STUDIES IN CULTURE
& COMMUNICATION

MAN AND HIS CIRCUMSTANCES

ORTEGA AS EDUCATOR

ROBERT McCLINTOCK

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for

My Teachers

MARTIN S. DWORKIN

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JACQUES BARZUN

GENERAL EDITOR'S FOREWORD

Praeceptor Hispaniae

ORTEGA SAID, MANY times and in many ways, that the true hero is the man with the will to be himself. In himself, such a man negates all values and associations he does not choose; that he chooses so much of what he has been given is to define the authenticity of his belonging—and his inevitable alienation. That he repudiates so much else, naming the dead gods and dying rituals of his epoch, is to assert his own being. Such a man stands out, inevitably, even if not purposively, in any crowd or collectivity—the while he maintains his consciousness, his critical self-awareness, at a deliberated distance from the elemental drives, instincts, and preconscious processes of his integral selfhood.

In this view, to think for oneself becomes an act of essential courage, a fateful heroism in a titanic enterprise, the creation of reality as it may be known: ordained as preëxistent, yet always coming-to-be; inescapably contingent and dimensional, yet ever potential and perilously unformed. To think—if we would understand so bold a purpose—is to accept responsibility for oneself, despite one's circumstances but not entirely at war with them; it is, with all critical awareness of history—but no deference to what is merely past—a commitment to beginning anew, to the invention of desirable alternatives, to the creation of "a new revelation" out of a belief in reason and its powers to define and direct the destinies of men.

—A post-Nietzschean conception, to be sure, along the way of so much of modern thought, seeking to find the essential individual in the mass of men, to assert a meaningful selfhood amid the enveloping forces of history and community. But it is as punc-

tually and profoundly counter-Nietzschean, in its affirmation of rational self-governance and redefined moral responsibility. Even more is it counter Marx-Engels and other post-Hegelian ideologies of individual sublimation in fictions of collective rationality. In this sense, for all his profound awareness of the darker tendencies of man's nature, primordial or infinitely civilized, Ortega stands against the fashionable denigrations of human capacity that make abstract forces into idols of new superstitions.

In despair of reason, men turn easily to ideas of thinking as somehow determined, beyond governance of will and measurement of virtue and responsibility. That such anti-reasoning is thinking, too, offers small reassurance—except, perhaps, to the cynically inclined, or those so self-indulgent as to pretend that any reasoning is irrelevant to behavior. To despair of reason is all too simple, and all-too-simply corroborated in the outcomes of uncritical action. But much worse may be to proclaim as rational the mystification of reason as mechanical or foreordained, and notions of human action as ultimately senseless manifestations of uncontrollable processes—call them destiny, or history, or transcendent purpose, or nature, or biological causality, or any other names for what are finally generalizations of individual livelihood. For Ortega, "vital reason," recognizing that reason is inherent in human living, repudiates not only the cult of rationalism, with its myth of pure, disembodied intellect, but also a romanticism that invokes the passions as autonomous forces in the organismic whole, raising them to be mindless judges of the mind.

The argument for the integration of reasoning and responsibility is made with topical specificity, to deliberately oppose the rising unreason of the age. But, on a longer scale of timeliness, Ortega is clearly in the line of humanistic teachers since the Greeks. Further, he is surely recalling his own native preceptors of virtue, reaching as far back as the Iberian Seneca, but most vividly Gracián, demanding *Hombre de Entereza*,[1] the man of integrity, holding to reason in the face of the mob and its fickle

[1] Baltasar ("Lorenzo") Gracián, *Oráculo Manual y Arte de Prudencia* (c. 1647), No. 29. A charming, modern bi-lingual edition is by L. B. Walton, *Baltasar Gracián, The Oracle: A Manual of the Art of Discretion* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1953).

passions, and despite the tyrant and his witless force. The spirit, the sense, and even the sound of it are so much like the insistence on being nothing less than a whole man, *Nada menos que todo un hombre*, of Unamuno,[2] who is so often hailed as the defender of a purified Hispanic self-identification, against an imputed denial by Ortega. Ortega the Spaniard is not so well-known, curiously enough, as is Ortega the Spanish European.

That the oversight has often implied political, as well as philosophical, misunderstandings may be perfectly exemplified by Jean Cassou, who managed to give the lecture on "Spanish Culture" at the opening session of UNESCO in Paris in 1946, without once mentioning Ortega—not even in disparagement.[3] So soon after the Civil War, the fratricides among the anti-Fascists still went on, and Ortega's vehement enmity to totalitarianism was still not sufficiently orthodox, it may be surmised, to give him status better than that of a literary "non-person." A mere decade later, the sociologist Enrique Gomez Arboleya, following less invidious standards of cultural importance, would bluntly call Ortega, "one of the greatest Spaniards of all time," adding, quite pertinently here, that "He merits the rare title of *Magister hispaniae*."[4] Now, for Robert McClintock, in *Man and His Circumstances: Ortega As Educator*, he is *Praeceptor hispaniae*—but in the many meanings that make him a teacher for all men, the more he is the Spaniard *and* the European.

The Spaniard, however, is also the proto-European, perhaps uniquely so among the peoples of the Continent. And the strands of Ortega's thought run as straightly back to the pre-classical heroes of the awakening of critical intellect in the West, most notably Xenophanes, Heraclitus, and Democritus, as they weave inextricably through the fabric of philosophies and counter-philos-

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[2] The title of one of his most famous stories, included in Miguel de Unamuno *Three Exemplary Novels*, Angel Flores, trans. (New York: Albert & Charles Boni, 1930; Grove Press, 1956).

[3] Published in *Reflections On Our Age*, Lectures Delivered at the Opening Session of UNESCO At the Sorbonne University, Paris, Introduction by David Hardman, Foreword by Stephen Spender (New York: Columbia University Press, 1949), pp. 151–164.

[4] In the article, "Spain," in Joseph Roucek, Editor, *Contemporary Sociology* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1958), p. 832.

ophies following Plato, Aristotle, and the ensuing schools. But Ortega is heritor of past formulations of thought primarily as rediscoverer of rational beginnings, and only thereafter as reinterpreter—and not at all as epigone or publicist. Indeed, Ortega's relationship to the thinkers and ideas of his own epoch is even more clearly signal of his commitment to criticism as the essence of understanding.

Characteristically, he could be the enthusiastic student of the Neo-Kantians Hermann Cohen and Paul Natorp, later praising them as his *maestros*,[5] while hardly becoming a votary of their school. Again, he could avow strong admiration for Max Scheler, whom he called "my great friend," as well as "the first man of genius in the new land of phenomenology," and, later, a "thinker par excellence, whose death in 1928 has deprived Europe of its best mind,"[6] while subjecting his work to searching, often sharply censorious judgment. It was wholly consistent for Ortega to be at once an immensely influential expositor, and a profoundly dubious critic, of the several strategies of analysis and speculation, in philosophy proper and the social sciences, that came to be generalized as "phenomenology." Similarly, his rôle in the related surge of systematic self-consciousness taking all the varied forms of "existentialism" is not easily assessed according to formulas of doctrinal association and determined influence. Not only his ideas, but his activities as editor and publisher, as well as teacher, reverberate powerfully in its development. Thus, there need not be wonderment at parallels and resemblances between Ortega's historical vitalism and the existentialism of, say, Jean-Paul Sartre—to choose the most widely-publicized exemplar of the school—prompting David Bidney, for only one, to remark that, "Contemporary existentialism . . . is not quite as novel as it has been made to appear."[7] In a way, it may be propriety, as well as respect, that

[5] *Obras completas*, VI, p. 383, note; cited in H. Spiegelberg, *The Phenomenological Movement: A Historical Introduction*, Second edition, Volume Two (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1965), p. 612.

[6] Spiegelberg, *Ibid.*, p. 614.

[7] In "On the Philosophical Anthropology of Ernst Cassirer and its Relation to the History of Anthropological Thought," included in Paul Arthur Schilpp, Editor, *The Philosophy of Ernst Cassirer* (Evanston, Ill.: The Library of Living Philosophers, 1949), p. 492.

has F. H. Heinemann, who created the name *Existenzphilosophie* in 1929, dedicating "To the Memory of José Ortega y Gasset" his authoritative *Existentialism and the Modern Predicament,*[8] which does not treat Ortega in the text.

Such difficulties in fitting Ortega within schools of thought are quite in accordance, it may be said, with his own insistence that man's nature and his situation may not be comprehended in the formulas of doctrinaires, the party men he despised as "walking suicides." It is this spirit that, after all, may be the essence of Ortega's thought, evoking an ideal of man reasoning-in-living, that, of all ideals, is most surely integral in such definitions of individual personhood as do not dissolve uniqueness, privacy, and potential freedom of thinking and choice in abstractions of collective identity. And it is in this spirit that one may read his famous indictment of *massness* as personal attack, if one is himself only ensorcelled or cajoled by the grandeur, verve, and rhetorical fluency of Ortega's writing. There is much to be questioned and disagreed with in Ortega's philosophy, as interpreted in the relatively few works of sustained systematic articulation, or in the immense body of variegated writings he produced originally for periodicals. But of his philosophizing, there need only be recognition of the sovereign commitment to thinking for oneself, for there to be vindication of Ortega's essential enterprise. There are thinkers with whom one must disagree on behalf of thinking, of philosophy as the method and measure of thinking. Ortega, a true philosopher, one questions rightly in order to understand, reënacting the prototypal encounter with the teacher we must always seek, as Socrates taught, in order to become the proper teacher of ourselves.

Thus, it is not mere academic presumption to perceive Ortega's intention as firstly and finally pedagogical, as does Dr. McClintock —provided that "pedagogy" is understood in its full, implicit meaning, conveyed in the felicitous translation of *"la pedagogía social"* as "civic pedagogy," and not as only the tutorial and invigilative functioning of schoolmasters. A true sense of pedagogy involves the discovery, definition, and critical measurement of the aspirations of civilization, and takes fully into account the multi-

[8] New York: Harper & Bros., 1958.

various ways of teaching and occasions of learning of all the agencies, media, and practices of a living society. Such a conception antedates Plato, yet its recognition now is a signal of a renewed vigor of educational philosophy since mid-century, after years, even generations, of academic disparagement, too often self-corroborated by educationists, as somehow second-rate philosophizing.

At stake is no less than man's meaning to himself, and hence, his meaning in the only universe he can know. In this age of tragic actuality and more horrendous possibilities, a call for pedagogy takes on unprecedented urgency, and the teacher from whom we can learn to think for ourselves is more than ever a preceptor for the very survival of reason. And the spirit of urgency of Dr. McClintock's study of Ortega is plain. This is a young man's book, directed hopefully, but insistently, to the young. It is grounded firmly on history, but as criticized memory, eternally relevant. Above all, it is devoted to reconstituting the destiny of a civilization in fatal crisis, one that, without such effort, must surely be, as Ortega denounced it, bankrupt and devitalized.

There are serious questions to put to the work, but they themselves become part of its own questioning of the future. Ortega had called upon the young to invent, to criticize and originate, to invigorate the forms of living, creating worthy alternatives and acting to realize them. Such teaching risks infinities of danger, but also bears all the hope there is of humane learning, that may advance the growing edge of mankind only in each man's striving beyond fixities of dogma, ignorance, and circumstance; beyond the self defined as somehow less than its aspirations, and their responsibilities. For the teachers, there are agonies and disappointments, needless yet inevitable; but there are special rewards, too, as the young renew the perdurable wonder of education, learning to teach themselves.

MARTIN S. DWORKIN

New York City
July 1971.

Preface

I see in criticism a vigorous effort to give power to a chosen work. . . . Criticism is not biography, nor is it legitimate as an independent activity unless it aims at perfecting the work. To begin with, this means that the critic has to introduce in his essay all the emotional and intellectual devices thanks to which the average reader will receive the most intense and clear impression of the work possible. The critic proceeds by pointing his effort towards the affirmative, and by directing it, not to correcting the author, but to giving the reader a more perfect visual organ. One perfects the work by perfecting the reading of it.

ORTEGA[1]

OVER TEN YEARS AGO, while browsing in the Princeton University Bookstore, my eye was caught by *What Is Philosophy?* Good question!, I thought. I had entered my undergraduate studies with an instinctive reverence for philosophy as the first among disciplines; but the philosophy courses I then took were all disappointing: invariably they concerned philosophies, not philosophy. The author of the book that chance had brought me to, José Ortega y Gasset, was unknown to me, but on quick perusal he seemed worth reading. Read him I did, and I have been doing so since.

What Is Philosophy?—with its concern for the *ego* living in the world, for the person thinking, choosing, doing—is a work well calculated to move a young man in his last year of college as he begins to face seriously the question of what he would do with his life. Ortega offered no substantive answers to this perplexity, for answers depend on the unique actualities of each separate self and

[1] *Meditaciones del Quijote*, 1914, *Obras* I, p. 325.

its particular circumstances, but he greatly reinforced my developing sense of the importance, the continual importance, of deciding on one's future. We live, not for a final answer, but by endlessly asking the question, what am I going to make of the coming instant? By constantly asking this question, one shapes a continual present according to the vision of the future and the comprehension of the past that one commands at each successive instant. Such thoughts, which had already been germinating in me, were brought to life by Ortega's prose; hence from the very start, he convinced me that he was part of the past that I should seek to comprehend should I want to shape my present according to a vision of a future.

In quick order, thereafter, I read *Man and People, The Modern Theme,* and *The Revolt of the Masses.* Here I encountered Ortega's public relevance, a relevance that has grown as the prospect of public affairs has become monotonously more bleak. At the time of first encounter, the Kennedy-Nixon campaign was moving towards its denouement, and the contrast between the noble man and the mass man that Ortega so sharply drew seemed to resonate perfectly with the contrast between Kennedy's apparent style of aspiration and Nixon's self-satisfaction. Thus, despite his own pessimism about the politics of any nation, Ortega at first seemed to explain the why and the wherefore of the political hope dawning within me. After all I had learned from others to think that America was special, exempt from the foibles of the European nations.

Events soon shattered these first hopes and relentless retrospect has made me doubt their reality. Being American for me has ceased to be sufficient, no more significant in itself than my being from New York and you perhaps from Milan or somewhere else. During the last decade, events and Ortega have made me into a European: I pledge my allegiance to that chancy, uncertain, but constructive process of transcending the nation, transcending the state, and transcending coercion in the conduct of public affairs in the post-industrial West. And much of what I have to say about Ortega is intended—in keeping with his own example—as a small but serious contribution to the creative effort of devising a future for the West.

I have shaped this book, however, not only in response to my general circumstances, but to my more immediate ones as well.

I went to graduate school with strong intellectual interests and weak disciplinary commitments. David Steward and I recurringly argued over whether one could follow one's interests within the academic grind. With some luck, some faith, and lots of friendly help, one can. Help first came to me from Lawrence A. Cremin, whose colloquium in the history of American educational thought redeemed an otherwise desolate Spring term in 1962. He convinced me not to drop out of graduate school and to take up the history of education, pointing out that it was a field undergoing thorough revision with plenty of room within it for the pursuit of my interests. His advice was excellent, and his teaching has been central to my development into a professional scholar.

In the Department of Philosophy and the Social Sciences at Teachers College, I studied with George Z. F. Bereday, Philip H. Phenix, R. Freeman Butts, and, most importantly, Martin S. Dworkin. Dworkin is a committed educator; he pours his energy into teaching, into imparting his engagement with the life of reason, into opening access to all he knows. In his seminar on "Education, Ideology, and Mass Communications" I encountered Ortega in a course for the first time, and my work in this seminar was the beginning of the long process by which Ortega became the topic of my dissertation. But Dworkin's teaching has been invaluable to me in other respects. I had studied Ortega on my own, and also knew the work of Camus and Jaspers fairly well. But through a torrent of references to all sorts of thinkers, Dworkin opened to me the diverse elements of nineteenth- and twentieth-century thought. And equally important, he drove me to the Greeks, especially to the pre-Socratics and Plato, not to decide that they held this or that, but to contend on my own with the questions they raised.

During the academic year of 1963–64, I participated in the doctoral seminar on European intellectual history jointly given by Jacques Barzun and Lionel Trilling. Together, they elicit what the aspiring graduate student thinks is his best effort, and each then subjects that effort to thorough constructive criticism. With the criticism I began the unfinished task of learning how written language works. In my seminar paper, which was on Ortega, I contended that a commitment to educate informed all his activities. Professor Barzun encouraged me in this view—one would not be

far off applying the same thesis to his own varied accomplishments —and he became co-sponsor with Professor Cremin of my dissertation. Professors James F. Shearer and Francisco García-Lorca commented on the prospectus of the dissertation and the former agreed to oversee the Hispanic side of my studies. Thereafter, my work was cut out for me, and my main intellectual interest was, at last, the center of my academic endeavors.

I spent the summer of 1965 in Madrid working in the archives of the Hermeroteca Municipal and of *Revista de Occidente*. In particular, José Ortega Spottorno and Paulino Garagorri helped make my research in Madrid fruitful and have encouraged me considerably through their continued interest in my work. Garagorri has directed me to much material that I would not have known to look for without his help.

A number of continuing conversations with friends have also deeply influenced this work. In one sense, the book is an attempt at an operational answer to a problem Philip Weinstein and I have repeatedly discussed: how can the critic avoid being a mere parasite living off the work he criticizes? A number of ideas in the book have been sharpened through conversations with Francis Schrag about freedom and the responsibilities of the intellectual who is at once committed to pursuing truth and to acting in an imperfect world. My conception of Rousseau and of the state owes much to discussions with Dan Brock about the limits of authority and abstractions such as the general will.

In producing the book itself numerous persons have helped, particularly Janet M. Simons and Robert Bletter. Here I again especially thank Martin S. Dworkin, this time not as teacher, but as editor. He has had the fortitude to keep me from deciding prematurely that the work was finished. It now embodies my best effort, one which I hope will be found worthy of its subject.

ROBERT MCCLINTOCK

Contents

The lord whose oracle is at Delphi neither speaks nor conceals, but indicates.

HERACLITUS, FRAGMENT 93 (DK)

Let my words appear to you as they may. They ought only to lead you to produce in your mind the same thought that I have produced in mine.

FICHTE, THE VOCATION OF MAN

I judge a philosopher by whether he is able to serve as an example.

NIETZSCHE, SCHOPENHAUER AS EDUCATOR

He who would teach us a truth should situate us so that we will discover it ourselves.

ORTEGA, MEDITATIONS ON QUIXOTE

¡Salud!

He who would teach us a truth should situate us so that we will discover it ourselves.

ORTEGA[1]

WHO WAS ORTEGA? Where did he stand? What did he accomplish? How should one judge the worth of his work?

Spokesmen for both the right and the left opine that he was a conservative elitist, a gifted, arrogant exponent of aristocratic prerogatives. More moderately, many scholars locate him in the tradition of liberal elitism, contending that he continued the work of men like John Stuart Mill and Alexis de Tocqueville. Those familiar with Spanish history appreciate his effort to reform society and politics, an effort that made him one of the moving forces in creating the Second Spanish Republic. In recent years, his stature among professional philosophers has been rising, for his posthumous tomes back up his living pretense to have made a significant contribution to Western thought, especially to ontology. His books, always well phrased, have won diverse readers, who may value him for his contribution to social theory, to esthetics, to the philosophy of history, to literary criticism, to Spanish literature. Other persons, fortunate to have met the man, not just his work, remember him as a great teacher, an absorbing lecturer, an engaging conversationalist, a professor who helped, for a time, to reform Spanish higher education. A growing number agree with Denis de Rougemont, seeing behind Ortega's work a visionary pan-Europeanist, one of the spiritual founders of a Western future.

During his span of seventy-two years, from 1883 to 1955, Ortega was intensely active, a fact that complicates the effort to characterize his life and work. Ortega did many things. He taught philosophy for twenty-five years; founded several magazines and an important newspaper; campaigned against corruption, dictators,

[1]*Meditaciones del Quijote*, 1914, *Obras* I, p. 336. (Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are by the author.)

and the King. For these efforts he later endured a decade of wandering exile. He wrote voluminously: hundreds of commentaries for the daily press, numerous articles for diverse journals, and books and more books. Ortega talked: he toured the world giving lectures, he stumped Spain making speeches; with everyone he loved to converse in the animated Spanish manner. He took part in politics, in both the politics of Spanish reform and the politics of European union. In short, Ortega met life with chest out, without stopping to bemoan lost opportunities and without bothering to correct misimpressions.

In the United States, special difficulties complicate understanding Ortega's integral character. To begin with, important information about him is hard to come by. The best introduction to his thought in English is José Ferrater Mora's *Ortega y Gasset*, but this work gives few biographical details, even though Ortega insisted that his personal experience was integral to his thought. Almost invariably, American translations of Ortega's works have lacked adequate introductions. For instance, readers of *The Revolt of the Masses* have had no way to know that they were reading a series of newspaper articles that had first appeared in a particular paper, *El Sol*, in a particular place, Madrid, at a particular time, during the decline and fall of the dictatorship of General Primo de Rivera. These circumstances help clarify the argument of the book, yet knowledge of them is not generally available. When readers do not know the real context of a work, they supply whatever context close at hand seems most useful. This practice has led to misinterpretations.

Another complication for Americans seeking to understand Ortega's character is that people are more likely to have read Ortega than to have studied him. This condition has arisen because the works available in English do not fit within a single discipline; instead, each has independently gained a modicum of currency in separate disciplines. Estheticians are likely to have read *The Dehumanization of Art;* philosophers know *What Is Philosophy?*, and perhaps *The Origin of Philosophy* and *The Modern Theme;* sociologists are acquainted with *The Revolt of the Masses* and, if interested in sociological theory, *Man and People;* political theorists will also have studied *The Revolt of the Masses*, as well as *Concord and*

Liberty; persons interested in historical synthesis will most probably have read *History as a System* and *Man and Crisis;* literary critics will have consulted *Notes on the Novel* and *Meditations on Quixote;* educators will have reflected on *The Mission of the University;* and romantics in each discipline may well have mused *On Love.* Owing to this variegation of his work, one encounters one, two, . . . many Ortegas in casual references.

But difficulties in stating precisely who Ortega was do not, by any means, arise solely from problems of translation. The most ambitious biography, to date, *Ortega—I: circunstancia y vocación* by his disciple, Julián Marías, loses the vocation in the complexity of the circumstances. In a bewildering manner, Ortega seemed to combine a number of different careers, simultaneously pursuing a separate course in each, yet remaining faithful to none. From the time that Ortega finished his schooling up to the Spanish Civil War, he pursued at least four concurrent careers: he was a professor of philosophy, a politician, a journalist, and a literary artist. His pursuit of these professions was not always steady, and unsympathetic critics have called him a dilettante, a gifted, erratic, vacillating personality.

The man's protean life, the changing complexity of his activities, presents interpreters with a serious challenge. Ortega insisted over and over again that each man has a destiny, an integral mission, a single task in life that lays down before him his personal path to self-fulfillment. Dabblers were damnable. "We are our Destiny; we are the irremediable project for a particular existence. In each instant of life we note if its reality coincides or not with our project, and everything that we do, we do in order to bring it to fulfillment. . . . All iniquity comes from one source: not driving oneself to one's proper destiny."[2] It will be a significant criticism of Ortega himself, if biographers prove unable to define his mission. Difficulties in doing so point straight to the central issue of his biography. Was he able to live by the very standard of human life that he upheld?

* * *

Character for man is destiny

HERACLITUS, 119

[2]"No ser hombre de partido," 1930, *Obras* IV, pp. 77 and 79.

PART ONE

A Spaniard and His Circumstances

I AM I and my circumstances, and if I do not save my circumstances, I cannot save myself. *Benefac loco illi quo natus es*, we read in the Bible. And in the Platonic school we are given this as the task of all culture: "save the appearances," the phenomena; that is to say, search for the sense of that which surrounds us.

ORTEGA[1]

[1] *Meditaciones del Quijote*, 1914, *Obras* I, p. 322

THE CHRONOLOGY OF LIFE is very rigorous. . . . With the most substantial, most human themes, it is during the twenty-sixth year that the life-span is lighted by its first extasis *in which the great eagles that are our future ideas sink their talons in our brains and carry us towards the heights, as if we were innocent lambs. Great ideas are not ours; instead, we are their prey. They will not let us alone for the rest of our lives: ferociously, tenaciously, ceaselessly, they tear at the viscera of Prometheus. . . . There is nothing mysterious about this date in life. It is the year, generally, when we cease to be mainly receptive, and hoisting our bag of learning onto our back, we turn our clear eyes upon the universe.*

ORTEGA[1]

[1] "El intellectual y el otro," 1940, *Obras* V, p. 510. Cf. *Prólogo para alemanes*, 1933, 1958, *Obras* VIII, p. 32, 34–5.

I
Aspirations

BILBAO, MARCH 12, 1910. Members and friends of the Society "El Sitio" were seated in their accustomed corner, awaiting their speaker with curiosity. They were confident that of all audiences in Spain, they most appreciated cultural attainments. Tonight they would prove their prowess; tonight they would take a chance and identify youthful talent, rather than savor mature repute. Usually they invited only the better speakers, men of established reputation. But almost twelve years had passed since national disaster had awakened the power of self-criticism in Spain. During those years many established reputations had fallen before the acerbity of critics who realized that, indeed, the given Spain was not the best of all possible ones. The time had come to hear what the young activists had to say for themselves.

Humiliating defeat by the *yanquis* in 1898 had destroyed Spain's pretension to inclusion among world powers. Suddenly doubts had been loosed. And the effects of these doubts on the nation were proving complicated. Members of "El Sitio" were well acquainted with "the generation of '98," as it was beginning to be called, for it comprised well-known critics who throughout the 1890's had been condemning the complacency of Spain's political and cultural leaders. The complete, rapid, seemingly effortless victory of the Americans had given the views of these critics an instantaneous authority; thereafter, they had to be reckoned with as seers. But by 1910 yet other groups were coming to the fore.

Spain fermented with irreverent discontent. If 1898 had provoked many Spaniards to question the established authorities, 1909 had goaded the doubters to combine into powerful forces for reform

and revolution.[a]* The immediate cause of the turmoil was the inability of the government to win its costly, frustrating military campaign against Moslem guerrillas in Spanish North Africa. It was a classic case of imperialist paralysis. Enthusiasm for the war came from the established classes—the great landowners, the Church, the Army. Those who derived a mystical allegiance to Cross and Crown from the *Reconquista* could not conceive of forgoing battle with the Infidel. Yet the soldiers sent to wage the battle were from a different class; their allegiance was secular and republican. Military mobilizations called up the poor, and the cost of war most burdened those who lived on modest salaries and meager wages. Little wonder the Moroccan campaign induced serious domestic dissension.

Agitation against the government mounted to a peak in 1909. The sources of protest were diverse. Basques and Catalans had been asserting their autonomy; they had resurrected ancient rights, their unique linguistic heritages, and their memories of a once independent existence; they disliked sending their sons to fight a Castilian war. The traditional backbone of the Spanish opposition, the anti-monarchists and anti-clericals, saw the war as further evidence that neither Altar nor Throne could emerge from the Middle Ages. And in addition to these familiar forces of opposition, new, more ominous, more disturbing ones appeared. Socialism, syndicalism, and anarchism were spreading among workers and even among the rural peasants. Subversive doctrines threatened, or so the secure feared, to sanction the bloody expression of pent-up hate that the multitudes in poverty had for the few who were very rich. As illiterate workers had acquired a taste for European ideologies, they had founded study groups, learned to read, published papers, organized unions, forged political alliances, and even won a seat in the Cortes for Pablo Iglesias, founder of the Spanish Socialist Party. In July 1909 the workers of Barcelona staged a general strike, which became ineffective through gratuitous violence, the "tragic week." Like-to-like, the government panicked; decrying the threat of revolution, it unleashed a heavy-handed repression, which greatly

*Bibliographical annotations to the points marked by a raised letter will be found in the bibliographical section, beginning p. 487.

widened the breach between those who accepted and those who rejected the established authorities.

In the midst of these events, a new group of critics became publicly visible, much to the malaise of those who were comfortable with commonplace certitudes. These young intellectuals, malcontents still in their twenties, were aggressively stirring the Spanish ferment. They aped the French avant-garde; they made propaganda for radical causes, passionately defended the rights of accused assassins, taught the workers to read and eagerly filled them with thoughts of equality and revolution. These irreverent critics were articulate, well educated, and deeply disillusioned with the recent Spanish past. More often than not they were children of prominent persons in the discredited establishment. In the midst of their education, 1898 had suddenly shocked them into a precocious critical awareness. They grew up feeling that they were the rightful heirs of an unrighteous patrimony. They would redeem their fathers' follies. They would use their talents and position not merely to criticize Spain. They would remake the nation. Or so they seemed to say. They would remake the nation, not by taking over the established positions of power, but by by-passing them, by building up a new system of power in cooperation with those who were excluded from participation in the old. To their elders, these activists seemed dangerously open to controversial ideas and overly eager to confront the difficult problems that the mature were prudently avoiding. They sought the future. They were the future. Yet despite their professed activism, the protesters were adamantly unwilling to work within a political framework that they considered discredited; and many of their elders were quite confused when the young malcontents spoke hopefully of a "new politics."

Traditionally, "El Sitio" gave an enlightened hearing to unorthodox thinkers.[b] It was natural therefore to provide a forum for these intellectuals, especially so since most members were well disposed towards the humanitarian causes and the democratic, socialist, European outlook vehemently espoused by the malcontents. Many in "El Sitio" would even agree when the dissenters demanded that entrenched interests stand aside or be pushed aside to let new men promote the thorough, rapid social change that had been revolu-

tionizing life in the more exciting parts of Europe. But despite such commonality of commitment, "El Sitio" was proceeding on hope and faith in inviting Don José Ortega y Gasset to address them. He was only twenty-six.

Despite his age, a small reputation had preceded Ortega to Bilbao. The young professor was known to speak with wit and learning about Spain's need to remaster European culture. More importantly, he was showing a talent for holding the reins of journalism, politics, and philosophy at once. He was already working to organize a coalition of intellectuals, workers, and the young, for this coalition was the one most likely to become the backbone of a reformed Spain. In his view, the intellectuals' duty was to help workers master the cultural skills with which they could turn their movements into effective forces of national leadership. Towards this end, he had given lectures at the *Casa del Partido* of the Madrid socialists, and he took active part in agitations among proletarians, such as the recent protests against the trial and execution of the purported terrorist, Francisco Ferrer.[2] Ortega had written eloquently opposing governmental efforts to repress popular movements, even the separatist movements in the Catalan provinces, for he believed repression would simply strengthen both terrorist sentiment and reaction among the established. Moreover, in addition to speaking out on the issues of the day, Ortega had indicated a larger vision. For instance, in *Faro*, a political magazine for intellectuals, he had contended that the nineteenth-century tradition of Spanish liberalism should properly give way to a twentieth-century vision of Spanish socialism.[3]

Unlike a number of young men with similar views, Ortega was clearly marked, from the beginning, as someone to be taken seriously by those in power. Ortega was not caught in the underground. Much of his controversial writing was appearing in *El Imparcial*, a powerful, eminently middle-of-the-road paper, which happened to belong to his family.[c] His maternal grandfather had founded *El*

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[2]See J. Alvarez del Vayo, *The Last Optimist*, pp. 35–6, for a first-hand account of Ortega speaking against Ferrer's trial and execution. See "Sencillas reflexiones," *El Imparcial*, September 6, 1910. *Obras* X, p. 169, for Ortega's view, at the time, of the significance of these events.

[3]"La reforma liberal," *Faro*, February 23, 1908, *Obras* X, pp. 31–8.

Imparcial and made it one of the better Madrid newspapers. A quasi-official organ of the Liberal party, the paper had become a leading journal of the Restoration—the Spanish equivalent of late-Victorian complacency. But despite its conservative tone, *El Imparcial* had opened its columns in the 1890's to some of the better critics of Spain's recent past. This policy had been the work of Ortega's father, José Ortega Munilla, who had achieved note as the able editor of *Los Lunes del Imparcial,* the paper's prestigious literary supplement. In this way *Los Lunes* had become a major outlet for the writers who gained great authority from the defeat of 1898; thus Ortega Munilla had made their prose, their ideas, and their personalities a part of the family influences under which his son, José, grew up.

Ortega quipped: "I was born on a rotary press."[4] He did not mean merely that he grew up accustomed to the smell of printer's ink and the late hours kept in getting out the city edition. He grew up at home with important writers and publishers and in a family through which the best of Spanish journalism became second nature to him. In the long run this background was important because it armed Ortega with a profound, instinctive understanding of public opinion and how to affect it. For instance, Unamuno wrote more frequently for popular papers and magazines than did Ortega, yet Ortega is remembered as the better philosophical journalist, for his contributions had a special compactness and continuity of thought that gave them a cumulative effect. But in the short run, Ortega's connections to *El Imparcial* were important because they insured his immediate access to an audience, and he quickly indicated that he would use it to propound views his readers were not accustomed to hearing. For instance, in Ortega's first contribution to the political columns of *El Imparcial,* he began to develop one of the fundamental themes of his journalism: "I believe that contemporary liberalism must be socialism."[5]

In addition to his family background, Ortega's education was such that, from an early age, he had to be taken seriously by older

[4]"El Señor Dato responsable de un atropello a la constitución," *El Sol,* June 17, 1920, *Obras* X, p. 654.

[5]"Reforma del carácter, no reforma de costumbres," *El Imparcial,* October 5, 1907, *Obras* X, p. 21.

men. Wise elders easily dismiss their young critics as ignorant, for it takes time to establish a reputation for substantial learning. But Ortega's education gave him a strong claim on intellectual respect.[d] Like many sons of the upper middle class, he had been sent away to a Jesuit boarding school. Thus he had missed the enlightened instruction that he might have received at the famous *Institución Libre de Enseñanza*, the Free Educational Institute, which in 1876 had been founded by Francisco Giner de los Ríos and other dissident intellectuals. Instead, Ortega had received the thorough, painful drill in classical languages that his friend, Ramón Pérez de Ayala, tellingly satirized in *A. M. D. G.: Life in a Jesuit College.*[6] From 1898 to 1902, Ortega had studied at the *Universidad Central* in Madrid, receiving his *licenciado* in philosophy and letters; he did well, impressing his masters as being competent and independent, but not extraordinary. Two years later, he received his doctorate at the age of twenty-one, which was not uncommon in his time; among his examiners was Unamuno, who soon thereafter wrote about Ortega in "Almas de jovenes," "Youthful Spirits."[7] Ortega's education, however, did not stop.

Rather than begin his career after receiving his doctorate, Ortega decided to go to Germany for further studies. The decision was a turning point in his life. At the beginning of the century, Spanish intellectuals were not well versed in German thought. In fact, Karl Christian Friedrich Krause, a humane but unexceptional follower of Hegel, was the only German thinker with whom most Spanish intellectuals were well acquainted.

Krausismo is a curious phenomenon that had a complicated influence on Spanish thought. It had started in 1857 when Julián Sanz del Río finished several years of meditating in solitude on philosophical studies he had pursued in Germany. Coming out of seclusion, Sanz del Río began to teach Krause's system, which held that all existence was within God, that a moral law pervaded human life and provided for the organic unity of mankind, and that all

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[6]Pérez de Ayala, *A.M.D.G.*, in *Obras completas de Ramón Pérez de Ayala*, Vol. IV. Ortega wrote a favorable review of this notorious book, which has become quite scarce, and he said that it rang true to his own experience. See "Al margen del libro *A.M.D.G.*," 1910, *Obras* I, pp. 532–5.

[7]See Unamuno, "Almas de jovenes," May, 1904, in Unamuno's *Obras* I, pp. 1148–1159.

would be well if each person conducted himself in rigorous fidelity to the dictates of the moral law within him. To be sure, in 1857 this introduction of German philosophy into Spain had been a progressive influence, one that engendered persecution from both Church and State. Yet with time, contexts change. Sanz del Río's dedicated, intimate teaching had been effective, and late nineteenth-century reformers in the schools and universities were deeply influenced by his version of Krause's humanitarian optimism. But twentieth-century reformers learned to look on the Krausist system with much skepticism. The vital elements of *Krausismo* were not the ideas peculiar to Krause, but the principles that he shared with other, more important thinkers: with Kant, Fichte, and Hegel. Spanish intellectuals, in spite of themselves, preserved the habits of scholasticism; they adopted *Krausismo* as a self-contained system and absolved themselves of the chore of further philosophical studies. Hence, in retrospect, *Krausismo* seemed to have served as an intellectual buffer between Spanish thinkers and the main line of European speculation. By attracting those who were receptive to change to a closed system, *Krausismo* subtly impeded the development of philosophy in Spain.[e]

Instead of studying his system, Ortega did as Sanz del Río himself had done and travelled to the German universities. These travels freed Ortega from the sterile controversies of Spanish speculation and his post-doctoral work put him far ahead of his former teachers. Ortega spent almost two years studying German philosophy at Leipzig, Berlin, and Marburg. During 1907, his most productive year in Germany, he worked with Hermann Cohen and Paul Natorp, the leaders of Marburg neo-Kantianism. There he began long acquaintances with Nicolai Hartmann, Ernst Cassirer, and other German contemporaries.

On his return, Ortega's competence was quickly recognized. His writing showed that unlike others, whether they were so-called Europeanizers or Hispanicizers, Ortega had a clear conception of European culture and of its importance to Spain. Consequently, his writing on the subject was surprisingly pointed and precise. His elders did not always understand him easily, for his texts included many not-so-familiar figures: references to Descartes, Leibniz, Spinoza, Kant, Fichte, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Renan, and Nietzsche. But his dexterous use of learning impressed readers even when they

did not wholly understand. This mark of erudition served to counter the charge of ignorance with which the well-established might have dismissed a young critic.

Finally, Ortega was to be listened to, even at twenty-six, not only because he had good connections and a good education, but because he was rapidly gaining position in his own right. His *Wanderjahre* through the German universities had already become a pattern being successfully promoted by the *Junta para Ampliación de Estudios*, a group initiated by Giner de los Ríos and directed by Ramón y Cajal to improve the universities of Spain. In 1909, Ortega had become professor of philosophy at the *Escuela de Estudios Superiores del Magisterio*, the leading normal school of Madrid. Here prospective teachers studied and here many youths who lacked the social advantages that gave access to the university still could get an excellent higher education.

Ortega's position was a good one from which he could pursue his desire to improve Spanish education and to stimulate Spain's intellectual elite. Yet in academic circles he was expected to try for the vacant Chair of Metaphysics at the University of Madrid, which was perhaps the most prestigious position open to a philosopher in Spain. Spanish professors win their posts by competing before a panel of judges; and despite his youth, Ortega was given a good chance of outshining his elder competitors, for only Unamuno could match the philosophic background that Ortega gained in Germany, and Unamuno, then at home at Salamanca, had already declined the opportunity to compete for a Madrid post. In Ortega's year of teaching, he had proved effective. Erudition had not overwhelmed his knack for dramatic presentation, and he was known to be quick and telling in the give and take of oral examination.[f] "El Sitio" was anxious to take their own measure of the man to see whether he lived up to his promise.

When the audience had gathered, it was clear that at least word of Ortega's personal appearance had preceded him to "El Sitio," for as a reporter observed in a pleasant Spanish idiom, "not a few" *señoritas* graced his audience.[8] And when Ortega arrived, they were not disappointed. A Spaniard: he was short, but strong and agile. The sense of movement characteristic of his thought

[8] "Una conferencia en 'El Sitio': La pedagogía social," *El Imparcial*, March 13, 1910.

actively emanated from his physique: he would soon develop a taste for driving fast touring cars, and a photograph shows him in a graceful *suerte de capa* before a real, albeit small, bull. Even when young, Ortega disdained the flashy garb of *Modernismo* and dressed in the accepted fashion of the time. Effortlessly, he had a certain flair, a prepossessing air, which made it unnecessary to advertise himself with eccentricities. His face was sharply featured and expressive. The animation of his eyes impressed those with whom he conversed, and caricaturists enjoyed exaggerating the large forehead that rose above his brows. His strong, active hands were almost always in motion, and when he spoke, they complemented his words with an elegant commentary of gestures.[8] At twenty-six Ortega was a master of oratory.

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Ortega took his invitation to speak to "El Sitio" seriously. The request came as the first sign that he was winning a well-placed following for his views; and he realized that his speech would receive wide attention, for the serious papers usually reported on "El Sitio's" proceedings. Since returning from Germany, Ortega had been pre-occupied with a mission, the Europeanization of Spain. In addition to giving him personal satisfaction, the invitation itself struck him as a sign of the need for Spanish regeneration, for a society of "El Sitio's" stature ought not to be inviting novices to address its meetings. This symptom of the need for Europeanization he would make an occasion for the pursuit of Europeanization; he would explain his theory of civic reform in the hope of enlisting his listeners in his cause. He took care in composing his address, "Civic Pedagogy as a Political Program";[9] much seemed to ride on it.

In preparation, Ortega might have considered beginning with a humorous introduction as counseled by classical rhetoric. But no. He was in no mood for levity. And besides, he had a better way to engage the attention of his audience. To do so, he would bluntly point out the significance of his presence at "El Sitio," a mere youth lecturing his elders. The thought of it angered him; his speech, by its mere existence, would demonstrate the depressed condition of

[9]The text of "La pedagogía social como programa político" is in *Obras* I, pp. 503–521. I have translated "La pedagogía social" as civic pedagogy.

Spain. How galling that the Society had to invite someone so young, someone "who *was* nothing because he had *done* nothing," someone who was signficant merely for his promise! Dwelling on this situation, he would irritate his audience—and rightly so—for the situation should irritate Spaniards. If things went well, he would transform this irritation into a motive force for efforts to change Spanish life. Sorrow and shame, he thought, were the great sources of constructive effort; he would make his speech follow the moral itinerary that Beethoven had identified with one of his symphonies, "to joy by way of sorrow."[10]

Yes, such a dark, aggressive beginning would be appropriate. He wanted to draw his listeners into recognizing the great void in their common lives, the great absence of a future, the terrible inability to conceive of what Nietzsche called a *Kinderland*, the land of one's children, a Spain that might be achieved if men's hopes came to pass. That oppressive cloud, a present without a future: men had to become angry at this miasma; then they might make a morrow. What words would impart this mood? Did they ring true to him?

There are two types of patriotism. One sees the country as the heritage of the past and as a set of pleasing things that we presently are offered by the land in which we were born. The rather legendary glories of our forefathers, the beauty of the sky, the garb of the women, the dash of the men around us, the transparent density of the *jerez* wines, the luxuriant flowering of the Levantine gardens, the capacity for producing miracles that persists in the pedestal of the Aragonese Virgin, and so on—these compose a mass of realities, more or less presumed, that are for many their country. Because they begin with the supposition that all these things are real, that these are here, they need only to open their eyes to see their country; as a result of this notion of the nation, there remains nothing for the patriot to do but to settle down comfortably and to occupy himself with tasting the delectable array. This is the inactive, spectacular, ecstatic patriotism in which the spirit dedicates itself to the fruition of an existing, prosperous destiny that has been fortuitously pushed before it.

There is, however, another notion of the nation. It is not the land of our fathers, Nietzsche said, but the land of our children. The country is not the past and the present, nor is it anything that a providential hand extends to us so that we may have possession of it; the country is, on the

[10] *Ibid.*, pp. 503–4.

contrary, something that yet does not exist, that, even more, cannot exist unless we struggle energetically to fulfill it by ourselves. The country is, in this sense, precisely the conjunction of virtues that were and are lacking in our historic home. The nation is what we have not been and what we must be under penalty of feeling ourselves erased from the map.

However perfect may be the life of a people, it is not too great to be improved. Our children expect from us this improvement of the country so that their existence will be less sorrowful and richer in possibilities than our own. The improved country, the perfected nation, is the land of our children. Therefore, it is the real nation for those who are fathers—either by flesh or by spirit and obligation.

By so understanding the country, patriotism becomes for us an incessant activity, a firm and arduous desire to fulfill the idea of improvement suggested to us by the teachings of the national conscience. Our country becomes a task to complete, a problem to solve, a duty.

Thus, this dynamic and . . . futurist patriotism finds itself constantly obliged to combat the other, the voluptuous and quietist patriotism. To know what our country should be tomorrow, we have to weigh what it has been and accentuate primarily the defects of its past. True patriotism is criticizing the land of our fathers and constructing the land of our children.[11]

Yes! Here was the problem: it was not that the old order had collapsed—far from it; it was that the sense of a *Kinderland*, the hope for a future, had been lost. The patriotic task was to rebuild these hopes, to rediscover a stirring possibility, one that might move men to a common future. The patriotic duty was to speak out, to condemn, to suggest, to propose, to activate; an allegiance to the future entailed a willingness to criticize the past and to negate the present.

Might some think that such activities on the part of private citizens were improper, a spontaneous meddling in the work of the King and his governors? Spain, after all did have its official leaders. To be sure, they were not chosen by a particularly representative process, nor were they highly effective governors. Yet, were they not responsible for defining the national purpose? Was it not the citizen's duty to defer to their authority? The Spaniard, at least had to respond with an adamant NO! Perhaps the Germans, English, or French could leave politics to the politicians; the Spaniard could not. Ortega understood that a people were prior to their politics; that

[11] *Ibid., pp. 505–6.*

they were responsible for the failures of their officials; that, rather than the government reform the nation, the nation had to reform the government. Constructing a *Kinderland* had little to do with official politics; the people themselves had to confront their governors with a vision of the future.

"El Sitio" would have no trouble with this point; it was a premise common to the numerous visions of Spanish regeneration. Making the point explicit, however, would prepare the way for his main concern: the people's means for making politics. Politics had two meanings, he would remind his listeners: "the art of governing or the art of obtaining the government and keeping it. Put another way: there is an art of legislating and an art of imposing certain legislative acts. To think that law is for every case the most circumspect and to think that sufficient means are possessed to pretend that this law succeeds at converting itself into written and ruling law, are very distinct matters. . . ."[12]

This distinction had been the tacit basis of his political criticism, especially of his contempt for the Machiavellian practices of Spain's official politicians. In his speech, he would make it explicit. With the art of obtaining the government, a few men work within a given system to conserve their conventional affairs, jockeying incessantly to aggrandize their personal positions. With the art of governing, all men interact in every walk of life to transform, slowly but ineluctably, the given system of authority, and its concomitant conventional affairs, inspiring each other to reject the old and to pursue new aspirations. At its best, the art of obtaining the government would result in prudent lawmaking, provided the government was already a well-made machine. The art of governing would, in contrast, give rise to lawgiving, the only process that could transform a decrepit government into a renewed system for making law.

Spain was deficient in the art of governing. For that reason there was no *Kinderland*. The official politicians were adept only at obtaining the government; they were facile at making and unmaking legislation, but they lacked a vision, a purpose, a goal, a conception of law. He was bitter, like many Spaniards, at the way Spain's governor's used the government in patent contempt for the ideals

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[12] *Ibid.*, p. 507.

—justice, liberty, legality—on which all government was founded. On another occasion, dwelling on the official abuse of government, he had proclaimed that "revolutions are just."[13] Yet, here was the real problem: like most men, he was not a violent revolutionary. Revolutions were just, but not desirable if they could be avoided: the costs of revolutions, the human costs, the moral costs, the political costs, were much too high. Was there an alternative? He believed there was. He would try to explain the alternative to "El Sitio."

Revolutions aimed at depriving those who had obtained the government of this holding. Revolutions wrested possession of the state apparatus from the established groups. Real improvement, he thought, did not come from this act alone. Real improvement came from exercising the art of governing, which was quite different from holding possession of the state. Yet, in the past, revolutionary movements had concentrated on taking the state away from the old order. Obsessed with the art of obtaining the government, revolutionary movements had had great difficulty with the art of governing. Only at tremendous cost could they manage to build a new state. There was a better way. He believed negative revolution to be unnecessary. When exhausted, self-serving groups occupied the government without assuming responsibility to govern, in its deepest sense, they had effectively abdicated; they reigned without scepter. Obtaining the government was a waste. In an exhausted order, the art of governing could be exercised by whoever could find ways to do so. He would suggest some. He would suggest how concerned citizens might govern spontaneously, how they might indirectly yet ineluctably reform the nation in spite of the government.

"To be sure," Ortega would say, "politics is action; but, all the same, action is movement: it is to go from one place to another, it is to take a step and a step requires a direction that points straight out to the infinite. Among us there has been an improper separation of the politics of action from the political ideal, as if the former could have meaning orphaned from the latter. Our recent history makes patent the point of misery to which an active politics free of political ideals leads." He would call on his audience to turn away

[13]"Los problemas nacionales y la juventud," Lecture at the Madrid Ateneo, October 15, 1909, *Obras* X, p. 117.

from official politics, not in overt rebellion, but in a spontaneous creation, one in which private citizens accepted responsibility for the art of governing and spread ideals of public life that would transform the country despite the moral inertia ensconced in the government. "What should it be?" Ortega would put to them. "What is the ideal Spain towards which we can orient our hearts . . . ?"[14]

Here, he might have considered launching into a description of a Spanish *Kinderland*. Spain possessed many deficiencies; hence Spaniards have long excelled in proposing splendid programs of reform. An ideal Spain—the topic would call forth glorious proposals: a democratic, republican government, industrialization, land reform and the mechanization of agriculture, improvements in public transportation, reforestation, reduction of military expenditures, the expansion and improvement of popular education, and so on endlessly. But in view of the demoralization of official Spain, these would be futile proposals. They would all depend on governmental action. They were not ideals by which private citizens could orient their hearts. To promote a spontaneous, popular politics, a vital attempt at the art of governing, the critic could do better than dwell on the promised land. Instead, he would analyze the people's means: civic pedagogy, the education of the public.

Thus he would arrive at the subject he really wanted to put before "El Sitio." Men had other means, besides politics, "to transform the given reality in the pattern of the ideal": education.[15] This means could be used by every man at every moment, for education did not take place solely in the school; civic pedagogy was an omnipresent aspect of life in a community. From his familial background among journalists, from his own experience of having been stirred, not by teachers, but by events, and from his philosophic studies in Germany, he had developed a profound, open sense of the educator's mission. His main task was to explain this mission to "El Sitio."

Civic pedagogy!? The educator's mission!? Why weight the excitement of politics with such dull concerns? In present-day America we know the expectations the young orator had to combat.

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[14]"La pedagogía social como programa político," 1910, *Obras* I, p. 507.

[15]*Ibid.*, p. 508.

People perceived education to be on the periphery of public affairs. In training up this or that individual, even were he to become a powerful personage, men of affairs would be wasting their time; too many believe Shaw: those who can, do; those who can't, teach. Nonsense! Education was more than tutoring individuals. Everyone, everywhere, all the time—each taught; each learned; life was a great cycle of pedagogic influence. Doers teach; teachers do: education, properly perceived, *was* the art of governing.

Since Machiavelli, men have confused the relationship between politics and pedagogy. Where Plato aspired to put philosophy in equal cooperation with kings, Machiavelli was content to put it in the subordinate service of princes. Machiavelli taught the prince to use reason, not in the pursuit of wisdom, but in a pursuit of power.[h] Since then the possessors of power have exploited the control of education as a means of preserving their position. These practices make for good politics and bad government. They subject solutions to pedagogical problems, problems in the art of governing, to the expedient criteria of practical politics, the art of obtaining and holding the government. As we know, these practices turn educators away from their proper business. They transform the pedagogue in every sphere of activity into a salesman preserving the American way of life, a general planning the national defense, a policeman guarding the sidewalks and patrolling the highways, an economist allocating national labor skills, a technician underwriting future material progress, or a doctor raising standards of public health. All these functions may be necessary and desirable, but they are peripheral to education, to the continuous acquisition of culture, skills, and tastes, a continuous acquisition through which each person forms his character and capabilities and through which each generation assumes its historic qualities. Instead of facilitating education, the school, church, family, marketplace, entertainment, and opinion provide whatever the powerful practical leaders believe will enhance and preserve their position. In both Ortega's Spain and the present-day West, pedagogy, which traditionally concerned lawgiving, has been made a mere handmaiden of the lawmaker.

