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FROM THE EXECUTIVE EDITORS OF THE ISSUE

José Ortega y Gasset (Madrid, 1883–1955) is the most prominent Spanish philosopher of the 20th century. He is also considered one of the most original European thinkers of the past century. His ideas and some of his solutions were pivotal in shaping the global philosophical landscape, and his influence was notable both in Europe and the United States (where he was embraced by various philosophical and sociological movements), as well as in Latin America, where his doctrine reached through the numerous students exiled after the Spanish Civil War.

We are now marking the centenary of the peak years of his thought: in 1922, *España invertibrada* was published; in 1923, *El tema de nuestro tiempo*; in 1925, *La deshumanización del arte* was released; and between 1927 and 1930, *La rebelión de las masas* appeared in articles and as a book. This anniversary seemed like a perfect occasion to present this special issue on his philosophy one hundred years later: Which of his theories remain relevant today? To what extent have his work and that of his disciples influenced the shaping of our present? What can we expect from Ortega studies in the coming years?

The editors of this special issue would like to thank *Filosofiya. Zhurnal Vysshey Shkoly Ekonomiki* (*Philosophy. Journal of the Higher School of Economics*) for providing the opportunity to present the work of Ortega y Gasset to the general public and, particularly, to the Russian philosophical academy. We are confident that the articles in this volume will be of interest and foster a fruitful dialogue. We also wish to express our sincere gratitude to all those who have generously agreed to contribute to this special issue by submitting articles or book reviews that demonstrate the relevance and productivity of this significant field of study. We sincerely hope that their contributions, whose quality and scholarship we attest to, will offer novel perspectives and facilitate further research on Ortega around the world.

Rodolfo Gutiérrez Simón
Complutense University of Madrid
Roman Ustiantsev
Complutense University of Madrid
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ORTEGA'S THOUGHT

STUDIES

ИССЛЕДОВАНИЯ

JOSÉ LUIS VILLACAÑAS BERLANGA*

THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF NEW ART IN ORTEGA**

Submitted: Sept. 05, 2024. Reviewed: Oct. 20, 2024. Accepted: Nov. 24, 2024.

Abstract: Ortega's work, like the reality of Isis, has ten thousand faces. It is multifaceted, and due to its creative and discursive approach, progresses without the reflective layers characteristic of a systematic construction. This very nature is the source of its rich layers and its internal complexity. One way of reading it may be to seek the best way to provide coherence. This is what I have attempted in my book on Ortega. However, that will never be the only way to read Ortega. In fact, no interpretation can exhaust the richness of his work. Another approach is to reveal the internal tensions, the flaws, and the discrepancies that emerge when trying to build a cohesive whole from it. This perspective inevitably notices the deep evolutionary motives aimed at suturing the most evident fissures. This latter reading is the one I wish to undertake in this discussion. I hope that, in this way, I will not have to repeat what we might call the more constructive interpretation I have presented in my book.

Keywords: Ortega y Gasset, Art, Phenomenology.

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THE TWO FRONTS OF ORTEGA: OVERCOMING KANT, THINKING LIFE

In the mid-1920s, Ortega embarked on two complementary philosophical endeavors. The first was to definitively break away from the Kantian system, which he referred to as the “piety of culture” and the tyranny of the “ought-to-be.” The second was to advance his own theory of life as an original and structural phenomenon of the new philosophical era. Achieving both objectives through a single philosophical argument was no easy task, yet he made significant strides in partial elements. He had done so in *The Theme of Our Time* (1923), he reiterated this in his approach to Kant’s centenary in 1924, and he would return to it in his aesthetic writings of 1925. Of course, Ortega did not explicitly state that with *The Dehumanization of Art* and *Ideas on the Novel* he was also abandoning the Kantian aesthetic framework, just as he had previously abandoned the moral and epistemological framework of Kantianism. However, his two famous aesthetic essays can also be interpreted from this perspective of breaking away from the past, and quite radically at that. Understanding what this operation entailed offers profound philosophical lessons, which may still hold relevance for our present. To explore this matter, it is useful to recall certain features of the Kantian program and its vision for an aesthetic regime.

Kant was extraordinarily aware of an asymmetry between theoretical pure reason and moral pure reason. The former had an element that ensured the universal application of logical functions, allowing all human beings to apply them to the perceptions of sensible intuition in a common manner. This element was the schema. Whoever wished to apply the subject function of any judgment had to seek in the sensible perceptions the permanent material content over time. Logical subject and temporal permanence were analogous functions. The same could be said of the logical function of implication, which was applied unequivocally through the temporal succession of perceptual material contents. The logical function of disjunction or reciprocal relation was applied to the sensible content through the schema of simultaneity. Pure concepts achieved their unequivocal sensible use through these schemas. As forms of the temporal order, they were transcendental, constant operations of the imagination.

However, the pure concept of moral reason, the categorical imperative, did not possess schemas for application to sensible material. The notion that human beings are ends in themselves and not mere means — the key to respecting the moral imperative in human action — could not be universally applied to states of sensibility, because imagination did not have a universal

operational schema here. We lack a universal moral imagination that tells each of us what it materially means to be an end in oneself. This absence of a moral imagination compromised the effectiveness of practical reason.

Kant sought a solution to this problem until the end. He made an initial attempt in the *Critique of Judgment*. Even in his *Metaphysics of Morals*, he alluded to the need for aesthetic education, after recognizing the importance of Friedrich Schiller's program. In any case, this program shaped the modern aesthetic regime, which was only truly challenged by Nietzsche, the final enigma of all avant-garde theory. We can refer to this Kantian aesthetic regime as the core of bourgeois *Bildung* (cultural education). Its central idea was that moral reason required something akin to the imagination possessed by theoretical reason. This substitute for imagination, this kind of moral imagination, was the aesthetic faculty of judgment.

From early on, Kant intuited that this faculty, which was supposed to ensure the applicability of moral categories, needed to have a dual structure. Drawing on his extensive readings of English literature, to which he was greatly inclined, he identified the distinct functionality of the notions of the beautiful and the sublime in relation to the two central aspirations of moral reason. The regime of the beautiful allowed for the imagining of a type of feeling in which the human being expressed a communal dimension. By cultivating a common sense as a response to the pleasure principle, the beautiful set boundaries for what it could mean for a human being to be an end in itself in social interactions. It produced a shared pleasure, achieved through the free play of subjective faculties, characterized by ease and naturalness of experience — what was termed “natural grace,” an attitude in which humans neither coerced nor violated themselves. If one were guided by this feeling of the beautiful experience, they would be able to form a community where respect for each individual's intrinsic worth could emerge without the abstract constraints of a purely legalistic sense of duty. Guided by this schema of the beautiful, one could act morally in concrete terms, ensuring free integration into a community of shared sentiment that did not violate human singularity. It was enough to leave the other as free and happy in their spontaneity as the experience of the beautiful suggested. Here, one could be an end in oneself in a way that did not disrupt the communal structure, based on granting the same spontaneity, naturalness, and joy to the other. Thus, the beautiful acted as a surrogate for the schema, fulfilling the same function, but applied to the realm of moral reason. Respecting the experience of the beautiful — shared enjoyment — served as a guide for respecting the law of the good, for acting in common.

But Kant understood, much more than Edmund Burke and in line with other bourgeois thinkers from Humboldt to John Stuart Mill, that this communal condition as a foundation for moral reason was not free of risks. It could indeed become stifling if maintained unilaterally. To ensure moral action, it was not enough to align our actions with the idea that the other could be an end in themselves in the material sense that the common sense of the beautiful allowed. To guarantee the moral experience integrally, we needed to intensify our understanding of freedom. Kant realized that this intensification had to be mediated by that specific aesthetic enjoyment produced by the feeling of the sublime. If the good could not be separated from the beautiful, from a certain grace and naturalness in human interactions, then the experience of freedom as something of our own had to be strengthened by the capacity to enjoy the sublime. An integral aesthetic education, if it was to serve morality, had to address both grace and dignity.

The radical difference between the beautiful and the sublime lay in that the first aesthetic object forged a common sense, while the second created a unique, intransferable experience—solitary, in a way, as romanticism would soon interpret. The fact that both could be derived from certain experiences of nature guaranteed universal access to this experience, something required for its function of mediating universal moral law.

ABANDONING THE PROGRAM OF BOURGEOIS BILDUNG

From this entire argument, only this difference matters to us. The experience of the beautiful is communal. The experience of the sublime is personal and solitary because it aims to intensify the sense of one's own freedom. Of course, Nietzsche dismantled this aesthetic regime. The beautiful, in the Kantian sense, became something suited to a domesticated sensibility. The sublime, springing from Dionysian sources, had to be projected into the communal sphere under the power of Apollonian instincts. The assumption behind this transformation was that nature was no longer the formative object of aesthetic education. This role fell exclusively on the products of art. The displacement of nature toward the artistic work, along with its productivity, became the most significant sign of this new understanding. Music, as a symbolic representation of the will to live, now became the key to aesthetic education and the program of *Bildung*. In Wagner's great works, the possibility of a total artwork capable of forming a sublime, public art was to be realized, taking up the torch of Schillerian theater as the educational ideal for a new humanity. We know where this program led.

Ortega takes up this scenario, and the problem he addresses in *The Dehumanization of Art* is connected to this evolution. However, he confronted a phenomenon that challenged the general program of collective Bildung. His starting point, characterized as the unpopularity of new art, was merely an expression of this rupture. Art was no longer governed by any educational program, by the formation of a common sense, or by the need to prepare a moral community. In reality, new art had broken away from the old program of mediation toward a new morality. Now, art was no longer aimed at the production of community. Instead, it continued to project itself onto social life, not by generating community but by causing social fracture. Symptomatically, it seemed that art was breaking with the grammar of the Kantian concept of the beautiful. The community, now reduced to the form of the masses, reacted to the eruption of the personal freedom of the artist with a certain hostility. This is what made the sociological study of art relevant, particularly the social reception of art, a line of inquiry that Ortega valued in Jean-Marie Guyau, known as the “French Nietzsche,” whose work *Art from a Sociological Perspective* had been published in Madrid by Sáenz de Jubera Hermanos in 1902.

Of course, Guyau still sought to maintain the Kantian program in his own way and defended the system of its mediations. Ortega, writing forty years later, observed the end of the bourgeois emancipatory dream and its socialist intensifications, noting the impossibility of creating a common sense with art. On the contrary, he saw that this program had been abandoned. Hence, as he stated, it was necessary to reflect on the sociology of art, a task yet to be undertaken in this new context. Through this perspective, Ortega renewed a consistent element of his thinking: his hostility toward the figure of the bourgeois, now the man blind and deaf to new art. All sentiments related to pain and joy — those elements intrinsic to Kantian beautiful art — were dismissed as melodramatic. In reality, the neighbor had disappeared for the artist. Common sense, that form of Kantian contagion, was superfluous. Ortega even rejected the dimension of unconscious contagion. Against the aspiration to forge a common sense or to extend the idea of freedom in the public’s personal experience, the new art now aimed only for a form of intelligent, non-sentimental pleasure.

Thus, Ortega saw in this type of art an additional impetus for fulfilling his first objective: separating himself from the Kantian universe. But what about the second objective, to secure within the same movement a philosophy of life? At first glance, reflection on the new art seemed a way to achieve this. New art required from its audience and revealed in the artist “nobility

of nerves, [...] instinctive aristocracy” (Ortega y Gasset, 1997: Vol. 3, 355). These characteristics altered the domain of the sublime, as the new art was characterized as a means of knowledge for the best (ibid.: Vol. 3, 356). It did not serve to forge a common sense, nor to enjoy shared freedom, nor to affirm “the false presupposition of real equality among human beings” (ibid.: Vol. 3, 356), but rather to differentiate among them. If Ortega had been more attentive to the latest German literature, he might have been pleased to find a fundamental metaphor aligning with a contemporary novel, *The Magic Mountain*, where human beings were divided between the inhabitants of the plains and the elitist mountain dwellers, experiencing death in the elevated Berghof of Davos. For Ortega, this was a “salvific split,” in stark contrast to the final pedagogical ironies of Thomas Mann, who bade farewell to the late-romantic illusions of aesthetic elitism.

Nevertheless, this theoretical way of discussing the social aspect of new art, so positive, contrasted with Ortega’s remarks about actual artistic works. The difference is striking. For instance, his appreciation of Picasso’s painting as an “exemplary failure” (ibid.: Vol. 3, 366 n1) was far from encouraging. In other passages, he spoke of “errors and even frauds of cubism” (ibid.: Vol. 3, 377). When discussing Dadaism, he referred to it in terms of extravagance and failed attempts. All of this, of course, confirmed the abandonment of the Kantian “ought-to-be,” as the “organic principle” of new art implied the abandonment of all norms (ibid.: Vol. 3, 366 m2). This orientation primarily excluded the norm of natural reality and dismissed the principle of realistic mimesis. Perhaps this is why he felt inclined to locate something sublime as the key to new art. Ortega spoke of “constructing something that is not a copy of nature and yet possesses some substantive quality, implying the most sublime gift” (ibid.: Vol. 3, 366). However, this sublime dimension was now used for an alternative moral program. For Kant, the sublime aimed to ensure the freedom of the individual as the common dignity of humanity. The beautiful aimed to secure its egalitarian and communal dimension. Both addressed universal aspects of human reason. Now, the sublime aimed to project a different public morality, seemingly aligned with political reform. In both spheres, and in 1925, Ortega welcomed the emergence of an aristocratic bearing (ibid.: Vol. 3, 356).

This moral reform implied a new sense of freedom. All the elements of new art proposed by Ortega were rooted in a new understanding of freedom, uncoerced by the principle of reality or the constraints of living forms. The new pure art was a free art, rejecting mimesis. It was art as play, where the decisive element was the perception of one’s own creative freedom,

the abandonment of the shared space of feelings typical of naturalized spontaneous life. This compact set of attitudes moved forward through the absolute mediations of art toward irony about the work itself, its lack of transcendence, always viewing creative activity as play. Going beyond common realities formed the basis of ultraism, seen by Ortega as a “new sensibility” (Ortega y Gasset, 1997: Vol. 3, 365). Aesthetic pleasure was no longer the pleasure of nature but of the art objects themselves. It was an artistic pleasure. Art transcended immediate, naturalized, reified reality. It created its own reality. In this way, art became an autonomous, absolute sphere, living for itself.

The call for the dehumanization of art thus implied the process of denaturalization of art, and this, in turn, the absolutization of art. But for Ortega, it also signified the *debourgeoisification* of social life. This aspiration closely aligned with his idea of being “very 20th century” and “not at all 19th century.” At the peak of his life, Ortega finally saw the triumph of the rupture with the world of his elders, a rupture he had demanded since 1914. Art seemed to be the best example of that liberal revolution he had advocated with unprecedented force in Hispanic thought. But what about the second objective, of paving the way for an authentic vital reason? This issue, which opened the door to his true philosophical horizon, was much more complex. As always, *la pars construens* was more intricate than the critique.

NEW ART AND LIFE: THE AMBIVALENCES OF THE PHENOMENON

Ortega believed in the organic nature of epochs, an “identical inspiration, a shared biological style” that pervaded an entire era. As if anticipating Foucault’s aspiration for an ontology of the present, he asserted a “compact solidarity with itself that each historical epoch maintains in all its manifestations” (ibid.: Vol. 3, 354). Consequently, he felt compelled to link the phenomenology of new art with the philosophical key he was striving to offer for the entirety of the epoch. Integrating Weber’s differentiation of spheres of social action, he understood that the organicity of an epoch required respect for the boundaries between these spheres (ibid.: Vol. 3, 371). However, unlike Weber, he envisioned an organic unity of the epoch. Conceiving this unity within an order of autonomous spheres required careful thought. Ortega had to place the systematic phenomenon of life at the architectural center of his time. Thus, the phenomenology of art gained greater significance. To achieve this, he had to relate his philosophical ideas about life to the new art and place it within the framework of ascending or descending life—the key to the “salvific split,” the foundation of all differences. In this regard,

he had no doubt when asserting that “Any obstinacy in remaining within our habitual horizon signals weakness, a decline of vital energies” (Ortega y Gasset, 1997: Vol. 3, 367). The will to live, if carried out freely, was a will to “deform reality.” Style, as he noted recalling his earlier observations on Mannerism, implied dehumanization. Everything seemed to align. New art enhanced vital energy. But there, surprisingly, tensions erupted.

How did dehumanized new art intensify life? This point was unclear. In the conclusion of *Art in the Present and Future*, Ortega had to acknowledge that the pleasure of classical art was the enjoyment of the vital, while new art was the enjoyment of the aesthetic (ibid.: Vol. 3, 428). From this perspective, the advantages of new art for life were not evident compared to the Kantian or Schillerian program. After all, disgust for reality — a central element of new art — was also disgust for “living forms or living beings” (ibid.: Vol. 3, 377). In classical art forms, “sources of torrential life” (ibid.: Vol. 3, 377) were evident. One only needed to recall the sense of vital plenitude that Kant recorded in the aesthetic experience, a plenitude that Schiller theorized as *Spieltrieb*. The vitalism of art seemed better assured under the classical program. So, did new art enhance vital intensity or not? Was it in harmony with the organic style of the epoch, or not?

Ortega emphasized that the work of new art was to be viewed by an observer freed from any sentimental structure. But was sentiment not rooted in the structure of life? New art was both the result and cause of this liberation, teaching a disgust for the human. The subjectivity that emerged from this training preserved only intelligence, ready to appreciate the objectivity of the work. Feelings obscured vision, eliminating the *pathos* of distance. Here, Ortega had in mind the music of Debussy, the poetry of Mallarmé or Valéry. These were far removed from the Dionysian, euphoric elements in art. He ventured into territory where he was uncertain. This emotionally cold art was valued positively, but cubism and Dadaism, which were no less intellectual, seemed like frustrated experiments. In any case, the Dionysian elements seemed to guarantee life’s exuberance. Intelligence, as a mode of relating to the object of art, did not appear compatible with this exuberance. “Life is one thing, poetry another,” Ortega had to admit when speaking of Mallarmé’s dehumanized poetry, which he called “the higher algebra of metaphors” (ibid.: Vol. 3, 371–372). The intelligence needed to understand it required a certain aristocratic spirit. Ultimately, Ortega had to acknowledge that the freedom to engage in this artistic play — the irony, the *pathos* of distance, as a distinctive subjective form of new art — “nullifies all vital resonance” (ibid.: Vol. 3, 372). How could one advance the process

of dehumanization without moving toward a process of devitalization, of cooling life? And if new art dehumanized and devitalized, was it not heading toward trivialization? The invitation to dwell in art as in an imaginary reef may have been different from a “flight from the world,” an “attempt to avoid reality,” but was it not also avoiding the reality of life? The organicity of the epoch centered around life was, in any case, compromised. The questions became unstoppable. If the origin of every metaphor lay in a fear of reality, if metaphor was the trace of a taboo against touching it, was art still a trace of that fear, another way of keeping reality under the mandate of taboo? However, new art did not display respect for reality but rather a kind of sadism toward it. Disgust was certainly one of the emotions that produced taboo. But did it not also imply a certain disgust for life itself?

Ortega hesitated between these two lines of analysis: an art of objective intelligence and an art connected to life. However, only an art linked to life was organic with the epoch and, more importantly, aligned with the principle of his philosophy. He was thus compelled to expand his analysis in an attempt to provide an explanation. For instance, he demonstrated that these were two divergent aspects of the will to avoid touching reality. One led to infrarrealism, which dissected reality sadistically, even paying an “inhuman attention to feelings” (Ortega y Gasset, 1997: Vol. 3, 375). This was the path taken by the new novels of Italo Svevo, James Joyce and Marcel Proust. The other led to suprarrealism, which exalted art through the use of metaphor to abandon reality, as seen in poetry, painting, and music. In both cases, there was a clear demonstration of the artist’s superiority over the real, which was, in any case, despised. Art asserted its own reality. But what nourished art if it sadistically despised reality, if it hated and precisely dissected it?

Ortega stated his answer clearly: ideas. They were what made art an inherently intellectual pleasure (after Pirandello). But what did ideas hold within themselves? Such questions linger beneath Ortega’s text, hinting at the final, unspoken question: what did ideas have to do with life? By not clearly formulating said question, Ortega once again remained ambivalent. In the end, he realized that the intellectual understanding underlying new art was that it truly hated artistic tradition. Behind the hatred of living forms, was there perhaps a hatred of art itself? Ortega sensibly posed this question. And if the epoch was organic, was not this hatred of tradition, of history, of the institution of art a symptom of a broader disdain, a deeper weariness?

Following the course of his questions, Ortega believed he had reached a solid phenomenon, the bedrock of the historical situation. “Is there an

inconceivable resentment fermenting in the hearts of Europeans against their own historical essence...?" (Ortega y Gasset, 1997: Vol. 3, 381). The question was radical. It seems evident that Ortega, in pursuing the phenomenon of new art and attempting to align it with the organic sense of the epoch, discovered something significant for his own philosophical development. He realized that it was difficult to understand new art from the systematic phenomenon of life unless this phenomenon was grasped as intrinsically historical. It was challenging to relate the phenomena of new art to life, but something seemed to come to light when it was linked to historical life. The fact that Ortega sensed new ground is evident in the simple fact that he framed it as a question, and more importantly, that he left it unanswered.

CONCLUSION: DIALECTIC BETWEEN LIFE AND HISTORY

If what new art expressed was hatred, what kind of enthusiasm did Ortega, nevertheless, see within it? Is there enthusiasm in boredom, disdain or disgust? Ortega acknowledged that all of this was highly ambiguous. It was more than that — a contradiction of love and hate, an emotional chaos that could well be the result of fatigue. When the delirium of that fatigue became the material of art, there could only be one response: comic irony. Art thus became a joke, a farce. We are faced with Nietzsche's appreciation for *opera buffa*, for Verdi's *Falstaff*. Here, Ortega glimpsed a path for easing tensions, a way to recover a light spirit, to enjoy a moment of joviality. The parodic nature of art emerges here, as Nietzsche had prophesied. Art lives off art, but by mocking art. This was the only content still capable of enchanting the world, the last trace of its "magical gift," the final expression of freedom. The institutionalized was scorned for the sake of new paths to freedom. History was despised in order to open up history.

In the end, as always when he encountered contradictions and ambivalences, Ortega resolved them by invoking real dialectics. In this case, it was even a marvelous dialectic. The negation of new art was the path to affirmation. Seriousness arose from resentment toward what was already dead, although the positive outcome was the farce it produced. Resentment producing a farce has a name: sarcasm. This was the meaning of its lack of transcendence. What was denounced here was the sublimation that had led art to present itself as the new salvation of humanity — the piety of the Kantian cultural universe once again. Pressured to reconcile all of this with the affirmation of life central to the organicity of the epoch, Ortega identified this movement as embodying the maxim *ab integro ordo*. He recalled that,

by mockingly rejecting the historical evolution of the institution of art, one arrived at the immediacy of life. Negativity served this positivity.

However, something in this step does not work. Sarcasm is not puerility; it is the expression of an old soul, not a child's. Ortega overlooked this and used the argument to reconcile art with life. New art took us back to childhood, just as Picasso's masks took us back to prehistory. That was its greatness: it created childlike ingenuousness in an old world. Thus, he was able to connect with the "triumph of sports and games" (Ortega y Gasset, 1997: Vol. 3, 384). Through this, he could reconcile with the values of life and youth. Art, he announced, was leading Europe into a new childishness.

But what remained of the idea, of the new objectivity, of the new intellectual aristocracy? Was it enough to express hatred for history to claim this new status? What about the contents of the artistic work itself? Did it matter that some were mere essays, or even frauds? These were unavoidable questions, and Ortega had the intellectual tools to pose them and was not satisfied with superficial answers. In another work, when he spoke of childishness, he associated it with the belief "that man can do whatever he likes at any time" (ibid.: Vol. 3, 423). If this was the result of the dialectic between historical negativity and the positivity it generated, it seemed that new art had a rather simplistic foundation. Real historical dialectics had to have a different structure, once again pressing Ortega to resolve the problem of the centrality of life with the complement of historical reason. With this elementary dialectic, the phenomenology of new art was overly simplified, which perhaps explained its uncertain aspect. The vital dialectic seemed inclined toward the simple positivity of affirming immediate life. Provisionally, in his 1925 essay, faced once again with the need for epochal organicity based on the fundamental fact of life, Ortega leaned towards a more one-sided view. This non-transcendent art, purely affirming youth, the body, and sports with great modesty, was not the intellectual art he initially analyzed — the new objectivity, the spirit of distance, and the drive for ideality. This tension could only be resolved if new art was mediated by history in a way other than mere negativity.

Ortega could not feel comfortable with his final reflections or the state his philosophy had reached in 1925. His own assessment of the essay was notably cautious. He called the likelihood that his analysis was correct an "illustrious coincidence." This was highly ironic, but not out of a lack of seriousness or puerility, but rather due to a keen sense of intellectual responsibility. His unease, unknowingly, was already searching for the next step in his thinking. Art was like Isis, and it could be called a reality with ten thousand names.

Philosophy, at the very least, should recognize this and not be satisfied with just one. However, there is no doubt that Ortega challenged anyone who objected to his arguments to offer a new path for art. Ultimately, the most significant outcome of *The Dehumanization of Art* lies in its emphasis on the intellectualization of art and its dependence on the idea. This fundamental stance did not clearly establish the organicity of the epoch based solely on the phenomenon of life. New art had no clear relationship with life, nor did it appear to have a complex relationship with history. The interplay of affirmations and negations seemed too simplistic. A more complex mediation, a more realistic historical dialectic, called for a new way of relating life and history. For this reason, in my opinion, this 1925 book is a powerful contribution to the “full emergence of historical sense,” (Ortega y Gasset, 1997: Vol. 3, 427) and, in this regard, a fundamental stage in Ortega’s thought.

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ФЕНОМЕНОЛОГИЯ НОВОГО ИСКУССТВА У ОРТЕГИ

Получено: 05.09.2024. Рецензировано: 20.10.2024. Принято: 24.11.2024.

Аннотация: Работа Ортеги, подобно реальности Исиды, имеет десять тысяч лиц. Это многогранное произведение, которое благодаря своему творческому и дискурсивному характеру продвигается вперед без рефлексивных складок, свойственных систематической конструкции. Именно этот характер придает ему богатство слоев и внутреннюю проблематичность. Чтение может стремиться найти наилучший способ предложить вам ее целостность. Именно это я попытался сделать в своей книге об Ортеге. Но это никогда не будет единственным прочтением Ортеги. На самом деле ни одно прочтение не может исчерпать его богатство. Другой способ его чтения — это выявление внутренних напряжений, неудач и дисбалансов при попытке построить из его работы некую целостность. Такой взгляд неизбежно обнаруживает глубокие эволюционные мотивы, смысл которых заключался в устранении наиболее очевидных разрывов. Именно такое другое прочтение я хочу предложить в этом исследовании.

Ключевые слова: Ортега-и-Гассет, искусство, феноменология.

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TWO OPPOSING VISIONS OF ART**

JOSÉ ORTEGA Y GASSET AND MARÍA ZAMBRANO

Submitted: Aug. 18, 2024. Reviewed: Nov. 06, 2024. Accepted: Nov. 24, 2024.

Abstract: Art occupies a large place in the work of José Ortega y Gasset (1883–1955) and María Zambrano (1904–1991). Both philosophers devote a large part of their written reflections to it, but their ideological differences and their dissimilar conceptions of politics and the role that the intellectual should play in it lead them to think of it in opposite ways. The former admires the “new art” of the first two decades of the twentieth century for its ability to divide society between an elite capable of understanding it and a mass that abhors it, as well as for its return to what, for him, should constitute the essential principles of art—de-realisation, dehumanisation, autonomy, purity—which nineteenth-century art forgets. The latter, on the other hand, criticises the disappearance of the human and the destruction of the forms operated by avant-garde art and defends a rehumanisation that recovers the existential function that, for her, corresponds to all art: to serve as a mirror for human life to see itself. This article sets out to compare these two positions by means of a comparative analysis of *La deshumanización del arte* (1925), the fundamental essay for understanding Ortega’s aesthetics, and *La destrucción de las formas* (1944), the essay in which Zambrano responds to the artistic questions posed by her mentor.

Keywords: José Ortega y Gasset, María Zambrano, Art, Derealisation, Dehumanisation, Avant-garde.

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THE DEHUMANIZATION OF ART: JOSÉ ORTEGA Y GASSET

Attentive to the latest developments taking place outside of Spain in virtually every field of knowledge—from philosophy and psychology to biology and physics, as evidenced by the wide range of topics he wrote about and the extensive knowledge he demonstrated—José Ortega y Gasset was naturally also interested in the trends emerging in the art of his time. He dedicated a substantial portion of his writings to this topic throughout

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almost his entire intellectual career.¹ The most representative essay of Ortega's aesthetics or theory of art, which marks its centennial next year, is undoubtedly *The Dehumanization of Art*, published in 1925, a pivotal date for the rise of "new art"² or avant-garde art in Spain.³

However, Ortega's essay is not a reflection on the various artistic forms generated by the avant-garde, nor is it a description of the differences between them. He does not discuss specific artworks, and he himself states that in writing *The Dehumanization of Art*, he aims to "seek the meaning of the new artistic intentions," that is, the philosophical foundation underlying this new art, rather than creating a theory or critique of the art itself (Ortega y Gasset, 2005: 876). According to Antonio Gutiérrez Pozo, the "philosophical will for openness and intellectual tolerance, which leads him to

¹Although *The Dehumanization of Art* is the essay that has gained the most prominence among Ortega y Gasset's works dedicated to art, the ideas it develops are already present in earlier texts, such as *Renán* (1909), *Adam in Paradise* (1910), *Meditations on Quixote* (1914), *Essay in Aesthetics as a Prologue* (1914), *Musicalia* (1921), *Meditation on the Frame* (1921), *Artistic Apathy* (1921), *The Theme of Our Time* (1923), *On the Point of View in the Arts* (1924), *Ideas on the Novel* (1925), *Art in Present and Past* (1925), and *Truth is Not Simple* (1926). Ortega continued refining these ideas in other writings on art, such as *The Idea of Theater* (1946), *Goya* (1946), and *Velázquez* (1943–1954) (Gutiérrez Pozo, 2012b: 1–2).

On the other hand, Ortega addresses art for various reasons: at times he appeals to a particular author (*Calling for a Goethe from Within*), a specific work of art (*The "Gioconda"*), or everyday situations (*Aesthetics on the Tram*). In other instances, he delves more deeply into aesthetics (*Essay in Aesthetics as a Prologue*) and art itself, as is the case with *The Dehumanization of Art* (Esteve Martín, 2018: 73).

²Although Ortega y Gasset does not make it entirely clear which artistic movements he includes under the term "new art," Antonio Gutiérrez Pozo, a professor of Aesthetics and Philosophy at the University of Seville, argues that the Madrid philosopher is essentially referring to avant-garde art from the first decades of the 20th century when he wrote the essay, although he also extends the label to artists such as Debussy, Mallarmé, or Verlaine, who do not fall within the avant-garde movements (Gutiérrez Pozo, 2012b: 1–2).

³1925 marks a decisive moment for the phenomenon of the avant-garde in Spain, not only due to the publication of *The Dehumanization of Art* as a unified essay—after it had appeared in the form of articles in the newspaper *El Sol* throughout 1924—but also because of the *First Exhibition of the Society of Iberian Artists* held at the Retiro Palace in Madrid. This exhibition featured prominent artists such as Rafael Barradas, Alberto Sánchez, Salvador Dalí, Ángel Ferrant, José Gutiérrez Solana, Benjamín Palencia, and Ucelay, among others. The exhibition was accompanied by the publication of a catalog and a series of lectures, in which Ortega y Gasset participated. He reflected on these contributions in *Art in Present and Past* (1925).

Additionally, in 1925, Rafael Alberti's *Marinero en tierra* and Gerardo Diego's *Versos humanos* were awarded the National Poetry Prize. Manuel de Falla composed *Concerto for Harpsichord*, and Guillermo de Torre published *European Avant-Garde Literatures*, a book described by Alejo Carpentier as "a kind of bible" for understanding the European avant-garde in Spain (Nieto Yusta, 2007/2008: 285–286).

constantly engage in reflective dialogue with contemporary issues,”⁴ drives Ortega to contemplate this novel artistic experience. In Ortega’s own words, “the purpose of this essay is merely to identify the new art through some of its distinctive traits” (Ortega y Gasset, 2005: 870). His goal, on the one hand, is to reveal the general essence of art, and on the other, to discern the role it plays in contemporary societies.

As may be seen in this first section, Ortega y Gasset interprets the artistic revolution taking place in the first two decades of the 20th century through the lens of his sociological theory, as he is primarily interested in the new social sensibility it produces. In fact, the Madrid philosopher begins his essay by citing the French author Jean-Marie Guyau, who wrote *The Art from the Sociological Perspective* (1888). Ortega describes Guyau as “brilliant” for paving a path that, despite initially seeming “sterile”—since “to approach art through its social effects is much like pulling a radish by the leaves or studying a man by his shadow”—proves fruitful and useful for Ortega himself in distinguishing between traditional and new art (*ibid.*: 847). In the essay *Musicalia*, found in Volume III of *El Espectador*, Ortega addresses the new era of music—which for him begins with Debussy. In *The Dehumanization of Art*, he intends to “speak more generally and refer to all the arts that still have some vigor in Europe; therefore, alongside new music, new painting, new poetry, and new theater” (*ibid.*). Ortega maintains that all artistic manifestations of a given era share the same aesthetic values and, consequently, produce the same sociological effects.

The study of art from a social perspective gained special relevance in the 19th century, owing to the emergence of a new factor in understanding, evaluating, and conceiving art: the audience. The “first form of democratization in the reception of artworks,” as Valeriano Bozal puts it, began with the appearance of the Salons in France. This development also marked the start of modern aesthetics, making it possible to categorize art as either popular or unpopular based on its reception by the masses.⁵ From Ortega y Gasset’s

⁴Antonio Gutiérrez Pozo and José Luis Villacañas use the term “phenomenology” to describe the philosophical approach Ortega y Gasset adopts toward art in this essay (Cf. Gutiérrez Pozo, 2012a,b; Villacañas Berlanga, 2024).

⁵The full quote is reproduced here: “Los salones fueron una institución real y continuaron siéndolo a lo largo del siglo XVIII; pero produjeron efectos que desbordan esos límites. [...] el salón crea un público que disfruta contemplando y valorando las obras expuestas, público que tiene acceso a lo que antes sólo era privilegio cortesano. El salón difunde las tendencias y propone gustos, excita el juicio y promueve tanto la información como la crítica. En una palabra, aunque de una forma inicialmente tímida, el salón constituye la primera forma de

sociological point of view, what characterizes the new art of the early 20th century is its unpopularity: “All young art is unpopular, and not by chance or accident, but by virtue of an essential destiny” (Ortega y Gasset, 2005: 848).

Far from viewing this negatively, Ortega appreciates the new art created by young artists⁶ precisely because it divides society into two opposing groups: on one side, a select and cultured minority capable of appreciating the originality and artistic relevance of the avant-garde; on the other side, the “formless mass of the crowd,” which rejects it because it is unable to understand it or see itself reflected in its images (*ibid.*). In other words, “the characteristic feature of the new art, ‘from a sociological perspective’,” is that, far from uniting society or providing a common set of recognizable images, it “divides the audience into two kinds of people: those who understand it and those who do not” (*ibid.*: 849).

As José Luis Villacañas notes, for Ortega, new art:

No longer adhered to any educational program, common sense formation, or the need to foster a moral community. In reality, new art had departed from that old program of mediation toward a new morality. Now art did not aspire to create community. It still projected itself onto social life but did so by creating social fractures rather than unity. [...] The community, now abandoned to the form of the masses, responded to this eruption of the artist’s personal freedom with a certain hostility (Villacañas Berlanga, 2024: 29).

Throughout his essay, Ortega is critical of 19th-century art, primarily romantic and naturalistic, not so much because it was popular but because it minimized strictly aesthetic elements, reducing the work to a mere imitation of human realities. Hence, both romanticism and naturalism share their “common realist root” (Ortega y Gasset, 2005: 852). Realism, then, is the

democratización de las obras de arte, en claro paralelismo con lo que sucedía con el teatro dieciochesco y las restantes prácticas artísticas” (Bozal, ed., 2000: 22).

⁶Ortega speaks of the new art as an art championed by the young, which shakes, or seeks to shake, the convictions of the old: “¿Por qué han de tener siempre hoy la razón los viejos contra los jóvenes, siendo así que el mañana da siempre la razón a los jóvenes contra los viejos?” (Ortega y Gasset, 2005: 860). By “viejos,” he must be referring to those who, like Antonio Machado or Miguel de Unamuno, belonging to the Generation of ’98, condemn pure poetry, while by “jóvenes,” he may be referring to those who, like Dámaso Alonso or Jorge Guillén, are renewing poetry. However, these figures would eventually renounce their initial principles.

According to María Luisa Maillard, this shift, carried out by some of the poets of ’27 who had developed a pure poetics in their youth, in line with the principles defended by Ortega y Gasset, is due to the influence of none other than Antonio Machado. At that time, Machado was producing poetry entirely opposed to that advocated by the Madrid philosopher, and with which María Zambrano would also find herself more closely aligned (Maillard, 2004: 102).

fundamental characteristic Ortega attributes to 19th-century art, an art that encourages the artist “to obediently follow the form of things, [...] to have no style,” (Ortega y Gasset, 2005: 860) and that, in *The Dehumanization of Art*, is reduced to the status of “mere mimetic representation, whether of objects or feelings” (Maillard, 2004: 104).

Moreover, Ortega opposes not only realist art, but also the idea of the inherent realism of Spanish cultural and artistic expressions — a notion widely accepted since the late 19th century by the Generation of '98, and later embraced by María Zambrano, as will be seen in the next section. Ortega harshly criticizes the supposed inherent realism of Spanish art: “It has been decreed that Spaniards have been realists [...] and, what’s even worse, that Spaniards must be realists, as if by force.” He views realism as “a lack of invention, a lack of love for form, poetry, and sentimental reverberations.” Thus, any realism, as mere imitation of the real, limits the artist’s imagination and is, “in all its letters, the negation of art” (Ortega y Gasset, 2004: 142, 145). For Ortega, “Spanish realism is one of the many vague terms we have used to cover the gaps of exact ideas in our minds,” and therefore, “it would be of great importance for a young Spaniard knowledgeable in these matters to take on the task of correcting this common notion that closes off the horizon like a gray wall to the aspirations of our artists” (ibid.: 144–145). It is no surprise, then, that Ortega celebrates the steps taken by young Spanish artists, who are breaking away from the realism of 19th-century art and giving rise to an art that, despite its unpopularity, represents a return to the unreality that, for the philosopher, must be the foundation of art.

When, in *Meditation on the Frame* (1921), Ortega describes the artwork as if it were an “imaginary island floating, surrounded by reality on all sides,”⁷ he defines it by its unreal character: art should not imitate reality, as 19th-century romantic and naturalist novels and paintings do. Instead, it should derealize itself, escape from reality, rely on itself, and play with its own resources to create something new, something that did not previously exist in reality. It is precisely this unreality, this virtuality, this fiction,

⁷The full quote is reproduced here: “El cuadro, como la poesía o la música, como toda obra de arte, es una abertura de irrealidad que se abre mágicamente en nuestro contorno real. Cuando miro esta gris pared doméstica mi actitud es forzosamente de un utilitarismo visual. Cuando miro el cuadro ingreso en un recinto imaginario y adopto una actitud de pura contemplación. Son, pues, pared y cuadro dos mundos antagónicos y sin comunicación. De lo real a lo irreal, el espíritu da un brinco como de la vigilia al sueño. Es la obra de arte una isla imaginaria que flota rodeada de realidad por todas partes” (Ortega y Gasset, 2004: 434).

that differentiates art, constitutes its essence, and makes it art rather than reality: “Life is one thing, poetry another [...]. Let’s not mix them. The poet begins where the man ends. The man’s destiny is to live his human journey; the poet’s mission is to invent what does not exist” (Ortega y Gasset, 2005: 864). Ortega separates life from art; art should not serve life, but should depart from it to illuminate something different. As Maillard explains:

From his earliest aesthetic reflections, Ortega separates art from the time proper to life. Art does not occupy a decisive place in the structure of human life, due to its imaginary nature that makes it a pause or respite from the seriousness of living (Maillard, 2004: 116).

Therefore, when Ortega speaks of “artistic art” or “pure art”—although he doubts whether totally pure art devoid of the human is even possible⁸—he refers to that which progressively eliminates “the human, all-too-human elements that dominated in romantic and naturalist production. This process reaches a point where the human content of the work is so minimal that it is almost invisible” (Ortega y Gasset, 2005: 852–853). The young artists Ortega refers to dehumanize their creations by omitting or directly removing human figures or allusions to everyday life—what Ortega calls “lived reality (*la realidad vivida*)” (Nieto Yusta, 2007/2008: 289)—which are elements that enable an emotional connection with the artwork. This is why, among the various terms he uses throughout his essay to define the new art—derealized, autonomous, pure—Ortega chooses “dehumanized” for the title, as it best captures the distinguishing feature of the avant-garde: “the new sensibility is dominated by a disgust for the human in art, similar to the aversion that the refined person has always felt toward wax figures” (Ortega y Gasset, 2005: 862). This new approach provides the spectator with a novel way of engaging with the artwork, one not based on recognizing human forms and emotions within it:

The art we speak of is not only inhuman because it contains no human elements, but because it actively engages in the operation of dehumanizing. In its flight from the human, it cares less about where it arrives, the heteroclitic fauna it ends up depicting, than where it departs from, the human aspect it destroys. It’s not about painting something entirely unlike a man, or a house, or a mountain, but about painting a man that resembles a man as little as possible, a house that retains only what is strictly necessary to witness its metamorphosis, a cone miraculously

⁸“Un cuadro, una poesía donde no quedase resto alguno de las formas vividas, serían ininteligibles, es decir, no serían nada, como nada sería un discurso donde a cada palabra se le hubiese extirpado su significación habitual” (Ortega y Gasset, 2005: 856).

emerging from what once was a mountain, like a snake shedding its skin. The aesthetic pleasure for the new artist emanates from this triumph over the human; hence, it is necessary to concretize this victory and present in each case the strangled victim (Ortega y Gasset, 2005: 859. State Duma First Convocation).

Thus, the nascent art of the 20th century recovers the essence that Ortega believes should define all art, which is not mimesis but rather unreality. This explains why, while romanticism — “which for the philosopher was par excellence the popular style” — is directed at everyone, as it seeks to reflect the vicissitudes of everyday life so that the public can see themselves in it, the new art, with its playful character, its tendency toward abstraction, and its departure from the reality of life, irritates the masses because they are incapable of understanding it. When one does not understand something, they feel “humiliated, with a vague awareness of their inferiority that needs to be compensated by indignantly asserting themselves against the work” (ibid.: 849). According to Ortega, this is because the masses confuse the true artistic enjoyment that art should provide, which has nothing to do with “rejoicing or suffering with the human destinies that the artwork might relate or present”:

People enjoy a drama when they manage to get interested in the human destinies proposed to them. The loves, hatreds, sorrows, and joys of the characters move their hearts: they take part in them as if they were real-life cases. And they say that the work is “good” when it succeeds in producing the necessary amount of illusion so that the imaginary characters seem like living people. In lyric poetry, they seek the loves and sorrows of the man pulsating behind the poet. In painting, they are only attracted by images where they find figures of men and women with whom it would, in some sense, be interesting to live. A landscape painting seems “pretty” to them when the real landscape it represents would be worthy of visiting for its pleasantness or pathos (ibid.: 850–851).

For Ortega, appealing to the emotions of the spectator “is to take advantage of a noble weakness in man, which makes him prone to the contagion of another’s sorrow or joy,” a contagion that “is not spiritual in nature but a mechanical repercussion, like the teeth-on-edge sensation caused by the scraping of a knife on glass” (ibid.: 861). Art interests the masses when it connects them “with interesting human things,” and not when the human element disappears from the work and is replaced by purely aesthetic elements that leave them unsure how to react because they do not understand them (ibid.: 851). The true artistic pleasure, which the masses are unable to experience, does not lie for Ortega in empathizing

with the fates of the characters in novels, symphonies, or paintings; rather, it must be an “intelligent pleasure” derived from contemplation, reserved for a select, educated minority:

Seeing is an action at a distance. Each of the arts uses a projector apparatus that distances and transfigures things. On its magical screen, we contemplate them as exiled, as tenants of an unapproachable star, absolutely distant. When this derealization is absent, a fatal hesitation occurs: we do not know whether to live the things or to contemplate them (Ortega y Gasset, 2005: 861–862).

Although Ortega insists that he does not intend “to extol this new kind of art, much less denigrate the kind practiced in the last century,” it is evident that avant-garde art fits perfectly with his elitist view of society, even if, as Villacañas points out, it does not entirely align with his attempt to reconcile reason and life.⁹ He himself admits, “The particular directions of young art interest me moderately, and except for a few exceptions, individual works interest me even less” (ibid.: 857). His admiration for new art is based on what it says and demonstrates about society, aligning with his vision of it. For Ortega, society must be divided between the “egregious” and the “vulgar”; new art allows us to distinguish between them, as the former are attracted to it because they can understand it, while the latter reject it because they feel humiliated. This distinction, which Constanza Nieto Yusta aptly describes as “classist” (Nieto Yusta, 2007/2008:

⁹José Luis Villacañas asks whether this process of dehumanization and disdain for living forms implies, in turn, a process of devitalization, and therefore, whether Ortega might be contradicting himself by defending a new art that does not place life, radical reality, at its center:

“¿Cómo avanzar en el proceso de deshumanización sin avanzar hacia un proceso de desvitalización, de enfriamiento de la vida? Y si el arte nuevo deshumanizaba y desvitalizaba, ¿no avanzaba hacia una trivialización? Puede que aquella invitación a habitar en el arte como en un arrecife imaginario fuera algo diferente de una “huida del mundo”, un “afán de evitar la realidad”, ¿pero no se evitaba también la realidad de la vida? [...] Ortega dudó [...] entre un arte de inteligencia objetiva y un arte vinculado a la vida. Sin embargo, sólo un arte vinculado a la vida era orgánico con la época y, lo que todavía era más importante, con el principio de su filosofía. Así que se vio obligado a desplegar sus análisis para intentar mediar con una explicación. [...] Resultaba complicado relacionar los fenómenos del nuevo arte con la vida, pero algo parecía iluminarse cuando se relacionaba con la vida histórica”.

In any case, Ortega “no podía sentirse cómodo con sus reflexiones finales ni con el estado que su filosofía había conquistado en 1925. Sus valoraciones del propio escrito son certeramente cautas. ‘Ilustre causalidad’ llamó a la probabilidad de que su análisis fuera acertado. [...] En todo caso, el resultado más poderoso de este escrito de *La deshumanización del arte* reside en la apuesta por la intelectualización del arte y su dependencia de la idea” (Villacañas Berlanga, 2024: 35–40).

296–298), differentiates between an intelligent, minority spectator capable of obtaining true aesthetic pleasure and a “contagious” spectator who derives emotional pleasure through identification with what they see. This division is directly related to the social theory that Ortega y Gasset presents in *The Revolt of the Masses*, whose key points are already anticipated in *The Dehumanization of Art*:

The time is coming when society, from politics to art, will once again be organized, as it should be, into two orders or ranks: that of the egregious men and that of the vulgar men. All of Europe’s discontent will eventually converge and be cured in this new and saving division. The undifferentiated, chaotic, formless unity, without anatomical structure, without governing discipline, in which we have lived for the last 150 years, cannot continue. Beneath all contemporary life beats a deep and irritating injustice: the false assumption of real equality among men (Ortega y Gasset, 2005: 849–850).

This point, as will be seen in the next section, is what leads María Zambrano, from ideological standpoints very different from those of her mentor, to distance herself from Ortega y Gasset’s vision of art as presented in *The Dehumanization of Art*, a vision that has been succinctly outlined up to this point.

THE REHUMANIZATION OF ART: MARÍA ZAMBRANO

María Zambrano is thoroughly familiar with Ortega y Gasset’s stance on art, as evidenced by her reference to the work analyzed in the previous section: “Among the most lucid insights, perhaps at a late hour (a point too far along the process), is the admirable essay *The Dehumanization of Art* by Ortega y Gasset” (Zambrano, 2016: 380). Although Zambrano engaged with Ortega’s philosophy throughout her intellectual career — using it as a foundation to develop her own — when it comes to art, her response is most clearly articulated in *The Destruction of Forms*, published in 1944 and included at the end of her essay *The Agony of Europe* (1945). Before delving into this analysis, it is important to outline the points of convergence and divergence between Zambrano and Ortega during her time as his disciple.

Zambrano first met her mentor in an examination board in 1926. However, it was not until a year later, when she began her doctoral studies, that she established more direct contact with him. At Ortega’s invitation, she regularly attended the gatherings of the *Revista de Occidente*, joined the circles of Ortega’s followers, and became his assistant in the Metaphysics

department at the Central University of Madrid. Their intellectual relationship developed throughout the 1920s and 1930s—a relationship that, as Beatriz Caballero Rodríguez has shown, was by no means reciprocal¹⁰—until it ended definitively shortly after the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, due to their irreconcilable ideological differences.¹¹ Despite this painful rift, which left Zambrano deeply disappointed in Ortega¹², his influence can still be seen in several aspects of her philosophy: the idea that life is the fundamental reality of the human being; the need to propose a new, broader and less arrogant form of reason than the exhausted modern rationality, one that transcends the limitations imposed by rationalism on the subject's understanding of the external reality and of themselves; and a concern with the problem of Spain from a political, social, and historical perspective (Caballero Rodríguez, 2020: 72–73).

It is in this last point where the differences between Ortega's and Zambrano's thoughts are most pronounced and where we can find the key to understanding their divergent views on art. For Ortega, the intellectual, as a member of the cultured elite distinguished from the masses—among other things, by their ability to appreciate new art—should guide the nation's destiny through a program of social pedagogy. In this regard, Ortega's political action is, as Caballero Rodríguez describes, “more ideological and

¹⁰The significance of Ortega y Gasset's mentorship for Zambrano has not only been widely studied from various perspectives—in this article, the approach is from the point of view of art—but is also consistently acknowledged by the philosopher herself, who considered herself a “disciple” of Ortega until the end of her life. In 1987, she stated, “he sentido siempre como mi maestro y seguirá siempre sintiéndolo” (Zambrano, 2014: 720).

Caballero Rodríguez, however, questions the potential influence that the young María Zambrano may have had on Ortega y Gasset and concludes that, despite her efforts to influence him, particularly regarding his political actions, there is no evidence of either direct or progressive influence, despite the closeness and persistence of the thinker. This persistence was expressed in letters in which Zambrano urged Ortega to do more for the political future of Spain (Cf. Caballero Rodríguez, 2020: 71–86).

¹¹Antolín Sánchez Cuervo points out that both Ortega and Zambrano originate from liberalism, but from distinct forms of liberalism. Ortega's liberalism is moderate, quickly disillusioned with the republican project, and increasingly leaning toward conservatism, to the point of accepting authoritarian positions and even engaging in alliances with fascism, more circumstantial than ideological. Zambrano's liberalism, on the other hand, is vaguely utopian, somewhat naïve, resistant to the logic of capital, and close to non-Marxist socialism, unequivocally republican, and radicalized during the war under the umbrella of the Communist Party (Sánchez Cuervo, 2017: 65).

¹²See, in this regard, the article *A los que callaron*, published in 1940, in which María Zambrano described the silence of Azorín or Ortega y Gasset as “aterrador” and exasperating for “los que no callamos” (Zambrano, 2014: 259).

conceptual than practical and tactical, more pedagogical and enlightened than executive or governmental.”¹³ Zambrano, on the other hand, from a young age advocated for a more decisive engagement of intellectuals with the problems of the social majority, which is why she criticized the “mature” generation’s rejection of a more practical and leftist political approach.¹⁴ In a letter dated February 11, 1930, she urged Ortega to become more involved in the Spanish politics of the time:

History cannot be made from above, from the vantage point of reason; only those beneath history can one day become its creative agents. And in this — I believe — we differ, our generation from yours, if we are to be anything, which I sometimes doubt. Our joy lies in feeling ourselves as instruments, aspiring only to have a mission within something that envelops us: the historical moment. It pains me deeply to see your disengagement at this moment, Mr. Ortega y Gasset. [...] You must and can do more; your mission with Spain is greater.¹⁵

As we can see, Zambrano felt that she belonged to a generation more politically engaged with its time — a generation she often referred to as “of the bull” for its sacrifice during the war in defense of the Republican regime.¹⁶ Unlike the bourgeois and elitist intellectual Ortega, this generation

¹³That program of social pedagogy that Ortega considers part of his mission as an intellectual is expressed not only in his philosophical work but also in the multitude of press articles he publishes — some of them, such as *El error Berenguer* (November 15, 1930) or *Rectificación de la República* (a speech delivered on December 6, 1931), have a significant impact on the political course of the country — and in the founding of the *Agrupación al Servicio de la República*, through which he served as a deputy in the Constituent Cortes of the Second Republic from July 1931 to July 1932. His disappointment with the new republican regime led to his definitive withdrawal from politics (Caballero Rodríguez, 2020: 75, 79).

¹⁴Ana Bundgård points out that the intellectuals of the generations prior to Zambrano, while never completely disengaged from politics, were more concerned with safeguarding their individuality and freedom of thought than with political commitment, as “eran disidentes, despreciaban la política [...]. Manifestaban voluntad de intervenir en la vida pública desde una posición separada [...]. Se sentían élite frente a la masa [...]. Compartían la voluntad de regenerar a España, pero rechazaban cualquier tipo de organización comunitaria que fuera en detrimento de la ‘egolatría’ individualista que les hacía reconocibles para el público lector” (Bundgård, 2009: 28–29).

¹⁵Carta de María Zambrano a José Ortega y Gasset, 11 de febrero de 1930 (Zambrano, 1991: 15).

¹⁶In the *Carta al doctor Marañón*, perhaps the text that best expresses the distance Zambrano perceived between her generation and Ortega’s, the philosopher argues that the time had come “la hora que ellos no querían ver. La hora que los jóvenes sí veíamos, por la sencilla razón de que la sentíamos. Íbamos a ser la generación del toro, del sacrificado. Ellos, no. Ellos no se sentían sacrificados. [...] Para ellos, se diría que todo era espectáculo: estaban sentados, aunque no fueran a los toros, siempre en la barrera. A salvo, viendo” (Zambrano, 2014: 731–732).

shared a profound sense of unity with the Spanish people, as evidenced by the involvement of many of its members, including Zambrano herself, in the Pedagogical Missions and other cultural, educational, and modernizing activities of the Second Republic, with which they strongly identified. Zambrano did not see herself as an intellectual above the people, needing to guide them from the clarity of philosophy rather than through political action, as Ortega did. Instead, she saw herself as an intellectual *for* the people, in close contact and full communication with them. This is why philosophy and politics appear closely intertwined at the beginning of her intellectual career.

This different conception of politics is reflected in their contrasting views on art: if Ortega, as explained earlier, advocated for the “dehumanization” of art, Zambrano, in contrast, championed its “rehumanization,” in line with the ideas expressed by the writer and journalist José Díaz Fernández in *The New Romanticism* (1930), where he speaks of the “rehumanization of the arts” and calls for “art for life, not life for art.”¹⁷ Although Díaz Fernández argued that art should not be dictated by a specific ideology, he believed that the artist could never “remain indifferent to the conflicts of individual or collective struggle, nor to human reactions within social life” (Díaz Fernández, 1985: 25). Similarly, Zambrano, like most of her contemporaries — many of whom were part of the Anti-Fascist Intellectuals Alliance formed right after the military coup of July 18, 1936 — advocated for a socially engaged art, one committed to moral values as opposed to the escapism of pure, autonomous avant-garde art.

Zambrano thus calls for a realist art, one that is grounded in reality rather than distanced from it. Contrary to her mentor, who harshly criticized the idea of Spanish realism, the Andalusian philosopher aligns with Unamuno,

¹⁷José Díaz Fernández advocates for a return to the human as a fundamental distinction of an advanced literature that adapts to the new sensibilities of the present time and reflects the conflicts that have polarized the human soul. One of these is the commitment to history to construct a new morality, a new way of living, a new art, and a new literature that abandons the vague and imprecise conception of abstract ideals and instead expresses the unwavering reality of a new order of things, which literature and art must affirm and strengthen. For this, what is needed, ultimately, is a new romanticism, an art for life and not a life for art:

“Europa ya no puede más de cansancio, de escepticismo y de desconcierto. Dicen que el alma no puede vivir sin una religión. Nosotros, hijos del siglo más científico y mecanizado, hemos extirpado quizá toda clase de mitos y simbolismos; pero no podemos vivir sólo para esto, para esto tan breve, tan personal, tan egoísta y tan efímero. Necesitamos vivir para el más allá. No para el más allá del mundo, puesto que no es posible creer en una tierra detrás de las estrellas, sino para el más allá del tiempo. Es decir: necesitamos vivir para la historia, para las generaciones venideras. Los mejores espíritus de nuestra época preconizan para hacerse cargo de esta responsabilidad histórica” (Díaz Fernández, 1985: 56–57).

Machado, and the Generation of '98 in rejecting the pure and sophisticated art of the avant-garde and defending the inherent realism of Spanish art, a notion she would develop further in her essay *Thought and Poetry in Spanish Life* (1939). For Zambrano, this realism is not the 19th-century realism criticized by Ortega for its reliance on mimesis, but rather a mode of being in the world and knowing it, which she considers distinctive of Spanish cultural tradition — a form of knowledge she contrasts with European rationalism. Unlike the violence of rationalism, Spanish realism, as a loving understanding of the world, preserves the multiplicity of being and does not reduce all reality to mere concepts:

The voracity of love, the hunger for presence and real, “material” form — if the term may be allowed — characterizes love and distinguishes it from the mere hunger for scientific knowledge. In its exclusive focus on the figure, love aids knowledge and has the capacity to forge an idea (Zambrano, 2018: 524).

From this perspective of Spanish poetic realism, Zambrano advocates for a return to form in art, as forms represent the necessary limits that reality imposes on any idealism — a final stage of human divinization that forgets its limits (Maillard, 2004: 100). The destruction of forms that defines new art, for her, is the most evident sign of the dehumanization of contemporary societies, caused by the exhaustion of modern reason, which, in its ultimate development as idealism, cannot answer the existential questions that art can illuminate. Thus, if Ortega calls on the poet and artist to detach from life, Zambrano urges them to remain close to it, for all poetry and art are born from life's need to express and reveal itself in form: “Something serious was happening at the place where the need for expression is born, that is, in life, the root of art” (Zambrano, 2016: 380).

What art must do, then, is to connect the human being with a transcendent and creative truth. This is why Zambrano is not particularly interested in the artist's freedom or the expression of their personality in a specific artistic style. For her, the artist is not someone who creates an image of themselves but rather “a medium of visibility where reality can settle, reveal itself, and breathe” (Zambrano, 2019: 303). She criticizes much of the new art that “throws the artist's ‘I’ in our faces,” seeking nothing more than to “demonstrate that this ‘I’ exists” (ibid.: 286). For Zambrano, the importance of art lies in the truth it communicates, not in the intellectual pleasure provoked by aesthetic contemplation, as Ortega maintains. However, Zambrano believes that the art of the early 20th century can no longer

satisfy this need, as it has, like rationalist philosophy itself, distanced itself from the human.

Zambrano seems to share her teacher's view that all the arts of an era reflect the same aesthetic values when she states:

It was evident and seemed unstoppable—a will to destruction that encompassed all the arts and therefore could not stem from aesthetic demands. The evolution of art could have led to a certain exhaustion of forms in some of the arts; but the unanimity with which all came to the meeting forces one to think that this goes beyond what is commonly understood as aesthetic. [...] The human face, the face of mankind, and the face with which humanity saw itself, gazing into its reassuring mirror, was disappearing. Art, both of the figure and the word, ceased to fulfill this function of balance and appeasement that had been tacitly entrusted to it for so many centuries; it renounced being the medicine, remedy, and comforting stimulus. For the first time, it was, to the extreme, unsettling, sometimes even depressing (Zambrano, 2016: 380)¹⁸.

This passage from *La destrucción de las formas* (1944) perfectly captures Zambrano's sentiment regarding the exiled and dehumanized art so admired by Ortega. For Zambrano, it is an expression of the eclipse of the human caused by rationalism and idealism. These expand humanity's conceptual and scientific apparatus, turning everything into "content of consciousness" and internalizing the external and sensible world. Yet, they impoverish human experience, as feeling and life escape concepts and can only be expressed poetically through art (Sánchez Meca, 2009: 88). However, not through art such as that of the avant-garde, which destroys forms—"the human form, of course, being the first"—immersing the subject in unbearable hermeticism and losing its role as a medium of visibility for the human. Zambrano thus experiences *Nostalgia de la tierra* (1933), as she titles another of her early articles on art. In it, she addresses "the crossroads of so-called modern art," an art detached from the material, de-realized, where bodies no longer have weight in space, becoming "a diabolical world of rootless bodies, of men without land. Inhospitable, uninhabited, dehumanized space. Dehumanized art is nothing but exiled art" (Zambrano, 2019: 174).

