

**Apocalyptic Stages: Lope de Vega's *El Nuevo Mundo*
and Cervantes's *La Numancia***

Moisés R. Castillo

Today, we have gradually become witnesses to a surge in the populist tide that has spread across the United States and Europe.¹ On the Continent it has produced Brexit in the United Kingdom, an increase in populism with ultra-nationalist Norbert Hofer in Austria (a candidate who fortunately did not win the election but obtained nearly 47 percent of the votes in the last plebiscite in December of 2016), the ultra-right-wing National Front of Marine Le Pen (with almost 34 percent of the electorate at the presidential elections of May 2017), as well as Matteo Salvini's Northern League in Italy, Geert Wilders in the Netherlands, Viktor Orbán in Hungary, the New Flemish Alliance in Belgium, the Democratic Union of the Center in Switzerland, and even Scandinavia has the so-called Democrats of Sweden, and the True Finns in Finland. There is also, the Ultra-Right-wing populist VOX party in Spain, the Popular Party of Denmark, and the xenophobic Alternative for Germany that has already carried nearly 15 percent of the votes and is the country's third largest political force. All told there are now ten European countries that have representatives of these ultra-nationalist populist parties in their governments. Each has different traits, and yet they all have a common denominator in that they all constitute a revolt against the status quo in the name of an "us," the people, versus a "them," that which is institutional, the system. The "us" is also in defense of a national identity that is viewed as being threatened.²

It is in fact this threatened national identity that is the main driving force behind a cultural environment dominated by the catastrophic-apocalyptic rhetoric we see in both the nationalist-populist language of Europe's far right and in that of the United States's Trump, or for that matter, in the language of Islamic fundamentalists from the self-proclaimed Islamic State. All of these movements are equally dangerous due to their regressive nature and should leave us no

choice but to remember the causes and effects of the greatest human atrocities perpetrated in the twentieth century.

In the environment of Europe's far right, there is a growing distrust of both institutions and the European Union's shared economic, social, and political goals. The governments are thus blamed for failing to defend what is understood to be the national identity of their respective countries, an identity that is viewed as being threatened for various reasons, but primarily the following: an increase in immigration, or more recently, an influx of war refugees who need asylum in the heart of Europe; rising unemployment and crime rates; and an increasingly unfair distribution of wealth. All of this has brought about an astonishing amount of xenophobia against the Other that is marked in all of its facets by the sign of difference, whether these differences be cultural, religious, ethnic, sexual, or any other type.

In the United States we have recently witnessed the same catastrophic-apocalyptic and xenophobic rhetoric, which dominated both the campaign and the inaugural address of President Trump. During the campaign, we heard phrases that have now become leitmotifs, such as "America has fallen," and "It is a disaster" (one of Trump's favorite words that was used 14 times in the second presidential debate). We therefore must "Make America Great Again." And this entails other measures, namely, to halt or reduce the influx of refugees and to defend ourselves from "radical Islamic terrorists," "crooked Mexicans," and "corrupt media." In Trump's inaugural address (Jan 20, 2017) he articulated his catastrophic-apocalyptic vision as follows:

Mothers and children trapped in poverty in our inner cities; rusted-out factories scattered like tombstones across the landscape of our nation; an education system, flush with cash, but which leaves our young and beautiful students deprived of all knowledge; and the crime and the gangs and the drugs that have stolen too many lives and robbed our country of so much unrealized potential. This American carnage stops right here and stops right now [. . .] We must protect our borders from the ravages of other countries making our products, stealing our companies, and destroying our jobs.

The consequences of these statements came quickly enough: within practically the first week in office Trump signed an executive order to extend the wall on the Mexican border (Jan 25, 2017) and issued another one called "Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States" (Feb 3, 2017) that closed off United States borders to Syrian refugees indefi-

nitely, refugees from the rest of the world for four months, and for 90 days for citizens of seven predominantly Muslim countries: Syria, Iran, Sudan, Libya, Somalia, Yemen and Iraq. It should be noted that former New York mayor Rudy W. Giuliani while appearing on Fox News said that President Trump wanted a “Muslim ban” and requested he assemble a commission to show him “the right way to do it legally” (Fox News, Jan 28, 2017). It seems quite clear that Donald Trump understands Islam and Islamic beliefs the way Spain understood them during many periods from the Reconquest up through the expulsion of the *moriscos* in 1609–1615, or even during the administration of José María Aznar from 1996–2004. In other words, Islam was understood as a threat that must be fought against in what we might call a clash of civilizations: “it’s us or them.”³ It is for this reason that in an interview on CNN given eight months prior to the election, the current president made very little distinction between religion and radical Islamic terrorism when he said to Anderson Cooper: “I think Islam hates us,” deploring the “tremendous hatred” that he said partly defined the religion. He maintained the war was against radical Islam, but said, “it’s very hard to define. It’s very hard to separate. Because you don’t know who’s who” (Mar 9, 2016).

Lastly, we should mention the apocalyptic rhetoric of the Islamic fundamentalists and one of their most violent branches, the ISIS jihadists, a group that systematically wages war against interventionist liberalism and the liberties of the Western democracies by construing these two “sins” of Western civilization as corrupting and threatening the integrity of their culture and religion.

Moreover, in today’s cultural imaginary, which we associate with critical developments vis-à-vis the reigning neoliberalism, one can argue that for several decades now we have been caught in an apparently never-ending cycle of all sorts of apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic fantasies. There seems to be no other way to explain the long-lasting nature of the mythology associated with the zombie apocalypse, which is something we can trace back to the movies of George Romero. In fact, over the last few years a series of critical proposals have been brought forward that have convincingly linked the zombie imaginary to imposing the neoliberal model worldwide (see David R. Castillo, et al., *Zombie Talk*). Such fantasies are based on the fact that chaos or destruction are not threats that are about to happen but rather ones that have already occurred, the consequences of which we are now beginning to suffer. From a mostly left-wing perspective, the catastrophic rhetoric of these fantasies entails a constant warning, which is translated into a critique of the negative consequences of globalization at every level and of consumerism, as well as the policies that promote them. It is a warning that we must take action if we are to forestall the planet’s and civilization’s slow death.

Not dissimilarly, both fanatic fundamentalism and European or American ultra-right-wing populism are profoundly reactionary. For Trump, invoking an idyllic American past with the slogan “Make America Great Again” entails, as we have seen, racism, xenophobia, and, as was mentioned more than once during the presidential campaign and in the inaugural address, it incites a draconian reaction, an uprising, because it claims that a corrupt political system favoring specific interests of the establishment must be fixed. That is why, during the campaign, we repeatedly heard phrases such as “We need to fix America,” “fix Washington,” whereas in the inaugural address we heard the following:

The time for empty talk is over. Now arrives the hour of action [. . .] The establishment protected itself, but not the citizens of our country; [. . .] today we are not merely transferring power from one administration to another, or from one party to another—but we are transferring power from Washington, D.C. and giving it back to you, the American People [. . .] January 20th 2017 will be remembered as the day the people became the rulers of this nation again.

In contrast, the apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic fantasies that emerge from the left of the political spectrum do not entail a return to an ideal past of a so-called “national greatness,” but rather a revision of the present, which in turn entails a denunciation of unrestricted economic liberalism: in other words, a denunciation of the injustices that have resulted from unfettered capitalism, including a growing gap in the distribution of wealth and irreversible environmental crises.

