CHAPTER 20

Cervantes' *Quijote* as a Model and Key to Unamuno's *Niebla*

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Three centuries separate the publication of Miguel de Cervantes's *Quijote* (1604 and 1616) and Miguel de Unamuno's *Niebla* (1914). Much has been written about Unamuno's literary rivalry with his famous namesake, as evident in his intertextual dialogue, essays and general obsession with Cervantes's masterpiece, which attests to the power and enduring influence by the latter over Spanish letters and his Basque namesake.[1]

A close reading of *Niebla* reveals the presence of numerous Cervantine techniques and ideas.[2] Readers may find the text more accessible if it is approached with *Quijote* in mind. My purpose in this paper is to identify certain shared characteristics in the distinctive nature and perspectives of these works in terms of plot structure, narrative techniques and character development. Guided by Cervantes's conviction that man is *el hijo de sus obras* ("the son of his deeds"), a theme which permeates these narratives, I propose to begin with a brief review of the two Miguels works and circumstances.

Miguel de Cervantes, born in September 1547 in Alcalá de Henares near Madrid, appears to have been a student prodigy, as referenced by his teacher who included two poems penned by *nuestro caro y amado discípulo Cervantes* ("our dear and beloved student Cervantes") in a book he edited.[3] The circumstances which prompted an aspiring poet and writer to turn soldier remain unclear.[4] Like other sons of poor *hidalgos* ("gentlemen") of his time whose career options were limited to the Church, the sea, or military service, as alluded to in *Quijote* (I, 9), at twenty-one years of age Cervantes was serving the crown as a soldier in Italy. He participated in the epic battle of Lepanto and other engagements, was wounded, captured by pirates on his return voyage to

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[1] In October 2000, I presented to an audience of *hispanistas* ("Hispanic scholars") at the European Studies Conference at the University of Nebraska at Omaha a paper entitled "*Singularidad y trascendencia en los gemelos quijotescos* ("Singularity and transcendence in the quixotic twins"): Cervantes's *Quijote* as a model and key to Unamuno's *Niebla*." A much-simplified version thereof served as a study guide for my students in a course on 20th-century Spanish peninsular literature at Monmouth College, including *Niebla* (in Spanish) together with a film on the subject. The present iteration is a hybrid product of those efforts and includes references to *Niebla* based on Elena Barcia's *Fog* (2017), a highly readable modern translation of Unamuno's novel (See Unamuno 2017). All text quotations in Spanish have been translated and streamlined to render the material more accessible. The titles of the novels and other narratives are stated in the original Spanish, as are the names of the characters, except Don Quixote's whose guttural Castilian pronunciation is difficult for English speakers and moreover has changed since the days of Cervantes.

[2] *Niebla* (*Fog*) also translated as (*Mist*, see Unamuno 2014) is arguably Unamuno's most complex intertextual novel, a modernist text, reflective of the thoughts and works of contemporary writers and thinkers, notably Søren Kierkegaard and others, including Sigmund Freud whose works Unamuno had read in the original. The idea of fog as a metaphor of existence may well come from Kierkegaard's novels.

[3] Cervantes's teacher, Juan López de Hoyos (1511–1583) included the poems in his work celebrating the life of Elisabeth of Valois, the wife of Philip II of Spain. See Wikipedia n.d.a.

[4] For a detailed account of Cervantes's life and times, including a picture of the *lápida conmemorativa* ("commemorative plaque") at the Calle Vila de Madrid where Cervantes had studied, see Wikipedia n.d.b.

Spain, and kept in captivity until he was ransomed--events which are reflected in the fictional captive's tale in *Quijote* I, 40/41.

Cervantes's lifelong struggle to make a living and his literary efforts as a poet, novelist and playwright remained unrewarded until 1604 when he published the first part of *El Ingenioso Hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha* (*The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote of la Mancha* henceforth referred to as *Quijote*), which brought him instant popularity, if not financial success, as counterfeit copies of the novel were circulating within weeks. The second volume was published in 1615.[5]

When Cervantes died the following year, he was rightfully heralded as Spain's greatest novelist, who wrote the "epitaph on medievalism"[6] and created the prototype of a modern novel infused with a humanistic outlook, nuanced irony, and replete with characters of diverse opinions, beliefs and perspectives, a polyphonic narrative which has fascinated readers throughout the ages. Cervantes was at the threshold of narrative change; his newly created literary genre represents "*enorme crisol que recoge de la tradicion, tanto culta como popular* ("an enormous crucible that collects from tradition, both cultured and popular").[7]

