

Summary
Don Quixote in the world of philosophers.
About the Quixotism of the Generation of '98
as searching for a new formula of subjectivity

The purpose of this book is to present a particular form of philosophy called "Quixotism" which was followed by a group of Spanish thinkers, called the Generation of '98, and to reconstruct the philosophical content of this movement. This work is to some extent polemic and stems from disputes connected with Quixotism and conducted by researchers of this intellectual formation.

To begin with, I am going to put forward three issues: firstly, the problem of determining whether or not we can speak of the existence of such a group as the Generation of '98, and if so, what its unity would depend on; secondly, an indication of Quixotism as unifying the group the Generation of '98 while questioning its reduction to the field of political and social thought, and finally, distinguishing between literary and philosophical interpretations of "Don Quixote" and Quixotism as a particular philosophy of the Generation of '98. The main thesis of the book is that the considerations which had been carried out as based on Cervantes' heroes, were aimed at overcoming an impasse in philosophy in general, which was recognised by Spanish thinkers and which became widely recognisable when the philosophy of Kant became well-thought out. The proposed concepts are: metaphysical, epistemological, political and social. Their common ground is the particular concept of an entity, constantly oscillating between the realms of ideas and matter, freedom and strong determination – what you own and what is alien. They form the core of "philosophical Quixotism."

This paper is divided into two parts. The first is mostly devoted to the strategy of the Generation of '98 which allowed them to move from the philosophical interpretation of the works of Cervantes to proposing their own ideas using the heroes of the novel, so in effect to move to Quixotism. The first chapter of this section "Reading 'Don Quixote': emergence of a philosophical category of Quixotism" presents the dominant Spanish readings of Cervantes's novel, which also provided the Generation of '98 with the foundation for their own considerations just through the consolidation

of the current oppositional idealistic vision of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza including specific traits or attitudes attributed to them. It is particularly important to identify the philosophical interpretations of "Don Quixote" especially in the context of the work of such thinkers as Hegel, Schelling and the Schlegel brothers and in the context of the well-known readings of these thinkers, which were well discussed in Spain, because in regard to the traditions and within designated by these philosophers philosophical problems the self-reflection of the representatives of this group will develop.

In the second chapter "Philosophical Quixotism of the Generation of '98" I analyse the concept of both "Quixotism" and "the Generation of '98" in relation to the current critical views of the topic. They were dominated by the political and social issues in such a way that the philosophical aspects of both of these phenomena somewhat disappear, and as a result the same principle of using the novel's heroes in the philosophical discourse becomes questionable. Meanwhile, this group, as seen in the example of Azorín's concept, did not limit their activities to the so-called "problem of Spain", but regarded themselves as versatile intellectuals who were bound together by a specific attitude, similar in its generosity to the attitude of Don Quixote, and by the picture of the world, which they supposedly "discovered" in the work of Cervantes. The reference to "Don Quixote" becomes for them an essential tool for self-determination, through which they hope to appear in public and on the contemporary philosophical scene, so the reference turns out to be a kind of trademark, referring not to the literary work, but to the philosophical contents shared by the members of the group.

Chapter three, "Universality of 'the problem of the Spanish philosophy'", indicates the exact moment of the appearance of philosophical Quixotism, which was founded on two propositions, namely that the work of Cervantes contains philosophical content and that it is universal, or at least current in relation to the Spanish reality. This translated into particular trials to prove how Spanish Don Quixote is, and this involved the replication of the essence or soul of the Spanish nation, which is a general element of specific events. This in turn led to a redefinition of the concept of philosophy in such a way that it covers non-academic forms, such as an essay or a novel, expressing a specific Spanish picture of reality which is thrown outside the dominant philosophical trends, but still shows a fuller, richer, and more realistic picture of the world.

The content of this type of Spanish philosophy is the subject of the second part of the book, which presents the concepts of the elected representatives

of the Generation of '98 which were developed on the grounds of the elements of the world as presented in the novel by Cervantes.

Chapter four, the most comprehensive of all, entitled "I need a reality" – voluntarily overcoming the opposition of idealism-realism in 'intra-philosophy' by Miguel de Unamuno, depicts a fundamental problem for philosophical Quixotism through the thoughts of Miguel de Unamuno, namely the question of the status of the entity in the face of Kant's recognition of the unrecognisable of the thing-in-itself. I examine de Unamuno's concept in the context of three forms of relationships: "I" vs. the world, "I" vs. another "I", and "I" vs. God. In the case of each of these issues the character of Don Quixote and his relationships were a paradigmatic case for de Unamuno, which he analysed and, as a result, formulated a general thesis. It was possible to exceed the traditional opposition of realism/idealism (and related phenomenal/substantial) through the adoption of a dynamic, non-essential concept of being. For de Unamuno, being is primarily a specific person, and its existence means doing. However, doing also means co-operation, co-existence with the outside world, from which the "I" enters into mutual relationships. To distinct others are applied: eternal "I" and the social "I" and the associated negative terms of comedy, drama, aestheticism, etc. "I" dissolves in what is social in such a way that it raises the question of its authentic existence, of what is my own, of who I am, and even if my existence is real. This "who" turns out to be a project, rather than a given being, so that there is the issue of free will, the ideal and freedom. Finally, God is seen as the guarantee of individual immortality – believing in him is the desire to believe, the will of faith, and the knight of faith is Don Quixote. The difference between Kierkegaard and de Unamuno, which is important because of the similarity between their ideas and the well-known fascination of de Unamuno of Kierkegaard's works, is emphasized as fundamental for de Unamuno's thoughts, if we take into account the category of "tragedy".

