

MIGUEL DE UNAMUNO
TRANSLATED BY
ANTHONY KERRIGAN

Selected Works of
Miguel de Unamuno,
Volume 3

Our Lord Don Quixote



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Selected Works of Miguel de Unamuno

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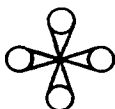
Volume 3

Miguel de Unamuno

Our Lord Don Quixote

*The Life of Don Quixote and Sancho
with Related Essays*

*Translated by
Anthony Kerrigan*



*With an Introduction by
Walter Starkie*

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Introduction

i. *The Forerunners*

MIGUEL DE UNAMUNO Y JUGO was vowed to fate by his allegorical first surname, which in the ancient Basque language meant "hill of asphodels"—the pallid flowers that the specters flitting through the shadowy Elysian Fields used to nibble when they wished to become visible. But, as Ramón Gómez de la Serna used to point out, his second name Jugo ("juice" or "sap") gives a note of earthly antithesis to modern Spain's apostle of Quixotism. In order to understand the full significance of Unamuno's spirit and his impact upon Spain and his contemporaries of the Generation of 1898, it is necessary to study the forces molding Spain in the last twenty years of the nineteenth century, when Menéndez y Pelayo, Ramón y Cajal, and Pérez Galdós, the great forerunners, attacked the scientific, humanistic, and literary methods of Spain in the two preceding centuries. Ramón y Cajal, who in 1880 (two years before Menéndez y Pelayo's *Los Heterodoxos*) published his first scientific work, *Investigaciones experimentales sobre la génesis inflamatoria*, has described in his fascinating autobiography, written forty years later, the attitude of mind of the young scholars and scientists of 1880–1890. They were in revolt against the rhetorical bombast of their elders; they wished to strike out on a different path, rather than follow the example of their predecessors, who wasted their energies in fruitless political discussions in the various Athenaeums and filled the newspapers with facile articles on every conceivable subject.

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Menéndez y Pelayo, Ramón y Cajal, and their companions shut themselves up in their studies and in their laboratories. As conscientious scholars and scientists, they shunned giving opinions on subjects with which they were not deeply acquainted; they noted with surprise and misgiving the blatant self-confidence of their elders, who trumpeted their political views to the four winds; and they faced imperturbably those who accused them of being fools and upstarts. The generation of Menéndez y Pelayo, Ramón y Cajal, and Galdós was one of scientists, scholars and investigators, in contrast to the generation before, which had been one of preachers and orators. It was a generation of peace, for the revolutionary spirit of 1868 had died down, owing to the restoration of the monarchy, and Menéndez y Pelayo, though he was a polemicist, yet fought with equal zeal against the fanatics on both sides. He saw that the nineteenth century had been one long dreary record of intolerance and prejudice; and he was determined to discover some method for uniting Spaniards in brotherly concord, and thus to diminish the violent antagonisms which made intellectual relationships impossible. Dr. Marañón, in an essay on those earlier days, has referred to the great antagonism that existed between Pérez Galdós and Menéndez y Pelayo, for the former had recently published the novels *Doña Perfecta* and *Gloria*, embodying his anticlerical theories in positive nineteenth-century fashion, and Menéndez y Pelayo in the first edition of *Historia de los Heterodoxos españoles* had attacked the position of the novelist with great bitterness. Nevertheless the two men were to the last close friends, and no nobler tribute was ever paid to Galdós than the speech pronounced in the Spanish Academy by Menéndez y Pelayo commemorating the former's election to that august body. Tolerance and a sense of reality were Menéndez y Pelayo's watchwords: "Let us," he said, "cast away those old-fashioned declamatory history books with their

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everlasting commonplaces about Pavia, St. Quentin, and Lepanto: they serve only to lull us to sleep and fill us with foolish vanity." Spaniards must turn their thoughts, he said, to the real internal problems of Spain. It was such sentiments that prompted him to utter paeans in the style of Joaquín Costa and Ricardo Macías Picavea to the rigid geometry of large metallic bridges and factories with waving trains of smoke; and when celebrating the virtues and excellences of the great Catalan scholar Milá y Fontanals, Menéndez y Pelayo was able to find words of praise even for the grotesque architectural excrescences of Gaudí, as symbolizing the unconquerable urge to progress of industrial Barcelona, "which God may destine to be the heart and head of a regenerated Spain."

The generation of scholars and scientists was followed by one of men of letters and literary artists—the so-called "Generation of 1898." "Each of these generations faced the problem of Spain in the crucial hour of disaster in 1898. . . . Galdós and his contemporaries had lived through the years when the monarchy of Isabel II was crumbling and events were leading Spain on to the 'Revolution of September.' " Menéndez y Pelayo and his contemporaries were fortunate enough to spend the impressionable years of their youth in the peaceful period of the monarchical restoration. The 1898 generation, to which Unamuno and his literary contemporaries belonged, spent their early years in an atmosphere of pessimism and heart-searching. Unamuno's earliest memories dated from the bombardment of his native city Bilbao during the Second Carlist War, when he was ten years of age, and his fellow-countryman Pío Baroja has described his vivid childhood impressions of the attacks on San Sebastián in that civil war. In spite of the patient toiling of his scholarly predecessors, Unamuno in the later years of the century saw Spanish misfortunes reach their climax. The old repressive spirit of Spain's colonial policy continued

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until 1898, when war with the United States broke out. In spite of the heroism of the fighting men, in spite of glorious deeds worthy of an epic, the war ended disastrously, and Spain lost her remaining colonies. But the sailors who went down at Manila singing hymns to their country had not died in vain. The disaster marked the end of a chapter. Every year that followed saw the introduction of new ideas into Spain. The harsh terms of the Treaty of Paris after the war, when all Europe looked on with indifference, showed Spaniards that they must bring their country into line with modern Europe. A new liberal spirit began to inspire the youth of the country. Up to 1898 the administration of railways, mines and other sources of national wealth had been, to a large extent, in the hands of foreigners. After this Spaniards began to invest their money in their own country, and to the lotus-eater's spirit of *mañana* there succeeded an eager activity. We find that the word "Europeanize" came into Spanish. Many brilliant writers and statesmen took up with great fervor the question of introducing foreign methods. The Unión Nacional was formed, led by philosophers like Joaquín Costa. It was then that Unamuno, a voluble spokesman for the new writers, took up the cudgels for the traditional Spaniard, and from his watch tower at Salamanca he hurled pamphlets at Costa and the Europeans. "So far from being Europeanized," he cried, "I should not be ashamed of being African—yes, as African as Tertullian and Augustine."

The remark is a striking one and goes a long way towards giving us a key to the Spanish soul. Spain can never be entirely European—she has always resisted with tenacity any invader, and the spectacle of the chief men of Saguntum throwing themselves and their treasures into the flames of their burning city has been repeated many a time in her history. However far her intellectuals may assimilate the ideals of her neighbors, there is always the leavening of

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españolismo in her literature and art. All Spanish writers who start their careers by trying to be European inevitably, sooner or later, return to the national tradition.

The movement of 1898 started brilliantly in literature under the guidance of Unamuno and other young writers whose minds were concentrated on the idea of rebirth after the Disaster. "They faced facts and stripped away ruthlessly the flowers of rhetoric and the hollow-sounding phrases," as Aubrey Bell wrote. "They made a cult of the intellect and worshiped the visionary art of El Greco and primitive poets like Gonzalo de Berceo. Their watchword was precision. 'Each thing in written language,' said Azorín, one of the masters of the Generation of 1898 and the one who had given it that name, 'must be called by its exact name.' " And the important fact was that Castile absorbed all those poets and artists, no matter from what region of the country they came. We discover that in contemporary Spanish literature the best pages on the Castilian scene come from the pens of the Basques Unamuno and Baroja, the Andalusian Antonio Machado, and Azorín of the Mediterranean region. The Generation of 1898, too, loved old towns where life still preserved the eternal qualities of the Middle Ages, and in literature they turned to the Castilian troubadours and minstrels of those early centuries, such as Gonzalo de Berceo, Juan Ruiz, and the Marquis of Santillana. "The new writers took for their master Pérez Galdós, who had shown himself a keen, in some respects an un-Spanish, critic of shams and shallowness, and a master of true Spanish realism. 'To Galdós,' said Azorín, 'the new generation of writers owes the very essence of its being.' " And Azorín goes on to say: "Galdós appears silently, with his little eyes that pierce, his cold, scrupulous glance: he appears, looking at everything, examining everything—the critics, the streets, the shops, the cafés, the theaters, the fields, the roads. . . . For the first time reality is going to

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exist for the Spaniards." But soon the voice of the supreme egoist Unamuno begins to boom throughout Spain, the voice of a prophet crying in the wilderness: "There is no other I in the world! Each one of us is absolute. If there is a God who has made and conserves the world, He made it and conserves it for me. There is no other I! There may be greater men and lesser, worse men and better, but there is no other I. I am something entirely new; an eternity of past time is summed up in me, and from me there starts up an eternity to come."

ii. Memories of Unamuno

ON DECEMBER 31, 1936, when the news came of the death of Unamuno, I took down from my library some of his books in an effort to recapture the spirit of one whom Count Keyserling called "the living Spaniard of most importance to Europe." I opened one of the books at random, and the first passage that caught my eye was the following, written in 1926 when Unamuno was living as an exile in France: "I write these lines while my Christian Spain is in agony. She spread Christianity through the sword, she proclaimed the crusade, and now it is she who is to perish by the sword." How much more truly did those words ring in the sixth month of the Civil War than in the days of the benevolent dictatorship of Primo de Rivera!