He would take the argument against this perversion of the civic order beyond justice and back to expedience on a higher level. He would speak of civic pedagogy as a *political program*. He would

suggest that if practical men had the courage not to interfere in the people's efforts to educate themselves, the ancillary benefits from expedient programs for training the people would accrue twice over. But he would not take his stand only on the grounds of a higher expedience. He had been schooled in the classical tradition of political philosophy. In this tradition, the problem of pedagogy was the foundation. Pedagogy was not didactics.[i] Far from it! Pedagogy was the basic component of political philosophy.

Classical political theory had explained how a community formed and persisted. Pedagogy was the branch of classical theory that explained, not how a teacher might conduct a school, but how ideals, spirit, mind, might function in the formation of a community. In the absence of a spiritual discipline, each man was the prey of his passions. These would beguile him into foolish deeds. These would destroy any nascent community. Thus Cain killed Abel. To moderate the power of passion, men created ideals of conduct. Ideals described not how men in fact behaved, but how they could and should behave. By reference to ideals men gave themselves a particular character. Doing so, they gained a certain dependability that under trying circumstances they would act in accordance with their self-imposed obligations. To the degree that men shared ideals, creating a common character, they formed communities. Ideals of conduct, taste, and thought enabled men to moderate their divisive passions and to live in harmony, in a common harmony attained without brute subservience of the multitude to a single member.[j]

If the political theorist would seek, like Plato, to engender an authentic community, he would find that his task is not only philosophical, devising the ideals by which men can discipline their character; his task is also pedagogical, leading each man towards the personal formation of the common, rational ideals that the philosopher has discovered. Intellectually, pedagogy would aid men in selecting their common ideals and in communicating these to their peers; it would explain to them how character was created, and through character, community. Practically, pedagogy would help spread common standards among a people; in doing so it would serve in forming a community of men. Pedagogy would be a foundation of public affairs: men can live in common and in freedom only by reference to rational, consistent conceptions of truth,

beauty, and goodness, and the acquisition of these conceptions is education, the continual process through which men are entering into their social compacts, forming and re-forming their communities.

In real life, however, the pedagogue's effort to extend the reach of reason, to found community, often would give way to the politician's obsession with obtaining power, with preserving position. Hence, education has frequently been treated as a subsidiary of practical politics, and pedagogy, a concern for the standards that men might cultivate in themselves, has been dismissed as irrelevant to *Realpolitik*. Practical leaders, at heart nihilists, recognized the expediency of appearing to be principled: they gave lip service to generally accepted ideals, which educators, in turn, have been expected to perpetuate without questioning. Convention, false certainty, and hypocrisy thus become the basis for educating the public. Instruction becomes a process of transmitting ignorance, dissimulation, and moral vacuity from one generation to another.

An unbuttressed facade would stand steady, provided the winds were gentle and the earth did not quake. So too, a community might persist for years in an unrecognized disillusionment, provided it encountered no internal or external crises. But, under the logic of expediency, a domestic minority would be exploited, seemingly safely, until it rebels, demanding justice or perhaps repayment in kind. Under the logic of expediency, a nation would be tempted to commit mounting force in protecting its foreign interests, until it consumes its vitality defending bad investments. During the twentieth century, citizens of nearly every Western nation have faced a crisis of common purpose; and in Spain, following 1898, prolonged colonial difficulties and violent domestic separatism combined to nurture a generation of civic pedagogues, men reacting to the lack of significant ideals, men searching for new, common standards, men seeking a spontaneous reform of their nation.

With a reawakening of an interest in human ideals, men would cease to perceive pedagogy as a mere instrument of policy; they would again recognize it as a rudiment of polity. Important matters, therefore, were at stake for Ortega as he planned to affirm that pedagogy was the science of human ideals. He would reassert historical initiative for the intellectual and the teacher. The *clerc* had

no reason to betray his office, to defer to the Worldly Wiseman; nay, the *clerc* had good reason to remain true to his duties. To the man of the world, voluntary, rational standards had become irrelevant. *Eppur si muove! Eppure egli vuòle!* Men continued to respond to aspirations. They led themselves out of themselves in an effort to realize their ideals, to remain true to their standards.

Ideas girded any public order. Men who changed ideas would change all else. He would contend, at "El Sitio" and throughout his life, that practical affairs were secondary features of the community; they were dependent on a particular system of aspirations, the formation of which was the primary level of public affairs. Both the means and the ends of political, economic, and social activities followed, for the most part, from the spiritual activities through which persons constituted their polity. Ideals were evoked by teachers, preachers, writers, and thinkers, by men who cultivated ideals according to a pedagogy. Because a group of men received its character in response to the educators within it, he would assert at Bilbao that "pedagogy is the science of transforming communities."[16]

Who made history? That was the question he would seek to raise. Practical men believed that they—the politicians, businessmen, and soldiers—made history. He would disagree. These men simply played out the script that had been composed, for better or for worse, by thinkers and teachers. He might have toyed with quoting Heinrich Heine's wise warning: "mark this, ye proud men of action: ye are nothing but unconscious hodmen of the men of thought who, often in humblest stillness, have appointed you your inevitable work."[17]

Pedagogy is prior to politics. For each pedagogy that men master, they must create a corresponding politics. In his speech and throughout his career, he entertained the possibility that intellectuals could introduce into Spain and Europe a set of ideals, standards, and aspirations that differed from those in force and that would make a different kind of practical life possible, desirable, and finally ineluctable. Thus, he did not perceive the imminence of a

[16]*Ibid.*, p. 515.

[17]Heine, *Religion and Philosophy in Germany*, John Snodgrass, trans., p. 106.

post-historic era; on the contrary, it was potentially a *most* historic era![k] He perceived a complicated, provisional, and open future; one that depended on our personally mastering the many modes of pedagogical power.

Thus, civic pedagogy was no dull weight crushing the excitement of politics, burdening it with didactic do-gooders. Civic pedagogy would be a great leaven, a vital yeast that would set the populace in ferment and make the community rise. The science of human ideals, pedagogy was the science of transforming communities; and it wrought change, not by imposing a Jacobin blueprint on the whole, but by effectively helping to raise the personal aspirations of each member. No worry: his listeners would realize that in turning to education he would not be addressing himself to the special concerns of harried parents and distraught teachers, but to the fundamental sources of further development in the history of Spain and, we might add, of the West.

Through education we obtain from an imperfect person a man whose breast glows with iridescent virtues. Innately, no one is excellent, knowing, or energetic. But a vigorous image of a superior human creature floats before the eyes of his teacher, who, using the skills of pedagogy, injects this ideal man into the nervous apparatus of the carnal creature. This is the admirable, educative operation through which the Idea, the Word, gives itself flesh! . . .

Insofar as it is a science, pedagogy concerns transforming man's integral character, and it encounters two problems: the first is to determine what future form, what human standard, is to point the direction in which the pedagogue should push his pupil. This is the problem of the educative ideal. Should the teacher carelessly arrogate to himself the right to impose a capricious form on the human material that someone has submitted to his nurture? It would be perversely frivolous to define the ideal type through any means except rigorous and careful labor. The pedagogue shares responsibility for the present with other men; but precisely because he prepares the future, the future also weighs upon his responsibility. We are that which moved obscurely in the dreams of our fathers and masters, for fathers' dreams are their sons and the century that will follow. . . .

The science of pedagogy must begin with the rigorous determination of the pedagogical ideal, of the educative ends. The other problem that is essential is finding the intellectual, moral, and esthetic means by which one can succeed in launching the pupil in the direction of the ideal. Just as physics establishes the laws of nature and then, in particular

technologies, these laws are applied to industry, pedagogy anticipates what man must be and then finds the instruments for helping man succeed at becoming what he must be.[18]

But wait. Here was another problem. Liberal Spaniards would not like talk about "what man must be"; they had learned to chafe at the divine rights of didacticism that the Church long ago arrogated to itself. Could he use the rhetoric of critical philosophy he had learned in Germany? He would try. The rational necessity explicated by critical philosophy differed from both the moral necessity upheld by scholastic ethics and the political necessity imposed by authoritarian government.[1] He would make it clear. By the human ideal, by "what man must be," one did not mean some sterile image of the perfect person to which all must conform. Instead, the human ideal denoted the common principles that, when used in diverse ways by diverse persons in diverse situations, marked each as a human being. One should base pedagogy on a cogent conception of the humanity of man, of what made the animal, man, into a human. With this contention, he would put his educational theory squarely in the liberal tradition. With Socrates, he would insist that teachers, all teachers regardless of their métier, were responsible for the quality of the nourishment they offered to the human spirit.[19] With Kant, he would base his pedagogy on a philosophical anthropology, on the study, as the great idealist said, not of what nature makes of man, but of what man can and should make of himself.[20] With Wilhelm Dilthey, he would hold that the human ideal was not revealed or imposed; it was the *telos* of all inquiry, or as Dilthey put it, "the blossom and goal of all true philosophy is pedagogy in its widest sense—the formative theory of man."[21]

"Man! Man!" he would exclaim to his audience. "Who is man?"

Here was the question. Answers had ranged from the cynical saying that man was the only creature that drank without thirst and made love in every season to Leibniz's belief that man was a

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[18]"La pedagogía social como programa político," 1910, *Obras* I, pp. 508–9.

[19]See especially Plato, *Protagoras*, 313A–314C.

[20]See especially Kant, *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*, in *Werke in sechs Bänden*, VI, p. 399.

[21]Dilthey, *Pädagogik: Geschichte und Grundlinien des Systems*, 3rd, ed., *Gesammelte Schriften*, IX, p. 7.

petit Dieu. "Be careful that interpretations of man fall between one and the other definition," he would caution.[22]

Man was a problem for man: that was his most human feature. Man's unique, human characteristic was that he had to decide what to make of himself. Here was the germ of Ortega's philosophy of life—his idea of "vital reason." Human character could oscillate between the beast who drinks without thirst and a small God; whether men traveled towards the former or the latter depended on their will: they were compelled towards neither. The variability of human character intensified the responsibilities of the pedagogue. Man's problem was that he made of himself whatever he would become, "and once we have let ourselves engage this problem without reservation, I believe that we will approach pedagogy with a religious dread. . . ." Again, he would repeat the fundamental question: "What idea of man should be held by the man who is going to humanize your sons? Whatever it is, the cast that he gives them will be ineffaceable."[23]

Humanization was not a mechanical, strictly causal process, however. Man was not wholly a biological creature. Educating a man was not, like breeding a horse, a matter of bringing the exterior qualities of a species to perfection in a single member. The goals of education would not be found in biology or any of its derivative sciences.[m] In keeping with the idealistic tradition, especially with the critical philosophy of Kant, he would warn against confusing our knowledge of phenomena with reality itself. "We must ask ourselves: is man a biological individual, a mere organism? The answer is unequivocal: No. Man is not merely a biological case, for he is biology itself; he is not only a grade on the zoological scale, for it is he who constructed the entire scale."[24]

Man was more than a spatial and temporal creature because he carried within himself the idea of space and time. Certainly the human body was a physical body, "but I ask you: physics itself, what is it? Physics does not respond to its own laws; it has no mass, it does not obey the law of universal gravitation. Hence, gentlemen,

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[22]"La pedagogía social como programa político," 1910, *Obras* I, pp. 509–510.
[23]*Ibid.*, p. 510.
[24]*Ibid.*, p. 511.

physics goes beyond physical facts; physics is a metaphysical fact." Physics was part of a great range of creations—science, art, morality—that were metaphysical entities. These were not natural; they were not, in essence, physical objects. Metaphysical entities were ideals and standards that had been created by man, and through these man gave himself his own specific character. "Science, morality, and art are specifically human facts: and vice versa, to be human is to participate in science, morality, and art."[25]

With this proposition, he would give a general answer to his question, Who is man? The goals of education would be found in the realm of science, morality, and art. All of man's mental creations were human ideals, which latently were common universals that would enable different men at once to particularize and to humanize their personal development. These metaphysical facts were neither natural nor necessary; their continual existence depended on the human will. He would mark off a great realm, which was filled with human ideals, as the special purview and responsibility of the educator. He would secure this realm against those who wished to deny its existence by reiterating the traditional duality between the physical and the ideal, between the rule of necessity and the rule of freedom. Along with certain other twentieth-century thinkers, he would escape the mind-body problem, not by reducing one to the other, but by showing that both existed *in the lives* of actual men, body as their physical life, mind as their spiritual life.

Referring to the idealism of Plato, Hegel, Pestalozzi, and Paul Natorp, he would characterize the rule of freedom as a communal rather than an idiosyncratic rule. Science, morality, and art were not an "individual inheritance." They were a discipline to which one freely submitted in order to partake in common truth, general good, and universal beauty. Considered as a subject of natural forces, each man was unique and meaningless; but as a free being each man could sacrifice a bit of his uniqueness to gain meaning by participating in cultural endeavors. "Inside each of us, two men live in a perpetual struggle: a savage man who is willful, irreducible to a rule or to a pattern, a species of gorilla; and a stern man who is

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 512.

found to be thinking exact ideas, performing legal acts, feeling emotions of transcendent value. The wild instincts exist only for the former man, the man of nature; the latter, the man of culture, alone participates in science, law, and beauty." This participation distinguished the human from the animal man.[26]

Thus, to his question, Who is man?, he would answer that man is the embodiment of his common ideals: The metaphysical principles of science, morality and art were the common characteristics that made men human, that permitted community in diversity. Each child was shaped by the standards of his family, his city, his nation, and his heritage; and conversely, a man's family, city, nation, and heritage were particular ideals that oriented each man's personal aspirations. "Concretely, the human individual is human only insofar as he contributes to the civic reality and is tempered by it."[27]

Ortega planned to expound two theses to "El Sitio." First, to determine what pedagogical ideals were most suitable for human aspiration, he would ask who man was and answer that man was human insofar as he fulfilled one or another metaphysical ideal. Second, he would begin contending that pedagogy was the fundamental, formative power of any community, but he would conclude that the given characteristics of a community, its established ideals and standards, were the most powerful pedagogical influences on its members. Were these theses circular? By all means, and that would be the source of their real import.

If men could examine human matters with the rigorous detachment that natural scientists pretend to possess, his circular reasoning would be a mark against his ideas. But, men think because they find themselves shipwrecked in a sea of things and they must think in order to learn to keep themselves afloat. In human matters rigorous detachment was not possible, for the human sciences arose from man thinking about himself: they were inherently circular. Expunging the circularity of our thoughts would do violence to the objects of our intellection, in this case to ourselves. The actual significance of his ideas about pedagogy would be found first by recognizing that pedagogical phenomena required a circular description, and

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 512.
[27] *Ibid.*, p. 514.

second by examining the consequences that followed from this situation.[n]

His first proposition led to a liberal conception of authority, one holding that authority over each person's activities ultimately resides in the person. Teachers needed to know the nature of a man in order to select the ideals that they should develop in their pupils, but the nature of the man was itself determined by the ideals that he adopted. The result was that pedagogical authority ultimately resided in the pupil, not the teacher; each person defined the place in the common, human world he would assume; enlightened ignorance of the pupil limited the teacher to provoking, criticizing, and generally enhancing the pupil's aspirations. No teacher had a basis for imposing his own goals upon another. In civic pedagogy, no part of the polity had the authority to define and impose its particular program on all.

Like most idealisms, his conception of communal authority was subtle, and hence easily misunderstood. Authority resided in each person, but it concerned common problems and potentials. He would reject a complete individualism; for if men renounced their common, intellectual resources in favor of idiosyncratic modes of thought, they would soon plunge themselves back into a state of nature. At the same time, he would not accept a radical socialization of the person. To be sure, he would observe that "the individual divinizes himself in the collectivity."[28] But the collectivity, the community, did not exist apart from and above the person: no man could make an authoritative statement in the name of "society." Civic ideals did not exist independent of the persons who pursued them; and to compel adherence to one or another ideal was impossible, for an ideal, by definition, was the object of a man's *aspiration.* Instead, community depended on the free adherence by many persons to common standards and their voluntary pursuit of common goals. "We have seen how the civic fact appears to us as we search for the reality of the individual because in reality we find every individual always enlaced with others and because we find that, taking each one separately, his interior is prepared from materials common to other men. In essence, gentlemen, the communal is a

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 520.

combination of individual efforts to realize a common work."[29] The collectivity through which the individual would divinize himself would not be a supra-personal, organic entity, but a metaphysical ideal that a person shared with other persons.

As the impossibility of objectively defining the nature of man restricted authority to the person's power over himself, the fact that the community was at once the result and the agent of education was the basis of democratic, egalitarian relations between men. If this circle accurately described human reality, if shared ideals were both source and result of education, man's civic relations were intrinsically open; they were continually subject to change and adaptation, yet their change and adaptation would always proceed through evolution, not revolution. A particular citizen or group had no way to fix once and forever the pattern of influence that formed and perpetuated the community, for the pattern was the coöperative work of all, each influencing the others. To introduce a completely novel pattern of influence and produce a revolution, not merely in word, but in deeds as well, was likewise impossible. A community developed as each man defined his vision of the future from the common heritage. To deny certain members of a group the opportunity to define their own place in its future was unjust. Listen now to what the youth would say; later, the mature man would speak again about the matter.

If community is coöperation, members of the community must, before anything else, be workers. One who does not work cannot participate in the community. With this affirmation democracy is impelled towards socialism. To socialize a man is to make him a worker in the magnificent human undertaking, culture, where culture means everything from digging a ditch to composing verses.

It is today a scientific truth, acquired once and for all, that the only morally admissible social system is the socialist system; but I do not affirm either that true socialism follows Karl Marx or that the workers' parties are the only ethically elevated parties. Regardless of what version you take, next to socialism all political theory is anarchic because it denies the supposition of coöperation, which is the substance of society and the regimen of community.

Passive cooperation characterized the slave who built the pyramids; the worker, if he is not be a slave, needs to have a living comprehension

[29] *Ibid.*, p. 515.

of the meaning of his work. To me it seems inhuman to keep a man in the corner of a factory unless he is given a vision of the whole so that he can gain a noble sense of his task. . . . Here is the ethical value of civic pedagogy: if each civic person has to be a worker in the culture, each worker has a right to endow himself with a cultural understanding.

Public instruction throughout Europe—not only in Spain—perpetuates through its organization a crime of *lèse-humanité*: the school is two schools—a school for the rich and one for the poor. The poor are poor not only in material matters; they are also poor in spirit. A time will come —disgracefully it is not yet here—when students of man will not need to classify him as rich or poor, as one classifies animals as vertebrate or invertebrate. But even worse, today men divide themselves into cultured and uncultured; that is, into men and submen.[30]

Here he would take the part of the teacher, the political teacher, the civic pedagogue. Here he would criticize current standards; he would propose alternatives; he would invite each listener to seek to define for himself a more perfect Spain, to try to live according to this better vision. He and his audience would be plunged into the cycles of pedagogic influence that he would have pointed out. Spaniards could not, by means of programmatic proposals, impose a different form upon these cycles. Spaniards could, however, question their own civic ideals, provoking others to do the same; and with enough effort, they might bend the course of development, spontaneously making it point in a different, more hopeful direction.

This effort, exerted by each, to learn to live by more taxing, more liberating civic ideals, would be civic pedagogy as a political program. This program would by-pass official Spain. It would be a new politics. It would result in the Europeanization of Spain. As soon as Spaniards would begin to search for the ideals of their *Kinderland*, they would discover Europe. Spaniards could most improve themselves, and through themselves, their nation, by pursuing the standards of European culture; and as proof of this contention he would offer both Miguel de Unamuno and Joaquín Costa. Despite the differences of their doctrines, both men exemplified the potential power of those who would master European intellectual standards. He would leave "El Sitio" with a simple thought: "Spain is the problem and Europe the solution."[31]

[30] *Ibid.*, pp. 517–8.

[31] *Ibid.*, pp. 519–520.

Such were the intentions behind Ortega's words. The address itself went well enough; it was neither disastrous nor epochal. His speech was reported in Madrid, at least by *El Imparcial*. His ideas won favor with those seeking to create a radical "new politics"; they, at least, found inspiration in what he said. Thus, *Europa*, a short-lived magazine of the young regenerationists, introduced excerpts from his speech with the observation that "it contains a virtual program. It gives specific recommendations with which we concur, for we have united the two words Politics-Pedagogy into a single word, the Future."[32]

But the speech itself was not as important as the aspirations it embodied. With respect to these, the speech could not help but fail, for the aspirations were enough to fill a lifetime. The great eagles had sunk their talons. Thereafter, came the ascent towards the heights.

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What mental grasp, what sense have they? They believe the tales of the poets and follow the crowd as their teachers, ignoring the adage that the many are bad, the good are few.

HERACLITUS, 112°

[32]Editorial introduction to Ortega's "La pedagogía social como programa político," *Europa*, March 20, 1910.

The precipitate that the years of study in Germany left in me was the decision to accept, integrally and without reserve, my Spanish destiny. It was not a comfortable destiny.

ORTEGA[1]

[1] *Prólogo para alemanes*, 1933, 1958, *Obras* VIII, p. 55.

II
Preparations

Recourse to love, rather than to her antagonist, conditioning theory, is needed to explain two features of learning.[a] The young do not truly know what it is that they want to learn, and most of them dutifully attend to whatever their elders choose to offer. Insofar as this unquestioning acceptance is the case, educational systems ironically perpetuate a radical ignorance. Each generation grows up without knowing why it learned what it learned. There are usually a few, however, who resist the given. In the manner that Socrates explained to Hippocrates, they avidly examine every teacher, testing whatever he proposes to teach to see whether it is really worth learning.[2] They seek to make their education all their own, that is, as Montaigne said, a part of their judgment.[3] When a teacher reveals his lack of judgment by being unable to account for why he teaches what he tries to teach, the young in search of true learning must borrow a fragment here and there and then move on, sadder but wiser men. Theirs is a task fraught with failure, and hence learning has usually been accompanied by a faith that every disappointment simply brings the would-be learner closer to his goal: lovers of wisdom have long known that to define great things it is often best to begin by identifying that which the thing is not. Thus, the first feature of learning that conditioning theory

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[2]See Plato, *Protagoras*, 310D–314C.

[3]See Montaigne, "Of the Education of Children," in Blanchard Bates, ed., *Montaigne, Selected Essays*, esp. p. 22.

cannot explain is the sustained, skeptical search for the unknown teacher who can set forth that which one intuits to be possible, but which one has yet to encounter.

Then, neither too soon nor too late, the searcher must reverse his nomadic inquiry at the moment that he meets the proper teacher. Many youths,tired of their quest, stop looking too soon and accept as a prize that which happens to be at hand; and others, hardened to skeptical scoffing, pass by their true goal without responding. A few recognize their teacher. Without giving up their powers of criticism, they let their teacher immerse them in influence, for they know that the influence is wholesome and that in time they can organize, edit, and perfect their acquirements. Thus, learning begins in a restless search and culminates in a decisive commitment. What but love could direct such delicate maneuvers?

In Plato's *Symposium* the eulogists who preceded Socrates in speaking in honor of love praised Eros for her genetic prowess. Agathon, the foil for Socrates, concluded his discourse by saying, "Thus I conceive, Phaedrus, that Love was originally of surpassing beauty and goodness, and is latterly the cause of similar excellences in others."[4] Socrates began his questioning of Agathon by asking whether or not there was an object of love, whether there were qualities or objects that love urged us to attain. With the admission that love is a desire for something, genetic theories of the erotic drive cease to make sense: the excellence of beauty and goodness was not in Love itself, but in the absent objects that Love urged us to attain. With this observation Socrates introduced Diotima's erotic teleology, in which love was a desire for the qualities one lacked, not the cause of the qualities one possessed. This desire was directed towards ever more elevating qualities, and hence love was a great educating force.[5] It could sustain a student's search for teachers, men who can help him master his deficiencies, and it could prompt him, whenever he met such men, to open himself to influence.

Thus love directs the student not by its causal power to determine his character, but by its teleological power to attract him onwards, drawing him out and leading him continually to surpass

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[4]Plato, *Symposium*, 197C, W. R. M., Lamb, trans.

[5]*Ibid.*, 199C–212C.

himself. Ortega explained this power of love as follows: "in the Platonic vocabulary, 'beauty' is the concrete name for what we generally, generically call 'perfection.' Formulated with a certain circumspection, but with rigorous attention to Plato's thought, his idea is this: in all love there resides in the lover a desire to unite himself with another who appears gifted with some perfection. Love is, then, a movement in our spirit towards something that is in a sense excellent, better, superior."[6] For Ortega, as for Diotima, love began with another and spread until it yearned for union with beauty, truth, and goodness.[b] The great diversity of love enabled Ortega to make it a complicated, varied force for the perfection of himself and his people.

We need to start with reflections on love in order to comprehend the tremendous educability that was Ortega's personal genius. Like Wilhelm Meister, Ortega began as a rather ordinary youth. But something drew him on through several *Wanderjahre* that were marked by many twists and turns and a serious lack of an explicit, apparent rationale. Yet in these wanderings, Ortega discovered his destiny; from disparate travels, he developed his sense of mission. A love for Spain drew Ortega onwards, a love for a perfected Spain, his *Kinderland*. In the Platonic conception of love, the excellence towards which our spirit moves is not always an already actual excellence; on the contrary, it is usually a potential excellence, one that must be brought into being if it is to exist among the concrete realities of our lives. Thus, our love at once draws us towards the better and is the agent for bringing that possibility into existence. Ortega understood this point. "In everything there is a suggestion of a potential plenitude. An open and noble spirit will have the ambition to perfect it, to aid it, so that it will achieve this plenitude. This is love—the love for the perfection of the beloved."[7] Ortega's *Wanderjahre* exemplify how the love for the perfection of the beloved guides the lover to the perfecting of himself.

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[6]"Amor en Stendhal," 1926, *Obras* V, p. 571.

[7]*Meditaciones del Quijote*, 1914, *Obras* I, p. 311. Cf. Leibniz, "Discourse on Metaphysics," (1686), "he who loves seeks his satisfaction in the felicity or perfection of the subject loved and in the perfection of his actions." Chandler and Montgomery trans., in Philip Weiner, ed., *Leibniz Selections*, p. 294.

To say that Ortega spent two years studying idealism in the German universities would be true but deceptive, for it might suggest that he went to Germany specifically to learn the doctrines of idealism. We can make an all-too-common error by treating the history of philosophy as a series of systems, each sufficient unto itself, a body of doctrine to be learned as one learns to decline Latin nouns. But philosophy is not a fixed system that can be learned. As a human enterprise, philosophy is a tradition of speculation in which each succeeding effort preserves its predecessors by partially perfecting and perverting them.[c] By a conjunction of inclination and circumstances, certain men are called to philosophize. Responding to the call, they discover that the tradition of their peers can influence; it is too vast to be learned. Ortega was among the men called forth by a love of wisdom; hence, from 1905 to 1907 he subjected himself to the intense influence of the idealistic tradition. Although he did not become a rigorous idealist, ever afterwards this tradition was an essential, positive element of his thought.

Ortega's studies were not directed by convention; they were wonder-filled years of wandering. His apprenticeship at Marburg culminated an erratic search for an obscure object. This search was sustained by the faith that Spain needed science and that somewhere in the halls of the German universities there were men who could reveal the genius of science to a curious, young Spaniard. Let us not be like those who never wonder at the marvelous mystery that Plato was, out of all the chances, the disciple of Socrates, and that Aristotle was the pupil of Plato. Thus, we should take some care to follow Ortega's studies in a way that will do justice to their great significance, but that will not convert them into an obvious fact to be taken for granted.

In an important essay on Goethe, Ortega suggested that the biographer should learn to comprehend a man "from the inside." This mode of understanding was not that of absolute acquaintance in which the biographer can reconstruct the entirety of a person's thoughts and surroundings at any particular moment. Understanding a man from the inside meant comprehending the powers of the man and the potentials of his surroundings, and perceiving how he meshed these together into a unique accomplishment. "The true inside from which I want you to see Goethe is not the inside of

Goethe, but the inside of his life, of the drama of Goethe. It is not a question of seeing the life of Goethe as Goethe saw it with his subjective vision, but of entering as a biographer into the magic circle of his existence in order to witness the tremendous objective event that was this life and of which Goethe was only an ingredient."[8] In this way, we should try to understand, from the inside, the drama of Ortega's encounter with idealism, an encounter that easily might have led to nothing.

Drama need not be marred by one's knowing the plot before witnessing the spectacle. At the end of 1904 Ortega decided to go to Germany, having become discontented with the intellectual life of his native land. He went to Germany with a vague intuition that the situation of Spain could be improved only through education, but he lacked the intellectual principles for transforming this intuition into a personal program of life. Consequently, when he went to Germany he did not know what to study, where to study it, or with whom; he was a potential student in search of a teacher. First he tried the University of Leipzig for the spring of 1905, and in the fall he switched to the University of Berlin. He found both universities to be impressive, but neither had a fundamental influence on him. Hence, at the end of his first year he was still uncertain about the nature of his quest, and he had yet to find the proper teacher. He then tried the University of Marburg, the center of neo-Kantianism. Ortega stayed there a year, and in 1911 he returned for another. At Marburg he found a true teacher and a significant idea: Hermann Cohen, the teacher, initiated him into the rigorous discipline of philosophic speculation, and Paul Natorp introduced him to a version of idealism that enabled Ortega to envisage a career as the educator of a more perfect Spain.

To appreciate the objective event that Ortega's studies were, it is important to note on the one hand how easily the study of philosophy can be sidetracked into fruitless byways and on the other how utterly devoid of external guidance Ortega's studies were. No subject is more vulnerable to bad teaching or studying than philosophy; and of the schools of philosophy, none is more easily rendered meaningless than idealism. The study of speculative phi-

[8] "Pidiendo un Goethe desde dentro," 1932, *Obras* IV, pp. 400-1.

losophy is itself a speculation; its goal is great and delicate, and all but strong spirits are easily diverted from its pursuit. In Germany, there were many times when Ortega's effort might have been shunted along unproductive paths, but Ortega was one of the strong spirits who could recognize when his current opportunities did not pertain to his real goal: thus he was willing to launch himself repeatedly into the unknown, rather than inure himself to inadequate familiarities. He had the courage, the inward faith in himself, not to insist that his studies advance step by step. Instead, as he tried this and that, he built up a tremendous tension between significant but unconnected inquiries; and when this tension reached the proper level, he was ready to master the principles, the ideas, by which these disparate elements could be combined to form a unity, a self, a heroic character.

"Plato saw in 'Eros,' " Ortega observed, "an impetus that succeeded in joining all things to each other; it is, he said, a connective force and a passion for synthesis. Therefore, in his opinion, philosophy, which finds the sense of things, is induced by 'Eros.' "[9] Unrequited love guided Ortega's incessant search. His trip to Germany was an affirmation of his country's potential; his discontent with its performance goaded him through his *Wanderjahre.* A positive act based on a negative judgment: he left, he later wrote, to escape "the stupidity of my country."[10] Seeking an alternative to stupidity, he naturally began with the University of Leipzig since its faculty had a prestigious reputation for erudition. Once there he was dismayed by the impersonality of the institution and by his complete lack of friends and connections. He resolved to master German; he struggled alone with Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason;* and he tried with little success to engage himself in a worthwhile course of philosophic studies.

Ortega's difficulties might have been foreseen. In 1905 Leipzig was not a center of philosophic speculation. The great psychologist, Wilhelm Wundt, was its best known professor, and in general the positivistic, empirical sciences were its forte. Before he was there long, the lonely young Spaniard began to doubt whether a

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[9] *Meditaciones del Quijote,* 1914, *Obras* I, p. 351.

[10] "Una primera vista sobre Baroja," 1910, *Obras* II, p. 118.

strictly metaphysical career was still possible. After several months Ortega wrote in a most uncharacteristic vein to his friend Francisco Navarro Ledesma, an important literary critic. "Philosophy is nothing in itself . . . ," he confided, "it is only a chemical process for treating a primary material extraneous to it and giving this material an essence. Thus, philosophy must find its subject matter in a special science."[11] In this way, self-doubt threatened to overcome the speculative spirit as philosophers faced the achievements of empirical science, making them suspect that their art would have to become either a positive science or a logical analysis. In this way, even Ortega was moved by the doubt that gave rise to the *Wiener Kreis*, and the whole movement towards a strictly analytic philosophy.[d] Ortega toyed with the idea of taking up an empirical specialty, and he even enrolled in courses in histology and anatomy, perhaps to prepare himself to study with Wundt.[e] But his heart was not in such work. For a time he studied philosophy at Leipzig with some concentration, but he found the subject uncongenial and his effort spilled over into a voracious program of reading. Nietzsche and Renan were his favorites, but he also read Ranke and other historians, the Humboldt brothers, Pestalozzi, Herbart, Schopenhauer, Descartes, Kant, and Goethe. His discovery of a collection on the history of Spain convinced him that the standard Spanish histories needed revision from beginning to end.[12] All this reading was stimulating and his letters were packed with various thoughts and insights, but it lacked discipline.

In the fall of 1905 Ortega went to Berlin in search of a better library. Reminiscing about this time, he wrote that often he was too poor to feed his body in the automat, and to make up for it he overfed his head in the library. Still his work lacked discipline and he failed to find a teacher who could give him decisive direction. In retrospect, this failure seems surprising. He heard about Wilhelm Dilthey, whom years later he would call the most important thinker of the last half of the nineteenth century.[13] But by then Dilthey only taught a select inner circle, and thus failed to meet one of his more

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[11]"Cartas inéditas a Navarro Ledesma," Leipzig, May 16, 1905, *Cuadernos*, November 1961, pp. 6–7.

[12]Leipzig, May 16 and August 8, 1905, *Ibid.*, pp. 7–9, 16, 18.

[13]"Historia como sistema," 1936, *Obras* VI, p. 41.

imaginative disciples. Ortega did, however, attend the lectures of Georg Simmel, who had just published his work on Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. Later Ortega would appreciate Simmel as a significant thinker; but in 1905 Simmel was not a fundamental influence on Ortega, who was already an enthusiast of "my Nietzsche." Simmel probably sharpened this particular interest, without deepening and unifying Ortega's general comprehension of German thought.[14]

If Ortega had had to stop after his first year in Germany, his studies probably would not have been a major influence on his life and thought. His work lacked unifying principles. Consequently, his various inquiries did not cohere and contribute each to the other. They were a multitude of fragments that were not yet cumulative because they were not informed by common ideas. Furthermore, he still lacked significant personal involvement with professors. Without it, he remained a mere observer of German intellectual life; all youths, no matter how brilliant, need a mentor to show them how to take part in any serious intellectual undertaking.

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It is not best, however, that students learn without making mistakes and incurring waste effort. By the spring of 1906 Ortega *understood* the difference between two kinds of German universities: those like Leipzig and Berlin, at which diverse specialists conglomerated, and those like the University of Marburg, at which a few men joined to form a "school."[f] The difference was pedagogical, for the scholarship of the men at both types was equally competent. At the conglomerate institutions, the faculty members agreed on few fundamentals and they made little effort to concert their influence on their students. At Marburg professors and students shared certain basic ideas and dedicated themselves to the investigation and elaboration of certain premises. There Ortega entered a true school of philosophy. His disagreement with its doctrines notwithstanding, his comprehension of what such an institution was had a lasting effect on his work as an educator.

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[14]The phrase "my Nietzsche" is from "Cartas inéditas a Navarro Ledesma," Leipzig, May 16, 1905 (before Ortega studied with Simmel), *op. cit.*, p. 9. In "El sobre hombre," 1908, *Obras* I, pp. 91–5, Ortega relied on Simmel's interpretation of Nietzsche.

"From the inside," Ortega's encounter with idealism reflects the effects that two teachers had on the ripe student. One must do more than merely learn philosophy; one must undergo conversion to a philosophic way of life. This conversion took place for Ortega at Marburg. It was not a conversion to Marburg neo-Kantianism; it was a conversion occasioned by the Marburg neo-Kantians, and through this conversion Ortega found the intellectual integrity to accept without reserve his Spanish destiny. Until then Ortega was simply amassing more and more knowledge about philosophy; after this time Ortega was a man converted to the vocation of living by his philosophic knowledge.

Discipline and hope were the essential qualities that, as a teacher, Ortega tried to develop in his students; and it was these qualities that his teachers at Marburg inspired in him. In retrospect, he wrote of Marburg that "to it I owe a half, at least, of my hopes and almost all of my discipline."[15] Hermann Cohen, the senior figure among neo-Kantians, was the source of Ortega's discipline, and Paul Natorp, the second great teacher in the school, helped arouse many of Ortega's hopes. They helped Ortega form his mission.

When Ortega met him, Hermann Cohen was an elderly, convivial philosopher, then at the height of his fame.[8] Cohen had been nurtured in the Jewish tradition; he was appreciative of the classical Greeks and convinced that the philosopher's task was to carry on systematically, and in spirit, if not in letter, the critical philosophizing initiated by Kant. The relationship that developed between Cohen and Ortega does not fit the stereotype of the aloof German professor. Ortega frequently went to Cohen's house for long conversations in the course of which there was a mutual give and take between the slim student and his portly master.[16] Cohen became Ortega's guide and counselor, the teacher that the youth was seeking; and on returning from Germany Ortega would tell Spaniards that Cohen was "perhaps the greatest contemporary philosopher." Cohen had established his reputation with his *System der Philoso-*

[15]"Meditación del Escorial," 1915, *Obras* II, p. 558.

[16]Ortega described these conversations in "Estética en la tranvía," 1916, "Para la cultura del amor," 1917, and "Meditación del Escorial," 1915, *Obras* II, pp. 33, 142, and 559.

phie, a multi-volume work on logic, ethics, and esthetics; and it is tempting to try to use these volumes as a basis for explaining what Ortega might have found in his mentor's teaching that would eventually contribute to the development of his own views. But that undertaking would be an unproductive distraction, for teachers, especially teachers of philosophy, properly influence their students by putting questions, rather than by providing doctrines. We should, therefore leave to another occasion the interesting task of tracing the great web of doctrinal influences that make up post-Kantian humanism; here let us concentrate on the questions and problems that Cohen put to Ortega.

Cohen made Ortega contend with the problem of competence in philosophy. By what standard should a philosopher measure the adequacy of his work? Is a philosopher competent when he proves to be unassailable, having rid his work of every possible ambiguity, perhaps at the price of removing its human significance as well? Or, in contrast, is he competent when he provides a complete, perhaps flawed, system that will attempt to establish intellectual standards applicable to all possiblle human problems? In short, is philosophy a disinterested analysis or a normative system? Should the philosopher know, or should he educate? To see how these questions were put, and to understand the kind of answers Cohen suggested, it is best to study the man—Cohen, the philosopher—not his philosophy.

Germany had attracted Ortega because of its reputation for erudition; he wanted an intellectual life that was more substantial than the one Spain offered. It was this substantiality that Cohen incarnated and communicated. He was a true scholar: man thinking. He could pose a basic question, propose a thesis resolving it, and develop that thesis through its implications by systematically and carefully contending with the ideas of those who had previously thought about the problem. Here is the first point that Cohen put across: competence is achieved not in preparing to be measured by one's peers, but in taking the measure of one's predecessors. This obligation to respect past achievements, to find them worthy of being dealt with seriously, was brought home to Ortega by an incident with Cohen that Ortega never forgot. When Cohen was midway through the composition of his two volume treatise on

esthetics, he stopped work for several weeks in order to study *Don Quixote* simply because a conversational remark Ortega had made about Cervantes suggested to Cohen that one of his esthetic propositions was not adequate to deal with such a work.[h] Here was a teacher who embodied the ideal of thoroughness; and Cohen managed to convey his scholarly standards to his students without turning them into pedants.

Eventually, Ortega criticized neo-Kantianism for having too narrow interests, but it was fortunate that in his youth he had to contend with a man such as Cohen.[17] Cohen imparted to his students the realization that the intricacies of Plato and Kant were important for contemporary European thought—and by "thought" one means not only technical philosophy, but the cultural life of Europe. It was no accident that three of Cohen's students—Nicolai Hartmann, Ernst Cassirer, and Ortega—were among the more competent, systematic thinkers of their time: they had been forced to grapple with their predecessors. In appreciation, Ortega recorded that Cohen "obliged us to make intimate contact with difficult philosophy and, above all, renovated the impulse towards system, which is the essence of philosophic inspiration."[18] Cohen's real achievement was to make the impulse towards system into a deep, personal concern for Ortega.

We touch here on an essential feature of Ortega's philosophic conversion. It was not, to repeat, a conversion to a particular dogma or principle, but to philosophy as a human enterprise. What was the vital significance of a cherubic professor who spent his life composing multi-volume treatises on reason? Why would a youth be inspired by a man who was willing to stop work to check his whole argument because of a chance remark? What was Cohen doing that began to seem profoundly important to Ortega? What was this "impulse towards system" that Ortega began to recognize as "the essence of philosophic inspiration"?

Those who "do philosophy," as some laboriously say, have difficulty appreciating the power and significance of the impulse

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[17] See esp. *Prólogo para alemanes*, 1933, 1958, *Obras* VIII, pp. 26–42.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 27.

towards system. As philosophy turned analytic, it turned in upon itself and became obsessed with the so-called problems of philosophy.[i] The history of philosophy ceased to have any interest except insofar as it could be pillaged for interesting problems. The most discussed problems concerned whether any possible proposition could actually meet the standards established by the ideal of truth and thus could merit the encomium "knowledge." Men *do* philosophy by analyzing such problems, hoping to win recognition from others who are also content to live by *doing* philosophy. The favored analysis is to show that the so-called problem is simply a question badly put that resulted from a failure to understand the limits of language. Presumably, the impulse towards analysis will terminate when all the problems of philosophy have been solved: on that millennial date philosophers will have nothing more to do and the activity initiated by Thales will become an historical relic, a monument to primitive man's propensity to make life hard for himself. But until that silent hour when, following what Wittgenstein advised, but did not practice, men say only what can be said clearly and pass over in silence all the rest, the problems of philosophy will be a great sport.[19] Although useless to the many who are caught in the affairs of the world and must therefore stand off as spectators, the impulse towards analysis is, as Bertrand Russell eloquently explained, a glorious recreation, the highest good for those who have the time and taste to do it.[20]

Rather than turn philosophy in upon itself, the impulse towards system turns philosophy outward into the community. Systematic philosophers are concerned less with the problems *of* philosophy than they are with those of reason and of man. The problem *for* philosophy has been to help man do what he truly intends, and the philosopher's contribution has been to create reason, to discover mind. We are still burdened with the incubus of faculty psychology and insist on thinking of reason as a mental faculty which is either inborn or non-existent, and which through discipline can be strengthened and exercised. In the systematic tradition, how-

[19]See Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, esp. p. 3 and the sections on language.

[20]See Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*, pp. 153–161.

ever, reason is recognized as a cultural creation, at first a mere seed that needs to be implanted and then carefully nurtured. The thinking faculty, if we must use the term, has to be shaped into some particular form before it is of any use in living life, and it can be shaped into several types of reason—pure, practical, esthetic, historical, dialectical, mythical,—by systematizing the ways men can effectively reflect on various types of problems that arise in their lives. Epistemology, understood as the critique of reason, is fundamental to all ensuing enquiries, including the more restricted, analytic epistemology that consists in the critique of knowledge. Thus, when Bertrand Russell began to survey the problems of philosophy by asking "Is there any knowledge in the world which is so certain that no *reasonable* man could doubt it?", he unwittingly attested to the prior need to make a critique of reason; for without a standard by which one can determine who is and is not a reasonable man, there will be no way to evaluate answers to the problems of philosophy or, for that matter, to any other set of difficulties.[21]

Reason is the cultural artifact that men have created to answer the myriad of questions that occur to them; and the philosophers' first duty has been to maintain and perfect this supremely productive tool that originates in wonder, in the recognition that on certain occasions men could neither speak clearly nor tolerate silence. Make no mistake, it was not a problem of philosophy, but the fear that Hume's skepticism would render reason useless to men, that roused Kant from his dogmatic slumber.[22] A desire to live by reason motivates the impulse towards system, which is, in essence, an impulse towards making reason a more effective implement for the conduct of those activities that thought must guide. The fantastic superstructure of human activities has come into being only as men have, through fantasy and speculation, developed the intellectual powers that direct these endeavors; and through philosophy men have laid down for themselves the marvelous variety of imperfect rational rules by which they live. The impulse towards analysis draws its strength from the realization that philosophy is the ulti-

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

[22] See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Part II, Chapter 1, Section 2, p. A745; and *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, "Introduction," esp. p. 260.

mate adjudicator in human life; but the impulse towards system gets its vigor from the recognition that philosophy is even more fundamentally the ultimate legislator in any human community. Hence, a systematic philosophy is an imperfect, normative theory of how reason should be used to deal with various human problems; epistemology, in its proper sense, is not only a science, but the basis of one or another way of life. By means of systematic philosophy, men create a mental framework within which they can pursue their sundry activities and harmonize their divergent efforts by seeking in them a common purpose.

Many persons, however, distrust systematic philosophy. Ours is not the best of all possible worlds, and systematic philosophy has caused, as well as solved, human problems. Hermann Cohen himself discussed, not without some sympathy, the supposed relation between Kantian thought and German militarism.[23] But, goaded by wartime Germanophobia, American and English critics of systematic philosophy have ignored the real alternatives.[k] To be sure, the preceptive philosophies that helped generate the Renaissance and Reformation, industrialism, the American and French revolutions, and the German state did not function perfectly; they sanctioned intemperate and unjust deeds. But one cannot avoid these imperfections by ignoring normative reason altogether. Whether it is admitted or not, all policies will be based on value judgments and standards of rationality, for one cannot act without existentially affirming the worth of one's ends and the principles that legitimate one's means. Men are free to make these judgements on the basis of either principle or interest; but without a normative theory of reason, there will be no principles for men to affirm freely, and by default justice will quickly become the interest of the strongest party. This reign of interest is precisely the nihilism predicted by those who foresaw that in the twentieth century systematic philosophy would cease to influence men, and the scepter of force has not stood for a particularly stable, humane reign.[l] Thus, so far the critics of systematic philosophy have yet to take into account the consequences of going without systematic philosophy, and recent history does not help their argument. Since normative philosophizing

[23]Cohen, "Kantische Gedanken in deutschen Militarismus," in Hermann Cohen, *Schriften zur Philosophie und Zeitgeschichte*, Vol. II, pp. 347–354.

has ceased to be the ground for evaluation of public policy, unprecedented injustices have been sanctioned by the ideologies that replaced systematic philosophy as the standard of practical reason.

As Ortega so often said, the only real way to correct the abuse of an idea or institution is to see to its proper use. This stricture holds true for the impulse towards system. The real causes of the events that the critics of systematic philosophy hoped to avoid were not the rational standards that had been established, but the imperfections in the way men use these standards. By deprivng the true, the beautful, and good of philosophic authority, we make it easier to accord a bogus, scientific authority to less elevating ideals such as the nation, the race, and the class. Furthermore, the seemingly scientific sanction renders these lesser ideals impervious to reason, for men cannot discuss, they can only fight, over judgments disguised as facts. The situation is serious. Ever since World War I, diplomats and publicists have been droning on about the need to find a basis for an enduring peace; but it is simple realism, not pessimism, to point out that it will all be wasted rhetoric unless a single power achieves world hegemony or unless men recreate a philosophic system that has enough prestige to function as a useful, albeit imperfect, implement for the principled harmonization of conflicting aims and interests. Of these two improbable alternatives, the latter seems preferable and more possible.

Cohen awakened in Ortega an impulse towards system, an impulse towards uncovering the principles by which men can live well. Such philosophic systematization is not to be scorned; it may be drudgery, but it is also the precondition of intelligent public leadership. Within the unity of an ideal, conceptual system, men have developed the concord that enables them to tolerate diversity in their practical activities. In effect, then, the discipline that Cohen imparted to Ortega was based on an appreciation of the proper place of principle in public affairs. For Cohen, a philosophic system was a powerful discipline, a willingness to proceed in various matters in accord with fundamental principles. He began with the rich complexity of activities that men perform, and from those facts he tried to go back to the basic principles that were implicit in the activities and that enabled men to create and shape these activities consciously. These principles were to be systematized in a coherent,

rational order; and this rigor in the world of speculative thinking was sought, not to confine the world of living actuality in ever-narrowing bonds, but to sustain without self-destructive conflict an ever-growing complexity of vital experience. As men learned to use the principles of systematic philosophy more and more effectively to make their deeds fulfill their intentions, the practical activities that were informed by the principles would be better consummated: more men could do more things without working at cross purposes. In this way speculative philosophy can accomplish a worldly mission. The basis for both Ortega's conception of Europeanization and the importance accorded in it to the mastery of conceptual rigor, of disciplined intellection, is in this impulse towards system.

Note, however, that a teacher who awakens an impulse must forgo the pleasure of satisfying it as well. It was discipline, not discipleship, that Ortega received from Cohen; hence, rather than adopting the latter's system, Ortega learned the importance of developing one himself. Many thinkers, including Cohen, influenced the development of Ortega's principles, but one man did much to give these their characteristic spirit. As Hermann Cohen was responsible for most of Ortega's discipline, Paul Natorp was the source of many of Ortega's hopes. Natorp taught a version of idealism that Ortega transformed into his personal pedagogical commitment.

In the drama of Ortega's life, it was fortunate that he encountered Paul Natorp. To be sure, when mature, Ortega would find Dilthey far more significant than Natorp. But a teacher usually does not influence students in the same way that a philosophic writer does. A writer influences slowly as his works sit close at hand on the shelves of students; and as students continually refer to these, the works become more and more intimately mastered. A teacher, in contrast, influences more rapidly as students accord him a serious authority for a limited time. In any particular encounter, it is a matter of readiness whether the teacher influences at all: in 1905 Ortega probably would not have benefited greatly from Dilthey's teaching had the two met in Berlin; but in 1906 Ortega was ready for Natorp's influence, which acted as an intellectual catalyst.

For over a year Ortega had been reading voraciously whatever struck his interest, but he had not given much thought to the

principles that might unify this rapidly accumulating erudition. Cohen pointed out the necessity of such principles. Natorp did too; and in addition, he taught a version of idealism that provoked the young Spaniard to create a philosophic system although Natorp's idealism did not, itself, become a part of Ortega's system.[m] Certain elements of Natorp's doctrine repelled Ortega;[24] but Natorp nevertheless helped Ortega discover an organizing idea in his varied reading and showed him how he might use this idea to improve Spanish culture. In no sense did Ortega become a disciple of Natorp; at the most, the latter briefly fulfilled Ortega's ideal of a good teacher, and as such a teacher Natorp exerted an essential influence on Ortega's life.