The destruction of forms that characterizes avant-garde art, transformed into art for art's sake, thus causes it to lose its capacity as a mirror of human

¹⁸Zambrano had not yet written about cinema in 1944 when she penned *La destrucción de las formas*. However, a few years later, when she wrote her first article specifically focused on cinema, titled *El realismo del cine italiano* (1952), she would state that cinema had always shown from its beginnings a "vocación de fijar la cara de lo humano" and that it is the complete opposite of the art-for-art's-sake approach defended by Ortega (Zambrano, 1995: 300).

life. If, for María Zambrano, the face is the result of deciding to be a person, the inability of this exiled art to forge it represents a loss of knowledge about the human soul, which she believes must be the ultimate goal of all art (Pardo Salgado, 2011: 27–28). In this way, Zambrano confronts her teacher and ultimately advocates for the rehumanization of art, a return to the human, so that the person can find the truths their life needs to move forward — truths that neither rationalism nor idealism can provide.

CONCLUSIONS

José Ortega y Gasset and María Zambrano agree that the new artistic sensibility emerging in the early decades of the 20th century is characterized by a “disgust for the human in art” and that contemporary artistic creations exhibit a “flight from the human figure” (Ortega y Gasset, 2005: 962). However, for Ortega, “this preoccupation with the human element in the work is, fundamentally, incompatible with the strict aesthetic function” (ibid.: 851), which should dominate the contemplation of the artwork. In contrast, for Zambrano, this process of dehumanization distances art from its true root, which is to satisfy life’s inherent need to express itself. While Ortega believes that the purpose of young art is to enable the elite minority to recognize themselves as such and to learn their mission — to guide the masses — Zambrano argues that new art has forgotten its existential role, which is to provide vital truths to its audience — not only to the elite, but also to the masses — and to contribute to the transformation of society.

Thus, although Zambrano’s entire philosophy owes much, particularly in its early stages, to Ortega’s thought, when it comes to art, she aligns more closely with the Generation of ’98 and their conception of Spanish culture as essentially realist, as well as with José Díaz Fernández and his contemporaries in advocating for an art that is subordinate to reality, aiming to reveal and transform it. The opposing visions that Ortega and Zambrano develop regarding art are rooted in their differing views on the commitment an intellectual should have to the society they live in and their increasingly divergent ideological positions.

In summary, if Ortega defines the essence of art — found in new art — by its anti-romanticism, its unpopularity, its purity, its unreality or autonomy from reality, its disregard for human forms and emotions, its lack of transcendence, and its dehumanization, Zambrano, in contrast, advocates for a romantic, popular, realist art, grounded in human life, transcendent, and rehumanized.

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ХОРХЕ ВАЛЬЕ АЛЬВАРЕС

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ДВЕ ПРОТИВОПОЛОЖНЫЕ КОНЦЕПЦИИ ИСКУССТВА

ХОСЕ ОРТЕГА-И-ГАССЕТ И МАРИЯ ЗАМБРАНО

Получено: 18.08.2024. Рецензировано: 06.11.2024. Принято: 24.11.2024.

Аннотация: Искусство занимает значительное место в творчестве Хосе Ортеги-и-Гассета (1883–1955) и Марии Замбрано (1904–1991). Оба философа уделяют большое внимание размышлениям об искусстве в своих трудах, но их идеологические различия и различные представления о политике и роли интеллектуала в ней приводят к тому, что они рассматривают искусство противоположным образом. Первый восхищается «новым искусством» первых двух десятилетий XX века за его способность разделить общество на элиту, способную понять его, и массу, которая его отвергает, а также за его возвращение к тем принципам, которые, по его мнению, должны составлять сущность искусства: дереализация, де-гуманизация, автономность, чистота, — принципы, забытые искусством XIX века. Вторая, напротив, критикует исчезновение человеческого и разрушение форм, вызванное авангардным искусством, и выступает за ре-гуманизацию, которая восстановит экзистенциальную функцию, присущую, по ее мнению, любому искусству: быть зеркалом, в котором человеческая жизнь может увидеть себя. В данной статье проводится сравнительный анализ двух позиций, основывающихся на эссе «Дегуманизация искусства» (1925), ключевом для понимания эстетики Ортеги, и «Разрушение форм» (1944), эссе, в котором Замбрано отвечает на художественные вопросы, поставленные ее учителем.

Ключевые слова: Хосе Ортега-и-Гассет, Мария Замбрано, искусство, дереализация, де-гуманизация, авангард.

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ESMERALDA BALAGUER GARCÍA*

ORTEGA'S NEW PHILOLOGY**

FORAYS INTO SAYING AND SILENCING

Submitted: Oct. 08, 2024. Reviewed: Dec. 01, 2024. Accepted: Dec. 06, 2024.

Abstract: This article delves into the philological theory of the Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset, which he himself termed "new philology". His proposal for philological reform, seen as a necessary precursor to the resurgence of a new philosophy—one that in his thought would be the philosophy of vital and historical reason,—centers around the problematics of "saying authentically" and silencing. These two components of speech are only clarified and revitalized considering two factors: the biographical intentionality of the speaker and the vital, historical, and circumstantial context. This article aims to reconstruct the "biographical archaeology of saying authentically and silencing" present in Ortega's philosophy.

Keywords: Ortega, New Philology, Speech, Silence, Language.

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Then he climbed a tree. Pure transcendence! Oh, sing Orpheus!

High tree in the ear! And everything fell silent. Yet even in that silence, a new beginning arose, a sign and transformation.

Rainer Maria Rilke, *Los sonetos a Orfeo*

Ernst. — Everything I can conceive of, I am capable of expressing in words.

Falk. — Not always, and often, at least, not in such a way that others derive from my words exactly the same concept that I have.

Lessing, *Ernst y Falk. Diálogo para francmasones*

ORTEGA AND LANGUAGE

The philosopher José Ortega y Gasset thought and wrote about almost everything, even turning Spain and Europe into philosophical problems.

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The Spanish philosopher reflected on words, on the limitations of saying, on what remained latent in silence and on the importance of not only what we say, but also how we say things, for the emergence of a “new philosophy.”

The form of the language through which we approach philosophy — its metaphors, the context it refers to, and its etymologies — is significant for restoring and rooting philosophy in life and connecting it to its historicity.¹ This is the effort Ortega undertook with his proposal of a Nueva Filología, conceived as a propaedeutic for the new philosophy of vital and historical reason.²

Ortega's presence and influence in philosophical studies have largely been confined to questions of ethics, politics, or metaphysics; however, his ideas on language have been less acknowledged. Francisco José Martín, in his book *La tradición velada. Ortega y el pensamiento humanista*, and Concha D'Olhaberriague, in *El pensamiento lingüístico de José Ortega y Gasset*, have had the sensitivity to study Ortega's reflections on language.³

In my view, the two major concerns for Ortega, beginning with the existential exile he experienced starting in 1932 and which became more pressing following his geopolitical exile in 1936 due to the Civil War, are: language — or the problem and difficulty of transmitting an idea justly — and the programmatic development of historical reason. The first of these concerns led him to think and write about two fundamental topics related to language: what translation is and how to translate without falsifying the original (see his 1937 book *Miseria y esplendor de la traducción* (Ortega y Gasset, 1937a)); and the new philology, or the question of authentic saying.⁴

¹The reader should recall that this is the philosophical turn that Ortega explicitly announced in 1923 with the publication of *El tema de nuestro tiempo*, when he stated that “la razón pura debía dejar paso a la razón vital,” and, in *Las Atlántidas*, he argued that it is imbued with “sentido histórico,” that is, it is historical reason.

²The nueva filología is the precedent, sometimes direct and other times indirect, of the hermeneutics of Gadamer or Ricoeur, the linguistic turn of Austin and Searle, the Cambridge School of Quentin Skinner, and the conceptual history of the Bielefeld School of Koselleck. A study on the presence of Ortega's ideas in these currents can be found in Balaguer García, 2025.

³There are other studies that delve into Ortega's exploration of language, such as Carriazo & Gaztelumendi, 2005; Cruz Cruz, 1975; Senabre, 1964; Siles, 2018

The latter article is particularly relevant, because Siles demonstrates the early interest that a young Ortega had in philology and his hesitant steps regarding whether to make it his occupation. On this subject, some of his letters can be read in Ortega y Gasset, 1991 (“entre tanto voyme metiendo serenamente por la filología y la lingüística” *ibid.*: 599).

⁴The philosophy and art of translation was also a topic that occupied Walter Benjamin, who held some theses similar to those of Ortega on this subject in his writings *La tarea del*

In the *Prólogo a una edición de sus Obras* from 1932 (Ortega y Gasset, 1932), Ortega already warned that his actions and philosophy were shifting towards a “second navigation” (τὸν δεύτερον πλοῦν, a term he borrowed from Plato’s *Phaedo*, 99d) so that “my future work would consist primarily of forging books” (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. v, 99). Ortega already had in mind that these two books would be *Aurora de la razón histórica*, his philosophical book, and *El hombre y la gente*, his sociological book, which remained unpublished. He announced them on numerous occasions: in a footnote in the *Prólogo para franceses* from May 1937 (Ortega y Gasset, 1937b); he confided in his friend Ernst Robert Curtius, in a letter dated December 3, 1937, that two major books constituting a philosophical system should have been published four years earlier; and in the *Prólogo* to *Ideas y Creencias* from 1940, he stated that for five years he had been “in labor with two substantial books that condense my work from the previous two decades” (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. v, 657).

The most relevant mention of the forthcoming publication of these books in relation to our topic — the *nueva filología* — is found in a letter Ortega wrote to his German translator, Helene Weyl, on January 30, 1937. In the letter, he outlined the four chapters that would make up *Aurora de la razón histórica*:

All this gives a first and rough expression to a systematic set of ideas that constitute the second chapter of *Aurora*, which would consist of four chapters, as follows.

- (1) *Aurora de la razón histórica* (The full development of what was anticipated in *Historia como sistema*);
- (2) *Ideas y creencias* (Which includes what was said in the essay by the same title, along with its continuation in *mundos interiores*);
- (3) *Principios de una Nueva Filología*;
- (4) *El método de las generaciones* (Märtens, ed., 2008: 197).

The development of the *Principios de una Nueva Filología* was part of the program of historical reason, the dawn of a new philosophy that grounded reason in its vitality and circumstantiality. This program was not systematically developed, and the chapter on the *nueva filología* is scattered across other texts that Ortega wrote “while moving from one thing to another.” However, Ortega was fully aware of the centrality of philology to

traductor and *Sobre el lenguaje en cuanto tal y sobre el lenguaje del hombre*. The relationship between Ortega and Benjamin regarding translation has been addressed in Balaguer García, 2023: 134–146.

philosophy. Thus, he continues in the letter, stating that a *Nueva Filología* is “required as a technique of history that allows us to think about human reality in its variability and circumstantiality. This technique, ultimately, acquires its most concrete tool in the rigorous method that, properly understood, is represented by the idea of generations” (Märtens, ed., 2008). The *nueva filología* is a method of historical reason because philosophy needs language to express the precise word (Plato had called this the “logographic necessity” in the *Phaedrus*).

John T. Graham, in his book *Theory of History in Ortega y Gasset. The Dawn of Historical Reason*, argues that Ortega’s theory is threefold: it is a philosophy of life, a philosophy of history, and a philosophy of the social, which includes a philosophy of language. It is “unity in plurality,” which would have come to light in his most significant work, *Aurora de la razón histórica* (Graham, 1997: x).

Ortega y Gasset is not a philosopher of language; he does not have a fundamentalist or radical theory of linguistic forms for philosophy. Instead, Ortega has a philosophy of saying and silencing, which he explains through the concept he coined as *nueva filología*. Ortega explores, repairs, and examines the “biography of saying.” I deliberately use this expression to indicate that the linguistic diction of thoughts and ideas housed in the human mind is not merely the sum of words whose union completes a meaning. Rather, this meaning is unveiled in the emergent gaze of a life that acts and speaks in a specific vital, historical, and conceptual context — that of the here and now. *Alétheia* was the name the Greeks gave to philosophy, Truth as unveiling.

In *Del Imperio Romano*, Ortega presents the key idea that allows words to be revitalized since words in the dictionary are mere empty, potential meanings:

The authentic meaning of a word depends, like all things human, on the circumstances. In the act of speaking — that is, of understanding one another verbally — what we call a language is merely an ingredient, the relatively stable ingredient that needs to be completed by the vital scene in which it is used.⁵

Ortega was an avid reader of Schleiermacher’s hermeneutics and the linguistics of German Romanticism, as represented by Humboldt. Between 1805 and 1819, Schleiermacher published the three volumes of his *Teoría Hermenéutica*, and in 1836, Humboldt published *Über die Verschiedenheit*

⁵ *Del Imperio Romano*; Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. VI, 87.

des menschlichen Sprachbaus und seinen Einfluss auf die geistige Entwicklung des Menschengeschlechts (Humboldt, 1836) in a political-historical context of transition towards the construction of state-nation models—the Kingdom of Italy in 1861 and the Second Reich in 1871. The ideas of unification drew from German Romanticism, including Kant, Herder, Fichte, or Hegel,⁶ and were based on the predominance of language as the most decisive historical fact of the human being, an expression of the *Volksgeist*. Fichte, in his *Reden an die deutsche Nation* (1808), had said that language was “the soul of the people.”

Between May and June of 1937, Ortega published a series of six articles on translation in *La Nación* of Buenos Aires, later compiled in the *Obras Completas* under the same title he gave them: *Miseria y esplendor de la traducción*. The third part, *Sobre el hablar y el callar*, is fundamental for reconstructing the *nueva filología*, but we will not dwell on it now and instead continue our navigation toward translation. In the fifth installment, *El esplendor*, Ortega turns to Schleiermacher and his book *Sobre los diferentes modos de traducción* (Schleiermacher, 1813) as a key authority to clarify the true task of translation.

Schleiermacher represents the utopia of translation because his hermeneutics allowed for understanding the social and linguistic context of a communicative act, enabling its comprehension and translation. Translation should not be voluptuous or beautiful, but must bring the reader closer to the author’s environment, recovering the nascent state of their expression. “Only a Platonic translation has been truly fertile,” Ortega says, referring to Schleiermacher’s approach.⁷ This praise is significant: translating from Greek is not easy, as much of the political terminology we use remains uncertain in its meaning, and returning to etymology is the only way to clarify things somewhat. Thus, translation does not require “literary elegance,” Ortega argues, but rather etymological rigor and precision.

Ortega came to Schleiermacher through Dilthey⁸ while studying in Berlin in 1906. At that time, Dilthey was no longer lecturing at the university, but Ortega, eager to absorb the German thinker’s teachings, sought out his works. The first he read was a historical-biographical book, *Biografía de Schleiermacher* (Dilthey, 1870).

⁶See Berlin, Silvina, 2021; Safranski, 2009. To delve into the impact and influence of German Romanticism on Western thought, see Wulf, 2022.

⁷*Miseria y esplendor de la traducción*; Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. v, 723.

⁸See Ortega’s article, *Guillermo Dilthey y la idea de vida*, *ibid.*: Vol. vi, 227, published in *Revista de Occidente* between 1933–1934.

References to Humboldt appear throughout Ortega's works, but perhaps the most significant are those related to language in the *Prólogo para franceses* (1937) and his course *El hombre y la gente* [Course of 1949–1950]. Of Humboldt, Ortega says he is “the man who perhaps had the greatest sensitivity to the reality of ‘language’”.⁹

Likewise, the Spanish philosopher paid attention to the linguistic turn of the 20th century, which philosophers such as Wittgenstein and Benjamin explored. Language was no longer conceived merely as an instrument for communication, but was linked to human experience materialized in its temporality and circumstantiality.¹⁰

In my view, the fundamental coordinate in Ortega's transfusion of philosophy and philology lies in Nietzsche, who, in *Die Geburt der Tragödie. Oder: Griechentum und Pessimismus*, proposes philology as the propaedeutic to philosophy.¹¹ In *Morgenröte. Gedanken über die moralischen Vorurteile*, Nietzsche demands learning to “read well” (*sie lehrt gut lesen, das heißt langsam, tief, rüch*) with eyes wide open like Minerva's owl, because only then can an attentive reader grasp a text's true content.¹²

Ortega was a master of titling his writings. It is no coincidence that his planned book on historical reason, *Aurora de la razón histórica*, into which he considered including a chapter on *Nueva Filología*, carries Nietzschean echoes in its title. *Aurora* is the dawn and birth of something new.

The correspondence Ortega maintained with the philologist and Romanist Curtius between 1923 and 1954¹³ illustrates Ortega's awareness of the need for philology — that is, paying attention to language, its etymologies, and metaphors — in order to practice philosophy properly. The most relevant letters are those Ortega sent in 1937 and 1938, during his Parisian exile. In them, Ortega told the German scholar that there was continuity between

⁹*El hombre y la gente. [Curso de 1949–1950]*; Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. IX, 735. In the *Prólogo para franceses*, see the reference to Humboldt on *ibid.*: Vol. IV, 362.

¹⁰Andrea Stella has an interesting study on the subject in Stella, 2016.

¹¹On the reception of Nietzsche by the Generation of '98 and '14, see these two suggestive contributions: Martín, 2016; Sobejano, 2009

Additionally, Jesús Conill has dedicated studies to tracing Nietzsche's influence on Ortega: Conill, 2015; 2019.

This relationship has also been studied by Javier Zamora Bonilla in *Pensando con Ortega y Nietzsche*, in Zamora Bonilla, 2023.

¹²Friedrich Nietzsche, *Aurora. Pensamientos acerca de los prejuicios morales*; Nietzsche, Aspinza et al., 2014: 489.

¹³Part of the correspondence has been published in Ortega y Gasset, 1974. The rest of the unpublished letters can be consulted in the Archive of the Fundación.

the philological and philosophical realms (Ortega y Gasset, 1974: 106–107), manifested through the most radical question a philosopher and philologist must ask to understand the written word of a text: *What does it mean to read a book?* Ortega begins his 1935 piece, *Misión del bibliotecario*, with this same question, concluding that speaking is a *Handlung*, an action we perform when we speak, carrying the intentionality of the speaker. This idea, repeated in his letters to Curtius — that a text reveals its latent true meaning when we understand it as the vital task of the author, who deliberately chose the form and intention of every precise word — is what Ortega understood as *Nueva Filología*.

PRINCIPLES AND LIMITATIONS OF A NEW PHILOLOGY

The origin of the *nueva filología* lies in the discovery of life as a radical reality during the 1930s. For Ortega, life is the sole reality from which all others are uncovered, and whatever life might be, it is undoubtedly something “we must create” in a specific *here and now*. Life is a task that unfolds in the temporality of the present, establishing the foundation for questioning the unique and non-transferable function — like life itself — that the *nueva filología* should hold.

If philosophy was to be rooted in life, as Ortega demanded in *El tema de nuestro tiempo* in 1923, it was imperative to understand life through its historicity and also linguistically. Vital reason is historical reason, and it is also philological reason. The categories of historical reason, which are the natural unfolding of the categories of vital reason, are linked to the *nueva filología*: in the temporality of history, generations express their ideas and beliefs with the available conceptual constellation. In other words, “saying” finds its expression within a specific life and circumstance.

The *nueva filología* emerged in the biographical context of Ortega’s “second navigation” in 1932.¹⁴ With this Platonic metaphor, mentioned in the *Prólogo* to the compilation of his *Obras* for Espasa-Calpe, Ortega took up the oars of his philosophical ship to navigate away from political deadlock and to chart new routes aimed at grounding philosophy in life and connecting it to history. This year marked the beginning of Ortega’s existential exile, as he withdrew from direct politics by leaving the Agrupación al Servicio de

¹⁴Regarding the intellectual biography of Ortega, the most notable is Zamora Bonilla, 2002. He has also published a shorter biography that explores the main ideas of his philosophy in *Ortega y Gasset. La aventura de la verdad* (Zamora Bonilla, 2022). Another more recent biography, though delving less deeply into the philosopher’s thought, is Gracia, 2014.

la República and resigning his position as a deputy—his political silence—and shifted his focus to writing a systematic philosophy in book form.

The second navigation represents an external rupture, distancing himself from his public intellectual role in Spain and maintaining a stance of “silence” on Spanish political affairs. It also marks an internal rupture, as a philosopher who, preoccupied with the backstage of his political circumstance, had neglected the tranquility required for philosophical thought. Notably, the publication of *Sein und Zeit* in 1927 inspired Ortega to write a book that systematically articulated his philosophy. One of these books, *Aurora*, as previously mentioned, contained his theory of a *nueva filología*.

Ortega's existential exile was far from silent.¹⁵ Rather than addressing politics, Ortega turned to the dictum of philosophy, which is question and dialogue. The supposed silence of this exile aligns with Cervantine irony: language itself imposes unavoidable silences.

We do not have a programmatic theory of the *nueva filología* compiled in a book akin to Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*. Ortega never completed the exposition of his philosophical reform, leaving only the foundational principles. If a work of art consists of many brushstrokes by the painter, the *nueva filología* is glimpsed through the black ink strokes Ortega left while writing about historical reason, translation, the art of Velázquez and Goya, sociology, or warning against totalitarianism in *La rebelión de las masas*.

To reconstruct the theory of the *nueva filología*, we must read what is latent and patent, “between the lines,” as Leo Strauss would say, in Ortega's books, courses, and lectures after 1932. Francisco José Martín notes that Ortega's early writings on language date to the 1920s and are situated within the development of vital reason (Francisco, 1999: 295). In *Las Atlántidas* (1924) and the text *Sobre la expresión, fenómeno cósmico* (1925),

¹⁵On this topic, see the second section of Chapter I and Chapter III dedicated to Ortega's alter egos in my book (Balaguer García, 2023). The thesis I propose is that the supposed posture of silence on Ortega's part is nonexistent. Ortega left his daily participation in the journalistic tribune to write his “systematic philosophy,” in which the problem of Europe—no longer Spain—remains present.

The issue of Ortega's “silence” has been a topic to which researchers of his thought have devoted various writings. “Levo doce años de silencio,” Ortega stated in 1945, that is, since his departure from Spanish politics in 1933. Some researchers have considered that Ortega maintained an active silence because he had nothing more to say, nor an audience to address. Along these lines, Pedro Cerezo Galán argued in his book (Cerezo Galán, 2000) that Ortega had died as an intellectual. Others have considered that his silence was legitimate and that he would have spoken had his soul not been at risk of corruption. José Lasaga Medina maintains that there was indeed a political silence.

Ortega reflects on words and their sense, linking them to bodily expression: “The word we hear is nothing more than noise; [...] what we understand is the meaning or sense it expresses, that it represents”.¹⁶ In Ortega’s first philosophical approach to the problem of language, he discovers that words do not signify in isolation, but form part of a system of relations tied to an expressive organism, the human being, a concrete life.

In 1935, Ortega delivered the lecture *Misión del bibliotecario*, which began with a fundamental question for philosophy: *What does it mean to read a book?* Here we find the first ideas about saying as a doing, *Handlung*, of the human being. Ortega continued to deepen this idea in the lecture *El hombre y la gente*, which he gave in Rotterdam in 1936.

The *nueva filología* is meaningful because much of the transmission of our *cultura animi* — to use Cicero’s term for philosophy — occurs through the artifact of the book. Is it possible to engage in dialogue with the written word of a book? How can we understand the ideas contained in a book, the lifeless words that have lost the energetic charge granted by the author during the creative, poietic act of saying? These questions are already present in Ortega’s early lectures and form the foundation of a *Teoría del Decir* that underpins the *nueva filología*.

In the Rotterdam lecture, Ortega stated:

Language is, by essence, dialogue, and all other forms of speaking diminish its efficacy. For this reason, the book, in its millenary evolution, tends to increasingly become a hidden dialogue. It is essential for the reader to rediscover their individuality as envisioned by the author and feel as though an ectoplasmic hand emerges from between the lines to touch them — whether to caress them or, very courteously, give them a punch.¹⁷

In 1937, with *Miseria y esplendor de la traducción* and in a 1938 letter to Curtius, Ortega presented a study of language from the perspective of philosophy. However, the first explicit expression of this linguistic reform, termed *nueva filología*, came with the publication of the *Prólogo para franceses* in *La rebelión de las masas* (1937). During his exile in Argentina in 1939, he outlined the principles of a *nueva filología* in *Meditación del pueblo joven*. From this context of exile, his reflections on the *nueva filología* and the relevance of language became increasingly prominent in writings such as *El hombre y la gente*. [*Curso de 1939-1940*] in Buenos Aires, the

¹⁶*Sobre la expresión, fenómeno cósmico, El espectador VII*; Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. II, 681.

¹⁷*El hombre y la gente. [Conferencia en Rotterdam]*; *ibid.*: Vol. IX, 204.

prospectus for the *Instituto de Humanidades* (1948), where he called for a more radical linguistic investigation termed *Teoría del Decir*, *Goethe sin Weimar* (1949), which subtly references the foundational principle of the *nueva filología*, Velázquez (1950), and the *Prólogo a la Historia de la filosofía* by Émile Bréhier (1942). These last two works specifically identify the principles that constitute the *nueva filología*.

The three contributions that bring the most clarity to the concept are *Apuntes para un comentario al Banquete de Platón* (1946), the *El hombre y la gente* course [1949–1950], taught at the *Instituto de Humanidades*, which Ortega founded upon returning from exile alongside his disciple Julián Mariás, and his 1938 letter to Curtius. Among these, the courses on *El hombre y la gente* are particularly significant for tracing his linguistic theory. Notably, while the concept of *nueva filología* and its central principle do not explicitly appear in these early lectures of the second navigation, they do surface in the 1949 course.

The *nueva filología* introduces two transformative ideas concerning our relationship with books or any discourse, oral or written. These contributions can be summarized as follows:

Saying as Handlung: This refers to intentionality, the origin of choice, and context. It can be encapsulated by the Latin phrase *Eadem sed aliter* (the same things, but differently). Each person's life is bound to a context, which continuously changes, becoming this or that, always distinct and varied. Context, also subject to the contingency of time, appears to show the same things, but always through the halo of new forms. Context is both historical and linguistic. Life, as it unfolds in different contexts, is distinct in each one. The historical nature of context lies in the past from which we project our lives toward a future — like archers — preserving three temporalities in the present, which is our actuality.¹⁸ It may seem that we say the same things; however, they are always different, because the speaker's intentionality and circumstance are distinct at each moment.

Silence as the Enabler of Language: Saying requires silence, which gives rise to a *Teoría del Decir* and a *Teoría del Silenciar*. These can be summarized by the phrase *Duo si idem dicunt non est idem* (if two say the same thing, it is no longer the same).

¹⁸Koselleck has called this temporality the *espacio de experiencia* and the *horizonte de expectativa*, which are two historical categories in Koselleck, Smilg, 1993: 334.

The foundational principle of the *nueva filología*, from which two secondary principles derive, is a Latin phrase that first appeared in the *Prólogo para franceses* of 1937:

Too often, we forget that every authentic saying not only says something but is also said by someone to someone. In every saying, there is a speaker and a listener, who are not indifferent to the meaning of the words. This meaning changes as they change. *Duo si idem dicunt non est idem*. Every word is situational. Language is, by essence, dialogue, and all other forms of speaking diminish its efficacy. This is why I believe that a book is good only to the extent that it brings us a latent dialogue, where we feel that the author can concretely imagine their reader and that the reader perceives as if an ectoplasmic hand emerges from the lines to touch them, seeking to caress them.¹⁹

Ortega, well-versed in the Greco-Roman world, adapted the original phrase from Terence's *Adelphoe* (*The Brothers*), introducing a variation: from Terence's *faciunt* to Ortega's *dicunt*. The original phrase reads: *Duo cum faciunt idem non est idem* (when two do the same thing, it is not the same). Ortega's adaptation is: *Duo si idem dicunt non est idem* (if two say the same thing, it is no longer the same).

Let us examine this statement in greater depth. Our knowledge of reality is mediated linguistically; that is, we think with a specific linguistic and conceptual structure that socializes us, as language is a social practice. Human beings are embedded in a linguistic structure from birth, and thus, to grasp the significant charge that language imbues in words and concepts, one must do so from within human and social life itself. Historical reason is inseparable from the linguistic dimension because all thought is expressed through concepts and words imbued with the significance they carry in their historical time. However, not only what we say is relevant, but also what we hide and silence—whether deliberately or unconsciously.

If two people say the same thing, it will by no means signify the same, because each projects this act of saying from their specific perspective, addressing a particular interlocutor and situated in a specific context. In other words, the significance of saying changes depending on the subjective position we occupy as speakers. As Ortega says, every concept is occasional, and its authentic meaning is unveiled when understood as an action *in statu nascendi* in response to a circumstance.

To illustrate this idea, consider Borges's story, *Pierre Menard, autor del Quijote*. Pierre Menard is a writer who wants to rewrite *Don Quixote*

¹⁹*Prólogo para franceses*; Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. IV, 350.

word for word and event by event: “His admirable ambition was to produce pages that would coincide— word for word and line for line— with those of Miguel de Cervantes.”

Borges explains that the method was straightforward: “To know Spanish well, recover the Catholic faith, fight against the Moors or the Turk, forget the history of Europe between 1602 and 1918, and be Miguel de Cervantes” (Borges, 1944).

Menard soon realizes that this task is impossible because even recovering Cervantes’s historical and biographical context would not enable him to say the same thing. Menard is already another self with his particular perspective.

Ortega understood saying as an action that arises in response to a situation; therefore, ideas and words only have full meaning when they fulfill their mission within the framework of an individual’s existence and activity. In the *Prólogo a la Historia de la filosofía, de Émile Bréhier* (1942), Ortega critiques the *History of Eternal and Universal Ideas*, which represents the “canon” of authors and “classic texts” supposedly containing a “timeless wisdom” that transcends the space and time in which they were produced: “There are no eternal ideas. Ideas are tied to the circumstances in which they occur; the integrity of an idea becomes clear when we see it in action”.²⁰

Ideas, according to Ortega, are actions that are unveiled in their nascent moment and are associated with a context. He continues: “The real situation from which one speaks or writes is the general context of all expression. [...] An idea is always a reaction of a person to a specific situation in their life. [...] Thinking is a dialogue with circumstance”.²¹

The etymology of *eidos* no longer refers to form or vision; Ortega uses the concept to connect to the action and reaction that emerge in the dialogue we establish with circumstance to understand our present. Only by reorienting the saying trapped in the timelessness of memory and writing toward its nascent coordinate— only by recovering it *in statu nascendi*— can we restore its authentic meaning. Every text is a fragment of a context. A text requires the body that speaks and gestures— in other words, life

²⁰ *Prólogo a la Historia de la Filosofía, de Émile Bréhier*; Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. VI, 147–148.

²¹ *Ibid.*: 147. The understanding of language as an action by the sender toward the receiver is also upheld by Austin and Searle in their *Teoría de los Actos del habla*. This was one of the first pragmatic theories in the philosophy of language, to which Quentin Skinner has devoted significant attention in his contextualist view of the history of concepts.

and the intentionality of the speaker — and it also requires the available conceptual framework.

For Ortega, there are no eternal ideas. If we disregard the circumstance or context that produces an idea, we are left at best with a vague conception of it. A history of ideas is impossible because ideas do not have history; rather, it is the people — those who speak, sustain, and even die for those ideas — who have history.

In contrast to the view of eternal ideas, Ortega considers ideas in their nascent state, emerging and being executed in their context. In this way, he finds a path to resolve the crisis of Modernity. Ideas are circumstantial, active, and performative, making it possible to speak only of a *History of Concrete Ideas*.

The defense of concrete and contextual ideas establishes the foundation for the *nueva filología*, which the philosopher expressed as follows in the *Prólogo a la Historia de la Filosofía...*:

Here is the first principle of a “new philology”: *an idea is an action* that a person performs in view of a specific circumstance and with a precise purpose. If, in seeking to understand an idea, we disregard the circumstance that provoked it and the intention that inspired it, we are left with only a vague and abstract outline of it. This vague or skeletal framework of the actual idea is precisely what is often called an “idea,” because it is what is understood without further context, what seems to have an omnipresent and “absolute” meaning. But the idea does not possess its authentic content, its proper and precise “meaning,” except by fulfilling the active role or function for which it was conceived, and this role or function is what makes it an action in response to a circumstance.²²

As early as 1935, Ortega wrote *Misión del bibliotecario*, exploring questions such as what it means to read a book and what kind of dialogue can be established with the written word to understand what has been said and captured on paper. This inquiry marked the beginning of the foundation for the *nueva filología*.

Books are written sayings that contain a vital act within their pages, and to return this fixed writing to life, it must be brought back to its nascent state. Reading a book is an act of life, and to understand it, one must return to the birth of its words — to the life in which they germinated.

To read a book, it is not enough to understand what it says; one must also understand why it says so — what the author’s intentionality was in

²²Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010 [the italics are Ortega’s].

that act of writing. Philosophy is only possible if we are willing to maintain a dialogue with the book, restoring its act to its original state.

Ortega believed that linguistics — whether phonetic, grammatical, or lexical — had studied language incorrectly by treating it as an abstraction already formed. For Ortega, however, the study of language held value only if understood as part of a life or, put differently, if one studied saying in its emergent moment, in *enérgeia*, or, in Ortega's words, *in statu nascendi*. Reforming this “cadaverous linguistics” is the mission of the *nueva filología*.

Ortega formulated the two principles of a *nueva filología* derived from the Latin principle in *Apuntes para un comentario al Banquete de Platón* (1946). These principles reappear in 1950, in the context of painting, in *La reviviscencia de los cuadros*, where Ortega also considers painting, like music and poetry, as a form of saying that consists within the act of a human being. However, as early as 1942, in the *Prólogo a la Historia de la Filosofía, de Émile Bréhier*, a less explicit formulation of both principles and the centrality of silence appears:

...Language is inherently ambiguous. No saying simply says what it intends to say. It expresses only a small fraction of what it aims to convey; the rest it merely implies or “takes for granted.” [...] What we articulate relies on countless things we leave unsaid. Language exists thanks to the possibility of reticence, and what we actually express lives off “what is left unsaid but assumed” (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: 146–147).

For Ortega, language has limits: it is illusory to believe that we can say everything we think. Saying has inherent constraints that increase as the subject matter becomes more human, abstract, or complex, approaching the realm of *pathos*. We say less than we intend and, paradoxically, imply more than we planned. Our saying inhabits two worlds: the patent world and the latent world, the latter composed of silences — what we do not say in order to speak effectively.

The explicit definition of the two principles is as follows:

“Reading” begins by meaning the project of fully understanding a text. However, this is impossible. At best, with great effort, we can extract a more or less significant portion of what the text intended to say, communicate, or declare, but there will always remain an “unreadable” residue. Conversely, it is likely that, in making this effort, we will also read things in the text — understand things the author did not “intend” to say, but nevertheless communicated, revealing them involuntarily or even against their determined will. This dual nature of speech, so strange and antithetical, is formalized in two principles of my *Axiomatics for a New Philology*, which are as follows:

1. All saying is deficient — it says less than it intends;
2. All saying is exuberant — it conveys more than it intends.²³

The two principles of saying in a *nueva filología* simultaneously outline two limitations of saying. How, then, is understanding between speaker and listener possible? Verbal action, Ortega explains in *Origen de la filosofía*, is rooted in a common subsoil from which we think: a shared foundation of ideas and beliefs that allow us to think and express ourselves. This he described in *La idea de principio en Leibniz y la evolución de la teoría deductiva* as a form of “subthinking.”

These principles coexist in apparent contradiction, yet they are not mutually exclusive. Instead, tacit assumptions enable understanding. The principles of the *nueva filología* reform traditional linguistics by emphasizing that every text, idea, concept, or saying is inherently contextual and part of a life. Detached from that life, it cannot be understood — it becomes, in essence, *bio-graphy*. Ortega remarked in his *Notas de Trabajo* on Descartes that understanding a text means “intimating with a great spirit”.²⁴ Molinuevo suggests that Ortega’s philosophy should be studied as a *modus dicendi* — that is, a text is not just accompanied by context; it *is* context and the situation of a life (Molinuevo, 1992: 93).

Ortega understood that:

Verbal saying “responds” to the situation of the speakers, to which they react with established words from their language and with bodily gestures. Language, therefore, is the system of these three elements: situation-language-gesture.²⁵

Understanding a saying that is both deficient and exuberant requires context, a conceptual framework, and the intentionality of living gesture. The author’s intentionality is critical for unveiling the latent meaning between the lines of a text because, as Skinner observed, language has a performative character — it can transform reality and even ideologies. To whom the text is addressed, the type of reader or interlocutor imagined, and the action the text performs in response to a context, are aspects to consider when approaching a text. However, the difficulty of speaking is compounded by

²³*Apuntes para un comentario al Banquete de Platón*; Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. IX, 729.

²⁴See *Notas de Trabajo* by Ortega preserved in the Archivo Ortega of the Fundación José Ortega y Gasset — Gregorio Marañón in Madrid, in the folder *Discours de la Méthode*, subfolder *Nueva Filología: qué es leer un libro*, reference 19/15.

²⁵*Apuntes para un comentario al Banquete de Platón*; *ibid.*: Vol. IX, 756.

a limitation inherent to language itself: silence, the reticence to not say everything in order to say something. To say anything at all, we must silence everything else.

Ortega writes:

In speaking or writing, we renounce saying many things because language does not allow us to. Ah, but then the effectiveness of speech is not only to say, to manifest, but at the same time, it is inexorably to renounce saying, to remain silent, to silence!²⁶

Only the speaker capable of renouncing and silencing much of what they wish to communicate can speak authentically. For Ortega, language is created in the amputation of speech.

Ortega's *Teoría del Decir*, as proposed through the *nueva filología*, is understood by addressing the questions: what is a book, and what does it mean to read a book? Books are “written sayings” (λογους γεγραμμένους, *Phaedrus* 275c), Ortega writes in *Misión del bibliotecario*, recovering this idea from Plato's dialogue. In *Phaedrus*, Plato recounts the myth of writing as told by Theuth and Thamus: writing requires the fixing of words in a book, but writing ultimately undermines memory, which is non-transferable and intrinsic to the person. A “collective memory” is, in Ortega's view, a contradiction in terms. Speech is fleeting, susceptible to the passage of time; however, humans can retain some of it through memory. Writing, therefore, is the “most enduring act” of retaining spoken information in memory. A book is thus a written saying, created with intent. For Ortega, a book is a vital act, and its words, speech and silences are inseparable from the situation in life in which they arise.

A book or text, as written speech, must be understood in its dual complexity of deficiency and exuberance, as well as in its latent silences. Ortega identifies two types of silence that limit conversation:

1. *Active silence*: A deliberate renunciation by the author, where they select what to express and leave other elements unspoken, trusting the listener to understand these through context (*inefado*—conscious reticence);
2. *Passive silence*: What remains unspoken because language assumes a shared understanding among speakers, a common foundation from which dialogue is possible (*inefabilidad*).

In Ortega's words:

²⁶ *Miseria y esplendor de la traducción*; Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. v, 716.

We can summarize this first condition of language as follows: language is always limited by a boundary of ineffability. This limitation consists of what absolutely cannot be said in any language.

But on top of this, there is a second limitation: everything that language could say but that each language silences, expecting the listener to infer and add it themselves. This silence is of a different level than the first—it is not absolute but relative; it does not stem from fatal ineffability but from a conscious economy. In contrast to ineffability, I call this conscious reticence of language the *inefado*.²⁷

In 1941, Leo Strauss, after arriving in the United States from exile, published an article in *Social Research* titled *Persecution and the Art of Writing* (Strauss, 1941).²⁸ Strauss argued that philosophy must often be read “between the lines,” as this “silenced” type of writing enables the transmission of heterodox ideas. Persecution, Strauss claimed, leads to a “logographic necessity,” as Plato described in the *Phaedrus*, where meaning resides latently “between the lines,” in Ortega’s terms.

Strauss writes:

Persecution thus gives rise to a peculiar technique of writing and, with it, a peculiar type of literature in which the truth about crucial matters is presented exclusively between the lines. This literature is not addressed to all readers but only to the intelligent and trustworthy ones (Strauss, Lastra & Miranda, 2014: 59).

Philosophy can take an exoteric form, accessible to the public—as Ortega attempted through his journalistic endeavors—or be esoteric. The active and passive silences imposed by language to enable speech reside latently “between the lines.”

Ortega also warns of another limitation of saying: the gestural and expressive actions of the speaker in the nascent and effective act of saying. The meaning of what we say is completed “by the modulations of the voice, the gesture of the face, the gesturing of the limbs, and the total somatic attitude of the person”.²⁹ Gesture is the most immediate impression we receive from another human being; the Other appears to us through gestures, such as the hand extended in greeting.

²⁷ *Apuntes para un comentario al Banquete de Platón*; Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. IX, 732.

²⁸ Regarding this article by Strauss, Antonio Lastra has pointed out that it is a work of displacement or exile because its author resorted to a different language and, perhaps, a different way of writing philosophy. See Lastra, 2001: 217.

²⁹ *Apuntes para un comentario al Banquete de Platón*; Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. IX, 735.

Ineffability, *inefado*, and gesture are three limits imposed by language's need for silence. Yet, this silence has a positive character because it enables dialogue. Silence contains meaningful information that complements saying.

How do we read a book? What is this activity? How do we engage in an honest dialogue with the great books of philosophy and the history of humanity? The *nueva filología* answers this question through the *Teoría del Decir*: the expression of written and oral sayings must be interpreted in the light of the action, context, and silences of a life.

Words are only words when spoken by someone to someone. Only in this way, only functioning as a concrete action, as the living action of one human being upon another, do they have verbal reality. And since the people between whom words are exchanged are human lives, and every life is always situated in a particular circumstance or situation, it is evident that the reality of a "word" is inseparable from the person who speaks it, the person to whom it is spoken, and the situation in which it occurs.³⁰

TOWARD A HERMENEUTICS OF SILENCE

Language is an organism that is made, unmade, and remade from its inception. It is always in the process of becoming and being executed—constantly in *gerund*—as we use it. In the genesis and development of language, Ortega distinguishes between two ways of using it: *speaking* (*hablar*) and *saying* (*decir*). This linguistic duality reflects the vital reality of human existence, which operates in two spheres: the individual and the collective or social. When we speak, we use a language that is already present and imposed upon us by our social environment. Ortega, a lover of etymologies, delves into them to differentiate between speaking and saying in linguistic acts:

Yes, it is about this: beginning to clarify what happens in the world, to declare it, which is the authentic mission of "saying" (*decir*) and the etymological meaning of this word. The Latins perfectly distinguished between mere *speaking* and formal *saying*. To speak, to prattle, is *loquor*, while *dico* signifies an action with institutional character, one with the solemn and official rank of a function necessary for the community. *Dicere* (*saying*) is a term of religious and legal language, not just any private or journalistic chatter. To say, for instance, is for a magistrate, in the name of the people, to make a promise to the gods or for a citizen to speak before a tribunal. To say, therefore, is to commit oneself to reality, whether

³⁰ *El hombre y la gente [Curso de 1949–1950]*; Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. v, 299.

divine or natural. It is also for a judge to pronounce a sentence (*ius dicere*) or for the people to designate a man as head of state (*dicere consulem*). Thus, *saying* has a sacramental value, and when other sacraments lost their virtue, “saying” remained to signify the last sacred function without which a community cannot live: to make manifest in words the truth of things, which is always, at first, hidden. Saying, then, is not merely verbalizing but *declaring* the truth, speaking *in form*. Authentic *saying* does not express a private necessity, emotion, or whim but formally conveys a doctrine.³¹

Saying transcends *speaking*. Speaking is the system of verbal uses established by the collective, while the speaker (*diciente*) is the creative individual capable of transcending established usages to express their inner being. Ortega notes that the struggle between personal saying and collective speech is the natural way language exists. Authentic saying has an executive or energetic character; it stands in contrast to inauthentic saying, which merely relies on established linguistic conventions.

Authentic saying, as we have seen, encounters the limitation of silence. To commit to reality and declare or unveil things through saying, we must engage in a voluntary and positive silence. However, language is also utopian—not only because of the hermeneutics inherent in self-imposed silence but also because we cannot be certain that the listener truly understands what we intend to say.

In *Ernst und Falk*, Lessing explores hermeneutics through a dialogue about Freemasonry. When asked what Freemasonry is, Ernst argues that if he knew what it was, he would be able to say it because only what we conceptualize can we express in words. Falk’s reply is simple: “Not always.” Even if one can express it in words, we cannot assume the listener will derive exactly the same concept.

To grasp the authentic meaning of philosophical saying, Ortega emphasizes the need for reform through the *nueva filología*, which ensures proper hermeneutics of a written text. Ortega’s *Teoría del Decir* is, in turn, a *Teoría del Silenciar*, derived from the Latin principle *duo si idem dicunt non est idem*. The *Teoría del Decir* provides a framework for recovering the phenomenon of saying in its nascent state (*status nascens*), as if it were emerging anew at the moment of its genesis, understanding words as the profound actions of a human being in response to their circumstances.

Language, Ortega explains, is the vast system of verbal usages employed in speaking. However, there must also be a science that studies *saying*,

³¹ [Llevo doce años de silencio...]; Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. IX, 704–705.

grounded in the *Teoría del Decir*, because from its origins, the word holds an almost sacred value as an expression of humanity.³² In both Sanskrit and Greek, the words for “word” or “saying”—*brahman* and *logos*—carry sacred significance. *Brahman* means “expansion” and derives from *Brahma*, the Hindu god of the universe. The *brahman* is the Hindu priest, bearer of the word. *Logos*, which means both “word” and “reason,” was conceptualized in Romance languages as *verbum*, with its Indo-European root likely stemming from *leg*, meaning “to choose.” The *logos* is the selection of the precise word.

The *Teoría del Decir* restores the sacred value of words by understanding saying as an occasional meaning revealed in its nascent state. Philosophy arises when we are willing to return to the birth of words, their etymology, and their use by speakers within their contexts. If we understand the writing of books in this way, the *nueva filología* becomes a propaedeutic for philosophy because philosophy is a system of living actions that can only be clarified in light of the dramatic and tragic dynamism of the author’s life.

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³²*La idea de principio en Leibniz y la evolución de la teoría deductiva*; Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. IX, 1026.

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НОВАЯ ФИЛОЛОГИЯ ОРТЕГИ

ИССЛЕДОВАНИЯ СКАЗАННОГО И НЕСКАЗАННОГО

Получено: 08.10.2024. Рецензировано: 01.12.2024. Принято: 06.12.2024.

Аннотация: В данной статье исследуется филологическая теория испанского философа Хосе Ортеги-и-Гассета, которую он сам называл «новой филологией». Его предложение реформировать филологию, рассматриваемое как необходимая предпосылка для возрождения новой философии — той, которая в его мышлении станет философией жизненного и исторического разума, — сосредоточено вокруг проблематики «подлинного высказывания» и замалчивания. Эти два компонента речи становятся понятными и обновляются только с учетом двух факторов: биографической направленности говорящего и жизненного, исторического и обстоятельного контекста. Цель данной статьи — реконструировать «биографическую археологию подлинного высказывания и замалчивания», присутствующую в философии Ортеги.

Ключевые слова: Ортега, новая филология, высказывание, молчание, язык.

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THE ESSENTIAL LIBERALISM OF JOSÉ ORTEGA Y GASSET**

Submitted: Aug. 06, 2024. Reviewed: Nov. 10, 2024. Accepted: Nov. 24, 2024.

Abstract: In "The Essential Liberalism of José Ortega y Gasset," the author explores Ortega's philosophy of liberalism, which emphasizes the radical reality of individual life as the basis of freedom and society. Unlike doctrinal liberalism or the liberal traditions of the 19th century, Ortega's concept is rooted in his philosophy of "vital reason," which posits life as a dynamic, self-creating process within historical circumstances. He argues that liberalism should enable personal life to flourish by providing freedom from oppressive state control and fostering a pluralistic society. Ortega critiques mass society, where individuality is often subsumed under collective ideologies, whether totalitarian or democratic. His liberalism prioritizes civil society over state power and champions the moral responsibility of minorities to lead through example, not coercion. While skeptical of the naïve optimism of 19th century liberalism, Ortega insists on preserving its essential principles, as liberalism underpins Europe's historical destiny. He distinguishes democracy from liberalism, cautioning against the tyranny of majority rule without safeguards for individual freedom. In his later works, Ortega stresses the importance of constructing Europe as a supranational entity to overcome nationalist tensions, preserving the pluralistic and free spirit that defines European civilization.

Keywords: Ortega, Liberalism, Politics, Philosophy of Life, Nation, State.

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...es el caso que yo no soy un "viejo liberal"

Ortega

THE DOCTRINE OF HUMAN LIFE AS RADICAL REALITY: THE ROOT OF ORTEGA'S LIBERALISM

In 1937, during the early stages of the most dramatic years of Ortega's life — a drama shared by many Spaniards inside and outside the nation during the war — he wrote *Prologue for the French* in Paris, as his most famous book *The Revolt of the Masses* had not yet been translated into the language of Descartes. In one passage, he asked: "¿Puede hoy un hombre de veinte años formarse un proyecto de vida que tenga figura individual y que,

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por tanto, necesitaría realizarse mediante sus iniciativas independientes, mediante sus esfuerzos particulares?” (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. IV, 364–365). To reach that goal, such a project would not only depend on his initiatives and efforts but also on the world in which he would try to achieve it, which should not be utterly hostile to his aims and must offer enough freedom for his plans. Observing the landscape of 1930s Europe, led by mass leaders like Mussolini, Stalin, and Hitler, to mention the most notable ones, Ortega feared that this young man, along with his entire generation, was doomed to become part of the “mass man,” a human type lacking personal life.

The philosopher’s question to his French readers can only be fully understood by grasping the expression “proyecto de vida,” which has a particular meaning in the philosophy of *vital reason*. For Ortega, the radical reality is “my life”—each person’s life. This life is not a “thing,” but rather a dramatic event precisely because it consists of a self installed in the world, forced to make a life for itself. It finds itself with an “unmade” life and has to be shaped amidst circumstances within the historical life of the society to which it belongs, providing the necessary resources. Each self must discover within itself the form it wants its life to take as it is propelled toward the future, open and indeterminate. In his 1933 course, *En torno a Galileo*, Ortega clarified:

Pues bien, ese programa de vida que cada cual es, es, claro está, obra de su imaginación [...] Todos sabemos muy bien que nos hemos forjado diversos programas de vida entre los cuales oscilamos realizando ahora uno y luego otro. En una de sus dimensiones esenciales la vida humana es, pues, una obra de imaginación (ibid.: Vol. VI, 482).

For the life of young Europeans to make sense, first, they must imagine and desire a personal life; second, their circumstances must grant them a minimum of autonomy; the existing political and economic structure must offer at least minimal equality of opportunities and the state must not oppress its citizens’ lives with its demands.

Freedom occupies a central place in Ortega’s metaphysical vision of *vital reason*, since the radical and ultimate reality to which everything must be referred is our life. For each individual, life consists of “doings” and having to make one’s existence, not just in the grand decisions but in the day-to-day and hour-to-hour moments. Therefore, in the many descriptions of this reality that Ortega offers — “our life” — the components that emphasize freedom as decision-making dominate:

La vida es una operación que se hace hacia adelante. Se vive desde el porvenir, porque vivir consiste inexorablemente en un hacer, en un hacerse la vida de cada cual a sí misma (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. v, 120)¹.

In short, Ortega's theory of human life calls for what Popper termed an "open society." Ortega's liberalism is, therefore, pre-political, embedded in the historical structure of human life rather than being a matter of doctrinal speculation. Human life is, above all, personal life, though it materially depends on the collective dimension that sustains it—society. There is a permanent tension between these two dimensions, which Kant summarized in a phrase Ortega shared: the "la in *sociable sociabilidad* de los hombres" (Kant, Ímaz, 1978: 46–47)². The life plan is personal, but its execution occurs in the social sphere. Plan and execution may not be compatible; when not, that life is condemned to failure. Great artistic or scientific innovations may arise if self-triumphs over circumstances. An individual introduces something into the world that did not exist, but which they needed in their life. For example, Newton "needed" to understand how the universe works, and Marx was required to understand the mechanism of worker exploitation by capital.

Ortega was not a liberal in the doctrinal or practical sense of the Liberal Party of the Restoration, led by Práxedes Sagasta, whom he criticized with particular ferocity.³ Nor did he adhere to the liberal trends dominating Europe, which he dismissively referred to as "Manchesterian," referencing the practical interpretation of liberalism that, starting with Bentham, dominated the British liberal tradition. However, Ortega was not a political theorist, though he was constantly preoccupied with politics. He always approached politics from a very specific problem—such as the issues of contemporary Spain—or a purely theoretical issue related to his *raciovitalismo* (life as radical reality). The hundreds of articles he published in the Spanish press

¹I cite another text to emphasize the relevance that life as a decision has in Ortega's metaphysics: "Vida es preocupación, y lo es no sólo en los momentos difíciles, sino que lo es siempre y en esencia no es más que eso: preocuparse. En cada instante tenemos que *decidir lo que vamos a hacer* en el siguiente, lo que va a ocupar nuestra vida. Es pues ocuparse por anticipado, es pre-ocuparse" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. VIII, 372. The italics have been added. In the previous paragraph, Ortega acknowledges the inspiration from the definition given in the description of Heideggerian *Dasein* as care, as *Sorge* (ibid.)).

²Towards the end of the text, we will indicate where Ortega cites the famous Kantian judgment.

³For his early political interventions starting in 1907–1908, see Zamora Bonilla, 2022, especially *The Return to Spain after the First Stage in Marburg: A Boiling Pot of Ideas for Politics. An Era of Controversies*, pp. 66 and following.

are examples of the former; of the latter, we have his analyses of the concepts of “nation” or “state,” his theory of minorities and masses, his theory of Europe as a historical entity, or his dialogues with past European liberal doctrines, such as his praise of French doctrinaire liberalism in the prologue to his *Rebelión* or his lecture in Berlin, where he reminded Germans emerging from the Nazi nightmare of their illustrious liberal past, extensively citing Wilhelm von Humboldt.

In summary, Ortega is liberal because this doctrine defends the pluralism of life forms that give space to the initiatives necessary for each specific life — the only reality — to choose its path. He postulates the superiority of civil society over any form of state control, which Ortega called the state. He praises parliamentary mediation as a remedy against “direct action,”⁴ Even when it was already discredited, we find liberal roots in his distinction between democracy and liberalism, highlighting the latter’s insistence on limiting state power and its *ethos*⁵ — conceiving liberalism as a moral system that values personal effort⁶ and kindness,⁷ even above justice.

However, as we will see, given the shifting circumstances of the first half of the 20th century — so rich in wars and revolutions — Ortega had plenty

⁴“La civilización no es otra cosa que el ensayo de reducir la fuerza a *ultima ratio*. Ahora empezamos a ver esto con sobrada claridad, porque la “acción directa” consiste en invertir el orden y proclamar la violencia como *prima ratio*; en rigor, como única razón. Es ella la norma que propone la anulación de toda norma, que suprime todo intermedio entre nuestro propósito y su imposición. Es la *Charta Magna* de la barbarie” (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. IV, 419). In another place, he considers direct action as an indicator of “political degeneration” (ibid.: Vol. II, 652).

⁵About this characteristic of liberalism as *ethos* see Pedro Cerezo, *De la melancolía liberal al ethos liberal* (Cerezo, 2011: 345) and *Razón vital y liberalismo* (ibid.: 271).

⁶When Ortega examines the distinction between play, an inseparable component of human and even animal life, and sport, a variation of the former, he establishes the difference in that sporting activity presumes free effort, while play is natural due to its spontaneity. The idea of sporting effort gains strength starting from the 1919 essay, *El Quijote en la escuela*. Biology and pedagogy: work does not create culture, an idea consecrated by Hegel and Marx; culture, on the contrary, is the child of sport: “Bien sé que a la hora presente me hallo solo entre mis contemporáneos para afirmar que la forma superior de la existencia humana es el deporte” (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. II, 427). Some years after that, *El tema de nuestro tiempo* (1923) softens that initial enthusiasm, precisely separating work from sport: “La necesidad y el deber de cultura imponen a la humanidad la ejecución de ciertas obras. El esfuerzo que se emplea para darles cima es, pues, obligado. Este esfuerzo obligado, impuesto por determinadas finalidades, es el trabajo. [...] Al trabajo se contraponen otro tipo de esfuerzo que no nace de una imposición, sino que es impulso libérrimo y generoso de la potencia vital: es el deporte” (ibid.: Vol. III, 609).

⁷The first meaning that RAE gives to “magnanimidad” says “generous or acting with liberality.”

of occasions and reasons to criticize the theses of political liberalism that dominated the European scene during the second half of the 19th century, such that the unwarranted optimism in human nature and the faith that the future was guaranteed by rational belief in progress caused its crisis, as Ortega had prophesied as early as 1930.

EVOLUTION OF ORTEGA'S LIBERAL IDEAS SINCE 1908: THE SOCIALIST
LIBERALISM OF THE YOUNG ORTEGA

To fully understand Ortega's political philosophy regarding his liberalism, we must begin with the stark contrast between Spain's historical situation during the Restoration and the level of European culture and civilization at the beginning of the 20th century.

The Restoration was a constitutional political system resulting from the political imagination of a liberal *moderado*, Cánovas del Castillo, who put an end to a cycle of civil wars—the *Carlist Wars*, which could be exaggeratedly described as the last religious wars fought on European soil. Cánovas's idea, as summarized by Fusi, was to create “a regime of liberty and concord, a stable system based on a prestigious civil power supported by strong and solid political parties” (Fusi & Palafox, 1997: 153–154). Thus, in 1874, the return of the Bourbon monarchy ended the struggle between conservatives and liberals, giving way to one of the most prolonged periods of social peace in modern Spanish history.⁸ It must be noted that the Crown-tutored bipartisan system, based on the alternation of dominant parties, was not far removed from the parliamentary systems enjoyed by the great European nations, despite the endemic scourge of *caciquismo* (*local political bosses*), which manipulated elections and ensured the agreed-upon alternation of power between the hegemonic parties—the conservatives of Cánovas and the liberals of Sagasta.

However, the intellectual and cultural differences between Spain and Europe were another matter. Spain had not experienced a Protestant Reformation and had barely touched the Enlightenment. Romanticism arrived late, influenced by the second wave of French Romanticism—Hugo and Lamartine. German Romanticism, so tied to the idealist philosophy of Kant's successors—Fichte and Hegel—had almost no presence until

⁸Look at the chapter *La Restauración y el reinado de Alfonso XIII* (1874–1931) from Fusi & Palafox, 1997. Also *España contemporánea (1814–1953)* of Vicens Vives, 2012: 103.

the Generation of '98. Nietzsche wasn't translated into Spanish until the last years of the 19th century.⁹

The early public action of the young Ortega was marked by his polemics with the Generation of '98, particularly with Unamuno and Maeztu. He criticized them for the insufficiency of their literature and "impressionistic critiques" as instruments of reform. What was needed, he argued, was "science," inseparable from the great continental philosophy of Descartes and Leibniz and Ortega's Neo-Kantian mentors. He said this was the essential deficiency: Spain had not experienced philosophical modernity.

Ortega had the privilege of traveling to Germany to study philosophy in 1905 at the young age of 22. There, he immersed himself in the latest and best philosophical currents of the continent. Ignoring positivism, which was already in crisis, he first trained in Neo-Kantianism and later in phenomenology. These biographical details are relevant for one reason: it is crucial to understand that Spanish political institutions were initially subjected to critique from the perspective of advanced European philosophical ideas—including political philosophy.

Despite his education in German thought, Ortega was aware that he should avoid repeating the error committed by Krausism in the previous generation, when a German philosophy was imported and forced to fit Spanish circumstances. Ortega recognized that the only chance to influence his generation of "young people," to whom he consciously addressed his early articles, publications and manifestos, depended on thoroughly understanding his homeland's material and spiritual foundations. Hence, he paid similar attention to the thinker from the previous generation who best understood Spain and Europe: Miguel de Unamuno.¹⁰ He also read the great novelists

⁹See the magnificent study by Sobejano, 2004.

¹⁰In his speech in Bilbao, Unamuno preaches a formula of liberalism that seems decisive to me: "El que las voces liberalismo y libertad tengan una estirpe común lleva a juegos de palabra y al errado concepto de la libertad. La libertad es la conciencia de la ley, y la ley es social. El liberalismo está en dondequiera en crisis, porque lo está aquel concepto manchesteriano de la ley que produjo la escuela clásica de economía política, verdadera esencia del liberalismo, que ha sido hasta ahora anarquista en el fondo" (*El Imparcial*, 11 de septiembre, 1908; Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. 1, 217). The quote is valid as an example of Unamuno's influence on the young Ortega. The criticism of the old liberalism is inspired by the rejection of the economicist approach of English liberalism. Ortega, in the wake of Unamuno, seeks a more spiritual, less utilitarian inspiration for his new liberalism, where the individual, defended as the ultimate root of the human, is in agreement with the social or collective. However, until 1914, as we will see, Ortega did not break with the neo-Kantian program which, like much of the prevailing ideology in the 19th century, deified the social.

and dramatists of the Generation of '98, such as Valle-Inclán, Baroja, and Azorín. He developed a close relationship with Ramiro de Maeztu, a well-informed publicist on European matters and a correspondent in London for a Spanish newspaper who sympathized with the circles of Fabian socialism, which had just emerged.