By a strange irony of fate death struck him down at the very moment when he was making his protest in the name of Spanish nationalism. In an interview given to the Portuguese *Diário de Notícias* some days before his death, he was reported to have said: "The sight of Germans in Spain is enough to kill me. They act on Spanish soil as if it were their own." He then went on to explain why at the beginning of the war he had taken the side of the insurgents: "When the army revolted against the ghost government of Madrid I

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gave it my full sympathy, hoping it would save Spain and its Christian civilization, which had been seriously threatened by its eternal enemies in the East. I soon realized, however, with the greatest sorrow that this struggle, which at first had been inspired by high motives, had developed into a class war, full of horrors and without pity or generosity of any kind. On the one side we see the so-called Marxists, who include not only Socialists, Communists, and Anarchists, but criminals and ex-convicts of all classes, without any ideals; we see on the other side not a union of anti-Marxist parties in the face of a common enemy, but a number of divided factions, most of them formed by old Royalist, Traditionalist, and Carlist partisans. But above all of them and attempting to win full supremacy is the 'Falange Española'—Italian Fascism badly translated into Spanish."

Only a short time before the Civil War, one day when I was walking with him down the Gran Vía in Madrid, Unamuno had exclaimed bitterly against the theories of Marx and Lenin as followed by their Spanish devotees. "There is no tyranny in the world more hateful than that of ideas. Ideas bring ideophobia, and the consequence is that people begin to persecute their neighbors in the name of ideas. I loathe and detest all labels, and the only label that I could now tolerate would be that of ideoclast or idea-breaker."

Unamuno all his life was a modern Don Quixote riding full tilt against hypocrisy, smug consciences, dogmatism, and shibboleths. His critics tried to lay him low by calling him "paradoxical," but paradoxes are necessary as weapons against routine of thought, and Unamuno's function in modern Spain had been to make men probe and sift ideas. "My painful duty," he said once, "is to irritate people. We must sow in men the seeds of doubt, of distrust, of disquiet, and even of despair." Consequently, I could not imagine a more dangerous ally than Unamuno, for the simple reason

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that he was always the incarnation of the Spanish spirit of anarchy. And I remember, on one occasion in 1928, hearing Ramiro de Maeztu, the third great Basque personality of the 1898 Generation, attempt to reconcile the militant faith of Unamuno with the nihilism of Pío Baroja. "Don Miguel," he said, "cherishes the memory of our ascetics and mystics, who taught us to despise the world we live in and turn our eyes away from it. Don Pío argues that Evil is the root of life, for he has lost his faith in humanity and his literature is a grim accusation. He has plenty of sympathy for the waifs and strays who float helplessly through life, but there is in his work too much rancor against society. I am an optimist, and I say to both men that we Spaniards must banish these thoughts of death and try to give eternal significance to our actions in this life. We Spaniards are excellent losers, and we resign ourselves to the thought of abandoning the works we have begun; our wise men have told us again and again that the world is naught but dust and ashes, and we are too easily disposed to hearken to them. Today we need to live for our country, not to die for it."

If Unamuno had lived at Athens he would have been made to drink the hemlock on the ground that such a man was a danger to the State. One Unamuno is a benefit to Spain, but dozens of little Unamunos pullulating in the universities and colleges bring libertarian anarchy. And yet, to quote Count Keyserling once more, in his book *Europe*, Unamuno was "probably the most important Spaniard that has ever lived since Goya," because he unswervingly proclaimed out of the wholeness of primal man the very few but very deep things which he had grasped and knew: the significance of faith, of blood, of the tragic, of Don Quixote as the highest symbol of man. For Keyserling, what the European, in that hour, needed more than all else was to win through again to an immediate relationship to these basic problems of life. Spain was supremely important in

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the modern world precisely because of her indestructible traditions springing from her past. Unamuno was a traditional Spaniard, hence he was most illuminating when he spoke to Europe.

Unamuno's death at that tragic moment in the Spanish Civil War was a warning and a reminder. It was a warning to those who thought that Spain—the pentagonal island, set at the junction between two continents—was fated to be the prey of Russia, Germany, or Italy. Few peoples had passed through so many racial changes as those of the Iberian Peninsula, but none of those changes had modified the eternal substance of Spain. And Unamuno's death was a reminder that the spirit of the Saguntines and Viriathus still burned as brightly as it did two thousand years ago.

I have a number of vivid pictures of Unamuno in my mind. I remember him as I saw him for the first time in 1921, when I lived in Salamanca. He certainly was the symbol of that august university town, and when in the evening we used to sit with him in a café in the Plaza Mayor, his table was surrounded by disciples and admirers, who had come from everywhere to pay court to him. There he would fire off paradox after paradox, pulling the beards of solemn old professors and adopting with them the Socratic method of pretending at first to be ignorant until there was an opportunity of clinching the argument with the blow of a sledge-hammer. At the time he was writing his novel *La tía Tula*, about the problem of the maiden aunt in Spanish families. Such women frequently save the destitute families of their relations, educate the children, give dowries to the girls, set the sons up in professions. Every evening at the *tertulia* in the Plaza Mayor, Unamuno would read out what he had written, and he and my wife argued fiercely, for the latter considered the heroine's renunciation of Ramiro inhumane—she consumes her own body as well as Ramiro's life and she has to confess one day: "All my life has been a

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lie, a deceit, a failure." While Unamuno was speaking he kept fashioning, with extraordinary agility, queer little paper birds. This personal art he labeled *cocotología*. Unamuno as professor of Greek in the University of Salamanca had his mind steeped in the classics, but he was not an elegant devotee of the Thessalian maidens. Coming from the Basque country, with its fierce individualism and obstinate pride, he rejected adornments of style, melodious cadences, as if they had been the flowers of Klingsor's magic garden. I also discovered that Unamuno was a-musical; to him sweet sound was but *música celestial*—the Spanish synonym for nonsense. He was in his conversation a subtle humorist, whose humor would have met Landor's definition that "genuine humor and true wit require a sound and capacious mind which is always a grave one." Often he recalled Samuel Butler, and like the author of *The Way of All Flesh* he liked to treat as absurd prejudices the ideas that were commonly held. Thus he defended idleness, holding the theory that lazy people were necessary for the world in the advance of civilization. "Poets," he declared, "are idlers, and it is to the principle of idleness that astronomy owed its origin, that is to say, when man, freed from the necessity of earning his bread, turned his eyes upwards and questioned the enigma of the skies." Unamuno and Butler remind us of the builders of the Middle Ages who adorned their cathedrals with gargoyles. Both liked to play the part of a gargoyle themselves, grinning amidst the solemnity of the Universe, yet not incongruous.

Unamuno was the "enfant terrible" of modern Spain, in spite of his occasional air of puritanical austerity, which caused Salvador de Madariaga to compare him very aptly to an elder at an Eisteddfod. In appearance he resembled an oak tree with an owl's head. Everything about him suggested the strength and integrity of the Basque mountaineer. In his study at Salamanca there were no dimmed lights or

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mysterious corners, all was sunny, and from the broad window we could see in the distance the graceful tower of the palace of Monterrey, which might be the symbol of Salamanca's beauty. In the evening he would walk with us slowly along the banks of the river Tormes, where once Lazarillo, the picaresque knave, used to scamper. The shadows of night descended rapidly; not a sound could be heard save from time to time the deep boom of the church bells in the distance. Over the broad, parched plain of Castile here and there grew a ghostly cypress tree, while across the river the cathedral loomed gigantic.

At such moments Unamuno would become reflective and ponder over the destiny of Spain. He gloried in the warring conflicts that are to be found in the Spanish soul: the mystery of the Arab, the steadfastness of the Germanic, and the fierce independence of the Iberian races. It was then that he would give vent to his intense Quixotism. I have heard him quote the familiar lines:

Cada vez que considero
Que me tengo de morir
Tiendo la capa en el suelo
Y no me harto de dormir.