Fast forwarding from Cervantes's *Siglo de Oro* ("Golden Age") to the luminaries and the *Zeitgeist* of Spain's *Edad de Plata* ("Silver Age"),[8] we find his namesake, Miguel de Unamuno, appointing himself as supreme exegete and arbiter of Cervantes' world and works. Born in Bilbao in 1864, Unamuno pursued university studies in Madrid and earned a doctorate at age twenty. Following his return to his Basque *patria chica* ("small homeland") he devoted himself to intensive study of languages and literature and his nascent writing career. In 1891, he obtained the chair of Greek (by competitive examination) at the venerable University of Salamanca, which became his academic home and center of his prolific literary production.

In contrast to Cervantes's humble origins and pursuits, his penurious existence and long-unrewarded literary career, Unamuno's literary efforts and his public concerns for the regeneration of Spain earned him recognition as acknowledged "patriarch" of *la generación del '98* ("the generation of '98").[9] An intellectual eccentric and *catedrático* ("professor") preoccupied with anguish and immortality and with an apparent desire to eclipse his namesake's stature both as novelist and interpreter of the soul of the nation, he actively cultivated his profile as writer for a national audience. A voracious reader with access to great libraries, Unamuno authored numerous articles, essays, poems, and novels, and maintained a steady dialog with major luminaries of Spanish and European thought whose influences are reflected in his own writings.

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[5] In 1614 an anonymous author writing under the pseudonym Alonso Fernàndez de Avellaneda, published *Segundo Tomo del Ingenioso Hidalgo Don Quixote de la Mancha* ("Second Volume of the Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote de la Mancha") This false story of the famous knight errant, subsequently referred to as the *Quijote apócrifo* ("the apocryphal Quixote"), is referenced repeatedly in *Quijote* part II and may have hastened Cervantes' publication thereof. The imposter against whom Don Quixote's struggles against in *Quijote* II can be seen as a reference to Avellaneda. For a modern edition of this *Quijote apócrifo*, see Avellaneda 1972.

[6] Otero 1967: 178.

[7] Carrascón 2014: 222. My translation.

[8] Spain's *Edad de Plata* is a parallelism to the Golden Age and refers to a flourishing cultural period (in spite of the disaster of 1898), encompassing roughly the last quarter of the nineteenth and first third of the twentieth century until the civil war in 1936.

[9] The "Generation of '98" was a group of writers and intellectuals responsible for a renaissance of Spanish letters at the time of the Spanish-American War (1898).

José Ferrater Mora describes Unamuno as

> one of those authors who may be called inexhaustible. And this is true or not, or not *only*, because he was interested in a great variety of subjects or because his works are rich in what are usually called "themes". . . . Besides, the simple truth is that Unamuno was an essayist, a journalist, a playwright, a poet, a thinker and a polemicist—all of which contributes to making our "author" not easily exhaustible.[10]

Noting what he calls Unamuno's "stubbornly negative attitude," Ferrater Mora adopts a term first applied to Unamuno by the Spanish essayist and philosopher Ortega y Gasset[11] and says that Unamuno "doesn't seem to be serious. It is sheer 'energumenism,' a desire to get himself talked about, intellectual histronics."[12] Undoubtedly, Cervantes's *Quijote* remained a major preoccupation at the center of Unamuno's vast literary production, as evident from his ruminations, essays and critical comments on the subject in his publications, notably his interpretations of Cervantes's masterpiece in his books: *Vida de Don Quijote y Sancho* (1914, *The Life of Don Quixote and Sancho*); *Tres novelas ejemplares y un prólogo* (1920, *Three Exemplary Novels and a Prologue*), his own version of Cervantes' *Novelas ejemplares (Exemplary Novels*); and *Niebla* (1914).