It is essential to bear in mind this dual movement in the intellectual formation of the young Ortega: from Germany, he drew methods and thinking techniques; from Spain, he drew problems, urgency, and the relevance of questions, that is, the program of his philosophy. This is evident in *Meditations on Quixote*, where he wrote: “Dios mío, ¿qué es España? [...] ¿qué es esta España, este promontorio espiritual de Europa, esta como proa del alma continental?” (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. I, 791). Notice how the philosophical question about “Spain” is inseparable from its European connection.

The issue of liberalism, although it originates from the political situation of Restoration of Spain, soon moves into the European context as Europe loses its quality as a “spiritual” (or ideal) model — a process that occurred shortly after the Great War (1914–1918) began, when Ortega realized the consequences the conflict would have for all nations. In some unpublished diary notes he began writing spurred by the outbreak of the war, he noted: “Los periódicos, con sus necedades y sus chuladas, no llevan al corazón de las gentes el estado emocional que pide este enorme hecho histórico que está en estos instantes comenzando [...]. Y, sin embargo, la realidad es que el mundo está fuera de sus goznes y tardará mucho en volver a ellos y no volverá sin formidables convulsiones” (ibid.: Vol. VII, 386).

It is commonplace that Ortega entered public life while still very young, with a program designed from European culture as a solution to Spain's national problems. To correctly interpret what the word “Europe” meant when it flowed from the philosopher's pen is to understand what he aspired to and what he considered inadequate in the critiques and proposals of the literati and reformist politicians of the previous generation. Priority did not lie in comfort and civilization, but in their underlying possibility, namely *modern* philosophy and natural science. Spain had produced Cervantes, Calderón and Lope, but also needed Descartes, Galileo, Locke and Kant. Simplifying a bit, one might say that, until 1914, Ortega's writings established as the foundation and support of all his arguments and proclamations the equation *Europe equals Modernity* understood as Cartesian rationalism, the science of Galileo and Newton, and the politics based on the modern

creation of a centralized state that orders and regulates civil society, which Ortega interchangeably referred to as the people or the nation.¹¹

Influenced by the political environment he encountered in Marburg, dominated by the chair socialism of his Neo-Kantian teachers, the period from 1908 to 1914 was characterized by Ortega's critique of the old liberal doctrine, coinciding with a certain "communitarianism" focused on the "flesh and bone" men (Unamuno), as we have seen. A year after his second trip to Germany (1907), he published an article in a newspaper, *Faro*, which he had founded with his friend Ramiro de Maeztu, titled *The Liberal Reform*, in which he discussed a "new" liberalism, very close to what social democracy was attempting in Germany under the Second Reich¹²:

De los conservadores ha salido ese apotegma peligroso, según el cual sería el liberalismo no más que el ejercicio de la libertad. Digo peligroso porque en tal decir se toma a sabiendas la libertad con un vago sentido popular que nada tiene que ver con lo que significa, para los sabedores de la ética. ¿Qué libertad es ésa a cuya defensa y sustentación quieren los conservadores circunscribir la idea liberal? ¿Qué quieren decir cuando dicen que «la libertad se ha hecho conservadora»? ¿Indican con ello que en los conflictos entre el individuo y el Estado debe llevar aquél la primacía y la decisión? Estos conflictos no tienen sentido dentro del nuevo liberalismo: son precisamente comprobación de los errores originales en la fundamentación positivista, utilitaria, del liberalismo inglés, que ha venido siendo la norma hasta hace poco. A la postre hemos vuelto hacia la sabia opinión platónica, que no reconoce individuos fuera del Estado (*Faro* 23 de febrero 1908; Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. I, 144–145).

A year earlier, he had called on Spanish intellectuals — thinking of his elders of the "Generation of '98" — not to withdraw from "public problems" and to recognize themselves as "Pobligados a renovar la emoción liberal y con ella el liberalismo, bello nombre que ha rodado por Europa y que, por una ironía de la musa gobernadora de la Historia, vino a salir de nuestra oscura tierra" (*ibid.*: Vol. I, 114). He insisted that this liberalism "must be socialism."

The development of these political ideas culminated in 1910 in a conference with the expressive title, *Pedagogía social como programa político*. The audience heard him repeat the Platonic thesis shared by his teachers: namely, that the individual is irrelevant in comparison to the social whole, that

¹¹Later we will clarify the meaning of terms such as "people," "nation," "State" and other related terms.

¹²It is no coincidence that in 1911 he dedicated an article to glossing the life of Ferdinand Lassalle, (1825–1864), entitled precisely *En torno a un héroe moderno* (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. I, 506).

morality must answer to politics, and that pedagogy is the only instrument for social progress:

Para un Estado idealmente socializado lo privado literatino existe, todo es público, popular, laico. La moral misma se hace íntegramente moral pública, moral política: la moral privada no sirve para fundar, sostener, engrandecer y perpetuar ciudades; es una moral estéril y escrupulosa, maniática y subjetiva. La vida privada misma no tiene buen sentido: el hombre es todo él social... (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. II, 100)

And shortly afterward: “El individuo se diviniza en la colectividad.” It is worth noting that the conference *Pedagogía social como programa político* was published in *Personas, obras, cosas* (1916), with a brief prologue in which Ortega acknowledged that he could no longer endorse certain opinions—specifically, those expressed in the previous quote: “me refiero al valor de lo individual y subjetivo. Hoy más que nunca tengo la convicción de haber sido el subjetivismo la enfermedad del siglo XIX.” Here, subjectivism means idealism. From Cohen to Plato’s philosopher-king, there was a single step Ortega was willing to take around 1910 to “save” Spain from its past, though ultimately he did not take it.

During those German years, he naturally became interested in the then-minority Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party (PSOE), led by Pablo Iglesias.¹³ He gave a few lectures at the *Casa del Pueblo* but soon distanced himself from Spanish socialism, considering it insufficiently “nationalizing” due to its internationalist and revolutionary vocation. In 1913, he published a provocative article declaring himself “socialist” out of “love for the aristocracy.” With this irony, he seemed to bid farewell to collectivist and internationalist ideals.¹⁴ He began to glimpse the importance of personal life, beyond—and above—social life and its political determinations. From then on, his ideals for public affairs focused on rethinking European liberalism, seeking to adjust it to the material reality of Spain and Europe at the time.

¹³An excellent summary of the socialist nuances of Ortega’s early liberalism may be found in Aguilar, 1986. See also Salmerón, 1984: 113 et seq.

¹⁴“El día que los obreros españoles abandonaran las palabras abstractas y reconocieran que padecen, no sólo como proletarios, sino como españoles, harían del partido socialista el partido más fuerte de España. De paso harían España. Esto sería la nacionalización del socialismo; quiero decir, el socialismo concreto frente a un socialismo abstracto que sólo es eficaz cuando se confunde con los confusos movimientos radicales” (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. I, 570); “Miscelánea socialista,” *El imparcial*, 1912.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF MEDITACIONES
AND THE PROJECT OF VIEJA Y NUEVA POLÍTICA

In 1914, Ortega conceived his first original philosophy and offered his generation a program to overcome the political crisis afflicting the Restoration system. *Meditaciones del Quijote* provided the philosophical foundations of his political intervention, which he articulated in a famous lecture, *Vieja y nueva política*, and in the manifesto he launched a year earlier to present the first political initiatives he undertook throughout his life: the *League for Spanish Political Education*. In both texts, liberalism appeared as part of his proposal for the regeneration of Spanish political and social life, more energetically expressed in the *Prospectus*, where we find one of Ortega's most heartfelt declarations towards liberalism. After linking the "advancement of Spain to liberalism," he clarifies:

Por liberalismo no podemos entender otra cosa sino aquella emoción radical, vivaz siempre en la, historia, que tiende a excluir del Estado toda influencia que no sea meramente humana, y espera siempre, y en todo orden, de nuevas formas sociales, mayor bien que de las pretéritas y heredadas.¹⁵ (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. 1, 740)

Although the classics of English liberalism are not among the philosophers he most frequently cited, Ortega owes to Hobbes the conviction that the individual subject, not the community, is the source of all rights: "The natural right resides in the liberty to do or refrain from doing anything that one can for the preservation of one's own life." The thesis complements this prioritization of the individual over the collective, that the work of a specific man — the work of his hands — is the foundation of all rights, including property (Strauss & Cropsey, 1993: 382). Thus, it prioritizes a "negative" conception of liberty, borrowing the famous distinction of Isaiah Berlin (Berlin, 1974)¹⁶, since liberty in this liberal tradition is understood only as the limits that individual rights impose on the powers of the state, regardless of who exercises it or the legitimacy for doing so.

This version of liberalism, with which Ortega became increasingly comfortable as he distanced himself from politics after his break with the Reformist Party of Melquiades Álvarez in 1915, prioritized the ideals of pluralism and personal freedom. These principles formed the core to which Ortega

¹⁵For a broader study of Ortega's interpretations of his "essential" liberalism, see Lasaga Medina, 2017.

¹⁶La diferencia en 136.

remained faithful throughout his work, although he constantly nuanced the final meaning of those virtues as embodied in the liberal *ethos*. Socialism, as a regulative ideal (not as the concrete policy of a party), never entirely disappeared; one must recognize that collective-social life is as much part of our existence as the most personal aspects, although Ortega always maintained the conviction that the decisive dimension in each individual's life is the one touching their innermost self, however determinant and decisive the historical-social circumstance may be at any given moment. Hence, Ortega periodically repeated his critique of "the social" to condemn the legacy that European culture inherited from the 19th century. In *Meditaciones del Quijote*, he projected an "Ensayo sobre la limitación," claiming that European masses had learned politics "thanks to democracy." Ortega's critique was directed at the "exclusivity" with which politics was practiced, which invaded many other fields of human activity: "Lo otro, la vida individual, quedó relegada, como si fuera cuestión poco seria e intrascendente" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. I, 755). Three years later, he revisited this issue more directly in an article titled *Democracia morbosa* (*Sick Democracy*), which I will discuss further below.

The dominance of the social, as we saw in "Pedagogía social...", evaporated, and with it, the Platonic idea of the pure rationality of the Idea. A realistic Platonism would now guide political reform. Let us clarify the paradox: the ideal that seeks to transform reality for the better, based on ideas elaborated by human reason, is inherent in the modernity from which Ortega's philosophy draws. However, this ideal must respect reality; moreover, it must discover the ideal within reality itself. He found this realistic inspiration in Don Quixote—the great, deluded dreamer who ends up not knowing where his efforts lead, but whose idealistic madness rests on the frequent moments of lucidity described by Cervantes. Ortega liked to quote this balanced defense of the ideals of classical liberalism—personal freedom and equality—from Don Quixote: "Considera, hermano Sancho, que nadie es más que otro mientras no haga más que otro" (ibid.: Vol. I, 598).

Ortega draws another lesson from Cervantes' novel. The critique of delusional idealism, which ignores reality's resistance, is already clearly formulated in two metaphysical themes touched upon in *Meditaciones del Quijote*: the idea of limitation, which philosophy and politics had ignored since Romanticism, and the idea that things have a materiality resistant

to any manipulation that man may intend.¹⁷ In an essay titled *Estética en el tranvía* (1915), Ortega ultimately shapes a new theory of the ideal that avoids the “utopianization of the real,” to which modernity had been so inclined since a certain point. He describes, with precise detail, this ideal that respects reality and will remain a guiding principle of Ortega’s political thought and action until the end: “descubre en la realidad misma, en lo que tiene de más imprevisible, en su capacidad de innovación ilimitada, la sublime incubadora de ideales, de normas, de perfecciones” (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. II, 181).

The “new politics” drew its momentum from a fierce critique of the “old politics” of the Restoration. The Spanish nation is out of shape, almost a ghost over which the youth must project achievable ideals capable of inspiring enthusiasm for the dream nationalization project. This was the message that Ortega directed to his generation in the theater where he gave that lecture. His pessimistic view of the Spanish nation, afflicted by the worst of evils, particularism — a concept he coined around 1921 when he wrote *España invertebrada* — stems from his years as part of the “teenagers of ’98.”¹⁸ This led him to rethink the nation not as a completed reality but as a project to be constructed. One should recall his emphasis on the idea of nationalization in the 1914 lecture: “Liberalismo y nacionalización propondría yo como lemas a nuestro movimiento. Pero ¡cuánto no habrá que hablar, que escribir, que disputar hasta que estas palabras den a luz todo el inmenso significado de que están encintas!” (ibid.: Vol. I, 736)¹⁹.

¹⁷“La cosa inerte y áspera escupe de sí cuantos “sentidos” queramos darle: está ahí, frente a nosotros, afirmando su muda, terrible materialidad frente a todos los fantasmas. He ahí lo que llamamos realismo: traer las cosas a una distancia, ponerlas bajo una luz, inclinarlas de modo que se acentúe la vertiente de ellas que baja hacia la pura materialidad” (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. I, 813). Ortega does not embrace this type of realism, but he will always maintain that any ideal that interprets the self in its search for solutions must be aware of this intimate and ultimate resistance of the materiality of reality.

¹⁸The expression “teenager of ’98” in Cacho Viu and his brilliant analysis of why Ortega gave Azorín the concept “Generation of ’98.” See *Ortega y el espíritu del 98*, specifically *La primigenia generación de 1898* in Cacho Viu, 1997: 126 et seq.

¹⁹One of the meanings not implied in his concept was precisely that of “nationalism.” Ortega foresaw the confusion and that is why he qualified his proposal almost immediately after: “No se entienda, por lo frecuente que ha sido en este mi discurso el uso de la palabra nacional, nada que tenga que ver con el nacionalismo. Nacionalismo supone el deseo de que una nación impere sobre las otras, lo cual su pone, por lo menos, que aquella nación vive” (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. I, 737). In *The Rebellion* he will be more radical in his condemnation: “Pero todos estos nacionalismos son callejones sin salida. Inténtese proyectarlos hacia el mañana y se sentirá el tope. Por ahí no se sale a ningún lado. El nacionalismo es siempre un impulso de

As previously mentioned, nationalization means strengthening the social fabric in all areas, from education to the economy; it involves a system of integration informed by “a project of common life.” It is easy to recognize Renan’s definition of a nation here, to which Ortega remained faithful, though with some decisive nuance. Renan’s “daily plebiscite” is transferred by Ortega to the realm of the future and the project: the nation is built around a system of shared illusions. This common life project will be found when the climate of particularism and hatred²⁰ created during the Restoration is overcome. The illness is not with the State or the political sphere but with the nation: “Lo malo es que no es el Estado español quien está enfermo por externos errores de política sólo; que quien está enferma, casi moribunda, es la raza, la sustancia nacional, y que, por tanto, la política no es la solución suficiente del problema nacional porque es éste un problema histórico” (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. I, 717). It is not surprising that, in terms of proposals, Ortega insists that the work of the new politics must be directed toward civil society:

Hay que exigir a la máquina Estado mayor, mucho mayor rendimiento de utilidades sociales, pero [...] queda por exigir mucho más a los otros órganos nacionales que no son el Estado, que no es el Gobierno, que es la libre espontaneidad de la sociedad. De modo que nuestra actuación política ha de tener constantemente dos dimensiones: la de hacer eficaz la máquina Estado y la de suscitar, estructurar y aumentar la vida nacional en lo que es independiente del Estado (ibid.: Vol. I, 717–718).

A few lines later, he emphasizes: “...nadie está dispuesto a defender que sea la Nación para el Estado y no el Estado para la Nación, que sea la vida para el orden público y no el orden público para la vida” (ibid.: Vol. I, 718). The vertebration of Spain is to be achieved through work and responsibility, efficiency, and justice; the articulation of its parts should come from recognizing differences and rights within the national whole. In political language, nationalization means what integration means in culture.

dirección opuesta al principio nacionalizador. Es exclusivista, mientras éste es inclusivista. En épocas de consolidación tiene, sin embargo, un valor positivo y es una alta norma. Pero en Europa todo está de sobra consolidado, y el nacionalismo no es más que una manía, el pretexto que se ofrece para eludir el deber de invención y de grandes empresas” (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. IV, 493).

²⁰“Yo sospecho que, merced a causas desconocidas, la morada íntima de los españoles fue tomada tiempo hace por el odio, que permanece allí artillado, moviendo guerra al mundo. Ahora bien; el odio es un afecto que con duce a la aniquilación de los valores” (ibid.: Vol. I, 748).

This idea of “nationalization” as the creation of social wealth, of shaping society apart from public powers, persisted throughout the period spanning more than 20 years that separated Ortega’s first public interventions from his last ones during the establishment of the Second Republic (1931). This distinction between nation and state and the “metaphysical” superiority of the nation as a vital reality, over the artificial and mechanical nature of the State (an invention of society to resolve its need for command and order) is rooted in the liberalism we have been discussing.

NATION AND STATE

Seven years later, after the League for Spanish Political Education dissolved and the failure of the modernization project of the *New Politics*, the Restoration system could not respond to the two severe crises it faced in 1917 and 1921. Precisely in the context of the latter crisis, Ortega published *España invertebrada* in *El Sol* newspaper. By 1923, the panorama had changed entirely with the emergence of Primo de Rivera’s dictatorship, which had the approval of the Crown and eventually led to a regime change with the proclamation of the Republic in 1931.

From this controversial essay, which recently celebrated its 100th anniversary, I will focus on Ortega’s continued emphasis on the distinction between nation and state and the superior “vital reality” that the nation holds. I will not address the analyses of the crisis of the Spanish nation, which were based on his diagnosis of *particularism*, the ultimate cause of the “disintegration” that the nation suffered. Instead, I will focus on Ortega’s distinction between minorities and masses, a key theme in his political philosophy.²¹

Minority and mass are simultaneously descriptive and normative terms. They do not specify political entities but rather social dynamics and psychological configurations. The epistemological status of these terms was not fully developed in *The Revolt of the Masses*, but in the second part of

²¹ Among the few comprehensive readings that have been made of the sociological, but not political, distinction between minorities and masses, it is worth highlighting that of Domingo Blanco Fernández for its rigor: “Su aristocratismo no lo plantea como una cuestión política ni propiamente sociológica, porque esos órdenes están mediados por el problema metafísico, que es del orden y la jerarquía de lo real. Al hombre superior nadie ha tenido que proclamarle superior, ni lo es porque se haya creído más que los otros, sino porque a buen seguro se ha exigido.” “El aristocratismo en Ortega, *Sistema* n^o 76, enero 1987, p. 84. Pocas líneas después aclara lo que quiere significar con su referencia a lo real: basta recurrir a las necesidades *reales* de una comunidad y a las tareas que exigen para ‘imponer un principio y unos criterios de jerarquía.’ Y eso es lo que significa en última instancia que ‘la sociedad es aristocrática y no puede no serlo’” (Ibid.).

Invertebrate Spain, significantly titled *The Absence of the Best* (*La ausencia de los mejores*). According to Ortega, the fundamental law of society's constitution consists of a dual-directional dynamic between a group that functions as a "minority" and another that operates as the "mass."

From the beginning, Ortega was aware of the danger of being misinterpreted as a defender of hereditary minorities, such as aristocracies of blood or wealth. Therefore, he always insisted on clarifying that minorities are "selectas porque se exigen mucho más a sí mismas" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. VII, 807). A possible definition of a man of the minority would be "personalidad autónoma que adopta ante la vida una actitud individual y consciente"²². Consequently, the minority is not effective because it controls the instruments of state power but because it creates a "spiritual power" that informs and guides "public opinion." According to Ortega, what is characteristic of Europe and its nations is that society is politically shaped as "public opinion" to such an extent that those who wield power cannot ignore it. However, Ortega maintains that the social efficacy of minorities depends on the adherence of the masses:

Un hombre no es nunca eficaz por sus cualidades individuales, sino por la energía social que la masa ha depositado en él. Sus talentos personales fueron sólo el motivo, ocasión o pretexto para que se condensase en él ese dinamismo social (ibid.: Vol. III, 477).

Likewise, without the minority proposing projects and discovering solutions, the dynamism of the masses becomes chaotic and destructive. Ortega described the mechanism by which the model draws the submissive as a "law of spiritual gravitation," a clear allusion to Newton's law, acknowledging the naturalistic, almost biological, inspiration that pervaded *Invertebrate Spain* and later vanished entirely in *The Revolt*, where the process of European

²²The complete phrase is the following: "Es extraño que de nuestra larga historia no se haya espumado cien veces el rasgo más característico, que es, a la vez, el más evidente y a la mano: la desproporción casi incesante entre el valor de nuestro vulgo y el de nuestras minorías selectas. La personalidad autónoma, que adopta ante la vida una actitud individual y consciente, ha sido rarísima en nuestro país. Aquí lo ha hecho todo el "pueblo," y lo que el "pueblo" no ha podido hacer se ha quedado sin hacer" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. III, 494–495). Otra descripción en la misma línea y más completa, la que dio en un breve ensayo titulado "Cosmopolitismo" (1924): "A las minorías selectas no las elige nadie. [...] El selecto se selecciona a sí mismo al exigirse más que a los demás. Significa, pues, un privilegio de dolor y de esfuerzo. Selecto es todo el que desde un nivel de perfección y de exigencias aspira a una altitud mayor de exigencias y perfecciones. Es un hombre para quien la vida es entrenamiento, palabra que, como he hecho notar en recientes conferencias, traduce exactamente lo que en griego se decía *ascetismo*" (ibid.: Vol. V, 201).

social crisis is described in specifically historical terms, advocating for an expressly indeterminist philosophy of history.²³

In Ortega's characterization of nations as historical formations of social groups that come together and live "because they have a shared program," we see his diagnosis that societies decay when the masses cease to be receptive to exemplary behavior or the minorities stop being exemplary. It cannot be emphasized enough that the minority-mass dynamic is a real dialectic. What the sociologist or historian must empirically determine is whether it was the masses that first became closed off to exemplary leadership or the minority that corrupted itself in the form of the "demagogue," preferring to flatter the masses rather than propose projects of destiny that imply mediations and sufferings.²⁴

None of this, Ortega asserts, has to do with controlling the state, nor can it be accomplished from within its bureaucratic organs. To conclude, I will reiterate Ortega's persistent stance in favor of civil society and the nation over the state, a position he maintained even after the rise of totalitarian movements in Europe. In his essay *Mirabeau or the Politician*, Ortega writes:

En definitiva, quien vive es la nación. El Estado mismo, que tan fecundamente puede actuar sobre ella, se nutre, a la larga, de sus jugos. La gran política se reduce a situar el cuerpo nacional en forma que pueda *fare da se*. Ya veremos, cuando pase algún tiempo, el resultado de esas soluciones que se proponen lo contrario: suspender toda espontaneidad nacional e intentar *fare dallo Stato*, vivir desde el Estado (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. IV, 218).

From this, Ortega concludes that while the state can "contribute to the vitality of its citizens," it can only do so to a minimal extent and, above all, negatively — by not constructing institutions that restrict personal spontaneity. This perspective on the state, which Ortega had maintained since *Old and New Politics*, prefigures his later theory of the "state as skin," a theory he would fully develop when he critiqued the limitations of the liberal doctrine in *On the Roman Empire*.

²³In *Historia como sistema* (1935) Ortega proceeds to critique Western philosophy as essentially naturalistic. Although he does not say so expressly, this critique extends to his approaches to *España invertebrada* y *El tema...* See Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. VI, 62.

²⁴"...la demagogia, fue adoptada hacia 1750 por intelectuales descarriados, ignorantes de sus propios límites y que siendo, por su oficio, los hombres del decir, del logos, han usado de él sin respeto ni precauciones, sin darse cuenta de que la palabra es un sacramento de muy delicada administración" (ibid.: Vol. IV, 351).

THE LIBERAL EUROPE IN CRISIS: SEARCHING FOR THE NEW MAN

The postwar scenario was confusing, particularly given the involvement of non-European actors in resolving the conflict. Any standard contemporary history textbook will describe the decisive intervention of U.S. President Woodrow Wilson and his ideals of peace and self-determination for the European peoples, which dismantled the dynasties that had ruled Europe for over three hundred years. Lenin and the Russian Revolution ended the war between Germany and Russia. They reignited the revolutionary pressures of the 19th century, which had seemed dormant amidst the nationalism unleashed by the war. The horror of the war contributed to producing a kind of collective illusion that led many to believe it had been the last war.

In philosophy, there was a growing awareness that the ideas of the 19th century had become obsolete. Before 1914, the sciences had dismantled most of the previous century's doctrines and its most entrenched certainties. The indefinite progress espoused by positivists, the remnants of German idealism, utilitarian moralities, and the romanticism that had degenerated into the decadent symbolism of the *fin de siècle* seemed to belong to a distant past. New philosophical approaches, such as phenomenology and emerging human sciences like ethnology, linguistics, and psychoanalysis, were seeking new orientations that offered the security of natural science without mimicking it and the certainty of knowledge without abstractions or unfounded optimism.

It is no wonder that by the early 1920s, two complementary ideas were spreading: that Europe was going through its most severe crisis since the Renaissance and that this crisis could be a growth crisis, a leap toward something beyond the "bourgeois" world of the classes that had caused the disaster. The liberal system of parliamentary balances and respect for legality had been blown apart. Communism, established by the victorious revolution in Russia, and nationalism seemed to be the new panacea that would end all woes. That was what the masses believed when they chose their leaders and supported their movements.

This was the environment in which Ortega developed his first writings, which were directed more toward Europe than Spain, which had been the primary focus of his sociopolitical analyses. The dividing line is clear: between the second edition of *Invertebrate Spain* and the first edition of *The Theme of Our Time*. There, Ortega says: "Al analizar el estado de disolución a que ha venido la sociedad española, encontramos algunos síntomas e ingredientes que no son exclusivos de nuestro país, sino tendencias generales hoy en todas las naciones europeas" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. III,

425). A year later, *The Theme of Our Time* was published. The book begins by solemnly declaring that European generations are facing a grave crisis: “El hombre de Occidente padece hoy una radical desorientación” (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. III, 607). Yet... “nuestra generación parece obstinada radicalmente en desoír las sugerencias de nuestro común destino” (ibid.: Vol. III, 567). Indeed, it seemed to be an important theme for a crisis, which Ortega, like many other Europeans, felt amid a torrent of artistic novelties—remember those that emerged around 1922²⁵—and political instabilities.

In one of the last chapters of *The Theme of Our Time*, Ortega speaks of the “new man” who is about to arrive—a somewhat unexpected use of a common phrase of the time. However, as we will see, this new man is less inspired by Trotsky or Lenin, who revived the Pauline metaphor in the propaganda of the Third International (1919) and more by Nietzsche, though without the illusion of any forthcoming “superman.” What Ortega believes is approaching is a time when Europe will experience a radical change in sensitivity, one that will emerge with a generation composed of men and women capable of introducing new values and new ways of shaping reality:

En toda perspectiva, cuando se introduce un nuevo término, cambia la jerarquía de los demás. Del mismo modo, en el sistema espontáneo de valoraciones que el hombre nuevo trae consigo, que el hombre nuevo es, ha aparecido un nuevo valor—lo vital,—que por su simple presencia deprime los restantes (ibid.: Vol. III, 610).

What is old is the valuation of abstract culture, of concepts. Ortega announces a new culture of vitality, or, as he clarifies in the book’s central chapter, the irony of Don Juan, which displaces the irony of Socrates. These metaphors point to Ortega’s summary judgment, declaring that the philosophy, ethics, art, and politics of the 19th century have been liquidated and consigned to history.²⁶

In a text published in *The Spectator* III, *Biology and Pedagogy* (1920), Ortega reported on the latest developments in biological sciences and their implications for psychology and pedagogy. In a discreet footnote, Ortega introduces a digression that hints at the theme of the “new man,” as if he were awaiting signs of the emergence of a new aristocracy:

Sólo a modo de media palabra para el buen entendedor, sea dicho lo siguiente: el ineludible triunfo del socialismo (que no es precisamente el «obrerismo») sobre el

²⁵Let us remember that in that year *Ulysses* by James Joyce, *The Waste Land* by T. S. Eliot and the *Duino Elegies* by Rainer M. Rilke were published.

²⁶For the philosophical scope of *El tema...*, see my text Lasaga Medina, 2023.

régimen capitalista equivale a arrebatar su predominio al tipo de hombre utilitario que ha imperado las ideas y los sentimientos durante casi dos siglos. Una vez transcurrido el período de turbulencias que todo cambio profundo trae consigo, el poder social pasará de manos del *homo oeconomicus* o utilitario a manos de otro tipo humano antieconómico, inutilitario, esto es, vitalmente lujoso para quien vivir no es ganar, sino, al contrario, regalar (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. II, 427).

This cryptic allusion becomes somewhat clearer — a little clearer — when one cites another note from the same essay a few pages earlier in a section titled *The Paradox of Savagery*. In it, Ortega contrasts life as an organizing, emerging activity with life organized and regulated, which he associates with civilization:

El gran público siente confusamente la impresión de que atraviesa la humanidad una hora de salvajismo. Habitado a oponer esta idea a las de cultura y civilización, no sospecha que dentro de ese salvajismo se está forjando toda una cultura y una civilización superiores. Por lo pronto, en el orden científico existe ya una renovación sólo comparable a la del Renacimiento. La ascensión obrerista que trae en su seno una nueva estructura política es, por lo pronto, una exaltación de lo primitivo social. Tal vez por eso ha llamado Rathenau al movimiento obrero una irrupción vertical de los bárbaros (ibid.: Vol. II, 408).

By connecting these two texts, it becomes clear that Ortega believes in the imminence of the arrival of a human figure, whom he identifies with the primitive man, capable of renewing forms of life and values. He names this new sensitivity emerging alongside socialism: a shift toward the “sporting and festive sense of life.”²⁷

It is logical to think that 19th-century liberalism belongs to the old ways of feeling existence, along with Wagnerian art and realist painting. Ortega declared as much during a tribute to Ramón Gómez de la Serna at his *Pombo Café* gathering in 1922. The new times would not be liberal, though not due to the return of any form of authoritarian government, but quite the opposite. It is the triumph of a new aristocracy of luxurious, sportive, and magnanimous men that will build the new society:

Pero el liberalismo, por su esencia misma, tiene los días contados. No es una actitud definitiva, que se baste a sí propia. Cuando no quede títere tradicional

²⁷“Este viraje en la actitud frente al arte anuncia uno de los rasgos más generales en el nuevo modo de sentir la existencia: lo que he llamado tiempo hace el sentido deportivo y festival de la vida” (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. III, 608). José Gaos stressed the importance with which Ortega regarded the theme of “the sporting and festive sense” of life by pointing out that it was the focus of a set of writings, in which he prophesied the shift of European sensibility in that direction. See *La profecía en Ortega* in *Los pasos perdidos...*, 2013: 81 et seq.

con cabeza, el liberalismo no hallará nada de qué liberarnos y se reabsorberá en su nada originaria (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. III, 408).

Ortega incisively criticizes the negative character of the liberal program — the concept of liberty as liberation — that characterizes Enlightenment modernity: a “liberation” from oppression, superstition, and dogmas. In the crisis of the 20th century, the old liberalism showed its inability to offer a life program capable of exciting the newly incorporated citizen masses, who were entering history and public life. Liberalism had exhausted its historical cycle with the fall of the bourgeoisie before socialism. Although I believe Ortega did not accept historical materialism, as it was a theory of history that was excessively deterministic, he did believe that history had an internal structure and logic, as expressed in his theory of generations, outlined in the first chapter of *The Theme of Our Time*. Prophecy has been possible throughout history, and Ortega makes one: a rupture generation comes with a brand-new sensitivity. It manifests itself in art and politics, the most sensitive expressions of culture. In art, the rupture had already occurred. Speaking to the artists gathered at the Pombo café, he refers to “artistic liberalism” and its play of negations, exemplified by Baudelaire, Oscar Wilde, or Barbey d’Aurevilly. The artists who listened, imbued with the avant-garde spirit, were the last “liberators” because they had destroyed the “last strongholds of literary tradition”. Ortega reiterates the generational rupture:

Amantes de las jerarquías, de las disciplinas, de las normas, comenzarán a juntar las piedras nobles para erigir una nueva tradición y alzar una futura Bastilla... (ibid.: Vol. III, 408)

The spirit guiding these inspirations was Nietzsche, and the symbol of the Bastille suggests that the historical cycle that began with the French Revolution was coming to an end. And so Ortega hoped it would happen in politics, where he also foresaw the last barricade of liberalism:

La Revolución francesa, desde sus barricadas —la barricada es el alojamiento del liberalismo,— consigue la gran liberación política, nos liberta del antiguo régimen (ibid.).

Ortega could have asked: Where or when did the old liberalism offer a program of “positive freedom,” a future project that, while safeguarding liberal forms, could provide values and affirmations to live by? The negations had not ended with the war; they had found generous inspiration in it.

It was the weakness of the liberal minorities that made revolutions possible. As Ortega notes in his analysis of the Bolshevik revolution:

No se olvide que el bolchevismo triunfó en Rusia sin que fuese necesario disparar más de diez cañonazos y aun éstos superfluamente. Lenin y Trotski no contaban, sin embargo, con la masa. ¿Cómo explicar, pues, el fenómeno? No es cuestión de hipótesis: los hechos hablan. Todo ello se debió a la parálisis en que ante el movimiento de la revolución social cayeron las pseudo aristocracias directoras. Frente a los nuevos problemas — necesidades, ilusiones, deseos — aquellas clases privilegiadas no tuvieron una palabra clara y fecunda que decir (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. VII, 743)²⁸.

The ruling minorities had failed. Russia was not Europe, and Ortega wondered whether this could happen in one of the great European nations.

BOLSHEVISM AND FASCISM

When it did happen in Italy after Mussolini's rise to power in 1922, Ortega saw the issue as a structural social problem. In 1925, he published an essay on Italian fascism, where he repeated the analysis cited earlier regarding the Russian Revolution: it was the weakness of the ruling minority, not the strength of the fascist base, that facilitated Mussolini's ascent to power:

Por ser tan inaudito el hecho del triunfo fascista — que significa el hecho de la «ilegitimidad constituida, establecida» — es por lo que instintivamente nos preguntamos: ¿Cómo las demás fuerzas sociales, que han sido hasta ahora entusiastas de la ley, no logran oponerse a esa victoria del caos jurídico? Y una respuesta se incorpora, espontánea, en nuestra mente: «Por la sencilla razón de que hoy no existen fuerzas sociales importantes que posean vivaz ese entusiasmo» (ibid.: Vol. II, 613).

A few lines later, Ortega identifies the skeptics: “Entonces resultaría que la fuerza de las camisas fascistas consiste más bien en el escepticismo de liberales y demócratas, en su falta de fe en el antiguo ideal” (ibid.).

In my opinion, the triumph of fascism rang alarm bells for Ortega regarding his earlier speculations about the arrival of the “new man” with a “sportive sensitivity.” It is no coincidence that shortly after, Ortega wrote a text that contains, in contrast to his earlier “toast” at Pombo, an implicit

²⁸The text is taken from an unpublished article entitled *Meditación del 1º de mayo* de 1919. It says at the beginning: “Yo sostenía entonces y reitero ahora que el movimiento obrero es, en su última raíz histórica, un proceso creador de nuevas aristocracias y que su triunfo es la condición imprescindible para que la vida humana vuelva a tomar un sesgo ascendente, aristocrático” (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. VII, 741). He refers to the text from 1913 that we quoted above. Note that Ortega confirms in this unpublished text two things: the degree of conviction he had in the change of sensibility that he had predicted for Europe, based on the emergence of a new aristocracy, that this had to be a graft of feudal lord on socialist trunk and that Leninist communism was not precisely such an aristocracy.

defense of liberalism. He did so by distinguishing between liberalism and democracy, perhaps because he noticed that the approaching changes were cloaked in the “ism” of radical democratism, which Ortega had already criticized in his 1917 essay *Sick Democracy*.²⁹

This critique resonates with the central argument of *Ideas de los castillos: liberalismo y democracia* (1925). In this essay, Ortega contrasts the ancient idea of liberty—where being free meant living within the city’s laws—with the modern concept of liberty as a personal right that defines a private sphere the public authority cannot invade, since, according to Ortega,

“El poder público tiende siempre y dondequiera a no reconocer límite alguno.” He then adds a judgment about democracy that contains, by contrast, praise for liberalism: “Sería, pues, el más inocente error creer que a fuerza de democracia esquivamos el absolutismo. Todo lo contrario. No hay autocracia más feroz que la difusa e irresponsable del *demos*. Por eso, el que es verdaderamente liberal mira con recelo y cautela sus propios fervores democráticos y, por decirlo así, se limita a sí mismo” (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. II, 541–542)³⁰.

In politics, there is a permanent tension between law and liberty, between justice (which should be the ideal of all legislation) and the demand for rights that liberalism promotes. Liberalism’s natural tendency to seek more liberty eventually creates differences, while democracy’s pursuit of legality moves toward equality. We tend to confuse the two, Ortega notes, because, in European history, they have often coexisted: “Liberalism and democracy get confused in our heads,” he remarks, somewhat ironically. He continues: “Democracy and liberalism are two answers to two entirely different political questions. Democracy answers this question: Who should exercise public power? The answer is: the exercise of public power belongs to the collective body of citizens” (ibid.). But are these two simply different or also opposed in their tendencies? If liberalism always seeks more liberty—thus less

²⁹“La democracia, como democracia, es decir, estricta y exclusivamente como norma del derecho político, parece una cosa óptima. Pero la democracia exasperada y fuera de sí, la democracia en religión o en arte, la democracia en el pensamiento y en el gesto, la democracia en el corazón y en la costumbre es el más peligroso morbo que puede padecer una sociedad” (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. II, 271).

³⁰Ortega agrees with other liberals, such as Stuart Mill or Tocqueville, who see the threat of the *demos* to freedom. Recently, Giovanni Sartori has echoed this inclination of democracy towards “the tyranny of the majority”: “Los constituyentes de Filadelfia temían que el principio mayoritario funcionara en el Parlamento como una apisonadora, es decir, como un ejercicio absoluto del derecho de mayoría que deviene, precisamente, tiranía de la mayoría” (Sartori, 2009: 45).

legality — and democracy seeks justice, serving the ideal of equality, then perhaps they are inherently at odds.

When we next examine Ortega's reflections in *The Revolt of the Masses*, we should keep in mind that the two terms — liberalism and democracy — described as distinct here, were, in the historical reality Ortega analyzes, a unitary political structure that dominated the major European states from approximately 1848, either as a reality or as an ideal imposed by necessity. The crisis of the parliamentary democratic ideal and its dysfunctionality, as demonstrated by the dictatorships that, following the Italian fascist model, gradually took over countries like Spain, Portugal, Poland, Hungary, and others, is what Ortega examines in his famous book. The liberal political systems that emerged after World War I lacked the consensus of public opinion. By 1930, with the Weimar Republic in freefall, Ortega was able to diagnose the generalized crisis of the liberal system in *The Revolt of the Masses*, where reflections on the failure of European liberalism are as essential as the praise he offers.

Little remained of the dream of the “new man,” a lover of hierarchies and danger, willing to risk his life in constant sportive and creative efforts.³¹ Historical reality had taken a different course, and as Europe approached the harsh decade that would end in the Second World War, Ortega sharpened his senses and foresaw Europe's collapse, driven by the rebellion of the masses and, inseparably, the failure of the minorities.

MINORITIES AND MASSES

The articles that appeared in the Spanish press during 1929 and the early months of 1930, later compiled under the title *The Revolt of the Masses*, reflect the historical processes of European society, culminating in an unprecedented crisis already announced in 1923. Although this crisis had clear social and political manifestations, Ortega identified its philosophical roots and dared to point to a historical moment when certain ideas began to distort the future of the Europeans.³² Ortega attributed the state of

³¹In the many texts devoted to these themes of the ethos of the new man, some of which we have already cited, Ortega is actually describing how he imagines the new ruling minority that would have had among its fundamental tasks the creation of the new culture that would have inspired in turn the new politics that would not be liberal, but perhaps ultra-liberal.

³²The year that Ortega points out as the moment when European intelligence turned towards demagoguery is 1750: “La demagogia esencial del demagogo está dentro de su mente y radica en su irresponsabilidad ante las ideas mismas que maneja y que él no ha creado, sino recibido de los verdaderos creadores. La demagogia es una forma de degeneración intelectual,

mass rebellion to two main causes: liberal education, which emphasized human rights without sufficiently teaching the corresponding duties, and the rapid advances in technology, which dramatically accelerated the possibilities of human life, causing confusion in people's desires, alienating them from nature and tradition, and contributing to the "primitivization" of the average man, who became increasingly unaware of the origin of the technical innovations that were transforming his life. This effect has only grown with each subsequent technological revolution:

El triunfo de las masas y la consiguiente mejora del nivel vital han acontecido en Europa por razones internas, después de dos siglos de educación progresista de las muchedumbres y de un paralelo enriquecimiento económico de la sociedad (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. IV, 385).

Ortega did not attribute this enrichment to capitalist production methods, but rather to something more fundamental: technology, born from modern natural science, which produced industrialism, the immediate cause of the increase in wealth and well-being that characterized European society at the end of the 19th century.³³

The success of modern science applied as technology, industrialism, and liberal educational practices all stemmed from the philosophical certainty that the universe follows universal laws, which human reason can discover and manipulate for its benefit. Everything began with the rationalism of Descartes and Galileo. Reason, emboldened by its triumphs over nature, believed it could extrapolate its methods to discover the laws governing society so that the goals of well-being and happiness dreamed of by society could be definitively resolved by "social techniques." Problems such as pain, suffering, poverty, or inequality were considered solvable once and

que como amplio fenómeno de la historia europea aparece en Francia hacia 1750. ¿Por qué entonces? ¿Por qué en Francia? Éste es uno de los puntos neurálgicos del destino occidental y especialmente del destino francés" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. IV, 367). Elsewhere, Ortega solves the riddle. 1750 is the year in which Diderot wrote the draft on which the project of L'Encyclopédie would be based. This project presumed that knowledge was already consolidated and only needed to be disseminated so that everyone could share it. Although he does not say so expressly, I think Ortega suggests that this optimism of reason inspired the French Revolution (See *Prólogo a un diccionario enciclopédico abreviado*, 1939 (ibid.: Vol. V, 633 et seq.)).

³³In *The Road to Serfdom*, Hayek agrees with Ortega in seeing the crisis of Europe as an effect of the success of liberalism: "Pudiera incluso decirse que el éxito real del liberalismo fue la causa de su decadencia. Por razón del éxito, ya logrado, el hombre se hizo cada vez más reacio a tolerar los males subsistentes, que ahora se le aparecían, a la vez, como insoportables e innecesarios" (Hayek, 1976: 47).

for all. From Bentham and Rousseau to Hegel, and from Hegel to his disciples—Comte and Marx—this line of “constructivist” thought prevailed. It even influenced British liberalism when John Stuart Mill abandoned the ethical and political inspiration of natural rights and decided to justify liberal positions with Bentham’s utilitarian principles of pleasure and pain. However, it was a historical absurdity to think that the growth of wealth and well-being in Europe could be entrusted to technology without freedom, as shown by the failure of fascism, Nazism, and, later, communism. It was just as absurd to imagine a future without technology as it was to imagine a future of politics without liberty.

Ortega’s conclusions seemed beyond question:

primera, que la democracia liberal fundada en la creación técnica es el tipo superior de vida pública hasta ahora conocido; segunda, que ese tipo de vida no será el mejor imaginable, pero el que imaginemos mejor tendrá que conservar lo esencial de aquellos principios; tercera, que es suicida todo retorno a formas de vida inferiores a la del siglo XIX (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. IV, 403).

The changes induced by these transformations in Europeans’ mindsets and moralities led to an almost unlimited confidence in the state’s power. Public opinion was seduced by the utopia of indefinite progress, which could take on a nationalist or socialist guise but always shared the belief that everything could be achieved through the will of a leader or a party who would implement these projects without considering real difficulties.

People began to believe that anything was possible, that the new “sciences” of humanity could change the world according to the wishes of the majority, and if this did not happen, it was because certain organized minorities were preventing it: for the Bolsheviks and anarchists, it was the bourgeoisie; for the German national-socialists, it was the Jews and Bolsheviks. The confusion and demagoguery in the minorities, who turned to the masses with promises that these desires would be fulfilled, changed the political atmosphere to the point where most of the institutions of the past collapsed:

La vieja democracia vivía templada por una abundante dosis de liberalismo y de entusiasmo por la ley. Al servir a estos principios, el individuo se obligaba a sostener en sí mismo una disciplina difícil. Al amparo del principio liberal y de la norma jurídica podían actuar y vivir las minorías. Democracia y ley, convivencia legal, eran sinónimos. Hoy asistimos al triunfo de una hiperdemocracia en que la masa actúa directamente sin ley, por medio de materiales presiones, imponiendo sus aspiraciones y sus gustos (ibid.: Vol. IV, 379–380).

In short, the heirs of the liberal, enlightened bourgeoisie were not liberals, and consequently, with the exception of the United Kingdom, Europe ceased to believe in liberal democracy until 1945:

No se hallará entre todos los [grupos sociales] que representan la época actual uno solo cuya actitud ante la vida no se reduzca a creer que tiene todos los derechos y ninguna obligación. Es indiferente que se enmascare de reaccionario o de revolucionario: por activa o por pasiva, al cabo de unas u otras vueltas, su estado de ánimo consistirá, decisivamente, en ignorar toda obligación y sentirse, sin que él mismo sospeche por qué, sujeto de ilimitados derechos (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. IV, 496).

The final diagnosis is not political, but metaphysical. When Ortega writes in the last section of *The Revolt of the Masses* that “Europe has lost its moral,” emphasizing that this is the real issue, the term “moral” can be misleading. He is not speaking of ethics, but of the historical reality that was Europe and the cause of its current crisis. To understand the scope of his diagnosis, we must recall that the rebellious temperament of Europeans has brought forth a new type of human being who does not coincide with the “vertical barbarian” that Ortega had spoken of with some hope but rather with the true “mass man”—a subject who combines the traits of a spoiled child with those of a specialist, who, knowing one thing, believes he knows everything, especially about political science and the functioning of the state. In another work, I have studied the profile of the mass man.³⁴ Here, I will focus only on commenting on those aspects that affect his understanding of freedom, since, paradoxically, it was that way of imagining freedom without resistance, like the dove Kant speaks of (Kant, Ribas, 1988: 46–47), which made him impenetrable to political liberalism. He rejected all forms of mediation, questioning parliamentary systems in favor of the fantasy—so relevant today—of immediate and direct democracy, which Ortega emphasized when he pointed out the mass man’s preference for direct action in politics.

A brief reflection on the phenomenology of whim reveals that, in its vital structure, liberty functions as an abstract absolute; it is absolute because it does not consider others³⁵ and is abstract because it is unaware of the

³⁴For a more extensive study of the profiles of the mass-man, see my book, already cited, *Meditaciones para un siglo*, especially Iv. 4 *Descripción fenomenológica del hombre-masa* (Lasaga Medina, 2022: 178 et seq.).

³⁵“...Llega a creer efectivamente que sólo él existe, y se acostumbra a no contar con los demás, sobre todo a no contar con nadie como superior a él” (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. IV, 408).

limitations and mediations imposed by circumstances, which always involve balancing opportunities and difficulties. The spoiled child's desires are unlimited, believing everything is permitted. Ortega suggests a connection between the spoiled child and another facet of the mass man — the “rebellious primitive,” the counterpart of the “new man” dreamed of by Ortega in the early 1920s. The primitive is a consequence of technology; the spoiled child is a product of liberal education and its gifts in the form of rights. Neither education nor technology alone would have contributed to the emergence of the mass man; it was their convergence, both arising from the liberal ideas of human nature in the 18th century, that was at the root of Europe's 20th-century crisis.

Does Ortega claim that liberalism is the root of all the problems in European life? The answer is no; the difficulties arose from a certain interpretation of liberalism after it succeeded and permeated European social interactions throughout the 19th century. Its success caused the crisis.³⁶ However, for this very reason, liberalism, having become an unquestionable historical reality, could not be ignored or “surpassed” by the new political structures that emerged from the collapse of the liberal order. This is why Ortega asserts decisively that liberalism had a valid reason to exist, and this reason must be acknowledged: “Europa necesita conservar su esencial liberalismo y ello convierte en anacrónicos tanto al fascismo como al bolchevismo, por diseñar Estados ‘totalitarios’” (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. IV, 433). Ortega had already criticized fascism in his 1925 essay for relying exclusively on the state as the only source of solutions. He now took communism more seriously because he noticed it was beginning to be admired by certain intellectual minorities precisely for its supposed moral superiority.³⁷ Years before the major propaganda event, the Congress of Writers,³⁸ was held in Paris, Ortega was already aware of the fascination that the Soviet Union's Five-Year Plans could exert on the West:

³⁶Shortly after, in the course *En torno a Galileo* (1933), Ortega concludes that civilizations decline due to internal causes. “Toda crisis humana se origina en que el hombre se ahoga en su propia abundancia.”

³⁷The case of surrealism joining the Communist International was exemplary. The spontaneous rebellion of the “spirit” had to be disciplined in the “scientific” revolutionary project that the Third International proclaimed. See how André Breton recalls his time in the French Communist Party in his *Entrevistas*, called *El surrealismo. Puntos de vista y manifestaciones*, especially Chapter IX. *Una gran duda: ¿Exige la emancipación del espíritu la previa emancipación social del hombre? — Acogida del Partido comunista* (Breton, 1972: 121 et seq.).

³⁸I am referring to a “Congreso internacional para la defensa de la cultura,” celebrated in Paris in June of 1935. Herbert R. Lottman en *La rive gauche. Intelectuales y política en París*,

“Cualquiera que sea el contenido del bolchevismo, representa un ensayo gigante de empresa humana.” And a few lines later: “Con tal de servir a algo que dé un sentido a la vida y huir del propio vacío existencial, no es difícil que el europeo se trague sus objeciones al comunismo, y ya que no por su sustancia, se sienta arrastrado por su gesto moral” (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. IV, 494–495). The only future program that Ortega believed was viable for Europeans was the construction of Europe as “a great national state” (ibid.).

Note that Ortega doubted whether Europeans could continue to be “politically free.” He stated as much when he insisted that he was “not an old liberal,” but he willingly acknowledged that liberalism was inscribed in Europe’s destiny because it had set a “level of the times.” Thus, he concluded with the last clear evidence that “in the last century [liberalism] was substantially correct.” Given his frequent critiques of its philosophy, art, and politics, it must have been difficult for him to admit the correctness of anything from the 19th century. Still, here he acknowledged an undeniable success: it had built a historical reality, prevailing over all the historical forms of the past, over all the “ancient regimes,” to create a superior form of coexistence. The mention of destiny is significant. For Ortega, the historical reality is for moderns what nature was for the Greeks and God for medieval philosophy — an absolute reality, a horizon of determinations, a source of legality, something that cannot be ignored. It is the other side of freedom, so the only way for modern Europeans to be free is to accept their destiny bravely and, in the case of public life, their liberal destiny.³⁹ This is why Ortega reiterates the idea, as we cited earlier, that liberalism’s

...actúa lo mismo en el comunista europeo que en el fascista... como en el católico... Todos “saben” que más allá de las justas críticas con que se combaten las manifestaciones del liberalismo queda la irrevocable verdad de éste, una verdad que no es teórica, científica, intelectual, sino de un orden radicalmente distinto y más decisivo que todo eso — a saber, una verdad de destino (ibid.: Vol. IV, 439).

It will not surprise the reader that seven years later, despite the disasters already plaguing Europe, after the fall of the Weimar Republic and the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, Ortega wrote in his *Prologue for Frenchmen* the most impassioned defense of liberalism ever made in the

1935–1950: “ningún otro acontecimiento tuvo tanta importancia simbólica para los escritores comprometidos de los años treinta” (Lottman, 1985: 100). See also Winock, 2010: 353 et seq.

³⁹He then specifies: “Pero el destino — lo que vitalmente se tiene que ser o no se tiene que ser — no se discute, sino que se acepta o no” (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. IV, 438).

20th century. It was an unexpected defense, not something he intended to write, nor did he consider it appropriate in the context of the Spanish Civil War. In that text, he valued the work of the doctrinaires⁴⁰ within the context of revolutionary tensions in France around 1848. Once again, he distanced himself from the French Revolution, whose egalitarian tendency he contrasted with the English Revolution of 1688. Above all, he left this declaration of the profound significance of liberalism in European history:

La forma que en política ha representado la más alta voluntad de convivencia es la democracia liberal. Ella lleva al extremo la resolución de contar con el prójimo [...] El liberalismo — conviene recordar hoy esto (1937) — es la suprema generosidad: es el derecho que la mayoría otorga a las minorías y es, por tanto, el más noble grito que ha sonado en el planeta. Proclama la decisión de convivir con el enemigo, más aún, con el enemigo débil (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. IV, 420)⁴¹.

In the second part of *The Revolt of the Masses*, Ortega reflects on possible ways out of the crisis. After diagnosing that Europe has “lost its morals” (in the sense that its history always involved living through the enthusiasm of some collective project), he suggests that the solution to the crisis lies in creating Europe as a supranational political reality. Ortega revisits ideas he had previously developed about the nation’s superiority over the state in the purest liberal sense: the state is an artifact, a technique for resolving problems of coexistence, whereas only the nation — civil society — belongs to the vital reality of a community. Ortega praises the historical reality of the nation as the foundation of European civilization but argues that it has now become too narrow for the expanding economic life. This mismatch, Ortega believes, is the root cause of the nationalist tensions proliferating among the peoples of Europe. He anticipates the post-World War II diagnosis: Europe must construct itself as a political supranational unity.

But before reaching that point, we must review Ortega’s final reflection on liberalism, using the interpretive tools of historical reason.

⁴⁰He mentions Roger-Collard and above all Guizot. He does not mention Tocqueville, whom he had not yet read. The most extensive text dedicated to him by Ortega, *Tocqueville y su tiempo* (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. x, 362 et seq.) remained unpublished. It is a series of notes written for a prologue to some works by the French political philosopher. See editors’ note OC, *ibid.*: Vol. x, 501.

⁴¹In his monograph *Liberalism*, John Gray, disciple and author of a study on Isaiah Berlin, cites these words as the motto that precedes the chapter *El liberalismo y el futuro* (Gray, 1992: 138). They are also cited by Aron, 1987-1988. It appeared translated in ABC Literario, divided into two parts, February 6 and 13, 1988, and in the section *Classics on Ortega* in *Revista de Estudios Orteguianos* (Aron, 2006).

THE LIBERTY OF MODERNS IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

In a letter to his translator and friend, Helene Weyl, written from Buenos Aires on December 2, 1940, Ortega mentioned his recent publications, *A Prologue for Frenchmen* and *An Epilogue for the English*, which he had written to accompany new editions of *The Revolt of the Masses*. He confided to Weyl that these were “the only things I have written in my life under abnormal conditions,” referring to the Spanish Civil War, which had driven him to Paris in the summer of 1936. What is most interesting is what Ortega tells Weyl: when he picked up the pen, he had not intended to write “the only defense of liberalism I have ever made in my life, which, of course, I consider true in what it says, but which is partial in the sense that it is not my complete view — not now, nor ever — of liberalism” (Märtens, ed., 2008: 239).

Ortega’s qualifications of liberalism began in 1914, and after the war ended in the early 1920s, he observed its decline throughout the continent. Despite this, he did not hesitate to acknowledge the unconditional value of liberal policies, recognizing that they had made possible the originality of a civilization based on personal freedoms — the same freedoms he had used in his youth to measure the historical backwardness of Spanish society. In addressing his French readers, Ortega pointed out that the Jacobinism of the French Revolution had not done much to advance the liberal cause.

In addressing the English, he drew attention to their naïve pacifism. However, he also praised at length the lesson they had given to a convulsed Europe by celebrating the coronation of their new king⁴². Today, this *Epilogue* is more frequently cited and studied than *The Prologue for Frenchmen* for at least two reasons: first, it is one of the rare exceptions that can be mentioned to dispel the notion of Ortega’s “silence” about the Spanish Civil War; second, and more importantly from a theoretical perspective, it contains something akin to a prophecy about Europe’s future after the tempest subsides — a prophecy that offers a judgment on liberalism in relation to the “totalitarianism” then dominating much of Europe.

The prophecy was bold, to say the least, since the Second World War had not yet begun in earnest. Since that war ended in Yalta, the spirit

⁴²“Por eso el pueblo inglés, con deliberado propósito, ha dado ahora inusitada solemnidad al rito de la coronación. Frente a la turbulencia actual del continente ha querido afirmar las normas permanentes que regulan su vida. Nos ha dado una lección más” (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. IV, 370). I clarify that this praise is in the “Prologue for the French,” whose revolutionary tradition is precisely the opposite of the “continuity” that the English had so plastically practiced in modern centuries.

of Ortega's prophecy is mostly relevant only in its final endorsement of liberalism. Indeed, the recovery would have to be collective based on the premise that Europe's sickness was total, not confined to individual nations. Ortega foresaw:

Por lo pronto, vendrá una *articulación de Europa* en dos formas distintas de vida pública: la forma de un nuevo liberalismo y la forma que, con un nombre impropio, se suele llamar «totalitaria». Los pueblos menores adoptarán figuras de transición e intermediarias. Esto salvará a Europa. Una vez más resultará patente que toda forma de vida ha menester de su antagonista. El «totalitarismo» salvará al «liberalismo», destiñendo sobre él, depurándolo, y gracias a ello veremos pronto a un nuevo liberalismo templar los regímenes autoritarios. Este equilibrio puramente mecánico y provisional permitirá una nueva etapa de mínimo reposo, imprescindible para que vuelva a brotar, en el fondo del bosque que tienen las almas, el hontanar de una nueva fe. Ésta es el auténtico poder de creación histórica, pero no mana en medio de la alteración, sino en el recato del ensimismamiento (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. IV, 527–528).

This prediction is risky and, at least in part, incorrect, not least because it could not account for the new political structure that would emerge from the end of World War II—the division of Europe, and within it, Germany, into “Western” and “Eastern.”⁴³ The unstated premise of Ortega's prediction was that Europe would retain its structure of “sovereign” nations and its “public opinion.” The important takeaway is that, as Ortega later emphasized in various European forums, Europe could be saved if it found the formula to recreate itself as a supranational political entity.⁴⁴

⁴³However, just before the quoted paragraph, a question concerning whether it was possible to be a “Europa oriental disociada hasta la raíz de una Europa occidental” is asked. Ortega answers categorically “nada de esto se ofrece en el horizonte” (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. IV, 527).

⁴⁴There is an expression, “El totalitarismo salvará al liberalismo” that has been interpreted as a justification by Ortega of what he here calls “totalitarianism,” a term that he does not define, but given the date of its use it is more than likely that he used it in the sense that Italian fascism gave it and not yet as the unprecedented form of government, distinct from military dictatorships, that would later be described by authors such as Hannah Arendt in her well-known *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (Arendt, 1951) or the Spanish sociologist Juan José Linz in *Regímenes totalitarios y autoritarios* (Linz, 2010). A recent critical reading of this passage in *La lucidez confrontada* by J. Brioso and J. M. Díaz interprets it in relation to the Spanish Civil War. The text is cited and commented on twice in *La guerra civil. Valoraciones...*, 103 and in *Esperar lo inesperado...*, 168. A somewhat simplistic interpretation that reads the paragraph in question not in the context of the European situation on the brink of war, but in relation to the Spanish civil conflict, is found in Antonio Elorza, *La razón y la sombra. Una lectura política de Ortega y Gasset*. Elorza begins by reproaching Ortega for condemning

Where Ortega engaged deeply in analyzing the limitations of modern liberalism was his essay *On the Roman Empire* (1940), which appeared in the Argentine newspaper *La Nación* in June of that year, the same year as the previously mentioned letter to Weyl. This means that Ortega had already published—though not yet in book form—his analyses comparing the freedom of the ancients (the Romans of the Republic) with the freedom of moderns in the Enlightenment. We now understand what Ortega meant when he told his friend and translator that when he wrote his defense of liberalism, he believed it sincerely, but it was not all that he believed. He was reserving the criticisms he would express in *On the Roman Empire*, where he subjected modern liberalism's theory of human liberty to the scrutiny of historical reason, comparing it with the understanding of liberty held by the Romans through the ideas of Cicero.

