

## Under the Influence of Cervantes: Trapiello's *Al morir don Quijote*

Dr. Isidoro Arén Janeiro  
*Independent Scholar*

For the last four hundred years, Cervantes' masterpiece, *Don Quixote* (1605-1615), has influenced literary creation, and it has conditioned the authors who dared to distinguish themselves from one of the monsters of literature. It has been argued that there is a before and an after the first publication of the *Primera parte del Ingenioso Hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha* (1605). In essence, giving it the status of being the first "original": the first modern novel that set the tone for the process of narrative production in Spain. Afterwards, all writers owed Cervantes, and are obliged into a conscious effort to swerve from the "original," so as to differentiate their work by taking their narrative one step away; thus, positioning their work next to the "original" as a unique creation on its own. The aim of this article is to study these aspects, and to present an overview of the influence upon Andrés Trapiello's *Al morir Don Quijote* (2005) by its predecessor: Cervantes' *Don Quijote* (1605-1615). It will also analyse the complexity of the Cervantes' masterpiece and the relationship established between the *Primera parte del Ingenioso Hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha* (1605), the "original," and the *Segunda Parte del Ingenioso Caballero Don Quijote de la Mancha* (1615). Additionally, it will present a study of Trapiello's *Al morir don Quijote*, where the betrayal of Alonso Quijano is the central aspect that defines this novel. Finally, it will take into account Harold Bloom's work *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry*, and it will analyse the intricate relationship between Trapiello and his text, as it is overshadowed by its predecessor. It will argue that there is a conscious attempt to deconstruct this masterpiece, so that Trapiello's can be read on its own.

As Cervantes, Trapiello has to reach the reader through a medium that he or she can relate to, or accept as being possible. Otherwise, if the connection of these famed characters were not made believable, then, Trapiello would fail with his continuation: the adventure through the secondary characters. The article will argue that Trapiello was successful in creating a world that is acceptable to a community of readers when reading *Al morir Don Quijote*, where the explicit world of Cervantes' *Don Quixote* is present in their minds, and it is one that has to be displaced. Trapiello's novel takes as the departing point, an event: the death of Don Quixote, and the final renouncing of his fantastical voyage. It is his last words that makes the reader realize that he or she is the culprit for his madness, and that Don Quixote's world was created to fill the expectations of a community of readers that were awaiting this type of novel, that of chivalry. It is the awakening moment for the reader who has been a witness to the death of a genre, and an active participant in the process, that forces him or her to turn their backs to Don Quixote. Once more, forcing the reader to refute the idea that a world of chivalry could have existed at all; therefore, coming to the bittersweet conclusion that they were also betrayed by Don Quixote.

The complexity of Cervantes' masterpiece is an aspect that has been studied already. Nevertheless, it is necessary to establish a brief outlook before entering into a

discussion of Trapiello's *Al morir Don Quijote*, as to explain his attempt to displace a novel that has an overbearing influence on all its predecessors. It has been argued that Cervantes did not want his novel to fall into an endless line of imitations, or continuations that would diminish his creation. He had to write a second part to complete the deconstruction of the first part, and, at the same time, to refute the apocryphal *Quijote*. But as before, where the first part parodies the novels of chivalry, the second part of Cervantes' masterpiece, *Segunda Parte del Ingenioso Caballero don Quijote de la Mancha* (1615), relies on two fictional worlds: the first one is his own creation, *Primera Parte del Ingenioso Hidalgo Don Quijote* (1605), and the other fictional world, that is explicit in the second part of Cervantes, is Alonso Fernández de Avellaneda in his novel *El Ingenioso Don Quijote de la Mancha* (1614).

For the success of Cervantes' second part, Cervantes had to depend, one more time, on his ability to deconstruct these two worlds, and to show the fissures within the creative process of a fictional world. In order for his second part to distinguish itself from his own first, and the apocryphal, Cervantes had to take the novel into a different direction. But, to fully comprehend the second part, either Cervantes' or Avellaneda's, the reader must comprehend the genesis, their aim, which lies within the pages of the first part, as well as the genre parodied. At the same time, to fully comprehend Cervantes' second part, the reader has to take into account the events in the first part, constantly been revised by both Don Quijote and Sancho; and Avellaneda's second part. Both fictitious worlds are explicit in the third adventure, Don Quijote's last. Moreover, as it will be argued later, in the creation of Trapiello's *Al morir Don Quijote*, all of these have to be considered in order to comprehend this latest novel, as the author deconstructs all the characters. Fundamentally, there is within these works a tension generated by the overshadowing of each other, and, as a result, there is a conscious attempt by each author to break away from the predecessor. Even Cervantes himself had to find a way to veer away from his first part, so that his second one is not seen as a mere continuation.