A common similarity between Unamuno and Cervantes is the fact that both authors use existing literary traditions to create a new type of novel. Cervantes's *Quijote* is considered the most intertextual novel of his time with echoes of Seneca, Homer, Virgil in his interspersed stories and tales that combine the learned with the popular to enhance the story of the quixotic pair's adventures. As Otero notes,

> Unamuno once remarked that every man could be judged by his favorite readings, Unamuno's favorite authors included Dante, Pascal, Rousseau, Sénancour, Leopardi, Kierkegaard and William James, a group characterized by him as "men of desperation," or malcontents at odds with the world. On the other hand, Cervantes' preference leans toward Garcilaso, Ariosto, Martorelli, and Boccaccio, men always ready to rely on the "rights of nature" to vindicate the life of the senses, men irrevocably attached to the here and now.[13]

It is no surprise, then, that the thoughts and theories of Unamuno's favorite authors are reflected in *Niebla.*

In terms of plot development, the first seven chapters of *Quijote* were likely intended as an independent short story and parody of chivalric romances. However, the narrative grew with

[10] Ferrater Mora 1967: 220–221.
[11] Ortega y Gasset 1961: I, 461.
[12] Ferrater Mora 1967: 224.
[13] Otero, 1967: 179.

the addition of Sancho as the knight's squire and inseparable counterpart whose folksy proverbs provide comic relief and contrast to his master's heroics. Generally considered two of the greatest characters in fiction, the quixotic pair's adventures are the core of the book. Through their experiences, they change and develop. Don Quixote evolves from a ludicrous madman into a more complex character with moments of surprising lucidity, as evident in his discourse about arms and letters (Quijote I, 38) until he is overcome by doubt at his demise. Sancho grows from being a shrewd villager "with a little sand in his head" (*Quijote* I, 7) to becoming the governor of Batavia and a self-directed fabulist who narrates his fictional encounter with the enchanted Dulcinea, thereby reinforcing his master's belief that reality is fiction and vice versa.

Having been vanquished in battle, Don Quixote returned to his village, only to find that his end came when he least expected it:

> . . . a fever seized him, and with his judgement now clear and free from the misty shadows of ignorance with which his ill-starred and continuous reading of those detestable books of chivalry had obscured.
>
> *Quijote* II, 74

Though Sancho encouraged him to take up the "pastoral calling" and venture into the fields dressed as shepherds and perhaps "find lady Dulcinea behind some hedge disenchanted and pretty as a picture," his master's famous last words: "there are no birds this year in last year's nest" proved that he was truly dying and sane, as Alonso Quixano the Good (*Quijote* II, 74).[14]

In the closing chapter of the book, Cervantes, speaking through the fictional Arab historian Cide Hamete Benengeli, states, "I shall be proud and satisfied to have been the first author to enjoy the pleasure of witnessing the full effect of his own writing. For my sole object has been to arouse men's contempt for all fabulous and absurd stories of knight errantry, whose credit this tale of my genuine Don Quixote has already shaken, and which will, without a doubt, soon tumble to the ground. Farewell" (*Quijote* II, 74).[15]

In so doing, Cervantes asserts his rightful place as father of a new literary genre, rich in dialogues, adventure stories, a plethora of characters and multiple narrators of various degrees of fidelity that produce what the Spanish call *realidad oscillante* ("oscillating reality') that permeates the narrative. The interplay of voices includes: Cervantes, who introduces the story in the prologue, claiming to be the "stepfather" of the novel; narrators who relate events from the annals of la Mancha; and Cide Hamete Benengeli, the Arabic translator of questionable fidelity. Numerous individual characters relate stories and events as seen from their point of view, state of mind and degree of credulity, and, in the process, create a delightful cacophony of voices. There is the pairing of opposite viewpoints as exemplified in the *baciyelmo* ("helm" or "barber's basin") episode, where, in Don Quixote's mind "under enchantment,' the barber's shaving basin appears transformed into Mambrino's golden helmet to be acquired in heroic battle (*Quijote* I, 21); ironic

[14] "The priest ordered the clerk to draw up a certificate that Alonso Quixana the Good, commonly called Don Quixote de la Mancha, had passed out of his present life and died a natural death, which testimonial he required in order to deprive any author other than Cide Hamete Benengeli of all excuses for falsely resuscitating him and writing interminable histories of his deeds." This is clearly a reference to Avellaneda's apocryphal novel.

[15] Cohen's translation (Cervantes 1976: 940).

distancing in the stupendous battle between Don Quixote and the gallant Basque where the action ceases in mid-sentence, the combatants having raised their swords about to smite each other. The narration stops there, its focus shifting to the search for and fortuitous encounter of the lost materials—parchments with scriptures in Arabic no less, which Cide Hamete then offers to translate in order to complete the story (*Quijote* I, 9).

In sum, *the Quijote* is an ingeniously crafted, episodic adventure story and parody of chivalric novels, rich in characters, some more detailed than others, e.g. the village priest and the barber, including episodes of historical significance, such as the captive's story, the historical reality of the battle of Lepanto, and the tragic expulsion of the *moriscos,*[16] as referenced in *Quijote* II, 9.