And I thought of Unamuno's words: "Death is our immortalizer. Nothing passes away, nothing is dissipated, nothing is annihilated. The smallest particle of matter is made eternal, and so is the slightest tremor of energy. And there is no vision, however fleeting, which does not remain forever reflected somewhere. . . . The sudden and momentary lighting up of obscure matter is a dream; life is a dream. And once the passing brilliance is extinguished, its reflection sinks to the dark depths, and there it remains until a masterful jolt one day rekindles it and lights it up again forever. For death does not triumph over life with the death of life. Life and death are wretched terms to which we are limited in this prison of time and space; they both have a

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common root and the root-stock grows in the eternity of the infinite: in God, the Consciousness of the Universe."

Unamuno hated modern civilization with its steel and stress. Ever since the eighteenth century, he said, Europe had been disciplining itself according to the principles of Voltaire and his goddess of reason; men have tried to play the part of Hans Sachs, and mark with their hammer the mistakes of Walter von Stolzing's inspired song, but the true Spaniard has always shunned such theories and abstractions. Unamuno would even have us go back beyond the Knight of the Sad Countenance, back to the Middle Ages. He says: "I feel that I have a medieval soul; and it seems to me that my country's soul is medieval too, that she has perforce passed through the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the Revolution—learning something, yes, but not allowing her soul to be touched, preserving the spiritual inheritance from the so-called Dark Ages. And Quixotism is no more than the most desperate phase of the struggle on the part of the Middle Ages against the Renaissance, which emerged from it."

The Unamuno I consorted with in 1921 in Salamanca was the symbol of that city and a spiritual descendant of Fray Luis de León. He was beloved by everybody and was the cynosure of all who came there. He was, to quote Dante, "*maestro di color che sanno*," and as he sat surrounded by people who came from all parts of the city he was an oracle. On one occasion he was censured by the King of Spain for something he had written and was not allowed to leave his city. Then the King decided to pardon him, and when the royal telegram arrived he was seated in the Plaza Mayor surrounded by his disciples. When he read it out everyone present cheered, but the Master was furious, for he had ceased to be a victim. The pardon had taken away the conflict, or the agony, as he would have said. On another occasion His Majesty awarded him the Cross of Alfonso XII,

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and Unamuno went to Madrid to receive the decoration. When he was ushered into the royal presence, he said, in his blunt way: "I present myself before Your Majesty because you have conferred upon me the cross of Alfonso XII, which I deserve."

"It is strange," replied the King, "that the other recipients of the cross all assured me that they did not deserve it."

"And they were right," replied Unamuno.

Unamuno's bitter hostility to Alfonso XIII and the regime did not cease, and his attacks culminated in his exile to Fuerteventura, one of the Canary Islands. From that moment he became famous in Europe as the main opponent of Primo de Rivera's dictatorship. The Master was not unhappy in the island of Fuerteventura, for its arid solitudes and its traditions of the Guanches—"the first Indians of Castile," as he called them—inspired him to verse, and he was able to finish, later in his exile, his *Romancero del destierro*. In his fantasies the snow-capped Teide of Tenerife became the emblem of Iberia, as Fujiyama is of Japan. His escape from exile in Fuerteventura in a yacht was engineered by the Paris left-wing newspaper *Le Quotidien*. It was France then that gave him the helping hand, and such intellectuals as Valéry Larbaud, André Gide, Paul Souday, and the Comtesse de Noailles became his champions and welcomed him in Paris. When I met him in the Café Rotonde in Montparnasse, he was surrounded by French journalists, but he was unhappy and homesick, and he rambled on about Fuerteventura, its noble ancient Iberian inhabitants and their prehistoric food *gofio*, or toasted corn. "Fuerteventura," he said, "is a more extreme Castile—it is dryer and more arid than Don Quixote's La Mancha, and the earth beneath the glare of the sun reverberates as though pulsating spiritually with countless souls. One day, if God gives me the opportunity, I'll organize Don Quixote's

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journey to Fuerteventura, to gather the yellow wild flowers of its fields and make a garland for Dulcinea." It was on May 15, 1926, that Jean Cassou published his vivid sketch of Unamuno, proclaiming him a modern Don Quixote, who cries out in the wilderness. "Such is the agony of Miguel de Unamuno, a wrestler, wrestling with himself, with his people and against his people; a man of war, hostile, fratricidal, tribune without a party, solitary exile, preaching in the desert, provocative, vain, pessimistic, paradoxical, torn to bits between life and death, invincible and yet always vanquished." Although I marveled at his mental vigor, his words now did not thrill me as they had done in Salamanca. The life of Paris, surging interminably along the boulevards, submerged this man who had seemed to wield the power of a dictator in his city of Salamanca. Two years later, in 1928, I went to visit the Master at Hendaye, on the borderland between France and Spain. When I arrived at the Hotel Broca, near the railway station, where he was living, he was not to be found. I wandered on that sultry afternoon into the biggest café in the square, where all the inhabitants seemed to be asleep: no sound was heard but the buzzing of flies, and there in the dim vaulted room I saw Unamuno. He was seated at a table reciting his poems to himself. Here on the Spanish frontier, in the beloved Basque country, twenty minutes from Spain, Basques from Spain and Basques from France thronged to see him, and here he pursued indefatigably his literary work. The townspeople all touched their hats to him and called him Master, and so again he seemed to live the feudal life that was so dear to him.

On February 9, 1930, two weeks after Primo de Rivera's fall, Unamuno crossed the frontier into Spain, and on February 11 he arrived in Salamanca and resumed his chair in the university. After the declaration of the republic, in April 1931, he was reinstated as Rector. Many of the younger intellectuals would have wished him to become

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President of the republic, for was he not the embodiment of the celebrated Generation of 1898, which had prepared the way for the new movement in the country? But who would expect Don Quixote to become governor of Barataria after Sancho Panza had been driven out? Unamuno, like the rest of the 1898 group, had prepared the way so that others might construct. It was not long, however, before his remorselessly analyzing brain began its destructive work. Articles appeared daily from his pen attacking every political party. At one moment he lashed the clericals, whom he called "spiritual parasites" because they supported themselves on the faith of others; at another he attacked the progressives, saying that "progress is apt to become a more degrading superstition than those which it attacks." Between meetings of the Cortes one would see him walking bare-headed up and down the Calle de Alcalá, pouring out his ideas in an endless stream to some willing listener. It was not long before he saddled his Rocinante and sallied out again, but this time the windmills were not theologians or dukes but modern inquisitorial orthodox Socialists. "Once it destroys the rights of the individual, the regime no longer satisfies me."

"Why do you rant so fiercely against the present government?" I said to him one day in the summer of 1931, when we were sitting talking in the painter Zuloaga's garden at Zumaya, in the Basque country.

He replied, "I want to preach the message of Spanish individualism against all those who would diminish its universality. I know that in my native Basque land, or in Catalonia, Galicia, Andalusia, or any Spanish region, it will always be the public power of the Spanish nation—call it State if you will—which will protect the liberty of the Spanish citizen against the intentions and the particularist spirit of the region with its little State."

Hardly had he finished his tirade when the lisping, me-

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lodious voice of the Galician writer, Ramón del Valle-Inclán, took up the argument: "Ah, yes. It is Castile which has made Spain, and it is Castile which has made the Republic. Castile is the universal Spain—the Spain that exists not only here in the Iberian Peninsula, but over the sea in the New World."

Then Zuloaga butted in: "We all are patriots of our regions: I am a Basque; you, Don Miguel, are one too; you, Don Ramón, are a Galician; but then we go forth from the region where we were born and become universal. All our good artists and writers were regional in one sense but became universal."

