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Futurities, Empire, and Censorship

Cervantes in Conversation with Ovid and Orwell

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At age 57 Cervantes was still a largely unknown writer. His plays were hardly performed, and his pastoral romance seemed forgotten. However, in 1605 he published *Don Quixote,* a work that became immediately popular, not necessarily as a serious work of fiction, but as a humorous book. Its main characters, knight and squire, would appear in parades and carnivals. Only much later would other aspects of his invention amaze the world. This essay, then, studies certain elements of futurity in *Don Quixote,* focusing on notions such as time, empire, and censorship. Before turning to Cervantes, the initial section of this essay seeks to delineate the study of futurities, particularly those that emerged from the Renaissance.

RENAISSANCE FUTURITIES

Exemplifying a concern with the future, Renaissance and other futurities can be conceived as a willful projection into later times of a person's or a people's present and/or past cultural notions, modes, and materials. Futurities take into account artistic, political, scientific, and philosophical notions or aspirations as they seek to affect later times. As such, futurities can take the form of an imaginary utopia, an invention that will shape later discoveries or affect how they are applied. They can also take the form of a groundbreaking artistic endeavor that finds fulfillment in later times, an idea meant to move forward; or they can be literary genres and devices that will impact the future. In terms of a person's or a character's life, the most pervasive impetus for futurity is fame (which includes, for example, cultural renown, literary legacy, monuments to the person's deeds, and to a lesser extent, name/descendants that entail, for example, "permanent" possessions such as lands, titles, and riches).

Futurities may be also rediscovered retrospectively, when a later work such as a contemporary poem or painting, for example, may trigger echoes of earlier (Renaissance) works, leading to a rediscovery of their latent futurity. By reversing the projection of futurities, we may discern new readings of older texts or artifacts of culture, moments where they echo their future and burst into later times as they seemingly challenge a linear historicity. These later times are not necessarily our present. It is also possible to study effects in previous times such as the nineteenth century. An example of such a past echo and its complexities will suffice. The art of Sandro Botticelli was neglected for centuries, following Giorgio Vasari's first history of art, one that fixed during the Renaissance and into the future the development of painting, culminating with Leonardo, Raphael, and Michelangelo. In his work, Vasari explicitly relegated Botticelli by finding fault, by seeing him as an "eccentric." Thus this artist sank into obscurity (a negative futurity), and his many innovations did not affect his near future. However, he was rediscovered in the late nineteenth century. Henry James gives us this sense of discovery when he speaks of a "Botticelli so obscurely hung, in one of the smaller rooms, that I scarce knew whether most to enjoy or resent its relegation . . . . His imagination is of things strange, subtle and complicated—things it at first strikes us that we moderns have reason to know, and that it has taken us all the ages to learn; so that we permit ourselves to wonder how a 'primitive' could come by them."[1] Henry James found in Botticelli modernist echoes that questioned aspects of rationality. The discovery of what I would call Botticelli's futurity becomes, as Melius explains, "an experience of belatedness and historical bewilderment."[2]

Although the discovery of futurities may be found in any culture, it would have less of an effect in traditional societies given their relegation of futurities to mythical repetition.[3] Yearning to remain in mythical time, some of these societies eschewed the "terror of history" and sought to escape any form of linearity. For them, futurities would be almost meaningless. Although I take the term "traditional" from the writings of Mircea Eliade, I by no means imply that these societies are backwards or that Western linearity is a superior mode of thinking. Rather, I use the term to bring together cultures that view time in a different manner. Futurities, then, is a notion that has always been with us, although it has become more prominent in human beings and societies that have veered away from the view of time and of history as circular and repetitive. Although often tied to the past, as in the Vedic concept of the four *yugas* or classical antiquity's notion of the four ages of the world that repeat themselves to infinity,[4] variations on this view appear in the work of modern historians such as Oswald Spengler and Arnold Toynbee. Contemporary theories of political-demographic cycles are inspired by the ancient conceptions.[5]

In terms of time, we can conceive of the Roman Empire as one of the crucial moments when cyclical history is swept away in favor of a linear conception of time. Rome, like most cities, lands, and empires, was destined for destruction (and

cyclical regeneration) from the time of its conception. Virgil transformed cyclical into linear time when he proclaimed that the *pax romana* under Augustus was the return of the most perfect of all ages, the golden age, and that it came without the need of a previous purification or destruction. Furthermore, this new age would last for all time: "For these I set no bounds in space or time; but have given empire without end."[6] Suddenly, the Roman Empire reaches out for futurity, and an extreme one at that, having no end. Paradoxically, in this very eternity, it would have lost the sense of linear history.

Christian empires take their cue from this newly created historicity, their religion now compatible with this linear view, one that ends with the end of creation and without cycles or repetition. During the Renaissance, the Habsburg Empire set itself as a descendant of the Romans, and as an empire that would last to the ends of time. Indeed, this vision of a perfectible future pervaded the Renaissance through its iteration in the two Habsburg lines ruling the German lands and the Spanish Empire. Even before the Habsburgs split, Charles V embodied the notion of a "world emperor." The many wars that took place in Italy between the Habsburg Empire and the French had a notable effect. Renaissance Italy came to reflect the metamorphosis of cyclical time into imperial futurities. Ludovico Ariosto, for example, would have Duke Astolfo listen to the prophecy that a new golden age comes with Emperor Charles V, a time for perfection without end.[7] Numerous rulers throughout Renaissance and early modern Europe would latch on to the myth of the Golden Age of humankind to laud their own rulers. In so doing, they were not espousing cyclical time, but asserting that an Augustan perfection could exist within history and would thus clash with other lands, as each asserted its perfection or perfectibility.[8]