According to Cicero, the two institutions that stabilized the Roman Republic were *Concordia* (*harmony*) and *Libertas* (*freedom*). The first consists of society sharing a system of beliefs.⁴⁵ Its political meaning lies in that shared beliefs provide the consensus necessary for a society to agree on the fundamental issue: who should rule? What form should the state's institutions take? The opposite of *Concordia* is the conviction held by only a segment of society, leading to division. “La concordia sustantiva, cimiento último de toda sociedad estable, presupone que en la colectividad hay una creencia firme y común [...] sobre quién debe mandar” (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. VI, 92). Politics, therefore, depends on pre-political or even non-political agreements, such as religious beliefs, the origin of the community (the myth of the city's foundation), and the relationship with nature—in short, the overall worldview. This is why Ortega devotes several pages to discussing the theme of “los auspicios o religión y negligencia” (ibid.: VI, 94 et seq.), to show that institutions such as the Roman requirement for priests to scrutinize the entrails or flight of birds before the authorities made decisions, while seemingly irrational, concealed the secret of Rome's political stability. When the auspices were subjected to rational critique by the Romans, the stability of the Republic was affected. Despite his

“the union with the communists” and summarises Ortega's dark prophecy by arguing that he advocates a “European articulation of liberals and fascists” (Elorza, 1984: 244).

⁴⁵In *Historia como sistema* (1935), Ortega theorizes that the historical structure of human life has its basis in the system of beliefs in force at each historical moment. But such a system may be in crisis and may not be shared in a unified manner by the entire social body. The canonical text for the problem of beliefs in the structure of historical reason is *Ideas y creencias* (1941).

rationalism, even Cicero was uncertain about the benefits of the auspices, though he had an obscure awareness of their importance.⁴⁶

The second topic Ortega addresses at length is the difference between *Libertas*, as understood by Cicero, and the liberty of the moderns. Ortega begins his argument by noting that Western civilization has exhibited, in contrast to the East, a distinguishing characteristic: “el hecho normal de la historia europea frente a la de Oriente ha sido la vida como libertad” (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. VI, 101). Roman *Libertas*, or life as freedom, is, in the final analysis — and only in a political sense, Ortega clarifies — “toda aquella que los hombre viven dentro de sus instituciones preferidas, sean estas las que sean” (ibid.: Vol. VI, 102). Just as the Greeks cannot separate personal freedom from the freedom of the *polis*, the Romans of Cicero’s time experienced freedom within the institutions they had created. This means that ancient liberty resided in *Concordia* as a necessary condition. Suppose we add that the Greeks and Romans did not possess the modern sense of intimacy or subjectivity as the site of personal freedom except in very rare cases. In that case, we must conclude that Ortega’s comparison was between different realities.

The key concept in this part of the essay is “life as freedom,” a term Ortega does not fully clarify, which might be misleading in its apparent transparency. If life as freedom means a society living in *Concordia under institutions agreed upon by all — not by a majority — such a way of life means the same as life in Concordia*. If such a unified, harmonious society ever existed, it was in some premodern utopia, since modernity establishes itself as a structure that articulates two dimensions of human life — the individual and the collective — that are not only distinct, but also in “real opposition.” Ortega does not theorize this explicitly, but it is implicit in the conclusions of this text, in his sociology (*Man and People*), and in his early critiques of liberalism’s naïveté in failing to confront “rebellious masses.”

⁴⁶Cicero wrote a book criticizing the belief in auspices, arguing with his brother Quintus Tullius Cicero, who did believe in them. The rationalist asks himself: “¿Qué debemos creer de los que buscan el conocimiento de lo venidero en las entrañas de las víctimas, en el vuelo y canto de las aves, presagios, oráculos y sueños?” (Cicero, 1985: 69). Later, speaking of “fate,” he says to his brother: “Deja para las viejas esa palabra tan supersticiosa” (ibid.: 70). Finally, he concedes that “la institución de los augures, fundada al principio en la creencia de la adivinación, se conservó después por razones políticas” (ibid.: 87). Ortega thus sees confirmed the thesis that a rationalist culture of ideas ends up dissolving the ground of beliefs that makes the harmony of a society possible.

“Life as freedom” is foreign to modern political philosophy, let alone its practices, because doubt and criticism, which are at the root of modernity, as well as the destruction of religious unity, bring faction revolution as a violent rupture of the established order, and civil war as possibilities that cannot be ruled out into the horizon of coexistence. We can now better understand why Ortega considers the modern understanding of freedom and the desire to exchange “la magna idea de la vida como libertad por unas cuantas libertades en plural, muy determinadas, que exorbitaba más allá de toda dimensión histórica, convirtiéndolas en entidades teológicas” (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. VI, 102). The moderns sacralized the secondary — the liberties — and, in doing so, fragmented the essence of freedom that Greece and Rome had conceived as life itself being freedom.

La libertad europea ha cargado siempre la mano en poner límites al poder público e impedir que invada totalmente la esfera individual de la persona. La libertad romana, en cambio, se preocupa más de asegurar que no mande una persona individual, sino la ley hecha en común por los ciudadanos (ibid.: Vol. VI, 113).

At the time, Ortega ignored the American Revolution and Tocqueville’s interpretation of democracy in America.⁴⁷ Had he been familiar with the political tradition of the “founders,” their aspirations and concerns when designing the Constitution, he might have found a third option to the exclusionary dilemma he posed between life as freedom and the fragmented liberties of modernity. The American Constitution enshrines “liberal” freedom in its Bill of Rights, which sits at the constitutional core and is a mechanism to prevent tyranny in its separation of powers. However, as Hannah Arendt showed in her interpretation of the American Constitution,⁴⁸ its authors were aware that the Constitution needed to possess the character of a founding — analogous to the mythical founding of cities in Greece and

⁴⁷Although Ortega belatedly addresses Tocqueville, it is possible to speculate that he did not read *Democracy in America* in detail, although he mentions his idea of democracy. He did not pay attention to the political experience of the American revolution because he never thought that it could teach old Europe anything. See the article by J. L. Villacañas in which he interprets that Ortega refused to “appreciate Tocqueville’s American experience”. There he notes that “the United States had achieved the synthesis of liberalism and democracy through its active community life, its plurality of power centers, its federalism, its virtue, and its involvement in common life” (Villacañas, 2011: 750).

⁴⁸I am referring above all to *On the Revolution*, although it is a recurring theme in his work. “La Constitución americana vino posteriormente a consolidar el poder de la Revolución, y puesto que el propósito de la revolución era la libertad, la tarea consistió en lo que Bracton ha llamado *Constitutio Libertatis*, la fundación de la libertad”.

Rome—in order to turn it into a shared belief among the entire social body. When Arendt emphasizes that the American Constitution enshrines freedom in the heart of modernity, she could have used the expression “life as freedom” because the American Constitution was, and perhaps still is, the closest thing to a “State as skin” that modernity has produced.

In the last part of his essay, Ortega introduces another concept: “life as adaptation,” in contrast to “life as freedom.” Each one defines how a society resolved its relationship with the state at a given moment in history: state as skin and State as orthopedics.

El hombre no es libre para eludir la coacción permanente de la colectividad sobre su persona que designamos con el inexpressivo nombre de “Estado”, pero ciertos pueblos, en ciertas épocas, han dado libremente a esa coacción la figura institucional que preferían—*han adaptado el Estado a sus preferencias vitales*, le han impuesto el gálbo que les proponía su albedrío. Eso y no otra cosa es “vida como libertad” (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. VI, 117).

Ortega is careful not to offer specific examples. One might find some, but not many. Historically, it has been rare for societies to be able to choose the precise form of the State that would make the community happy:

En tiempos tales, lejos de fluir la vida humana a sabor por cauces institucionales forjados a su medida y *con su anuencia* [...], se vuelve todo lo contrario: *pura adaptación de cada existencia individual al molde férreo del Estado*, un molde de que nadie es responsable y que nadie ha preferido, sino que adviene irresistible como un terremoto. Esto y no otra cosa es «vida como adaptación» (ibid.).

The first form corresponds to the “State as skin” and the second to the “State as orthopedics.” Behind the second metaphor, it is easy to see the intuition of modern totalitarian States, which, in their extreme form, aspire to absorb all social spontaneity within the rigid ordinances of the State.

Ortega examines the European present from the perspective of 1940, at a time when this “State-orthopedics,” which demanded that personal life adapt to its blind impositions, ruled almost all of Europe. The final tone of this essay, perhaps imbalanced due to the circumstances, suggests that Ortega is describing the end of a cycle in European political life and taking note of its errors. We are reading the obituary of liberalism, which, according to him, no one had written before.

The liberalism that would emerge with the victory of the Allies in a devastated Europe is different, perhaps with more “skilled belligerence” against the enemies of freedom, inspired by a liberal tradition different from that of the French Revolution. It is undeniable that Europe in the second half

of the 20th century rescued parliamentary democracies based on three historical events: the victory of the Allies over the Axis powers (May-August 1945), the threat of Soviet Stalinism over Western Europe, and the negative example of fascism, especially National Socialism and the horrors of the Final Solution, which became known through the Nuremberg Trials. This combination of factors, along with the protection of American democracy, made it possible for the great European nations to begin constructing what we now know as the European Union, thereby confirming the central intuition of *The Revolt of the Masses*.

THE EUROPEAN CIVIL WAR AND THE FATE OF LIBERALISM

The preservation of security, rather than guarantees of freedoms, is what legitimizes the power of the State. Security first, then civil liberties. This seems to be Ortega's bitter conclusion in *On the Roman Empire*. The fundamental criticism of modern liberalism is based on the accusation that it has not delved deeply into the disteleology of the social, into a conception of the human condition that would be closer to reclaiming the myth of original sin than to the Enlightenment view of man as a benevolent animal. In other words, Ortega believes that low passions lie irrepressibly within social order:

La sociedad, conste, es tan constitutivamente el lugar de la sociabilidad como el lugar de la más atroz insociabilidad, y no es en ella menos normal que la beneficencia, la criminalidad. Lo más a que ha podido llegarse es a que las potencias mayores del crimen queden transitoriamente sojuzgadas, contenidas, a decir verdad, sólo ocultas en el subsuelo del cuerpo social, prontas siempre a irrumpir una vez más *de profundis* (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. VI, 103).

From this premise, the only possible conclusion is that the primary function of the State is to impose the law by coercing free men when they violate it. If human coexistence is described as a kind of "permanent tragedy," only a "conservative" thesis on the State can be expected: "so-called societies are impossible without the exercise of command, without the energy of the State," as we already know. Ortega adds: this exercise implies: "la violencia y otras cosas peores, largas de enumerar, 'toda participación en el mando es radicalmente degradante' — como dice Auguste Comte" (ibid.: Vol. VI, 104).

Ortega often returned to these issues, developing them in the aforementioned sociology course *Man and People* — taught, as we know, in Buenos Aires around the time *On the Roman Empire* was published — in Franco's Madrid in 1946. In the lectures he gave in various parts of Europe, such as

the famous Berlin lecture in 1949. In unpublished papers in preparation for the sociology course, he planned to write a chapter on the State, which he never completed — one wonders whether this was due to accidental reasons or because he chose not to.⁴⁹ Among the unused notes, we read: “El Estado es, pues..., último recurso al que la sociedad recurre cuando está en peligro la sociedad — [...] Porque es último recurso, ultima ratio. No se olvide esta esencia ortopédica del Estado. El Estado existe porque y en la medida en que la sociedad no existe” (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. x, 325).

I do not believe that new and different ideas emerge in Ortega’s texts from the 1950s beyond those already presented. Ortega revisits passages from *The Revolt of the Masses* to show that his predictions have largely come true.⁵⁰ He knows that the construction of Europe is now possible and contributes to this through his lectures. He describes European history as a unified landscape since the Renaissance, a historical space structured on two levels: one of a European culture that predates its division into nations and one of nations formed from their own identities. Therefore, Europe is not only a political project for the future, but also a cultural reality from the past, one that is characterized by a continuous pursuit of the ideal of “life as freedom,” although it was never fully realized: “The permanent core of Europe is pluralism and freedom”, he wrote in the much-quoted *Prologue for the French*. This maxim could serve as a conclusion regarding Ortega’s liberalism. However, it is worth noting that this core never belonged to the collective social dimension of human life, but rather to its historical background and the lifestyle of many European men and women.

It was not exactly “totalitarianism bleeding into liberalism” that redirected old Europe, but rather (Anglo-Saxon) liberalism resisting the totalitarianism of Soviet Stalinism and its imperialist project. The decision of capitalist

⁴⁹In these same unpublished works we find a cruder description of human unsociability in which the myth of “original sin” is expressly mentioned: “ya en el siglo XIII, Federico II Barbarroja, una de las más geniales figuras del pasado europeo, en su *Liber Augustalis*, deriva el Estado del pecado original, es decir, del primigenio crimen o inobservancia de una ley natural-sobrenatural — en suma, lo deriva de la originaria y constitutiva delincuencia del hombre. El Estado, según él, es engendrado por la *necessitas*. Esto me recuerda que Kant, en su breve ensayo *Ideas para una historia universal en sentido cosmopolita*, nos habla de la “insociable sociabilidad” del hombre” (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. x, 324). Los editores señalan que el texto pertenece a un “Final desechado” (ibid.: Vol. x, 323).

⁵⁰Note that he stopped using the terms “minority-mass” very soon after publishing his book. He preferred the pair “individual-people” for the sociology course that was to systematize the collective, social dimension of human life, of which we know the two courses, the one he gave in Buenos Aires (1940) and in Madrid (1946), conceived as the second part of *La rebelión*.

Western Europe to defend itself made it possible for Europe to experience a period of social balance and prosperity, allowing for the reconstruction of new liberal societies. Today, the perception is that the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, far from confirming Fukuyama's prediction (Fukuyama, 1989), has ushered in a period of insecurity and political crisis, swinging between citizens' attraction to populisms of both left and right, entrenched in a radicalization/denial of democracy that echoes the factionalism that Europe experienced in the 1930s. Today, Europe boasts a supranational political structure firmly rooted in liberal principles and a higher level of well-being than in the past. These two factors ease — though perhaps not indefinitely — the civil tensions within our democratic societies.

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ЭССЕНЦИАЛЬНЫЙ ЛИБЕРАЛИЗМ ХОСЕ ОРТЕГИ-И-ГАССЕТА

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Аннотация: В статье «Эссенциальный либерализм Хосе Ортеги-и-Гассета» рассматривается философия либерализма Ортеги, которая основывается на его концепции «радикальной реальности» индивидуальной жизни как основы свободы и общества. В отличие от доктринального либерализма XIX века, либерализм Ортеги коренится в его философии «рациональности жизни», где жизнь понимается как динамический процесс самозидания в исторических обстоятельствах. Ортега утверждает, что либерализм должен создавать условия для развития личности, обеспечивая свободу от угнетающего контроля государства и поддерживая плюралистическое общество. Ортега критикует массовое общество, где индивидуальность часто растворяется в коллективных идеологиях, будь то тоталитаризм или демократизм. Его либерализм ставит гражданское общество выше государственной власти и подчеркивает моральную ответственность меньшинств за лидерство через пример, а не принуждение. Несмотря на скептицизм к наивному оптимизму либерализма XIX века, Ортега настаивает на сохранении его принципов, так как либерализм лежит в основе исторической судьбы Европы. Он различает демократию и либерализм, предостерегая от тирании большинства без гарантий индивидуальной свободы. В поздних работах Ортега подчеркивает важность создания наднациональной Европы для преодоления националистических конфликтов, сохранив дух свободы и плюрализма, определяющий европейскую цивилизацию.

Ключевые слова: Ортега, либерализм, политика, философия жизни, нация, государство.

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THE INFLUENCE OF THE 1898 DISASTER AND THE IDEOLOGY OF THE GERMAN MANDARINS IN THE GENESIS OF ORTEGA Y GASSET'S THEORY OF GENERATIONS**

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Abstract: In this article I will address, on the basis of a very specific case, the way in which the social trajectory of philosophers and the processes of the collective definition of philosophical products are expressed in key categories of philosophical discourse, that is, in the symbolic forms proper to the social practice we call philosophy. To do so, I will show that the formative period of the young Ortega is crossed by two fundamental social experiences that were interpreted in a generational key: the 1898 Disaster and contact with the German mandarin ideology. I also hope to show that these experiences were incorporated or translated into the central categories of the philosopher, who was then just beginning to take his first steps in the Spanish political and intellectual field. Later, these categories would become, among other symbolic forms, part of his mature theory of generations. The aim of this article is to point out how the residues of these two experiences permeate his theory through these key categories. In doing so, I would like to focus on two ways of research: 1) deepening a better understanding of his work through the sociology of philosophy and 2) warning against the risk of uncritically incorporating such residues in an unreflective application of Ortega's theory of generations to the present day.

Keywords: Ortega y Gasset, Theory of Generations, Mandarin Ideology, Sociology of Philosophy, Generation of '14.

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INTRODUCTION

A study interested in the relevance of Ortega y Gasset's theory of generations must fundamentally consider two levels: the consistency of its internal logic and its heuristic potential for historical knowledge. However, these two lines of research cannot be approached with guarantees without a well-informed grasp of Ortega's intellectual sources, which constitute the horizon

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of meaning for the development of the theory in question. Nor can we ignore the most relevant theoretical alternatives that, implicitly or explicitly, function as referents in an analysis that is inevitably comparative: which theory of generations best explains the historical or cultural phenomena? These last two questions are part of the usual concerns in philosophy and the history of philosophy. However, Ortega y Gasset's theory of generations, like any cultural product, is also the result of a whole network of conscious and unconscious choices, as well as of socio-historical conditioning factors that are only suggested by the literalness of the text. Thus, when Ortega theorizes about generations, he talks about the need to transform the dominant conception of the history of his time; but he also expresses his position as an introducer of German philosophy and science in Spain, criticises the *caciquismo* of the Restoration and the egalitarianism of the workers' movement, and defends the preeminence of the cultural capital in politics. The study of this link between the philosopher's social experience and his theoretical elaboration enriches the understanding of his work and broadens the horizon of meaning to which I referred earlier, which is essential for a serious analysis of the topicality of any philosopher.

In previous research (Costa Delgado, 2019), I have tried to objectify the social conditions of cultural production and political work of the Generation of '14, to which Ortega belongs. José Luis Moreno Pestaña (Moreno Pestaña, 2005: 22) defines, based on Bourdieu and Spinoza, three axes that should guide a sociology of philosophy: "the social trajectory of the producers, the specific symbolic forms in which they must express themselves and the processes of collective definition of philosophical products." In my book (Costa Delgado, 2019) I am largely concerned with the first and third axes. In this article, as I said in the abstract, I will deal with the genesis of some of the fundamental symbolic forms of Ortega's theory of generations. In this way, I do nothing other than follow the recommendations of Ortega himself (Ortega y Gasset, 2004d: 369), a philosopher enormously sensitive to the historicity of thought:

Ordinarily, the history of ideas, for example, of philosophical systems, presents them as emerging from each other by virtue of a magical emanatism. It is a spectral and adynamic history inspired by the intellectualist error that attributes to intelligence a substantivity and independence that it does not have. Presumably, if the historians of ideas, especially of philosophies, had been historians by vocation and not rather men of science and philosophers, they would not have fallen so deeply into this error and would have resisted believing that intelligence functions

on its own, when it is so obvious that it is governed by the profound needs of our life, that its exercise is nothing but a reaction to man's pre-intellectual needs.¹

THE 1898 DISASTER AS A FOUNDING EVENT OF THE GENERATION OF '14:
FROM SPANISH FAILURE TO GERMAN SCIENCE

Present in Ortega's work from as early as 1903 (Ortega y Gasset, 2004e: 14) was the conviction that a major social change was underway in Spain, characterised in terms of a modernisation consisting of political and economic rationalisation and technical specialisation. In other words, the prescription could be defined as a bureaucratic reform of the state and the deepening of the division of labour. The first mention is to be found in a critique of an article by Francisco Grandmontagne, which characterised the situation in Spain along the lines of other writers of the Generation of '98: backwardness, oligarchy and *caciquismo*. Ortega replied through qualifying the diagnosis by positively valuing the industrious and hard-working north as opposed to the provincials who sought the favour of the Court, while praising those who went to Madrid exclusively to train and sit for Civil Service competitive examinations, instead of "employing other tortuous procedures to secure their livelihood" (ibid.). In other words, he defended a bureaucratic and capitalist modernisation which he proposed as an alternative to an outdated imperial past: "It is high time that we recognised political economy and the art of commerce as nourishing sciences and that they come to occupy in our activity the place left empty by the withered theological and historical dreamings" (ibid.: 15). For the young Ortega, from his earliest writings, cultural capital — sanctioned in this quotation by means of educational qualifications and competitive examinations — is presented as a guarantee against the clientelism characteristic of the Restoration, a necessary mediation for access to the Civil Service and a legitimate way of guaranteeing a high social status.

In this article, age has already appeared as a factor that differentiated a group in which Ortega included himself from the elders who recreated themselves in the lamentation of Spanish failure. The previous generation had also experienced the "Disaster," of course, but among the young it had produced, according to Ortega, a very different effect: a lasting impression at the key moment of their early education. That impression left a residue of distrust that marked a radical generational break: they did not need

¹All translations of Ortega's quotations are the author's own work.

anyone to explain Spain's failure to them, since they themselves had grown up with that certainty:

The impressions of disaster on those of us who have opened our eyes of curiosity to the time of failure will not be easily or quickly erased. In that age that demands confidence in everything, that forges an ideal out of any piece of anything, we have seen nothing but agonies and breakdowns (Ortega y Gasset, 2004e: 14).

The impact of the 1898 Disaster as a foundational event of his generation is an argument and a symbolic reference that Ortega would later recover in *Vieja y nueva política* and, in general, quite frequently rely on during these early years when he spoke of politics whilst addressing people of his generational position,² that is, people of a similar age who could be incorporated into his generational project. For example, at the end of his series of articles on the new politics in *El Imparcial* in the summer of 1908:

I maintain the full hope that many Spaniards born at the same time as me, and open to the curiosity at the time when the seals of historical justice were placed on our ancestral home, declared insolvent, will feel, as I feel, at every hour, every minute, an ethnic shame that burns their entrails and tortures their imagination. [...] This was the first political emotion we received, and it will act on our lives like a vicious constellation: vicious for us, but, I hope without pride, favourable for our race (Ortega y Gasset, 2004f: 208).

The first trip to Germany was a key factor in modifying the sense of this young Ortega's modernising zeal, although the reference to 1898 was still present. Those who travelled outside Spain for training emerged in a privileged position for the new political and intellectual situation, like Ortega and many of the members of the Generation of '14.³ In Ortega's case, the choice of Germany as a destination endowed the modernising project with very specific content. In *Notas de Berlín*, sent to *El Imparcial* from

²I take Karl Mannheim's (Mannheim, 1993) concept of generational position, whose theoretical framework I develop and adapt to the specific case of the Generation of '14 in Costa (Costa Delgado, 2019: 15–52).

³In Costa (ibid.: 196–208) I show the importance of study trips for this Generation, explaining their incidence in the configuration of a generational philosophical norm: 15 of the 23 Philosophy students who signed the generational manifestos of 1910 and 1913 obtained pensions for studies abroad. For more information on university study trips at the time and the *Junta de Ampliación de Estudios* see: Caballero and Azcuénaga (Caballero Garrido & Azcuénaga Cavia, eds., 2010), Sánchez Sánchez (Sánchez Sánchez, ed., 2012), Sánchez Ron (Sánchez Ron, 1988), and García Velasco and Sánchez Ron (García Velasco & Sánchez Ron, 2010).

Germany in 1905, during a visit by King Alfonso XIII, the young philosopher took the opportunity to propose for the first time what would later become a generational key: the import and adaptation of German culture to Spanish reality as a fundamental element for modernising Spain. This text already contained elements such as public education as a springboard for modernisation — with particular emphasis on the university — cultural capital as a measure of progress, pedagogy as the main factor of political transformation and also the proviso that the German cultural orientation did not also imply political leadership, since Ortega was not convinced by the Kaiser's imperial model⁴:

Germany cannot provide us with political leadership; we are called from elsewhere. But Germany, on the other hand, is precisely the nation whose influence on our moral and intellectual leadership will be most fruitful for us. [...] The Germans are not Germans, they have become Germans in fifty years. This is what we have to learn in Germany and will only learn there: the way to become Spanish in a short time, the great German secret, the method. Public education is the spring of that secret.

[...]

The thinking of our rulers, if it is to begin to build solidly, must above all concern itself with the German school and the German University. And not to copy them, which would be the gravest mistake, but to place itself before the problem of Spanish culture in the same way that the Germanic legislators placed themselves before the German one. Study them well, increase the number of professors and granted students, have a moment of decision to set aside the old pedagogical ideas (Ortega y Gasset, 2004c: 51–52).

After his trip to Germany, Ortega insisted on turning the training acquired there into a generational differential factor. The philosopher reworked the demands already present in the Spanish political-intellectual panorama with categories imported from Germany, incorporating some novel elements and, in the process, building his own space in the Spanish intellectual and political field. Thus, Joaquín Costa's *escuela y despensa* project was no longer enough: both issues depended on a deeper renewal of Culture according to neo-Kantian philosophy, understanding culture as *Kultur* according to the characteristically German opposition between *Kultur* and *Civilisation*,

⁴The opposition between scientific Germany and political Germany is something that Ortega develops in his 1908 article *Las dos Alemanias* (Ortega y Gasset, 2004h: 133–135), although it was commonplace in European culture at the time, especially after Germany's victory in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1871.

which I will discuss in the following section. As Zamora Bonilla (Zamora Bonilla, 2002: 60–61) comments:

The traditional Spanish subjectivism wanted to be overcome by an ethical and objective idealism mixed with pedagogical socialism capable of achieving a culture of universal values based on science, understood according to the parameters of the physical-natural method. Ortega thought that idealism was to work on reality in order to found ideality, opposing “a world that must be” to the world that is.

This was one of the main reproaches that Ortega began to make to Costa’s regenerationism: education and technique were necessary, but the Aragonese was wrong not to understand that they were the product of Culture: “to burden the pronunciation on one thing or another decides the success” (Ortega y Gasset, 2004b: 190). Ortega’s trip to Germany substantially modified his initial discourse, very similar to Costa’s, and allowed him to construct his own version of European salvation for Spanish backwardness: it was no longer a matter of exclusively importing technology, industry and commerce as factors of modernisation, but of seeing how the integral cultural model of Germany could be adapted to Spain, considering also the important presence of philosophy and humanistic studies in the education of German students.

This new element gave theoretical content to an opposition specifically formulated in terms of age vis-à-vis the Generation of ’98. This opposition, it is important to note, was already present in the 1903 article on Grandmontagne. In other words, it predated the German experience and its effects. It was after the first trip to Germany, as can be seen in the 1906 articles on *The Spanish University and the German University*, that Ortega incorporated the content of his German education into the generational discourse, adding to a generational experience that had already been previously affirmed an intellectual and political programme that accentuated that difference and sought to legitimise the aspirations of the young philosopher. In the articles of 1906, Ortega defended the need for a cultural reform whose main vehicle should be the university (Ortega y Gasset, 2004g: 68–69). To this end, it was necessary to eradicate university scholasticism, yes, but also those who were fascinated only by the technical aspects of European progress. He criticised the latter by holding up the German education system as a virtuous example:

Yes, sir; in Germany, in the Gymnasiums, six years of Latin! or seven! and, to make matters worse, six years of Greek. It is probable that no Spaniard, apart from Mr. Alemany and Don Julio Cejador, has wasted six years in learning Greek, and yet there are fewer cogwheels and fewer sera in Spain than in Germany.

[...]

Like this enmity against classical and artistic education, there are many others that will appear, born of laziness in learning, of the bad faith of some ingenious writers, who are hindered by Greek and Latin, because they did not learn it in time, and of the perennial breeding ground of coffee *arbitristas* and Athenaeum orators, ex-scientific and ex-literary.

[...]

Let it be known, then, that civilisation is not practicality. That culture is not technicism. That if a symbol of modern Europe were to be carved out, perhaps a reaper and a dynamo would appear on it, but not alone: together we would have to put Momsen's glasses, Darwin's hammer and Wundt's pencil (Ortega y Gasset, 2004g: 68).

In this fragment, Ortega was attacking a previous generational unit which formed part of a mode of the intellectual generation of which the philosopher felt he was heir, but which was being radically transformed. With this move, he was introducing, still in a diffuse way, a new polemic in the intellectual field: a new generational connection — a debate around new positions — from which perhaps a new mode of intellectual generation could result.⁵ The stake was clear: Ortega differentiated himself from previous importers of European science into Spain. And he did not limit himself to Joaquín Costa: the attack on Krausism, personified in Julián Sanz del Río, could be seen in phrases such as this: “a Spaniard goes out of Spain, travels through Germany or Belgium or England, and on his return to Tierra de Campos brings back material to talk about for half a century. And not to comment on the advances of Europe and lament the backwardness of Spain, but to marvel at how advanced Spain is” (ibid.: 67).

The effects of the trip to Germany were not only evident in rhetorical games or in the content of the discourse. Before his first visit to Germany, the first journalistic articles that Ortega had published were oriented towards a reflection on literature and on literary authors, with certain pills of philosophy, fundamentally — though not limited to — Nietzsche, and French historiography (Taine and Renan). These literary works and their authors not only constituted the subject of his reflections, but often also inspired his arguments and the style in which he expressed himself. In view of this, it can

⁵Again, I refer to Mannheim (Mannheim, 1993) and my introduction to *La educación política de las masas* (Costa Delgado, 2019: 15–52) for the concepts of generational unit, generational connection and mode of generation. For the latter, see also Mauger (Mauger, 2013; 2015).

be argued that Ortega might well have developed his philosophical vocation in a style similar to that of Unamuno or Eugenio d'Ors, which I have defined elsewhere as “literary philosophy” (Costa Delgado, 2019: 209–224), and which Abellán (Abellán, 1997: 27), among others, extends to the Generation of '98 as a whole. Even after his first visit to Germany, Zamora Bonilla (Zamora Bonilla, 2002: 53) stresses the influence on Ortega's prose of the “essayistic and libertine style of Simmel, without notes or quotations or references” and “of Spanish writers such as Unamuno.” This is undoubtedly true: the young man from Madrid could not completely distance himself from the dominant intellectual environment in Spain, where he wanted to make a breakthrough. He chose the style which, as he understood it, was most suited to the task he had set himself, that of importing German idealism. However, despite his recourse to the essay and his distance from German academic orthodoxy, the formal differences with Unamuno's philosophy are notable. Ortega himself was aware of his evolution, as reflected in his 1907 article *Teoría del clasicismo* (Ortega y Gasset, 2004k: 121): his commitment to philosophy and science meant that he underwent intense, disciplined training in order to adopt their method, abandoning the intellectual production understood as mere subjective expression and, in parallel, aesthetic judgement as an ideal. Zamora Bonilla (Zamora Bonilla, 2002: 41) comments on this same transformation on the basis of the private correspondence that the young Ortega wrote to his father during his first year in Germany: “he then transformed his intention of living ‘existence more as an artist, as a literary man’ into a life of slow, scientific study, with ‘an infinite, vital yearning to seek the truth, to seek it even though it does not exist’.” This “conversion” from the literary to the scientific, accelerated by a training trip abroad, recalls similar generational experiences, such as that of Victoriano García Martí in Paris or that of Maeztu in England (García Martí, 1941: 72, 101; Villacañas, 2000; Costa Delgado, 2019: 196–208). In this sense, Ortega's philosophical approach must be seen as part of a generational project that was committed to the specialisation of the different disciplines within an increasingly autonomous Spanish intellectual field, despite the fact that Ortega was undoubtedly more than equipped in style, literary erudition and editorial contacts to play the card of literary philosophy:

The rational is what constitutes the civil, the juridical; it is the terrain in which individual differences can be assembled and united in a city, in a juridical society, passing from the jungle to the citizen. Aesthetic judgement, on the other hand, is in itself irrational: it is decided by that lump of the individual which is unassimilable

for the concept, elusive, brave, irreducible to the legitimate action of science. Like all the young Spaniards of this time,⁶ I have waged a long war against my ego to throw it, like a bad dog, from the fanatics consecrated to logic and ethics, to speculative life and moral life: howling the little dog of myself, it has gone to take refuge in the splendid democracy of aesthetics (Ortega y Gasset, 2004k: 121).

We can see in the quotation a use of metaphors and adjectives with a strong political charge, something recurrent in Ortega. In this case, the philosopher's elitist idea of democracy⁷ is applied to aesthetics: it is the judgement that is within the reach of anyone, that does not require submission to a discipline. Science, logic or ethics, on the contrary, would then be regulated spaces, only accessible to those who choose to submit to their rules. In other words, to those who have disciplined themselves in order to obtain — in Ortega's opinion — a more modern, objectifiable version of cultural capital, necessary for Spain.

In the continuation of the article quoted above, Ortega (*ibid.*: 123) insisted on the importance of the trip to Europe for his new intellectual direction, citing some of the characteristic features of the Generation of '98, such as *casticismo*:

I have been *casticista*, and I have even given birth to a certain confession of Celtiberianism that you made to me years ago [...]. On returning from some pilgrimages through Scythian lands, I have become convinced that there already exists in Spain a very strong current of affirmation of the house and of the sentimental tradition. Since the enrichment of the national conscience should be our rule, I believe, Brother Cendoya, that the time has come for us to stop being casticists.

He also took the opportunity to dissociate himself from the Institutionists, referring to Cossío's book on El Greco as the greatest exponent of Spanish *casticismo* (*ibid.*: 124). The new generation, Ortega said, should not insist on the same direction, but explore a path of its own that passed through classicism: the norm, the ideal, which had its origin in Greece and its actuality in German science and philosophy.

The result of this process of discipline and distancing is, however, somewhat ambiguous. Ortega's articles written in the interval between his stays

⁶Here again, there is a reference to a generational position and project beyond his individual trajectory.

⁷For Ortega Greece was an "aristocratic demos" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004k: 122), although this model could also serve as an example for socialists if they undertook the formation of a working class elite.

in Germany and 1914 reflect an undoubted philosophical training and scientific concerns, corroborating the philosopher's assertions. But we must not forget that his first great work was *Meditaciones del Quijote*,⁸ where he opted for literature as an object of philosophical reflection. Gil Villegas (Gil Villegas, 1996: 225–376) connects this approach to philosophy through aesthetics with the position of outsiders in Germany, mainly young intellectuals from the European periphery, such as Ortega himself and the Hungarian Lukács. So, although it is undeniable that the German training marked a break with respect to the way in which Ortega's first intellectual vocation materialised, his preoccupation with literature continued to play an important role both in his first steps in philosophy and throughout his life, in his peculiar philosophical style.

THE RESIDUES OF MANDARIN IDEOLOGY IN THE IMPORTATION OF GERMAN KULTUR

In order to put into practice this project of importing and adapting the German *Kultur*, Ortega varied the tactics to be followed depending on the immediate political situation and the audience, while maintaining the basic idea common to this period of his youth. In 1908, before the Assembly for the Progress of the Sciences, he argued that, given Spain's backwardness and the impunity of political corruption, the strategy had to be long-term and the most immediate priority was to form a scientific elite as a basis for a subsequent pedagogical task:

The Spanish problem is, certainly, a pedagogical problem; but what is genuine, what is characteristic of our pedagogical problem, is that we first need to educate a few men of science, to arouse even a shadow of scientific concerns, and without this prior work the rest of the pedagogical action will be vain, impossible, meaningless. I believe that something analogous to what I am saying could be the precise formula for europeanisation (Ortega y Gasset, 2004b: 186).

Popular education was to be left for later:

We must improve ourselves without taking care to improve the people first. We who are responsible must be the virtue of our people and they must be able to say to us, like Shelley of a person he loved: "You are my best self" (ibid.: 189).

⁸This was undoubtedly Ortega's first major work, although earlier articles such as the series *Arte de este mundo y del otro* (Ortega y Gasset, 2004a: 434–450), published in *El Imparcial* in 1911, also show the persistence of his attention towards aesthetics as an object of philosophical reflection.

The formulation is reminiscent of passages in *Vieja y nueva política*, with the appeal addressed to the “minorities who live in intellectual occupations” (Ortega y Gasset, 2004n: 723–724); but this generational group corresponds to a later phase and the motives for which the philosopher addresses this specific public are not exactly the same. This text shows an attitude of resignation in the face of the immediate political situation that changed the following year with the political impact of the *Semana Trágica* and the subsequent Republican-Socialist Conjunction. The manifestos and generational groups responded to this new situation, in which the path of institutional political insertion opened up, oscillating between a more popular and a more elitist vocation for integration, depending on whether they were closer to the PSOE or to the possibility opened up by the Reformist Party in 1913 (Costa Delgado, 2019: 141–191).

For the formation of this Spanish cultural elite with a scientific basis, two tasks were necessary: sending young Spaniards abroad for training and importing from the most advanced countries all that was necessary to reproduce in Spain an autochthonous version of European culture: techniques, materials, but also inspiration for a comprehensive cultural reform. In his first two articles in 1909 in *El Imparcial*, Ortega (Ortega y Gasset, 2004j,l) called for an up-to-date scientific library and for more financial aid for research and study abroad. Europe was, for Ortega, synonymous with science and, as we have seen, in his case science referred to Germany, not to England or France, although for the philosopher both nations also had an enviable cultural life. It was in Germany that they had managed to develop a more impersonal, more reflective method and, therefore, more suitable for importation to Spain (Ortega y Gasset, 2004m: 462). Such a method could be accommodated to the Spanish national idiosyncrasy without the need to import with it other uses that were not desirable, retaining its purely intellectual advantage: “the Germanic style is neither attractive nor powerful: we will learn his sciences, which retain hardly anything of the one who produced them, which are pure reason, method, universal and unconditioned reality, and we will leave aside the Tudesque *pathos*” (ibid.).

What was the peculiarity of the German method? To explain this, Ortega frequently used the characteristically German opposition between *Kultur*, understood as the essential contribution of a nation to the progress of humanity, which “refers substantially to spiritual, artistic and religious facts” that “express the peculiarity of a people,” and *Civilisation*, understood in German-speaking usage as “a second-degree value,” which “affects only the exteriority of human beings” (Elias, 2009: 84–85). This opposition, which

originated in the eighteenth century and was revived in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Germany in connection with the rivalry with France and England (Elias, 2009: 83–113), was a central element in Ortega's claim of a conception of progress that was not limited to technical and material aspects and aspired to a broader cultural reform that also included philosophy — especially ethics — the human sciences and classical studies. At the same time, given that culture (*Kultur*) acquires in this theoretical framework the character of expression of a national essence, its development in Spain required interpreters — Spaniards — capable of such a task of creative adaptation.

Norbert Elias (ibid.) studied the sociogenesis of the concepts of culture and civilisation in Germany and France. His thesis is that the weak German courts of the eighteenth century were unable to sustain and foster an indigenous German culture. The relative economic poverty of Germany at the time and the active involvement of the German aristocracy in the public functions of the small courts made them very reluctant to welcome bourgeois intellectuals into their midst. In addition, the German commercial and artisanal bourgeoisie was underdeveloped. For all these reasons, the German bourgeois intelligentsia of the second half of the eighteenth century, marginal and dispersed throughout a politically fragmented territory with no hope of gaining access to political power and thus taking refuge in the universities, formed their own version of German culture (*Kultur*). This was directed towards a genuinely German spiritual, ethical and scientific ideal, as opposed to the customs of the small German courts (*civilisation*) which imitated the great absolutist court of the time, the French court. Court civilisation was thus associated with effective political power and the symbols of its privileged status, and not with the manners and customs considered characteristic of the German people as a whole. In France, on the other hand, the court was able to assimilate the talents of the middle classes, such as Diderot and Voltaire. Later, after the French Revolution, the German opposition *Kultur/Civilisation*, which originally corresponded to the opposition between bourgeois intellectuals and Frenchified courtiers, came to be seen as an expression of a national opposition between Germany and France (ibid.: 110).

Fritz Ringer (Ringer, 1995), for his part, studied the ideology of the mandarins of the German university that Ortega knew, which was completely traversed in its frameworks of mental perception and representation by the opposition described by Norbert Elias. In his work, Ringer points out that Germany:

led the rest of Europe in creating a modern system of higher education and research, just as England led the industrial revolution. This resulted in a particularly well established upper middle class in Germany long before its position was abruptly threatened by rapid industrialisation and political democratisation after 1870 (Ringer, 1995: 13–14).

The picture described by Ringer corresponds well with Elias's image of a German bourgeoisie, radically opposed to the aristocracy and driven to build its own national identity under the banner of culture, although Ringer refers to a later stage of the process. According to Ringer (*ibid.*: 23): "in this situation, educational level and professional status can become the only important basis for social advancement, capable of rivalling the aristocracy." The slow transformation of the various German feudal courts into a unified monarchy in a modern bureaucratic state favoured the development of an elite of mandarins with a strong self-consciousness and who based their legitimacy on culture, understood as both cultural capital and *Kultur*: an element of social distinction, which allowed access to a privileged social status, and, inseparably, a fundamental factor in the integral formation of the person, which was understood as an ethical rather than a logical choice (*ibid.*: 97–98). Thus, the defence of German philosophical idealism underlying the ideology of the mandarins was not a strictly philosophical question: "idealism was, from the beginning, as much a creed as a philosophy. [...] For all these men, the new philosophy was an expression of strong personal convictions. It reflected their conception of learning, their ideals of education and culture" (*ibid.*: 104–105). Like Elias, Ringer stresses that this ideology presented an aggressive side when it manifested itself against the aristocracy and the remnants of feudalism, and a conservative side when it identified the social and political demands of the popular classes as the main risk:

The fact is that Sombart and many of his colleagues wrote with the unconscious arrogance of men who, until quite recently, had been completely accustomed to setting the cultural standards of their nation. They behaved as if "the masses" actually prevented them from listening to Haydn in privacy or cultivating their own "subjective *Geist*". In a curious way, the whole theory of cultural decadence was a projection of the intellectuals' personal fears and doubts about the rest of society (*ibid.*: 256).

In view of Ringer's reconstruction of the German tradition, the influence of this German academic ideology on Ortega's philosophy, politics and representation of the world is evident. Therefore, if we want to study Ortega's importation of German philosophy, we cannot only deal with the influence of

doctrines labelled as philosophical—for example, that of idealism through the neo-Kantians, characteristic of the period immediately after the first stays in Germany—we must also take into account how and how much of this mandarin ideology arrives in Spain together with this philosophy and through the own life experience of those who import it. We should not think of the influence of this ideology as a solidly articulated doctrine that is systematically transmitted, nor, on the contrary, as a vague nebula that would infect, like a virus, the purity of the philosophical content. Ideology is also expressed through the philosophical content itself and through the representation that intellectuals make of their place in the world. In order to study the weight of this ideological influence, we must first of all objectify it. For example, through the use of conceptual oppositions that have a special weight in organising the image that intellectuals have of themselves and their task, as is the case with the aforementioned *Kultur/Civilisation* pair. This opposition had its correlate in the form of a political theory that considered the Anglo-French liberal-progressive representation of humanity as the sum of equal human beings in the abstract to be erroneous. Instead, it postulated a historically situated concept of individuality:

The issue can be clarified by the following analogy. Members of an orchestra play different parts, each following a score suited to the unique qualities of their instrument. The music thus produced is not composed of identical components. [...] The total performance depends on the simultaneous realisation of different goals by numerous participants, each of whom strives for a limited kind of perfection in the performance of his own part, according to his best ability (Ringer, 1995: 109).

This way of understanding culture, on the one hand, placed history at the centre of cultural analysis, something that would be very present in Ortega's later philosophy; on the other hand, it could lead to certain essentialist positions that passed for historicist when speaking of the perspectives of a nation or a social group as if they were psychological characterisations of individuals, a question equally present in Ortega's philosophy, for example in his theory of generations.

German mandarin ideology also resonates in the tone of Ortega's anti-Marxist stance and in his repeated insistence that economics and politics are subordinate spheres of the social: culture (*Kultur*) is the essence of a nation, which is expressed in each of its practices, while other dimensions of human activity, particularly those linked to what is connoted as instrumental or utilitarian, refer to a civilising veneer that forms part of a secondary order, *civilisation*:

The mandarins [...] refused to regard economic activity as anything other than a means to higher ends. Their point of view was neither that of the businessman nor that of the worker. For them, the whole productive sector of industry and commerce only was one among several parts of the machinery of society, and even a relatively subordinate part. This explains their methodological emphasis on the non-economic context of everyday life (Ringer, 1995: 147).

In the light of this analysis, the type of cultural or intellectual reform that Ortega advocated in his generational programme, set out in the first part of the article, must be related, at the same time, to his social position in Spain — a young “media philosopher,” installed in the centre of the Madrid bourgeoisie and importer of European avant-garde culture — to the content of the imported philosophy — neo-Kantian idealism — and to the mandarin ideology characteristic of the German professors. As can be seen, intellectual importation goes far beyond the mere translation of texts and its study cannot be limited to them.

Ringer’s (ibid.: 10) basic definition of the German mandarins corresponds to the aspirations and self-representation of the members of the social group articulated as the Generation of ’14 in Spain: “a social and cultural elite that owes its status primarily to educational qualifications, rather than to hereditary rights or wealth.” Both Ortega’s discourse and the sociological composition of the generational unit (Costa Delgado, 2019: 77–139) show how this is indeed characterised by the affirmation of cultural capital as an element of social distinction, as opposed to inheritance and wealth, from above, but also to the “masses,” from below. What happened is that, in the Spanish context of the early twentieth century, the social recognition of this group was much more precarious, the group itself was smaller in number and aggressively against the socio-political model of the Restoration. Ortega’s position is in some respects comparable to that of the “modernist mandarins,” who tried to adapt their legacy to modern times and sought to do so by relying on the liberals, advocating a non-Marxist social reformism. Ortega, in his initial phase, was even more democratic and optimistic about the possibilities of reform than these modernist mandarins, although, as I have already mentioned, with a variable tone closely linked to the immediate political situation.⁹

⁹Thus, the *Semana Trágica* and the Republican-Socialist Conjunction coincided with a brief rapprochement between Ortega, the PSOE and Lerroux’s Radical Party; while the gesture that Alfonso XIII made to Melquíades Álvarez’s Reformist Party in one of the crises of the turnist government was accompanied by Ortega’s rapprochement with this party in 1913, together with many other intellectuals of his generational unit.

There are, therefore, certain parallels between the sociogenesis of the German *Kultur/Civilisation* opposition and the situation of the Generation of '14 in Spain at the beginning of the twentieth century. An in-depth analysis of these parallels would explain the affinities that made possible the translation of German mandarin ideology to Spain. However, there are also important differences. Undoubtedly, the way in which German political unity and national identity were configured, fundamental in the studies of Elias and Ringer, have little to do with the Spanish case. Nor is the stage of development of the Spanish bourgeoisie at the beginning of the twentieth century comparable to that of Germany, or the degree of centralisation of intellectual life in the capital, which was much higher in Spain.

These differences between the German and Spanish cases can also be expressed in temporal terms. The association between the cultivated bourgeoisie, which owed its rising social status to its cultural capital, and an increasingly bureaucratized state began to be solidly forged in Prussia from the end of the eighteenth century. Then, the link “between the common-sense rationality of the new philosophy and the emerging system of absolute monarchy” (Ringer, 1995: 31) enabled the social ascent of the mandarins. In Spain, the process was initially similar to the French case as described by Elias (Elias, 2009: 114–129), associated with enlightened despotism, although with a much smaller social base. The liberal revolution, however, followed a very different course in Spain: the slow and difficult construction of the new State did indeed entail a radical transformation of the educational system, and the beginning of the long history of Krausism in Spain: the sending of Julián Sanz del Río precisely to Germany, is one of the milestones that connect the construction of the liberal State with the development of the autonomy of the intellectual field in Spain. But the Catholic Church, in a strategy aimed at compensating for its loss of economic and political power in the new regime, competed fiercely and successfully for the control of the material bases of intellectual production.¹⁰ This prolonged dispute, together with economic backwardness and recurrent political interventions in the Spanish intellectual field, made it difficult for the bourgeois intelligentsia to acquire an autonomous position supported by the State. Consequently, at the beginning of the twentieth century, there was nothing similar in Spain to either the German mandarins or the intellectual elite of the Third French

¹⁰On the relationship between the struggle for control over the material bases of intellectual production and the secularisation of philosophy in Modernity, from a sociology of philosophy perspective, see Collins (Collins, 2005: 525–619).

Republic, but rather the aspiration of generating a similar body, allying temporarily with social and political forces that were also interested in economic, cultural and political reform of the State, albeit with different objectives in the long term.

The comparatively limited degree of autonomy of the Spanish intellectual field at the time also explains why the strict division existing in German society between the academic and journalistic worlds described by Ringer¹¹ came as a pleasant surprise to Ortega, who aspired to reproduce it in Spain. On his return, however, he regretted having to content himself with transferring to the press tribunes an imitation of the intellectual discussion to which he aspired: in Spain at the beginning of the century, although journalists and academics had a different social status, they often shared the same social spaces and took part in the same debates, both intellectual and political. This was a difficult fit with the mandarin ideology rooted in the German academic tradition, which pretended itself to be outside—or rather above—the superficial vicissitudes of politics.

These differences explain why some aspects of the opposition between *Kultur* and *Civilisation* appear very nuanced in Ortega. For him, the question of technical and material progress formed a fundamental part of the generational project, and subordination to a broader cultural ideal was not posed as an opposition, but rather as a complementary, though urgently necessary, part of the same process. Thus, Ringer's (Ringer, 1995: 9) observation that highlights as one of the fundamental characteristics of the German mandarin's ideology "the consistent repudiation of instrumental or 'utilitarian' knowledge, the associated contrast between 'culture' and 'civilisation'," is not applicable to the case of the Spanish philosopher. Ringer (ibid.: 19) argues that rapid industrial and economic development generated among the German educated elites "a justifiable fear of the loss of their values and in particular of traditional values. They suspected that their own scale of personal cultivation values would come to be regarded as outdated and irrelevant." Ortega, in his youthful texts, but also in mature works such as *La rebelión de las masas*, expressed this structural unease of German intellectuals at the beginning of the century in a peculiar way: combining the demand for a comprehensive cultural reform to face a critical situation—first Spanish, then, in the 1920s, European—with the concession of an important space in his analysis to the positive aspects of the

¹¹"The general impression is given that there was a clear separation between the academic elite and the unofficial and disconnected intelligentsia" (Ringer, 1995: 68).

disturbing phenomenon. This partially positive assessment must be seen in relation to the particular position of the Spanish intellectual elites at the beginning of the twentieth century: they did not constitute a relatively cohesive and solidly established body before the abrupt socio-economic transformation of industrialisation, as in the German case; it was precisely the gradual Spanish industrial and economic development, together with the political transformations associated with it, which served as a catalyst for their demand for greater social recognition and intellectual autonomy. This process, which can be described as a transformation of the mode of intellectual generation, did not begin with the Generation of '14, although this generational unit gave it an important impetus that began to be articulated, as I have explained above, around the effects of the 1898 Disaster. The symbolic closure of the Spanish imperial past associated with that event did not, however, entail the suppression of the great opposition that ran through the Spanish intellectual and political field of the time: the imperial past was still symbolically alive, embodied in institutions—such as the Catholic Church, which was particularly active in the intellectual field—and in political and intellectual traditions that claimed to be heirs to that legacy and to the values associated with that idea of Spain. Faced with different ways of expressing this position, such as neo-scholasticism, traditionalism or *casticismo*, the young Generation of '14 positioned itself mainly on the side of the version of Spain's modernisation that concerns us here: emancipation from the old empire by taking as a reference point a particular adaptation of the European cultural and material present. This is what José Gaos was referring to when he stated that “Spain is the last colony of itself [...] the only Latin American nation which, from the common imperial past, has yet to become independent, not only spiritually, but also politically” (Gaos, 1945: 28).

Consequently, the objectives of the critique of the mandarin ideology were embodied in different figures in Germany and Spain, but the ideology was translatable because it allowed for structural homologies based on a system of oppositions with very similar values. At the top, in the case of eighteenth-century Germany, an inbred and Frenchified nobility that monopolised the courts of the German principalities and reproduced a “false culture” copied from abroad; in the case of early twentieth-century Spain, the Church and a political and intellectual elite spuriously sustained by the clientelistic networks of *caciquismo*, an “official Spain that obstinately prolongs the gestures of a defunct age” as opposed to “another aspiring, germinal Spain, a vital Spain, perhaps not very strong, but vital, sincere, honest, which,

hindered by the other, does not manage to enter fully into history” (Ortega y Gasset, 2004n: 714). Below, already at the beginning of the twentieth-century, the social forces unleashed by the industrial revolution in Germany directly threatened the social and institutional position of the mandarins, integrated throughout the nineteenth-century in the growing bureaucracy of an expanding authoritarian monarchy; in Spain, those same social forces—more reduced—did not lose their threatening character, but for most of the young Generation of '14, they still represented a hope of political renewal that could serve the purposes of the aspiring mandarins. This optimistic outlook would begin to change in some cases, such as that of Ortega, only a decade later. For the time being, in a precarious alliance, they denounced the Canovist system as corrupt and arbitrary and the Church as a source of ignorance and backwardness. Faced with these common enemies, the Generation of '14 defended the rationality and modernity of an organised bureaucratic system that rewarded efficiency and talent, understanding as such the social properties embodied by the group that aspired to control that bureaucracy, the most important component of which was cultural capital.

CONCLUSIONS

Despite these differences, and although the study of the parallels would require a more detailed analysis, I would like to emphasize that the ideological framework of the German mandarins conditioned, or perhaps we could say conveyed, the way in which Ortega reworked his distance from the hegemonic intellectual praxis of the previous generation in Spain. In a double intellectual and political bet, he sought to dissociate himself from it by seeking the support of a bourgeois, Madrid-based, rationalist intelligentsia, partly educated abroad and rejecting the system of *caciquismo*. In the process of importation, the mandarin ideological framework lost its link with specifically German social and historical aspects, which ceased to make sense to the new recipients. On the other hand, it acquired new connotations typical of the importing intellectual field, combining with other elements that structured it: for example, the Europe/Spain opposition, central in the polemic between Ortega and Unamuno (Costa Delgado, 2019: 204–206); the opposition between academics and journalists, fundamental in the relationship between Ortega and Maeztu (*ibid.*: 227–262); or the conflictive connection to the political power of the Restoration, which meant that at least until 1917, when the revolutionary threat became more evident (Elorza, 1984: 117–171), Ortega, together with most of the generational unit, was situated in a more progressive position, willing to seek alliances

with socialists and republicans. Despite the losses and acquisitions that occurred in the process of importation, the translation made sense because there were certain common elements between the two fields—German and Spanish—that made understanding possible.

Throughout the article I have shown how, already in Ortega y Gasset's early publications, it is possible to trace the elements of both an intellectual and a political programme for the modernisation of Spain. The strategic lines of this programme consisted of rationalising the State and deepening the division of labour, modelled on the main European powers of the time. The impact of the 1898 Disaster generated a struggle for the appropriation of the meaning of the event, which many interpreted as a political opportunity. Ortega, together with a small group of aspiring intellectuals and politicians of his age, elaborated a generational reading, trying to symbolically link the fate of Spain to the group's expectations for the future. As Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 2012) points out with regard to the construction of the modern State, the rationalisation or bureaucratisation of the State advances when a group of agents with political capacity—frequently with the support of a fraction of intellectuals—manages to impose a particular point of view as universal within the framework of a territory and, simultaneously, generates a normative space in which they themselves are in a privileged position. In other words, they are agents with an interest in the universal. In this sense, Ortega's discourse on the modernisation of Spain is totally traversed by the pretension of establishing cultural capital as the ultimate criterion of distinction in the intellectual and political fields.

Ortega's stays in Germany at the beginning of the century brought him into contact with neo-Kantianism, but also with the ideology of the German mandarins, studied by Norbert Elias and Fritz Ringer. This contact modulated his generational programme in some fundamental aspects. It legitimised and gave theoretical and practical content to a representation of society divided into elites and masses on the basis of cultural capital. It also offered a theoretical solution to the typical problem of the modern "intellectual": How to reconcile the demand for intellectual autonomy with the claim to legitimise political intervention by means of an intellectual authority, when by definition this is invested in opposition to politics? The *Kultur/Civilisation* dialectic offered a way out: a true intellectual—and even more so a philosopher—should not aspire to fragmented knowledge, but to transmute his scientific specialisation into cultural totalisation, to become a privileged interpreter of the general interest, of the universal,

also in politics. Obviously, there is a correlation between this dialectic and cultural elitism.

At the same time, the importation of mandarin ideology into Spain was not mechanical. The notable political, economic and intellectual differences between Germany and Spain at the beginning of the twentieth-century meant that the programme of the Generation of '14 was much less conservative in tone than the German academic norm. Nevertheless, the key categories of that ideological framework proved flexible enough to be adaptable to that new social reality.

With this paper, in addition to shedding light on the influence of this double generational experience on Ortega's theory, I would like to point out, on a more general level, the importance of historicising the categories with which we construct our own philosophical discourse. I firmly believe that Ortega's theory of generations has an enormous heuristic potential, provided that it is critically updated. Such a critical disposition involves subjecting its entire conceptual framework to close scrutiny, including the denaturalisation of such established oppositions as elite/mass and such suggestive definitions of the intellectual task as that derived from the *Kultur/Civilisation* dialectic, in order to understand what, in its concrete formulation, they owe to a very specific historical context. Only in this way, and never with full guarantees, will we be able to avoid bringing to the present, along with the theory, some clandestine passengers from another era.

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Costa Delgado J. [Коста Дельгадо Х.] The Influence of the 1898 Disaster and the Ideology of the German Mandarins in the Genesis of Ortega y Gasset's Theory of Generations [Влияние Катастрофы 1898 года и идеологии немецких мандаринов на становление теории поколений Ортеги-и-Гассета] // Философия. Журнал Высшей школы экономики. — 2024. — Т. 8, № 4. — Р. 104–127.

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ВЛИЯНИЕ КАТАСТРОФЫ 1898 ГОДА И ИДЕОЛОГИИ НЕМЕЦКИХ МАНДАРИНОВ НА СТАНОВЛЕНИЕ ТЕОРИИ ПОКОЛЕНИЙ ОРТЕГИ-И-ГАССЕТА

Получено: 08.10.2024. Рецензировано: 15.11.2024. Принято: 26.11.2024.

Аннотация: В этой статье я рассмотрю на основе конкретного случая то, как социальная траектория философов и процессы коллективного определения философских продуктов находят выражение в ключевых категориях философского дискурса, то есть в символических формах, присущих социальной практике, которую мы называем философией. Для этого я покажу, что формативный период молодого Ортеги был пронизан двумя фундаментальными социальными переживаниями, которые интерпретировались через призму поколения: Катастрофа 1898 года и контакт с идеологией немецких мандаринов. Я также постараюсь показать, что эти переживания были включены или переведены в центральные категории философа, который только начинал свои первые шаги

в испанском политическом и интеллектуальном поле. Впоследствии эти категории стали частью, наряду с другими символическими формами, его зрелой теории поколений. Цель этой статьи состоит в том, чтобы указать, как остаточные элементы этих двух переживаний проникают в его теорию через эти ключевые категории. Делая это, я хотел бы открыть два направления для исследований: 1) углубить понимание его работы через социологию философии и 2) предостеречь от риска некритического включения таких остаточных элементов в некритическое применение теории поколений Ортеги к современности.

Ключевые слова: Ортега-и-Гассет, теория поколений, идеология мандаринов, социология философии, поколение '14.

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JOSÉ MANUEL IGLESIAS GRANDA*

THE DAWN OF THE ECO-SOCIAL DEBATE IN IBERO-AMERICA**

EDUARDO NICOL VERSUS ORTEGA Y GASSET

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Abstract: A considerable prolegomenon to the debates surrounding the eco-social crisis in Latin America can be found in Nicol's early critique of Ortega y Gasset's ideas on technique. Considering Ortega's theory, we will discuss how Nicol argues the need to move away from the modern assumptions implicit in contemporary culture and philosophy. Nicol problematizes a certain univocity in the conception of human action as a technical domain and points to the need to recover the independence of its ethical and moral dimensions. The civilizing ideal (present in Ortega) of humanizing and molding the world by projecting human ends onto it is unsustainable. It leads to an eco-social crisis that is difficult to overcome. For this reason, Nicol will propose ways of inhabiting that are not related to this ideal of progress and technical mastery, but to moral progress based on the expressive and communal dimension inherent in the human being himself.

Keywords: Eco-social Crisis, Ethics, Latin America, Nicol, Ortega, Technics.

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INTRODUCTION

From the beginning of his career, Eduardo Nicol kept a clear distance from Ortega y Gasset. His work was characterized by adopting positions largely distant from or opposed to Ortega's. What is little known, however, is that Nicol was one of the first philosophers to receive Ortega's ideas on technique critically. A year after *Meditation on Technique's* publication (1939) in Argentina, the Catalan philosopher published a review in which he problematized a fundamental aspect of Ortega's ideas: their implicit theory of action.

This review is of special interest, because it shows how Nicol detects one of the most problematic aspects of Ortega's philosophy of technique very early on. The Catalan philosopher perceives these reflections as based on an

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ideal humanity, defined by the capacity for technical mastery of the world. Nicol criticizes Ortega for putting forward a univocal conception of action as technical action and leaving aside its moral dimension.