Our discussion was held in a flowering rose-garden, where beneath trees a fountain bubbled up and flowed over beautiful tiles ornamented in ancient Moorish pattern. In the distance I heard the sound of an organ: Manuel de Falla was playing in the little chapel. The fountain bubbled eternally, the organ notes died away, and the friends talked on and on. In such a haven of peace I prefer to leave my friend Don Miguel, but I know that his spirit would refuse to imagine the next life as an eternity of peace and contemplation, a fusion of past and future, a recollection of hope in an everlasting present. But as I say farewell to the Master's spirit I hear a faint voice chant the words: "I am Spanish by birth, education, spirit, language, profession; Spanish above all and before all; Spanish is my religion; the heaven in which I wish to be is a celestial Spain and my God is a Spanish God—the God of Our Lord Don Quixote, a God who thinks in Spanish and who said in Spanish, 'Let there be light,' and the Word was the Spanish Word."

iii. *Essays and Soliloquies*

ÁNGEL GANIVET in his *Idearium español* stated for all time the significance of Don Quixote as the mythical hero

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of Spain. "All nations," he says, "possess a type, real or imaginary, in which they incarnate their own special qualities. In all literatures we find a masterpiece, in which the type-man is represented as in action, as coming into contact with the society of his time and as undergoing a long series of trials in which the temper of his spirit, which is the spirit of his race, is assayed. Ulysses is the Greek *par excellence*; in him are united all the virtues of the Aryan—prudence, constancy, effort, self-control, with Semitic astuteness and fertility of resource. Compare him with any of the leaders of the Germanic peoples and we shall see, with the utmost precision, the proportion of the Greek spirit that is due to Semitic influence. Our Ulysses is Don Quixote, and in Don Quixote we are immediately aware of a spiritual metamorphosis. The type has undergone purification, and in order to act must free itself from the burden of material preoccupations, loading them onto a squire, Sancho Panza. In this way he proceeds in complete ease, and his action is an endless creation, a human prodigy, in which every conception is idealized. Don Quixote did not exist in Spain before the Moors came, nor during their stay, but after the conclusion of the Reconquest. Without the Moors, Don Quixote and Sancho Panza would have been a single individual, an imitation of Ulysses." Ganivet saw in the quixotification of Spain her only possible glory in the future, and he adds that Sancho Panza, after learning to read and write, might be a Robinson Crusoe, and, like Robinson, in a pinch he would shed his air of superiority and agree to be the squire of Don Quixote. But Ganivet's quixotism was a vague aspiration to the future, provided the Spaniard were able to change his objectives and resurrect his former activity. Ganivet's suicide in 1898, on the eve of the Spanish-American War, was a gesture of despair in the face of disaster recalling that of Larra in similar circumstances in 1837. Larra in his celebrated article "El día de difuntos de

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1836" (All Souls' Day 1836), seeing the Carlist War extend all over Spain, and remembering the rising of the sergeants of 1812 against the monarchy and many other bitter struggles, had found nothing but death and tombs on one political side as well as the other: "Here lies half Spain, it died at the hands of the other half." Ganivet attributed the Spanish decadence to lack of will—*abulia*, he called it—and Quixotism for him meant concentrating the energies of the nation and closing the doors to prevent their escaping. Parodying the words of Saint Augustine he said, "Noli foras ire: in interiore Hispaniae habitat veritas." Unamuno's Quixotism was more human than Ganivet's and more transcendental, for the former postulates an ideal man, an archetype offered to mankind of the future. There were two distinct periods in the Quixotism of Unamuno. The first belonged to his youth, around the year 1898, when he wrote in one of his articles: "Let Don Quixote die that Alonso Quixano the Good may be reborn! Let Don Quixote die!" This strident cry was but the climax of a process of self-questioning which had been seething in his mind ever since 1895, when he had written the essays contained in *En torno al casticismo*. Only great artists, he now said, know how to dive into the intra-historical human depths of their own lives and the lives of their people. "Cervantes," he added, "belongs to this eternal art, for in the sublime final scene of his *Don Quixote* he points out to our Spain the path of its regeneration in Alonso Quixano the Good, who, because as a genuine Spaniard he succeeded in renouncing, as it were, his Hispanicism, reached the essential spiritual universality which slumbers within every one of us."

In his essay "The Knight of the Sad Countenance" (1896), Unamuno tells what happens to Alonso Quixano the Good, after his passing Quixotization, his return to sanity, and his death. He must be reborn, become European, and enter a life of co-operation, justice, and intelligence. Soon, however,

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Unamuno changed in his attitude toward Don Quixote, and we come to the second period, when in 1906 he published "The Sepulcher of Don Quixote." Now, instead of a sane, resurrected Don Quixote, we have Don Quixote alive and mad, and our inconsistent author states his purpose: "I believe we might attempt the holy crusade of going to rescue the Sepulcher of Don Quixote from the hands of the university graduates, curates, barbers, dukes, and canons who occupy it. I believe we might undertake a holy crusade to redeem the Sepulcher of the Knight of Madness from the power of the champions of Reason." Yes, we must not only rescue the Knight of Madness from the champions of Reason, but liberate ourselves from the rationalism that hitherto has been dominating Europe. It will be no easy task to follow our author on the crusade, for the knights of Reason hold most of the modern world in their power, and they jealously guard the tomb to prevent Don Quixote from coming to life again.

To become a devotee of the new religion of Quixotism we have to set up on a pedestal as priest a man of whom we are not sure whether he was really made of flesh and bone, a man who more likely was purely fictitious. We have also to face the universal ridicule poured on us by the knights of Reason. Don Quixote made the whole world laugh, but he never made a joke. His seriousness roused laughter among those who dwelt in the plain and were unable to breathe the air of the mountain top. Don Quixote, like Brand, dwelt among the snows and held that "he is mad who is alone." When madness becomes collective it becomes a reality, and Unamuno cried out that what was wanted in Spain was for the whole people to become transfigured by the madness of someone among them.

In his commentary on the life of Don Quixote Unamuno suggests in a most subtle way the background of Spain without ever describing the scenery. We remember how Flau-

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bert said of *Don Quixote*: "Comme on voit partout ces routes d'Espagne qui ne sont nulle part décrites!" and Unamuno has followed the same method. The land that produced Don Quixote is parched and poor; the men who cultivated it carried on an incessant struggle with the earth. They were originally wanderers guiding their flocks from pasture to pasture, over the lonely uplands, past the ghostly cypress trees, or else, unable to meet their wants, wandering to far-off lands. Don Quixote with his meager visage was one of them, and he would rise up with the dawn and hunt from place to place.

According to Unamuno, all the origins of Spain are contained in that book. At one moment we are in the rough, oaken land of the Basque, the descendants of the old Iberians; at another we wander through the melancholy glens of Galicia, where we hear the plaintive Celtic pipes; then through the plains of Castile and the mountains of Aragón. We pass through the Sierra Morena into the romantic Andalusia, where dwell the descendants of the Abencerrajes. Against this eternal background of Spain Unamuno sees many national heroes, possessing the temperament of the rueful knight, and one of the great merits of his commentary is that he establishes their relationship. For Unamuno, Don Quixote is neither abnormal nor isolated. He compares his hero to other heroes, such as the Cid, Santa Teresa, Pizarro, Ignatius of Loyola—especially Ignatius of Loyola. We see how Don Quixote carries to realization many of the dictates of Jesus, for he has the sweet humility that springs from great and noble charity, and he seems to reflect the spirit of the Redeemer. Then he is intensely Spanish in his heroism, and his God is the God of the age of chivalry. He has the pride of combat of the Cid, the exalted loyalty of Pizarro; like Santa Teresa and Saint John of the Cross, he dwelt in his own dreamland and climbed the mystic ladder in the journeying of the soul,

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wearing the colors of faith, hope, and charity. Of him we might say, in William Blake's words:

I give you the end of a golden string
Only wind it into a golden ball—
It will lead you in at Heaven's gate,
Built in Jerusalem's wall.

But the nearest parallel, according to Unamuno, is with Loyola, who was a great military captain in religion. In Spain there was more need of the fighting captain than of the contemplative mystic, in days when the Church was assailed on all sides. If we look at any Spanish church, say the cathedral at Ávila, is it not like a frowning, beetling fortress of the spirit? The bastions repel the infidel; the very land around is harsh and ragged, and the peasants there have a proverb which describes it: *Cantos y santos*—"Stones and saints." The earth cannot bloom in fertile harvest, because God has given it to be a symbol of beauty that exists within the soul. But when we advance within the frowning fortress, into the dark, mysterious nave, the glimmering lights of the side altars, the chanted prayers that float through the wide expanses, the fragrant incense that mounts and loses itself with the sounds in the mists of the vaulted roof—all these explain the soul of Don Quixote and the great mystics of Spain. External life mattered little to them, for they were following the narrow dream-path, and to reach the bourne it mattered not what wounds, what famine, what ridicule they had to suffer on the way.

There is a danger in following our apostle of Quixotism too far in his tragic interpretation of Cervantes' masterpiece: we may lose sight of the relationship between the latter author and the character he has created. Unamuno is not concerned with Cervantes at all, but with the living Don Quixote developed by centuries and outgrowing his original creator. "I feel myself more Quixotist than Cervantes, and my aim is to free Don Quixote from Cervantes." But hatred

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of pedantry may entail a new pedantry, for *Don Quixote* is not only life, it is also literature.

The universal *Don Quixote* embodies the quality of humor with its rich union of heart and mind which passed from Spain to eighteenth-century England and appeared during the Augustan Age in the works of Henry Fielding, who has been called "the younger brother of Cervantes." The greatness of *Don Quixote* consists in holding the balance between laughter and tears, for the spirit of Cervantes is a Janus, which with one face laughs and with the other weeps. Son of the Renaissance, Cervantes had all that vigorous curiosity and joy of life which we find in that epoch when there was a bloom on the modern world. All the privations, all the sufferings and disappointments of his life, could not kill in him his delight in the beauty of nature and the romance of discovery. The contrast is characteristic of Spain with its brilliant sunlit spaces and its cavernous shadows. Unamuno peers deeply into the shadows, leaving us above. He descends with the lonely knight into the cave of Montesinos, where he may learn all the secrets of the world of fantasy. In defending the knight he awakens in himself an intense spiritual urge which enables him to combat the deadening forces of rationalism that have been oppressing the world for the past half century.