DON QUIXOTE: CYCLICAL TIME AND WAVERING FUTURITIES

This imperial reach for futurities is at the heart of the culture of the Spanish Renaissance and Golden Age. Writers of the period, time and again, proclaim the return of an (imperial) Golden Age with a new monarch. Philip IV is depicted next to the goddess Astraea, whose return to earth serves as a harbinger of a new age.[9] Surrounded by prophecies of mythical return and, paradoxically, of a new empire that will accomplish great things as it reaches into the future, Cervantes will insert these ideas into his work. For some, *Don Quixote* is a work that deals with the past, with a chivalric world that the would-be knight would attempt to re-create. This return to the past is couched in mythical and timeless language. He alone would be able to bring back the age of chivalry and even become emperor. Indeed, in his famous speech to the goatherds, he imagines the return of the Golden Age. This mythical and circular time is used to make him into a timeless hero.

A key Cervantine futurity is suggested by the clash between a hero who wishes to re-establish a golden age (and thus become a new Charles V) and the disordered calendar presented in the text, one that confuses Roman, Julian, and Gregorian calendars, inserting ancient feasts where they do not belong and creating a seemingly anachronistic time.[10] While the protagonist trumpets the new age that he will bring about, the narrative confuses the reader as to the timeline. While the knight points to his own willful projection, one where he self-fashions himself as key to the future, the text revels in instability that drowns him in historical contingencies. The would-be knight parodies past exemplars of chivalry, while at the same time performing the end of chivalry. Compressing time, the knight even points to a modern world without heroes, a practice envisioned since James Joyce's *Ulysses*. As he moves through the constricted spaces of Spain's southern geography, he envisions the immense spaces of past chivalric novels which themselves telescope into the new terrains, new worlds that have just been "discovered" by Europeans, new worlds that can morph into spaces of today. Spaces of imperial Spain become geographies of resistance where the knight unwittingly parodies conquest through failure, a failure that affects his own masculinity.[11] And failure is in itself a way in which theorists today critique capitalism's heteronormativity.[12] The weight of history upon the knight might paradoxically "construct queer futurity as a break with heteronormative notions of time and history."[13] Thus, Cervantes's *Don Quixote* is "novel" in our own time. It is a novel of failure; a novel where a knight fascinates through un-masculine fragility; a novel that breaks with time and history while in the midst of proclaiming its importance. It is an anachronistic work that chronicles the failure of a modern hero, and the fate of this hero is deeply entwined with the destiny of his empire. In all these ways Cervantes points to futurity; his work envisions a future that resembles our own and motifs and struggles that are akin to our own.

It should come as no surprise, then, that the novel includes a veiled praise of Botticelli's *Primavera*. In a grotesque ekphrasis, Cervantes renders homage to a painter, discarded by Vasari but rediscovered in the nineteenth century by John Ruskin, Walter Pater, Henry James, and so many others.[14] It is as if Cervantes points to futurity, to the contemporary praise of Botticelli, while at the same time acknowledging that futurity wavers through time. In other words, an artist may disappear from the canon only to be rediscovered subsequently.

This is precisely what happens to Cervantes's novel. In the seventeenth century, it became popular among the people, as knight and squire were subjects of comic parades and figures of carnival. But the text was not canonized until the eighteenth century. A luxury edition in four volumes was conceived by Lord John Carteret, Earl of Granville.[15] He published it as a present to Queen Caroline. After all, she had a room or museum dedicated to Merlin the Magician in Richmond Park.[16] And since the famed Arthurian magus makes an appearance in *Don Quixote,* it was thought a worthy addition to her room. Carteret commissioned John Vander-

bank to do an illustration for the frontispiece of this edition, which appeared in 1738.[17] Here, Cervantes himself has been transformed into a classical hero or demigod. As this godlike Cervantes goes to do battle, nine women stand by him with both fear and hope. Having been displaced from their home by monsters, the nine Muses stand and wait. To battle the creatures, a Satyr (satire) grants Don Quixote a mask that will allow him to destroy the monstrous books of chivalry that have taken over Mount Parnassus. Canonicity here somewhat contrasts futurity. The work is appreciated for its connections to the past. Later, with the "romantic" approach, the knight is neither comic figure nor tool for the cleansing of old genres. He becomes a hero imbued with numerous qualities, such as determination and fortitude.

The realization of the novel's instabilities brings it into the modern era and thus creates its futurity as the first modern novel. Critics and writers focus on Cide Hamete Benengeli, an Arabic narrator who by force confronts his main character, a Christian knight. Even before Wayne Booth coined the term "unreliable narrator," Cervantes's narrative joined the ranks of the "modern" novel.[18] Critics pointed to the many levels of narration; they also stressed that characters had become rounded, complex. Critics asked whether the knight was hero or fool, leading to further complex readings. Thus we have today's *Don Quixote,* lauded as the first modern novel, partaking of futurity, deeply influencing modern writers, who often see it as a work before its time, in terms of invention or the structuring of a new genre through shifting perspectives and unreliable narration; or through its capaciousness and genre-bending discourse.[19]

There is also a political subtext in the novel, one that was noticed long before the advent of New Historicism. Here, imperial reach, the writing of empire, and the mechanisms of power and control are questioned. Having glanced at cyclical time and at the wavering of futurities in the history of this novel, let us turn to hidden futurities. I am not speaking here of the very common ways in which futurities are crafted during the Renaissance, such as the notion of fame, name, and renown, one that will propel the knight and his maker to the future. I am speaking of a series of choices made by character and author, choices that impinge on our times. Perhaps this futurity is merely the illusion of what some may call a "universal" work, one that seems to speak to readers in different times and places. But I would argue that some of the futurities of *Don Quixote* have to do with a series of very specific notions that seek to question power and imperial reach. They resonate with the notion of an Orwellian dystopia and even an American Empire, but also bring forward Renaissance ideas on how to deal with questions such as imperial control and censorship.