From these coordinates, Nicol will devote a large part of his work to criticizing civilizing projects based on the technical mastery of nature. In his eyes, they become unsustainable, leading to an eco-social crisis and a threat of civilizational collapse. For his part, Nicol will argue that human action is not only technical but also moral or self-transforming. In this sense, he will point out the need to articulate vital projects focussed on the development of this sphere of action and not on the implementation of a growing development of the technical transformation of the world. This fact may allow us to interpret Nicol's critique of Ortega as a prolegomenon to the debates surrounding the eco-social crisis in Latin America.

ORTEGA'S SHADOW IS LONG.

NICOL: AN EARLY CRITICAL READER OF THE MEDITATION ON TECHNIQUE

This section will analyze Nicol's review of Ortega's *Meditation on Technique*, published in 1940, to question Ortega's possible influence on Nicol. It will show Nicol's problematization of Ortega's univocal understanding of human action and how this problematization connects with Nicol's later theoretical proposal and with his critique of the unsustainability of the modern ideal of progress and technical mastery.

In his *Sociology of Philosophies*, Randall Collins (2000) points out that thought is a great conversation. Authors elaborate their ideas and position themselves in an ongoing dialogue with their peers. The ultimate aim is to make their ideas become a vehicle for the conversation. This way, the thinker's work and position would be consolidated and socially validated. This fact allows us to understand the multiple interrelationships between philosophers' different positions in the face of certain problems. Yet, above all, it allows us to account for the generative dynamism that underlies intellectual production in its history.

Within Spanish philosophy, José Ortega y Gasset played a fundamental role. It could well be said that he was one of the key figures in the constitution of this field, which owes to him its consolidation and international positioning. However, not all philosophy in Spain was Ortega. The country had other relevant intellectuals and currents of thought, especially in Barcelona, the second city of the peninsula and home of the Barcelona School.

All in all, Ortega set the standard that all Spanish thinkers had to deal with—either follow, re-signify, or criticize. Ortega constituted, to use

his own words, an authentic “philosophical mountain range” within the discipline’s geography in Spanish — a mountain range with which every passerby would have to deal in a certain way (Ortega y Gasset, 2006: 137; Sánchez Cuervo, 2019: 613).

Eduardo Nicol was a Catalan thinker from the Barcelona School (Linares, 2008). He developed all of his work in exile, and, from the beginning, was distant from Ortega’s theoretical positions (Sánchez Cuervo, 2019). Nicol never directly polemicalised with the latter, but he did have serious philosophical clashes with his main disciple: José Gaos, with whom he shared a faculty in Mexico (González Hinojosa, 2017). Studying the imprint of Ortega’s thoughts on Nicol’s would take up an entire doctoral thesis and lead to a systematic review of their solutions to the most complex theoretical problems of the twentieth century. However, there is a very specific motif in the thought of the two philosophers to which we would like to draw attention in this work: technique. Nicol’s critique of Ortega in this respect is highly topical, as it implies a pioneering reflection on the limits of the modern ideal of technological mastery and its eco-social unsustainability.

Ortega and Nicol approach the problem of technique from very different and, to some extent, opposite perspectives. Moreover, Nicol was a very early reader of Ortega’s *Meditation on Technique*; he reviewed this work just one year after its publication. This review, published in 1940 and undiscovered by specialists until now, already contains what will be the core of Nicol’s thoughts on the question. Therefore, it allows us to understand to what extent Nicol’s most original ideas on the subject are a critical response to Ortega’s.

The review was published in issue 3 of the *Revista Mexicana de Formación*. Nicol deals with *Ensimismamiento y alteración* and *Meditación de la técnica*. These are two independent texts, but they were published together in 1939 by Espasa-Calpe Argentina. The review is structured as follows: first, Nicol gives a succinct and somewhat tendentious account of Ortega’s main ideas from the two texts, then makes a personal and critical reflection on them. In broad terms, Nicol critiques the theory of action that follows from Ortega’s ideas on technique. The Catalan problematizes the univocal meaning that Ortega confers in human action by relating it solely and directly to technique and the transformation of the world. Nicol, for his part, will point out the need to consider theory itself in its ethical and self-conscious dimensions as an independent form of human action and not reducible to technique.

Ortega begins his theme of self-absorption as he usually does: affirming with irony and a certain verve that all those who have dealt with it in the past have done so improperly or insufficiently. Thus, we discover that sociologists have not yet described what society is. From there, the analysis and the chain of ideas begin. Let us distinguish between man and beast. The latter lives in perpetual fear of the world; it does not live from within itself but is dependent on the other, altered. Man can think and meditate; that is to say, he can turn away from the other, from that which is outside, and go within himself, and become self-absorbed. Because he can carry out this operation, he can undertake the reverse: he can object to things, transform them, and elevate himself to the other, that is to say, humanizing the world. But this is not achieved by the simple fact of existing; to achieve it is a task for man, a task that he performs in three different moments, which are repeated throughout human history: 1st alteration: man is lost among things; 2nd self-absorption: man withdraws into his intimacy and speculates on things, forms ideas of them; and 3rd action: man returns to the world with a project or plan of action. Therefore, man's destiny is action: we do not live to think but to survive.

[...]

When he exercises his reason, man is unlike a fish in water. Man is not a rational animal, like the swimming animal fish (Nicol Archive. Folder 141, folio 116g).

As Nicol rightly points out, Ortega understands human action as a single process characterized by three moments. Each moment is distinguished by a specific way of relating mankind to the real: a first moment, in which mankind is practically dissolved in the world, lost among things; a second moment, in which mankind manages to distance itself from the real and reflect on it; and a third moment, in which mankind applies its ideas to the world, humanizing it, organizing it based on his projects.¹

Hence, for Ortega, human action is a question of transforming the real and thought is a moment within this process. Thought is the moment that allows mankind to become more effective and that distinguishes humans from other animals. Since animals live without taking distance from the real, they are “pending on the other, altered.”

As Nicol rightly points out, Ortega tries to overcome substantialism and rationalism in this way. There are no ideas that adhere to stable substances, but these are the fruit of mankind's self-absorption and detachment from reality. Reason is not the defining faculty of what is human, but simply an instrument of human life to establish itself more comfortably and efficiently

¹A systematic study of Ortega's philosophy of technique can be found in Alonso, 2021.

in the world. Now, Ortega tries to overcome both philosophical diatribes from a basic presupposition that Nicol criticizes. This involves relating human dignity and fulfillment to the capacity to impose on the real and mold and adapt it to human ends.

The animal has needs to eat, warm up, etc. The man also has them, but there are other priorities besides these needs. The animal has nothing else to do. On the other hand, man has to satisfy these needs to live, which is the original need of all the others. Man lives because he wants to, and when circumstances, nature, and his surroundings are not enough for him to live, he does not let himself die like the animal he invents. And if it is sufficient and surplus to requirements, he limits himself and restrains himself.

These acts that man invents and executes have a common structure: they modify the circumstance. They are technical acts, but the technical is not exhausted in them. They are also technical acts that man executes to achieve the superfluous. The superfluous is as necessary as the primarily necessary (Nicol Archive. Folder 141, folio 116g).

It is not only that man must transform the real to overcome the limitations that affect his survival. It is not only that truly human life emerges from the space liberated by technology in response to these needs. Rather, it is that this new space will only be valuable and significant, in turn, when it makes it possible for man to transform reality more and more. In other words, when a greater humanization of the real is possible, that is to say a growing absorption of the real within the human. Ortega understands that the dignity of life lies in its capacity to impose itself on circumstance.

The animal cannot withdraw from its repertoire of natural acts, from nature, because it is nothing but nature, and if it distances itself from it, it would have nowhere to go. But man, it seems, is not his circumstance, but is only immersed in it and can at times step out of it, and withdraw into himself, withdraw, become self-absorbed, and occupy himself only with things that are not directly and immediately attending to the imperatives or needs of his circumstance. In these extra or supernatural moments of self-absorption and withdrawal, he invents and executes this second repertoire of acts: he makes a fire, builds a house, cultivates the fields, and builds the car.

[...] Well, these are the technical acts specific to man. The whole of them is technique, which we can, of course, define as the reform that man imposes on nature to satisfy his needs. These, as we have seen, were imposed by nature on man. Man responds by imposing a change on nature or circumstance that leads to the creation between nature and man of a new nature, a super-nature (Ortega y Gasset, 2015: 62–63).

Human life is, therefore, distinguished by the fact that it can introduce its being into the world, and it does so in various ways in different periods of history. Each epoch is marked by a specific project or way of facing reality. This creative activity of vital projects is human action itself and is what guides technique. Human action is a self-conscious project of humanizing, transforming reality. Consequently, action is technical. In other words, the technique is — for Ortega — man's way of being in the world as the basis of his transformative praxis. In the words of Nicol,

What is most important is, first, the breadth with which Ortega approached the problem of technique and, consequently, his way of articulating and metaphysically grounding human action. From all this, we obtain the principle of a philosophy of action, which starts from a radical distinction between man and the world and considers technique the link between the two (Nicol Archive. Folder 141, folio 1171).

In his review, Nicol problematizes this philosophy of action. The Catalan philosopher points out that human action is based not only on the transformative praxis of reality. Theory also constitutes an independent and differentiated form of action and, consequently, a manifestation of human freedom. For Nicol, theory is not simply a moment of transformative action — the moment in which the project that transforms reality is articulated. Rather, human action occurs in different ways, and theory is one of them.

Theory is an independent manifestation of human freedom, likewise the creation or transformation of reality. However, Nicol specifically understands theory by conceiving it as the condition of possibility for the ethical and moral growth of the human being. Through theory, man becomes aware of his freedom and exercises it by choosing and rejecting options. Hence, in contrast to Ortega, Nicol understands that the greatest dignity of human beings lies in their capacity to forge an ethos and to produce themselves consciously and freely.

In short, Nicol replies to Ortega that human action is not only the transformation of reality, but also the action and transformation of oneself. This shaping action of personal intimacy differs from technique. For this reason, Nicol questions the weight that the philosopher from Madrid confers on it in his “metaphysics of human action.” For him, technology will play an important part in the configuration of man because of its role in the transformation of reality. Yet it cannot play a central role, since human action goes beyond this transformation. It also encompasses one's self-production and the forging of one's ethos.

Therefore, Nicol opposes Ortega in that he proposes a different conception of action concerning technique. Instead of singling out man as a transforming and humanizing agent of reality, he emphasizes the existential and ethical component that action possesses insofar as it forges the subject. Precisely, the prioritization of the ideal of a technical and reality-transforming humanity will lead, in Nicol's eyes, to the failure of contemporary civilization due to an eco-social crisis that will be difficult to overcome.

Certainly, man makes himself by elaborating and executing his life project. But this project is not exhausted in action, understood as the transformation of the world. In other words: action is not only this transformation. It is also that I exercise on myself [...] transforming or elaborating or simply seeking intimacy. And for this action, we cannot say that technique exists, nor that it is a technique, nor do we conform to the definition of technique as PRAXIS. Moreover, it consists of precisely rejecting technical work (Nicol Archive. Folder 141, folio 1171).

NICOL'S PROPOSAL ON TECHNIQUE AS A RESPONSE TO ORTEGA'S

This section will expand and develop Nicol's ideas outlined in the review of Ortega's text. It will look in depth at Nicol's critique of the modern ideal of humanity and its relation to technology and try to show how these ideas can critically respond to the Madrid philosopher's approach.

The ideas that Nicol notes in his review will be developed in detail during the rest of his life. The Catalan philosopher will defend theory as an ethical and essentially human activity. The theory would imply a way of relating to reality and to others based on giving reason for the being of the real through intersubjective dialogue. In this sense, Nicol will defend the theory's expressive and communitarian nature and understand it as the authentically human way of being in the world (Nicol, 1974; 1977; 1978).

Human beings do not live to transform reality and impose themselves on it but rather to express it by giving a reason for their being and, in this way, to generate a community based on the reason. This theoretical activity has also an ethical component because it implies the very forging of the human. Theoretical activity implies a personal self-production that internally constitutes each human being, subsequently permeating each epoch through the ideas about oneself that mankind elaborates on (ibid.).

This is not to say Nicol denies reality's transformative dimension and rejects the technique's importance. Nicol gives it an important role, but he understands it as the basis on which he subsequently establishes this other self-conscious activity that theory consists of. Nicol develops these ideas in two main works: *El porvenir de la filosofía* and *La primera teoría de la praxis*.

Based on what was pointed out in the review many years earlier, Nicol detects a kind of hiatus in human action that prevents it from being understood as something univocal. Human action has an external dimension, the transformation of the world, and an internal dimension, the transformation of oneself. Based on the former, man is a “worker-being.” For Nicol, human existence implies a continuous work with reality, an appropriation of circumstance, as Ortega would say. Man transforms the natural and creates artificial worlds. He generates new orders of things and organizes his existence differently from the rest of the animal species (Nicol, 1972; 1978; 1980).

This form of organization of man as a worker is the basis of civilization and culture. Certainly, in Nicol’s eyes, it already implies a certain degree of freedom; for man develops the possibilities of the real in a creative and unprecedented way. He is a “poet of nature.” However, this freedom is relative, for it is always subverted to the inherent necessity of life. Work and technology respond creatively to biological necessity. In doing so, they generate a new balance between the human and the natural, a super-nature that did not exist before (Nicol, 1972).

However, this humanized reality is not an end in itself for Nicol. Rather, it enables the emergence of a new way of being in the world: theory. Work and technology enable man to organize himself efficiently and free him for leisure. However, leisure has become a new kind of activity. In contrast to Ortega’s view, “the superfluous”² does not imply more transformation of nature or more humanization of nature.

On the contrary, leisure becomes an end through which man shapes his free existence in unprecedented ways without imposing himself on reality. Moreover, leisure allows the emergence of cultural and political spheres, completely independent of the direct transformation of the real, such as politics, art, and philosophy. These spheres do not necessarily have to be focused on the technical transformation of the real but are ends in themselves, leading to the self-realization of the human being (Nicol, 1978).

²For Ortega, “the superfluous” is inherently technical. It implies technical acts that sustain it and enable the emergence of a kind of well-being absent in nature. “The superfluous” is related to the technical in the sense that it must be produced by it. Technique frees man from natural needs; it generates new needs, which Ortega relates to “well-being”; these new needs, in turn, require more techniques to satisfy them, and so on progressively. Ortega’s idea of well-being implies adapting the environment to the subject’s will (Ortega y Gasset, 2015: 70). Nicol captures the unsustainability of this ideal of well-being very well.

In *La primera teoría de la praxis*, Nicol (Nicol, 1978) develops this idea further. He points out how theory implies a specific form of augmentation of being (*anabasis*) that is distinguished from the transformation of the real. Through theory, being is increased as the human becomes increasingly self-conscious. It is a qualitative transformation. Theory makes people deeper and more self-conscious, thus making them more aware and knowledgeable of the real. A reality that is changeable and ungraspable once and for all, but to a certain extent apodictic and regular in its changes, which allows for knowledge of it.³

To put it briefly, Nicol makes his proposal based on the crack he finds in Ortega's ideas. By focusing exclusively on transforming external reality, Ortega leaves aside the inner dimension involved in human action. He forgets that action has an important moral component that progressively makes man become complex and self-conscious and capable of advancing ethically and morally simultaneously as he transforms reality externally. For this reason, Nicol's ideal of well-being is radically opposed to Ortega's: well-being does not imply transforming reality more and better, imposing oneself more on it, but growing internally and morally. With this, Nicol reworks Ortega's notion of the "vital project."

Although Ortega defended that human action was based on a vital project, he always subsumed this project into the transformation of reality itself. Nicol gives a more relevant role to the project. The project is not a means to the transformation of the real but an end in itself. The project implies a concrete idea of life called to be carried out by mobilizing all possible means. The project transcends the transformation of reality and configures a new type of human life based on the realization of free activities such as philosophy, art, politics, etc. (Nicol, 1977).

³This expressive and symbolic dimension of the theory that Nicol seeks to highlight and recover contrasts with what Ortega proposes. In Ortega's words: "By this I mean that life is not fundamentally, as so many centuries have believed, contemplation, thought, theory. It is production and manufacture, and only because production and manufacture demand it, thought, theory, and science appear. [...] The world, the circumstance, presents itself as the first matter and as a possible machine. Since to exist, mankind has to be in the world [...] mankind resolves to seek in it the hidden machine that it contains to serve it. The history of human thought is reduced to the series of observations that man has made to bring to light the possibility of a machine that the world carries latent in its matter. Hence, technical invention is also called discovery. And it is no coincidence, as we shall see, that the technique par excellence, the full maturity of technique, began around 1600, precisely when, in his theoretical thinking about the world, a man came to understand it as a machine" (Ortega y Gasset, 2015: 88).

This idea of life starts from one's self-awareness and ethical growth within individuals. As mentioned above, it starts from a very concrete form of praxis: theory. Theory is called upon to guide transformative praxis so that both constitute a unity of meaning.

Thus, there is a certain parallelism between Ortega and Nicol. However, as we have said, Nicol detects a crack in Ortega's ideas and uses it as a prompt to develop his own reflection. Human well-being does not lie in the transformation of reality but in one's inner development and growth; the transformation of reality without this can become unbridled and even threatening to him.

Nicol shows how the vital project can only be understood with a very particular type of praxis called to make the human itself grow. A theory of action that neglects or undermines this question will lead to an overdimensioning of the transformation of the world that ends up endangering humanity itself. Nicol connects ethics with praxis and affirms that theory as internal action guides man. If there is no ethical growth in tandem with the transformation of reality, the latter becomes unsustainable and dangerous. Technical development must go hand in hand with moral development. However, Ortega leaves this question aside; he undermines it. And if the theory undermines the question, what will the consequences be? This note that Nicol makes on Ortega's theory is particularly valuable when considering the ways of inhabiting the world that follow from both ways of thinking.

Nicol (Nicol, 1980) considers that modernity has been based on a civilizing project characterized by leaving aside the ethical dimension of action. Hence, Ortega's conception of the human and the technical are modern. In Nicol's eyes, modernity was based on the Baconian idea of mastery of nature. The ideal of humanity was to achieve emancipation from any vulnerability through ever greater and more efficient control and mastery over nature. Man was to make himself lord and master of the world, transforming it completely without accepting any restriction. The human being was to cast his shadow over all that was real, humanizing it. Reality was thus to become a kind of ontological clay at the disposal of the human being, turned into a new demiurge.

In Nicol's eyes, this vital project focused on mastery and left aside precisely the ethical conception of praxis. He forgot that technological progress had to go hand in hand with moral progress if the former was really to come to fruition. And, if he did not forget it, he blurred it by confusing it or relating it — as Ortega does — directly to the technical mastery of the world.

Nicol (Nicol, 1972; 1980) points out in this respect how the modern project of existence has become unsustainable. He realized how the ideal of unlimited domination of the natural world had brought with it the consequence of its destruction and, on a more dire note, the destruction of humanity itself. If human beings had once been characterized by maintaining sustainable balances with reality and building civilizations on their basis, modern civilization undermined these balances by destroying the environment and generating an eco-social crisis that could lead mankind to extinction (Linares & Iglesias Granda, 2023).

It is precisely this question that Nicol's most systematic and thorough reflection on technology deals with. Nicol (Nicol, 1972; 1980) radically questions modern technological civilization for having derived in an almost totalitarian regime, where human freedom loses its place and the logic of efficiency prevails. In contemporary society, technology is no longer governed by any human project or ideal. It has taken on total autonomy, conditioning, and determining human action. Thus, Nicol points out how contemporaneity is characterized by a sort of "force majeure" that subsumes human freedom and ends any hint of agency (Iglesias Granda & Sánchez Cuervo, 2024).

Nicol (Nicol, 1972; 1980) distinguishes between the contemporary regime of force majeure and the modern emancipatory project based on technical mastery. The modern emancipatory project was indeed based on a specific idea of man, on a project. This unsustainable project led to a situation in which man no longer had room for maneuver to guide his actions. The modern project, by focusing solely on technical progress and neglecting moral progress, has led, in Nicol's eyes, to a situation in which technology becomes destructive and ungovernable. In saying so, Nicol does not depart entirely from Ortega. The latter had noticed how contemporary civilization was characterized by the absence of projects guiding technological development.

The very progress of technology has created a new problem; or rather, it has aggravated the problem which is essentially man's life itself, because today he does not know what he can do with his leisure, nor what plans he can forge for his settlement in a world which technology is transforming with seemingly limitless rapidity. It is as if technology had turned from a means into an end, and man no longer had any other project — any other life plan or idea of life — than that of technical progress (Nicol Archive. Folder 141, folio 1171).

The review shows that Nicol realizes that Ortega has a good grasp of the overflow of technological power. However, the thinker from Madrid needs to perceive that the basis of his technology theory leads to this

situation to a large extent. The metaphysics of Ortega's action is based on technique and the transformation of reality, which leads, as Nicol helps us see, to the oblivion of the moral and ethical dimension of action. Hence, it leads to a univocal conception of progress, where it is understood only as technological, not moral, progress. Ortega criticizes the fact that there are no projects that guide contemporary technology. Still, he needs to realize that it is precisely inherent to the modern project to omit the moral or guiding dimension of action and to focus solely on mastery of nature. Its metaphysics of action and the conception of technology that follows from it implicitly suppresses the moral dimension of action.

In short, Nicol shows that Ortega's conception of technique cannot account for its contemporary drifts. Ortega needs to take more distance from the modern postulates on technique and mastery of the Baconian project. This fact prevents him from grasping the root of the contemporary problems he rightly detects, which can be summed up in man's loss of the capacity to take charge of technology. Nicol would tell Ortega that the lack of projects to guide technology is not casual. These projects do not exist because the univocal modern ideal of mastery and humanization of reality undermines the moral dimension of action and theory. That is to say, the undermining of moral progress in the face of technical progress. Ortega precisely reproduces this undermining in his theory without realizing it. How can there be projects on par with technology if the moral dimension of action, which would make the emergence of these projects possible, is left aside?

TOWARDS A MORE SUSTAINABLE WAY OF INHABITING THE WORLD. THEORETICAL POSSIBILITIES OF NICOL'S CRITIQUE IN THE PRESENT DAY

This section will reflect on the political and ecological consequences of Ortega's and Nicol's proposals. It will show how the notions of inhabiting that follow from both are radically opposed. While Ortega's argument leads to unsustainability and eco-social crisis, Nicol points to a way of life that is more respectful of the environment and less inclined to stress it. This confrontation of the two notions of inhabiting will allow us to defend how Nicol's critique of Ortega's ideas, pointed out as early as 1940, constitutes an interesting prolegomenon in the debates on the eco-social crisis in Latin American philosophy.

The Catalan thinker detects how Ortega's approaches to technology have unsustainable natural and eco-social implications. They imply a conception of man as the dominator and humanizer of reality, making reality a moldable clay at man's disposal. Man inhabits reality by transforming it; he must

make it his own and construct a new reality (over-nature). In Nicol's words, Ortega develops a philosophy "that starts from a radical distinction between man and the world and considers technology as the link between the two" (Nicol Archive. Folder 141, folio 1171)... In Ortega, there is an idea of nature as something opposed to human beings that must be appropriated and shaped for survival. In brief, human well-being lies in transforming nature technically.

However, this ontology of man and technology is more than merely descriptive or enunciative. It is a theory from which operational or normative consequences follow. Let me explain: Ortega's ideas implicitly carry the defense of a way of acting on the planet. Suppose the human being is an "ontological centaur" who has to create his reality by humanizing the real. In that case, he must do so without considering nature as a limit to his actions. That is to say, it is taken for granted that man can transform and manipulate nature at will to the point of projecting himself onto the whole of reality and making it an extension of his thoughts. Ortega's words are obvious in this respect:

Far from losing himself in this return to the world, on the contrary, he brings himself to the other; he projects it energetically, lordly onto things, that is to say, he makes the other—the world—gradually become himself. Man humanizes the world, injects it, impregnates it with his ideal substance. It is conceivable that one day in the future, in the depths of time, this terrible external world will become so saturated with man that our descendants may walk through it as we mentally walk through our intimacy today—we may imagine that the world, without ceasing to be so, may become something like a materialized soul and, as in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, the gusts of wind will blow, pushed by Ariel, the elf of ideas (Ortega y Gasset, 2015: 150).

These operative consequences, which in texts such as the one above almost become imperatives, lead to a particular (lordly) way of relating to the natural, which tends not to accept and respect its limits and modes of ordering. Man must impose himself on reality and not take it as it is, and he must do so as the primary goal of his life. Hence, what will follow from a theory that puts virtue in nature's progressive and exponential transformation without any brake? A progressive degradation of nature.

As we have seen, Nicol grasps this question very well. Our philosopher focuses on how Ortega's theory, unable to distance itself from the modern idea of technological mastery, ignores the moral dimension of action. This leads to an unbalanced progress in which morality cannot take over the

technical. The focus is only on technical development, and morality is forgotten, so morality does not align with technical development. The technical becomes the end of the action, giving rise to an accelerated and exponential transformation that subsumes any possible project. Thus, the ideal will be to humanize the world to the ultimate consequences without respecting this world as it is, as a reality independent of human beings, a reality to be inhabited without violence or force.

Nicol detects very well how Ortega's ideas do not distance themselves from modernity and how, in this sense, they continue to reproduce implicit conceptions of what is human, despite consequences that were already harmful in his present. Ortega's notion of inhabiting leads to the deterioration of nature and destroys the balance between nature and society, on which humanity has been based until now. Ortega's exaltation of technology, the transformation of reality, and his neglect of the moral dimension of action lead to an eco-social crisis that questions humanity's survival capacity.

Nicol's reading of Ortega coincides with his reading of Bacon's civilizing project (Nicol, 1980). Nicol advocates the need not only to recover the ethical dimension of theoretical action, but also to make it a way of life. Nicol's work implies a conception of inhabiting that is radically different from Ortega's. This conception involves his interest in recovering philosophy and theory as the basis of a different way of being in the world, based not on the mastery of the real, but on its disinterested expression (Nicol, 1982).

This fact implies an attitude of respect towards reality, not of mastery. Man must transform it to a certain extent to inhabit it, but without forcing it, simply by developing his intrinsic possibilities, like a "poet of nature." However, this transformation must never be an end in itself. In Nicol's eyes, this transformation makes possible a new way of being in reality that is free and disinterested, based on the expression of the real. This new way of being would respect nature and give rise to forms of community organization based on its expression (Nicol, 1974; 1982).

Thus, Nicol proposes inhabiting the earth based on respect for the real rather than its unbridled transformation — a coexistence that certainly transforms it, but always maintaining respect for its being and dynamism. Human life and well-being should not oppose nature, but develop in harmony. It must express and develop its intrinsic possibilities and not act as a "centaur" marked by a split between humanity and nature. Human life is not fulfilled by imposing itself on reality, but by developing it harmo-

niously and expressing it collectively⁴—something close to what Walter Benjamin wrote against the unquestioned illustrated ideal of progress in his *On the Concept of History*.⁵

Nothing has corrupted the German working class as much as the notion that it was moving with the current. It regarded technological development as the driving force of the stream with which it thought it was moving. From there, it was but a step to the illusion that the factory work ostensibly furthering technological progress constituted a political achievement. The old Protestant work ethic was resurrected among German workers in a secularized form. [...] The new conception of labor is tantamount to the exploitation of nature, which, with naïve complacency, is contrasted with the exploitation of the proletariat. Compared to this positivistic view, Fourier's fantasies, which have so often been ridiculed, prove surprisingly sound. According to Fourier, cooperative labor would increase efficiency to such an extent that four moons would illuminate the sky at night, the polar ice caps would recede, seawater would no longer taste salty, and beasts of prey would do man's bidding. A kind of labor which, far from exploiting nature, would help her to give birth to the creations that now lie dormant in her womb. The sort of nature that [...] "exists gratis" is a complement to the corrupted conception of labor (Benjamin, Löwy, 2005: 72).

In contrast to Ortega's, this Nicolian idea is, thus, incompatible with the ideology of technological progress present in contemporary societies. This idea does not require unlimited progress in the technical transformation of reality, but rather moral progress that implies a greater self-awareness on the part of humanity from which to articulate a regime of organization based on the expression of real and intersubjective cooperation. Therefore, Nicol's ideas point to a way of inhabiting that fully questions modern capitalist societies with their unlimited growth and development imperatives.

⁴For his part, Sánchez Vázquez criticizes the Nicol's position and points out the risks of it becoming an ideology that legitimizes capitalism (Iglesias Granda, 2023).

⁵Benjamin criticizes how the ideology of progress has permeated Marxism without realizing that the domination of nature ultimately leads to man's domination over man. Benjamin pioneered moving away from the positivist and technocratic ideology that permeated much of European culture in the early 20th century. An ideology that was the hallmark of Marxism and of Ortega y Gasset. In this sense, Benjamin anticipated ecological concerns, as did Nicol. In response, Benjamin looks to Fourier and his working day as a game. A play that unfolds the real instead of dominating it and that seeks to generate scientific discoveries that, instead of dominating nature, restore the relations between society and the environment (Löwy, 2005: 75–76)

It should be borne in mind that Nicol is not a thinker in the Marxist tradition. However, he agrees with Benjamin's early critical conception of the modern ideal of progress.

Nicol developed many of the ideas present in Ortega's review at a time when these issues were becoming current. This was the time of the emergence of environmental awareness. In 1972, the Club Rome report *On the Limits to Growth* was published, and the Stockholm Conference took place. It became clear that modern theories leading to unlimited development were inefficient in dealing with a civilization marked by a progressive depletion and destruction of nature and its resources.

It was more necessary than ever to set a course toward other civilizational horizons. The theory had to set a precedent for subsequent action, and the first step had to be to distance itself from the modern theoretical assumptions that were at the root of the consequences suffered in the present. Thus, from the outset, Nicol distances himself from the ideals of technical mastery of the real present in Ortega's work, warning of the risks of reducing human action to transformative praxis. A civilizing project or ideal must guide the technical transformation of the real, and these can only be understood by bearing in mind that human action has a moral component that must be cultivated and developed independently.

Thus, Nicol will point out that the threat of eco-social crisis and civilizational collapse is due to having been governed by a mistaken ideal. The fact of making technical progress the civilizational ideal destroys the natural foundations that sustain life. It is, therefore, a question of changing this ideal. Human beings must return the focus of their lives to moral rather than technical growth and development. We will have to move towards a civilization where the important thing is not to grow technically and economically, but humanly. This must involve transmuting the spheres of value that govern individuals' decisions and priorities.

How can this be achieved? Nicol advocates replacing the desire for production and enrichment, the desire to dominate the real, with respect for it and acceptance of its reality. Expressing and reflecting the real as it is, without violently harming it. To generate communities based on this collective and inter-subjective expression and not on mercantile or merely pecuniary interests. In short, to look back at those ways of inhabiting the world that were not reduced exclusively to the dimension of homo faber, but which cultivated the freedom and creative capacity of human beings as expressive, communicative, and communitarian beings.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper has tried to show how, practically from its publication, Ortega's ideas on technology gave rise to a topical debate today: the eco-social crisis. The Catalan philosopher Eduardo Nicol quickly detected how Ortega's thought implicitly carried the ideal of human domination over nature, of questionable sustainability. Nicol criticized Ortega's univocal conception of action as technical action. He pointed it out as the root of the gap between technical and moral progress that was already clearly evident in the 20th century. Nicol defends the need to consider human action both as technical and moral. This implies that individuals' development and ethical growth cannot be assimilated into technical action. Hence, Nicol proposes a conception of human existence radically opposing Ortega's. Faced with the eco-socially unsustainable ideal of molding reality based on human ends, he defends a way of life based on developing the possibilities inherent to the real and its communitarian expression.

All this shows how Latin American philosophy was characterized by its pioneering contribution to the global philosophical panorama with a critical perspective on technological development and the ideal of control and domination of nature. This work points to how it not only anticipated debates of great relevance from the 1970s onwards, such as those related to ecology, but could also outline cultural diagnoses of great insight that are still very relevant for thinking about the present.

ABBREVIATIONS

Nicol Archive Archivo Eduardo Nicol Franciscá, Archivo Histórico de la UNAM

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ХОСЕ МАНУЭЛЬ ИГЛЕСИАС ГРАНДА

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РАССВЕТ ЭКОСОЦИАЛЬНЫХ ДЕБАТОВ В ИБЕРОАМЕРИКЕ

ЭДУАРДО НИКОЛ ПРОТИВ ОРТЕГИ-И-ГАССЕТА

Получено: 10.08.2024. Рецензировано: 01.10.2024. Принято: 07.10.2024.

Аннотация: Начало обсуждения экосоциального кризиса в Латинской Америке можно найти в ранней критике Николем идей Ортеги-и-Гассета о технике. Рассматривая теорию Ортеги, мы обсудим, как Никол утверждает необходимость отхода от современных предпосылок, заложенных в современной культуре и философии. Никол ставит под сомнение однозначное понимание человеческой деятельности как исключительно технической сферы и указывает на необходимость восстановления независимости ее этических и моральных аспектов. Цивилизационный идеал очеловечивания и формирования мира через проекцию на него человеческих целей, присутствующий у Ортеги, является несостоятельным. Этот подход приводит к экосоциальному кризису, преодоление которого крайне затруднительно. По этой причине Никол предлагает способы обитания, которые

не связаны с данным идеалом прогресса и технического мастерства, а основаны на моральном прогрессе, вытекающем из выраженной и общественной природы, присущей самому человеку.

Ключевые слова: экосоциальный кризис, этика, Латинская Америка, Никол, Ортега, техника.

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PAOLO SCOTTON*

THE CULTIVATION OF HUMANITIES IN THE GLOBAL SOCIETY**

ON ORTEGA Y GASSET'S INSTITUTE OF HUMANITIES

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Abstract: Once he returned to Madrid from his long exile, between 1948 and 1950 José Ortega y Gasset founded the Instituto de Humanidades (Institute of Humanities). This non-formal educational institution was conceived as a counterpoint to the cultural hegemony of the Francoist regime. This article aims to shed light on this usually neglected project developed by Ortega y Gasset during the last years of his intellectual career. A project that can be said to represent one of the most significant realizations of his pedagogical meditations on the role of humanistic education and philosophy in society, a recurrent topic of his writings at least since his Misión de la Universidad (Mission of the University). This case study is particularly relevant since the Institute constituted both a significant attempt to define the role of Western cultural tradition in the second post-war period and to defend the need for freedom of expression even under a censorious dictatorship. Moreover, this experiment was strictly entangled with the process of internationalization in education, which was promoting the construction of a global peace after the end of the Second World War. A project that still inspires the agenda of several international agencies, such as UNESCO.

Keywords: Ortega y Gasset, Institute of Humanities, Pedagogy, Internationalization, Global Education.

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THE GROUND CONDITIONS FOR THE BIRTH OF THE INSTITUTE OF HUMANITIES

During his whole life, José Ortega y Gasset combined his activities as a philosopher and university professor with the implementation of different cultural and political projects (Atencia, ed., 2015; Scotton, 2014). Such public engagement never ceased throughout his entire career, even when the political circumstances seemed to render it impossible (Scotton, 2019).

This was also the case of the Instituto de Humanidades (IoH) that Ortega established in Madrid in 1948, while the Francoist regime was

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dominating the Spanish cultural and social scenario (Claret Miranda, 2006). Ortega's main aim was to return through this project to playing a public role as an outstanding intellectual in his home country without being assimilated to the ideology of the new political regime. For this reason, he chose not to give lessons at the university — the institution in which he had been working for almost thirty years — accepting the difficult task of building a new educational institute with a different scope and purpose with respect to the official academia. An academia that, by that time, was marked by an intransigent national-catholic ideology (Moreno Pestaña, 2013; Scotton, 2020).

After more than ten years of exile, Ortega reestablished his relationships with the Spanish academic and political establishment (Gracia, 2014: 615). The regime was aware of the fact that the Madrilenian philosopher would not have been easily assimilated into its ideology. However, his mere presence in the country was proven to guarantee relief in relation to the international perception of the country as far as its freedom of expression was concerned (Güell, 2009). For these reasons, when Ortega decided to create in Madrid his new IoH, his activities were neither supported nor completely ostracized by the Spanish dictatorship. As one of his disciples and cofounders of the IoH, Julian Marías, wrote (Marías, 1983), the censorship of the propaganda obliged all the newspapers to dedicate exclusively very few and descriptive lines to this new Orteguian intellectual project. However, the intimate circle that surrounded this activity could count on the sympathy of some members of the establishment that had a very influential role within the regime propaganda (Cerezo González Cuevas, 2009: 111).

The absence of official support implied a lack of economic aid. Thus, this initiative had to depend on the matriculation fees of its students and participants. However, the poor material conditions of the Spanish population in those years would not permit a vast participation in these meetings, as had been wished by the proponents of the Institute. For this reason, they not only decided to award some funding to people in need or with a particular merit, but they also decided to include a series of free talks and public speeches to expand the audience of these colloquia. This decision responded to a specific desire manifested by Ortega, who wanted to attract those who were more likely to be excluded from the possibility of acquiring a decent education, i. e., university students educated by a contemptible propaganda and members of the working class.

After having passed the control of the censorship,¹ on November 6, 1948, the 24-page manifesto of the IoH was rendered public through two different reviews: *Ínsula* and the *Revista de Psicología General y Aplicada*. Moreover, it was also published and sold in different bookshops in Madrid and other Spanish cities, with a circulation of 1000 copies. After its publication, Ortega received several manifestations of interest from all over Spain. Not only by the members of upper society (ambassadors, professors, politicians, ministers, or university students), but also by middle-class people who had longed for the return of the philosopher.² Indeed, there was great expectation around the positive effects that the Institute could have brought about in the Spanish cultural atmosphere. However, at the same time, there was also some scepticism over the possibility that Ortega and his collaborators could have for really favouring the enhancement of humanities within an obscurantist society that was manipulating any form of authentic intellectual freedom.

THE ROLE OF HUMANITIES AFTER WWII:
A LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUE

The status of humanities and philosophy in the second post-war period was a crucial preoccupation not only for Ortega and his circle of disciples, but also, generally speaking, for many intellectuals on a global scale. As Karl Jaspers wrote in 1951,

human existence is becoming mass existence. The individual loses himself or herself in types that impose themselves due to modern literature, cinema, and newspapers, and this is mainly due to all things becoming flat in daily life (man's habitus). In his desolation, he moves towards a self-reappraisal connected with a we by participating in a presumably powerful force of the mass (Jaspers, 1951: 25).

How education and humanistic culture could answer this problematic state of affairs was the dilemma Ortega was facing, at least since his most famous books published during the upheaval of the totalitarian regimes in Europe: *Misión de la Universidad* and *Rebelión de las Masas*. In that context, *Misión de la Universidad* not only constituted a pedagogical text,

¹ *Instancia en solicitud de autorización para imprimir la obra "Prospecto del Instituto de Humanidades,"* in General Archive of Administration, Exp. 5376-48 Sig 21/08499. According to the censor (Batanero), the manifesto: "no contiene nada censurable. Se limita a exponer la razón del título y contenido a desarrollar en la actividad del centro de cultura e investigación que crean, programa, matrícula etc."

² Numerous letters can be consulted in the Archive of the Ortega y Gasset Foundation in Madrid, showing the support of many people from very different backgrounds for this new project implemented by the Spanish philosopher.

but also a political one. In its introduction, Ortega presented himself as a spiritual guide for his students, as an heir of the tradition of pedagogical renewal started by the Institución Libre de Enseñanza (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. IV, 1034–1035). Accordingly, the university reform was considered a priority to counter what he interpreted as the supremacy of an undisciplined mass that had entered this educational institution: university students were part of this mass. However, Ortega's diagnosis was not as pessimistic as it could appear. Indeed, whereas *Rebelión de las Masas* constitutes the *pars destruens* of Ortega's vision of democracy, *Misión de la Universidad* was its *pars construens*. The university was meant to assume a new social responsibility, changing its functions and goals by constructing a barrier against the hyper-democratic and irrational character of the masses. Reaching this goal would have been rendered possible through the construction of a comprehensive understanding of the scientific and social world and by the following transmission of a systematic culture, conceived as "a system of vital ideas possessed by each historical epoch" (ibid.: Vol. IV, 568). To do this, Ortega thought it would have been necessary to rest on a basic pedagogical principle: the principle of economy. The university had to guarantee a basic understanding of the main scientific questions in order to offer everyone the minimum background indispensable for taking an active and meaningful part in society and in the public debate.

This political issue concerning education appeared to be even more urgent and significant in the post-WWII scenario, as can be seen by taking into consideration the Prospecto of the IoH. Indeed, its theoretical preamble is constituted by a long meditation on the meaning of the word "humanities" in the European cultural and academic tradition. In particular, Ortega rejects both the French definition of humanities, conceived as moral or political sciences, and the German tradition that perceived humanities in terms of *Geisteswissenschaften*, i. e., spiritual sciences. Indeed, the political circumstances marked by the experience of the Weimar Republic and the consequent consolidation of national socialism in Germany had contributed to creating a very different connotation for the concepts of *Geisteswissenschaften* and *Bildung*, that is, the education of humankind, passing from being conceived as a path of reform and amelioration to being identified as acculturation and indoctrination. As Gadamer wrote some years later, "the demagogic barbarism that is breaking into German culture" had perverted the meaning of *Bildung* in such a way that it was rendered useless to talk about the freedom of self-determination and improvement, individually and collectively speaking (Gadamer, Giralt, 1990: 152). These critical remarks

were evidently already present in the intellectual debate soon after the end of WWII and, for this reason, Ortega was striving to offer a new and different definition of the humanities, trying to dissociate from this long tradition. For doing this, he adopted the Roman sense of the word (Amoedo, 2001: 116) and defined humanities as the totality of the human facts alongside the expertise and research of these facts conducted by scholars in those fields (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. VI, 538).

This premise reveals at least two important and apparently opposed aspects related to the project carried out by Ortega y Gasset in those years: a) the holistic and international scope of his theoretical analysis and practical activity; b) the intention to dialogue with the context of the post-war society and the new global educational trends, making them meaningful in relation to the Spanish public opinion. These two purposes were both implicitly presented in the invitation to the Spanish public that Ortega included in the Prospecto. Regarding the first aspect, Ortega pointed out the necessity of defining the humanities as interdisciplinary tools that are subsumed under a unifying philosophical concept. This implied the need to adopt different approaches such as those provided by linguistics, philology, ethnology, historiography — or, as Ortega called it, historiology — and economics. As a matter of fact, the philosopher presented the IoH as a collaborative project rendered possible by the activities of different scholars and, hopefully, students, aimed at analysing relevant problems from diverse perspectives with the purpose of shedding light on a complex and fragmented reality. This vindication of a universal and holistic vision of culture had been at the centre of Ortega's meditation, at least since his *Misión de la Universidad*, when he was trying to counter the risks of academic specialism, understood as a dangerous instance of intellectual barbarism. In that case, Ortega had openly criticized the common attitude of his colleagues within academia, who only focused on their micro-research without taking into account the problems faced by the society in which they lived. Contrary to this tendency, as Graham (Graham, 2001: 426) correctly put it, the prospectus of the IoH represented an “essay on interdisciplinary” both in principle and in practice. The holistic and international scope of the project was also manifested by the overwhelming number of foreign intellectuals from different fields of knowledge whom Ortega wanted to invite to take part in the activities of the Institute. Among them were Gabriel Marcel, Heinz Heimsoeth, Wilhelm Röpke, Arnold Toynbee, Pierre Jobit, Ernst Fritz, and many others. The second of the aforementioned features is evident in the recurrent references made by Ortega to the Spanish scenario.

Not only for his continuous criticisms of the scholastic tradition, but first and foremost for the direct invitation he made to the Spanish audience to collaborate on his project. However, Ortega was aware of the political prudence he had to observe to avoid the regime's censorship. For this reason, on the one hand, he vindicated the aristocratic character of such an intellectual project, which, according to him, aimed neither to proselytize Spanish society to a new creed nor to influence national life. On the other hand, he overtly hoped for the possibility of kindling a widespread interest towards his new project among civil society.

No desdeñamos al público, lo que sería una actitud estúpida. Lo que hacemos es no contar con él, porque, queramos o no, ya lo hemos dicho, la mayor parte de nuestras labores excluye su participación, y además porque no se le puede pedir ni constancia ni dedicación. Lo que haremos, si esa anormal abundancia de oyentes afluyese a algún curso, sería trasladar éste a un local de ocasión, suficientemente amplio, fuera de nuestro domicilio en Aula Nueva (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. VI, 543).

Significantly enough, Ortega proved to be able to capture the interest of a great audience, and this permitted the full development of all the IoH's foreseen activities during its first year. In particular, during the course of 1948–1949, it included four courses, two research seminars, and four colloquia. The courses took place once per week and ran for one to three months, from December to March. The themes were: Universal history (Ortega y Gasset), Arabism and classical philology (Emilio García Gómez), The historical method of generations (Maras), and The culture of Mohenjo-Daro (Benito Gaya). The two research seminars focused, respectively, on the works of Goya (Ortega y Gasset and Valentín de Sambricio) and on the empirical application of the historical method of generation (Marías). Lastly, the four colloquia dealt with themes of economy (the social structure of price), philology and linguistics (modism), and philosophy (the Clouds of Aristophanes). Moreover, the activities of the IoH were supplemented by the publication of a Bulletin, which provided short information regarding its program and also invited its readers to take part in an active debate over the Institute.

In the first of these short publications, Ortega explained the reasons for the tripartite organization of the activities of the Institute and, in particular, the importance of the colloquia as experimental forms of teaching and learning. These were conceived as dialogues among scholars and a restricted audience of experts with the attempt of practicing an in-depth investigation on specific

themes by adopting an interdisciplinary method. This methodology was conceived as the best means for countering the inadequacy of modern science, characterized by extreme specialization and the consequent impossibility of reaching comprehensive knowledge on any substantial problem. By joining different perspectives, according to Ortega, it could have been possible to acquire an ampler view since:

Si se quiere que las disciplinas de Humanidades vuelvan a cobrar su auténtico vigor, es preciso intentar la reintegración de la ciencia en su unidad orgánica, procurando compensar por todos los medios posibles su dispersión especialista que es, por otra parte, ineludible (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. IX, 1179).

The IoH constituted Ortega's response to the question of the role of the humanities in society. A question he faced during the course of his whole life but that, by 1948, had acquired a new radicality, since new problems were emerging, concerning the cultural situation of both his country — deprived of real democratic participation — and the globe, where intellectuals were trying to regain credibility after the drama of WWII that they partially felt responsible for. Indeed, intellectuals had suffered a loss of prestige. As a response to this state of affairs, Ortega thought it was necessary to pave the way for a new and different relationship between philosophers and civil society. A relationship that implied a different understanding and transmission of the cultural tradition purported by a humanistic education.

EXPERIENCING THE CULTURAL LEGACY. ON ORTEGA'S HISTORIOLOGY

The first course Ortega taught at the IoH dealt with the book *A Study of History* by Arnold Toynbee. This book ultimately served Ortega as a pretext to talk about some topics he had treated during the whole decade of the '40s. These can be summarized into two main strands: a) the concern for the development of a new theory of history (*historiología*) that, by substituting the traditional and conservative *Bildung*, could be able to establish a dynamic and fruitful connection between the personal existence of individuals and the social life of the community; b) the related socio-political problem of the way in which social consensus is built; i. e., the problem of political legitimacy and political reformism. The confrontation with the recent publication of the British intellectual gave Ortega the possibility to delve into such historiographical and sociological problems, revealing a new worry related to the theoretical premises of the new global order that was developing after the end of WWII.

The general framework within which Ortega developed his ideas was the constant confrontation with recent internationalism. This new trend, according to him, was setting the agenda of the intellectual and political debate during the second post-war period, constituting the theoretical ground that legitimated the creation of supranational entities responsible for the regulation of different national interests. The unification of the whole world population under the name of a unique civilization was, according to the philosopher, an unrealistic political idea and a blatant cultural error. This was not due to the fact that the different National States still constituted the basis of different collective histories and worldviews, being diverse systems of beliefs that regulated the lives of every individual in a given place and moment. Accordingly, Nations, to Ortega, represented the basis of social consensus forging a collective consciousness (Aguilar, 1998: 117–120). For this reason, globalization, according to Ortega, did not straightforwardly imply the homogenization and sharing of a unified system of beliefs, since the material change of the conditions of living had to be combined with the common faith in a shared past, able to sustain the future co-existence of a community of individual beings. As a consequence, the problem posed by Ortega did have an international and political facet: how, within a new global society, could social consensus be built and maintained? And what, if any, would have been the role of humanistic culture in this process?

To answer these questions, it is necessary to focus on two main aspects of Ortega's lessons at the IoH: a) his "historiology"; and b) his theory of social consensus. According to the Madrilenian philosopher, all relations of power are grounded in historical premises (Ferreiro Lavedán, 2012), and for this reason, to understand them, it is necessary to dig into the history of the particular society they refer to. Ortega distinguishes between history as erudition (historiography) and history as human self-comprehension (historiology). It is evident that it is the latter that he tried to promote throughout the IoH. In fact, as he said, the IoH "Es un instituto de historia, mas por historia entiendo el estudio de la realidad humana desde el más remoto pasado hasta los hombres hoy vivientes, inclusive" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. IX, 1253). History is conceived by the philosopher as a meaningful narration of the past, which is manifested through a linguistic sedimentation that gives birth to a social reality through acts of speech. Through this definition, he underlined the importance of philology for shedding light on the past and, consequently, for understanding the present (Cruz, 2014). At the same time, language to him is a social phenomenon that forges the social world. Due to this multidimensional essence of history and the

impossibility of confining it to the past — since history is always actualized through a narrative process and implements performative acts of speech — historiology is intrinsically linked with the construction of social consensus, thought of as a dynamic force. As Ortega put it:

La razón histórica, que no consiste en inducir ni en deducir sino lisamente en narrar, es la única capaz de entender las realidades humanas porque la contextura de éstas es histórica, es historicidad. [...] De lo dicho se desprende que toda realidad humana, por su historicidad, consiste en venir de algo pasado e ir hacia algo futuro (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. IX, 1266).

Relating these epistemological considerations with their political implications leads to thinking that legitimacy cannot be grounded on a social contract, a system of abstract rules set once and for all, but rather on a stratified set of historically developed practices that need to be continuously recast by individuals and which had to develop from a common ground. A ground that could become a wish: an active principle of cooperation. Thus, consensus, according to Ortega, is not a mere agreement among the members of a society on a specific theme, but rather the expression of a shared and more profound *Weltanschauung* based on a common background.

Significantly enough, in the same years in which Ortega was developing his theory, Ludwig Wittgenstein was delving into the epistemological analysis of common sense. Similarly, though from a different perspective, the Austrian philosopher too pointed out the importance of the historical tradition as the basic grounds of a world vision. As he put it,

I did not get my picture of the world by satisfying myself with its correctness, nor do I have it because I am satisfied with its correctness. No, it is the inherited background against which I distinguish between true and false (Wittgenstein, 1969: 15).

According to Ortega, this shared background (what he called a system of beliefs) was what ultimately grounded and rendered possible all social relations, sustaining the system of law, the norms, and the political institutions (Salas, 2016). Accordingly, he dissociated from other sociologists and political theorists, such as Kelsen, who assigned to the law a rational foundation, affirming that the legitimacy of political power is grounded “en cierta situación total de la vida humana colectiva. De aquí que al quebrarse la creencia común se resquebraje la legitimidad” (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. IX, 1321). Consequently, according to Ortega, laws are neither grounded in a fixed set of rules and principles nor in a violent imposition. On the

contrary, they are based on an in-progress set of habits and social convictions that citizens, through their participation in the historical flux, are ultimately responsible for. This process of building consensus represented, according to the philosopher, the crucial problem that Western civilization was facing during the second post-war period, and to this question he devoted the second of the courses he gave at the IoH: *Man and People*.

FROM HISTORIOLOGY TO SOCIOLOGY

In November 1949, Ortega started his second course at the IoH. The great affluence of the audience rendered it necessary to change the location of the conference; neither the Aula Nueva nor the Hall of the Unión Mercantil could host the event. For this reason, the lessons took place in the Barceló cinema. For that occasion, Ortega planned twelve lessons on sociology. According to the program, these would have been the topics to be developed: 1: The human being, human life; 2: The human being, we; 3: The people; 4: The greeting; 5: The speech of the people, the language; 6: The social gathering; 7: The state; 8: The right; 9: The society and its form; 10: Nation, ultra-nation, and inter-nation; 11: Animal and human societies; 12: Humanity.

The topics were at the centre of Ortega's preoccupation at least since the second half of the '30s, since his conference in Rotterdam in 1936 on the relation between individual and collective life (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. IX, 203–217). In spite of this long elaboration, the course he presented at the institute was an on-going project that he continued to ameliorate and partially change in the following years and during different conferences he gave during the '50s. During his lectures at the IoH, he completed only the first half of the themes he had planned. Moreover, the final and more ample version of the book he was preparing during 1954–55, which should have been composed of 15 or 18 chapters, would not be completed. By that time, he was planning not to publish the book in Spain due to censorship, but rather in America, the Netherlands, or Germany.

His sociological interest arose with particular emphasis during the years of the Spanish civil war and the following global conflict, as proved by the very first lesson of this course, entitled *Ensimismamiento y Alteración*. The confusion and disorientation he perceived during the upheaval of the totalitarian regimes all over Europe and the appearance of violence at a global scale caused what he called an "ineptitud sociológica" (ibid.: Vol. x, 142). To counter it, Ortega thought it was necessary to develop a new social theory. The basic premise that sustains his reasoning is that whereas all personal and interpersonal relations are grounded on a rational basis,

social norms — uses — are characterized by an absence of rationality, being imposed behaviours that, customarily, each and every one adopts in her social and public life without thinking about the reasons grounding her actions. The move from the individual actions (rational) to the social ones (a-rational or irrational) exhibits a progressive reduction in the conscious involvement of the person who accomplishes those actions. As Ortega put it, “La colectividad es, sí, algo humano; pero es lo humano sin el hombre, lo humano sin espíritu, lo humano sin alma, lo humano deshumanizado” (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. x, 257). In other words, all social actions lack the two main characteristics of human ones, i. e., the comprehension of the reasons beneath the performed act, and the free desire to accomplish it (ibid.: Vol. x, 266).

This basic distinction traced by Ortega between human and social actions brings about further consequences in relation to the way in which he conceives the creation and legitimacy of political power. In fact, given the irrationality and mechanical character of social existence, rather than a rational system of rules set at a particular moment by a definite group of people, social relations are more effectively regulated by costumes, habits, uses, and commonly accepted rules of thumb. These are also called by Ortega “beliefs” (*creencias*), as opposed to ideas. Social uses, norms, and institutions, according to Ortega, put pressure on the subject by directly or indirectly imposing a certain way of behaving. This common way of acting implies some positive consequences: for instance, it permits to foresee the behaviours of other social agents, and, in addition, it renders possible the development of society according to a coherent project. A social norm, to Ortega, actively operates within society when it is concretely used. In this respect, he speaks of social norms as *vigencias*, since they impose themselves in the concrete world and are effectively present and active within society. This implies that the legitimacy of a society is not grounded on something like a social contract, but rather on the validity of this system of *vigencias*. As Ortega put it:

El fenómeno sociológico fundamental que es la vigencia y que se da no sólo en la opinión sino en todo uso, que es, por tanto, el carácter más sustantivo del hecho social y de la sociedad como conjunto de hechos sociales, la vigencia, no consiste en la adhesión individual, tanto o cuanto numerosa (ibid.: Vol. x, 319).

The power of the State is consequently grounded on a consensus that depends on the a-rational adoption of a set of beliefs. The production of such a set of beliefs does not obey the same procedures that regulate the

creation of rights. To explain this point, Ortega traces a distinction between strong and weak uses. Whereas the State and the Right belong to the former, public opinion, i. e., the compact system of beliefs that grounds social norms, pertains to the latter. This does not mean that the forces related to the weak uses are inferior to those of the strong ones. What is really weak or strong is the eventual sanction that can be imposed on the person who does not respect such use. In the case of strong uses, such as an imposed law, the sanction is more rigid and stronger since the infringement of that law would determine the repressive intervention of the state. On the contrary, the sanction implied by not respecting a weak use does not cause coercive repression by the State nor the imposition of a precise sanction (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. X, 293). Thus, to Ortega, State and Society have to be thought of as two different entities. Whereas the first is the expression of a fixed set of positive rules established by a government at a given time, the second would be the result of a long process of crystallization of ideas that have been proven to be effective in the real world. Social norms being the result of a process of consolidation of uses considered to be valid for their pragmatic outcomes, the fact that they are respected per se would manifest the existence of a common public opinion, which is responsible for the legitimacy of political power, or, to put it differently, which renders possible the existence of a stable form of social coexistence. Thus, the problem of guaranteeing the legitimacy of a political power clearly emerges not only when strong and weak uses evidently diverge, but also and foremost in all those cases in which no shared system of beliefs is present within a society and, as a consequence, there is no public opinion (common sense).

Evidently enough, the two courses Ortega taught at the IoH were very tightly intertwined. The historical essence of human beings constituted the premise for comprehending the social dimension of what can be defined as a collective intentionality. This affirmation can be elucidated by taking into consideration one aspect that both courses analyse from different perspectives, i. e., the nature of language. This topic would later be connected to Ortega's central argument in defence of the cultivation of the humanities as a social and political necessity.

Language serves Ortega as an excellent example for illustrating what a social use actually is. In fact, it possesses a double nature: on the one hand, it is an imposed set of grammatical, phonetic, syntactic, and pragmatic rules external to the individual. On the other hand, it is also the most effective means by which each person can express herself, and consequently, it is perceived as a private and intimate aspect of one's own personality. However,

language is not created, but rather learned by individuals, being the product of a long-lasting historical process of changes and adjustments that leaves very little room for freedom. The colloquium on modisms that took place in the IoH, i. e., on slangs and figures of speech, is particularly interesting in this respect, since it investigated the reasons that determine the meaning of an expression that, per se, would not be intelligible without taking into account its social use. This apparent inexplicability implies the activation of a rational process by an a-rational speaker, aimed at clarifying the way in which a particular expression acquired a specific meaning through its use, and is then generally adopted without thinking about it. This “narration” represents the only way through which a social use, that is imposed on individuals and unconsciously used by them, could acquire a sense for their lives (Lévêque, 2008). Through the case of language and its philological study, Ortega exemplifies how it could be possible to rationally motivate a social use by comprehending its history (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. X, 275–276).

In addition, Ortega goes further, using the example of language, in order to delve into the sociological problem of political legitimacy. In particular, he affirmed that language is both an imposed norm and a reality that can change over time through the intervention of its speakers. To Ortega, this evolution would be regulated by a precise dynamic, according to which a group of very proficient speakers would be able to influence the use of the language by dominating its rules and attributing a proper meaning to new words that would later enter into the common use of language of lower classes (ibid.: Vol. X, 297–298). By applying these theses on the creation and transmission of a language to his sociological perspective, in the second course of the IoH, Ortega places the responsibility of this change on intellectual activity. Social uses are not considered irrational per se, since they had been previously created through a rational activity before passing through a long process in which they lost their proper rational meaning, gaining, at the same time, force and validity (*vigencia*) through their a-rational, massive application.

Such a framework set by Ortega ultimately poses a question that he felt was extremely urgent: how would it be possible to set up a new system of uses and beliefs when the old ones had lost their validity? The solution Ortega offered to this question was based on the role he assigned to intellectuals in society. Since the ‘30s, and then even more explicitly after the end of WWII, Ortega had been vindicating the role of intellectuals and education in shaping the public opinion, since education and, in particular, the humanities, would

have been crucial in forging the system of beliefs endorsed by a given society. At the aforementioned conference in Rotterdam in 1936 he pronounced:

Yo esperaba, yo espero aún que Europa, llegada a plena madurez, ya que ha creado tan maravillosas técnicas para dominar la naturaleza corporal, sepa tratar parejamente lo social y cree técnicas peculiares para someter la fuerza elemental de lo colectivo a la voluntad del hombre responsable (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. IX, 217).

THE REFORM OF HUMANITIES IN GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

During his whole life, Ortega strongly refused to conceive of philosophy as something separate from the life of human beings, as an academic practice that has to deal with erudite questions. Indeed, to Ortega, philosophy and humanities were indispensable both for comprehending the society in which one lives and for reforming it. Through the cultivation of the humanities, he thought it was possible to respond to the perceived crisis of value in the post-war society and, at the same time, to offer meaningful arguments for the importance of cultivating citizens capable of countering populisms and totalitarianisms (Simeoni, 2013). Ortega's meditations on these topics became more and more frequent during the '50s, soon after the closing of the IoH, which interrupted its activities in the summer of 1950.