On the Iberian Peninsula, during the Counter-Reformation in the 16th and early 17th centuries, an analogous situation arose. There, Spain resorted to catastrophic-apocalyptic rhetoric in order to protect its national identity, which was viewed as being under attack, and at the same time sought to justify the expansion of its empire. During the reigns of Charles V, Philip II, and Philip III there was an emphasis on the chaos and danger of Christianity being completely annihilated by the advance of the heretic and the infidel. And these rulers set about combating the threats posed by *conversos* and *moriscos* domestically—what remained of the massive expulsion of Jews and Moors in 1492—and the threats posed by Protestants and Turks abroad. To these struggles we can add the war being waged against the recently discovered Indians, a conquest that in addition to the territories and gold and silver bullion that has

been acquired will ultimately lead to a larger number of Catholics in order to countermand the increase in the number of Protestants in Europe and thereby safeguard the values of the Holy Roman Empire. It is therefore not surprising that on the Iberian Peninsula at the end of the sixteenth century the *morisco* problem was viewed as a “clash of civilizations,” as stated by Braudel, or that America would go from being viewed as a Christian utopia at the beginning of the century to a tragedy of apocalyptic proportions at the end of that same century coinciding with the first collapse of the Spanish Empire (Fernando R. de la Flor), and the “disintegration of colonial Christianity” (Enrique Dussel). In short, the narrow-mindedness of Counter-Reformationist Spain on matters involving Catholicism, its xenophobia and its wars of religion and conquest against the *morisco*, the *converso*, the Turk, the Protestant or the Indian will occur in a climate of gradual and profound economic and imperial crisis, a crisis that at the end of the sixteenth century is often perceived as the “end of an era.”

To illustrate the idea, in this essay I intend to contrast two cultural products from the period, two historical plays that are not too far apart in time and bring to the stage portrayals of chaotic situations, two struggles of apocalyptic dimensions, although we do not know how often these plays were performed: *El Nuevo Mundo descubierto por Cristóbal Colón* (The New World Discovered by Christopher Columbus, c. 1598–1603) by Lope de Vega and the *Tragedia de Numancia* (The Tragedy of Numancia, c. 1581–1585) by Miguel de Cervantes.⁴

In *El Nuevo Mundo*, a play that recreates the Genovese captain’s monumental feat of making the first voyage to America—and in which for the first time he is the protagonist of a theatrical work (Flint 169)—the following are portrayed: Columbus’s difficulties in financing the voyage, the first encounter with Indians of the New World, the massacre at Puerto Real, spreading the faith (helped by the miracle of the Cross), indoctrinating the Indians, and the awards and titles that the Admiral receives in Barcelona from the Catholic Monarchs upon his return for having given them such a large amount of territory, gold and Catholic subjects. The culmination occurs with the baptism of a few indoctrinated and docile Indians the Admiral has brought back with him.⁵

In *El Nuevo Mundo*, all of the ideological arguments that fuel the Counter-Reformation are made. Even the paradigm of the Reconquest is utilized to understand America and fight against the chaos brought about by that untamed territory and its inhabitants, the “barbaric Indians.” For that reason, the starting point is to turn the crusade that is being carried out against the Moors into a play. At the end of Act I, the events of January 2, 1492 are portrayed, the day Granada was taken by the Catholic Monarchs, and the expulsion of the Jewish and Moorish enemies is associated with the conquest of the Indies and spread-

ing the Gospel. The Catholic Monarchs cannot help Columbus until Granada falls into Christian hands. The conquest of America is thus understood as part of, or the last step, in the Reconquest of Spain against the infidel pursuant to the Divine Plan. According to this Divine Providence doctrine, God has placed evil (the devil, Idolatry) in America so that Cristóbal Colón (note that “Cristóbal” means the bearer of Christ and “Colón” is the first colonist) will make the voyage, conquer America and redeem it for the greater glory of Spain and of God himself.

In this sense, we are informed of the redeeming mission of the discovery of America through lines such as the following: “Levántele (a Colón) en el aire y llévele al otro lado del teatro, donde se descubra un trono en que esté sentada la Providencia, y a los lados la Religión cristiana y la Idolatría” (112) (Columbus is raised into the air and carried to the other side of the theater where a throne is unveiled in which Providence is seated and at her side, Christian Religion and Idolatry). In the conversation between Religion and Idolatry witnessed by Providence, Idolatry appears as the mistress of the Indies, where, “Tras años innumerables / que en las Indias de Occidente / vivo engañando la gente / con mis errores notables” (vv. 728–31) (After all the innumerable years that I have lived in the Indies, deceiving the people with my patent lies!), he hands over possession to the Devil. It is at that point that we are presented with the crusade, the reason for the heroic deed of spreading the Gospel.

With regard to this topic, it is crucial to examine the arguments deployed by Lope de Vega to theologically justify the conquest in two passages from his *Nuevo Mundo* that not only seek to fervently support the Indies enterprise but also to attempt to silence the mostly Protestant voices that labeled these incursions as bloody and unjust given that they were carried out for reasons of self-interest.⁶ I therefore take as a starting point the notion that *El Nuevo Mundo descubierto por Cristóbal Colón* does not recreate a conquest for us, but instead portrays what has happened in a “reconquest” that God has brought about for His own glory and for the glory of Spain; and with Columbus as His prophet. This is why by Act I the play’s Navigator is already so certain, despite having as little information as he has, that a New World does exist, that there are people there, and that it is full of riches. Moreover, in supporting this reconquest, the play introduces us to the crusade, the desire to spread the Gospel, even before land is sighted and it is known that there are people who inhabit it. Thus, when I speak of reconquest I understand that God logically knew and possessed the New World from the beginning. He subsequently allowed idolatry (the devil) to reign in it, for otherwise the theological error of thinking that God was not omniscient or omnipresent, or of doubting His omnipotence, would have been committed. Lastly, in the Creator’s plan, the

Spanish Empire appeared as the chosen redeemer of America for God's greater glory. If one observes the line read by Idolatry after Religion severely chastises her, it becomes clear that a reconquest is what is occurring: "*Religión*. De la Fe las Indias son" (v. 752) (*Religion*. The Indies belong to the Faith), "*Idolatría*. Ya no tiene redención" (v. 755) ("*Idolatry*. There is no longer hope for redemption"). Taking this into account, if we delve into the meaning of the word *redimir* (to redeem) we find that it signifies to 'repurchase something that had been sold, possessed or held for some reason or based on some title.'⁷ God, therefore, is attempting to acquire, recover and redeem those lands that were His all along. Obviously, Idolatry answers that there is no return (redemption) and Providence continues to use this telling business language when she states: "Pues de lo que está cobrado / por la falsa Idolatría, / no hay hablar, Religión mía; / vaya a mal lo mal ganado. / Esta conquista se intente; / que para Cristo ha de ser" (vv. 756–61) (All earned by false idolatry, my dear Religion, has unjustly been gained. May this conquest be undertaken in the name of Christ) (my translation). Providence, therefore, sees the conquest as being a fair solution to the dispute, or rather the re-conquest of what already belonged to her. In other words, what greater and better justification for the colonial enterprise is there than the duty to reconquer what apparently belonged to and belongs to God? From this point on there will be no further mention or discussion of the "voyage" but rather of "conquest" both in the text and on stage.