Literature is a prominent theme throughout both *Quijote* and *Niebla*: In *Quijote* (I. 6) the village barber and priest opine on the merits of books in the book inquisition episode, and Don Quixote and Sancho question the veracity of their adventures as described in Avellaneda's fake *Quijote* as opposed to Cide Hamete's more veritable accounts of their deeds (*Quijote* II, 58), the effect of which heightens the complexity of the plot and the characters' own identities.

In *Niebla* we encounter characters' discussing "book stuff" as well; for example, Victor Goti explained his narrative theory and interspersed tales within his own work, including the farcical story of the scholar of "women in books" whom Augusto consults in his ludicrous attempts to conduct research on the female gender.[17] Augusto's romantic sentiments are derived from novels, as Eugenia discerned, and are purely cerebral, as pointed out by Victor: "In fact, if you push me, I'll tell you that you yourself are nothing but an idea, a fictional character" (*Fog*, 54).

Niebla, Unamuno's third novel (written in 1907 but published in 1914), is an intertextual work of philosophical significance with undeniable narratological similarities to Cervantes' masterpiece. In its form and substance, *Niebla* draws from a wide spectrum of literary and philosophical currents, notably a profound Cervantine influence as evidenced in the tension between realism and fiction. Ardila notes that these two works share many similarities: a quixotic protagonist; interspersed episodes; extensive use of dialogues and monologues; the use of various narrative voices; the interaction between author and protagonist; and dreams as extensions of reality;[18] to which Friedman adds the use of irony in the prologues.[19] Ardila also notes Unamuno's use of various narrators, including the servants Domingo, Liduvina, and Victor Goti (whose role is similar to that of Cide Hamete in *Quijote*), as well as stream of consciousness and interior monologues, which provide Unamuno's *nivola* with the subjectivity of modernist novels.[20]

Other resemblances include narrative self-awareness and death of the protagonist at the hands of the author. As Weber points out, Unamuno's *nivola* alludes to the protagonist's emergence into conscious existence and the author's attempt to create himself. "*Niebla* would

[16] Spanish Moslems or their descendants who converted to Christianity.

[17] The parody of Antolin's "research methods" and utterance that "a great writer's sentence lacked value until a scholar quoted it and mentioned the title, edition, and page where it appeared" satirizes the critical comments and opinions voiced by Unamuno's own critics and detractors (*Fog*, 125).

[18] Ardila 2010: 349.

[19] Friedman 2006: 302.

[20] Ardila 2010: 366.

be the perfect example of the novel in which reality and fiction merge as both character and author create themselves."[21]

Though Unamuno downplayed Cervantes's creative genius and influence on his own work, his *nivola* reflects numerous Cervantine ideas, mixed up with ruminations from other authors he had studied. Don Quixote, whose first act of self-creation was acquiring his knightly title, becomes the fictional model for Augusto Pérez in *Niebla*. Where Cervantes had claimed to be the novel's *padrastro* ("stepfather") in the prologue addressed to the "idle reader" of the book, Unamuno adopted a somewhat similar concept. In *Niebla*, the question of authorship starts with the prologues where an unidentified character introduces the famous Unamuno in discussing the protagonist Augusto Pérez, not unlike Cervantes's narrators who relate Cide Hamete Benengeli's rendered account of Don Quixote's exploits. Readers of *Niebla* may remain unaware that the prologue is actually penned by a character in the book until they read the post-prologue, which is authored by Unamuno. Here, Unamuno complains that his friend Victor Goti, himself a novelist, had, in the prologue, "indiscreetly disclosed some opinions of mine" which were not meant to be shared, admonishing him not to annoy his author or he would let him die or kill him just as he did with Augusto Pérez (*Fog*, post prologue, 11).

Goti purports to write his own novel within *Niebla*—one that looks suspiciously like Unamuno's own work. As character, author and Unamuno's alter ego, Goti expounds on his novelistic technique in relating to Augusto the fictional tragic-comic story of a certain don Eloino Rodriguez, which he intends to interpolate within the narrative:

> I am writing the way Cervantes incorporated short tales into the *Quijote. . . .* My novel does not have a plot, the plot will reveal itself. It will create its own plot.
>
> *Fog, 89*

As noted by Leon Livingstone, "The novel . . . creates itself as the character creates itself. And as the character creates himself, so do author and reader create themselves."[22] Augusto, Unamuno's protagonist, who casts doubts on Unamuno's own existence, appears to reflect Don Miguel's judgments in *Quijote* about the illustrious quixotic pair being more real than Cervantes. Just as Augusto's attempts to escape from the mist of his doubtful existence failed, Don Quixote's *quijotada* ("quixotic act or deed") failed to disenchant Dulcinea and resuscitate the world of chivalry and knights-errant.