The theory of education and the cultural activity developed by Ortega in the succeeding years was developed through a series of relevant conferences and publications he gave worldwide. The way of dealing with this topic was strictly related to the international attempt to build a new global peace through education and the intervention of new supranational institutions that were being created after the end of WWII. Ortega's frequent travels abroad during the 1950s, in Germany, Switzerland, England, Portugal, Italy, Argentina, and the USA, gave him the possibility to express his ideas and, at the same time, to try to influence the opinions of other intellectuals and political actors on these topics. As already seen, the IoH aroused significant global interest in a context in which the process of internationalization in education was taking place. In particular, Ortega's proposal coincided with two important international phenomena which contributed to making his project very attractive outside the Spanish border. The first was the creation of UNESCO on November 16th, 1946, which determined a growing attention towards the definition of the basic guidelines of a global education for peace promoted by Western countries (Singh, 2011). The second, strictly related to the previous one, was the radicalization of the Cold War and the consequent desire of the US to establish its cultural and political

superiority on a global scale. The Machiavellian pragmatism of American internationalization during those years (Mazower, 2012) was supported by a very effective cultural strategy. As Alfred Reisch (Reisch, 2013) proved, America tried to win the Cold War also through a cultural policy, with the help of books as the most effective tools to spread ideas and values among people living in communist and non-communist countries. Since its creation, UNESCO, more than by neutral philanthropic aims, had been moved by the political wish to build a culture of peace able to counter the German model. As stated by the Conference of Allied Ministers of Education, the ancestor of UNESCO, "It is essential that in the new Europe Allied Scientific Culture and outlook shall replace the German." In 1948, UNESCO published a solemn appeal against the idea that wars are inevitable, a document that invited all cultural promoters, such as teachers, scientists, artists, writers, and journalists, to spread the values of peace and democracy in order to counter the "pernicious idea that war is inevitable." The organization, supported by some private foundations and public institutions, was not only a brain trust in scientific knowledge, but also actively engaged in the promotion of specific educational policies with the aim of propagating its ideology (Casual, 2005: 42).

Ortega's educational proposals did find very responsive ground, particularly in the US. More precisely, thanks to the mediation of Robert Maynard Hutchins, professor at the University of Chicago and founder of the Aspen Institute in Colorado, Since the '30s, Hutchins has been focusing on the importance of liberal education as a means for the development of a peaceful and wealthy society (Hutchins, 1936). In particular, he proposed a reform of the American educational system that resounded Ortega's proposal as presented in the *Misión de la Universidad* (Pascual Martín & Scotton, 2024). Ortega referred to Hutchins, who had invited him to Colorado, as "el gran innovador de la enseñanza universitaria en los Estados Unidos" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. X, 15). He thought he had found a very valuable ally in his defence of a renewal of humanistic education. Since 1949, when The Gaither Commission submitted its recommendations to the Foundation's Board of Trustees of the Ford Foundation, this Foundation has started to implement its activities with the specific aim of promoting the development of peace, democracy, economics, education, and behavioural sciences. Hutchins, in 1950, became associate director of the Ford Foundation. The collaboration with Hutchins and his entourage at the University of Chicago, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Ford Foundation, would be extremely fruitful for the creation of the Aspen Institute for Humanistic

Studies. Through this new Institute, Hutchins wanted to offer a series of undergraduate courses, adult education, and philosophical seminars. Ortega was adopted as one of the intellectual references of this new cultural project, and, given both its theoretical insights and the expertise he demonstrated with the development of the IoH, he was asked to give advice and guidance on the structure of this new school.

In a long letter in response to this inquiry, Ortega provided the basic principles of his pedagogical theory in relation to the importance of cultivating humanities in such a changing international context. Ortega's argument was based on a fundamental premise: the humanities were particularly needed in the second post-war age, both for cultural and political purposes. His defence of the humanities was primarily conceived as a form of resistance, motivated by the growing relevance acquired by natural science in high school and university education. A supremacy that mirrored the statement of proposal of the very director of UNESCO, Julian Huxley (Huxley, 1946), who sustained the ideal of an evolutionary humanism oriented towards the scientific progress and the technical development of society. As Ortega put it,

There is in America an extremely unbalanced state as regards education in favour of naturalistic (not humanistic), physical, biological, and technical education.³

Ortega's suggestion was that of promoting a cultivation of the humanities that could counter these technological trends, in particular by changing: 1) their scope, 2) their teaching-learning methodology 3) their ends. Concerning the last of these aspects, the ultimate goal of the Aspen Institute as an Institute for humanistic studies, according to Ortega, would have been that of fostering the creation of a new intellectual and social elite able to influence, as Ortega put it, "en todos los órdenes de la vida de los Estados Unidos" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. X, 51). This political aim can be summarized in the attempt to forge the new intellectual elite of the country, able to reason on the new set of ideas indispensable to responding to the crisis of beliefs and uses society was facing. This goal could have been reached, according to the philosopher, only by adopting a new teaching-learning methodology based on the cohabitation of teachers and students in the same institution. This cohabitation would have promoted what Ortega called "elegance." With this word, he indicated the ability to be able to fruitfully take part in intellectual conversations with a unified

³Letter by Ortega to Walter Paepcke, in Archive Ortega y Gasset, *Fundación Ortega y Gasset-Gregorio Marañón*, PB-370/1, pp. 3-4.

and interdisciplinary vision. In Ortega's description of the positive climate of this mutual interchange of ideas that should have characterized the students' and teachers' experience at the Aspen Institute, emerges the nostalgic memory of the atmosphere he had experienced, firstly as a young student and later as a professor, in different teaching institutions informed by the innovative methodologies promoted by the *Institución Libre de Enseñanza*. By recalling what he suggested in *Misión de la Universidad*, Ortega underlined the importance of promoting an education that could reach a meaningful synthesis of different subjects and transmit to the students the knowledge indispensable for comprehending the society in which they live. And for this purpose, humanities were needed since, as Ortega put it, their scope

Se trataría de enseñar a leer, esto es, a absorber de verdad un libro importante. Por tanto, aplicando también a la lectura los principios de concentración o condensación y de síntesis. Se trata de ensayar una educación y una cultura que sean puro nervio, sin tejido adiposo y exuberancias linfáticas (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. X, 46).

This attentive attitude that the reading activity would promote was conceived by Ortega as the necessary prerequisite for the advancement of a more cultivated society.

CULTIVATING HUMANITIES FOR PROMOTING SOCIAL COEXISTENCE AND POLITICAL DIALOGUE

The IoH contributed to giving Ortega y Gasset great notoriety outside the Spanish border. Since the beginning of the Institute's activities, Ortega has been invited to give lectures and conferences all around the world. These conferences permitted him to clarify his thinking on the role of the humanities in the second post-war period. In particular, once he noted the growing trend towards the internationalization of education, Ortega affirmed the necessity to shape the European identity and construct a new form of super-national coexistence between the citizens of different countries through the development of a reformed version of humanistic education (Beneyto, 2005). To do so, he underlined the need to adopt his historiological and philological methods (García Balaguer, 2020). This was what Ortega argued on a particularly significant occasion, i. e., a discourse he gave in 1949 at the *Freie Universität* in Berlin. The city and the audience — the new generation of young German students of the humanistic faculties — had a clear symbolic connotation. On such an occasion, Ortega provocatively

affirmed that democracy was neither an absolute value nor an unproblematic form of government. As Ortega put it: “la democracia, si no es contenida por otras fuerzas ajenas a ella, lleva al absolutismo mayoritario” (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: Vol. VI, 569). According to Ortega, strengthening these external forces was the responsibility of humanistic education. As he said: “no vale hablar de ideas u opiniones donde no se admite una instancia que las regula, una serie de normas a que en la discusión cabe apelar. Estas normas son los principios de la cultura” (ibid.: Vol. IV, 417).

According to Ortega, to ameliorate a situation marked by populisms and by a superficial or limited practice of public debate, it would have been necessary to provide a cultural solution. Thus, he defended the importance of humanistic education, not arguing for a generic defence of the positive values of the humanities per se, since the vague idea that the study of philosophy, or more generally speaking, of the humanities, would fashion better people and a better society was rejected by the Spanish philosopher exactly for the same reasons that he proposed a new form of humanistic education: because of its historical failures. These failures, however, did not prove the inadequacy of humanistic education as a whole, but rather only of a particular model. For this reason, Ortega proposed to start with the revitalization of the humanistic culture conceived as “la única adecuada a un ente como el hombre, que en medio de un mundo en constante movimiento es él mismo móvil” (ibid.: Vol. VI, 573). This concept of humanistic education as an on-going process of personal awareness and responsibility called for the practice of an interdisciplinary approach that considered each individual as an *integrum*. This pedagogical concern was mirrored by a political one: just some months before Ortega’s conference in Berlin, the Council of Europe had been created. The creation of the European community fascinated Ortega, who, on different occasions, such as his conference entitled *Europa meditatio quaedam*, focused on this new phenomenon of cultural and political unification. In fact, in a moment in which, as Ortega wrote, Europe was dissociated (ibid.: Vol. x, 126), it was crucial to understand how such a new social community could have been built. Since sociability had been put into question or, as in the case of the European Union, had to be built, he deemed necessary the intervention of humanistic education as a means of socialization, since only educated people could take part in the “project of future coexistence” that a nation ultimately is (Llano Alonso, 2010), and Europe should have been conceived as a confederation of national states.

As proven by the case of the IoH he founded in Madrid after the end of WWII, Ortega’s pedagogical proposal during those years was basically

aimed at setting the grounds for the practice of social coexistence among citizens on a global scale that refused the risk of a hyper-democracy, or what has been defined as the democracy of the public (Manin, 2010), calling for the development of a more reflective and participatory process of decision-making. Thus, Ortega argued for the need to reform the humanities, in particular their way of being taught, through a holistic and interdisciplinary method. The relationship he established between individuals and society and his reflection on the importance of education in promoting a responsible form of political participation ultimately converge in his attention towards the importance of creating occasions to debate in the public arena, both among intellectuals and common citizens. Accordingly, in his late years, he focused on the importance of language and rhetoric. In fact, the reform of the humanities he longed for during many years should have started by assigning a prominent role to the study of language, in its philological and historical dimension, as the basis for comprehending the past and present of a global humanity, and projecting its future.

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РАЗВИТИЕ ГУМАНИТАРНЫХ НАУК В ГЛОБАЛЬНОМ ОБЩЕСТВЕ

ОБ ИНСТИТУТЕ ГУМАНИТАРНЫХ НАУК ОРТЕГИ-И-ГАССЕТА

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Аннотация: После возвращения в Мадрид из долгого изгнания, между 1948 и 1950 годами, Хосе Ортега-и-Гассет основал Институт гуманитарных наук (Instituto de Humanidades). Эта неформальная образовательная организация была задумана как противовес культурной гегемонии франкистского режима. Настоящая статья стремится пролить свет на этот часто упускаемый из виду проект, разработанный Ортегой-и-Гассетом в последние годы его интеллектуальной карьеры. Этот проект можно считать одной из самых значительных реализаций его педагогических размышлений о роли гуманитарного образования и философии в обществе — теме, которая неоднократно поднималась в его трудах, начиная как минимум с работы «Миссия университета» (Misión de la Universidad). Этот кейс особенно важен, поскольку Институт представлял собой как значительную попытку определить роль западной культурной традиции во второй послевоенный период, так и защиту необходимости свободы выражения мнений даже в условиях репрессивной диктатуры. Кроме того, этот эксперимент был тесно связан с процессом интернационализации образования, направленным на создание глобального мира после окончания Второй мировой войны. Проект, который до сих пор вдохновляет повестку дня ряда международных организаций, таких как ЮНЕСКО.

Ключевые слова: Ортега-и-Гассет, Институт гуманитарных наук, Педагогика, Интернационализация, Глобальное образование.

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BEING-IN-THE-WORLD AND LIFE**

THE MEETING POINT OF JOSÉ ORTEGA Y GASSET
AND MARTIN HEIDEGGER

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Abstract: This article explores the philosophical dialogue and intersections between two prominent 20th-century thinkers: José Ortega y Gasset and Martin Heidegger. Despite their different cultural and linguistic contexts, their reflections converge on questions of human existence and engagement with the world. The study examines their central concepts, such as Heidegger's "being-in-the-world" and Ortega's "ideas and beliefs," providing an in-depth look at how humans interpret and inhabit reality. The analysis highlights both differences and parallels in their approaches to examining the world and human existence. While Heidegger employs a terminology rich in philosophical neologisms, his analysis of *Dasein* and care (*Sorge*) resonates with Ortega's concept of the "radical reality" of life. Conversely, Ortega emphasizes the necessity of engaging a broad audience and stresses the role of human imagination in constructing the world. The article also investigates the importance of cognition as a mode of "being-in-the-world" for both philosophers. Despite methodological differences, both thinkers conclude that the human being and the world they inhabit are inseparably linked. This work deepens the understanding of philosophical resonances between two intellectual traditions and offers new directions for further study.

Keywords: Ortega, Heidegger, Ideas, Beliefs, Dasein, Existential Philosophy.

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Sometimes, a polemic between thinkers does not imply that they conduct it directly. It is possible that this polemic does not involve an exchange of letters or, as is customary today, attacks on social networks. Still, it is easy to find in the author's footnotes or in conversations with students if we are lucky enough to get such evidence. A similar case seems to occur concerning the polemics of one of the essential Spanish thinkers of the 20th century, José Ortega y Gasset, with another, no less significant thinker, named the *evil Alemannic magician* by Jean Amery—Martin Heidegger. We know of two of their meetings, which took place at conferences and were described

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by Heidegger. One transpired in Darmstadt, and the other in Bühlerhöhe, and both, according to Heidegger, turned out to be significant enough for him to remember and record in his diary entries (Heidegger, de Lara, 2014).

From the same notes, however, we know that Heidegger was not familiar with Ortega's philosophy. He was familiar with some of the texts, even if they were translated (*ibid.*), but this fact itself testifies to at least an interest in Ortega's thought. This is emphasized by José Luis Villacañas Berlanga, among others, in his analysis of Ortega's work. Commenting on Heidegger's description of his meetings with Ortega, he says the following:

Son las palabras de un gran filósofo sobre otro, pronunciadas con una profunda voluntad de justicia y con una innegable grandeza. En ellas apreciamos una debida comprensión de las dificultades de ser un filósofo español en aquel tiempo, de su soledad y de su heroicidad. Por eso las hacemos nuestras sin un ápice de reserva (Villacañas Berlanga, 2023: 15)¹.

Ortega's views on Heidegger are also very well-known to us. In addition to the footnotes in his texts, where the German thinker often appears as someone with whom Ortega agrees or disagrees (Ortega y Gasset, 2017a), it is also emphasized that Ortega put forward similar theses much earlier than the German thinker; they just did not become so widespread; but in all cases, Heidegger is the one in discussion with whom Ortega is interested. Ortega's intellectual struggle would last his entire life, and even in his most recent major publications, we will find references to Heidegger's work more than once. Their aforementioned meetings took place at conferences held in 1951 and 1952, three years before Ortega's death. Nonetheless, it remained crucial for him to engage in discussions about the philosophical ideas that mattered to him within the same intellectual sphere as Heidegger and to debate their points of disagreement.

The language of both thinkers also differed significantly. From the beginning, Ortega focused on a broad audience, published articles in newspapers, gave open lectures, and used language that was easily accessible to his listeners and readers. His texts show what a bright and ironic orator he was; he knew how to win over the audience. Some of his publications, including those mentioned in this work, were originally just such open lectures. His intellectual opponent took a slightly different approach. Heidegger's

¹"They are the words of a great philosopher about another, spoken with a profound will for justice and undeniable greatness. In them, we perceive a proper understanding of the challenges of being a Spanish philosopher at that time, of his solitude and heroism. For this reason, we make them our own without a trace of reservation."

texts are full of neologisms and his own interpretations of terms, even if they already had a significant philosophical history. At some point, he completely refuses to use any commonly used philosophical definitions. In his last works, especially in *Veiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)*, he completely switches to an exclusively German one, primarily created by him in his earlier works. Of course, all this makes getting acquainted with his philosophy somewhat problematic.

However, despite all their differences in approaches to publications and treatment of readership, Ortega and Heidegger would have had nothing to argue about if the development of their philosophical thought had not led them to the same questions. One of these questions is the existence of man in the world. This fundamental theme occupied many thinkers at the beginning of the 20th century, and each found their own answers. Ortega put forward his ideas as early as 1914 when his *Reflections on Don Quixote* was published, and it was developed within the framework of his “theory of ideas and beliefs.” This “theory” is not so much a rigorous system as an attempt to describe the possible space for finding an answer to this aforementioned question. At the same time, Heidegger proceeds from the fact that to puzzle out the essence and meaning of human existence, it is necessary to revisit the question of being itself, and from this point develops his concept of *Dasein*. Could these ideas, at any point, intersect?

This article is devoted to an attempt to give a preliminary, very rough answer to this question. We realize that a complete analysis of the resolution to a dilemma as fundamental as the question of human existence can take countless pages, yet still be incomplete. In this regard, we will begin our comparison exclusively within the framework of one category: the description of how man perceives himself in the world and what attitude he builds towards it from the points of view of José Ortega y Gasset’s theory of ideas and beliefs and Martin Heidegger’s interpretation of being-in-the-world. However, even such a description can lead us to an excessive blurring of the boundaries of this article, because the very terms “ideas y creencias” (*ideas and beliefs*) in Ortega’s philosophy and Heidegger’s “being-in-the-world” occur many times in different works and contexts. In this regard, we have decided once again to limit the scope of the works under consideration to only those in which either a direct study of the concept of “ideas and beliefs” is encountered or where we find a direct polemic with Heidegger. Thus, the list of works included in the study is as follows: *En torno a Galileo* (1933), *Historia como sistema* (1935) and *Ideas y creencias* (1940), *El hombre y*

la gente (1957) in the case of Ortega, and *History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena and Being and Time* in the case of Heidegger.

Based on these works, we will try to mark the beginning of reflection on what man's existence in the world means to Heidegger and Ortega.

It should also be noted that Ortega and Heidegger are often compared, or at least mentioned in the same context, and each time the differences in their views on various philosophical issues are emphasized. We, in turn, would like to take a slightly different approach and show that, despite other points of reference in the search for a philosophical answer to the question of the meaning of human existence, and despite the difference in terminology and views, the thought of Heidegger and Ortega, at times, reveals some interesting intersections. These overlaps, in turn, do not mean that one thinker is "first" or "more correct" in seeking an answer to one of the fundamental philosophical questions, but rather show that despite all their differences, finding similarities is also possible.

A VIEW OF THE "WORLD" AND "BEING" IN IT

Ortega describes the world in terms of what it will give us, that it is a "radical reality" (Ortega y Gasset, 2017b: 587) in the sense that within it, the roots of world order are found. Later, he proceeds to examine it more closely, gradually discovering more and more details that make the world itself possible. First, the ideas and beliefs based on which we create, each in our own way, a description of the reality in which we are present (*estamos*). Here, we would like underline that Ortega places an emphasis on the creative ability of the human imagination. In other words, a person invents the world based on how they see it (Ortega y Gasset, 2017d: 326). Ortega also stresses that this applies equally to everyday and more niche spheres of life, for example, to science, which for him is a similar "fantasy." Still, it should be understood that the "fantasy" here is not a derogatory connotation as it might seem at first glance, but simply a way of defining it as the same invention of the world by man as many other things.

Martin Heidegger, on the other hand, takes a different path. He believes his starting point dawns at a more fundamental question that he is rediscovering, that of being, which had fallen into oblivion since ancient times and invites to turn to it anew (Heidegger, 1967: 1; Heidegger, de Lara, 2022: 21) to grasp how "being," while being an extremely general concept, is nevertheless fundamental to understanding how we comprehend ourselves in the "world." Later, he explains that we are interested not so much in all beings in general

but in specific beings, such as *Dasein*, the being of man, because it is through it that man discovers the world “given to him.” Here, Heidegger makes an exciting move and, through the “analysis of *Dasein*,” shows how the world unfolds before us and encloses us within.

At this point, it already becomes evident to us that there are some similarities between Ortega’s “theory of ideas” and Heidegger’s reasoning about the structure of *Dasein*, which have made it possible to draw parallels in how they approached the analysis of the world as such. However, we are interested in only one aspect: the world is understood simultaneously as perceived and interpreted by both thinkers. However, this would be too broad a generalization. Let us analyze this thesis based directly on Ortega and Heidegger’s texts.

THE WORLD IS A SET OF “IDEAS” AND “BELIEFS”

Ortega’s theory of ideas has undergone several significant changes since its appearance in the text *Around Galileo* and was finally formed in the much later *Ideas and Beliefs* and *Man and People*. By this time, it included not only “ideas” and “beliefs,” but also “doubts” that arise as a result of the fact that “beliefs” cease to work.

...in the basic firmament of our beliefs, here and there, like gigantic hatches, abysses open — the emptiness of doubt (Ortega y Gasset, 2017d: 608, 616).

That is, gradually, as a result of living our lives and trying to discover ways of describing them that are more or less rational, as it seems to us, we turn to them to the same extent as to the question of what constitutes life for the individual. In this case, it is not so important what exactly this question is, But what is more important is the very fact of turning to the radical reality of life with the fact that it is not clear to us. Instead, we must somehow master this reality and clarify it due to the search for answers to these questions. This is what Ortega calls the process of forming ideas, from which, in turn, beliefs will derive (ibid.). One important point worth noting separately, is that Ortega tells us that doubts are beliefs, albeit with a different structure (ibid.). Thus, the process of our appeal to the world, to the reality in which we find ourselves, appears to us as follows:

- (1) We, against our will, find ourselves in an unavoidable reality, which we can also call life;

- (2) This reality is radical because it is the basis for all other realities, including scientific “ideas” and various “beliefs”²;
- (3) We try to understand this reality as it is given to us and described by others. According to Ortega, man does not exist independently, but is constantly subject to the influence of others and society;
- (4) Within the framework of explaining this reality, we have ideas that, after a while, turn into beliefs that we no longer try to analyze from the point of view of representing reality but are (*estar*) in them, believe in them;
- (5) However, over time, we question them because the reality of life shows us that these beliefs do not fully coincide with what we see. Here, we return to life as a radical reality and repeat the third and subsequent steps.

This moment of repetition is of the most tremendous significance to us. The point is that we have not just described some reality of life once, and then it has frozen for us forever, like an insect stuck in amber and retaining an eternal appearance, but we return to our attempts to describe it again and again. The radical reality that is life itself and the world we find ourselves in creates circumstances that force us to continue searching for an answer to how this world is presented to us.

Here, we can find similarities between the ideas in the *Prolegomena* text and Martin Heidegger’s *Being and Time*. The latter notes that *Dasein*’s being-in-the-world “has always been scattered or even split with its facticity into definite modes of being-in” (Heidegger, 1967: 57; Heidegger, de Lara, 2022: 78). Here, he enumerates the various ways in which being-in can manifest itself in the world. These are recognition, interrogation, consideration, making particular objects of existence, and many more. We, however, are interested in this similarity, the appeal to the world where we have found ourselves against our will. Now, we must somehow reveal the reality of its existence to ourselves. But what does “must” mean? Is there something among Heidegger’s definitions that could be like this endless attempt to describe and interpret the reality we find in Ortega? The closest image to this would be the one we mentioned earlier, which is the image of being “pre-occupied” with reality. *Dasein* “cares” about the world it inhabits, adopting a perspective that can be understood as an “idea” or a “belief,” depending

²To us this difference between the verbs “to have,” which applies to “ideas,” and “to be,” which is used to explain man’s situation, seems especially important when we speak about “beliefs” and “doubts.”

on the context. It then begins to reflect on existence based on how it is presented through direct engagement with the world and how it aligns with an already established system of “ideas” or “beliefs.” Thus, if we were to try to present the structure of knowledge of the world in terms of how *Dasein* reveals himself in it, we would get the following preliminary sketch:

- (1) *Dasein* is the being of being, which can question its being (Heidegger, 1967: 8; Heidegger, de Lara, 2022: 28);
- (2) This question has a specific direction, but it is not about being. It is about creating and describing some conceptuality of being *Dasein*, which is questioned on its being (Heidegger, 1967; Heidegger, de Lara, 2022);
- (3) This being is “in.” At this point, we turn to the fact that this “in” implies the world in its totality given to *Dasein*;
- (4) Turning to the world means that we begin to be interested in it, show concern for it, and try to gain an understanding of it, as we wrote above.

These two lines of interpretation of the world, from the point of view of addressing it and finding “ideas” to describe it — are very similar. However, there are also significant methodological differences that allow the thinkers to arrive at different results. While Ortega, in his interpretations of ideas and beliefs, follows the path of expanding his theory’s terminology and descriptive possibilities, Heidegger, on the other hand, tries to seek in the opposite direction and exhaust each of the conceptual points he cites as much as possible. In other words, if we take another look at how Ortega explains the functioning of “ideas,” we will see that, at some point, he tells us that the entire problem lies in our language, which we use without proper care, failing to make distinctions where we should. That is why we have this distinction between “ideas” and “beliefs” and then between “beliefs” and “doubts.”

At the same time, Heidegger’s thoughts constantly revolve around exact terms or concepts. Before taking another step in reasoning, he tries to exhaust his terms, completing an etymological or conceptual analysis of each. An excellent example of this approach will be the case described in the second chapter of this work concerning the term “being-in,” in which the preposition “in” has been considered with particular care. This leads Heidegger to the critical conclusion that *Dasein*’s being has the essential arrangement of being-in-the-world.

MAN IN THE WORLD

Within the framework of this section, it seems appropriate to turn, in addition to the texts mentioned above devoted to “ideas” and “beliefs,” to Ortega’s posthumously published work *Man and People*. Initially, he read it as a short course publicly in 1949–1950 in the Instituto de Humanidades. We refer to this text because it allows us to assess man’s role in the world directly. In this case, we are interested in “man” as one who takes direct part in the invention of the world, in its reconstruction based on his ideas and how he reveals himself in his beliefs. That is why this text, within the framework of the current section, is of special interest to us, and, therefore, we will refer to it within the framework of this analysis.

Let us turn directly to Ortega’s text. As already stated, we will find theses about life as a “radical reality,” which we encountered earlier. Their essence boils down to the fact that the life of each person is their own life and must be considered from within themselves (1), that a person must do something while being in the circumstances (2), which, in turn, presuppose the presence of various possibilities and, consequently, freedom (3). Finally, that life is incommunicable (4); another person cannot live my life for me (Ortega y Gasset, 2017c: 243–245, 266–267). The last point is of particular interest to us because it also assumes the presence of “responsibility”; “everything I do, and therefore think, feel, desire, must make sense.”³ That is, our interaction with the world is somehow connected with the fact that our ideas about it are somehow manifested; the world is filled with meaning for us based on how we think about it.

Ortega tells us the following:

Only that which I think, desire, feel, and do with my body is human every time I act *as the subject, the creator of all these states* when everything happens to me as such. Consequently, my thought, for example, acquires a human dimension only when I think of something when I guess the meaning of this or that fact (ibid.: 268–269).

³It is worth pointing out, and this is one of the reasons why we have decided not to include the text of *Man and People* in the first chapter of our work, that Ortega already said it before, especially in lesson VI of his work *Around Galileo*, which we have already analyzed.

“I used to say that life is loneliness, radical loneliness. By this he did not intend to express a more or less vague appreciation of life. It is something very simple, precise and unquestionable, a truism, more of a very fertile consequence. Life is everyone’s: everyone has to live their own life on their own. Our toothache hurts us and only us” (Ortega y Gasset, 2017c: 609).

This is what the concept of “responsibility” that we mentioned earlier is related to. To be “responsible” in this context means that we do something, somehow address a “thing” and give it meaning, because we have “ideas” as a result of our creative activity about how this thing should function for us.

In this way, Man and the World are no longer separated from each other; as Ortega himself notes, “we find ourselves on the other side of the thousand-year dispute between idealists and realists” (Ortega y Gasset, 2017c) and assert that the world is an infinite number of things, affairs and problems that confront Man and that he becomes such as himself precisely because at each moment he takes into account all these “things” and “circumstances of life.” He endows them with meaning through the ideas that arise in him in each situation and defines them through the beliefs which he sustains at the moment.

At first glance, it may seem that this model of the description of Man and the World does not coincide very much with what we find in the text of the *Prolegomena* and *Being and Time*. Still, there is one aspect in which we can also find a very curious similarity. It is connected with the term that we had already used earlier when we spoke of that particular attitude to the world that *Dasein* manifests, and it is associated, first of all, with the concept of “care.” In the previous chapter, we talked about it and mentioned that *die Sorge*, “care,” is for Heidegger “*Dasein*’s being,” that is, a “construction” (Heidegger, 1967: 61–62; Heidegger, de Lara, 2022: 82–83) of being-in-the-world in which being-to-the-world *Dasein* itself is “preoccupation.” In other words, the endowment of the being in which *Dasein* reveals itself meaningfully.

Thus, man’s being-in-the-world is not merely a trait or property that man could do without or which we could ignore in our analysis. Still, man is directly related to the existence of the world, which is mediated by the presence of certain circumstances, as Heidegger himself points this out, but he also connects it to the world of “care,” understood ontologically, as opposed to “anguish” or “experience,” which are understood ontically. The ontological structure of “care,” whose detailed analysis, however, lies beyond the scope of this work, contributes to a person’s turning toward the world and the things within it. It generates the same “concern,” that is, it imbues them with sense and meaning. The ontological structure of “care,” whose detailed analysis goes beyond the boundaries of this work, contributes to the fact that a person begins to turn to the world and the things within it, producing the very same “concern” that endows them with meaning and significance. Note that this term should not be interpreted as something

exclusively active, for example, “taking care of the garden” or “taking care of health,” when a person completes some actions that we could describe with the help of the term “care.” These examples are also predominantly ontic. At the same time, Heidegger speaks of its ontological significance:

Even when I don’t care about something, when I leave something unattended, rest, or withdraw from something, even these cases fundamentally modify the same way of being. Even when I do nothing but simply doze in the sun, I am thus at peace, and my being retains this specific character of preoccupied being-in-the-world. This applies to any being-at..., to any involvement in something (Heidegger, Aspiunza Elguezabal, 2006: 200)⁴.

In other words, by the very fact of being-in-the-world, *Dasein* retains this character of “preoccupation” with this being-in-the-world. This kind of interpretation, together with the term mentioned above — “circumstances,” which we find in the text of *Being and Time*, allows us to say that “care” is used by Heidegger in a very similar manner to that which we described above when we spoke of Ortega.

THE ROLE OF COGNITION IN THE WORLD

When we talked about how the world is described within the framework of Ortega’s “ideas” and “beliefs,” we mentioned the role in which he will respond to “doubts.” Recall that “doubts” are gaps in the fabric of the world that a person had previously perceived as definite. However, attempts to solve the problem of the appearance of these gaps lead to the fact of the very existence of this “doubt,” which is also a belief (Ortega y Gasset, 2017e: 1023); at the same time, “cognition” should not be understood solely as a set of specific facts that we receive because of considering an unavoidable reality. Ortega emphasizes this when he says,

Cognition is not reduced to the sum of raw facts and bare dates. Both facts and dates are useful, of course, but they are not reality; they do not possess reality in themselves, and precisely for this reason, they cannot convey it to our understanding (Ortega y Gasset, 2017d: 629).

Here we go back to the very beginning of our analysis when we looked at the text of *En torno al Galileo* and said that cognition, in Ortega’s opinion, helps us to create reality as “pure fiction.” Thus, it links the productive

⁴“Even if I do nothing and only doze off and thus stay in the world, I have this specific being of worrying being-in-the-world — every dwelling with, letting myself be taken along” (Heidegger, 1979: 214).

faculty of imagination, which allows us to invent a description of reality, and cognition, which helps to extract different aspects of reality from specific facts. Thanks to such work, we get more ways to interpret reality, and if it coincides with our interpretations of our ideas about it, then we consider the knowledge we have gained to be true. The very work of revealing reality in this way is what Ortega calls “science.” Thus, our knowledge, in general, and science, in particular, are the aggregate of a relatively large number of ideas that we have arrived at as a result of the fact that some of our “beliefs” have changed their type and turned into “doubt.” The reality, Ortega concludes, “it is not a fact, something given or bestowed, but rather a construction that humans create using the material provided” (Ortega y Gasset, 2017d: 531).

From all that has been said, we can draw a significant conclusion that will inform us of the vital role that knowledge plays, not only from the point of view of its increase, but from the point of view of how man reveals himself in the world. Ortega speaks of cognition, which, sooner or later, can become scientific cognition or science, as, for example, in the previous paragraph. However, the matter is not limited to this. Even if this knowledge never takes the form of scientific knowledge, we understand that we are talking about an individual trying to describe in some way a world about whose beliefs they have doubts. We know, and Ortega also notes that doubts do not appear “suddenly,” but the fabric of beliefs in which a person resides is constantly thinning until “doubts” appear. However, it follows from this that cognition does not seem “instantaneous” or “sudden,” but rather that the thinning of “belief” occurs over a relatively long period, as well as the process of cognitive activity, which also realizes itself in time and takes into account new circumstances. Consequently, we can say that cognition is not just a form of activity that we use or do not use at our discretion, but a particular way of being in reality, a way of being in the world. It is our knowledge when confronted with the world that discovers “holes” in it, which it tries to “fill” with ideas, from which, perhaps, new “beliefs” will break through.

This way of being in the world is unique to the being that is man because, along with being in the world, it also contributes to the fact that this world, under the influence of a constant direction of thought on every “object,” in the broadest sense of the word, changes for this particular person. That is, we are talking about the fact that a person lives in a reality that is not only never “complete,” but capable of changing precisely because such a mode of being as the being of the “knower” is inherent in man.

In both texts, after a preliminary analysis of being-in-the-world, Heidegger moves on to the role of knowledge in relation to this being, focusing instead

on exploring cognition as a phenomenon. For Heidegger and Ortega, it is evident that knowledge is not the object of knowledge itself but must “be somewhere else” (Heidegger, 1967: 60; Heidegger, de Lara, 2022: 81–82). However, it is not a physical place but a “way” of being-in-the-world:

- (1) “Cognition of the world is a mode of being *Dasein*, namely a way that is ontically based in being-in-the-world as the fundamental constitution of this being” (Heidegger, 1979: 217; Heidegger, Aspiunza Elguezabal, 2006: 203);
- (2) “Cognition is the existential mode of being-in-the-world” (Heidegger, 1967: 61; Heidegger, de Lara, 2022: 82).

Even though the definition of Being and Time seems shorter, the interpretation that follows it seems much more detailed than in the first case. From the beginning, Heidegger tells us that cognition is *Dasein*’s way of being. This alone would be enough for us to assert the closeness of this idea to what we find in Ortega’s text because it asserts that it is precisely cognition that is the means for being-in-the-world of human existence, which is precisely what *Dasein* is. However, let us also turn to Heidegger’s comments in Being and Time, because there we find another critical aspect.

If we now ask what manifests itself in the phenomenal datum of knowledge itself, we must state that knowledge itself is based in advance in the already-being-in-the-world as the essential constitutive of the being of presence. This being-under is, in the nearest way, not just a numb gaze at the naked present. Being-in-the-world as a preoccupation with the preoccupied world *is captured*. To be cognition as a contemplative determination of the present, a preceding deficit of the preoccupied need-to-have-to-deal with the world is required (Heidegger, 1967: 62; Heidegger, de Lara, 2022: 83).

In this case, we are talking about cognition, being-in-the-world, and care as related concepts that give us some idea of the world together. This is because, as a result of caring for the world, we also do, and this follows, among other things, from the analysis of “care” that we gave in the previous section, some cognitive work. “Care” then appears to us as a relation to the world in which we find ourselves, and knowledge results from interpreting some things in the world to which we have turned our “concern.” This is one of the main coincidences that we would like to emphasize. This is not to say that cognition is a process of obtaining facts. Still, both Ortega and Heidegger emphasize its role as a way of being-in-the-world, interpreting it and, to some extent, creating the reality in which man finds himself. Later, Heidegger concludes this thought as follows:

Based on this mode of being to the world, which allows the beings encountered within the world to meet only in their pure appearance (εἶδος), and as a mode of this mode of being, a special gaze into what is thus encountered is possible (Heidegger, 1967; Heidegger, de Lara, 2022).

That is, we should say that a means of being-in-the-world such as cognition allows us to find, in a certain way, within the reality that we encounter the things that we can later interpret as having to do with the proper order of things.

CONCLUSION

Indeed, we cannot assert that these ideas coincide entirely. Moreover, even the terminological apparatus of both thinkers is quite different. Nevertheless, we see that within the framework of the interpretation of knowledge as a certain way of being-in-the-world, as a way of inventing ideas, giving definitions and forming scientific knowledge, significant similarities are found between the thinkers. This intersection, along with others that can be seen when comparing the philosophies of Ortega and Heidegger, all deserve separate, meticulous research.

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РОМАН УСТЬЯНЦЕВ

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БЫТИЕ-В-МИРЕ И ЖИЗНЬ

ТОЧКА ПЕРЕСЕЧЕНИЯ ХОСЕ ОРТЕГИ-И-ГАССЕТА И МАРТИНА
ХАЙДЕГГЕРА

Получено: 06.07.2024. Рецензировано: 12.09.2024. Принято: 07.10.2024.

Аннотация: Статья исследует возможный диалог и пересечения взглядов двух выдающихся мыслителей XX века: Хосе Ортеги-и-Гассета и Мартина Хайдеггера. Несмотря на разные культурные и лингвистические контексты, их размышления пересекаются в вопросах человеческого существования и взаимодействия с миром. Авторы анализируют их ключевые концепции, такие как «бытие-в-мире» у Хайдеггера и «идеи и убеждения» у Ортеги, которые позволяют углубленно рассмотреть, как человек осмысливает и оживает реальность. Центральное внимание уделяется различиям и сходствам подходов к анализу мира и человеческого существования. В частности, подчеркивается, что, хотя Хайдеггер использует терминологию, насыщенную философскими неологизмами, его анализ *Dasein* и заботы (*Sorge*) перекликается с концепцией Ортеги о «радикальной реальности» жизни. Ортега, напротив, фокусируется на необходимости диалога с широкой аудиторией и подчеркивает роль человеческого воображения в создании мира. В статье также рассматривается значимость познания как способа «быть-в-мире» у обоих философов. Несмотря на методологические различия, оба мыслителя приходят к выводу о неразрывной связи человека и мира, в котором он существует. Работа способствует лучшему пониманию философских переключек между двумя интеллектуальными традициями и предлагает новые направления для дальнейших исследований.

Ключевые слова: Ортега-и-Гассет, Мартин Хайдеггер, бытие-в-мире, идеи и убеждения, *Dasein*, экзистенциальная философия.

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A BROKEN WORLD. SOME NOTES ON MANUEL SACRISTÁN AS A READER OF ORTEGA**

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Abstract: By reconstructing the reading of *Mission of the University* found in *The University and the Division of Labor*, we will carry out a critical juxtaposition between the views of José Ortega y Gasset and Manuel Sacristán, emphasizing the critical notes made by the latter, using as a guiding thread the issue of the division of labor, which is implicit in Ortega's text. In the second stage of our discussion, we will seek to clarify how and to what extent Ortega's text influences Sacristán's conception of dialectics.

Keywords: Ortega, Sacristán, University, Dialectics, Elites, Division of Labor.

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Scientific truth is an exact truth, but incomplete and provisional, which is necessarily integrated into another type of truth — ultimate and complete, though inexact — which could appropriately be called "myth." Scientific truth, therefore, floats within mythology, and science itself, as a whole, is a myth: the admirable European myth.

José Ortega y Gasset, *El origen deportivo del Estado*

INTRODUCTION

It is striking how the bibliography consulted on *Misión de la universidad* (Forment, 1999; Fortuño Llorens, 2015; Lledó, 1984; López Alós, 2004; Zamora Bonilla, 2004) contains little to no references to the classic study by Manuel Sacristán (Madrid, 1925 – Barcelona, 1985) titled *La universidad y la división del trabajo*.¹This omission is notable because this "material,"²

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¹We find an exception in the pages dedicated to Ortega's text in the book *Ortega y Gasset. Una experiencia filosófica española* by José Luis Villacañas (Villacañas, 2023: 700, 708).

²"Este texto [...] constituye lo que en la tradición del movimiento obrero se llama un *material*, un texto escrito como base para la discusión, útil solo para unos hombres de un ambiente determinado" (Sacristán, 1985a: 98–99).

written in the heat of post-1968 university conflicts³ constitutes a precise reconstruction of Ortega's book — praiseworthy for its rigorous consistency as much as its sharp, immanent critique of Ortega's position. Sacristán confronts Ortega's theses with their implicit and naturalized⁴ assumptions, particularly the absence of an explicit social analysis capable of accounting for the structural causes underpinning the crisis of the Spanish university. Sacristán aims to capture the truth embedded in Ortega's theses in order to preserve it, while also discarding anything that might stem not from accurate description, but from Ortega's axiological framework — from his outdated militant liberalism — rather than from the substance of the issue he addresses.⁵

No less noteworthy, it must be said, is the scant attention — at least as far as we know — that studies of Sacristán's legacy have paid to systematically establishing the connections between the theoretical core of his approach (the conception of dialectics) and some of Ortega's statements about culture,

³“En su última fase, el sesentayochismo español fue una escolástica congestionada, falsamente marxista, que hablaba constantemente de abolir allí mismo la Universidad y la división del trabajo, mientras la tasa de crecimiento del PNB español rebasaba ampliamente la media europea, el régimen alcanzaba sus puntas más altas de adhesión pasiva (la llamada “despolitización” popular) y la correlación de fuerzas era tal que ni siquiera se podía resistir medianamente a la represión fascista” (Sacristán, 1985a: 99).

In 1966, Sacristán played a prominent role in founding the Sindicato Democrático de Estudiantes de la Universidad de Barcelona, drafting its introductory document, the *Manifiesto por una Universidad Democrática* (Sacristán, 1985b: 50–61), and actively participating in the so-called *Capuchinada*, the first act of the union, which culminated in a sit-in at the Capuchin monastery in Sarrià. On this episode, see Sarrión, 2022: 186; Capella, 2005: 88–90.

It is worth recalling that *Misión de la universidad* (1930) also responded to a context of university agitation. In May 1928, Primo de Rivera's dictatorship passed a decree-law seeking to equate degrees issued by private religious university institutions (*El Escorial* and *Deusto*) with those granted by public universities. This sparked student protests, particularly from the recently founded (1927) Federación Universitaria Escolar (FUE), leading to Ortega's resignation in July 1929. After 18 years of service, he left his chair in metaphysics at the Central University in protest against the dictatorship's repressive response to student demands. See Fortuño Llorens, 2015: 17–18; Zamora Bonilla, 2002: 280–281; Zamora Bonilla, 2004: 740.

⁴In the text at hand, Sacristán applies this model of “immanent critique” not only to Ortega, but also to the leftists who advocated for the immediate abolition of the university and the division of labor. To this end, he conducts a rich reflection on the Hegelian-Marxian concept of *Aufhebung*, aiming to determine what can be abolished and what must be preserved in the “division of labor,” in order to clarify what type of university could realistically be aspired to, given the correlations of forces present in his time. Cf. Sacristán, 1985a: 120–121.

⁵On Ortega's exalted liberalism, the final lines of Section VIII of the first part of *La rebelión de las masas* (Ortega y Gasset, 2009: 130) are paradigmatic. For a critical approach to Ortega's reverential admiration for “doctrinaire liberalism” à la Guizot or à la Royer-Collard, see (Domènech, 2006: 206).

totality, and synthesis. These are found not only in *Misión de la universidad* but also in other works by Ortega.⁶

Accordingly, this article seeks to serve as just one initial tessera in a larger mosaic. Taking as its starting point the texts of both thinkers dedicated to the mission of the university, it aims to outline the guiding lines of a future study whose goal will be to elucidate the precise details of Ortega's influence on Sacristán's conception of dialectics. To this end, we will proceed in two steps. The first part of our paper proposes an obvious yet necessary task: to reconstruct some of the main lines of Ortega's argument and their appropriation in *La universidad y la división del trabajo*. In the second part of our discussion, we will examine the specific affinities between this approach and Sacristán's conception of dialectics.

MISIÓN DE LA UNIVERSIDAD

Ortega identifies, as a prelude to the university reform, the necessity of defining the specific mission of this institution, that is, to "give it its authenticity and not insist on it being what it is not, falsifying its inexorable destiny with our arbitrary desire" (Ortega y Gasset, 2015: 69). This approach excludes mimesis as a method, as it is not about reproducing foreign models implemented in the great European nations as paradigms in Spanish soil. Rather, it is about carrying out a profound and sincere exegesis of our own circumstance to arrive at conclusions "after personal combat with the very substantive issue" (*ibid.*).

The anti-mimetic approach of Ortega's reflection, the search for the "own destiny" of the nation and its institutions, already implies certain

⁶I myself (Garrido, 2021: 257–258) have, in the past, fallen into the error of underestimating the influence Ortega may have had on Sacristán's dialectics, at the time seeking improbable sources which, while plausible, could not replace the evident connection between Sacristán's reflection and the work of the philosopher of El Escorial. José Sarrión (Sarrión, 2017: 239) has briefly pointed out the connection between Sacristán's thought and certain themes in Ortega's philosophy. Miguel Manzanera also studies Ortega's influence on a young Sacristán, aligned with a political-intellectual tradition that might be termed "left-wing Ortega followers."

An exception among attempts at systematic confrontation between Ortega and Sacristán can be found in the works of José Luis Moreno Pestaña (Moreno Pestaña, 2011: 2013), who, after a detailed study, comes to see Sacristán's proposal as a "specification of Ortega's project" (*ibid.*: 252), and of Ascensión Cambrón (Cambrón, 2015). However, neither undertakes an exhaustive confrontation between the two authors—a task which, for that matter, we will also not be able to carry out in this paper. Fernández Buey (Fernández Buey, 2015: 76), meanwhile, analyzes Ortega's and Sacristán's readings side by side, even tentatively suggesting—again briefly—the connection between Ortega's approach and the issue of dialectics: "an approach, within the framework of the analysis of the university's functions, to a classic problem: the opposition between analytical knowledge and a synthetic-generalizing vision."

methodological issues that are relevant for defining the object at hand. For instance:

A fundamental error that must be eradicated from minds is the belief that nations are great because their schools [...] are good. This is a remnant of the “idealistic” piety of the last century. It attributes to schools a strength they neither have nor can have (Ortega y Gasset, 2015: 70).

The forcefulness of the thesis does not deter Sacristán (Sacristán, 1985a: 111), who points out a certain stumble by Ortega into the same “idealistic piety” he critiques. This stumble occurs only a few pages later, when Ortega announces the project of “reconstructing from the scattered pieces—*disiecta membra*—the vital unity of the European man,” a project that culminates in the following corollary: “Who can do this if not the university?” (Ortega y Gasset, 2015: 83). In this rhetorical question, which seems to highlight the transformative power and causal priority of culture, Sacristán’s disagreement takes root:

The “spontaneous” idealism of the modern European intellectual [e. g., Ortega] ignores that it is the inorganic atomization of the social base that prevents an integrated ideological superstructure, allowing only the proliferation of shifting ideologies characteristic of the superstructural capitalist world (Sacristán, 1985a: 111).

In other words: for Sacristán, the division of labor, a problem implicitly addressed in Ortega’s text in its dual variants—technical (specialism) and social (formation of ruling classes)—must be the starting point for understanding the university crisis. This change of perspective entails acknowledging that the crisis stems from current transformations in the social structure. Precisely for this reason, it cannot be resolved through a reform focused on returning the institution to its medieval origins⁷ but only through aligning itself “with the times,” which cannot avoid confrontation with these structural transformations. Such a shift, Sacristán believes, requires taking to their ultimate consequences what Ortega’s text allows us to glimpse: “the relationship between the university problem and the critical fragmented situation of mature capitalist culture” (ibid.: 101).

Ortega gestures in this direction, but when he must confront this problem, he anticipates his own position inconsistently, forced to take a step back and

⁷“La nostalgia, consciente o no, de la integrada *cultura* europea pre-capitalista, de un mundo los suficientemente “formado” [...] como para que la variedad de los individuos y paisajes no impidiera percibir inequívocamente los valores y las jerarquías” (Sacristán, 1985a: 106).

reserve his reflections for another occasion.⁸ This position — the intention to extend university education to the working masses — remains undeveloped, but if we keep it in mind, it reveals certain inconsistencies with the flow of his text. Let us anticipate them: by assuming the formation of the ruling class — currently the bourgeoisie (Ortega y Gasset, 2015: 80) — as the genuine “mission” of the university, Ortega complicates the understanding of the exclusion of workers as a class as a fact that could be remedied through expanded access to higher education. On the contrary, the worker emerges more as the historical figure embodying the fundamental distinction between those who command and those who obey — the true leitmotif of Ortega’s social philosophy.⁹

And yet, for Ortega commanding does not solely — or even primarily — consist of issuing martial orders¹⁰ but also pertains to the ways of achieving consensus and producing a shared public opinion among the cultured ruling class, and while workers may command (Villacañas, 2023: 80), and Ortega himself considers it desirable for them to access education to do so (ibid.: 73–74), we cannot ignore the consequences analytically contained in the semantics of command. The organization of society as an exchange of command and obedience implies a relational structure in which the virtual

⁸“Todos los que reciben enseñanza superior no son todos los que podían y debían recibirla; son sólo los hijos de clases acomodadas. La universidad significa un privilegio difícilmente justificable y sostenible. Tema: los obreros en la Universidad. Quede intacto. Por dos razones: Primera, si se cree debido, como yo creo, llevar al obrero el saber universitario es porque este se considera valioso y deseable [...] Segunda, la tarea de hacer porosa la Universidad al obrero es en mínima parte cuestión de la Universidad y es casi totalmente cuestión del Estado” (Ortega y Gasset, 2015: 73–74).

⁹In *España invertebrada*, Ortega had spoken with crystal clarity on the matter: “Where there is no minority acting upon a collective mass, and a mass that knows how to accept the influence of a minority, there is no society, or one is very close to there not being one” (Ortega y Gasset, 2020: 98). We are fully aware that Ortega’s approach is, to some extent, incommensurable with Marxian social theory and that Ortega explicitly distanced himself from it (Ortega y Gasset, 2009: 78). This could be raised as an objection to Sacristán’s approach and to our critical observations.

However, it is equally true that it is Ortega who raises the labor question and recognizes the obviousness of bourgeois rule in the societies of his time. While Ortega appears faithful to his *aristocratismo del espíritu* when referring to certain workers who “also rule now and share control with the bourgeoisie” (Ortega y Gasset, 2015: 80), it is also true, as Sacristán reproaches him, that Ortega does not seem capable of drawing any consequences from the existence of bourgeois and workers. He treats their coexistence as if the forms of their relationships were not embedded in a logic of exploitation and asymmetrical socialization that would be relevant to the issue at hand.

¹⁰Cfr. Villacañas, 2023: 703.

universalization of the university advocated by Ortega encounters its limit in the classist structure enshrining the social division of labor: the specifically capitalist form of the social transcendental in which some must command and others must obey.

We will return to this, but following the order of Ortega's exposition, we must still recall that for Ortega, the university is, *in primis*, an organizational device for the technical division of labor (professional) in relatively complex societies. In other words, its contemporary function is to train specialists (generally intellectual workers),¹¹ whether in the particular form of accessing the system of needs embodied in the "professional," the average type of university graduate, or in the even more peculiar—superior by its object, not by its practitioners, who represent "a mode of existence as limited as any other" (Ortega y Gasset, 2015: 98)—form of scientific work, with its equally fragmenting and differentiating power corresponding to its analytical methods.¹² Thus, Ortega can synthesize his initial approach to university functions with the following formula: "Higher education consists, then, of professionalism and research" (Villacañas, 2023: 75).

Strictly speaking, the university must focus its efforts on the first part of its dual role, namely, teaching. To achieve this, the institution must center its attention on the average student, making them its "unit of measure" and designing teaching programs around what they can effectively learn (*ibid.*: 92ff.). This means selecting, from the overwhelming amount of knowledge produced by specialized research in each field, only what an average student can learn to perform their profession. This emphasis implies that, strictly speaking, scientific research cannot constitute the core of the university, as it is not the occupation of the average person but of a minority. Failing to recognize this and privileging research—an academic task that, rather than teaching what has already been discovered, involves "posing problems, working on solving them, and reaching a solution" (*ibid.*: 96)—has exac-

¹¹It is well known that the critique of specialism, one of the forms of particularism identified in *España invertebrada* (Ortega y Gasset, 2020: 72) as the quintessential malady of Spanish reality, is one of the guiding ideas of *La rebelión de las masas* and a characteristic trait of the *hombre-masa* studied by Ortega. For him, the contemporary professional practices "their profession with a state of mind essentially identical to that of someone content to use an automobile or buy a tube of aspirin, without the slightest inner solidarity with the destiny of science, of civilization" (Ortega y Gasset, 2009: 139; cf. *ibid.*: 159–163). On the continuity between *La rebelión de las masas* and *Misión de la universidad* through the problem of specialism, see Villacañas (Villacañas, 2023: 700).

¹²On how the *hombre-masa* is, to a large extent, a result of the processes triggered both by science and specialization, see Villacañas (*ibid.*: 703).

erbated the tendency to overlook what Ortega considers the university's principal task: the transmission of culture.

Thus, in addition to training professionals and conducting scientific research, the university is tasked with transmitting the most advanced culture of its time — what Ortega defines as the “system of ideas about the world and humanity” that individuals must possess to “effectively direct their existence”: “clear and firm ideas about the Universe, positive convictions about what things and the world are. The ensemble, the system of these, is culture in the true sense of the word” (Villacañas, 2023: 77).¹³ Culture, then, serves a dual purpose that, as we will see, reappears in Sacristán's version of dialectical synthesis: the cartographic conception and practical vocation of culture, and the necessity of “living up to the ideas of the time.”

Let us revisit the first point later and focus now on the second. In *La rebelión de las masas*, Ortega argued that what “each generation calls ‘our time’ always has a certain altitude: it rises above yesterday, holds even, or falls below” (Ortega y Gasset, 2009: 88). This altitude is a qualitative, not merely chronological, determination of the value attributed to the present. After analyzing the two fundamental attitudes toward the past — nostalgia for its superiority or relief at leaving such a difficult time behind — Ortega

¹³The system of ideas we call culture can be considered an anthropological universal, as every man and woman, by being alive and by living in the characteristic way of human life — meaning a life that is both *bios* and *zoé*, both biography and biology (and, to adhere to Ortega's framework, more the former than the latter (Ortega y Gasset, 2009: 132; Ortega y Gasset, 2015: 105)) — participates in a specific culture, a certain system of ideas that serves as orientation in their life project. “No life is possible, sublime or base, discreet or foolish, that does not essentially consist in conducting itself according to a plan” (ibid.).

However, it would be naive to reduce Ortega's approach to a simple pluralism of worldviews, to an egalitarian perspective bordering on relativism, whose institutional translation would certify the *isegoría* of worldviews. As Sacristán points out, “only by reducing cultural social reality to the subculture of the hegemonic educated bourgeoisie can the idea of ‘teaching a culture’ make sense” (Sacristán, 1985a: 107–108). The entire dialectic of docility and exemplarity that is intrinsic to Ortega's elitism, which naturally ties into the importance of teaching leadership, would otherwise be rendered meaningless. No, Ortega is consistent in his views: what the ruling elite must learn is a developed system of ideas — the most developed system of its time — not just any ideas circulating in society:

“The vast majority of these convictions or ‘ideas’ are not fabricated Robinson Crusoe-style by an individual but are received from their historical environment, from their time. In every era, there are naturally very different systems of convictions. Some are rusty and clumsy survivals of other times. But there is always a system of living ideas that represents the highest level of the time, a system that is fully current. That system is culture. Whoever falls below it, whoever lives by archaic ideas, condemns themselves to a lesser life — more difficult, painful, and crude” (ibid.: 106, emphasis ours).

notes that the period he lived in followed “a time of fullness,” giving the present the aura of “decline” (Ortega y Gasset, 2009: 91). Reflecting on the fullness of the 19th century, Ortega concludes that it revolved around what he calls “modern culture.” The loss of this modern culture, a hard-won achievement of immediate ancestors, forces a break from a world that was always the same, where “nothing new could happen,” and “tomorrow would be, in all essentials, the same as today” (ibid.: 93). Faced with the horizon opened by this loss and the eruption of the unpredictable, “the true fullness of life” becomes apparent (ibid.).

In light of this diagnosis, it is no surprise that the social crisis affecting Europe in the 1920s, according to *Misión de la universidad*, stems significantly from the lack of culture — the fact that the average citizen does not possess “the vital system of ideas about the world and humanity appropriate to the time” (Ortega y Gasset, 2015: 78). This connects to the university because this “new barbarian” is “primarily the professional” (ibid.: 79), the average type whose education — at the expense of the university’s old task of transmitting the era’s high culture — has become its central focus. Ortega notes that this specialist is “wiser than ever, but also more uncultured” (ibid.)¹⁴. They deeply understand their narrow niche of expertise but are incapable of forming a global image that would allow them to navigate an increasingly complex world rationally, rather than through arbitrary extrapolations based on their limited knowledge or through outright irrationalities and outdated conceptions.

Considering these contemporary problems, Ortega proposes to address them by asserting that “the primary and central function of the university is the teaching of the great cultural disciplines” (ibid.: 95). This education would enable those who learn them, as cultured individuals, to fully “live up to the times.” To this end, Ortega provides a catalog of disciplines in which this new Goethe, this Leonardo of mass society, must be minimally versed:

- (1) The physical image of the world (Physics);
- (2) The fundamental topics of organic life (Biology);
- (3) The historical process of the human species (History);
- (4) The structure and functioning of social life (Sociology);

¹⁴He revisits the idea from *La rebelión de las masas*: “He is not wise because he formally ignores everything outside his specialty; but neither is he ignorant, because he is ‘a man of science’ and knows his tiny portion of the universe very well. We must say that he is a wise ignoramus, which is exceedingly grave, as it means he is someone who, in all matters he is ignorant of, will behave not as an ignorant person but with all the arrogance of someone who is a sage in his specific field” (Ortega y Gasset, 2015: 161).

(5) The universe's framework (Philosophy) (Ortega y Gasset, 2015: 95).

Culture, distinct from science and professional training, does not require the average student to become a specialist in each of these subjects. Instead, it aims for them to acquire a general cultural foundation.¹⁵ Being cultured means that their judgments do not contradict the “principles, modes of knowledge, and ultimate conclusions” (Villacañas, 2023: 111) of the most advanced findings across various fields, even if the graduate cannot typically reproduce or explain the state of the art in each area. Using a term from his contemporary Antonio Gramsci, this entails creating a shared discipline—a cultivated common sense—that breaks with the spontaneous, inherently Ptolemaic mindset (Gramsci, 2023: Vol. 2, 658).¹⁶

The achievement of this global image, which Ortega equates with culture, does not coincide with scientific research or professional training. These develop through methodologically regulated, analytical procedures. Culture, on the other hand, as a system of ideas forming a coherent totality meant to guide individuals rationally and consistently in the social sphere—grounding their evaluations and pursuing their goals with an accurate worldview—must be the result of a synthetic effort counteracting the dispersion characteristic of increasingly specialized knowledge:

The current dispersion and complexity of scientific work must not continue without being compensated by another type of scientific work, inspired by an opposite interest: the concentration and simplification of knowledge. It is necessary to cultivate and refine a specific type of talent: synthesizers (Ortega y Gasset, 2015: 111).

¹⁵Villacañas has summarized this idea by asserting that in the *Facultad de cultura*, the sciences must be approached from their vital content (Villacañas, 2023: 706).

¹⁶It would be worth delving deeper into the affinities between Ortega's approach and that of Gramsci—hinted at, for example, in José Luis Villacañas's study (ibid.: 700)—in search of common sources that go beyond a generic *Stimmung* of the era. Certainly, thinkers like Croce or Sorel could explain some of the truly remarkable affinities, but a meticulous philological study is required to trace the shared connections that might account for such parallels, particularly at the level of describing the layers of common sense. Consider the strict synonymy between the “rusty survival of other times” (Ortega y Gasset, 2015: 106), as referenced in note 13, and Gramsci's phrase “fossilized layers [of worldviews] that reflect the conditions of past life” (Gramsci, 2023: Vol. 3, 763).

The Sacristán text under discussion, with its emphasis on the issue of hegemony, could be seen as an initial confrontation between Ortega and Gramsci. However, since it is “only” a “material,” it is more of a practical application of both thinkers to interpret the contemporary circumstances of Sacristán's time. A preliminary attempt at the type of contrast that interests us here can be found in Scotton, 2013.

These talents, *stricto sensu*, will also be specialists, but specialists “in constructing a totality” (Ortega y Gasset, 2015: 114), in creating “vigorous syntheses and systematizations of knowledge” (ibid.: 113). This brings Ortega to the core of his institutional reform proposal: the creation of a “*Facultad* of culture,” through which all specialists would pass, serving as the nucleus of the university and thus providing an institutional translation of his diagnosis of Europe’s present maladies.

This global image, which, as we have seen, must provide a cartographic principle, constitutes the third function of the university. As Ortega writes, “society needs good professionals [...] but needs even more to ensure competence in another kind of profession: that of ruling” (ibid.: 79–80). And to rule, it is necessary for the ruler to have guidance that is both up-to-date and realistic — a description of the world as a whole. With this return to the problem of ruling, we close the circle of our argument and arrive at Sacristán’s main point of dissent:

In every society, someone rules — whether a group, a class, the few, or the many. By ruling, I do not mean so much the juridical exercise of authority as the diffuse pressure and influence over the social body. Today, in European societies, the bourgeois classes rule, and most of their members are professionals. It is therefore crucial for these professionals, beyond their specific professions, to be capable of living and exerting vital influence at the level of their time (ibid.).