Unamuno's greatest work, *The Tragic Sense of Life*, the continuation of *The Life of Don Quixote and Sancho*, is a long monologue on the subject of death. His central idea is that man is all the more man—that is to say, the more divine—the greater capacity he has for suffering. And because he sees us all plunged in materialism, with our eyes turned away from death, he preaches unceasingly his gospel of the Middle Ages and Don Quixote. If *The Life of Don Quixote and Sancho* is, as Aubrey Bell called it, a kind of lay sermon engrafted on the text of *Don Quixote* with parallels from the life of Ignatius of Loyola, *The Tragic Sense of Life* is our

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author's attempt to construct a systematic treatise on philosophy. Rather than a methodical treatise, however, it is the passionate autobiography of a soul in anguish. It should be considered an appendage to Unamuno's poetry, especially to the cosmic poem *Aldebarán* and *The Christ of Velázquez*. Christ is for Unamuno not the dead Christ, but the Christ of Pascal who will live in a passion of suffering to the end of the world. Unamuno has summed up his Dostoevskian message in his greatest sonnet, *Siémbrete* (Sow yourself), with its lines:

You, as you pass, your very self must sow,
Not looking back, not looking on death's strife,
Lest the past weigh upon the path to go.

He finds the proof of immortality less in reason than in his fierce longing for immortality—"my longing to live and to live forever . . . is not a necessity of reason but a need of the spirit that makes us believe in God; I wish God to exist; I need the immortality of my soul." At the end of the *Tragic Sense*, the author evidently was conscious that he had failed to compose a system of philosophy, for he refers to it as *estos ensayos* (these essays). That statement gives us a clue not only to the personality of Unamuno, but to that of his companions of the Generation of 1898. In the last sixty years of troubled Spanish history, some of the most striking utterances by Spanish thinkers have been in the essay form. The *ensayo* has been the most significant literary form because it embodies concisely and dramatically the dominant ideas of the day. Sometimes it may be a *cri de cœur*, a passionate appeal by a prophet to his people. Modern Spanish history has had a number of these dramatic essays which, in their day, summed up the thoughts that seethed in the minds of the thinking minority. Before Ganivet committed suicide in the year of Spain's disaster, he poured out his soul in such an essay, the *Idearium*, following that motto he had adapted

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from Saint Augustine. Rafael Altamira's book *Psicología del pueblo español*, which was in the nature of an essay written at white heat during the War of 1898 and published in 1902, crystallized the two opposite movements that emerged from the Disaster: one that was pessimistic and tried to prove that Spaniards were lacking in the essentials necessary for adapting themselves to modern civilization, the other that reacted against the pessimistic view and turned with confidence to the task of introducing a progressive spirit into the country. Unamuno became the great master of the dramatic essay, and he used it as a means for expressing his own philosophy, his Quixotic self-communings. The literary qualities of Unamuno as novelist and dramatist that fail to achieve complete success in the novels *Niebla* and *Abel Sánchez*, or the dramas *El Otro* and *Hermano Juan*, become more deeply significant when we discover them in the many volumes of essays and the soliloquies. In the essays we feel that he is as much at his ease as Socrates was in the streets of Athens. So eager is his mind, so keen and persistent his curiosity, that we see him forever in our mind's eye, gesticulating, questioning, warning, laying down the law to all and sundry. As Ortega y Gasset said of him, the moment he appears in company he installs his ego just as a feudal baron plants his standard in the middle of the field. As he was tireless in his excursions through the whole of modern and ancient thought, he enriched his personality by his eagerness to absorb new ideas and impressions.

Many of the essays are random commentaries on incidents in his gospel *Don Quixote*. Some of them, written in 1895, ten years before the publication of *The Life of Don Quixote and Sancho*, are of interest to devotees because they are rough sketches of themes that Unamuno would in time treat more amply in larger works. Of particular significance is the essay "Don Quixote and Bolívar," in which he calls the Liberator one of the most faithful adepts of Quixotism,

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and quotes a remark to his doctor when he was dying. "Who," Bolívar asked, "were the three greatest fools the world had ever known?" When the doctor shook his head, Bolívar replied: "The three greatest fools of History have been Jesus Christ, Don Quixote . . . and me." So thrilled was Unamuno by this remark of Bolívar that he resolved to incorporate in a later edition of *The Life of Don Quixote and Sancho* a selection of parallels from the life of the Liberator, just as he had done for Bolívar's fellow Basque, Saint Ignatius of Loyola. The parallel between Bolívar and Don Quixote was a close one, for if the Don's shy courtship of the rustic Aldonza Lorenzo launched him into his craze for chivalry, certainly Bolívar's despair at the death of his wife María drove him at once into a whirlwind of active, restless journeying that lasted three years, during which time he tried to drown his sorrow in a series of violent and ephemeral love affairs. Then, at last, calm came when he visualized the crusade for the liberty of his country. And so the shy and gentle María Teresa Rodríguez, the Spanish girl whom he had married in Bilbao in 1801, the Aldonza Lorenzo of that American Don Quixote, by her death became transfigured into Dulcinea, that is to say, into Glory.

On another occasion during his momentary disillusion Bolívar reminds us of the depressed Don Quixote at the end of Part Two. It was in 1824 when he wrote to the Marquis of Toro: "You must understand, my dear Marquis, that my deep depression springs from my philosophy, and because I am more of a philosopher in prosperity than in misfortune. I say this in order that you may not think that my affairs go badly." Unamuno's comment is that Bolívar like all great men felt metaphysical anguish, hearing the dread voice that rises in the demi-silence of eternity saying, "Wherefore all this?" We must remember that Bolívar had read Rousseau, the patriarch of pessimism, and that the two volumes of the *Contrat social* out of Napoleon's library had been presented

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to the *Liberator* by Robert Wilson, the English general. Whereas Don Quixote read books of chivalry, Bolívar read Rousseau. Each one of Unamuno's essays illustrates the unceasing struggle between his personality as a writer and his personality as a man. More than once he has said: "I cannot live without discussion or contradictions, and when nobody outside discusses with me, or contradicts me, I invent someone within myself who does it." His brain was like a parliament in permanent session, and, as a critic has said, he could say of himself, in the words of Alfred de Vigny: "*Je ne suis pas toujours de mon opinion.*" And now, as a final illustration of his agonistic personality, I shall quote from a characteristic letter I received from him as long ago as October 1921:

"I wish I could write to you with peace and serenity of mind, but it is impossible. The affairs of this Spain of mine have reached such a critical state that we who feel acutely all the shame that has come upon our country cannot dedicate ourselves to higher things. We cannot breathe in the aether of pure, speculative contemplation because we are stifled by the dust of battle. For some time past I have not written a single line of art or philosophy. I have to write articles of battle. Who knows—perhaps those articles will in the end become more permanent than all the rest! The Gospels were written for an occasion, and the Epistles of Saint Paul were really newspaper articles. I do not know when I shall rest; perhaps never. And that will be for the best, for to rest is to die. One must leave oneself in the hands of God—that He may carry us whither he destines us: Who knows? 'Life is a dream,' said Calderón. 'We are such stuff as dreams are made on,' said Shakespeare. 'Dream of a shadow,' said Pindar. And I say that we are a dream of God. God is dreaming us and woe to that day when He awakes! God is dreaming. It is better not to think of that, but continue to dream that God is dreaming. Farewell."

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The majority of simple believers like to imagine the next life as a state of peace and contemplation, a kind of fusion of past and future, a recollection of hope in an everlasting present. Unamuno hated to think of eternal peace, and he quotes the example of Dante, who alone, created in all its details a society of hell, purgatory, and paradise.

WALTER STARKIE

I

*The Life of Don Quixote
and Sancho
according to Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra
explained and commented upon by
Miguel de Unamuno*

Foreword to the Second Edition [1914]

THE FIRST EDITION of this work appeared in 1905, the third centenary of the first publication of *Don Quixote*; the coincidence was not intentional, nor was it indeed a work designed to celebrate a centenary.

The edition was plagued, through my own fault, not only with typographical errors, but with errors and blunders in my original manuscript, all of which I have attempted to correct in this second edition.

