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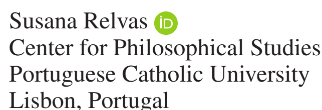
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Introduction

Sixty-five years after Ortega's death and 90 years after the publication of his most read and translated book, *The Rebellion of the Masses*, it's time to put the Spanish philosopher in his due place in the twentieth century European philosophy. The preliminaries of this work have already been done in Spain and in the United States. Some early attempts to establish periods in Ortega's philosophical career should perhaps be abandoned or at least subjected to further analysis. The influence of some philosophers on his thought seems now to have been overestimated, and his philosophical trajectory has to be reappraised. The publication between 2004 and 2009 of a critical edition of Ortega's *Complete Works* allowed the contact with several unpublished manuscripts but, above all, made possible, for the first time, the access to the original versions of some of his lectures, either in Spain or in other parts of the world. This edition, due to the competent scientific supervision of the Foundation Ortega y Gasset/Gregório Marañon, in Madrid, opened a new era in the research on the work of the Spanish philosopher.

Ortega had more than 50 years of public activity, not only in philosophical essays and university lectures, but also in the press and, albeit for a brief period of time, in politics. Looking for a solution to Spanish problems—its backwardness, its lack of a philosophical culture, its political impotence in the international arena—Ortega, under the motto of the Krausist politician Joaquím Costa: "Spanish is the problem, Europe is the solution," traveled to Germany, where, between 1905 and 1912, he made several stays. Research has already stressed the importance of these juvenile years to the understanding of his mature thought—although the interpreters may evaluate it from different perspectives—and highlighted the meaning of Ortega's polemics with the main representatives of the so-called generation of 98, especially Pio Baroja and Miguel de Unamuno.

In Germany, after a first stay in Leipzig and Berlin, Ortega was trained in Neokantian philosophy at the University of Marburg, where he was a student of Hermann Cohen and Paul Natorp. However, during the last months of his last stay in Marburg he became acquainted with phenomenology and the works of Edmund Husserl. He read the *Logical Investigations* and the paper "Philosophy as a Rigorous Science." Once in Spain, he read in 1913 Husserl's major work *Ideas pertaining to*

a Pure Phenomenology and a Phenomenological Philosophy. Papers and conferences like “About the concept of sensation” or “Sensation, construction, intuition” are an undoubtful proof of Ortega’s intellectual conversion to phenomenology. (And they are perhaps the first full account of phenomenology outside Germany.) One should also mention the first four paragraphs of the “Preliminary Meditation” of his first book, *Meditations on Quixote*, as an evidence of this fact. The need to overcome Neokantianism, as well as any form of idealistic-oriented philosophy, was for Ortega deeply rooted in the general characteristics of the epoch, an epoch that he would later label the epoch of the end of Modernity. That’s why this need was not, for him, just a personal trait; it was urgently felt by a whole generation of young philosophers, in which Ortega included his Marburg student colleagues, Nicolai Hartmann and Heinz Heimesoeth.

However, after 1929 Ortega addressed several critiques to phenomenology, especially regarding the nature of the concept of reflection. In fact, in his 1913 book *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and a Phenomenological Philosophy*, Husserl stressed that reflection was the unescapable means of achieving phenomenological reduction, which in turn is the proper phenomenological method to analyze the intentional achievements of consciousness. However, according to Ortega, reflective consciousness is not primary consciousness with its peculiar executive character; and so phenomenology offered one more methodological device to analyze the way consciousness constitutes the objects it experienced, but not to explain how consciousness takes hold of those objects toward which it is directed in the first place. The fateful error of Husserl, namely—according to Ortega from 1929 onwards—was the belief that there exists an executive consciousness that is “consciousness of….” However, when consciousness executes an intentional act it does not take hold of itself as distinct from that toward which it intends. At this moment, consciousness and the intended object are just one and the same thing.

Phenomenology after all was no less idealistic than Neokantianism. Ortega’s most influential students, in the 1930s, like Julián Marias or Antonio Rodriguez Huéscar, heard these criticisms that the master repeated time and again in his seminars, but were unable to understand them in the light of Ortega’s philosophical evolution since 1912. They did not ask themselves the question if Ortega would not be polemicizing with phenomenology from inside phenomenology and not from the outside. Ortega’s posthumous book *Man and People*, for instance, with its discussion of Husserl’s and Alfred Schütz’ thesis about intersubjectivity, could not change their viewpoint. (In his 1982 book *La Innovación Metafísica de Ortega*, Huéscar puts *Man and People* in the second phase of Ortega’s criticisms to idealism—be it Neokantian or phenomenological—but says nothing about the above-mentioned issue, an important part of chapter “Phenomenology Revisited” of Ortega’s book. In fact, he only mentions the book, without any further discussion of its contents.) Huéscar and Marías among several others were, to a great extent, responsible for the legend of an anti-phenomenological Ortega, which lasted almost until the beginning of the 1980s. There were, however, some exceptions before that time. As early as 1968, Ciriaco Morón Arroyo, in his important book *El Sistema de Ortega y Gasset*, especially in its chapter “Ortega’s Philosophical Anthropology”, was able to make a

fair account of Ortega's indebtedness to phenomenology and his lifelong commitment to phenomenological themes and a phenomenological oriented methodology.

Of course, a close reading of Ortega's main books will easily discover that a great number of contemporary philosophers, other than phenomenologists, had some influence in his thought, since his philosophical training in the first years of the twentieth century until his mature works in the second and the third decades of the century. One could mention the names of Nietzsche, Bergson, William James, Georg Simmel, Hermann Cohen, and many others. But in this book we tried to make a clear distinction between two kinds of authors: those that Ortega read and to some extent influenced his philosophy or, at least, the way he addressed some philosophical issues; and those from which his philosophical perspective must be understood. To give just one example: undoubtedly Nietzsche's tragic philosophy of culture and Simmel's opposition between culture and life had some influence in Ortega's notion of vital reason; when someone reads *The Theme of our Time*, a book Ortega published in 1923, one can look back to these two philosophers in order to understand the meaning of the Orteguian notion of the "two imperatives," the vital imperative and the cultural imperative. But if who reads the book forgets the origin of Ortega's philosophy of culture—the way it developed from an early Neokantian orientation to a phenomenological one, which finds it expression in the *Meditations on Quixote*—one runs the serious risk of not understanding what one is trying to read.

Now, this is only one of the misunderstandings that surrounds Ortega's philosophy. Another one has to do with his social and political ideas and his engagements in some political debates in Spain before the civil war. (After 1939 the mention of political events in Spain, or even in Europe, is very scarce in Ortega's writings. For this reason, many people, otherwise sympathetic to his general philosophy, addressed him several and sometimes harsh criticisms.) The publication in 1930 of *The Rebellion of the Masses* was the occasion for some debates about Ortega's thinking in political affairs, and it has not ceased to be till the present times. For some, a thinker that was, in his youth, close to the Spanish Socialist Party had turned conservative, if not anti-democratic, proposing a society grounded on a division between an aristocratic elite and the masses. Of course, if one disregards Ortega's definition of democracy—which for him has to do with the problem: who holds political power?—the risk of misunderstanding his political ideas increases. Besides, to understand what Ortega meant one must, in the first place, pay attention to his evaluation of the nineteenth century political and cultural heritage. The fact is that the Spanish philosopher observed the rise of an anthropological type whose main characteristics were the feeling of being an heir of a comfortable situation he had not to endeavor to preserve, and the idea that living like everybody else was the most comfortable condition. Ortega's main issue, in the abovementioned book, is not politics, but instead what in his opinion stands before politics.

The anthropological bases of Ortega's position must be understood. Life, for Ortega, is a drama. (In any case, not a tragedy, in the sense of Unamuno. A drama does not exclude moments of joy, and anxiety—popularized in the twentieth century through existential philosophy—was always alien to Ortega's view of human

life.) What does it mean to say that life is a drama? It means that we are always doomed to do something, wishing or not, that no one can assume another man's responsibility—just like no one can feel my toothache, even if that person already has experienced a toothache—and the outcome of man's actions is always uncertain. That's why life, for Ortega, means radical disorientation. Man is disoriented from the very roots of his being-in-the-world, and philosophy (or better, metaphysics) arises from the necessity of becoming oriented. Moreover, no one can know for certain what kind of help or cooperation he can get from his fellow beings. The other and I have two different lives, in its most intimate nature life is radical solitude, and mutual understanding (be it social cooperation, friendship, or even love) is, for Ortega, the happy outcome of a cautious approximation.

The present book aims to give a contribution to the reevaluation of the meaning and scope of Ortega's philosophy. It is not intended to give a thorough account of every aspect of his thought, a task that would be impossible to fulfill in one volume. However, we think it gives a comprehensive survey of the most important aspects of his philosophy and of the cultural and educational mission he proposed to achieve. As is well known, Ortega never claimed he was speaking to humanity in general.[1] The Spanish circumstance—as well as the European—was the milieu from which his work emerged. The "salvation" of this circumstance and the enhancement of a philosophy that would be up to it were two Ortega's life-long concerns (Cámara, 2007: 44). However, not only this is not a limitation but is also what makes this work actual. Universal truths can only emerge from the particular in which they are embodied; the particular is not opposed to the universal, but rather to the abstract, i.e., to what seems to be valid for all but is really valid for nobody.

For some it may be perplexing that we don't directly address in this book Ortega's political opinions. If one looks to the main themes of the chapters, this may seem true. However, a closer reading will easily see that this is not exactly the case. Either Ortega's reaction to the Spanish Krausist reform program (that we address in chapter "Spain Is the Problem; Europe Is the Solution") or his criticism of Neokantian philosophy and the subsequent adherence to phenomenology (in chapter "Ortega and Germany") had deep implications in his political ideals. Also, the chapters devoted to Ortega's Anthropology (Chapter "Ortega's Philosophical Anthropology") and to the developments of his philosophy in the years of the exile (Chapter "Ortega's Exiles") have several references to his political opinions. Nevertheless, the meaning or even the coherence of Ortega's sometimes controversial political decisions during the Spanish Civil War and the Second World War is not directly addressed. Perhaps one has to be a Spanish to get a full understanding of them. Of course, everyone can grasp (even if one does not agree with) his distinction between

[1] In December 1948 Ortega called "humanity" an "inane concept." He was at the occasion analyzing, in a series of Lessons in the Instituto de Humanidades of Madrid, the work of the British historian Arnold Toynbee *A Study of History*. Toynbee, so Ortega claims, ignored the concept of "spirit of the people," as the most radical expression of the social and cultural milieu in which men live and act. According to Ortega, historians must understand this milieu before they try to grasp the meaning of men's behaviors (Ortega y Gasset, 2009: 1223).

liberalism and democracy; just as one can understand what he meant by (and again not agree with) an alliance between liberals and moderate totalitarians—whatever that could mean—to counterfeit what Ortega thought was the most dangerous and extreme form of totalitarianism, i.e., Russian communism[2]; and again one can understand why Ortega refused to belong to a so-called "third Spain" (like some of his most intimate friends did), calling it an utopian project devoid of any real possibility of intervening in the Spanish events.

Anyway, if we can speak about a political philosophy in the work of Ortega, we must also reckon that it is sometimes confused, to say the least. As Morón Arroyo has shown, Ortega tries to reconcile a very disparate set of readings in such fields as political theory, anthropology, history, and sociology (Morón Arroyo, 1968: 283). If the outcome of these readings very often is not perfect we can at least underline some important philosophical assumptions: in the first place, the fact that state power always stands above and stems from a previous form of sociality; secondly, that the most ancient forms of sociality were organized around two main differences: of age and of sex; in the third place, that those differences were more important than families ties, which only arouse later when paternity was definitely recognized.

It's also possible that Ortega, in 1946, returning from exile, came to think that in the Spain of Franco, after the end of the Second World War, he would be able to find a small space of freedom where he could go on lecturing and, at least in small doses, spread the liberal spirit with which he felt so many affinities. Perhaps the foundation, with his former student and friend Julián Marías, of the Instituto de Humanidades, increased this conviction (Taltavull, 2020: 48). It was anyway a naiveté and Ortega always looked with defiance by the political and academic authorities of the time. Spanish intellectuals that were close to the regime never showed much sympathy for Ortega's thought. Gonzalo Fernandes de la Mora, for instance, a right-wing politician and thinker, criticizes Ortega's theory of the select minorities, labeling it a theory proper to young people (Mora, 1956: 30), and Ortega's theory of the revolutions, saying that it leaves their origin unexplained and doesn't offer a clear distinction between political revolutions and other kinds of revolutionary events, such as the appearance of deep technological innovations (Mora, 1956: 39). One must acknowledge, however, that he has some affinities with Ortega's sociological explanation of the revolutionary mind and shares Ortega's criticism of the claims for a revolutionary "top to bottom" change of all human affairs. Besides, one cannot forget that some Spanish thinkers belonging to the same political circles as Fernandes de la Mora, like Pedro Laíns Entralgo, among others, claimed to be disciples of Ortega and had close affinities with his philosophy of vital reason.

[2] Sometimes, Ortega puts at the same level Russian totalitarianism and Italian fascism, namely, in 1937, when both are compared with the "healthy" way of social and political functioning of a liberal democracy like England. Ortega adds that the effects of people's education in Russia and Italy, carried out by the state authorities, were a kind of orthopedic device, while in England people's reaction to political events was like walking with one's own legs (Ortega y Gasset, 2006: 413).

It is nevertheless possible that in some Lectures he tried to raise small and cautious criticisms to the more radical and right-wing sectors of the regime, like, for instance, in the “Meditation on Greeting,” in *Man and People*. In fact, the fascist greeting of the members of the Spanish *Falange* was in use at the time. Ortega showed that an act of greeting is a conventional behavior that stems from a social practice whose meaning is almost always ignored by those that behave in that way; to sum up, a greeting that doesn’t stem from the authenticity of individual life is an irrational behavior. Anyway, even if this was meant as a criticism of the regime[3] (and it was a very nice analysis, regardless its intentions, of a social behavior that passes unnoticed most of the times), it is not enough to remove the shadow of the ambiguity of Ortega’s stance regarding the Spanish dictatorship.

The meaning and the scope of Ortega’s philosophy and educational projects are unintelligible without an understanding of Ortega’s diagnosis of Spanish cultural and political scenarios at the beginning of the twentieth century: the end of the “Regeneración” regime, the failure of Krausism-inspired politicians and thinkers, the sterile polemics between the followers of an Europeanization of Spain and their enemies. The Krausist experience was a cultural and political failure because Krausist inspired philosophers and politicians lacked the intellectual tools to understand the origins of Spanish decay since the beginning of the Modern Age, but they paved the way for a more consistent program of reforms. They showed the meaning of Europe and the narrowness of Spanish *casticismo*. (Chapter “Spain Is the Problem; Europe Is the Solution” of this book addresses this background of Ortega’s cultural action; Chapter “Ortega and Germany” addresses his three stays in Germany and his training in Neokantian philosophy at the University of Marburg, under the heading of Hermann Cohen and Paul Natorp.) Next, the book will follow Ortega’s appropriation of Husserl’s phenomenology and his creative applications of it, particularly in the domain of the philosophy of culture (in chapter “Ortega, Phenomenology and Idealism”). We mentioned above Ortega’s criticisms of philosophical idealism as well as his thesis about the end of Modernity. As will be shown especially in chapters “Ortega and Germany” and “Ortega, Phenomenology and Idealism”, this meant for the Spanish philosopher that culture should be reorganized around new ideas and values; those inherited from the nineteenth century—namely, autonomy and indefinite progress—had come to an end. As will be shown in chapters “Ortega, Phenomenology and Idealism” and “Ortega’s Social Philosophy”, the cultural ideals of Modernity were based, according to Ortega, in an opposition between reason (especially high culture, science, and philosophy) and life. In 1923, *El Tema de Nuestro Tiempo* was aimed to overcome this false opposition. One of Ortega’s preferred metaphors, the metaphor of the *Dii Consentes*—the Roman

[3] Some sparse sentences in Ortega’s later writings and Lectures could also be interpreted as mild criticisms of the Regime of General Franco. In 1948 he claims not to be a nationalist and calls the attention of his audience to a book he begun to publish 20 years earlier (he is mentioning *The Revolt of the Masses*) in which he announced as “a matter of life and death” the necessity to overcome any nationalist bias when addressing world affairs (Ortega y Gasset, 2009: 1224).

divinities that were born and would dye together—could be applied to outline Ortega's theory of the relations between culture and life.

Chapter "Ortega, Phenomenology and Idealism" plays a special role in this volume, partly due to its technical nature, partly due to his differences in content from the other eight. (Perhaps with the sole exception of chapter "Phenomenology Revisited".) This chapter addresses a controversial issue: the relation of Ortega to idealism. That the issue is controversial can be proved by the fact that not a long time ago José Luis Villacañas, in his edition of the *Meditations on Quixote*, said that Ortega's theory of culture, at the time, was still Neokantian. We will stress that Ortega abandoned any kind of idealism around 1912, that his first interpretation of phenomenology was clearly anti-idealistic, and that his criticisms of it were due to an interpretation of phenomenology as a refined kind of idealism. Two important Lectures of Ortega will be the focus of our analysis: *What is Philosophy?* and *Lessons on Metaphysics*. However, if idealism had to be overcome, the kind of philosophy that should follow it would have also the task of keeping the level of thought that idealism attained. As Ortega several times stressed, philosophy is above all a matter of level. Regarding the achievements of philosophical idealism, that level means systematicity. Philosophy has to be systematic. But to be systematic and at the same time avoid the pitfalls of idealism, philosophy has to lean on a reality that is itself systematic. As we will show in chapter "Phenomenology Revisited", that reality, for Ortega, is life: not life in general, but human individual life.

Taken together, chapters "Ortega's Social Philosophy" and "Ortega's Philosophical Anthropology" address two closely connected issues. In fact, Ortega's social philosophy has special ties with his broad conceptions of man. To ground philosophically social reality one must, first, analyze the relation of every man with himself (that Ortega labels with the Spanish word *ensimismamiento*); then the relation of man to man, understand the reasons why another being may be reckoned as a fellow human being, finally, how, in the basis of that relation, arises an anonymous and impersonal level that is able to regulate and control it. The dangers that Ortega mentions in *The Rebellion of the Masses* have not only a political or social origin. For the Spanish philosopher, they are grounded on the inevitable loss of man's intimacy with himself, in order to be able to live with other men.

The book will also address the meaning and scope of Ortega's mature "philosophy of vital reason" and "philosophy of historical reason" (especially in chapter "Historical Reason"), evaluating its actuality in the face of contemporary issues in culture, history, science, and philosophy. His perspectivism, a clue to his understanding of the relations of reason to life—beyond the false alternatives of dogmatic rationalism and skeptical relativism, will also be addressed in this chapter. But first, in chapter "Ortega's Exiles", we will give a brief account of Ortega's intellectual activities during his 10 years exile in France, Argentina, and Portugal. Actually, it was during these years that the Spanish philosopher elaborated his mature philosophy of Historical Reason, in two important Lectures held in 1940 and 1944 in Buenos Aires and Lisbon, respectively. It was also in exile that Ortega began the drafts of his future posthumously published book *El Hombre y la Gente*, although he only gave it its final form after his return to Spain in 1946.

Exile was for Ortega a dramatic experience. Of course, it is always a dramatic experience for someone who is forced to go through it; a foreign country means, most of the times, a foreign language, a strange landscape, the brake of most of the familiar and friendly ties. It may also be accompanied by severe financial problems and difficulties in finding a job. Ortega and his family experienced all this. Besides, serious health problems affected Ortega during his exiles in three different countries and he never really recovered from them. If problems of money were always felt, they were also intertwingled with the brake of personal relations; it was particularly the case in the Espasa-Calpe "affair," when this well-known publishing house—whose new executive officers were very close to the nationalist regime that won the Spanish Civil War—refused to continue making payments for Ortega's covenant.

The circumstances of the exile help us to understand some aspects of Ortega's philosophy of "Historical Reason." "Historical Reason" is much more than a philosophy of history, capable of rivaling with those of Hegel and of the German Historical School of the nineteenth century. With this label, Ortega proposes to offer an interpretation of historical events in connection with human life, i.e., according to its meaning for social actors of the past and of the present. *En Torno a Galileo* is emblematic of Ortega's ideas. There he tries to show that historical events have a deep influence in human life, that the "historicity" of the past is just another name for that influence, and that a detached view of past events, as the one physical sciences can have regarding natural events, is nonsensical. Moreover, Ortega's philosophy of Historical Reason seems to address two important issues that are today at the center of philosophical and cultural debates: on the one hand, the crisis of some ideas inherited from the nineteenth century, namely, the belief that history equals indefinite progress, and, on the other hand, the concept of rational activity as a permanent endeavor to attain universal truths.

But under the label of Historical Reason Ortega will also address the relation between ideas and beliefs. The issue had occupied Ortega's mind for a long time. He used to employ the Spanish word *vigencia* (which means in English, at the same time, validity and duration) to express the fact that the dominant ideas (in philosophical, religious, political, or social matters) of one epoch were condemned to change and be replaced by other—not necessarily opposed—ideas in the following epoch. In his Lessons *En Torno a Galileo* he will even stress the importance of making a distinction between "changes in the world"—minor changes, generally corresponding to changes of generation—and "changes of world," those deep changes that generally follow an epoch of crisis (Ortega y Gasset, 2006: 416). But he also stresses the fact that these new ideas must lose their character of novelty and, of course, some of its accuracy to become widespread beliefs in an entire epoch. After all, Ortega's philosophy of Historical Reason seems to give a final answer to one of his basic and enduring problems: how is it possible to escape from the rationalism of Modernity, which looks at ideas *sub specie aeterni*, without falling in skepticism and relativism?

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“Spain Is the Problem; Europe Is the Solution”

1 The Krausist Movement

During Ortega’s youth and the first years of his apprenticeship that began at the Jesuit college of El Palo, after which he studied philosophy in Deusto and Madrid, the leading philosophical and political current in Spain was conducted by a series of thinkers inspired by the German philosopher Karl Krause, a former student of Fichte in the University of Jena. Although the main sources of their Krausist-inspired philosophy were Krause’s followers, Heinrich Ahrens and Guillaume Tiberghien, two philosophers of Law, one cannot simply dismiss the idea that Krause’s own philosophy was unknown to them. One of the leaders of the Spanish Krausist movement, Julián Sanz del Río, published a book entitled *El Ideal de la Humanidad para la Vida*, whose first edition appeared in 1860, where he stated the political and educational ideals of the Spanish Krausism. Actually, his efforts to make a public presentation of the philosophy of the German thinker began with a series of Lectures, in 1854, in the Central University of Madrid.[1]

During the second half of the nineteenth century and the first years of the twentieth century, Krausist-oriented politicians tried to bring Spain closer to the leading European nations, not only by strictly political means but also by serious efforts in the domain of public education. In 1906, the young Ortega—already studying in Berlin at the time—writes: “We Spanish don’t believe in education” (Ortega y Gasset, 2004a: 63). In March 1909, in an article published in *El Imparcial*, Ortega regrets that the efforts of Giner de los Ríos (another Krausist thinker) to give his Spanish fellow citizens good reasons for choosing the Europeanization program were fruitless (Ortega y Gasset, 2004d: 241). And again 7 years later, in his 1916 public Lecture “Pedagogía social como programa politico”—although strongly influenced by the

[1] Ten years before, in 1844, Sanz del Río had been sent to Germany by the Spanish government, charged with the mission of getting acquainted with German philosophy.