Still within this business model, Idolatry insults the Spaniards in the presence of Providence by telling the latter that although they are using the excuse of religion it is actually greed that motivates them. Later on the Devil himself states: "No los lleva cristiandad, / sino el oro y la codicia" (vv. 798–99) (Spaniards/[Ferdinand] are not motivated by Christianity but by gold and greed) (my translation). Providence, in turn, closes the matter on such an important endeavor stating that Christianity and spreading the Gospel are what are ultimately important, although at the outset of the enterprise everything is set into motion to make a profit: "*Providencia*: Dios juzga de la intención / si Él, por el oro que encierra, / gana las almas que ves, / en el cielo hay interés, / no es mucho le haya en la tierra" (vv. 775–79) (God will be the judge of the intentions of the conquest. If He, through the bait of gold, wins the souls of the natives, there is interest in profit in the heavens, so there should be no surprise that there is also interest in profit on earth) (my translation). Keep in mind that the scene begins by referring to this issue using the same language when the character of Imagination beseeches Columbus to "Atiende en aquesta audiencia / de tu negocio y cuidado" (vv. 712–13) (Listen to this tribunal which judges your trade) (my translation). Through the character of Providence Lope de Vega subsequently wipes out any guilty conscience the Spaniards may have by vindicating the

Christian Fernando and purging his intentions. It is therefore not surprising that the first thing the Catholic King does upon conquering Granada is to dedicate its mosque to the Catholic God. The crusade has been consecrated as a duty: “*Providencia: La conquista se ha de hacer*” (v. 809) (The Conquest shall be undertaken). Later on, just as in *La lealtad contra la envidia* (Loyalty Against Envy) by Tirso de Molina, it will be considered holy. With scenes such as this one that come from the *comedia de santos* (plays on the lives of saints) there is no attempt at verisimilitude but rather a desire to give the action an extraordinary, majestic quality and thereby spread the doctrine.

In addition, the second passage in which Lope de Vega theologially justifies the conquest as a re-conquest is at the end of the play, and this is demonstrated by the fact that the Devil states that he reigns in the Indies because God ordered him to:

Devil: Como en puercos estaba entre esta gente,
que así me lo mandaste, y ya me arrojas
desde sus cuerpos a otro mar profundo.
No me llame su dios eternamente,
pues hoy del nombre y reino me despojas;
tuyo es el mundo; redimiste el mundo. (vv. 2784–89)

(Like within swine, I dwelled in these people,
and as You have ordered, You now cast me
from their bodies to the deep sea.
From henceforth they renounce me as their god.
Because you strip me today of my title and my kingdom,
to You is the world given. You have redeemed the world.)

As we see, God gave the Devil possession of the Indies so that the Spaniards would have a reason to redeem them for Him (crusade). Otherwise, what else would the following words mean that were written by Columbus himself and quoted by Tzvetan Todorov?

Colón mismo, después de los hechos, atribuye su descubrimiento a ese saber *a priori*, que identifica con la voluntad divina y con las profecías (a las que, de hecho, recurre mucho en este sentido): “Ya dije que para la ejecución de la empresa de las Indias no me aprovechó razón ni matemática ni mapamundos; llenamente se cumplió lo que dijo Isaías.” (31)

(Colón himself, after the facts, attributes his discovery to that *a priori*

knowledge, that he identifies with God's will and all the prophecies (towards which he, indeed, many times turns to): "I already stated that for the execution of the Indies enterprise I didn't rely on deduction, mathematics or world maps: it simply fulfilled what Isaiah said." (my translation)

Lope de Vega has recreated America by following, among others, Fernández de Oviedo, who believes that the appearance of the New World is "un don de la Providencia para hacer factible la realización del destino ecuménico del pueblo español" (Edmundo O'Gorman 131) (a gift of Providence to fulfill the ecumenical destiny of the Spanish people) (my translation).

In the play the Catholic monarchy of divine right and its prophet Columbus not only save the Indians from the apocalypse that stems from their own violence, given that the "savage Indian" that Columbus meets for the first time in the Antilles is cannibalistic and is involved in internecine struggles for power, but rather that they save the Indians and the world they live in from the human, religious and technical catastrophe that has befallen them. In addition, *El Nuevo Mundo* also entails mythologizing the historical present of Philip III since the play collectively heals the contemporary wounds by connecting the historical present—which addresses the issue of ensuring the persecution of non-pure-blooded Catholics (*limpieza de sangre*), the expulsion of the *moriscos*, and the struggle against the Protestants and the Turks—to the glorious past of a Columbus and Catholic Monarchs who expanded the realm and brought "civilization" and Catholicism to the most savage territories by carrying out God's plan. This plan for which the Spanish Empire has been chosen by God himself not only to liberate America from its own destruction, which has occurred due to the devil's rule, i.e. the idolatry in the land, but rather to lead and thus protect the Holy Roman Empire from the catastrophic threat posed by the advance of the heretic and the infidel in Europe. Note how these ideological strategies become extremely effective when it comes to protecting Spain's national identity and her imperial interests during the period.

Similar conclusions could be drawn when analyzing the tragedy *La Numancia* by Miguel de Cervantes given that the work clearly juxtaposes a heroic event from the pre-Hispanic past with the nature of the contemporary monarchy of Philip II. Whereas in *El Nuevo Mundo*, as we have seen, Lope de Vega recreates the events that the ecumenical destiny of the Spanish people is based on in accordance with God's divine plan, in *La Numancia* Cervantes appears to recreate those that form the basis of Spanish national identity and prefigure its imperial destiny by associating it with basic concepts such as honor, military prowess and, especially, patriotic pride and bravery.

The play recreates the last stand in the heroic uprising of the Celtiberian people of Numancia against the Roman Empire. Numancia, a Castilian city

located near current day Soria was historically in rebellion against the power of Rome and was therefore laid siege to for fourteen years (sixteen years in the play, v. 117). The tragedy recreates on stage the final siege lasting one year seven months laid by General Publius Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus against the Numantines, which led to the city being razed to the ground in 133 BC. So far we have the perfect script for a good historical play, especially if we are witnesses to the dramatic apocalyptic climax that the tragedy displays and that portrays the immolation of the entire Numantine people in order to deny the Romans the glory of defeating them. Over time, Numancia will become in Spain's collective imaginary a synonym of patriotic pride, resistance and unlimited courage. And we should not be surprised by the fact that the Celtiberian people and the Spanish are identified with each other because a few years before Cervantes wrote *La Numancia*, Philip II's chronicler Ambrosio de Morales was already celebrating the Numantine feat as a landmark episode in the history of Spain (*Corónica general de España*, 1574).

Numancia is therefore that proto-Spain that becomes a foundational myth of national and imperial identity: Numantine strength, which is considered exemplary, is thus projected as the source of the Hapsburg Dynasty's character, the courage of that lineage of kings that going all the way back to Ferdinand the Catholic will rule the world and that Philip II is the leader of: "*Fame: Indicio ha dado esta no vista hazaña / del valor que en los siglos venideros / tendrán los hijos de la fuerte España, / hijos de tales padres herederos*" (vv. 2424–27) (This peerless deed hath given proofs most plain / what valour, in the ages yet to be / shall dwell within the sons of mighty Spain, / the heirs of such ancestral bravery!). The allegorical figures of the Duero River in Act I and War and Fame in Act IV all ensure that the Numantines' "único y solo" (unique and sole) courage will be immortalized (v. 2422), and also prophesy the fall of the Roman Empire at the hands of Attila the Hun's troops, or of Rome itself at the hands of the Spaniards in the sixteenth century.