In the upcoming sections of this essay, I focus on the ways in which Cervantes's visions of censorship and practice of self-censorship are implicated in future concerns and even our own. I look at how societal control echoes through different empires, expansionism leads to perpetual war, fake news seeps into the text; even

at how enhanced interrogation can be located in the novel as a kind of reverse-echo futurity. To make clear the importance of the Roman Empire in the fashioning of the Spanish Empire (and the construction of resistance), I turn to one of Virgil's contemporaries, Ovid, and place him in conversation with Cervantes. Since George Orwell was deeply influenced by Cervantes, I use some of his ideas to clarify the path that is taken by Cervantes as he approaches later empires. About the present American Empire, I will be very brief, although much can be gleaned through the reading of the three writers whom I have chosen to foreground.

THE SITES OF EMPIRE

The play of censorship to be discussed in this essay takes place in imperial sites. Thus, it is important to take these sites and their futurities into account as we proceed. The notions of cyclical versus linear history were accompanied in the West by another important schema that had its own separate trajectory. Although there are many versions of *translatio imperii,* writers envisioned the recurring rise and fall of empires, starting in the East,[20] and then moving west, passing through Persia and Greece and finally reaching Rome. According to this vision, empires rise, reach their apogee, and then fall, allowing for the next one to their west to follow this pattern. Antonio de Nebrija, author of the first Spanish grammar, refers to this movement "in his exposition of the transition from Greece to Rome, motivated by the dissipation of Alexander's empire."[21] If empire does not halt with the Virgilian image of an eternal Rome, and later with the Holy Roman Empire of Charlemagne and his followers, then Spain, being the westernmost European kingdom, might be heir to empire.[22] Nebrija expresses his concern that "just as the decline of empires had led to linguistic corruption and oblivion, the same thing could happen to Spain if the cycle were to be repeated."[23] His grammar would seek to halt any future *translatio.*[24] The notion of *translatio,* then, is deeply entwined with futurities. It underlines the anxieties of the endings of all empires (although they will have a future through fame), and it propels writers and thinkers to develop theories that would stop the procession of empires through time (as in Virgil and Nebrija).

Even in our contemporary world, comparisons between Rome and America abound, pointing to a transatlantic *translatio* (by way of the British Empire). For example, Andrew Bacevich clearly asserts: "Like it or not, America today is Rome, committed irreversibly to the maintenance and, where feasible, expansion of an empire that differs from every other empire in history."[25] And Niall Ferguson explains: "Like Rome it [America] began with a relatively small core . . . which expanded to dominate half a continent. Like Rome, it was an inclusive empire, relatively (though not wholly) promiscuous in the way it conferred its citizenship. Like Rome, it had, at least for a time, its disenfranchised slaves. But unlike Rome, its republican constitution has withstood the ambitions of any would-be Caesars—

so far."[26] Ferguson adds to the "so far" a second ominous note: "The dilemmas faced by America today have more in common with those faced by the later Caesars than with those faced by the Founding Fathers."[27]

Although this essay focuses on Cervantes and the Spanish Empire, it draws upon the Spanish author's conversations with Ovid and the Roman Empire, with Orwell and the remains of the British Empire, and, through the latter, it points to the American Empire.

Cervantes's novel repeatedly refers to Rome, from the speech of the Golden Age with its Virgilian and imperial overtones, to the recurring references to Roman writers in the prologue to Part One and beyond. The speech of the Golden Age, as mentioned above, serves to echo Rome's interest in futurity, its desire to become an empire without end. It thus calls attention to the futurities of the Spanish Empire and its anxieties over a fall, over a "translation" that would stunt its projection into the future, and preserve it only in the hall of fame of past empires. Don Quixote as character already embodies decline. Instead of being a vital and valiant young man in search of fame and adventure, he is a forgotten hidalgo, about fifty years old, who rides a skeletal nag and displays decrepit armor. If he is to be the embodiment of empire, then that empire is already in decline. His many losses in battle recall the defeats that Spain would encounter more and more frequently, and his lack of wealth would remind the reader of the imperial bankruptcies caused by constant war. Through a conspicuous juxtaposition of a false knight's hyperbolic views and the historical realities of imperial overreach, the work embodies the anxious and declining future of empire.

While Virgil may be the most cited of Roman writers in Cervantes's novel, being a reminder of the notion of empire without end, Ovid, yet another Augustan writer, appears throughout the novel. Although the *Metamorphoses* are often cited, the Ovid of the later works, the works of exile, becomes unusually important in Cervantes. These later writings will be key to notions of censorship in Cervantes and beyond. Although it may seem that there are few links between the later Ovid, as he fashions himself in the *Tristia* and the *Ibis,* and the knight from La Mancha, a closer look at each points to a significant connection. The Ovid of exile is overwhelmed by the extreme temperatures and the savagery of the lands by the Black Sea where he is sent. As a representative of Rome, he certainly lacks *virtus,* the main quality expected of its people and suggesting valor and manliness. It is as if the center of empire produces feeble offspring. This leads us to yet another important feature/schema of empire as commonly portrayed: rise or *imperiogenesis,* which, according to Peter Turchin, often occurs through a people "characterized by cooperation and a high capacity for collective action,"[28] a peak and a decline (*imperiopathosis*). Empires, as they reach their peak, accumulate such wealth and bounty that the peoples at their centers may lose the "masculinity" required of a system that promotes constant wars. These new subjects, as they engage in the arts, come to realize that their leisure and comfort stem from a system that seeks

enslavement and conquest. Critiques of the system thus arise. Their fall, according to some theorists, is due not to this "feebleness" but to the excess of the elites, the overreach of power, and the depletion of resources through constant war and the collapse of the economy.