I considered prefacing this book with my essay "On the Reading and Interpretation of *Don Quixote*" published the same year of 1905 in the April number of *La España Moderna*, but I gave up the idea in view of the fact that this entire book is nothing but the execution of the program announced in that essay. My thesis was this: let us leave to savants, critics, and historians the meritorious and most useful task of investigating what meaning *Don Quixote* might have had in its time and in its setting, as well as what Cervantes sought to express and what he did express; the rest of us should accordingly be left free to take his immortal work as something eternal, outside any epoch, even any country, and to expound whatever its reading suggests to us. And I maintained that by now *Don Quixote* belongs to everyone, to each one of its readers, and that everyone can and should interpret it mystically, so to speak, in the same way that the Bible is usually interpreted.

But if I gave up the idea of placing the aforementioned essay at the beginning of this second edition, such is not the case as regards the essay titled "The Sepulcher of Don

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Quixote" which I published in the February 1906 issue of the same review, *La España Moderna*.

Of all my works the present book is the one to have achieved most favor with the public which reads me, as is proved by this second edition, and by its appearance in Italian under the title *Commento al Don Chisciotte*, translated by G. Beccari and issued in the series "Cultura dell' anima," edited by Giovanni Papini and published by R. Carabba at Lanciano. Meanwhile, a French version is in preparation.

I am pleased to think that the better fortune of this work in comparison to all my others is due in some measure to the fact that it is a free and personal exegesis of *Don Quixote*, in which I do not pretend to discover the meaning Cervantes aimed to impart to his work, but only the meaning which I myself give it. Nor is my book an erudite historical study. I do not believe I need repeat that I consider myself more Quixotist than Cervantist, and that I attempt to free Don Quixote from Cervantes himself, permitting myself on occasion to go so far as to disagree with the manner in which Cervantes understood and dealt with his two heroes, especially with Sancho. Sancho imposed himself upon Cervantes, despite his creator. The fact is, I believe that characters of fiction possess a life of their own within the mind of the author who creates them, as well as a certain autonomy, and that they obey an intimate logic of which the author himself is not altogether conscious. Any reader who desires further clarification on this head and is not scandalized by the suggestion that we can understand Don Quixote and Sancho better than Cervantes, who created them (or, more correctly, extracted them from the spiritual innards of his country), should have recourse to the essay I first mentioned.

Salamanca, January, 1913

Foreword to the Third Edition [1928]

THIS EDITION—the third—of my *Life of Don Quixote and Sancho*, which forms part of my Complete Works, does not differ in any way from the second, in which numerous typographical errors, as well as errors in the original, were corrected; the latter were the offspring of my hasty improvisation, and had infested the first edition, published in 1905—twenty-three years ago now—which coincided by chance, and not by intention, with the celebration of the third centenary of the first publication of *Don Quixote*, it being no part of my purpose to create a “centenary” work.

As I correct the proofs of this new edition here, in my frontier exile, I have been tempted more than once to add something to the text or modify it, but I have abstained from so doing in the thought that any addition or modification would more suitably fit in some other work. Such additions arise from my quixotesque experience during four years of expatriation from my poor enslaved Spain. Especially as I reread my commentary on the adventure of the freeing of the galley slaves, I thought of adding a few paragraphs explaining how the galley slaves stoned Don Quixote because they did not want to have their chains taken away but wanted to be put into new chains and be made into troopers of the Holy Brotherhood, as I learned at the Athenaeum in Madrid from certain youths who call themselves intellectuals of a select minority.

In the interim, four translations of my book have been published: two in Italian, one in German, and another in English. The author of this last-mentioned and excellent

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translation, Professor Homer P. Earle, of the University of California, was kind enough to call my attention to the fact that in a certain passage I put into Sancho's mouth words that—in the Cervantine text—belong in the mouth of Samson Carrasco, and he asked me if he should correct or suppress the passage, or add a note of defense against possible objections from would-be erudite critics. I could have referred him to my essay "On the Reading and Interpretation of *Don Quixote*," published for the first time in the April 1905 number of the review *La España Moderna*, where I clearly revealed my bent and purpose to be that of a commentator—the mystics commented upon Christian Holy Writ in much the same manner—and I could have told him that I leave to savants, literary critics, and historical investigators the meritorious and most useful task of prying into the meaning *Don Quixote* might have had in its time and in its setting as well as what Cervantes sought to express and what he did express. But I preferred to offer him another explanation, and this is it:

In the prologue to *Don Quixote*—which, like all prologues, including the present one, is merely literature—Cervantes reveals to us that he found the narrative concerning the heroic life of the Knight of the Sad Countenance among some Arabic papers of one Cide Hamete Benengeli. A profound revelation, this, in which the good Cervantes—and so good!—discloses what we might call the objectivity, the existence (*ex-istere* means "to be outside") of *Don Quixote* and Sancho and his entire cast of characters outside the novelist's fiction and beyond it. For my part, I believe that Cide Hamete Benengeli was no Arab but a Jew, a Moroccan Jew, and that he did not make up the story either. In any case, this Arabic text of Cide Hamete Benengeli is in my possession. And though I have forgotten all the tiny bit of Arabic taught me by Señor Cordera at the University of Madrid—and he gave me the prize in the subject!—I can

Forewords

still read it fluently, and in this text I have discovered that as regards the passage cited by Professor Earle it was Cervantes who misread the text, so that my interpretation, and not his, is the faithful one. I believe, therefore, that I am safe from all professional or professorial objections and criticism.

I also believe that I need not enlarge, in this simple foreword, on a doctrine which I have so often explained, the nature of historical reality, all the more so inasmuch as I am preparing a work on Quixotism in which I strive to clarify the difference between *ser* [to be], *estar* [to be, ephemerally], and *existir* [to exist]. And Don Quixote and Sancho *are*—not only *were*—as independent of Cervantes' poetic invention as Augusto Pérez is independent of my invention in *Niebla*—Pérez, to whom I had thought to have given life in order then to put him to death, against which he, justifiably, protested.

And now, kind reader, until we meet again.

MIGUEL DE UNAMUNO

*In exile at Hendaye, in my native Basque country
and on the very frontier of my Spain, May 1928*

Foreword to the Fourth Edition [1931]

I HAVE NOTHING to add to the foreword of the third edition on correcting proofs for the fourth.

M. DE U.

Salamanca, end of December, 1930

The Sepulcher of Don Quixote

YOU ASK ME, my good friend, if I know how to incite delirium, vertigo, any madness whatsoever, among these orderly and placid masses that are born, eat, sleep, reproduce themselves, and die. Is there no way, you ask, to introduce a new epidemic of flagellants, or of convulsionaries? And you speak of the millennium.

Like you, I frequently feel nostalgia for the Middle Ages. Like you, I would like to live among the spasms of the millennium. If we ever succeeded in spreading the belief that on a certain day, say on the 2nd of May, 1908, the centenary of our cry of independence, Spain would end for ever; that on this day we would be distributed like lambs, then I think that the 3rd of May of that year would be the greatest day in our history, the dawn of a new life.

This is a wretched pass we are come to, sheer wretchedness. Nobody cares about anything. And when anyone—alone, naturally—attempts to agitate some problem or some question, it is assumed he is moved by pecuniary interest or zeal for notoriety or an impulse to be different.

Not even madness is understood here any longer. They go so far as to say and think that a madman must have a hidden reason or an economic motivation for being mad. The "reason of unreason" has become a fact for these wretches. If Our Lord Don Quixote were to rise from the dead and return to this Spain, they would seek out the ulterior motives behind his noble extravagance. If anyone denounces an abuse, prosecutes injustice, lashes out at vulgarity, the slaves ask themselves: What is he looking

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for here? What is he after? Sometimes they think and say he does it to get his mouth stopped with gold; again, that he is driven by the base sentiments and low passions of a vengeful or envious man; again, that he does it merely to make a noise and get himself talked about, from vanity and conceit; again, that he does it to amuse himself and pass the time, for sport. What a shame that so few have a taste for such sports!

Only gaze around. In the face of any act of generosity, of heroism, of madness, this crowd of stupid university graduates, curates, and barbers of today think only of asking themselves: why does he do it? And as soon as they think they have discovered the reason for the act—whether or not it be what they suppose—they cry “Bah!” and point out how it was done for this or that reason. Once an act is shown to have a reason for being, and they discover what the reason is, the act loses all its value. And that’s the good that logic does them, piggish logic.

To understand is to forgive, it is said. And those wretches need to understand so they can pardon the fact that they are humiliated, that their wretchedness is flung in their face by word or deed, without a by-your-leave.

They have gone so far as to ask themselves stupidly why God made the world, and then have answered themselves: for his own glory! And they have fallen back into their self-satisfied presumption, as if they, great boors that they are, knew anything about the glory of God.

Things were made first, and then their wherefore. Let a new idea be proffered, any one whatever, on any theme, and it will reveal its purpose.

Sometimes, when I expound some project, something I believe should be done, there is always some one to ask: “And afterwards?” Such questions merely deserve another question by way of answer: “Afterwards?” demands an “And before?”

