

KIERKEGAARDIAN DREAD AND DESPAIR IN UNAMUNO'S *EL QUE SE ENTERRO*

...learning to know dread is an adventure which every man has to confront if he would not go to perdition either by not having known dread or by sinking under it. He therefore who has learned rightly to be in dread has learned the most important thing.

SØREN KIERKEGAARD, *The Concept of Dread*

I

The most salient characteristic of Miguel de Unamuno's literary production —the quality most often underlined by his exegetes— is the thematic unity of his work; the theme is often described as the problem of personality. Since personality is a major subject in Unamuno's work and the philosophic approach to his fiction may offer insight into his structural and thematic problems¹, it will be the purpose of this essay to offer an analysis of one short story, "El que se enterró", by comparing it with *The Concept of Dread* and *The Sickness unto Death*, two works by the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard, whom Unamuno read with

¹ See Carlos Blanco Aguinaga's two recent studies: "Unamuno's *Niebla*: Existence and the Game of Fiction", *Modern Language Notes*, LXXIX, 2 (March, 1964), 188-205, and "Aspectos dialécticos de las *Tres novelas ejemplares*", *Revista de Occidente*, 19 (octubre, 1964), 51-70. Amy M. Kleppner, discussing the literary work of French existential philosophers ("Philosophy and the Literary Medium", *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Winter, 1964), reaffirms their uniqueness since existentialism is "the only contemporary philosophy whose exponents have employed the literary medium as a significant mode of expression" (207). Their fiction illustrates the basic ideas of their philosophical writings. But in addition "successful existentialist works will not be diversions but obsessions; they will present a world not to be seen, but to be changed" (209). The relationship between the writer and reader in this type of work has been changed to require collaboration "through which the reader is projected into a dramatic, imaginative experience, an authentic spiritual adventure, wherein he, like the existentialist hero, must risk his freedom, make choices, assume responsibility" (210). The narrative and dramatic works of these philosophers reflect the "immediacy and dramatic quality" of the ideas themselves and offer a bridge "between philosophy and lived experience" (211).

devotion from 1900². This story was chosen³ because it treats the problem of personality and clearly deals with the Kierkegaardian themes stated in the titles of the two works mentioned. It is hoped that the textual comparison presented here will help clarify both Unamuno's relationship to Kierkegaard and his method of creation, for this "concretion" of philosophic texts adds to our knowledge of the variety of uses Unamuno made of the works of others, as well as his own⁴. I have considered the possible objection to comparing a theoretical work with a fictional one as well as the lack of balance between the short quotations from Unamuno and the longer ones from Kierkegaard but I hope to prove the value of this procedure by demonstrating both how much Unamuno borrowed from his "hermano espiritual" as well as how he was able to concretize the Kierkegaardian ideas into a story of a few pages. Unamuno looked for the man behind the philosopher and the philosophy and he found Emilio, the man who buried himself, in the pages of *The Sickness unto Death* and *The Concept of Dread*⁵. Finally, although it has been stated that Una-

² For Unamuno's relationship to Kierkegaard and existentialism see: Julio Arístides, "Unamuno y la angustia existencial", *Euterpe*, XII, 41 (1941); R. Arnou, "L'existentialisme à la manière de Kierkegaard", *Gregorium*, XXVII (1946); Hernán Benítez, "Unamuno y la existencia auténtica", *Revista de la Universidad de Buenos Aires*, XLIV (1948); J. A. Collado, *Kierkegaard y Unamuno* (Madrid, 1962); Luis Farré, "Unamuno, William James y Kierkegaard", *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos*, XX and XXI (1954); Oscar Fasel, "Observations on Unamuno and Kierkegaard", *Hispania*, XXXVIII, 4 (1955); José Ferrater Mora, *Unamuno, bosquejo de una filosofía* (Buenos Aires, 1957); Nemesio González Caminero, "Miguel de Unamuno, precursor del existencialismo", *Pensamiento* (octubre-diciembre, 1949); A. G. Iturrioz, "En torno a la filosofía existencial: Heidegger y Unamuno", *Razón y Fe*, XXXVII (1937); Joaquín MacGregor, "Dos precursores del existencialismo: Kierkegaard y Unamuno", *Filosofía y Letras*, XXI (1951); François Meyer, *L'ontologie de Miguel de Unamuno* (Paris, 1955) and "Kierkegaard y Unamuno", *Revue de Litterature Comparée*, XXIX (1955).

