

## **Miguel de Unamuno and William James, el gran pensador yanqui**

by Mariana Alessandri, Ph.D

### **English Abstract**

This essay makes the case for reading Spanish philosopher Miguel de Unamuno as a Latin American pragmatist. The thought of William James—Unamuno’s contemporary—is sprinkled throughout Unamuno’s work beginning in 1902, when he started reading James. Focusing on the years between 1902-1905, I highlight the pragmatic elements in Unamuno’s work. The first part of the paper explains why I read Unamuno as not just a Hispanic but also as a Latin-American thinker, and the second part traces Unamuno’s reading of James. We know that Unamuno read part or all of the following four works: *The Will to Believe*, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, *Pragmatism*, and *the Principles of Psychology*. The final section of the essay analyzes Unamuno’s ethical religion of Quijotismo for its Jamesian pragmatic elements. James is present in many of Unamuno’s descriptions of Quijote, as well as in Unamuno’s own justification for believing in Quijote as a God-figure.

### **Resumen en español**

Este ensaio argumenta a favor de uma leitura do filósofo espanhol Miguel de Unamuno como pragmatista latino-americano. O pensamento de William James—contemporâneo de Unamuno—aparece nos textos de Unamuno a partir de 1902, quando começou a ler James. Ressaltamos os elementos pragmatistas na obra de Unamuno, principalmente nos anos 1902-1905. A primeira parte do ensaio explica porque lemos Unamuno como um pensador latino-americano e não só hispano, e a segunda segue a leitura que Unamuno fez de James. Sabemos que Unamuno leu parcial ou completamente quatro livros de James: *The Will to Believe*, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, *Pragmatism* e *Principles of Psychology*. A última parte analisa os elementos pragmatistas Jamesianos no Quijotismo, a religião ética de Unamuno. James está presente em muitas das descrições que Unamuno faz do Quixote, e também na justificativa que Unamuno oferece para crer no Quijote como um deus ou figura divina.

### **Resumo em português**

En este ensayo, leo al filósofo español, Miguel de Unamuno, como pragmatista latinoamericano. El pensamiento de William James—contemporáneo de Unamuno—está presente en el corpus de Unamuno a partir de 1902, cuando empezó a leer a James. Encuentro y explico los elementos pragmatistas en las obras de Unamuno durante los años 1902-1905. La primera parte del ensayo explica porque interpreto a Unamuno no solo como un pensador hispano, pero también como un pensador latinoamericano, y la segunda parte sigue la lectura que Unamuno hizo de James. Sabemos que Unamuno leyó parcial o completamente cuatro libros de James: *The Will*

to Believe, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, *Pragmatism* y *The Principles of Psychology*. La parte final del ensayo analiza los elementos pragmatistas Jamesianos del “Quijotismo”, la religión ética de Unamuno. Se encuentra a James en muchas de las descripciones del Quijote por parte de Unamuno, e incluso en la justificación de Unamuno para creer en el Quijote como un dios o figura divina.

---

The question concerning the influence of William James on the thought and writings of Miguel de Unamuno cannot be answered with certainty, but the most recent scholarship suggests that James indeed influenced Unamuno’s work. This question has been asked principally by two Spanish thinkers: Pelayo Hipolito Fernandez in 1961, and Izaskun Martínez Martín forty years later.[1] Using the same data, these two scholars come to vastly incompatible conclusions. Whereas Fernandez insists that there are only “pragmatic parallels” between Unamuno and James, Martínez believes that Jamesian Pragmatism did in fact influence Unamuno’s ideas. Instead of weighing in on this debate generally, my scope here is limited to Unamuno’s description of *Quijotismo* as he describes it in *La Vida de Don Quixote y Sancho*, written in 1904 and published in 1905. [2] I believe that James’s ideas influenced the writing of this book, not primarily because the book sounds suspiciously Jamesian, but because Unamuno’s early reading of James coincides with the writing of this book.[3]

Unamuno was one of the earliest non-English-speaking readers of James, and certainly one of the first Spaniards. He read James in the original English before the works were translated into Spanish.[4] By reading James in English and publishing works about him in Spain in the early turn of the century, Unamuno played a crucial role in interpreting Pragmatism for his Spanish audience. By telling his friends and colleagues about James through his correspondence, Unamuno was literally spreading Jamesian Pragmatism around the world. Unamuno found a kindred spirit in “el gran pensador yanqui” (“the great Yankee thinker”), and his admiration for James continued for the duration of his life.[5] My task in this essay is to draw attention to *Vida*’s Jamesian Pragmatic tone, first by detailing Unamuno’s public and published fascination with James between 1902-1905, and then by presenting *Vida*’s Jamesian Pragmatic elements. Although I do not claim that *Vida* is itself a work in Pragmatism nor that Unamuno is a Pragmatist, I do claim that certain themes in this book seem to have been inspired by James, and that Unamuno read James quite closely and understood his description of Pragmatism well.

## I. Unamuno’s Early Reading of James

We know that Unamuno read part or all of the following four works: *Principles of Psychology*[6] (1890), *The Will to Believe* (1897), *The Varieties of Religious Experience* [7] (1902), and *Pragmatism* (1907).[8] I concentrate on Unamuno’s public use of

James's thought primarily between 1902 and 1905 since he began to read James in 1902, wrote *Vida* in 1904, and published it in 1905.

Unamuno first wrote about James in letters and essays in 1902.[9] In total, from 1902-1904 Unamuno wrote seven essays and two letters (both to Uruguayan writer[10]) in which he either claimed to have been reading James, or directly quoted or paraphrased his work.[11] In an article from 1908 Unamuno announced that he was reading James's *Pragmatism*, which had only been published in 1907. The proximity between the book's publication and Unamuno's reading of it is indicative of Unamuno's attention to James. In other words, Unamuno was more or less "on the edge of his seat" throughout James's lifetime.[12] For the rest of his own life, Unamuno quoted and paraphrased the "despairing Christian,"[13] and in his correspondence continued to urge friends and colleagues to read James.[14]

Unamuno first mentioned James in July 1902 in an article titled "Ciudad y Campo," in which it is clear that Unamuno had read *Principles*. [15] In this article Unamuno repeated James's seemingly backward conclusion in *Principles* that our emotions are the products of our somatic functions, not the cause of them. In the following passage James explains this paradox: "Common-sense says, we lose our fortune, are sorry and weep; we meet a bear, are frightened and run; we are insulted by a rival, are angry and strike. The hypothesis here to be defended says that this order of sequence is incorrect, that the one mental state is not immediately induced by the other, that the bodily manifestations must first be interposed between, and that the more rational statement is that we feel sorry because we cry, angry because we strike, afraid because we tremble, and not that we cry, strike, or tremble, because we are sorry, angry, or fearful, as the case may be." [16] Unamuno applauds James for being paradoxical, and for resisting the common-sense interpretation of emotions as dictating somatic functions. Unamuno himself was quite fond of paradoxes and contradictions because he believed that a lived life (as opposed to a mere life of thought) was full of them. I imagine that Unamuno also appreciated James's fearlessness when it came to thinking "against the grain" of popular psychology.