The Sepulcher

There is no future; there never is any future. What is known as the future is one of the greatest of lies. The true future is today. What will become of us tomorrow? There is no tomorrow! What is happening to us today, right now? That is the only question.

And as regards today, all these wretches are quite satisfied merely because they exist today, and for them it is enough to exist. Existence, pure and naked existence, fills up their entire soul. They do not feel that there is anything more than merely existing.

But, do they exist? Do they really exist? I think not. For if they existed, if they really existed, they would suffer from existing and they would not be content with it. If they truly existed in time and space, they would suffer from not existing in eternity and infinity. And this suffering, this passion, which is no more than the passion of God in us, God himself, who suffers in us because He feels himself a prisoner in our infinitude and in our temporality, this divine suffering would make them break all these mean chains of logic with which they try to bind their mean memories to their mean hopes, the illusion of their past to the illusion of their future.

"Why does he do that?" Did Sancho Panza ever ask why Don Quixote did the things he did?

And to come back to the point, to your question, to your preoccupation: with what collective madness might we imbue these poor masses? With what delirium?

You yourself have come close to the solution in one of those letters in which you assail me with questions. You wrote: "Don't you believe that some new crusade might be attempted?"

All right, then, I do. I believe we might attempt the holy crusade of going to rescue the Sepulcher of Don Quixote from the hands of the university graduates, curates, barbers, dukes, and canons who occupy it. I believe we might under-

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take a holy crusade to redeem the Sepulcher of the Knight of Madness from the power of the champions of Reason.

They will defend, as is only natural, their usurpation, and they will strive to prove, with numerous and studied arguments, their right to the custody of our Sepulcher. They stand guard over it so that the Knight may not rise from the dead.

These arguments must be answered by insults, showers of stones, passionate yells, lance thrusts. There must be no reasoning with them. If you attempt to reason against their reasons you are lost.

If they ask you, as is their custom, about your right to reclaim the Sepulcher, answer nothing; let them find out later. Later . . . perhaps when neither you nor they any longer exist, at least in this world of appearances.

And this holy crusade boasts of a great advantage over those other holy crusades which gave birth to a new life in this old world. The fervent crusaders of those days knew where lay the Sepulcher of Christ, they knew where it was said to be, while our crusaders will not know where the Sepulcher of Don Quixote lies. It must be sought in the battle to save it.

Your quixotic madness has more than once driven you to speak to me of quixotism as of a new religion. And I must tell you that the new religion of which you speak and which you offer me, if it were to come into existence, would boast two unique elements of superiority. One is that its founder, its prophet, Don Quixote—not Cervantes, of course—was not, in all certainty, a real man, a man of flesh and blood, but more likely pure fiction, as far as we know. Its other element of superiority is that its prophet was ridiculous, the fair game and laughingstock of all the world.

The courage we most lack is simply the courage of standing up to ridicule. Ridicule is the weapon used by all the wretched graduates, barbers, curates, canons, and dukes

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who keep the Sepulcher of the Knight of Madness hidden: of the Knight who caused everyone to laugh, but who never made a single joke. His soul was too great to give birth to jests. He made people laugh with his seriousness.

Begin, then, my friend, to play the part of Peter the Hermit, and call people to join you, to join us, so that we may set out to rescue that Sepulcher whose whereabouts is unknown to us.

You will see how, as soon as the holy squadron sets out, a new star will appear in the sky, a star visible only to the crusaders, a clear, shining star, which will intone a new song in this long night enveloping us, and how the star will set out as soon as the squadron of crusaders sets out, and how as soon as they have triumphed in their crusade, or as soon as they have all succumbed—which is perhaps the only deception in real triumph—the star will fall from the sky: and where it falls that will be where the Sepulcher is. The Sepulcher is where the squadron dies.

And there where the Sepulcher is, there also is the cradle, there is the nest. And from there the clear and resplendent star will once more rise, heavenwards.

No more questions, my friend. When you force me to speak of these matters you force me to plumb the depths of a soul suffering from the coarseness that afflicts me on every side, spattered by the mud of lies that splash all of us, lacerated by the cowardice all around us; you force me to bring up from the depths of my soul visions without reason, concepts without logic, things with a meaning that not even I can decipher or ever want to ascertain.

“What do you mean by that?” you ask me often. And I reply: “Do I myself know?”

No, my good friend, no! The meaning of many of the ideas that occur to me and that I confide to you is not clear even to me; at least, I don’t know what they mean. There is someone within me who dictates them to me, who utters

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them to me. I obey and do not delve into myself to search out his face nor ask his name. I only know that if I were to see his face and he were to tell me his name, I would die so that he might live on.

To my shame, I must admit that I have on occasion invented fictional beings, characters in novels, for the purpose of putting in their mouths words I did not dare put in my own, and to make them say as if in jest something I took very seriously.

You know me, and you know very well how far I am from purposely seeking out paradoxes, extravagances, or peculiarities, whatever certain boors may think. You and I, my good friend, my only absolute friend, have often spoken together of madness and what it is, and we have commented on Ibsen's Brand, the son of Kierkegaard, and of how the madman is only he who is alone. And we have agreed that any madness whatsoever ceases to be so as soon as it becomes collective, as soon as it is the madness of an entire people, even perhaps of the entire human race. As soon as an hallucination becomes collective, as soon as it becomes popular, it becomes "social," it ceases to be an hallucination and is converted into a reality, into something outside of every one of those who share it. And you and I agree that what must be done is to bring to the masses, to the people, to our Spanish people, some type of madness, the madness of any one of its members who is mad, but really mad, not just mad on little lies. Mad, not foolish.

You and I, my good friend, have been scandalized by what is known here as fanaticism, but which, to our misfortune, is no such thing. No—nothing that is regulated and contained and channeled and directed by graduates, curates, barbers, canons, and dukes is fanaticism. Nothing that flies a banner proclaiming logical formulas, nothing that has a program, nothing that offers a plan for tomorrow which an orator can expound in a methodical fashion, is fanaticism.

The Sepulcher

Once—do you remember it?—we saw nine or ten young men gather behind a youth who was saying: "Let's commit an outrage!" That is what you and I want: for the people to gather and cry out: "Let's commit an outrage!" and then set to it. And if any university graduate, barber, curate canon, or duke holds them back to say: "My sons! This is all very well. I see that you are bursting with heroism, filled with a holy indignation. I shall go along with you. But before we all set out, and I among you, to commit this outrage, don't you think we should agree on the outrage we plan to commit? What shall the outrage be?"—if any one of those scoundrels should hold them back to tell them any such thing, they should knock him down on the spot and pass over him, all together, stamping on him—and the holy outrage will have begun.

Do you not believe, my friend, that there are many solitary souls whose hearts demand some outrage, something to make them burst? Go out and see, then, if you can bring them together and form a squadron, so that we may all set out—for I shall go with them behind you—to redeem the Sepulcher of Don Quixote, whose location, thanks be to God, we do not know. The clear and resplendent star will tell us in good time.

"And may not the truth be," you ask me in moments of discouragement, when you are *beside* your true self, "may not the truth be that when we set out and think we are advancing through fields and over lands, we are really going in circles around the same fixed point?" But in that case the star, too, is fixed, immovable over our heads, and the Sepulcher lies within us. And then the star will fall, but it will fall so as to bury itself within our souls. And our souls will become light, and they will fuse together into the clear and resplendent star, which will rise again, more resplendent than ever, changed into a sun, a sun of eternal melody, illuminating the sky above the redeemed fatherland.

Forward, then. And watch out that no graduates, barbers,

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curates, canons, or dukes disguised as Sanchos gain admittance to the ranks of the holy squadron. No matter if they ask you for islands; what you must do is to expel them as soon as they ask for the itinerary of the march, as soon as they talk to you of a program, as soon as they whisper in your ear, maliciously, asking for the Sepulcher's whereabouts. Follow the star. And do as the Knight did: redress whatever wrong comes your way. Do now what must be done now and do here what must be done here.

Set forth! They demand to know where? The star will make it clear: to the Sepulcher! What will we do on the road as we advance? What shall we do? We shall do battle! And how shall we battle?

How? When you encounter a liar, shout in his face "Liar!" And press forward! When you encounter a thief, shout "Thief!" and press forward! When you encounter a man who talks nonsense, one to whom the crowd listens openmouthed, shout "Idiots!" And press forward! Always press forward!

"Do you think that is the way," a friend of ours who wants to be a crusader asks me, "do you think that is the way to wipe out falsehood, thievery, nonsense from the world?" Who says we can't? The most wretched of all wretchedness, the most repugnant and pestilential scheming of cowardice, consists in saying that nothing is gained by denouncing a thief since others will continue stealing, that nothing is gained by shouting "Fool!" in a fool's face since such a gesture will not reduce the amount of foolishness in the world.