However, the matter is not left at that since, as the literature on the subject has shown, in this play the Hapsburgs are not only portrayed as the heirs to Numantine courage but also as the successors to the power of the Roman Empire. In other words, on the one hand the play seems to celebrate without even the slightest chink in the armor Spanish heroism and the imperial glory that go hand in hand with a fully patriotic Cervantes (Francisco Ynduráin, Ricardo Doménech, Joaquín Casaldueiro, Merveena McKendrick, Paul Lewis-Smith, Brian Stiegler, Jack Weiner, Francisco Vivar, Jordi Cortadella). And yet, on the other hand, the tragedy is fraught with signs that allegorically project a link between the Roman consul Scipio and his troops, and King Philip II and his. According to this interpretation, after the battle against the Numantines waged by this newly disciplined army led by Scipio, Rome has

become militarily worthy of being a great empire, an empire that appears to have been brought back to life, “renovado” (renovated) with new spirit and splendor in the powerful Hapsburg Catholic Kings (Juan Bautista Avallé-Arce 254). Therefore, if the play prophesies this *renovatio et translatio imperii*, this identification of Scipio-Philip II and Rome-Spain, then the Spanish Empire is portrayed as a victim (Numancia) and victimizer (Rome), which calls into question its action in search of the imperial ideal.⁸

In this political vein, some of the critics have focused on those passages of the play—as the specific acts and motivations of the two leaders, or the involvement of the allegorical characters Guerra (War), Hambre (Famine), and Enfermedad (Sickness) in Act IV—that allegorically have the potential to evoke the siege that the Spanish Empire maintains with possible, historical and more contemporary Numancias, in other words, the revolt of the *moriscos* (Hermenegildo, *La ‘Numancia’*), that of Flanders (Willard King, Carroll Johnson), or that of the Araucanians (King, Barbara Simerka). Also, according to Kahn, “In *La Numancia*, Cervantes’s general target of criticism is Philip II’s shift in imperial policy and the nearly one hundred years of Spanish incursion into America” (37).

All of this is what has led literary critic Michael Armstrong-Roche to explore the consequences of role reversal, of that Spain viewed as a new Rome, and thus convincingly reveal the paradoxes that threaten the creation and defense of the imperial national identity in Cervantes’s *La Numancia*. The strategy in the words of the critic is as follows: “rather than defend a triumphalist patriotic or anti-imperial critical reading of the play as has already been done very well, I am interested in drawing attention to the way the text plays those implications off one another in the light of Numancia’s sixteenth century consolidation as a proto-national myth for Spain” (“(The) *Patria* Besieged” 208). In two articles on *La Numancia* that complement each other, Armstrong-Roche thus tries to give meaning to the large number of historical referents mentioned in the literature (“Imperial Theater”) as well as to the internal polyphony of the text itself (“[The] *Patria* Besieged”). In the first article, he contrasts the classical and humanistic idealization of Scipio—a model of virtues—with Cervantes’s version that addresses the repeated abuse of the rhetoric of virtue in unfair wars that are fueled by a quest for fame. In the second article, he proposes a paradoxographical reading of the internal polyphony of a text that ends up mixing up the two anti-heroes, Scipio and Theogenes, and therefore Rome and Numancia, and thus celebrates—through the voices of the River Duero, Spain and Fame—the concept of homeland and patriotic sacrifice that appears to inform Cervantes’s play and, at the same time, question it—through the voice of Famine; the repeated association of suicide with homicide; the lack of consensus among the Numantines regard-

ing “suicide”; cannibalism; and the desire for fame that causes Theogenes to kill his own wife and children.

In light of these arguments, and in line with other plays in which Cervantes’s vision of the Moorish or Jewish Other is portrayed (*La gran sultana doña Catalina de Oviedo*, *El trato de Argel*, *Los baños de Argel*, *El gallardo español*, *La conquista de Jerusalén por Godofre de Bullón*),⁹ *La Numancia* shows a deliberate ambiguity—as Johnson or Hermenegildo (*La ‘Numancia’*) would say—, a wavering, an ambivalence that, while on the one hand celebrates patriotic heroism, at the same time strongly calls into question the notion of fatherland and patriotic sacrifice, which clearly undermines the construction of national identity and imperial expansion surrounding these concepts. To be sure, this is not about defending a Cervantes who is relativistic, anti-imperialistic or unpatriotic, but rather an author who—as I argued in “¿Ortodoxia cervantina?” and “Espacios de ambigüedad”—by continuously positioning himself on both sides of the issue, or by defending opposing perspectives in the same play, is denouncing the fatuous ideals imposed by the dominant ideology, thereby calling into question all that smacks of fundamentalism or cultural essentialism.

In *La Numancia*, the aesthetic landscape is apocalyptic, but the diagnostic employed in Cervantes’s tragedy is quite different from that which is used in a typical historical drama such as *El Nuevo Mundo*. Whereas in *El Nuevo Mundo*, the Catholic Monarchs are a guarantee of order within chaos, and at the same time ensure that the values felt to be authentically Spanish and that accompany the Empire will continue on into the future, in *La Numancia*, these values are shrouded in ambiguity and ambivalence and are therefore called into question. What then are we left with? On the one hand, there is the tragedy, the end of a civilization: the Numantines’ deaths are an apocalypse in the same way it is for all of those subjugated by the empire (Greer), or under “the injustice of tyrannical imperialism” (Kahn 25). On the other hand, there is praise for the qualities that make us all better—whether we are Numantines or Romans—and that the play distills: resistance in the face of adversity, dignity, charity, commiserating in the face of suffering, the search for peace, and courage.

At this point it will be illustrative to examine those themes that appear in both *La Numancia* and *El Nuevo Mundo* and consider how they are addressed by Cervantes and Lope de Vega, respectively.

In both plays, there are verses that make reference to the envy and fear of the vast Spanish Empire that other foreign nations will feel. This is something we have already seen in the conversations between the sailors Arana and Terrazas in *El Nuevo Mundo*, and that *La Numancia* portrays in the words of the River Duero character: “¡Qué invidia y qué temor, España amada, / te

tendrán las naciones extranjeras, / en quien tú teñirás tu aguda espada / y tenderás, triunfando, tus banderas!” (vv. 521–24) (What fear and envy, O beloved Spain, / shall bear to thee the nations strange and brave; / whose blood shall serve thy flashing sword to stain, / O’er whom thy banners shall triumphant wave!). Similarly, *La Numancia* also makes reference to the notion of Divine Providence, which is so important in the work of Lope de Vega, and that in Cervantes’s work is portrayed on stage as being intimately linked to the unification of Spain’s territory and identity that was completed by Philip II through the annexation of Portugal in 1580. The River Duero thus makes the following prophesy to the character of Spain: “Debajo deste imperio tan dichoso, / serán a una corona reducidos, / por bien universal y tu reposo, / tres reinos hasta entonces divididos” (vv. 513–16) (Beneath his fortunate imperial hand / three kingdoms once divided under stress / Again beneath one single crown shall stand, / for common welfare, and thy happiness). The three kingdoms that are being united are Aragon, Castile and Portugal. Emphasis is also placed on religious “celo” (v. 502) (zeal), that is, on the universal redeeming mission of the Hapsburg Catholics: “Católicos serán llamados todos, / sucesión digna de los fuertes godos” (vv. 503–04) (They all shall bear of Catholic the name / in true succession to the Goths of fame). Therefore, disunity is the very sin that causes the Spanish empire’s long suffering at the hands of foreign powers, a historical penance that is lifted from the nation with the Hapsburgs’ arrival to the throne. The Catholic monarchy will ultimately constitute a true redemption for Spain insofar as it confers upon it the definitive ascent to world hegemony (Álvarez Martí-Aguilar).