If Unamuno was introduced to James through *Principles*, two other books that he read shortly afterward have a stronger presence in *Vida*. In 1902 Unamuno simultaneously read *The Will to Believe* and *Varieties*, which had just been published in that year. [17] The four essays from Unamuno's 1902 edition of *The Will to Believe* that he focuses on in print are "The Will to Believe," "Great Men and their Environment," "Is Life Worth Living?" and "The Sentiment of Rationality." Although he cites *The Will to Believe* more than *Varieties* during these four years, I believe that both books strongly influenced his writing of *Vida*. [18]

Months after "Ciudad y Campo," in December 1902 Unamuno published an essay titled "Sueño y Acción." He announced that James had given a beautiful lecture—"The Will to Believe"—in which James stated that the will to believe is the will to survive, and only the will to survive can bring us to heroic action. [19] In this essay

Unamuno echoes James's insistence on the connection between belief and action. In the following line which directly precedes his paraphrase of James, Unamuno uses the term "dream" to describe how strong faith leads to action: "They dream, and because they dream, they work." [20] Unamuno seems to have been impressed by James's description of the connection between the will to believe and action. We will see that in *Vida* Unamuno is as intent as James on linking belief to action.

On the last day of 1902 Unamuno wrote "Viejos y Jovenes" in which he performs a mental experiment where he imagines himself talking to a man who claims to believe that there are inhabitants on Saturn. Unamuno writes that he would ask this "believer" what would happen—if and how his life would change—if he found out that there in fact there were no inhabitants on Saturn. Unamuno continues, saying that if the man were to answer that nothing in his life would change if there were no inhabitants on Saturn, that he, Unamuno, would inform the man that he did not believe that Saturn had inhabitants. Unamuno credits James with convincing him that belief—to count as belief—must have practical consequences in the world. [21] Earlier in the article Unamuno announces that he was reading the "precious essays" in James's *The Will to Believe*, and mentions by name "Great Men and their Environment." In this essay James argues that geniuses shape their societies in addition to being shaped by them. As we will see, this Jamesian theme permeates Unamuno's interpretation of Don Quixote as a character who changes his world through faith. Although James primarily uses the term "genius" in this essay, Unamuno is right to infer that heroes also change the world around them.

I believe that Unamuno's emphasis on agony (*agon*, struggle) was not born in his reading of James. Unamuno's history with the theme of the tragic and the irreconcilable is long and has deep roots. When he found a similar strain in the thought of James, he naturally seized on it. In a 1903 article, "Glosas al Quijote," Unamuno identifies with James's emphasis on hardship—struggle—as a motivator for action. In his essay "Is Life Worth Living?" James writes: "The sovereign source of melancholy is repletion. Need and struggle are what excite and inspire us; our hour of triumph is what brings the void. Not the Jews of the captivity, but those of the days of Solomon's glory are those from whom the pessimistic utterances in our Bible come." [22] After announcing, in typical fashion, that he had been reading *The Will to Believe*, Unamuno quotes this passage in which James claims that the fountain of melancholy is not sorrow but repletion, fullness, or satiety, which Unamuno translates as *hartazgo*. Unamuno agrees with James that necessity and struggle are what really inspire us to act instead of completion or victory. [23] Our triumphs actually bring us emptiness and *tedium vitae*, says Unamuno, channeling James. [24] Predictably, Unamuno applauds James for thinking that men of action live in perpetual struggle, whereas men of contemplation live inactive lives, expecting the future to change itself. [25] One can begin to see why Unamuno found a kindred spirit in James: Unamuno read James's emphasis on struggle as a personal part of James's life that mirrored his own. [26]

Along the same lines, in the 1903 essay "Sobre el Fulanismo," Unamuno explains James's idea that it is curiosity and irritation that propel us to act. Unamuno

quotes a passage at length from “The Sentiment of Rationality” in which James applauds natural irritation, to Unamuno’s delight. The following is only a small fraction of what Unamuno translates from James: “It is of the utmost practical importance to an animal that he should have prevision of the qualities of the objects that surround him, and especially that he should not come to rest in presence of circumstances that might be fraught either with peril or advantage —go to sleep, for example, on the brink of precipices, in the dens of enemies, or view with indifference some new-appearing object that might, if chased, prove an important addition to the larder. Novelty *ought* to irritate him.”[27] Typically, Unamuno was drawn toward those things that irritate the soul because in irritating the soul one can begin to live. Unamuno considered himself to be fighting the same *tedium vitae* in Spain that James was fighting in the United States, a theme that I address in the next section.[28]

In May 1904 Unamuno published “Almas de Jovenes” in which he translates and quotes James’s *Varieties*. The following lines were originally written by Annie Besant, then quoted by James, and then by Unamuno: “Plenty of people wish well to any good cause; but very few care to exert themselves to help it, and still fewer will risk anything in its support. ‘Someone ought to do it, but why should I?’ is the ever re-echoed phrase of weak-kneed amiability. ‘Someone ought to do it, so why *not* I?’ is the cry of some earnest servant of man, eagerly forward springing to face some perilous duty.”[29] Martínez interprets Unamuno to be re quoting this passage from Besant to reinforce his own claim that many or most people are unwilling to act for the common good until it affects them personally. Unamuno was fascinated with the idea of the hero, and if we remember that this article was published in May, just one month before he began writing about Quixote—the ultimate hero—then it makes sense that he would seize on this passage from James. Unamuno’s concern with the lack of heroes (or saints) in the world ties his reading of James to his writing of *Vida*, and not just any James but the James of *Varieties*. [30]

The final reference that Unamuno made to James’s work during these years is the most interesting in terms of *Vida*. In August 1904, when he was already more or less finishing with the writing of *Vida*, Unamuno wrote a letter to the Uruguayan Alberto Nin Frias to tell him about his new book, in which he claims to have found a “Spanish Theology.”[31] In other words, at the same time that Unamuno was reading and publicly applauding James’s work on faith, religious souls, geniuses, and heroes, he was also “finding” an authentically Spanish theology grounded in Quixote.[32]

These references all make it clear that Unamuno was a careful and diligent reader of James, that he identified with him, and that he was inspired by him. Reading James seems to have given Unamuno the courage and the momentum to write the majority of *Vida* in two months; I believe that James, in part, lit a fire under Unamuno. [33] It is no surprise, then, that James seems to hover over and at times enter into the pages of *Vida*. The three Jamesian pragmatic notes that I hear in *Vida* are: 1) the fight against *tedium vitae*, 2) the religious perception of the existence of two worlds—the visible and the invisible, and 3) the tight connection between belief and action, including

the importance of heroes and/or saints. I now turn to the analysis of these three Jamesian elements of Quijotismo.