In a letter to Navarro Ledesma, Ortega described the true teacher, whom he had failed to find in Spain and whom he hoped to meet in Germany. Ortega thought that young men matured best by pressing against well-formed ideas. He likened a teacher to the wall of a dam against which the powers of a student accumulated until they finally crested it and issued in a controlled overflow. Without such resistance, the young would exhaust themselves with "infertile license." A teacher had to confront his students with developed ideas and challenge the young to improve on these. "The formation of the intellect requires a period of cultivation in which artificial means are used: hence, morality and discipline. Those who did not, at twenty, believe in a moral system, and who did not stretch and compress themselves into a hierarchy, will be for the rest of their days vague and fumbling creatures who will be incapable of putting three ideas in order." True education, Ortega continued, was like a chemical crystallization in which a bit of crystal had to be introduced into a solution and around this seed a much larger crystal would grow.[25]

A year after writing this description, Ortega found such a teacher when he took Paul Natorp's course on psychology and pedagogy. The neo-Kantian confronted Ortega with a moral system of which education was the fundamental feature. Moreover, Natorp

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[24]Ortega particularly criticized Natorp's treatment of Plato: see "Prólogo a *Historia de la filosofía* de Emile Bréhier," 1942, *Obras* VI, p. 383, n. 2; and *Prólogo para alemanes*, 1933, 1958, *Obras* VIII, pp. 35–6.

[25]"Cartas inéditas a Navarro Ledesma," Leipzig, May 28, 1905, *Cuadernos*, November 1961, pp. 12–4.

confronted Ortega with a powerful, pedagogical presence; and before describing the remarkable features of psychology and pedagogy as they were understood by Natorp, it is important to reconstruct his probable character as a teacher.

Natorp was a serious soul. He had carefully worked out his theories, and on the grounds that he chose, his presentment was powerful and persuasive. Furthermore, Natorp had sufficient self-confidence to make his students contend with his ideas. Despite this confidence, however, he lacked the pretense that emasculates many educational theorists: Natorp knew Plato, Kant, and Pestalozzi and he spoke about them with authority; but he did not pretend, in addition, to be able to place all other philosophical writers in appropriate cubbyholes. In his teaching, Natorp combined solidity and sincerity; what he spoke and wrote had a definiteness that bordered on dogmatism and a humility that exposed the limits of his knowledge. This combination of qualities enabled him to have a catalytic effect on Ortega. What Natorp proclaimed about Plato, Kant, and Pestalozzi, Ortega immediately recognized to be true of the writers that he knew best: Fichte, Renan, and Nietzsche.[n] Hence, Natorp's virtue as a teacher was courage; he knew there was nothing to fear in exposing his deepest thoughts to critical students. Thus, he explained his thought rigorously and made no effort to hide the fact that his ideas were based on a limited examination of an inexhaustible tradition. By revealing his imperfections without apology, Natorp forced his students to look to the problem at issue, rather than to his answer to it, and he made them rely on themselves for authority, rather than on their teacher. The effect of this teaching on Ortega's life was fundamental, even though, in his subjective vision, Ortega may not have fully realized it.

One of the worst acts of cultural hubris is to forget men of merit. Forgetfulness is tantamount to the inability to keep a matter in mind, and when the matter had merit, it means that the forgetful have lost their sensibility for that particular human strength. American educational theorists have forgotten—more exactly, they never really discovered—Paul Natorp.[o] Our ignorance of Natorp is symptomatic of our inability to appreciate sound philosophic

speculation about the problems of education. For Natorp, education did not merely deserve the second effort of philosophers; it was not to be taken up only after thinkers had exhausted themselves in ontology and epistemology. On the contrary, education was the heart of the matter.

Natorp's main interest was the crux of any theory of reason: the relation of the fictional world of thought to the factual world of things. The Parmenidean would deny the latter in order to secure the former: there is nothing but the One—eternal, unchanging, perfect. The materialist, in contrast, would reduce the former to the latter, making thought a function of its material basis and thus gaining a solid footing by renouncing his freedom of mind. Neither extreme attracted Natorp. He accepted both thought and things, and contended that any relation between the two depended on the will of man. His was the simple, fundamental, and humanistic solution to the mind-body problem.

For all their praise of analytic powers, contemporary critics of the concept of mind have made a serious analytic error. The relation of thought and things is an insoluble paradox only for those who try to give referents of one or both of the terms a status independent of man.[26] According to a neo-Kantian like Natorp, there was no way to know things-in-themselves, and consequently there could be no relation between thought and things in this sense. What other point was there to Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*? For man, material reality was the phenomenal world with which he interacted, and conceptual reality was the ideal, hypothetical, conventional world that man created by means of his intellect. Any relation between these two worlds depends on man's will; and

[26]Following his arch-opponent, Descartes, Gilbert Ryle committed this mistake in *The Concept of Mind*. Few besides Descartes—and one may doubt whether in fact Descartes did—maintained what Ryle called "The Official Doctrine" of Mind, that somehow an ideal system of thoughts, a mind, is contained in a real, physical mechanism, a body. Ryle attributes a different mode of being to mind and to body and then asks how these different things can possibly be joined. Most other thinkers have escaped the absurdity of this question by either an idealistic or a materialistic reduction in which mind and body are first shown to have the same mode of being, whereupon a connection between them becomes possible. Natorp began from the idealistic position: all bodies of which there is any empirical evidence are phenomenal.

most of our words denoting character—courageous, just, rational, provincial, liberal, opportunistic, matter-of-fact, dogmatic, hypocritical, capricious, fanciful, hedonistic, imaginative, and so on—denote various ways in which men willfully relate their thought to their phenomenal existence. The mind-body problem was significant, therefore, not so much as a question of epistemology, but as an opportunity for the education of character.

Reflection should show that this statement is not as outrageous as it may at first appear. Remember that we are dealing with systematic philosophies. Natorp, like Cohen, believed that the philosopher was responsible for creating, preserving, and perfecting rational standards that would make the solution of human problems more effective. Reason is not the same as technical knowledge. The various sciences create means for solving this or that particular problem, whereas philosophy establishes ways for dealing with various types of problems—scientific, ethical, esthetic, and so on. To have the greatest human use, the special knowledge of the various sciences should be stored until the particular situation to which it pertains arises. But, in contrast, if the general rational capacities developed by systematic philosophy are to have much benefit for man, they need to become common skills by means of which diverse persons react to the daily situations of life. Hence, besides creating a cogent system of thought, the systematic philosopher had, in one way or another, to disseminate the powers he had thus created.

This insistence on the educational responsibilities of the philosopher, which goes back to Plato, may seem inconsistent with the tendency of systematic philosophers to produce impossibly difficult tomes. Certain systematic philosophers have been seriously amiss in not providing means for making their teachings accessible. But it would be silly to think that the philosopher's duty to educate people in the use of reason is tantamount to the demand that *The Critique of Pure Reason* should be rewritten so as to be suitable for use as an elementary school text. Men develop their rational powers by practicing with many different procedures and problems; reason is not a neat and narrow system. The philosopher's goal—and it is this goal that makes difficult tomes often necessary—is to establish principles that approximate the first principle, the principle that

is common to all human endeavors; and the philosopher seeks this first principle, not to reduce all variety to its single mold, but because by means of it the sum total of educating influences might be so concerted that these influences would less frequently cancel themselves out in random conflict and would continually conduce to the fuller, more effective use of reason on the part of all. To carry through this aspiration, the philosopher must devote himself to a great many concerns, fully as many as Plato integrated into his seminal treatise, the *Republic,* in which he first set forth both the epistemological and the educational missions of systematic philosophy.[27] We shall have to leave for another occasion the further examination of the educational responsibilities of the philosopher. Here let us simply recognize that they exist and examine the consequences of their existence that interested Paul Natorp, and after him, Ortega.

In the *Republic,* Socrates observed that "it would be silly, I think, to make laws [concerning behavior]; such habits cannot be established or kept up by written legislation. It is probable, at any rate, that the bent given by education will determine the quality of later life, by that sort of attraction which like things always have for one another, till they finally mount up to one imposing result, whether for good or ill."[28] From this conviction, which Natorp fully shared with Plato, the theory of civic pedagogy followed. As a determinant of the quality of life, legislation was secondary in comparison to education. Natorp produced a series of books and essays on civic pedagogy. According to Natorp, the way in which men applied their intelligence to their experience was shaped by the fundamental ideas, conceived in a rather Platonic way, that defined men's aspirations. The quality of a man's life depended on his character, and the quality of life in a community depended on the civic character of its members. The important reforms that could be made in a community were improvements in the prevalent patterns of character education.[29] These reforms would start with the final stage of such education, that of the "free self," with the

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[27]See Plato, *Republic,* esp. 472A–541B.

[28]*Ibid.,* 425C, Cornford, trans.

[29]Natorp, *Sozialpädagogik,* pp. 99–389.

personal formation to which men continually subject themselves. As men changed themselves, reform would work back through the school and into the home, for changed teachers and parents would display stronger character to their pupils and children. Natorp was radical and thorough. He used many branches of systematic philosophy to elucidate such reforms: logic, epistemology, ethics, and esthetics were the basis of his civic pedagogy; and the philosophies of religion, history, law, and science filled it out with humanitarian content.[30] His vision of pedagogical reform was a major contribution to the most curious of the Marburg movements, neo-Kantian Marxism.[31]

Ortega followed Natorp's arguments in his speech to "El Sitio" in 1910. Ortega's idealistic socialism, his belief in the political significance of pedagogy, and his conviction that systematic philosophy was the backbone of any enduring reform all took shape at Marburg. In retrospect, Natorp's teaching affected Ortega in two ways.

First, as has been suggested, Natorp's system helped Ortega find an organizing idea in his varied studies. Even in his most systematic writings, Natorp claimed little originality: his theory of civic pedagogy was neither more nor less than the essence of idealism rightly understood. Ortega perceived the significance of such teaching; writing to Unamuno, Ortega conceded a slight disappointment: Natorp had been heralded as a great, original thinker, but was really an original interpreter and critic. "It is clear that this is no mean achievement."[32] Natorp would have agreed. In a major book and several essays he painstakingly showed how the bases of his theories were to be found in Plato.[33] His historical studies of Pestalozzi showed that the Swiss reformer was not to be thought of primarily as a sentimental humanizer of instructional methods; Pestalozzi was a radical who thought that the only way to attain

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[30]*Ibid., passim,* and *Sozialidealismus,* pp. 167–199.

[31]*Ibid.,* and Karl Vorländer, *Kant und Marx,* esp. pp. 122-140.

[32]Marburg, January 27, 1907, *Revista de Occidente,* October 1964, p. 12.

[33]Natorp, *Platos Ideenlehre, passim,* and *Gesammelte Abhandlungen,* pp. 7–42.

the ideals of the French Revolution was through the education of character.[34] Although Ortega read Plato with care, he never took to Pestalozzi. But what was important was not Ortega's chance to adopt Natorp's valuations. Natorp's studies, historical and philosophical, did not provide Ortega with ready-made interpretations of significant thinkers; they suggested to him an interpretative principle, namely that the whole philosophical tradition could be used to illuminate civic pedagogy. Thereafter, we find Ortega using, in his own, more subtle, more profound way, the idea of civic pedagogy as a principle for criticizing diverse men, ideas, and institutions. Thus, in response to Natorp, Ortega became aware of the hidden unity in his varied interests.

Second, this interpretative principle helped Ortega understand his personal aspirations so well that he developed a deep sense of mission, which was the secret of his genius. A young Spaniard who went to Germany in disgust over the cultural decadence of his nation, who hoped vaguely to find a means for improving the intellect of his people, suddenly found a vocation in the idea of civic pedagogy. The Spanish problem was one of character: a lack of intellectual discipline, an insensitivity to the usefulness of ideas for life, and a failure to appreciate the value of modulating the swings of passion with stable principles. Sustained by hope, Ortega had read and wandered, amassing much learning, but not enough understanding. Thus, he had been, in the fullest sense, ready to hear Paul Natorp explain an educational theory for the deliberate transformation of social characteristics, and on hearing such a theory, a catalytic reaction had occurred in Ortega. When he said that he owed almost half his hopes to Marburg, Ortega paid tribute to the theory that so naturally mediated between himself and his circumstances. It enabled him to clarify the vague, educational aspirations with which he had gone to Germany.

* * *

Discipline and hope—systematic philosophy and civic pedagogy—these were the concerns through which Ortega prepared himself to become the *Praeceptor Hispania.* In his German studies, Ortega

[34] *Ibid.*, pp. 91–236, and *Der Idealismus Pestalozzis.*

realized that he had to return to Spain and use every means he could to rebuild the intellectual life of his country. He had opened himself to the influence of a tradition that, from beginning to end, commended the life of a philosopher-king, a civic pedagogue, a lawgiver, as the way of duty. Ortega was already disposed to such a life, and in Germany he was unreservedly converted to seeking to live it.

Thus, after a long, erratic search, having finally found his teachers, Ortega realized that he could commit himself neither to them nor to their lessons. He could commit himself only to his idea of what Spain could and should become, for the stimulus of his studies enabled him finally to formulate this idea effectively. In the end, this vision of Spain proved to have been the beloved object that had drawn him on his quest. "To love a thing is to be determined that it should exist. It is to deny, insofar as it depends on oneself, the possibility of a universe in which the object is absent. Note that this argument amounts to giving life, continually and intentionally, to the thing insofar as it depends on oneself. To love is the perennial vivification of the loved one."[35]

Ortega loved "vital Spain," and in Germany he resolved to use whatever means he could to vivify this object of his love. This single mission led him into many activities, into teaching, writing, publishing, and politics. With respect to each of these professions, let us examine his hopes and achievements, his methods and disappointments.

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It is wise to listen, not to me, but to the Word, and to confess that all things are one.

HERACLITUS, 50

[35] "Facciones del amor," 1926, *Obras* V, p. 559.

FOR US, THEREFORE, our first duty is to foment the organization of a minority charged with the political education of the masses. It is of no use to push Spain towards any appreciable improvement unless the workers in the city, the peasants in the fields, and the middle class in the county seat and the capital have not learned on the one hand how to impose the rough will of their genuine desires upon authority, and on the other how to desire a clear, concrete, and dignified future. The true national education is this political education that simultaneously cultivates the impulse and the intellect.

ORTEGA[1]

[1] "Prospecto de la 'Liga de Educación Política Española'," 1914, *Obras* I, p. 302. Ortega's italics in the first sentence have been omitted.

III
Programs

ERRANT MAN has repeatedly realized that he has been distracted from his purpose because formalized thoughts and ritualized acts conspire with his natural torpor to betray his aspirations. Early in the twentieth century, Spanish intellectuals realized that this was Spain's condition. They knew—just as following the Great War their counterparts throughout Europe would know—that the shibboleths of the nineteenth century stood for nothing. A call for renovation disrupted Restoration complacency; the critics believed that a renovated national life had to be achieved without recourse to the corrupt practices of traditional politics. In discussing the possible sources of renovation, Unamuno stated the outlook of the major reformers: "From politics no one expects anything. . . ."[2] Reform without reliance on practical politics was the goal of the Generation of '98.

Consequently, although they did not say so, the basic activity of Ortega's models and teachers was civic pedagogy as a political program.[3] The reformers were men in search of a vision of what Spain could and should become and of the means suitable for launching themselves in the direction of that ideal. Thus, Pedro

[2]Miguel de Unamuno, "Renovación," 1898, *Obras* III, p. 687.

[3]Ortega (b. 1883), Eugenio D'Ors (b. 1882) and Gregario Marañón (b. 1887) are generally not classed in the Generation of '98, for they were still in their fromative years when Spain lost its empire. Members of the Generation of '98 were educated during the Restoration but achieved their first major public success after 1898 and as critics of the Restoration. Among them were Ganivet (b. 1865), Unamuno (b. 1864), Baroja (b. 1872), Azorín (b. 1874), Antonio Machado (b. 1875), Manuel Machado (b. 1874), Maetzu (b. 1875), Menéndez Pidal (b. 1869), and Valle-Inclán (b. 1866).

Laín Entralgo opened his history of the Generation of '98 with a chapter on "a country and its inventors."[4] Ortega's precocity was to seize early and explicitly on the fact that Spanish renovation was an educational problem.[a] In 1905 Ortega went to Germany with this conviction dimly formed and he returned two years later with it considerably matured, for he had studied similar theories in Plato, Rousseau, Fichte, Pestalozzi, and Nietzsche, and he had listened closely to explanations of civic pedagogy by his teacher, Paul Natorp. Ortega's prominence within the movement for Spanish reform resulted from his pedagogical awareness. He drew out the positive consequences that followed from the rejection of practical politics, and he became the first of the bourgeois gentlemen to realize that pedagogy was his profession.

* * *

No historian has shown more effectively than Salvador de Madariaga how the reform movement split into two tendencies, one which proclaimed that salvation would be achieved by the cultivation of the essential Spanish character and another which contended that renovation would require the mastery of European science and philosophy. Angel Ganivet and Joaquín Costa initiated this split between Hispanicization and Europeanization, and, as Madariaga says, Unamuno and Ortega "were destined to take over the dialogue . . . and drive it into the Spanish conscience."[5] Care is necessary, however, not to overdo the superficial contrasts between the two outlooks, for in doing so their essential differences are obscured. When set in opposition, the two views appear to be conflicting ideologies; and, by virtue of a common willingness to sacrifice the person to the cause, there are few things that are more fundamentally alike than conflicting ideologies.

Neither Unamuno nor Ortega would accept the implication that often results from comparisons of Hispanicization and Europeanization, namely that two different visions of Spain's destiny were at stake. For example, as Madariaga wrote: "the first mood of the generation is . . . fiercely negative and critical. Nothing. There is

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[4]Laín Entralgo, *España como problema*, pp. 353–367.

[5]Madariaga, *Spain*, pp. 88–96; the quotation is from p. 90.

nothing but sham and hollowness. We must begin afresh. And then, as soon as the new men turn their faces toward the morrow, the split occurs. . . . Spaniards broke asunder as to their estimate of what New Spain was to be. Some of them, with Costa and with Ortega, carried forward their European position; we must, they said, make Spain a European people; others, with Ganivet and Unamuno, hesitated to accept all that Europe means. . . ."[6] But Spain's potential future was not that well defined. Unlike European revolutionaries, Spanish reformers were not persuaded that they knew what path history would inevitably take; they simply agreed that Spanish history ought not to continue on the path it had followed for the past century. In the early 1900's few had given a detailed description of the characteristics that would mark a renovated Spain. Joaquín Costa was the reformer who came the closest to having a program, but Ortega thought that this program was too superficial, for it ignored certain difficult fundamentals.

Hispanicizers and Europeanizers did not diverge over their vision of the good life. Allowing for differences of temperament and for occasional clashes of rhetoric, there was a remarkable similarity between the reformed Spain depicted by Unamuno and by Ortega. Neither was extremely precise; and since both dealt with the Spanish future while writing for the daily press, their views were at times parochial. Moreover, in writing about the substance of desirable reforms, they showed many points in common. In politics and economics the two were receptive to socialist and federalist ideas; both favored a more effective political system that would be responsive to the popular will without necessarily following the familiar forms of parliamentarianism, and both desired a much stronger economy with a more egalitarian distribution of the national product. Furthermore, they shared many cultural goals: better and wider popular education, especially on the primary level, and a university system that avoided the twin pitfalls of pedantry and dilettantism; the preservation of traditional Spanish virtues and the avoidance of materialism; the establishment of a cultural commonwealth with other Spanish speaking countries, especially Argentina; and dominion over separatism by making Castile again

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 95.

worthy of its pre-eminence and again secure enough to grant sensible autonomy to restive regions. Unamuno, unlike Ortega, seriously considered the place of the church in the past, present, and future of Spain; but this point notwithstanding, the essential differences in their theories of reform were of another order.[b]

Change requires a stable element; for without a principle of order, change degenerates into chaos, a mere random flux. This matter of ordering principles is at once the most demanding, fragile creation of culture and the very motive force of history. The significant differences between Hispanicization and Europeanization will be found by reflecting on the historic function of such principles.

Principles, of course, are not real in a physical sense; they are ideals that men postulate in the realm of freedom. These ideals are not necessary causes of what in fact happens; they do not, like the force of gravity, act on all bodies endowed with physical mass in a fixed, predictable manner. Nevertheless, principles can be, and often are, contingent causes of human action. They can be causes because they can be the conceptual determinants of what men believe they ought to do; they are contingent because men are not mechanically compelled to act as they believe they ought. To what extent this contingent cause operates in history is the subject of long and lively discussion. Ortega was of that group that held principles to be decisive; he even held that the so-called material determinants of history are in fact contingent, working only as a result of the valuation by men reasonably assured of subsistence that material well-being was preferable to spiritual salvation, psychological peace, or rational contemplation.

Debate over the extent to which principles are operative in history need not be settled here. Prescience has been the gift of the great humanistic historians, particularly Tocqueville, Burckhardt, and Dilthey, because they attended to the principles that men professed in both word and deed.[c] They assumed that the character of reform, of both historical change and continuity, depended on the principles with which men informed their acts, on the aspirations by which men channeled their efforts. The achievements of these historians redeem Ortega's belief that principles are historically significant, for they show that his convictions can lead to worthy historical insight.

Recognition that principles are the basis of historic change and continuity also illuminates the problem of nihilism in modern experience. When men recognize that their opponents have principles, albeit ones that are different from their own, they recognize something independent of themselves and their opponents that can be reasonably discussed. A very different situation arises when men deny that their opponents have principles or assert that all principles are mere rationalizations for mechanically determined positions.[d] Reflecting on this situation, Nietzsche warned that "secret societies for the extermination of non-members and similar utilitarian creations will appear on the theater of the future"; for he understood that the European nihilist, shorn of the old ethic of good and evil and unable to create a new ethic of good and bad, would act on the sophistry that all is permitted, on the principle of unprincipledness.[7] Dostoevsky exposed similar contradictions among the Russian nihilists, who simultaneously denied all principles and still piously hoped to move men to reform by conjecturing a materialistic utopia for future generations. The completely unprincipled man denied himself the means with which he might have been able to convince doubters of the value of his goal, and consequently he could only use force to answer the childish, but profound, question "Why?"

In his *Reflections on Violence,* Georges Sorel showed how, without principles of order, all innovations depend on self-confirming myths with which form can be forcefully imposed upon change. Both revolutionary and reactionary nihilists arbitrarily depict a golden age and use it to batter reality into its shape, gaining for themselves the aura of world-historical men.[8] As soon as principles of order have been denied, there can be no discussion. The myth must reign over all, or all will collapse in anarchy. Hence, as Hannah Arendt has shown, ideologists have a penchant for terror, for they have no other means for resolving basic disagreements.[9] When unprincipled movements clash, each must try to suppress the myth

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[7]The quotation is from Nietzsche, *The Use and Abuse of History,* Adrian Collins, trans., p. 61.

[8]See Georges Sorel, *Reflections on Violence,* T. E. Hulme and J. Roth, trans., esp. pp. 119–150.

[9]Hannah Arendt, "Ideology and Terror: A Novel Form of Government," reprinted in *The Origins of Totalitarianism,* 2nd. ed., pp. 460–479.

that supports the other; and to do so, terror is used to eradicate alien leaders and to intimidate their followers. Among other tragedies of our time, the Spanish Civil War exemplifies the cost of these clashes.

Hispanicization and Europeanization were not, however, conflicting ideologies, each guided by a myth of Spain's future and each forced to wage war on the other. On the contrary, both were principled theories of reform. Hence, the leaders of both groups could amiably and reasonably discuss their differences, and they slowly merged their theories through a rational synthesis of apparently conflicting principles. The differences between Hispanicization and Europeanization did not result from the destiny that each envisaged, but from the stable element that each chose from the present possibilities for use as a principle of order in the midst of change.

When men are moved by a desire for improvement, they may seek strength from two sources that are often called the romantic and the classic. A troubled man may look inward and ponder his personal self in a search for his proper destiny, or he may gaze outward and examine his surroundings in a quest there for a beneficent order. Contrary to unexamined opinion, these concerns are not exclusive of one another: they are Heraclitean opposites that together form the self and its circumstances.

Spanish complacency had been cracked during the War of 1898, and intellectual leaders who sought national improvement disagreed whether the best source for these improvements would be the Spanish literary and linguistic heritage or the European scientific and philosophic tradition. Certain leaders gave priority to contemplating the Spanish soul and others to emulating the European surroundings. Teachers are familiar with this divergence: should one teach children or subjects? Just as true teachers do both, just as great men are born from a tension between the romantic and the classic, the more effective reformers were at once Hispanicizers and Europeanizers. But they had to learn through mutual criticism—and here is their exemplary value for American educators—that the two sources of national reform were equally necessary, each for the other.

This is not the place to trace fully the dialectic of Spanish re-

form.[e] It will have to suffice to describe briefly the preliminary thesis of Europeanization and the antithesis of Hispanicization in order to show how, in 1914, Ortega promoted a Europeanizing synthesis of the two efforts through the League for Spanish Political Education.

Early proponents of Europeanization rejected the external characteristics of Spanish national life and tried to import the economic, social, political, and physical forms of contemporary Europe. The principle of Europeanization was not complicated: what was good for England, France, and Germany would be good for Spain. The hope that Spain's arid lands could be forested illustrates this principle: the effort to reclaim wasteland by planting trees reflected a desire to make Spain's climate and topography more like that of Northern Europe. The contemporary example of nations with temperate climates, rather than the historical example of the Western Caliphate, enabled the proponents of forestation to claim that trees would help to hold the soil and moisture and to temper the extremes of weather, that they would be a source of food and raw materials, and that they would even be a moderating influence on Spanish character.[10] Forestation promised a visible Europeanization.

But early Europeanizers knew Spain far better than they knew Europe. They were men with strong attachments to the Spanish tradition and with great hopes for the Spanish future. National defeat hurt them deeply and they turned, almost desperately, to what seemed an obvious alternative. They assumed, perhaps because they never thought it through, that the products of another civilization could be reproduced in Spain without the prior mastery of the culture that had made those products possible. Furthermore, they did not fully realize that if successful, the physical Europeanization of Spain might entail the radical transformation of Spanish traditions. Hence, like many current theories of modernization, Europeanization was materialistic and simplistic; it held that the one thing needful was to live according to the external, materialistic standard of more powerful civilizations.[f] Although Joaquín Costa was one of the great historians of the Spanish character and one of the most able students of Spanish legal traditions, his conception

[10]See D. Joaquín Costa Martínez, *El arbolado y la patria*, esp. pp. 1–19.

of Europeanization typically dealt with superficial matters. Hence, his thought presents us with a few particulars. He said that to have power and wealth the European nations had expanded their navies and merchant marine, and therefore Spain should do so. He said that to have a disciplined, competent population the European nations had developed effective, practical school systems, and therefore Spain should do so. He said that to benefit from new possibilities the industrial nations had encouraged productive investment and the rationalization of agriculture, and therefore Spain should do so. He said that to free human energies the democratic nations had revolutionized the monarchic social and administrative structure, and therefore Spain should do so too. He said that throughout Europe disorganized peoples had united under firm governments based on effective communications, and therefore Spain should do so too. But could Spain do so? That was another question.

Costa was not sanguine, for a specter was haunting Europeanization—the specter of Spain. Industry, foreign trade, scientific agriculture, forestation, impersonal administration, democracy and socialism: these were not possibilities that could be realized by a sole reliance on human and technical engineering. Developmental economists, who pride themselves on their empirical prowess, should note the fact that almost seventy years after the inception of Spanish forestation, the program is still in an incipient stage, not because of Spain's intemperate climate, but because of the Spaniard's intemperate character. As Ortega observed, "Castile is so terribly arid because the Castilian man is arid."[11] Any program of national reform had to come to terms with the nation to be reformed. Here was the principle of Hispanicization.

An oversimplified conception of Europeanization engendered a sharp, well-grounded reaction. Critics observed that their tradition was not uniformly debilitated and out-moded; there were still valuable qualities in the Spanish character. Through a process of reform,

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[11]"Temas de viaje," 1922, *Obras* II, p. 373. Raymond Carr, *Spain*, pp. 425–6, makes some interesting observations about the difficulty of forestation that results from the peasants' hatred of trees and indifference to nature.

these values were to be preserved, enhanced, and even projected into Europe.[12]

Traditionally, the Spaniard had excelled in the realm of the spirit. The Spanish ideal was a man of courage, faith, and pride; he could die with dignity, having lived with passion. The Reconquest and the Empire had been won by virtue of spiritual power, and the genius of Spanish literature was its profound appreciation of human character. El Cid and Cervantes, the religious mystics and the Conquistadors were human types that were of enduring value. The renovation of Spain would be destructive if it effaced the traditions of these men.

Hispanicizers were not content, however, simply to reaffirm their faith in the Spanish tradition. They, too, believed that Spain needed renovation. Unamuno and others envisaged improvements in the external characteristics of Spanish life that were not very different from those depicted by Europeanizers; but Unamuno insisted that the traditional virtues must not be sacrificed to make way for materialism. He knew Europe better than the Europeanizers did.[h]

Unamuno said that he had begun to learn Danish in order to read Ibsen and he mastered it in order to read Kierkegaard. Only those who had experienced the spiritual struggles of the latter could appreciate the drama of the former. Nor did he think it imperative that Ibsen be performed, for he doubted that an audience could be found anywhere in Europe that could respond to the work.[13] Such observations raised doubts in Unamuno about the wisdom of Europeanization. However resplendent European civilization might appear, Unamuno believed its culture was not sound. The dominant European nations had allowed their capacity for spiritual transcendence to decline, and in its place they had cultivated a material-

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[12]Chronologically, both the idea of Europeanization and the theories in opposition to it had been worked out well before 1898. See for instance, Unamuno, *En torno al casticismo*, 1895, *Obras* I, pp. 775–869. The defeat of 1898 did not cause either Europeanization or Hispanicization; it simply gave prominence to the two views, both of which had their origins much earlier in Spanish history.

[13]Unamuno, "Ibsen y Kierkegaard," 1907, *Obras* III, p. 289. In his text Unamuno described Ibsen as a Norwegian, but said that he learned Danish to translate Ibsen. As written languages, Danish and Norwegian are very similar and sometimes even called Norwego-Danish.

istic view of life, vying with each other for the preponderant command of physical force. Unchecked materialism would bring destruction. If Spain followed the rest of Europe along such a course, it would be at a serious disadvantage in a doomed competition. Better alternatives were at hand.

What Unamuno called "Regeneration, in truth" entailed no copying of others. Intrinsically, Spain was healthy. But, for too long the state had repressed the inherent genius of the people by imposing constrictions on the effort, communication, and thought of its citizens. Even before the defeat of 1898, Unamuno had formed the basic distinction between a stagnant and a dynamic confidence in Spanish mores. Restoration leaders had had an unfounded belief in the absolute validity of Spanish customs; they *knew* that the external forms of their life were correct. This belief was a gnostic error that hopelessly tied the leadership to the forms of the past. Unamuno contrasted *pistis* to *gnosis*, and he recommended the former, a flexible confidence in one's inner powers, as the way to renovation. Those who believed unquestioningly in their conventions were static, whereas those who had faith in themselves were able to develop real hope, to see the possibility of their true selves flourishing in the midst of altered circumstances. Pistic confidence rather than gnostic belief was the great liberator and humanizer, the basis for our values. "*Pistis*, not *gnosis;* for in *pistis* one finds faith, hope and charity; for from *pistis* men receive liberty, equality, and fraternity; and out of *pistis* springs the sincerity that always lets one discover the ideal and oppose it to reality, the tolerance that allows diverse beliefs to be contained inside the common hope, and the mercy that helps the victims of the unalterable past and the fatal present. Sincerity, tolerance, and mercy."[14]

Certain definite intellectual consequences followed from this idea of the way to regeneration. The teacher would not use the same means to foster faith as he would to induce industrialization. Unamuno stated these consequences concisely: "Now the duty of the intellectuals and the directing classes lies not so much in the effort to mold the people on the basis of one or another plan—each

[14]Unamuno, "¡Pistis y no gnosis!" 1897, *Obras* III, pp. 681–5; quotation, p. 685.

being equally Jacobin—as in studying it from the inside, trying to discover the sources of our spirit."[15] At this point, Hispanicization became vulnerable to a more sophisticated conception of Europeanization.

Romanticism is always embarrassed by the fact that the savage rarely proclaims his own nobility. Unamuno fulfilled his duty; no man of his time came closer to discovering the sources of the Spanish spirit. But Unamuno's powers were not purely Spanish. Unamuno was a Basque whose knowledge of European literature far excelled that of his contemporaries. Many thought that his character belied his doctrine, and although he wrote against Europeanization, his accomplishments and aspirations made him an exemplary model of the goal that younger Europeanizers sought. "A great Bilbaoan has said that Hispanicization would be better [than Europeanization], but this great Bilbaoan, Don Miguel de Unamuno, ignores, as is his custom, the fact that although he presents himself to us as a Hispanicizer, he is, like it or not, by the power of his spirit and his profound cultural religiousness, one of the leaders of our European aspirations."[16]

Ortega accepted the Hispanicizers' critique of Europeanization, and he shared their goal of comprehending the Spanish genius. He asked, however, how they were to discover and manifest the sources of their spirit? Why, if Spaniards were to rely wholly on their own genius for the performance of this task, had it not been done before? Some other ingredient was needed to distinguish the twentieth-century Spaniard from his nineteenth-century predecessor. Ortega contended that this ingredient would be the stimulus of the European literary, scientific, and philosophic tradition, for the power of abstract thought that this tradition had cultivated would aid the Spaniard in understanding and perfecting himself.

Returning from Germany with an intuition of the functions that intellect might perform in Spanish reform, Ortega began his critique of Hispanicization. In *El Imparcial* he reviewed the two discourses by Unamuno at "El Sitio." Ortega was enthusiastic about

[15]Unamuno, "De regeneración: en lo justo," 1898, *Obras* III, p. 699.

[16]Ortega, "La pedagogía social como programa político," 1910, *Obras* I, p. 521.

Unamuno's politics, but pointedly critical about his metaphysics, which "amounted to a joke." This failing was unfortunate, Ortega contended, because a better metaphysical foundation would have strengthened Unamuno's political position.[17] At the same time, Ortega criticized Ramiro de Maetzu for not appreciating the importance of ideas in the development of Spanish character.[18] In the discussion that ensued between the two young writers, Ortega was careful to keep the disagreement from becoming fundamental. Thus he wrote of Maetzu that "I am in accord with him on the *quid* of the Spanish problem, and I only disagree on the *quo modo* of the solution."[19] All—Ortega, Maetzu, and Unamuno—agreed that the *quid* was to bring the Spanish character to perfection; they disagreed over the *quo modo* because they thought that different pedagogical principles would best guide them to their common goal. Unamuno and Maetzu contended that reformers should rely on the natural, inner responses of the Spanish genius. Ortega suggested that perhaps the genius, the prodigy, could rely only on inner responses; but, he added, comprehension of Spanish virtues could be communicated to the average, educated Spaniard only through greater use of intellect, conceptual discipline, and clear, rigorous thinking. Here was a new idea of Europeanization. "It is necessary that our spirit go with perfect continuity from 'The Drunkards' of Velázquez, to the infinitesimal calculus, passing by way of the categorical imperative. Only by means of an intellectual system will we give the spirit of our people the proper tension, just as a Bedouin, by means of a frame of cords and stakes, stretches taut the light cloth of his tent."[20]

Ortega won over most reformers to his notion of Europeanization. The dialogue with Unamuno continued; but privately Unamuno admitted what Ortega had contended all along: they were

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[17]"Glosas a un discurso," *El Imparcial*, September 11, 1908, and "Nuevas Glosas," *El Imparcial*, September 26, 1908, *Obras* X, pp. 82–5, 86–90.

[18]"Algunas notas," 1908, *Obras* I, pp. 111–6.

[19]"Sobre una apología de la inexactitud," 1908, *Obras* I, p. 118.

[20]"Algunas notas," 1908, *Obras* I, p. 115.

talking about the same ideas in different words.[21] In 1914 Ortega emerged as the leader of the younger reformers. His youth had enabled him to be late in formulating his position, and consequently he did so with the benefit of having criticized earlier reformers and of securing himself against the weaknesses that they revealed. With the principles of Europeanization that he advanced, he attended to both external order and inner strength; he tried to use the powers of European thought to clarify the authentic Spanish character. Ortega offered a clearer definition of Europe than did Costa, and the former's conception was not as vulnerable to Unamuno's retort that the European nations were not fit to be emulated.

Eventually, Ortegan Europeanization would involve the adoption of advanced productive and administrative techniques; on this point Ortega agreed with Costa.[22] But he criticized Costa for failing to appreciate the source of European technical competence. "For some, Europe is the railroad and good politics; for others it is the part of the world where the best hotels are found; for a few it is the state that enjoys the most loyal and expert employees; for still others it is the group of countries that export the most and import the least. All these images of Europe coincide in an error of perspective: they confuse what is seen in a rapid journey, what leaps before the eyes, what is, in sum, the external appearance of contemporary Europe, with the true and perennial Europe."[23]

In essence, to Ortega, Europe was science. And, as Aristotle had observed, science resulted from the two talents that Socrates had given the West: the ability to make definitions and to use the inductive method. Europe shared everything else with the rest of the world. Ortega cautioned Europeanizers to avoid inducing a demand in Spain for the *products* of a scientific civilization. Instead, they should restrict their efforts to cultivating the scientific *spirit* in the Spanish elites. "Certainly the Spanish problem is a pedagogical problem," Ortega contended in 1908, "but the essence, the

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[21]For Ortega's attitude see especially the letter to Unamuno, Marburg, December 30, 1906, in *Revista de Occidente*, October 1964, pp. 8–9. For Unamuno, see the letter to Ortega, Salamanca, December 21, 1912, in *Ibid.*, p. 19.

[22]See for instance, *Vieja y nueva política*, 1914, *Obras* I, pp. 304-8.

[23]"Asamblea para el progreso de las ciencias," 1908, *Obras* I, p. 100.

character of our pedagogical problem is that we need, above all, to educate a few men of science, to develop at least a semblance of scientific preoccupation; for without this prior work, the rest of our pedagogical labor will be vain, impossible, and senseless. I believe that what I have just stated gives the precise formula for Europeanization."[24] Ortega perceived that without the mastery of dynamic science, Spain would succumb to what we have learned to call the revolution of rising expectations, for inflamed appetites would continually exceed the meager increases in the nation's capacity to produce consumer goods achieved through crash programs.

Beware of anachronism: science need not be experimental and operational. By science Ortega meant *Wissenschaft*, the body of disciplined theory concerning both man and nature. When he commended science as the art of definition and the inductive method, he was not propounding a positivistic epistemology. Rather, he took speculative philosophy to be the pinnacle of science. The great philosophical system-builders were the true masters of turning meaningful definitions. In *Meditations on Quixote* Ortega extolled Hegel for this skill. "Philosophy has the ultimate ambition of arriving at a simple proposition in which all truth is stated. Hence, the one-thousand two-hundred pages of Hegel's *Logik* are only a preparation for pronouncing, with all its rich significance, this sentence: 'The idea is the absolute.' Apparently so poor, this sentence really has infinite significance; and thinking it properly, all this treasure of significance is exploited in one stroke and in one stroke we see the enormous perspective of the world clarified."[25]

Likewise, when Ortega commended induction he was not touting the experimental method, for he believed that quantified experiment led to the "terrorism of the laboratories."[26] Many European thinkers, among them Ortega, have insisted with good reasons that induction, in its proper sense, is phenomenology, and "all classic idealists—Plato, Descartes, Leibniz, Kant—began with the phe-

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[24]*Ibid.*, p. 103. The characterization of Socrates was first made by Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, XIII, iv, 1078b27–30.

[25]*Meditaciones del Quijote*, 1914, *Obras* I, p. 317.

[26]See *¿Qué es filosofía?*, 1929, 1957, *Obras* VII, p. 298. Cf. "Sobre la expresión fenómeno cósmico," 1925, *Obras* II, pp. 582–3.

nomenological principle."[27] This principle entailed the recognition that all thought deals only with data of consciousness; given this recognition, induction becomes first the qualitative elucidation of what these data signify to their perceiver, and second the critical elaboration of the characteristics of life and thought that make the experiencing of these significances possible. Without pursuing these difficult subjects further, suffice it to say that Ortega's version of Europeanization, the mastery of science, called on his countrymen to cultivate their ability to define and describe phenomena and to theorize about the problems and possibilities thus revealed. Such science would affect Spanish life not as it gave rise to specialized propositions applicable to particular problems, but as it enabled Spaniards to sharpen and discipline their total view of life.

Europeanization, conceived of as the mastery of science, was not dependent on the current example of Europe, for Ortega was not recommending to Spaniards the European reality as such, but a particular capacity for apprehending reality that happened to have been developed in Europe. Ortega could tell Unamuno that "the cultural decadence of Germany is indubitable" and he could disregard the Basque's attacks on materialistic positivism because the actual decay or perversion of scientific practice did not detract from the potential of the scientific ideal.[28] Science was the means men had created for rationally ordering their circumstances, and Spaniards should aspire to master this capacity.

Ortega also attended to the problem of the Spanish self. Here too his procedure was philosophical. He avoided the historical question whether particular characteristics were consistent with the genius of the Spanish tradition. He went directly to the principle of selfhood, and he best exemplified its use in opposing another superficial attempt at Europeanization: *Modernismo.*

At the turn of the century certain Spanish writers and artists took up the avant-garde style of symbolist poetry and art nouveau. According to the *Modernistas,* Paris was the center of Europe, and Mallarmé, Verlaine, and Baudelaire were its greatest geniuses. The

[27]"Sobre el concepto de sensación," 1913, *Obras* I, pp. 256–7.

[28]Letter to Unamuno, Marburg, January 27, 1907, in *Revista de Occidente,* October 1964, p. 11.

Nicaraguan Rubén Darío and the Spaniard Ramón del Valle-Inclán were the leading poets of the modernist movement in Spain, and their style may have contributed to Ortega's occasional excess of metaphor.[29] Ortega liked the poetry of Darío and Valle-Inclán, but he warned that the vogue of their work exerted a destructive influence on the young and that *Modernismo* was, therefore, a danger.

Young artists and intellectuals should realize, Ortega thought, that there was a difference between being conversant with the latest fashion of the avant-garde and being masters of the tradition that enabled the avant-garde to create the latest fashion. Young Spaniards were dazzled by the genius of Darío and Valle-Inclán. Ortega feared that members of the coming generation would fail to form their *selves*. "If we can write good literature and if we are also capable of science, our commitment must unequivocally incline towards the latter, without dabbling in the former. Señores Valle-Inclán and Rubén Darío have an assured place in heaven, just as do Cajal and Eduardo Hinojosa. Those who will probably go to hell—the hell of frivolity, the only one there is—are the youths who, without being Valle-Inclán and Rubén Darío, imitate them badly instead of plunging into the archives and reconstructing Spanish history or commenting on Aeschylus or Saint Augustine."[30]

Against the cult of *Modernismo*, Ortega proposed to be "nothing modern, but very twentieth century."[31] His whole conception of selfhood was summed up in this quip. Mere modernity was not a desirable characteristic, for the essence of being up-to-date was that one would soon go out-of-date. The person who was merely abreast with current styles of thought and expression had no inner strength and was vulnerable to the whimsical ways of the world.

To be "very twentieth century" was another matter indeed. Certain real problems confronted him as a person at once a Spaniard and a European living in the first half of the twentieth century. To achieve selfhood, a man had to identify these problems correctly, cultivate his capacity to meet them, and discipline his will to do so. The sources of this man's strength would be in himself; his power

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[29]Ricardo Senabre Sempere, *Lengua y estilo de Ortega y Gasset*, p. 23.

[30]"Algunas notas," 1908, *Obras* I, p. 113.

[31]"Nada 'moderno' y 'muy siglo XX'," 1916, *Obras* II, pp. 22–4, esp. 24.

would be his own; and he would be a knot of resistance to the flux of things. This man would be the hero, perhaps a humble hero, but a hero all the same. Perceiving a problem, he would invent an adventure in which he would overcome the problem; and conceiving of his adventure, he would discover the means of living it. Hence, the heroic self resisted the habitual, the ordinary, the fashionable—everything that was given—and in doing so, he made himself the perennial source of change and progress in human life. "To be a hero consists in being one, one's self."[32]

This conception of selfhood transcended the disagreement between those who wanted to perfect Spanish character by cultivating the traditional mores and those who wanted to adopt foreign, mainly French, manners. The true person resisted the adoption of all "roles," regardless of whether they were offered by tradition or by the avant-garde. No one would find himself by identifying with a historical group, no matter how grand and glorious, for life worked the other way around: history was revealed in the selves of living men.[k] To live was to deal with one's problems; and in this imperative to come to grips with one's real difficulties, Ortega found the explanation of why a sense for Spanish character and tradition seemed to have disappeared: "the terribleness of contemporary Spanish life is that the vital problems do not exist."[33] There could be no character in men who complacently perceived no problems. To achieve an authentic life, to create the contemporary Spanish character, one had to examine one's habitual existence, perceive its deficiencies, invent a better project, and muster the will and means to live it. If the Spanish reformers were such heroes, there would be no theoretical problem about the perpetuation or the transformation of tradition; the tradition would be perpetuated and transformed as Spaniards drew on the full resources of their character in a dedicated effort to recognize and surmount their gravest deficiencies.

In sum, Ortega held two ideals before his peers: the heroic ideal and the scientific ideal. He conceived of Europeanization as a

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[32]*Meditaciones del Quijote*, 1914, *Obras* I, p. 390.

[33]Letter to Unamuno, Marburg, December 30, 1906, in *Revista de Occidente*, October 1964, p. 9.

great adventure invented by his generation to overcome the palpable problems that sensitive Spaniards perceived. The scientific ideal was losing influence throughout Europe; and by rejuvenating this ideal, Spaniards would not only ameliorate the deficiencies in their national life, but they would also remake a positive place for themselves in the European order. These were the educative ends adopted. They were his answer to the first problem of pedagogy, the *quid.*

Recall that the second problem was the matter of means, *quo modo.* In general, a civic pedagogue had two ways in which to work: he could undertake personal activities and he could stimulate social movements. In the ensuing chapters our main concern will be to scrutinize Ortega's personal efforts at reform. But his personal activities, although significant in their own right, will be best appreciated if we first follow a group effort at renovation that Ortega and his friends organized in 1914: the League for Spanish Political Education. The League was an attempt to organize "a minority charged with the political education of the masses."[34] Through it, its founders hoped, Spain would be Europeanized, and a more humane polity and community would emerge.

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When certain phrases are uttered, political commentators often perceive only those meanings that are consistently associated with partisan polemic. Their reflexes have been so conditioned by the reiteration of slogans that the sound of certain words, rather than their meaning, elicits a predictable response. No matter how inapposite this response may seem to the impartial witness, the partisan will persist in construing the terms awry, for by questioning his slogans he would cease to be a partisan. Ortega's political theory bears many loaded phrases: elite, aristocracy, duty, destiny, and the two introduced above—minorities and masses. From the left Ortega's writings seem to abound with terms that will start the flow of bile in readers whose reflexes have been conditioned by democratic dogma, and from the right his works are laden with phrases that raise hopes in American conservatives that Ortega can be enlisted in their cause.[1] In many casual references, scholars call him an "aristocratic" or "conservative" theorist; yet his political practice

[34] *Vieja y nueva política,* 1914, *Obras* I, p. 302.

was quite democratic.[m] The only ideological position that Ortega wholeheartedly accepted was *au dessus de la mêlée*, and he contended that the political mission of his generation was to transcend the worn out quarrel between liberalism and conservatism.[35] In view of this situation, it is especially important that we follow the principle of basing our judgments, not on our reflexes, but on our reflection.

Many have had difficulty with Ortega's political thought because they have not looked beyond his phrases to the problems to which he referred. Until recently neither the American left nor right was prepared to appreciate Ortega, for neither entertained the premise of his politics: the illegitimacy of the established institutions. Now that Americans have begun to doubt the perfection of their political practices and now that new elements of the American left have even described themselves as "a prophetic minority," Ortega's pedagogical politics can perhaps find a more suitable audience.

For Ortega, politics was not primarily a system for determining who gets what when; it was first a matter of reconstructing such a system that had ceased to work. Most of Ortega's political writings concern problems of lawgiving, not lawmaking. Ortega's columns in *El Imparcial* and *El Sol* show that, as a lawmaker, he was a liberal democrat who believed that laws should be made in accordance with the popular will. But the Spaniard with such aspirations had to ask two questions: was the given political system capable of responding to the popular will? and was the populace capable of articulating its will? To both queries the answer was no: the given system was a chaotic struggle of factions that could perhaps respond to contending class, economic, and regional interests, but not to the interests of the *pueblo*. The Spanish people—poor, undereducated, and disillusioned by endless political abuses—were thoroughly apolitical. Hence, the would-be democratic lawmaker had first to be the effective lawgiver. He had to create a political system in Spain that would reflect the popular will, rather than a balance of factions, and that would develop among the people the desire and ability to express their will on matters of public policy.

None of the familiar systems for lawmaking—democracy,

[35]See esp. *La rebelión de las masas*, 1930, *Obras* IV, p. 205.

oligarchy, monarchy, dictatorship—explain or guide the phenomena of lawgiving. The task of making an established political system function is fundamentally different from that of establishing a new, reformed political system, for the former task entails the effective use of existing forms of power whereas the latter involves the creation of previously nonexistent forms. Because in lawgiving men must act in ways that do not presuppose the possession of power, the activity seems quixotic and incomprehensible to those whose conception of politics has been molded by the conventions of lawmaking, be these democratic, monarchical, or totalitarian.

Lawgiving is inherently hortatory and moralistic; lawgivers must persuade people to accept inwardly new ideals of authority before institutions based on those ideals can be made to operate. Thus, words are prior to deeds. The opportunity for creating new agencies of community arises precisely because the established, institutionalized offices of leadership have become inadequate. Men find that they cannot act; in the absence of legitimate, effective centers of authority, no person or group can properly initiate policy for the whole polity. In such a situation, some will try desperately to impose their favored policies upon the community, and their efforts will lead to tragic destruction; others will more prudently control their urge to act and will try to conceive of new, possible forms of polity that can be spontaneously elicited from the community. When lawmakers are no longer able to act effectively for the whole community, it is time for lawgivers to stimulate the whole community to act for itself, reforming itself in such a way that lawmakers can once again effectively act for it.

In this enterprise of lawgiving, great restraint is essential. The man who wants to engender fundamental changes in a community cannot impose a predetermined program. Changes, when fundamental, are appropriate precisely because the system of power has become inadequate. The established means for working out and implementing predetermined programs have ceased to function effectively. Owing to this situation, the lawgiver can at most stimulate a commitment by the people to new forms and possibilities. Thus, in his relation to the populace, the fundamental reformer is heuristic and protreptic, not didactic and prescriptive: rather than command the people to acquiesce in his infallible will, he provokes them to the discovery of a better community within themselves.

In this heuristic or pedagogical politics, talented elites have an important place. Sometimes our conception of an elite is that of the officer corps of an army: men of special rank and training whose duty it is to command. Such an elite is a recipient of order, has nothing to do with lawgiving, and was not Ortega's model for the gifted minorities. At other times, our conception of an elite is that of a moral remnant: men scattered through every rank of society who take upon themselves the tasks of being witnesses to the truth and justice. Their duty is not to command, but to inspire. An elite of this character has everything to do with lawgiving and was the type of aristocracy that Ortega thought was essential for Spanish reform.