³ "El que se enterró" is important not only because it adumbrates the technique of the *novela* but because it was transformed into the drama *El otro*; see E. K. Paucker, *Los cuentos de Unamuno, clave de su obra* (Madrid, 1965).

⁴ See Carlos Clavería, *Temas de Unamuno* (Madrid, 1953); J. López Morillas, "Unamuno y sus criaturas: Antolín S. Paparrigópulos", *Cuadernos Americanos*, VIII (1948); Julián Marías, *Miguel de Unamuno* (Madrid, 1943); Ricardo Gullón, *Autobiografías de Unamuno* (Madrid, 1964). Unamuno's story is indeed parallel to Kierkegaard's works both on a philosophical and a personal level. The treatise *The Sickness unto Death* "is an exquisitely personal document, in large part an analysis of the author's own experience... Hence his competence as a psychologist of despair" (Translator's note to *The Sickness*, New York, 1954, 273). Also, "with Freud and Nietzsche he [Kierkegaard] shared a significant fact: all three of them based their knowledge chiefly on the analysis of one case, namely, themselves" (Rollo May, Ernest Angel, Henri F. Ellenberger editors, *Existence*, New York, 1959). Unamuno's story was considered autobiographical in Luis Granjel's *Retrato de Unamuno* (Madrid, 1957).

⁵ In a review of Sartre's study of Gênet the critic stresses the relationship between philosophy and biography: "It might perhaps be argued with more force that all biography must, today, be philosophical treatises... and that philosophy on the other hand must often assume the form of biography, as well as that of novel

muno's fiction is anti-psychological⁶, I shall try to link Unamuno and Kierkegaard together in their existential viewpoint, demonstrating by means of existential psychoanalysis their proximity to the latter field, for both writers made use of (and indeed fused) the psychological and philosophical approaches to the problem of the individual in crisis.

II

"El que se enterró" deals with Emilio's change of personality which is noted and commented upon by his friends. After many futile attempts to learn the cause, the narrator is finally told the reason for the transformation. Emilio had been in a state of anxiety for some time, living in fear of death and annihilation. This fear increased to such an extent that he spent days locked in his study until one day, knowing that he would die of fear, he began to invoke death. Death arrived, but it entered the study as an image of himself; it was not a mirror image, but moving freely, sat down opposite the victim and looked at him. After a while, everything slowly began to vanish and Emilio died. When he regained consciousness he found himself in the chair his other self, or death, had occupied and saw his dead body in the chair opposite. He had been cleansed of the terror in which he had been immersed. Emilio then buried the body in the garden and, to prove the reality of his tale, he shows the corpse to the narrator, who can only think of a homicide. There follows a condemnation of logic and an affirmation of the reality of Emilio's experience. The short epilogue deals with the treatise on hallucinations found among Emilio's papers after his death from pneumonia.

and theatre. The reasons for the change lie first, in the profound transformation of philosophical concern since Hegel, the turning away from the external, supra-mundane, and essential towards the historical, human, existential. A second cause has been the radical methodological sophistication of the passion in men to understand other men and their relations to each other, expressed in —for example— depth-psychology, group dynamics and existential analysis" (David Cooper, "Sartre on Gênet", *New Left Review*, 25, May-June, 1964, 69). Unamuno's words also underline these ideas: "Soy, señor mfo, de los que no aciertan a separar al hombre del escritor, ni su manera de ser y de vivir, de su manera de producirse al público..." ("El escritor y el hombre", *Ensayos*, II, Madrid, 1958, 595). And again: "Pues abrigo cada vez más convicción de que nuestra filosofía, la filosofía española, está líquida y difusa en nuestra literatura... y no en sistemas filosóficos..." (*Del sentimiento trágico de la vida, Obras completas*, XVI, Madrid, 1958, 431).

⁶ See Julián Marías: "...no se trata de la mostración estática de una estructura... psíquica... ni siquiera de las fases en que se desenvuelve" (69).

III

I shall consider the story in three parts. The first part deals with Emilio's change and his friends' reactions, as well as their attempt to discover the cause of the transformation, and ends when Emilio is struggling to find words to describe his experience to the narrator. I shall quote alternately from (and sometimes comment upon) Unamuno [U] and Kierkegaard [K].