## II. The Presence of William James in *La Vida de Don Quixote y Sancho*

*Vida* is Unamuno's commentary on Cervantes's classic *Don Quixote*.<sup>[34]</sup> Unamuno makes it clear that he does not consider Cervantes the authority on Quixote, and goes as far as to claim that Quixote is "more real" than Cervantes, since Quixote as a fictional character is immortal while his author was clearly mortal. As a result, Unamuno's Quixote is not Cervantes's Quixote, and Unamuno admits to using his commentary as a platform to work out his own ideas, independent of Cervantes and the Cervantists.<sup>[35]</sup>

Before 1902 Unamuno had viewed Quixote as a deadweight to Spain, and had instead endorsed *Alonso el Bueno* (*Alonso the Good*), the name Quixote took shortly before death. During this time Unamuno called for the death of Quixote so that Alonso could live on. One can only speculate as to why Unamuno reversed his opinion on Quixote, and retracted everything negative he had said about the "holy madman." A likely reason for Unamuno's turn to Quixote was Spain's loss of Puerto Rico, Guam, the Philippines, and Cuba in the 1898 Spanish American War. By calling on the traditional and mad Quixote, Unamuno may have been (quixotically) trying to turn Spain's defeat into a victory.<sup>[36]</sup> The turn may also have to do with Unamuno's earlier and well-documented spiritual crisis of 1897, which was triggered by his newborn son, Raimundo, contracting meningitis, which left him with a hydrocephalic condition that killed him in late November 1902.<sup>[37]</sup> This incident renewed or at least reminded him of his childhood faith in God, which he had abandoned during his university years in Madrid. I speculate that Unamuno's turn to Quixote in 1902, which would bear fruit in 1904, had to do with his reading of James at that time. While his child lay dying in the late months of 1902, Unamuno was engrossed in *The Will to Believe* and *Varieties*. I do not doubt a connection between Unamuno's reading of James, the death of his son, and his religious turn to Quixote.<sup>[38]</sup>

Whatever the reason for his about-face, Unamuno turned to Quixote as a symbol of Spain's future. In choosing Quixote instead of a different literary figure, Unamuno was already reflecting quite a Jamesian attitude; namely, that rational thought does not exhaust what it means to be human, nor is it what is most valuable. Cervantes writes that Quixote's brains had "dried up," and Unamuno repeatedly emphasizes this detail to make a point. Unamuno perceived himself to be fighting against either a hierarchy or a complete domination of the hard sciences over the humanities, which, for Unamuno, translated into the primacy of thought over action. By designating Quixote as Spain's hero (and, ultimately, god), Unamuno was suggesting that it is not only in the "brain" that we find our value. James makes a very similar point in *The Will to Believe*: "Evidently, then, our non-intellectual nature does influence our convictions. ... The state of things is evidently far from simple; and pure insight and logic, whatever they might do ideally, are not the only things that really do produce our creeds."<sup>[39]</sup> Perhaps James values the

brain more than Unamuno does, nonetheless, he understood that it does not and cannot work alone, apart from the passions. The following is a quasi-Pascalian passage written by Unamuno, but that could have been written by James: “These reasonable men usually boast only reason; they think with their heads alone, when one must think with one's entire body, with one's whole soul.”[40] In 1904 Unamuno envisioned himself combating a world dominated by what he referred to here as the “brain”—and elsewhere *logic, reason, thinking*—to the detriment of the “heart,”—*soul, spirit, imagination*. James might put it in terms of “science” vs. “faith,” and rejects any allegiance to science that excludes the possibility of faith. Unamuno exalts Quixote's madness because Quixote fights for that which is not verifiable and that which cannot be seen with the eyes. In “The Will to Believe,” James states that if reason cannot decide what action to take, “we have the right to believe at our own risk any hypothesis that is live enough to tempt our will.”[41] Neither Unamuno nor James advocates a coup d'état of the heart, or faith, over the brain, or science, but both Unamuno and James struggle against *tedium vitae*.

### III. *Tedium Vitae* and *Abulia*

For Unamuno Quixote is the hope of Spain because he fights against spiritual sloth, or what he calls *abulia*. Unamuno's use of this term—*abulia*—is very similar to the way James used it a handful of times, including in *Principles* and the preface to *The Will to Believe*, both of which we know that Unamuno had read before writing *Vida*. In *Principles*, James describes *abulia* thus: “Great fatigue or exhaustion may make it the condition of almost all objects; and an apathy resembling that then brought about is recognized in asylums under the name of *abulia* as a symptom of mental disease. The healthy state of the will requires, as aforesaid, both that vision should be right, and that action should obey its lead.”[42] Setting aside the question of vision, James describes *abulia* as the failure to act on the basis of what one thinks or feels; it represents a disconnect between thought and action, and includes or is akin to fatigue. Unamuno uses the term primarily to describe inaction, and specifically spiritual inaction.

For Unamuno it is Quixote's niece who exemplifies *abulia*. Unamuno reprimands Antonia time and again for being shortsighted, an adjective that is interestingly tied to James's earlier suggestion that a loss of vision should perhaps be connected to *abulia*, and for only seeing the world of “appearances.” Instead of praising Quixote for jumping into life feet first, Antonia mocks him and calls him a fool. In some sense Antonia is right: Quixote is not a knight, but, in another sense, on a deeper level, Unamuno states that Quixote is a knight. The world that counts, according to Unamuno, is deeper than common sense, which poor Antonia has in spades. For Unamuno Antonia is the fool and not Quixote, because she cannot see what matters; all she sees is what is in front of her. In a word, Unamuno charges Antonia with living for nothing, and he retaliates against her critique on behalf of Quixote: “But you, my Antonia Quixana, you? You do not go mad either in a human or in the divine sense; you may have a little brain but, little as it is, it fills up all your little head, so that there is no room left for the overflow from your heart.”[43] From Unamuno's vantage point, Quixote's “madness” is desirable

because it leads to a moral life, one guided by principles. Antonia, on the other hand, will never be inspired, says Unamuno, and will never willfully create a world for herself like Quixote does. She has plenty of intelligence, but no spirit or imagination.[44] For Unamuno, she is the equivalent of those who mock religion. Both James and Unamuno would say that those who ridicule religion are cutting themselves off from something that leads some people to a fuller, richer life.