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educational ideas of the Neokantian philosopher Paul Natorp—Ortega retrieves the Krausist educational program, claiming a pedagogy able to educate the "inner man," i.e., the man that, at the same time, thinks, feels, and wants. Ciriaco Morón Arroyo has stressed the strong connection that the young Ortega established between these two philosophical traditions—i.e., Spanish Krausism and Neokantianism—regarding the problem of education and its political consequences. Albeit the aims of education are only attainable, according to Neokantian philosophy, in an asymptotical approach, and for the Krausists, on the contrary, they seem to be attainable in the course of history, as the outcome of the progress of culture (Morón Arroyo, 1968: 412), for both—Neokantians and Krausists—to work for the education of humanity has quite the same meaning: it means to work for the state, as the entity that, in each historical epoch, better embodies those aims (Morón Arroyo, 1968: 397).

The Krausist education program was not carried out exclusively inside the University. In 1874, Giner de los Ríos founded the Institución Libre de Enseñanza and 3 years later its Boletín, and both had a large cultural and political influence in Spain, until the beginning of the twentieth century. Joaquim Costa, a famous liberal Krausist politician that Ortega greatly admired and whose political action he publicly supported, was a close collaborator of Giner de los Ríos in the Institución. Costa's claims that University Chairs should be open toward the public space (Jeschke, 1946: 41) will have a deep impact in the way Ortega looked to the role he was destined to play in the Spanish circumstance of his time[2]: he wrote intensely in newspapers about cultural and political matters until the beginning of the 1930s.

Education, however, was not the only concern of Krausist thinkers and politicians. The other was Spain's national problem and the question of the claims for autonomy from the several nationalities that formed the Spanish state, namely, the Basques and the Catalans. Krausists were strong supporters of a unified Spain, but they looked to that unity not as the outcome of military power, but as the outcome of the voluntary process of unification that—at least so they thought—was going on in Spain for centuries. A certain form of nationalism meant for them particularism or even provincialism; Krausists, on the contrary, believed in the universal ideas of Modern Age.[3] In matters concerning the political regime, some Krausists were inclined to a republican solution: the monarchy had atrophied Spain's process of formation and contributed to its backwardness compared with the more advanced European nations. One has only to read some of the most important political texts of Ortega of the first two decades of the twentieth century, like, for instance,

[2] It seems that, much later, the Spanish dictator Primo de Rivera adopted some points of Costa's political and social program. Perhaps that is the reason why Ortega adopted a somewhat dubious position regarding Primo de Rivera's dictatorship, to which he was accused at the time to give a mild support. Anyway, the future republican governments of Spain will also adopt significant parts of Costa's ideas.

[3] One must read the abovementioned booklet of Sanz Del Río, *El Ideal de la Humanidad para la Vida* (in part a paraphrase of some texts from Karl Krause) to be convinced of this. On the relation between universalism and patriotism in the Spanish Krausists, see Serrano (1990: 109–111). On the originality of Sanz del Río's book regarding the accusations of plagiarism, see Rueda Garrido (2015: 617).

"Vieja y Nueva Política" to see that, regardless the sometimes bitter criticisms, Ortega and his generation were indebted to the Krausist efforts to redress Spanish life. To prove the extent of this debt, one could also quote some sentences of an emotional article Ortega wrote in the Madrid newspaper *El Sol*, in December of 1917, by the occasion of the death of the last representative of that Krausist generation that fought for the ideal of the Spanish republic: Gumersindo de Azcárate. Ortega writes, "[…] nothing perhaps shows better what the Spanish future will be than the fact that we, the men of white shield, feel much more closer to the men of 1869 than to the restaurationists"[4] (Ortega y Gasset, 2005: 33).

Why Sanz del Río and his friends chose, among other German philosophical systems, the system of Karl Krause has been much debated. Sanz del Río himself stressed the fact that it was the most close to the Spanish mind and way of feeling, especially in religious matters (Jeschke, 1946: 25 ff.). This book is not the proper place to discuss the Spanish Krausist movement, but one thing seems clear: it inaugurated a huge controversy between Spanish intellectuals about the meaning of the Spanish way of being, about the means to regenerate Spanish public life, and the relations between Spain and European culture. As we will see below and in the next chapters, this controversy, 50 years after the publication of the abovementioned book of Sanz del Río, i.e., during Ortega's youth, was still going on.

2 The Generation of '98

The Krausists failed to redress Spain, although the Krausist program has left some imprints in Ortega's thought, as we will see later. This failure was not only the personal failure of a group of men but also the failure of a whole nation, incapable of redressing itself. The consequence was the crisis of 1898, the loss of the remains of the Spanish empire, the dramatic awakening of the consciousness of Spain's insignificance in the world political affairs. That's the reason why Ortega tries to save the men of '98 from the criticisms addressed to them: they were accused of having done nothing except criticize the state of affairs of their time. However, Ortega asks: when nothing can be done because the soil that would make action fructify doesn't exist, what else remains except the critical and analytical work that a future generation may perhaps resume, in order to prepare the possibility of a new life (Ortega y Gasset, 2004f: 603)?

The expression "Generation of '98" was probably coined by Ortega himself, in the article "Competencias" written in 1913 and published in *El Imparcial*. At the end of this same year, Azorín, one of the main representatives of that generation, resumed it in "La generación de 1898" (Abellán, 1991: 190). According to José Luis

[4] By "men of white shield," Ortega means his own generation. The fact that the shield is white, i.e., without an emblem, probably means that this generation is still looking for the way to accomplish its tasks. 1869 is the date of a revolutionary upheaval whose major outcome was to give Spain a liberal constitution.

Abellán, the Generation of '98 may be characterized by two main features: (1) a strong relation with the previous generation, the generation of the "restauración" with which it shared the same concern for a reform of Spanish institutions, which led at least their main representatives—Azorín, Baroja, Unamuno[5]—to share in their youth socialist-oriented ideals; (2) a characteristic aesthetic way of addressing the Spanish problems. Consequently, while the members of the "restauración" wrote textbooks of sociology or political science, the members of the Generation of '98 wrote above all novels and poems (Abellán, 1989: 173). Even if we think that Abellán's diagnosis is a bit exaggerated, nevertheless it agrees with the broad Orteguian diagnosis of the "insufficiencies" of the Generation of '98; that's one of the reasons why Ortega will replaced its cultural program by his own doctrine of "salvation" of the Spanish circumstance.

Ortega's reaction to the ideals of the Generation of '98 was not immediate and seems to have even resisted his first contact with German science in 1905–1906. In August of 1906, he published an article in *El Imparcial*, "Pedagogy of the Landscape," which is in part a reaction to the *Social Pedagogy* of Paul Natorp (Ortega y Gasset, 2004b: 101). Natorp's "wonderful book," as Ortega labels it, lacks the reference to the relation of the individual with the landscape, which is as important for his education as the acquisition of ethical principles. In this article appears the alter ego of Ortega's youth, the mystic Rubin de Cendoya. As Morón Arroyo rightly notes, this alter ego (that was also the pseudonym under which he signed some of his early writings) is not the proof of the eventual relevance of mysticism properly speaking for Ortega, but rather, in the years from 1906 to 1908, the proof of his close relation with the Spanish spirit, at least regarding those features that opposed it the more to the spirit of modern Europe.[6]

On the whole, however, the experience of the social and cultural program of the Generation of '98 seems to have been for Ortega one of deception. In 1909 he wrote a very critical article in *El Imparcial* regarding Miguel de Unamuno's views about the Europeanization program. A close analysis of this article is of great importance for our present purpose. Unamuno had published in the Madrid daily newspaper *ABC* an article against the "Europeanizers" that he just labeled "simple minded people".[7] Ortega comes again to the problem of the Spanish science, but the problem is actually twofold: there is the problem of the existence in Spain of a scientific research comparable to the research made in the most advanced European countries; but there is also the problem of the scientific study of Spanish culture, namely, its language and its literature. Even in the latter case, he concludes, Spain is far beyond what European nations and particularly Germany are doing. Behind Ortega's rather

[5] I count Unamuno as a member of the Generation of '98, like Ortega. It seems the issue is debatable. Jeschke (1946: 91 ff.) puts the members of the Generation in two different groups, but doesn't count Unamuno in any of them, calling him a precursor.

[6] As Morón Arroyo also notes (1968: 72), from 1908 onward the ideas of Rubin de Cendoya, namely, in the field of religion, are those of Hermann Cohen. Cendoya is Ortega's alter ego insofar as, through him, the Spanish philosopher shows his own philosophical evolution.

[7] The original Spanish word was "papanatas." It can also mean "fools."

fierce irony, we guess the melancholic conclusion that Spanish affairs are more thoroughly addressed by foreigners than by Spaniards.

Ortega’s polemic relation to the Generation of ‘98 will only come to an end by the time of the publication of his first book, the *Mediations on Quixote*, which was the outcome of a long reflection about Spain and the ways of redressing it. In its early form, i.e., most likely in 1911, when Ortega began to assimilate Husserl’s phenomenology through the reading of the *Logical Investigations* and was still imbued with the spirit of Neokantian philosophy that had marked his training at Marburg University, this work was entitled “The Agony of the Novel” and was an attempt to explain what Ortega then called the failure of the novels of Pío Baroja, one of the exponents of the Generation of ‘98.

The evaluation of the meaning of the Generation of ‘98 intersects with two other problems in the genesis of Ortega’s thinking: his Neokantian training in Marburg (where he stayed twice: in 1906 and 1910–1911) and the assimilation of phenomenology and the farewell to Neokantism (which happens in 1912). (This evaluation covers two different phases, the pre-phenomenological and the phenomenological, changing, however, during the transition from the first to the second.) To respect the chronological order, the second and the third items must be postponed until the Part Two of this chapter. For the moment, I will only address the first, i.e., Ortega’s evaluation of the Generation of ‘98, or at least its “hard core”: Pío Baroja, Ramiro de Maeztu, and Miguel de Unamuno.

As Ortega says, they all are “barbaric” authors. Strange as it may seem, the word “barbaric” here has a positive connotation, which it does not always retain in Ortega’s texts. They may be called barbarians owing to the way they rebel against a cultural, social, and political order that is fundamentally false. This reaction of the Generation of ‘98 is purely negative, although Ortega acknowledges the positive side of its sincerity: and sincerity is a key concept for understanding much of Ortega’s thinking and the way he evaluates a great number of philosophical and cultural trends. One must not forget that he accuses philosophies as different as Neokantism or German Idealism of “insincerity,” that is, of projecting their own systematic constructions on the reality they are trying to grasp (Ortega y Gasset, 2009: 147). The Generation of ‘98, therefore, is sincere: it seeks to dethrone the dishonest dominant culture (i.e., the values prevailing in Spain in the terminal period of the Regeneration), a culture that is mere convention with no roots in life, and it seeks a return to the “natural,” to the wild man, as Ortega says, to the “orangutan,” which is a part of us all, our animal part. A text by the young Ortega, written in 1912, entitled “Pío Baroja: Anatomy of a Dispersed Soul” (Ortega y Gasset, 2007: 270–294), is essential to understand this problem, because there are very complicated problems here. First, because sincerity, being essential to the philosopher or the artist, cannot be their only virtue; secondly, because our animal part has to be educated and cultivated, the “orangutan” that each of us brings in himself must rise to the awareness of his own humanity. In this form of an opposition between animal life and culture, partly inherited from Georg Simmel, appears the opposition, which we will find again in later phases of Ortega’s philosophy, between two egos: the one who strives to be human and the one who keeps below human possibilities.

3 Europe as the Solution

The Krausist generation was the first to point its finger to the causes of the backwardness of Spain, even before the crisis of 1898. The reason is the long and persistent withdrawal of Spain from the more advanced European nations. The desire—not at all shared by the Generation of '98—to get Spain closer to the level of civilization already attained by France, England, or Germany was very strong since the middle of the nineteenth century in some sectors of the Spanish *intelligentsia*. In "Competencia" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004f: 604) Ortega mentions the fact that the famous Spanish biologist Ramon y Cajal (and Nobel Prize in Medicine) writes in his book *Reglas y Conceptos sobre Investigación Biológica* that the cause of Spain's illness consists in its withdrawal from European science, not in its climate, the poverty of its people, or its bad governments.

In *El Sistema de Ortega y Gasset*, Morón Arroyo makes some interesting remarks on Ortega's interpretation of the meaning of European culture (Morón Arroyo, 1968: 324 ff.).[8] For the young Ortega, Europe and especially Germany meant science and hygiene, i.e., clarity in the realm of ideas and a healthy lifestyle. In a way close to the one Husserl will adopt later, in the *Crisis of the European Sciences*, Europe means life as it has to be, i.e., life according to reason, and not life as it has always been, according to tradition and long established moral standards. Later, when Ortega comes to a valuation of the Mediterranean spirit, namely, in the *Meditations on Quixote*, he will modify his earlier point of view, but will never give it up completely. If the Mediterranean nations and above all Spain are characterized by a sensibility to luminosity, to the vividness of forms and to the small details that daylight can reveal, the nations of the north have contributed to the European spirit with the no less necessary attention to man's inner life. And at least in his Neokantian phase, Ortega thinks that without this attention—be it conducted by cognitive, ethical, or aesthetical motives—no man can be called cultured, no matter the amount of material progress (above all scientific) he can take profit of. In an article for *El Imparcial*, of 28 October 1907, he writes:

> Perhaps no other plainly historical epoch has been so alien as ours to the feeling of and to the concern with culture. Today, civilization, which is a very different thing, is enough for us, and we are satisfied when someone tells us that we go today, from Madrid to Soria, in lesser time that a century before, forgetting that only if we go to Soria to do something more exact, more just or more beautiful than what our grandparents have done, will the fastness of the voyage be humanely praiseworthy. Now, we must recognize that civilization is nothing more than the set of techniques, of the means with which we tame this huge and wild animal of nature to obtain supernatural ends. (Ortega y Gasset, 2004c: 117)

[8] If we accept the general line of Morón Arroyo's arguments, we don't accept the periodization he advances in his book of Ortega's evolution that seems to be very close to that of Ferrater Mora. According to Ferrater Mora, this early phase of Ortega's evolution, corresponding to his journeys to Germany, should be labelled "the objectivistic phase." Anyway, what Morón Arroyo says about the meaning of Europa for Ortega is not affected by his periodization. In the following chapters, we will propose a totally different one.

This small quotation tells us a lot about Ortega's thinking at the time. First of all, it says that Europe is not only the place of scientific reason, but above all the place where science is put at the service of higher-order ends, i.e., ethical ends. Civilization is not downright technical progress, like, for instance, the increase in velocity to overcome the distances. To be a man is not the same as to be a good technician. However, that is not the most important. Ortega's motto in 1914, in the *Meditations on Quixote*, *benefac loco illo quo natus est*, is clearly perceptible in these words of 1907, and it indicates the right path to the understanding of his Europeanization program. Only the sharp opposition at the end, between the "wild animal of nature" and the "supernatural ends," still sounds too much Neokantian.

The next series of three articles in *El Imparcial*, from November and December of 1907, entitled "Teoría del Clasicismo," spreads a new light in the complex problem of the meaning of Europe. Now, Ortega stresses the fact that without Greek civilization, Europe would only be one more cultural variety, like Asia or Africa. But that implies that we know how to look to Greece; not with romantic (or nostalgic) eyes, as if Greece was something belonging to the past. Ortega labels this way of looking "materialistic"; through it Greece appears like something rigid and fixed, immobilized in a distant past. Surprisingly, Ortega says that to put our eyes in Greek civilization is not the same as contemplating the beauties of Greek art. The reason is that art can be looked at from a mere historical point of view, even if some epochs in art history (namely, Greek art) may be seen as a kind of a historical pattern. Only to the extent we share the same ideals of Greek knowledge and ethics can Greece have a historical meaning for us, modern Europeans, or for us who endeavor to attain the level that the advanced modern nations have already attained.[9]

4 Ortega's Early Political Ideas

If one reads the first volume of the critical edition of Ortega's *Complete Works*, one will easily note the great number of newspaper articles dedicated to political matters. If one is not acquainted with Ortega's work and his university career, one could be inclined to think that all those articles were not also the outcome of an intensive philosophical training. Perhaps those articles can be read and understood by the sole reference to the Spanish political and social situation of those days. But one who follows this narrow line of thought will be missing something very important, and this will be the roots and the final purpose of the overall Orteguian educational program, of which politics alone was just a part. One will not understand why a trained

[9] A very fine analysis of this early Orteguian theory of culture can be found in San Martin (1998: 39 ff.). Regarding the problem addressed above, the point, at least it seems to me, is the following, from the Neokantian perspective Ortega adopts at the time: when someone looks to Greek art (or to any other artistic work of the past), there is the danger of looking to the final product and not to the process of production. And the last, not the first, is the really important from an anthropological point of view. I will come to this issue later, in the Second Part of this chapter.

Neokantian philosopher that will afterward embrace phenomenology has spent—and will spent in the next few decades—such amount of time writing for newspapers.[10]

We have already spoken about the importance of the Krausist movement, and we must come to it again. Perhaps Ortega's reaction to his Neokantian training, at least in political and social matters, was not exclusively motivated by his discovery of the new philosophical continent represented by phenomenology. Some of the ideas he opposes to Neokantian philosophy of culture had roots in the way the Krausist liberal thinkers (and especially Joaquím Costa) looked to the task they intended to carry during the time of the so-called Spanish *Restauración*. Little after Costa's death in 1911, Ortega wrote an interesting article for *El Imparcial* entitled "Observaciones," published in the edition of March 25. One feels immediately that Ortega's presentation of Costa's program aims to show two different albeit complementary things: (1) that Costa and his generation were unable to fulfill what they has promised and (2) that this promise, i.e., the regeneration of Spain, has to be resumed by those who dare to inherit Costa's program. But the way Ortega makes this presentation needs further analysis. Actually, Ortega says that Costa's program looked for a balance between the universal ideals of Enlightenment and the "particularism" of the romantic generation. Of course, as Ortega acknowledges, we need universal concepts to see clearly, i.e., not to get lost in the irrelevant details; but the function of the concept is just to allow us to see better the particular, not to make it disappear. A tendency toward the universal and a tendency toward the particular are like two opposed virtues (Ortega y Gasset, 2004e: 407), which have in themselves the limitation that stems from that virtuosity they have. But Enlightenment and romanticism are just two dogmas.

Since that time Ortega defined himself as a liberal, although his concept of "liberalism" has undergone some changes during his philosophical activity. In the years of his Neokantian training, perhaps under the influence of the social thought of Paul Natorp, he felt himself close to the political program of the Spanish Socialist Workers Party, although to call him a socialist would be greatly exaggerated. Ortega has an "ideal" view of socialism as much as he had an "ideal" view of liberalism, in his early years. In some of his early writings, he explains that an ideal view of reality means to put before the acceptance of what exist the acknowledgment of what ought to be, i.e., moral values. To be a conservative means exactly the opposite, to deny the ethical value of ideals and keep an attachment to old political formulas (Ortega y Gasset, 2004c 143).

Ideals go beyond constitutional rules; they are a kind of norm that urges to go beyond established all norms in search of the realization of justice. In a very Kantian fashion, Ortega argues that no political constitution can allow its own political subversion, but those things can happen any time ideals find no way to accomplish themselves in the constitutional order. As he states, we face in these cases a kind of

[10] In 1917 Ortega will regret that someone with specialized philosophical training finds in Spain so few people with whom to hold a conversation in strict scientific or philosophical terms. Although this might be true, it's only a part of the issue.

agraphoi nomoi, i.e., not written laws that urge us to act in a certain way.[11] One may be surprised by seeing Ortega connect liberalism and revolution, a connection that in his mature years he will no longer sustain. But what Ortega means by revolution in his juvenile writings has nothing to do with the twentieth century's notion of revolution, especially the one that takes as it model the Russian Revolution of 1917. For Ortega, liberalism is revolutionary as long as it maintains the faith in the moral ideals it inspired throughout the nineteenth-century history and keeps his distance from parliamentary games and skinny political compromises with conservative policies.

No wonder then that Ortega dares to call himself a liberal socialist. In 1908, he sees no contradiction between these two words. When a new and original right emerges, there should the liberal be; that's according to Ortega the meaning of a liberal political tradition. Now, the beginning of the twentieth century has witnessed the rise of a new idea: the socialist idea (Ortega y Gasset, 2004c: 145); the working-men claim for social justice. Anyway, we must reckon here the presence of a permanent feature of Ortega's social and political thought: the refusal of any kind of utopia. An ideal, he stresses, is not a utopia, nor a dream, but rather the anticipation of a future reality required by moral imperatives.

5 Ortega's Initial Philosophy of Human Life

Julián Marias, a famous disciple and interpreter of Ortega's philosophy, tried to find in Ortega's juvenile essays, namely, those pertaining to his Neokantian phase, the beginnings of his future racio-vitalistic philosophy. Marias mentions, for example, an essay written in 1910, entitled "Adán en el Paraíso," as a proof of that. And in fact, in this essay we can find the sentence "man is the problem of life." Anyway, it's arguable that this sentence means that life is a problem for man. Probably, it doesn't mean the emergence of a philosophy of life in the middle of a Neokantian-inspired philosophical anthropology, but just the other way around: life becomes a problem to itself by means of human life, which means that this one must be raised according to universal norms that give life its full meaning. A philosophy of life, for the mature Ortega, can only be a philosophy of individual life, because only individual life is a radical reality.[12] We will come to this issue again in the next chapters.

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[11] Ortega is very probably remembering the famous verses of Sophocles' *Antigone* (454–455) where the heroine claims her divine right to bury his brother, against the orders and laws of the city.

[12] Of course, since his juvenile writings Ortega stresses the importance of beginning philosophical efforts by a radical, i.e., systematic reality. After his farewell to Neokantianism and his adhesion to phenomenology, he will resume this idea, and when later he begins criticizing phenomenology one of the reasons he conveys for his criticisms is the lack of systematicity that phenomenology shows. Speaking about the young Ortega, Morón Arroyo seems to say that this concern with systematicity means the transference of the physical-mathematical pattern of rigor to other domains (1968: 91). If this is Morón Arroyo's opinion, it is not totally acceptable, and Ortega's text that Morón Arroyo quotes before making this statement, from the article "Renan," of 1909, contradicts what he says. We discuss this issue in the next lines of our text above.

But Ortega’s discovery of this radical reality had what we may perhaps call a preparatory phase during his Neokantian training in Marburg, in which Hermann Cohen’s ethics (or Cohen’s reinterpretation of Kantian ethics) played an important role. We can see the ongoing discovery of individual life behind utterances and statements inadequate to express its real nature. The article “La teología de Renan,” from February 1910, is an interesting example of what we have just said. One cannot say that Ortega simply ignores individual life, but he valuates it only to the extent that it endeavors to achieve universal and objective goals, i.e., goals that can profit the whole humanity. But in these goals, one attained, the really significant is not the subjective effort that tended toward them, but their objective meaning or validity for all. (We find here the reason why Ferrater Mora labelled the early phase of Ortega’s thought the “objective” one.) That is why, Ortega continues to say, men called them divine predicates: justice, for instance, is not the sum total of the just actions performed by men thanks to the inner forces of the human spirit (Ortega y Gasset, 2004f, 334). Only reflection is able to destroy such an illusion, showing that “God” is only the name for transindividual (i.e., objective) validity.

In March 1911, Ortega has changed. It’s too risky to say that any early contact with phenomenological philosophy (perhaps the reading of the *Logical Investigations*) was the cause of this change. The fact is that in an article about the political situation in Spain and the legacy of Joaquim Costa’s politics, Ortega comes to take some distance regarding the worldview of the Enlightenment and its extension in the nineteenth-century historicism; this, Ortega claims, allows us to see from a distance the general course of the historical events, but is unable to take hold of the individual life of each collectivity. Moreover, the nineteenth-century historicism is the creator of the idea of progress, i.e., the idea that each people must go through the same path and the same stages in order to attain a universal goal (Ortega y Gasset, 2004e: 407).