However, it should be noted that the imperialism and notion of Divine Providence that are clearly fostered in *La Numancia* are undermined by other themes that are addressed. These include the barbarism that the Numantine collective suicide represents, or the cannibalism and the desire for fame, both of which also occur in *El Nuevo Mundo* but with a completely different ideological bent. In *La Numancia*, the Celtiberian people cry out for their freedom, “¡Numantinos, libertad!” (v. 1357) (Liberty, ye Numantines!), and insult the Romans calling them “pérfidos” (v. 1679) (perfidious) and greedy “romanos / hambrientos y fieros lobos” (v. 1376–77) (all these Romans be, / hungry wolves and fierce are they). However, the Numantines are just as guilty of inhumanity, specifically of cannibalism, as are Lope de Vega’s Indians, when in the following verses Theogenes orders his compatriots to quarter and eat all of the Romans who have been taken prisoner in order to satisfy their hunger (vv. 1434–41).

Furthermore, in *El Nuevo Mundo*, the emphasis is primarily on Columbus’s redeeming mission in the Indies, but also on his quest for fame: “ser el primer argonauta” (v. 124) (to be the first argonaut). Thus in *La Numancia*,

not only does the Roman leader Scipio have a blind desire for fame associated with victory, which brings about the total destruction of the Celtiberian people, but also, when the time comes, the Numantine chief Theogenes shows the same defect as evidenced by the last words of the leader to one of his men: “camina, que se tarda / el tiempo de morir como deseo, / ora me mate el hierro o el fuego me arda, / que gloria nuestra en cualquier muerte veo” (vv. 2172–75) (make haste, for my desire / outruns Fate’s tardy step with panting breath; / let sword devour me, or the furious fire, / I see our glory in whatever death!). For denying the Roman enemy glory—a vengeance that becomes homicidal as Armstrong-Roche (“(The) *Patria* Besieged”) would put it—is also an incentive to go down in history:

Theogenes: Sólo se ha de mirar que el enemigo
no alcance de nosotros triunfo y gloria:
antes ha de servir él de testigo
que apruebe y eternice nuestra historia;
y si todos venís en lo que digo,
mil siglos durará nuestra memoria:
y es que no quede cosa aquí en Numancia
de do el contrario pueda haber ganancia. (vv. 1418–25)

(One thing alone is needful, that the foe
shall reap from us no triumph and no fame,
nay, rather shall he serve, in this hour woe,
as witness to immortalize our name.
if now with me ye hand in hand will go,
through thousand ages shall your glory flame,
for nothing in Numancia shall remain
which these proud foes can garner to their gain.)

What is more, this glory will lead Theogenes to impulsively and unnecessarily murder his own family and then cry out, baring his soul, and beseech one of his soldiers to kill him with his own sword as if he were a “pérfido romano” (v. 2141) (perfidious Roman). This makes him the target of criticism from the character of Famine, who, several verses earlier, had stated that the desire for fame is a “strange,” choreographed and “murderous” way to seek his death for posterity and “harm” to one’s own people:

Famine: Venid: Veréis que en los amados cuellos
de tiernos hijos y mujer querida,
Teógenes afila y prueba en ellos

de su espada el cruel corte homicida,
 y como ya, después de muertos ellos,
 estima en poco la cansada vida,
 buscando de morir un modo extraño,
 que causó, con el suyo, más de un daño. (vv. 2048–55)

(Come, you shall see how in the bosom dear
 of tender children and beloved wife,
 Theogenes sharpens and proves in them
 the temper of his homicidal knife,
 and when the deadly work is over here,
 so little recks he of his wearied life,
 he seeks for Death, a by a mode strange,
 which causes more harm than his own.)
 (my translation)

Lastly, the Roman soldier Gayo Mario relays the words that Theogenes had uttered before committing suicide by way of throwing himself into the fire, words that emphasize this quest for fame: “¡Oh clara Fama, / ocupa aquí tus lenguas y tus ojos / en esta hazaña, que a cantar te llama! (vv. 2282–84) (O brilliant Fame, / come hither with thy countless tongues and eyes, / behold a deed it fits thee to proclaim!).

Therefore, if in *El Nuevo Mundo* barbarism and cannibalism are used to make the Indian appear inferior and thus justify the Spanish Empire’s redeeming mission in the Indies, in *La Numancia* anthropophagy not only is a homicidal act of desperation that postpones certain death, but one that could be the ultimate expression of the inhuman violence (“cannibalism”) that imperialism—here Spain as a new-Rome—inflicts on its oppressed (Hulme 5). And while in *El Nuevo Mundo* the quest for fame by Columbus is simply a question of self-interest justified by the providential purpose of the conquest’s enterprise, in *La Numancia* that desire for fame casts a pall on both Scipio and Theogenes, on both Rome and Numancia, thereby making it difficult to tell which of the two is a victim and which is a victimizer. This difficulty is made worse if, as was mentioned above, we assume the role reversal that the play prophesies and identify Scipio with Philip II. To be clear, the tragic cannibalism to which the Numantines resort in their desperation and their expressed quest for immortality through fame add to the sensationalistic feel of the drama, which seems to point in the direction of the familiar Cervantine exaggeration, the kind of dramatic excess that we see at work in other plays as a means to introduce ambiguity. In so doing here, Cervantes is testing—if not openly calling into question—the concepts of fatherland, patriotic sacrifice

and imperial national identity vis-à-vis the audience.¹⁰

Perhaps the best example of this ambivalence on the part of Cervantes occurs when War as an allegorical figure comes on stage to say that all those who curse war, including the Numantines, are mistaken given that in the future, war will help Spain in its dominions and conquests in the same way it has now helped the Romans in theirs: “tiempo vendrá en que yo me mude / y dañe al alto y al pequeño ayude.” [. . .] “quien me maldice a veces yerra, / pues no sabe el valor desta mi mano, / sé bien que en todo el orbe de la tierra / seré llevada del valor hispano, / en la dulce sazón questén reinando / un Carlos, un Filipo y un Fernando” (vv. 1982–91) (but time will come when I shall change it all, / will smite the mighty, and assist the small. [. . .] Though he who curses me at times errs far, / unconscious of the worth that owns me lord / do know right well that through all lands that are / shall flash the valour of the Spanish sword, / at that sweet season when shall rule the land; / a Charles, a Philip, and a Ferdinand). What is indeed quite telling is the fact that it is War herself who indicates how Spain, now the heir to the “abatidos” Numantine “hispanos” (v. 1981) (defeated Hispanics), will at some point in the future become the successor to Roman imperial power in the monarchy of Ferdinand the Catholic and the Hapsburgs. And even though the crowning of these kings on the throne is considered to be a happy occasion (“dulce sazón”), the consequences of war as an instrument of imperial expansion in these verses are patently clear: the place that the Numantine victims occupy vis-à-vis Rome will be the same place the victims of the future Spanish empire will occupy, whether they be the *moriscos*, the Flemish or the Amerindians. In addition, it would seem as if by extolling wars of religion and conquest *La Numancia* once again makes an ideological connection to *El Nuevo Mundo* by Lope de Vega. However, as so often happens in Cervantes’s texts, ambiguity and conflicting messages rear their head given that this apparently positive image of the war—as moral and just expansion—that will bring Spain all over the world, will be harshly criticized if it is accompanied by the ambition or fame that Scipio and Theogenes clearly show here. Cervantes simply can not accept the fact that what is so often merely ambition can be portrayed as a virtue, and he, therefore, — as also pointed out by Armstrong-Roche (“Imperial Theater”)—believes that wars that are waged out of a desire for fame are unjust and refers to them as “bárbara arrogancia” (v. 2298) (barbarous arrogance) in the words of Scipio himself. This is also made absolutely clear in another work by Cervantes, *La conquista de Jerusalén por Godofre de Bullón* (ca. 1583–1585).¹¹

In Act III of this play, the soldiers Charles and Fabricio, two of the protagonists that bring to the stage the first crusade of 1099, talk about their various ups and downs, and in their dialogue, one of them says he is quite happy.