At the point in his intellectual development that Ortega had reached in 1914, he conceived of gifted minorities as the prime movers of progress towards the reformation of Spanish life; and later in his life he would go so far as to state that all communities, like it or not, were aristocratic.[36] But he meant—and this critics often overlook—that communities were aristocratic not in the way they made law, but in the way they constituted and maintained themselves as communities. And by an aristocracy, Ortega did not mean a corps of commanders, but the leaven of the spiritually committed and intellectually competent citizens diffused throughout the populace. The function of the members of this aristocracy was to conceive of more adequate principles of order, to embody these in their personal activities, and, by example, to inspire other persons to understand and to adopt these principles. Such a minority stood in the same relation to the people as the Socratic citizen stands to his peer; the characteristics to be brought out in the community must pre-exist in the people and the duty of the educative minorities is to put the question and to exemplify the answer in order to help the people perceive and manifest their own immanent characteristics. Without effective elites of this type, a people of magnificent potential might not be able to bring their genius to bear upon their common lives. This was Spain's difficulty.

Hence, Ortega's primary goal was to create a capable minority for Spain, to create a prophetic, not a paternal, minority. In substance, this goal was neither democratic nor anti-democratic, for the

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 150.

mission assigned to the elite was to make a Spanish democracy possible. But the goal was quite consistent with both the humanistic educational tradition and the liberal political tradition. It was premised on the proposition that virtue is knowledge, and that therefore the common good, the virtue of all, depends on whether all have access to knowledge. An Enlightenment willingness to put confidence in man's capacity for self-perfection characterized Ortega's theory; yet he was not oblivious to the difficulties of getting men to exercise this capacity. Ortega's aristocracy was an elite of intelligence and talent whose purpose was to extend knowledge and to make it accessible to a greater proportion of the people. Rather than the paternal rule of the elites that came to govern Spain, the goal of Ortega's elite was to show Spaniards that they could rule themselves with more humanity and justice. Ortega's so-called elitism was based on the egalitarianism described by Ralph Waldo Emerson when he said: "Democracy, Freedom, has its roots in the sacred truth that every man hath in him the divine Reason, or that, though few men since the creation of the world live according to the dictates of Reason, yet all men are created capable of doing so. That is the equality and the only equality of all men. To this truth we look when we say, Reverence Thyself; Be true to Thyself. Because every man has within him somewhat really divine, therefore is slavery the impardonable outrage it is."[37]

Ortega's first major public undertaking was the organization of the League for Spanish Political Education.[n] The League comprised ninety-eight young intellectuals; the founding of it was an occasion at which they gathered as a group and gave themselves the task of enlarging and perfecting all the sectors of Spanish life that they could affect. On March 23, 1914, Ortega gave its convocational address, "The Old and the New Politics."[38] In this speech Ortega fully expressed the conception of politics he had been developing and he movingly applied it to the Spanish situation. As the phrase "new politics" suggests, his arguments were not unlike those that many young American radicals have voiced since the 1960's, for

[37]Emerson, *Journal*, December 9, 1834, reprinted in Whicher, ed., *Selections from Ralph Waldo Emerson*, p. 19.

[38]*Vieja y nueva política*, 1914, *Obras* I, pp. 267–308.

civic pedagogy is the form of politics natural to all who find themselves living in the midst of illegitimate institutions.

Ortega began with a premise accepted by most Spaniards except those who happened to be in power. This premise was that during crises—and none in his audience doubted that Spain had been in a prolonged crisis—the will of the people was not found in the established institutions. A crisis resulted when the institutional skeleton of the community was no longer able to support efforts to deal with the community's real problems. During crises, the popular will was found in the projects and aspirations that defined the people's potential. "And thus it comes to pass that today we see in our nation two Spains that live together and that are perfect strangers: an *official Spain* that insists on prolonging the gestures of a dead age; and an aspiring, germinal Spain, a *vital Spain*, which although not very strong is still valid, sincere, and honest, and which, having been obstructed by the other, has not succeeded in fully entering into history."[39]

In spite of the obstructive function of official Spain, Ortega did not succumb to the slavish *ressentiment* that characterizes so many radical and reactionary movements alike. He held, as a basic pedagogical principle, that one could grow and develop only by pushing against resistance; and hence political development did not require the excision of obstructions, a ruthless surgery on those who opposed the reformers' hopes, but rather the surmounting of obstacles as sporting proof of the true superiority of the new. Consequently, in the politics of crisis, one should ignore the traditional points of power—neither seeking them nor shunning them—and assiduously attend to one's proper business: bringing the nation's potentials to fruition. Since the old political structure was designed to deal with problems that existed no longer, it was a sham that was not worth serious attention. Instead, members of the League would attend to the people, their problems, their powers, and their proposals; the League would help clarify and manifest the possibilities that were to be found across the entire range of Spanish life. "We will go to the towns and villages, not only to seek votes to obtain acts of legislation and powers of government, but

[39] *Ibid.*, p. 273.

to make our teaching create organs of community, of culture, of technique, of mutualism, of a life that ultimately is human in all its senses, and of a public energy that will rise without cowering gestures against the fatal tendency in every state to envelop in itself the entire life of the society."[40]

Noblesse oblige! A small handful of men belonged to the League and they did not join it to gain attention for their special interests. They had little doctrine and they followed the slogan "justice and efficacy."[41] The League would function in a simple manner. It would hold before all those who were discontented with Spain, especially before educated young dissidents, the mission of Europeanizing, of educating Spain. The League sought members among doctors, economists, engineers, professors, poets, and industrialists; and to those who had the strength and courage to pursue more than their immediate interests, the League proposed a goal. At the age of thirty, Ortega made his appeal to the idealism of youth, calling the young in body and heart to a great task, not because it was expedient, but because it was good.

> We shall saturate the farthest corner of Spain with our enthusiasm and curiosity; we shall scrutinize Spain and spread love and indignation. We shall travel through the fields with our apostolic din; we shall live in the villages to listen to the desperate moans that issue there; we shall first be the friend of whomever we shall presently lead. We shall create among them strong bonds of community—cooperatives, circles for mutual education, centers of information and protest. We shall goad the best men of each capital up a commanding, spiritual elevation, for today they are imprisoned by the terrible burden of official Spain, which encumbers the provinces even more than Madrid. We shall let these spiritual brothers who are lost in provincial inertia know that in us they have allies and defenders. We shall cast a net of vigor across the limits of Spain, a net that will be at once an organ for teaching and an organ for studying the facts of Spain, a net, finally, that will form a nervous system through which vital waves of sensibility and automatic, powerful currents of protest will run.[42]

To proceed in the manner of the League is to ignore the obvious realities of practical power. Was it a plausible, meaningful means of

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[40] *Ibid.*, p. 277.

[41] *Ibid.*, p. 286.

[42] *Ibid.*, pp. 286–7.

action for ninety-eight talented young men to turn their backs on traditional politics, to ignore the conventional measures of ambition and success, to propose, gratuitously and gamely, certain ideals of conduct and competence, and to suggest, with passion and eloquence, that they and their compatriots would live better by fulfilling these more exigent standards? Those inclined to scoff should note that among the young today rejection of official institutions is a commitment that moves many; and if for no other reason than its power to deprive the established order of needed talent, it should be examined sympathetically in order to comprehend its positive rationale. Yet powerful currents pull in another direction and encourage interpreters to treat the League lightly.

With respect to the established institutions, the League was a negative influence; but then, as now, the established institutions had an inordinate prestige. Ortega's rejection was complete: Spanish institutions were so inconsequential that they did not merit active opposition. Hence, Raymond Carr, in his excellent economic and political history of modern Spain, appropriately discusses Ortega in a chapter on "The Protestors"; but Carr is wrong in implying that Ortega's positive endeavors were inconsequential because these commitments endured "characteristically only for a short period."[43] To be sure, the League did not aim at institutional power and it did not endure. But Carr's judgment of Ortega's commitments, and many of his other judgments concerning Spanish history, reflect the deep contemporary bias in favor of institutional action over spontaneous action.

This bias towards institutionalized power underlies one of the more significant critiques of Ortega's life work.[o] Exponents of this critique contend that between 1898 and 1936 Spain was a country undergoing political and economic modernization. To sustain its development more trained technicians were needed. But instead of turning towards the technical subtleties of engineering, economics, sociology, political science, and business administration, the intellectuals were led by Ortega and Unamuno into excessively speculative, theoretical concerns. Typically, these critics might suggest, the League for Spanish Political Education lacked institutional strength and its members made no organized effort to solve a single practical

[43]Carr, *Spain*, p. 537; cf. pp. 524–63, esp. pp. 530–2.

problem within their competence. The League proposed fine goals, but it never organized to ensure that these would be carried out. In the long run, all it did was briefly assuage the consciences of a few intellectuals who thought that they should do something for the nation but who were unwilling to accept the discipline and self-effacement that institutional effectiveness would entail. In short, if members of the League had been truly serious about reform, they would not have opposed a "vital," spontaneous Spain against official Spain; nor would they have argued for a new politics in place of the old; rather, they would have rolled up their sleeves and become the staff of a more competent, "vital" officialdom.

Today, when economic development has become one of the more fashionable topics of academic inquiry, this criticism seems correct. Ortega was no developmental technocrat.[p] He discouraged corporate action on isolated problems; he opposed the kind of academic specialism that would have helped to increase the power and improve the efficiency of the administrative and technical bureaucracies; he relied on spontaneous, rather than organized, effort to improve the nation. The League was little more than a short-lived declaration of intention. Its program was not practicable; it called for renewed purpose and improved competencies without particularizing proposals. We have been taught to think that these characteristics are weaknesses; and if Spain truly needed only a strong shot of technical modernization, these criticisms would be cogent. But the Spanish problem may have been more complicated; and if this is so, the characteristics that seem to have been demerits may prove on reflection to have been the points that gave Ortega and the League their greatest strength and relevance.

Spontaneous civic action is not something that mysteriously erupts from a people, without rhyme or reason; like any other form of action, it is willed with care, and it becomes effective only with the delicate use of reason. Such action is spontaneous, and it is opposed to the institutional, because its power emanates from the personal activities of a variety of individuals, each of whom acts as an individual, not as a corporate official or follower. Thus, even though our personal activities may have great social consequences and are the result of careful deliberation, they are called sponta-

neous because, from the point of view of any institutional authority, they are initiated in accord with our own intimate intent rather than the will and convenience of official policy. Independent, spontaneous activities gain a civic significance whenever men separately inform their personal acts with purposes that are widely shared by others. All of Ortega's social theory was premised on the conviction that spontaneous civic action was fundamental and that institutional action was secondary and conditioned by the spontaneous.

Ortega made the opposite assumption from that which seems to have been made by most social scientists. Rather than say that personal choice was possible only within certain interstices of institutions, he said that formal institutions were possible only within certain spontaneous matrices. Institutions were effective only when they were legitimated by a prior spontaneous concord; and in the absence of spontaneous concord, it was futile to try to engineer it by the deft or brutal manipulation of formal programs. Instead, one had to try to concert the spontaneous commitments of capable persons; as these persons independently informed their activities with common goals, a significant public potential would begin to become manifest; and as the prominence of this potential increased, more and more persons would define their aspirations with respect to it. On the basis of this concord, a new, effective set of institutions could be established.

The Prospectus of the League was a declaration of intent, not so much of League policy, but of a direction that each person who subscribed to it would follow in the pursuit of his personal vocation. The League needed to endure only for one meeting, for in that one meeting its participants consecrated their lives to Spanish political education. Salvador de Madariaga, who was one of the League's members and who has shown an inspiring fidelity to its principles, has described this consecration best. "This memorable day was the beginning of real leadership in Spanish politics. The spring tapped by Don Francisco Giner and fed by the devoted efforts of the Junta, or Committee for the Development of Studies, had by now become a strong and clear river of intelligent opinion flowing into the troubled and muddy waters of Spanish politics. Great hopes were raised when this body of new men, uncontaminated by the responsibilities of the past and the intrigues of the present, declared their

intention to take part in public life and to raise the tone and substance of Spanish politics."[44]

This evaluation of the League is borne out by the fact that in later life its members independently made important contributions to Spanish politics and culture, contributions that were fully in accord with the intent of the League. Since the League did nothing more than attempt to concert the personal aspirations of its members, to inform their activities with a common goal, no causal significance can be attributed to it; it did not function programmatically. Nevertheless, one could write a good history of the growth of the Republic and the pre-Civil War flowering of Spanish culture by celebrating the careers of the "generation of '14," that is, the ninety-eight members of the League. Among them were Manuel Azaña, prime minister and then president of the Republic; Manuel Abril, poet; Américo Castro, essayist and literary historian; Angel Galarza, minister of the interior in the Largo Caballero government; Manuel García Morente, philosopher and translator; Lorenzo Luzuriaga, educational theorist; Salvador de Madariaga, diplomat and historian; Antonio Machado, poet, educator, and essayist; Ramiro de Maetzu, diplomat and essayist; Federico de Onís, educator, essayist, and literary historian; Ramón Pérez de Ayala, novelist; Fernando de los Ríos, professor of law, politician, and diplomat; and Luis de Santullano, director of the "*misiones pedagógicas*" under the Republic.[45] Many other members achieved distinction in their chosen endeavors; and it must have been a great encouragement to each to know that the purposes he had decided to pursue were shared by colleagues in other fields.

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[44]Madariaga, *Spain*, p. 310.

[45]The Pedagogical Missions were a project in which university students spent their summers in rural villages, getting to know the problems of the poor and trying to introduce the villagers to contemporary cultural and sanitary achievements. See Gabriel Jackson, *The Spanish Republic and the Civil War*, pp. 108–110, for a good description of the *misiones pedagógicas*. Much like VISTA in many respects, the missions put more emphasis than VISTA does on creating substantive communication between the future leadership elite and the rural Spaniard. There was not the condescension implicit in a "war on poverty"; there was the belief that the rural peasant could learn things of value from the urban student and the urban student could learn equally as much from the rural peasant.

Even though the League had no programmatic policy, its historic significance merits careful consideration. As was noted above, we think of the Spanish problem as one of economic and technical underdevelopment, which in part it was. But in seeing Spain as underdeveloped and in need of modernization, we see it through foreign, uncomprehending eyes. To be sure, Spain is economically backward; but that is a mere symptom. The real problem is more fundamental; and consequently, it is irrelevant to judge the League by latter-day standards of modernization. The League for Spanish Political Education was meant to deal with a different, related, more basic difficulty.

Owing to Spain's limitations, it was the first European nation to encounter the crisis of purpose pandemic throughout this century. In this peculiar sense, Spaniards were among Europe's historically advanced peoples: they first experienced the trauma of losing their colonies. After all, Spaniards had constructed one of the early nation-states of Europe, and their colonial expansion had been second only to that of England. But Spaniards had found it very difficult, with a nation that lacked a rich surplus of either men or materiel, to hold their colonies. Throughout the nineteenth century they invested much energy and hope in the enterprise; nevertheless their overseas holdings set themselves free or were taken over by stronger upstarts. By 1900 Spain was having difficulty keeping its meager holdings in North Africa and the millennial tide of the Reconquista seemed about to be reversed.

Spaniards had to face the demonstrated fact that they had become an insignificant power and a people without purpose. Nations are not natural entities that exist come what may; they are continually created and re-created as men grant allegiance to symbols and offices that define for each person a significant future and purpose. At the turn of the century, Spaniards witnessed the dissolution of their national purpose. Hence the Spanish problem was precisely the problem that has become so familiar in the industrialized countries; the problem was nothing more nor less than a collapse of national cohesion.

If all that Spaniards suffered from was political and economic underdevelopment, then the intellectualism and voluntarism, as

well as the confidence in spontaneous action, which characterized the League for Spanish Political Education, would have been inappropriate. But Spaniards had sufficient internal resources to improve significantly their material standard of living, the quality of public administration, and the political status of the people. These improvements, however, were impossible because Spaniards lacked the national will and unity, the sense of common purpose, that would have enabled them to overcome the particular problems that impeded improvement. Whether all strata of the Spanish people had ever assented to a particular idea of the Spanish nation is a moot question. However, since 1898 the idea of Spain as a center of imperial grandeur had clearly become ridiculous to important groups of Spaniards, while for others it became a treasured memory, the remains of which had to be carefully preserved. Hence, public affairs were rent not simply by disagreements about the means of government, but by dissension over the very character of the nation that was to be governed. The intractability of powerful interest groups, the agrarian problem, and the regionalist problem were symptoms of a weakened, shattered national purpose; and until that purpose had been strengthened, there would be no way to elicit the sense of sacrifice and altruistic foresight that were the only means by which those impediments to national improvement could be surmounted. And since the reformation of Spain's national purpose was stopped and negated in the Civil War, these impediments still persist.

How can one strengthen a sense of common purpose? How can one create new civic ideals when the established ones cease to move men or become irrelevant to the true problems of a time? Better technical training, an expanding economy, or a foreign war serve at best to postpone the urgency of these questions; public programs cannot answer them. When we come fully to grips with the difficulty of these questions, we will realize that our faith in the all-embracing efficacy of institutionalized authority is shallow and dangerous. Men are not slaves, and no amount of authority *over* men can create purposes *in* men.

Consequently, the Spanish intellectuals of the League should not be merely dismissed as impractical reformers. They tried to deal subtly and fundamentally with the real problems that lurk every-

where behind the glittering facade of modern civilization. Disillusion with the given community—whether it manifests itself in the apathy of the poverty-stricken, the criminal despair of the drop-out, the drugged fantasy of the escapist, or the terrorism of the revolutionary—is not a problem to be solved simply by a reliance on institutionalized programs in the political and economic sphere of life. In one form or another, these symptoms, which are symptoms of a crisis in spontaneously shared values and purposes, have been apparent in the recent history of every "developed" nation. And there is good reason to suspect that many of the programs designed to deal with these symptoms end ironically in reinforcing them.

Historic forces fail and tear themselves asunder in an act of *hubris* committed when men begin to believe that a hitherto successful system can be relied upon to master every problem. Man is limited. The intellectual procedures that he develops are imperfect; they solve certain problems, but in doing so they create other ones. After a mode of thought has been used effectively for a long time, it becomes habitual. Furthermore, after long use there will be many problems that were caused by the very inadequacies of the established way of thinking. These problems will require attention; and heedless men will try to use the familiar mode of thought to solve the very problems that have been created by its inadequacies. Hence, although the development in the past three hundred years of rational techniques in political and economic life has brought great benefits to most citizens of the modern nation, it would be a mistake to rely solely on these techniques for solutions to twentieth-century problems of value. In large part these problems have arisen from our failure to deal effectively with the vital concerns that lie beyond the limits of our political and economic techniques.

We are indebted to the Spanish reformers for their perception of the desirability, in dealing with a deep crisis of national purpose, for something *in addition to* the materialistic modes of reasoning by which even Spanish national power, backward as it was, had been markedly enhanced. Here we encounter the reason why "official Spain" was rejected by the members of the League. Official Spain was an empty but authentic work of nineteenth-century liberalism. To be sure, its implementation of rational policy in economic, political, and social life left much to be desired. But the

limiting factor was not a lack of technical competence, it was a lack of national purpose. A commitment to official Spain would mean, in effect, that one was satisfied with the existing formulation of the national purpose and that one was content simply to rationalize and improve the pursuit of it. On the other hand, a commitment to vital Spain meant that one would try to create a more stirring national purpose. Such a commitment entailed a reliance on speculative intellectualism and spontaneous activity, for one could neither legislate values nor create purposes by materialistic modes of thought.

"There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so." In view of this truth, the reductionizing materialist is hard put to generate ideals and to avoid nihilism. Believing that he must explain his existence by reference ultimately to material reality, he finds that no *thing* is either good or bad; he feels deceived, not because his thinking puts the wrong values on various acts and objects, but because thinking, by itself, seems to place a value on them. Free valuation contradicts his materialism; and in order to maintain his belief, he must seek to think away thought, to reduce it to a material basis. To the degree that he persuades himself that his reduction is effective, he persuades himself that nothing is either good or bad, that all is permitted. All the same, thought exists, although it is not a thing, and as long as thought exists, valuations will be made, even by materialists who sincerely deny their power to do so. The function of thought is to transform the material world into an environment that man can inhabit. Mind fulfills this function by giving the great chaos of things the essential characteristic that, for *human* beings, the chaos lacks: thought assigns values; it creates order; it discovers what is and is not permitted. Human judgment is fallible: occasionally it assigns things the improper value, postulates a dangerous order, or permits the wrong and prohibits the right. But in the face of its imperfections, men are more likely to improve it through reflection, or thinking about thought, than they are by reduction, or thinking away thought. Repeatedly in history, when men have realized that they are confronted in public life by problems of order and questions of value, they have not turned to material nature, with respect to which these problems do not exist, for they realized that such a turn would be mere escapism. Instead, they began to reflect on thought, on culture, on man thinking.

In keeping with this tradition, the League for Spanish Political *Education* was a cultural, not a technical, group. By joining it, sensitive men agreed to plunge into all aspects of Spanish public life to try to make manifest the highest values in it. They wanted to initiate the general examination of life in the capital, in the provinces, and in the villages; and they had the hope that through such meditations Spaniards would eventually be able to say, "On these grounds we can all meet and share a significant, common destiny." To encourage the development of national purposes they had to rely on spontaneous activity, an intellectual appeal to the young and the speculative criticism of established institutions. They were not out to modernize Spain, but to humanize it, and for this purpose their procedure was appropriate.

In Spain, Europe, and throughout the world, twentieth-century life has been beset by problems of order and value, and because the League for Spanish Political Education put purpose before power, it is historically relevant to these problems. The League stands for an important kind of political action, for its procedures differed radically from the practical, materialistic activities that have been relied on to maximize the economic, administrative, and military strength of nation-states. The new politics aims to improve the spiritual power of various peoples and to bring the crucial but intangible questions of ideals, aspirations, and values out of the realm of chance and into that of choice. It is important to recognize that the method and intent of the League has this historic significance, for historical accident aborted the League's practical development.

* * *

Unamuno was right: Europe undid Europeanization. Not long after the League for Spanish Political Education had been convoked, World War I began. Other questions besides those concerning the purposes Spaniards could share began to seem more pressing. Why had order collapsed? How long would the conflagration continue? Which side had the just cause? Should Spain enter the war? It was not a time in which men could concentrate on building a new national purpose.

Thus the League met only once, and then broke apart under the centrifugal force of events. But even if the League had held

together its significance would not have been its corporate achievements. Long after the League was forgotten, its members were personally pursuing its policies. In keeping with the idea of a new politics, the institution itself was not important; reform was a personalistic, spontaneous endeavor: many different men would separately make their own contributions to a new Spain. Substantial reform would be achieved only when these individual achievements aggregated into a perfected community.

Our task, then, is not to follow how Ortega fitted himself into the shifting conglomerations of his time. It is men who act, not institutions. Ortega's personal activities should be interpreted as the effort of one man to accomplish tasks similar to those that he had proposed through the League. In the course of his manifold activities, Ortega worked to strengthen the intellectual elite of Spain and to bring it into contact with the people. Whether he acted as a teacher, writer, publisher, or politician, his effort was to make intellect enhance the community by using it to increase the capacities of the people and to perfect their sense of common purpose.

This intellectual task was Ortega's vocation, consciously held and intentionally pursued. He was a civic pedagogue, a political teacher, and educator of the public. This vocation is not an arbitrary unity imposed by a biographer on an apparent chaos of Ortega's activities. He repeatedly professed this commitment, and it endured characteristically for a long period. Soon after he published the prospectus of the League, Ortega described his personal vocation: "these essays—like the lecture room, the newspaper, or politics—are diverse means of exercising the same activity, of giving vent to one desire. . . . The desire that moves me is the most powerful one that I find in my heart, and resurrecting the perfect name that Spinoza used, I will call it *amor intellectualis*." Ortega's love was for Spain, which he intended to bring to perfection by cultivating its intellectual powers.[46] Eighteen years later, when he perceived that circumstances were forcing him to transform his vocation, to direct his *amor intellectualis* towards Europe rather than Spain, he reiterated the single-mindedness of his efforts. "I had to make my experiment at apprenticing the Spaniard to intellect in whatever

[46]*Meditaciones del Quijote*, 1914, *Obras* I, p. 311.

way he could be reached: in friendly conversations, in the periodicals, and in public lectures. It was necessary to attract him to the precision of ideas with a graceful turn of phrase, for with Spaniards, in order to persuade one must first seduce."[47]

For the quarter century during which he was Professor of Metaphysics at the University of Madrid, Ortega's career was an extraordinary personal effort at educating the Spanish public. Ortega fulfilled his own conception of the hero, he invented and pursued a great adventure in which he tried not to swim mindlessly with the currents of his time, but to channel them in new directions so that they would bring barren soils to life. The youth whom we have met was a man with a mission.

* * *

The people should fight for the law as if for their city-wall.

HERACLITUS, 44

[47] "El quehacer del hombre," 1932, *Obras* IV, p. 367.

To CONCENTRATE *his forces, a writer needs a public as a liqueur needs the goblet into which it is poured. Hence, in* The Spectator *I appeal . . . to readers who are interested in things apart from their consequences, whatever those may be, the moral included; I appeal to pensive readers who are pleased to trace the outline of a subject through all its delicate, complicated structure; to readers who are not hurried, who have noted that any just opinion requires a copious expression; to readers who on reading rethink for themselves the themes they have read; to readers who do not need to be convinced, but who nevertheless find that they are ready to renew themselves by continually passing from habitual creeds to unaccustomed convictions; to readers who, like the author, have kept in reserve a bit of the antipolitical spirit; in sum, to readers who are unwilling to attend to a mere sermon, to become mindlessly moved at a rally, or to judge persons and things according to cafe gossip.*

ORTEGA[1]

[1] "Perspectiva y verdad," 1916, *Obras* II, p. 17.

IV
The Pedagogy of Prose

SPANISH REGENERATION was a matter of political education, not political policy. As things stood, reforms in the state would be ephemeral unless they were based on effective reforms of Spanish character and skills. Without the latter reforms, the human capacities to make new institutions work would not be available and the new procedures would quickly give way to old habits. Because of a conviction that regeneration had to be based on a reform of character, not of customs, as he had put it in an early essay, Ortega had a special conception of action.[2] *Scribere est agere.*

For Ortega, significant action elicited change in the character of men; for him, speaking and writing were more significant forms of doing things than were buying and selling, designing and producing, legislating and judging. Thus, when Ortega learned in 1905 that his friend Navarro Ledesma planned to enter the Cortes, he expressed great disappointment. If one had to enter the established political system, Ortega granted, there were two positions that deserved to be vigorously upheld, "that of the promoter of instruction and education and that of the moralizer in international politics." But political office was not, Ortega thought, the best way for a man with Navarro Ledesma's literary gifts to promote these goals. "I think you are going to Congress to pass time and to not speak out, which seems to me very bad."[3] In Ortega's judgment, in com-

[2]See "Reforma del carácter, no reforma de costumbres," *El Imparcial*, October 5, 1907, *Obras* X, pp. 17–21.

[3]Letter to Navarro Ledesma, Leipzig, August 8, 1905, in "Cartas inéditas a Navarro Ledesma," *Cuadernos*, November 1961, pp. 15–6.

parison to the opportunity to speak out vigorously and effectively on the fundamental issues of character, the opportunity to legislate with respect to secondary matters was merely a means of passing time. The way to promote Spanish regeneration was through education.

An educator of the public who aimed to Europeanize Spain had to contend with the perennial difficulties of pedagogical action; in particular, with the difficulty the liberal educator encounters in his search for ways to occasion in others a willingness to master the more difficult potentialities of their inner character. Ortega's goal was to bring Spain more fully into the flow of the European tradition. The way to accomplish this integration, as he saw it, was not to emulate externally the superficial features of European life, but to communicate to diverse individuals in all walks of Spanish life the scientific standards and cultural competencies of the European heritage. By mastering European culture, Spaniards could use it to bring their concrete Spanish circumstances to fruition. It is no easy matter to elicit a true mastery of principles in the inner character of other men. Yet, that is what Ortega's conception of Europeanization entailed. This purpose, and his awareness of the difficulties that accompany it, are well reflected in Ortega's prose style, the technique that informed his effort to act by writing.[a]

* * *

Certain Catholic critics of Ortega's style claim that it dazzles and deceptively hides his inner, philosophical evasion. They assume that a serious thinker should write in a stolid style, and that Ortega's vivid imagery and sonorous diction signify his lack of serious thoughts. Thus, José Sánchez Villaseñor claimed that "his style has betrayed Ortega," for such elegant, engaging, evasive prose made it difficult to decide exactly what Ortega thought. Father Sánchez sensed that Ortega preached "an incendiary message";[4] and when

[4]José Sánchez Villaseñor, S.J., *Ortega y Gasset, Existentialist*, Joseph Small, S.J., trans., pp. 136, 138. An effort has waxed and waned several times to grant Ortega's genius as a writer and to deny his capacity as a philosopher. See besides *Ibid.*, books such as V. Chumillas, *¿Es Don José Ortega y Gasset un filósofo propriamente dicho?*, and P. Ramírez, *La filosofía de Ortega y Gasset*. For a summary of this critique see Jeronimo Mallo, "La discusión entre católicos sobre la filosofía de Ortega," *Cuadernos Americanos*, 1962, No. 2, pp. 157–166.

the grounds for such a message seem uncertain, it is prudent—for the sake of the afterlife and spiritual hegemony of the Church—to assume the worst about anyone who so exalted the present life. Father Sánchez doubted that a man with a definite philosophic vision would choose to express it as unsystematically as did Ortega. For many, the task before philosophy is to add another great synthesis to those of Aristotle and Aquinas. To contribute to this endeavor a thinker must publish his thought in systematic treatises.[5] Hence they conclude that Ortega chose the occasional essay as his major vehicle of expression because he had decided to assert, against the claims of systematic reason, an irrational glorification of life. Ortega's style, his rhetoric, was the weapon that he used against reason, for with his playful parlance he so subtly insinuated his dangerous views that no systematic critic would be able to expose their damning contradictions.[6] Fortunately, these critics proved able to prevent, with the aid of the rhetoric they scorned, this latest episode in the Satanic conspiracy to subvert the true philosophy by means of the persuasive arts.

Such appreciations of Ortega's prose do not stand up to critical examination. Not content to suggest that Ortega's use of the occasional essay to express serious thought was a mistake, these critics conclude that it was a sign of bad faith. Rather than look for the rationale of Ortega's style, they absolve themselves of that task by claiming that his prose was patent proof of his disrespect for reason. With a writer who disdains reason the serious critic rightly seeks, not to explain, but to expose; hence their polemic: "Ortega's is a frightening responsibility before history for having exchanged philosophy's noble mission for acrobatic sport."[7] The irony of the argument that unsystematic, occasional, powerful expression betrays irrationalism is that it could so easily be turned against the namesake of Father Sánchez's society. But to avoid such wrangling let us not lose sight of the great lesson that arose from the Greek confrontation of reason and rhetoric: the effectiveness of style tells us nothing for or against the cogency of thought. Augustine had

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[5]Sánchez, *Ortega y Gasset*, pp. 195–216.

[6]*Ibid.*, pp. 132–142.

[7]*Ibid.*, pp. 232–3.

learned this lesson well: "in your wonderful, secret way, my God, you had already taught me that a statement is not necessarily true because it is wrapped in fine language or false because it is awkwardly expressed. . . . You had already taught me this lesson and the converse truth, that an assertion is not necessarily true because it is badly expressed or false because it is finely spoken."[8] To decide on the cogency of a man's thought we examine the reasons he gives for it, whereas to judge the effectiveness of a man's style we ascertain whether the effects produced by his presentation are consonant with his intentions.[9]

If Ortega's intention was simply to expound his philosophic system, then his style left much to be desired, for in no single work did he give an explicit, complete statement of his essential doctrine.[b] But on one occasion he did state that it would have been too easy to become a *Gelehrte*, a savant who occupied his life writing exhaustive philosophic treatises; after all, he studied under Hermann Cohen, was a friend of Nicolai Hartmann, and won an important chair of metaphysics at the age of twenty-seven. Only choice, he said, prevented him from comporting himself according to the stereotype of a learned metaphysician.[10] Ortega's literary intention went beyond expounding a system of ideas; he aimed at cultivating the ability of his readers to form coherent abstractions and to use those abstractions as means for improving the actual life they led. These intentions gave rise to the rationale of Ortega's style.

Two characteristics mark Ortega's prose: a notable variety of subject matter and an extraordinary constancy of form. Ortega wrote on quite as many subjects as Bertrand Russell, to choose a philosopher well known for his universal curiosity;[c] but unlike Russell, whose treatment of different subjects often seemed to owe little to his basic philosophic convictions, Ortega made his reflections on politics, art, epistemology, psychology, history, and pedagogy all illuminate the essential premises of his thought. The unity

[8]Augustine, *Confessions*, Bk. V, Ch. 6, R. S. Pine-Coffin, trans.

[9]A concise statement of the contemporary relevance of this confrontation is in Martin S. Dworkin's "Fiction and Teaching," *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, Vol. I, No. 2, Autumn, 1966, pp. 71–4.

[10]*Prólogo para alemanes*, 1933, 1958, *Obras* VIII, p. 57.

in Ortega's thought was not achieved, however, by going in the direction of more systematic writers, for instance, Ernst Cassirer. Whereas in *The Myth of the State* Cassirer began with an explicit statement of his philosophy of symbolic forms and throughout applied that conception methodically to the illumination of a persistent political problem, in *The Revolt of the Masses* Ortega did not explicitly mention his doctrine of human existence until the closing pages and then it was to observe that the doctrine had been "entwined, insinuated, and whispered" in the text.[11] By proceeding in this way, readers who disagreed with Ortega's basic convictions might still profit from his analysis of European history, but readers who were not convinced by Cassirer's conception of myth could draw little from his application of it to the political past. Thus, Ortega was particularly capable of treating diverse topics in such a way that his essays could simultaneously stand independent from his other works and contribute to the elucidation of his system for those who wished to follow it.

If Ortega's handling of subject matter was unique, so was his choice of form. Twentieth-century philosophic stylists like Unamuno, Santayana, and Sartre have used a variety of prose, dramatic, and poetic forms to to present their thought to the public. Ortega wrote only essays. Furthermore, all his essays, regardless of length or subject, were constructed in the same way: he would write in compact sections, each of which could stand alone as a short essay; and to form larger works he would string related sections together. His art was that of the aphorist, in which he took great care to fit various short, concise statements of principles together into a larger, unified work.

An instance of this variety and constancy may be found in the first volume of *The Spectator*. Included were essays on epistemology; the philosophy of history; love; World War One; joy; "esthetics on a trolley car"; the Castilian countryside; paintings by Titian, Poussin, and Velázquez; the nature of consciousness; and the writings of Pío Baroja. Throughout, certain convictions about thought, life, and the future of Spain insistently recurred. Yet

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[11]See Ernst Cassirer, *The Myth of the State*. The words by Ortega are from *La rebelión de las masas*, 1930, *Obras* IV, p. 278.

despite the variety of topics, Ortega composed everything in short sections, in each of which he raised a single thought, explored its significance, and pointed towards the idea that would follow in the next. The longest essay, "Ideas on Pío Baroja," comprised fifteen of these sections, which each averaged two pages in length.[12] Throughout his life Ortega continued to write on a variety of topics; and he was always faithful to his basic prose form, composing passages from fifty to five thousand words in length and including from one to fifty or more of these in an essay or book.

Diversity of subject and invariability of form: these are the striking features of Ortega's prose; the rationale of Ortega's style should clarify why he always relied on one form of the essay to write about a variety of topics. The critic's task is to discover whether these features of Ortega's style could help readers form coherent abstractions and provoke them to use these ideas in living their lives.

A young man in search of an ideal Spain could not be content with the established channels of action. Ortega's prospective patriotism recognized his country's traditional weaknesses, and the goal of the *nueva política*, or civic pedagogy, was to create the conditions for a Spanish renaissance, to establish a *Kinderland* that was free of the vices that vitiated the fatherland. Intellectuals had a duty to use every means they could to strengthen Spanish culture. Thus Ortega's prose exemplifies the stylist as educator.

Certain readers may object, however, that didacticism is an enemy of literary grace, and yet Ortega's writing is a model of grace. To be sure, in an ordinary sense didacticism leads to a disquisitional rhetoric. But Ortega's writing was not didactic in an ordinary sense. He devoted little effort to disseminating information or cultivating convention through his prose. He was strangely incapable of exposition. Even his essays on travel were displays of dialectical, not descriptive, skills;[13] and when, in an essay such as *Mirabeau or the Politician*, facts were necessary, he presented them in a blurb

[12] *El Espectador—I*, 1916, *Obras* II, pp. 15–125.

[13] See especially, "Notas de andar y ver," 1915, *Obras* II, pp. 249–265; "Temas de viaje," 1922, *Obras* II, pp. 367-383; and "Notas del vago estío," 1925, *Obras* II, pp. 413–450.

of information that became memorable only in the ensuing analysis of principles.[14] Ortega's writing was informed by pedagogical intentions, but not by the pedagogy that is generally espoused by people who believe they possess superior knowledge and who seek to proclaim it to lesser men. Ortega's commitment to the liberal tradition was present in his prose, and hence he always wrote for an audience of peers.

When peers converse as peers, it is a dialogue. This fact has troubled many writers who think of their readers as peers but have difficulty adapting static pages of print to the open exchange of dialogue.[15] The Plato of the Seventh Letter showed an acute awareness of this problem, and the many forms of dialogue promoted by Plato's work provide a key to the art of Ortega's prose. With respect to the reader, Plato's early, so-called Socratic dialogues give a fixed presentation of definite discourse, one that can be seemingly experienced and enjoyed without the reader's critical engagement; these works may appear aporetic only by virtue of their aporetic endings. In contrast, the middle and late dialogues do not so perfectly dramatize possible conversations. But if each statement in these works, for instance, in the *Republic,* is taken literally, the work yields absurdities. Yet the work functions as a powerful heuristic if the reader continually and actively engages himself in the critical interpretation of the possible meanings of Plato's text. Thus the work proves to be internally aporetic; and as soon as Plato's readers engage themselves in reasoning about the just man who may reside in their own hearts, they find that Plato left many clues with which they can thread their way through his artful contradictions. Let us take, then, as the sign that a work is philosophic dialogue the fact that the writer can elicit, by one means or another, the reader's critical involvement in the questions at hand.

Ortega, by virtue of his ability to engage his readers in reason-

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[14]*Mirabeau o el político,* 1927, *Obras* III, esp. pp. 612–8 where the facts of Mirabeau's life were given. Cf. "Juan Vives y su mundo," 1940, 1961, *Obras* IX, pp. 507–9 where Ortega prefaced his lecture with a blurb of information on Vives.

[15]There is a good discussion of dialogue in Paul Friedländer, *Plato, An Introduction,* Ralph Manheim, trans., pp. 154–170. The discussion that follows has been influenced by this work, by my own reflections on the style of Plato, Nietzsche, and Ortega, and by discussions with Martin S. Dworkin and others.

ing about particular problems, was a master of philosophic dialogue. He did not state his thoughts so that they could be easily mouthed by others. He rarely gave a systematic, abstract statement of a principle; instead he would treat principles in relation to particular situations, leaving it to the reader to *make*, not repeat, the abstraction. Further, he usually presented incomplete arguments, in which there would be gaps that the reader would have to fill for himself. In writing, Ortega continually complemented the particular with the general, the general with the particular; and he left it to the reader to decide whether to read a work, or even a paragraph, as a theoretical reflection or as a polemical designation. Even the very brilliance of his wording made readers continually ask themselves: is this serious or is it simply a phrase? All these features were among the devices that Ortega used to engage the reader's intellectual powers by not making his primary meaning obvious, by not giving it a final, full, fixed formulation, by helping readers to extract from the text their own formulations of its meaning.

Even the critics of Ortega's style testify unwittingly to his ability to refrain from pronouncing the final word and to force his readers to seek it out for themselves. Thus, Father Sánchez observed that it was not "easy to discover what Ortega really holds. He submits his ideas to a scrupulous analysis before putting them on paper. Whoever tries to penetrate his thought has to launch forth on an arduous ideological hunt through the dense jungle of his extensive work. . . . Behind the scenery of his metaphors he artfully juggles his ideas. He calls this his delight, his irony—to wear that masquerade which permits us only by close scrutiny to glimpse his real characteristics."[16] These words, which were meant to damn, were fine praise to a man who wrote in order to create a philosophic dialogue with his readers, for they testify to the skill with which Ortega made his readers think. Thus Ortega hid his thought from casual curiosities and manifested it to those who were willing to search for it "by close scrutiny."

Ortega's style was dialogically effective. This power, however, might have been the result of his intentional art or of accident. His style might be explained as the fortuitous combination of his gift

[16]Sánchez, *Ortega y Gasset*, p. 137.

for phrasing striking metaphors with his incapacity for expounding ideas systematically. However much these qualities explain the origin of his style, Ortega was aware that his writing functioned well as dialogue. He cultivated this quality of his prose. "The involution of the book towards the dialogue: this has been my purpose."[17]

Unlike Martin Buber, who made dialogue one of his principle subjects of reflection, Ortega rarely wrote about dialogue per se.[d] For him, dialogue was reflection, it was thought; although he wrote about it infrequently, he took part in it continually. According to Ortega, dialogue was a problem for a serious writer because in its essence thought was dialogue; and to communicate thought one had to produce a dialogue. In this production the writer needed neither to set forth dramatic conversations nor to ramble on about dialogue; he needed to write in such a way as to provoke the reader into dialogue, or thought, concern over real uncertainties. This task was particularly difficult because the dialogue that Ortega tried to stimulate was not so much a direct one between himself and his reader as it was an indirect one between his reader and the reader's circumstances, of which Ortega's books were only a minor part.

How was thought dialogue? It was an open exchange concerning matters that the participants recognized to be significant difficulties. In its fullest sense this definition suggested that the most incessant, productive dialogue was the continual exchange between a man's self and his circumstances concerning the vital problems of his life. Each man lived in the midst of his personal, particular surroundings, and each man's thought comprised an infinitely complicated interplay between himself and these circumstances. This interplay involved the problems that a man perceived as he tried to live by means of limited capacities in the midst of inhospitable surroundings. This exchange, which was always open and always significant, was the primary dialogue of life: "life is essentially a dialogue with its circumstances"; "to think is to converse [*dialogar*] with one's circumstances."[18] The basic dialogue between a man and his world was that man's unique concern; other persons might help

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[17]*Prólogo para alemanes*, 1933, 1958, *Obras* VIII, p. 18.

[18]The first phrase is from *Las Atlántidas*, 1924, *Obras* III, p. 291. The second

shape the objective features of a person's world, but only each man alone could converse with *his* surroundings.

This primary dialogue of life, however, which constituted each man's unique experience, was not a solipsism in which the only reality was the one that a man intimately experienced. Each man informed his own conversation with his circumstances by taking part with other men in intellectual dialogue. To do so, men identified common problems; they created mutually comprehensible terms with which they could discuss these problems and their possible solutions; they embarked on the disciplined, dialectical examination of every proposed solution to their difficulties. With these common means—observation, conversation, and criticism—each man structured and controlled the primary dialogue between himself and his circumstances. Thus, beginning with the unique hopes and difficulties of each, men joined and created a common, rational world, in which they could theoretically solve their difficulties and imaginatively fulfill their hopes. Hence, "the dialectic is a collaboration" by means of which men joined together to enhance their personal exchange with their unique surroundings by confessing common concerns, concerting their goals, and perfecting their powers.[19]

To begin, then, dialogically effective writing required the collaboration of the reader. An auditor could not collaborate in a monologue, and therefore it provoked no dialectical progression of thought. To be effective, a writer had to project from his personal life a set of problems, goals, and powers that the reader could discover implicated in his own intimate existence. For collaboration to take place, the good writer would neither speak nor conceal, but indicate, and the good reader would neither believe nor deny, but consider. Whoever gave dialogue its due would note that the mark of an effective writer was not that he was admired and generally understood, nor was it that he was notorious; it was that those who read him carefully would genuinely apply in the conduct of their lives the powers that he communicated.

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is from "Prólogo a *Historia de la filosofía* de Emile Bréhier," 1942, *Obras* VI, p. 391. Cf. "El deber de la nueva generación argentina," 1924, *Obras* III, p. 255: "thought is . . . essentially dialogue."

[19]"El deber de la nueva generación argentina," 1924, *Obras* III, p. 256.

Universal truths were the bane of dialogue, for, as Ortega often observed, they were inherently utopian and difficult to adapt to the dialogue of life. Principles were important to Ortega, but discourse that communicated only the letter of principles was inadequate, for men did not live in the realm of pure Platonic forms. Adequate discourse had to carry one up out of the cave into the light of abstract thought and then back down to the shadowy particulars. Both the writer and the reader could avoid empty universals—principles divorced from particulars—by dealing only with words that they could find pertinent to an actual occasion. "All words are occasional," Ortega observed. "Language is in essence dialogue, and all other forms of speaking enervate its efficacy. For this reason, I believe that a book can be good only to the degree that it brings to us a latent dialogue in which we sense that the author could concretely imagine his reader. And the reader should feel as if, from between the lines, an ectoplasmic hand came out to touch his person, to caress him, or—very politely—to give him a cuffing."[20]

In *Meditations on Quixote,* Ortega said of a literary work that its form is the organ and that its content is the function that teleologically creates the form.[21] We have examined the form that Ortega tried to give his prose, "the latent dialogue," a good name for those dialogues that lack dramatized conversation but that nevertheless engage the reader in the active interpretation of the text. But the way that Ortega implemented this form followed from the content —the *telos* or function—that provided him with the occasion for creating the form. If his writing enlisted the collaboration of the reader, it was important that there be something particular that the reader was to collaborate in.

Serious writers simultaneously perform particular and general functions, but the enduring worth of their work rarely results from their skill with respect to particulars alone; they must further put their craftsmanship in the service of some general, transcendent concern. Thus, both the man of letters and the hack writer work

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[20]"Prólogo para franceses," 1937, *Obras* IV, pp. 114–5.

[21]*Meditaciones del Quijote,* 1914, *Obras* I, p. 366.

with similar immediate aims, ranging from the salacious to the salvational; but in doing so, the literary genius is acutely aware of serving a universal function, whereas the scribbler is oblivious of this aspect of his office.

Regardless of its immediate tone and subject, Ortega's writing performed the general function of apprenticing his readers to intellect. Thus, like the Platonic dialogues, Ortega's latent dialogues had at least two levels of significance: on one level was the ostensible subject of discussion and on another was the attempt to perfect the discussant's rigorous use of intellect. This second preoccupation was so important to Ortega that one can appropriately identify it as the function, the *telos*, the content of his writing. Hence, throughout his literary work, he tried to cultivate the intellect of his readers, even though in the course of his career he made a significant change in the audience he sought. Up to the early 1930's he was primarily concerned with the Spaniard's intellectual powers, whereas after that time he addressed himself to the abilities of the European. Be that as it may, the two audiences were intimately linked; the European grew out of the Spanish as for writers in other countries it grew out of the French, British, Italian, or German. Ortega discovered his capacity to address Europe in the course of writing for Spaniards, and perhaps the secret of his appeal to both was his *power* to speak, by means of particulars, to an enduring concern of man, that is, to the question of man's intellect and its function in the conduct of his life.

Power, as Ortega conceived it, depended less on position, on office, on one's control of "force," than it did on one's ability to influence the intricate, intimate existence that persons experienced, and to do so without diminishing the intricacy or intimacy of that existence. To have power with respect to the state of intellect, one had to occasion significant alterations in the way men actually used their intelligence and culture in the course of their lives. Hence, Ortega resorted to the daily paper and the personal essay, for by these means he could speak to men about concrete matters as they pursued their personal concerns, having coffee in the morning break or meditating in the quiet of their study. All of Ortega's writing was circumstantial; it was related in one or another way to his imme-

diate world.[e] Many essays concerned things that Ortega met with in the course of taking part in Spanish public life; and the rest he could write "as a spectator" because he was so deeply involved in the press of events that he found himself forced, from time to time, to suspend participation and to consider disinterestedly the quality of the things about him.[22] Thus, even his impetus to reflection gained its strength from his involvement in his concrete surroundings. Consequently, he never assumed that his audience was some disembodied, universal philosopher. In the world of men there was no unmoved mover whose existence comprised only pure contemplation. Noting this fact, Ortega wrote not only polemic, but even disinterested essays, so that, in the cacophony of competing claims on an active man's attention, these reflections might command quiet consideration. From this circumstantiality the power of Ortega's prose with respect to intellect derived.

For instance, take *Meditations on Quixote*. In this small book, and in *The Spectator*, which was its continuation, Ortega made the intellectual function of his prose explicit. "The reader will discover, . . . even in the remotest musings on these pages, the throbs of a patriotic preoccupation. He who wrote them, and those to whom they are addressed, began spiritually with the negation of a senile Spain. But isolated negation is an impiety. When the pious and honorable man denies something, he contracts the obligation to erect a new affirmation. . . . Having negated one Spain, we find ourselves on the honorable course of discovering another. Only death will free us from this task. Hence, should one penetrate into the most intimate and personal of our meditations, he will catch us conducting, with the most humble powers of our soul, experiments towards a new Spain." The purpose of these experiments, Ortega said, was to infect his readers with a desire to understand their surroundings by "sincerely presenting to them the spectacle of a man agitated by a vivid eagerness to comprehend." If this desire became an operative element of the Spaniard's view of life, the old Spain would be transmuted into the new.

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[22]See the acknowledgment in *El Espectador—I* and "Verdad y perspectiva," 1916, *Obras* II, pp. 11, 15–21.

For centuries, Ortega suggested, Spaniards had been animated by rancor and hate; they closed themselves and could neither love nor understand. Comprehension was an act of love in which one carried the matter in question to its fullest possible significance by the shortest available route. The most important aspect of intellect was not erudition, but the power to use man's cultural creations to enhance one's comprehension of the concrete, personal world in which one lived. "All that is general, all that has been learned, all that has been achieved in the culture is only the tactical maneuver that we must make in order to accommodate ourselves to the immediate." Spaniards had been unable to cope with their circumstances because they had not learned to love their world, that is, to employ their culture to perfect their surroundings.[23]

In a meditation on his method, Ortega amplified this thesis. He began by musing idyllically on the mysterious profundity of a forest, for he happened to be sitting in one near the Escorial. What is a forest? he asked; and with this question he began to contemplate the nature of thought. The forest became the occasion of his thought, the forest became his teacher. "This beneficent forest, which anoints my body with health, has furnished my spirit with a great lesson. It is a majestic forest; old, as teachers should be, serene and complex. Moreover, it practices the pedagogy of allusion, the sole delicate and profound pedagogy." An appreciation of this pedagogy, which is the most difficult one to practice, pervaded Ortega's writing. One can comprehend this pedagogy only by practicing it, and consequently he wisely refrained from particularizing the methods by which it should be pursued: "whoever wishes to teach us a truth should not tell it to us; he should simply allude to it with a concise gesture, a gesture that suggests in the air an ideal trajectory along which we can glide, arriving by ourselves at the foot of a new truth."