Yes, it must be repeated a thousand and one times: if once, if one single time, one single liar were totally and forever done away with, the lie would be done away with once and for all time.

Set forth, then! And expel from the sacred squadron all those who set themselves to studying the cadence to be

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followed in the march, its beat and its rhythm. Above all, throw out all those who talk forever of rhythm. They would convert the squadron into a quadrille, the march into a dance. Throw them out! Let them go elsewhere to sing their song to the flesh.

Those who would convert your squadron into a dance quadrille call themselves and each other poets. They are nothing of the sort. They are anything but poets. They set out for the Sepulcher only through curiosity over what it is like, in search of a new sensation perhaps, or to amuse themselves on the way. Throw them out!

These are the ones who, with their bohemian indulgence, help to perpetuate the cowardice and falsehood and wretchedness that destroy us. When they preach liberty, they have only one kind in mind: the right to dispose of their neighbor's wife. With them everything is a matter of sensuality: they are enamored sensually even of ideas, the great ideas. They are incapable of marrying a great and pure idea and raising a family with it. The most they can do with ideas is to cohabit with them. They take them as mistresses—even for just a night. Throw them out!

If someone wants to pick a flower, some little flower that smiles nearby, let him pick it, but quickly, without stopping, and let him follow the squadron, whose leader meanwhile has not let his eye wander from the clear and resplendent star. If the flower-picker puts the flower in the breastplate of his armor, not so that he can see it but so that it may be seen—throw him out! Let him go, with his flower in his buttonhole, to dance somewhere else.

Look, friend: if you would accomplish your mission and serve your country, you must make yourself odious to the sensitive lads who see the universe through the eyes of their girl friends. Or even worse. Your words should sound strident and bitter to their ears.

The squadron must halt only at night, beside a wood or

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in the shelter of a mountain. There it can pitch its tents, and the crusaders can wash their feet and sup on what their wives prepare them; then they can get them with child, kiss them good night, and sleep till the next day's march. When anyone dies, they can leave him beside the highway, shrouded in his armor, at the mercy of the crows. The task of burying the dead should be left to the dead.

If anyone should attempt, in the course of the march, to play a fife or flageolet or shawm or guitar or whatever, break his instrument and oust him from the ranks, for he hinders the others from hearing the song of the star. Even worse, he does not hear it himself. And he who does not hear the song of heaven should not go in search of the Knight's Sepulcher.

The dancers will speak to you of poetry. Pay them no heed. Anyone who plays on his syringe—for the "syrinx" or shepherd's pipe is just that and no more—beneath the heavens, without listening to the music of the spheres, does not deserve to be heard. He cannot know the abysmal poetry of fanaticism, the immense poetry of empty temples, without lights, without giltwork, without statues, without pomp, without coats of arms, without any of what they call art. Four blank walls and a wooden roof: any corral whatever.

Oust from the squadron all the dancers to the syringe. Oust them before they desert you for a plate of beans. They are cynical philosophers, indulgent, good chaps who understand everything and pardon everything. For whoever understands everything does not understand anything, and whoever pardons everything pardons nothing. Such a person has no scruple about selling himself. Since they live in two worlds they can preserve their liberty in the other world and enslave themselves in this one. They are at one and the same time aesthetes, and followers of Pérez or López, of Peter or Paul, or whoever.

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It is some time since it was said that hunger and love were the two wellsprings of human life. Of low life, they mean, of terrestrial life. The dancers dance only for hunger or for love; hunger of the flesh, and love of the flesh also. Oust them from your squadron, so that there in some meadow they may glut themselves with dancing while one of them plays the syringe, another claps hands, and a third sings to a plate of beans or the thighs of this season's love. Let them invent new pirouettes, new capers, new steps for the rigadoun.

And if someone comes to you to say that he knows how to throw up a bridge and that the time may come when his knowledge may serve to cross a river: Throw him out! Throw out the engineers! Rivers should be forded or swum across, even though half the crusaders drown. Let the engineer go build his bridges somewhere else, some place where they are needed. In the search for the Sepulcher, faith is bridge enough.

* * *

If you want to fulfill your vocation, my good friend, put little faith in art, put little faith in science, at least what are called art and science but are no more than paltry imitations of true art and science. Let faith suffice. Your faith will be your art, your faith will serve as science.

More than once I have doubted your ability to carry out your task when I noted the care with which you write your letters. They reveal—too often—erasures, emendations, corrections, syringings. There is no violent spurting, no jet that would blow off the stopper. More than once your letters have degenerated into literature, into that piggish literature which is the natural ally to all slaveries and wretchedness. The enslavers know full well that while the slave is singing to liberty he is consoled in his slavery and does not think of breaking his chains.

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But then I recover my hope and faith in you again when beneath your hurried, improvised, reckless, cacophonous words I perceive the trembling voice gripped by fever. There are even times when it cannot surely be said that the words are in any known language: let each man translate them into his own.

Try to live in a constant vertigo of passion, dominated by any passion whatsoever. Only passionate men create works that are truly enduring and fertile. Whenever you hear of someone who is impeccable, in any of the senses of this stupid word, flee his company; especially if he is an artist. Just as the greatest fool is the man who has never in his life committed an act of folly or spoken like a fool, just so the least poetic artist, the most anti-poetic—and among artists anti-poetic natures abound—is the artist who is impeccable, the artist awarded the crown of laurel, of cardboard, of impeccability, by the dancers of the syringe.

You are consumed, my poor friend, by an incessant fever, a thirst for unsoundable and shoreless seas, a hunger for universes, a longing for eternity. You suffer from reason. And you do not know what it is you want. And now, now you want to repair to the Sepulcher of the Knight of Madness and dissolve in tears, burn with fever, die of the thirst for oceans and the hunger for universes and the longing for eternity.

Start out, alone. All other solitary men will walk at your side, even though you do not see them. Each one will think he is alone, but together you will form a holy battalion, the battalion of the sacred, endless crusade.

You do not know, my good friend, how all solitary men, without knowing one another, without looking into one another's faces, without knowing one another's names, march together and lend each other support. The others talk about one another, shake hands, exchange congratulations, praise each other and run each other down, gossip among

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themselves, and then go off their separate ways. And thus they flee the Sepulcher.

You do not belong to the coterie, but to the ranks of the free crusaders. And yet, why do you loll about the gate and listen to the cackling? No, my friend, no! Whenever you pass near a refuge for vagabonds, stop your ears, speak your piece, and press on, toward the Sepulcher. And let all your thirst, and hunger, and longing, and all your love, vibrate in what you say.

If you prefer to live off them, live for them. But then, my poor friend, you will have died.

I remember the unhappy letter you wrote me when you were about to succumb, to reform, to enter the confraternity. I saw then how your solitude weighed upon you, when solitude should be your consolation and strength.

You had reached the most desperate, the most desolate state of all; you had come to the edge of the precipice of your own perdition; you went so far as to doubt your own solitude, you went so far as to believe that you were in company. "Might it not be mere caviling," you wrote me, "the fruit of arrogance, of petulance, of pride, perhaps of madness, to think myself alone? For when I am calm I realize that I am accompanied, and my hand is shaken cordially, I hear encouraging voices, sympathetic words, all manner of gestures to indicate I am far from alone." And more in the same vein. And I saw you were deceived, and lost; I saw you fleeing from the Sepulcher.

No, you do not deceive yourself in the throes of your fever, in your agonies of thirst, in the anguish of your hunger; you are alone, eternally alone. You are bitten not only by the bites you feel, the bites that feel like bites, but also by the bites that feel like kisses. They hiss who applaud you, and those who shout "Forward!" mean to detain you on your way to the Sepulcher. Stop your ears. And above all cure yourself of a terrible affliction which, for all that

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you shake it off, will come back with the obstinacy of a gad-fly: cure yourself of the affliction of caring how you appear to others. Concern yourself only with how you appear before God, concern yourself only with the idea that God may have of you.

You are alone, much more alone than you imagine; and even then you are still not on the road to absolute, complete, true solitude. Absolute, complete, true solitude consists in not even being with yourself. And you will not be really, completely, and absolutely alone until you strip yourself of yourself, beside the Sepulcher. Holy Solitude!

* * *

All this I told my friend, and he answered with a long letter, filled with furious dismay, and containing these words:

“All that you tell me is very well, it’s quite all right, it’s not bad. But don’t you think that instead of going to look for the Sepulcher of *Don Quixote*, to rescue it from graduates, curates, barbers, canons, and dukes, we should go look for the Sepulcher of God, and redeem it from the believers and unbelievers, the atheists and deists now occupying it, and wait there, crying out in supreme despair, dissolving our hearts in tears, until God resuscitates us and saves us from nothingness?”