Before we enter in this discussion, there are some things to be considered, and need to be argued in order to understand this intricate relationship. As with any fictional creation, the reader have to be willing to let go of his or her perception of what constitutes their reality, that is, what is possible or not. When the reader starts reading any type of document, they must accept certain premises, or parameters, even if these challenge their senses. He or she must for a few moments leave his guard down, and allow the fictitious world to operate under its own peculiar rules. By doing so, the receptor must keep in mind that it is the fictional world that makes up the inner laws that operate within the novel. Thus, he or she must develop some pre-established considerations that would enable him or her to keep in mind those defining lines: those, for example, that divide the world of Don Quijote and Alonso Quijano, and the numerous characters that form the complexity of the novel in itself, and that of the reader. In other words, a reality that maintains the reader at arms length, with both feet in their own reality, or the construction of what constitutes their reality.

When Cervantes created Don Quijote's world, he knew that it was based on a flawed world that transcends what a reader would be willing to accept as realistic; and even some of the fictional characters within the novel, accomplices in the deceit, will not concede to admit. The chivalry narrative becomes the medium that permits Cervantes to turn it against itself, to develop his main character and plot. This is the perfect venue to

construct the novel as a platform where reality and fiction are intertwined, thus forcing the reader to decide what establishes their own reality, and what it is considered as fictional. Don Quixote's world mirrors that of the novels he has read: this is his major flaw, and the genesis of this crazed adventure. Cervantes plays with the reader: he pulls him in and out of his novel. It makes them accept the fictitious reality that he constructed, and once the reader has been convinced that it is possible to find someone with Don Quixote's demeanor, or Sancho's; it is, then, that Cervantes forces the reader to step back and realize that he or she is as much of a fool as these two characters. The reader's perception is constantly challenged, and as Don Quixote and Sancho, it is not until the end that the reader has to conclude that he can be duped also.

In order to achieve this, Cervantes must resort to the compositional techniques available. He departs from the acknowledgment that there are some pre-established structures that the reader would accept, thus he or she would be willing to put aside their concept of reality, and consent to the one created by Cervantes. Therefore, if these pre-established structures of fiction are accepted as genuine modes of mimicking reality, whereas in the sixteenth century chivalry novels were accepted as such, then, as Martínez-Bonati states: "there is nothing arbitrary about them and nothing that corrupts the sense of reality" (14). It is obvious that the narrative frame in *Don Quixote* is not an arbitrary medium; it is Cervantes' deliberate plan to bring forward a novel where fiction and reality are constantly fighting to deceive the reader, thus challenging the reader's sense perception and sense experience. The objective is to force the reader to reach an understanding of his self-awareness, and obtain a new knowledge of the world that conditions him. In addition, it is their refusal to understand Don Quixote's world that betrays Alonso Quijano, thus destroying his illusionary reality. As it is the case of Trapiello's novel, his choice of characters and action are not arbitrary. He wanted to present a new reading of this masterpiece, by pulling in the reader into a world where the consequences of Alonso Quijano's adventures are the cataclysm of the setting for *Al morir Don Quijote*. It is, in effect, a new reading, a deconstruction of the idealistic character that left everyone with a sensation of being betrayed by Alonso Quijano.

In essence, Cervantes' *Don Quijote* presented a journey of self-discovery that begins with a major flaw of character, which derives its origin in Don Quixote's own personality. As already suggested, it is his melancholic nature that motivates him to re-establish the lost world depicted in the novels of chivalry. Thus, Don Quixote imitates the fictional characters that in a way have shaped his own vision of the world, which is a direct reference to Plato's criticism of the dangers of mimicking reality as mentioned in *The Republic*: "to liken oneself to another either in voice or gesture, is that not imitation?" (*The Republic* 393 c5, 90). The concept of "liken oneself to another" is not the problem; the problem arises when the object being imitated is flawed, as Don Quixote has to a Knight Errant.