Clearly, Unamuno owes to Cervantes a considerable part of his inspiration, a debt he was loath to acknowledge. His narrative technique in the *nivola* may well have been inspired by the anecdote of the *El torpe pintor de Ubeda* ("The clumsy painter of Ubeda"), which Cervantes referenced twice (*Quijote* II, 3, 71). Whereas Unamuno had earlier expressed disdain for the little interspersed stories in *Quijote,* particularly the *El curioso impertinente* ("The Curious-Impertinent"),[23] he later adopted the concept. It has been suggested that Cervantes' tale is the basis for one of Unamuno's own *Novelas ejemplares* ("*Exemplary novels*") entitled *Nada menos*

[21] Weber 1973: 209
[22] Livingstone 1967: 96
[23] Chapter 33 of *Quijote*.

que todo un hombre ("Nothing Less than a Man"). In both narratives, the same desire to find proof of another's love–*una pasión que tenemos que aceptar con fe ciega* ("a passion we have to accept with blind faith"), leads to a tragic end.

Structurally, *Niebla*'s narrative is organized in thirty-three chapters, preceded by a prologue penned by Goti, a post-prologue by Unamuno, as well as an epilog/funeral oration by Orfeo, Augusto's dog, who ruminates about his master and the meaning of life before he dies. Orfeo as a narrator may well have been modeled after the canine Cipción in Cervantes's novela *El coloquio de los perros* ("The Dialog of the Dogs", 1613). As explained by Victor to his friend Augusto, the theory behind the novel he writes is as follows: The plot develops spontaneously, which, moreover, justifies the interpolated stories. The characters create themselves through their actions and words. Descriptions of physical characteristics are minimized: reality is the intimate fight of the character or agonist. (*Fog*, 88–91).

The greater part of *Niebla* consists of dialogues and interior monologues. Augusto's ruminations about love in Chapter 4 are one long interior monologue. The same holds true for Goti's own novel, which can include anything that a writer may imagine. The latter should hide his own presence in the work, leaving his characters to occupy the scene. Moreover, the *nivola* should be a "tragic comedy" and confuse the reader by treating with seriousness the comical incidents and vice versa, another Cervantine idea (*Fog*¸ 89–91).

Though Unamuno professed his indifference to Cervantes's narrative techniques, his *nivola* closely resembles the structure and form encountered in *Quijote,* such as the free development of the plot, determined by the fortuitous adventures of the quixotic duo in their *andanzas* ("meanderings") through the plains of La Mancha, a narrative technique which is reflected in *Niebla* with Augusto's aimless *paseos* ("meanderings") through town.

Perhaps following the example of the Spanish poet Manuel Machado (1874–1847), who once said that his unusual verse was not a "sonnet" but a "sunnit," Unamuno coined the term *nivola* to distinguish his work from a *novela* ("novel") so that no one would be able to complain that he is violating the rules of that literary form.[24]

> I'm inventing a new genre – I only need to give it a different name– and it will be subject to whatever rules I like. And include lots of dialogue.
>
> *Fog*, 91

Unamuno adopted this concept, as evident in his description of the new *vivíparo* ("viviparous") method of novelistic composition in *A lo que salga* (*Whatever turns out*) where he states that his recent essays have grown spontaneously. The idea may also stem from the way that free-flowing

[24] Unamuno uses the neologism "sunnit" in the dialog between the characters Augusto Pérez (protagonist) and Victor Goti (himself a novelist) and Unamuno's alter ego who explains his novelistic technique of the *nivola* to his friend Augusto (*Fog*, 91). In this exchange, Goti claims to have heard the poet Manuel Machado (Antonio's brother) tell how he had read one of his sonnets written in some unusual verse to Eduardo Benot who observed that it was not a sonnet. "No, señor," Machado replied, "it's not a sonnet, it's a *sunnit.*" He goes on to explain that this way no one will be able to say that he is violating the rules of the genre. Unamuno was fond of playing with the meaning of words: his fictional character's encounter with Machado (whether real or not) leads to Augusto's introspection about whether his friend Goti might be inventing him and whether his life is a novel or a *nivola* . . . , reality or fiction.

conversation between Don Quixote and Sancho illustrates the creative power of the word in the revelation and self-development of a character in the narrative.