If he contemplated the forest, which—for the trees—he could never directly experience, he discovered the lesson the forest taught. Beneath the surface of things, beneath their sensory appearance, there was the idea of them, which would be revealed when he

[23]This and the preceding paragraph summarize *Meditaciones del Quijote*, "Lector . . . ," 1914, *Obras* I, pp. 311–328. The quotations are from pp. 328, 313, and 321 respectively; the definition of comprehension is from p. 311.

fused his superficial perceptions with an act of pure intellection. To experience a forest, he had to combine the mental concept, the forest, with his sensations of being surrounded with dense trees, of walking on a bed of leaves and moss, and of hearing the stillness gently interrupted by the songs of birds and the whispers of the breeze.[24]

Concepts, the basic stuff of intellect, were the general, common ideas and definitions by means of which men converted immediate sensory data into personal conceptions that were stable and communicable to others. Spaniards habitually ignored concepts and exaggerated the importance of immediate, unrefined impressions. Consequently, Spanish civilization was "impressionistic" and lacked continuity, direction, and intelligent leadership. With only a bit of irony, he suggested that to correct this imbalance Spaniards should make it a national goal to master the concept. Instead, many mistakenly justified Spanish impressionism by opposing reason to life. Reason was not a substitute for life; concepts were the work of life, and like digestion or reproduction, reason was a vital function of the human being. As a vital function, reason was a great aid, not a threat, to life. Rightly understood, the concept would be the ally of the Spaniard's traditional impressionism.[25]

Like Seneca, Ortega might have quoted Posidonius: "A single day among the learned lasts longer than the longest life of the ignorant."[26] A man with developed conceptual powers would have a greater capacity for the immediate experience of life than would someone with scant ideational ability. In the course of every moment a man experiences a multitude of fleeting impressions; and without some means of fixing his attention, he could not concentrate on one matter long enough to apprehend masterfully any but its most

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[24]This and the preceding paragraph summarize *Ibid.*, pp. 329–337. The quotations are both from p. 335.

[25]This and the following two paragraphs summarize *Ibid.*, pp. 337–364. For more technical discussions of Ortega's conception of the concept, see "Conciencia, objecto y las tres distancias de éste," 1915, *Obras* II, pp. 61–6; "Sobre el concepto de sensación," 1913, *Obras* I, pp. 245–261; *El tema de nuestro tiempo*, 1923, *Obras* III, esp. pp. 163–8. Ortega's major work on the subject is *La idea de principio en Leibniz*, 1947, 1958, *Obras* VIII, esp. pp. 66–70, 99–114, and 256–323.

[26]Seneca, *Epistulae Morales*, LXXVIII, 29, Richard M. Gummere, trans.

superficial significances. A man fixed his attention and investigated the ultimate significance of a thing by means of concepts. These intellectual tools were by themselves no substitute for the impressions of real experience, Ortega cautioned; concepts complemented and completed impressions by enabling a man to convert his feelings and sensations into comprehension. And a man expanded his life by achieving such understanding. "Only when something has been thought does it fall within our power. And only when the elemental objects have been subdued, are we able to progress towards the more complex."[27]

Culture was not simply a body of great literature; it was the concepts, principles, and ideas that made the literature—as well as the art, law, and science of a people—useful in the conduct of their lives. Because Spaniards had few concepts at their command, they had little culture; despite the fact that they had a rich tradition, they lacked the means for bringing this tradition to bear upon their lives. Here, then, was the writer's task: to communicate fundamental concepts and to show how they were to be used in life. "On the moral map of Europe we represent the extreme predominance of the impression. Concepts have never been our forte; and there is no doubt that we would be unfaithful to our destiny if we ceased to affirm energetically the impressionism found in our past. I do not propose a secession, but, on the contrary, an integration. . . . Our culture will never give us a firm footing if we do not secure and organize our sensualism by cultivating our meditativeness."[28] To develop his readers' reflectiveness, Ortega wrote primarily about concepts. By an allusive pedagogy, he explained various concepts and showed how they were to be used. Thus, the essay we are analyzing was at once a critique of Spanish culture and an introduction to the concept of the concept. By functioning in this second way, his essay helped overcome the deficiency in Spanish character that had been identified as crucial in his cultural critique. Whatever the ostensible subject of Ortega's prose, there was as well a discourse on one or another concept and its significance for life.

Anyone who wished to make reason serve life could not be

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[27]*Meditaciones del Quijote*, 1914, *Obras* I, p. 354.

[28]*Ibid.*, p. 359.

content with dwelling on a few specially favored thoughts. Ortega had to concern himself with a multitude of concepts, which would run the gamut of the situations that arise in life. Hence, even if he were naturally inclined to specialize, Ortega's purpose would have led him to speak on many matters. A writer who dwelt on a narrow range of concepts would help merely to cultivate learned ignoramuses who were reasonable in esoteric matters and bumbling fools in the mundane concerns of life. Besides permitting Ortega to introduce a useful range of concepts, variety in subject matter permitted him to shun abstraction and to emphasize the concrete even though he wrote about principles. Thus, he could use the pedagogy of allusion.[f] For instance, in meditating on the concept, Ortega began, not with the metaphysics of essences, but with the forest glen in which he sat. But note, if he had not continually varied the real situations that he used in explicating his ideas, his readers would soon have found either that he was concerned primarily with the situation itself, he being gifted with a minor talent for describing forests, or that the situations, like the tables and chairs often discussed in introductory epistemology, had been converted into technical conventions that no longer served effectively to bring metaphysics down to earth. The variety of Ortega's subject matter enabled him to avoid these pitfalls; he introduced his readers to a multitude of concepts by presenting well-chosen references to daily life.

Ortega relied on short, personal essays as his favorite prose form because through these he could bring latent dialogues to his readers, and with such dialogues he could practice the pedagogy of allusion. In each fragmentary essay Ortega introduced a concept, he indicated and explored certain things that would engage the reader in using the concept, he scattered clues about how the concept might be mastered, and he then broke off, leaving the reader to proceed alone along the ideal trajectory that had been suggested. There are dangers, however, in such a prose form, and in seeing why Ortega would risk these dangers, we perceive his true mettle as an educator of the public.

Anyone who intends to teach by the pedagogy of allusion must risk being misunderstood and he must have faith in the ultimate competence and good will of others. Ortega took that risk and he had that faith. "There is little probability that a work like mine,

which, although of minor value, is very complicated, which is full of secrets, allusions, and elisions, and which is throughout completely intertwined with my vital trajectory, will encounter the generous soul who truly desires to understand it. More abstract works, freed by their intention and style from the personal life out of which they surged, can be more easily assimilated because they require less interpretative effort."[29] Here is the choice of Hercules that any popularizer must make. Does one have confidence in the capacity of the audience to make an interpretative effort, or does one distrust its ability? Ortega believed that a man mastered himself and his world by making an interpretative effort; and he therefore believed that a writer misused his readers when he made their interpretative effort unnecessary, for by doing so the writer encouraged readers to be lax before life and to expect life to reveal itself replete with a ready-made discipline.

Ortega's writing gained its pedagogical power from his determination to respect the intelligence and intellect of his audience. By requiring a great interpretative effort from his readers, Ortega risked on the one hand that they might have difficulty precisely reproducing his personal conception of one or another concept, but he ensured on the other that they would be better able to think by means of that concept. Readers who independently pursued the thoughts that he suggested would train themselves in using concepts to order their experience. To encourage such mastery, it was best to refrain from excessive explicitness and to make the reader think through the lesson for himself. Ortega's style produced effects consonant with his intentions. As the forest had been the occasion, not the subject, of Ortega's meditation on the concept, so his meditation was to be the occasion, not the subject, of his reader's own reflection.

By means of his writing, Ortega tried to disseminate throughout Spain a more adequate repertory of essential concepts that would perfect the Spaniard's impressionistic genius. In his essays Ortega called attention to different concepts in the course of writing about a great variety of topics; and he elicited the reader's involve-

[29] "Prólogo a una edición de sus obras," 1932, *Obras* VI, p. 347.

ment with these concepts by not providing an exhaustive, abstract interpretation of his subject, and by giving instead a suggestive yet precise indication that could be completed only by the reader's own efforts. There is no better example of these techniques than the final part of *Meditations on Quixote.* In it Ortega meditated on the concept of the novel, for he held it necessary to master this concept in order to do justice to *Don Quixote* and to the great influence on Spanish character that this book had had. In this meditation Ortega introduced and allusively explicated various other concepts that contributed to an understanding of the novel; he wrote passages of five to ten paragraphs on the idea of the literary genre, the exemplary novel, epic, the bard, myth, books of chivalry, poetry and reality, realism, mime, the hero, lyricism, tragedy, comedy, tragicomedy, and the experimental novel. On each of these topics, Ortega at most was suggestive; and the reader was clearly expected to complete his own conception of these matters and to unify them into a general conception of the novel that might prove adequate for intepreting *Don Quixote* and its effect on the interpreter's life.[30]

Throughout Ortega's work, one will find him in this way introducing, explicating, and commending concepts through short, suggestive essays that implement the pedagogy of allusion. Ortega's prose was dialectically effective because of his ability to record allusive actualities, rather than consummate abstractions; and consequently, even through his style he wielded pedagogical power. The principle that gave his prose its power was the principle of respecting the reader's interpretative abilities.

Here again is the choice that every writer must make. Some choose to make reason regulate life by imparting their conclusions directly to others without transmitting the skills by which the conclusions were drawn; others seek to make reason function in life by awakening with their prose the rational powers of their readers. Each writer must choose whether to communicate primarily the results of reason or the powers of reason. Ortega chose the latter course. He believed that when a mind comes alive and begins to vibrate with the power of reason, its duty is not to think paternally on behalf of those who are still inert. With the ineluctable force of

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[30]*Meditaciones del Quijote,* 1914, *Obras* I, pp. 365–400.

resonance, it should vibrate in sympathy with other reasoning minds and augment with the increment of each the power of the whole, so that all are awakened and a great work may be wrought.

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To those who are awake there is one ordered universe common to all, whereas in sleep each man turns away to one of his own.

HERACLITUS, 89

STRICTLY, a man's vocation must be his vocation for a perfectly concrete, individual, and integral life, not for the social schema of a career.

ORTEGA[1]

[1] "Sobre las carreras," 1934, *Obras* V, p. 171.

V
The Partly Faithful Professor

For over twenty-five years, Ortega's career, in the sense of a social schema, was that of a university professor. As had been anticipated, in 1910 Ortega won appointment to the Chair of Metaphysics at the University of Madrid. His character as a civic pedagogue is exemplified in the way he turned this career into an integral element of his personal vocation.

How Ortega's expectations must have soared when he learned, at twenty-seven, that he had won the Chair! Here was a great opportunity; without having to spend years in academic obscurity, he would be able to use his new position to work systematically at educating the gifted elite that he believed necessary for Spanish reform. As he later put it, an "imperative of intellectuality" was a condition of progress in Spain, and there was no better way to cultivate intellectuality in Spain than as a professor of metaphysics.[a]

For Ortega, any substantial civic grouping such as a nation involved the linking together of diverse peoples in such a way that their diversities were preserved, perfected, and utilized. Nationality was not a common character shared by all. The ability to draw, in pursuit of a *Kinderland*, on the different characteristics of diverse peoples, gave rise to a nation in which men with many special geniuses could give, harmoniously and cooperatively, to the common effort what was unique to each. For this federation of diverse elements to occur, it was important that each be "in form," that each have a sense of his uniqueness, of the way that his special character might help enrich the whole. What Ortega called "particularism" developed within a nation not when its component members pos-

sessed an acute sense of their unique character, but when these members complacently confused themselves with the whole. Particularist groups, thinking they were the nation, would seek to make policy serve their interests without taking into account the interests of other members.[2]

Ortega thought that Spain's politics was hopelessly particularistic; this condition gave rise to the imperative of intellectuality. Such an imperative did not call on the intellectuals to take over power; as we have noted, an Ortegan elite was not an authoritarian elite. Instead, the imperative of intellectuality called on men who had carefully disciplined their powers of thought to confront "the masses," the uncritical members of all the particularist groups in Spain, with clear delineations of the actual complexity of the nation, the diversity of its members, and the intricacy of their interdependence. If a minority of gifted, articulate thinkers could confront the Spanish people with a cogent presentation of this diversity and intricacy, then a modicum of realism, humility, and altruism might creep into practical politics. "In the intellectual class there resides vaguely, very vaguely, the lone possibility of constituting a select minority capable of profoundly influencing our ethnic destinies and beginning to initiate the new organization of our country, which now destroys and atomizes itself day by day. I believe, therefore, that the Spanish intellectual is not at the hour of triumph, but at the hour of the greatest effort."[3]

In its full sense, this effort would be two fold. In the end it would entail bringing intellectual clarity to bear on every aspect of Spanish life; but that culmination was possible only after a previous labor had been performed, namely, only after a substantial group of Spaniards had truly mastered intellect. It was this aspect of the imperative of intellectuality that Ortega could pursue as a professor of philosophy.

Recall how Ortega's conception of Europeanization gave priority to intellectual rigor as the European characteristic that Spaniards sorely lacked. In general, Ortega took it as his task to enamour his

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[2]Ortega's best presentation of these thoughts is *España invertebrada*, 1921, *Obras* III, especially pp. 51-71.

[3]"Imperativo de intelectualidad," *España*, January 14, 1922, *Obras* XI, pp. 11-2.

compatriots with a feeling for science, that great tradition of theorizing about experience. Science was idealism, metaphysics, thought about phenomena, both physical and spiritual. Thus, Ortega's purpose, the imperative controlling his vocation, was to make the Spaniard "react intellectually to reality." To accomplish this goal, Ortega needed, through his prose or through his classroom, to influence the integral character of particular Spaniards, to inspire them with a feeling for speculative thought. This aim led Ortega to take up the career of an educator, of a professor of philosophy; and as an educator, he did not simply savor ideas in limbo in his philosophical reflections. As an educator, he had to see that ideas gave themselves flesh, for man thought various ideas so that he could use them in living his life. Hence, when Ortega spoke, as he often did, of transforming the Spanish spirit, he did not envisage exercising some mysterious power over the *Volksgeist;* he proclaimed his intention to have a real effect on the thought and character of actual men, first on those who would make up an elite diffused throughout the mass, and second on every man as the capacities of the elite began to resonate independently in each member of the mass. "I will achieve all my aspirations," he said, "if I manage to cut on that minimal portion of the Spanish spirit within my reach certain new facets that will reflect the ideal."[4] One place where a bit of the Spanish spirit came within Ortega's reach was the classroom of the university.

We have already seen how Ortega found the active concerns of politics and economics to be secondary, derivative elements in public affairs. In contrast to these, one of the fundamental factors in public life was the higher learning. Systematic philosophy was especially important, not for any direct effects, but for its indirect influence. A strong, continuing philosophic elite was the historical backbone of any European nation; for in times of trouble the members of this elite unobtrusively preserved the conceptual capacities by which public affairs could again be given a humane, progressive order, and in times of hope these men were a source of inspiration, constructive criticism, and informed instruction. On his return from Germany, several years before his university appointment, Ortega

[4]*Meditaciones del Quijote,* 1914, *Obras* I, p. 314.

had clearly stated that the first order for educational reform was to bring the study of philosophy up to the level that the leading European nations had attained during the nineteenth century.[5] It was this belief that brought him home from Marburg, and his appointment was a practical step giving him the opportunity to attempt the reform.

To demand radical improvement in one or another university discipline is easy; to implement such reforms is difficult.[b] The university is a conservative institution. Its power to perpetuate learning is bought partly at the price of being doomed to perpetuate incompetence as well. But this fact should not cause despair. The university is particularly open to personal influences. Faculties rarely excel as corporate bodies; great schools of scholarship are the work of particular men. The vitality of an intellectual tradition does not depend on its being continuously represented by popular courses in the curriculum; it is more important that here or there a particular professor in one way or another profoundly moves certain students. Through such relationships Ortega himself had been initiated to systematic philosophy. And since the transmission of learning depended on such personal influences, he could hope that a university, although seriously estranged from the philosophical tradition, could make up its deficiencies and develop a corps of men who were at, or near, the front rank of speculative inquiry.

Only rarely does academic reform require action from administrators and senior professors. The real changes depend on the spirit of younger faculty members, of those who do not believe that the present world is the only possible one and who are therefore unwilling to call it the best. As young men define their style of inquiry, their purposes and powers as teachers and students, they define the future character of the university. If their elders reward the mediocre, preferring the familiar to the excellent, it simply means that institutions with present prestige will decline and others will take their place, for the truth will come to light. Here is the secret source of renewal: among the young there is a gravitation towards difficulty, which is less visible than the gravitation towards novelty, but

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[5]See especially "Asamblea para el progreso de las ciencias," 1908, *Obras* I, pp. 99-110.

which is in the long run the most powerful of all the forces making for beneficial change.

Ortega's teaching provides an excellent example of the power of spontaneous reform. He simply began to teach in his own way, pursuing his own academic ends; students recognized his personal competence and the legitimacy of his purpose; other professors concurred with his goals; without fanfare, the reform was wrought. In this way, "the school of Madrid" emerged. By 1936 Madrileños took pride in the fact that their city was a flourishing philosophical center, and they gave Ortega much of the credit.[6] The change was remarkable and is the first measure of Ortega's accomplishment as a teacher.

Whereas at the turn of the century the most progressive philosophic movement in Spain was *Krausismo*, by the 1930's Madrid was one of the creative centers of existential thought. To be sure, Unamuno had done the most to bring Spanish thought to the attention of those outside of Spain; but it was Ortega who had done the most to bring Spaniards abreast of European speculation. Prodded by Ortega, Spanish publishers discovered during the twenties and thirties that they could flourish by providing a substantial public with good translations of European thinkers, traditional and contemporary. Brentano, Dilthey, Husserl, Scheler, Simmel, Spengler, Spranger, Heidegger, and Huizinga attracted much interest. Talented young men took to the study of philosophy; and in the early 1920's, Ortega had one of them, Xavier Zubiri, go to Freiburg where Husserl taught. There Zubiri came under the influence of Martin Heidegger; and hence even before the publication of *Sein und Zeit*, a link was established between Ortega's version of existential metaphysics and Heidegger's. Zubiri has gone on to become one of the more able philosophers of Europe as is shown by the appearance in 1962 of his treatise, *Sobre la esencia*.[7] In addition to Zubiri, Ortega's teaching had a significant influence on a number of other excellent philosophers—Pedro Laín Entralgo, Julián Marías, José Ferrater Mora, Paulino Garagorri, Luis Díez del Corral, Manuel Granell, and

[6]See the articles by Fernando Vela, Manuel García Morente, Xavier Zubiri, Luis Santullano, Gregorio Marañón, Blas Cabrera, and María Zambrano in the March 8, 1936 issue of *El Sol*.

[7]Xavier Zubiri, *Sobre la escencia*, tercera edición, 1963.

José Luis L. Aranguren, among them—all of whom are in one way or another connected with the school of Madrid. Together, they constitute one of the more solid centers of contemporary thought. As examples: Laín's work on "the self and the other" and his inquiries into the ethics of the clinical relation between doctor and patient, Marías's studies in the history of philosophy, Ferrater's reflections on the nature of death, Garagorri's essays on Unamuno and Ortega and his continuation, in the Ortegan mode, of an active role for the philosopher in contemporary Spanish life, and Díez del Corral's profound reflections on European history are but a few examples of how members of the school of Madrid have brought clarity, profundity, and competence to bear on a wide range of concerns.[c]

Together with his direct influence on the school of Madrid, there is a second measure of Ortega's teaching, namely his continuing inspirational influence in the Spanish university. After the Civil War, Ortega was barred from teaching, but even so he remained one of the more effective influences in Spanish higher education: insofar as students are free men, they will naturally follow the memory of excellence rather than fawn on imposed mediocrity. This influence became manifest at Ortega's death in 1955. Numerous speakers and essayists commemorated his influence as a teacher, for the fact that he had not been permitted to teach had all along been eloquent witness to his power to teach.[d] Always a master at creating occasions, Ortega was so in death, for his funeral became one of those great events in which the human spirit affirms itself against those who would suppress it by shouting, as General Millán Astray reputedly did when unable to answer Unamuno's criticism, "Down with intellect! Long live death!" The regime was able to censor the obituaries and made a transparent effort to hail Ortega as one of its supporters; but it could not control the elegies of the inward heart. Through these, truths were spoken that could not be suppressed. In memorial after memorial, thousand of students eloquently payed homage to the men, Ortega and others, who should have been the students' teachers. "This posthumous tribute to Ortega y Gasset, professor of philosophy and letters, is the homage of those who would have been his disciples had he not relinquished, for reasons well known, his chair of metaphysics. It is an homage of a university youth without a university which is compelled to seek knowledge

outside of classes, from books which are not textbooks and in languages which are not Spanish."[8]

Thus, what happened through both Ortega's presence and his absence as a teacher attests to his capacity; and when viewed in retrospect, there can be no doubt that Ortega's influence through the university was great. Manuel García Morente, Ortega's friend and colleague, gave unequivocal testimony to this fact: "the philosophic teaching that, during the past twenty-five years, Don José Ortega has given at the University of Madrid has actually created the basis of Spanish philosophic thought."[9] And Xavier Zubiri gave a clue to the genius of Ortega's teaching when he described it as "the intellectual irradiation of a thinker in formation."[10]

A major part of Ortega's commitment to renovate Spanish life through civic pedagogy depended on the fact that this irradiation took effect, that his teaching had power. And let us emphasize the word "power." Teaching is not a neutral act; it is a public commitment of considerable consequence. At his best, a teacher occasions change in those he meets; in doing so, he shapes the future—this is the teacher's power. With respect to this power, a detailed reconstruction of the particular lessons imparted by a pedagogue is less significant than the informing principles that allow the lessons to occasion change in their recipients.

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Ortega had left Germany committed to reforming Spain by reforming, among other things, the university. In academe, his mission was to raise intellectual standards, to bring dormant traditions back to life, and to cultivate a love of intellect among those who had little comprehension of the capacities that a thoughtful life entailed. In pursuing such a mission one can easily plunge into pedantry. Ortega realized that intellect could flourish only when enlivened with imagination. Higher standards were useful only to those with higher aspirations, and consequently, while

[8]From a memorial read at Ortega's grave when some thousand students brought a wreath to it the day after his funeral; quoted by Richard Mowrer, "Unrest in Spain," *The New Leader*, Vol. XXXIX, No. 7, February 13, 1956, p. 14.

[9]Manuel García Morente, *Ensayos*, p. 205.

[10]Xavier Zubiri, "Ortega, maestro de filosofía," *El Sol*, March 8, 1936.

insisting on competence, Ortega provoked his students to essay the most difficult problems of thought. Here were the principles that gave Ortega's teaching its power: intellect *and* imagination. Thus, Ortega taught with a two-edged tongue: the discipline and hope that he had received as a student he tried to transmit as a teacher by simultaneously cultivating the tools and the *telos* of thinking.

Students aver that as a teacher Ortega had style. Those who spent much time with him report that he would use many means of discourse to teach at any opportunity, that always the expression of his thought was taut, and that each particular statement carried with it an intimation of his entire outlook. Ortega not only presented his philosophy, he exemplified it. Thus, the Puerto Rican educator, Antonio Rodríguez Huéscar, recalled that "in Ortega — in his teaching — we witnessed . . . *living reason* in motion, personalized, making itself; Ortega did not *have* a philosophy, he *was it*."[11] Few students could resist the lyric grace of Ortega's discourse. Manuel Granell, a member of the school of Madrid, has recorded how Ortega "seduced" him to give up plans to study architecture and to switch to philosophy. "Never would I have suspected that concepts could take on such flesh. The dry, cold Kantian expression received palpitating life. And suddenly, in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, he opened a small passage that led to the essence of love."[12]

The essence of love, an erotic theory of education: by the time Ortega had returned from Germany, he not only had one, but, believing that people had to feel attracted to learning in order to seek it out, he was ready to make use of his theory. Before his first class at the normal school of Madrid, there was much curious anticipation among the students, for his writing — as it always would — had stirred youthful spirits. Ortega arrived a moment late. The expectant students watched as he drew, silently, but with a dramatic flair, a copy of Plato's *Theaetetus* from his briefcase. Holding the book before the class, he announced that they were beginning a course in philosophy and

[11]Rodríguez, *Con Ortega*, pp. 24-5, quotation p. 24.

[12]Granell, *Ortega*, p. 30.

that philosophy was the general science of love. As such, philosophy was an aspiration, a desire, not for erudition, but for understanding, for the greatest possible comprehension of the connection of all things to all things.[13]

As Ortega realized, such methods involve serious risks. Without care, the teacher who uses dramatic, poetic methods to arouse the interest of his students, can sacrifice his teaching to his drama and poetry. In his particular case, Granell noted how, when students started to take notes, Ortega stopped and warned them that he was presenting an example chosen to engage their powers of thought, not to present noteworthy doctrine. "I must try to seduce you with lyric means; but you must not forget that they are only this: means—means and not ends. Philosophers should permit no other seduction than that of metaphysical ideas."[14] To carry off such a seduction one needs more than sensuous rhetoric. All love is a discipline; but none is more demanding than *amor intellectualis*. What erogenous zones of the spirit did Ortega arouse? How did he turn these desires towards the true, the good, and the beautiful?

Firstly, Ortega required competence. It may seem strange that the seduction of metaphysical ideas should begin with such a prosaic quality that at the start erected a barrier; but the expectation that seduction should be easy simply shows how far we have come to expect that everyone should win great thoughts with little effort; the cult of easy learning goes hand-in-hand with that of easy virtue. Ortega was not intimidated by the thought that rigor would reduce creativity. The idea of rigor intimidates only those who lack strong creative energy; whereas for anyone with sufficient spirit to command his opportunities, rigor is the quality that enables him to seize a thought and turn it into a work of art, science, or ethics. All love is a discipline, and the very essence of *amor intellectualis* is rigor, competence, and precision.

Science, Ortega once observed, meant to speak precisely; and precision, he told a young Argentine, was the requisite of a

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[13]Maetzu, *Antología*, pp. 85-7.

[14]Granell, *Ortega*, p. 30.

good thinker.[15] A teacher who wished to initiate his students into the delights of metaphysics should try to impart the standards of precise thinking. One does not, however, speak precisely by incanting the term "precision" and expecting all to understand. When logical positivists think of precision, they dream of a perfect language in which ambiguity is rendered impossible. Such precision was not Ortega's goal. Whereas the theorists of a perfect language aim at the precision of objective statement, Ortega sought the precision of subjective comprehension. He was not interested in training students to repeat, dumbly but accurately, the characteristic terminologies of various philosophers. The terms themselves were meaningless;[e] and they could have meaning only for those who perceived the human problems that a philosopher tried to solve by recourse to the thoughts denoted imperfectly by his terminology. The attempt to do away with metaphysics by exposing the inadequacies of its language is based on a reverse word magic in which the shaman believes that by annihilating the words he can annihilate the thing. But the problems of metaphysics are not dependent on the words; the meanings of the words are dependent on certain problems of man.

A good example of this reverse word magic is Stuart Chase's chaste rebuke of *The Tyranny of Words*.[16] Chase reproduces isolated sentences and paragraphs from various writers, including Ortega, to show how their willingness to use words imprecisely—meaninglessly, without strict observance of the ordinary definitions—makes them get stirred up about senseless matters. Chase's word magic becomes apparent in his expectation that any paragraph should be lucid even when it stands alone, independent of the context the author gave it. With this expectation, a work of art can be nothing more than the sum of its parts. Each word embodies a conventional significance; and regardless of the spiritual whole into which these discrete elements are woven, we are to judge on the basis of conventional meanings whether an isolated passage expresses something intelligible. If the separate parts

[15]"La pedagogía social como programa político," 1910 *Obras* I, p. 509, for the definition of science; "Carta a un joven argentino . . . ," 1924, *Obras* II, pp. 348-9, for the requisites of a good thinker.

[16]Stuart Chase, *The Tyranny of Words*, *passim* and especially pp. 369-370.

prove unintelligible, Chase infers that the context, the inclusive whole the author forged from these parts, must be the figment of an excited imagination.

By this method words certainly will never be tyrannical, for they will never require a person to alter his established convictions about the way things are. But whenever tempted to make such criticisms from the part to the whole, we should remember Coleridge's caution. "Critics, who are most ready to bring this charge of pedantry and unintelligibility, are the most apt to overlook the important fact that besides the language of words there is a language of spirits *(sermo interior)*, and that the former is only the vehicle of the latter. Consequently their assurance that they do not understand the philosophic writer, instead of proving anything against the philosophy, may furnish an equal and *(caeteris paribus)* even a stronger presumption against their own philosophic talent."[17]

Coleridge meant by "language of spirits" the inner comprehension that arises in a man as he contemplates the wondrous and awesome aspects of his existence. The life of any man is problematic, and words are merely imperfect means that men use to make manifest to themselves and others what they think about their problems. Words receive their human significance from the context of the human problem that occasions their utterance. No matter how carefully defined, words do not serve to communicate fully unless speaker and listener tacitly share common concerns; these concerns give rise to the *sermo interior*, the realm of interior discourse that the true educator seeks to develop. Hence, Ortega contended, any teaching that did not first impart a personal comprehension of the difficulties that had occasioned a particular thought would merely impart a muddled set of ideas, the significance of which the student had no inkling of.

Instructional reforms followed from this contention. Ortega adapted the age-old *lectio* to a novel purpose. A student would read aloud an important passage from a great work and Ortega would give a commentary to it.[18] In doing so, he avoided simple

[17]Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, Chapter XII, p. 158.

[18]Rodríguez, *Con Ortega*, pp. 21-3, gives an account of his experience as Ortega's reader.

attempts to explain the argument. Such explanations distracted the student from his proper concern, Ortega suggested, because a program of instruction that was designed simply to transmit subject matter was fundamentally false: it merely thrust upon the student a mass of material that he was not prepared to understand. Because most students sought subject matter alone, they usually falsified the very knowledge they tried to acquire. "The solution to such a tough and bicorn problem . . . does not consist in decreeing that one should not study, but in profoundly reforming the human activity of study and consequently the essence of the student. For this purpose, it is necessary to turn instruction around and say that to teach is primarily and fundamentally to teach the need for a science, and *not to teach* the science the need for which it is impossible to make the student feel."[19] Here was the principle of negative education, first noticed by Rousseau, applied to university pedagogy.

Through historicism Ortega made students perceive the opportunity for metaphysics, the source of it, not in theory, but in man's vital experience. Historicist explanations, as he indicated throughout his essay on "History as a System," took account of the fact that everything human, including the pursuit of truth, beauty, and goodness, had an historical setting that was pertinent to understanding the character of the human effort. "To comprehend anything human, personal or collective, it is indispensable to narrate its history. This man, this nation acts this way and is as it is *because* before it acted in another and was something else. Life only becomes a bit transparent to *historic reason*."[20] With an historicist presentation, a teacher could convey a precise understanding of the issues that had occasioned man's great philosophical systems. Even when explaining the most abstract issues, Ortega usually resorted to historical expositon, either showing how the issue arose in the history of thought or suggesting how it should arise in a hypothetical personal history.

Ortega's historicism was a mode of explanation, not a set of

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[19]"Sobre el estudiar y el estudiante," 1933, *Obras* IV, p. 554.

[20]"Historia como sistema," 1935, *Obras* VI, p. 40.

ontological assertions about what had "really" happened in bygone times.[f] Ortega did not suggest that thought was determined by historically inevitable forces. On the contrary, thought was man's free response to his circumstances; and to understand any particular thought, one needed to be aware of the circumstances to which it pertained. "The understanding," Ortega told his students, "and its radical form—philosophy—, are not definitive attitudes of man, but only historical ones, ones of the human present."[21] Hence, to understand a philosophic system, students needed to comprehend its historical setting, to discover what human problems the system pertained to, and to make that system part of their repertory for dealing with the world when the problems to which the system pertained were also their problems.

Whatever its worth as a philosophy of history, Ortega's historicism was useful as a pedagogical means. A student who did not understand the vital problems that gave rise to an intellectual system had no personal control over the system. To be sure, he might be able to reproduce and analyze various arguments, but he would be unable to use them. To help students assert control over their intellects and to improve their use of thought in living their lives, Ortega tried to recreate through historical exposition the problems that men had sought to solve by creating metaphysics. Competence resulted from understanding, not mere knowing; and to understand a matter one needed, in addition to knowing its formal properties, to comprehend its function. Hence, one did not effectively disseminate the tools of intellect simply by explaining various doctrines; one had to exemplify their humane uses.[g]

Ortega sought first to stimulate the student's power of thought. He cultivated this power in his students by imparting to them an historical understanding of philosophy. Note that a student who had mastered the power of thought would be free to exert himself on whatever problem engaged his interest. In this way, Ortega's first instructional endeavor contributed to a liberal

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[21]"Tesis para un sistema de filosofía," *Revista de Occidente*, October 1965, p. 6.

education, to an education worthy of free men, for a young man who understood the historical uses of different doctrines would be free to adapt them to his personal purposes. Here the other concern of Ortega's teaching came to the fore—the *telos* of intellect.

Secondly, then, Ortega aroused a sense of mission in his students. In addition to gaining a clear comprehension of the uses of past doctrines students needed to define the purposes through which they could adapt past doctrines to present uses. Without a personal mission, even the best trained thinkers would be dependent on convention; and a man who was dependent on convention, whether his dependence was positive or negative, was not his own master. A teacher could not provide his students with a mission, but he could continually put the issue before them and suggest various possibilities for their consideration. Students responded to Ortega because he provoked their aspirations. Insistently, he advised youths to contemplate their destiny, to define their proper purposes. Frequently, he confronted students with the idea of a mission and the function that it served in personal life. Imaginatively, he suggested novel aspirations for consideration by the students he addressed.

According to Ortega, a person's mission was an activity that he *had to do* in the double sense that the person had certain things he could do, for they were within his sphere of possibilities, and that he not only had them to do, but he had to do them, he was obliged to do them, on the pain of voluntarily falsifying his best self.[h] Each self, in conjunction with its circumstances, had definite possibilities, which would not become actual without effort, but which were not Utopian, impossible goals to pursue. Only the person himself could will to pursue his mission, for although many components of it were public, or at least publicly apparent, the most important element, his will, was locked in the recesses of his spirit. Ortega's conception of mission democratized and universalized his idea of the hero, the man who resisted the ready-made life that his surroundings offered and who invented his own program of life, an adventure in which he overcame the real problems in his circumstances. Every man had a mission,

which each had to find in his circumstances; and, like the hero, every man finds that he can pursue his mission only through authentic, personal commitments, not through impersonal, external conventions. Ultimately, the quality of *life* in any community was a function of the degree to which its members freely aspired to fulfill their missions, their destinies.

A man became free by willing to pursue his mission. Each person's mission originated from his own powers and inspiration, and was always dependent on these; hence one's mission was the basis of one's dignity and strength vis-à-vis the manifold stimuli from the surrounding world. No slave can be made of a man who has a keen sense of his mission; a despotic ruler can only exterminate such a man, or drive him into open or covert rebellion. No inner strength, no independence can develop in a man who lacks a feeling for his mission, for he will have no basis for pursuing a consistent course of action in the face of the vicissitudes of experience. Consequently, a liberal education, an education worthy of free men, must somehow address the problem of mission; and one of the great threats to the liberal tradition is that the growing reliance on stereotypes in education, entertainment, and propaganda destroys the power of young men to formulate inspiring, personal conceptions of their destinies.

How can the teacher take up this question? The very nature of a mission complicates the task, for no man can authoritatively tell another what the latter's mission is. The Greek debate over whether virtue could be taught is essential to answering the educational question posed by Ortega's conception of mission. Socrates and Plato worked out the liberal position: virtue itself cannot be taught, but the intellectual skills by which a person can ascertain the proper virtue in any particular situation can be taught. Such skills the teacher could impart, but beyond those, he had to rely on the natural goodness of man, on the fact that no man would wittingly do wrong. The desire to be virtuous came from within the person, and the teacher had to limit himself to hoping that by judicious criticism he might awaken the unwitting to a sense of their error. The teacher could not exceed that limit and instruct others of their duties. Thus Socrates must let the befuddled Euthyphro continue with his impious plan; and

despite all Plato's talk about the idea of the good, he gave no substantive definition of goodness itself.[1]

In a similar way, Ortega did not propose to teach people their mission. As we have seen, he did teach his students to comprehend the use of concepts. This instruction would help to free them to think constructively about their personal destiny. But the teacher could do more; he could try to insure by criticism that the young would not be unaware of the problem of their mission. There was a great difference between a teacher who dogmatically proclaimed to his students that they must do thus and so, and one who told them that they should consider what it was that they must do. Ortega took the latter course. He believed that on examining independently their common problems, men would come up with coherent goals. The difficulty was to get the problems before the people. To accomplish this, Ortega devoted much of his effort in his academic courses, his public lectures, and his protreptic essays to making his listeners consider the question of their destiny.

Throughout his life Ortega exhorted students, professors, and the public at large to examine the mission of the university. Currently, we are becoming fully aware that the university will have a central place in any twentieth-century *Kinderland,* for as the possibilities of politics and economics are more and more nearly exhausted, the task of further humanizing life falls more and more explicitly to the men of culture. Ortega reflected on the mission of the university with a full awareness of the intrinsic power of intellect. He did not acquiesce to the apparent inevitabilities of his given present; he keenly studied the art of the possible.

The issue for the future is this: is the university the client of the state, or is the state the client of the university? This question restates the already familiar question: is practical politics the primary problem of public affairs and pedagogy secondary, or is pedagogy primary and politics secondary? We know in general Ortega's answers to these questions. Pedagogy was the primary force moving the public affairs of a community. The state was becoming a great danger, having become for many an end unto itself; and to provide an alternative center for progressive aspirations, the university should be built up as fulcrum for humane

initiative. These convictions, fully developed, lead to a European *Kinderland.*

If education has precedence over politics, then the participants in the university have, despite contrary appearances, initiative with respect to their function in the community. Almost everywhere the formal arrangements appear to contradict this fact: universities are chartered and maintained by the political and economic powers that be. But Ortega believed that official politics, with the formal primacy of the state over the university, was a sham; vital politics coincided with the actual relations in the community, and in early twentieth-century Spain there was much evidence that the university was a major source of enlightened theory and humane practice in public affairs. Whether or not full community leadership would ever be located in the university, there were grounds for calling on students and professors to lead the university in unexpected, independent, controversial directions. Intellectuals could assert initiative if professors and students could spontaneously concert their aspirations towards great, *cultural* goals. All that Ortega said about the mission of the university was intended to produce this coalition.

Ortega's reflections pertain to a situation that has many parallels to current unrest in Western universities. There was a crisis of purpose in Spain as presently there is throughout the post-imperialist world. When people have lost faith in their traditions and expect little from official politics, they turn to alternative institutions. Thus in Spain, many hoped that the university could be a source of great reforms, if . . . . If what? If the university could stop being the meek servitor of the established interests and could begin to act independently. The university, that is, the aggregate of students and professors, would act independently if the cultural activities its members performed reflected their autonomous judgment of what was culturally most fit and proper, not the judgment by practical men of what was politically and economically most expedient. Then, and now, the effort to act autonomously was easily sidetracked in a senseless agitation against external interferences. Interferences would be left behind if—if students and professors could somehow concert their efforts

at learning and teaching. In the 1920's in Spain, the students were well organized in their peculiar, anarchic way, and the university faculty was at least in part far more progressive than those in official power. The time was ripe for a university initiative, provided students and professors could combine the authentic pursuit of their proper activities into an effective reforming force.

Ortega's efforts to promote university reform, to make the university a powerful force for Spanish reform, aimed to unite faculty members and students in the cooperative pursuit of common cultural goals. In our day, many managers of the so-called multiversities instinctively misunderstand this possibility, for it contradicts their essential policy—divide and rule. For instance, in *The Uses of the University*, Clark Kerr observed that "although José Ortega y Gasset, in addressing the student federation at the University of Madrid, was willing to turn over the entire 'mission of the university' to the students, he neglected to comment on faculty reaction."[22] This remark reveals an inadequate comprehension of both Ortega and the important educational possibility that was in question. In the realities of life, the mission depended on all who participated in the university, and it could be "turned over" to no particular group, neither to students, nor to professors, nor to administrators. The mission could be perfected, however, if all participating persons considered their destiny in the university and honestly refined their aspirations.

In his quip, Kerr did not dwell long enough on the setting in which Ortega enunciated his vision of the university's mission. The central issue was not whether either the students or the professors should dominate within the university; the central issue was the one that has been central since Plato criticized sophistry, and it will certainly continue to be central to academic development throughout this century. This issue concerned putting the school, the university, on an equal footing with the state. Without such balance, the ruler will not respect the thinker, and will expect the latter to do no more than menially improve the means for achieving politically sanctioned ends, whatever these may be.

The Mission of the University, a manifesto declaring the independence of the university from narrowly defined state ser-

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[22]Clark Kerr, *The Uses of the University*, p. 21.

vice and control, appeared as a series in a daily newspaper during the fall of 1930. Spain was then in the midst of a revolution: the quasi-Fascist dictator, Primo de Rivera, had lost control of the country and renounced his power; the Monarchy was collapsing; a Republic, which not without reason would be called "the professors' Republic," seemed destined. Ortega had published his articles in fulfillment of a promise he had made while addressing the powerful student federation, the F. U. E. The students sought Ortega's opinions because he had been a leader in the campaign to free the university from state interference. In the agitation preceding the Republic, both students and professors wanted the university freed from the customary political interference; they thought, further, that men of culture should take up leadership and transform the university into a bulwark of a liberal Spain. The Madrid students invited Ortega to speak about these possibilities. There was little need for Ortega to comment on faculty reaction, since he was then recognized as a leading spokesman for the faculty. The students wanted to know what reforms he, a respected professor, thought should be made in the Spanish university. The position Ortega espoused showed his ability to call simultaneously for both discipline and hope, and his fidelity to his conception of Europeanization, that is, to his belief in the historic importance of fundamental principles.

In his speech on the ninth of October, Ortega did not present his personal conception of desirable academic reforms. Instead, he reflected with the students on the qualities that made reformers effective, for if students were to do their part, they would need to develop these qualities in themselves. Ortega spoke in a large hall, filled with a young audience that buzzed with excitement. He brought this excitement to a peak by reflecting on the historic power of enthusiasm.

"If primitive humanity had not possessed this ability to inflame itself with far off things in order to struggle against the obstacles that it encountered close at hand, humanity would continue to be static." But then Ortega brought the students down to earth: enthusiasm alone produced no reforms; the reformer had to act as well as hope, and to act well a man had to be in form, or "in shape," as athletes put it. To get in shape for university reform, one needed discipline and clarity, an awareness

of present problems and possibilities, and a knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of one's own character. The university and its mission could not be discussed substantively in a loud voice before a huge audience, Ortega told the students. These topics, he promised, would be the subject of a special course, which he characteristically conducted through the columns of the daily press.[23]

Ortega began by observing that if students were to occupy themselves, as they should, with the effective reform of the university, they had to overcome their frivolousness and forthrightly contend with the mission of the university. Ortega commended one principle to students who were concerned with such reform: do not exhaust energy agitating against abuses, but build up force by fostering the proper uses of the institution. "University reform cannot consist wholly or principally in the correction of abuses. Reform is always the creation of new uses." Both the faculty and the students had to ask the "capital question": "What is the mission of the university?" If the members of both groups continually examined this question, and if each person, whether student or professor, was sufficiently in form to pursue his own answer to it, then their concerted actions would slowly create a reformed university.[24] "History proceeds very often by jumps. These jumps, in which tremendous distances may be covered, are called generations. A generation *in form* can accomplish what centuries failed to achieve without form."[25]

At this point Ortega stopped directly addressing students, for he would not paternally tell them what they should find the proper uses of the university to be. But he did continue. The mission of the university lent itself at least to Ortega's personal

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[23]"Actos de la F.U.E.: Conferencia de Don José Ortega y Gasset," *El Sol*, October 10, 1930. It would be interesting to know why the transcript of this speech, an outspoken call to university students to gird themselves for involvement in academic and national reform, is not included in present Spanish versions of *Misión de la universidad*. The American translation by Howard Lee Nostrand includes the speech to the F.U.E. The translation gives only vague information on the dates of the *Mission:* the F.U.E. speech was given on October 9; the remainder of the book first appeared very quickly thereafter in the *feuilletons* of *El Sol* for October 12, 17, 19, 24, and 26, and November 3 and 9, 1930.

[24]*Misión de la universidad*, 1930, *Obras* IV, especially pp. 314, 316-7.

[25]*The Mission of the University*, Nostrand, trans., p. 23.

formulation. He himself acted on this mission, and he hoped that others connected with the higher learning would, on considering the problems, find that they had a similar mission and that they would also act on it. As students and professors spontaneously shared certain aspirations, a better educational program would authentically develop; to impose a plan by administrative fiat would simply pervert the essential nature of the goal. Patience was the virtue of the true reformer.

According to Ortega, the mission of the university was to overcome the multiplicity of studies and to reachieve a unity of culture. The reunification of culture would make the university, once again, a spiritual power, a power that could harmonize the political, social, and economic sectors of contemporary life by suffusing them with value. "Then the university would again be what it was in its best hour: an uplifting principle in European history."[26]

In Ortega's view, it was entirely possible and thoroughly desirable to make the university a progressive influence on European history. The university would not perform this function by maximizing its production of applicable knowledge and using it more aggressively to promote the political, economic, and military strength of the state. That Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton or that the German victory of 1871 was the victory of the Prussian schools and the German professor was a "*fundamental error that it is necessary to root out of our heads,* and it consists in supposing that nations are great *because* their schools —elementary, secondary, or higher—are good. This . . . attributes to the school a creative historic force that it neither has nor can have."[27] This was not the uplifting power that the university could possess; and, if anything, Ortega hoped the university would withdraw from many gratuitous service functions in the community. An historically significant university would be a university that served its own mission, not the interests of the state, and that managed, by virtue of serving its mission, to introduce into public affairs various ideas, aspirations, and abilities that would command historic responses.

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[26]*Misión de la universidad,* 1930, *Obras* IV, p. 353.

[27]*Ibid.,* p. 315.

An infatuation with practical political power can here pervert an understanding of the pedagogical possibility. Ortega carefully called attention to the error of thinking that the university could promote history directly, and in doing so he allied himself with those in the tradition who have denied that the educator could teach men to be virtuous. Nevertheless, such paternalistic expectations have become deeply ingrained in present-day views of how history is made; hence many think that history is made for men by their institutions and that institutions that cannot act directly cannot act at all. In keeping with these beliefs, many expect that the university will promote history through its instructional programs, which will cast present youth in a mold that has been predetermined to suit the future. Instead, history may still be made by men, and another way that the university may promote history is by being of discreet assistance to men as they seek to realize their unique potentialities. The university becomes a sterile servant of the status quo to the degree that it prostitutes itself to programmatic policies. The university wields the indirect power of culture. It shapes history by helping the young inform their hopes and discipline their powers, and thus spring surprises on their elders. Rather than the university program being the historic agent and the students being the plastic stuff upon which it works, free men may be the historic agents and the university may be a simple but significant occasion for their activity. Liberal education gains historic significance in this second manner, by helping the men who will make history make themselves.

By definition, an education is at once general and particular: it includes all the intellectual attributes that a particular person acquires during his lifetime. Not even the grandest institution *gives* an education, specialized or general; the institution offers instruction, the student acquires his education. It is an axiom of liberal pedagogy that responsibility and initiative reside in the person becoming educated; he is the one who must live with the ideals and skills that he acquires. Since in the end each man is his own teacher and the instructional agent is not the cause of education, educational institutions cannot be the servile agents of the established interests, for those institutions do not in fact have the pedagogical efficacy to mold the young to any externally

determined form. To stay within the bounds of human possibility, educational institutions can and should do no more than provide the occasions wherein the young can forge themselves into something substantial.

In the past hundred years, however, educational theorists have plunged into pedagogical paternalism.[k] What was once the student's responsibility has since become the responsibility of the teacher and the institution. Opportunities to receive instruction have been hypostatized into "an education" that exists independent of the persons who acquire it. This hypostatized education is attributed to teachers and institutions, which are thought to have the power to educate. Thus, one "receives" a college education by virtue of doing satisfactorily what a college faculty tells one to do. The pedagogical consequence of this hypostatization has been to shift nearly the whole burden of responsibility and initiative in formal provisions for education off the student and onto the teacher. This shift has had a grotesque effect on didactics: learning theory has become synonymous with conditioning theory.

Ortega's hopes for the Spanish university will be incomprehensible to the pedagogical paternalist. To be sure, Ortega made efficiency the key to a desirable program of instruction, but it was efficiency defined by the student, not the social powers that expected to be served by the university. As a national system for distributing socially useful skills, Ortega's university would become less efficient and less predictable. But his university was not to serve a paternal state, but to contribute to a republic of free men. By respecting, rather than subverting, each person's intrinsic dignity, the university would again become a constructive force in history, in an open, humane history made by responsible persons. The mission that Ortega envisaged for the university was to renounce the pedagogical paternalism that has been the foundation of the corporate state and to offer again an education worthy of free men.

Presently, many despair of life in industrial societies because they have a diminished sense of responsible freedom and of creative significance. The compulsions that people feel are manifold: libidos excited by the media drive us into promiscuity; organization—political, economic, and soical—forces us into all kinds of

established group endeavors, which suck the dignity from our sense of self; a premature taste for abundance lures us into debt and catches us in the endless effort to meet our payments on a mounting material wonderland. A young person who sees his future as a series of compulsions rightly judges that there is no reason to educate himself, to give his character a unique, significant form. Men in power think that they have learned to manipulate the public. Adeptly mobilizing idealistic activism here and the complacency of the silent majority there, they believe that the performance of essential social functions can be assured, regardless of particular persons' sense of non-participation. This political nihilism of the adult rulers simply intensifies the educational nihilism of the young by depriving them of an authentic sense of personal responsibility. Thus we incubate the citizens of an ever less-principled, characterless community.

Juvenile anomie can be overcome by one decisive act; let us suppress the *bêtise* that teachers and institutions are responsible for the success of education, and instead, let us recognize the fact that the one thing in life for which the young are absolutely responsible is their own education. This responsibility is unavoidable because the young have the ultimate power, whatever the system of didactics, to accept or refuse instruction, to seek out, select, tolerate, or ignore any particular preachment. A boy's duty is to make a man of himself; the responsibility of youth is to educate itself. No man or institution can do this for the young; life puts it up to them. In educating themselves, the young make or break themselves, for their ability to acquire that highest of all possessions, self-help, fundamentally determines the quality of their commonwealth. Teachers can only challenge — *Sapere aude!* Dare to discern!

On this point, Ortega was *"muy siglo veinte,"* very twentieth century. He broke decisively with the paternalistic conception of the university for the nation's service. To be sure, out of context certain of his points sounded quite paternalistic. For instance, he contended that the university must "make the average man, *above all,* a cultured man. . . ."[28] But the context of this remark was his

[28] *Ibid.,* p. 335.

insistence that the university was based on the students, and hence he was putting the responsibility to make the average man cultured primarily on the average man, that is, the student, rather than on the teacher or the curriculum. Ortega did not intend, as Clark Kerr mistakenly suggested, to hand over the entire mission of the university to the students. Ortega's intention was not so simple; he believed that no component of the university — students, professors, administrators — could authentically contribute their increment to the whole unless they recognized that students were the reason for being of the university. "In the organization of superior instruction, in the construction of the university, one should begin with the student, not with knowledge or the professor. The university should be the institutional projection of the student, whose two essential characteristics are a limited, insufficient power to learn and a need to know in order to live."[29]

By recognizing that the university was the institutional projection of the student, the problem of curriculum was posed in a new manner. The alternative to paternalism by the faculty is not a pure and simple abdication to "student power." *Lernfreiheit* and *Lehrfreiheit,* the freedom to learn and the freedom to teach, go together inseparably; and the worst abuse of academic freedom for the faculties of American colleges and universities is our examination system, which impairs the student's freedom to learn in any particular course, and which thus undercuts the professor's freedom to teach. To be sure, there should be a check on achievement to uphold standards and to certify that competencies have in fact been attained; but that check need not come at the end of each separate course, and it would be closer to its proper place if it came when a student judged that he had mastered a whole subject, not a fragmentary course, and that he had acquired the qualifications for a degree. Reliance on course grades signals our distrust of a student's power to judge his own progress. When students are considered to be incapable of autonomous judgment, the teacher finds ascribed to him manipulatory power over the students; and with that power, the teacher seems to become responsible for the results of its exercise. This apparent responsibility inhibits the

[29] *Ibid.*, p. 332, italics omitted.

teacher's activity: if it is the teacher's fault that his students fail an examination, then the teacher will feel impelled to spoon feed his auditors. But the man studying, being capable of autonomous judgment, is responsible for his studies. Confronted with men studying, the man teaching finds that his responsibility is to make the matters that he personally considers important accessible to those who also consider them worthy of study. The essence of such a system is mutual respect between students and professor; the enemy of it is the urge to prescribe.