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Ortega and Germany

1 Germany: A Country That Works

Ortega's philosophical training in Germany covers a period that goes from 1905 to 1911. At the beginning of the year 1905, the 22-year-old Ortega makes his first journey to Germany, where he spent two semesters in Leipzig and Berlin. He returns to Spain in February of 1906, but, at the beginning of the Winter Semester of that same year, he returns to Germany, this time to Marburg. A last journey will take place in 1910. The reason Ortega offers to go to Germany is the need to study Kant's philosophy. In fact, many years later, in 1924, at the beginning of a remarkable paper on the occasion of the celebration of the 200th anniversary of Kant's birth, Ortega writes: "During ten years I have lived inside Kantian thought; I breathed it like an atmosphere and it was, at the same time, my home and my prison. I have very much doubts that who has not done a similar thing may clearly see the meaning of our times." It is a very clear and honest statement. It points out the two main reasons for those three journeys: to understand Kant's thought, as a representative of those modern trends in philosophy from which Spain was kept apart, and to understand the meaning of Modern Times, which was illustrated by the spirit of Kantian philosophy.

Instead of writing "Ortega and Germany," as I did in the title of the present chapter, I could have written "Ortega and Spain." In fact it is not Germany that is a problem for Ortega, but Spain. However it is Germany, i.e., what Germany meant from the philosophical, cultural, social, and political point of view, which will enable Ortega to identify the Spanish problem (which he will diagnose as constituting Spain's departure from modernity), as well as the means to remedy it. This is, however, still a very schematic way of presenting the issue and in the long run somewhat misleading. Because the issue "Spain" arises for Ortega on several levels simultaneously.

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1. In the first place, a departure does not mean a delay in every aspects of culture. Thus, if Spanish science is weak or even non-existent, as Ortega argues in a controversy with Menendez Pelayo in a juvenile essay (Ortega y Gasset, 2004a: 90), Spanish art, and not only that of the *Siglo de Oro*, is far superior to all artistic achievements of the European countries that entered modernity and participated in its cultural achievements.
2. Secondly, according to Ortega, modernity—from which Spain was always kept apart since the seventeenth century—is coming to an end, and, under such conditions, what, from a certain point of view, may be considered a delay may otherwise be an opportunity, not only for Spain but also for Europe.
3. Next, if Germany produced the quintessential philosophical systems of modernity (we may generically call them "idealistic systems") and the world-visions corresponding to them, it also produced the system which allows philosophy to come out of it by the time modernity is coming to an end.
4. Finally, the system that makes it possible to get out of modernity—we will see that for Ortega, at least between 1912 and 1929, it is phenomenology—needs the contribution of the Spanish spirit to develop what it just promises (without fully keeping its promises) in the rich analyses it made possible.

The following analyses will thus cover only a small period of Ortega's intellectual life, roughly the one between the 1910 essay "Adam in Paradise" and the Lessons entitled *What is Philosophy?*. I will not be able to speak of later works in which the influence of German authors is also felt, such as *Man and People*, where the presence of Max Scheler and Alfred Schütz is strongly felt,[1] nor to address the reaction to Husserl's essays of 1936 on the crisis of the European sciences, which Ortega mistakenly put under the authorship of Eugen Fink.[2] And even for the period considered, my references to German culture will have to be very limited. I can't say nothing about Nietzsche or Simmel, which are very important for understanding *The Theme of our Time*, or about Martin Heidegger, without which the *Principles of Metaphysics*, from 1932 to 1933, cannot be fully understood. Nor can I mention Ortega's wonderful essay entitled *Ideas and Beliefs*, in which—not always very successfully—intersect the influences of phenomenology and of Wilhelm Dilthey's historicism. There is also another reason why I don't address Dilthey's philosophy here. Although he was still philosophically active in 1905, when Ortega went to Berlin, Ortega seems to have not met him nor attended his Lessons. Later, acknowledging strong similitudes between himself and Dilthey, he will claim that he developed his own ideas independently of the German thinker, with whose works he only several years later took acquaintance. I think there is no serious reason to doubt his testimony.[3]

[1] The relation of Ortega to these two German thinkers will be addressed in chapter "Ortega's Aesthetics", about Ortega's anthropology.

[2] Some sketchy references to this reaction will be made below, in chapter "Ortega's Social Philosophy", about Ortega and idealism.

[3] However, in a letter to his friend Federico de Onís, from 12 July 1912, Ortega already speaks of historical reason as an "extreme form" of pure reason. Javier Bonilla (2013: 95) calls this expres-

2 The *Meditations on Quixote*

Basically, my purpose in the Part Two of this chapter is very modest and not very original: I intend, with the theme “Ortega and Germany,” to shed some light on the genesis of the *Meditations on Quixote*, the first book Ortega published in 1914. What I aim to demonstrate is the following: the book of 1914 closes a first period of the debate between Ortega (at that time a partisan of the Europeanization of Spain) and the adversaries of the Europeanization, a debate that took place roughly between 1905 and 1912. Moreover, as I also intend to show, at the end of this period Ortega will slightly change his position and, although never departing from his initial purposes of redressing Spain, acknowledges the reasons underlying some of the arguments of his adversaries.

Since my subject is Ortega and Germany, perhaps readers would expect that I speak with some detail of the “Prologue to Germans,” which Ortega thought of as an introduction to a German translation of a selection of his works in 1934, which was never published during his lifetime. But this text poses particular difficulties of interpretation, which make it, by itself, the theme for a chapter with more limited objectives than the present one. (Anyway, we will mention it in chapter “Ortega’s Social Philosophy”.) Although the “Prologue to Germans” is a very rich philosophical text, it contains a part of hindsight and self-interpretation that is not entirely accurate. By this I mean that Ortega attributes to himself ideas about Husserl’s phenomenology as early as 1912, which in reality he will only come to express from 1929 onward, in part as a result of the reading of Heidegger’s *Being and Time*. On the other hand, there is the problem of a non-coincidence between the original Spanish text, which is found in volume VIII of the critical edition of the *Complete Works*, and the text that was translated into German. In the latter, a few paragraphs have disappeared, in which Ortega makes an assessment about the historical significance of phenomenology and gives a wrong explanation for the relationship that exists between the Ego of the natural attitude—which performs[4] intentional acts directed at the things themselves—and the transcendental Ego, which, in Ortega’s opinion, merely reflects about the former. This disappearance of a part which Ortega, however, did not erase in his own manuscript, can only have the following explanation. In 1934, during the time in which his text was being translated into German, Ortega paid a visit to Husserl and Eugen Fink in Freiburg, with whom he had lengthy conversations about phenomenology. One of the two must surely have pointed out to him the mistake he had made: reflection does not entail the loosing of executive consciousness. In consequence, Ortega must have decided to remove

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sion an echo of the philosophy of Dilthey. Perhaps the relations between Ortega and Dilthey need to be revisited. Anyway, in 1912 Ortega was probably acquainted with the problems of historical reason through the reading of Husserl’s essay “Philosophy as a rigorous science.” Of course, the fact that he read it doesn’t mean that he agreed with Husserl’s position regarding historicism.

[4] The Spanish word is *ejecuta* (executes). In chapters “Ortega, Phenomenology and Idealism” and “Ortega’s Social Philosophy”, addressing directly the relations of Ortega to phenomenology, we will see that “execution” is Ortega’s successful attempt to translate the German word *Vollzug*.

from the German text that part which he then realized was not well. It would not be appropriate to address this very complicated issue here,[5] but in any case, I point out that the problem of the two Egos—not always identified by this name—is a constant problem in Ortega until his last writings. We'll meet him in a moment (and that's why I mention it now) on a small but important youth essay on the Spanish novelist Pío Baroja, one of the main representatives of the Generation of '98.

The *Meditations on Quixote*, published in 1914, is as I already said Ortega's first book, the first work of phenomenology in the Spanish language and probably, if we except (and only partially) Husserl's essay entitled "Philosophy as a Rigorous Science," the first work to try a systematic application of phenomenology to the problems of culture. Hence its novelty, its exceptional importance, but also the enormous difficulties of understanding that it still offers today to the interpreter. Philosophy for Ortega, although a theoretical science, must have a practical side (San Martín, 1994: 22). This practical side—i.e., the way a philosophy is able to address the problems of culture and the solutions it can offer to redress it—is a kind of touchstone of its theoretical validity. We will soon see how an impressive and complex system of philosophy, like Neokantianism, failed in this regard and why Ortega thought that phenomenology had opened new possibilities.

3 Neokantian Aesthetics

We should bear in mind some fundamental traits of the Marburg Neokantian School of Philosophy, since, as Ortega received his philosophical training in Marburg, it is to a large extent about his Neokantian masters that he is thinking when he calls for a Europeanization program for Spain. This program is summarized in his well-known statement: "Spain is the problem; Europe is the solution" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004e: 404). On the other hand, Ortega's reaction to Neokantism and its slow departure from it, coinciding with his assimilation of the fundamental theses of Husserl's phenomenology, which he came into contact with around 1912—or perhaps a little earlier, in 1911, at the final stage of his second stay in Marburg—is perhaps the most significant event in his philosophical trajectory. Such a reaction, in strictly philosophical terms, was a reaction against idealism in its most extreme variant; but it probably began as a rejection of Hermann Cohen's aesthetic ideas expressed in his work *Kants Begründung der Ästhetik*. The failure of Neokantian aesthetics, particularly regarding the possibility of understanding Spanish art, seems to have fueled the process of Ortega's farewell to idealism. It is therefore justified that we give this issue a thorough explanation.

Aesthetics is for Neokantism one of the three parts into which the total system of philosophy is divided; philosophy of knowledge and moral philosophy are the remaining two. In this tripartition we obviously recognize the content and

[5] I will make some further comments on this crucial issue in the next chapter, pp. 43 ff.

purpose of each of the three Kant's critiques. But Marburg Neokantism is not limited to the repetition of Kant's main tenets, or to pleading for a return to Kant, to a Kant that was not "contaminated" by the speculative interpretation of his philosophy by German idealism. Neokantianism also provides an original understanding of Kant's philosophy, based on the interpretation of certain significant passages of his works. In the context of the philosophy of knowledge, Hermann Cohen's interpretation will be supported, fundamentally, by the "Analytic of the Principles" of the *Critique of Pure Reason* and more specifically by the principle Kant labeled "Principle of the Anticipations of Perception." From a cognitive point of view, Cohen argues that consciousness produces its own content, which anticipates the encounter with sense data, and sense data, from which knowledge is supposed to depart, is only the outer limit that consciousness encounters when it sees that its own cognitive work is done. We can compare this procedure with what happens in the process of solving an equation, where the unknown values are determined from previously known quantities. Seemingly, from the point of view of moral philosophy, consciousness produces the law that regulates its own action, a law that Kant called the categorical imperative. When consciousness, at last, produces a content that is not relevant neither to the knowledge of nature nor to moral action, we find ourselves in the presence of a work of art. But there is a problem here, as we shall see, since there are no other products that consciousness can offer other than those stemming from the knowledge of nature or from moral law. So, in this case, when we speak of the "production of a content," we speak, in the first place, of the production process and not of the contents produced. We are then, as Hermann Cohen said, within the realm of pure feeling, in other words, the realm of aesthetics.

The fact that a work of art is independent either of object-oriented knowledge or of a will focused on the conformity to moral law means that nature and moral law, from the point of view of aesthetics, only produce the material that art can use (San Martín, 1994: 262). But, for Neokantianism, this entails a consequence that Ortega will refuse to acknowledge. Cognition is abstract by definition in that each thing is seen as an instantiation of a general law that governs it. Moral law is also abstract, at least in the Kantian sense of morality; it legislates, not according to individuals and situations, but in view of the agreement of the will with the pure principles of action. Thus the principles of pure feeling, which govern the creation of a work of art, should, according to Neokantism—at least on behalf of the equilibrium between the three parts into which the total system of philosophy is divided—be so abstract as pure knowledge and pure will. Accordingly, a work of art should be judged by these abstract principles, and any representation, in order to be called artistic, must be in line with them.

In nature, which the physical-mathematical sciences take as their subject, there are no individuals, but only space-temporal objects ruled by universal laws; science deals only with generic cases. In art, by contrast, there are only individuals, who, not being governed by natural laws (in which case they would be the subject of science), can be governed only by themselves. However, this can only mean, since we have not left the level of the abstract universal, that in a work of art an individual

must be ruled by its idea. More precisely, the work of art is made up of individuals in tension with their idea; in other words, art is made up of symbols. Since this idea must be the same to all humanity, art gathers all individuals around their own humanity. Ortega, still in his Neokantian phase, will say that art represents the permanent conditions of vitality, man as inhabitant of the planet, or, in his own words, “Adam in Paradise,” the title of an essay he wrote in 1910.

According to Julián Marías, this juvenile essay was the first formulation of Ortega’s mature philosophy of vital reason. Marías, in my opinion, was wrong, and we will soon see why. Another Ortega scholar, Philip Silver, says more accurately that this Adam of the 1910 essay is a sort of surrogate of the “transcendental unity of apperception” of which Kant speaks in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (Silver, 1978: 45). John Graham, on the other hand, attempted to find in this essay the presence of aspects common to Ortega and William James’ pragmatist philosophy. As he himself states, it is not the properly aesthetic content of this essay that interests him in the first place (Graham, 1994: 116). This lack of interest, however, had consequences, since Silver is thus unable to see to what extent the overcoming of a philosophy of the abstract universal by a philosophy of concrete individual life is due to Ortega’s contact with phenomenology. Ortega, who, in his own words, writes “Adam in Paradise” to understand the emotions that come from contemplating Ignacio Zuloaga’s paintings,[6] will quickly realize that Neokantian aesthetics does not provide him with the concepts that would allow this understanding.

Now, concrete individual life has an “animal side,” which is difficult to grasp in what Ortega calls its executivity with the help of the pure principles of knowledge and action. Ortega’s experience with Neokantism, which I will obviously not develop here in full length, is a kind of testing of the limits of Neokantism, that is, of the points where it inevitably fails. A permanent thesis of Ortega—at least I believe so—is that the universal not only does not subsume the whole particular (which would be Kant’s thesis) but also does not construct it entirely (according to Marburg’s Neokantian thesis), but only touches it tangentially. We also find this thesis in a work of maturity (partly written in Portugal) entitled *The Idea of Principle in Leibniz*. For Ortega in individual things and persons we can always find something wild, that is, irreducible to thought. Ortega also calls it their intimacy (Ortega y Gasset, 2004h: 670). It is this intimacy that art gives us back: it gives us reality executing itself, which is what we can never grasp when we try to understand it with the help of pure thought, even when the thing that is thought is our own Ego. Therefore, the aesthetic object has this twofold characteristic: it is transparent and not opaque, unlike other things that give us back their surfaces when our eyes see them, and at the same time it does not show anything other than itself.

Now, in “Adam in Paradise” the issue is not yet the executivity of things that we can see as a result of the painter’s work, but their unity. It should be borne in

[6] Ortega wrote several papers about Zuloaga, a Basque painter he deeply admired. The analysis of the meaning of these paintings helped Ortega to understand the failure of Neokantian aesthetics and theory of culture. We will address this issue more thoroughly in chapter “Ortega, Phenomenology and Idealism”.

mind that Ortega's concept of executivity, when it is not applied to characterize the acts of consciousness, is often the equivalent of Aristotle's *dynamis*; on the contrary, unity (before Ortega's contact with phenomenology) refers to the a priori synthesis of pure understanding. This is what Ortega explains nicely in this essay: to paint one thing is not the simple job of copying it, because it is necessary first to ascertain the formula of its relation to all other things, i.e., its meaning. But let us see: science and ethics seem to exhaust the domains of the activity of reason; in fact, what else will there be besides what is and what should be? Is there anything left that art has to deal with? What will Adam do in Paradise? Certainly not science or morality, for it does not yet need what these kinds of knowledge can offer him; and yet—since it is Adam, the first man, that is, man in general—his life will no longer be animal or vegetal life, for then he himself would be an animal or a vegetable, which live without taking notice of their own form of life. Paradise is not found anywhere either. It is only the mythical scenario of the permanent drama of human life, where one fights, wins, and loses, only to go on fighting. Adam is undoubtedly life, but universal life constituting a problem for itself (Silver, 1978, 44). Every artist, from Ortega's Neokantian perspective in 1910, must also be an Adam in Paradise, and art represents life in its fullest universality.

We will see in a moment how phenomenology will confirm Ortega in his suspicion that life is not universal but always particular, i.e., life is always "my life." This is what Julián Marías did not notice and, therefore, puts Ortega's philosophy of life, in the 1910 essay, where it cannot yet be found. However, we must reckon that there is much in the essay "Adam in Paradise" that points beyond Neokantian aesthetics. Although still within the conceptual framework of Neokantianism, Ortega says that in man life is reduplicated and that every human act—that is, every act of mine—is both accomplished in space and charged with affects. By means of the human body, thanks to light and color, painting shows everything that is not immediately related to space: human passions, history, and culture. What Ortega implicitly tells us in 1910 is that life, even in its utmost universality, can only be lived as "my life," i.e., the life of any of us. This is what the theory of phenomenological reduction will teach him, in 1913, in the Second Section of Edmund Husserl's of *Ideas I*. Indeed, the theory of reduction, as a methodological instrument which allows the philosopher to analyze the acts of consciousness proper to the transcendental subjectivity of each of us, in relation to their noematic correlates, will confirm Ortega in that suspicion that always hovered, like a shadow, in his relations with Neokantism. That's why he will say much later that his contact with phenomenology was "una buena suerte." But, accepting the assumptions of Neokantian aesthetics, the question arises as to the value of Zuloaga's paintings: are they really works of art or just a sociological document? Will not Zuloaga's paintings be too much attached to the Spanish circumstance? Will not they represent scenes and figures too much particular to be able to satisfy the demands of universality (San Martín, 1994: 268–269), without which, according to Neokantian aesthetics, art is not possible?

4 The Overcoming of Neokantianism

A clear understanding of Ortega's reaction from 1912 onward to the Neokantian theory of culture, which had been roughly his own until the previous year, is a key element in understanding the *Meditations on Quixote* and the way Ortega in this book brings to its conclusion a controversy that, for years, he had maintained with Miguel de Unamuno about the relations between Spain and Europe and the role of the "Europeanizers," in which Ortega himself was included (Ortega y Gasset, 2004d: 256). What is really at stake in the abovementioned book, as well as in the background of all Ortega's writings, is Spain and the problem of Spain, more precisely Spain's relationship with Modernity, from which it departed since the seventeenth century (Ortega y Gasset, 2004i: 770–772).

However, the problem of culture, which Ortega addressed until 1912 from the Neokantian perspective which was then his own, materializes in a program whose contours were relatively simple (San Martín, 1994: 23): "Europeanizing" Spain, or, as Ortega said, making Spain run, such as Germany, is to make it assimilate the culture of modernity and, above all, its culminating point—science. (This is not an absolutely original idea in Ortega, and some political and intellectual representatives of the so-called Restoration regime also defended it. Ortega's political program had some similarities with the program of Joaquím Costa, the only politician of the Restoration regime that he really admired.) However, the idea that Europe is the solution for Spain is precisely the idea that motivates Unamuno's mistrust. This becomes particularly evident in the last chapter and in the Conclusion of *Del Sentimiento Trágico de la Vida*, a work Unamuno published in the year 1912, shortly after Ortega, after returning from his third journey to Germany (the second to Marburg), starts writing his "The Agony of the Novel," the text, as I said before, from which will come the *Meditations on Quixote*.

I think that one should not overlook the role Miguel de Unamuno played in the evolution of Ortega's thinking on the problem of culture. The *Meditations on Quixote* culminates a passionate debate that Ortega engages with Unamuno's idea of Spain, which is evident in numerous essays and in the correspondence between them. And although Ortega continues to reject Unamuno's overall position, something the latter had argued in *Del Sentimiento Trágico de la Vida* will since then mark Ortega's new philosophical position. Unamuno's book is written at a time when he was just reading a book of Hermann Cohen, who was at the head of the Marburg Neokantian school, the *Ethik des reinen Willens*. Unamuno does not understand the "purity" of Kantian morality, considers it apart from the reality in which men live and act, and refuses the underlying conception of culture (which he disdainfully spells with an initial K). Unamuno's rejection of the German philosophical way of addressing cultural issues will have great repercussions on Ortega in the subsequent years. Unamuno asks whether the idealistic systems—of which the Neokantian is just an example—which are the quintessential philosophical systems of modernity, will not end drying up the sources from which human life gets its meaning (de Unamuno, 1982: 256–257).

The critique of Neokantism and its idea of culture, the understanding of cultural life as an immediate reality, or as a part of one's individual life, constitutes, in Ortega, a reaction to Unamuno's critiques, but also the most visible outcome of his early contact with phenomenology, which happens precisely at the final stage of his second journey to Marburg. However great the reasons of Unamuno's claims that culture is the immediate reality of the life of a nation, he still lacked (Ortega thought) the philosophical concepts needed to think this fact and to address this immediate reality with the necessary conceptual distinctions. Immediate reality must not be rejected altogether, but it may need to be saved.[7] Phenomenology will provide Ortega with the needed concepts to bring about this task.

For Neokantism, culture was primarily represented by science. It is science that allows us to overcome the contingency of sensible knowledge, which is passive in relation to impressions coming from the outside. In 1910, Ortega still shares this thesis, as is evident from the distinction he makes, in the aforementioned essay on Baroja's novel, between the barbarian man and the man who lives on the basis of ideas. But if one turns to § 11 of the "Preliminary Meditation" of the *Meditations on Quixote*, one may easily see how Ortega can no longer accept this distinction or at least needs to formulate it in different terms (Ortega y Gasset, 2004i: 785–786). Ideas—or concepts, as he says there—are not opposed to the spontaneity of life, to the emotions we feel at events that may undermine our security and our certainties, such as, for instance, those emotions that are represented in Goya's paintings. Nevertheless, all emotions are changeable and momentary, and that is the reason why we need concepts to think them; concepts don't replace emotions in their vital spontaneity—as Neokantism might imply—but give us the assurance that enables us to think about what we feel. A concept means safety, as Ortega says by taking up a Plato's expression in the *Phaedon* (Ortega y Gasset, 2004i: 786). Providing security amidst uncertainty is the task of culture.

Let us look at a passage from a letter that Ortega, during his first stay in Marburg, wrote to his fiancée, Rosa Spottorno, in June 1907, and how her early adherence to the Neokantian standpoint is expressed:

> The discovery of Galileo is of great value to us; you do not know it yet, but you will know that my philosophy is his: Plato, Galileo, Descartes, Newton and Kant; there you have the great stations of my philosophy; they all carry within themselves the great thought: reality does not exist, it is man who produces it. Reality is not what you see, hear, feel - but what you think; what is seen, heard, touched, is only appearance. An example: the earth seems to be motionless; *eppure si muove* - said Galileo: and yet she moves. That is, for the eyes, the earth is motionless, but for reason, for science, it moves. The earth looks flat, but it is round. Where is it round? In the eyes? No, in the eyes it is flat. So where is it round? In astronomy, in geography; your eyes and mine, the eyes of the flesh that does not think, see it flat; but the eyes of science see it as round. (Ortega y Gasset, 1991: 552)

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[7] The concept of salvation has two different but closely connected meanings. On the one hand, it has the same meaning as in Plato's *Phaedon*: to save a phenomenon means to give it its due place in the network of phenomena one is trying to analyze, in other words, not to ignore its existence and its role. On the other hand, salvation means to bring something to its own possible perfection. Spanish circumstance, according to Ortega, had to be saved. It meant the effort to look at it as it really was, with its backwardness and its potentialities, and not just introducing in it ideas and concepts stemming from alien circumstances.