Unamuno explains *abulia* as a two-fold condition: fear of failure and fear of ridicule. In *Vida* he paints a picture of a man afflicted with *abulia* (for Unamuno, Spain as a whole is this man) who is considering a risky endeavor: “He would try it if he were sure beforehand of success, but faced with the possibility of the failure and, even more, the ridicule and sneers of his neighbors, the possibility that they will take him for a madman or a visionary or a fool, in the face of this possibility he draws back and attempts nothing.”[45]

Unamuno’s social critique applies to other characters in the novel beside Antonia[46]—Sancho, who lives for money and food; the curate and the barber, who burn Quixote’s books; and Sansón Carrasco, the recent graduate of the University of Salamanca who defeats Quixote and forces him to retire from knight errantry.[47] Unamuno claims that the people of Spain, the *abulia*-stricken masses “want to have ideas given them already chewed, salivated, and made into a pill ready to swallow, so that they need give themselves no more trouble than that of swallowing, or better yet, they would like to have the ideas spooned into them.”[48] These people reject independent thought and are simply waiting for someone else to live their lives for them.

In the preface of *The Will to Believe*, James addresses the connection between *abulia* and intellectualism: “But academic audiences, fed already on science, have a very different need. Paralysis of their native capacity for faith and timorous *abulia* in the religious field are their special forms of mental weakness, brought about by the notion, carefully instilled, that there is something called scientific evidence by waiting upon which they shall escape all danger of shipwreck in regard to truth. But there is really no scientific or other method by which men can steer safely between the opposite dangers of believing too little or of believing too much.”[49] James is suggesting that intellectuals are especially susceptible to *abulia* because of the amount of information they require in order to make a decision.

*Abulia* is conceptually very close to James’s description of *tedium vitae*. In “Is Life Worth Living?” James asserts that his mission is to attack *tedium vitae*: “My task, let me say now, is practically narrow, and my words are to deal only with that metaphysical *tedium vitae* which is peculiar to reflecting men. Most of you are devoted, for good or ill, to the reflective life.”[50] For James overreflective consciousness results in a kind of pessimism, and it usually takes the form of religious cynicism. Unamuno illustrates this *tedium vitae* with Sansón Carrasco, whose intellect was detrimental to his imagination. He was a university graduate, yes, but he lacked (and probably envied) Quixote’s willingness to believe in that which is not visible. Whereas *abulia* is not always tied to

intellectualism (Antonia is not an intellectual) in the way that *tedium vitae* is, it is often a result of overreflection. If *abulia* is spiritual sloth and *tedium vitae* is “moral sea-sickness” caused by reflection and the belief that at some point all of the “facts will be in,” then it seems that these terms are certainly related, and may be used more or less as synonyms.[51] Unamuno suggests that in order to overcome *abulia* we must shed the lethargy in our souls and become followers of Quixote; we must become quixotic.

Unamuno’s self-imposed task throughout his work, but especially in *Vida*, is to disturb people and incite them out of what he perceives to be their ethical and religious slumber; this recalls James’s idea that struggle and irritation are what produce movement or action. Unamuno considered it his mission to bring war to (apparent) peace, and to disquiet the soul into moving. What is arguably the most beautiful passage that Unamuno ever wrote appears in *Vida* in the form of an address to his reader: “Reader, listen: though I do not know you, I love you so much that if I could hold you in my hands, I would open up your breast and in your heart’s core I would make a wound and into it I would rub vinegar and salt, so that you might never again know peace but would live in continual anguish and endless longing.”[52] Struggle, pain, want are what make life worth living, Unamuno implies in agreement with James, not repletion or *hartazgo*. As long as one does not know peace and continues struggling, Unamuno believes that the individual has the potential for a meaningful life. Unamuno’s fight was a not uncommon existentialist one against inaction, indifference, and cynicism, and in *Vida* Unamuno used Quixote to rouse his readers. Both James and Unamuno were set to fight against *abulia* and *tedium vitae*, and though I think Unamuno considered himself to be on this mission even before reading James, it was in reading James that Unamuno found an ally.

#### IV. Parallel Worlds

Unamuno interprets Quixote as having a holy wisdom because he sees the world differently than the other characters in the book. Quixote sees another dimension to the world, which is also how James describes the religious nature in *Varieties*. The religious soul almost always describes the world as two worlds—one visible and one invisible—that are usually in conflict with one another. Quixote’s charging the windmills is Unamuno’s evidence that Quixote interprets the world on a second, or religious, level. In this episode Quixote charges thirty or forty windmills, believing that they are “enormous giants” with “long arms.”[53] Sancho tries to tell him that they are only windmills and not giants, but for Unamuno it is Quixote and not Sancho who sees clearly. Windmills, for Unamuno’s Quixote, represent technology; mills keep people fed and satisfied and quiet. Unamuno writes:

The Knight was right: fear and only fear made Sancho see -- makes the rest of a simple mortals see -- windmills where impudent giants stand, spewing wickedness about the world. Those mills milled bread, and of that bread men confirmed in blindness ate. Today, they no longer appear to us in the form of windmills, but in the form of locomotives, dynamos, turbines, steamships,

automobiles, telegraph with wires and without, machine guns, and instruments for performing ovariectomies, all conspiring to commit the same harm.... In the end, the human species, overwhelmed by weariness and surfeit, will give up the ghost at the foot of a colossal factory manufacturing an elixir promising long life. But the battered Don Quixote will go on living, because he sought health within himself and dared to charge the windmills.[54]

This is a quasi-Marxist interpretation of Quixote's act, but it works for James as well because in the religious context one sees the two worlds in direct opposition to one another. James states that religious people typically describe the world as comprised of two parallel and opposing worlds. For the religious soul seemingly innocuous phenomena are often the enemy in disguise. This seeing of two worlds—one good and one to be overcome—is what James is referring to in *Varieties*: “The visible world is part of a more spiritual universe from which it derives its chief significance.”[55]

What I consider the real Jamesian pragmatic thrust in *Vida* is that Unamuno not only says that Quixote *interprets* the world differently, but that when Quixote interprets the world he *creates* truths through believing. In the following well-known scene Quixote, who has broken his helmet, uses a barber's basin as a helmet, and believes that it is the famous “helmet of Mambrino.” For Unamuno the question is not whether the object is *really* a basin or a helmet (because apart from its use the question makes little sense), but rather how taking it for a helmet and using it as a helmet says something truthful about it. In Unamuno's interpretation Quixote has the power to turn a basin into a helmet. Unamuno calls this power *faith*,[56] and we can hear Unamuno's religious language begin to flow. Quixote doesn't just see a helmet where others see a basin; this is not primarily a question of appearance versus reality. Quixote creates a helmet through faith, which is the last of the Jamesian elements in *Vida*.