When Fabricio asks him what the reason for his happiness is, Charles's response is quite telling: "El ser esta jornada diferente / de cualquier otra, qu'és-ta es santa y justa, / las demás llenas de ambición y envidia" (vv. 1335–38) (That this war is different from any other, for this one is holy and just; the rest are full of ambition and envy). Indicating that this war is "the only one" that is holy strikes me as an unnecessary but typically Cervantine exaggeration that plants the seed of ambiguity and calls into question what it expresses. While perhaps not calling into question the legitimacy of this "holy war," it does cast doubt on the legitimacy of "all other wars that are full of ambition and envy." Looking at the passage from an undeceived perspective, it perhaps shows a distrust of wars and entails a self-criticism regarding the motivations behind all wars that Christians have had to wage due to less laudable interests in order to get to the current war, especially those wars waged out of a desire to further ambition and achieve fame.

Bearing all this in mind, perhaps what Cervantes is trying to tell us at this point in *La Numancia* is both the futility of the quest for fame through the Roman's annihilation of a people and the emptiness of misplaced and exaggerated patriotism (patriotic suicide) that, when imbued with a desire for fame, also leads to homicide: a nonsensical act that Theogenes and the Numantine Senate through its decree trumpet but of which many of the Numantines are deeply critical, calling it "cruel sentencia" (v. 1675) (cruel sentence), "rigor bárbaro extraño" (v. 1676) (strange barbarous rigour), and stressing that "verdugos de nosotros nuestras manos / serán, y no los pérfidos romanos (vv. 1678–79) (ourselves our executioners must be, / and not these Romans steeped in perfidy). This horror, highlighting the lack of unanimity on the senate decree of collective suicide, is particularly voiced by the anonymous characters Numantine 1° and 2°, and Numantine woman, as well as the young Variato and Servio. In addition, the allegorical characters War, Famine and Sickness take charge of narrating in graphic detail the atrocities of the people's mass self-immolation that occurs off-stage.

To recapitulate, as we saw at the beginning of this article, there are currently two positions that both suggest a sky-is-falling attitude and smack of "living in an apocalypse:" The ultra-nationalistic, conservative position and certain progressive positions that are critical of neoliberalism. Ultra-nationalism seeks to return to a sort of idyllic past that will bring us back to the essence of our identity, to the essence of what we supposedly believe ourselves to be, which in the case of the United States can be summed up by the phrase "Make America Great Again." Through this empty phrase, Trump's populism instills and disseminates a rhetoric of fear and attacks everything that does not comport with his identity-nationalist, protectionist interests. This includes, among other things, a complete lack of trust in institutions and a sharp attack

on differences, which leads to discrimination of all types, measures that are profoundly anti-constitutional and xenophobic. All of this was defended in the campaign under the slogan “Defend / Save America from its enemies.” In contrast, the progressive position that is critical of neoliberalism seeks to denounce the crises that surround us and to offer solutions that reexamine the models of political and economic growth.¹² And given this panorama, it must be made clear that becoming alarmed by the expansion of populism is illogical and hypocritical if we do not also reflect critically on the political and economic dogmas of the dominant thinking, dogmas that have fostered and are currently fueling these populist movements.

Thus, as we have also seen through the analysis of the plays by Lope de Vega and Cervantes, in the middle of the Counter Reformation in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, Spain resorted to catastrophic-apocalyptic rhetoric to protect its national identity that was believed to be under threat and in so doing justified its imperial expansion. However, the apocalyptic scenarios that these two plays bring to the stage are quite different: *La Numancia*'s apocalypse would be akin, with the necessary exceptions being made, to the left's apocalyptic warning vision, since by presenting the ambiguity at the heart of the concept of fatherland and patriotic sacrifice, it raises doubts and calls into question the basic principles of imperialist-national identity. It is therefore not simply a matter of going back to a utopian or providential point in time in the national past (the conquest of America), as in Lope de Vega's ultranationalist proposal in *El Nuevo Mundo*, that when linked to the present idealizes the Hapsburgs' politics. There is also a desire to call into question Spain's very national identity by rethinking Imperial Spain, not only as the heir to the lofty courage of the Numantines, but also as a new Rome that lays siege to other possible Numancias: the *moriscos*, Flanders, and the Araucos. In other words, while Cervantes's proposal was counter-utopian in *Don Quixote* through parody—along the lines indicated by José A. Maravall—it is also counter-utopian in *La Numancia*, but this time through tragedy. It is a tragedy whose ending makes us feel lonely, full of uncertainty, and overcome by the “tragic *sparagmos*” that the scene of the last Numantine's suicide embodies, that of the young Variato who jumps off the tower in order to deny Scipio the fame of an official victory. The last few verses, however, are devoted to glorifying Numantine courage in the words of the character of Fame, a courage that it is fervently hoped Spain will inherit.

All of this prompts us to ask ourselves the following question: What is our position in light of the models these two proposals provide us with, given that both Lope de Vega's proposal and Cervantes's are fraught with catastrophic-apocalyptic rhetoric?

Perhaps our position needs to be informed by the arguments that have

been advanced above and provided by Cervantes's humanism in *La Numancia*, *La conquista de Jerusalén*, and the other plays in which the Other is portrayed (*El trato de Argel*, *Los baños de Argel*, *La gran sultana* and *El galardo español*), all of which look at what we have in common much more than what divides and separates us from the Other, whether he or she be a Moor, a Christian, a Jew, an Indian, a Roman or a Numantine. With all of its military undertones, *La Numancia* extols human qualities that make us all better people by revealing an empathy that it promotes. This goes above and beyond any courage, of course, but also refers to resistance in the face of adversity and especially in the face of an unjust government. It should be noted that the Numantine ambassadors in Act I seek justice, not independence from Rome, and base their rebellion on the depraved and unfair governments of previous consuls. The concepts of dignity and right are also alluded to when Variato accuses Scipio and Rome of having broken previous "pactos y concertos" with them (v. 2354) (pacts and agreements) (my translation). There is the quest for peace, something that the Numantines emphatically stress in Act I: "pedirte, señor, la amiga mano" (v. 237) (beg you, lord, for your friendly hand), "pases" (v. 258) (treaties), and "concerto" (v. 252) (agreement) (my translation). There is also honorable action (v. 592, 593, 1295, 1298 . . .), commiseration in the face of individual suffering, charity, and sacrifice for others, for example, the self-sacrifice of a mother who because she is starving is unable to nurse her child, or the lover who, helped by a friend who loses his life as a result, finds his death while searching for a few morsels of bread that will reach his wife covered in his own blood. There are scruples in the face of war in general given that it is a "mal" y "dura pestilencia" (vv. 1156–58) (evil and harsh pestilence) (my translation) that appears on stage flanked by Famine and Sickness. And lastly, there is the criticism of any war that is waged in the name of ambition or the desire for fame, as has been shown. It is often in the borderland contact areas that empires, nations and religions come into conflict and lay bare the contradictions they are based on, where the characters of Cervantes more clearly display their precarious and complex humanity, their noble attributes and shortcomings, their hopes and fears, and their theatrical but authentic life experience.