The "eyes of the flesh" and the "eyes of science" constitute another formulation of the problem of the two Egos. Obviously, they are not yet the ones that appear in the *Meditations on Quixote*, in the well-known statement "I am myself and my circumstance," and it will take a long reflection for Ortega to arrive at it. At the time of his Neokantian training, Ortega designates these two Egos, as we already know, the as "orangutan" or "gorilla," on the one hand, that is, the animal and unlearned Ego, unable to rise to the level of science, and the cultivated Ego, capable of science, on the other. We have the Ego that sees the flat earth and the science-informed Ego that can correct his animal perception and see that the earth is round. In this context, the meaning of a sentence in a letter to Unamuno, dated 13 December 1907, must be understood as saying that Spain must die as a people to survive as a cultivated nature.

5 The Genesis of the *Meditations*: Papers and Conferences from 1913

Ortega's first contact with phenomenology and his reaction to Unamuno's book are simultaneous. Now, if Neokantianism was right, if science—and, in particular, mathematical physics, with their pure categories of relation, which underlie the concept of function and allowed the creation of infinitesimal calculus—represented the *telos* of the human spirit, Spain's task could only be to assimilate this science, which was born with modernity and meant the triumph of that same modernity. But if it is not exactly so, one must see what may be the part of truth that exists in Unamuno's critique of the "Europeanizers." However, in order to understand how Ortega will take a stand on this issue, it will be necessary to analyze a text that precedes the publication of the *Mediations*: the 1913 essay entitled "Sensation, construction, intuition," which constitutes the first public recognition in Spain of phenomenology (if not the first outside Germany), as Husserl had been practicing it since 1900.[8]

In this essay we can see the overcoming of Neokantianism and the assimilation of phenomenology and also the development of what will become the future point of view of *Meditations on Quixote*. As can easily be seen, each of the terms in its title identifies a specific philosophical attitude: empiricism, Neokantianism, and phenomenology, respectively. I will summarize what I think is the essence of

[8] The critical edition of Ortega's *Complete Works* allows now a better understanding of the intellectual evolution of the Spanish philosopher in the years between his last journey to Germany, which ends in 1911, and the publication of the *Meditations on Quixote*. The reading of the posthumously edited texts written at that time is fundamental to the understanding of the stages of that evolution. While still in Germany, in 1910, Ortega writes a text, untitled, but which the publishers of the *Complete Works* entitled "El hecho de que existas cosas ..." (which are the words with which that text begins), where he shows acquaintance with Husserl's doctrine of ideal meanings (Ortega y Gasset, 2007a: 195). It is also essential to read the text entitled "Current Trends in Philosophy" (Ortega y Gasset, 2007b: 232–269), to understand how, as early as 1912, after his return from Germany, Ortega had assimilated Husserl's critique of psychology in the *Logical Investigations*.

Ortega's argument so as to understand what he will say the following year—in 1914, therefore—in the *Meditations*. Sensations—he says—contrary to what empiricism supposes do not provide us with an immediate contact with reality. As empiricism presents them, sensations are already the result of a theory, of a certain understanding of the psychophysical nature of man, and the ways in which an information from an alleged outer reality comes to him. But if, against what empiricism argues, one must recognized that the being of things is meaningless outside their relation to knowledge—that is, there is no being that can be captured by knowledge like it pre-exists before the relationship with the subject who grasps it—the opposite attitude, i.e., constructivism, which argues that being is nothing but the equivalent of the root of an equation, the value of which will be determined by previously known quantities, is the victim of a similar error, although of an opposite sign (Ortega y Gasset, 2004g: 649). Both empiricism and constructivism are incapable of restoring the way consciousness simply perceives its objects, i.e., how it has what phenomenology labels an *Erlebnis*, or a lived experience. However, this perception is a relation much more complex than empiricism has ever imagined. Take, for example, what Ortega says (Ortega y Gasset, 2004g: 629) about the perception of a color. Ortega insists that it does not depend on the perceiving subject the fact that a color is always the color of something, and therefore the essential connection—intuited by the subject—between any surface and the colored tone with which it is seen constitutes one kind of legality to which all mundane objects must obey.

For the history of Ortega's relationship with phenomenology, a reference must also be made to the essay entitled "On the concept of sensation," originally published in three parts, in June, July, and September 1913, in the *Revista de Libros*, as a book review of the work of a former student of Husserl, Heinrich Hoffman, entitled *Studies on the Concept of Sensation* (Ortega y Gasset, 2004f: 624–638).[9] Ortega begins by referring to Hoffman's critique of the concept of a pure sensation, which he considers a notion constructed by psychologists to explain the genesis of psychic activity, to which, however, no lived experience corresponds (Ortega y Gasset, 2004f: 625). We must be particularly attentive here to Hoffman's conclusion, which Ortega also supports: a pure sensation, or a simple sensation, is almost impossible to determine, even more so in visual than in acoustic sensations. Does any simple sensation correspond to any of the four fundamental colors? In a visual experiment, which, for example, runs through all gradations of color between red and yellow, the gradations of orange will appear with the same fundamental color character as red and yellow colors, and not, as might be expected according to the theory, as transition colors. Thus, a description of visual perception can only have its starting point in the lived experience of colors, which will necessarily be made up of complex sensations.

[9] The original title of Hoffman's book is *Untersuchungen über den Empfindungsbegriff*.

But the most interesting thing about this essay lies elsewhere. In his second part, published in July 1913, Ortega seeks to explain the differences between induction, deduction, and intuition; the first two establish the existence of certain factual connections, while the last establishes an essential connection. So, for example, the fact that a color supposes an extension that it colors is an essential connection. It is not up to me, as I express in a judgment such a connection, whether a color may be detached from its relationship with extension (Ortega y Gasset, 2004f: 629). But Ortega says something even more interesting. While induction and deduction suppose a concatenation of facts, the vision of an essential connection can be grounded in the experience of a single fact. Regarding the previous example, Ortega stresses that the experience of a single surface is sufficient to understand the relationship between a color and a surface. This experience can be based on a perception, an imagination, or even a hallucination. An imagined surface must be equally colored as a hallucinated one, for this essential law does not refer only to objects that exist in the real world, independently of a subject that eventually perceives them.

Therefore, detecting the presence of phenomenology either in the *Meditations* or in other writings of the same period is not a very difficult task for anyone familiar with Husserl's thinking. It is even surprising that, for decades, Ortega's leading scholars (including some of his closest disciples, such as Julián Marías or Paulino Garagorri) have not been able to highlight this fact. Probably their ignorance of phenomenology, coupled with their belief in the letter of a late statement by Ortega that he would have departed from phenomenology from the moment he had the first contact with it, prevented many of them from seeing the obvious. It was necessary to understand how Ortega appropriates and interprets, in the first four paragraphs of the "Preliminary Meditation," the four sections of *Ideas for a Pure Phenomenology and a Phenomenological Philosophy* (Husserl's work published in 1913 and which Ortega is among the first to have read outside Germany) in order that the genesis of the *Meditations on Quixote* could receive a new light.

6 Ortega's Philosophy of Culture at the Time of the *Meditations*

All these considerations may seem far removed from the philosophy of culture, but in reality, it is not so. I argued earlier that Ortega realizes the possibility of applying the fundamental acquisitions of phenomenology, as Husserl had exposed them in the *Logical Investigations* and *Ideas I*, to the problems of culture. It should also be noted that Ortega, at least in 1913, reads these two works as if there were no essential differences between them, which will expose him to some difficulties of interpretation, which I will not address here. But this explains the course of his theory of intuition, which contrasts with Neokantian empiricism and constructivism. In the First Section of *Ideas I*, Husserl sets out the distinction between facts and essences, showing that reality is crossed by a typical ideal structure—which constitutes what

is commonly called "essences"—that determines how it can be viewed. To explain it I will look for help in an example that Ortega himself offers in the *Meditations on Quixote*. If I look at an orange, he argues, I will see only the part of it that faces me, not the whole orange, just as I don't see the inside. But the part that is hidden, or the interior that I don't see, are there for me as possibilities, at the same time determining the reality of the orange I see.

This analysis entails a new concept of reality, from which Ortega will draw a new concept of culture. The real world for the moderns is Descartes' extensive substance. Reality, however, as the perception of the orange has shown us, has two dimensions, the patent and the latent. There is a depth in things that comes to surface in order to manifest itself. So what I see is successively replaced by what I had not yet seen. Of a totality (e.g., the actual forest of the Escorial, of which the *Meditations* speak), I only see the successively visible parts. This totality that is the forest escapes from my eyes. The forest is, wherever anyone look at it, a possibility, as was the case just now with our orange.

In Paragraph 3 of the "Preliminary Meditation," entitled "Brooks and Orioles," Ortega raises a delicate problem (Ortega y Gasset, 2004i: 767–768). Let us imagine that in a forest I hear the rushing waters of a brook at my feet and at the same time the singing of an oriole in a distant tree. The combination of our auditory, visual, and tactile senses provides the conscious awareness with precious elements for our orientation in space: I cannot arbitrarily put at a distance the brook that I see at my feet and whose water I can touch with my own fingers. Something different happens with the oriole whose singing is captured by my ears. In Husserl's language, in *Ideas I*, we would have to say that the brook or the oriole is noemata, that is, not just a set of sensible qualities, not just material objects, but objects with meaning: wandering in the woods one hot summer day, the water of the brook, for me, is not just H_2O, but something that gives me a certain feeling of freshness and where I can wash my sweaty face.

But Ortega still urges us to make another kind of experiment. Let us transform active hearing into passive hearing. That is, let us suspend our attention to the noise of the waters of the brook and to the song of the oriole and consider them both as pure sound matter. Let us do even more: let us suspend the act of interpretation that accompanies the auditory sensation and causes us to project in the distance the song of the oriole and place at our feet the brook whose waters we hear. We realize, then, that remoteness and proximity are not features of the things themselves, but something that they acquire only by virtue of an act we executed. The sound sensation is purely superficial; it is that part of reality that is offered to us effortlessly and which we may call the patent world; the sense of proximity or distance that accompanies it is hidden, in the sense that it palpitates in patent reality (almost like hearts beat in every breast) without being identical with it, and demands from us, in order to be able to grasp it, the performance of an act of a totally different kind.

In the *Meditations on Quixote*, Ortega will spell out this new concept of reality and this new way of thinking about the relationship between consciousness and

reality. For ancient and medieval philosophy, reality was something independent of the subject and of which the subject, in order to know it, sought to form a copy; for the Modern Age, reality is the outcome of a constructive activity of the human mind. Nevertheless, both ideas are false, although the modern world, according to Ortega, highlighting the role played by the subject, has obtained a viewpoint that cannot simply be put aside, but only put in its rightful place. Henceforth, it is not legitimate to assert the being of reality without asserting, at the same time, the being of the subject who asserts that same reality. This is what Ortega expresses, in the Preface of the *Meditations*, by the famous statement "I am myself and my circumstance," which must, however, be withdrawn from the trivial or falsifying interpretations of its meaning. This is what I will try to do in the following lines.

In 1914, shortly before the publication of the *Meditations*, Ortega publishes a preface to a collection of poems by Moreno Villa, *El Pasajero*, which he titled "Essay on Aesthetics in the Way of a Prologue" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004h: 664–680). Sections II and III of this text are particularly interesting, since it is here that Ortega offers his theory of the Ego, outlined in the essay "On the concept of sensation." In the title of Sect. II, appears, I believe that for the first time, the expression "executive Ego," which, in Ortega's language, corresponds to the Husserlian notion of thetical or positional consciousness. This expression means that the Ego is usually in a utilitarian or pragmatic attitude toward the things it deals with. However, he is not a thing, nor, as long as it remains executive, can he become a thing. Nevertheless, in certain circumstances, by abandoning this executive character, the Ego itself may become an object. The best way to understand how this happens and what its consequences are is to follow Ortega's own example: the analysis of our walking experience (Ortega y Gasset, 2004h: 667–668).

Walking is an act that, for each of us, involves muscular tension and an effort. This is tantamount to say that we make a direct experience of what we do, without, however, at the same time we make that effort, we are entitled to say that we see ourselves walking. It is also true that we suppose that others make an effort similar to ours when they walk, but we do not see it; we just see others walking, as living bodies performing certain movements to change their situation in space, but without being able to feel, through direct experience, the effort they make. However, we can also see ourselves as we see others, that is, we can see ourselves walking. In this situation our primary consciousness has lost its executive character and has become reflexive consciousness: the executive consciousness is now the reflexive one, which takes primary consciousness as its object. (It is again the problem of the two Egos, now in a more complex way.) Now, this reflexive consciousness corresponds to the consciousness of the phenomenologist, after having performed the phenomenological reduction (of which Ortega does not speak), and the primary consciousness is one's own consciousness as a transcendental subjectivity that performs intentional acts. Therefore, "I am myself and my circumstance" means that I am a set of intentional acts and objectivities put in these acts. The first objectivity is the circumstances of my immediate personal life, which must be brought, through reflexive activity, to the level of culture. It is the effort that Ortega calls, as we already know, "saving the circumstance."

7 Final Remarks

We are now in a position to get an understanding of the phenomenological theory of culture—that is, the philosophy of vital reason—which Ortega proposes in these *Meditations on Quixote*, replacing his first theory of a Neokantian kind, with the explicit aim of understanding, by means of this new theory, Spanish culture and its destiny. In short, we could say culture is not identical with immediate life but is not opposed to it either. (That is, it is not executive, but it is not opposed to executivity.) Ortega further states that culture is security; that is, culture is the whole of the ideas we create in order to be able to live, so that life is not, as for Plato was the sensible world, just a flow of fleeting impressions and sensations. But there are, in Ortega's theory of culture, three aspects, above all, that deserve a better look in order to conclude.

First, culture, understood as a set of ideas that are useful for life, is an intersubjective creation that raises claims of truth and objectivity. This means that if a culture's point of view on reality may not exhaust what that reality is as a whole, if any culture is ultimately unable to do so, for reality is always given to us in perspectives, like the orange of our example just now; however, what each culture says of reality must express what that reality is. Failing to do so, it runs the risk of turning into an imposture. (This was the case with Spanish culture at the time of the Restoration.) This brings us to the second aspect. Authentic culture, for Ortega, is an act of kindness or love. Through culture—that is, through concepts—we express what in a thing goes beyond it and refers to all other things, constituting the depth dimension that is latent in what is evident in each one when it is presented to someone. Culture is thus the virtual element that extends beyond what is real, is the existence of one thing in all others and of all others in it, is the unifying drive that Plato called "Eros" in his dialogue *Symposium* (Ortega y Gasset, 2004h: 782).

Finally, as a third aspect, I would say that culture is, for Ortega, an imperative of clarity. But, as is evident from what I have said above, there is a clarity of superficial things and a clarity of the depths of things; there is a clarity proper to sensible impressions and a clarity that means the peaceful spiritual possession of things (Ortega y Gasset, 2004i: 788). The depths of the forest of the Escorial are no less clear than its borders, which we contemplate before entering it; but they will only gain clarity if we can penetrate them and have previously developed the organ capable of perceiving them. This clarity, which is the concept or culture, is not life, but instead—in the nice expression that Ortega makes use of—the commentary on life, not in the sense of something accessory to it, but as life itself led to its fullness.

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Ortega, Phenomenology and Idealism

We have already addressed the relations between Ortega and idealism in our chapter "Ortega and Germany". But there our aim was to show that Ortega's "second navigation"—an expression, we recall, we borrowed from Plato's dialogue *Phaedon*—i.e., his farewell to Neokantianism around 1911–1912 and his reception of phenomenology, was also intended to be a departure from any kind of modern idealism, which means that we offered an interpretation of Ortega's philosophy as realistic since the beginning of his maturity and an interpretation of Ortega's own interpretation of phenomenology, at the time he received it, as a realistic trend in philosophy, destined to put an end to that idealism we have just mentioned.

As is well known, not all the interpreters of Ortega's philosophy (perhaps not even the majority) agree with this interpretation. In his very interesting book about Ortega and idealism, Antonio Rodriguez Huéscar says not only that Ortega, since the beginning, looked at phenomenology as a subtle variant of the old Cartesian idealism but also that the main Orteguian concepts, at the time he published the *Meditations on Quixote*, in 1914, were already directed against phenomenology (Huéscar, 1982: 45). Huéscar fails to notice, for instance, that the concept of *ejecutividad* (executivity)—indeed a central concept in Ortega's philosophy—was the outcome of an effort to translate into Spanish a central idea of Husserl's fifth Logical Investigation, which the German philosopher labeled *der Vollzugscharacter des Bewussteins* (the executive character of consciousness). But Huéscar is not the only one to have committed this error. John T. Graham, for instance, seems to connect the roots of Ortega's idea of executivity with an early influence of William James' pragmatism, before Ortega took acquaintance with phenomenology (Graham, 1994: 122).[1] Much closer to what I think is the right evaluation of Ortega's contribution to a realistic-oriented phenomenology is the book of Morón Arroyo that was already

[1] Nevertheless, in footnote 43 to (1992: 122) Graham acknowledges that the first occurrence of "executivity" dates from 1914. At this time, Ortega had already read Husserl's *Logical Investigations*.

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mentioned in chapter "Spain Is the Problem; Europe Is the Solution". Regardless what one thinks of his opinion that phenomenological reduction is a "rest" of idealism in Husserl's thought (Morón Arroyo, 1968: 205)—and I think the issue is debatable—his exposition of Ortega's affinities with the phenomenological method is on the whole correct. Some years before the illuminating analysis of Javier San Martín of the first four sections of the "Preliminary Meditation" of the *Meditations on Quixote*, Morón Arroyo has shown the extent to which Ortega's description of the woods of the Escorial are an example of how the phenomenological method can be applied (Morón Arroyo, 1968: 206). In any case, the issue must be revisited.[2]

Philosophers can be victims of retrospective illusions regarding their own evolution. Perhaps that's what happened with Ortega. Anyway, that's not what matters here. What Ortega says in 1934, in his famous "Preface to Germans," about his relations with Neokantianism and especially with phenomenology—that he abandoned it the moment he got in contact with it—may not be entirely true. But two central ideas in this text are certainly true. (1) Around 1912, Ortega and a whole generation of young philosophers, trained in the Neokantian philosophy, felt deeply the urgency of departing from idealism, even if they were never entirely Neokantians; (2) for those same philosophers, phenomenology offered a bundle of rich philosophical analysis, even if phenomenology, as Ortega says, lacked the necessary systematic character (Ortega y Gasset, 2009a: 150). Moreover, phenomenology seems to have played a decisive role in their farewell to idealism. In Ortega, however, the phenomenological method, as it is exemplified in Husserl's writings, seems to have made a strong and lasting imprint. This explains why, as one of his former students says, Ortega always claimed that philosophical efforts were directed to the solution of problems and not to the understanding of what philosophers have thought about them (Garagorri, 1970: 47). That was the reason why Ortega's language, in his lectures and in his writings, avoided those technicalities that prevented human mind to focus on the things themselves.

Ortega's 1915 Lectures on *The System of Psychology* are a clear-cut example of what he thought at the time about idealism and phenomenology. Ortega offers an analysis of what "consciousness" means and says that consciousness is the most difficult thing to find in the whole universe if by "consciousness" we mean some kind of entity that is separated from the other things of which it is the consciousness of (Ortega y Gasset, 2007: 466). I am only aware that I love, for instance, when there is someone loved by me, just as I can only be aware that I make a

[2] There are some topics related to this issue that have to do with an overall interpretation of Ortega's thought and the phases of its evolution. For instance, regarding the 1910 essay "Adam in Paradise," shall we say that it is still Neokantian or not? And if not, is it still idealistic in nature, or is it already pointing to the mature philosophy of vital reason? Some have claimed with no apparent justification that Ortega's mature philosophy was already present in this juvenile essay (Marías, 1983: 326; Graham, 1994: 120). And how do we explain what has changed in Ortega's aesthetics between "Adam in Paradise" and the last essays about Zuloaga's paintings, after his return from Germany in 1912? About these issues, we refer to what we already said in chapters "Ortega and Germany" and "Ortega, Phenomenology and Idealism".

judgment when there is something judged. When I say that I am "conscious of," there is always another thing different from consciousness that appears and gives consciousness the possibility also to appear. And this happens, as Ortega rightly stresses, not thanks to an a posteriori act of reflection about what being conscious means but rather in that very moment in which I am "conscious of." When someone looks at a table, there is at the same time the table that appears and the appearance itself of the table. Only the latter, i.e., the appearance, can be called a phenomenon of consciousness; however, it needs the former, i.e., the table, in order to happen. The important point for us is the fact that Ortega expresses these phenomenologically oriented ideas without any criticism to an alleged phenomenological idealism. Of course, Ortega overlooks the fact that an appearance is an appearance to me, and so I must be aware of myself when I intend something other. Anyway, the real problem lies elsewhere: can I recover my previous spontaneity when later I reflect upon my executive act? We will come to this issue later in this chapter.

Some—like John T. Graham—have also argued that Ortega's overcoming of idealism, especially in its Neokantian variety, was only possible thanks to his acquaintance with William James' pragmatist philosophy (Graham, 1994: 120). The relation of Ortega and James is too large an issue to be addressed in this Chapter. Graham is perhaps right when he stresses that one of the roots of Ortega's idea of life as radical reality can be found in James' philosophy. However, considering phenomenology only as a method and accepting Ortega's opinion, we mentioned above, that phenomenology lacked the necessary systematic character to be considered a *prima philosophia*, Graham misses the role it plays in Ortega's farewell to idealism. Morón Arroyo points out correctly that the fact that Ortega labels his own philosophy, in 1915, a "radical positivism"—which remembers us Husserl's statement that he was the only "true positivist"—means he looks at his own philosophy as a kind of realistic phenomenology, where the aim is to "show" or to "exhibit" and not to construct (Morón Arroyo, 1968: 2009).

1 Ortega's Philosophy in 1929

Since that what we called in chapter "Ortega and Germany" Ortega's "second navigation" was already motivated by the need to abandon the continent of subjectivity, i.e., idealism, we may in this chapter address Ortega's mature diagnosis of idealism, from 1929 onward. As we shall see, phenomenology will now be accused by Ortega of being a kind of idealism, and his personal relations with Husserl's philosophy will be reevaluated. This reevaluation culminates in the abovementioned statement of 1947 in *The Idea of Principle in Leibniz*: "I abandoned phenomenology at the very moment I received it" (Ortega y Gasset, 2009d: 1119).

In this chapter we will in the first place address Lessons VI, VII, and VIII of *What is Philosophy?*, from 1929, and the Lessons II and III of the *Principles of*

Metaphysics, from 1932 to 1933.[3] Later, we will turn to Lesson X of *What is Philosophy?*. We will also mention the Section 4 of the "Preface to Germans"[4]. At last, we will address *The Idea of Principle in Leibniz*, which offers some new arguments regarding idealism and particularly the so-called phenomenological idealism.[5]

We will begin by the end of Lesson VI of *What is Philosophy?*. There Ortega resumes the task of philosophy previously mentioned in earlier Lessons and says that philosophy is the quest for the ultimate *data* of the universe, i.e., those that exist in the universe and, at the same time, in our knowledge of it. This means that there may be things in the universe that we don't know (and perhaps will never know), and things in our knowledge that don't exist in the universe, although we believe they do. Regarding these last kinds of things, the task of philosophy is called *desasirse*, which means, in Ortega's more technical vocabulary, voiding oneself from false beliefs. One remembers, immediately, Descartes' doubt and Husserl's *epoché*. One could ask why those things—or at least some of them—which exist in the universe but not in our knowledge cannot be called ultimate *data*. The answer seems obvious: a *datum* is only a *datum* as long as it is given to someone. This is very important, not only to an overall understanding of Ortega but also to an understanding of his critique of idealism: "ultimate" doesn't mean existing in isolation.