Finally, the general plot outline of *Quijote* appears to be reflected in *Niebla.* Augusto Pérez, the protagonist of *Niebla*, has been described as the spiritual twin of Don Quixote: He is a somnambulist who, lost in the fog of his existence, is oblivious to Eugenia when their paths cross in the street, because, as Unamuno puts it, "the spiritual fog was too thick" (*Fog,* 19). Augusto's actions prior to being mesmerized by Eugenia's eyes are of little consequence, but, like Don Quixote, he was spurred on with an anguished sense of existence. As a hesitant *pretendiente* ("suitor"), Augusto gives in to his absurd infatuation, even though Eugenia is not remotely interested in him and has a fiancé. His attempt to impress her with "a generous and heroic act" (*Fog,* 37) is not unlike Don Quixote's quests in honor of Dulcinea. Augusto creates in his mind a sublimized image of his love interest: "My Eugenia, yes mine. . . . The one I'm creating . . . , Not the flesh-and-blood one who accidently appeared in front of my building" (*Fog,*18). This ideal image so obfuscates his mind that he fails to recognize the real Eugenia in the street.

"The plot shows how the protagonist, Augusto Pérez, emerges from the mist of unconsciousness into true existential awareness,"[25] his efforts having been likened to a failing experiment in exploring the depth of his character and the freedom, or lack thereof, in his existence, his *voluntad* or *noluntad* ("lack thereof") as Unamuno would say. In his despair, Augusto finds comfort in the quiet submission by Orfeo, his dog, to whom he confides his troubles and dejection. When Eugenia elopes with her lover, she not only dashes Augusto's dreams but also exposes him to ridicule, not unlike Don Quixote's exposure and humiliation before the Dukes (*Quijote* II, 70).

Having been vanquished and having lost his prospects of ever disenchanting Dulcinea, Don Quixote's spirits declined, he took ill and died, having renounced his chivaleresque dreams and identity. A similar, though paradoxical, outcome awaits the anguished Augusto, who resolves to commit suicide after reading Eugenia's letter. He dies indeed, though the cause of his demise remains confoundingly ambiguous. Did Augusto succeed in killing himself in an act of desperation, thereby hoping to assert his autonomy in defiance of Unamuno, who told him that he did not exist?

> You are neither alive nor dead, because you don't exist. . . . You exist only as a fictional character. You, poor Augusto, are nothing but a product of my imagination and of those who read the fictional adventures and predicaments I've written. You're only a character in the novel, or nivola, or whatever you want to call it.
>
> *Fog*, 159

The reader is kept guessing whether Unamuno eliminated Augusto's character as either threatening or threatened. Did Augusto as a fictional being purposefully overeat to an extent that led to cardiac arrest in defiance of his creator's wishes, or was he clinging to life in defying Unamuno's threats to eliminate him?[26] Either way, with his death at the end of the novel, Augusto

[25] Weber 1973: 209.

[26] As Augusto himself argues, "I eat therefore I exist. There's no doubt about that. *Edo; ergo sum!*" (*Fog*, 168)

transcends the boundaries of mortality through literature, a transcendence which ultimately applies in equal measure to Unamuno, both as a character in the nivola and as the nivola's creator. "Guided by Kierkegaardian anguish," Ardila says, "Unamuno comes up with a tragic and paradoxical dénouement for Augusto who, although being immortal, dies."[27]

Cervantes described the demise of Alonso Quixano the Good in a simple way:

> At last, Don Quixote's end came. . . . Amidst the compassionate tears of all present he gave up the ghost—that is to say, he died.
>
> *Quijote* II, 74

Cervantes' declaration about Don Quixote's death, thus putting his character to rest, may have prompted Unamuno to effect the opposite with the philosophical problem posed by Augusto's ambiguous death. Both protagonists expire quietly, the principal mourners being Sancho, witness to his master's heroics and believer in his dreams, and Orfeo, the orphaned dog and Augusto's best friend.