If the Roman example is adduced, then the "contagion" reaches the rulers themselves: "the capacity of effeminate emperors and other political figures to emasculate the state, as it were, to weaken, and ultimately endanger, Roman hegemony."[29] While the Ovid of the later poems seems weak and perhaps even "effeminate" (in a heteronormative sense) and thus performs his own fall from empire through his poems, he does not point to the fall of empire, but to its preservation through critical thinking. Don Quixote's feebleness may point to the "feeble" successors of Emperor Charles V and the eventual downfall of the Spanish Empire. The poverty that surrounds the knight as he travels through the countryside may serve as a contrast to dreams of immense riches, the wealth of the elites. The knight and the novel may be said to embody a critique of empire, hidden by the book's avowed purpose (to bring down the novels of chivalry) and by the work's comic nature. Turning to Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four,* feebleness has been carefully erased by the rulers, as all subjects are considered feeble, totally controlled by power, and constantly watched for any signs of a critique of the system as the state engages in constant war. In today's America, war seems to be a constant, the elites are reaching unparalleled wealth, and the arts and humanities are constantly under fire, as the more "manly" pursuits of the sciences are promoted. Of all three texts being discussed, *Don Quixote* seems to be the one that most closely approaches our historic moment, thus becoming an example of reverse-echo futurities.

THE CENSORS: CATO, AUGUSTUS, AND O'BRIEN

The modern census derives from the one that was conducted in the ancient Roman Republic by two magistrates called *censores.*[30] As their duties expanded over time, they were charged with evaluating Roman character and moral habits. They would give a letter or mark (*nota*) to those who violated proper conduct.[31] The term *censere* (to assess) was used in this context, thus linking the census with censorship. The counting of bodies and the censoring of certain practices became intertwined.[32]

The prohibition of books was unrelated to the term until at least the sixteenth century.[33] Spain used two basic types of textual censorship: *censura praevia* and *censura repressiva.*[34] Before publication, all book manuscripts written during the *Siglo de Oro* had to be approved—that is, they had to be subject to *censura praevia,* to ensure that they contained nothing against the Catholic religion and proper customs.[35] The name given to those charged with these *aprobaciones* was "censores" or censors.[36] In other words, censors were the ones who counted pages and manuscripts, marked passages or texts, and approved or censored. The Inquisition,

on the other hand, prepared Indexes of Forbidden Books and used *censura represiva* to find and burn forbidden books already in bookstores.[37]

Taking the development of the notion of censorship into account, we can view Cervantes's *Don Quixote* as a body that speaks and can be censored; as a text that self-censors, and more importantly as one that conceals or camouflages meaning, a kind of steganography that hides the notion that something is hidden and thus makes its deeper musings available only to engaged readers.[38] Although I am not aware of Cervantes's knowledge of steganography, he did evince interest in a related area, physiognomy, pointing to hidden traits that reveal a person's character. And he would have known the technique used by playwrights to speak to power: "decir sin decir"—saying without saying, so that some of the transgressive elements could be hidden in plain sight.[39]

We may remember that in the prologue to *Don Quixote* the "author" bemoans the fact that his book is too plain, lacking adornment. A friend arrives and counsels him on clever ways to ornament his text with well-known Latin *sententiae* and commonplace classical allusions.[40] The fifth and last maxim is said to derive from Cato.[41] In an age when classical learning was pervasive among the educated, it would be clear that this particular *sententia* came from Ovid rather than from Cato. The two verses derive from *Tristia,* Ovid's meditations on exile: "So long as you are secure you will count many friends; if your life becomes clouded you will be alone."[42]

The camouflaging of Ovid's authorship is perhaps one of the first instances pointing to meditations on questions of censorship. Cato (who is touted as the author) was often referred to as *Censorius* (the Censor), thus pointing to the last major office he held in Rome (184 BC). And this name was quite apt since he was particularly censorious, always living a simple life while railing against the lifestyle of others.[43] Cervantes, aware of the censorious nature of Cato, places his name in the Prologue so as to camouflage the name of Ovid. After all, Ovid had been banished from Rome by Emperor Augustus for *carmen et error,*[44] something he had written and something he had done (thus bringing together the notion of censoring a person and a book). While Cervantes openly compares his book to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in the introductory poems to his novel,[45] he hides the Roman poet in this second citation since the *Tristia* belonged to the censored Ovidian body. As an instance of steganography, Cervantes's text first conceals criticism by citing Horace and the Gospels. Thus protected by enumeration of authorities, the work can pretend to err. Instead it may be writing to those who, like Ovid and himself, were without friends in high places, abandoned at the edges of empire, censored and seeking solace.

A very successful writer in Augustan times, Ovid had enjoyed the favor of the emperor, a patron of the arts, for most of his life. But then he was banished to Tomis, a town on the Black Sea.[46] Ovid's works in exile are typified by a lament of his relegation to a barbarous and frozen land and a desire to regain the emperor's

good will, which would allow him to return to Rome. Thus, bursts of praise are accompanied by laments that may border on subversive complaints.[47] By censoring Ovid, Cervantes hides his book of exile as a dangerous text and body, while at the same time creating a secret space for meditation on censorship. The need for such spaces underlines Cervantes's desire for more open conversations. Orwell's dystopia, on the other hand, makes such sites abhorrent and suspect rather than spaces of comfort. Within the novel, Goldstein's clandestine volume, which advocated freedoms and explains the workings of the totalitarian Oceania, was often the object of a daily gathering, "The Hate," in which all party members joined.[48] When O'Brien gives Winston such a book, he does so to further incriminate him, rather than to allow for a place for freedom. In the end, he reveals that the book is a fake, written by a committee including himself.[49] While exposing total control, Orwell's novel is claustrophobic. On the other hand, Ovid's book is a yearning for Rome and for a kinder empire. Ovid, Orwell, and Cervantes point to futurities in the way they point to censorship and its practice in imperial settings, including America today.