Where may those ultimate *data* that philosophy is looking for be found? To begin with: almost all *data* are a source of problems. Ortega offers a simple and nice example: if we look to a stick in a transparent vase full of water, we will get two different *data*, the *datum* of that part of the stick that is in the water and the *datum* of that part that is out of the water. And as we all know—and both physics and psychology teach us why—those *data* don't overlap, since the stick will appear to everybody broken in two, in that part that corresponds to the water level in the vase. Moreover, this appearance contradicts the appearance of the stick in normal perceptual conditions, i.e., outside the water. And so, we have a problem: which is the real appearance of the stick? Which of the appearances corresponds to what the stick really is? Even if we rightly say that the stick is not broken, the appearance of the stick out of the water corresponding to this belief (in what we have called "normal

[3] The complete title is *Principles of Metaphysics according to Vital Reason*. These Lessons were first published by Paulino Garagorri under the title *Lessons of Metaphysics*. (*Unas Lecciones de Metafísica*, Madrid, Alianza Editorial, 1966.)

[4] This text was only posthumously published in 1958. Ortega intended it as a preface to a German edition of *The Theme of Our Times*. Helene Weyl translated the first 100 pages of the Spanish original into German, but Ortega suspended the publication in 1934. As he confessed at the time, the political events in Germany that same year were the main reason for this suspension.

[5] I recall that the focus of this chapter is Ortega's evaluation of idealism and not of phenomenology. Phenomenology is mentioned here only as it is considered by the Spanish philosopher as a variety of idealism. Ortega's discussion of phenomenological themes goes far beyond this limited issue. For instance, in *Man and People* he has a very interesting discussion of Husserl's and Alfred Schütz' theories of intersubjectivity.

conditions") cannot be an ultimate *datum*. This *datum* can only be stated by someone to whom the stick appears and is able to reckon how it really is.[6]

The search for ultimate *data* is the specific task of philosophy and what distinguishes it from science. Even Descartes was searching ultimate *data*; doubt, for him, was just the method to get hold of them. I think Paulino Garagorri is wrong when he says that Husserl was just prolonging Descartes' errors when he looked for the ultimate *data* in a kind of innate universal a priori structures that made knowledge possible (Garagorri, 1970: 36). The only a priori Husserl's phenomenology allows is the noetic-noematic correlation. As we just said in footnote 6, when Ortega interprets this correlation as the same correlation that obtains between myself and my circumstance, he is only enlarging the scope of Husserl's analysis, converting what in the first place was a theory of perception into a theory of culture.

In *What is Philosophy?* the quest for ultimate *data* has four levels. Ortega, at the beginning of Lesson VI offers a brief account of the first two, since he is now going to enter the third. The visual image of philosophy's slowly approach to this *data* is a spiral (Fig. 1). The two most external circles of the spiral correspond to the scientific view of the universe. For a positivist-oriented philosophy, these circles represent the most objective knowledge of the universe; the objectivity is guaranteed by the facts that experiments allow us to get hold of. According to this view, a scientific assertion is objective if we can make a correspondence between what it says and what happens in the world. Ortega does not put into question the fact that science gets its support in some observable *data* (Ortega y Gasset, 2009d: 945). However, he adds that science is an intellectual construction on the basis of those *data*, "a pure intellectual exercise"—a kind of sportive activity, as he also puts it—that has not much resemblance to what we grasp about the way things behave in the world of

Fig. 1 The method of approach to the ultimate *data*

[6] Of course, those who insist that in Ortega's philosophy every reference to the subject means also a reference to the objectivities that appear to that subject, and that this is a proof of Ortega's overcoming of idealism, are right. What we argued in chapter "Ortega, Phenomenology and Idealism" is that this simultaneous reference to a subject and to an object—condensed in Ortega's famous motto *Yo soy yo y mi circunstancia* (I am myself and my circumstance)—is just Ortega's interpretation of Husserl's noetic-noematic correlation (1950: 227).

everyday experience.[7] Incidentally, he adds that this is the reason why Aristotle and medieval Averroism denied the existence of a personal intellective soul (Ortega y Gasset, 2008a: 292): scientific thought is an impersonal activity and our individual life, the only one that really exists—just like the beliefs that guide our lifeworld experience, as we shall soon see – takes no special part in it.

Now, Ortega draws other and more important consequences from what has been said about the relations between science and reality. Since science doesn't sprout from the radical center of our own person (but only from one of its derivative functions), scientific assertions will never be an object of belief. That's why they have a kind of sportive character. Scientists may endeavor to ground their assertions on facts; however, our personal life is not entirely committed to these assertions, or, if it is, it is only as long as they are the basis of technical discoveries that can improve the way we live. It's not impossible that what was first an idea may turn, in the course of time, into a belief. On the other hand, beliefs don't have the same impersonal character of scientific assertions, and, even when they are shared by a great number of people, they always keep a close relation with individual life. It would be nonsensical to say, for instance, that I believe in the curvature of space, according to Einstein's theory of general relativity; it is a rather technical mathematical construction needed for the explanation of some *data* captured by astrophysicists. Even if the curvature of space could be proved, we still wouldn't have, in our daily lives, the phenomenal experience of it. On the other hand, it makes sense to say that I believe that I cannot go through a wall, because in my daily life I adjust my behavior to this belief, which, besides, is shared by all my fellow men.[8]

The ultimate *data* of the universe must be evident. But evidence is not a feeling. It's the immediate presence of an object in consciousness. No wonder that the point of departure of idealist philosophers was the claim that consciousness is immediately present to itself. We can understand what evidence is with the help of some examples. If we look to an orange, we see the orange color of its peel. The peel is immediately present in consciousness. (Note: the peel and not the idea of the peel, which is an elaborate construction of the philosopher or the psychologist when analyzing human mind.) However, the inner parts are not immediately present; and if

[7] Perhaps Ortega is thinking about something like a paradigm, in the sense of Thomas Kuhn. Those intellectual exercises he calls science differ from each other more according to the kind of world scientific view they propose than according to their empirical content. We will soon see how, according to Ortega, scientific theories "touch" empirical reality. Anyway, he is addressing here another issue. He is contrasting the intellectual endeavors of science with man's daily occupation with his own life.

[8] In the context of this chapter, I will only mention briefly Ortega's theory of belief. It would deserve a long explanation, but at least three things can be said thereupon. (1) There are, for Ortega, two kinds of beliefs: those who stem from any kind of human experience, regardless of the context in which it happened, and those who have a historical character and are doomed to disappear at the same time as the époque that saw their birth. (2) Ideas may be transformed into beliefs as long as time has consolidated their existence in man's consciousness. (3) From a cultural point of view, ideas are indispensable, since only they enable men to give stability and reliability to the social reality they live in.

we split the orange in two halves, each of these halves will also have an inner side that is not seen. The inner side of a physical object is never immediately present in consciousness. This assertion is very important, and we will understand it better after another example.

When someone proves a theorem, has he the immediate experience of it or not? If our answer is yes, we would have to draw the rather strange conclusion that our relation with a theorem has something in common with our relation with an orange peel. But that prima facie strange conclusion has to be drawn. Evidence, as Ortega stresses, has nothing to do with the ontological status—or the peculiar way of being—of the thing from which we have the evidence. We must require that an object be present to consciousness in order to be able to talk about it, but the way it is present depends on its own peculiarities. Evidence just means that what we think of a thing, i.e., its concept, and the way that same thing is given overlap.[9] Now, we must draw the two following conclusions (Ortega y Gasset, 2008a: 302):

1. Sensible or intelligible things can be evident, since evidence regards the way a thing, no matter its ontological status, is present in consciousness. This is what Ortega calls a radical enlargement of positivistic claims.
2. When something, sensible or intelligible, cannot be immediately present in consciousness, the evidence of it is impossible.

Let's apply now our conclusions to the problem of how many things there are in the universe, retrieving our point of departure. Firstly, we must reckon that there are just the things that are. Like Willard v. O. Quine remarked, any statement like this one is trivially true, in the sense that no one will disagree with it. However, it doesn't improve our knowledge (Quine, 1994: 1).[10] Secondly, we must also reckon that some of the things we believe exist may not exist. Thirdly, there are those things that exist and that we may be sure they exist; as we said above, those last things are at the same time in the universe and in our knowledge of it. We are now in condition to complete our first image by this new one. In Fig. 2 a straight line connects our point of departure and our expected point of arrival; but, progressing toward the center of the spiral, we pass, each time a circle is completed and before entering a smaller and inner circle, through our point of departure. We are just progressing; however, progressing means that we can only accept as true what has been given to us in an adequate intuition. The path Ortega followed was intended to prove that neither the *data* of common sense experience nor those of scientific experience were adequately given. Has this path by chance approached an intuitively given *datum*? If so, what is it? As we will see, it's here that, according to Ortega, we can experience

[9] Perhaps it would be better to say "when we intend a thing" instead of "what we think of a thing." Ortega is probably thinking about the relation of meaning intentions and fulfillment intuitions, as Husserl explained it in the *Logical Investigations* (1984: 44).

[10] We will see two sections ahead that from this conclusion onward Ortega and Quine will follow two different paths. The main question for the American philosopher is: "what is there in the universe?"; for instance, alleged mental objects, like unicorns, have any kind of being? For Ortega the question is: "what is the nature of what is there in the universe?".

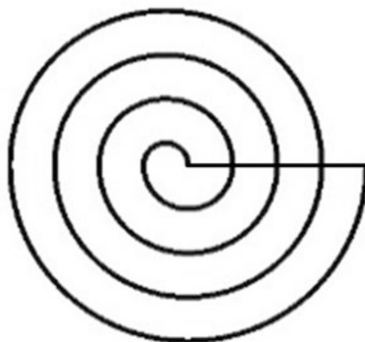

Fig. 2 The path towards intuitive data

the dramatic failure of every kind of philosophical idealism, i.e., of the philosophical systems of modernity.[11]

2 An Alternative Path?

The *Principles of Metaphysics according to Vital Reason*, a course lectured in 1932–1933 in Madrid's Central University, seem to offer an alternative path to that radical reality of my life Ortega has been speaking about since 1914. Perhaps the reading of *Being and Time*, of Martin Heidegger, can explain some of the shifts in this course regarding the Lessons of 1929. As he had not the possibility of direct access to Husserl's late Freiburg Lessons, nor to his manuscripts from the same period, Ortega was unable to guess how near he still was from the actual phenomenological work of the father of phenomenology. Ortega's point of departure, in the abovementioned course, is the need for metaphysics. He is trying to understand why men do metaphysics—or some men at least do—and what it can possibly mean to learn doing it. (Ortega's first Lesson is about the distinction between doing metaphysics when one feels the need for it and studying metaphysics; although it is an important issue, I won't address it here.) The first of Ortega's important statements is that we cannot learn metaphysics from a book; in order to be able to learn it, we

[11] In 1929, idealism, for Ortega, began with Descartes and ended with Husserl, but Ortega did not always thought like that. At the time he wrote the *Meditations on Quixote*, idealism ended with Neokantian philosophy. Of course, not all Ortega scholars agree with this opinion. Antonio Rodriguez Huéscar, for instance, says that phenomenology was for Ortega, an idealism to be overcome since the beginning (1982: 45). We have already addressed Huéscar's opinions in chapter "Ortega, Phenomenology and Idealism". Anyway, and disregarding this last issue, idealism was, for Ortega, a historical and necessary progress, since it corrected the unilateral character of ancient and medieval philosophies, i.e., philosophies based in the primacy of sensation. (What Ortega means by sensation must not be interpreted in an empiricist fashion. It's based on the sensation every philosophy that postulates the primacy of the object over the subject and forgets that knowledge is an unsurmountable relation between the two.)

must feel a personal need for it in the first place. Metaphysics is something men need. Ortega then says that we can only feel its necessity in those situations in which we feel ourselves disoriented. Metaphysics is then a kind of top-down movement, a descent, as he says at the end of the Second Lesson (Ortega y Gasset, 2008b: 575), that we may represent through Fig. 3.

In a somewhat different manner, Ortega is still walking over the soil he opened up for philosophy in the Lessons of 1929. I mean, Ortega is retrieving the idea that my life is the radical reality, that what happens to and in my life is the most important thing for me, in the sense that it is the thing I experience in the first place. Disorientation is something that happens in my life and compels me to stop to think. Later, in the "Preface to Germans," he will be even clearer about this:

> […] personal life is the radical reality and (…) life is circumstantial. Everyone exists as a shipwrecked in his circumstance. In it, he has to brace in order to keep floating. (Ortega y Gasset, 2009b: 152)

Significantly, Ortega doesn't say that to stop to think means to lose the executive character of consciousness. Phenomenologically, we could say that to stop to think is what every transcendental subject does.[12] This stop is the possibility of going on carrying executive acts. When Ortega, in other writings, analyzes the role played by *ensimismamiento* (the capacity of human beings to turn to themselves) in the

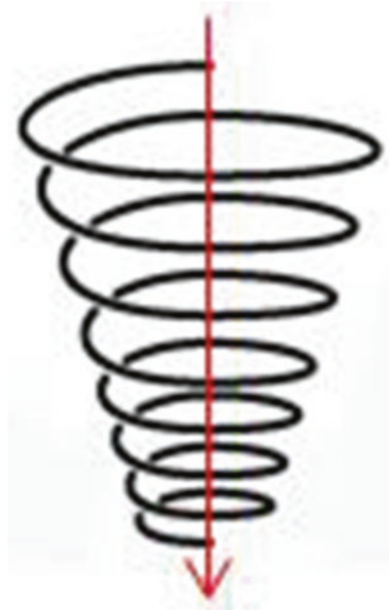

Fig. 3 The top-down movement characteristic of metaphysics

[12] In some of his writings, like the "Preface to Germans," Ortega seems to think (wrongly) that the transcendental subject is the phenomenological subject, i.e., the subject that carries the phenomenological reduction. This confusion can explain some of his criticisms to phenomenology.

achievement of human projects, he will come to very similar conclusions.[13] Life has in itself the possibility of reflection. But, when, like philosophical idealism, we put that possibility in the first place as the distinctive characteristic of the subject who reflects (which is what Ortega now thinks phenomenology also does), we lose the meaning reflection has in life. Reflection is no more something that happens in life for life's own sake, or for the sake of its own executivity, but an intellectual procedure that consists in analyzing primary consciousness (San Martín, 2012: 160). The fact that executive consciousness and reflective consciousness do not necessarily oppose each other is also stressed by Móron Arroyo (1968: 213), just like culture doesn't oppose the spontaneity of life. Reflection is consciousness' attention to itself, to its own intimacy, and to the acts it executes, in order that philosophy may be possible.

Disorientation would be inexplicable if either idealism or realism were right. Because Descartes identified things with my *cogitationes*—and this identification is the core of every idealism – he had to blame imagination for my disorientation, since imagination can induce me to act before the *clara et distincta perceptio* has informed me about what to do. This is important to notice, since Ortega's criticisms to phenomenological idealism consisted, for its most part, in the accusation that it forgot the executive character of consciousness.

3 What Does It Mean to Be Disoriented? Kinds of Disorientation

Perhaps that is not at all clear, at least at the beginning. Why should metaphysics be an answer to disorientation? What does it mean to feel disoriented? In what occasion is someone disoriented? Now, these are difficult questions to answer, since they all have to do with Ortega's notion of man and of belief. We feel ourselves disoriented when our beliefs don't work anymore. It is the theme of the second lesson of the *Principles of Metaphysics according to Vital Reason.*[14] I think things can be put in this way: when our beliefs seem to work, we are not disoriented. Resuming one of Ortega's examples, we could say that usually we don't feel disoriented when trying to leave a room. We know what doors are made for, and we also know that opening the door will allow us to leave the room. In the same way, we know that it is not recommendable to jump through the window, at least when we are not in the ground floor. Perhaps a door won't open when we try to open it. But problems of this kind are not the origin of disorientation, at least in the radical sense Ortega thinks it.

[13] *Ensimismamiento* is especially important in epochs of crisis, when men feel disoriented and search for a new meaning for their lives (Ortega y Gasset, 2010: 463). We shall address in full length the problem of *ensimismamiento* in chapter "Ortega's Philosophical Anthropology", when we will discuss Ortega's anthropology.

[14] In this section we will only address the 1932–1933 series of Lessons. The other two series will be addressed in the next section.

Anyway, something has been won with the previous analysis. Rooms, doors, and windows, and similar things, are just those things that are in the universe, which we encounter because we live among them. Even a skeptical has to admit that he takes into account their existence.[15] That's why, as we explained before, Ortega's question is not "what is there?", but instead "what is the nature of what is there?" Daily life gives us an answer to the first question, but not to the second. This is the reason why men do not have an immediate access to the radical reality. Ignoring the nature of what there is, we live in a kind of chaos. In other words, we are disoriented.

Now, let's try to think a little more about what happened when the door didn't open, as we expected. This trivial matter happened in our life; perhaps it was sufficiently unexpected to occupy our whole attention, at least for a few moments, particularly if we were especially in a hurry to leave the room. The much probable fact that elsewhere doors were functioning as usual was of little help to us. This trend of thought has allowed us to advance a little bit: disorientation is always something that happens in our lives. And so, the radical disorientation that is at the origin of metaphysics must happen in our lives too.[16] Keeping always this in mind, Fig. 3 becomes more comprehensible: we must dig in the surface of our beliefs[17] to find the reasons, lying deep in our being, that make us disoriented from the beginning.

However, the two trends of thought we have been addressing (first the one of 1929 represented in Figs. 1 and 2 and now the one of 1932–1933, represented in Fig. 3) are not really opposed. In the second of his *Lesson of Metaphysics*, Ortega characterizes his own method as a movement that goes from the more external attributes of our lives to the most intimate (Ortega y Gasset, 2008b: 570). Immediately after, Ortega adds something that may seem paradoxical: the intimate center of our lives consists in the fact that life is always punctual or instantaneous. Only the instant we live in, i.e., only what we are living now, has reality. However, this statement must be immediately followed by another one if we want to understand what to live really means. Every instant is of such a kind that in it we remember past instants and anticipate the future ones.[18] Past and future events only have reality as long as we remember them or expect them to happen.

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[15] This sentence may seem typical of a naïve realism, which is not where Ortega stands. We will soon see what this sentence really means.

[16] Most of the times, we will speak of "our lives," but it must be kept in mind that for Ortega life is always "my life." As he stressed several times, life is non-transferable, which means that no one can live my life, just as no one can occupy my place in space, as long as I remain there. When someone does something that I could have done, for instance, seating in a chair where I could be seated if I had arrived first, what he has done is an event in his biography not in mine.

[17] Perhaps the example given by Ortega in the second Lesson (2008b: 567) is not the best one. He speaks about our belief that it is impossible to get out of a room through the walls. But that belief can only be an example of the radical necessity of orientation if we reckon from the beginning that it is a justified belief that has to do with our most primitive experiences of the world. There is of course a physical explanation for this phenomenon, but in our daily experience we don't need to bother about it.

[18] The two classical texts about this important issue are Augustine's *Confessiones*, Book XI, and Husserl's *Lessons about inner Time Consciousness*. Ortega had already addressed this issue in

In every instant we take possession of the totality of our lives. However, this life of ours (that Ortega stresses is always "my life") is not identical with ourselves as persons. Our life is ourselves and the things which we are occupied with, which Ortega labels my "pragmatic fields" in *Man and People*. We cannot put them at a distance: we and they (or rather, a man and the totality of his pragmatic fields) are like the Greek and Roman divinities called *Dii Consentes*, i.e., gods that were born and lived together (Ortega y Gasset, 2008b: 573). The end of this Second Lesson has a clear Heideggerian orientation. Heidegger's *Being and Time* was published in 1927, and it immediately called Ortega's attention. But we must not forget that a philosophy centered in "my life" as the ultimate radical reality was being proclaimed by Ortega since at least 1923, the year of the publication of *The Theme of Our Times*.

Life has two unsurmountable characteristics. In the first place, as Ortega says, it is given to us, we are *arrojados a ella* (Ortega y Gasset, 2008b: 573), which corresponds to what Heidegger called, in § 29 of *Being and Time*, *die Geworfenheit* and Sartre will call later, in *Being and Nothingness*, the *déréliction*. In the second place, life forces us to choose between opposing and sometimes conflicting possibilities. This is a kind of paradoxical situation: albeit we didn't choose to live, we are forced to choose as long as we live. A comparison will help us to understand this. If a bullet had consciousness, it could, given a certain quantity of gunpowder and the intention of the shooter, calculate its own trajectory. As in our lives, the bullet neither shoot itself nor has chosen the target; but, after having been shot, it still won't be able to choose its trajectory or modify it. In this it is different from us: choosing the trajectory or modifying it (or refusing to do so) is what we human beings do. Life, for human beings, is a problem, although the solution to this problem is never given to us in anticipation: we always have to choose between conflicting possibilities (Ortega y Gasset, 2008b: 574). That's why the movement of a bullet is not the movement of life.[19]

4 The *Principles of Metaphysics*: The Later Lessons

The Lessons entitled *Principles of Metaphysics according to Vital Reason* were resumed twice, in 1933–1934 and 1935–1936. The Lessons from 1935–1936 were the last Ortega lectured at the University of Madrid before his exile. These two different series of Lessons have some important remarks about the nature of beliefs, which we intend to address in this section of the present chapter. Above all, they constitute a clear testimony of the ambiguities that pervade Ortega's theory, which we have already mentioned earlier.

Lesson X of *What is Philosophy?*

[19] Incidentally, Ortega adds that life is not a dream. I think that what he is trying to say is something like this: in dreams we don't choose but are constantly dragged in its stream. Only after the awakening we can integrate this stream in our conscious life and perhaps enlarge the meaning of our life with it (Ortega y Gasset, 2008b: 574).

Philosophers, Ortega says in 1933–1934, mistrust beliefs. Philosophy—I think he is thinking in the first place about modern philosophy, in spite of a reference to Plato's *Phaedon* that I will mention in a moment—begins when doubts about the validity of men's beliefs come to the foreground. Beliefs, he adds, are subjective opinions, almost like phantasies. If, making philosophy, we are looking for the radical reality we must put them aside and focus our research on what gives itself to us as it really is. What we believe in has been given to us through daily experience and is the outcome of a naïve or primary trust in it (Ortega y Gasset, 2009a: 106). Surprisingly, if we think about what Ortega says elsewhere, he claims that beliefs make us insecure. It is not philosophical doubts that make us insecure; when alleged certainties were far more numerous than now—i.e., in the primitive or savage epochs of mankind, when beliefs prevailed over critical examination—insecurity was greater. It seems that then men were always changing their system of beliefs in order to find out a new belief that would be better than the previous ones. The last centuries, the centuries of critique (Ortega y Gasset, 2009a: 106), offered the greater security men have enjoyed so far.