The fact is that today the bourgeoisie rule does not grant Ortega’s elitism¹⁷ — essentially a meritocratic and demophobic aristocratism, consistent with his liberal principles and often flirting with the sociological organicism¹⁸ that inspired fascist corporatism — an essentialist character or a preference for that social class. The distinction between elite and mass, between select minority and social majority, is, as we have said, a constant in politics¹⁹ — a premise that can take various forms but cannot and should not be eliminated without risking a crisis as profound as the one plaguing interwar

¹⁷The best study we have on this topic is Sánchez Cámara, 1986. On the link between fascist ideology and the medievalizing critique of capitalism — which seeks to put everyone in their place to restore the organic unity lost to capital — see Sacristán, 1985a: 109.

¹⁸“There will be, therefore, national health to the extent that each of these classes and rewards has a living awareness that it is merely an inseparable fragment, a member of the public body” (Ortega y Gasset, 2020: 72). The influence of Scheler’s sociological models on Ortega is discussed by Domènech (Domènech, 2006: 342), Lledó (Lledó, 1984: 15–16), and Sánchez Cámara (Sánchez Cámara, 1986: 202).

¹⁹For the defense of “radical aristocratism,” that is, factual and ineradicable rather than normatively desirable — although one might assume that, because it is ineradicable, it is also desirable — see Ortega y Gasset, 2009: 81–82; Ortega y Gasset, 2020: 105–108.

Europe. As Ortega himself puts it: “If tomorrow the workers rule, the issue will be the same: they will have to rule from the heights of their time; otherwise, they will be replaced” (Ortega y Gasset, 2015: 80)²⁰.

In other words, Ortega can accept the existence of workers and even their governance, provided they are willing to become an elite and to reason within the language of power — a universal political Esperanto. This, however, entails renouncing the universalism that forms the core of the emancipatory program, not just of socialism but of the millenary democratic tradition and its specifically modern form rooted in the Enlightenment principle of autonomy: that the people, as a political subject, can simultaneously be the subject and object of governance, recognizing in the law the fruit of their will and rejecting as law any mandate tainted by heteronomy. For this, representation must not be the privilege of narrow elites but rather the heavy burden of individuals, accessible even to the free poor, tasked with the monumental challenge of representing the will of an inclusive “all” that includes themselves.

This is, evidently, an ideal of deep roots. Ortega opposes it with his own ideal, equally utopian. What is at stake here is not the sociological

²⁰In reality, the inclusion of workers in institutions that had previously been barred to them marks the true “*altura de los tiempos*” that Ortega’s text acknowledges but does not take to its ultimate consequences. The fragmentation inherent to specialism is, in fact, the corollary of certain social transformations within the productive apparatus — consider, for instance, the brutal form of specialization represented by the Taylor system or its relatives developed by Ford or Bedeaux and implemented everywhere during Ortega’s time — whose consequences exacerbate the proletarianization of large social strata.

To think that the effects of such a profound morphological transformation could be mitigated through a state reform limited to guaranteeing the inclusion of workers in the university — without altering the university’s structure except in a regressive sense, that is, making it once again fulfill past functions it had abandoned — has rightly been described as utopian. For Sacristán’s critique of utopianism, in its dual nature as both a critique of the present and a refusal to transform it immanently by leveraging its own negativity, see Sacristán, 1985a: 106. See also Fernández Buey, 2015: 86.

Furthermore, Ortega’s utopianism is very much characteristic of the elitist liberalism of the interwar period, shared with other liberals *à la Croce*, nostalgic for the 19th-century situation that combined the forms of civil society typical of competitive capitalism with a political society structured around a parliamentary system in which the parties of notables converged: those *clerics* who, in Ortega’s ideal type, would form the select minority. This institutional framework, along with all the nostalgias of the cultured professional — so reminiscent of the Hegelian system of needs or Proudhonian society of artisans — becomes obsolete with the unstoppable advance of monopoly capital, contemporary with the consolidation of mass parties — both socialist (and ultimately communist) as well as democratic-Catholic. This consolidation is linked to the extension of suffrage through the most varied forms of class struggle and peasant mobilization during the First World War.

and political realism of these visions but understanding which principle—elitism or universalism—can inspire institutions and political programs that constitute a civilizational advance. Realism, at best, would lead us to acknowledge that elites exist, but from that fact, it is the task of political reflection to decide whether to eternalize the phenomenon, treating it as a neutral reality, or to regard it as a problem to combat and minimize, as though it could be eradicated.²¹ Thus, the issue, as Sacristán recognized, pertains not to the object itself but to the perspective of its observer.

This shift toward the enunciative position leads Sacristán to observe in Ortega's perspective a "liberal tendency to resolve [the problem of social experience's fragmentation] through a paradoxical conversion of traditional humanism into a new specialty [which] often takes the form of a dichotomy between wisdom or global knowledge and fragmentary understanding" (Sacristán, 1985a: 102). In other words, it would involve creating a social group—the culture masters—that, without fulfilling any productive role, would feed the enlightened layer, serving only as an integrative support for the ruling class (cf. *ibid.*: 108).

In other words, the cultural creator would compensate for the fragmentation of knowledge produced by hyper-specialized scientific research and the professional division of labor through a manageable cultural synthesis that the ruling class could use in governance. Culture, as the antithesis of barbarism, is the keystone of a non-egalitarian integration, capable of containing social antagonism. Fundamentally, it is about guaranteeing the hegemony of a particular group, a government based on consensus and

²¹Certainly, Ortega y Gasset, 2020: 105ff had flatly rejected such approaches—"there is no more talk about whether or not the political constitution, from a moral or justice perspective, should be aristocratic. Instead of first analyzing what it is, the inescapable conditions of each reality, one immediately proceeds to dictate how things should be"—but in a way that canonizes *what is*, the elitist structure of reality, as the only thing that "can be." Antoni Domènech (Domènech, 2006: 377–378) has pointed out the conservative, if not outright reactionary, lineage of critical motives against the "ought," so fashionable in 19th-century nostalgias for the *Ancien Régime*.

It must be said here that the perspective that starts from *what is* does not necessarily have to abandon the juxtaposition of normative approaches, as long as these are viewed as competing programs that different factions strive to make prevail. There is nothing to object to Ortega's assertion that "only what can be ought to be, and only what operates within the conditions of what is can be," but, since *what is* does not univocally determine the possibilities of *what can be*, there will always be several competing *oughts* in every historical period. Most importantly, there will be no way to justify the a priori exclusion of a particular *ought* unless one enjoys the prerogative of knowing the entire range of combinatory possibilities offered by human sociality.

legitimized by a principle Ortega anchors in a culture up-to-date with the times — that is, sufficient to neutralize the specific intensity of class struggle in interwar Europe (and particularly in Spain during the 1920s and 1930s).

The capitalist fragmentation of feudal organicity is a transversal object of reflection throughout Sacristán's work.²² While Sacristán recognizes the need for totalizing syntheses to satisfy the cartographic principle, he is equally aware that this capitalist fragmentation of traditional societies is also the result of the generalization of the principle of formal freedom inherent to the historical imposition of the capitalist mode of production. This freedom, though truncated by its formal nature, is nonetheless an indispensable starting point, born against the feudal organism, from which to construct concrete totalities capable of guiding social praxis.

Here, Sacristán and Ortega converge. The point where they diverge is in their acknowledgment that the cultural totality aspired to by the philosopher of El Escorial is impossible without altering the structural foundations that produce dispersion. By failing to accept this premise, Ortega's conception of hegemony as "asymmetrical interdependence" reinforces the very scheme it aims to remedy. Thus, the *Facultad* of culture becomes the source of hegemonic-consensual domination ultimately guaranteed by the state. In this sense, the university is no more than a refinement of the crude spiritual power the press wields over public opinion (Ortega y Gasset, 2015: 119–121; Sacristán, 1984a: 114).

Sacristán, however, does not see the principle that consecrates social division — and, therefore, the existence of the state and the hegemony carrying the principle of heteronomy — as eternal. Nonetheless, he starts from Ortega's reading to address the issues of his time, including the post-1968 student movement's goal of abolishing the division of labor. For Sacristán, such abolition is simply impossible, primarily because the complexity of contemporary societies excludes the possibility of eliminating the technical division of labor, i. e., specialization. However, it is possible to conceive of a division of labor that does not entail a classist structure governed by the blind laws of the economy (but by planning) and curbs the automatic conversion of social power into political dominance. That these

²²See, for example, his beautiful treatment of this topic in relation to post-Kantian German philosophy, acknowledging, in a manner characteristic of him, the element of truth contained even within the mystifications of Romanticism, in the text titled *Al pie del Sinaí romántico* (Sacristán, 1984a: 346ff).

tendencies were inscribed as possibilities in his present²³ is evidenced by the high rates of youth unemployment at the end of the 1960s, which appeared to be the direct consequence of industrial innovation, leading to significant turnover rates in the workforce. These transformations were tied both to the deskilling of productive tasks and to the increasing access of popular strata to university education. The democratization of the university provided the conditions to envision its transcendence — not as such, since certain technical knowledge must still be transmitted — but as a “factor of the class-based division of labor,” as a mechanism for “producing hegemony through the formation of an elite and the formulation of criteria of culture, behavior, distinction [and] prestige” (Sacristán, 1985a: 134).

Thus, what was incompatible with the socialist perspective was the mission of the university identified by Ortega: the teaching of culture intended to underpin the dialectic of docility and exemplarity. This principle needed to be opposed with one that did not reinforce “the class-based, hierarchical, and fixed division of labor, which in the large capitalist industry” was already “contradicting the mobility and consciousness of the workers” (ibid.: 137). The goal was not to eliminate all social differences but rather to ensure that inequalities among social agents were no longer a direct expression of inherited social organization. A genuine meritocracy — a term consistent with Ortega’s conception of aristocratism (Ortega y Gasset, 2009: 119) — would have to be founded on a division of labor that was non-hierarchical, purely functional, in which “the distribution of tasks ceases to be mediated by individuals’ status and is determined solely by collective functionality, without material or formally coercive fixation of individuals” (ibid.: 141).

The context of university democratization in which Sacristán operates gives rise to a crisis of expectations, a dislocation between the education of graduates and society’s ability to integrate them into positions corresponding to the status their degrees should guarantee. In this phenomenon, we can discern a possible trend toward the general devaluation of the exchange value of university degrees and, consequently, their devaluation “as components of the capitalist social organization” (ibid.: 144). From this follows the

²³It is worth noting, as Sacristán emphasizes heavily, that the crisis facing the university institution of his time highlights tendencies that could be exploited in a socialist direction, such as the one he proposes. This does not mean that such a crisis, by any necessity, is destined to be resolved in a socially progressive way. In fact, the relevance of Sacristán’s text lies not so much in his strategic proposal for the student movement — seen from today, it has largely become irrelevant — but rather in his ability to foresee tendencies of recomposition that have been consolidated with the advancement of the neoliberal university.

possibility that the pursuit of increasingly higher levels of education may not only respond to financial motives but also to the genuine aspiration to expand one's cultural foundation. Certainly, Sacristán errs on the side of a certain anthropological optimism, underestimating the alienating potential of the *low-cost culture* offered ubiquitously by the so-called culture industry, which caters to citizens' cultural impulses. More generally, he assumes an interest in what could be called *high culture*, an interest that appears to be far from universally shared, even if the material conditions to free up time from the workday were provided.

Nonetheless, given Sacristán's description, the hypothesis of a crisis in the social hierarchy legitimized by university degrees seems justifiable. If confirmed, this would imply that the hierarchy would lose part of its legitimacy, leaving it supported only by the heavy inertia of tradition and the brute force of precedence—that is, having been the first to occupy a position. If this is the case, with the loss of its legitimizing function, the traditional role of the university diagnosed by Ortega—namely, the production of hegemony in the traditional sense of governance—would also collapse. According to Sacristán, the crises in professional and scientific training would then be mere symptoms of this broader phenomenon.

However, Sacristán is aware that a forward escape could be orchestrated by the ruling classes to ride out the crisis without altering the very social structure that generates it. Faced with the obsolescence of the hierarchy resulting from the development of advanced capitalist social formations, an attempt could well be made to preserve privileges and the inertia granting them legitimacy through the recomposition of “the traditional university by introducing or reinforcing horizontal barriers that produce even more stratification, intra-university class structures: first-class, second-class, and third-class graduates” (Sacristán, 1985a: 150).

Numerous contemporary phenomena confirm Sacristán's prediction. Examples include the enormous proliferation of degree programs (Cambrón, 2015: 480–482), the pronounced rise in private universities, and the processes of competency-based education and lifelong learning, which place the burden of always-incomplete training on students. This, in turn, serves as a pretext for justifying their limited integration into the labor market.²⁴ Meanwhile,

²⁴It should be noted in passing that the current brutal subordination of the university to a market that is clearly unable to absorb the masses coming from higher education stands in stark contrast to Ortega's approach. His focus was on the average student, making the definitive and complete transmission of the necessary competencies the goal of education.

the devaluation of degrees continues: their exchange value is, in general, progressively diminishing, and their use value is also eroded due to the increasing bureaucratization and precarization that affect the tasks the university performs, tasks that Ortega considered secondary.

THE SACRISTANIAN DIALECTIC

Emilio Lledó, in his text on *Misión de la universidad*, situates Ortega's reflection in the tradition of Carl Heinrich Becker. The former Prussian Minister of Culture had, even before Ortega, advocated the need to develop vigorous syntheses that reconcile the necessity of transmitting the foundational elements of curricula dedicated to professional education with the freedom of creative research. To this end, against specialism, Becker saw in the teaching of philosophy, politics, sociology, and history the bridges that could mediate between the specialist and their era, proposing the creation of "a chair of *Weltanschauungsphilosophie*, a kind of philosophy of worldviews" (Lledó, 1984: 14–15)²⁵. The concept of culture in *Misión de la universidad* revives this Diltheyan idea, no longer as a worldview but rather as a "system of living ideas" (Ortega y Gasset, 2015: 80, 104, 106), a "system of ideas about the world" (ibid.: 77), or "clear ideas about the universe, positive convictions about what things and the world are" (ibid.). Thus, the Madrid philosopher asserts:

Culture is the system of living ideas that each era possesses. Better yet: the system of ideas from which the era lives. Because there is no remedy, no possible escape: humanity always lives from a set of specific ideas, which constitute the foundation upon which its existence rests. These, which I call "living ideas or ideas we live by," are, no more and no less, the repertoire of our actual convictions about what the world is, who our neighbors are, and the hierarchy of values held by things and actions: which are more estimable, which are less (ibid.: 104).

Certainly, the reference to life, to a "life [that] cannot wait for the sciences to scientifically explain the universe" (ibid.: 107), seems to anticipate the issue of praxis — a central theme for Manuel Sacristán — and serves as a safeguard against the speculative tendencies of philosophy, protecting it from becoming an inert network of transhistorical ideas detached from its grounding in the immanence of human life.

²⁵We follow the report on Becker's proposal from the article by Lledó (Lledó, 1984) to which we have referred. The works of the German author considered in that study are: *Gedanken zur Hochschulreform* (1919) and *Vom Wesen der deutschen Universität* (1925).

However, Ortega's text also contains an internal tension that again seems to involve the "spontaneous idealism of the European intellectual," of which Sacristán, as we have seen, accused him. Ortega's formulation in the cited passage tends toward a relationship between experience and thought that, using a somewhat academic term, we could call *a-dialectical* (in the specific sense that the second term provides the foundation from which the first develops, but not vice versa). Here, Ortega's traditional perspectivism seems to fade, as it appears — if we are faithful to the text — that life unfolds from a given set of ideas, but not that thought emerges from a specific vital situation. This suggests a separation between theory and practice, a speculative resolution of real antagonisms (a traditional pitfall of idealist traditions) entirely consistent with the limitations of his proposed university reform: the powerless *Facultad* of culture against the cyclopean task imposed by the modern division of labor.

Be that as it may, we must now demonstrate the isomorphism between Ortega's text and Sacristán's approach to dialectics — a relationship not always free, even when reversed, from the tension between theory and practice discovered in Ortega (Garrido, 2021: 275–276). One of Sacristán's central texts on this subject, *La tarea de Engels en el Anti-Dühring*,²⁶ begins precisely with the aforementioned issue of worldview:

A worldview is not knowledge; it is not knowledge in the sense that positive science is. It is a series of principles that account for the behavior of a subject, sometimes without the subject formulating them explicitly (Sacristán, 2009b: 76).

As we can see, this definition of worldview reproduces two Ortegean themes we have already addressed. First, the relationship between culture and action (or life, or praxis, or behavior), which now appears inverted, granting priority to action, as it is this that the worldview seeks to explain. Second, Sacristán revisits another issue Ortega raised: the distinction between culture as a general worldview and science understood as positive knowledge specialized in studying a particular object.

Regarding the latter, Ortega had already noted that "culture [...] skims from science what is vitally necessary to interpret our existence," but without conflating the two or denying that *there are entire parts of science that are not culture* (Ortega y Gasset, 2015: 107). The distinction is obvious if we

²⁶Preface for the translation of the Engelsian classic, which we owe to Sacristán himself and which was published in 1964. On the relevance of Sacristán's text on Engels, both in the Spanish context and in his own intellectual evolution, see, respectively: Morán (Morán, 2017: 841–842) and Vázquez García (Vázquez, 2009: 343).

consider that “culture needs [...] to possess a complete idea of the world and of humanity; it cannot stop, as science does, where the methods of absolute theoretical rigor happen to end” (Ortega y Gasset, 2015). There is thus a qualitative difference between the analytical approach inherent in the production of scientifically rigorous knowledge and the synthetic practice aimed at generating cultural products that compensate for their inexactness with functionality.

This dual movement recurs in the paths Sacristán’s treatment of dialectics takes, allowing us to clarify its specific insertion into the *Kampfplatz* of contemporary Marxism. Against attempts to sanctify the scientific status of Marxist doctrine, championed by notable figures like Louis Althusser or Galvano Della Volpe, Sacristán sides with the opposite position: “The Marxist classics are classics of a worldview, not of a specific scientific-positive theory” (Sacristán, 2009b: 87). In other words, what defines Marxism is not the establishment of a series of methodologically verifiable theses with an unalterable truth value (an orthodoxy, to put it in political terms) over time. On the contrary, for Sacristán, Marxism is a worldview—or at least a fraction of the socialist worldview—a framework of axiologically charged ideas (guided by principles of social equality based on the positive freedom of subordinate classes) that guides decision-making and interprets the findings of positive sciences. In this sense, the results of scientific analysis describe a grammar of facts to which realistic political praxis must adhere, but they do not restrict social actors’ scope of action to a single possibility. Instead, they open up space for a plurality of worldviews that interpret reality from different values and act accordingly. Marxism is just one of these.

According to Sacristán, what is specific to the Marxist worldview—even within the broader socialist tradition, with which it shares values—is its fidelity to the materialist principle of immanence, to the task of elaborating the dialectical synthesis, the concrete totality in which “theory and practice are united,” “without introducing any data beyond the materialist ones of reductive analysis” (ibid.: 82). The Marxist worldview, as scientific socialism, must exclude by principle any descriptive content that does not stem from the results of positive sciences (or that is incompatible with them), articulating these results into a worldview prepared to guide practice based on the values mentioned above.

This conception of Marxism resonates with one of the peculiar ways of being “in tune with the times” found in *Misión de la universidad*: “in our era, the content of culture largely comes from science” (Ortega y Gasset, 2015: 107). As Ortega added, in line with Sacristán’s perspective: “what

has been said is enough to make clear that culture is not science. The fact that today more faith is placed in science than in anything else is not itself a scientific fact but rather a vital faith” (Ortega y Gasset, 2015).

From all this arises the intrinsic overlap between the Marxist worldview and transformative practice. In a 1968 text titled *El género literario del Marx maduro*, Sacristán names this union “revolutionary praxeology.” There, he identifies Marx’s central aim as “grounding and rationally formulating a project for transforming society” (Sacristán, 2009a: 371). This task necessarily requires the author to master as much scientific knowledge as possible, without reducing the endeavor to mere education. The specific link that Marxism, as “revolutionary praxeology,” establishes with science is one of “supraordination,” meaning that the need to align practical goals with the rational descriptive framework derived from the sciences involves “the clarification and foundation of [revolutionary] practice” through theory (ibid.: 372).

Thus, the relationship between theory and practice, between the merely descriptive elements of reality and action founded upon them, grants the former—a realistic description integrated into a worldview—a cartographic, orientational function. This principle of cartography, as we saw, was also attributed by Ortega to the type of synthesis that culture should embody, a practical tool capable of organizing the chaos of life:

Life is chaos, a wild jungle, a confusion. Humanity gets lost in it. But the mind [...] works to find “paths,” “roads” through the jungle; that is: clear and firm ideas about the Universe, positive convictions about what things and the world are. The whole, the system of these, is culture in the true sense of the word [...]. Culture is what saves from the shipwreck of life, what allows humanity to live without its life becoming a senseless tragedy or radical degradation (Ortega y Gasset, 2015: 77).

Finally, upon close examination, the synthesis Ortega proposes as the task of the *Facultad* of culture—a synthesis that draws from the results of physics, biology, history, sociology, and philosophy—is entirely compatible with the principle of supraordination between positive knowledge and praxeological totalization. From this overlap, Sacristán also developed a university reform proposal—though not comprehensive, as Ortega’s was, but limited to the role philosophy should occupy in the Spanish university system. In this proposal, the echoes of Ortega’s ideas in *Misión de la universidad* are not difficult to discern. Sacristán’s brief text, published in 1968, is titled *Sobre el lugar de la filosofía en los estudios superiores*.

We speak of echoes of Ortega's proposal because there is, in my view, a certain formal affinity between the two authors' proposals, even though, in terms of content, Sacristán launches a nearly explicit critique of Ortega's text, anticipating his later critique in *La universidad y la división del trabajo*:

It is possible that there never was, or that there existed only for a couple of decades, an organization of culture that gave academic philosophy the possibility of effectively and monopolistically performing the function of ideological direction of society (Sacristán, 1984b: 360).

In this distancing, we also see how Sacristán replaces the role Ortega attributed to culture in general with that of academic philosophy, which, in Ortega's argument, was only one component of the synthesis. Philosophy is thus left in a no-man's-land: it can no longer provide substantive propositions to be incorporated into the dominant worldview in a society, nor can it serve as the organizing principle of that worldview. In this sense, it is not comparable to other disciplines, not a worldview, not positive knowledge, nor a "substantive knowledge superior to positive sciences" (ibid.: 357). If philosophy is to retain a space between worldviews and scientific description, it must be conceived as a practice of "reflection on the foundations, methods, and perspectives of theoretical, pre-theoretical, and practical knowledge and *poiesis*" (ibid.).

Consequently, philosophy becomes a second-order reflection, unrelated to transmitting a canon containing the substantive theses about the ultimate nature of being crafted by the high culture of each era. For this reason, maintaining philosophy sections on equal footing with faculties that develop and transmit the knowledge of various positive sciences becomes senseless. However, since, as noted, there is still a practice that "may discreetly be called philosophical" (ibid.: 357), it is worth accompanying the elimination of the philosophy degree with the "organization of a general institute of philosophy," or, "to put it in decree-law terms: having eliminated the philosophy degree, the doctorate must be reorganized" (ibid.: 368).

The central characteristic of this, as it pertains to our interests, would be that "the only title issued by the institute — the doctorate in philosophy — presupposes the attainment of another degree — specifically, a degree in some specialty — which the institute cannot provide" (ibid.: 369). Thus, the supraordination between philosophy and other disciplines, which makes the former a second-order reflection taking the latter as its object, here assumes an institutional form in which the institute as a whole inherits Ortega's function of synthesizing the most advanced research results of the

time, while renouncing the claim that this synthesis offers the cultural level appropriate for the ruling class. Certainly, it is difficult—and would be elitist—to suggest that social practice, whether revolutionary or conservative, should be measured against the synthesis orchestrated by the reflections of philosophy doctorates. Sacristán’s argument suggests that worldviews effectively in operation originate outside academia and, consistent with Ortega’s aspirations for the ruling class, that the program and practice of scientific socialism should not aim for exhaustive reflection on the various positive sciences but, at most, for non-contradiction with their results.

That Sacristán, while reproducing part of Ortega’s argument, cannot reach the same conclusion, already tells us something about the different normative principles governing each thinker’s reasoning. It also speaks to the historical distance separating interwar Europe and the twilight of the *Trente Glorieuses*, marked by the devaluation of the traditional intellectual’s role in shaping public opinion, as well as the difficulty of establishing a unified public opinion itself. The pluralism of worldviews formed outside academia, competing for an increasingly complex hegemony, seems implicit in Sacristán’s reflection, which takes its starting point from Ortega. Nonetheless, the eclipse of the social centrality, once held by traditional intellectuals, does not, Sacristán believes, justify abandoning the space in which philosophy might still have meaning. It does not warrant succumbing to the spectacle of the philosopher as a “knower of Being in general without knowing anything serious about any particular being” (Sacristán, 1984b: 365).

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РАЗВИТЫЙ МИР. НЕСКОЛЬКО ЗАМЕТОК О МАНУЭЛЕ САКРИСТАНЕ КАК ЧИТАТЕЛЕ ОРТЕГИ

Получено: 06.09.2024. Рецензировано: 15.11.2024. Принято: 24.11.2024.

Аннотация: Реконструируя прочтение «Миссии университета», представленное в тексте «Университет и разделение труда», мы проведем критическое сопоставление позиций Хосе Ортеги-и-Гассета и Мануэля Сакристана, выделяя критические замечания, на которые указывает последний. В качестве центральной темы анализа выступает вопрос о разделении труда, который подразумевается в тексте Ортеги. Во второй части нашего исследования мы постараемся выяснить, как и в какой степени текст Ортеги влияет на понимание диалектики Сакристаном.

Ключевые слова: Ортега-и-Гассет, Мануэль Сакристан, Университет, диалектика, элиты, разделение труда.

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PHILOSOPHICAL CRITICISM

BOOK REVIEWS

ФИЛОСОФСКАЯ КРИТИКА

Loza Vera, M. 2024. “José Ortega y Gasset’s Legendary Thought : An Overview of Life as a Philosophical Query” [in English]. *Filosofiya. Zhurnal Vysshey shkoly ekonomiki [Philosophy. Journal of the Higher School of Economics]* 8 (4), 207–211.

MANUELA LOZA VERA*

JOSÉ ORTEGA Y GASSET’S LEGENDARY THOUGHT**

AN OVERVIEW OF LIFE AS A PHILOSOPHICAL QUERY

CARRIAZO RUIZ, J. R. 2023. *ORTEGA: VIDAS, OBRAS, LEYENDAS* [IN SPANISH]. MADRID: GRUPO ANAYA

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Quede dicha esta idea, que merece meditación para la comprensión del hombre como biografía (Zamora Bonilla, 2002: 616).

Toda vida—decía mi padre hablando de Goethe—es más o menos una ruina entre cuyos escombros tenemos que descubrir lo que aquella persona tenía que haber sido. [...] Mi padre fue poco amigo de los recuerdos (Ortega Spottorno, 2002: 131–132).

Contrary to popular belief, life cannot simply be defined as a mere linear chain of events throughout time. Instead, it should be understood as a complex ensemble of creations, innovations, changes and growth. Therefore, the task of reconstructing someone’s life should not be reduced to the recollection and categorization of events within certain timeframes. In order to do justice to someone’s true identity, a biography should take into account the multiplicity of circumstances that have transpired and, inevitably, shaped someone’s lifetime. The true purpose of a biography, then, is not to enlist different timeframes of a person’s existence—like an ordinary table of contents—it should tell an all encompassing story about someone’s journey and making of their “true” self. In other words, the multiplicity within this “story telling” should be able to reflect a person’s singularity.

Specifically, writing a biography for someone like José Ortega y Gasset—who continuously upheld the philosophical importance of circumstance within one’s self—should not fall short of this requirement. In light of

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this, José Ramón Carriazo Ruiz offers an incredibly detailed and extensive insight into Ortega y Gasset's life in his book: *Ortega: Vidas, obras, leyendas*. With the help of bibliographical sources like personal letters, interviews, articles and books, this biography reveals different lenses, perspectives and dimensions that influenced Ortega's vital projects. Consequently, Carriazo Ruiz is able to portray the evolution of his political, anthropological and philosophical ideologies, as well the circumstances that surrounded and affected it. By doing so, this book depicts Ortega as a much more complex and multifaceted philosopher, whose intellectual production had a profound impact on society. Yet, at the same time, it shows how society's circumstances equally defined him.

Moreover, in order to capture Ortega's identity way beyond the usual interpretations, Carriazo claims he employed three main themes throughout the book. Firstly, the book covers Ortega's multiple "lives": his experiences, projects, adventures... Secondly, it discusses the Philosopher's writings: his books, articles, essays, etc. Thirdly, the biography includes the "legendary Ortega": the myth and character that has emerged due to different interpretations and analyses. Everyone that has heard of Ortega — even Carriazo himself — has gotten to know of Ortega as the legend before truly learning about his life and work. Hence, according to Carriazo, with the help of multiple perspectives and sources, this biography is an attempt to discover the truth that lies beneath the legend. In a true *orteguian* nature — which argues that the human self is not a fully autonomous, self-contained being, which is why it cannot be understood without its circumstance — this biography seeks to understand Ortega's life and self by focusing on his vital context.

In consonance with his philosophical belief that human beings are capable of creating and fulfilling their own vital projects, Ortega lived a life filled with creativity, purpose and drive. As Carriazo accurately depicts in this book, the Philosopher's fruitful life developed and expanded into many branches within its reach. Unsurprisingly, Ortega's lifelong interests were never exclusively philosophical. As a matter of fact, in addition to philosophy, Ortega pursued careers within journalism, politics, and education as well. However, the reason for this wide variety of endeavors throughout his life was his origin. By the time Ortega was born in 1883, his family had already maintained a long history with journalism, politics and academics. As Carriazo states, Ortega was the son, grandson, nephew, father and grandfather of politicians and journalists. Subsequently, it only seemed natural Ortega would dedicate a big part of his life to these two disciplines.

In addition to these “inevitable” interests, Ortega pursued his degree of Philosophy at *Universidad Central* in Madrid. According to Carriazo, Ortega’s philosophical ideologies evolved from Cohen and Natorp’s neo-kantianism — which he acquired during his multiple stays in Germany between 1905 and 1911 — to Husserl’s phenomenology, as well as from scholars like Scheler, Brentano and von Uexküll. By showing Ortega’s discussions, support and criticism towards other philosophers, Carriazo is also able to show how Ortega’s own philosophy was slowly taking form because of his life’s circumstances. Although initially he was captivated by neo-kantian objective idealism — which he considered could solve spanish subjectivism — Ortega eventually distanced himself from it. Slowly, due to his political experiences in Spain, in addition to his own philosophical, scientific and anthropological readings, Ortega would create his own philosophy. In an attempt to avoid falling into any philosophical extremes — like rationalism or vitalism — Ortega’s philosophy emphasizes the junction between the individual and their circumstance. Furthermore, he created the concept of “vital reason,” which, in contrast to absolute reason, is capable of integrating concrete realities with rational thought. As a result, Ortega concluded that human existence is a personal project influenced by social, historical and cultural contexts.

According to Carriazo, while Ortega’s philosophical knowledge and insight were developing and growing, his involvement in the public world of journalism and politics was equally as important. Ortega’s journey in journalism began very early on, when he started publishing articles on *El Imparcial* — his family’s successful newspaper — during his first stay in Germany. Nonetheless, not only would he collaborate in a variety of journals and newspapers throughout his life — for example, *La Nación*, an argentinian newspaper — he would also embark on numerous other projects where he would either be founder, leader or active participant. Examples of this include: *Liga de Educación Política* and *España; Europa; El Espectador*, an academically and intellectually oriented journal; *El Sol*, a journal with intellectual and political importance within Spain; *Calpe-Espasa*, a spaniard and latin american editorial; and *Revista Occidente*, an academic journal — which Ortega considered his most personal and passionate-driven project — that featured the most groundbreaking thinkers and theories of that time period. At times, many of these endeavors were abandoned due to his personal circumstances, but, after a while, he would embark on another project with different purposes.

A similar thing occurred with Ortega's involvement in politics, directly and intimately related to his involvement in the press. Ortega was profoundly passionate about Spain's identity, history, and future, thus his active participation in Spain's press would also usually be accompanied by his investment and active participation in its politics. According to Ortega, Spain needed to be completely transformed and renewed due to its utter absence of cultural depth. As a solution, Ortega proposed, especially in his earlier years, the Europeanization of Spain, which meant the country needed to pursue Germany's ideals. However, later in his life, he would also insist on the need to incorporate Spain's spirit into Europe's culture. That being said, Carriazo emphasizes the interdependence between journalism and politics in Ortega: his press articles would always serve as an outlet for his political views, judgments, and proposals. Nevertheless, whenever he felt disillusioned and disheartened by the political climate of his country, he would distance himself from politics and, consequently, at times, from journalism as well. Instead, he would then turn to his philosophical reflections and inquiries.

Defined by his ever-changing circumstances, Ortega would manifest his constant ideological and vital evolution in his writings. During his lifetime, he wrote many books—which were usually a collection of already published essays or articles—about philosophy, politics, anthropology, art, etc. Among all of his books, there were some that particularly stood out because of the unprecedented ideas that were exposed. For example, *Meditaciones del Quijote* (1914), his first book, already manifested some of the central concepts in his philosophy, such as: circumstance, perspectivism, and culture. Later on, he published *El tema de nuestro tiempo* (1923), which was centered around the concepts of vital reason and the historical shift between generations. Also, in *La rebelión de las masas* (1930), Ortega offers a cultural diagnosis of modern society through concepts like technology and “mass man.” These works show a slow but steady progress towards what would constitute one of the most influential philosophies of the twentieth century. Undoubtedly, Ortega published many other works that were highly innovative.

Along with his collaboration in international and national conferences—like the ones in Argentina and Uruguay, in which he participated—his writings increased Ortega's acclaim in Spain, Europe, the United States of America and Latin America. According to Carriazo, the Spanish youth already considered Ortega as the revolutionary image of their generation during his mid-twenties. Even so, his prominence grew even further because of his writings and speeches, his political stance, and his presence within intellectual circles at the time. Certainly, because of this, Ortega also

had to undergo a lot of scrutiny, criticism and opposition from many thinkers and intellectuals either because of his philosophical ideas or his political positionings (or lack thereof). Needless to say, Carriazo insists that these widespread and controversial interpretations of his work and his persona would lead to the mythification of Ortega y Gasset. Likewise, future studies into his work and his life would add supplementary layers to this legendary image.

In this biography, Ortega's life is presented in varied, eclectic, even contradictory ways. Perhaps only in this manner is Carriazo able to truly do justice to the Philosopher's life, identity and work. As Ortega himself said: "Porque, no se dude, toda vida es secreto y jeroglifo. De aquí la biografía sea siempre un albur de la intuición. No hay método seguro para acertar con la clave arcana de una existencia ajena" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004/2010: 89).

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Loza Vera M. [Лоца Вера М.] José Ortega y Gasset's Legendary Thought [Легендарная мысль Хосе Ортеги-и-Гассета] : An Overview of Life as a Philosophical Query [обзор жизни как философского поиска] // Философия. Журнал Высшей школы экономики. — 2024. — Т. 8, № 4. — Р. 207–211.

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ОБЗОР ЖИЗНИ КАК ФИЛОСОФСКОГО ПОИСКА

CARRIAZO RUIZ J. R. ORTEGA : VIDAS, OBRAS, LEYENDAS. — MADRID : GRUPO ANAYA, 2023.

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Saiz Sanz, C. 2024. "Uniting Action and Thought, Journalism and Philosophy in the Chase of Cultural Renovation : An Innovative Approach to the Life of Ortega y Gasset Through Journalism" [in English]. *Filosofiya. Zhurnal Vysshey shkoly ekonomiki [Philosophy. Journal of the Higher School of Economics]* 8 (4), 212–217.

CELIA SAIZ SANZ*

UNITING ACTION AND THOUGHT, JOURNALISM AND PHILOSOPHY IN THE CHASE OF CULTURAL RENOVATION**

AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO THE LIFE OF ORTEGA Y GASSET
THROUGH JOURNALISM

BLANCO ALFONSO, I. 2023. *NACÍ SOBRE UNA ROTATIVA. LAS EMPRESAS CULTURALES DE JOSÉ ORTEGA Y GASSET* [IN SPANISH]. MADRID: TECNOS

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This book is not simply a biography, but an insight into José Ortega y Gasset's life through his connection to journalism. Ignacio Blanco Alfonso has focused on this aspect of the philosopher's work throughout his academic career and continues to offer this fresh perspective on Ortega's personal and philosophical life. To choose a topic from which to interpret an entire lifetime is a decision that enables a deeper analysis and focus on it, since it can be challenging to present a common biography as a profound study on a person while maintaining its appeal to the reader. That is what Blanco Alfonso achieves when looking into Ortega's life through journalism, an innovative angle from which to continue broadening the understanding of this intellectual and his many endeavours.

A thinker such as José Ortega y Gasset deserves a book focused on his journalistic side, since he was connected to this discipline throughout his entire life for many different reasons. Firstly, he had a familial relationship with journalism, as the author of the book alludes to in the title. Secondly, he believed that this was the best and only style of writing for the introduction of his philosophical ideas to the Spanish audience, allowing for a cultural renovation of society. The bond to journalism through his family

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is thoroughly explained in this book, with the first chapter containing the most detail. As described at the start of the work reviewed here, Ortega y Gasset was born inside the journalistic world, since his father was the director of an important newspaper known as *El Imparcial*, which also belonged to the family, specifically to the side of Ortega's mother. Blanco Alfonso presents José Ortega y Gasset's relationship with his father mainly through the letters they sent back and forth when the former was studying in Germany. Said correspondence allows the reader to understand the relationship between father and son, as well as to see how important journalism was for them both. Here we start to see the potential Ortega perceives in the journalistic media and style of writing for the Spanish audience. These letters and the many photos included in the book come from the Archivo de José Ortega y Gasset, part of the Fundación Ortega-Marañón in which the author participates as a director of the Centro de Estudios Orteguianos. This active research on the Archivo de José Ortega y Gasset is also worth mentioning in this review, since it is one of the primary methods used for the creation of the book. Including letters and images is definitely helpful in making a cohesive biography and in connecting the reader to the events in the life of the figure that is portrayed.

It could be easy to forget that such an important thinker also led an ordinary life, full of difficulties as well as blessings. In this book, the author makes an effort to connect both the mastery that characterises Ortega and the reality of his life as part of a complex world. Letters and pictures are used following that goal and the reader can also find explanations of the personal and emotional states of the thinker, the historical context and the journalistic and philosophical activities that he was involved in. This overview of Ortega's life as a whole, without separating his work from his context, is suggested by the philosopher himself. José Ortega y Gasset was an intellectual who defended the importance of the circumstance to the self, considering identity nonexistent without taking into account everything that surrounds the individual. That is why dividing life and theory would be unfair to Ortega, a comprehensive analysis of his work through the understanding of his circumstance is Blanco Alfonso's goal: "Se ha escrito sobre la significación de estas empresas orteguianas en relación con la época y con su producción intelectual, pero, puestas en perspectiva con el lado más humano de Ortega, adquieren un nuevo fulgor que nos permitirá conocer y comprender mejor al autor y su circunstancia" (Blanco Alfonso, 2023: 103). The choice of journalism made both by Ortega in his many works on newspapers and by Blanco Alfonso in his angle for this biography is

intensely connected to this idea of circumstance. As the author of this book states, journalism is a very human kind of discipline and it allows to understand Ortega's self and his circumstance all in one look. Continuing this effort to show the human complexity of José Ortega y Gasset's life, the book takes into account the emotional states of the thinker throughout the many different episodes that affected his life. In statements like this one from the sixth chapter of the book: "Estas emociones se apoderaron de su pensamiento" (Blanco Alfonso, 2023: 236), it becomes clear that sentiment plays a big part in his life and actions, as well as his more theoretical ideas.

Throughout six chapters one can grasp how his passion grows and shrinks depending on the circumstance surrounding Ortega, and it is definitely taken seriously in the book, since it shaped the works he would create in different periods of his life. The reader can see how enthusiastic the young Ortega is about the powers of journalism in renovating the Spanish cultural condition, even with his father's initial objection to this thought. However, the general pessimism installed in Europe in the context of the First World War overwhelms him and places him in an introspective state, evident in his personal journal *El Espectador*. For some time he moved away from the more active political life he was leading through projects such as the *Liga de Educación Política* and its newspaper *España*. The emotional cycle begins again when, as can be gained from the third chapter, Ortega recovers his vitality and passion for political action upon coming back from Argentina and gets himself into shared endeavours with Urgoiti, such as the failed purchase of *El Imparcial* and the foundation of *El Sol*, which came to be a very important journal. However, an emotional plummet happened once more with the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera and the death of his father. In the recovery from these hardships, the biggest of Ortega's cultural endeavours was born, *Revista de Occidente*; as well as his collaboration with *La Nación*, his first access to an American audience. Lastly, we can see how he slowly left the political world for good, focusing on his philosophical and personal projects on what he called his second navigation. During his last decades he came to a silent attitude through his experiences as an exile after the Spanish Civil War and his comeback to Madrid, where he was not recognised as professor at the university. The feeling of failure in the cultural renovation of Spain was manifest, the power first associated with philosophical and political journalism had not found the transformation Ortega wished for, and this kept him in a taciturn sentiment and far from politics. Even his death ended up being a journalistic question and political event, since the publishing of articles to inform of his passing was censored by

Franco's dictatorship, from fear that it would reopen Ortega's transformative thoughts to the public, which it did actually end up doing, to some extent. All this goes to show how important the emotional state of the thinker was throughout his life, how it affected his actions as it would for every human being, how the political and personal context shaped his feelings, how his circumstance and his self always went hand in hand.

To understand this final feeling of failure upon his realising that in Franco's dictatorship Spain was far from being culturally renovated in the sense that Ortega wished for, it is necessary to grasp how important this goal was for the thinker. José Ortega y Gasset had a main objective, which was the modernization of the Spanish cultural state, a transformation that could only be achieved through journalism. This is the philosophical and political side of his connection to the journalistic world, his belief in the need to Europeanize Spain and push it forward in a cultural sense through this type of writing. In Ortega's philosophy we can find the conviction that every generation has a goal of its own, and he was sure that in his time this cultural renovation was the most necessary shift. However, this purpose was not easy to achieve since the Spanish audience did not take much interest in strict philosophical works, which contained the new cultural condition in Ortega's belief. The need for a cultural evolution through new and critical thinking is what led the philosopher to lean on journalism as his form of political action. The Spanish masses were not ready for European philosophical texts, but still needed this revolution in thought, in culture, which could be accomplished through the journalistic writing style and way of distribution. He actually viewed journalism as an opportunity to make philosophy accessible: "La claridad se debe a que sus escritos fueron, antes que libros, artículos de periódico. [...] favorecieron una auténtica democratización de la filosofía" (Blanco Alfonso, 2023: 20). For that reason, Ortega founded and wrote in many different newspapers throughout his life, since he believed it was the most direct path to Spanish audiences. This idea is the essence of Blanco Alfonso's book, not only this thinker's familial relationship to journalism, but his connection to it as a way of transforming his society. Ortega thought of his journalistic endeavours as political actions, as the place where it was transparent how theory and praxis were one and the same thing, where his philosophy came to life in the renovation of the public opinion and thought structure in Spain.

Ortega y Gasset's profound interest in the development of Spanish culture is what leads Blanco Alfonso to structure his book following the philosopher's many cultural endeavours. All the projects that Ortega worked on

throughout his life were connected to this aspiration to revive the culture in Spain and bring it closer to the European manner. At some points he believed passionately in this transformational force, while at other times he felt far from achieving such a revolution. As the author explains, he ended his life closer to this last impression, since the modernised culture in Spain seemed farther from reality than ever. However, in this book the reader can grasp how profound Ortega's impact on the Spanish cultural context actually was, how even his death allowed for some movement towards this progress, and how his philosophy still resonates and produces renovation to this day. A clear portrayal of all the above is what Blanco Alfonso achieves in depicting Ortega's life through his cultural and, specifically, journalistic projects such as *España*, *Europa*, *El Sol* or *Crisol*, as well as *El Espectador*, *Pliego de Cordel* or *Revista de Occidente*. José Ortega y Gasset did not always have an easy relationship with journalism, he went back and forth in his thought of himself as a journalist, frustrated at having to refrain from more strict philosophy while also encountering many challenges in the cultural transformation he hoped to achieve through this style of writing. However, he was undeniably a philosopher who wrote for the Spanish audience, with an enormous part of his work published through newspapers since he could not help but try to fulfil the need of his time, the cultural renovation. This is made clear in his own quote with which the book opens: “[D]ócil a la circunstancia, he hecho que mi obra brote en la plazuela intelectual que es el periódico” (Blanco Alfonso, 2023: 7). Ortega could not resist it, he was a journalist as much as he was a philosopher, action and thought were unified in his philosophy and that is what Blanco Alfonso shows in his book.

Saiz Sanz C. [Саиз Санз С.] Uniting Action and Thought, Journalism and Philosophy in the Chase of Cultural Renovation [Объединяя действие и мысль, журналистику и философию в стремлении к культурному обновлению] : An Innovative Approach to the Life of Ortega y Gasset Through Journalism [новаторский подход к жизни Ортеги-и-Гассета через призму журналистики] // Философия. Журнал Высшей школы экономики. — 2024. — Т. 8, № 4. — Р. 212–217.

СЕЛИЯ САИЗ САНЗ

СТУДЕНТ,

КОМПЛУТЕНСКИЙ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ Мадрида (Мадрид)

ОБЪЕДИНЯЯ ДЕЙСТВИЕ И МЫСЛЬ, ЖУРНАЛИСТИКУ
И ФИЛОСОФИЮ
В СТРЕМЛЕНИИ К КУЛЬТУРНОМУ ОБНОВЛЕНИЮ
НОВАТОРСКИЙ ПОДХОД К ЖИЗНИ ОРТЕГИ-И-ГАССЕТА
ЧЕРЕЗ ПРИЗМУ ЖУРНАЛИСТИКИ

BLANCO ALFONSO I. NACÍ SOBRE UNA ROTATIVA. LAS EMPRESAS CULTURALES DE JOSÉ ORTEGA Y GASSET. — MADRID : TECNOS, 2023.

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MARÍA NAVAS CARRALERO*

ORTEGA THEN AND NOW**

AN INTRODUCTION TO NAVIGATING
THE FOUNDATIONS OF HIS PHILOSOPHY

PEÑA, C. 2022. *LA ACTUALIDAD DE ORTEGA Y GASSET* [IN SPANISH]. FLASH

DOI: 10.17323/2587-8719-2024-4-218-221.

We can approach Ortega y Gasset's philosophy in many ways: we may start reading it because of the topics he deals with or find ourselves attracted to his writing style... However, the quality of a philosophical work can be measured according to the relevance of the problems it addresses, this is the point of view chosen by Peña González. The author examines the work of the Spanish philosopher, highlighting its relevance in the contemporary world. The book is structured around several thematic axes that illustrate how Ortega's ideas can offer a critical perspective on various current problems.

ORTEGA'S PUBLIC VOCATION

Ortega's work is essentially circumstantial, that is, it is motivated mainly by the events of his time. "Ortega's philosophy is a philosophy exercised in public or, rather, before the public [...] His work is an example of an intellectual work crossed by this dimension of the public" (Peña, Navas, 2022). His connection with this dimension is deliberate and explicit because it is an intellectual and explicit project.

In *Vieja y nueva política* and *La rebellion de las masas*, Ortega advocated for reason and culture as tools to confront the crisis of modernity, a topic that remains relevant today. To his view, the nation is a project that is built thanks to the collaboration of all citizens. Each individual must behave, whether as an elite or a mass, according to the type of human being that characterizes them. That is, there must be an elite that changes the social course and directs the masses through a new, younger and more vitalist

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politics. From a liberal point of view, he vindicates the role of intellectuals in society and calls on the elite of his time to be part of politics.

He distinguishes an official Spain that persists in prolonging a past that no longer exists, from another Spain, the vital Spain, which has not yet managed to enter history due to the insistence of the previous one. The generational task of the new politics is to push this new vital Spain into history. The new politics is a new sensitivity and a new historical attitude. Ortega's work focuses on the importance of the individual within society and Peña highlights how individual responsibility is key to social change. In an environment where individual voices are often drowned out, Ortega's thought invites each person to take an active role in their community.

The idea that politics is not just a matter for the elites, but a responsibility shared by everyone, is another teaching of Ortega that Peña takes up. The former maintains that active participation in public life is essential to strengthen democracy and ensure social harmony.

To highlight the importance of philosophy and its transformative role, the author emphasizes the distinction that Ortega makes between "ideas" and "beliefs." On the one hand, beliefs are the ultimate convictions on which our being in the world is based, the belief system that sustains our life. They are necessary, because without them the human being would not know what to hold on to. Sometimes our beliefs crack and a radical doubt creeps in through the cracks. This is when philosophy comes in, which Ortega describes, like democracy, as a game, something dynamic and almost sporting. Philosophy makes the paradigm shift possible when we have reached the threshold of an era and human beings need to reform their values.

Another prominent theme of the book is the interrelationship between culture and politics. Peña maintains that Ortega understood that culture is fundamental for the construction of an active and committed citizenry. In this sense, education is advocated as something that encourages critical thinking and citizen participation, essential elements to strengthen democracy. All this, as we have already seen, is due to a project of political and social reform.

THE BASIC FEATURES OF ORTEGA'S PHILOSOPHY

Ortega can be spoken of as a "public intellectual." Almost all of his books, even the most complex ones, began as newspaper articles. The Rebellion of the Masses, his most famous work, was written week after week in *El Sol*, a newspaper that he helped found. His status as a philosopher at a time of huge crisis in Spain forced him to be an intellectual *in partibus*

infidelium, that is, in the land of infidels. Spain, at the beginning of the 20th century, was a country on the verge of feudalism, discouraged by the loss of territories, extremely catholic and politically unstable. Despite the intellectual brilliance of the generation of '98 and their incredible artistic and philosophical sensitivity, there was a lack of systematicity in their thinking. Ortega studied in Germany, which is visible in and benefits both the form and content of his work. His main influences were idealism and neo-Kantianism, the latter he calls *his home and his prison*.

Human beings have the need to think, to seek the truth. Despite this being natural, ways of bringing said search about are multiple and determined by history and circumstance. Culture is an interpretation of reality through which humans discover elements of the latter and make them true. For Ortega, the West has forgotten the vital and historical dimension of reason. He criticizes the position of neo-positivism, which defends the fundamental coincidence between reality and the ideas of the subject of knowledge. Consequently, intellectuals and scientists have tried to adapt reality to the criteria of physics and mathematics, forgetting that intelligence is not static, but rather animated and crossed by vital challenges. They have abandoned the task of forming the principles and ways of seeing the world to which human beings can adhere. Ortega stated that history is a context that defines our actions. Peña takes up this idea to argue that understanding our history, both individually and collectively, is essential to building a more conscious and responsible future. At a time when populism and extremism are gaining ground, this reflection will be more relevant than ever.

To explain Ortega's treatment of concepts that are fundamental to his thinking, Carlos Peña turns to philosophers such as Wittgenstein or Putnam. Because of this, he introduces common elements between the philosophers such as *game* in Wittgenstein's case: "Reason is internal to life, which means that it is always situated. If we were to imagine life as a game and wanted to describe it from an external point of view [...] our description would be purely behavioristic [...] Because describing a game means adopting the point of view of those who play it, the only way of giving it a meaning among the many possible ones" (Peña, Navas, 2022).

As for the second, the author of the book equates the Orteguian thesis with H. Putnam's internal realism: "Truth, says this author, is relative to a system of concepts. But the fact that it is relative to a system of concepts does not mean that it is not objective, since within the system it is undoubtedly objective. There are things that are true within one world of life and things that are true within another. It would be absurd to decide

which of these systems is more truthful, because in order to do so one would have to place oneself above all of them” (Peña, Navas, 2022).

These, among other techniques, are ways in which Peña makes his explanations much more didactic and enjoyable. In this way, he makes Ortega’s philosophy more accessible to any reader, thus spreading his message, which was the main objective of the Spanish philosopher.

TO CONCLUDE

In conclusion, *La actualidad de Ortega y Gasset* is a call to recover and apply Ortega’s teachings in the analysis and resolution of contemporary problems. Peña stresses that Ortega’s thought, centered on reason, history and intellectual responsibility, remains a valuable tool for navigating the complexities of today’s world. The book invites the reader to reflect on their role in society and to actively engage in the defense of democracy and coexistence.

Despite its short length, this book is an appropriate introduction to Ortega’s thought, as it explains the foundations of his philosophy in a very simple, clear and accessible way, linking them, moreover, to very relevant questions that are still the subject of intense debate today.

Navas Carralero M. [Навас Карралеро М.] Ortega Then and Now [Ортега тогда и сейчас] : An Introduction to Navigating the Foundations of His Philosophy [введение в изучение основ его философии] // Философия. Журнал Высшей школы экономики. — 2024. — Т. 8, № 4. — Р. 218–221.

МАРИЯ НАВАС КАРРАЛЕРО

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ОРТЕГА ТОГДА И СЕЙЧАС

ВВЕДЕНИЕ В ИЗУЧЕНИЕ ОСНОВ ЕГО ФИЛОСОФИИ

PEÑA C. LA ACTUALIDAD DE ORTEGA Y GASSET. — FLASH, 2022.

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MIGUEL CUENCA ARRIBAS*

A REFLECTION ON ORTEGA'S LANGUAGE, SILENCE AND THOUGHT**

MAPPING THE PHILOSOPHER'S PROPOSAL

BALAGUER GARCIA, E. 2023. *LOS LÍMITES DEL DECIR. RAZÓN HISTÓRICA Y LENGUAJE EN EL ÚLTIMO ORTEGA* [IN SPANISH]. MADRID: TECNOS

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Ortega himself recognises a turning point in his career when, in 1932, he proclaims in the *Prologue to an Edition of his Works* that he is about to embark on a "second navigation," which is distinguished, among other aspects, by the "silence" that the philosopher maintains throughout this period (or, at least, that he claims to maintain). In this book, Dr. Balaguer aims to trace a path through recurring themes that constantly come to the surface, and to examine the nature of that silence, if indeed it exists, by analysing Ortega's reflections on language. She aspires to show how Ortega demanded a "New Philology" in which he could express the vital and historical reason to which he devoted his entire career. The book under review aims to take up the exposition of this "New Philology," which Ortega never developed in a systematic way, but which is present throughout his writings. In the words of Balaguer:

This work challenges the assertion that Ortega no longer had anything to say after 1932 and embraces the idea that the New Philology allows us to read Ortega's publications during his exile with a liveliness that declares more than it silences, that says more than it keeps shut (Balaguer Garcia, 2023: 62).

The work is formally structured into a prologue and three chapters, which are further subdivided into epigraphs and sub-epigraphs which deal with the different themes that emerge throughout the research. Rather than a linear exposition, the narration goes through different topics relevant

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to the understanding of Ortega's thought. This structure allows the ideas around which the work is structured to appear constantly, and those above-mentioned ideas are thus stressed from different points. The question of whether this is due to the dispersed nature of the object of study (scattered throughout Ortega's texts over the years) or rather to the author's affinity with Ortega's methodology and style, is one that readers are to decide for themselves.

In any case, the prologue — entitled “*Western Man Expects Nothing from Literature*”: *Literature and Logos* — begins by analysing Ortega's reflection on literature, the existence of literary genres, and the capacity of literature to serve as a vehicle of knowledge. Balaguer elucidates how, in an increasingly disenchanted world, Ortega's philosophy breaks new ground with the assertion that fictions and metaphors allow us to expand reality and perceive what is latent in it. Consequently, literature should be understood as a “logos” capable of being a vehicle of knowledge. She states:

Fictions compensate for the finiteness of our existence, as they enable us to unfold our self in order to situate ourselves in other points of view from which to analyse and understand reality. Literature constitutes a wellspring for the broadening of our experience, and only that philosophy which takes this into account will be able to carry out its paidetical task (Balaguer Garcia, 2023: 24).

The first chapter — *Exile as Context* — continues the investigation, showing the ways in which metaphor (and genealogy) can achieve what conceptual history cannot: the revitalisation of language and the revelation of its meaning *in statu nascendi*. The author demonstrates how, despite his reputation as a literary figure, Ortega defends himself as a systematic philosopher, although his system is subterranean, akin to the iceberg in Hemingway's stories, as Balaguer tries to emphasize. Thus an Ortega who is both a philosopher and a sociologist is defended. As a philosopher, his primary concern is the exposition of vital and historical reason; as a sociologist, the tensions that exist between the individual and society. In this manner, we are presented with the fundamental elements of Ortega's system of thought, which were consistent throughout his early works. However, in his second navigation, these are reconfigured around the concept of life as radical reality and historical reason as the method of its study. The issue at hand is that

Ortega's true vocation was philosophy, yet this could not be exercised in isolation. [...] The philosophy to which Ortega was fatally destined was practical, vital, and historical, and was aimed to save that other thing, the very Other by antonomasia, which is given in life (ibid.: 49–50).

Balaguer analyses how, for Ortega, the philosopher is supposed to be in contact with his circumstances, with society. However, his task is seen as the opposite to that of the politician. The philosopher is compared to the prophet, since he tries to reveal a truth (*aletheia*) by questioning the beliefs (*doxa*) of his time. Thus philosophy is in essence *paradoxa*. In an ideal society, an agreement will be reached between the politician and the philosopher/prophet. Yet, in Ortega's time, the societal pact with philosophy had been broken, resulting in the philosopher experiencing an exile that Balaguer argues is existential, rather than political. Nevertheless, despite his withdrawal from political life (the roots of which she maintains predate 1932), the author asserts that Ortega frequently broke his silence and that, in truth, said silence never did occur.

The second chapter — *The New Philology* — seeks to reconstruct Ortega's reflections on language through an analysis of the various texts in which he discusses this topic. Although the philosopher's engagement with the philological sphere commenced during his formative years, it is in his second navigation when the "discovery of life as radical reality" and "historical reason" allowed him to propose the New Philology as an archaeology of speech. As such, his approach to text was based on a study of the author's biography, their social-historical context, and the etymology of words. Balaguer explains how Ortega, following Nietzsche, understands language as a fossilisation of a vital context. Every text is, in origin, a conversation. Therefore, the ability to read properly is not only about knowing what is being said, but also about understanding the text as part of the author's life and revealing its vital context. This is what it means to revitalize language, to show its meaning *in statu nascendi*. This leads to two conclusions. Firstly, that the desideratum of fully understanding the meaning of a text is unattainable, since the "saying" is unable to fully capture the essence it aims to convey, whether due to "deficiency" or "exuberance." Instead, it serves as a tool for attempting to do so (which the New Philology must be aware of and interpret accordingly). The second conclusion is that all acts of speech are accompanied by silence. In addition to the silence that arises from the "ineffable" (that of life which cannot be transmitted), there is also something "ineffated," that is to say, something which is taken for granted and which is not spoken about. These are beliefs, and language itself, in part, is constituted by those beliefs. As such, its customs and clichés can enslave thought. Consequently, the philosopher must seek a method of breaking the chains of usage, which Ortega finds in etymology. This allows us to transcend speech towards an original way of communicating.

As a result of these reflections, the second part of this chapter is devoted to comparing the linguistic proposals of Ortega's "New Philology" with relevant 20th-century authors. Thus, three sections are devoted to establishing Ortega's dialogues with Hans Gadamer (on hermeneutics); with Reinhart Koselleck (on conceptual history); and with Quentin Skinner (on intentionality). This highlights the lesser-known early contributions of the Spanish philosopher to the discipline.

Finally, in the concluding chapter — *Methodus vitae: Application of the Method of the New Philology* — Dr. Balaguer examines how Ortega employs the methodology discussed in the previous chapter in his "second navigation." Indeed, the return to the classics seeks to revitalize them, and such an enterprise can only be achieved if, by means of historical reason, they are understood in their vocation and circumstance. Ortega is able to engage in philosophical discourse with Cicero and Vives because he shares with them a vital tension: the necessity to engage in philosophy at a time when the relationship between the city and the philosopher is called into question. The author elucidates how Ortega is able to perceive himself reflected in them to the extent that they act as alter egos, with whom the philosopher is able to engage in discourse about his own time (in addition to the aforementioned Cicero and Vives, Goethe also proves to be of significant importance in this regard). The "existential exile" that was defended in the first chapter re-enters the scene here, and it is explained how

with all these references to the "History of Rome" Ortega did not want to show that the solution to the crisis of his time, a crisis of beliefs, lay in copying the Roman world. This would have been naïve. Rather, it lay in making transparent, in the light of narrative reason, which is historical, that the *libertas* is felt under the government of institutions capable of adapting and living up to the needs of the social collectivity (Balaguer Garcia, 2023: 209).