A 2013 report by the PEN American Center states: "Writers are self-censoring their work and their online activity due to their fears that commenting on, researching, or writing about certain issues will cause them harm. Writers reported self-censoring on subjects including military affairs, the Middle East, North Africa region, mass incarceration, drug policies, pornography, the Occupy movement, the study of certain languages, and criticism of the U.S. government. The fear of surveillance—and doubt over the way in which the government intends to use the data it gathers—has prompted PEN writers to change their behavior in numerous ways that curtail their freedom of expression and restrict the free flow of information."[50] Given the situation, Cervantes's novel provides an alternate future to the self-censored by exhibiting mechanisms through which the threat of censorship can be sidestepped through cloaking devices.

CRUELTY, CUTS, AND DISMEMBERING

In addition to *sententiae,* the friend in the Cervantine prologue recommends classical allusions to adorn the book. After another concealing *enumeratio,* he asserts: "si de crueles, Ovidio os entregará a Medea" [if you would tell of cruel women, Ovid will acquaint you with Medea].[51] Indeed, Medea's character is carefully delineated in four very different works by the Roman poet: *Heroides, Metamorphoses,* the lost play titled *Medea*, and the exile poem *Tristia.* Most editors who footnote Medea consider that the friend's allusion derives from *Metamorphoses,* book 7.[52] However, only *Tristia* accurately fits the description of Medea as cruel.[53] In the ninth letter of the third part, Ovid explains the origin of the name Tomis, a city on the northern coast of the Black Sea to which he was exiled. He begins by evoking this "wild barbarian world"[54] and narrating how "wicked

Medea" (*impia*)[55] travels to Tomis after abandoning her father at Colchis. But King Aeetes is in pursuit. This is the turning point in her life, as Ovid foreshadows what is to come. The Roman poet describes how she clutches her heart with a guilty hand "that dared and was to dare many things unspeakable" (*nefanda*),[56] thus linking imminent actions to future deeds. Her audacity and wickedness reaches their peak as she looks around for a way to save herself. Gazing upon her brother Absyrtus, she immediately realizes what she must do. She does not even debate her decision but acts with full knowledge of the magnitude of her unspeakable deed. One look at her brother, and she sets her mind upon fratricide to delay her father and have him mourn for his son. Ovid describes the cruel manner of the murder: Medea hacks and tears his limbs apart. Although in some versions she does so already fleeing by ship, in Ovid she scatters the remains through the fields around Tomis. As a final unredeemable act, she places his hands and head on a high promontory. She knows that King Aeetes must gather up all of his son's dismembered parts in sorrow. And this gives her time to escape. This moment is characterized in Stephen Russell's words by its cruelty and "unrelenting darkness."[57] The moment is inscribed upon the name of the city, which Ovid derives from *tomi,* "to cut."[58] Ovid, in his lament, shows quite clearly how the emperor has cut him from empire, has sent him to a sorcerous place: Medea embodies the emperor's cut, his censorship.

Cervantes points to this moment as cruel, reflecting on the sorrows of a censored body. Indeed, Ovid's *Tristia* consists of disparate parts, and Cervantes's novel appropriates the idea of cutting and fragmentation. At the end of chapter 8, for example, the reader is left in suspense as Don Quixote and the Biscayan have their swords held high; the author or editor claims that he cannot narrate the rest of the episode because the manuscript is cut off and ends at this point. In chapter 9 we are treated to a search for the rest of the manuscript, while being told that we must wait for the juicy details: a sword that will come down and cut one of the bodies as it would a pomegranate. The pomegranate, when sliced, shows its red interior, the blood held inside the human body. This fruit, as Eric Graf has pointed out, represents the body politic, both the Catholic kingdom and the ancient Islamic kingdom of Granada.[59] Indeed, when Granada fell, the fruit was added to the shield of the Catholic Kings. Cutting, dismembering, and fragmentation in Cervantes all point to the censored Islamic body and to the empire that seeks to discard the memory of its history. As Orwell states of each member of society: "He must be cut off from the past . . . because it is necessary for him to believe that he is better off than his ancestors"[60] Thus, new histories are written, reminding us of the dictum that history belongs to the victor. In Orwell's case, a new world keeps changing and even inventing its events through "fake news." Since Orwell cuts off a society from the truths of historical accounts, and even artistic endeavors from the past, neither Ovid nor Cervantes would be available to remind people of the cruelty of such a deed. Cervantes and Ovid engage in

futurities, reminding us that discarding history and forgetting the past can lead to situations as dire as those found in Orwell.