* * *

- U. "El joven oficial, dicharachero y descuidado habíase convertido en un hombre triston, taciturno y escrupuloso". CU, 46. There is an almost exact pairing of adjectives here⁶.
- K. According to Kierkegaard, the first Emilio would represent the individual who lives "merely in the instant abstracted from the eternal" COD, 83, and since man's "happiness is not a characteristic of spirit, and in the remote depths, in the inward parts, in the hidden recesses of happiness, there dwells also the anxious dread which is despair... all immediacy, in spite of its illusory peace and tranquility, is dread, and hence, quite consistently, it is dread of nothing..." SUD, 158. There is a form of despair which "permits itself as it were to be defrauded by 'the others'. By seeing the multitude of men about it, by getting engaged in all sorts of worldly affairs, by becoming wise

⁷ The quotations from "El que se enterró" are to be found in my edition of *Cuentos de Unamuno*, II (Madrid, 1961), abbreviated to CU, followed by the page number. The Kierkegaardian texts quoted will be abbreviated to: SUD (*The Sickness Unto Death*, New York, 1954) and COD (*The Concept of Dread*, Princeton, 1944) with the page number following the abbreviation.

Although in Kierkegaard dread (Danish *angst*), anguish or anxiety (translated by Lowrie as "dread") in *The Concept of Dread* and the despair of *The Sickness Unto Death* are different concepts, both result in symptoms typical of a state of anxiety. See Rollo May, *The Meaning of Anxiety* (New York, 1950), 31-45 and Sigmund Freud, *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* (New York, 1933), 113-152.

⁸ "El que se enterró": the title, as well as the story itself, represents a division, an attraction of opposites. Kierkegaard writes: "No kind of despair can be defined directly (i. e. undialectically) but only by reflecting upon the opposite factor". (SUD, 163). Other divisions appear: "Sus momentos de abstracción eran frecuentes" and it seemed that Emilio's spirit during these moments traveled "por los caminos de otro mundo" (CU, 46). *Abstracción*, from *trahere* and *ab*, indicates a separation, here of body and soul or spirit. One of Emilio's friends recalls Browning's poem on Lazarus, and says that Emilio visited death. Here is another division, as well as a carefully placed indication of what it to follow.

about how things go in this world, such a man forgets himself, forgets what his name is... finds it too venturesome a thing to be himself, far easier and safer to be like the others, to become an imitation, a number, a cipher in the crowd..." SUD, 166. The carefree have a false sense of security: "Unconsciousness of despair is like unconsciousness of dread... the dread characteristic of spiritlessness is recognizable precisely by the spiritless sense of security; but nevertheless dread is at the bottom of it, and when the enchantment of illusion is broken, when existence begins to totter, then too does despair manifest itself as that which was at the bottom". SUD, 177.

- U. "Y cuantas inquisiciones emprendimos para averiguar la causa de aquel misterioso cambio de carácter fueron inquisiciones infructuosas". CU, 46.
- K. "Freedom is constantly communicating... unfreedom becomes more and more shut-up and wants no communication". COD, 110. "But with respect to this thing of the self he initiates no one, not a soul, he feels no urge to do this, or he has learnt to suppress it... And our despairer is introverted enough to be able to keep every intruder (that is, every man) at a distance from the topic of the self..." SUD, 197.
- U. "Pero tanto y tanto le apreté y con tal insistencia cada vez, que por fin un día me dijo: ¡Bueno, vas a saber lo que me ha pasado...!" CU, 46.
- K. "Close reserve is involuntary revelation. The weaker the individual originally is... the more certainly will the secret break out at last. The most trivial contact is sufficient to start that terrible monologue..." COD, 115.
- U. "... se arrellanó en su sillón y empezó a temblar... se sacudió luego como quien adopta una súbita resolución..." CU, 47, not only anticipating the story he is about to recount but duplicating his reactions to his experience.
- K. "The continuity which close reserve may have can be compared with the vertigo we may suppose a top must feel as it revolves perpetually upon its pivot..." COD, 115.
- U. When Emilio looks up at the narrator, there seems to be a change in him: "... me miró fijamente y con unos ojos que no le conocía antes..." CU, 47.

- K. "It [revelation] may declare itself in words... It may declare itself by a look, by a glance; for there is a glance of the eye by which a man involuntarily reveals what is hidden". COD, 115.
- U. "... tú no vas a creer ni palabra de lo que te voy a contar, pero eso no importa. Contándotelo me libertaré de un grave peso, y me basta". CU, 47⁹.
- K. "In common speech we have an expression which is exceedingly suggestive. We say of a person that he cannot open his lips. The shut-up is precisely the mute, the spoken word is precisely the saving thing, that which delivers from the mute abstraction of the shut-up". COD, 111.