That is to say, Ortega perceives a crisis of beliefs in Europe at the time of his writing, which has resulted in the elimination of the Ciceronian "common ground" (of beliefs) that could previously be used to establish an agreement on divergences (of ideas). In his writings, he addresses this crisis and attempts to provide solutions to it. Thus there is not really a silence, Dr. Balaguer defends, in Ortega's "second navigation." Although his reflection departs from public life to rehearse philosophy in the study of the classics, it does not cease to be a vital and historical philosophy. This analysis concludes when Balaguer addresses Ortega's treatment of five fundamental concepts for understanding this issue. First, *concordia* and *libertas*, which are

essential elements in Cicero's society, and central to Ortega's late proposal of liberalism. Thirdly, *humanitas*, the understanding of humanism as an integral study of the human being (which necessarily involves reflection on language, as evidenced by the fact that the humanists called themselves "grammarians") in their circumstances, which lay behind his intentions in the Instituto de Humanidades. Fourthly, "vocation," as opposed to the concept of "careers" and as a fundamental element in understanding the vicissitudes of people's lives. Finally, "scholasticism," as opposed to philosophy, insofar as the former provides inherited answers to problems that are not lived (while the latter aims to be paradoxical, i. e. "tradition of intradition," and to reflect from life experience).

In conclusion, the book is able to trace a coherent route through Ortega's mature work through the concepts of "New Philology" and "historical reason." In addition to the author's knowledge and handling of Ortega's various works, these are continually put in relation to other philosophers (the aforementioned Gadamer, Koselleck and Skinner, but also Foucault, Benjamin, Weber, Strauss, Zweig, etc.) in order to stimulate reflection on current problems and to defend the validity and productivity of the Ortegaian proposal, despite its many silences and incompleteness. It is argued that this proposal is nonetheless a lively and stimulating one.

Ciencia Arribas M. [Куэнка Аррибас М.] A Reflection on Ortega's Language, Silence and Thought [Размышление над языком, молчанием и мыслью Ортеги] : Mapping the Philosopher's Proposal [маршрут вклада философа] // Философия. Журнал Высшей школы экономики. — 2024. — Т. 8, № 4. — Р. 222–226.

МИГЕЛЬ КУЭНКА АРРИВАС

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РАЗМЫШЛЕНИЕ НАД ЯЗЫКОМ, МОЛЧАНИЕМ
И МЫСЛЬЮ ОРТЕГИ

МАРШРУТ ВКЛАДА ФИЛОСОФА

BALAGUER GARCIA E. LOS LÍMITES DEL DECIR. RAZÓN HISTÓRICA Y LENGUAJE EN EL ÚLTIMO ORTEGA. — MADRID : TECNOS, 2023.

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RUBÉN ÁLVAREZ VALLEJO*

IDEAS ORGANIZED**

FOUR STAGES IN THE LIFE AND WORK OF ORTEGA Y GASSET

TALTAVULL, J. B. 2023. *ESPAÑA COMO VOCACIÓN Y CIRCUNSTANCIA. LA IDEA DE NACIÓN EN EL PENSAMIENTO Y LA ACCIÓN POLÍTICA DE JOSÉ ORTEGA Y GASSET* [IN SPANISH]. MADRID: DYKINSON

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In *Spain as Vocation and Circumstance: The Idea of Nation in the Thought and Political Action of José Ortega y Gasset*, Bagur Taltavull delves into the concept of nationhood that Ortega held, a factor that was central to his thinking from a very young age. The author elaborates on how Ortega understood philosophy as the very essence of his existence. Through his work, he demonstrated that life had no meaning outside of philosophy. By applying philosophy to Spanish politics and culture, he transformed his perspective on the circumstances of his country.

Ortega, raised in a family where liberalism and regenerationism instilled a strong civic notion of the nation, lived through the “Disaster of 1898”, an event that deeply influenced his work. He later confessed, and his writings attest to it, that this event was pivotal in shaping both his identity and his concept of nationhood.

Taltavull also examines Ortega’s German influences, noting that the ideas of Nietzsche and Kant left a strong impression on him during his studies in Leipzig and Berlin. However, nihilist thinking failed to fully persuade him, as Ortega consistently prioritized the power of reason. Indeed, he later advised Unamuno to avoid the author of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.

Among the intellectual currents that sparked Ortega’s interest, regenerationism stands out. While authors like Morote and Picavea had already addressed the political and social problems of the nation, it was Joaquín Costa’s ideas that profoundly impacted Ortega. Specifically, Costa’s vision of Spain (and his proposals to address the nation’s decline) resonated

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deeply, as did his essential dualities: the elite and the masses as the sole components of the nation, and the contrast between de facto politics and politics grounded in principle.

The historian also explores Ortega's ties with certain members of the Generation of '98. Although he had productive discussions with Baroja, Unamuno, and Azorín, Ortega's ideas did not always align perfectly with those of these writers. In fact, he once accused Azorín of hypocrisy, as Azorín's actions within society seemed inconsistent with the ideals he espoused in his writings. It was during this period that Ortega declared the Europeanization of Spain to be a poor idea, arguing instead for a focus on the "Hispanization" of the country. However, the precise meaning of "Hispanizing" the nation remains ambiguous.

Taltavull meticulously explains how the works of other contemporary authors planted seeds in Ortega's mind. The texts he read in his youth provided foundational notions for developing his concept of Spain, such as the existing social divisions between masses and elites or the internal debate about reconciling individualism with belief in the national spirit.

Ortega moved to Germany in search of answers for his dream of national regeneration. He recognized that science, particularly through the University of Berlin, had been the key to Germany's own regeneration. He claimed that Germany was far more advanced culturally than Spain and quickly understood that German society was deeply committed to identifying and pursuing its ideals. Gradually, Ortega began to acknowledge Spain's inferiority compared to Germany.

He initially idolized German life, which he described as perfect, though he later criticized it for an excessive nationalism that brought negative consequences for the nation. What may seem like mere comparisons with his homeland was actually Ortega's way of gathering a set of tools to apply those same key factors in Spain. His fixation on German culture led him to advocate for educational reform in Spain, exemplified in his work *La Universidad española y alemana*, published in six installments in *El Imparcial*. Through this text, he denounced Spain's disregard for pedagogy, which he viewed not as a circumstantial issue but as the result of centuries of neglecting this vital task.

Regarding religion, Taltavull explains how Ortega advocated for secular education in Spain, following the French model. This stance drew him into Spain's heated debates, where he clarified that a secular school system did not mean excluding religious education. As he later elaborated, likely

influenced by Neo-Kantian thought, a secular nation did not equate to collective avoidance of religion but rather to the abandonment of ecclesiastical dominance.

Ortega's writings on Spain are inseparable from references to culture and science. He argued that Spain needed to be viewed from a European perspective — not by abandoning its own identity but by organizing the nation culturally and avoiding total imitation of other European countries. In fact, he maintained that Spain's regeneration through a focus on culture and science could significantly contribute to the European continent.

Another highlight of Taltavull's essay is the figure of Cervantes as a paradigm of the philosophy Ortega championed. In *Meditations on Quixote*, Ortega explores themes such as reason and love in Spanish society, united under the concept of *amor intellectualis*, which for him merges subject and object. He also addresses hatred, which he blames for the nation's disunity. Ortega firmly believed that Spain's "cancer" was the resentment and discord among its citizens, a topic he revisits and elaborates upon in *Invertebrate Spain*.

Following the influence of certain European models, Ortega also had the opportunity to visit Argentina on several occasions. The Argentina he encountered in 1916 closely resembled the political ideal he envisioned for Spain. This was the result of measures implemented by the Unión Cívica Nacional under Yrigoyen's leadership. Both Ortegas (his father accompanied him) leveraged their interest in Argentine politics to strengthen cultural ties between the two countries and highlight Spain's importance in South America.

The impact of the Great War also appears throughout Ortega's work, as it coincided with the publication of *Meditations on Quixote* in Spain. Ortega would later state, in 1918, that the Great War had been a missed opportunity to reorient Spain's politics toward becoming a more united nation. He lamented that failing to seize this moment led to a clear division. This division, as he described it, was between a right-wing Spain and a left-wing Spain, something that only served to hinder the nation's progress.

Taltavull also highlights the importance Ortega places on literature (*Don Quixote of La Mancha*), architecture (*El Escorial*), and the shaping of the landscape. Ortega argued that these elements together should be capable of rectifying the Spanish character. His idea of a nation was shaped through these cultural, artistic, and social elements, as detailed in *Meditations on Quixote*.

Turning to *Invertebrate Spain*, it is notable that Ortega was aware of the lack of written texts by historians about the nation's past, which he saw as essential for a better understanding of the present. In the prologue to the fourth edition of *Invertebrate Spain*, he asserted that true historians would eventually write such books. Although not a historian himself, Ortega dared to write a text about Spain's destiny, as he believed it was necessary for his personal life; he could not avoid feeling tied to the country in which he lived.

It is also important to note a turning point in Ortega's political life starting in 1930, when he became involved in pro-Republican activism. Although he supported these ideas, he was convinced that the Republic would require a disciplined party, capable of standing up to other political factions. Here, he introduces the concept of "excellent men," individuals who must be sought out and selected to excel in their fields and transform the nation's spirit on a political level.

Regarding what the dictatorship meant for Spain, Ortega highlights two essential personal factors: the rise of his pessimistic feelings toward Spain, which caused him real anguish, and the growing difficulty of acting from within. These circumstances led him to consider traveling to other places, such as Paris, Cuba, or Venezuela, where he could work on and disseminate his ideas.

We can affirm that Taltavull's text is comprehensive, as it meticulously examines Ortega's four stages: his youth, his works influenced by Neo-Kantian philosophy, his turn to phenomenology, and finally, the phase shaped by historical reason. While these stages cannot all be pinpointed to specific dates, there are texts that serve as markers of key transitions. Furthermore, it is not only Ortega's changing perspective on Spain that defines these stages, but also his shifting influences and the various experiences he underwent throughout his life.

Ultimately, the foundational vectors of Ortega's work are his theories about the idea of the nation, his vision of humanity, and his conviction that politics is in constant evolution. His books, writings, and interviews collectively embody these ideas. They describe the nation as a mass guided by a select few individuals. They stress the importance of having a compelling project for shared national life to ensure stability. Above all, they aim to bring a divided nation closer together. These are ideas that sought, above all else, to give Spain structure.

Álvarez Vallejo R. [Альварес Вальехо Р.] Ideas Organized [Упорядоченные идеи] : Four Stages in the Life and Work of Ortega y Gasset [четыре этапа в жизни и творчестве Ортеги-и-Гассета] // Философия. Журнал Высшей школы экономики. — 2024. — Т. 8, № 4. — P. 227–231.

РУБЕН АЛЬВАРЕС ВАЛЬЕХО
СТУДЕНТ,
КОМПЛУТЕНСКИЙ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ МАДРИДА (МАДРИД)

УПОРЯДОЧЕННЫЕ ИДЕИ

ЧЕТЫРЕ ЭТАПА В ЖИЗНИ И ТВОРЧЕСТВЕ ОРТЕГИ-И-ГАССЕТА

TALTAVULL J. B. ESPAÑA COMO VOCACIÓN Y CIRCUNSTANCIA. LA IDEA DE NACIÓN EN EL PENSAMIENTO Y LA ACCIÓN POLÍTICA DE JOSÉ ORTEGA Y GASSET. — MADRID : DYKINSON, 2023.

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Del Mar Blasco Lorenzo, M. 2024. "Context, Vision and Legacy : Five Approaches to Understanding Ortega's Work, Life and Influence" [in English]. *Filosofiya. Zhurnal Vysshey shkoly ekonomiki [Philosophy. Journal of the Higher School of Economics]* 8 (4), 232–236.

MARÍA DEL MAR BLASCO LORENZO*

CONTEXT, VISION AND LEGACY**

FIVE APPROACHES TO UNDERSTANDING ORTEGA'S WORK, LIFE
AND INFLUENCE

FRANCISCO, A., ED. 2023. *ORTEGA Y GASSET, SU VISIÓN DE ESPAÑA [IN SPANISH]*. MADRID:
SEKOTIA

DOI: 10.17323/2587-8719-2024-4-232-236.

The present work is a collection of chapters written by different authors and coordinated by Cardells-Martí, that address the vision of Spain presented by José Ortega y Gasset and reflected in the *Manual para estudiantes de español de las secciones bilingües*, published by Spain's Ministry of Education, Culture, and Sports. The book's content is divided, besides the introduction, into five parts, which cover the monarchy, the "Reconquista," America, the Church, and Ortega's relationship with history in general and within the context in which he lived. The various authors and chapters reflect different concerns and objectives, so that, while some parts seek to identify the historical causes of certain claims made by Ortega, others conduct a historical review to verify or refute certain ideas presented by both Ortega and the aforementioned manual.

In the introduction, Cardells-Martí highlights *España Invertebrada* as the work that inspires the studies compiled in this volume. The book's coordinator proposes reading through Ortega's work from its context, namely, the fall of the Spanish Empire, the author's motivations and the influence all this has had on subsequent historiography. To this end, Cardells-Martí dedicates the first pages to detailing the historical moment and national sentiment inherited by Ortega, the goals he proposed that make his vision original, and the legacy he left for subsequent generations, concretely materialized in the *Manual para estudiantes de español de las secciones bilingües*. The

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second part of the introduction briefly introduces the chapters that make up the book and their respective authors.

The first chapter, written by professors María and Laura Lara Martínez, addresses the monarchy as it appears in *España Invertebrada*. This text starts from Ortega's generally negative view on monarchy, specifically regarding the Visigoths, the process known as the "Reconquista," the unification of Spain under the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, the Catholic Monarchs, and the decline of the Spanish Empire after the death of Philip II. According to the authors, Ortega identifies a perpetual decline in the nation's formation process, which in many ways is explained by the absence of conscious and leading minorities. While disagreeing with this, the researchers dedicate a great part of the chapter to reviewing the entire history of the Spanish monarchy (from King Argantonio to the fall of Franco's dictatorship) and pointing out those historical facts that either refine Ortega's assertions or show them to be uncertain. In the chapter's conclusion, the authors explain in what way they believe there have indeed been select minorities in Spain and how certain ideas of Ortega, such as the role of "the people" in the constitution of Spain and the colonization of America, are historically questionable. As a final point of reflection, the authors analyze the influence that Ortega's thoughts and views on the monarchy have had on later historic texts, specifically the *Manual para estudiantes de español de las secciones bilingües*.

Cardells-Martí is the author of the second chapter, dedicated to the "Reconquista" and the Spanish identity. The very concept of "Reconquista" is presented by the author as somewhat ambiguous and one that has generated a long historical debate, in which Ortega y Gasset participated. The chapter comprises analyses of the different positions that have been defended on this subject from the late 19th century through the 20th century. Ortega's stance is explained as a reactive response to Modesto Lafuente, whose historical vision had become the status quo: while Lafuente saw the Visigoths as the true origin of the people of Spain and Islam as "the others" or the enemy that was heroically expelled, for Ortega, the reconquest is a project led by Castile that fails, as it does not achieve true unity, setting a tone of mediocrity for the rest of Spain's history. In addition to Modesto Lafuente, the text discusses the debate between Américo Castro and Claudio Sánchez Albornoz, that is, between understanding Spanish identity as a Judeo-Christian-Islamic multiculturalism or as essentially Christian-Roman. Cardells-Martí takes a historical-causal approach in exploring the different ideas that arise when explaining the Reconquista and dedicates much of the chapter to exposing

the elements that lead Ortega to take his position (not only the Spanish context but also the significant influence German thought had on him). This, however, does not prevent the author from pointing out those of Ortega's claims that have been questioned, as well as the weak points in the arguments of the aforementioned authors. As in the previous chapter, the influence of Ortega's thought on the *Manual para estudiantes de español de las secciones bilingües* is examined, particularly in its explanation of major processes of change as the result of tension between the masses and the ruling minority. Additionally, it is noted that there is no section specifically dedicated to the reconquest in the text, and that there is a notable historical imbalance, which the author even accuses of being an attempt to conceal reality.

The third chapter focuses on the relationship between Ortega and America. After presenting the vision of America as a potential future paradise that prevailed in Europe during the 19th century, Montojo Sánchez details the four trips Ortega made to America and his view of the continent before, during, and after those trips. According to the author, Ortega showed little interest in America until his first trip to Argentina, where he felt intellectually supported and acknowledged. Beyond the personal details of his travels, Ortega identifies the colonization of America as the great "popular" achievement of the Spanish nation, which, however, did not come to fruition due to the lack of a common project and select minorities. The author briefly outlines the sections of *España invertebrada* where Ortega mentions America, its constitution, and its relationship with Europe. Once again, the chapter concludes with a reference to the *Manual para estudiantes de español de las secciones bilingües*, which, as the author stresses, contrasts with Ortega's vision, as America and Hispanic-American history are treated sparsely and superficially in the manual.

In the fourth chapter, Glicero Conde Mora analyzes the relationship between Ortega and the Church and religion. The author approaches this topic from a biographical perspective, structuring the chapter around key moments in Ortega y Gasset's life that explain his relationship with the Church and Christianity: it is noted that Ortega's father had distanced himself from religious practice, and thus his son inherited and maintained this same stance despite being educated in Catholic schools. Much of the chapter's conclusion is devoted to the death of Ortega, about which there are two main versions: one stating that he died hugging a crucifix and praying and another denying it. Above all, the chapter aims to show that, although Ortega y Gasset was not a believer, his thought and writings neither invite nor lead to a theoretical rejection of God or anti-clericalism. On one hand,

Ortega seems to approach religion from a purely sociological perspective, examining the historical approaches and departures the masses have had throughout European history. On the other hand, the author refers to the Second Republic and Ortega's denunciation of the anti-clerical violence to argue that Ortega had nothing against ecclesiastical institutions. After briefly mentioning the relationship between Ortega and Herrera Oria, the author concludes by aligning himself with Julián Marías in asserting that there is nothing in Ortega's thought that is incompatible with Catholicism.

In the final chapter, written by Andrés-Gallego, the relationship between Ortega and history is analyzed, understanding this relationship in a broad sense. In the opening lines, the author expresses a desire to understand not so much Ortega's ideas, as the motivations he had for writing *España invertebrada*. Starting from certain themes, such as the German influence on Ortega's thought, the nation's decline, his negative view of medieval Spain, and the supposed elitism of the philosopher, Andrés-Gallego revisits many of the most important episodes in European history. The chapter is largely devoted to explaining certain historical realities that occurred before and during Ortega's intellectual agency and that explain, to a greater or lesser extent, certain ideas that appear in his texts.

As outlined, the volume written by various authors offers a multidimensional exploration of José Ortega y Gasset's thought and his vision of Spain, addressing from different perspectives his philosophical, political, and cultural conception of the country. Throughout the various essays, the authors analyze Ortega's influence on the construction of a modern Spanish identity, his critique of the masses, and his interpretation of Spain's past and present. Key aspects of his work, such as *España invertebrada*, are also discussed, where Ortega highlights the structural problems of the nation and their possible solutions from a philosophical point of view. However, the different perspectives, objectives, and approaches of the authors result in a certain lack of coherence and cohesion. While some essays focus more on philosophical aspects, others address political, historical, and biographical issues, without a clear unifying thread. This disparity of approaches makes for a fragmented analysis and hinders a coherent reading.

Del Mar Blasco Lorenzo M. [Дель Мар Бласко Лоренцо М.] Context, Vision and Legacy [Контекст, видение и наследие] : Five Approaches to Understanding Ortega's Work, Life and Influence [пять подходов к пониманию творчества, жизни и влияния Ортеги] // Философия. Журнал Высшей школы экономики. — 2024. — Т. 8, № 4. — Р. 232–236.

МАРИЯ ДЕЛЬ МАР БЛАСКО ЛОРЕНЦО

СТУДЕНТ,

КОМПЛУТЕНСКИЙ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ МАДРИДА (МАДРИД)

КОНТЕКСТ, ВИДЕНИЕ И НАСЛЕДИЕ

ПЯТЬ ПОДХОДОВ К ПОНИМАНИЮ ТВОРЧЕСТВА, ЖИЗНИ
И ВЛИЯНИЯ ОРТЕГИ

ORTEGA Y GASSET, SU VISIÓN DE ESPAÑA / ED. POR A. FRANCISCO. — MADRID : SEKOTIA,
2023.

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Expósito Laguna, L. 2024. "On the Philosopher Seeking a Cure : Understanding 20th Century Spain through a Symbiosis of History and Ortega's Philosophy" [in English]. *Filosofiya. Zhurnal Vysshey shkoly ekonomiki [Philosophy. Journal of the Higher School of Economics]* 8 (4), 237–240.

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.

Expósito Laguna L. [Экспосито Лагуна Л.] On the Philosopher Seeking a Cure [О философе, ищущем лекарство] : Understanding 20th Century Spain through a Symbiosis of History and Ortega's Philosophy [понимание Испании XX века через симбиоз истории и философии Ортеги] // Философия. Журнал Высшей школы экономики. — 2024. — Т. 8, № 4. — Р. 237–240.

ЛАУРА ЭКСПОСИТО ЛАГУНА

СТУДЕНТ,

МАДРИДСКИЙ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ КАРЛОСА III (МАДРИД)

О ФИЛОСОФЕ, ИЩУЩЕМ ЛЕКАРСТВО

ПОНИМАНИЕ ИСПАНИИ XX ВЕКА ЧЕРЕЗ СИМБИОЗ ИСТОРИИ И

ФИЛОСОФИИ ОРТЕГИ

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

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Valdivia Terrazas, J. N. 2024. "The Main Narratives of a Search for Truth : A Great Thinker's Political and Historical Context" [in English]. *Filosofiya. Zhurnal Vysshey shkoly ekonomiki* [*Philosophy. Journal of the Higher School of Economics*] 8 (4), 241–245.

JUDITH NICOLE VALDIVIA TERRAZAS*

THE MAIN NARRATIVES OF A SEARCH FOR TRUTH**

A GREAT THINKER'S POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

ZAMORA BONILLA, J. 2022. *ORTEGA Y GASSET: LA AVENTURA DE LA VERDAD* [IN SPANISH].
BARCELONA: SHACKLETON BOOKS

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In this book written by Javier Zamora Bonilla we are presented with an overview of the life and works of Ortega y Gasset. Through a biographical approach, Bonilla manages to show Ortega's context, which was mainly political, and how deeply it influenced all his writings.

Ortega was born into a wealthy family which owned an ideologically liberal newspaper. From a young age he seemed interested in searching for truth, an academic type of person. After some intellectual traveling in search of knowledge and, in a way, finding his own path, he leaned towards being a philosopher.

For the sake of a better explanation of Ortega's philosophy, Bonilla classifies Ortega's thinking into four main aspects: the pursuit of understanding the human being (the "I" and its circumstance), the analysis of the historical crisis (which involves the context), the motif concerning Europe (in earlier years he wanted Spain to be more like Europe, but afterwards he notices the european crisis and talks about it), and the quest he worked at in making an impact on other intellectuals (his main pursuit after noticing the crisis in Europe and Spain was to shape influential figures into the type of people that could solve the problem).

After establishing that division, Bonilla narrates Ortega's life. As mentioned before, the latter traveled a lot in his search for knowledge. Having studied in Germany from the most relevant philosophers, after attaining

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a strong academic foundation he came back to Spain and began publishing in the newspaper (mainly political articles) and even speaking at important conferences. In 1914, he published one of his most famous books, *Meditaciones del Quijote*, which at first glance may seem merely about novels and esthetics, but actually has an ideological background.

In the *Meditación Primera* (the first part of the book), Ortega emphasizes the relevance of the novel and also the cervantism over the Quijotism (which other authors like Unamuno write about). For Ortega, *El Quijote* sets an example of a novel capable of making an atemporal present, from which we can help ourselves to understand life and the human being. From Ortega's point of view, Cervantes' style, cervantism, was able to represent the surface and, at the same time, the depth.

At that point Bonilla introduces one of the most relevant topics in Ortega's thinking, "I am I and my circumstance, and if I don't save it, I don't save myself". Bonilla explains how the real hero for Ortega is the human being that is trying to accomplish his own "I" inside its own circumstance (like Quijote is doing). Ortega's understanding of the human being is inseparable from its circumstances, an "I" without circumstance does not make any sense, because no one can exist without any circumstance.

We have to keep in mind that Ortega's work is very consistent, so, in some way, all his books are concordant. Bonilla is able to connect Ortega's life with his work, and he also establishes some connections between those of his books that were published in different years. So, after talking about *Meditaciones del Quijote* and more narration of Ortega's life, the author talks about *España Invertebrada*, keeping in mind that "I am I and my circumstance" and cervantism are both concepts that will be key to Ortega for solving the spanish political situation.

Ortega attempts to conduct an analysis of Spain to understand the crisis it is going through. In this endeavor he goes back to Spain's (and also Europe's) past. Ortega highlights how important the history, the circumstance of the country are to understanding a nation, and also that the most worrying problems for Spain are common tendencies in Europe. At this point Ortega decides that Spain can no longer be Europe's mirror.

Since Europe ceases to be a reference for Spain in moving forward, Ortega takes a rationalist and vitalist standpoint (both were really important for Ortega, to him it was key to look at Spain from a vitalist perspective, but without leaving out rationalism) to look for a solution to the spanish crisis. While following this point of view, Ortega decides to highlight the concept of culture, generation and sensitivity.

Culture for Ortega is understood as the answer that different civilizations have been giving at different times to their own periodical issues. Ortega's point is that it is important to keep in mind the relevance of the history of human beings not only as individuals, but also as a community.

Generation, understood as a social body made out of a mass and a minority, with a determined trajectory, is key for understanding historical development.

Ortega notices how each generation lived in a determined point of their own culture, this fact is what makes each generation develop a different *sensitivity*. Ortega explains how every new generation is formed by what they have received from the past, but also, new ideas they develop by themselves. The *sensitivity* each generation has is different from the previous ones, which means their perception is completely new.

The key to understanding quick generational changes is not only history as a temporal line of important events, but also history as the development of culture. Ortega looks for a better understanding of generations so we are able to predict, at least to some extent, how the human mindset is going to evolve.

When Ortega was in the process of understanding the human being in mass society so he could better get to know the new *sensitivity* that was formed (he writes and talks a lot about it and even focuses on avant-garde art), Spain was going through a dictatorship which eventually forced him to leave the country.

The Civil War in Spain made Ortega notice he was in danger no matter which side he took, so he decided to leave the country and go to France. Ortega's mindset did not fully correspond with neither of the conflicted ideologies, as he was against fascism but he did not completely agree with the anti fascists.

Even outside the country, Ortega kept track of the situation in Spain, he even wrote about Unamuno when he was informed about his death. Despite the differences he used to have with Unamuno, Ortega praised him as an intellectual and took the chance to write about the figure of the intellectual as the type of person that needs to keep up on the important questions not because of egoism, but out of love.

Those times were really unstable and difficult for Ortega, aside from having to be in exile, he even fell ill and had to see how his two sons went to war as they decided to fight for Franco. The situation in Spain did not seem to get any better and he and his family (his wife and daughter) were

worried that the war would propagate to France, so they left and went even further, this time to Argentina.

Even in Argentina Ortega was really worried about what was happening in Spain and in Europe and thought that the intellectuals were being muted by the guns, which was a huge problem. Ortega kept at his political tasks of speaking at conferences and writing.

In 1942 Ortega went to Lisboa with his wife, since it would be possible for them to see their sons there from time to time. In Portugal he kept writing and imparting classes as he also used to do in Buenos Aires. He kept persevering on the idea of how the intellectuals remained mostly unheard. Ortega was very concerned with the international situation.

After three years Ortega finally came back to Spain, where he continued being a political figure. He was very determined to talk about communism and fascism, and, of course, about what had been happening to Spain. It was really important to Ortega to teach and shape the young intellectuals into better figures that would help the country, and so he did until he got cancer and died in 1955.

To sum up, this book narrates Ortega's persistent and political life while explaining his philosophy, even though Bonilla does not really delve deep into philosophical questions (the book is mostly historical and political rather than purely philosophical). He also provides a list of Ortega's most important works with their date of publishing, abstracts, and even a chronology which is helpful in keeping track of not only the main events in Ortega's life, but also of the important happenings that affected him (from historical episodes to writings that were related to him).

Valdivia Terrazas J. N. [Вальдивия Террасас Дж. Н.] The Main Narratives of a Search for Truth [Основные нарративы поиска истины] : A Great Thinker's Political and Historical Context [политический и исторический контекст великого мыслителя] // Философия. Журнал Высшей школы экономики. — 2024. — Т. 8, № 4. — Р. 241–245.

ДЖУДИТ НИКОЛЬ ВАЛЬДИВИЯ ТЕРРАСАС
СТУДЕНТ,
КОМПЛУТЕНСКИЙ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ МАДРИДА (МАДРИД)

ОСНОВНЫЕ НАРРАТИВЫ ПОИСКА ИСТИНЫ

ПОЛИТИЧЕСКИЙ И ИСТОРИЧЕСКИЙ КОНТЕКСТ ВЕЛИКОГО МЫСЛИТЕЛЯ

ZAMORA BONILLA J. ORTEGA Y GASSET : LA AVENTURA DE LA VERDAD. — BARCELONA :
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DANIIL LAVRISCHEV*

AN AMBIVALENCE EMBODIED**

VIRTUE AND VICE IN CONSTRUCTING A MODERN SCIENCE ETHOS

KASAVIN, I. T., AND A. O. KOSTINA. 2024. *EPISTEMOLOGIYA DOBRODETELEY [VIRTUE EPISTEMOLOGY]: TSENNOSTNO-NORMATIVNYY OBRAZ SUB''YEKTA POZNANIYA [VALUE-NORMATIVE IMAGE OF COGNITIVE AGENT]* [IN RUSSIAN]. MOSKVA [MOSCOW] AND SANKT-PETERBURG [SAINT PETERSBURG]: TSENTR GUMANITARNYKH INITSIIATIV [CENTRE OF HUMANITIES ENTERPRISE PUBLISHING]

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Contemporary Western epistemology possesses, to a great extent, the normative trend. The major manifestation of such a tendency is a branch called *virtue epistemology* (VE). Born in A. Goldman's works (Goldman, 1979) as one of the possible solutions to Gettier's problem (Gettier, 1963), VE was based on the idea that the reliability of justification lies in one's cognitive processes, namely in perception and apperception. These processes Goldman called *virtues*, because they (a) belong to an individual; (b) provide more knowledge than ignorance (namely, are *reliable*); (c) may have normative aspect (being good or bad for an agent) derived from their desirability to successfully obtain knowledge. That was the first, very primitive theory, which had more in common with XVII century empiricists than with contemporary epistemology. However, the idea of agent-based normative epistemology has appeared to be rather attractive, and nowadays VE is one of the major trends in both Western and Russian theory of knowledge. Virtue theorists are now creating a mainstream in epistemology, writing guidebooks and overviews in the field of cognition (Dancy, Sosa & Steup, eds., 2010; Greco, 2010; Sosa, 2017). In Russia there are a vast number of papers, yet only a few full-scale monographies on VE. Apparently, there is only the book by A. Karimov (Karimov, 2019), which provides a general overview of authors, topics and problems in VE. The recent

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work *Virtue Epistemology: Value-normative Image of Cognitive Agent*¹ by I. Kasavin and A. Kostina seems to be the second solid reach for the topic in book form; that is why this review exists.

The monograph reviewed is devoted to the subject of science ethics and epistemological questions of vices and virtues of the mind. Namely, it is about virtue epistemology, as the title says, and how this trend may assist in constructing a better modern scientific ethos. It is worth noticing that the book is a result of I. Kasavin and A. Kostina's long-years' of work, previously published in well-known academic journals. However, the monograph is a complex reach for the subject, uniting and somewhat expanding the scale and scope of the work previously done.

The monograph addresses several common and newsworthy issues in the field of social epistemology of science. First of all, the authors describe the aim of their enterprise as "providing new approaches in designing philosophical foundations for modern science ethics" (Kasavin & Kostina, 2024: 7). The idea of a crisis in how science ethics functions and to whose benefit it does serve is a part of the current mainstream in the social and philosophical study of science. The result of the book is declared to be "the new science ethos, which allows to unite the idea of specific status for scientific knowledge and an image of science as common social good" (ibid.). To achieve their goals, the authors use methodology provided by virtue epistemology, which, once again, puts them into the mainstream in contemporary epistemology. Namely, they are incorporating general terms (virtue, vice, character qualities, etc.) and methodological groundings (normativity, prescriptivism, etc.) to their approach in designing science ethics (or ethos).

To understand the authors' ideas, one would need to know that VE is generally described as two separate "branches": reliabilism and responsibilism. The adherents of the former (E. Sosa, J. Greco, etc.) stick to Goldman's general point that our knowledge is based on proper use of proper, reliable methods. They are expanding the reliabilist theory with some additions, both to the understanding of what we call "reliable process" and what the "proper use" of such processes may be (some of these features are described further). Proponents of responsibilism (Code, 1984; Zagzebski, 1996) suggest a more Aristotelian (however, there is really more of A. MacIntyre in their works) approach to what intellectual virtues and vices are. They try to give new

¹Russian: "Эпистемология добродетелей: ценностно-нормативный образ субъекта познания".

life to the Aristotelian term “intellectual (*dianoetic*) virtue,” which describes not the cognitive process itself, but the character quality that makes the reliability of the process possible. However, responsibilists mainly focus on four cardinal virtues from the ethics, adding to them the “intellectual” annex: “intellectual” fortitude, “intellectual” temperance, “intellectual” justice, and prudence (some authors add to them “intellectual” autonomy and dianoetic virtue of *phronesis*).

It is important that the authors of the monograph, being aware of the presented distinction, try to separate from it and do not lean towards either reliabilism, or responsibilism. Through the criticism of both “branches,” the authors try to justify their own path to deal with the matters of virtues and vices. What they came to at the end of their journey is one of the major questions of the review.

One more preparatory comment is required. Through the monograph, the authors tend to use the terms “ethics” and “ethos” as synonyms in the field of science. Whilst the distinction is present—“ethics” is about how one does not create another atomic bomb and “ethos” is about how one conducts effective research,—through the monograph it becomes clear that mainly (yet not completely) the authors favour the “ethos” sense for both terms. This decision seems rather consistent, since VE methodology is conjugated with the process of obtaining knowledge and not with questions of humanism or ethical evaluation of animal tests. In the review I will follow the authors and use both words in the sense of “regulations of scientific search” as well.

The book is divided into 4 sections with 12 chapters. The first section examines “key questions, related to the elaboration of both external and internal science ethos” (Kasavin & Kostina, 2024: 11) The second section is a closer look into the essence of intellectual virtues in their relation to the aims and methods of science. The third section describes what intellectual fortitude is in detail, its relation to the freedom of the researcher, and its role in the process of “doing science.” The fourth section reveals the authors’ view on authorship in science and how the different virtues and vices of an author become evident in the scientific community. I am going to set my course through the “chapters” to conclude with both the section’s key points and those of the monograph.

The first three chapters immerse the reader into the problematics of science ethics. Namely, they are describing the criticism addressed to the contemporary view on the structure and logic of knowledge production and to the image of a scientist. In the first and second chapters one may find an overview of the strong and fundamental ambiguity and blurriness of the rules

and “laws” in the social analysis of the scientific community. The authors argue that many attempts to examine science through the Pareto principle or any normative restrictions (such as Mertonian norms) are insufficient to provide an adequate and promising theory of scientific normativity. E. g., if one (let us say, a policymaker) sees the scientific community as 20% effective researchers and 80% useless “drones,” she might think of cutting down the financing to stimulate competitiveness. However, the authors say, there is a major, yet non-obvious contribution of these 80% — namely, the popularization, teaching, administrating, etc. is done by these people who remain unknown for their research. Similarly unknown are the people who work for the success of the “scientific heroes,” who receive all the glory for the discoveries. And these “heroes” barely follow the strict rules of ethos or normativity — so one may consider common vices (for example, blind commitment to one’s own revolutionary ideas) as a virtue in some cases. That is why the simple view of science as a competitive sphere with solid ethical regulations is to be rejected.

Besides these critical statements, the authors make several positive assertions, pointing out the relevance and importance of the scientific community for the normal and healthy function of all of society. Science is said to be a place for common collaboration and communication. Therefore, the whole society can be consolidated and constructed with a glance back on the scientific community. I shall add there, that these theses are strongly and strictly connected to the recent works of I. Kasavin in correspondence with V. Porus (Porus, 2023; Porus, 2024), whose works investigate the problem of political agency of the scientific community and its role in decision making. One may find further elaboration of the chapter’s issues in these papers, since it is mainly the mottos and watchwords that are presented in the monograph.

The third chapter describes the possible solution of the problems outlined earlier by the means of VE. The authors briefly examine the two branches — reliabilism and responsibilism — and address their critique based on works by M. Slote. This part is strictly connected to chapter 2, where the authors were describing the insufficiency of VE for providing a strict distinction between virtues and vices. One may ask, why then use such a methodology; and the authors answer: because mainly “clear” reliabilism and responsibilism are insufficient. However, they argue, there are more complex and modern approaches to the problem of intellectual virtuousness, such as that of M. Slote and H. Battaly. Namely, the authors describe Slote’s idea of sentimentalism and Battaly’s personalism. The former is a variation of reliabilism, where the ability to perceive and the ability of induction are

the core virtues. The latter is a kind of “compromise theory,” combining both virtues for low-grade (e. g. perceptive) and high-grade (e. g. scientific) knowledge. I may only suggest further reading (such as the aforementioned monograph by Karimov) to deepen the understanding of these theories, since the chapter is not as long as one may desire. Also, I shall note that the information from this chapter is barely mentioned in the other parts of the monograph, yet still provides consistent authors’ opinions on how VE works.

So, from the first section one may understand the fundamental insufficiency and inadequacy of the conventional and common view on scientific normativity both from the social and ethical perspectives. Through this idea the authors justify their niche and work on the subject and the approach to a more detailed view on specific virtues and topics of their interest. Namely, the next chapters are devoted to authors’ description of virtuousness.

In section 2 the chapters come in pairs. Chapters 4 and 5 describe the “humility paradigm” as a key component of scientific ethos. There the authors examine how T. Kuhn and C. Popper can assist in the enterprise of science ethics started by R. Merton. I must admit that this part is interesting and, I daresay, gracefully done. Though this part is not as long as most others in the monograph, it explains in a laconic and clear way how the idea of intellectual humility can be derived from Merton through the works of Kuhn and Popper. Namely, in these chapters the peculiar dialectics of Mertonian organized skepticism are presented through historical optics. While Kuhn admires conservative thinking and sticking to the paradigm, Popper insists on being brave, creative and revolutionary in science. According to the authors, the “synthesis” of such dialectics is a virtue of humility, which allows to balance between trust and skepticism, between awe for new and blind admiration of the old. Moreover, humility leads to understanding that science is a place for the gift of shared knowledge. Once again, I want to value the nontrivial character of reasoning in combining science ethics and historiosophic ideas.

Chapters 6 and 7 give an overview of some solutions for VE insufficiency to form the perspective of belief ethics and feminist epistemology. In detail, the authors are describing how the injustice, uncertainty and involuntariness in both epistemic communication and belief acquisition are transformed into the subject of VE and normativity. The authors also argue that the purpose of normativity is to control and prevent epistemic abuse. For example, if one social group is restricted from participation in epistemic communication, then there is an epistemic injustice causing further problems for the social and cognitive agency of the group members. To deal with

such cases, the authors suggest using normative regulations to make the epistemic communication clear of bias and inequity. This idea is strongly connected with the feminist approach, where epistemic violence in the form of coercive ignorance is analyzed through standpoint theory and the optics of social critique. For example, some groups may not be familiar with the achievements of modern science—and people possessing Western rationality claim these groups as “ignorant”—so they conduct their own claims about the world. The aim of normativity is to protect these claims from an abusive and toxic atmosphere in the scientific community. So, the key point of the authors’ solution is to go beyond scientific universalism and protect the oppressed beliefs and opinions by means of normativity. I also suggest reading *Cynical theories* to expand the understanding of the paradigm presented.

Overall, from the section it becomes clear that the authors see the topic of epistemic virtues as a shaky and vague ground, where existing approaches are not sufficient. Therefore, the authors provide their own view on how epistemic virtuousness should be manifested in science. Given the “humility paradigm” and the idea of the non-abusive epistemic community, one may see these two aspects as key to performing the task of the monograph. However, to fully understand the authors’ own virtue epistemology, we need to consider the next section, devoted strictly to the specific virtue of fortitude—it is separate from the “Epistemic virtues” section 2 for its very importance.

Section 3 opens with a reasoning concerning ambivalence as an essential part of scientific ethics. Despite being in some sense eclectic—it seems intricate to smoothly combine historical cases, Aristotle, VE, Pareto principle and J. Rawls,—the chapter provides a consistent view on how the ambivalence of science ethics manifests itself both in historical and philosophical perspective. Since Aristotle, it has been commonplace in ethics that our actions are not, in most cases, a direct subject to some rigorous scheme and may be in a way described by a “medium principle,” which is fundamentally vague. In scientific ethics, though there are Mertonian norms, one can predominantly find counterexamples to the idea of a universal morality. Scientific “heroes” are mostly brave deviants from lesser parts of communities. However, authors argue, such ambivalence provides the like of a “veil of ignorance” for science. In such a state, every scientist becomes morally free to choose any path, including any virtues, role models, risks, solidarity or loneliness. And that freedom is a key difference of science from other social spheres. The role of strict ethics is, therefore, to be the glue

for common justice and solidarity in the community of researchers. These ideas are in deep correspondence with some of the monograph chapters and provide consistent expansion to them. Here the ideas of several previous chapters are somewhat united to conduct a long and informative explanation of the place and role of scientific ethics. Also worth noting is the table of different role models and activities for scientists (Kasavin & Kostina, 2024: 102), which, in my opinion, requires further study on empirical matter. Despite not mentioning the the virtue of fortitude, the reasoning provides the reader with several important concepts and ideas to enrich the understanding of the monograph.

After that, the authors proceed to the examination of J. Turri's ideas on VE. First of all, they conduct a study of his arguments against responsibilism, mostly the one concerning the role of motivation in cognition. "To know" does not mean "to be constantly motivated" in every cognitive action; neither does it mean "to have reliable success." In conjunction with Turri, the authors conclude that responsibilism is too strict and demanding of the cognitive agent to be an adequate normative theory of knowledge. So, after that critique the authors proceed to Turri's own theories of "ecumenic reliabilism" and "abilism." The former is based on the idea that the subject of our interest is not only reliable knowledge, but also the unreliable, which is the most common and widespread form of everyday knowledge. The latter theory of abilism adds to this thesis the idea that the ability to obtain knowledge is much more important than reliability. Altogether these theses may be understood as a famous "anything goes" motto application to epistemology in order to provide necessary freedom of research.

The last part of the section is the one where fortitude comes to the fore. The text deeply connects and enhances the ideas of fortitude, gift, loneliness and creativity, mentioned in the other parts of the monograph. Intellectual fortitude is here described as a communicative virtue, however strongly bound with loneliness, not being a regular part of the community. Such a bond is manifested in the form of creativity — if one is brave enough to be alone in his ideas, she states her own unique creation. This creation, however, is not to be kept for oneself; another part of the fortitude is to be open and offer one's ideas as a gift. That is, namely, the vocation of a scientist — to create and give, to remain lonely whilst staying in community with other agents. After all, this part, while being visionary and sometimes poetic, gives a proper explanation of how intellectual fortitude is to be understood. It also serves as a uniting element to see how different ideas from previous narrative are combined in a consistent way.

Although the matters of fortitude itself are examined in a lesser part of the section, from it one may understand how the virtue is constructed, of which parts it consists, and how it is connected to freedom. It is also praiseworthy that these reasonings correspond with other parts of the monograph, borrow the ideas and theses and enrich them with new information. Also, like in the beginning of the second section, the narrative of the first part of this section is original and visionary, combining ideas and theories in nontrivial ways.

The last section of the book is devoted to the analysis of statistical data on publishing activity in Russia. Namely, the authors examine the phenomenon of “coercive publishing,” which is connected to the famous “Publish or perish!” motto. The aim of such an examination is to understand whether high publishing activity is a vice or a virtue of the scientist, and, in case of it being the former, how to deal with it. The authors conclude that there is an ambivalence in how publishing activity is evaluated by the community. On the one hand, there is a strong dissatisfaction with the result of the scientific policy derived from coercion to publish—mainly because of meaningless paperwork for a report or of the necessity to do teachings and publishing at the same time. On the other hand, there are plenty of compensatory factors, such as stimulation to do at least some research for the teachers and maintaining competitive in the academy. The conclusion is natural for such texts: maybe we should give up high publication activity to rather enrich science with earnest and meaningful works? To add to that, the idea of a complex nature of “coercion to publish,” irreducible to the matters of economics and, secondly, the claim that the problem of “coercion” for a researcher may lay not in the field of producing the papers, but in the sphere of technical issues conjugated with sending a manuscript to the publisher, which is usually a frustrating and long process.

After the main contents of the book (namely, the sections), there are two appendixes, containing translations of papers from the beginning of the 20th century. The work put in is admirable—the appendixes comprise nearly half of the book,—however, they are connected to the subject of the monograph in a vague and indirect way. I shall also notice the absence of a conclusion, which makes summarizing the ideas of the book a bit of an exercise for the reader. Despite all this, one can still come to a solid comprehension of the text.

From the monograph one may learn that there is a poor understanding of how science functions and, more importantly, of how scientific ethos functions. Mainly because of economic and social matters, there is a need for rules and restrictions which shall guarantee the freedom and opportunities

for an upsurge of research. However, normativity has its own limits and cannot be manifested in a strict set of rules and prescriptions (like Mertonian norms). That is why one should examine intellectual virtues and vices to understand how to conduct proper behavior in science.

Despite declaring the usage of virtue epistemology, the authors mostly criticize it and build their theses mainly around the rejection of the apparatus, referring to key authors in the field (e.g. Greco, 2010; Sosa, 2007; Zagzebski, 1996). That is why one shall notice the absence of “classical” virtues, such as open-mindedness, *philia* for knowledge, autonomy, *phronesis* and prudence. Instead, the authors give the reader the original description of fortitude and freedom of research, as well as a distinctive understanding of humility. Although the analysis of the given virtues is done in a competent and consistent way, it seems rather obscure to use the label of virtue epistemology and then reject its core parts presented by reliabilism and responsibilism. So, I shall say, if one is interested in VE, she may benefit from reading the “classical” authors first and then proceeding to the monograph reviewed, with proper preparation.

As for the part of the authors’ construction of a brand-new scientific ethos, one can find in the monograph a consistent and original view on the issue. The non-trivial examination of the history of science to see the ambiguity and ineffectiveness of strict norms is combined with visionary ideas of how normativity could work properly. As the title of the monograph says, the authors provide a complex value-normative image of a scientist, who is obligated to stick to some values, yet remains free to choose a path and a certain behavior with these values in mind. The brave and humble, reasonably conservative yet open to the new, balancing between vice and virtue—this image of the cognitive subject manifests the truly ambivalent nature of science ethics and the monograph.

However, there is a little more ambivalence in the book. Namely, whilst there are many important and admirable ideas, there are many topics worth mentioning about the issue of science ethos. First of all, as I have said before, there is no examination of several virtues, which are important for a researcher—e.g. autonomy and open-mindedness. More complex reach for the subject of virtue in different cases may enlighten the path to creating a proper way to do science. Moreover, my hope was to find a deeper analysis of Mertonian norms, which are still a base foundation for science ethics—how can a researcher be ethical if he is not disinterested and conscientious? One may notice, in addition, that the norm of scientific communism is a viral and debatable topic in contemporary study of science ethics, especially in

Russia (see, e. g. A. Elbakyan's PhD thesis and manifesto). Also, I shall add that while there is a complex analysis of virtues and virtuous practices in the monograph, there is a lack of examination of vices and vicious deeds. In my opinion, these matters are of no less significance than the topic of virtue. As long as there are vices of bias, profit motivation, dishonesty in the forms of (self-)plagiarism and citation manipulation within the Academy, there can be no real freedom and blossoming of science. So, my hope is to see from the authors new complex and virtuous works on the subjects deeply embodied with ambivalent science ethos.

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ДАНИИЛ ЛАВРИЩЕВ

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ВОПЛОЩЕННАЯ АМБИВАЛЕНТНОСТЬ

ДОВОДЕТЕЛЬ И ПОРОК В ФОРМИРОВАНИИ СОВРЕМЕННОГО НАУЧНОГО
ЭТОСА

Касавин И. Т., Костина А. О. ЭПИСТЕМОЛОГИЯ ДОВОДЕТЕЛЕЙ :
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ACADEMICAL LIFE

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АКАДЕМИЧЕСКАЯ ЖИЗНЬ

INSTRUMENTA STUDIORUM*

III INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM «HISTORIAN AND POWER
IN MEDIEVAL EUROPE»: MOSCOW, SEPTEMBER 23–26, 2024

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The III International Colloquium, organized within the framework of the project “Historian and Power, Historian in Power,” was held from September 23 to 26, 2024 at the Institute of Social Sciences of the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration.

This year the colloquium was dedicated to the anniversaries of two prominent contemporary medievalists—the 75th anniversary of Vladimir Ivanovich Mazhuga (St. Petersburg) and the 70th anniversary of Leonardo Ramon Funes (Buenos Aires). Despite all the differences in the areas of their scientific interests, they are united by their attention to the manuscript tradition of the Middle Ages, medieval manuscripts’ creation process, their codicology, palaeography, archaeographic features and publication. That is why the participants spoke on the medieval historian’s craft, creative workshop etc.

Along with Russian medieval historians, prominent medievalists from Spain, Argentina, France, Great Britain and Brazil participated in the colloquium. During the seminar, these medievalists shared the results of their research and their experience, which is extremely important for future specialists—students of the RANEPА and RSUH, who also took part in the colloquium as listeners.

The colloquium was opened by VLADIMIR MAZHUGA (St. Petersburg Institute of History, Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg) with the paper *The Ideas of Bartolo da Sassoferrato (1313–1357) and Judicial Practice in Italy in the Second Half of the 14th Century*. The main source of the research was the codex with a copy of Bartolo Sassoferrato’s commentary on the *Digestum Novum*, completed in its main part in June 1370 in Bologna. The codex contains many glosses and drawings left by one of its copyists. These glosses and marginalia not only give us a concrete idea of how Bartolo’s ideas were taken up by his younger contemporaries and lawyers, but also

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of the practical application of his ideas in the courts, their high relevance in the society of the period under consideration.

The first day of the colloquium was concluded by OLEG AUROV (Institute for Social Sciences, RANEPa) with a paper entitled *Visigothic “Symphony” and the Problem of Its Continuity in Asturias and Leon in the 8th – Early 11th Centuries*. Professor Aurov revealed the features of the relationship between the councils and the legislative activity of the Visigothic kings and also spoke about its continuity in the Asturias-Leonese epoch. This political conciliarity was manifested not only in the fact that the kings convened councils and attended their first sessions, but also in other gestures and rhetorical formulas that represented this “symphonic” unity of royal power and the Church.

The papers presented *on the second day* of the colloquium were devoted to various topics, mainly concerning the medieval history of Spain and France. The first to speak that day were RICARDO PICHEL (National University of Distance Education (UNED), Madrid) and CARMEN BENITEZ GUERRERO (University of Seville), whose topics were as follows: *Around the Fuero of Baeza and Its Paratexts. (I): Textual and Manuscript Tradition* and *Around the Fuero of Baeza and Its Paratexts. (II): Historiographic Notes and Urban Elites*. Both papers presented the results of a study of the manuscript of one of the monuments of medieval Spanish foral law — the *Fuero of Baeza*, stored in the Arsenal Library in Paris (Bibliothèque d’Arsenal. Ms. 8331). ANASTASIA NACHARKINA (Russian State University for the Humanities, Moscow) presented the paper *The Story of Alexander the Great in the “General History” of Alfonso X the Wise: Towards the Problem of Sources*, dedicated to the problem of the authorship of this text. She stressed that this monument is a single work created based on the Latin translation of the Greek Romance about Alexander, completed by Leo of Naples in the 10th century under the title *History of the Battles of Alexander the Great (Historia de preliis Alexandri Magni)*, and supplemented by previously known works dedicated to Alexander the Great (*Libro de Alexandre* (1178 – c. 1250), *Alexandreis* by Walter of Chatillon, etc.). Professor MANUEL HIJANO (Durham University, UK) spoke about *The Tale of the Seven Infantes de Lara in the “Chronicle of 1344”* and focused attention on the role of epic texts as sources of medieval chronicles. Since the original text of the epic tale of the seven infantes de Lara has not survived, we know nothing about it save the mentions in *History of Spain* of Alfonso X the Wise and in later narrative tradition. Written in Galician-Portuguese, the *Chronicle of 1344* is one of the main sources describing this period, which gives special

significance to its content. NINA SPICHENKO (ISS RANEPА, Moscow) in her paper *Representation of Imperial Power in Roman Spain on the Example of Terminia Augustales*, touched upon themes of Spanish history that are chronologically far removed from the 14th century. Her work dealt with the role of boundary markers and inscriptions associated with the name of Octavian Augustus and his immediate successors, established by Roman governors and their representatives in the 1st century AD when delimiting the lands of Spanish communities. MIKHAIL BIRKIN (ISS RANEPА, Moscow) spoke about the *Christian Civitas in the Decrees of the Toledo Councils of the Late 6th–7th Centuries*. According to his conclusions, the role of Christian communities as successors to the tradition of the ancient civil community (*civitas*), among other things, is also manifested at the level of the conceptual system of law of the Visigothic kingdom, reflected both in the laws of the Visigothic code (*Liber Iudiciorum*) and in the council canons. ELENA MAREY (High School of Economics, Moscow) in the paper *The Power of the Abbot in the Visigothic Monastery* touched upon the main organizational aspects of the management of monastic communities in the era of the Kingdom of Toledo. NIKITA FEDONNIKOV (ISS RANEPА, Moscow) made his presentation on the *Biography of Hincmar of Reims Through the Prism of His Historical and Political Works*. The researcher showed how Hincmar himself, in the pages of his writings, comprehends the events of his life, the political reality surrounding him and his role in it, and how these reflections influenced his political and social ideas.

The paper presented by ESTEBAN AUGUSTO GREIF (University of Buenos Aires, National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET)), *Jacques de Vitry, Muslims and Christians in the “History of the East,”* was dedicated to the figure of Jacques (Jacob) de Vitry (1165/1170–1240), a French canon, chronicler and propagandist of the idea of the Crusades. During his presentation, the Argentine medievalist examined the range of possible sources that Jacques de Vitry could have used not only to create his *Oriental History* (the first of two books that make up the *Jerusalem History*), written in the East after the siege of Damietta during the Fifth Crusade, but also to describe the history of the Arab conquest of the territory of Palestine. DMITRY STAROSTIN (Institute of History, St. Petersburg State University), continuing the theme of the relationship between history and propaganda, dedicated his report to the topic *Astronomy, History, Propaganda: Problems of the Church Calendar and the Legitimation of Royal Power in the 13th Century*. OLGA TOGOEVA (Institute of General History of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow) described her research *Philippe de Mezieres*

vs. Jean Gerson: Disputes about the Right of the Last Confession in the French Kingdom at the End of the 14th Century. She outlined the problem of using medieval images of legal subjects and their relationship with the accompanying text. NATALIA BOLDYREVA (Institute of World History, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow) spoke about a completely different era with unsimilar subjects, but also related to the problem of *instrumenta studiorum*. Her presentation *Girald of Cambrai in the Posolsky Prikaz (Chapters on the British Isles in the “Mercator Cosmography”)* was dedicated to the translations of Latin historical and geographical works carried out in Russia in the 16th century.

The session on *the third day of the colloquium* was opened by CÉLINE MARTIN (University of Bordeaux-Montaigne, Bordeaux) with the paper *Isidore of Seville and Suinthila*. The researcher focused on the figure of Isidore of Seville and his interrelations with the Visigoth king Suinthila (621–631), with whom he had a trusting relationship. Next, JUAN SOTA FERNÁNDEZ MARCOS (High School of Economics, Moscow) presented a paper on the topic: *Once Again About the “Humillissimus Scriptor”: The Officium of the Virgin Mary by Juan Gil de Zamora for Alfonso X*. He dedicated his research to the *Officium of the Virgin Mary*—a work that was written by special order of the Wise King. Speakers from Argentina JUAN HECTÓR FUENTES and ERIKA N. JANIN (National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET), Buenos Aires) presented a paper entitled “*How to Put Your Hand on the Fire*”: *Gestures of Anger and Fear in the Age of Alfonso XI of Castile*, which was devoted to a topic widely researched at present, related to the history of emotions. At the beginning of the presentation, the scientists outlined the hypothesis according to which, in the 14th century, emotions, as socially and politically codified elements, were used to construct exemplary (positively assessed in society) and negative models of behaviour. The motif of the relationship between literary text and the realities of social, political and cultural history was continued in the brilliant presentation *Historiography in Verse and the Propaganda of the Monarchy: the Case of Juan de Barba’s “Consolatoria de Castilla”* by CYNTHIA HAMLIN (National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET), University of Buenos Aires). She analyzed the apologetic and propagandistic basis of the poem *Consolatoria de Castilla*, which tells about the period of the reign of the Catholic Kings of Spain Isabella and Ferdinand from their accession to the throne until the capture of Malaga (1484). The next speaker, MANUEL ABELEDO (National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET), Buenos Aires), also spoke about the relationship

between literature and history during the Late Middle Ages. His paper treated the topic *Sentimental Fiction and Reprobatio Amoris: The Problem of the Way There and Back at the Moment of Reflection in Possible Literature about Love*. During his presentation, the medievalist noted that the problem of “proof of love” (*reprobatio amoris*) is not to find out what position is embedded in texts about love and passion, but to understand whether they encourage their readers to ask themselves this question. The topic of the manuscript heritage of the Middle Ages was presented by the paper of the Argentine researcher OLGA SOLEDAD BOHDZIEVICH (National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET), Buenos Aires) *The Oldest Manuscripts of the Works of Juan Gil de Zamora: The First Data of the Study of the “Book of Jesus and Mary” (Liber Ihesu et Marie)*. OLGA PISNICHENKO (Federal University of Roraima, Boa Vista) in her paper *Revenge with a Pen: Don Juan Manuel and His Historical Truth*, analyzed the role of historical aspects in the works of Infante Don Juan Manuel (1282–1348?), an outstanding political figure and writer of the Castilian Renaissance. The next speaker, MAXIMILIANO SOLER (National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET), Buenos Aires), dedicated his paper to one of the classic problems of the history of medieval historiography: *Post-Alfonsine Historiography and Historiographic Discrepancies: “Historia hasta 1288 dialogada” and the Affirmation of the Subjectivity of the Aristocracy*. His colleague PABLO ENRIQUE SARACINO (National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET), Buenos Aires) presented a paper entitled *Riurga, Padilla and Other Falsifiers: Falsification of the Past in the Shadow of Humanism*. He examined the purpose for which sources were falsified in various historical works, the founder of which can be considered Annius of Viterbo with his work *Commentaries on the Works of Various Authors Discussing Antiquity (Commentaria super opera auctorum diversorum de antiquitatibus loquentium)* (15th century).

On the final day of the seminar, various problems of the relationship between medieval literature and historiography comprised the arguments of the presentations of GEORGINA OLIVETTO (University of Buenos Aires) *The Politics of Friendship and Political Friendship* and MARIO ANTONIO COSSÍO OLAVIDE (University of Salamanca) *The Cultural Model of the Era of Sancho IV (On the Example of the Royal Chancellery)*. The latter, essentially for the first time, posed the problem of the unity of the literary heritage of the era of King Sancho IV of Castile and Leon (1282/1284–1295) in the same vein in which it is customary to speak about the literary heritage of his great father, Alfonso X the Wise. In contrast to his colleagues, DANIEL PANATERI

(National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET), Buenos Aires) presented a paper mysteriously titled *History of His Spain*, within the frame of which he spoke about Spanish medieval studies of the second third of the 20th century, primarily in light of the “great debate” between Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz (1893–1984) and Américo Castro (1885–1972). The discussion of the origins of Spanish civilization, which was the focus of the participants in the “great debate,” was examined in the paper taking into account the positions expressed by other significant Spanish medievalists and thinkers of the same time, including Ramón Menéndez Pidal (1869–1968) and Miguel de Unamuno (1864–1936).

LEONARDO RAMÓN FUNES (National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET), Buenos Aires) concluded the seminar with the presentation *How Fiction Helps Us Understand History: Fiction about Political Events in Castilian Chronicles of the Late Middle Ages*. Reflecting on the problem posed in the paper’s title, the medievalist scholar concluded that the work of medieval chroniclers is not to distinguish between the historical and the fictional, but to develop it at the intersection of history and fiction. The speaker noted that for chroniclers, fiction is just another path, as true as any other, to achieving the truth.

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Alexander V. Marey
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