THE BOOK'S WHIMSICAL BODY

Authors who wish to grapple with what cannot be said at times create a different aesthetics, one of whimsy, ugliness, and fragmentation. At the very beginning of *Tristia,* Ovid writes an apostrophe to his little book, urging it to go without him to Rome, a place he can no longer enter. By personifying the book and claiming that in his home in the capital of the empire it will find its lost brothers (the other works by Ovid), he treats the tome as his own child. The child, albeit an imperfect creature, will enjoy the empire and plead for him, while the poet will remain in a dark and barbarous place where he is buffeted by winter storms.[61]

Cervantes begins his prologue in a similar manner, calling his book a child of his understanding, which was also engendered in a dark place, in this case a prison.[62] For both Ovid and Cervantes, there is an ideal place where good books are written; but theirs come from a different site and state of mind, and thus are born defective.[63] Both mark the authors and texts as beings that are outside the empire, outside the frontiers of civilization.[64] In modern times, George Orwell does the same, writing of his despair from a remote island. George Woodcock asserts that Orwell "was—in the end—a man as much in isolation as Don Quixote. His was the isolation of every man who seeks the truth diligently, no matter how unpleasant its implications may be to others or even to himself."[65] *Nineteen Eighty-Four* embodies precisely those elements of injustice, censorship, and thirst for unlimited power that he opposed. The book itself is whimsical, mad, fragmented, and claustrophobic.

The result of exile and censorship is the creation of unpolished children, children who lack adornment and beauty. By acting against the censors, these personified books have a voice that seems to penetrate the empire, be it Rome or Madrid. Orwell writes a book about censorship of books and bodies that takes place in 1984 but includes an appendix from the year 2050, when the principles of Newspeak seem to be an item of history, a thing of the past that is no longer censored. Within the book, Winston had started a diary, "a lonely ghost uttering a truth that nobody would ever hear."[66] But the appendix allows for a space where his ugly and fragmented ghost child would enter the world of the future. Cervantes's child also enters our futurities crying out for truths that might be hidden.

THE FLAYED AND THE MAD (*DON QUIXOTE,* 4)

The whimsical body is also assigned to the protagonists, who must be eccentric and thus hide their abilities to say the forbidden through their manias, another

form of steganography. Cervantes hides transgression by creating a crazed gentleman, since the mad had license to speak and elicit laughter rather than recrimination. Ovid's *Tristia* shares some of the mad melancholy of its successor. Much darker is *Nineteen Eighty-Four,* where madness, straying from the party line, leads directly to the Ministry of Love, the home of the Inquisitors.

In the third book of *Ex Pontus,* Ovid praises the way in which Marsyas taught Olympus to play the pipes. Marsyas, symbol of freedom, held a musical competition with Apollo.[67] After Marsyas lost, the god flayed him alive.[68] In the Early Modern period, artists from Raphael to Jusepe de Ribera and Luca Giordano showed the vengeful nature of power in such depictions. In Ovid, then, Marsyas is a heroic and tragic figure, one akin to the Roman poet himself—a poet who dares to speak of things the emperor disdains, only to be exiled.

The Ovidian image of Marsyas as a censored body is curiously refashioned in chapter 4 of *Don Quixote,* where the flayed and censored body belongs to a victim: Don Quixote would save a youth who is being beaten, and Andrés seeks to reinforce this aspiration. He asserts that he is truly saintly, a martyr who does not deserve such punishment: His master is having him flayed like St. Bartholomew, a Christian Marsyas.[69] Images from art (and their ekphrases) are forever present in these works and are often used to reinforce different notions and ideas, showing the malleability of images and the ability of those in power to manipulate them.[70] We can never be sure that appearances reinforced by religion and myth represent social reality. There is a good possibility that Andrés is a thief. Other questions arise: Why is Andrés ordered to be silent? Juan Haldudo commands: *La lengua queda* [Keep quiet].[71] What is being censored? We are not told. Don Quixote has to make a quick judgment, exact a promise from the attacker, and leave. Timothy Hampton asserts: "For he cannot be a stationary judge and a knight errant unless a judicial system implements his judgments."[72]

From the very beginning of the novel, Cervantes urges the reader to consider matters of punishment and censorship, of a social reality that at times evades the would-be knight. While Don Quixote seeks to free the youth, his actions are not based on the evidence. They are whimsical, perhaps revealing that somewhere within madness he understands that justice is arbitrary.

In Orwell, Winston knows that madness is a sign that he has not accepted, that he has not come to love Big Brother. In the end O'Brien, his inquisitor, tells him that he is deranged and "cures" him through torture and mind control.[73] In today's world, "sleep deprivation, auditory overload, total darkness, isolation, a cold shower and rough treatment" have been used to disorient a prisoner.[74] These "enhanced interrogation techniques" underline Orwell's insight into the future and echo back to Ovid and Cervantes. Although Winston's body is not flayed, his mind is taken apart thought by thought, as he becomes a sad and hopeless martyr. The flayed are images of the censored.

LIBRARIES OF THE CONDEMNED (*DON QUIXOTE*, 6)

Up to this point the censored bodies have been authors, books, madmen, would-be saints, and challengers of gods and the powerful. In his works of exile Ovid obsesses over why his work was condemned and worries that he is no longer read in Rome. As Cervantes's novel progresses, Don Quixote becomes more and more central to meditations on censorship. Perhaps the most famous episode on the subject is found in chapter 6, the scrutiny of the knight's library made by the priest and the barber. Here, Don Quixote's "friends" seek to deprive him of dangerous books—books of chivalry that augment his enthusiasm for adventure. Since at least the eighteenth century, this episode has been viewed as a satire on the control and censorship of books and/or a satire on the Index of Forbidden Books fashioned by the Inquisition.[75] The most recent incarnation of this approach is found in the 2011 book by Ryan Prendergast, who affirms that Inquisitional control is omnipresent.[76] He also evinces "the capricious nature of censorship"[77] in the episode of the examination of the knight's library. It is important to ask, then: If Cervantes's novel satirized censorship, why wasn't it censored?