IV

We come now to Emilio's story, already recounted in the summary given above. It will be seen that the "astonishingly modern psychology of 'despair'"¹⁰ found in *The Sickness unto Death* and *The Concept of Dread* is parallel to Emilio's state, although Kierkegaard reverts to the psychological structure of the person in order to investigate the possibility of sin¹¹ while Unamuno does not go beyond his oft-repeated antithesis of logic vs. madness¹².

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- U. "... caí enfermo de terror". CU, 47.
- K. This terror is Kierkegaardian dread: "The possible corresponds to the future. For freedom the possible is the future; and for time the future is the possible. Corresponding to both of these in the indivi-

⁹ In the second paragraph of the story the narrator is present and the key words again indicate a division. Emilio cannot begin his story, we learn of the "esfuerzo" and the "resolución costosa y muy combatida" (CU, 46). And again there is a reference to what is to follow and to what has already occurred: "mientras yo no vuelva a morirme". Even the chair in the study takes part in the separation: "me pareció adquirir nuevo sentido" (CU, 47). The characters in the story, the narrator and Emilio, are placed *opposite* each other, repeating the position of Emilio and his other self: "me hizo sentar frente a él". Emilio's struggle to find words to express his experience also indicates a duality: "Dos veces intentó empezar a hablar y otras tantas tuvo que dejarlo..." (CU, 47).

¹⁰ Robert Bretall ed., *A Kierkegaard Anthology* (Princeton, 1947), xix.

¹¹ Collado, 109.

¹² CU, 52.

dual life is dread. A precise and correct linguistic usage associates therefore dread and the future. It is true that one is sometimes said to be in dread of the past, and this seems to be a contradiction. Nevertheless, upon closer inspection it appears that this manner of speaking points in one way or another to the future. The past of which I am supposed to be in dread must stand in a relation of possibility to me". COD, 82.

- U. "La enfermedad no se me conocía en nada ni tenía manifestación externa alguna, pero me hacía sufrir horriblemente". CU, 47.
- K. "... there lives not one single man who after all is not to some extent in despair, in whose inmost parts there does not dwell a disquietude, a perturbation, a discord, an anxious dread of an unknown something, or of a something he does not even dare to make acquaintance with, dread of a possibility of life, or dread of himself, so that, after all, as physicians speak of a man going about with a disease in him, this man is going and carrying a sickness of the spirit, which only rarely and in glimpses, by and with a dread which to him is inexplicable, gives evidence of its presence within..." SUD, 155. "... the dreadfulness of this most dreadful sickness and misery, is namely, its hiddenness-not only that he who suffers from it may wish to hide it and may be able to do so, to the effect that it can so dwell in a man that no one, no one whatever discovers it; no, rather that it can be so hidden that he himself does not know it!" SUD, 160.
- U. "Todo me infundía miedo, y parecía envolverme en una atmósfera de espanto. Presentía peligros vagos". CU, 47.
- K. "... it [dread] is different from fear and similar concepts which refer to something definite..." COD, 38. "If we ask further what is the object of dread, the answer as usual must be that it is nothing. Dread and nothing regularly correspond to one another". COD, 86.
- U. "Sentía a todas horas la presencia invisible de la muerte, pero de la verdadera muerte, es decir, del anonadamiento". CU, 47.
- K. "So then every human existence which supposedly has become or merely wills to become infinite is in despair. For the self is a synthesis in which the finite is the limiting factor, and the infinite is the expanding factor. Infinitude's despair is therefore the fantastical, the limitless. The self is in sound health and free from despair only when, precisely by having been in despair, it is grounded transparently in God". SUD, 213.