Now, one may argue that Ortega is just speaking about the task philosophers have to carry out, i.e., the search for radical reality, and beliefs are not a radical reality. The problem, however, is that Ortega is not just opposing philosophical ideas to unphilosophical beliefs but also arguing that we should not live on the basis of beliefs, leveling all our beliefs and not establishing between them those subtle but important differences he makes elsewhere. He even seems to say that unphilosophical thought consists of things posited by the mind, while philosophy is the search for what posits itself as it is, independently of the mind. Of course, whenever Ortega speaks of the mind, he immediately explains he is thinking about "constructive thought" (Ortega y Gasset, 2009a: 106), and we already know that by this last expression he means above all Neokantian philosophy, opposed to phenomenology as a non-constructive or intuitive philosophy. We also know that this immediate reality that intuitive thought is looking for is not that mind-independent reality traditionally called the "object" or even the world, but instead individual life. I think that is the reason why the reference to Plato's *Phaedon* has some importance here (Ortega y Gasset, 2009a: 107). The *Phaedon* is a dialogue about death; but after all we all know that we die. Plato's dialogue pulls us away from the triviality of statements like "I will die someday" or "everybody is doomed to die" and forces us to focus on the kind of life we live if we want to deserve a life after death.

I think we are now approaching the center of Ortega's thought about the relation between some kinds of beliefs and ideas. The fact is that some beliefs are not really grounded on reality but on mere hearsay (San Martín, 2012: 184). However, the fact mentioned above that I cannot go through a wall is not just hearsay, even if I am totally ignorant of the nature of molecules. It corresponds to an important characteristic of my lifeworld experience, it is the basis of my bodily schemes of orientations in space, and it is the permanent proof that I live in a world whose reality is attested by the fact that it resists me. That I cannot go through a wall is that kind of belief that stems from our relation as human beings to the world in which we leave. The scientific explanation of this fact may change, since science is a historical event: but

the fact underlying the explanation will not change (at least as long as human beings remain what they are now). Other beliefs, however, are just hearsay. The things they allegedly correspond to have no evidence since they are not given to us in proper intuition. Regarding those things, philosophy urges us to take the attitude Ortega calls, as we said above, *desasirse*.

Now, we have a serious problem here. Namely, what is the criterion to distinguish between these two kinds of beliefs? Does Ortega give us the final reason why such a distinction has to be made? Unfortunately, I think he is not entirely clear regarding this issue, although we can find the criterion in his works, especially if we read the Lessons of 1929—of which we talked about at the beginning of this Chapter—and the three series of Lessons of the *Principles of Metaphysics*. One must void oneself of false beliefs in order to keep true beliefs, but one only grasps the meaning of this difference as long as one has previously voided oneself of all beliefs in order to attain the radical reality of life. Only once we have made the top-down movement described above and represented in Fig. 3 will we be able to understand that living also means carrying, as a special kind of tools, those beliefs that allow our worldly orientation. We must now see how Ortega comes again to this problem in 1935–1936, in his last Lectures at the University of Madrid before he went into exile.[20]

Ortega begins stressing an important point: man's primal situation in the world he lives in may be characterized as one of "insufficient truth" (Ortega y Gasset, 2009c: 186). This means that every man possesses a bundle of certainties and truths whose ultimate ground he ignores; moreover, some of these alleged truths are in a state of collision with each other. Coherence between truths is not a mandatory concern in the primal situation; the connections between them have a vital and not a logical character (Bonilla, 2013: 105). That's why doubt arises, and theoretical thought is put in movement. (There are several kinds of theoretical thought, namely, science and philosophy; they are different in kind, but I will skip this issue here.) However, as soon as theoretical thought comes into play, doubt arises. But now Ortega makes another important remark. He says that doubt about the validity of the grounds on which our previous beliefs had their roots entails another belief that is not at the same level as the ones now put in question, namely, the belief that things have a certain kind of being that will not, so to speak, evaporate from the moment we investigate it. In other words, a being that is, at least to a certain extent, accessible to our thought (Ortega y Gasset, 2009c: 188). That is why anyone that engages in the pursuit of knowledge, even before he begins, always has a certain opinion about things: things have a being. Since this opinion is previous to any kind of proof, we may call it a belief. But we must reckon that it has not emerged from mere hearsay. The belief that everything has a being comes out from the inner center of one's own life.

[20] The editorial notes to the edition of this course in p. 1439 in the volume IX of the *Complete Works* say Ortega y Gasset, 2009c that, according to Paulino Garagorri, who was responsible for its first publication, the beginning of the Lessons was dedicated to the presentation of the main topics of *Ideas y Creencias*, which had just been published in Buenos Aires.

5 Why Has Idealism Failed?

In the last section of this chapter, we come again to the analysis of the reasons why, according to Ortega, idealism has failed. (In what will follow, we can also see why realism also fails, but that's not the issue we are addressing now.) As we have seen, man's normal condition is disorientation, but it always happens somewhere and is due to certain motives: I may feel disoriented because I cannot find a way out, or because a cherished project has failed, or because life seems to have lost its meaning due to the sudden death of someone I loved, or for any other reason. However, although I may feel deeply disoriented, I am not in the first place aware of myself as disoriented, but aware of the circumstance that motivated the disorientation. According to Ortega, it's only in a second moment that I turn to myself to reckon my disorientation (Ortega y Gasset, 2008b: 587). I live among persons and things, and to be aware of myself as a living being I have to turn away from those things. What Ortega calls *percatarse de las cosas* (to pay attention to the things that surround me)—the executivity of consciousness that we talked above—is always prior to *reparar en mí* (to pay attention to myself).

Idealism means to put the *reparar en mí* as the radical reality. But, if I only pay attention to myself after having paid attention to the world that surrounds me, radical reality can only be the relation between myself and the things of which I am aware of, a relation in which I am not aware of myself before being aware of the world. This relation is, for Ortega, the ultimate *datum* from which philosophy has to depart.

Let's now return to Lesson VII of *What is Philosophy?* Ortega offers a characterization of idealism that he sees represented by the work of Descartes. (Husserl is never mentioned in these Lessons, but we will see later that there are good reasons to think that he is also the addressee of the critics directed against Descartes.) Idealism is a quest for the radical reality, which cannot be identified with the outer world since the latter can be put in doubt. The *data* stemming from outer experience are uncertain and doubtful. They only appear to me as long as I (or my thought) appear to myself. Realist-oriented philosophers claim that everything distinct from thought exists even when it is not thought. But it's doubtful that a statement about existence can be made in such conditions. On the other hand, thought, i.e., things seen as long as they are seen, or imagined as long as they are imagined, is undoubtedly aware of itself and grasps its own existence (Ortega y Gasset, 2008a: 320). Modern philosophy for Ortega is the paradoxical consequence of this decision. However, things as long as they are thought, or even thought as long as it thinks about itself, are only a part of the experience that our life has of itself. We never encounter, in the first place, thoughts or meanings.[21] That's, for Ortega, what idealism failed to notice.

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[21] Ortega puts it nicely when he says that no one has ever perceived a perception. Of course, I can turn to perceptions to study them. That's what a psychologist may do. But to study a perception, its

Now, Ortega claims that, having discovered life, he has discovered a new continent or, as he says in Lesson X of *What is Philosophy?*, a new kind of being. But that being is not like a new animal variety of a well-known species, not even like a new species. A zoological discovery, even if it is an unexpected one, always has a regional meaning; our universal idea of what the reality taken as a whole is like is not altered by it. But now, the farewell to idealism means the discovery of a new reality that cannot be thought by ancient concepts or categories: these were intended either to think about objects independently from the subject or to think about the objects as they were constituted by the subject's autonomous activity. Perhaps Ortega is just retrieving the old Diltheyan idea that the categories of life cannot be the same as the old ontological categories inherited from Aristotle, i.e., categories of beings in general. Perhaps he is also retrieving what Heidegger (strongly influenced by Dilthey) had said about the same issue in *Being and Time*. However, before attesting Ortega's indebtedness to this two authors, one should look to what he has to say.

Ancient and medieval philosophies were not subject-oriented. Not only they were object-oriented, but they also considered truth as the unconcealment of a thing, the fact that it was opened to the outside, publicly visible. This openness allowed the thing to leave an imprint in the human mind. That's why ancient and medieval philosophies lived according to the metaphor of the signet and the wax.[22] However, the subject of modern philosophy is opened to the inside, i.e., to himself. Here lies the paradox. Man is by nature directed toward the outside, and idealism is in a sense anti-natural. However, when that outside becomes doubtful or uncertain, man must turn to the inside in order to overcome that uncertainty. Figure 4 tries to explain it. The smaller circle in the center represents the Ego. The other circles, from the less to the more peripherals, represent the outer world, the images of the colors, shapes,

Fig. 4 The relation of the Ego (the smaller circle in the center) to the outer world in idealist systems

psychological or physiological mechanism, is not living as perceiving subject, but in accordance with scientific achievements.

[22] Rodriguez Huéscar (1982: 51) stresses this point correctly.

sounds, physical bodies, etc. We must be very attentive to this, because here lies the Orteguian way of interpreting idealism, and also, since 1929, of interpreting phenomenology, which, from now onward, will be considered a variety of idealism, being perhaps its most radical and coherent variety.

In the published version of the "Preface to Germans," written originally in 1934, Ortega, as is well known, retrieves these same critiques to phenomenology. However, here arises a problem that, to our knowledge, has not yet drawn the attention of most of Ortega's commentators. Ortega speaks about the two Neokantian generations of 1840–1855 and 1855–1870 (to which belonged to his two Neokantian masters in Marburg, respectively, Hermann Cohen and Paul Natorp), but, between these two and the earlier generation of Hegel, he puts another one, whose main representatives were born around 1830. Ortega calls it the most unhappy generation in the history of European philosophy (Ortega y Gasset, 2009a: 139). The case is the following: they were not idealists, like the previous generation—that of Hegel and of the post-Kantian philosophers—and like the following Neokantian generation of 1840; nevertheless they were unable to fight against the emergence of positivist and empiricist philosophies that came after the downfall of German idealism. Nevertheless, they put forward some remarkable ideas: for instance, that a whole is prior to its parts, that the categorical must not be opposed to the empirical, that intellectualism must be overcome, that a synthesis is not just something added by a spontaneous subject to the empirically given, and several others (Ortega y Gasset, 2009b: 140–141).

It's difficult not to acknowledge that all these remarkable ideas can also be found in phenomenology.[23] Perhaps the third—the fact that intellectualism must be overcome—was not entirely evident in the books Husserl had published until 1934. But Ortega himself had made very interesting and successful efforts to prove that phenomenology could be directed to attain this end, especially in his first book, *The Meditations on Quixote*. Moreover, the accusation that in the "Preface to German" he addresses to phenomenology, of not being able to gain a systematic form, cannot be found elsewhere in his writings before 1934. And the accusation that it is a new form of idealism only appears in 1929. We can even advance the hypothesis that Ortega's efforts since 1914 were meant to give phenomenology the systematic form that he thought it still lacked. However, Ortega had more to say about the so-called phenomenological idealism. In the next chapter, we will address this issue. And we will also see that the reasons Ortega offers to sustain his accusations are grounded on a misinterpretation of the role of reflection in Husserl's thought.

[23] Huge problems arise here. Unfortunately, I won't be able to address them all. The idea that a whole is previous to its parts is a central theme in Husserl's phenomenology. The third Logical Investigation analyzes this issue. Ortega has shown in a remarkable way that this is not only a cognitive issue. When we think, for instance, in the meaning of sentences like "I am in this room," or "a table is in this room," we are facing the relation between parts and wholes (Ortega y Gasset, 2008b: 589). Moreover, if "I am" or the "table is," this "being in" only gets its meaning—its ontological status, if one likes—from the whole, i.e., the relation between the room, the table, and me. (We will come back to this issue when analyzing Ortega's Anthropology in chapter "Ortega's Aesthetics".)

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Phenomenology Revisited

1 Ortega's Second Critique of Phenomenological Idealism

To begin this chapter, I will address two important issues: (1) why must idealism be overcome; (2) how does Ortega's philosophy of vital reason, and its perspectivism, allow the overcoming of idealism. We have already noticed that idealism, for Ortega, is pretty much the same as modern philosophy, which began with Descartes and ended with phenomenology. This last point has a polemical character. As I stressed before, Ortega only began to accuse phenomenology of idealism from 1929 onward, and until that date Neokantian philosophy was considered the most prominent representative of an idealistic philosophy. So, we have to assume that after 1929 Ortega has an idealistic interpretation of phenomenology to offer; in fact, he seems to maintain that interpretation until the end of his life—we will see that he comes to it again in 1934 and 1947—and offers us reasons to support that interpretation, although never fully explaining why he changed his mind on this issue. In the "Preface to Germans," he is very clear about the kind on interpretation he has to offer:

> […] Husserl believes to find the primary reality, the positive or the given, in pure consciousness. This pure consciousness is an ego that is aware of everything else. But this must be well understood: this ego doesn't want, he is just *aware* of his will and of what he wanted; he doesn't feel, but *sees* his feeling and the values felt; at last, he *doesn't think*, i.e. *doesn't believe* in what he thinks, but *only* notices that he thinks and in what he thinks. (Ortega y Gasset, 2009a: 155)

To sum up, idealism swallows the objective reality since the subject is for it the primordial reality. Modern philosophy, for Ortega, is a philosophy of the subject that unilaterally underlines an aspect that ancient philosophy had left unnoticed. Actually, subject and object are strongly correlated; they, so to speak, are born and die together. Let us go back to our earlier example of the orange. It will allow us to understand the two mentioned issues at the beginning of this section. Let's suppose

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we have cut the orange in two, and one of its halves is shown to two different subjects: one subject sees the part that has a peel that covers the inside, and the other, located at the opposite side, sees the pulp. Each subject performs an intentional act that aims the orange, but they don't see the same part of the orange; their respective intentional acts have different contents. Using Ortega's own language, we could say that each subject has a different perspective of the orange. Now, the difference in perspective depends on the subjects or on the intended object, namely, the orange? (Ortega y Gasset, 2008a: 299)

It would be too hasty to say that the difference depends on the subjects just because they occupy two different locations in space. In fact, once the two subjects have changed their places, each of them will reckon that he is now able to see what the other had formerly seen, and talking to one another they would agree that their opinions on the issue overlap. And so, they will agree that they were looking at the same object. However, our analysis, to be faithful to our experience, must go a little further. Due to the location of the subjects, the orange couldn't show at the same time its two parts to the two different subjects. And that depends on the nature of the orange—on its particular ontological status, i.e., on the kind of object it really is—and not only on the nature of the subjects or on some kind of limitation of their visual acuity. We have now reached a very important point.

When we see an orange, regardless the fact that we can only see a perspective of it, we don't see the act of seeing. Of course, we can later say: "I have seen an orange," or "the orange I saw was big," or things like that. But in this case, we are speaking not of an actual orange that is being seen now, but of our previous act of seeing. Now I am not intending an object but an act. This possibility of our consciousness to turn to its previous acts and analyze them is called reflection. Now, Ortega thinks that phenomenology is entirely grounded on the possibility of acts of reflection. In a way he is right, since Husserl himself acknowledged, in the first volume of his *Ideas*, that phenomenological reduction depended on the possibility of conducting reflective acts (Husserl, 1950: 177). But, as we will see, Ortega misinterprets the aim of reduction and only sees in it a more sophisticated form of idealism.

As is well known, in the German translation, by Helene Weyl, of this "Preface"—whose publication, together with some of his writings, Ortega didn't authorize in 1934—the passages concerning phenomenological idealism were suppressed. Since in October of that same year, Ortega has talked with Husserl and Eugen Fink; it's probable that they have discussed the issue with him and told him that his interpretation of phenomenology (and above all of phenomenological reduction) was wrong.[1] In fact, the aim of reduction is not what Ortega affirms. We can see the extent of his error in a comparison he advances (Ortega y Gasset, 2009a: 156). Through reflection—he says—i.e., through phenomenological reduction, the philosopher is only able to see consciousness' lived experiences after having modified it in the same way a quantum physicist modifies the behavior of an atom when trying to measure

[1] If one wants to know the impression Husserl got from his talks with Ortega, one can read his letter to Roman Ingarden from 26 of November of 1934. Speaking about Ortega's acquaintance with phenomenology, Husserl says: "Er ist tief eingearbeitet in meine Schriften" (Husserl, 1968: 90).

its speed or find its location. What Ortega means is clear: he argues that phenomenology loses executive consciousness, i.e., a consciousness that disappears in face of the reality of which it is the consciousness, and only grasps consciousness when it is no longer living but instead reflecting about what it once has lived. Is he right or wrong when he addresses these critics to phenomenology? To evaluate the accuracy of Ortega's criticisms, we must first disentangle the problems a doctrine of reflection has to face. For our present purposes we can name three:

1. When and how does reflection begin?
2. Does reflection mandatorily entail a lack of executivity?
3. Can reflection give us back the original meaning of the executive act?

Regarding the last question, Ortega's answer is decisively no. In an act of reflection, the reflective consciousness is now the executive one; reflected consciousness is only the object of that reflection. We are already acquainted with Ortega's favorite example: the reflection about a toothache that does not ache. Whereas this is unquestionable and so we must reckon that at least a certain amount of the original meaning of the act has been lost, we must also raise the question if this loss is not accompanied by a gain. Reflection, at least in the phenomenological meaning of this word, is not tantamount to introspection (as Ortega, of course, knows perfectly well), and so the analysis of the exact way someone has lived his pain—the stages of its growth and its decrease, for instance—is not very important here. What is phenomenologically important (and this means, for Husserl, that we have previously accomplished the phenomenological reduction[2]) is the fact that we are now able to grasp the essence of pain, in which case growth and increase can eventually be meaningful not as a psychological experience of the individuals X or Y, but as an essential characteristic of this phenomenon, i.e., something without which it would be something else.

Once we have understood this, the answer to the second question becomes very easy. Reflective consciousness lacks executivity, but not in the sense that it is unable to feel what has been once felt. Actually, it's just the opposite that happens (San Martín, 2012: 162). Grasping the essence of pain (or of any other executive act), we are in position to reckon a certain act we are now presencing as a token or as an instantiation of this essence: we now understand better the acts a person is executing, and their meaning becomes clearer. Accordingly, the answer to the first question is also very simple. We must remember that phenomenological analysis is based on the possibility of "first person" experiences and in their meaningful character. Even if phenomenological analysis is carried out by phenomenologists, they can be carried out by anyone who is disposed—or feels the motivation—to become one. This means that for a phenomenological reflection to be justified and achieve its purported task, it has to be grounded on a universal possibility of reflection. That this possibility exists is a datum of immediate experience. Every act is accompanied

[2] We can see the difference between reflection as it is carried out in the natural attitude and reflection in phenomenological attitude in § 38 of *Ideas I* (Husserl, 1950: 84 ff.).

by the pre-reflexive consciousness that it is being carried out. Ortega didn't notice this pre-reflexive groundwork;[3] that's the reason why he never fully understood what Husserl meant by reflection.

2 Phenomenological Idealism Revisited

Nonetheless, Ortega has not finished with idealism and phenomenology in 1934. A long footnote to *The Idea of Principle in Leibniz*, which he began to write in 1947, in one of his several stays in Lisbon after the return to Spain, reopens the debate (Ortega y Gasset, 2009b: 1119–1120). The issue seems now to be a little more complex. In fact, Ortega distinguishes a theoretical point of view about the meaning of the phenomenological method, on the one hand, and phenomenology as a practical method for the analysis of different problems, on the other. This means, for Ortega, that we can look at phenomenology as a kind of idealism, which is characterized by "phenomenological reduction," but, at the same time, as a philosophical trend that engages in concrete analysis from a realistic standpoint. Phenomenological reduction is idealistic because it starts with the subject and its constitutive activity, reinstating the old subject-object distinction. (Of course, realism does just the same, although it starts with a subject-independent reality. I will skip this problem here.) The following question arises immediately: how can a subject-oriented methodology of analysis entail realistic outcomes? The complexity of phenomenology notwithstanding, perhaps phenomenology is just a contradictio in adjecto, in spite of the rich philosophical analysis, as Ortega is willing to acknowledge, it can offer. Or perhaps it's just the opposite that happens. Ortega has misunderstood the aims of the "phenomenological reduction" and what "idealism" meant for Husserl (San Martín, 1994: 83).

The Idea of Principle in Leibniz is not only a fine book, offering excellent analysis of Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, Leibniz, or Kant (among several others), but one of Ortega's most original books. Morón Arroyo once said that, although Ortega is the philosopher of the circumstance, this unfinished book is the freest from the circumstance of the life of its author (Morón Arroyo, 1968: 444). In a way he is right, since Ortega speaks about themes that have occupied philosophy since its beginnings. But, at a closer inspection, one can perhaps find some threads that connect the book with Ortega's earlier concerns regarding the Spanish circumstance. We already said, in chapter "Ortega and Germany", that Ortega thought that the "salvation" of Spain could only come from science, by which he meant above all (albeit not exclusively) philosophy. And since we can agree that Ortega's last years, after his return from exile, were characterized by a deep feeling of disenchantment regarding the possibilities of action, it's too natural that he tried to evaluate what happens to philosophy and to philosophers when they engage in the project of cultural and political reform. Not by accident, the metaphor of the *Dii Consentes*, so

[3] Cf. (Ortega y Gasset, 2008b: 587): "[...] I only take notice of myself when I am unaware of the world [...]".

important for the understanding of Ortega's idea of the relation between man and his circumstance, reappears in this book (Ortega y Gasset, 2009b: 937).[4]

In the unfinished book of 1947, phenomenology is mentioned, for the first time, after thorough although not entirely new considerations about the fate of modern philosophy. This means that Ortega is busy trying to understand phenomenology's historical meaning. In other words, he is trying to grasp what can possibly mean to practice philosophy in a phenomenological fashion in an epoch in which, as we have seen in previous chapters, modernity has come to an end. The first reference to Husserl in § 3 of the book (Ortega y Gasset, 2009b: 948) comes almost at the end of a large panorama of the first two centuries of modern philosophy and science and has a preliminary character. Ortega speaks about an epoch where philosophy no longer is *the* science, but only one among other sciences, even if its object is still considered, at least by some, the most excellent one; moreover, philosophy no longer serves as a model for rigorous thought and from then on takes the model for its reasoning from physics. As Ortega says, quoting from Kant's essay of 1763 *Reflections on the Principles of Natural Theology and of Moral*, philosophy addresses its specific issues like Newton addressed his own (Ortega y Gasset, 2009b: 941). However, Ortega goes on, since the time of Newton physics has suffered a deep transformation and, at the beginning of the twentieth century, challenges a deep-rooted philosophical idea regarding the nature of truth. Particularly with quantum mechanics, physicists no longer believe that a thought is true only if it is identical with empirical reality; of course, some physical assertions must "touch" some parts of reality, but the coherence of the whole set of assertions of a physical theory is enough proof of its validity. We will not discuss Ortega's thesis about the nature of modern physics. Our aim for now is only to show the context of the first reference to Husserl. It comes in a footnote (Ortega y Gasset, 2009b: 948), and Ortega says that Husserl is still attached to the old idea of scientific rigor, when physics itself begins to move away from it.