The flaw, which is the agent that motivates our hero, is twice removed from reality: it is a fictional character, and a fictitious world, that Don Quixote wants to emulate: "Llenósele la fantasía de todo aquello que leía en los libros, así de encantamientos como de pendencias, batallas, desafíos, heridas, requiebros, amores, tormentas, y disparates imposibles" (39). These aspects are unsound, because they are representations of an idealized world, which has no bearing on the reality that tries so hard to imitate. And as Martín de Riquer argues, the success of Cervantes lies in the fact

that he was able to achieve what the censors could not, eliminate the proliferation of chivalry novels (*Para leer a Cervantes* 99-112). It was only by making the reader aware of the defects of this genre, via Don Quixote, that Cervantes was able to put an end to this type of creation; or so he thought, until a second part flourished under the pen of Alonso Fernández de Avellaneda in his novel *El Ingenioso Don Quijote de la Mancha* (1614).

Cervantes fashioned his own critical view of the conventional genres of the time, which by default turns itself into a theoretical treatise disguised under a mask of parody. It is this parodying aspect that exemplifies Cervantes' true intent and ingenuity, as E. C. Riley has pointed out, "Cervantes handles his work in such a way as to show his complete control over the creation he tries so hard to make seem independent" (41). It is precisely Cervantes' practical capacity to arrange images that question our senses, forcing us to negotiate the meanings within *Don Quixote's* textual sites, which creates a dichotomy defying our 'sense experience' and 'sense perception' of reality. Cervantes' manipulation of the textual images reinforces the infrastructure of the novel, and in consequence shapes the meaning of these textual images. Don Quixote's vision of the world is his own, the images before his eyes refer him to a world that he understands as mirroring the worlds that have shaped his sense perception from the novels he has read. It is his lack of sense experience that causes the friction between him, and the world that surrounds him: "He believes what he says, even if the language unavoidably betrays the essence of the vision" (Mazzotta 91).

As mentioned before, the first part of *Don Quixote* borrows some of the characteristics of the worlds depicted in the pastoral, picaresque, byzantine and morisco, and courtly novels. These types of narratives constitute the foundation for the development of the plot in the first two adventures of Don Quixote and Sancho under the narrative of a chivalry novel. In the first part, our senses are in constant attack, the limitation of the reality that is perceived challenges the reality of our own experience. We are aware of the burlesque nature of the narrative, but the danger arises when the imitation of the textual world becomes the real world. It is in the second part of the novel where Don Quixote ends his historical journey. But, as in any other journey, he must have a purpose, which is now to disenchant Dulcinea in the fictitious world of the first part, becoming the space that Cervantes usurps in order to finalize the novel:

Aún la cola falta por desollar-dijo Sancho-: lo de hasta aquí son tortas y pan pintado; mas si vuestra merced quiere saber todo lo que hay acerca de las caloñas que le pone, yo le traeré aquí luego al momento quien se las diga todas, sin que les falte una meaja, que anoche llegó el hijo de Bartolomé Carrasco, que viene de estudiar de Salamanca, hecho bachiller, y yéndole yo a dar la bienvenida me dijo que andaba ya en libros la historia de vuestra merced, con nombre del *Ingenioso Hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha*, y dice que me mientan a mí en ella con mi mismo nombre de Sancho Panza, y a la señora Dulcinea del Toboso. (645)

Thus, he appropriates his own narrative and transforms it into the space where Don Quixote and Sancho come at odds with their own fictitious reality. Their first reality as seen in the first part of the novel becomes their fictitious reality in the second part: "veremos en lo que para esta máquina de disparates de tal caballero y de tal escudero, que

parece que los forjaron a los dos en una misma turquesa y que las locuras del señor sin las necesidades del criado no valían un ardite” (641).

The second part becomes the space where Don Quixote and Sancho’s sense perception is challenged by their sense experience. Both characters are confronted with their own manipulation of the reality, challenging each other. It is now that we find a Don Quixote questioning Sancho’s vision of reality, and by doing so, they become aware of the ineffectiveness of their own vision of the world, thus bringing them back to reality. It is, in a way, Cervantes’ deconstruction of the first part, so that his second one can stand side by side as a unique work on its own. Both serve as examples of how corrupting a misreading of textual signs can be for the reader. It hints at Plato’s apprehension towards the poet’s creation of a character that mimics real life individuals because, at some point, the imitation becomes the imitated with its flaws, and the cycle breaks the barriers between reality and fiction. An aspect discussed by Charles Auburn:

[Don Quixote] knows that it is necessary to practice excess in order to find his limits and know himself. By turning reason upside down, by exposing its other side, madness, Don Quixote bears witness, in his way, to the philosophic trend which would break down the extremes of logic, the “sophistries” (sofisterías) of Aristotle’s epigones, the abstract mechanical rationalism of human reality. (60)