I would argue that the whimsical protagonist and the comic elements stand as a firewall against any who would criticize it as a vision of censorship in the times: The priest and the barber are accompanied by the niece and the housekeeper as the latter immediately searches for Holy Water to spray the books, since evil enchanters may be hidden in this library. Thus, they camouflage dissent and are part of the steganography of the work. At the same time, these "loving" figures who censor Don Quixote, claiming they do so because they care for him, are not that far removed from Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four.* Let us remember how the Thought Police capture Winston Smith and his beloved Julia and take them to the Ministry of Love for interrogation.[78]

Books are like human bodies and must be punished accordingly.[79] Taking up the famous *Amadís de Gaula,* the priest decrees "este libro fue el primero de caballerías que se imprimió en España . . . y así me parece que, como a dogmatizador de una secta tan mala, le debemos, sin escusa alguna, condenar al fuego" [this is the first book of chivalry published in Spain . . . So it seems to me that since it's the founder of such a bad sect, we ought to condemn it to the flames without a second thought].[80] In Orwell, Winston Smith is subjected to torture and other means "to destroy his power of arguing and reasoning."[81] His memory and bookish nature are dismantled. Through doublespeak he comes to believe in the state's dictum that "Slavery Is Freedom,"[82] as the Thought Police instill in him a mental discipline through which all inhabitants of Oceania are, in Thomas Pynchon's words, "able to believe two contradictory truths at the same time. . . . In social psychology it has long been known as 'cognitive dissonance.'"[83]

While Ovid seems to prefer pardon to resistance, Cervantes's novel clearly shows the way to playfully reply to the censors. It condemns through the comic;

it opens new spaces through madness and eccentricity. Orwell's is by far the more terrifying book—freedom becomes madness, while a constricting madness seems to grip the population through doublespeak, a term that is not so distant from today's fake news.

MAGIC AS MIRACLE (*DON QUIXOTE,* 17)

Steganography, or ways in which authors and characters camouflage their ideas from the censors, are many: whimsical characters and books, madness, silences, hidden allusions, and the comic as firewall.[84] There is also the miracle of which Leo Strauss speaks. In two recent books on Cervantes, both published in the fall of 2011 by the University of Toronto Press,[85] the same quotation by Strauss appears: "For the influence of persecution on literature is precisely that it compels all writers who hold heterodox views to develop a peculiar technique of writing, the technique of writing between the lines . . . . But how can a man perform the miracle of speaking in a publication to a minority, while being silent to the majority of his readers?"[86] Anthony Cascardi explains that in Cervantes the "exoteric text responds to the well-established circumstances of a *converso* with Erasmian-humanist leanings."[87] Indeed, the attitude of the censors influenced those who disfigured an image of Erasmus and included the name of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza.[88] In his book, Cascardi delves into Platonic indirections and contradictions; the banishment of the poet from the Republic; the presence of a mendacious historian—all with the aim of teasing out Cervantes's techniques. I would like to turn, instead, from Straussian miracle to magic in Cervantes.

After repeated hurts and defeats, including a pounding at the inn, the knight decides to concoct the Balsam of Fierabrás. The balsam, an invention that became part of pious Christian tales, was made from the liquid that served to embalm Christ. In Cervantes's novel, however, Don Quixote does not need to fight a Saracen giant to obtain the balsam. He brews it with oil, wine, salt, and rosemary.[89] This, of course, is preposterous, since the balsam cannot be made, given that it was the one used to embalm Christ. Parody of the chivalric, the eccentricities of the knight and his comic invention create a firewall that hides the heterodox.

As a reader laughs at his antics, she misses the point—that is, what the knight does with the ingredients. As he mixes and cooks them, he intones prayers and makes the sign of the cross over the potion.[90] He has fashioned an *ensalmo,* a potion and prayer used to cure the sick in a way that was forbidden by the Church. In his 1538 treatise, Pedro Ciruelo, writing against all superstitions, dedicates a whole chapter to the *ensalmadores* who perform these cures. He exhorts those who have suffered wounds and other physical traumas to go to doctors and pharmacists and to pray to God. At no point is the wounded to resort to *ensalmos,* which are of two kinds: of words alone (a prayer) and of words and substances (prayer and balsam).[91] Such words incur the sin of blasphemy since they obtain their power from

the devil. Perhaps the most important treatise on this practice was written some years after Cervantes's novel by Manuel do Valle de Moura, an Inquisitor from Portugal. De Moura's treatise highlights an element neglected by Ciruelo—the use of gestures or ceremonies.[92] They are to "affect reality."[93] Don Quixote "a cada palabra acompañaba una cruz" [with every word he crossed himself].[94] There is no question, then, that Don Quixote is committing a mortal sin and a blasphemy, not only by the standards of Ciruelo, but also by those of De Moura. If we add to the equation that *conversos* and *moriscos* were famous for their *ensalmos,* then what we have is a reputedly Christian knight performing forbidden, devilish magic that was often used by those the Inquisition suspected of reverting to their ancient religions. While he claims to fight the infidel, he becomes one himself, and this is hidden through the magic of laughter and eccentricities.