The second set of references to Husserl is not much longer than the first, but it's much more important, at least in my opinion. We must look to it very carefully. Since the beginning of § 18 (Ortega y Gasset, 2009b: 1012), Ortega engaged in a large and complex examination of the main currents of western philosophy. To understand what we will say until the end of this chapter, it is perhaps better for the reader to keep in mind that Husserl once said that phenomenology is the culmination of a secret and long-lasting aspiration of western philosophy. Ortega will show that it is not, despite what we all owe to the careful and painstaking analysis Husserl can offer us. But we must begin from the beginning, and the beginning is Plato's conception of a philosophical science. It can be summarized in a single sentence; "we must take a distance to get closer" (Ortega y Gasset, 2009b: 1014). Or in a little more technical language: we must look to the supersensible ideas in order to get some knowledge of sensible things. Aristotle instead followed another track: he

[4] Anyway, one has to acknowledge that Ortega doesn't speak of man and his circumstance, but instead about thought and being.

thought that we can only get some knowledge of the sensible world if we contact with it first through sensation. Ortega, however, adds a very important comment. Our modern word "sensation"—he says—is totally inadequate to express what ancient Greek meant by sensation. In Aristotle's *De Anima*, we can find this word in contexts that only allow its translation by "comparison" or even by "judgment".[5]

In fact, when it comes to Aristotle things become a bit more complex. We are now approaching a decisive point in which Ortega's old criticisms of phenomenology will be resumed. According to Ortega, Aristotle, in Book III of *De Anima*, had the unfortunate idea of introducing an "active intellect," breaking with the continuity he had first postulated between sensation and thought (Ortega y Gasset, 2009b: 1020). But the reason why, according to Ortega, he had to do this is very important. Aristotle saw—rightly, as Ortega adds—that philosophy must be systematic[6]; accordingly, he had to put his psychology at the same level with his theology and his ethic, i.e., he thought that only the continuity between these three disciplines would warrant his philosophy a systematic character. And so he had to postulate the existence of an active intellect, a part of the human intellect—separable from the rest—that put human intellect closer to the intellect of God. One can ask what all this has to do with phenomenology and idealism. It has a lot, as we will see in a moment.

In an excellent analysis of Ortega's thought, Javier San Martín speaks of Modern Times as being characterized by a contempt for the immediacy (San Martin, 1994: 281). Now, the fate of the Aristotelian doctrine of the intellect was that contempt. Let us see an example. Suppose I see a certain white object, for instance, a sheet of paper. I can separate (i.e., abstract) the white of the sheet from its other characteristics, for instance, the fact that it is a rectangular sheet of paper. Next, I can compare the color of this sheet with the color of other objects, for instance, the color of the walls of my office at the University or the color of my car, and infer it is the same color. Now arises a huge gnoseological and ontological problem. What is the relation between the white color each time "individualized" in the three objects I just mentioned and "the white," i.e., the alleged "unindividualized" color that I see in these three objects and in many others? Although Ortega doesn't examine at length Husserl's investigations on this issue, it seems that he thinks, at least according to a footnote in (Ortega y Gasset, 2009b: 1021), that the German philosopher was not completely clear about the solution for this problem, formulated in the following alternative: the color of an object is just an abstract moment of this object or instead the instantiation of the "species" to which that color belongs (Husserl, 1984: 226)?

[5] I must skip here a very important remark in footnote 2 to (Ortega y Gasset, 2009b: 1015). Ortega says that this notion of sensation is very close to what Husserl meant by "experience" in his posthumous book entitled *Experience and Judgement*. Ortega remarks that, like Aristotle, Husserl thinks that every explicit judgment has at its basis in perception; the latter is, so to speak, a judgment in a "contracted" form.

[6] We have already spoken, more than once, about the necessary systematic character of philosophy, namely, in the Introduction and in the previous chapter. As we also showed in chapter "Ortega and Germany", Neokantianism, despite its idealistic stance, had that systematic character without which, for Ortega, there is no true philosophy.

3 Ortega's Radical Point of Departure

Now, we come to the third and fundamental set of references to phenomenology in *The Idea of Principle in Leibniz*. But first, let's look to what Ortega has to say:

> Since 1914, I have depicted the description of the phenomenon 'consciousness of…', stating, in face of all kinds of idealism, that it is not a *pure* description, but already a hypothesis, to say that the act of consciousness is real, but its object is only intentional, therefore, unreal. A description that strictly adheres to the phenomenon - I said then - will state that in a phenomenon of consciousness such as a perception we find the *coexistence of the Ego and of the thing*, therefore, that the last is not ideality, intentionality, but the reality itself. (Ortega y Gasset, 2009b: 1120)

What is at stake here is the meaning and the aims of phenomenological reduction. Is it directed to the description of the phenomenon Ortega calls "consciousness of…". Let's in the first place remind that "consciousness of…" always means "consciousness of something." Even in a pure noetic analysis—such as Husserl practiced it in the *Logical Investigations*—the noematic pole is always present. That's the reason why Husserl stressed that an intentional act has always a matter, i.e., it is directed toward something and means that thing in a certain way. And he also adds that an act has an intentional content, which means that regardless the way a thing is intended by different consciousness, it is the same thing that is intended, and different subjects can reckon that they intend the same. That's why expressions like "the winner of the battle of Jena" and "the looser of the battle of Waterloo" have the same intentional content, albeit they do not mean the same about their reference, i.e., Napoleon Bonaparte. What Ortega says in the "Preface to Germans," that phenomenology "turns the world into a phantom and transforms it in sheer meaning" (Ortega y Gasset, 2009a: 155), is not an accurate account of phenomenology even if we insist that it is a variant of idealism.

In the last to lines of the above quotation, there seems to be another misunderstanding. Ortega says that the thing intended by an Ego is not ideality, but reality itself. In a way he may be right if what he means is that we don't have to look for a real thing beyond the thing intended; this one is not just some kind of meaning subsisting in the mind for which we had to look for a reference. But the intended object qua intended (what Husserl called the noema) is not identical with the real object. The problem lies in the fact that we usually chose as examples of intended objects things like trees, houses, animals, etc. But we can also intend, for instance, unicorns or flying sauces. (Let's suppose, for the sake of argument, that they do not in fact exist.) For phenomenology, qua intended they are not different from trees or houses, although they have no place in our ontology. That's the reason why Husserl found justified the distinction between the noema and the real thing.

However, Ortega has something more to say about phenomenology. Most of Husserl's publications during his lifetime, as is well known, were intended to expose the main principles of the phenomenological method. The concrete analysis that the method allowed remained for its great part unpublished. For those who read the first volume of the *Ideas* and took it as the sole way of understanding what

phenomenology was all about, the new philosophical science Husserl proposed could look as just one extension of Descartes' philosophical project. Of course, attentive readers of the philosophical literature could find—if they were willing to do it—in *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, the book Husserl published in 1929, that the "Cartesian" way followed in the *Ideas* was not the only legitimate introduction do the phenomenological method.[7] That first impression would be confirmed by the two articles about *The Crisis of the European Sciences* Husserl published in 1936. Curiously, Ortega, who read them some time before their publication, got the impression that the author could only be Husserl's assistant Eugen Fink.

I must recall that Ortega said that phenomenology lacked a systematic character. This statement is easily understandable if we think that for the young Ortega Neokantian idealism offered the example of a systematic philosophy, although it was really not systematic at all: a system can only be grounded on systematic *data*, and those *data* are, for Ortega, the Ego and its circumstance or, in other words, concrete human life. Neokantian idealism failed because it looked to the achievements of this concrete human life—which is always, as we know, individual human life—as a first and imperfect stage in the teleology of reason. Ortega agreed with idealism as long as it endeavored to save reason and truth from every kind of skeptical attacks, but idealism was only able to do it at the expense of that individual life. For the Neokantians in particular reason only is really reason in the theoretical activities of science and in the pure moral imperatives of practical reason.

If this is so, one can ask: what was phenomenology doing but an exploration of human life, engaged in lifeworld intentional achievements, in acts of perception, of feeling and volition, and also in theoretical higher-level activities, like physics or mathematics? It's of course debatable if the theoretical efforts Husserl made to clarify phenomenology's methodological practice are plainly in accordance with that practice when it comes to the concrete analysis of particular phenomena (San Martín, 1994: 85). Nonetheless, Ortega saw in phenomenology, when he first took contact with it, the only way to overcome a basic tenet of idealist philosophies: that the meaning of what exists must be constructed through the activity of the mind, instead of being picked by intuition in the immediate experience.

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[7] Of course, Ortega didn't ignore this important work. He makes some references to it, although unfortunately too brief, in the 1944 course *The Historical Reason* (Ortega y Gasset, 2009b: 664–665).

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Ortega's Social Philosophy

1 The Phenomenological Relevance of the Concept of Mass-Man

The Revolt of the Masses, published in 1929, is perhaps the most famous and the most well-known book Ortega published during his lifetime. Yet, if we don't read it in close connection with his more technical philosophical works of the same time period, there is the danger of it being to a large extent misunderstood. To what extent can *The Revolt of the Masses*, as I suggest in the title of this section, be considered a treatise of applied phenomenology, dealing with the understanding of social life and a particular social type? To give the proper answer, we have to see not only what phenomenology meant to Ortega but also how he assimilated it and used it in many of his works. My aim here is not to exhaust a subject that will be dealt with in other chapters of this book. Neither will an analysis be made of Ortega's criticisms of phenomenology from 1929 onward, regardless one thinks they are justified or not. In order to understand Ortega's philosophical position in *The Revolt of the Masses*, as well as the need to read it from a phenomenological standpoint, we will only have to mention some fundamental ideas:

1. My life, one of Ortega's central concepts, corresponds to what Husserl called the "transcendental Ego," that is, a subjectivity committed to the performance of intentional acts that allow it to orient itself in the world and thereby to understand the meaning of worldly things and events.
2. What things are and mean for each of us—that is, how they become part of our lives—depends to a large extent on the horizon in which they make their appearance.
3. Patent phenomena conceal a latent web of relationships and structures; the former are related to the latter as facts are related to essences, according to what Husserl states in the First Book of *Ideas I*.

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Certainly my life is, to a large extent, determined by the cultural and social environment in which I grew up and live, by long-time established and sanctioned habits and practices, by language, and by a variety of factors that it would be useless to specify. All this makes me in some way an heir. But albeit this condition, from which no one can get rid of, just like someone who walks with his back to the Sun cannot but see his own shadow extending in front of him, I cannot evade the responsibility of being what I am, what Ortega used to call the "vocation" that is mine. Since "vocation" is a basic anthropological concept in Ortega's philosophy, we will address it in the next chapter. For our present purpose, the following will be enough: that I have a vocation means that I must take on permanently the responsibility for my own life and for the innermost parts of my Ego (Cerezo, 2011: 127). This also explains why human life possesses, at every moment, an element of reflectiveness.

Now, we must be careful when using the concept of reflectiveness. Ortega doesn't mean that kind of second-degree reflection I can do after something has been done and when I have enough distance to turn back to it. An example of this distance that institutes a second-degree reflection would be, for Ortega, what Husserl calls phenomenological reduction, in which the proper execution of intentional acts is suspended. For Ortega, however, reflection is first of all that reflection which is inherent to life itself, occurring simultaneously with the execution of current intentional acts. Using an example from Ortega, we could say: there is a reflection that accompanies my toothache, meaning that I am aware that my teeth ache, and which differs from the reflection on a past pain that no longer aches but can be analyzed in its phases—its beginning, the progressive increase, the slow decrease during the medical treatment, etc. But while the pain hurts me, my reflective acts are of a completely different kind. I feel myself somewhat responsible for my pain, I can handle it, decide to take a pain reliever, make an appointment with a doctor, and the like. Let us then fix the following distinction, which is of the utmost importance:

1. In the last situation mentioned, I am a transcendental Ego, I perform acts that are aimed to orient myself in current reality, I am responsible for it, since reality is a part of my life.
2. In the case described first, when I analyze the pain after having already taken a distance from it, eventually because it is gone, I am a phenomenological Ego.

This distinction, which is not always clear in Ortega, is of great importance, because it allows us to conclude that reflection, in the first place, is nothing more than our own life reflecting upon itself, hence the essential need to be sincere, for sincerity is the first of the vital imperatives. That first-degree reflection, the reflection of the Ego upon itself, is the primal condition for a responsible life; as well as for the philosopher, sincerity is the mandatory condition in order that his second-degree reflection (i.e., philosophy) does not falsify the reality it intends to think. (Lack of sincerity, as we stated in previous chapters, is Ortega's main accusation to the philosophical systems of German idealism and Neokantism, which has nothing to do with the fact that we can find some truths in them.) I admit that it may exist here—at a certain extent—some influence of the Heideggerian concept of authenticity (Heidegger, 1986: 305), but I think Ortega speaks of sincerity long before

Being and Time was published in 1927. Now, *The Revolt of the Masses* is the analysis of a human type that is characterized by being fundamentally insincere, first and foremost with itself, by betraying its own humanity and, irresponsibly, by not being able to assume its condition as a transcendental subject up to the end. It is therefore a deficient way of being human, which Ortega will call the mass-man.[1]

2 Can We Speak of a Contribution of Ortega to the Social Sciences?

"Mass-man" is one of the several concepts created by Ortega that are relevant to the social sciences. Nelson Orringer calls our attention to the way Ortega handles this concept, in order to show its phenomenological relevance. Ortega's method is quite close to the eidetic variations. Each step in the argumentation must be corroborated by a return to the lived experience in which the theory is grounded (Orringer, 1979: 275). That's why Ortega begins with an unquestionable *datum*: the multitudes are everywhere, and places once almost empty, or occupied only by a select minority, are now full of people. Only if this description holds can we advance a hypothesis: the level of our epoch has raised in comparison with past epochs, and the masses claim for rights that until recently were reserved to the few.

Another important concept is the concept of generation. I will try to show how the emergence of the mass-man disturbs the healthy internal dynamics of generations. To do so, it is necessary to start by defining a generation. We can define it as a vast number of people that has a homogeneous vital sensibility, which is distinct from the former sensibility, and a clear consciousness of its specific mission (Ortega y Gasset, 2007: 124). Now, a generation, according to Ortega y Gasset (2005: 563), is always composed of a select minority and a multitude, coexisting in a dynamic equilibrium. According to this definition, the triumph of the mass-man means above all the breaking of that balance accompanied by the consequent generalization of the social type that he himself represents. So, places full of people are only a symptom. We must focus on the breaking of the equilibrium. This phenomenon seems to have, for Ortega, two consequences:

1. The multitude no longer acknowledges the role of the select minorities and therefore recognizes itself as a multitude endowed with rights that traditionally were not their own rights.
2. The select minorities themselves think and act like multitudes.

The first consequence, if true, brings with it some huge problems, which I will not address in this text. The question is whether a multitude that recognizes itself as

[1] Nelson Orringer stresses the fact that the mass-man is a kind of mix. It belongs to the mass, but it also aims to overcome the select minority, by imitation—at least up to a certain point—of the behaviors of the latter (Orringer, 1979: 267). I will address this issue in the following pages.

such is still in fact a multitude. It is not essential to answer it for what I have to say in this chapter. Let's get to the essential issues. We can find the mass-man in different social strata and even in isolated individuals, and it is likely that it became the dominant social type in different generations of different historical periods. Ortega argues, for example, that the last centuries of the Roman Empire were characterized by the predominance of mass-men. However, I believe that, according to Ortega, something in the Generation of 1930 (or in the years immediately preceding this date) facilitated the emergence of this type of man. Taking an expression I used in Sect. 1 of this chapter, I would say that things are as follows: the triumph of the mass-man means that each individual fails to perform the intentional acts that can guide him in life in a radical way; the individual disavows his condition as a transcendental Ego and, instead of living on his own spontaneity, lives on the basis of what has already been performed by others, escaping his own destiny.[2]

In his well-known 1923 work, *The Theme of our Time*, Ortega makes an observation that will allow us to better understand what is at stake here. The spirit of a generation, he says (Ortega y Gasset, 2005: 564), the vital attitude that a generation represents, depends on the balance between the way one acknowledges what one has received from the previous generations, not paying attention to the intimate voices of spontaneity, and the way in which, being faithful to the latter, one reacts against the authority of the past.[3] At first glance, the mass-man's triumph might seem to mean an imbalance in favor of the first term of the alternative. Actually, the situation is much more complex, because such an imbalance represents a loss of historical sense. Those who live on what they inherited do not have a real past. The past, in fact, only exists for those who distance themselves from it and endeavor toward a future different from the present in which they live. Strictly speaking, mass-men don't have a present either, since the present only has a meaning as long as it awakens the responsibility toward the future.

Ortega says in a short 1933 text—that is, 4 years after the publication of *The Revolt of the Masses*—that his time is the time of young people. Or rather, that in a relatively circumscribed period of the European life, roughly from 1917 to 1932, the idea of youth (in art, politics, clothing, and sport) seemed to supersede all others. Social existence in Europe, he says, is organized so that young people of the middle class can live a pleasant life. The whole of life has taken on a childish character, that is, the awareness to the radical insecurity that characterizes it has been forgotten or

[2] Pedro Cerezo notes that the Spanish word "destiny" may have several meanings that the German language distinguishes by three different words: *Schicksal*, *Geschick*, and *Bestimmung* (Cerezo, 2011: 127). In the present context, I use the word destiny as meaning at the same time *Geschick* (i.e., destination, something that is there for us to accomplish) and *Bestimmung* (i.e., vocation, the consciousness we have of the mission we are urged to accomplish, by the circumstance in which we live).

[3] One could perhaps argue that Ortega, stimulated by the reading of Max Scheler's *The Formalism in Ethics*, was himself searching, by means of the concept of select minority, for a balance between two human types that Scheler clearly distinguishes in his book. In fact, the German author opposes a Kantian and Nietzschean type of man, who seeks the autonomy of the will, and a Fichtean type that values the will according to the degree of its achievements (Scheler, 1955: 504).

even lost. The belief of being too much safe from dangers, the belief that the world was made for ourselves, characterizes, according to Ortega, the process of the degeneration of minorities. These are the times when people begin to believe that everything can go on forever too well (Ortega y Gasset, 2009: 19).

Of course, young people, as an age group, have always existed; but there is a profound difference between a time when youth is a stage of preparation for adulthood and a time when adults want to look young, dress like young people, and share their tastes and language. It is not easy to say how far this diagnosis has to do with Ortega's theory of the rhythms of history, which, in his opinion, would oscillate between times of youth and times of senectitude, the former characterized by the creative impetus and the latter by the spirit of conservation. Perhaps the aforementioned distinction between latent and patent will be of some help to understand what Ortega means. "Youth" and "senectitude" are latent dimensions that allow us to appreciate the degree of vitality that is evident in a historical epoch, i.e., what Ortega also calls its level, the more general characteristics of its manifestations in politics, science, art, or philosophy. In this sense, the puerility of our age does not make it an epoch in which prevails the spirit of youth.

We will see later that these two facts—the irresponsibility of those who only feel themselves as heirs and childishness—have to do with the level of our age. It is this level that we must try to describe in the first place, in order to understand the radical novelty that it means. And this level is largely determined by science: their applications have increased life expectancy, reduced the threat of deadly diseases, and revolutionized hygiene conditions in both private and public life. But it is not these achievements that in themselves have transformed the epoch into a childish epoch. Let's see what Ortega tells us in *The Revolt of the Masses* about this subject:

> The world that surrounds the present man from birth does not limit him in any way, does not put any veto or restraint on him, on the contrary, it stimulates his appetites that, in principle, can grow indefinitely. For it happens (…) that this nineteenth and early twentieth century world not only has the perfections and amplitudes it actually possesses, but it also suggests to its inhabitants a radical security that tomorrow it will be even richer, more perfect and broader, as if it enjoyed spontaneous and inexhaustible growth. (...) This leads us to point out in the psychological diagram of the present mass man two main features: the free expansion of his vital desires, therefore, of his person, and the radical ingratitude for all that made the ease of his existence possible. One trait and another make up the well-known psychology of the spoiled child. (Ortega y Gasset, 2010a: 407–408)

This situation was prepared by the nineteenth century. And although concrete historical and sociological references are not very abundant in Ortega, there are at least two factors that lie in its origin. Ortega does not discuss them at the same time, and a detailed analysis of texts from different times would lead us to a lengthy discussion of the evolutionary stages of his thinking, not only in philosophical matters but also in social and political matters. This is a topic that I will restrain to discuss in this chapter, but I want to point out its existence. Thus, in a juvenile paper entitled "Socialism and Aristocracy," Ortega acknowledges that capitalism, which developed prodigiously from the mid-nineteenth century onward, had a leveling effect by destroying most of the social significations on which the previous society was grounded. The priest, the

warrior, the legislator, the small owner, or the simple adventurer, among others, tends to disappear to make room for two new protagonists: the capitalist and the worker. It is not important to discuss the correctness, in purely sociological terms, of this diagnosis, because the most important thing is to understand what Ortega means in cultural or even spiritual terms. The phenomenon to which he points is the emergence of two unique significations, or two unique lifestyles, united by a common denominator: their place in the current system of production.

A later text, inserted in the series called *El Espectador* and entitled "Ideas de los Castillos," mentions another factor which would be the cause of the same situation. Ortega's accuracy in historiographic terms may also be contestable, in particular as regards the history of law in the Iberian Peninsula, but I will also leave this issue aside (Fernandes, 2006: 292). What interests me here is the genesis of the ideas expressed in *The Revolt of the Masses*. Ortega regrets that the influence of German law in Spain was not as strong as that of Roman law. The former gave attention to the individual and his independence from state power, which Ortega puts in the genesis of liberal thought; the second privileged the individual as an abstract entity, that is, from the sole point of view of his equality before the law and, consequently, before all others.[4] Ortega sees this as being the genesis of democracy and egalitarianism. Perhaps one could argue that egalitarianism may not be understood only as synonymous of leveling. However, this is the way Ortega understands it.

Nevertheless, reading other texts, one just gets the impression that Ortega sometimes blurs the distinction between democracy and liberalism, which he so cautiously kept most of the time. For instance, in the 1933 conference "¿Qué pasa en el mundo?," he speaks of liberal democracy, and the definition he offers of a democratic state, namely, one that bases its activity in a democratic consensus and looks for the spontaneous support of those who agreed to live in common under the same authority (Ortega y Gasset, 2009: 23), is pretty close to his definition of liberalism in "Ideas de los Castillos." Moreover, he stresses the fact that this kind of liberal democracy, far from meaning "manchesterism" in economic affairs (i.e., the overevaluation of economic matters regarding the political ones), means in fact the possibility of an individual and social life independent of the state and a clear-cut separation between a man's social existence and man as a private person.[5] However, to blur the distinction was sometimes almost inevitable. If democracy and liberalism were the answer to two different questions—namely, who shall rule the state and what are the limits of state power—we may accept the fact that someone claims to be both a democrat and a liberal.

[4] About the German, i.e., medieval roots of Ortega's notion of liberalism, and the ancient and modern roots of democracy, see Sánchez Cámara (2005: 190–191).

[5] To make this distinction clear, I will only add that for Ortega "social existence" always means anonymity, i.e., the necessity to perform tasks and fulfill duties that do not come from the sources of one's own self, whose main characteristics are "non-transferability" and "circumstantiality." Perhaps one could say that liberalism, for Ortega, means the kind of political systems that allows the self of each man the free accomplishment of his own vocation. On this issue see Álvarez (2013: 257–260).

3 Deficient Human Types: Dissection of the Mass-Man

An analysis of this question, allowing us to understand the four deficient human types that Ortega subsumes in the general concept of mass-man, presupposes that we have first addressed a former question. This question may be stated as follows: under what conditions is a form of life a truly human life? Since 1914, i.e., since the publication of the *Meditations on Quixote*, the answer offers no doubt for Ortega. A truly human life is only a life that endeavors to extend its conditions of existence, either individually or collectively. In other words, all authentically human life includes the dimensions of valuation, ideals, and evens illusion. The latter is not opposed to the first two, provided we do not fail to differentiate it from the more or less pathological hallucination. The three constitute the human response to inherited reality, which every man is called not only to preserve but also to amplify. Life is thus a permanent having-to-do, for everything inherited is subject to the radical insecurity that affects all human affairs. To fully understand this, it would be necessary to introduce some concepts that Ortega only introduces and thematizes in later works, namely, in *Man and People*. One of his central ideas in this work is that this having-to-do is untransferable (Ortega y Gasset, 2010b: 173). This clarifies the meaning of the concept of "aristocracy" in *The Revolt of the Masses*: an aristocrat is someone that demands from himself more than the others do and does not transfer to others a responsibility that only he can assume.