## V. Faith in Action

By changing one letter in the Spanish, Unamuno redefines the term faith. In Quijotismo, faith no longer means to *creer* (to believe) but to *crear* (to create, to be creative).[57] In what may be his closest tie to James, Unamuno effectively argues that having faith means that we can create the world in which we want to live, that we can actually, literally, really, make the world different through our action.[58] In choosing *crear* over *creer*, Unamuno empowers the individual.[59] Quixote created Mambrino's helmet and Dulcinea through faith, says Unamuno; he not only believed that the basin was a helmet and that Aldonza was a lady, but he turned them into what he saw; he treated them as such and so they became a helmet and a lady.[60] After this, one can no longer say that the basin is just a basin or that Dulcinea is just Aldonza: Quixote changed them. In *Sentimiento* Unamuno sharpens his description of faith as *crear* and not *creer*: “Faith is not the mere adherence of the intellect to an abstract principle; it is not the recognition of a theoretical truth, a process in which the will merely sets in motion our faculty of comprehension; faith is an act of the will—it is a movement of the soul towards a practical truth, towards a person, towards something that makes us not

merely comprehend life, but that makes us live.”[61] For the Jamesian Unamuno, faith is no longer a question of belief but of action.[62]

It is clear that Unamuno has a religious relationship to Quijote; he worships him and claims that Quixote acts through him and gives him strength. Unamuno faithfully reads the “Gospel” of Quixote to learn how to imitate him. Unamuno says everything about Quixote that a Christian says about God, but he does so metaphorically or literarily. Unamuno does not pray to Quixote to intervene (meaning: he is not delusional), but he prays to Quixote as a source of inspiration, and the effects are real, literal, and tangible. When the god is a fiction instead of a divinity, one is inspired rather than possessed, and one is still ultimately responsible for one’s actions, but one does not exactly feel like the author of those actions. Fixating on Quixote keeps Unamuno focused on how he wants to live his life, and he changes his life in accordance with the religion. James says that prayer or communion that has real effects in the world is valid and needs to be respected and even analyzed. Quixote may be a fictional god, but Unamuno’s belief in him produces real effects in the world. Unamuno himself was exiled in 1924, and chose to extend his exile by six years—all in the name of Quijote. “It is not I but Quixote who lives through me,” he said. Faith, for Unamuno, is no longer a question of mere belief but means something only when lived. The following passage is by Unamuno, but it could have been by James in *Varieties*: “Every belief that leads to living works is a true belief, and what leads to moribund works is a falsehood. Life is the criterion of truth; logical concordance is not, it is only the criterion of reason. If my faith leads me to create or increase life, what is the use of submitting it to further proof ... if you are dying of thirst and see a vision of what we call water and hurl yourself upon it and drink it, and you slake your thirst and are resurrected, then that vision was a true one in the water was true water. Truth is that which, after moving us to act in one way or another, makes the result conform to our intent.”[63] Both Unamuno and James reveal their Pascalian roots on the subject of faith. All three would agree that action is the end of all truth or belief. If a certain belief changes your life, then it is true, in a sense. As early as 1902 Unamuno was clearly fascinated with this more pragmatic, consequences-oriented understanding of truth and belief when, if you recall, he imagined a person who claimed to believe that there were inhabitants on Saturn, but who then admitted that his life would not change if it were not true. Unamuno and James agree that belief without practical consequences is not belief.

Whoever chooses to follow Quijote’s footsteps, says Unamuno, must open her eyes to a new and religious world full of risk. Unamuno calls Quixote a hero and a god; he is entirely focused on Quixote’s humanity but this does not jeopardize the powerful effects that Quixote can have in the world.[64] Quixote is a hero-god for Unamuno, akin to James’s “genius” who shapes his or her society. Martínez and Nubiola state the following about Unamuno’s Quixote: “It can be said—in a Jamesian sense—that we find in Don Quixote all that we look for in a hero. We forgive all his weaknesses because of his courage and his willingness to risk his life, heroically defending the noble cause he has chosen. This is Don Quixote, this is the Pragmatist hero.”[65] Quixote is the Pragmatist hero because he is the opposite of Sansón Carrasco; Quixote is not cynical

and does not suffer from *tedium vitae*. Instead, Quixote is the portrait of the man who agrees to live in a risky world and is willing to believe in the face of doubt.

## VI. Conclusions

Although I would hesitate to call Unamuno a Pragmatist or *Vida* a textbook in Pragmatism, one can hear James in both; what I have laid out is only a small representation of the presence of James in Unamuno's work.[66] After 1905 Unamuno continued to use James in his published writings. In 1906 Unamuno wrote a letter to Enrique Herrero Ducloux in which he stated that he did not see in Americans a tragic faith in God that consists in the desire for god to live. But, he clarified, "I am obviously referring to Hispanic Americans, because among the Yankees it's a different thing, and good proof of this is William James, among others." [67]

From time to time Unamuno disagreed with James's conclusions. In 1909, the same year he called James "el gran pensador yanqui", Unamuno wrote in a letter: "William James said that God is practically the producer of immortality. Isn't it that immortality, or even less, the belief in it, is the producer of god?" [68] This same objection resurfaced in 1913 when Unamuno published *The Tragic Sense of Life*. Here Unamuno suggests that it is because we desire immortality that we believe in God, and not the other way around, as James formulates it. But in this midst of this disagreement he also applauded James in *Varieties* for addressing topics like faith, immortality, heroism, melancholy, and saintliness.

Mariana Alessandri, Ph.D  
University of Texas-Pan American  
Dept. of History and Philosophy, ARHU 342  
Edinburg, TX 78539  
[alessandrima@utpa.edu](mailto:alessandrima@utpa.edu)

---

## Notes

[1] Pelayo Hipólito Fernández, *Miguel De Unamuno Y William James: Un Paralelo Pragmático* (Salamanca: publisher, 1961) and Izaskun Martínez Martín, "William James Y Miguel De Unamuno: Una Nueva Evaluación De La Recepción Del Pensamiento Pragmatista En España" (City: Universidad de Navarra, 2006). Also see Pedro Cerezo Galán, *Las Máscaras De Lo Trágico: Filosofía Y Tragedia En Miguel De Unamuno* (Madrid: Trotta, 1996), 278-82.

[2] Miguel de Unamuno, *Vida De Don Quijote Y Sancho Según Miguel De Cervantes Saavedra Explicada Y Comentada Por Miguel De Unamuno* (Madrid: Librería de Fernando Fé, 1905), hereafter VQS. For the English translation, see *Our Lord Don Quixote: The Life of Don Quixote and Sancho with Related Essays*, Bollingen Series (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967), hereafter OLDQ. Unamuno's Quijotismo is not unchanging throughout his life, but I am limiting it to *Vida* for the sake of the connection with James. In cases like this one where the works have been translated, I use the translation. In all other cases the translations are mine.

[3] Martínez also believes that *Vida* sounds particularly Jamesian. See Izaskun Martínez, "El Pragmatismo De Unamuno," *Anuario Filosófico* 40, no. 2 (2007): 443.

[4] For more on the translations of James into Spanish in connection with Unamuno's reading of James, see Izaskun Martínez and Jaime Nubiola, "Unamuno's Reading of the Varieties of Religious Experience and Its Context" in *Fringes of Religious Experience: Cross-Perspectives on William James's The Varieties of Religious Experience*, ed. S. Franzese and F. Kraemer (Frankfurt: Ontos, 2007), 157-58.

