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LAURA EXPÓSITO LAGUNA*

ON THE PHILOSOPHER SEEKING A CURE**

UNDERSTANDING 20TH CENTURY SPAIN THROUGH A SYMBIOSIS
OF HISTORY AND ORTEGA'S PHILOSOPHY

LASAGA MEDINA, J. 2022. *MEDITACIONES PARA UN SIGLO: LA FILOSOFÍA POLÍTICA DE ORTEGA Y GASSET*. MADRID: CINCA

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In 2022, José Lasaga Medina published his essayistic work *Meditations for a Century: The Political Philosophy of Ortega y Gasset*, in which he explores the thought of the great Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset during the first half of the 20th century. Thus, readers will see not only the development of his ideas, but also the historical context that shaped them and gave the philosopher his distinctive outlook. The reader will be able to delve into Ortega's work while exploring the European and Spanish situation of the time.

The author, José Lasaga, is a Spanish philosopher, professor, and researcher. His work has focused on various topics such as the philosophy of Hannah Arendt, the figure of Don Juan, and even the philosophy of education, but his most notable expertise is his knowledge of Ortega.

Meditations for a Century is his most recent work, and in it, we find a profound reflection on the 20th century through the lens of the Spanish philosopher Ortega y Gasset, one of the most influential thinkers of his time. The work not only offers an overview of some of the major events that occurred in Europe during the 20th century, but also, along with the extensive analysis of Ortega's thought, allows us to attain a more detailed understanding of the situation and its political and philosophical implications.

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From Ortega's early writings to his more mature reflections, the reader witnesses a journey through the writer's life via his biography, his philosophical views, and his historical context. Being aware of the latter is crucial to understanding where a thinker's ideas originate. What he is thinking, when, and how it affects him and his country... All this allows us to read Ortega's work with deeper knowledge and a more faithful interpretation of reality. Lasaga is able to show us this in his work thanks to the narrative he establishes in perfect harmony between history, life, and thought, which is only possible due to his extensive knowledge of Ortega's texts. Thus, we will see, among many other things, the critique of modernity, the development of his historical perspective, an analysis of the circumstance of the human being and his attempt to save it.

The Great War was a significant blow to European society, and the following need to rethink theoretical, philosophical, and cultural frameworks is evident in the thought of many philosophers. Ortega cannot remain indifferent to this situation, and the path his philosophy takes reflects this. Being a thinker deeply concerned with his present and with history, the situation of war and cultural change notably captures his attention and inspires his ideas.

Lasaga explores the way in which Ortega grows as a thinker over time, how the world influences him, and how his relationship with other philosophers, such as Unamuno, shapes his thought. From his early writings to *The Revolt of the Masses*, one of his most influential works, Lasaga analyzes the texts of the Spanish philosopher, demonstrating a deep knowledge of them. The reader can discover Ortega's assumptions and premises, his influences, his hidden messages, and the concerns that drive his ideas. Through an investigation of the historical context, one is able to delve deeply into Ortega's thought and unravel with him the Spanish question that concerns him so much.

With this work, one can become familiar with the vital reason postulated by Ortega's philosophy. Also, as a critique of modernity, it is presented as a proposal and solution to the challenges of the time and as a more suitable epistemological tool. Lasaga also explores the famous idea of circumstance, investigating Ortega's conceptions of freedom, vitality, the individual, and their interdependence within the surrounding context, proposing athletic effort as a reflection of personal freedom.

The Revolt of the Masses is likewise one of the most discussed works in Lasaga's book due to its importance, not only for Ortega's career, but also for its social, cultural and political impact. Thanks to the author's research,

the reader can appreciate Ortega's ability to analyze his circumstances and context, as well as his capacity for diagnosis and integration into his theory. Through this, we can see his participation in politics, his critiques of fascism, communism, democracy and Spain. One can understand history through Ortega's concepts, while simultaneously understanding Ortega's philosophy through its historical context, a perfect symbiosis.

This is extremely important for the reader and for a deeper understanding. Considering the importance Ortega placed on understanding history as a crucial element for analyzing reality, Lasaga's approach makes even more sense. This profound attention to the past, present, and future is essential for facing any challenges that arise. Once again, we see historical reason as a new model of reason for addressing its time. A model of knowledge presented, also, as a "cure" for the ills of the moment.

The historical perspective also plays a leading role in Ortega's cultural vision when observing the "new art" in his *Dehumanization of Art*. Here, one can see Ortega's deep concern for future generations as a hope for society and its problems. With this, one can also understand the ongoing analysis that Lasaga presents on the Spanish question. Ortega entered politics upon seeing a problem and wanting to act on it. Thus, he questions what was happening with Europe, what was happening with Spain after the Great War. The "vital Spain" is postulated as an ideal and future plan, as a message for the youth, and Ortega's solutions and philosophical perspectives will vary from hope to concern.

Overall, *Meditations for a Century* offers readers the opportunity to delve into the thought of Ortega y Gasset through a clear and accessible interpretation of the famous philosopher's initial exploration. Not only are the most important texts analyzed, but secondary texts are also used for support, allowing for a better understanding and providing a more complete context.

Following Ortega's historical perspective, Lasaga provides us with a journey through the philosopher's life, the development of his thought, and the historical events that accompanied and shaped his intellectual and personal evolution. This book is suitable for those who are still new to Ortega's philosophy, for philosophy students beginning to delve into vital reason, and even for those already well familiar with Ortega, who can continue learning thanks to Lasaga.

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О ФИЛОСОФЕ, ИЩУЩЕМ ЛЕКАРСТВО

ПОНИМАНИЕ ИСПАНИИ XX ВЕКА ЧЕРЕЗ СИМБИОЗ ИСТОРИИ И

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