Ortega believed that the mission of the university could be realized cooperatively and spontaneously because he had the twin conviction that students who were unfettered and aware of their responsibilities to themselves would wisely choose what to study, and that professors who were autonomous and confident in their students would intelligently choose what to teach. The existing system, however, was perverted, in the Spanish case, not by misplaced examinations, but by the simple fact that the most important matters were ignored by both professors and students, for all were preoccupied with other people's business. To reform the university, both professors and students needed to get in shape, in form, and by an act of will attend to their proper business: the acquisition, not of skills, but of culture. Ortega asserted that professors who were in form would try to teach culture; and he was confident that, given the opportunity, students would want to make themselves cultured men. And for Ortega, "culture" had a special meaning.

Culture was not some objective good; it was important because the student was a living, throbbing person who had to act, like it or not, in a myriad of ways. Man was limited, an imperfect being; and yet he had to direct himself in the world, often in situations in which the potential consequences were final. Culture was the set of ideas by which men gave direction to themselves in the world. Culture was another way of talking about an education worthy of free men, for it was an imperfect but provisionally complete scheme of the world and of life by means of which a person could direct himself through his life. Culture included certain vocational skills; but the possession of only a particular set of skills was not sufficient as culture, for the man who possessed only par-

ticular skills would be dependent on a world in which those skills were needed. Culture was that comprehension of the way things were that enabled a man to readapt continually to ever changing situations and to maintain through those changes his unique, personal character.[30] Culture was a definite, intellectual structure by means of which particular men oriented themselves in the chaos they found around them. Culture was each man's means for making a cosmos of the surrounding chaos.

Ortega observed that students could not learn everything; they had to choose to learn this and to ignore that, or else they would overload their capacity to acquire knowledge. Students who chose frivolously would be shirking their responsibility to themselves and their future; the matter was too important to the young for them to leave it up to their elders. As far as many specialists were concerned, it would be convenient to ignore culture in the university, to forego a sense of over-all orientation in order to gain omnipotence in a narrow matter. But, Ortega thought, the students would be foolish if they did not seek, above all, for culture in its proper sense. If students carefully nurtured their sense of life, its values, principles, and problems, then they would have the power to give a coherent direction to their more specialized activities; and if, on the other hand, uncultured specialists, who lacked a sense of the whole, continued to dominate the important, particular activities of contemporary life, then the community would remain dangerously directionless, unprincipled, and instable. Culture should not be shirked; anyone who thought he could safely ignore the difficult task of making himself cultured was blindly gambling that other men would be willing and able to provide the community with qualities that he himself believed unworthy of his personal concern. Ortega did not believe that the young really wanted to take this risk, and consequently he asserted that "the *primary and central* function of the university is education in the great cultural disciplines."[31]

As a fact of academic life, the great cultural disciplines were not in the existing curriculum. University disciplines had long been

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[30] *Ibid.*, pp. 340-8.

[31] *Ibid.*, p. 335.

organized to meet technical, rather than cultural, preoccupations, Ortega observed. This situation was harmful even to the future of the sciences, for it created a bevy of investigators who lacked any orientation to life other than that offered by the present state of their art. To rectify this situation, and more importantly, to reassert the mission of the university, professors should cooperate with the deepest demands of the students, and together they should try to create a new faculty, a faculty of culture. In doing so professors and students could give rebirth to the ideal of a liberal education; and doing that, they would lay the groundwork for a renewal of authentically liberal politics.

Culture had been pushed out of the existing faculties by demands from the surrounding society for more and more practical research. The scholar's strength and freedom, however, has always been his ability to wander, if not physically, at least spiritually; hence there were no compulsions preventing a change of direction. Students could initiate that change by taking responsibility for their own education. Having taken it, they would soon realize their need, to perfect themselves as free beings, for culture. Professors then could make good on the revitalization of liberal education simply by shunning the profits of practice and by seeking the consolations of culture. And in the highest sense there would be a great practical utility in such a course: it would reinvigorate the conscience of the community.

When teachers expected discipline and hope from their students, not simply in this or that special sphere, but in a complete view of life, and when students respected and responded to these expectations on the part of their teachers, then the spontaneous reform that Ortega hoped to achieve would be fulfilled. Then the Spaniard could expect that his community would be continually nourished by an influx of imaginative, competent, independent young men who would penetrate into every sphere of life and bring it closer to perfection. By respect for the autonomy of men and for the capacity of free men to make their history, the university could fulfill its historic mission and again become a powerful, indirect source of progress in European history.

If, by such reforms, Spain could get its educational institutions "in form," an open future, one that would bring significant

change in the direction of Spanish public life, might become possible. A university in form would help develop a select minority that would work, not from the top by virtue of its special skills, but from every level by virtue of its sense of mission, intellectual clarity, and capacity to live life intensely.

Ortega's conception of Europeanization called for reform by resonance. A self-appointed elite diffused throughout the community had to set itself in motion; it had to make itself vibrant. On the appearance of an elite of vibrant spirits, the nation would turn towards its members in the same way that the admiring gaze of passers-by turns towards the vibrant man or woman walking down the street. "Imagine," Ortega mused, "that the general type of woman preferred by the males of today was a little, a very little more dynamic than the one loved by our fathers' generation. Doubtless the children would be thrust towards an existence that is a bit more bold and enterprising, more replete with appetites and efforts. Although the change in vital tendency would be slight, its amplification of the average life of the whole nation would ineluctably bring about a gigantic transformation of Spain."[32]

Working for twenty-five years as an influential professor of philosophy, Ortega did much to help such an elite bring itself into existence. But he made himself only "a partly faithful professor," as he put it, for cultured elites have all too easily become mere ornaments on decadent societies. In order to fulfill the imperative of intellectuality, in order not to lose the benefits of love's labors, the intellectual must succeed in making reason resound. In keeping with this part of the imperative, Ortega complemented his work towards university reform with significant efforts at popularization through publishing.

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The thinking faculty is common to all. . . . All men have the capacity of knowing themselves and acting with moderation.

HERACLITUS, 113, 116

[32]"La elección en amor," 1927, *Obras* V, pp. 620-1.

TODAY THE PERIODICAL *article is an indispensable manifestation of the spirit; and whoever pedantically denies it, lacks the remotest idea of what is happening in the womb of history.*

ORTEGA[1]

[1] "Prólogo a una edición de sus obras," 1932, *Obras* VI, p. 354.

VI
The People's Pedagogue

By family tradition and personal vocation, Ortega was drawn into journalism. The Spanish destiny that Ortega discovered during his studies in Germany, the idea of organizing a minority charged with educating the masses, the practice of writing to communicate concepts that Spaniards could use to live a fuller life, and the labor of reforming the university in order to enlarge the vibrant elite of Spain: these aspects of Ortega's vocation were integral with another, his extensive activities in journalism and publishing. Through newspapers, magazines, and books, Ortega tried to bring a cultural elite into contact with the average Spaniard. Through the cultural media, not political agencies, the educating minorities would influence the masses. Ortega's insistence that a prophetic minority was essential in the reform of Spain may in the end have been a type of paternal authoritarianism or of democratic liberalism. Whether Ortega was a paternalist or a liberal depends in part on the relation between the elite and the populace that he sought to establish through mass media.

In more than one sense, our story begins with the year 1898. Not only did the shock of defeat awaken the critical intellect of Spain, but also in America Hearst's campaign of yellow journalism to exploit the sinking of the *Maine* showed that an aggressive press could effectively fan a nation's martial passions, a demonstration that heralded the start of a new historic epoch. With universal schooling, inexpensive books, significant amounts of "free time," high circulation papers, radio, movies, television, rapid transit, and

a host of other changes, all men have gained an access to information. As this access is widely utilized, the striving to be represented in public deliberations gives way to an urge for immediate participation. Yet as the sources of information come under ever-narrowing control, the possibility that the participation may not be actual, however apparent, arises, for control of the media invariably tempts those in power to manipulate the public totally.

In recent attempts at understanding media, a fascination with apparent changes in the means of communication has led pundits to miss the truly important issue.[2] Man is still the message; and despite man's startling extensions, his fundamental problems remain the same. Men still love and reproduce, eat and assimilate, entertain hopes and suffer disappointments, band together for the pursuit of common concerns and separate in mutual misunderstanding. Throughout these manifold activities, which are rooted not in man's extensions, but in his innards, the problem of judgment is pervasive. No matter how much the technological milieu may change, the intrinsic quality of the problem of judgment remains the same for those who seek to communicate: should one impose on others the judgments one deems correct or should one stimulate in others their powers to judge as they see fit? The new media of communication do not eliminate this issue, they intensify it, for they simultaneously perfect the power to impose judgments on others and to stimulate others to judge for themselves.[3]

Scant consensus has been achieved about how to deal with the problem of judgment through the mass media. A case can be made that the mass media operate on such a scale that those responsible cannot risk relying on the intelligence and interpretative powers of their audience; instead, they must try to ensure that the audience gets their point. Paradoxically, in the case of selling soap we clearly see the damage wrought by downgrading the intelligence of the audience, for the economic goal does not begin to justify the educationally harmful means. But with respect to great

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[2]See for instance Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media, passim.*

[3]In "Seeing for Ourselves: Notes on the Movie Art and Industry, Critics, and Audiences," *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, July 1969, pp. 45-55, Martin S. Dworkin examines the problem of locating responsibility for making the film responsive to personal judgment.

public issues, a clear-cut judgment is not so easy. In times of war, how far will the egalitarian democrat maintain his faith in the intelligence and good judgment of the common man by allowing partisans of the enemy to state their case, freely and fully, not only on a soap-box at the edge of a deserted park, but also through the most powerful media available? How will the egalitarian introduce the ordinary person to the work of the physicist, not to speak of the difficult poet? What does it mean to believe in the average man, to put one's faith in him? Does it mean to be satisfied with him exactly as he is, or to be willing to wager the success of one's actions on the expectation that the average man will freely excel what he has so far achieved? On the great issues of public policy, will the democratic communicator be content to inform the deliberations of an unfettered popular opinion, or will he seek by one means or another to manipulate the public into a thoughtless acquiescence?

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Henri Bergson once observed that "Ortega thinks of himself as a philosopher, but he is only a journalist of genius."[4] For the moment, we need only consider the French essayist's positive evaluation, that Ortega was a journalist of genius.

To begin, one measure of the considerable energy that Ortega devoted to journalism is the frequency with which he helped organize new publishing ventures.[5] True, the number of his initiatives was in part a function of the number of his failures; but only in part. More importantly, the extent and diversity of these activities reflected his intention to reach the people, not by bringing them all beneath the umbrella of a single formula, but by reaching each through his particular interest. To be sure, the resources that Ortega and his friends could command were insufficient for them to span the full range of special interests. Nevertheless, Ortega was

[4]Quoted without source citation by Salvador de Madariaga, *De Galdós a Lorca*, p. 112.

[5]The best survey of Ortega's organizing activities is Lorenzo Luzuriaga's "Las fundaciones de Ortega y Gasset." Copies of most of the periodicals that Ortega helped publish can be found in the Hemeroteca Municipal of Madrid. In the following discussion I have relied mainly on an examination of these.

involved in the founding of a popular weekly magazine, a very successful daily paper, a serious monthly review, and two publishing houses that specialized in providing good literature at inexpensive prices, as well as a number of less successful enterprises.

None of Ortega's ventures into the media achieved a truly mass appeal; here is the problem in judging the pedagogical character of his efforts. One might argue that the publications with which he was connected were "elitist" because they did not reach everyone. But that would be an extreme argument, one that would entail holding, for instance, that the *Masses*, a popular magazine of the American left contemporary with Ortega's publications, was also elitist and anti-egalitarian. Even the *Reader's Digest* reaches only a fraction of its potential audience and by a strict count of numbers it is more nonpopular than popular. Furthermore, a magazine is not always edited out of knowledge of its actual audience; in fact, such packaging of the product has been possible only since the techniques of market surveying have been developed. In the absence of these techniques, a magazine or journal is more likely to be edited for an audience the editors would eventually like to win. Whether Ortega's publications were or were not elitist in character depends on considerations more intangible than a simple count of their readers.

Throughout, Ortega's publications reflected a common editorial principle: commission the best writers one can to say whatever they have to say to an audience that is not pre-selected by a commitment to a particular party, ideology, cultural interest, educational prerequisite. A major impetus in Ortega's publishing activities stemmed from the failure of *El Imparcial's* editors to apply this principle to Ortega himself. His style of speaking his mind was cramped by the party connections of the established press, especially by the partiality of *El Imparcial* as an unofficial organ of the Liberal Party. In April 1913 readers of *El Imparcial* were shocked by the first installment of Ortega's essay "On a National Nuisance," for in it Ortega had the quite impartial gall to condemn the Liberal Party as a retrograde factor thwarting Spanish rejuvenation. Three weeks later, Ortega completed the essay, its point and tone uncompromised, by publishing it in *El País*, a competing

paper.[6] To sign on with *El País*, however, would not have been a solution, for Ortega was not anxious to toe its line as a Radical Party organ any more than he was to toe that of *El Imparcial*. Ortega set seriously to work to organize a new type of publication in Spain.[a]

This desire was not entirely new to Ortega, for by 1913 he had already learned by several mistakes. Soon after his return from Germany, Ortega had helped found *Faro*, a short-lived weekly in which he discussed many of his ideas about pedagogical reform.[b] Then in 1910 Ortega had helped Luis Bello, who had succeeded Ortega's father as editor of *Los Lunes del Imparcial*, in starting the unsuccessful "review of popular culture," *Europa*. Both *Faro* and *Europa* had a rather narrow appeal to those who already believed in a sophisticated form of Europeanization. The cover of *Europa's* first issue was a drawing of Oscar Wilde, in an art nouveau frame, sniffing a flower in dandy dress.[7] *Europa* was snapped up by those In The Know, but they were not numerous enough to support the magazine, which failed to encourage those Not In The Know to find out what it was all about. The tone of *Europa* was too negative. Even while trying to gain attention for the magazine by writing about it in *El Imparcial*, Ortega stressed the negative, remarking that *Europa's* title could not be more divisive. "*Europa* is not only a negation: it is a principle of methodical aggression against national bungling."[8] *Europa* was elitist in style if not doctrine. Of course, *Europa* expressed the faith that the Spanish people were ready for it, that they would respond to its snobbish notion of Europe and appreciate its excellence. "Those who publish this review," the manifesto of the first issue confessed, "believe one can now give the Spanish people something more than a stamp

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[6]"De un estorbo nacional," *El Imparcial*, April 22, 1913; and "De un estorbo nacional, II," *El País*, May 12, 1913. Ortega published nothing more in *El Imparcial* except "Bajo el arco en ruina," June 11, 1917, and "El verano, ¿será tranquilo?," June 22, 1917. For the texts of these articles see *Obras* X, pp. 232-7, 241-5, 352-4, and *Obras* XI, pp. 265-8.

[7]Cover of *Europa*, Año I, Núm. 1, February 20, 1910, in the archives of the Hemeroteca Municipal, Madrid.

[8]Ortega, "Nueva Revista," 1910, *Obras* I, p. 144. Cf. *Europa*, May 1, 1910.

album. The public will decide."[9] The public decided; number 13 of volume 1 was the last issue of *Europa*.

From *Europa's* failure to *España's* success was but the ability to learn from mistakes. The new undertaking began in 1914, soon after Ortega broke with *El Imparcial*. *España*, despite its title, continued the Europeanizing commitment of the young writers who in *Europa* had showed their dedication to improving popular culture —Pío Baroja, Luis Araquistaín, Corpus Barga, González Blanco, Ramón Pérez de Ayala, Manuel Abril, Ramón del Valle-Inclán, Manuel Machado, Ramiro de Maetzu, Bello, and Ortega, among others. *España* was devoted to cultural and political concerns; and, most importantly, its tone was more open than that of *Europa*. The purpose of *España*, like that of the earlier magazine, was to promote Europeanization, to deflate the authority of official Spain, and to concentrate and amplify the powers of vital Spain. But where *Europa* had stressed negative criticism of national deficiencies, *España* encouraged cooperative effort and the fostering of hope.

Ortega wrote the manifesto for *España's* first issue, which set a warm tone of mutual respect in its very title: "*España* Greets the Reader and Says." In what followed, *España* spoke of the sorry state of official Spain. "But *España* has not been founded with the aim of saying only this, which is a negation. Negation is only useful and noble and pious when it serves as a transition to a new affirmation." The task of the new magazine was to bear witness to this affirmation, to give it a voice, to show it gaining resonance in the capital and the provinces. *España* would be the organ of no existing party; it would speak for the ideal party of those who believed in the Spanish future. "We will work in solidarity with every noble intention, with every worthy person, with every just cause whatever its origin and name may be."[10] Ortega stated clearly in the first issues that its editorial principle was to have the best available writers speak their mind to all who sought to build a Spanish *Kinderland*. "Thus, we solicit—

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[9]Anonymous, "Al Público," *Europa*, February 20, 1910.

[10]"*España* saluda al lector y dice," *España*, núm. 1, January 29, 1915, *Obras* X, pp. 271-3.

and without it we can accomplish nothing—the collaboration of all who aspire to a better Spain."[11]

When *España* was well on its way to success, Ortega withdrew from active collaboration. This withdrawal has been interpreted by some such as Lorenzo Luzuriaga as a sharp break that resulted in *España* falling into other hands.[12] If it occurred at all, this break would have to have come over World War I. Some people thought that Ortega was pro-German because of his studies there. But Ortega was not a Germanophile. During 1915 he repeatedly wrote in *España's* columns that Spain should back England and he averred that he desired "very deeply the triumph of England."[13] But not only was Ortega sympathetic to *España's* position on the war, the record does not even show a clear break between Ortega and *España.*

If Ortega wrote less for *España* in the Spring of 1916, it was because he was hard at work getting out the first volume of *The Spectator,* a series of his personal essays that he sold by subscription. Ortega found time, however, to publish "Cervantes, plenitud española" in the May 4 issue of *España,* which appeared just prior to his leaving with his father on a joint lecture tour in Argentina. Ortega's relations with *España* were still good enough early in 1917 for it to run an article on "Ortega y Gasset in America."[14] In Argentina, Ortega spent most of his time with newspapermen; and on his return he seemed anxious to re-establish his connections with the daily press. He wrote a few articles for *El Imparcial* and *El Día* while working to start up *El Sol,* a major new paper that was to follow the same publishing principles pioneered by *España.*

Money for *El Sol* was put up by the wealthy engineer, Nicolás María de Urgoiti, who wanted to start a newspaper that would give a voice to spokesmen for reform. At first he had tried to buy *El Imparcial,* for its readership was most like that of the

[11]*Ibid.* Cf. Anonymous, "Gratitud de *España*" and "Propósitos" in *España,* núm. 2, February 5, 1915.

[12]Luzuriaga, "Las fundaciones de Ortega y Gasset," pp. 38-9.

[13]"Una manera de pensar, II," *España,* October 14, 1915, *Obras* X, pp. 339-344.

[14]J.M.M.S., "Ortega y Gasset en América," *España,* March 7, 1917, p. 11.

paper he wanted to start. However, the deal did not go through.[15] As a result, the capital that would have gone into the purchase of an established readership and an existing, albeit decrepit plant, was put instead into the purchase of new, efficient presses. Now, at last, a Madrid paper was equipped to print a straight line of type on a clean page! This was a source of economic strength and even of political power, which predictably hurt many journalists and politicians, and caused much resentment. *El Sol* was an immediate success; and Ortega, with Manuel Aznar and others, was responsible for its editorial policies. He made it his major means of addressing the public. Not only did *El Sol* publish the quantitative bulk of Ortega's writings, it first published, in *feuilleton* his qualitatively important works: *Invertebrate Spain, The Theme of Our Time, The Dehumanization of Art, On Love,* and *The Revolt of the Masses,* to name only the better known books. In addition to these contributions, Ortega provided *El Sol* with hundreds of reflective commentaries and editorials on Spanish public affairs.

El Sol had grown out of the earlier publishing projects in which Ortega collaborated. The same writers who had often written for *Europa* and *España* appeared frequently in the pages of *El Sol.* Like these magazines, *El Sol* was self-consciously independent of the established parties; and like *España,* but perhaps unlike *Europa, El Sol* was not edited in Madrid solely for Madrileños. Much attention was given to news of the provinces, and the intention was clearly to create a national paper. Furthermore, *El Sol* was not narrowly devoted to politics. Close attention was given to culture, economics, technology, entertainment, sports (notably excepting bullfighting), and education. Recall how the imperative of intellectuality called on Spaniards to clarify the full complexity of their common lives, to make manifest the nature of its many different components, to bring each of these to its perfection so that no single Spaniard could absent-mindedly confuse his interests with those of the whole. Here was *El Sol's* function. "The title of this paper," Ortega wrote in its first issue, "signifies above all a desire to see things clearly."[16]

[15]Luzuriaga, "Las fundaciones de Ortega y Gasset," p. 40.

[16]"Hacia una mejor política," *El Sol,* December 7, 1917, *Obras* X, p. 368.

El Sol brought many technical innovations to Spanish journalism, for this time an eager staff was backed by an engineer who appreciated the importance of good technique. The paper became the first in Spain to use the graphic techniques of mass journalism and to print legibly in larger characters on good newsprint with high speed presses. By combining quality with unmatched efficiency, *El Sol* offered readers and advertisers a better paper at competitive prices. As a result, Spaniards almost proved that mass journalism need not be sensational, irresponsible journalism. *El Sol* quickly achieved one of the higher circulations in Madrid, 110,000 after three years, and because of its more readable format, it began to cut severely into the advertising revenues of competing papers.[17] By 1920, it began to appear as if the established papers might be driven either to change their ways or to go out of business. But *"la vieja política"* would not let *"la vieja penza"* collapse.

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expressed his poignant disappointment by summing up *El Sol's* accomplishments. "Besides being, neither more nor less, a great paper with a European outlook, it has succeeded in three years in creating a format for a daily that is much superior to those familiar in our country. It has created a new journalistic style, and furthermore—a matter I commend to the attention of my readers—it has considerably improved the administrative and editorial techniques of the Press. . ." Then, with his accustomed scorn for mediocrity, Ortega stated the historic significance of the effort to thwart the paper's power. "It is appropriate, in order to orient future historians, to underscore the fact that in Spain around 1920 the possession of a good printing press was considered to be an intolerable vice that the State needed to castigate vigorously."[19]

El Sol survived this crisis; it continued to flourish; and Ortega devoted much of his effort to it during the 1920's. Throughout, Ortega's aim was not primarily to make the paper succeed, but to deflate official Spain and advance the new politics. Ortega and other gifted writers used *El Sol* in an agile pursuit of these more inclusive goals. They were committed journalists, journalists committed not to mere journalism, but to the humanistic regeneration of their country. He and his friends were not as interested in selling newspapers, magazines, and books as they were in apprenticing the Spaniard to intellect. Ortega used publishing, as he used his writing, to make up for the lack of concepts that had traditionally hampered the Spaniard's attempt to deal with the world. Hence, regardless of how popular his audience was, he scrupulously respected its capacity to make a significant contribution to the matter at hand; and usually this involved a fundamental concept that would increase a man's power to live thoughtfully.

Writers could use *El Sol* to pursue such goals because the paper had a flexible format, which developed from Spanish traditions. In the formation of *El Sol*, two points were of major importance: Spanish papers had always been a significant forum for leading intellectuals and had never followed the Anglo-American distinction between factual reporting and interpretative opinion.

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[19]"Admirable carta de D. José Ortega y Gasset," *El Sol*, June 29, 1920, *Obras* X, pp. 659-662.

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parliamentary deliberation, or the concept of localism, or the dynamics of fascism, or the historical significance of Einstein's physical theories. The reader's interpretative powers were respected by freeing writers to use their own interpretative powers to the hilt. As the freedom to teach is secured by recognizing the student's freedom to learn, so the journalist's freedom to express himself fully is gained by having confidence in the reader's freedom to evaluate what he reads.

In part, *El Sol* resulted from the *tertulia*, the conversation groups that met regularly in local cafes and drawing rooms. Indeed, the paper may have originated in a *tertulia*, for from the time of *Europa* until the Civil War Ortega was at the center of such a group, which included the writers who frequented the pages of *El Sol*. But that is not the point; what is important is not the origin, but the function, of *El Sol*. The *tertulia* was a powerful Spanish institution, which could be either a negative or a positive influence on the nation. Whenever a *tertulia* lost access to dynamic ideas and new information, it enrorced intellectual stagnation with terrible effect; but whenever a group became porous to external influence or was dominated by persons of wide curiosity, it became a marvelous center for cultural communion, through which profound changes in character could be quickly transmitted from person to person. In *Invertebrate Spain* Ortega analyzed the educational power of the *tertulia* under the heading of "Exemplarity and Aptness"; the tendency toward conformity that existed in any close social group would become a significant source of general improvement if one could introduce exemplary characteristics into those groups.[20] *El Sol* was to do precisely that. It was to be a great conversation piece, the sun illuminating the sidewalk cafes and streaming through the parlor curtains.

As Nietzsche observed of teachers, no philosopher can be expected to be truly profound week after week at appointed hours. This human limitation holds true for the journalist as well, and the genius of *El Sol* was its willingness to accept irregular contributions from many writers. As a consequence, a reader never

[20]See "Ejemplaridad y docilidad," *España invertebrada*, 1921, *Obras* III, pp. 103-8. Ortega did not say that he had a *tertulia* in mind, but that is the institution that most closely approximated the relations he described.

knew who would present views in the morning's paper, and writers were not forced to write their columns mechanically, feigning inspiration to meet a fixed commitment. Thus, writers could preserve their sense of mission and readers their sense of discovery. This practice was possible because *El Sol* was not considered to be a packaged product that had, at least, to meet certain minimum specifications day after day in order not to let its consumers down. Rather than maintain a respectable minimum at all costs, *El Sol* daily reached for a maximum. This reach, which sometimes failed, could be justified only with confidence in the discrimination of the audience. The reader, not the editor, had to make the final judgment about the quality of that day's performance. With *El Sol*, responsibility and initiative for informing oneself were left to the reader, and the journalist was freed to speak, as best he could, to the reader's curiosity and concern.

The way Ortega used his access to *El Sol's* columns shows how flexible these procedures were. Ortega was not a dependable source of copy for *El Sol*, and sometimes his copy was, by the American newsman's standards, plainly inappropriate. One after another, series of his articles would appear, and then there might be nothing for many months. Ortega would write on whatever struck his fancy: for a time he would concentrate on day-to-day critiques of contemporary affairs, then he would publish a series of essays about "Love in Stendhal," and then a profound reflection on political theory, the texts of several lectures on epistemology, or a two-part meditation on the migration of birds! If a journalist is a person who writes *for a paper*, then whatever Ortega was, with all due respect to Bergson, he was not a journalist. For Ortega, the newspaper was simply one of many means he used to write *for his audience*.

With *El Sol* and *España*, Ortega collaborated in creating a first-rate daily paper and weekly magazine, yet these left many other publishing areas to be touched. One of the practices the Royal Orders of 1920 had prohibited was the selling of combined subscriptions to *El Sol*, to a monthly literary magazine, and to a book service. Soon afterwards, Ortega and María de Urgoiti collaborated in starting the publishing house, Espasa Calpe, which put out an extensive collection of serious works, classic and con-

temporary, in a format that almost anyone could afford. Then, two years later, Ortega independently founded and directed the monthly magazine, *Revista de Occidente*. Within a year the magazine generated sufficient resources, financial and literary, to branch into book publishing, a field in which it quickly gained an important place. Next to *El Sol*, *Revista de Occidente* is the most significant of Ortega's efforts to bring a cultural elite into communication with the average man.

Revista de Occidente was not a light magazine; one could not claim that it was for the average man *qua* average man. As Ortega observed in its prospectus, he hoped people who wanted to follow questions in some detail would find it rewarding. With respect to the imperative of intellectuality, *Revista de Occidente* served neither to create the cultured elite that Spain needed to develop nor to confront the average Spaniard with a compelling clarification of the diverse elements of Spain. It would be left to a university in form to nurture the Spanish elite and to periodicals like *El Sol* and *España* to inform the common reader. The function of *Revista de Occidente* was somewhat different: to encourage curious individuals whose desire to understand their world had been stimulated by *El Sol* and *España* to deepen their command of culture. Hopefully, *Revista de Occidente* would help them master culture to the point at which they ceased to be common readers and became members of the cultured leaven scattered through Spain. Ortega did not believe that difficult matters could be made easy. But like Plato, he held that all men possessed the power of judgment; and the opportunity to perfect and live by that power was not to be confined to a closed elite of those who happened to have the good fortune to earn university degrees.

Of the publishing ventures in which Ortega took part, *Revista de Occidente* most clearly bore his mark. Like his prose, its pages brought readers a great variety of articles, almost all of which dealt with important principles that Spaniards might use in living their lives. The *Revista* published articles by leading writers from almost every Western nation. But this fact, by itself, was not the main support for its claim to be a "review of the West." Its real success was in presenting readers the opportunity to acquaint themselves thoroughly with the ideas that were most productive

in twentieth-century culture. "Our Review will reserve its attention to the truly important themes, and it will manage to treat them with the fullness and rigor necessary for their general assimilation."[21]

As writers serve both particular and general functions, so do editors. The editing of *Revista de Occidente* showed a keen sense of the universal purposes that a serious monthly could serve. To be sure, editorial details were not ignored. The magazine was technically excellent. For instance, the format and typography of *Revista de Occidente* were carefully conceived and imaginative. Articles were laid out with the reader, not the cost accountant, in mind; the magazine was generous with paper, providing the thoughtful reader with wide margins in which to record his reactions. In starting the magazine, an exclusive contract was taken on a distinctive typeface, which became an identifying feature of the *Revista*. Consequently, when the organization branched into book publishing, any reasonably well-read Spaniard could tell at a glance a book published by the *Revista*. In addition to technical excellence, the magazine could also reward good writing. The *Revista* could pay significant fees to its contributors, Ortega stated in unsuccessfully soliciting an article from Unamuno.[22] Few other important writers declined opportunities to publish in its pages; and month after month it presented in a distinctive way an interesting selection of significant articles by competent writers.

Without succumbing to didacticism, the dedicated editor can have a clear idea of who his readers are, of what potentials make them worthy of his concern, and of how these potentials can be developed by the readers' involvement with the material he publishes. The readers of *Revista de Occidente* were persons in Spain and Latin America with intellectual pretensions. They had the ability to take part in Western intellectual life, but to do so they needed to overcome an ingrained incapacity for abstract thinking. Traditionally Spanish intellectuals had disguised their conceptual

[21]"Propósitos," 1923, *Obras* VI, p. 314.

[22]Letter to Unamuno, Madrid, June 6, 1923, *Revista de Occidente*, October 1964, p. 27. Perhaps Unamuno's reluctance resulted from a feeling that "a review of the West" was insufficiently Hispanic to be a proper forum.

poverty by accepting a provincial isolation from the rest of Europe. As its name proclaimed, *Revista de Occidente* would end this isolation. In its "Prospectus" Ortega announced that the magazine would try to develop the Hispanic cultural community through complementary procedures: encouraging Hispanic writers to deal with European themes and bringing the better European thinkers before the Hispanic audience.

A remarkable group of young Spanish essayists, novelists, and poets published in the *Revista,* and on occasion significant contributions were made by Latin American writers such as Victoria Ocampo. No matter how much influence the *Revista's* cosmopolitanism had on its Spanish readers, the magazine seems not to have imparted very much to Spanish writers. Few became preoccupied, centrally concerned, with European themes. Since many of the contributors—for instance Manuel Abril, Pío Baroja, Américo Castro, Eugenio D'Ors, José Gaos, José Martínez Ruiz (Azorín), Ortega, and Ramón Pérez de Ayala[23]—were mature by the time the *Revista* began, it did not shape their personal interests. Younger writers were also not necessarily influenced by the *Revista's* Europeanism. Two promising young interpreters of Spanish character, Federico García Lorca and Miguel Hernández, contributed to the *Revista* without being noticeably influenced by its European concerns. Pedro Salinas, a young poet of marked cosmopolitan character, published much in the *Revista;* but his European interests were formed by several years of teaching in France and England prior to his connection with the *Revista.* For most Spanish writers, the *Revista* did not occasion their taking up new themes; instead it provided a wide-reaching outlet through which they could voice whatever themes—Spanish or European—to which they felt drawn.

The only young writer who was markedly influenced by a desire to address himself to European themes through *Revista de Occidente* was the prolific novelist, Benjamín Jarnés; and one cannot say that this influence was good for him. Jarnés was a

[23]For the essays published in the *Revista* by these men and by those mentioned below, see E. Segura Covarsi's *Indice de la Revista de Occidente.* I have mentioned only those writers who have been written up in the *Diccionario de literatura española.*

novel-a-year man who, from 1925 through 1936, still found time to contribute over seven articles a year to the *Revista*. Although his work was significant, it was not first-rate; his writing, both critical and creative, lacked depth, and this characteristic can largely be attributed to the desire, inflamed by the *Revista*, to encompass too much within his range of reference. For the Spanish writer, the program of the *Revista* was dangerous to the degree that it forced the intellectual growth of young men: a writer cannot simply will to address himself effectively to cosmopolitan questions; he must slowly, naturally nurture this power, as Ortega did for himself, by pursuing the questions immediately before him to their ultimate significance.

Ortega was more successful with the second policy of the *Revista*, bringing the better European writers to Spanish readers. By publishing many translations of important essays, the *Revista* not only brought Spaniards into contact with European themes, it further built up confidence by showing that Spanish writers would not be overshadowed when their work appeared in juxtaposition to that of leading European writers. The cosmopolitanism of the *Revista* did not consist in slighting Spanish culture, ignoring its traditions, and discussing only European themes. Instead it encouraged the better representatives of Spanish culture to mingle with those of other national traditions. To accomplish this integration, it was important that European writing published in the *Revista* have a transcendent, universal signficance, for otherwise it would not serve to stimulate and strengthen the work of Spaniards. Ortega possessed the intellectual and editorial background to know what Europeans might be pointed out to Spaniards and to understand how the former could best be introduced to the latter.

Rather than tell readers about significant men, Ortega sought out ways through which these men could confront readers. The mechanics of this confrontation were quite simple: to publish translations of substantial works by important European contributors to the arts and sciences. As might be expected, this procedure was premised on confidence in the expressive ability of the writer and the interpretative power of the reader. What were the significant ideas being advanced in various fields at that time? Who created these ideas? Which of their works could best introduce

these ideas to a curious, intelligent, educated audience? Such questions informed editorial policy. The *Revista* had no formula for addressing an audience of non-specialists such as the one that has proved so profitable for *Scientific American*. Only James Joyce and Edmund Husserl were presented by means of secondary material; and this was mitigated in the case of Husserl by the publication in the "Biblioteca de la Revista de Occidente" of a complete translation of his *Logische Untersuchungen*, which is yet to be translated into English. As for subjects, the *Revista* covered the gamut from literature through physics. But there was more to this procedure than mere mechanics.

Writers and readers of *Revista de Occidente* met as equals because they shared concern for the contemporary cultural condition of the West. "At the present moment, the desire to know 'what is happening in the world' acquires great urgency, for everywhere symptoms of a profound transformation in ideas, sentiments, manners, and institutions surge up. Many people are getting the distressing impression that chaos is invading their existence. Nevertheless, a little clarity, as well as a bit of order and hierarchy in our information will quickly reveal the plan of the new architecture according to which Western life is being reconstructed. *Revista de Occidente* seeks to serve this characteristic state of the spirit in our time."[24] Here was the secret of the *Revista:* it sold neither its readers nor its writers short, for it assumed that both groups sought to develop an integral conception of Western culture. Rather than cajole name writers to tailor their thought to the supposed capacities of the audience, the *Revista* freed thinkers to write from their strength, to explain as best they could what they had to contribute to Western culture, for persons read the review to learn about these essential contributions. Although each issue contained variegated material, the actual subject in most contributions was the fundamental principles of contemporary culture. In this way the *Revista* made good on its claim to be a review of the West.

Take, for instance, the *Revista's* coverage of contemporary literature. The creative writer did much to define the spiritual

[24]"Propósitos," 1923, *Obras* VI, p. 313.

possibilities of a people; consequently to make the spirit of the West manifest to Spaniards it was important to have a good selection of the more sensitive Western writers. The *Revista* gave its readers a remarkable introduction to contemporary Western literature. American writing was represented by works of Sherwood Anderson, William Faulkner, and Eugene O'Neill.[25] British writing was more fully introduced with translations of Joseph Conrad, Lord Dunsany, Aldous Huxley, D. H. Lawrence, Katherine Mansfield, Liam O'Flaherty, George Bernard Shaw, James Stephens, and Virginia Woolf. Plays, stories, and essays were translated from the French of Jean Cocteau, Joseph Delteil, Jean Giraudoux, H. R. Lenormand, Paul Morand, and Paul Valéry. From German there were contributions by Franz Kafka, Georg Kaiser, Thomas Mann, Rainer Maria Rilke, Carl Sternheim, and the Austrians Franz Werfel and Stefan Zweig. Finally, three Russians of note, Ilya Ehrenburg, Vsevolod V. Ivanov, and Alexander I. Kuprin, and the Italian, Luigi Pirandello, were introduced to Spanish readers. A review specializing in literature might have been considered successful for publishing writers such as these, along with leading contemporary Spanish writers. But literature was only one of the many subjects covered by the *Revista de Occidente.*

Among the ten internationally known physicists who published in the *Revista,* six were Nobel Prize winners; furthermore the *Revista* was not simply following the judgment of the Swedish Academy of Science, for two of the six—Max Born and Erwin Schrödinger—were awarded the prize after they had written for the *Revista.* These writings concerned many of the basic conceptual problems of physics and the bearing of these problems on cultural matters. In 1926 Max Born wrote on the relation of scientific laws to matter; in 1929, soon after he delivered his

[25]In this and ensuing paragraphs, I have mentioned only those contributors who were of sufficient note to be written up in the third edition of *The Columbia Encyclopedia.* Some arbitrary procedure seems necessary in order to keep the discussion reasonably brief. However, this particular criterion leaves out significant figures such as the biologists F. J. J. Buytendijk and Jacob von Uexküll, the historians E. R. Curtius and Wilhelm Worringer, the mathematicians Hans Thirring and Hermann Weyl (a close friend of Ortega), the psychologist David Katz, and the philosopher Eduard Spranger.

paper on the unified field theory to the Prussian Academy of Science, Einstein explained the need and difficulty of this theory to Spaniards; in 1930 Louis de Broglie discussed the question of continuity and individuality in contemporary physics; in 1932 Erwin Schrödinger reflected on the ways in which natural science was conditioned by its milieu and methods; and in 1934 Werner Heisenberg traced the transformations of fundamental principles that had occurred in twentieth-century physics. Besides these essays the *Revista* published examinations of various aspects of theoretical physics and of its significance for a philosophy of culture by Sir Arthur S. Eddington, Sir James Jeans, Abbé Georges Lemaître, Robert A. Millikan, and Willem de Sitter.

Other fields besides literature and physics were well represented. The *Revista* published Leo Frobenius and Sir Arthur Keith on anthropology, Oswald Spengler and Johan Huizinga on history, Werner Sombart on economics, Georg Simmel and Max Weber on sociology, E. F. Gautier on geography, Igor Stravinsky on music, Amédée Ozenfant on painting, Le Corbusier on architecture, H. S. Jennings and J. B. S. Haldane on biology, and C. G. Jung and Ernst Kretschmer on psychiatry. Contemporary philosophers were well represented by A. N. Whitehead, George Santayana, Count Hermann Keyserling, Bertrand Russell, and Max Scheler. Critics like Lewis Mumford, Lytton Strachey, and Edmund Wilson also contributed essays. Many of the writers were not simply published once and then forgotten. Georg Kaiser and Franz Werfel contributed eight pieces each, and Sir Arthur S. Eddington and Sir James Jeans each published four; there were seven contributions by Jung, four by Strachey, thirteen by Simmel, four by Keyserling, five by Russell, and six by Scheler.

In addition to the monthly magazine, the *Revista de Occidente* quickly became a major publisher of serious literature in Spain. Although it specialized in translations of contemporary European writers, significant Spanish writers were on its lists, among them Ortega, Eugenio D'Ors, Antonio Espina, Benjamín Jarnés, Jorge Guillén, Rafael Alberti, Valentín Andrés Alvarez, Pedro Salinas, and Federico García Lorca. The series "New Facts: New Ideas" was characteristic of the *Revista's* publications. In it, inexpensive translations of important works on theoretical physics,

philosophy, psychology, and the social sciences were issued. Hermann Weyl, Jacob von Uexküll, Max Scheler, Kurt Koffka, Franz Brentano, Georg Simmel, Hans Driesch, C. G. Jung, Ernst Kretschmer, Sir Arthur S. Eddington, Werner Sombart, Bertrand Russell, Eduard Spranger, and David Katz were among the authors published in this series. There were also series specializing in history, anthologies of great thinkers, the history of philosophy, anthropology, and contemporary literature.[26] In short, almost any curiosity stimulated by articles in the *Revista de Occidente* could be pursued in greater depth through the books published by the *Revista*.

Let us imagine a community in which all men have the opportunity to educate themselves, to shape their character by means of principles. Let us further imagine that each member of this community can partake in a continuous, profound examination of basic theories and the application of these to life. In addition, each person in this community will have open access to unlimited information that exposes the inner workings of the commonweal to scrutiny. In such a community the privileges of power, which have always been based on the fact that a few have had access to superior intelligence and information, would disappear. The state would wither, and men would begin to realize Rousseau's dream of a perfect democracy in which each person, deliberating for himself on the basis of complete information, would independently decide on his course of conduct with respect to the general will. In such a community, the Platonic desire to infuse politics with ethics can be realized. And such a community would be one in which each member would draw, separately yet fully, on the available means of communication: on the schools, books, magazines, newspapers, radio, television, museums, and cinema. From these different media, each member would extract those cultural elements he found pertinent and concert these into his integral, individual mission.

Ortega perceived that the pedagogical usefulness of different

[26] *Revista de Occidente* regularly advertised the books it published. A rather complete list can be found in the advertising pages (unnumbered) of the December 1930 issue.

publishing media could be fulfilled only as people individually coördinated the bits of information and various ideas that they extracted from their newspapers, magazines, and books. No one could perform the acts of coördination for the reader, but men responsible for the forms of communication could take into account the fact that alert readers would be drawing connections between thoughts stimulated by different media. Together, *El Sol* and *Revista de Occidente* were a nascent attempt to recognize that men learned by putting things together from a variety of sources.

Ortega's desire to link the newspaper to the magazine and the book depended on his insight into the character of an intellectually alert audience. Often, communicators described the mental character of a potential audience by establishing what lowest educational attainments all its members might have in common; and for a communication to be addressed to one of these groups successfully, it must be couched so that persons of that educational level can absorb it comfortably. Thus, communicators assume that they must shape their appeal to the supposed characteristics of an audience of children, elementary school graduates, high school graduates, college alumni, professionals, or intellectuals. Many people take for granted the existence of various media such as newspapers, magazines, and books; they are content to match the content of these media to the desires and attainments of one or another audience. All too rarely one thinks to link the media together in such a way that they support a man's effort to transform his personal characteristics. Instead, the newspaper, magazine, and book become packaged products marketed to known, predictable audiences, and if these products became culturally effective, inducing significant changes in their audiences, it would seriously complicate their very marketability. Hence the complacent communicator prefers to compete discreetly for particular parts of the static pie.

This conception of the relation between the media and their audiences creates a static situation for both writer and reader. Authors quickly learn to specialize, writing invariably on a single level of intellectual difficulty; and the reader comfortably habituates himself to accepting only those communications—be they

in newspapers, magazines, or books—that his present attainments enable him to read with ease. This situation is fine for the middlemen; the young writer discovers how to give certain editors what they want and the reader picks his product and nestles in with a long-term subscription. The editor is the patriarch who dictates what is good for both writer and reader. But this system is bad for the intellectual development of both the writer and the reader, for it discourages both from the open pursuit of their talent and curiosity. When audiences are marked off so as to separate out isolated cultural strata, which are defined, when all is said and done, by the difficulty of the prose that will be tolerated in each, the system forces the writer to conceive of his readers by means of a stereotype; and if the writer has any talent, he will subtly insinuate that stereotype into the character of his actual readers. In this way, the system impedes the full development of the cultural community and impairs the continuous humanization of its members.

Audiences, however, need not be defined by their common, extrinsic characteristics. In Ortega's publishing enterprises much less attention was paid to the external attainments of the audience than to its internal drive. *El Sol* was not a class or regional newspaper; the intention was that workers, farmers, professionals, and intellectuals, that people in the countryside, the villages, the provincial cities, and the capital, would all read the paper. With *El Sol*, as with all of Ortega's publications, one assumed only that the audience was curious and intellectually alert. To match a set of publications to this audience, one had to observe how a curious, alert person conducted his intellectual life. Daily, such a person would sift, without a systematic effort to preserve his findings, a wealth of various materials, some of which he would note to be important; periodically, he would follow with some care a variety of topics that he had found to be important, but not essential, for his abiding concerns; and continually, he would devote himself to permanently mastering those powers — personal and professional — that he found necessary for the just conduct of his life. Thus, the intellectual functions of the newspaper, the periodical, and the book were defined. By coordinating the way these served their respective functions, a powerful pedagogical system was created.

Then, this system was put in the service of a definite, particular conception of culture and of its potential significance in the life of Spain. The topics treated ephemerally, but compellingly, in *El Sol* were examined from time to time with more care and permanence in *Revista de Occidente*, and they were, furthermore, the subject of substantial books published by the *Revista*.

By linking different media to each other, one not only encouraged readers to pursue a passing curiosity to the point of thorough mastery, one helped writers explore and perfect their powers. Writers used *El Sol* to test themes and initiate the public exploration of potential subjects. *El Sol* was a place in which writers could think in public and readers could get a sense of writers as men thinking, watching their concerns germinate, mature, and ripen. In 1927, in a short essay heralding the appearance of a literary weekly catering to young writers, Ortega explained the different functions that newspapers, magazines, and books could serve in literature. The best use of a newspaper, he suggested, was as a great testing ground and clearing house with easy access for young writers. Through the newspaper there would be a productive, personal, ongoing exchange between writers and their readers. The periodical, in contrast to the newspaper, should be open only to material that had survived a more rigorous selection; its articles should concern matters of recognized importance and be worthy of permanence. Through the magazine a reciprocal relation between writer and readers should be maintained, but at a greater distance than in the newspaper. Finally, the book should be reserved for literature, a work that was of sufficient significance to command enduring interest even though the relation between writer and reader would become indirect.[27] This conception of the literary function of the newspaper explains why preliminary versions of Ortega's most important books first appeared in *El Sol*. For instance, *The Revolt of the Masses* was preceded by a series of experimental essays in *El Sol* in which Ortega worked out his argument and prepared his personal audience for its reception.[28] If due care was

[27]"Sobre un periódico de las letras," 1927, *Obras* III, pp. 446-9.

[28]See "La política por excelencia," "Dinámica del tiempo," "Tierras de porvenir," and "El poder social," 1927, *Obras* III, pp. 445-505, which were all preparations for *The Revolt of the Masses*.

taken to use newspapers, magazines, and books with a full sense of their interrelations, all sorts of reciprocal effects between the writer and reader might become possible.

Ortega's publishing activities—each by itself and all in concert—were attempts to educate the public. It would be easy to object that the actual effects achieved were not sufficient to make a decisive difference in Spanish life. However, the education of the public is an indirect mode of influence; it is not dramatically decisive and it requires time to produce results. Art is long and life is short, even in an age of instantaneous communication. In this case, life was too short. *El Sol* began in 1917, to endure for a mere twenty years. *Revista de Occidente* appeared in 1923; and although it kept publishing until 1936, by 1930 events began to lure Ortega and his colleagues into more immediate commitments. These proved to be premature, but there was no turning back; by the early 1930's Ortega no longer believed that he could deeply influence the Spaniard's character. Hence, the vision of a coordinated system of media dedicated to helping the populace improve itself remains only a vision.

Nevertheless, this vision is particularly significant. It clarifies principles of culture that are easily ignored in the high finance and publicity politics of mass communications. It illuminates alternatives to the qualitative stagnation that has characterized most of contemporary culture. During the early twentieth century, writers hopelessly confused the concept of culture by cant about various kinds of culture—aristocratic or democratic; high, low, or middle brow; proletarian, mass, elite, popular, primitive, and so on ad infinitum.[c] The only distinction that needs to be made is between culture and pseudo-culture, or ornaments, roles, "bags," and other disposables. Here culture means precisely what the etymology of the word suggests, that which promotes the growth and development of man. Pseudo-culture, despite its enticements, is too insipid to conduce to the spiritual development of those who produce and consume it. Whereas with culture, the effects on a man's character are essential and those on his appearance are incidental; with pseudo-culture, the effects on his appearance are essential and those on his character are incidental. Real culture is continuous,

cumulative in the character of the person, and difficult; it is the result of a man's efforts to develop his mission, to embody what he stands for with respect to the absolute. The capacity for the participants in a community to cultivate their character is the ultimate foundation of their common life. And cultural democracy is the audacious yet desirable attempt to develop a community whose success, whose very survival, depends on the manner in which each member of the community, not only a privileged few, cultivates his character.

No man, however, can force culture on another. True culture is self-culture. In the light of this proposition, Ortega made the assumption basic to all efforts at cultural democracy: any man who asserts his will has the power to cultivate his character; through self-culture all men can expand their abilities and minimize their deficiencies. The basic threat to cultural democracy is the paternalistic assumption that the average man is incapable of cultivating himself and that he should therefore be provided with a veneer of pseudo-culture, something he can consume without having to change his character. And the worst paternalist of all is the professing democrat whose nerves have failed, for his efforts to encourage the people to rely on his superior wisdom will simply reinforce the popular inadequacies that prompted him to exalt himself in the first place.

In his teaching, writing, and publishing Ortega assumed that his audience was composed of sentient, intelligent persons who were to be addressed as peers. He tried to build up the intellectual elite of Spain, not so that its members could think for the people, but so that they could more effectively provoke the people to think for themselves. *El Sol*, which was the work of intellectuals, tried to win a provincial, rural audience, not to carry another party line to isolated areas, but to bring to rural life a new set of stimuli and, equally, to experience new stimuli itself. "We wish and believe possible a better Spain—stronger, richer, nobler, more beautiful . . . ," Ortega wrote in the opening issue of *El Sol*. "In order to achieve it, it is necessary that each of us be a little bit better in everything; that an affinity for the powerful, clean, clear life disperses through the entire race; that each Spaniard resolves to

elevate by a few pounds the pressure of his spiritual potencies."[29] Cultural democracy would flourish in Spain only when the inhabitants of the central cities and the rural villages had sufficient respect for one another to attempt to converse as equals.