[5] In a letter dated March 18, 1909 to Ernesto Guzman, Unamuno used these words to describe James. See Miguel de Unamuno, *Epistolario Americano (1890-1936)*, ed. Laureano Robles (Salamanca: Universidad de Salamanca, 1996), 321.

[6] William James, *The Principles of Psychology*, ed. Fredson Bowers, Frederick H. Burkhardt, and Ignas K. Skrupskelis, 19 vols., vol. 8, *The Works of William James* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983). Hereafter PP.

[7] *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, ed. Fredson Bowers, Frederick H. Burkhardt, and Ignas K. Skrupskelis, 19 vols., vol. 15, *The Works of William James* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985). Hereafter VRE.

[8] Martínez outlines this reading of James both in her dissertation and also in an earlier article. See Martínez Martín, "William James Y Miguel De Unamuno: Una Nueva Evaluación De La Recepción Del Pensamiento Pragmatista En España" and Izaskun Martínez, "Miguel De Unamuno, Lector De William James," in *Seminario del Grupo de Estudios Peirceanos* (City: Universidad de Navarra, 2004).

[9] Unamuno's copy of *The Will to Believe* is the 1902 edition, and it is housed at the Casa Museo de Unamuno (CMU), Unamuno's former home of located in Salamanca, Spain, which is now the archive in which all of his surviving documents are kept. See CMU U/4286 anot.

[10] Enrique Rodó (1903) and Alberto Nin Frias (1904). In his earlier letter to Rodó, Unamuno mentions that both he (Rodó) and Nin Frias would enjoy reading James. See Unamuno, *Epistolario Americano (1890-1936)*, 159-61, 188-90.

[11] Unamuno's complete works are published in the following set: Miguel de Unamuno, *Obras Completas*, ed. Manuel García Blanco, 9 vols. (Madrid: Escelicer, 1966-1971). I refer to these as OCE (Obras Completas Escelicer), followed by the volume and page numbers. The seven articles and two letters are, in order, "Cuidad y Campo" (Jul. 1902, OCE I, 1038); "Sueño y Acción" (Dec.1902, OCE III, 961); "Viejos y Jovenes" (Dec. 1902, OCE I, 1077); "Contra el Purismo" (Jan. 1903, OCE I, 1069); letter to Rodó (Feb. 1903); "Glosas al Quijote" (Jan. 1903, OCE VII, 1208); "Sobre el Fulanismo" (Jan. 1903, OCE I, 1097); and "Almas de Jóvenes" (May 1904, OCE I, 1153); letter to Nin Frás (Aug. 1904).

[12] Martínez highlights this short length of time between the publication of the book and Unamuno's acquiring it as part of her claim that James was a significant part of Unamuno's life. See Martínez Martín, "William James Y Miguel De Unamuno," 155. Her entire explication of Unamuno's reading of James can be found on pp. 149-91.

[13] Unamuno used this term for James in *The Agony of Christianity* from 1924. See OCE VII 329. The term *desesperado* can also mean *desperate*.

[14] Interestingly, in 1928 Unamuno began reading another pragmatist, John Dewey, whom he did not care for. In a letter to Warner Fite, Unamuno calls Dewey's style confusing and confused, and basically says that Dewey's point is weak. For more details on Unamuno's reaction to Dewey see Unamuno, *Epistolario Americano (1890-1936)*, 542 and John Dewey, *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, ed. Joseph Ratner (New York: Henry Holt, 1928). Unamuno's copy of the Dewey is preserved in the Casa Museo de Unamuno (CMU U/5198).

[15] Unamuno says: "Y por lo que hace a la vida de las emociones, sabido es el juego que en ellas representan las vísceras y el sistema vasomotor, hasta tal punto que algunos psicólogos, como Guillermo James y Carlos Lange, han llegado a sostener que la emoción no es otra cosa que el sentimiento que tenemos de las alteraciones fisiológicas de nuestras entrañas, y del sistema vasomotor sobre todo." See OCE I, 1038-39 and also Martínez Martín, "William James Y Miguel De Unamuno," 160.

[16] See PP, 1065-66.

[17] As we will see, in December 1902 Unamuno told his audience that he is reading *The Will to Believe* (OCE I 1076). In February 1903 Unamuno wrote a letter to José Enrique Rodó in which he says that he is reading *Varieties*, so we can assume he is reading these books more or less simultaneously. Additionally, Martínez notes that in January 1903 Unamuno talks about melancholy, a theme that appears in both books, which compounded with the fact that they are both 1902 editions convinces her that he is reading them around the same time. See Martínez, *Miguel De Unamuno, Lector De William James*, 7 and Unamuno, *Epistolario Americano (1890-1936)*, 160.

[18] Unamuno quoted *Varieties* only four times in all of his published work, but this is not an indication that the book was not extremely important to him. In Unamuno's copy of this book he made thirty-two marginal notes, compared to the thirty-three in *The Will to Believe*, which he cited nineteen times in his published work. See Martínez Martín, "William James Y Miguel De Unamuno," 151 and Martínez, *Miguel De Unamuno, Lector De William James*, 3. In general I think that *Varieties* had more of an influence over Unamuno's *Tragic Sense of Life* than it did over *Vida*, but we must bear in mind that Unamuno considered the former a sequel to the latter.

[19] Unamuno writes: "El profundo pensador norteamericano William James dirigió a los clubs filosóficos de las Universidades de Yale y Brown un hermoso discurso sobre la voluntad de creer, *the will to believe*. La voluntad de creer es la voluntad de sobrevivir y solo la voluntad de sobrevivir nos lleva a la acción heroica, lo repito" (OCE III, 961).

[20] "Sueñan, y porque sueñan, obran" (OCE III, 961).

[21] Unamuno writes: "Si uno me dice que cree que hay habitantes en Saturno, le preguntaré al punto qué cosas de las que hace o pueda hacer dejaría de hacer en el caso de que no hubiese en Saturno habitantes, o qué cosas de las que no hace haría

en tal caso, y si me contesta que para él todo continuaría lo mismo, le replicaré que ni eso es cree que hay habitantes en Saturno, ni cosa parecida. Este criterio, que lo he aprendido del ya citado William James, me parece acertadísimo” (OCE I, 1079). Martínez notes: “Lo que quiere decir que Unamuno ya había adoptado en aquella fecha el mismo criterio pragmatista para la creencia, es decir, que creemos que algo es verdadero si tiene alguna consecuencia práctica para nuestra vida.” [What this means is that Unamuno had already adopted by that time the same pragmatic criteria for truth, that is, that we believe something is true if it has some practical consequence in our lives.] See Martínez Martín, “William James Y Miguel De Unamuno,” 187.