In conclusion, when writing about the siege and fall of the Celtiberian city of Numancia at the hands of the Romans, Cervantes creates a historical tragedy of apocalyptic proportions that serves to show not only the dehumanizing power inherent in the emergence and development of any political empire, but also the individual and collective hope of resistance that all citizens have and that is deeply rooted in their resilience, virtue, liberty, courage and dignity. By exploring and advancing these concepts, Cervantes's writing advocates for articulating alternative social and historical-institutional values for human

action and interaction. These are values that we can use to ward off fundamentalist ideology, an ideology that blocks our shared humanity and prevents us from having empathy for the Other. In this new era of populist ideologies, Trumpism, the rise of dangerous and xenophobic ultra-nationalist-identity movements, of post-truth, and the belief held by many individuals that they have “their own truth,” there still remains much to be learned from the texts of a thinker as balanced and insightful as Cervantes.

Notes

1. This essay has been translated from the Spanish almost in its entirety by Andre Moskowitz.
2. It is worth noting that left-wing populism in Europe and its right-wing counterpart both share a distrust and criticism of institutions and the powers that be. Left-wing populism, however, does not embrace ultra-nationalism. This can be seen in the radical left-wing groups featured in the *Podemos* (We Can) party in Spain, the Syriza Coalition in Greece and, some believe, also in the alternative progressive democrat Bernie Sanders in the United States.
3. When responding to a question at a press conference held on September 22, 2006 at the Hudson Institute in Washington, D.C., Spanish President José María Aznar stated that the world is currently “under an ongoing attack that we must defend ourselves from.” He added that “the West did not attack Islam, but rather they attacked us,” and in that regard, he then criticized the “lack of leadership in Europe” and the “division” that existed among European countries. The former Spanish president stated that Islamic terrorism is a “threat that is everywhere and that we are all subject to; we are at war.” He went on to say: “This is war and to fight it we must believe that we can win it, but if you don’t believe in anything you cannot fight against anything,” lamenting that “the leaders of the West do not believe.” Trump, as we have seen, does believe, in part because he had an extreme right-wing ideological advisor Stephen K. Bannon who has stated that Western societies have been weakened and are “at the very beginning stages of a very brutal and bloody conflict” [. . .] “Now that call converges with something we have to face, and it’s a very unpleasant topic, but we are in an outright war against jihadist Islamic fascism. And this war is, I think, metastasizing far quicker than governments can handle it,” he said in a press conference (November 15, 2016). It is clear that Bannon is behind the “Muslim ban” ordered by Trump.
4. This work has been called by different names in different editions: *Tragedia de Numancia* (The Tragedy of Numancia), *Cerco de Numancia* (The Siege of Numancia), or *La destrucción de Numancia* (The Destruction of Numancia). The literature on the subject generally refers to this work by the abbreviated name of *La Numancia*, a title

which was also used by Cervantes when he referred to it in his “Adjunta” (Appendix) to the *Viaje del Parnaso* (Journey to Parnassus). Hereafter I will refer to it by this abbreviated name. I cite both the critical Guanajuato edition by Florencio Sevilla Arroyo of 2013, and the translation into English from the Spanish by James Y. Gibson of 1885, unless noted otherwise.

5. For an in-depth study of this work, see my article “Lope de Vega,” and for an extensive treatment of all of the plays from Spanish Golden Age literature that recreate the Indian as a protagonist in theater, consult my book *Indios en escena* (Indians on Stage). I cite the play’s 2001 bilingual edition by Robert M. Shannon, unless noted otherwise.
6. In the following line from *El Nuevo Mundo* Lope de Vega tries to cast aside the “black legend” that the playwright attributes to the envy that the other Europeans have of the vast Spanish Empire: “*Terrazas*: no ha de haber provincia extraña / a quien la envidia no mueva” (vv. 2032–33) (there will be no foreign land not moved by envy). This is also seen in a dialogue between Arana and Terrazas: “*Arana*: Aquellos a quien pedía [Colón] / socorro y no se le dieron, / ¿qué sentirán ese día? *Terrazas*: El yerro grande que hicieron / y de Colón la osadía. / Conocerán su ignorancia, / con Inglaterra y Francia, / Portugal y otras naciones” (vv. 2034–41) (*Arana*: Those monarchs from whom Columbus sought support and who turned him down, what will they feel when they find out? *Terrazas*: They will recognize their great error and Columbus’s boldness. England, France, Portugal and other nations will recognize their blunder).
7. This is the second sense of the word *redimir* according to the *Diccionario de la Lengua Española* of the Real Academia Española de la Lengua (1747–48).
8. Avallé-Arce did not remark upon the tragic ambiguity of a representation of Spain as both Imperial *victim* and *victimizer*. Yet, others have made a point of calling attention to it, among them Alfredo Hermenegildo (*La ‘Numancia’*; and his 1994 edition of the drama), Margaret Greer, and most recently Michael Armstrong-Roche and Aaron M. Kahn.
9. On the treatment of the Other in these plays, see my “¿Ortodoxia cervantina?” and “Espacios de ambigüedad.”
10. For this cannibalistic episode, Cervantes more than likely is drawing from historical accounts of the campaign, such as Appian of Alexandria’s recount of the siege, or book V of Antonio de Guevara’s *Epístolas familiares*. Nevertheless, it is important to note that Appian of Alexandria alludes to endo-anthropophagy, the consumption of members of one’s group: “According to Appian, before their ultimate surrender, the Numantines had resorted to cannibalism, first consuming their dead, then the sick, and finally the weakest members of their community” (Greer 283). Cervantes changes this fact in Act III, probably following de Guevara’s account, and writes about the exo-anthropophagy by which Theogenes instructs his people to quarter and eat up all of the Roman prisoners to mitigate his compatriots’ hunger. This event, referred to in the play as a repast to be celebrated as “extraña, cruel, necesitada” (v. 1441) (strange, cruel, necessary), and “tan extraño y tan honroso hecho” (v. 1445) (this strange and

just design), equals in barbarism the Numantines with the American Caribs—the cannibals by *antonomasia* according to the Chroniclers of the Indies— something that would have been repellant to Cervantes’s audience. Simerka, William Whitby, Frederick de Armas, and Avalor-Arce consider this cannibalistic repast a sacrifice that prefigures the celebration of that of Christ in the Catholic mass. And as for the desire for immortality by achieving fame, it is clear that the tragedy inherently triggers both the unavoidable end for the Numantines prophesied by destiny, and their glorious resurgence in the Catholic monarchy of divine right, but the staging of the sacrifice is so excessive in portraying the desire for immortality that Matthew Stroud considers the play: “un drama de martirio” (303) (a martyrdom play), or “apólogo dramatizado histórico-político: un auto secular” (307) (a historical-political dramatized apologue: a secular *auto*).

11. I cite the critical edition by Héctor Briosos Santos of 2009. Translations from this play are mine.
12. Some of these crises and their consequences for the end of humankind are as follows: the crisis of democracy and of the model for economic growth; the environmental crisis; the control of green-house gas emissions; the destruction of natural resources and managing waste of all sorts; the demographic crisis; the population increase in poor countries and the population decline in wealthy countries; the incessant wars over the control of territory and resources; terrorism and ISIS jihadism; religious-political problems; and, of course, the political class’s corruption and the rise of populist movements.

