

OYA, Alberto. (2020). *Unamuno's Religious Fictionalism*. Cham: Palgrave MacMillan. IX + 93 pp.

What would human beings share? According to Spanish philosopher Miguel de Unamuno, the longing for immortality. That idea was one of the main concepts argued by the philosopher. The Spanish scholar Alberto Oya has devoted his most recent study to analyzing this Unamuno guideline. Oya's book offers an analysis of Unamuno's ideas on religious faith, the reasons that Unamuno proposed about this subject and related currents, and his defense of this human aspect.

The author structures his book with short chapters that show Unamuno's view from different perspectives. The influences of the Spanish philosopher also appear in the essay, from Spinoza to Kierkegaard. The essay examines some of the main features in Unamuno's system of philosophy. This is written from the perspective of a Spanish scholar who studies him from his analytic background, and often deepens in the philosophy of religion. In fact, the book points out the relevance of Unamuno's stance when addressing contemporary non-cognitivist and fictionalist conceptions of religious faith.

Oya starts with the notion of hunger of immortality, "hambre de inmortalidad". Immortality is considered a nuclear and vital matter in each human life. This concept is related to Spinoza's notion of appetite, felt by all sentient beings and apparently non-sentient beings, such as rocks. All beings long for an endless existence. For Unamuno, this is a metaphysical claim rather than a psychological one. Unamuno took Spinoza's *conatus* but developed the idea with different implications, theorizing that beings want to exist in a never-ending life as themselves.

Nevertheless, Oya rightly points out that, accepted this, then Spinoza's grounds drop in his free man principle. The consequence of Unamuno's hambre-hungry is that all human beings look for extending their individuality to embrace the universe, being themselves. Therefore, an aspiration to God. Still, what kind of immortality is sought by Unamuno? One embodied, as individuals of flesh and bones, instead of the one unwarranted granted as souls. We long for this endless life against reason, which denies that very possibility. The

Christian God seems to be granted this desire, thanks to Resurrection.

According to Unamuno, the Christian God satisfies our longing for an endless existence, our most essential inclination. But this is not an intellectual longing. We have an affective or emotional relationship with this aspiration and with God. Sadly, arguments will fail to demonstrate that this hunger can be satisfied. For this reason, Christians believe in their God with faith based on love and spirit, instead of arguments and ideas. For Unamuno, Christianity was a wrestle between heart and mind.

Therefore, we long for the Christian God because this God can offer an endless life in flesh and bones, thanks to Resurrection. However, on the other hand, we cannot be sure of His existence if we see this from the point of view of reason. That causes the tragic sense of life, “sentimiento trágico de la vida”, paradigmatic of the Spanish philosopher. This anguish grows from the irresolvable struggle between sentiment and reason, and the faith that has to come from this fight, at least for a Christian. This anguish seems to be felt by all singular things, even apparently non-sentient beings, so we can feel mercy for

our fellows in life. Our anguish induces a feeling of the world as a sentient Being linked to us by love and compassion.

If we understand religious faith like Unamuno does, it constitutes something rooted in human natural condition. Unamuno's stance does not have an apologetic value because it is grounded in us, beings, and in our nature. Therefore, his view does not provide evidence that proves the existence of God. Religious faith emerges from us, from our vital longing for an endless life. Oya links the original subjectivism, nuclear to Unamuno, with the notions expressed by contemporary philosophers working close to religious fictionalism.

In conclusion, the book consists of new insights proposed by a Spanish scholar on philosophy about one of the most remarkable philosophers of this culture. The author studies Unamuno analyzing one of his most relevant notions. Oya demonstrates a solid background on this subject, thanks to which he leads the way to new views of Unamuno and the philosophy of religion that will improve our understanding of them.

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