- U. "Despierto, ansiaba porque llegase la hora de acostarme a dormir y una vez en la cama me sobrecogía la congoja de que el sueño se adueñara de mí para siempre". CU, 47.
- K. "... there can be no question of being helped by forgetfulness..." SUD, 196.
- U. "Era una vida insoportable, terriblemente insoportable. Y no me sentía ni siquiera con resolución para suicidarme". CU, 47.
- K. "... he who is educated by possibility is exposed... to the danger of downfall, and that is self-slaughter. If at the beginning of this education he misunderstood the anguish of dread, so that it does not lead him to faith, but away from faith, then he is lost". COD, 142.
 "... let us... take another look at the introvert who in his introversion marks time on the spot. If this introversion is absolutely maintained, *omnibus numeris absoluta*, then suicide will be the danger nearest to him... If on the other hand he talks to someone, if to one single man he opens his heart, he is in all probability strained to so high a tension, or so much let down, that suicide does not result from introversion". SUD, 199-200.
- U. "Tenía miedo, como lo tenía de todo. Y este miedo fue creciendo de tal modo que llegué a pasarme días enteros en este cuarto... con la puerta cerrada, y volviendo a cada momento la vista atrás". CU, 47-48.
- K. "That blind door behind which there was nothing [in the case of the superficial despairer] is in this case a real door, a door carefully locked to be sure, and behind it sits as it were the self and watches itself, employed in filling up time with not willing to be itself. This is what is called 'introversion'." SUD, 196. "... if by himself and by himself only he would abolish the despair, then by all the labor he expends he is only laboring himself deeper into a deeper despair". SUD, 147. "But the more the despair becomes spiritual, and the more inwardness becomes a peculiar world for itself in introversion, all the more is the self alert with demoniac shrewdness to keep despair shut up in close reserve, and all the more intent therefore to set the outward appearance at the level of indifference, to make it as unrevealing as possible... This hiddenness is precisely something spiritual and is one of the safety devices for assuring oneself of having as it were behind reality an enclosure, a world for itself locking all else out, a world where the despairing self is employed as tirelessly as Tantalus in willing to be itself". SUD, 206-207.

- U. "No te sorprenda el que vacile... porque lo que vas a oír no me lo he dicho ni a mí mismo". CU, 48.
- K. "What the shut-up keeps hidden in his close reserve may be so terrible that he dare not utter it even in his own hearing, because it seems to him as though by this very utterance he were committing a new sin or as though it would tempt him again... It is therefore most likely to occur when the individual at the time of accomplishing the terrible act was not master of himself... [as] the case with a man who once was insane and has retained a memory of that previous state..." COD, 114-115.
- U. "El miedo era ya una cosa que oprimía por todas partes, que me ponía un dogal al cuello y amenazaba hacerme estallar el corazón y la cabeza". CU, 48.
- K. "... [dread] is different from fear and similar concepts which refer to something definite, whereas dread is the reality of freedom as possibility anterior to possibility". COD, 38. "Only this dread is by the aid of faith absolutely educative, laying bare as it does all finite aims and discovering their deceptions. And no Grand Inquisitor has in readiness such terrible tortures as has dread, and no spy knows how to attack more artfully the man he suspects, choosing the instant when he is weakest, nor knows how to lay traps where he will be caught and ensnared... which never lets him escape, neither by diversion nor by noise, neither at work nor at play, neither by day nor by night". COD, 139.
- U. "Llegó un día, el 7 de septiembre, en que me desperté en el paroxismo del terror; sentía acorchados cuerpo y espíritu". CU, 48.
- K. "Here is dread at its highest pitch... the individual trembles, like a horse which balks and neighs at the spot where once it took fright... To try to put a stop to this horror by words and phrases is labor lost... The occasion comes... dread sucks like a vampire the strength of remorse and shakes its head". COD, 103-104. "The despairing man cannot die; no more than 'the dagger can slay thoughts' can despair consume the eternal thing, the self, which is the ground of despair, whose worm dieth not, and whose fire is not quenched. Yet despair is precisely *self-consuming*, but it is an impotent self-consumption which is not able to do what it wills and this impotence is a new form of self-consumption in which again, however, the despairer is not able to do what he wills, namely, to consume himself... This is the hot incitement, or the cold fire in despair, the gnawing canker

whose movement is constantly inward, deeper and deeper, in impotent self-consumption. The fact that despair does not consume him is so far from being any comfort to the despairing man that it is precisely the opposite, this comfort is precisely the torment, it is precisely this that keeps the gnawing pain alive and keeps life in the pain. This precisely is the reason why he despairs... Because he cannot consume himself, he cannot get rid of himself, cannot become nothing. This is... the rising of the fever in the sickness of the self". SUD, 151.

V

There follows Emilio's encounter with death and its consequences.