Ortega understood that mutual respect was the principle of cultural democracy. The alternatives that he perceived to cultural stagnation arose from his willingness to act on the premise of respect, even though, judging from past performance, the meager achievements of many men might suggest that such respect was not merited. But Ortega respected the potential that men possessed, not their past achievements. No culture would be created by those who began with the inductive discovery of what, at the present moment, a given group could comfortably comprehend. The teacher, writer, and publisher had to take human potentiality as his starting point; he also had to be able to do justice to all aspects of human endeavor—to technology, economics, law, sport, science, art, speech, myth, love, and morality. The publisher's genius, like that of the teacher and the writer, was to avoid cutting these endeavors down to the size of the average man, and to manage, instead, to introduce each concern in such a way that the average man could, with earnest effort, develop in himself all the possibilities that each realm of culture offered.

If a few men began to use a liberal pedagogy in their teaching, prose, and publishing, Ortega believed that others would respond and that a nation could spontaneously reform itself. Spain almost did.

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Men should speak with rational awareness and thereby hold on strongly to that which is shared in common — as a city holds on to its law, and even more strongly. For all human laws are nourished by the one divine law, which prevails as far as it wishes, suffices for all things, and yet is something more than they.

HERACLITUS, 114

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[29] "Hacia una mejor política: El hombre de la calle escribe," *El Sol*, December 7, 1917, *Obras* X, p. 368.

I FIRMLY BELIEVE *in the possibility—note, in the possibility—that Spain will now begin a new historic ascent. I firmly believe that in a few years we can make of Spain, not the richest or the most learned country, but the healthiest one, politically and socially, of all Europe.*

ORTEGA[1]

[1] "Selección," *El Sol*, August 20, 1926, *Obras* XI, p. 99.

VII
The Spain That Is

ORTEGA—AN UPPER-CLASS RADICAL, passionately in favor of social change, winning note at the age of thirty with his address "On the Old and the New Politics"—exemplifies an apogee of the post-Marxian left. Abhorring bourgeois complacency, the military mind, and the politics of interest groups, he thought that the populace could be aroused to reform the nation by reasoned recognition of abuses, an appeal to conscience, and the impassioned proposal of plausible alternatives. At heart, but not intellectually, he was an anarchist who insisted that any worthwhile social order could not be imposed upon the people, for it had instead to emanate from their spontaneous concord. In retrospect, Ortega seems to have been ahead of his time, especially for a Spaniard. He was convinced that the democratic revolution could not stop once its original material and civil goals had been approximated: the revolution had to be carried through the cultural sphere as well, so that the community would not remain riven in two parts, the cultured and the uncultured. In Spain, furthermore, the material revolution even seemed likely to follow, not precede, the cultural.

Except for educators, especially John Dewey, American social critics have generally not thought democracy is a cultural problem, as much as one of economics and politics. Hence, in the United States, Ortega's political thought did not lend itself to easy comprehension. And owing to the special importance English-speaking leftists gave the word "Masses," especially during the depression, *The Revolt of the Masses* was absorbed immediately into the debate between liberals and conservatives. The former condemned

Ortega as an anti-democratic elitist who wished to thwart the progress of the poor, and the latter welcomed him for his opposition to the further expansion of the state. Although misdirected, these partisan interpretations have persisted.[2] Yet Ortega's political commitments merit more careful treatment, for the old divisions to which he was assimilated tell us little about the new realities to which he spoke.

Throughout the West, the political divisions characteristic of the industrial nation-state are becoming increasingly irrelevant. The traditional separation between right and left resulted from fundamental disagreements over the proper role of government in regulating economic and social affairs. Other, more subtle problems of regulation are coming to the fore, namely those concerning character, culture, and the spiritual quality of life; with these problems there is a reversal of the field. On the one hand, the right is becoming increasingly willing to use the state to uphold the sanctity of established mores and to preserve a cultural quiet, a bourgeois homogeneity, favored by a "silent majority"; on the other, the left more and more calls for individual autonomy, civil liberties, and cultural laissez-faire. Ortega and this new left have much in common. It was the fascist state, not the socialist, that he condemned; and in spiritual matters he stood for intellectual autonomy, cultural pluralism, and the full, free expression of diverse commitments.

Ortega may help clarify the cultural politics arising in the West. If so, the truly important aspect of his political thought will be found in his sense of a cultural *Kinderland*. But the very people who might learn from these reflections are the ones disposed to distrust his supposed anti-democratic elitism. The supposition of this elitism was formed in misunderstanding of his writings and in ignorance of Ortega's actual political activities, which were substantial. To be sure, for him, practical politics remained secondary to cultural politics; but institutional reform was still important.

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[2]For instance, as recently as 1965, the liberal publicist, Michael Harrington, devoted considerable space in *The Accidental Century* to debunking a reactionary Ortega. With gusto, Harrington destroyed a burlesque of *The Revolt of the Masses*, exposing its retrograde implications. See *The Accidental Century*, pp. 213–9.

"Culture, education will be everything in Spain because the rest is nothing. Political reform signifies only an orthopedic expedient to make the cripple walk and the handless grasp. . . . The substantial reform of our nation will be that of our society, not of our politics."[3] All the same, the orthopedic expedient deserved serious attention, and much of what Ortega taught, wrote, and published concerned the reorganization of Spanish public institutions. This concern, not partisan reactions to *The Revolt of the Masses*, evidences the character of his hard political commitments.

A prolonged encounter with Ortega's political writings shows that through many changes of subject and situation, his method of political reasoning remained constant. He often repeated Fichte's phrase defining the politician as the man who made manifest "that which is."[4] It would be a mistake, made all too easily, to think that the Fichtean politician, responsible to "that which is," would be an unprincipled opportunist, a man at peace with the powers that be, or an officeholder content to take the easiest, safest, most "realistic" course in any situation. A politician who makes manifest "that which is" would not be a man who was eager to follow public feeling dutifully, to avoid all suspicion of "rocking the boat," to respond in sympathy with every whim of his constituents, or to compromise his goals whenever they clashed with the seeming facts of public opinion. After all, both Fichte and Ortega were philosophers; and the calling of philosophers has always been to get beneath the flux of appearance, to uncover a stable reality, to substitute for that which seems to be that which really is. Hence, we can learn more about "that which is" by examining the epistemology of politics, the critique of how men should reason politically, than we could by surveying the political conditions of Berlin in 1807 or Madrid in 1931.

Ortega had a classical view of political reasoning. For him as for the classical tradition, the fundamental political reality was

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[3]"Ideas políticas, VI," *El Sol*, July 26, 1924, *Obras* XI, p. 49.

[4]See *Vieja y nueva política*, 1914, *Obras* I, pp. 269-270; "Sobre el fascismo," 1925, *Obras* II, pp. 503–4; and *Del Imperio Romano*, 1914, *Obras* VI, p. 102. Cf. *El tema de nuestro tiempo*, 1923, *Obras* III, p. 156; and "La constitución y la nación, IV," *El Sol*, January 25, 1928, *Obras* XI, pp. 217-8.

found in the aspirations that men pursued, not in the conditions under which they lived. As Plato showed in the way that he had Glaucon and Adeimantus introduce the problem of justice, leadership was possible only with respect to intrinsic values that, even under the most horrible conditions imaginable, would still be deemed the proper goals by men.[5] As with Plato and with Aristotle, so with Ortega: the supreme good was the end of political science and the measure of political reality.[6] Ortega insisted that every person and group had a "destiny," which was its best possible achievement, and life was an effort to fulfill this possibility.[7] "Realistic politics is the politics of realization. Realization is the supreme mandate that defines the arena of politics. It does not conflict with the ideal, but imposes concretion and discipline on it." Here Ortega faced the rigorous demands of a truly practical politics. "Realism is more demanding [than idealism]: it invites us to transform reality according to our ideas and, at the same time, to think our ideas in view of reality, that is, to extract the ideal, not subjectively from our heads, but objectively from things. Every concrete thing—a nation, for example—contains, next to what it is today, the ideal profile of its possible perfection. And this ideal, that of the thing, not of ourselves, is truly respectable."[8]

In "Perpetual Peace" Immanuel Kant reasoned that the ideal implicit in any functioning government, no matter how localized its jurisdiction, was a universal government in which the entire human community, not simply its parts, was ordered by a rule of law.[9] Here Kant exemplified how the critical philosopher could

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[5]Plato, *Republic*, II, 357-368.

[6]This contention was used with effect by Socrates against Thrasymachus in *Republic*, I, 336B-354C, and against Polus in *Gorgias*, beginning 466D; and is at the heart of the discussion between Socrates and Callicles in *Gorgias* 481B-527E, for Callicles was willing to deny it. For Aristotle, see *Nicomachean Ethics*, I, i-iii.

[7]See especially, "No ser hombre de partido," 1930, *Obras* IV, pp. 75-83.

[8]"Entreacto polémico: II: Del realismo en política," *El Sol*, March 18, 1925, *Obras* XI, pp. 63-4. See also, "Hacia un partido de la nación — Platónica advertencia sobre la respetabilidad del Estado," *Luz*, January 15, 1932, *Obras* XI, pp. 419-422.

[9]"Perpetual Peace," in: Immanuel Kant, *On History*, Lewis White Beck, ed. and trans., pp. 85-135.

develop positions of practical significance: one did it by showing precisely what rational consequences were entailed with the profession of a particular aspiration. Kant's procedure was to show men, who recognized in themselves an aspiration to live under a rule of law within a particular locality, that they could rationally uphold the localized legality only by asserting a rule of universal law. This procedure led to a distinctive conception of statesmanship. The statesman would start with a people's professed ambitions; he would then show the people what aspirations these rationally implied; and he would finally help find the way to fulfilling these real goals. As Ortega suggested, such political reasoning was not merely a heady, illusive idealism. It began from certain hard facts and from them proceeded to some of our most cherished political hopes.

In significant ways, aspirations, if they are authentic aspirations, are more fundamental political facts than are physical conditions. Within limits, any ruler has the power to alter at will the conditions under which a people live. A ruler can change conditions by force; he can change aspirations only by reason.[10] To reason about aspirations a ruler needs to accept them as given facts impervious to his arbitrary will; then he can enter into open communication about the meaning of these aims. In doing so he recognizes, in both word and deed, that the humanity of his subjects is equal to his own: the ruler ceases to be a law unto himself. This aspect of aspirations, that they can only be governed by reason, is the human basis of equality before the law. Further, as diverse aspirations undergo public examination, a multitude of personal commitments will be made by all who partake in the discussion; it is these commitments that aggregate into significant

[10]I am, of course, speaking here of the ruler of men, not of crowds. The aspirations of a crowd are notoriously easy to sway. But it is a mistake to call the urges that make and move crowds "aspirations." Crowds come into being only where authentic aspirations are absent or suspended. And even with crowds, it is doubtful that a leader can *willfully* manipulate its urges. Instead, he must take its urges into account and address himself to these with a semblance of consideration. See Gustave Le Bon, *The Crowd*, especially p. 113, n. 1, and generally, pp. 101-140. Crowds exist as the symbiotic correlate to the inner emptiness of their would-be masters; and neither crowds nor their masters are good bases for politics. Both are best avoided; see Seneca, "On Crowds," *Epistulae Morales*, VII.

community decisions. Here, then, in the fact that our personal aspirations pattern our daily acts and that these acts shape the real potential of the community, is the basis of participatory government. When confronted by serious, authentic aspirations, a ruler can only lead, he cannot direct. No formal machinery, no Bill of Rights or Constitution, can sufficiently guarantee our freedom and dignity; the vitality of our personal aspirations is the sole, substantial, ultimate check on arbitrary power.[11]

Because aspirations are primary in public affairs, no man has the right to by-pass the will of his compatriots; and this fact means that politics becomes less a matter of power and more a matter of reason. The politician becomes the man who can understand and make manifest the full implications of what it is that his compatriots profess to will. Hence, for Ortega, the great example of the politician was Mirabeau, not because Mirabeau was effective in the Machiavellian sense of gaining and keeping power, but because he divined the one political system—constitutional monarchy—that was suitable for France after 1789: only this system was rationally consistent with the diverse aspirations released by the Revolution; only it could make effective use of the remaining French traditions and provide a stable, progressive rule.[12] Likewise, for Ortega, Antonio Maura epitomized Spanish politics because among the politicians of official Spain, only Maura was willing to ask what the accepted goal of a stronger national system really entailed, and only Maura was willing to pursue wholeheartedly (albeit imperfectly, as Ortega saw it) the difficult, federalist reforms that this goal logically implied.[13]

Make no mistake: this mode of political reasoning, reasoning from aspirations, is not fool-proof. Its use by shallow men is dangerous, for it can lead (by wrong reasoning, one must interject) to a situation in which a limited goal seems to justify unlimited means. But those who are willing to renounce reasoning from

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[11]An effective examination of certain aspects of this function that aspirations can perform will be found in *The Political Illusion* by Jacques Ellul, Konrad Kalen, trans.

[12]See "Mirabeau o el político," 1927, *Obras* III, pp. 603-637.

[13]See "Maura o la política," *El Sol*, December 18, 19, 22, and 31, 1925; January 7 and 10, 1926, *Obras* XI, pp. 71-91.

aspirations because it is susceptible to abuse should be ready to renounce all that goes with it, for instance, personal reasonableness in public matters, the dignity of man, equality before the law, and the democratic ideal. Unless we hold men responsible for their aspirations and deal honestly with these, there is no substance to our conceptions of reason, dignity, equality, and democracy, for these great concepts will have become mere euphemisms for the tyranny of a self-subsistent state that reigns over all. Beware those favored phrases—"a free society," "the free world."

A general drift into totalitarianism is slowly laying bare a radical choice: politics can either be the critique of aspirations or the manipulation of objects. For Ortega the choice was clear. He renounced paternalistic manipulation. "There is no other way to educate and chastise the public conscience than to make it responsible for its acts."[14] To be sure, when rational politics failed, manipulation and force were necessary; that it to say, they became unavoidable, for they are the consequence of reason's failure; but this is not to say that they are therefore desirable as some think when pronouncing on the mythical "needs of society." Ortega realized that reliance on power was a symptom not of political supremacy, but of political bankruptcy. The true object of politics was not to maximize power, but to minimize it; and one pursued this object by holding people morally responsible for their acts, by giving up all claims to direct their activities authoritatively, and, in doing so, gaining a basis for criticizing, educating, and chastising their aspirations.

Because two *different* principles can guide public affairs—force or reason—Ortega, and everyman, had an occasion for a commitment. Ortega committed himself to reason, not to force. He recognized, to be sure, that occasionally it was reasonable to give way to force, to defer, when reason would not work, to those committed to the rights of might: "when arms are taken up we should put down our pens . . ."[15] But Ortega did not put down his pen to take up arms; he put it down because there was no use

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 90.

[15] "Una manera de pensar," *España*, October 7, 1915, *Obras* X, p. 337.

writing for an audience of armed partisans: they cared for prose only insofar as it served as propaganda. Ortega believed that one's rational authority was higher if one relied on it alone. The apparent man of reason, who, when his reasons were rejected, immediately called in force, had little claim to thoughtful attention. Consequently, Ortega's political judgments rarely concerned manipulatory policy; it was not his office to engineer consent.

If critics work with restraint, maintaining rational pressure perpetually against those who rule by manipuation, they can exert tremendous power solely by means of reason. The critic can make politics without resort to force by subjecting every effort to engineer consent to dispassionate scrutiny. If the claims of the powerful prove deficient, more and more people will withhold assent and refuse to cooperate constructively with the regime. As time goes on, the despotic ruler will have decreasing resources at his command with which to maintain his power over a progressively more restive populace. Ortega's opposition to the dictator Primo de Rivera took this form. When Primo de Rivera came to power, Ortega did not rush into overt, armed opposition. Instead, along with other intellectuals, he critically attacked the veil of legitimacy over the Dictatorship. The Dictatorship claimed justification by asserting that it alone could rid Spain of the *vieja política*. Let Primo de Rivera live up to that purpose, Ortega said; let him rid the nation of the "cynicism, unscrupulousness, incompetence, illegality, and caciquism" of which he, the Dictator, was currently the most prominent example; let him abdicate.[16] Maintaining such attacks on Primo de Rivera's presumption of legitimacy, Ortega and other critics abraded the Dictator's authority until the regime, losing its natural backers in Church and State, starved for talent, unable to solve the nation's problems, beset by numerous challengers, withdrew. Here was critical politics in action. For Ortega, political rationalism did not mean reasoning about the use of force, but making politics solely by the use of reason.

Politics, thus, began with the aspirations that men professed; it functioned by bringing men to examine these aspirations and to become aware of the actions that their goals required. The political

[16] "Sobre la vieja política," *El Sol*, November 27, 1923, *Obras* XI, p. 30.

critic proceeded by putting certain basic questions. What were the aspirations that did, that could, and that should move men? Were these aspirations possible ones? That is, were they possible with respect to the rational will; could a person will them without willing contradictory things? Were the aspirations possible with respect to the actualities of the time and place in which they were to be pursued? What were the conditions under which one could fulfill these aspirations? How could such conditions be brought about? What particulars could and should one personally will in order to help attain these general goals? Were these particulars consistent with the supreme good? If the critique of aspirations provoked by these questions worked perfectly, politics would merge with education and ethics, and the state would truly wither away. But in the absence of its perfection, the critique of aspirations was still a useful tool of piecemeal reform; as more persons were led to take responsibility for their own conduct, there would be less occasion for the community to be governed by the rule of force. In this way, the critque of aspirations could work within a political system based on force. Its partial effectiveness was Ortega's practical basis for opposing a vital politics to the official politics of Spain.

Ortega's political writings were a continuous critique of the aspirations manifested by leading Spaniards. Taking up a goal that had been widely professed, he would show by critical analysis what conditions would make the goal possible and what particular activities might bring it to fruition. With such a critique, Ortega confronted his readers with three alternatives: show by more cogent reasoning that the aspiration really entailed different particulars, renounce the aspiration as undesirable, or accept the particulars and seek to realize them. In this way, the critique of aspirations would lead to spontaneous, practical consequences without abusing the dignity of other persons.

Together, Ortega's critiques amounted to a vision of a possible Spain, one in which Spaniards faced their true problems and resolved to surmount them. Indeed, Ortega lacked both the means and the intention to compel the realization of this reform of Spanish life; but part of the reformer's discipline—if he would have his work be the result of reason—is to restrain his eagerness and

to rely on the choice of those involved to act on principles, not on interest. Without such restraint, the anxious reformer will merely habituate his wards to respond to compulsion, not to conviction, and the reform will be as insecure as those who forcibly imposed it. The reformer can properly do no more than criticize ambitions and show what the hard choices are. The men who are called in a reform to change their ways have to make certain difficult commitments; that is, to prefer magnanimity to force, justice to riches, temperance to satiety, and culture to acclaim. Since such choices have not yet been made by significant Spaniards, the nation's problems have been perpetuated; consequently, Ortega's vision of the Spanish future is still relevant to the present day.

Ortega began his critique with the aspiration to have a Spanish nation. "Are we able to make a national Spain?" When the question whether Spain should or should not exist was put to Spaniards, all but the most extreme separatists would unequivocally affirm the desirability of a national existence. This affirmation could be the basis of a Spanish future. To clarify it, Ortega critically elucidated the consequences of the commitment: What national ideals could move Spaniards despite their great diversities? What particular institutions should Spaniards accept in order to make good on their basic aspiration to have a Spanish nation? If Spaniards were to make their commitment to Spain's existence more than an empty piety, what did they need to do?

Such questions elicited Ortega's reflections on Spanish politics. His answers were twofold: on the one hand, he identified the historical impediments that hindered the achievement of Spain's national potential, and on the other he showed how these impediments might become irrelevant if Spaniards recognized that their national aspirations entailed commitments to regionalism, industry, competence, and democracy.

Ortega *steadily* upheld both the negative and positive side of his position. The critique of aspirations cannot produce instantaneous results; suasion becomes powerful when pertinacious—like a prevailing wind, which by blowing steadily and firmly bends the growing trunk, the unwavering winds of doctrine enduringly point life towards the better. Month after month, year after year, the critique must go on, converting men of power ever anew to

higher ideals. Ortega's aim was to change his nation's character; at best it was slow business. "Those who wish a different, better Spain must resolve to modify the repertory of Spanish life, and to judge as superficial all reforms that are not oriented by this resolve. Precisely for this reason, institutions serve reform not when one takes them by themselves, hoping for their abstract perfection, but when one forges out of them instruments capable of transforming the uses of collective life and the very character of the average Spaniard."[17]

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Lawgivers, as distinct from lawmakers, are particularly interested in the effects of various institutions on the character of the people. The elder Plato thus examined the potential preambles to the *Laws*, testing various regulations to see which could justify themselves by their healthful effects on human character. Thus, the French *philosophes* and the American founding fathers insisted that only a virtuous people could maintain civil freedom and that the only institution worthy of free men was one that conduced to preserving their virtue. Thus, too, Ortega was remarkably sensitive to the effects institutions had on character. He rejected the established institutions of Spain because they perpetuated and intensified Spanish weaknesses and caused Spanish virtues to atrophy. He suggested that the reform of the state be designed to reverse these influences.

In a well-known work, *Invertebrate Spain*, Ortega presented the negative side of his position by exposing the historical traditions that detracted from Spain's national existence. Spanish institutions had been adapted to performing a function that had long since ceased to exist, and no new mission had been developed by Spanish leaders. Such a condition was pure frivolity, and participation in it had bad effects on Spanish character.

A nation existed, Ortega contended, because diverse groups shared a common ideal that enabled them to coöperate and compete in an effort to accomplish a sovereign task without

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[17] "¿Reforma del Estado o reforma de la sociedad?," *El Sol*, November 22, 1927, *Obras* XI, p. 187.

destroying their diversities. The traditional ruling ideal of Spain, imperial conquest, had lost its force. Hence, each subsidiary group that had been a part of Spain now turned inwards. Lacking an inspiration that transcended its immediate concerns and brought it into contact with other elements of the nation, each became obsessed with its parochial aspirations and problems. Soon each inward-looking group began to confuse itself with the whole nation. Particularism resulted. Cohesive regions, narrow interest groups, self-serving professions, and separate classes lost the habit of taking account of others, especially of those who were not closely organized. Particularism led to the imbecilic arrogance that typified Spanish affairs. If the "true" Spain was synonymous with the military, with Barcelona's businesses, with landed wealth, or with Madrid socialism, why should the leaders of these groups bother with the rest? Two years before General Primo de Rivera gave further proof of the point, Ortega described the military, with its penchant for *pronunciamentos*, as the group that best exemplified the Spanish tendency to confuse the interests of region, profession, and class with those of the nation. Until this tendency was overcome and replaced with a capacity for prolonged coöperation in the pursuit of high ideals, the Spanish nation would not rejuvenate.

Despite its fame, this historical critique was not the most important of Ortega's political writings. In it, Ortega was uncharacteristically negative. He condemned the attitudes of the ruling groups without offering a significant alternative. Yet Ortega usually dwelt on the positive side: "the important thing is not to castigate the abuses of the governors, but to substitute for them the uses of the governed."[18] Particularism prevented Spaniards from achieving their national potential, but this abuse resulted nearly automatically from the lack of a powerful national ideal. Consequently, the critic needed to do more than debunk particularism. Spaniards would avoid the destructive consequences the present system had for their character, if they could define the proper uses of their public life: a national ideal that would work in the twentieth century. Only the discovery of such an ideal

[18]"Sobre la vieja política," *El Sol*, November 27, 1923; *Obras* XI, p. 30.

could end the political frivolity that encouraged particularism. In one way or another, most of Ortega's political essays concerned this possibility.

In his youth Ortega had liked to tell about a noble, but unintelligent, schoolboy. It was the custom in Spanish schools to seat pupils according to academic rank, and one unfortunate fellow always ended up in the dunce's chair. The boy, however, refused to be daunted; to him the seeming desiderata of formal rank were insignificant, and he reassured himself with the thought that someone had to be last and that what mattered was that he made for himself the best of whatever position he had. This boy knew his dignity.[19] In like manner, the realities of resources meant that Spain could not be an imperial power. But national virtue was not displayed by dominion over others and pre-eminence in military and commercial might. The real measure of worth was dominion over oneself. Here Ortega saw a significant opportunity for Spain to take a leading part in European affairs. Ortega foresaw tremendous transformations in the industrial West and he sensed that in the course of these many nations would succumb to a new barbarism. Spain would achieve greatness by maintaining a humane stability through these transformations. Spain could excel if it would simply attend to its proper business; then it would show to the rest of Europe that a people could quietly and resasonably set its house in order.

In his political writings Ortega frequently used the athletic phrase: Spain's destiny was "to get in shape," "to be in form."[20] Latin America and especially Europe needed the example and leadership of a people who were in shape, for the Latin Americans had a new world to master, and the Europeans had the awesome task of transcending their national existences and creating a new, more inclusive polity. In both cases, the job could not be done by people who were out of form. "In 1812 we made a constitution that was copied by the entire Continent. This does not mean that

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[19]See *Meditaciones del Quijote*, 1914, *Obras* I, p. 332; and "Moralejas," 1906, *Obras* I, p. 46.

[20]See, for instance: "Actos de la F.U.E.: Conferencia de Don José Ortega y Gasset," *El Sol*, October 10, 1930. Cf. *Obras* XI, pp. 194, 198, 236, 252, 257, and 261; *Obras* II, p. 547; *Obras* IX, p. 266; and so on.

we may not now offer it a different model. To do so, it will suffice that Spaniards resolve to shake off their inertia and their prejudices, and that they be, above all, what they have been at certain times in their history: magnanimous and faithful to great tasks."[21]

Americans are being forced, like it or not, to conceive of their national destiny as a matter of thrusting imperial grandeur, excursions into space, and vast military might. Hence some may find the ideal that Ortega offered to be singularly unmoving. As it was, it failed to move certain Spanish personages. Yet for many others it was a meaningful goal. The ideal of national form was analogous to the ideal of personal composure, being at peace with oneself, accepting one's situation and destiny, and steadfastly attending to the fulfillment of these inwardly determined possibilities. A nation that turned away from world affairs and concentrated on getting in shape, would not be isolationist; on the contrary, Ortega realized that such disciplined restraint was the precondition of transcending the outworn national system of Europe. National composure was the basis of neither isolationism nor internationalism, but of supranationalism. Nor did Ortega's ideal entail a withdrawal from the great challenges of life; on the contrary, it required a commitment to doing something substantial about the mundane, difficult problems that persisted close to home.

There was a certain Stoic greatness in the ideal that Ortega put before Spaniards, and the people of Spain, who long ago contributed so much to Stoicism, came close to fulfilling it. Perhaps this fact in part explains the profound, persisting emotions unleashed by the Civil War. The past achievements of the Republic did not make sensitive men from around the world come to its assistance. Rather, the hope that the Republic symbolized throughout the West drew them there. In the years that Italy sank more and more deeply into fascism, Spain worked itself out of a worse situation towards a humanitarian, liberal government. When all the grand nations were suddenly paralyzed by the great depression, Spain gamely embarked on a peaceful and profound reform. As Germany succumbed to Nazi brutalism, Spain

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[21] "Un proyecto," *El Sol*, December 6, 1930, *Obras* XI, p. 290.

seemed to show that at least one nation could substantially transform itself without tearing itself apart or imposing its worst elements upon the whole. The Civil War was such a trauma for idealistic citizens of the West precisely because Spain had symbolized for a few short years the hope that a nation still could peacefully change for the better, that without bloodshed it could freely get itself in shape. The ideal that Ortega put before Spaniards was the conviction that Spain could make itself worthy of symbolizing such a hope.

To get in shape and to lead other states by example, Spaniards needed to attend closely to the effects of their institutions on their character. Ortega's discussions of particular reforms all pertained to this question; as he said, he tried to forge instruments capable of transforming the uses of collective life and the very character of the average Spaniard. Here was his vision of the Spain that is; it was to be realized by fulfilling the possibilities of regionalism, industry, competence, and democracy.

From 1914 through 1931, these themes kept recurring in Ortega's political essays. He did not spin out great schemes for formal institutions. The solutions of Spain's problems would be achieved when the people perfected their character. Thus regional laws were not as important as sincere, intelligent tolerance of regional customs and aspirations. Ortega was less concerned about the reorganization of industry than he was about the will to work, for no amount of reorganization would make the national product sufficient if it continued to be stunted by under-employment, inactivity, and laziness on every level. Likewise, schools alone could not improve a people who were unwilling to recognize and reward competence. Finally, to make a formal democracy work, Spaniards needed to develop a spontaneous democracy in which various sectors of the society took an interest, each in the others, for only then could the power of the *cacique* and other local despots be broken. Formal provisions for regionalism, industry, education, and democracy were not, however, unimportant; Ortega simply contended that the spiritual commitment was the prior condition of successful, constructive activities. Because the reform of character was so important to Ortega, most of his political

writings were attempts at political education. In the course of discussing this or that particular, he was trying to cultivate in the character of his readers the qualities that would put Spain in form. Typically, in closing a long essay on "Political Ideas" Ortega exclaimed, "Education! Culture! Here is everything. This is the substantial reform."[22]

Ortega's regionalism began with a commitment to the Spanish nation. He did not accept the validity of the opposition: either regionalism or nationalism. In one essay he claimed that the solution to the separatist problem was an *elegant* one, for it would be arrived at by turning upon the difficulty itself, regional loyalties, and making that the basis of a stronger Spanish nation. "The future of Spain will be made by managing to change the sign of this unique energy and understanding that beneath the provincial negation of Madrid there beats a more healthy, noble urge: the desire to affirm itself."[23]

National divisiveness had been created in the seventeenth century when the monarchy and church had attempted to protect their interests by instituting a centralized government. Spain, Ortega reminded his readers, had originated from the joining of separate kingdoms, none of which gave up their individuality in the merger. The fiction that Spain was a unified nation-state to be ruled by an administration centralized in Madrid was the cause of Spanish divisiveness, for it capped the nation's true well of talent —the regions—and it forced the various peoples of Spain to look elsewhere for fulfillment. To have an efficient administration and to free the genius of the people, the politics of Spain should be organized regionally. As early as 1908 Ortega had written that it was futile to try to suppress separatist terrorism; repressive laws passed in Madrid would simply intensify the combat.[24] The true solution was to show that Spain could encompass both regionalists and centrists. Madrid, unlike Paris, was too weak to be a dominant capital. "In no sense, not even the intellectual, has Madrid fulfilled

[22]"Ideas políticas, V," *El Sol*, July 26, 1924, *Obras* XI, p. 49.

[23]"Provincianismo y provincialismo," *El Sol*, February 11, 1928, *Obras* XI, p. 237.

[24]"Sobre el processo Rull," *Faro*, April 12, 1908, *Obras* X, pp. 47-50.

its mission of being a capital. Madrid has failed."[25] These were hard words for a Madrileño to write, but Ortega believed that they were the key to the solution of the regional problem: Madrid had had its turn and failed; now it was the time to see what the provinces could do when given thorough regional autonomy.

Early in 1926 Ortega made the first of his several proposals for decentralization; his proposals show well how institutional reforms could be used to change Spanish character. A particular political system rewarded a particular set of character traits, and hence by changing the political structure one could take a significant step towards reforming the national character. Ortega saw regional autonomy as a means for increasing the political, economic, and social maturity of the Spanish people. Without an opportunity to use their abilities in signficant situations, the people could not develop their abilities. If the average Spaniard was to take a constructive part in popular government, it had to be in local and regional government, for in these spheres the issues were concrete and they made a difference to the common man. With respect to these issues the *pueblo* could make good use of its innate virtues without being unduly handicapped by its lack of formal education. But Spanish centralism had made local and regional affairs the purview of civil governors appointed by the Minister of the Interior. Instead of being responsible for their local and regional affairs, the people theoretically participated in resolving the abstract questions of national politics, yet they had little liking, capacity, or concern for these general questions. The civic talents of the Spaniards had not developed because self-government had been withheld where it might have mattered and provided where it was irrelevant. "Up to a few years ago, a very few years, the population of Barcelona and its province, with the million inhabitants of its capital, was governed by precisely the same institutions as were those of Soria and Zamora, two tiny villages. And presently some people wonder at Barcelona's singularly subversive inspiration!"[26]

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[25]"Maura o la política," *El Sol*, December 22, 1925, *Obras* XI, p. 79.

[26]"El estatuto catalán," May 13, 1932, reprinted in Mori, *Crónica*, Vol. VI, p. 126, and in *Obras* XI, p. 469.

Other proposals followed, some of which slipped past Primo de Rivera's censors, others of which were suppressed until after the Dictator fell. The provinces, with their accidental boundaries, should be consolidated into rational regions that would be workable political and economic units. The members of each region would command resources sufficient to promote their own affairs effectively. Such a political structure would encourage the average citizen to transform his deep local ties into political commitments of regional significance, commitments that were personally meaningful and that transcended his immediate, local realm. With time and effort, these regional involvements might gain true national import. In this way, the nation could turn responsibility for all but the very broadest problems over to those who had an immediate interest in their outcome; power would be wielded by men who were actually concerned with the policies in question. Whereas centralization had inhibited the local development of talent, decentralization would encourage it; thus the political structure would be made into a means for cultivating improvements in the Spanish character. "It is evident that if [the average Spaniard] succeeds in motivating himself by resolutely taking into his own hands the responsibility for his local life, we will have converted an inert, routine, torpid person into an active, ambitious, enterprising, restless creature. The tone of the normal existence will have changed. In each corner of Spain the vital pulse will have quickened; in each day more will happen: there will be more labors, more projects, more loves, more hates."[27]

Regional autonomy would open to Spaniards more significant channels of self-development. But autonomy was not a mysterious mechanism that would perfect men by itself. Its results would be salutary only if Spaniards resolutely willed to make themselves more competent. The basic problem in Spanish public affairs, Ortega contended, was the incompetence of the leaders and the people's extraordinary tolerance of incompetence in their leaders. "The absence of the excellent, or what is nearly the same, their

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[27]"Provincianismo y provincialismo, II," *El Sol*, February 14, 1928, *Obras* XI, p. 238.

scarcity, has acted on all our history and has stopped us from becoming a reasonably normal nation."[28]

Not infrequently, the inability of countries like Spain to achieve a stable representative government is attributed to the absence of a thriving middle class. Many Spaniards, Ortega included, saw the matter differently. To them, the great enemy of reform was the *petit bourgeois.* "Everywhere in the nation the morality, ideology, and sensibility of the *petit bourgeois* reign, dominate, and triumph. And the *bourgeois* is, by definition, the man who is without curiosity, who is incapable of looking beyond his routine horizon, who feels fear before every change, and who is what he is because he lacks the mental agility to depict for himself, in the face of the ruling reality, another aspiration."[29] No reform was possible until this mentality was changed, and the way to change it was to confront oneself and others with disquieting opinions, for incompetence resulted from a complacent character that needed above all to be disturbed.

But Ortega reserved his most biting scorn for the incompetence of the upper classes. It is remarkable that *The Revolt of the Masses* has been thought to have been an attack on the social advance of the lower classes when the financier, the industrialist, the socialite, and the heir were so explicitly made the prototype of the mass-man. To Ortega the Spanish monarch was a prime example of the tendency to meddle in matters where one was incompetent while ignoring one's real duties.[30] In general Ortega condemned the upper classes for thinking that they could leave leadership to others, that they did not need to hold themselves responsible to *hoi polloi,* and that they could while away the passing days longing idly for the golden years when their self-interests were synonymous with the interests of the state. "But—damn it!—to the banker, to the industrialist, to the magistrate, to the powerful trader, to the 'aristocrat' of the Rolls and the cocktail,

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[28]*España invertebrada,* 1921, *Obras* III, p. 121.

[29]"Vaguedades: I: Sobre todo, que no se reforma nada," *El Sol,* March 6, 1925, *Obras* XI, pp. 51-2.

[30]See "El error Berenguer," *El Sol,* November 15, 1930, *Obras* XI, pp. 274-9.

to the professor, to the bishop, to the prior of the retreat, to the engineer, to the matron's physician . . . , to all these there pertains an enormous burden of responsibility." Their responsibility was to symbolize and actualize the dynamic competence that superior culture gave. Instead the upper classes complained and carped and did their best to thwart the efforts of other groups to improve their lot.[31] For Ortega, a conservative upper class was a contradiction: if the class was truly pre-eminent, it could not help but exert progressive leadership by virtue of its superior abilities; whereas if it truly inhibited the progressive development of the nation, it could not be composed of the most able men and thus it could not be a class worthy of its pretensions to superiority. In shirking their responsibility to be a positive symbol of excellence to the rest of the nation, the "superior" classes proved themselves to be, in relation to their duties, the most inferior of all classes and the most *petit bourgeois* of all Spaniards.

Besides his many-sided effort to undermine the self-satisfaction of incompetent pretenders to position, Ortega carried the theme of competence to the level where it really counted, that of particular, positive skills. One of the groups to whom Ortega most consistently made this appeal was youth. Youth still had the time to make itself competent, and there was nothing that could so disturb the complacency of the established as competent youths seeking to push their ineffective elders from position. Thus, in 1914 Ortega made collaboration with youth one of the primary features of the League for Spanish Political Education. Thus, in 1929 he advised a group of young intellectuals to enter politics with no connections to the past, but with a steadfast willingness to seek out every possible issue and to subject it to rigorous original analysis. In these, as in several other cases, Ortega advised youths to test the mettle of their elders by confronting those in established positions with competent, original undertakings. If the elders lacked the ability to adapt, so much the worse for them; it would simply prove the incompetence of the established leaders. "Today we have to invent everything: great themes, juridical

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[31]"Ligero comentario," *El Sol*, January 1, 1930, *Obras* XI, p. 112.

principles, institutional patterns, moving emotions, and even the vocabulary."[32]

In addition to youth, Ortega called on the technician to pride himself in his competence. Thus, in discussing agricultural reform he wrote: "No doubt, God will reward our good will, electing us to salvation in the blue prairies of heaven . . . But the good will that suffices to get us to heaven does not suffice to organize the countryside. In this task economic science is alone useful and indispensable. *Et si non, non.* Numbers, statistics, complicated systems, a bureaucratic corps of great wisdom and solicitude, an enormous quantity of prosaic competencies—without these our agriculture will not ascend to heaven."[33] In discussing whether technicians or politicians should head the major ministries, Ortega suggested that to preserve technical excellence and autonomy, the technician should not be converted into a politician responsible for bartering political priorities.[34] Ortega personally took pride in his own mastery of journalistic and publishing techniques, and his scorn for the Spaniard's tolerance of incompetence was fully revealed in his biting reaction to the government's attempt to impair *El Sol's* competitive position.[35] Finally, Ortega's respect for expertise led him to propose, as a member of the Constituent Cortes that constituted the Second Republic, that a Council on the National Economy be created, that it should have on it Spain's best economists, and that it be given wide powers for drawing up and implementing long-term national economic plans like those used in the U.S.S.R.[36]

A characteristic of Ortega's outlook on the problem of competence was his belief that the way to particular improvements had to be paved by those with general abilities. He was often more eloquent about skill in general than about particular skills, about competence as an abstract ideal than about special competencies.

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[32]See the letter from Genaro Artiles, *et al.*, and Ortega's reply, printed as a pamphlet, Madrid, April, 1929, *Obras* XI, p. 104.

[33]"Competencia," *El Imparcial*, February 9, 1913, *Obras* X, p. 230.

[34]"El momento española: politícos y técnicos," *El Sol*, February 26, 1920, *Obras* X, pp. 629-632.

[35]"Hoy aparecerá en la 'Gaceta' la Real Orden contra 'El Sol,' Admirable carta de Don José Ortega y Gasset," *El Sol*, July 29, 1920, *Obras* X, pp. 659-662.

[36]"Sobre lo de ahora," *Crisol*, August 6, 1931, *Obras* XI, pp. 364-6.

And he had good reasons for this emphasis. Excessive centralization was just one of many means that the Spanish had for shunting talented, skilled persons into closed, ineffectual avenues of endeavor. On the one hand, the problem of competence was a question of the nation's need for many different, particular sikIls, and on the other it was a matter of the more basic need to create a demand for these. To foment a demand for various skills, it was important to promote a general respect for ability and to develop an *esprit de corps* among the competent. The way to do these things was to praise the ideal of competence. Hence, Ortega often spoke of competence apart from particular skills: for instance, "Enthusiasm and competence should be the alpha and omega of the new politics."[37]

What Ortega called "enthusiasm" in this slogan, coined in 1915, he later called "work" or "industry." Under this heading he sought to promote both industriousness and industrialization.

In part, Ortega called for the radical social and economic reorganization of Spain, but he added that the reorganization should be wrought by class coöperation instead of class warfare.

A coöperative revolution was not as impossible as radical and reactionary orthodoxies would have people believe. Since Ortega did not subscribe to a materialistic, deterministic conception of man's intentions and since he thought that men could choose rationally the principles by which they would live, he did not believe that class conflict was inevitable. Conflict or coöperation resulted from the intentions of those involved; it all depended on whether the intentions that different groups chose to pursue conflicted or coincided. Class coöperation, however, was difficult; and in Spain it could be sustained only by a common commitment to an ideal of enthusiasm, of work, of industry. Ortega believed that by absolute, intrinsic measures all classes of Spain would be better off economically and civilly if each would stop trying to aggrandize itself at the expense of others and if all would throw themselves with enthusiasm and determination into getting the job done.

[37] "Alma de purgatorio," *España*, March 5, 1915, *Obras* X, p. 287.

Clearly, the job to be done was the renovation of Spain. Leadership in this coöperative effort would come from the strongest group, the workers. "On the day that the Spanish workers abandon abstract words and recognize that they suffer, not only as proletarians, but also as Spaniards, they will make the socialist party the strongest party of Spain. And in doing so, they will make Spain."[38] Ortega maintained this conviction, voiced in 1912; and to understand his political economy we need to grasp the depth of his faith in the potential for leadership in the working classes. Too many liberal reformers have become accustomed to deriding the gospel of work as an opium pushed by complacent capitalists. In doing so, we fail to realize that this gospel, albeit according to certain different saints, is the core of most leftist efforts at national development. Ortega was no doctrinaire; he vigorously defended the liberty of industry vis-à-vis the state when the *vieja política* threatened *El Sol*. But as we shall see, for a Spaniard committed to economic renovation under the leadership of the working classes, the doctrine of free enterprise had implications unfamiliar to those accustomed to seeing it put only to conservative uses. Capital was capital; the important thing for Spain was not whether it was owned privately or publicly but that all the scarce capital be fully employed.

Ortega's commitment to the cause of the working classes did not begin with doctrine, but with a search for a dynamic force that could quicken the pace of Spanish economic activity. Development had to be driven by a dynamic force. The most powerful one in Spain was the working classes; more than any other group, the Spanish workers were willing to exert themselves, and therefore Spain's development, its push to fuller employment of all its resources, should be led by the workers. "Whatever are the political differences that exist, or that can exist tomorrow in our public life, it is necessary that none commit the stupidity of not knowing that, for sixty years, the most energetic force in universal history has been the magnificent upward movement of the working classes."[39] Ortega stayed aloof from the Socialist Party per se, for he thought

[38]"Miscelánea socialista," *El Imparcial*, October 6, 1912, *Obras* X, p. 206.

[39]"Rectificación de la República," December 6, 1931, *Obras* XI, p. 405.

it was too much like a party of the *vieja política*. But he stayed close to the Socialists. Thus, in the Constituent Assembly he told his Socialist colleagues that "whatever may be the distances between me and the totality of this theory [Marxism], my agreements with it are much more than enough to enable us to walk together for a long time."[40] In the elections to the Constituent Assembly Ortega's organization, the Group in the Service of the Republic, backed Republican-Socialist candidates and appealed mainly to a constituency of intellectuals, professionals, and workers. And Ortega's economic liberalism was not a mere ploy to win election. Thus, his proposal in the Constituent Assembly for a Council on the National Economy was to institute an agency for national planning with real powers; the Council was to be an independent branch of the state that was charged not only with drawing up developmental plans like the Russian, but also with the power and duty to mandate the allocation of the resources needed to implement the plans it drew up.[41]

Both the Socialists and Anarcho-Syndicalists were powerful agencies of popular education and mobilization, but in different ways both had tendencies towards political particularism, aiming to improve their lot not through national improvement, but through the destruction of wealth; this particularism could prevent workers from being sources of national leadership. Ortega devoted much effort to combating this tendency, and his main argument was the idea of industry, the gospel of work. Owing to chronic underemployment, many Spanish workers and peasants held that with increased production, economic and social justice would leave everybody, both the rich and the poor, better off. Ortega tried to keep this conviction in the foreground, for it was the conviction that could make the working classes the source of national reform. Ortega seriously contended that the class struggle could be ended if there was a general commitment to work; and he used this contention, strange as it may seem, as a successful argument in campaigning for election in a primarily left-of-center, working-class constituency.

In Spain, the gospel of work cut both ways. If the capitalist

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[40]"En el debate político," July 30, 1931, *Obras* XI, p. 352.

[41]"Sobre lo de ahora," *Crisol*, August 6, 1931, *Obras* XI, pp. 364-6. Cf. "Circular de la Agrupación al Servicio de la República," January 29, 1932, *Obras* XI, pp. 427-8.

could demand a day's work for a day's wage, the worker could demand the full employment of capital. In a country in which considerable idle wealth coexisted with severe underemployment, there was good reason for the poorer classes to rally to the idea of industry and there was good reason for believing that the interests of productive labor and productive capital had much in common. In this context there was more sense than would at first appear in Ortega's statement that his "idea of work should make the abyss that exists between workers and those who are not workers disappear, for as the former work with the hoe on the divine earth, the latter will work by means of their capital."[42] The rights of capital depended on its full employment, not as a source of profit, but as a means of production. At a time when villages were spontaneously expropriating idle land so that they could put the hoe to it, Ortega's conception of industrious coöperation was a constructive, humane basis for reforming the chronic condition of underemployment: those incapable of making their wealth productive would forfeit their claim to ownership.

Ortega's life-long political struggle was against the *vieja política*, that destructive competition between organized interest groups for special benefits to be gained at the expense of the nation. The purpose was to create a national economy, an economy to which all Spaniards contributed and from which all Spaniards benefited. Rather than the current slogan, *toda por la patria*, all for the fatherland, which merely rephrases the organic principle of the old politics, *toda de la patria*, all from the fatherland, Ortega would have said *una patria por toda*, a fatherland for all. Thus, with this demand in his political economy for participation in public life by all members of the community, we arrive at the fourth of Ortega's basic political commitments, that is democracy. It was his genuine democratic feeling that truly set him apart from the sectarians of the old politics and the fundamental law.

Exponents of every form of government currently subscribe to democratic rhetoric. Therefore let us be specific: the democrat

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[42]"Nación y trabajo: he aquí el lema de la Agrupación al Servicio de la República," *El Sol*, February 5, 1932. Cf. "Discurso en Oviedo," April 12, 1932, *Obras* XI, pp. 440-4.

believes in the dignity of man, seeks to implement the general will, and provides for popular participation in the determination of policy.

Men who believe in human dignity believe that each man, no matter how humble he may be, has qualities of unique and noble worth within his capacity. Further, each man shares equally in a common humanity: all men are brothers because the life of everyman is a continual struggle to realize his unique and noble potentials. The function of democracy is to make the governors respect the dignity, the worth, of each person: to do so, democracy gives each a voice in the affairs of the commonweal, so that the governors will not, in their ignorance, suppress the very virtues of the people. Ortega's democratic commitments were based on a belief in human dignity. Consequently, he was not bent, like so many politicians, on getting people to tell him what he wanted to hear; he was sincerely interested in the way other persons defined life for themselves. With the League for Spanish Political Education, this commitment resulted in a spontaneous effort to create channels of communication between the rustic peasant and the urban professional. In the same spirit, Ortega was a peripatetic philosopher who spent much time wandering about Spain, and his bittersweet essays on Spanish character testify to his concern to understand and celebrate the unique characters of diverse persons.

Respect for the dignity of different individuals logically leads the political thinker to a concern for the general will, a concern that was essential to Ortega's conception of democracy. In part, when Ortega distinguished between the old and the new politics, he distinguished between a political life guided by the will of all and one inspired by the general will. To be sure, Rousseau's presentation of these two political drives was flawed.[a] But the distinction between them, which did not begin with Rousseau, is essential to democratic theory. The will of all is a balance of factions; it is the dominant opinion, the one that comes out on top after all the interests favoring different positions have been mobilized and pitted against each other. Most political acts reflect the will of all; it guides the practical operation of power. But Rousseau was inquiring not into the nature of political power. Instead, he reflected

on the nature of political legitimacy. "Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains. He who believes himself the master of others lets himself be more a slave than they. How is this change made? That I ignore. What can render it legitimate? That question I believe can be solved."[43]

What is the general will? This question, to be answered coherently, should be refined into two. What is the concept of the general will? What, in an actual political situation, is the general will? Rousseau offered no answer to this second question; as Plato never gave a substantive statement of what the Good in actuality is, Rousseau never gave a substantive statement of what the general will is. Instead, Rousseau postulated the concept of the general will. If, he suggested, the substantive actuality of the concept was known, authority could be rendered legitimate; and he laid down very rigorous conditions that would have to be met before knowledge of the general will might be attained. As a concept, the general will postulates the *idea* of a common interest, a common interest that comes into being as men choose to live with other men. In theory, authority based truly on this common interest would be a legitimate authority, for in choosing to live in community with other men, a man rationally committed himself to will to act in ways consistent with the interest of the community in which he has chosen to partake. Or, to put the negative: a man who willed to act contrary to the interest of the community would act contrary to his basic intention of living in community with others. Let us leave to metaphysicians the question whether actual communities have real interests, or whether communities really exist apart from their members; Rousseau did not pronounce upon these points. Likewise, let us leave to the historians of political theory the question whether Rousseau bears responsibility for the crimes later committed by erring men who claimed to know and embody the substantive general will. There is, at least, a *concept* of the general will; we have been reflecting on it.

Throughout Platonism, throughout Stoicism, throughout Rous-

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[43]J. J. Rousseau, *Du contrat social*, Livre I, Chap. I, *Oeuvres complètes*, III, p. 351.

seau's *Contrat social,* there runs the recognition that wise political deliberation will result from a sober, intelligent, informed, independent search, a search that is always humbled by the *idea* of the general will; that is, the idea that the community has an interest, that only this interest could legitimate authority, and that this interest is never clearly apparent, if it can ever be apparent at all, to any individual or group. The idea of the general will is essential to democratic politics and limited government: it reiterates to rulers the humbling fact that the most they can claim for their policies is prudent expediency, never unrestrained legitimacy; it saddles the would-be leader with continuous self-doubt; it creates a never ending need for the serious, open examination of every policy and piety. As happened in history, by immeasurably raising the criteria for legitimacy, the *idea* of the general will significantly reduced men's deference to arbitrary authority.

Once arbitrary authority gives way to constitutional government and a rule of law, due emphasis on the idea of the general will reinforces the fact that democracy entails a tremendous self-discipline on the part of each citizen. Contrary to stereotype, Rousseau was profoundly prudent when he observed that to arrive at a sound popular decision one should ask the people, not whether they approve or reject a proposition, but whether they believe the proposition to be in accord or not to be in accord with their common interests. To answer this question, each person would have to deliberate seriously and independently about the nature of the community in which he sought to participate.[44] The idea of the general will tells men little about what in any particular case should be done. Instead, the idea sets forth criteria that should influence the way men proceed to deliberate about what they should do. Thus Rousseau, who had nothing to say about which policy goals were in fact consistent with the general will, was explicit and rigorous in discussing how men should deliberate about policy.