[22] William James, *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy*, ed. Frederick Burkhardt, Fredson Bowers, and Ignas K. Skrupskelis, 19 vols., vol. 6, *The Works of William James* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), 45, hereafter WB.

[23] OCE VII, 1208.

[24] I speak at length on *tedium vitae* in the next section.

[25] Unamuno writes: “Estoy leyendo los admirables ensayos que constituyen el libro titulado *The will to believe and other essays in popular philosophy* del vigoroso pensador norteamericano William James, y hay entre ellos uno: ¿Merece vivirse la vida? (*Is life worth living?*) en que el autor desarrolla con gran maestría el principio de que la fuente de la melancolía es el hartazgo, que las necesidades y la lucha son las que nos inspiran y nuestra hora de triunfo la que nos trae el vacío. ‘No de los judíos en cautividad —dice—, sino de los judíos de los días de gloria de Salomón nos provienen las expresiones pesimistas de nuestra Biblia” (OCE VII, 1208). The English translation can be found in Unamuno, *Our Lord Don Quixote*, 367, hereafter OLDQ.

[26] In 1924 Unamuno wrote in *The Agony of Christianity*: “James is a pragmatist and a despairing Christian; another who agonized in Christianity” (OCE I 329).

[27] WB 68.

[28] One of the reasons Fernandez rejects the idea that Unamuno was influenced by James is that he does not see in James the “agonic” nature of Unamuno: “What distinguishes Unamuno from James is the agonic or contradictory character of his position.” See Fernández, *Miguel De Unamuno Y William James: Un Paralelo Pragmático*, 65.

[29] VRE 27, OCE I 1157-58

[30] OCE I 1157-58.

[31] Unamuno, *Epistolario Americano (1890-1936)*, 189.

[32] In *Tragic Sense of Life*, Unamuno applauds James for specifically addressing the following themes in *Varieties*: faith, immortality, heroism, melancholy, and sainthood. See OCE VII 111.

[33] The other thinker that I credit with inspiring the writing of *Vida* is Søren Kierkegaard, who to my mind had an even greater influence over Unamuno than James.

[34] Unamuno’s copy of the classic is preserved at the Casa Museo de Unamuno. Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *El Ingenioso Hidalgo D. Quijote De La Mancha*, ed. Real Academia Española, 4 vols. (Madrid: Imprenta Real, 1819).

[35] At the beginning of the second edition of *Vida* (1914), Unamuno added an essay titled “El Sepulcro de Don Quijote” in which he explains his stance on Cervantes. See VQS 139-53 and OLDQ 9-22.

[36] The issue of the generation of 98’s (is this referring to 1898? If so, add apostrophe before numerals) so-called “regenerationist literature” is an interesting one. The war between the United States and Spain and the resulting Spanish literature can be metaphorically summarized as follows: Robinson-the-bully (USA) stole Quixote’s (Spain’s) toys (Guam, the Philippines, and Cuba), so in turn Quixote insists that he did not want or need them anyway (“regenerationist literature”). The turn to Quixote by not a few Spanish writers at the time supports the theory that Spain tried to build itself back up literarily from its physical loss of empire. Christopher Britt-Arredondo makes this argument convincingly, and claims that Unamuno’s turn to Quijotismo was caused primarily by Spain’s losses in the Spanish-American War. Unamuno himself lends credence to this view by regretting having contributed in 1897 to what he in 1913 called “that horrible regenerationist literature,” and instead turning to a favorable view of Quixote. In response, one may question which of his approaches to Quixote might appropriately be called “regenerationist.” Britt-Arredondo does not clearly distinguish between Unamuno’s contra- and pro-Quijotismo, and perhaps may be referring to all of it as regenerationist literature given that, from his point of view, it was all a direct response to the war. See Christopher Britt-Arredondo, *Quixotism: The Imaginative Denial of Spain's Loss of Empire, Suny Series in Latin American and Iberian Thought and Culture* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005) and Miguel de Unamuno, *Tragic Sense of Life* (New York: Dover Publications, 1954), 309-10.

[37] According to Jose Rubia Barcia, on hearing this news Unamuno “broke down one night, and the following day left his home and went to spend a few days in the Dominican convent to try to recover his childhood faith and pray to God for help in his sorrow. He even went to see a priest friend of his, looking for religious consolation and advice in the faraway town of Alcala de Henares.” See Jose Rubia Barcia and M. A. Zeitlin, *Unamuno: Creator and Creation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 8 and Martin Nozick, *Miguel De Unamuno: The Agony of Belief* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1971), 33. In a letter to Pedro de Múgica dated December 9, 1902, Unamuno informs Múgica of Raimundo’s death, which occurred some fifteen days earlier. See Miguel de Unamuno, *Cartas Inéditas De Miguel De Unamuno*, ed. Sergio Fernández Larraín (Santiago de Chile: Zig-Zag, 1965), 317.

[38] In addition, one might argue that this “turn” is not as stark as almost all Unamuno scholars assume. It is true that his thought changed, but perhaps it was more gradual than we typically assume. For example, in an essay from 1896 Unamuno already writes favorably about the “sound philosophy” of Quixote and his “quixotic idealism,” thus muting the contrast between his anti- and pro-Quijotismo years. Also, as early as 1900 in the epilogue to *Amor y Pedagogia (Love and Pedagogy)* published in 1902, Unamuno renounces his “¡Muera, Don Quijote!,” a move that he repeats in 1913 (OCE II 409). Whether it was drastic or gradual, Unamuno definitely and publicly changed his mind about Quixote.

[39] WB 19-20.

[40] OLDQ 156.

[41] WB 29.

[42] PP 1152-53. James also mentions *abulia* in "Talks to Teachers on Psychology and to Students on Some of Life's Ideals," which Unamuno may or may not have read: "Certain melancholiacs furnish the extreme example of the over-inhibited type. Their minds are cramped in a fixed emotion of fear or helplessness, their ideas confined to the one thought that for them life is impossible. So they show a condition of perfect 'abulia,' or inability to will or act. They cannot change their posture or speech or execute the simplest command." See William James, *Talks to Teachers on Psychology and to Students on Some of Life's Ideals*, ed. Fredson Bowers, Frederick H. Burkhardt, and Ignas K. Skrupskelis, 19 vols., vol. 12, *The Works of William James* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), 106.

[43] OLDQ 165.

[44] Unamuno states: "It is not intelligence which is lacking, but spirit" (OLDQ 152).

[45] OLDQ 145. Unamuno later adds: "Thus, in our country, the country of Don Quixote and Sancho, since moral cowardice has our souls in its grip, and men recoil from a possible failure and tremble lest they fall into ridicule, lies abound and visions are painfully scarce" (OLDQ 222).

[46] About the so-called "minor" characters in this novel, Anthony Cascardi adds: "None engages his social position ethically." These characters are neither ethical nor virtuous. Anthony J. Cascardi, *The Bounds of Reason: Cervantes, Dostoevsky, Flaubert* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 71.