- U. "Me encerré como todos los días aquí... y empecé a invocar la muerte. Y es natural, llegó... sentí que se abría la puerta y que entraba cautelosamente un hombre. No quise levantar la mirada. Oía los golpes del corazón y apenas podía respirar... Cuando pasó un breve rato me decidí a levantar los ojos y mirarlo. Lo que entonces pasó por mí fue indecible..." CU, 48.
- K. "... he shuts himself up with it [dread], he says, as a patient says to the surgeon when a painful operation is about to begin: 'Now I am ready'. Then dread enters into his soul and searches it thoroughly, constraining out of him all the finite and the petty and leading him hence whither he would go". COD, 142. "If in the strictest sense we are to speak of a sickness unto death, it must be the one in which the last thing is death and death the last thing. And this precisely is despair... It is indeed very far from being true that, literally understood, one dies of this sickness, or that this sickness ends with bodily death. On the contrary, the torment of despair is precisely this, not to be able to die... the hopelessness in this case is that even the last hope, death, is not available. When death is the greatest danger, one hopes for life; but when one becomes acquainted with an even more dreadful danger, one hopes for death. So when the danger is so great that death has become one's hope, despair is the disconsolateness of not being able to die". SUD, 150-151. "The relation, as it is always with dread, is sympathetic and antipathetic. This again seems paradoxical, and yet it is not; for though dread is afraid, yet it maintains a sly intercourse with its object, cannot look away from it, indeed will not..." COD, 92.

- U. "El que estaba ahí, de pie, delante mío, era yo, yo mismo, por lo menos en imagen...
—Sí, una alucinación... murmuré". CU, 48.
- K. "Generally speaking, imagination is the medium of the process of infinitizing... The self is reflection, and imagination is reflection, it is the counterfeit presentment of the self, which is the possibility of the self..." SUD, 163-164. "In the situation of possibility this [dread] manifests itself in the form of illusion..." COD, 98. "The self is a conscious synthesis of infinitude and finitude, which relates itself to itself, whose task is to become itself, a task which can be performed only by means of a relationship to God. But to become oneself is to become concrete... If on the contrary the self does not become itself, it is in despair". SUD, 163. "... more and more things become possible, because nothing becomes actual. At last it is as if everything were possible — but this is precisely when the abyss has swallowed up the self. Every little possibility even would require some time to become actuality. But finally the time which should be available for actuality becomes shorter and shorter, everything becomes more and more instantaneous... At the instant something appears possible and then a new possibility makes its appearance, at last this phantasmagoria moves so rapidly that it is as if everything were possible — and this is precisely the last moment, when the individual becomes for himself a mirage". SUD, 169.
- U. "Al poco rato sentía que el suelo se me iba de debajo de los pies, que el sillón se me desvanecía, que el aire iba enrareciéndose, las cosas todas que tenía a la vista, incluso mi otro yo, se iban esfumando..." CU, 49.
- K. "... though it [vertigo] is qualitatively different, despair has much in common [with it], since vertigo is under the rubric soul what despair is under the rubric spirit, and is pregnant with analogies to despair..." SUD, 149. "So when feeling becomes fantastic, the self is simply volatilized more and more, at last becoming a sort of abstract sentimentality which is so inhuman that it does not apply to any person... As the sufferer of rheumatism is unable to master his physical feelings which are under the sway of wind and weather... with the result that he is involuntarily aware of a change in the air etc., so it is with him whose feeling has become fantastic; he becomes in a way infinitized, but not in such a way that he becomes more himself, for he loses more and more... When the will becomes fantastic, the self likewise is volatilized more and more..." SUD, 164.

- U. "Cuando al poco rato volví en mí, es decir, cuando al poco rato volví al otro, o sea resucité... se me había limpiado el alma de aquel extraño terror". CU, 49.
- K. "... only the man who has gone through the dread of possibility is educated to have no dread—not because he avoids the dreadful things of life, but because they always are weak in comparison with those of possibility". COD, 141.
- U. "Me encontraba triste, muy triste, abismáticamente triste, pero sereno y sin temor a nada". CU, 49.
- K. "Not only is despair far more dialectical than an illness, but all its symptoms are dialectical... For not to be in despair may mean to be in despair, and it may also mean to be delivered from being in despair. A sense of security and tranquility may mean that one is in despair, precisely this security, this tranquility, may be despair; and it may mean that one has overcome despair and gained peace". SUD, 157.
- U. "Es como si hubiese cambiado el tono, el timbre de todo". CU, 51.
- K. "He who is educated by dread is educated by possibility... he will then interpret reality differently... and even when it rests upon him heavily, he will remember that after all it is far, far lighter than possibility was". COD, 139-140¹³.