The issue of authorship in *Niebla* invites another similarity. Unamuno inserts himself within the narrative as a character and authoritative figure who asserts his right to decide the fate of Augusto Pérez. Cervantes had done the same, albeit less obviously. In Unamuno's initial discussion about the *nivola* we are led to believe that Victor Goti, either directly or as a character and alter ego of Unamuno, is the true author of *Niebla*, just as Cide Hamete Benengeli claims in *Quijot*e:

> Idle reader, you can believe without any oath of mine that I would wish this book, the child of my brain, to be the most beautiful, the liveliest and the cleverest imaginable. . . . But I, though in appearance Don Quixote's father, am really his stepfather. . . . This book has no need for any of the things that you say it lacks, for the whole of it is an invective against the books of chivalry. . . .
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> *Quijote* I, prologue

The discussion of the *nivola* as an integral part of *Niebla* echoes the literary contemplations in *Quijote* by its author and various characters. This is a reversal of Unamuno's earlier judgement that Cervantes' literary criticism in the immortal novel was at best "misguided and of bad taste." Virtually all characters in *Niebla* talk about "book stuff" in one way or another, a prime example being the dialog between Augusto and his servant Domingo:

> Who isn't something out of a book? . . . Unamuno is also book stuff. We all are. And he'll die. Yes, he'll die too, even if he does not want to."
>
> *Fog*, 170–171

[27]Ardila 2011: 360 *"Unamuno, guiado por la angustia kierkegaardiana, despara un desenlace trágico y paradójico para Augusto, quien, aun siendo inmortal, muere."* My translation.

Literature replaces life, as evidenced by the doctor's mutterings concerning Augusto's death by overeating:

> To make up for what he was not going to eat in the future? Is that it? . . . Maybe his heart sensed he was going to die. . . . Who knows whether or not he existed, least of all him.? We know the least about our existence. We only exist for others.
>
> *Fog*, 171

In *Niebla*, Unamuno portrays not only the protagonist's emergence into conscious existence, but also, having inserted himself into the story, the author's attempt to create himself through the novel. As Weber notes, Unamuno "had tried at different times in his life to find within himself a substantial, unchanging, and 'eternal' self"[28] and he

> never wanted a self that was fiction, but he despaired of getting at a self that was substance. So he finally tried magically to convert the world and all his readers into fiction, an "eternal" fiction in which he could be eternally dreamed.[29]

Thus, in Unamuno's view, Augusto Pérez's dreams are more real than reality.

Lastly, there is a metafictional echo in the ultimate exchange between creator and creation where Unamuno tells his creation

> You exist only as a fictional character. You, poor Augusto, are nothing but a product of my imagination and of those who read the fictional adventures and predicaments I've written.
>
> *Fog*, 159

To this Augusto, insinuating that Unamuno himself is nothing more than a pretext, later responds

> Look, my dear Don Miguel, it's possible that you are a fictional character who doesn't really exist, neither living nor dead. You may be only an excuse to make my story and others like mine known throughout the world.
>
> *Fog,* 174

This interview scene, according to Blanco-Aguinaga, represents "one more effort [on Unamuno's part] to achieve some sort of immortality by making sure he appears in a realm where

[28] Weber 1973: 215.
[29] Weber 1973: 216.

he will always be seen by mortals."[30] To confound things further, upon his death, Augusto appears to Unamuno in his dream, to remind him

> You may be only an excuse to make my story and others like mine known to the world. When you're dead and gone, we [your creations] may be the ones keeping your soul alive.
>
> *Fog*, 171

Américo Castro characterized Unamuno as an intellectual eccentric, who is primarily interested in confusing his readers with paradoxes and contradictions. "His is a living dialectic, a sustained dialogue that moves between hope of eternity and the terror of nothingness, midway between lofty poetry and flat reality."[31]

Although there is a significant divergence in the form and content of the two novels, it has been suggested that, when Unamuno created *Niebla*, he may have modeled it, consciously or unconsciously, after *Quijote*. Critics have generally commented on the Cervantine nature of the interspersed episodes or asserted that *Niebla* may have been imagined precisely as a quixotic work, or as *una recreación en términos modernos de la más grande joya de la literatura española* ("a re-creation in modern terms of the greatest jewel of Spanish literature").[32] Others have pointed out the link Unamuno sought to establish with the works of Cervantes, as evident from the similarities between *Niebla* and Cervantes' *Novelas ejemplares* (*Exemplary novels*).