In the first part of the novel, Cervantes develops a space where our visual senses are challenged and forced to accept the reality of the world to which Don Quixote and Sancho belong. It is Cervantes’ intention to captivate our attention, and divert our senses in order to make us question what constitutes our interpretation of reality. Don Quixote is not wrong to dream that he will restore the old world with its old values; his nostalgic vision of the past makes him fall in a melancholic state that distorts his senses. It is precisely his knowledge about the world that disrupts him, but it is a knowledge founded in an experience that is based on an imitation, of an imitation, of an imitation that reaches him corrupted, and corrupts him at the same time. It is this corruption that is transferred into the naïve Sancho, and the reader, who is credulous enough to believe in Don Quixote’s visionary world; a vision that makes the reader as credulous as Sancho or the secondary characters. But, again, Sancho is not knowledgeable of the falseness of the novels that his master uses as references; he is only aware of his immediate reality that gets distorted by Don Quixote, transforming him into a dreamer. Nevertheless, the victim of Don Quixote’s lunacy is not totally Sancho, but, we, the reader who are willing to accept the text as it is presented to us, where the lines between historical and fictitious facts are interwoven into the a narrative so complex, that the most prestigious reader could fall victim to the antics of its main character.

It is in the second part of the novel that we find a more rational Don Quixote and Sancho: both are engaged in a world based in the first part of the novel, it is a broken continuity because they are aware of the contradictions of the realities that they try emulate. But, in a way, it is the final realization that their view upon the world is wrong: both of them know this, and are perfectly aware of their particular predicament. However, it is the insistence of the reader who demands another sally, another adventure, a spectacle, so that he or she can once more fall prey to the dangers of fiction. Don

Quixote and Sancho doubt the enterprise that they both embarked on, that is: what is exactly their purpose? To march and redeem their names; to restore their fame, which has been usurped by a plagiarist, to make amends to the false world depicted in Avellaneda's novel. At first, these seemed to be enough, but not to the reader, he wanted a Don Quixote and Sancho who could recreate the fictitious world of the first part. Our characters are aware of their own reality, which does not relate to the one that is being displayed for them in the second part, that of the first part. The question is: are we, the readers, aware of this disturbing fact? They gain knowledge through their own evasiveness of the true reality, which at the very end, Don Quixote admits in his dying bed. He has been deceived by his false sense of reality:

Yo tengo juicio ya libre y claro, sin las sombras caliginosas de la ignorancia que sobre él me pusieron mi amarga y continua leyenda de los detestables libros de las caballerías. Ya conozco sus disparates y sus embelecocos, y no me pesa sin que este desengaño ha llegado tan tarde, que no me deja tiempo para hacer alguna recompensa leyendo otros que sean luz del alma. (1217)

In *Al morir Don Quijote*, the reader will be forced to choose between these constructions of reality: on one hand, Don Quixote's, on the other Alonso Quijano's. The reader will be caught up in a sordid reality where the secondary characters are left off to fend for themselves, and they become aware that the fantastical voyage was, in essence, a negation of their own reality that they so desperately wanted to avoid. But, the influence of the lunatic Don Quixote is still haunting their lives. Even after death, Alonso Quijano's actions are taking a toll in the lives of these secondary characters.

The action in Trapiello's novel begins in the deathbed of Alonso Quijano, where everyone that knew Don Quixote gathers to pay their last respects. It is a setting that allows the reader to reconnect with Cervantes' novel. In effect, Trapiello introduces a brief summary of the major adventures of Cervantes' *Don Quijote* via the voices of mourners who were present. Afterwards, there is a period where everyone is forced to stay home as it began to rain. It is during this interval that the protagonists distance themselves from the shadow of Don Quixote. Once he is dead, there is an empty void that has to be filled, and it is during this interlude that Trapiello sets the reader for what is about to happen next. The plot moves around the figure of Antonia Quijano who has been left with a world on shambles, she must take over where Don Quixote failed, and restore the image of the Quijano homestead. Nevertheless, she is confronted with people who want to take advantage of her precarious situation: the servant Cebadón, who rapes her and leaves her pregnant; the accountant De Mal who cheated Don Quixote in life and now wants to marry Antonia by forcing her to face poverty; and the young student Sansón Carrasco, the true love that ignores her. All of these male characters represent a different reality for Antonia: on one hand, Cebadón wants to marry her to get himself out of servitude, he does so by using brute force; then De Mal threatens Antonia to lose her status by making her realize that her inheritance had been squandered by her uncle; she is forced to choose between poverty and marrying an old and decrepit man. In essence, she is not left much of a choice. But, her only escape is marrying Sansón Carrasco who is still coping with the death of Don Quixote, and who is aloof to her love for him. The