¹³ Two further points may be mentioned. Kierkegaard describes a reaction similar to the narrator's in Unamuno's story. When the narrator says "Me dieron tentaciones de huir, pero la curiosidad venció en mí al miedo" (CU, 49) and earlier "la curiosidad pudo en mí más que la piedad, y es sabido que la curiosidad es una de las cosas que más hacen al hombre cruel" (CU, 47), we find traces in Kierkegaard: "Compassion is so far from being an advantage to the sufferer that rather by it one is only protecting one's egoism. One dare not in a deeper sense think of such troubles, and so one spares oneself by compassion. Only when the compassionate person is so related by his compassion to the sufferer that in the strictest sense he comprehends that it is his own cause which is here in question, only when he knows how to identify himself in such a way with the sufferer that when he is fighting for an explanation he is fighting for himself... only then does compassion acquire significance..." (COD, 107). But the narrator resembles one of Kierkegaard's "immediate" men, and so there is in his voice an element of mockery: "¿Y cómo no consultaste con un especialista?" (CU, 47). Or again: "Me parece una reflexión demasiado filosófica para ser dirigida a un perro..." (CU, 50); on seeing the corpse in the garden he responds with "Bueno... ¿y todo esto qué significa?" (CU, 51) and "Yo no creo nada". Kierkegaard comments thus on mockery: "The highest and apparently freest expression of unbelief is mockery. But certitude is precisely what mockery lacks, therefore it mocks..." (COD, 125). Emilio too says: "...tú no crees en nada y por no creer en nada no te puedes explicar cosa alguna, empezando por las más sencillas" (CU, 51). And Kierkegaard: "...in the same degree that the excellence of the proof increases, certitude seems to decrease..." (COD, 125).

In the short story we read: "Y en cuanto a eso de las alucinaciones, he de decirte que todo cuanto percibimos no es otra cosa, y que no son sino alucinacio-

VI

There are, of course, basic differences between Unamunian and Kierkegaardian despair, for one of the Danish philosopher's definitions of despair is: "After having been informed by a revelation from God what sin is, then before God in despair not to will to be oneself, or before God in despair to will to be oneself"¹⁴. Kierkegaardian dread also refers to sin, for it makes sin possible. However, although Unamuno is not concerned either with sin or with God in the story under discussion, there are general similarities. Specifically, Kierkegaard regards dread, or anxiety, as a necessary emotional constituent of the search for faith, Unamuno believes in the struggle for belief. Collado has succinctly explained Kierkegaard's approach, a definition which helps the reader understand Emilio's encounter: "El hombre queda aterrado ante su heterogeneidad, ante su espiritualidad, ante la inmensa posibilidad del espíritu. Todo esto le produce el vértigo del abismo. El hombre, al verse ante sí mismo, tiembla. El temblor psíquico es la angustia"¹⁵. Trembling and a reaction similar to vertigo are used by Unamuno to describe both Emilio's reaction to his recollections as well as his state just before death. The nothingness of Kierkegaard produces anguish, and Emilio's feeling of the invisible presence of death, "es decir, el anonadamiento" also leads to anguish, terror or dread. Emilio's impotence before his encounter with his other self is also expressed by Kierkegaard, for the ambivalent attitude of the individual in dread, an inability to tear oneself away, the fact that what one fears, one desires, causes dread to make the individual impotent"¹⁶.

nes nuestras impresiones todas. La diferencia es de orden práctico..." (CU, 50). "La lógica... es una institución social y la que se llama locura una cosa completamente privada. Si pudiéramos leer en las almas de los que nos rodean veríamos que vivimos envueltos en un mundo de misterios tenebrosos, pero palpables" (CU, 52). Kierkegaard in his *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* affirms that subjective reality, although it seems to contradict objective reality, may have its own validity. Here is the relevant quotation from Kierkegaard: "When the question of truth is raised in an objective manner, reflection is directed objectively to the truth, as an object to which the knower is related. Reflection is not focused upon the relationship, however, but upon the question of whether it is the truth to which the knower is related. If only the object to which he is related is the truth, the subject is accounted to be in the truth. When the question of the truth is raised subjectively, reflection is directed subjectively to the nature of the individual's relationship: if only the mode of this relationship is in the truth, the individual is in the truth, even if he should happen to be thus related to what is not true". A Kierkegaard Anthology, 210-211, K's italics.