A similar magic is found in Ovid. We have seen how in *Tristia* the name Tomis derives from Medea's sorcerous evil. Another of his poems of exile, the *Ibis,* contains maledictions against an unknown enemy. His ugly and whimsical children could infect Rome with their verbal magic and reverse the curse of cruelty. There is no magic in Orwell, unless we envision Big Brother as a magician and if we consider doublespeak to be some kind of incantation that makes people act on the wishes of the "magician." In today's world, the internet may enchant in ways that we still cannot fathom, leading to truths, lies, and manipulations—social media, for example, have arguably become a catalyst for rebellions.[95]

PERPETUAL WAR (*DON QUIXOTE,* 18)

It is clear from Orwell that censorship is an instrument of war; or perhaps war is an instrument of censorship. When a state or empire asserts that enemies are threatening it, then it begins to seek unorthodox voices as it claims that the realm must stand united. This unity carries with it a univocal aspiration, one that mutes any difference of opinion, any dissent. All three writers with whom we are dealing present us with meditations on warfare, and all have experiences of conflict. Cervantes had experienced both battle and captivity. The Spanish Empire had been at war constantly through the reigns of Charles V and Philip II. In spite of all the gold from America, Philip had seen more than one bankruptcy. He had defaulted on loans in 1557, 1560, 1575, and 1596.[96] This feeling of constant war is replicated in Cervantes's novel, where the knight is always finding new enemies. Although transmuted by the notion that Christian knights are always in search of adventures, the novel comically represents an empire that is assiduously searching for enemies and converts. A cloud of dust can mean that an army is approaching. Two such clouds mean two armies—but which one will the knight support? Of course, he chooses Pentapolín and his European forces against the Islamic Alifanfarón. Although chivalry was dead, giving way to new forms of warfare with cannons and gunpowder, both Charles and Philip wanted to keep alive the fiction of chivalry;

thus, they held jousts and tourneys, as novels of chivalry with their ancient customs were immensely popular. War was thus idealized, and the romances could be seen as inciting war. Cervantes, through his knight, suggests that enemies can be a mirage, a cloud of dust.

Orwell, having lived through the Second World War and seeing the excesses of two types of totalitarian regimes, writes a novel in which perpetual war is the aim of the state.[97] War welcomes a repressive system: "The scientist of today is either a mixture of psychologist and inquisitor, studying with extraordinary minuteness the meaning of facial expressions, gestures and tones of voice, and testing . . . hypnosis, and physical torture."[98] Orwell's prescience is such that it reminds us of today's facial and voice recognition as a mechanism for control and of war as distraction so that the state can amass more power.

Ovid seems the mildest of the three. Living under the so-called *pax romana,* where peace was proclaimed, he was well aware of Augustus's image as the initiator of this Golden Age. Augustus closed the gates of Janus, claiming that peace should be preferable to war. Ovid, however, would see this as a sham. Although advocating certain freedoms, as time went on, Augustus's rule became more repressive. By 6–8 AD, book burning was encouraged, given spreading rebellions due to famine and the increasing influence of Tiberius.[99] It should come as no surprise that in the year 8 AD Ovid was exiled. Ovid, Cervantes, and Orwell link war and censorship in increasingly dystopian terms.[100]

THE PERILS OF SIGHT

In the second book of *Tristia,* the poet asks: "Why did I see anything? Why did I make my eyes guilty? Why was I so thoughtless to harbor the knowledge of a fault? Unwitting was Acteon when he beheld Diana unclothed; none the less he became prey of his own hounds."[101] Let us remember that the last work cited in the Inquisition of Don Quixote's library is a translation of some myths by Ovid carried out by Barahona de Soto. We preserve at least two of them: *Vertumnus and Pomona* and *Acteon.*[102] It is this last character that personifies Ovid's error in *Tristia.* Thus, the Spanish text further conjoins the burning of books and bodies with Ovid's exile.

In today's world we can photoshop a picture much better than in George Orwell's dystopia.[103] Orwell's is the least complex of the works, having no need for steganography. If Orwell's book misdirects us, it is in the sense that technology would never change. His vision of an impoverished gray realm with booming sounds of repression could easily be replaced by a place of affluence where a screen's dazzling images foreground the trivial and hide a world being depleted of its resources. Reality is forever changing, and the would-be censors, be they religious, political, or corporate, attempt to manipulate what we see or hear for their own purposes. Don Quixote reverses this equation. He claims that what he envisions is authentic and that others are deceived by surface values; and he uses

a "doublespeak" that is far from Orwellian, but one that is meant to involve the reader in deciphering the words and the world. Battling against those (such as the priest and the barber) who insist that there be only one view, one Authorized Version of history and reality, he seeks to metamorphose that constricting singularity into a multiplicity of perspectives.

George Orwell may have looked much like Ovid in exile and has been envisioned as "Don Quixote on a bicycle" as he moved in 1945 to the remote and rustic island of Jura.[104] These authors become and/or create whimsical bodies and characters that seek to escape control. Don Quixote, like the Ovidian textual body, is a figure whose eccentric individuality opposes and mocks the Roman or Orwellian markings of power.

Don Quixote speaks to the present, thus asserting its futurity. It deals with uncertainties, with unreliability, at a time when words and news seem unreliable and when our society seems more and more uncertain as to the future. The work exhibits the clash between historical cycles and linearity; between empire without end and the rise and fall of hegemonic powers, again matters that grant it a clear futurity. Perpetual war, surveillance, and censorship envelop Cervantes's novel in an aura of prescience. Today's disregard for books, and the hopes and perils of reading, affect both the ancient knight and the modern world. Hidden allusions, eccentric sayings, and the firewall of the comic call on Cervantes's wit to become present in a society where we can only speak to those alike, where division is set to tear us apart. His gentle humor calls for gentle reprimands against ideas—never specific people—whereas his warnings against the perils of sight remind us that we are now always seen, even as we seek a place of privacy and seclusion.

These conversations with Ovid and Orwell allow us to listen to Cervantes's novel, to seek a subtle speech or steganography that defies censorship, and allow us to understand through the book's futurities our own present. Ovid begins this conversation, providing Cervantes with numerous motifs and techniques. Orwell closes it by representing the drab and the hopeless. Cervantes challenges censorship through a type of playful and puzzling self-censorship that instead of foreclosing speech (*la lengua queda* [keep quiet]) opens new spaces for dialogue, much as knight and squire will forever speak their differences in what has been called one of the most human books ever written.