other protagonist of the story is Quiteira, the maid, who is, all the sudden, left without a master; and after so many years of servitude and sacrifice she is repudiated by the niece. It is, in a way, the only time in her life that she had to face the world on her own. She went to her town to visit her relatives, but she realized that she did not belong. Her quest is to find out where she exactly belonged. This is a theme that runs through the plot of the novel: where do these protagonists belong? What is exactly their role in life? After the death of Don Quixote, all of them are left without an answer, and this is what Sansón Carrasco is trying to find out. And even Sancho, who secluded himself, so that he can learn to read, is lost. He must know at firsthand what has been said about him, he needs to understand why is it that he does not belong, or fit within the people that surround him. When Don Quixote was alive, these characters knew exactly who they were, but now, who are they? At the end, they all come to the conclusion that they cannot escape the shadow that falls upon them by their relationship to Don Quixote, and they are all victims of his actions. They all realize that the only way out is look forward to another utopia, another dream, but one that is forged by them, thus they depart for America, with hopes to start a new life, and renouncing the life that Alonso Quijano had imposed upon them.

*Al morir Don Quijote* is in the latest sequel to Cervantes' masterpiece where this idea of betrayal is best explored. The betrayal of Alonso Quijano is a topic that has not received much attention until the most recent novel by Trapiello. It refashions the world left behind by Alonso Quijano after his death, and it tries to present a story where the secondary characters are the victims of Don Quixote's flawed world. The adventure that Alonso Quijano undertook made him comprehend that his reality was a construction that tried to liken one that was flawed, and it is this realization that leaves him with a feeling of betrayal. But, it is not just Alonso Quijano, it is the reader of *Don Quixote*, which, once he or she reaches the end of the adventure, is left with a sensation of deception also, in the sense that they are left to fend for themselves in their own reality. And, as Sancho bids Alonso Quijano, they want a continuation, even if the construct of a new fictional world were based on another defective setting of another type of narrative, that of the pastoral discourse. However, in the end, Alonso Quijano refuses to go on, his state of melancholy has reached such a state of deception, that the only way out is death:

Al morir don Quijote, y después de las primeras condolencias y la lógica agitación, los amigos allí reunidos, el ama y la sobrina no supieron muy bien qué tenían que hacer, aunque todo lo fueron haciendo ordenadamente a lo largo del día, como si improvisaran al mismo tiempo el ensayo general y el estreno de aquella triste y memorable jornada, e hicieron cosas que pensaban serían muy necesarias para el alivio del dolor de los demás, aliviándose de paso en el dolor de hacerlas. (19)

The death of Alonso Quijano leaves its mark on the people closest to him, and those who were standing to see what would happen next, which for their own selfish reasons chose to sit by, and wait until the last breadth of air. But, Trapiello presents a new story, one where the bitter reality comes crushing into the lives of those who for whichever reason cheered Alonso Quijano as Don Quixote, and those like his niece and maid who were left in despair, and without any hope for their immediate future:

Al morir don Quijote, los más ingenuos pensaron que se cerraba una historia, de la misma manera que, aunque sea mala comparación, decimos: muerto el perro, se acabó la rabia. Los que sabían que la locura y las graciosas extravagancias de don Quijote eran la causa de que Cide Hamete Benengeli, el cronista árabe a cuyos oídos llegaron, las pusiera por escrito, y de que Miguel de Cervantes la mandara traducir, los que sabían esto, es posible que muerto don Quijote, todo había concluido. Pero no fue así, porque las historias responden al conocido símil del cesto de las cerezas, las cuales, cuanto alguien quiere sacar una, se eslabonan, hasta arrastrar a todas las demás, no solo de ese modo, tras la historia de don Quijote, estaba esperando la historia de Sancho Panza, y con la suya, la de Teresa Panza y la de sus dos hijos, Teresica y Sanchico, y la del cura don Pedro, el maese Nicolás, y la de Sansón Carrasco, y la de la sobrina y la del ama del hidalgo, y todas las historias de aquellos que en algún momento tuvieron que ver con el caballero, ... (25)

These characters, that played a secondary part in the adventures of Don Quixote, become the main characters in Trapiello's novel. It is a reading of what happened after Alonso Quijano died. *Al morir don Quijote* answers some questions that many readers might have had about what happened to Sancho, the niece, the maid, the priest, or the barber, etc, etc. But, the tone of the novel is set by the very idea that, it is because of Alonso Quijano's selfish actions that they are lost, and detached from their reality, that all of the sudden invades every corner of their existence. After his death, their world changes, there are new realities that take over their lives; the idealistic world of Don Quixote is forever banished. All the secondary characters must reconstruct their own lives in order to cope with life without a madman that kept them, for a brief period of their lives, away from their disturbing and sordid reality.