In chapter five, "A vital lie" – an acting agent learning about Baroja Pío, the starting point is a discussion about the possibility of scientific, rational learning about the truth about reality and the relevance of truth in relation to life and in relation to Baroja's ideal of "a man of action". Vital "harm" of mathematics and natural sciences, which deprives an individual human existence of its sense, an overgrowth of a critical sense, rational "disenchantment" of the world makes, according to Baroja, an individual lose its willingness to work and slips into more and more apathy. The category of "a vital lie", whose paradigmatic example is found by Baroja in the actions taken by Don Quixote, becomes a response to skepticism, which a man of the end of the century suffers from, a decadent individual living in the post-

Kant and, even worse, “post-Schopenhauer” era. It is vital here to identify Cervantes and his work as being humorous with its metaphor of the mind as a lamp and not a mirror. Baroja presents a concept, similar to de Unamuno’s, of an entity entangled in a relationship with the world and the mind, which, while learning, creates a cognized object. A discussion between Baroja and de Unamuno, based on their shared concept of knowledge, takes place in relation to the category of lies and truth. For Baroja, a lie, however vitally necessary, is a lie, for de Unamuno it becomes the truth, so that the mind is no longer a reference platform.

The last chapter is called “‘An unshakable axis’ Don Quixote’s essence of Spain and the construction of a collective entity in the thoughts of Ganivet, Azorín and Maeztu”. It presents the solution to the problem of Spain in relation to the concept of the subject and the cognitive knowledge presented by Unamuno and Baroja as proposed by the elected representatives of the Generation of ’98. The same ideas are found in the works of Ganivet, Azorín and Maeztu, which act as a proper foundation of their deliberations about Spain and appear to be secondary to purely philosophical decisions. The main category is “fear against influence”, which is moved from the realm of an individual subject to a collective entity. Ganivet’s “unshakable axis” or the poetic reading of the Spanish landscape as proposed by Azorín, as they both search for the embodiment of Spanishness in Don Quixote, show that neither radical Europeanisation (releasing oneself to external influences), nor closing in certain limits are solutions which allow the continued existence of Spain. In addition, there is a major problem of imperialism – Maeztu and his concept of “spiritual empire” provide an example of an application of the traditional idealistic reading of “Don Quixote”, in which the opposition will still be the opposition between the ideal and the real, which clearly separates his late idea from the achievements of other representatives of the Generation of ’98.

It can therefore be concluded that Quixotism developed at different levels by Generations ’98, is a kind of “third way”, and its meaning lies mainly in putting the issue of modern subjectivity which is elusive in traditional conceptual schemes. The Generation of ’98 is interested in the truth of human existence, of a particular person, a particular community, existence, which is stretched between idea and matter, reason and passion, and which takes place somewhere in the area between its own internal and the alien external. The entity turns out to be a dynamic structure, always at risk of falling into what is alien, external, inauthentic, but also always open to the future, which stands on the border between the ideal and the material, theory and practice, design and history. Freedom, as defined by

these Spanish thinkers, is not absolute, but it is often only a glimmer or a moment of choice, a momentary stroke of external constraints soon to be back falling in to again.

Don Quixote – a particular character, whose function is to embody the concepts of “spiritualism”, vitality, individuality, activity and idealism as an ethical attitude, serves as a kind of centre of this issue, binding its various contexts (metaphysical, epistemological and socio-political) as a whole, while preventing its final closure in the form of a philosophical system. More than that, it ceases to be merely a symbol of idealism, variously understood, but it is transformed into the point where opposites converge. The representatives of the Generation of '98 emphasize first of all that Don Quixote represents a desire for an ideal, but the ideal entangled in a world of inevitable conflict, which tears the whole of reality and which is also a condition of life. In other words, the figure of Don Quixote is developed and transformed into a medium of a series of respectively philosophical concepts, is used to introduce the same conflicts into the philosophical discourse and make it more dynamic. Literary forms which embody general ideas, open up the possibility of practising philosophy in a non-systematic way, which in turn translates into forms selected by the Generation of '98 thinkers, such as essays, philosophical novels or intellectual autobiographies.