. (463)

In addition, the twenty bronzed youths envisioned by the New World Pilgrim, twenty to symbolize the sacred number in the Indian cosmology, do not speak in *nahuatl* but in a Spanish that again incorporates the lilting harmonies of the Aztec tongue. Thus, even on the linguistic level, Fuentes is a constant synthesizer, combining the best of both cultures, stressing the need for the dominant culture to be the voice of the dominated. Fuentes recreates and celebrates the *nahuatl* language, capturing its beauty and eloquence, while at the same time emphasizing its irrevocable fusion with Spanish to create a new, Mexican language. By preserving the grace, the poetic intensity, and the mystery of *nahuatl* within the Spanish language, Fuentes once again adopts a midline position between the fanatic *indigenistas* on the one hand, who advocate an adoption by Mexico of the Aztec tongue, and, on the other hand those who ignore, disdain, or suppress Mexico's extremely important and still vital indigenous heritage.

In both *Terra nostra* and *Cervantes o la crítica*, the essay that, as we have seen, is not a mere critical exposition but a creative work of art in its own right, the synthesizing power of Fuentes' imagination leaps over the centuries to fuse characters across time and space. Thus, in *Terra nostra*, the dictatorial figure of Felipe merges into that of Francisco Franco, just as the mausoleumlike Escorial merges into the gigantic mausolem constructed by Franco in the Valle de los Caídos. The Rome of Tiberius, depicted at a point near his death, portrayed as an Emperor mired in delusions and awash in decadence, cut off from his people, revelling in his solitude and in his absolute power, is but the fatalistic anticipation of the deluded and tyrannical Felipe, also alone, severely estranged from the life of his kingdom, exalting himself as the sole and absolute ruler of his kingdom when in fact that Empire is rapidly disintegrating, just as is the Rome of Tiberius. This is the same process of identity fusion that Fuentes utilizes in the essay—not to underscore the operation of a fatalistic, cyclical time, as he does in *Terra nostra*, in which both the present and the future are but the duplication of an oppressive past, but in a far more positive way—dramatically to underscore the unity and the continuity of literature, and indeed, of all the humanistic disciplines, across the ages. Thus Fuentes leaps strikingly from the medieval heretics to twentieth century novelists like Barth, Goytisolo, and Stoppard, or from Don Quixote to Buster Keaton and Charlie Chaplin. These bold imaginative leaps serve to open up literature, to restore it to its true place within the other humanistic disciplines—history, philosophy, visual art, religion:

> Su reciclaje de las verdades inconmovibles de la Iglesia no es demasiado diferente de lo que muchos escritores contemporáneos (Italo Calvino, John Barth, Juan Goytisolo, John Gardner, Guy Davenport, Tom Stoppard) hacen: reelaborar antiguas creencias o historias menos lejanas en los moldes de la metamorfosis. (23)

The most important of these "amalgamations" of Fuentes is that between Cervantes and Joyce, *el abuelo del Boom* and the Father of the Boom, respectively. The totalization impulse, a term used by Fuentes in his *La nueva novela hispanoamericana* to characterize the art of Mario Vargas Llosa, is in *Cervantes o la crítica* linked with Cervantes, and with the Irish author who is depicted as the Cervantes of the twentieth century. And once again, the terms in which Fuentes depicts the art of both James and Cervantes apply equally as well to his own creative production:

> Cervantes y Joyce son los dos ejemplos supremos mediante los cuales la ficción moderna, en sus extremos, totaliza sus intenciones y se reconoce a sí misma . . . En Cervantes y en Joyce, es particularmente agudo el conflicto de la gestación verbal, la lucha entre la renovación y el tributo debido a la forma anterior; en ellos, el destino de las palabras es su origen y el origen de las palabras es su destino. (97)

The same linguistic bridge-building techniques, which Fuentes has so stunningly utilized in *Terra nostra*, as the New World pilgrim/god spins an elaborate bridge of words in a desperate attempt to ward off a conflict between two worlds that is inevitable, is also found in *Cervantes o la crítica*:

> España e Irlanda, Hispania y Hesperia, dueñas de la misma raíz, tierras de la doble estrella, Venus, Hésperes, primera luz del crepúsculo y última luz del alba, Venus, estrella-espejo, gemela de sí misma, brillando sobre los pueblos de las tierras de las Vísperas, España e Irlanda, tierras del eterno velorio. Tierras de las espera. (98)

This innovative use of an associational, stream-of-consciousness style, one that incorporates plays on words like *Hesperia/espera* and uncommon word fusions like *estrella-espejo*, demonstrates how Fuentes, like Alfonso Reyes before him in his poetically imaginative essay on the Mexico at the time of the Conquest *Visión del Anahuac*, has remarkably expanded the essay as an artistic form, through his creative exuberance and his linguistic verve and power.

And, once again, as so often in Fuentes' art, in which the individual, the national, and the universal are blended with great skill, we can descry the third corner of this national triangle: Spain, Ireland, and the other nation that Fuentes in another essay has characterized as eccentric in the literal sense of the term, outside of the center—Mexico. Once again Cervantes and Joyce merge into Fuentes: "ambos surgidos de países excéntricos, de países devorados y desvelados por la reflexión sobre su propio ser" (97–98). Similar to Spain and Ireland and perhaps, in the twentieth century, more than either of these two countries, Mexico is obsessed with the problem of defining itself, with untangling and understanding the complex strands of *la mexicanidad*. Throughout his many novels, plays, and essays, Fuentes has, paradoxically, both attacked and demythified the official "mexicanidad" and yet constructed his own mythic Mexico.

In addition to being the prolongation of *Terra nostra*, which several critics have regarded as so Gargantuan that it would have exhausted creative possibilities, *Cervantes o la crítica* is a continuation of another masterful work of synthesis by Fuentes, one that also unites Latin America and Spain by incorporating both Latin American and Spanish authors into the same positive framework, *La nueva novela hispanoamericana* (1969). Here Fuentes not only analyzes the works of the novelists of the Boom, but in a concluding chapter extends Latin American experimental fiction to Spain by including Juan Goytisolo as a Boom author:

> Goytisolo emprende la más urgente tarea de la novela española: destruir un lenguaje viejo, crear uno nuevo y hacer de la novela el vehículo de esta operación. Su obra se convierte así en el puente que une a dos fenómenos literarios de idéntico signo idiomático aunque de actitud radicalmente opuesta ante ese signo: la novela española y la novela hispanoamericana. . . . Con Goytisolo, el español escrito en España deja de ser el lenguaje de los señores para revelarse, igual que un la América Española, como el lenguaje de los parias.[9]

Once again novel and essay merge; the reunion of the leading authors of the Boom in *La nueva novela* anticipates the reunion of the characters from their novels at the end of *Terra nostra*, as Horacio Oliveira, Santiago Zavalita, Humberto el mudito, La Estrella and Cuba Venegas, Coronel Aureliano Buendía, all are portrayed as exiles from their native countries who meet together in Paris. Throughout *Terra nostra* as throughout *Cervantes o la crítica*, the space of fiction is equated with the space of liberation, which is the primary concern of the discussion of these characters. These figures have been denied a geographical, political, and economic space, just as it has been denied, sometimes repeatedly, to many of their creators. It is extremely ironic that these fictional refugees should encounter their *terra nostra* not in any Latin American country but in Paris, which for Fuentes in *Terra nostra* as well as in *Una familia lejana* (1980) is both the geographical and the spiritual center of the work. Counterpointing the fatalistic year of 1521, which marks for Fuentes the imposition of tyranny both in Spain and in the Spanish New World, the year of the consummation of the Conquest by Cortés, who devastated Mexico-Tenochtitlan and the year in which the *comuneros* were defeated by Carlos V, is the day of freedom with which *Terra nostra* begins: July 14, 1999—Bastille Day. Another concluding irony is that the New World created by Polo Febo and Celestina after the apocalypse is not in the New World discovered by Columbus but in the Old World, in Paris.