However, to recreate this world, and to take over the lives of literature's most famed characters, even if they were secondary, is audacious. It is such, because one must remember that the shadow of Cervantes would be always present, as it is Avellaneda's. Their influence on the turns of events will always predetermine Trapiello's novel. Even if the story takes many liberties, and usurps these characters lives, and the turn of events does not conform to those of the reader, the task at hand is a difficult one. As argued before, the text departs from the premise that its reader has read the story of Don Quixote, and his or her interest in reading this latest spin off is to find out what happened after don Quixote died. *Al morir Don Quijote* tries to put and end to a saga that for the last four hundred years has kept readers at bay, or wondering what now? The reader of *Al morir Don Quijote* will become part of a new adventure: a new journey that will take unexpected turns. It is not an idealistic world that the reader encounters, but it is the harsh reality that Antonia Quijano has to face, as well as the Quiteira, the maid, and the rest that were fooled by Don Quixote's antics.

But, it is not just the characters that are under the affects of Alonso Quijano's shadow. The author and the reader as well, are under the influence of Cervantes' masterpiece, *Don Quijote*, and, likewise, they are conscious of the precursor's creation. This is an aspect that every author, and reader, must accept because it is intrinsic to all literary creations. There will always be an echo from the predecessor that determines, up to a certain point, the successor, as Harold Bloom argues in *The Anxiety of Influence*, and

vice versa. The author must swerve from the original, so as to detach his work from it, consequently liberating his or her work from the influence of the forerunner. (1) This is the case at hand; Trapiello had to find a way to change the direction of Cervantes' masterpiece. After all, everyone knows every aspect of his novel, and to work under the pressure of failing to convince the reader that his creation is not just a mere imitation, is a difficult one.

Trapiello is taking on the "original," Cervantes' masterpiece, that has conditioned prose writing for the last four hundred years, and he is reconstructing not only what happened after the death of Alonso Quijano, but what happened before Don Quixote's first sally. To all intents and purposes, he is trying to answer the questions that many readers of the masterpiece had asked, but no one answered. Inquiries that Cervantes did not even deem necessary, he gave the reader ample freedom to use his or her imagination to fashion these on their own. Essentially, Trapiello's *Al morir Don Quijote* determines, up to a certain point, the precursor's work because it gives the reader an interpretation of Cervantes' novel through his own. Trapiello "swerves" the story of Don Quixote into a new direction that redirects the action towards the secondary characters, which are also veering away from their former lives under the influence of Don Quixote's antics.

In *Al morir Don Quixote*, Trapiello presented the antithesis to Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, as Cervantes himself had done in his second part, in regards to Avellaneda's apocryphal *Don Quixote*, and his own first part. As stated before, the relationship between all these creations is explicit because they all influence each other as antecedents, as works that are the continuation of the first part, the original work. In essence, they all coexist under the shadow of Cervantes' first part. In all these successors, there is an obvious attempt to swerve away from the action that took place in Don Quixote's first two sallies. In Trapiello's work, there is a conscious turning away from these forerunners, where the reader is steered from the action that is implicit in their reading. There must be a response to questions that were not answered in the original work, the first part. Inquiries that were answered somehow in the second part, and Avellaneda's, but, as Trapiello insinuates in his work, it did not go far enough to satisfy the reader's inquisitiveness.

*Al Morir Don Quijote* presents, using Bloom's definition, a *Tessera*,<sup>(2)</sup> a completion of the saga (if one is to accept this latest novel as the final fragment in Cervantes' work, which, obviously, is not, others would come). But it is his interpretation, one that complements the antecedents of the principle characters. Thus, displacing the great original and maintaining the reader within the confines of his conception of: what happened after the death of Don Quixote? And, also, it steers the reader into another direction where Trapiello constructs the lives of the characters, it completes their past, as to present an explanation of their present situation, one that would allow them to escape from the hold of Don Quixote's influence.