[47] Cascardi explains Unamuno's characterization of Sanson Carrasco: "In *The Tragic Sense of Life*, Unamuno saw Sanson Carrasco as pragmatic European man, who relates to the world by logic and planning and who upholds the rationality of society and its cultural institutions" (Cascardi, *The Bounds of Reason*, 62).

[48] OLDQ 275. Unamuno later adds: "Yes, all our evil stems from moral cowardice, from each man's lack of the impulse to affirm his truth, his faith, and to defend it. The lie coils around and throttles the souls of this breed of stupid sheep, stupefied by a stoppage of common sense" (OLDQ 146).

[49] WB x. In *Psychology: the Briefer Course* (which Unamuno may not have read), James fills in the description of *abulia*: "Great fatigue or exhaustion may make it the condition of almost all objects; and an apathy resembling that then brought about is recognized in asylums under the name of *abulia* as a symptom of mental disease. The healthy state of the will requires, as aforesaid, both that vision should be right, and that action should obey its lead. But in the morbid condition in question the vision may be wholly unaffected, and the intellect clear, and yet the act either fails to follow or follows in some other way." William James, *Psychology: Briefer Course*, ed. Fredson Bowers, Frederick H. Burkhardt, and Ignas K. Skrupskelis, 19 vols., vol. 14, *The Works of William James* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 379.

[50] WB 39. James also describes *tedium vitae* in an essay from his "Vacations": "Who that has travelled in Europe is not familiar with the type of the broken-down American business-man, sent abroad to recruit his collapsed nervous system? With his haggard, hungry mien, unfitted by lifelong habit for taking any pleasure in passive contemplation, and with too narrow a culture to be interested in the historical or æsthetic

side of what meets his eye, he tries to cheat the tedium vitæ by a feverish locomotion, and seems to draw a ghostly comfort from a peevish and foolish criticism of everything he meets—the tyranny of despots, the dinginess of the old paintings, and the mendacity of the natives, the absence of the ballot-box, the crookedness of the streets, the fearful waste of raw material in walls, harnesses, and conveyances, and the barbarousness of the window fastenings. These Americans have been brought up to measure a man solely by what he acquires, or at best what he effects, hardly at all by what he is.” See William James, *Essays, Comments, and Reviews*, ed. Fredson Bowers, Frederick H. Burkhardt, and Ignas K. Skrupskelis, 19 vols., vol. 17, *The Works of William James* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 4.

[51] George Cotkin uses the helpful term “moral sea-sickness” to describe tedium vitae. See George Cotkin, *William James, Public Philosopher*, New Studies in American Intellectual and Cultural History (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 79. For a helpful discussion on James’s notion of *Tedium Vitae*, see 73-94.

[52] OLDQ 305. The entire passage follows in the original: “Mira, lector, aunque no te conozco, te quiero tanto que si pudiese tenerte en mis manos, te abriría el pecho y en el cogollo del corazón te rasgaría una llaga y te pondría allí vinagre y sal para que no pudiese descansar nunca y vivieras en perpetua zozobra y en anhelo inacabable. Sin no he logrado desasosegarte con mi Quixote es, créemelo bien, por mi torpeza y porque este muerto papel en que escribo ni grita, ni chilla, ni suspira, ni llora, porque no se hizo el lenguaje para que tu y yo nos entendiéramos” (VQS 322).

[53] Part I, Chapter VIII.

[54] OLDQ 58. The omitted text follows: “Fear, and only Sanchopanzesque fear, inspires us to venerate and pay homage to steam and electricity. Fear, and only Sanchopanzesque fear, makes us fall on our knees before the impudent giants of engineering and chemistry and thank them for mercy.”

[55] VRE 382.

[56] OLDQ 141.

[57] Doris King Arjona writes in 1928, “Unamuno finds for this longing a sublime satisfaction in the power of the will to believe in the existence of the thing it needs, identifying itself with the faith which he has defined as not *creer* but *crear*, and this creative faith, arrayed in absurd isolation against the hosts of reason, finds for him its perfect expression in the madness of Don Quijote.” See Doris King Arjona, “‘La Voluntad’ and ‘Abulia’ in Contemporary Spanish Ideology,” *Revue Hispanique* 74 (1928): 618.

[58] Jose Balseiro summarizes Unamuno’s position on the creation out of faith, and faith’s relation to the will: “Things are so much truer the more they are believed; and it is it not intelligence but will that imposes them upon the world. It is courage that creates all truth. Therefore Unamuno fights against positivism and technicism, against all—periods and doctrines—essentially materialist and pessimistic. Don Quixote did not stand for ideas, but for the spirit. Unamuno’s struggle has always been a spiritual one.” Jose A. Balseiro, “The Quixote of Contemporary Spain: Miguel De Unamuno,” *PMLA* 49, no. 2 (1934): 646.

[59] In *Tragic Sense of Life*, Unamuno adds: “Faith, therefore, if not a creative force, is the fruit of the will, and its function is to create. Faith, in a certain sense, creates its object. And faith in God consists in creating God” (TSL 193).

[60] Unamuno highlights the way that courage and faith are involved in making truth: “That’s the way, my Lord Don Quijote. That is the way of naked courage, insisting aloud and in sight of all, defending one’s claims with one’s life; that is the way of creating any and all truth. The more one believes in the thing, the truer it is believed, and it is not intelligence, but will, which imposes this truth.” (OLDQ 142).

[61] TSL 191.

[62] Fernández still rejects the idea of James’s having influenced Unamuno on the ground that for James, faith is only a “working hypothesis,” compared to the creative aspect that Unamuno gives it. Fernández, *Miguel De Unamuno Y William James*, 64-65.

[63] OLDQ 129.

[64] Unamuno says in *Tragic Sense of Life*: “But perhaps we must look for the hero of Spanish thought, not in any actual flesh-and-bone philosopher, but in a creation of fiction, a man of action, who is more real than all the philosophers—Don Quijote” (TSL 313-14).

[65] Martínez and Nubiola, *Unamuno’s Reading of the Varieties of Religious Experience and Its Context*, 7. Martínez and Nubiola also call Quixote a saint, and this fits perfectly into Unamuno’s interpretation. One of the reasons why Unamuno was so enthralled with James, he tells us, is because James wrote about sainthood, and specifically about Saint Luis Gonzaga. See “Que es verdad?” (1906, OCE III 862).

[66] For Unamuno, Quixote is the genius who is in part created by his environment, but who, more importantly, has the power to lead his epoch into a new future. Quixote sees a world that other people refuse to see, and embodies the religious sentiment that James insists we have the right to believe.

[67] Unamuno, *Epistolario Americano* (1890-1936), 235.

[68] Miguel de Unamuno and Luis de Zulueta, *Cartas (1903-1933)*, ed. Carmen de Zulueta (Madrid: Aguilar, 1972), 228.