In a major sense, Fuentes' remarkable essay continues the distinguished tradition of writings on *Don Quijote* by outstanding modern Hispanic authors that perhaps acquire their deepest significance as revelatory not only of Cervantes' art but of the mind and soul of the modern author. *Cervantes o la crítica* is the most recent manifestation of a long tradition that includes Miguel de Unamuno's *Vida de Don Quijote y Sancho*, Ortega y Gasset's *Meditaciones sobre el Quijote*, and in Hispanic America, Juan Montalvo's *Capítulos que se le olvidaron a Cervantes*, Borges' short story, "Pierre Menard, autor del Quijote," and Agustín Yáñez's story, included in *La ladera dorada*, "La boda de Don Quijote," in which as in *Terra nostra*, author and character, Cervantes and Don Quijote, both are re-created as fictional entities. The remark that the narrator of Borges' story makes concerning Menard's laboriously re-created *Quijote*—literally, an exact duplication of Cervantes' text, but connotatively and spiritually a mirror of the aesthetics of Menard and of the intellectual preoccupations of his period—the twentieth century—applies as well to the *Quijote* not only imaginatively interpreted but re-created in their own image by Fuentes, Ortega, Unamuno, and Yáñez:

> He reflexionado que es lícito ver en el Quijote "final" una especie de palimpsesto, en el que deben traslucirse los rostros—tenues pero no indescifrables—de la "previa" escritura de nuestro amigo.[10]

In conclusion, we may see Fuentes' *Cervantes o la crítica* as a fascinating amalgam. It first of all provides a provocative new interpretation of Cer-

vantes' classic novel, proving once again that *Don Quijote*, which has generated mountains of critical commentary, continues to be a vast generating text. In both novel and essay, Fuentes ringingly affirms the most positive and the most enduring legacy of Spain to the New World—the richness, expressiveness, and dynamism of its language; and the vibrancy and contemporaneity of its great character creations: Celestina, Don Juan, and Don Quijote.

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NOTES

1. See the excellent study on this epic work of Fuentes by Juan Goytisolo entitled "*Terra nostra*" and included in his collection of essays *Disidencias* (Barcelona: Editorial Seix Barral, 1977), pp. 236-237.

2. Carlos Fuentes, *Cervantes o la crítica de la lectura* (México: Joaquín Mortiz, 1976), p. 9. Subsequent references are included in the text.

3. Carlos Fuentes, *Terra nostra* (México: Joaquín Mortiz, 1975), p. 615. Subsequent references are included in the text, preceded by TN.

4. Octavio Paz discusses this curious and yet highly symbolic disinterment and reburial in his essay "El arte de México: materia y sentido," included in *In/mediaciones* (Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1979), pp. 51-53. Paz recounts the placing by the Viceroy Revillagigedo of the immense "Coatlicue Mayor" in the Real y Pontífica Universidad de México, which had previously been given a collection of Greek and Roman statues by Carlos III. Perhaps the enormous contrast between the Greco-Roman concept of divinity—the divine that is the perfection of the human, and the Aztec concept of the divine as monstrously inhuman, a divinity with a necklace of human skulls and a skirt of serpents and two gigantic serpents in place of a head—produced the horror of the statue and caused it to be quickly banished from the museum. According to Paz, the first disinterment was in 1790, and in 1804, as a result of the request of Baron von Humboldt, the statue was again unearthed, so that the illustrious investigator could examine it—and then quickly reburied! Once more, according to Paz, "La presencia de la estatua terrible era insoportable."

5. Consult Carlos Fuentes, *Tiempo mexicano* (México: Joaquín Mortiz, 1971), p. 43.

6. Carlos Fuentes, "El español, ¿lengua imperial, mendicante o humano?", in *Vuelta*, 23 (octubre de 1978), p. 32.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

8. Consult Alejo Carpentier, *El siglo de las luces*, Prologue by Carlos Fuentes (Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1979), IX.

9. Carlos Fuentes, *La nueva novela hispanoamericana* (México: Joaquín Mortiz, 1969), pp. 81-82.

10. Jorge Luis Borges, "Pierre Menard, autor del *Quijote*," included in his collection *Ficciones* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1956), p. 56.