In order to achieve this process, there must be a moment where the reader breaks away from the implicit world that conditions the novel, and it is precisely Trapiello's conscious moving away from its predecessor that distinguishes his work. There is a weakening of the predecessor sphere of influence that allows for this breaking away from the original work, and gives room for Trapiello's novel to exist independent from the

implicitness of Cervantes' masterpiece, Avellaneda's as well.(3) In order to discontinue the inherent features that the creator has cast upon its characters, Trapiello must go beyond the confines of Cervantes' masterpiece; he must depart from a point that would allow him to achieve this goal. As argued beforehand, the departing point of the novel, the death of Don Quixote, is, in effect, the onset that permits the swerving from the original that leads to the creation of a world that completes the previous one. He must weaken it by deconstructing the mythical figure: Don Quixote himself. An aspect that would allow Trapiello to fashion Don Quixote under a new reading, where he is not the driving force, but he is analyzed by those secondary characters who are facing a more cruel reality.

The novel must destroy the influence of the previous one, and, as to achieve this goal, the author must generalize the uniqueness of the original one in contrast to his own.(4) An aspect that Trapiello achieves by steering away from any attempt to rewrite the predecessor work, but, by establishing new elements that were ignored, and that are the base for his own creation; also, by introducing new aspects that clearly established a breaking away from its original. He is also able to erode the uniqueness of Cervantes' masterpiece by, once more, pointing out its flaws, which are now brought out by these secondary characters that are faced with the consequences of Don Quixote's actions. They must repress any influence upon the successor work from its original, from its specter, ever present in the creative process, as well as in the reading of the novel. Trapiello must force the discontinuity from the original, so that his creation can replace it on its own, and not as mere echo of the predecessor. There must be an eradication of any aspect that ties it to the previous work, in order for it to stand as a unique, and as an original creation.

Trapiello must purge any aspect that would make his own creation lose any distinctiveness from the predecessor. The sole purpose is to gain independence from the antecedent. The novel must stand on its own against the parent-novel, the original, in order to distinguish itself in its uniqueness; facet that differentiates it, not as a mere echo, but it is own creativeness. By limiting any reference to Don Quixote, Trapiello limits his influence upon his own characters. In essence, Trapiello must cleanse his creation from any reference to Cervantes by displacing the action towards another goal, one that would allow his novel to stand side by side on its own without any interference from its original, from the source. It is a slow process that the reader has to take into account; one that is subliminal, unnoticed, but still present within the revisionary nature of the novel itself. In essence, there is a self-purging, a conscious effort by Trapiello, as well as the protagonists in *Al morir Don Quijote*, to erase their link to Cervantes or Alonso Quijano / Don Quixote, consequently allowing the novel to stand by itself.(5)

Nevertheless, at the last stage of distancing himself from the original, there is a brief moment where *Al morir Don Quijote* is, again, overshadowed by Cervantes' masterpiece. In essence, there is a completion of the circle, where Trapiello places his own creation against the original, and the angst of influence truncates its independence, as one recognizes the origins, the precursors influence. However, Trapiello holds his creation against its antecedent, and it is this last step that emancipates it from the original. In itself, *Al morir Don Quijote* can stand on its own, as an independent novel, creating an uncanny effect, one where the novel gives the allusion of preceding the precursor. In other words, by giving answers to a series of questions that were ignored by Cervantes,

Trapiello sets the tone to reread Cervantes' *Don Quijote* on the shadow of his creation. He makes the reader reconsider the original under a new interpretation.<sup>(6)</sup> After having read *Al morir Don Quijote*; one cannot escape its influence on how *Don Quijote* is read. As before, the reader has to find the uniqueness that distinguishes the original from its inheritor.

In conclusion, as argued before, the very idea to continue Cervantes' creation has been one that caused Avellaneda's to be repudiated. The reader of Cervantes did not accept this version because it failed to convince the reader that this could be the second part of Don Quixote's adventures. So, one must ask, how has *Al morir don Quijote* become so well received by a community of readers that hold Cervantes' masterpiece as sacred? The answer lies in how Trapiello treats the characters; he gave them a voice that allowed them to present their point of view, and their inner thoughts. An aspect that in Cervantes' novel was denied. The reader of Trapiello connects with these new protagonists; their trauma of losing Alonso Quijano is juxtaposed by his betrayal. They were all betrayed because Don Quixote's journey did not help them escape their own sordid world, it did not help them face the challenges set upon them, but it made them realize that in itself life is cruel, and Alonso Quijano escaped from his responsibilities. At the end, they must resort to their own perception of reality, and start a journey of self-discovery themselves. In *Al morir Don Quijote* the reader will witness a metamorphosis of these voiceless characters. It does not only present their present condition, that of the post-traumatic effects of losing a loved one, but it will fashion their past, one that has to be understood in order to determine the outcome of the novel. In essence, Trapiello takes into account the past events that shaped the personalities of their characters, aspect that Cervantes purposely avoided. It is the journey of the hero that must face its past, and once having done so, face the future as a new man or woman. *Al morir don Quijote* is the latest endeavor to deconstruct the myth of Don Quixote's idealism. It is a novel that attempts to complete the other side that Cervantes did not take into account, nor his character Alonso Quijano, that of the people that were left behind to fence with an overbearing reality, and who have nothing to look forward to, but another utopia, that of America.