Standards of public deliberation are always important in public affairs. As history shows, the results at different times of a particular political system vary tremendously in quality: mon-

[44] *Ibid.*, Livre IV, Chap. 2, pp. 440-1.

archy, aristocracy, oligarchy, democracy, and even tyranny have each, on occasion, promoted the good life for all, and at other opportunities they have each sunk all into times of trouble. One of the fundamental sources of these variations may well have been the willingness or unwillingness of those who made decisions to do so, not by asking whether they themselves approved of their particular policies, but by pondering whether their policies accorded with the common interest.

Ortega thought that Spaniards needed to alter their procedures for deliberating about policy. If they kept in mind an *idea* of a general, Spanish will, they would greatly democratize their political procedures. The political inertia of most Spaniards allowed the tradition of particularism to persist. Particularism signified that in thinking about public policy, men were considering only their most immediate interests, not their common interests. The *vieja política* responded not to the common interest of the whole community, but only to that of its dominant parts. If numerous members of the community remained silent, it would be next to impossible to take them into account in deliberating on public policy. Hence political apathy played into the hands of particularist groups. Ortega thought that a democratic regionalism would encourage the political participation of the traditionally inert members of the community. To the degree that such regional participation led to more active national participation, the range of opinions that would be articulated in politics would increase; this increase would enhance the possibility of governing in accord with the interests that every Spaniard, each in his separate uniqueness, had in Spain. To find this Spain in which there was room for everyone, each Spaniard needed to contribute his part. "We aspire to institute a state that will be for all Spaniards. We wish to erect a great, commodious house where there will be room for all."[45] Democracy was important, first, as a means of making the political process take every Spaniard into account.

To suffuse a political system with the spirit derived from the idea of the general will, it is not sufficient merely to ensure that all are taken into account. That is only the first step, which

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[45]"Un proyecto," *El Sol*, December 6, 1930, *Obras* XI, p. 288.

is consistent with both the idea of the will of all and the idea of the general will. The second step, which follows from the idea of the general will alone, is more intangible; Ortega called it the "dignification" of the political process. For years Ortega tried to convince his compatriots that a national parliament would work only if its function was dignified; that is, if the day-to-day details that the national government traditionally meddled with were turned over to the regions where concern for them was appropriate. The national government should confine its attention to full, imaginative deliberation over major issues concerning the whole nation.[46]

When such deliberations are to be conducted by deputies of the people, there is disagreement about the nature of democratic procedure. Some believe that deputies should be bound to represent the express wishes of the majority of their constituents; others think that the deputies should sift all the opinions of the people and advance the one that they find most reasonable. The idea of the general will suggests that the latter procedure is more proper. The practice of Ortega's Group in the Service of the Republic was an excellent example of a representative deliberation in this second sense. No qualifications of doctrine, class, or region were put on those to whom the Group would listen. Ortega was not a cynical democrat; he believed that politics was a work of reason, that men entered politics to reason in common about common problems, and that it was not reasonable to ignore the sincere opinions of any man. As we shall see, this respect for the opinions of all men, this willingness to assume that all deputies in the Constituent Assembly were sincerely anxious to use reason disinterestedly to discover the best possible constitution for the nation, was at once the strength and the weakness of Ortega's political position.

It is ironic that Ortega should have acquired a reputation for being anti-democratic. As soon as one examines his actual

[46]See "Ideas políticas: Ejercicio normal del parlamento," *El Sol*, June 28 and July 1 and 2, 1922; "Ideas políticas," *El Sol*, June 29 and July 3, 12, 13, 19, and 26, 1924; and "La constitución y la nación," *El Sol*, January 11, 14, 18, 25, and 26, 1928; *Obras* XI, pp. 14-25, 32-49, and 201-227.

political commitments, one discovers that they were uncompromisingly democratic. As has been suggested, the misapprehension has resulted largely from the selective concentration on certain works and from the difficulty of access to others. For example, Ortega's statement that a society, to the degree that it is a society, must be aristocratic, has become notorious; and people who habitually think of democracy as being opposed to aristocracy generally misunderstand it.[47] But the corollary to his conviction about the aristocratic nature of society is a less well-known assertion about the democratic nature of government. Ortega made this assertion both before and after making his notorious statement in *The Revolt of the Masses*, so it cannot be explained away as a temporary change of heart. The corollary is this: under modern conditions, a government, to the degree that it is a competent government, must be democratic.

> The contemporary state requires a constant and all-embracing collaboration from all its citizens, and it does this not only by reason of political justice, but of ineluctable necessity. The problems of the present state are of such quantity and quality that they require the continuous concern of all its members. By this necessity, which the conditions of modern life inexorably impose, the state and the nation have to be fused into a unity; this fusion is called democracy. This means that democracy has ceased to be a theory and a political credo for which some agitate, and that it has converted itself into the inevitable anatomy of the present epoch; it is not only that in the present there are democrats, but that democracy is the present.[48]

Public affairs have reached such a degree of complexity that democracy is a necessity; since the intricate web of interpersonal relations that constitutes the industrial nation-state is the actual locus of public affairs, policy formation cannot in fact be confined to the exalted few—despite pretension, all are involved. This ineluctable democracy was inescapably implied as each person sought to turn on an electric lamp, to open a newspaper, to don

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[47]See *La rebelión de las masas*, 1930, *Obras* IV, pp. 150-1; cf. *España invertebrada*, 1921, *Obras* III, pp. 93-100.

[48]"Rectificación de la República," December 6, 1931, *Obras* XI, p. 409. Cf. "Dislocación y resturación de España: II: Condiciones," *El Sol*, July 17, 1926, *Obras* XI, p. 96.

machine-woven cloth, or to board a train or trolley; this democracy was the fundamental feature of the Spain that is. Yet this democracy in which each must take account of all, for he depends on all, is the democracy that has been most easily scorned, not only in Spain, but throughout the contemporary West. Blinded by the illusions of power each pridefully takes account only of his friends, his class, his party, his union, his club, or his group. The fatal contradiction of the nation-state in Spain and elsewhere is a disjunction between the citizens' character and their circumstances. When the nation-state finally achieves a thorough integration of its members, linking them together in a web of mutual dependencies, it loses the spiritual inspiration, the common ideal, that prompted each member to look beyond his immediate self-interest and to subordinate his particular urges to the pursuit of a shared ideal. The nascent nation could tolerate diversity yet it was able to achieve spiritual unity; the mature nation necessitates unity yet it can only occasion dissension. Can the nation-state survive when its democratic reality—the need of each to take account of all—is chronically ignored?

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To extinguish hubris is more needful than to extinguish fire.

HERACLITUS, 43

WITH MORE GOOD WILL than perspicuity, some think Parliament would be better if a few professors and writers of respectable stature took part in its internal life. To be sure, today the only figures anointed with a few drops of prestige belong to the scientific, literary, and artistic fraternities. . . . Nevertheless, I doubt very much whether the direct intervention of the intellectual would improve politics. History more properly suggests that in politics intellectuals have been able to do only one thing: to be in the way.

ORTEGA[1]

[1] "Ideas políticas, II," *El Sol*, July 1, 1922, *Obras* XI, p. 19.

VIII
Failure

ORTEGA'S PUBLIC POWER was that of a *clerc;* he was a man of the world who continually confronted his people with worthy standards and the woeful gap between these ideals and human achievements.

From 1898 to 1931 Spanish history was a halting, definite movement towards the peaceful, thorough reformation of the body politic. Through ups and downs, through dictatorship and freedom, the impetus that at once sustained and modulated this progress was the vigorous political journalism of Spain's best thinkers. It was as if Madison, Hamilton, and Jay had kept *Publius* at work for over thirty years. Unamuno, Ortega, and many others campaigned continuously to enlighten, provoke, and caution the Spanish people. Their effort succeeded.

Greatness beckons when a nation devolops a powerful corps of teachers and journalists who are neither cynical nor utopian, neither doctrinaire nor decadent. Thanks to such a corps, Spain made extraordinary progress towards the peaceful reconstruction of its politics and society. This progress seems all the more remarkable when compared to the concurrent decline of other European countries. Owing to the horror of the Civil War, we often forget that in 1931 Spain had a peaceful yet popular revolution. Bloodless coups and bloody rebellions are commonplace occurrences; but the thorough, relatively stable transfer of power from an ancient Monarchy to republican Spain is unique in recent history. In 1931 there was no putsch, no coup, no rebellion; there was simply a compelling recognition, created largely by the clerisy,

that the reasonable course was the transfer of power to republican leaders. Therefore, one observes with regret how the clerisy convinced itself that in 1931 the millennium had arrived: Ortega and other intellectuals hurried to participate in practical politics. Doing so, they destroyed their claim to stand apart as constructive critics who could modulate the clash of conflicting powers. Doing so, they deprived the new Republic of the intellectual leadership that had made its auspicious advent possible. These were decisive errors.

The force of political criticism depends on the critic's separation from direct involvement in the internal political process. As soon as a critic is implicated with immediate responsibility for practical decisions, his criticism will be dismissed as self-serving. Until the Second Republic, Ortega's power as a political educator arose from his independence, his obvious distance from official Spain.

Throughout most of his career, Ortega understood the source of his power. By contrasting official Spain and vital Spain he ingeniously forced listeners to suspend their interest in the gossip of capital politics and to concentrate on substantive issues. The League for Spanish Political Education had critical authority because its members put themselves above the fray, neither seeking office nor shunning office, believing that these were irrelevant to their tasks.[2] In 1925 Ortega described how a clerisy should influence the practical world. Ideally, he said, an intellectual should ignore politics and concentrate on his strictly intellectual concerns. But troubles rent Spain; crises threatened Europe: intellectuals could not prudently disregard mundane affairs. In lieu of disengagement, Ortega offered this principle: "that in order to make politics, the intellectual must make it as an intellectual and not compromise the virtues and imperatives of his vocation and discipline."[3] Two years later he was even more explicit: "even in exceptional cases, it greatly behooves the writer to separate his intellectual labor from his political anxiety, and when he does not

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[2]See *Vieja y nueva política*," 1914, *Obras* I, especially 277-9.

[3]"Entreacto polémico: Para el Conde de Romanones," *El Sol*, March 15, 1925, *Obras* XI, p. 59.

do this, to require of his political interventions all the elevated virtues that rule intellectual work"[4]

Ortega failed to maintain this principle. As long as he was in opposition, he preserved his independence and remained true to his intellectual vocation. But in 1931, without the tangential discipline of belonging to a non-participating opposition, he became too deeply implicated in partisan politics; soon he began to seek followers rather than to speak his mind. Consequently, when he became convinced in 1932 that he could no longer participate effectively in the very system he had helped create, he could only withdraw and maintain silence, obviously disturbed, but with no grounds for disinterestedly speaking out: he had ceased to be above the fray. New efforts at his old style of criticism were rebuked as sour grapes; a disgruntled aspirant for office found that his prerogatives as a *clerc* existed no more.[a] Then it was, when his Spanish hopes had run aground, that Ortega announced his second voyage.

Ortega began his drift into active politics in 1929. The previous year he had toured Latin America giving highly acclaimed lectures. The President of Argentina had attended when Ortega presented a preliminary version of *The Revolt of the Masses* to the Society of Lectures in Buenos Aires. These talks and his special course on *What Is Philosophy?*, given at the University of Buenos Aires, were enthusiastically received and prominently reported in the Argentine press, especially in *La Nación*. Madrid papers, in particular *El Sol*, echoed reports of Ortega's reception, enhancing his reputation as the Spaniard who could best create living cultural ties between Spain and its former colonies. This reputation was further increased when Ortega addressed the Chilean parliament, an unusual honor. *El Sol* ran several articles analyzing Ortega's sway over Latin American youth: his accomplishments, the commentators found, suggested that Spain's strength would depend on the ability of its intellectuals to inspire a trans-Atlantic cultural commonwealth to concerted actions.[b]

Ortega returned to Spain in January 1929 to find that he was

[4] "El poder social," 1927, *Obras* III, p. 499.

something of a celebrity and that a major conflict between the Universities and Primo de Rivera was brewing. The Dictator developed the delusion that he could at once improve higher education and decrease political opposition from intellectuals by fixing a faster pace on both the faculty and the students. Orders, especially ones that command a forced march, are never well received in academe; hence, as frequently happened, Primo de Rivera's results did not accord with his intentions. The attempt to subject academic requirements to worldly expediencies, the ill-fated Article 53 of the University Statute, put the University of Madrid out of operation for a year and confirmed the intellectual community as the Dictator's implacable foe. Student strikes and demonstrations against Article 53 in particular and the government in general enlivened February and early March. The government could not control the students, and in desperation the Dictator closed all universities for two weeks and that of Madrid until January 1, 1930.

With the students sent home, the professors took up the cause. Ramón Menéndez Pidal, the great historian and director of the Royal Academy, a man not notorious for dabbling in the politics of protest, announced his sympathy with the students. From his unsilent retirement, having years before renounced his university posts over another clash between state and student, Unamuno called on the mature to take up the battle that the young had bravely waged. Ortega was prominent among the professors who answered Unamuno's call, using their talents to oppose the Dictator. Along with four others, Felipe Sánchez Román, Luis Jiménez de Asúa, Fernando de los Ríos, and Alfonso García-Valdecasas, Ortega resigned his professorship to protest the closing of the university. He did not, however, give up his teaching vocation. He hired the Sala Rex, one of the larger theaters in Madrid, and advertised in the papers that he would continue his university course, charging a small fee to cover expenses. His gesture was a great success. Attendance began high and grew steadily: midway in the series he had to hire a still larger theater. His lectures on *What Is Philosophy?* were popularly known as "The Course" in recognition that through them the University was still in operation.

Ortega and his friends were deceived by "The Course." Couching his thought in clear and elegant prose, he presented an existential ontology that was as advanced as Heidegger's. Many who listened avidly to the lectures, or followed them in the papers, were not university students. Observers took the suprising heterogeneity of his audience as a sign that the Spanish people had finally matured, that all the efforts to create a cultivated elite had succeeded. For this reason, *El Sol* asserted in an editorial that "the course of Sr. Ortega y Gasset, besides having been a philosophic course, can very well qualify as an historic fact."[5] What began as a gesture became a desideratum; here, unexpectedly, was the awaited sign that the moment for Spanish renovation had arrived. If the precondition for Spanish regeneration was the existence of a truly cultured minority, one that could give the country a backbone, in Ortega's phrase, then the hour had come: suddenly, in the audience of "The Course," the renovating elite seemed to present itself to the eyes. In describing the sight, Luis de Zulueta became almost lyric with joy: "the theater was full. A numerous and diverse public. Neither a single group, nor a single color, nor a single sex, nor a single class of the society. It is an intellectual selection, but one made spontaneously, freely. . . . An excellent symptom. A favorable sign of the times. Now in Madrid people fill a theater, day after day, only to learn philosophy."[6]

After years of work, a new politics seemed imminent. The pace quickened. Ortega honed his political journalism to make it move events. His Argentine lectures on the mass man—how timely!—these he worked into a long series of articles that came out in *El Sol* through the fall of 1929 and the spring of 1930. In this, its proper context, *The Revolt of the Masses* was anything but a conservative tract; it served well in the campaign to bring down the Dictator and then the Monarch. As Ortega defined the mass man, there were no more prominent examples than Primo de Rivera, the King, and those around them. The first installment gave the clue: masses did not mean "either solely or principally" the working masses; masses meant men in every social class who

[5]Anonymous, "El curso de D. José Ortega y Gasset," *El Sol*, May 21, 1929.
[6]Luis de Zulueta, "Lecciones de Ortega y Gasset," *El Sol*, May 21, 1929.

were satisfied with themselves, who were unwilling to discipline themselves. Mass men proliferated among intellectuals and the vestiges of "nobilities," nobodies who claimed special privileges in society. "In contrast, it is not unusual today among the workers, who formerly could be patronizied as the purest example of what we are calling 'mass,' to encounter eminently disciplined characters."[7] In the taxing turn Ortega gave to his conception of the truly noble life, in making it denote rigorous self-discipline in the service of man's highest ideals, he provided the rationale for a profound attack on the Spanish monarchy and the established classes, and for a call to visionary reform.

To suggest that *The Revolt of the Masses* was only, or even primarily, a tract against the complacencies of the Spanish Monarch and his minions would be excessive. But in it Ortega contended, in vivid, compelling prose, that power—political, economic, technical, cultural—was exercised by men of no special competence, men who took more from civilization than they contributed. The *señorito satisfecho,* the sated swinger, was anything but the self-disciplined worker and peasant. Repeatedly Ortega likened the character of the mass man to that of the *fils de famille,* especially to that of the hereditary aristocrat. Who would give flesh to these similes? Who but the established groups around the government and the King? Ortega challenged them on the most fundamental grounds: their moral claim to authority.

In summer 1930 Ortega reiterated this critique with his essay on "The Moral of the Automobile in Spain." Spaniards ranked fourth in the number of cars per capita; their roads were terrible and sparse; Spain produced no cars; automobiles in Spain were always clean and luxurious. The lesson was clear: in Spain, neither the automobile, nor the members of the leisured class who owned them, served any use.[8]

The polemic against the ruling groups culminated in the fall.

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[7] *La rebelión de las masas,* 1930, *Obras* IV, p. 147. The key to this polemic is the attack on "the happy few," *Ibid.,* p. 151. Also the argument, *Ibid.,* p. 150, that there were no longer any genuine aristocracies would, in the context in which it was published, only undercut the *raison d'être* of the Monarchy.

[8] "La moral del automóvil en España," *El Sol,* August 23, 1930, *Obras* IV, pp. 84-8.

In "The Berenguer Error," Ortega used his knack for coining slogans that crystallized strong feelings to denote the King as the real obstacle to reform. When Primo de Rivera had resigned early in the year, Alfonso XIII had General Berenguer form a government, which was charged with promoting a "return to normalcy." Berenguer's task was to reconstruct a government based on the Constitution of 1876, which Primo de Rivera had suspended in 1923. The King asked an impossible task of his General, Ortega asserted, for the King, not the Dictator, had been the fundamental abnormality in recent years. Monarchy was normal only insofar as the Monarch was the educator and spiritual leader of his people, Ortega contended. At this, the King had proved himself incompetent. Hence the greatest abnormality in Spanish life had become the Monarchy. "Spaniards! Your State does not exist! Reconstruct it!" To close his brief against the King, Ortega adapted a phrase from Cato's implacable cry against Carthage; immediately, it became a bond among republicans—"*Delenda est Monarchia.*"—Monarchy must be destroyed![9]

By the end of 1930, agitation for a republic could not be contained; a revolution was merely a matter of time, and not much time at that. Ortega and the clerisy were but a small, yet significant part of those calling for change. Several workers parties, especially the Socialists, several Republican parties, and several regionalist movements, especially the Catalan left, were coöperating, despite some strains, to bring down the government and to constitute a new system. These organized groups were the practical powers forcing revolution. Yet the intellectuals were also essential: they brought popular opinion to the point of accepting a republican solution to the vacuum of authority. In December 1930 an unsuccessful republican uprising had been easily put down. In the aftermath, the Athenaeum of Madrid was closed because that meeting place for intellectuals had become—nay, it had always been—a center of republican aspirations. Such mea-

[9] "El error Berenguer," *El Sol*, November 15, 1930, *Obras* XI, p. 279. The effect of the phrase can be gauged by the attention given to it by the monarchist historian, Melchor Fernández Almago, *Historia del Reinado de Don Alfonso XIII*, p. 562; and by Mori's use of it to identify Ortega in the chronicle of the Constituent Assembly, *Crónica*, Vol. I, p. 95.

sures were of no avail; discussions that previously went on in public, now took place in private. In February 1931, Ortega, the novelist Ramón Pérez de Ayala, and the great doctor Gregorio Marañón, organized the Group in the Service of the Republic, giving intellectuals a national organization through which to express their republican commitments. The Group operated as a correspondence society with local chapters all over Spain. It did a great deal to help republicanism come to power without an outright, violent revolution.

General Berenguer had set a "normal" election to the Cortes for February, but abstentions were so heavy that the election was a farce. In an admission that the "return to normalcy" had failed, Berenguer resigned. The government of Admiral Aznar was no more effective. On April 12, municipal elections were held throughout the nation. Returns showed a landslide for republican candidates. The position of the Monarchy had become untenable. Two days later King Alfonso XIII left Spain, and his ministers negotiated the transfer of power to a provisional republican government, most members of which had lately been in jail for their political dissidence.

The fall of the Monarchy had been like the kill in a *corrida:* with the exhausted government's attention fixed on the *muleta,* the red flag of revolution, the republicans pierced the heart from above and in the open, yet unseen and unexpected, with the thin rapier of electoral victory. But unlike a *corrida,* the political spectacle does not end. With the fall of the Monarchy the direction of republican activities had to shift from the negative tearing down of the old system to the positive building up of a new one. Here certain divisions became apparent.

Two developments in bringing down the Monarchy were particularly significant in constructing a republic: the Pact of San Sebastian and the Group in the Service of the Republic. On August 17, 1930, leading Republicans, Catalan nationalists, and Socialists had agreed in the Pact of San Sebastian to work cooperatively for a republic, by use of force if necessary. Although several of Ortega's intellectual allies, including his brother, Eduardo, took part in the Pact, it was primarily a practical political alliance between the major republican organizations. Hard bargains

were struck about the means for bringing down the Monarchy and about the future features of the republic. In April, the Revolutionary Committee created through the Pact became the Provisional Government. The blocs represented by the signatories to the Pact were the practical backbone of the Republic; and despite certain tensions and changes in leadership, this coalition clearly dominated the new government at least to the November 1933 elections.

The Group in the Service of the Republic was a new organization, the purpose of which differed from the Pact. The Group, which was not founded by an alliance between existing organizations, was not intended to be a political party. Members of the Group were committed to political education; they had little practical power; their spokesmen did not represent large blocs of votes. The Group aimed to put the intellect of Spain in the service of a republic, or as its manifesto said, "to mobilize all Spaniards of an intellectual office in order to form a copious contingent of propagators and defenders of the Spanish Republic."[10d]

Together the Pact and the Group served a common purpose. No one had to make an either-or choice between the tendencies represented by the Pact and the Group, for both shared a valid, useful, sincere commitment to creating a new republic. The Pact stood for the practical reality of the republic, the Group for its intellectual ability. Members of the latter, however, had to make a serious decision: how could the Group best serve a republic that would be built upon the practical politics of the Pact? This question was especially important in determining the policy of the Group towards the Constituent Assembly. Ortega miscalculated in answering this question.

On December 6, 1930, as a sign of the weakening Monarchy, Ortega had published an essay requesting that a national convention be convened to draw up a new constitution. This essay, "A Project," reveals Ortega's expectations about the Constituent Assembly. He identified two groups as dangerous to real progress: those who did not want a new state and those who immediately

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[10]"Agrupación al servicio de la República: Manifiesto," *El Sol*, February 10, 1931, *Obras* XI, p. 127.

wanted a radical social revolution. Essentially, both these groups scorned the Spanish nation and looked at politics as means for advancing their particular interests. The views of these extremes were short-sighted; any state founded on one or the other of them would be doomed to perpetual instability. The alternative would be a great, coöperative effort in which *all* could work to organize a new state, a state designed for all, not for one or another of its principal groups.[11]

Ortega might have taken as a motto for his convention Pascal's statement that "we do not display greatness by going to one extreme, but in touching both at once, and filling all the intervening space."[12] Drawing up a good constitution was more an intellectual than political endeavor, it seemed to Ortega. In order to create a governmental mechanism that would allow all groups to coexist and that would nevertheless be politically effective, the framers would have to account wisely for all aspects of the nation, even those they disliked. Destiny called Spain's intellectuals to the task of discovering a political system that could form and implement significant national policies and that could do so without driving any major group into a desperate resistance for the sake of survival. Clearly, Ortega expected the Constituent Assembly to be composed of patriotic personages who, like the American founding fathers, would draw up with a minimum of partisan self-serving an enlightened, enduring, adaptable basis for government. This task done, the founders would then disband and return to their respective occupations. Perhaps Ortega should have read Beard.

Ortega conceived of the Constituent Assembly in the mold of vital politics. Destiny beckoned and the people would spontaneously push forward those men gifted with genius; or, more precisely, the occasion was such that an unexpected excellence and enlightenment would be engendered in those the people advanced. For Ortega, a political movement that merited being called vital, as opposed to the merely official, was a spontaneous unity in the pursuit of a great task. Now the moment approached

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[11]"Un proyecto," *El Sol*, December 6, 1930, *Obras* XI, pp. 280-290.

[12]Pascal, *Pensées*, no. 353, W. F. Trotter, trans.

when the vital politics of those who had been pursuing Spanish renovation would merge into a new official politics, that of the Second Republic. Ortega saw the Constituent Assembly as the culmination of the vital politics. The Assembly, he thought would be unified by a desire to provide Spain, and through Spain, Europe, with the key to unlock the constraints of the nineteenth-century state and to point the way for the European peoples to regain their proper form.

On the basis of these assumptions, it made sense for the Group in the Service of the Republic to seek an active part in the Constituent Assembly. The deliberations would call for intellectual vision; as in any intellectual consideration, the opinions backed by the best reasons would carry the greatest weight. The Group comprised many of Spain's most respected thinkers. They would be looked to as the men best able to divine the features of a constiution that would prove, through the experience of future centuries, to be exemplary. In an Assembly vitally committed to producing such a document, the Group would be listened to not in proportion to the power of its constituents, but in proportion to the wisdom of its members. Such expectations lured the clerisy into political activism.

Despite the Assembly's glowing oratory of statesmanship, Ortega's belief that official politics would give way to vital politics in the Assembly was invalid. A Constituent Assembly that would have fulfilled Ortega's expectations would have been an extraordinary assembly indeed. Dominated by a non-ideological bloc, it would have studied the nation disinterestedly to discover the kind of state the nation needed as a whole. Then, it would have tried to design a state to fit these specifications. While campaigning, Ortega described such deliberation: "the state is an immense machine that a national collaboration constitutes in order to serve the public life, and the process for inventing a machine is this: first, one decides what are the objects that one wishes to obtain with it and then one molds the parts and the mechanism into the form that best conduces to these objects."[13] But the actual Constituent Assembly did not proceed in this manner.e

[13]"Ortega y Gasset habla en Léon," *El Sol*, June 28, 1931, *Obras* XI, p. 303.

To begin, the dominant blocs were not disinterested; they had strong ideological commitments. The larger parties had definite preconceptions about the constitution, they knew what they wanted, and bargains had been made to ensure the realization of these expectations. Hence, the Assembly had strong ties to the *vieja política*. Instead of beginning to deliberate by working out agreement about the functional attributes to be given the new state, the Assembly began with a projected draft of the Constitution, the juridical features of which were then re-examined in debate. AIthough this procedure was the only workable one in a convention of 470 persons, it encouraged partisan groups to ignore careful consideration of the Constitution as a whole and to concentrate on amending the project with their favorite proposals. Most debates concerned amendments, and in the end the Constitution was more a lawyer's derivative from advanced constitutional theory than an original contribution to the advance of that theory. An Ortegan Assembly would have had to go to the people, the whole people, to help them understand the Constitution, to create a genuine desire to live by its rule, and to overcome the fears of republican government. Spaniards were not politically sophisticated, and only if they fully comprehended the constitution, finding themselves deeply in concord with it, would it become the basis of a truly vital yet official politics. In reality, the members of the Assembly knew that they had drafted a divisive document, for most deputies, Ortega included, opposed a plebiscite to ratify their work for fear of unnecessarily aggravating national divisions.

At the outset, members of the Group might have realized that their assumptions concerning the Assembly were wrong. The Assembly was too large to accomplish much beyond endorsing the preconceived opinions of its majority. Its mandate was too strong, enabling well represented groups to try to build a bias in favor of their interests into the system. The Assembly's strong mandate, however, failed to isolate it from electoral pressure, for there was nothing to prevent it from patterning parliament on itself and transforming itself into the first parliament, as in fact it did. Voting by lists encouraged a convention of parties rather than one of personages. All these facts might have suggested to Ortega that the Assembly would not be a body in which farseeing

statesmanship would dominate. The Group erred in trying to shape the Republic by taking an active part in the Assembly. By doing so, they had no real effect on the Constitution, and they dissipated the clerisy's influence. Their prestige, which was great, might have been put to better use as a journalistic, educational force keeping the interests of the nation before the Assembly, and interpreting to the nation the work of the Assembly. In this role the Group could have continued, long after the Constitution had been framed, to act as a moral influence, raising the tone of political practice and modulating the swings of political passion.

In retrospect, one can see a serious ambiguity in Ortega's political criticism. Beginning with his convocation address to the League for Spanish Political Education and continuing up to his participation in the Constituent Assembly, Ortega alternated between making two different contrasts: sometimes he pitted the new politics against the old politics and at others he opposed a vital politics against official politics. As long as the new politics was in opposition, the two contrasts could be used interchangeably; but they were not the same. The antipodes denoted by each contrast were different: a *new* politics suggested that the *old* would in time be replaced, or at least reduced to a mere vestige like the British monarchy; but a *vital* politics might very well exist permanently in a continuous, productive tension with the *official*. As long as the *vieja política* reigned in Spain, Ortega did not need to clarify these distinctions. But failing to do so, he was not prepared for the time when the new politics would become an official politics. Then, by being drawn into the new, official politics of the Second Republic, he gave up his basis for engaging in vital politics. Perhaps American proponents of the new politics should ponder this distinction.

Ortega failed to clarify whether civic pedagogy was a permanent complement to official, practical politics, or whether it was a temporary endeavor that would transform the corrupt old ways into a pristine, new system. By taking the Group in the Service of the Republic into the Constituent Assembly, he acted as if the latter were true, as if vital politics were an historical anomaly to be rendered unnecessary by the new constitution. The fall of the Monarchy, however, did not end the need for Spain's clerisy to

crusade with their pens for a more enlightened, humane public life. As it turned out, the results of the Constituent Assembly were far from perfect, but they were good enough; instead of establishing a new politics, they laid the groundwork for the thorough reform of the old. With strong, disinterested leadership of public opinion, the Second Republic might have performed with more stability than it did. Such leadership was lacking, for the *clercs* who had performed this office for more than thirty years and who could have continued to do so, had over-engaged themselves and undercut their intellectual authority. In the Constituent Assembly they fell short and did not write the perfect constitution. Thereafter, their criticism, which might have modulated political practice, was liable to be dismissed as the losers' laments.

In the Constituent Assembly, Ortega's claim to intellectual aloofness was steadily eroded. Through the summer and fall of 1931, the aura of partisanship around the Constitution disturbed him. Particularism became prominent. For instance, the regional groups did not contribute a unique outlook on the whole project; they insisted instead that a particular outlook be reflected in certain parts of the project. Hence, Ortega, a leading proponent of regional autonomy, found himself in opposition to the Catalan Statute and certain language matters: rather than grant autonomy for regional affairs, the Statute seemed to grant to a single region the right to speak authoritatively on certain national matters. Likewise, the Socialists seemed less concerned with perfecting the national economy than they were with inserting into the Constitution advanced welfare provisions that were probably not possible given the exisiting level of production in Spain. Ortega strongly welcomed the welfare provisions as humane, progressive, and just; he worried, however, that those who were primarily responsible for these provisions would think they had completed their task and would not carry through by leading a coöperative effort to expand the economy, an effort that alone could make good on the welfare state that the Assembly had so generously promised on paper. Then, to make matters worse, the old anticlericals reveled in pushing through Article 26, which provided the authority to disband any religious order that threatened the

state. By disbanding the Jesuits and stipulating that all education be immediately laicized, thus mandating the discontinuation of many more schools than the new government could create, the Assembly severely complicated the new Republic's excellent efforts to improve public instruction.[f]

Such moves struck Ortega as a sacrifice of the national interest to satisfy the passions of large, doctrinaire groups. The Law of the Defense of the Republic, inserted towards the end of the Assembly's work, signified that the deputies knew they had failed to produce a national constitution: the framers of the new state were already preparing to defend it from powerful enemies within the nation. Finally, the Assembly indulged in the gratuitous trial *in absentia* of the King, which served nothing except to aggravate the monarchists. Such developments did not augur well for proponents of the new politics.

Like several other intellectuals who served in the Assembly, and many who observed from without, Ortega had serious reservations about the Constitution. "An immense number of Spaniards," he wrote towards the end of the Assembly's work, "who collaborated in the birth of the Republic by their actions, by their votes, and, what is most effective of all, by their hopes, are now saying between their worries and discontents: 'This isn't it! This isn't it! The Republic is one thing. 'Radicalism' is another. If not, let it wait."[14] When the moment for ratification came, of course, Ortega voted for the Republic; after all, it was a start and a great improvement over either dictatorship or the Constitution of 1876. But then, like any politician who accepts an imperfect work that he has helped to produce, Ortega set out to make the Constitution better by correcting its deficiencies in the realm of practice. Thus Ortega was drawn deeper and deeper into practical politics. Since partisanship was the major deficiency of the new Constitution, Ortega rather desperately decided that the creation of an inclusive, non-partisan party might best correct the weaknesses of the new system.

Even before the fall of the Monarchy, Ortega had called for a party of national unity; and as the work of the Assembly drew

[14]"Un aldabonazo," *Crisol*, September 9, 1931, *Obras* XI, p. 387.

to a close, he renewed this plea. Final ratification of the Constitution was to occur in December 1931, at which time the Assembly would elect a President, who in turn would appoint a Prime Minister. To be effective, this non-partisan party would have to elect its candidate as President, so that he could ask the party to form the government. This condition drew the potential party into competition with others, making it a partisan non-partisan party! In November rumors began to appear in the press that Ortega would found a political party. These rumors were compounded with denials into a considerable publicity campaign, which built up to a speech that Ortega gave on December 6, a few days before the final votes. Before a large audience of notables, Ortega outspokenly analyzed the shortcomings he felt would endanger the soon-to-be-established Republic. He addressed himself before the fact to "The Rectification of the Republic," and he asked that "a party of national amplitude" be created under the leadership of Miguel Maura. Only such a party could offset a drift towards the polarization of the Spanish polity.[8]

At first, the idea of a non-partisan party may seem absurd; under the circumstances, it may well have been impossible. The potential plausibility of this party of national amplitude stemmed from the fact that large, conglomerate parties can form in two different ways. On the one hand, coalitions of interest groups, which believe that to the victors belong the spoils, form when the components agree to divvy up between them the best plums of the political process. The Pact of San Sebastian provided the basis for such a party, and Manuel Azaña led this dominant coalition of left Republicans, Socialists, anti-clericals, and Catalan nationalists. On the other hand, occasionally more idealistic coalitions are built upon hopes for the future nation. These have had strong, intuitive appeal in poor, struggling countries. In difficult situations, diverse groups sometimes realize that by concentrating on national development they will be better off by having a smaller share of a larger nation than by taking the maximum share of the present nation. Such a national government ruled Britain in World War II, and analogous examples of "one party democracies" have become familiar in newly emergent nations. Such non-partisan governments usually come into exist-

ence either in response to dire threats to a nation's existence or as the result of a charismatic leader winning control over the nation's means of force. Neither condition held in Republican Spain.

Ortega tried to create a disinterested coalition party solely by suasion. Strong currents of political idealism existed in the Assembly; and in Ortega's speech he tried to capitalize on that idealism, hoping to break Azaña's coalition and to replace it with a more inclusive, idealistic one under Maura's leadership. As usual, Ortega was eloquent. He played on all the statesman-like hopes that had been voiced in the Assembly. He appealed particularly to the Socialists, for they were the next to largest group in Azaña's coalition and the one most susceptible to Ortega's nationalistic humanitarianism. He tried to base the new coalition on the three groups that he thought were the best endowed with inner human strengths. The new party would be "constituted by working men, mental workers and manual workers. . . . These workers are called, before anyone else, to this undertaking, for the life of a nation is in substance two things: manufacturing and mentefacturing. These two potencies—these and a third, youth—have to set the tone of any possible new party."[15]

El Sol sampled reactions to Ortega's speech by leading politicians. Predictably Miguel Maura was enthusiastic. Unamuno was complimentary, but refused to comment on Ortega's political propositions. What mattered, however, was the reaction of the Socialists; they proved to be polite but uninterested. Fernando de los Ríos commended Ortega's patriotism, but added that the existing parties could best accomplish the policies called for. Alvaro de Albornoz and Marcelino Domingo thought that the party Ortega sought would, in effect, weaken the left and strengthen the right; it therefore should be opposed. Others believed that the existing parties were sufficient and that it was improper to criticize the Republic on the eve of its being constituted.[16] The party of national amplitude died aborning. Three days later the Assembly elected Niceto Alacalá Zamora as Presi-

[15]"La rectificación de la República," *Obras* XI, p. 416.

[16]"El discurso de Don José Ortega y Gasset," *El Sol*, December 8, 1931.

dent, who soon announced that the Azaña government had been formed.

Ortega did not immediately give up hope for a new party. In the following months he toured the provinces studying the possibilities of converting the Group in the Service of the Republic into a national party.[h] He spoke in the north at Oviedo and in the south at Granada, both times explaining the rationale for a non-partisan coalition. He published a series of articles on its importance, but by the summer of 1932 the impossibility of making a majority party out of a minority organization of citizens and amateur politicans had discouraged him. Further, his efforts at political criticism were being dismissed as the recriminations of a frustrated politician. Putting up a good face, expressing confidence in the Republic and hope for the future, the Group disbanded. Ortega soon announced his withdrawal from politics: he had tried and failed. "This sonorous and perfect failure gives me the right to silence."[17] He broke his silence briefly after the 1933 elections to write in favor of the turn away from domination by the left, and he again called for enlightened, clear-headed government in the name of the whole nation. But the resentful effort by the right to undo two year's work by the left dashed Ortega's renascent hopes. Except for his grudging declaration of allegiance to the Republic early in the Civil War, he thereafter remained silent about Spanish politics.

Yet silence still resounds as a sonorous symbol. Silence, Ortega wrote, was a great teacher, for a well-placed pause signified as much as many words.[18] In this case silence taught that only under certain conditions could the intellectual take an effective part in politics; when those conditions were absent the intellectual should quietly prepare for the day when they would return. Years before Ortega had written that when men begin to fight with one another they cease to discuss their differences rationally. To stay out of such conflicts, the intellectual should say nothing, for whatever he said would be used as a club, not as a reason. Force was the *ultima ratio;* and when men resorted

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[17]"Carta," *Luz*, April 1, 1933, *Obras* XI, p. 520.

[18]"El silencio, gran brahmán," 1930, *Obras* II, pp. 625-633.

to it, they were impelled to try to mobilize all available talent and power—right became a mere tool of might.

Ortega quickly realized that he was compromised with respect to Spanish public affairs. His self-imposed silence preceded the Civil War: "since August [1932] I have suspended my political activities, not only the parliamentary ones, but absolutely all of them, so that no one can claim without shame that since then I have made any act of political organization or even of expressing simple opinion, apparent or latent, direct or indirect, on the surface or beneath it."[19] From mid-1932 until his death, Ortega maintained, with minuscule exceptions, an adamant silence on matters of Spanish politics. Instead, he devoted himself to the interests of intellect. By doing so, he ensured that, come what may, he could work towards two goals: he could return to the practice of civic pedagogy with respect to Europe rather than Spain, and he could try to preserve the disciplined intelligence that had been nurtured in Spain and that might someday again pervade the conduct of political life.

By being silent, and by not taking part in the looming fray, the intellectual preserved certain possibilities, namely the possibilities of alternatives to the conflict. During his political activities Ortega contended that a peaceful, progressive Spain would be one that was led by a coalition of labor, intellect, and youth. This coalition failed to form in 1931, and since then certain silences have preserved the possibility that sometime in the future it will manage to come into being. Note that *clercs* like Ortega began their silence about four years before the Civil War; it would be wrong to fill in the silence with the passionate shouts that still echo from the conflict. Most of the intellectuals who had labored for decades to regenerate Spain perceived by 1932 that they had failed. The problem was to find a way by which progressive groups could endure the coming conflict without having their competencies crushed. Ideology was incidental: Spanish progress would come only when hard labor, cogent intellect, and vibrant youth managed to concert their efforts spontaneously.

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[19] "Carta," *Luz*, April 1, 1933, *Obras* XI, p. 519.

The great danger in the coming reaction was not that a retrograde ideology would push out the nominal liberalism of the Second Republic, but that one or more of the truly progressive groups in Spain would be decimated.

For Ortega, the Civil War and the long period of marking time that followed were a tragic but historically insignificant incident. Reaction, a return to past traditions, was impossible, he believed. History was an ongoing movement, a continuous flow from the past into the future; hence a people could not escape into the safe certitudes of yesterday. Reactionary movements could try to impose myths on reality; but the reality would remain, and eventually when people became bored with stasis, leaders would be forced to begin again to deal honestly with the reality and retrace the steps that had previously been taken. Thus, conservatism could not permanently undo the accomplishments of progressivism; at worst the conservative could force the progressive to retrace his steps and forgo for a time further advance. The major steps taken prior to 1931 towards Spanish progress had built up the components of the coalition of labor, intellect, and youth. Through the reaction the task was to preserve these parts and to prepare for the time when they could again try to come together.

That day may be approaching. The victors in the Civil War face a profound political problem: reactionary regimes rarely prepare adequately for the transfer of power, for their eyes are always on the past and they fail to foresee the morrow. But a transfer of power ineluctably approaches and the faint efforts to prepare for it show, both positively and negatively, that the intrinsic power of Ortega's coalition of labor, intellect, and youth will have to be taken into account. The clearest sign is negative: the major efforts to suppress possible sources of unforeseen change in the established power structure have been aimed directly at workers, writers, and students. The vaunted liberalization of Spanish rights in recent years amounts to the following: there will be general freedom of speech and assembly provided that workers, intellectuals, and students do not give themselves independent organizations and do not concert their social concerns.

More important, however, are the positive signs (in 1970)

that Spain's progressive groups are revitalizing. That all men are mortal is obvious; the recent concern about the transfer of power in Spain is not merely, or even mainly, a function of the *Caudillo's* age. The present situation does not presage a resurfacing of the conflict fought out in the Civil War. The silence that preserved the possibility of a coalition of labor, intellect, and youth, also preserved the possibility of a re-alliance of forces. The present interest in the transfer of power has arisen mainly because members of the present government realize that the community of interest between components of Franco's coalition—the Army, the Church, and wealth—is no longer solid. In the thirties, the progressive, republican advance was broken from within by an inane, gratuitous, excessive anti-clericalism. Since then the Church has changed—and so has the outlook of workers, writers, artists, and students. In the newspapers, interesting signs of the time keep recurring. So-called Communist workers are arrested for holding illegal meetings in their churches; a Bishop argues scathingly for the moral necessity of land reform; Barcelona students and professors are besieged in a Convent and arrested for demanding the right to organize independently; young priests are clubbed in a demonstration in support of students. What all these and many other signs mean for the future of Spain depends entirely on what many particular Spaniards decide to do. Labor, intellect, and youth have come through the reaction largely intact. And if the Church were to liberalize. . . . At the present time one can only say that judicious silence has ensured that all is now possible in Spain, and one suspects that the time is not too distant when, ironically, judicious silence will seem to have been an excessively timid commitment.

Yet silence is not the same as inactivity. Ortega's disappointment with the course of events from 1932 onward must have been profound. Fortunately, however, his work was not inextricably bound to his taking an active part in Spanish public affairs. Ortega was a "good European." One of the inspirations for his effort at the reform of Spain had been to point the way by which the European nations could get in shape and transcend their parochial limitations. This European goal remained alive for Ortega; his

Spanish failure even intensified it, for he saw that the failure was a symptom of Europe's decadence.

To see the Spanish failure as a European symptom, one should look beneath the surface of the Civil War and the events before and after it. For Ortega, the failure of Spain, and his own failure with respect to it, went much deeper than the failure of a particular political program. Anyone with Ortega's knowledge of history is fully aware of how changeable political fashion has always been. One finds no fundamental significance in this sphere. The failure of Spanish reform was more profound. The failure appeared to be nothing less than a failure of culture itself; it seemed to be a terrible confirmation of the thesis advanced in *The Revolt of the Masses* that there was a radical defect in European culture. Spain, like the rest of Europe, was showing that its elites on both the right and the left did not understand the principles of the civilization for which they were responsible.

During his long silence about Spain, Ortega devoted himself to an examination of Europe's cultural principles. This re-examination of Western culture has facilitated a re-alliance of forces within Spain and throughout the West, and in this facilitation we find a worldly justification for the quiet labors of Ortega and other reflective men who chose to be silent in times of passion. It is not an accident that religion, labor, intellect, and youth have changed during the past third of a century. Let us turn to Ortega's small but significant part in this reorientation of Western culture.

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Greater dooms win greater destinies.

HERACLITUS, 25

Interlude

It would not be better if things happened to men just as they wished.

HERACLITUS[1]

AT THE AGE OF FIFTY Ortega faced up to failure: he redefined his task. Yeats' lines sum up Ortega's plight. "Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold; Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world. . . ."[2] Spain again became possessed by factional politics; the *vieja política* returned with a vengeance. Ortega saw no way to reverse the tendency towards extremism, the terrible tendency that would lead to dictatorship by way of anarchy and civil war. Moreover, at fifty Ortega found that Europe no longer offered hope to the Spanish reformer. Although valid, the European tradition was in abeyance. Ortega withheld his "Prologue for the Germans" from publication as a protest against Hitler's ascension to power. The extremism of Spain was but an episode in the more general extremism that dominated Europe. Young men could no longer proclaim that Spain was the problem and Europe the solution, for Europe, itself, had become the problem—and there was no foreseeable solution.

Man, however, has the power of abstraction. No person is compelled to obsess himself with immediate matters; letting these take what course they may, he can withdraw into his inner counsel and work towards the more distant future, laying intellectual foundations for a new attempt at creating a humane order. Thus, in 1932, Ortega became a posthumous man: he published his collected works and announced that henceforth he would devote

[1]Heraclitus, Fragment 52, Wheelwright, trans.

[2]W. B. Yeats, "The Second Coming," in *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats*, p. 184.

himself to reflecting on the fundamental problems of Western culture. The great journalist lost his passion to publish and many of his important books remained in his workshop until after he died. He devoted all the leisure he could piece together to reflecting in solitude or in the company of a few intimates on the great questions, answers to which might help men rebuild the foundations of their culture. Only since his death have men been able to appreciate the magnitude of his effort, an effort that he called, after Plato, his "second voyage." Ortega's first voyage, like Plato's, was an excursion into practical reform through pedagogical means; and for both, the second voyage consisted in reflecting on the problems that made the first end unsuccessfully. For both, their reflective effort did not begin abruptly, but developed naturally from their active concerns.

Throughout his life, Ortega maintained a tension between the immediate and the distant; always he was both a participant and a spectator. But in his youth he hoped to witness the results of his thoughts and deeds; his aspirations concerned his immediate circumstances. During his second voyage he did not completely lose this involvement. But his work became more abstract. He aimed not at immediate consequences, but at far off goals that concerned the sense of life held by the people who would live in a fully industrialized world. On the thirtieth of June, 1932, Ortega made two recordings for the Archives of Speech at the Center for Historical Studies. These recordings indicate the change in his interests. In the first he retrospectively described his attempt to transform the Spanish character. In the second he prospectively plumbed the secret of history. The first gave an eloquent apology for the life he had led up to then. He called it "The Work of Man."

> Life is labor. And the truth of life, that is, the authentic life of each person, consists in doing what must be done and in not doing anything else. For me a man has merit to the degree that the series of his acts is necessary and not capricious. But the difficulty of it is in properly leading one's target, for the only thing that appears to us to be necessary is a repertory of actions that others have performed. These come to us haloed with one or another consecration. They incite us to be unfaithful to our authentic work, which is always irreducible to that of others. True life is inevitably invention. We must invent our own existence; yet at the same

time this invention must not be capricious. Hence, the word "invent" recovers its etymological intention of "find." We must find, we must discover the necessary trajectory of our life, for only then will we be truly ourselves and not just anyone, as the frivolous always are.

How can one resolve so difficult a problem? For me there is no doubt about it. One finds that one is like a poet to whom a rhyme scheme is given. This rhyme scheme is one's circumstances. Each person always lives in the midst of unique and unavoidable circumstances. These tell one in a schematic outline what it is that one must do.

In this way I have directed my labor. I have accepted the circumstances of my nation and my time. Spain suffered and still suffers from a *deficit* of intellect. It had lost its dexterity at handling concepts, which are — neither more nor less — instruments with which we make our way among things. It was necessary to teach Spaniards to face reality and to transmute it into thought with the least possible loss. Thus, I dealt with something more ample than science, for science is only one of the many manifestations of the human capacity to react intellectually before reality.

Well then, I had to make my experiments at apprenticing the Spaniard to intellect in whatever way he could be reached: in friendly conversation, in the periodicals, and in public lectures. It was necessary to attract him to the precision of ideas with a graceful turn of phrase, for in Spain in order to persuade one must first seduce.[3]

In his second recording, Ortega turned his attention from Spain to Europe and from the past to the future. A serious problem troubled him: only the arbitrary, capricious willful men like Mussolini seemed capable of acting with any effect in contemporary Europe. Young men could not plan consistent life-programs for themselves, as Ortega had done, for circumstances had changed and no one understood how to act independently upon the new forces of historical development. He took it as his task to discover how men could reassert their historical initiative; and consequently, in his second recording he directed attention to "The Concept of History."

I am speaking at the Center for Historical Studies and I want to use the time and place that I find myself in to manifest my enthusiasm and faith in history. For contemporary Europe, history is the primary condition of its potential health and resurgence, for each thing can have only its proper virtues and not those of anything else. Europe is old; it

[3]"El quehacer del hombre," 1932, *Obras* IV, pp. 366-7.

cannot aspire to have the virtues of youth. Its virtue is that of an old man, that is, of having a large memory, a long history. The problems of its life are found at complicated heights, and therefore they require extremely complicated solutions: only history can provide these. Any other procedure would cause an anachronistic disjunction between the complexity of Europe's problems and the youthful simplicity and absence of memory that it would try to give to their solutions. From history Europe should not abstract a blueprint for what it should do — history does not foresee the future —; from history Europe should learn to avoid doing what it must not do, and thus it will give rebirth to itself by always avoiding its past. In this task history helps us by freeing us from that which was; for the past is a revenant, and if one does not dominate it with memories, thus placating it, it will always turn against us and end by strangling us. This is my faith, this is my enthusiasm in history; and it is a vivid pleasure and it has always been my great Spanish passion to see that in this place we concentrate our attention on the past and that we dig into the past, which is the way to make it fertile, just as by digging into old land with a plow, wounding it with a furrow, we fructify it.[4]

Here, then, was the mission of Ortega's second voyage: to master what Nietzsche called "critical history"; to turn back against the past, to criticize it so that one could avoid reincarnating its mistakes. Ortega spent his later years reflecting on the historic possiblities open to Europeans. In these reflections the past imposed only negative limitations, only actualities to be avoided. Let us leave behind us our sentimental attachments to the given; let us ask with Ortega: what is it that European man can and should become?

* * *

Beware when the great God lets loose a thinker on this planet. Then all things are at risk.

EMERSON[5]

[4]"Concepto de la historia," 1932, *Obras* IV, pp. 367-8.

[5]Emerson, "Circles," *Works*, Vol. 1, p. 198.