Cervantes blurs the boundaries between reality and fiction, as evidenced from how the illusions of Don Quixote affect the world around him. His authorial intent, as stated in the prologue to *Quijote* addressed to the "idle reader," was to ensure that "reading the story makes the melancholy laugh and the merry laugh louder; that the simpleton is not confused; that the intelligent admire your invention, the serious do not despise it, nor the prudent withhold with praise" (*Quijote*, Prologue, 30). Unamuno, on the other hand, felt obligated to confound his readers in order to "stir their dormant souls." As Weber observes. in reading Unamuno "You have to confound everything, dream and wakefulness, fiction with reality, the true with the false, confound everything in one fog."[33] Having no use for Cervantes's realistic down-to-earthness and lack of concern for an afterlife, Unamuno decided to create literature out of his inner turmoil. Thus, the polar opposition of Cervantes's and Unamuno's world views may be summed up as "Cervantes worshiped life; Unamuno was obsessed with death and immortality."[34]

Niebla, Unamuno's third novel, published when he was fifty years old, is emblematic of his persistent existential preoccupation and his concerns with immortality. By inserting himself as a character within the novel, he posits the question of immortality both for himself as author and for his creation. As Starkie notes, "Unamuno finds proof of immortality less in reason than in his passionate longing for immortality, his longing to live and live forever.[35]

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[30] Blanco-Aguinaga 1964: 197 (cited by Weber 1973: 214).
[31] Castro 1967: 2–3.
[32] Ardila 2010: 348, citing King 1967: 219. My translation.
[33] Weber 1973: 212 "*Hay que confundir, confundirlo todo. Confundir el sueño con la vela, la ficción con la realidad, lo verdadero con los falso; confundirlo todo en una sola niebla."* My translation.
[34] Otero 1967: 179.
[35] Starkie 1967: 237.

Unamuno, the self-appointed *excitator hispaniae* ("arouser of Spain") as described by Curtius,[36] claimed the following:

> My duty is to irritate people. We must sow in men the seeds of doubt, of distrust, of disquiet, and even of despair,[37]

Otero contrasts him with Cervantes in the following way:

> Cervantes worshipped life. Unamuno was obsessed with death. Cervantes was not eager to shuffle off his mortal coil, but was always quick to use his inexhaustible optimism to move the melancholy to laughter and make the cheerful man merrier still; Unamuno, on the other hand, having decided that he should never die, consumed most of his mortal hours dwelling on his immortality, meanwhile injecting his somber pessimism into melancholy and cheerful alike.[38]

Following Cervantes's precept that *cada uno es hijo de sus obras* ("each one is the child of his works," *Quijote* I, 47), these uniquely Spanish authors and their genius merit their elevated stature, having created enduring works of literature, worthy of admiration and contemplation across the ages. Students of Spanish might find the below-referenced poem helpful in understanding Unamuno as a poet, author and thinker.

If you have read to this end, dear "idle reader," for your contemplation I leave you with this short poem, which is emblematic of Unamuno's work and more neatly and succinctly summarizes his ideas and major preoccupations than my digressions.[39]

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[36] See Curtius 1954: 264: "Unamuno is a unique example, . . . the vigilant, inspiring, revulsive, demanding and animating stirrer of a nation. Spain owes him . . . the awakening from her apathy and "abulia". . . . Without Unamuno's blows and stabs, the Spanish spirit would not be what it signifies today for Europe." (*Unamuno será un ejemplo único . . . el vigilante de una nación, un exitador hispaniae, estimulante, revulsivo, exigente y amenazador. España debe agradecerle . . . el despertar de su apatía de su "abulia" . . . sin los martillazos y las cuchilladas de Unamuno el espíritu español no sería lo que hoy significa para Europa.*)

[37] See Starkie 1967: 241, where the author quotes this statement by Unamuno without providing a citation.

[38] Otero 1967: 179–180.

[39] This poem was published posthumously in Unamuno 1953. My translation.

Leer, leer, leer, vivir	To read, read, read, to live
la vida que otros soñaron.	the life that others dreamed of.
Leer, leer, leer, el alma olvida,	To read, read, read, the soul forgets,
las cosas que pasaron.	the things that passed.
Se quedan las que quedan, las ficciones,	What remains, remains, the fictions,
las flores de la pluma,	the flowers of the pen,
las solas, las humanas creaciones,	the only, the human creations,
el poso de la espuma.	the residue of the foam.
Leer, leer, leer, ¿seré lectura	To read, read, read; will I be read
mañana también yo?	tomorrow too?
¿Seré mi creador, mi criatura,	Will I be my creator, my creature,
seré lo que pasó?	will I be what happened?

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