¹⁴ SUD, 227.

¹⁵ Collado, 101.

¹⁶ COD, xii.

In addition to the difference between their points of departure, Kierkegaard, in his *The Sickness Unto Death*, describes several types of despair, his starting point being the man who to protect himself from reality retreats from self-awareness, who "has no consciousness of a self which is gained by the infinite abstraction from everything outward... which is the first form of the infinite self..."¹⁷ For this man "the whole problem of the self in a deeper sense becomes a sort of *blind door in the background of his soul behind which there is nothing... he is afraid that this thing in the background might again emerge*. So little by little he succeeds in forgetting it..."¹⁸

The second type of despair shows "greater consciousness of the fact that one's condition is that of despair", the despair is more intense, cannot be forgotten but "despair is held open every instant, and there is thus the possibility of salvation"¹⁹. In this despair at not willing to be himself, the despairer would leave the earthly, but instead of climbing to faith he becomes "more deeply absorbed in despair and despairs over his weakness". Despair is "to have lost the eternal and onself..."²⁰ Where does this despairer go from here? If he does not find faith, despair will be introversion or he will "plunge into life."

In the third type, or next step, when the despairer realizes why he does not want to be himself, there is a greater consciousness that suffering "comes directly from the self... In order to will in despair there must be consciousness of the infinite self... By aid of this infinite form the self despairingly wills to dispose of itself or to create itself, to make itself the self it wills to be, distinguishing in the concrete self what it will and what it will not accept."²¹ This purging and reconstruction enable him to have the self he wills. Thus in Kierkegaard's description of despair "attention was constantly directed to an ascending scale. The expression for the scale was in part potentiation as from passive suffering to conscious action. Both expressions in combination are in turn the expression for the fact that despair does not come from without but from within."²²

It is the second and third types of despairer that Emilio represents most closely—with an important exception. For we must remember that Kierkegaard insists that "when the individual is by possibility educated up to faith, dread will eradicate what it has itself produced."²³ Has Unamuno's Emilio been educated up to faith? In *The Sickness unto Death*

¹⁷ SUD, 188.

¹⁸ SUD, 189, my italics.

¹⁹ SUD, 196.

²⁰ SUD, 195.

²¹ SUD, 201.

²² SUD, 230. As in the case of the Unamunian *nivola*, this story has no external support, and like Emilio's despair, it is built up not from without but from within.

²³ COD, 143.

Kierkegaard describes the self when despair is completely eradicated: "... by relating itself to its own self and by willing to be itself the self is grounded transparently in the Power which posited it."²⁴ Both dread and despair can gain infinity. Emilio did not gain infinity, nor God, but a new self; he reconstructed himself but became wiser and sadder, perhaps because although he had "more consciousness and therefore more self" his new self was not grounded in God. Kierkegaard strongly condemns this futile recreation:

Ah, so much is said about human want and misery—I seek to understand it. I have also had some acquaintance with it at close range; so much is said about wasted lives—but only that man's life is wasted who lived on, so deceived by the joys of life or by its sorrows that he never became eternally and decisively conscious of himself as spirit, as self, or (which is the same thing) never became aware and in the deepest sense received an impression of the fact that there is a God, and that he, he himself, exists before God, which gain of infinity is never attained except through despair. And, oh, this misery, that so many live on and are defrauded of this most blessed of all thoughts; this misery... it seems to me that I could weep for an eternity over the fact that such misery exists...²⁵

In order to "support a reflection based on nothing" great faith is needed,²⁶ for Kierkegaard's believer "perceives and understands, humanly speaking, his destruction (in what has befallen him and in what he has ventured), but he believes. Therefore he does not succumb."²⁷ Emilio substituted for belief in God a belief in "cosas trascendentales, misteriosas, inexplicables..." This was as far as Unamuno could go in 1908.

VII

Both Unamuno and Kierkegaard are dealing with the individual in crisis; the latter's *The Sickness unto Death*, the only work before Freud devoted exclusively to the problem of anxiety, has been the source of much comment by existential psychoanalysts who have found much that is useful in his analysis of anxiety, depression and despair. They underline Kierkegaard's understanding, both in *Sickness* and in *The Concept of*

²⁴ SUD, 147.

²⁵ SUD, 159-160.

²⁶ SUD, 158.

²⁷ SUD, 172.