Works Cited

- Álvarez Martí-Aguilar, Manuel. “Modelos historiográficos e imágenes de la Antigüedad: *El cerco de Numancia* de Miguel de Cervantes y la historiografía sobre la España Antigua en el siglo XVI.” *Hispania Antiqua* 21 (1997): 545–70.
- Armstrong-Roche, Michael. “(The) *Patria* Besieged: Border-Crossing Paradoxes of National Identity in Cervantes’s *Numancia*.” *Border Interrogations: Questioning Spanish Frontiers*. Ed. Benita Sampedro Vizcaya and Simon Doubleday. New York: Berghahn Books, 2008. 204–27.
- _____. “Imperial Theater of War: Republican Virtues under Siege in Cervantes’s *Numancia*.” *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* 6.2 (2005): 185–203.
- Avalor-Arce, Juan Bautista. “‘*La Numancia*’: Cervantes y la tradición histórica.” *Nuevos deslindes cervantinos*. Barcelona: Editorial Ariel, 1975. 247–75.
- “Aznar defiende al Papa argumentando que los musulmanes no piden perdón por conquistar España.” *20 Minutos*, 23 Sept. 2006.
- Braudel, Fernand. *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*. Vol. 2. Trad. Siân Reynolds. New York: Harper & Row, 1972.
- Casalduero, Joaquín. *Sentido y forma del teatro de Cervantes*. Madrid: Gredos, 1974.

- Castillo, David R., David Schmid, David A. Reilly, and John Edgar Browning. *Zombie Talk: Culture, History, Politics*. New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2016.
- Castillo, Moisés R. "Espacios de ambigüedad en el teatro cervantino: *La conquista de Jerusalén* y los dramas de cautiverio." *Cervantes* 32.2 (2012): 123–42.
- _____. *Indios en escena: La representación del amerindio en el teatro del Siglo de Oro*. Purdue Studies in Romance Literatures 48. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2009.
- _____. "¿Ortodoxia cervantina?: Un análisis de *La gran sultana*, *El trato de Argel* y *Los baños de Argel*." *Bulletin of the Comediantes* 56.2 (2004): 219–40.
- _____. "Lope de Vega, inventor de América: *El Nuevo Mundo descubierto por Cristóbal Colón*." *Bulletin of the Comediantes* 54.1 (2002): 57–90.
- Cervantes Saavedra, Miguel de. *Tragedia de Numancia*. Ed. Florencio Sevilla Arroyo. *Obras Completas III, Edición Guanajuato*. Guanajuato: Museo Iconográfico del Quijote-Centro de Estudios Cervantinos, 2013. 73–109.
- _____. *La destrucción de Numancia*. Ed. Alfredo Hermenegildo. Madrid: Castalia, 1994.
- _____. *La destrucción de Numancia*. Ed. Ricardo Doménech. Madrid: Taurus, 1967.
- _____. *La Numancia*. Ed. Francisco Ynduráin. Madrid: Aguilar, 1964.
- _____. *La conquista de Jerusalén por Godofre de Bullón, atribuida a Miguel de Cervantes*. Ed. Héctor Brioso Santos. Madrid: Cátedra, 2009.
- _____. *Numantia: A Tragedy by Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra*. Translated from the Spanish with Introduction and Notes by James Y. Gibson. London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 1885.
- Cortadella i Morral, Jordi. "La *Numancia* de Cervantes: paradojas de la heroica resistencia ante Roma en la España imperial." *Actas del XI Coloquio Internacional de la Asociación de Cervantistas*, 2004. Ed. Chul Park. Seúl: University of Hankuk, 2005. 557–70.
- De Armas, Frederick A. *Cervantes, Raphael and the Classics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- "Donald Trump Anderson Cooper CNN full interview (part 2)." *CNN*, 9 Mar. 2016.
- Dussel, Enrique D. *Desintegración de la cristiandad colonial y liberación: perspectiva latinoamericana*. Salamanca: Ediciones Sígueme, 1978.
- Feder, Lester J. "This is How Steve Bannon Sees the Entire World." *BuzzFeed News*, 16 Nov. 2016.
- Flint, Weston. "Colón en el teatro español." *Estudios Americanos* 22 (1961): 165–86.
- Greer, Margaret R. "Imperialism and Anthropophagy in Early Modern Spanish Tragedy: The Unthought Known." *Reason and Its Others: Italy, Spain, and the New World*. Ed. David R. Castillo and Massimo Lollini. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2006. 279–95. *Hispanic Issues* vol.32.
- Hermenegildo, Alfredo. *La 'Numancia' de Cervantes*. Madrid: Sociedad General Española de Librería, 1976.
- Hulme, Peter. "Introduction: The Cannibal Scene." *Cannibalism and the Colonial World*. Ed. Francis Barker et al. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. 1–38.

- “Inaugural address: Trump’s Full Speech.” *CNN Politics*, 21 Jan. 2017.
- Johnson, Carroll B. “*La Numancia* y la estructura de la ambigüedad cervantina.” *Cervantes: Su obra y su mundo*. Ed. Manuel Criado de Val. Madrid: EDI-6, 1981. 309–16.
- Kahn, Aaron M. *The Ambivalence of Imperial Discourse: Cervantes’s La Numancia within the ‘Lost Generation’ of Spanish Drama (1570-90)*. Oxford: Peter Lang, 2008.
- King, Willard F. “Cervantes’ *Numancia* and Imperial Spain.” *Modern Language Notes* 94.2 (1979): 200–21.
- Lewis-Smith, Paul. “Cervantes’ *Numancia* as Tragedy and as Tragicomedy.” *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 64 (1987): 15–26.
- Maravall, José Antonio. *Utopía y contrautopía en el “Quijote.”* Santiago de Compostela: Pico Sacro, 1976.
- McKendrick, Melveena. *Theatre in Spain: 1490–1700*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- Morales, Ambrosio de. *Corónica general de España*. Alcalá de Henares: Juan Iñiguez de Lequerica, 1574.
- O’Gorman, Edmundo. *La invención de América: El universalismo de la cultura de occidente*. México: FCE, 1958.
- Real Academia Española. *Diccionario de la Lengua Española*. 21ª ed. Tomos 1 y 2. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1992.
- R. de la Flor, Fernando. “Sacrificial Politics in the Spanish Colonies.” *Reason and Its Others: Italy, Spain, and the New World*. Ed. David R. Castillo and Massimo Lollini. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2006. 243–58. *Hispanic Issues*. Vol. 32.
- “Rudy Giuliani Admits It Is a Muslim Ban.” *Fox News*, 29 Jan. 2017.
- Simerka, Barbara. *Discourses of Empire: Counter-Epic Literature in Early Modern Spain*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003.
- Stiegler, Brian N. “The Coming of a New Jerusalem: Apocalyptic Vision in Cervantes’s *Numancia*.” *Neophilologus* 80 (1996): 569–81.
- Stroud, Matthew, D. “*La Numancia* como auto secular.” *Cervantes: Su obra y su mundo*. Ed. Manuel Criado de Val. Madrid: EDI-6, 1981. 303–07.
- Todorov, Tzvetan. *La conquista de América: La cuestión del otro*. Trad. Flora Botton Burlá. Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1987.
- Vega Carpio, Félix Lope de. *El Nuevo Mundo descubierto por Cristóbal Colón, de Lope de Vega/ The New World Discovered by Christopher Columbus*. Edición Crítica y Bilingüe. Ed. Robert M. Shannon. *Ibérica* 34. New York: Peter Lang, 2001.
- Vivar, Francisco. “El ideal *pro patria mori* en *La Numancia* de Cervantes.” *Cervantes* 20.2 (2000): 7–30.
- Weiner, Jack. “*La Numancia* de Cervantes y la alianza entre Dios e Israel.” *Neophilologus* 81 (1997): 63–70.
- Whitby, William M. “The Sacrifice Theme in Cervantes’s *Numancia*.” *Hispania* 45 (1962): 205–10.

Castillo, Moisés R. "Apocalyptic Stages: Lope de Vega's *El Nuevo Mundo* and Cervantes's *La Numancia*." *Writing in the End Times: Apocalyptic Imagination in the Hispanic World*. Ed. David Castillo and Brad Nelson. *Hispanic Issues On Line 23* (2019): 72–96.