## Notes

(1) This aspect of veering away from the predecessor is a facet that Harold Bloom explains by utilizing the term *Clinamen*, which he defines as a “poetic misreading or misprision proper; I take the word from Lucretius, where it means a “swerve” of the atoms so as to make change possible in the universe. A poet swerves away from his precursor, by so reading his precursor’s poem as to execute a *clinamen* in relation to it. This appears as a corrective movement in his own poem, which implies that the precursor poem went accurately up to a certain point, but then should have swerved, precisely in the direction that the new poems moves” (“Introduction.” *The Anxiety of Influence* 14).

(2) This is the second point that Harold Bloom discusses in his well know work about Poetic Influence, where he defines *Tessera* as a “completion and antithesis; I take the word not from mosaic-making, where it is still used, but from the ancient mystery cults, where it meant a token of recognition, the fragment say of a small pot which with the other fragments would re-constitute the vessel. A poet antithetically ‘completes’ his precursor, by so reading the parent-poem as to retain its terms but to mean them in another sense, as though the precursor had failed to go far enough.” (“Introduction.” *The Anxiety of Influence* 14)

(3) This aspect is discussed by Harold Bloom under the heading of *Kenosis*, which he defines as “breaking device similar to the defense mechanisms our psyches employ against repetition compulsions; *kenosis* then is a movement towards discontinuity with the precursor. I take the word from St. Paul, where it means the humbling or emptying out of Jesus by himself, when he accepts reduction from divine to human status. The late poet, apparently emptying himself of his own afflatus, his imaginative godhood, seems to humble himself as though he were creating to be a poet, but this ebbing is so performed in relation to a precursor’s poem-of-ebbing that the precursor is emptied out also, and so the later poem of deflation is not as absolute as it seems” (“Introduction.” *The Anxiety of Influence* 14-15).

(4) Harold Bloom describes this facet as “*Daemonization*, or a movement towards a personalized Counter-Sublime, in reaction t the precursor’s Sublime; I take the term from the general Neo-platonic usage, where an intermediary begin, neither divine nor human, enter into the adept to aid him. The later poet opens himself to what he believes to be a power in the parent-poem that does not belong to the parent proper, but to a range of being just beyond that precursor. He does this, in his poem, by so stationing its relation to the parent-poem as to generalize away the uniqueness of the earlier wok” (“Introduction.” *The Anxiety of Influence* 15).

(5) Again, this idea is summarized by Harold Bloom who defines it as *Askesis*, or “a movement of self purgation which intends the attainment of a state of solitude; I take the term, general as it is, particularly from the practice of pre-Socratic shamans like Empedocles. The later poet does not, as in *kenosis*, undergo a revisionary movement of emptying, but of curtailing; he yields up part of his own human and imaginative endowment, so as to separate himself from others, including the precursor, and he does

this in his poem by so stationing it in regard to the parent-poem as to make that poem undergo an *askesis* too; the precursor's endowment is also truncated. ("Introduction." *The Anxiety of Influence* 15).

(6) Harold Bloom defines this aspect as *Apophrades*, "or the return of the dead; I take the word from the Athenian dismal or unlucky days upon which the dead returned to reinhabit the houses in which they had lived. The later poet, in his own final phase, already burdened by an imaginative solitude that is almost a solipsism, hold his own poem so open again to the precursor's work that at first we might believe the wheel has come full circle, and that we are back in the later poet's flooded apprenticeship, before his strength began to assert itself in the revisionary ratios. But the poem is now *held* open to the precursor, where once it *was* open, and the uncanny effect is that the poem's achievement makes it seem to us, not as though the precursor were writing it, but as though the later poet himself had written the precursor's characteristic work" ("Introduction." *The Anxiety of Influence* 15-16).

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