In a sense close to what Martin Heidegger had labeled "care" in *Being and Time*, Ortega argues that to live is to worry, and tend toward the future, on the basis of the experience of the present. Someone who does not feel worried in a way still does, because he assumes as his own the concerns of those who created the circumstance in which and from which he lives; he only cares about managing a gift he has received as an inheritance, as if he could enjoy it without limits. In this way we can see better what the characteristic incapacity of the mass-man is: it is an inability to conduct himself in life and to bring all things to their utmost perfection. In the *Mediations on Quixote*, Ortega called it—even before he created the concept of mass-man—the inability to ask for the meaning of things and to make each one the virtual center of the world.

This last statement deserves further explanations, since the concept of virtual is one of the most important in Ortega's thinking, performing multiple tasks. We may call virtual, in the first place, what is not, at a certain moment, the focus of our attention, but which may end up to be later on; secondly, we can also call virtual what is merely latent, that is, hidden under a patent reality; thirdly, we can call virtual what simply does not yet exist or exists only as a possibility to be accomplished in the future. For now, it is enough to say that the mass-man does not know the virtual. Indeed, he is inclined to accept a reality which he enjoys as if it had been expressly made for him and which he is never tired of claiming that it is his property. This attitude corresponds to one of its most obvious characteristics, which Ortega denounces: he considers himself to have rights over things, but is not charged with the duty to preserve them. The mass-man is unaware of what Ortega calls the radical insecurity of all life. Let's look at the following passage:

> When we talk about our life, it is customary to forget something which seems to me to be very essential: our life is always and first of all the consciousness of what is possible for us. If at any moment we didn't had before us more than one possibility, it would make no sense to call it that. It would rather be pure necessity. But here it is: this very strange fact we call our life has the radical condition of always finding before itself more than one way-out, which, because they are several, acquire the character of possibilities between which we have to decide. (Ortega y Gasset, 2010a: 395–396)

Let us go a little deeper into the concept of virtual, since it may give us a key to understand Ortega's thinking in *The Revolt of the Masses*. I spoke above of the inability of the mass-man to see in everything a virtual center; in fact, his gaze travels around things in the same way an heir contemplates what he has not created but which he has at his disposal. Can Spain, for example, be seen by a Spanish not as a mere heritage but as the virtual center of the world? If the question may seem a little strange today, it seemed much more so at the time Ortega published his book. A few decades earlier, Spain had just lost the remains of its empire, where, as Philip II liked to say, the sun never set; internally, Spain was divided between monarchists and republicans; the republic will be established 1 year after the publication of *The Revolt of the Masses*, and 6 years later the nationalist sectors will unleash a Civil War; at the level of philosophy and science, Spain was only beginning to overcome the delay that separated it from the most advanced European countries. Could a country in such a situation be the virtual center of the world? (The same question could be posed for Europe today, probably even more pertinently than in Ortega's time. But this would lead us in other directions.)

I would like to remind now, in order to reach the conclusion of my analysis of Ortega's thought in *The Revolt of the Masses*, the paths we have already taken in point 3 of this chapter:

1. The mass-man is unaware of the virtual dimension present in every reality. For him there is only the actual and not the possible.
2. The mass-man considers himself to be the heir of a situation which does not have to be preserved by his endeavors, because, deep in his heart, he is unaware of the uncertain character of all human affairs.
3. The mass-man, owing above all to the progress of science, whose significance is unknown to him, enjoys a well-being and a level of civilization superior to any other known in the past.

If these three traits characterize it, as we have seen, we still need to add a fourth: the mass-man is identical everywhere. This is an important point, as it allows Ortega to explain a feature of European life that was not yet fully dominant in his time but would soon become a feature of life around the whole world. I remarked earlier that life has a patent dimension and a latent dimension. I also remarked that one of the characteristics of the phenomenological method, as Ortega understands it (and as Husserl also understood it), is that it allows us an access to the latent dimensions that lie behind the patent and it ensures that we have, from the former, the same evidence we can have from the last.

Now, why does life tend to be equal everywhere? Why the rise of its historical level—whose reasons lie for Ortega in the democracy inherited from the nineteenth century and in the advance of science—had as its outcome an advance in uniformity? Ortega makes an important point: today the life of the average man is made up of the vital repertoire that in earlier times characterized minorities. When we seek to draw the psychological diagram of the present man, we need to take into account the situation which Ortega describes as follows:

> So my thesis is the following: the very perfection with which the nineteenth century gave an organization to certain forms of life is the reason why the beneficiary masses don't consider it as an organization but as a nature. This explains and defines the absurd state of mind that these masses reveal: they are concerned only with their well-being and at the same time have no solidarity with the causes of their well-being. Since they do not see the advantages of civilization as a prodigious invention and construction that can only be sustained with great efforts and caution, they think that their role is reduced to demand them as if they were native rights. (Ortega y Gasset, 2010a: 408–409)

The situation thus described allows us to understand the four psychological types in which the mass-man unfolds today: the spoiled child, the *señorito satisfecho*, the barbarian, and the expert. The four consider as their own right that which was the result of an unprecedented historical effort, which Ortega calls the "historical level" of our time. The *señorito satisfecho* is, of the four types that I have mentioned, probably the worst of all. In it is manifested a particular form of "demeaning"—Ortega's word in Spanish is *envilecimiento*—which consists in not being faithful to one's own vocation as a man and wanting to remain in this infidelity. Life, for Ortega, as I mentioned earlier, is a having-to-do, and this having-to-do, as I said, is not transferable. This gives each of our actions a clear responsibility. Life presupposes commitments and duties, in the first place those duties we impose on ourselves. The *señorito satisfecho* lives in the public space as a child lives at home, with the family, where even the biggest offenses can go unpunished; what he does is just for fun, as if what we do in life was not always irrevocable.

In *The Revolt of the Masses* (Ortega y Gasset, 2010a: 467), Ortega tells a funny story, with which I end this section, since it offers an example of the situation of the mass-man and his radical disorientation, and also gives us one of the keys to understand the inner connection between the two parts of this book. Indeed, this short story is found in the second part, in the opening paragraph entitled: "Who Rules the World?" Ortega says, there, that foreigners visiting Spain are often amazed that any passersby whom they ask a certain direction are willing to accompany them to the place where they want to go. Ortega wonders: did my fellow countryman, when he generously offered to help a foreigner, really wanted to go somewhere? And he concludes, with irony: I have the feeling my countrymen go out to see if they can find any foreigners to go with. This is a bit the situation of the mass-man: he goes, because it is not possible to remain always motionless and human life must, by nature, perform some task, but he goes without knowing where he goes. To know where one has to go is "the consciousness of the command." And those who have such a conscience, says Ortega, belong to a "select minority."

4 Ortega's Social Ontology

I will begin, in this fourth section, with a second part of this chapter, in which I will focus on *Man and People*, addressing in particular Ortega's relations with Husserl and Alfred Schütz. As I stated in the title of this section, my theme now is made up of problems of what I have called social ontology, a philosophical discipline which I will seek later on to explain in what it consists of.

Schütz and Ortega were not personally acquainted, although Ortega sought contact with some representatives of the phenomenological movement, in the first place with Husserl, but also with Heidegger, Eugen Fink, and Merleau-Ponty. However, the references to Schütz in Ortega's works are various, the most important being those found in the posthumous work *Man and People*, published in 1957. Schütz, who will die a few years later, in 1959, planned to write an essay on this book, where he found a great coincidence with his own points of view. Death prevented him from carrying out this project.

Out of curiosity, I mention a passage of a letter from Schütz to Luís Recasens Siches, professor of law at the University of Mexico, dated summer 1958, where Schütz stresses this coincidence of views. Speaking of the importance of his 1932 work, *Die Sinnhafte Aufbau der sozialen Welt*, for the understanding of *Man and People*, says Schütz: "he mentions my name, sometimes very sympathetically" (Hermida-Lazcano, 1996: 46).

What is meant, then, by social ontology? With this discipline, from my point of view, we seek to show how social relations are based on man's way of being and, therefore, that only on the basis of an understanding of that way of being they become intelligible. In other words, it is the purpose of this discipline to analyze what exists in man which is irreducible to nature and which is not merely a prolongation of nature, nor of the physical processes that characterize it. Thus, social ontology is closely related to philosophical anthropology.

We can only fulfill this research program if we determine exactly how what we call "social" makes its appearance, because the relationship between the human and the social is not of strict equality; the former does not identify with the latter. Not everything that is human is social, even if we cannot grasp the meaning of human actions without a society and the norms it establishes to distinguish, for example, the legitimate from the illegitimate or the approved from the forbidden. One can obviously argue that social relations always precede the relations between individuals, that is, the social is not the sum of a very broad set of individual or interindividual relations. Nevertheless, Ortega's question is to know how we experience this previous relationship and how the social world becomes for us—and I will use an expression of Schütz—something *Fraglos gegeben* or in English, in a very expressive way, *taken for granted*.

The choice of Schütz—and also of Husserl—by Ortega means that his reflections on the subject fall within the scope of phenomenology. I do not intend to hide the various differences that separate these three authors, especially since Ortega makes some important criticisms to Husserl's theory of intersubjectivity. And albeit I

cannot develop them here in the detail they deserve, still I will have to mention them very briefly. However, I would like to begin by referring to some similarities in viewpoints.

1. First, Schütz and Ortega seem to share some doubts on the Husserlian project, in the fifth Cartesian Meditation, of providing a philosophical foundation for the existence of a community of transcendental subjects (the community of monads, as Husserl also calls them). Both merely offer a description of the empirical communities of subjects living in the natural attitude.
2. Both intend to capture the *eidos* of these communities, that is, in phenomenological terms, their invariant structure.
3. Both also reject the Husserlian definition of social institutions as higher-level intersubjective communities, seeking to safeguard the specificity of the social regarding intersubjective relations.

These similarities are very important, and I will stress their importance below. However, regarding the no less important differences, I think we find them at the basis of the project of social ontology that is proper to each of these two authors: Schütz's concern is to provide a phenomenological basis for Max Weber's comprehensive sociology, whereas Ortega's social ontology fits into the larger scope of his thesis on life as a radical reality and on the crisis of modernity. In order to comprehensively address Ortega's social ontology, I would have to take into with the characterizing the account the influences of Max Scheler and Martin Heidegger, which I cannot do here. It should be said, however, that some of Ortega's ideas originate at a stage of his thinking prior to his acquaintance with the thought of these two authors. I only remember that Scheler's important work on ethics was published in 1916–1917 and Heidegger's *Being and Time* in 1927.

But there is a difference, not less important, between Ortega and Schütz that I cannot avoid mentioning, although it deserves a lengthier discussion than the one that fits the theme of the present chapter. It has to do with the characterization of the other as "danger," which is the salient feature of the Orteguian theory of intersubjectivity—and far-reaching for the social ontology he offers us in *El Hombre y la Gente*—and gives it, moreover, a particular place among phenomenological approaches to this theme. As we know, for Schütz, the relationship with the other is marked by a process of typifications: this means that a set of solidified habits that are a part of the stock of knowledge that the lifeworld experience has put at our disposal will predetermine our expectations regarding this relationship and will give rise to a system of relevance through which we can know what we both have in common—i.e., what is relevant for both—and what sets us apart. Now, Ortega takes up the notion of typification, but he gives it a completely different scope, because, according to him, the intentionalities in which the other is constituted as such, that is, in which his initial anonymity and neutrality acquire more precise contours, have their starting point in a presumption of threat and distrust.

Regarding the transcendental issue prior to the one just mentioned—the one that Husserl intended to address in the fifth Cartesian Meditation – namely, the question of the constitution of the other's transcendental Ego and the intersubjective

transcendental community, I will only make a few brief references here. Husserl's problem in the fifth Cartesian Meditation is that of the conditions for the possibility of recognizing a foreign body as an "other constituent Ego," on the basis of which it is possible to say that there is a common world. Now, in the natural attitude, this problem does not arise. We all live in the conviction that there are other men with whom we relate, that this relationship allows communication and understanding, and, also, that there is a set of intersubjectively shared (e.g., linguistic) signs and symbols which function within the framework of institutions of which no one is the individual author. Without going into unnecessary detail on this subject, I only say that neither for Schütz nor for Ortega does the question of intersubjectivity have a satisfactory solution in the frame of Husserl's philosophy.

In Husserl's perspective, the recognition of the existence of a common world lies in the fact that, as Schütz says, my perspective and that of the other can become congruent from the moment I change places with him and each of us is able to see what the other saw a moment ago. But the essence of the difference between me and the other may not lie in the fact that my body is "here" for me and his is "there" (Schütz, 1990b: 316). I believe that Ortega has recognized the nature of the difficulty by arguing that the problem lies not in the fact that I see a body "there" but whether a body similar to mine is there (Ortega y Gasset, 2010b: 220): i.e., if the body I see from here, where I am, is a body that sees me from there, where it is. Husserl, as is well known, spoke here of a knowledge—though not of a reasoning—by analogy or an analogizing apperception (Husserl, 1950: 140). In this process, as Husserl describes it, I believe it is possible to recognize four phases:

1. First, the knowledge of my own self.
2. Secondly, the recognition of my body as my somatic body.
3. Thirdly, the recognition of the other's somatic body by the analogizing apperception referred to above.
4. Finally, the presentification of another's psyche as something that inhabits that body and gives it that somatic character that I experience in my own body.

This process, as I think it is easy to see, rests on three assumptions: that the knowledge of myself, or my solipsistic experience, precedes the knowledge of the other; that it is through the body of the other that his psyche becomes present; that his experience of his own body must be identical with that which I have of mine, although his somatic experiences cannot be undertaken in my primordial sphere (Husserl, 1950: 143); and finally, that for the constitution of the somatic body the sexual difference is not relevant.

This question of the presentation of the alter ego as a result of the analogizing apprehension of its somatic body, being a theme in itself, is nevertheless of some interest to the issues I am presently addressing. It is the alter ego that enables the recognition of common intentionalities that are at the origin of a common world. Nevertheless, in the natural attitude—the one I will take as the object of analysis—the existence of this common social world is always a presupposition (Schütz, 1990a: 144).

5 Social, Transindividual, and Individual

I spoke earlier of a precedence of social relations over the relationship between individuals. But saying that the social relationship precedes the relationship between individuals, I meant "to precede" not in the sense of "coming first," from a chronological point of view, but rather in the sense of "first" in what I would call the order of foundation. From a chronological point of view, the first relationships that every human being establishes—let us think of a newborn—will not be social in nature, although the people with whom they establish a relationship play a role that is socially instituted or codified.

Thus, if a social ontology can pose the problem of the origin of the social, it is not in order to determine when the first human societies were formed, nor in order to know when a human being first recognizes as social certain relations that he establishes with the other socialized human beings. Searching for the origin can only mean that we are looking for those factors without which the social does not exist and that, therefore, we always find when we say that we are in the presence of a social relationship. To clarify this question of the origin of the social, I shall begin by referring, following Alfred Schütz, to a distinction between four levels of the human world. These distinctions are to be found in his seminal work, *Der Sinnhafte Aufbau der Sozialen Welt*, published in 1932, but can also be found, with some variations, in numerous later writings. From a methodological point of view, this distinction is obtained as a result of what Husserl called the "eidetic reduction": this implies that something is captured in its uniqueness and contingency, to establish the invariant structure that makes it what it is and not something else. In our case, the eidetic intuition aims to capture the invariant element of all those situations in which the relationship between at least two human beings is not simply intersubjective.

At the first level, we find the *Umwelt*, that is, the surrounding world; it is the realm of the I-Thou relationship (the friends, the family, the simple acquaintances). It is the familiar world, where the I and the Thou grow old together; it is still the world of things within reach, to use an expression of Heideggerian flavor, i.e., that I can manipulate out of a relationship of familiarity. In "Symbol, Reality and Society," Schütz (1990b: 306–318) makes a detailed analysis of this *Umwelt*, although, instead of what he had done in his first work of 1932, he analyzes it in two distinct moments, corresponding to the manipulative sphere (still without reference to the intersubjective relationship with other subjects) and the sphere of intersubjectivity.

The second level is the *Mitwelt*, which is composed of all my contemporaries. Perhaps it could be translated as a "concomitant world": it is the world that goes beyond my family, my friends, or professional relationships. Here an I-Thou relationship will not be valid, as in the *Umwelt*. I find it pertinent, to characterize it, to introduce a new sociological category, which Ortega calls *la gente*. This word also has a Heideggerian resonance, since it is the term chosen by José Gaos in his translation of *Being and Time* to Spanish to translate *das Man* (Heidegger, 1986: 126). It would not be even impossible to approximate Ortega's description of this new mode of expression of Heidegger's description of inauthentic life. But this approach

should not be taken too far: the inauthentic life of which *Being and Time* speaks about is not social life; inauthenticity, for Martin Heidegger, can characterize the I-Thou relationship or even each one's relation to himself. The important is that the *Mitwelt* already assumes that the other exists, that communication with him is possible with the help of already available systems of signs, and that he will react to my actions, just as he expects me to react to his.

For the moment, I will not deal in great detail with the third and fourth levels, which Schütz calls respectively *Vorwelt* and *Folgewelt*, the world of ancestors and the world of the successors. They are important as such as they refer to the historical condition of each human being and his social background, but they are not directly important to the problem I intend to address now.

The *Mitwelt* is what constitutes the social world itself. But it is not correct neither for Schütz nor for Ortega, contrary to what Husserl claimed, to call it a higher-level subjectivity (Schütz, 1990a: 144). For here the other is not experienced as an alter ego, that is, as one who has an ego similar to mine. In Ortega's expression, it is an *alter-tu*; he is a Thou to me, as I am a Thou to him. For Ortega, this means that each one, as he is a Thou to others, no longer lives his life as a radical reality, but instead as a socialized life, subject to the anonymity of the impersonal rules that guarantee the functioning of a society.

As is well known, Ortega defined life as a having-to-do. But it uses the expression I just mentioned whenever it refers to life as a radical reality, like my own life. The social world, in the natural attitude, appears to us as a having-to-do of a completely different nature. This having-to-do is motivated by reasons foreign to our lives, and both what we plan to do and the social framework in which we do it are not entirely up to us. The experiences of those who preceded us, the stock of knowledge they made available to us, and the expectations that came with such experiences, as well as the resulting schemes and idealizations, largely determine our action (Schütz, 1990a: 146).

Just a brief remark about what, following Schütz, I just called "idealizations": it is the procedure of projecting into the future a behavior that I have in the present or had in the past and which others have had before me with similar success. For example: "I can drive on the highway up to 120 km/h without risking having a car accident." For this very reason, because our actions follow the "I can do it again" principle, it is perfectly legitimate to say that in normal social life there is never a first time. What we do now and how we do it is always dependent on experiences we have already done, for ourselves or for others. This would be clearer if I could address in detail the problem of the temporal structure of the social world. Anyway, I will make a brief reference to this problem.

I said above that life is, in Ortega's expression, a "having-to-do." This gives it a projecting dimension, i.e., a looking forward of a very special character. The project is anticipated, says Schütz, in the *futuri exacti* mode. In other words, projecting implies imagining an action already performed and the effects it has produced. The project thus constitutes the reason for which an action was taken. Imagination of the results of an action predates the imagination of future phases of the action that will lead to the desired ends (Schütz, 1990a: 68). What makes it possible for me to

imagine the outcome of the actions I am going to take is that I have already done similar actions in similar situations, at least according to my knowledge of the situation I am now in. This result, which is only first imagined, Schütz calls the in-order-to-motive, the reason why I will do it. This is a very important concept since it clarifies the temporal structure of the action. In fact, action is not only motivated by a desired outcome or, in other words, by a state of affairs different from the current one. But insofar as it is so, it is legitimate to say that human actions tend toward the future, with the aim of fulfilling an expectation.

6 Social Acts and the Consciousness That "I Can"

However, these acts which we may properly call social are not just performed in a mechanical way. The consciousness of an "I do," or "I act", is always accompanied, to a degree that may of course vary, by the consciousness of an "I can." To use a Husserlian term here, from *Ideas II*, I would say that they are always centripetal acts, acts that come back to the self that is their author and which the self at the same time recognizes as their own (Husserl, 1954: 257). That is, they are not only something that will happen but also something that could happen otherwise if I so wished.

The *Mitwelt*, the *Vorwelt*, and the *Folgewelt* have a common characteristic: in them the other appears to us only under the form of a "symbolic presentation." This concept of "symbolic presentation," which Husserl uses in his *Philosophy of Arithmetic* to explain the logical validity of the concept of number, when a counting operation is no more possible, is of great importance for a social ontology with a phenomenological basis. Just as I cannot intuitively keep in mind the number corresponding to too many objects (e.g., how many leaves of grass there are in a flower bed, or how many cherries there are in a cherry tree), although such a number exists and for it are still valid the basic properties of numbers; so, too, I cannot have a face-to-face relation with the totality of individuals who constitute a social group of reasonable dimensions, although I admit that for all of them are still valid the social principles and norms that are valid for me and for those with whom I am directly engaged.

What I just said provides us with a first clue to the discovery of the nature of the social. I do not see face-to-face all those who are part of my *Mitwelt*, and yet I act according to rules whose validity is shared by all, rules that have their origin, at least in principle, in institutions whose legitimacy is based on a general consensus. The experience of the social is the experience of a certain form of invisibility. Ortega describes this experience of invisibility in chapter "Historical Reason" of *El Hombre y la Gente*. The situation is that of a police officer who forbids us to cross the street at a particular place where there is no pedestrian crossing:

> Whose will in this case will it be? Who wants me not to circulate freely? Here begins a series of transfers that cascade us into an entity that is definitely not a man. This entity is called the state. It is the state that prevents me from crossing the street at will. I look around, but nowhere do I find the state. (…) But who or what is the state? ... May someone make us see it! Our pretense is in vain: the state does not suddenly appear. (Ortega y Gasset, 2010b: 262)

A direct, face-to-face relationship with others that belong to my social world is not possible. When a relationship with someone has a social character, the face-to-face relation is gone. If, for example, a policeman prevents me from crossing the street and threatens me with a fine if I do so at that location, the authority in whose name he is doing this is not present, is not identical with this law enforcement officer, though it is visible through his deeds. Michael Theunissen points out that in this situation, we are faced with a relationship similar to that which exists between one's own body and one's psyche or between an artifact and the human subject who made it (Theunissen, 1984: 249). Husserl himself had already recognized this in § 55 of the *Cartesian Meditations*, by stating that a perceived object is always presentive-appresentive (*Gegenwärtigend-Vergegenwärtigend*) and that the phenomenological transcendence of the alien psyche can to some extent be compared to the transcendence of the back of a house in relation to the perception of its front (Husserl, 1950: 151). However, a fundamental element of the social relationship is missing here, namely, the instituting moment and its normative validity, the invisibility of which seems to me to be of a different nature.

The *Vorwelt* and the *Folgewelt* have a common feature that distinguishes them from the *Mitwelt*: the somatic body of their "inhabitants" is not accessible by direct experience, by right and not only in fact, as is the case with the inhabitants of the *Mitwelt*, whose somatic body it is possible to have an access since they are our contemporaries. (Although actually not the overwhelming majority of them.) What is missing compared to my contemporaries is that kind of experience which Schütz labels "growing old together." Certainly they have grown older as I grew older, but I didn't have nor will ever have the direct experience of their aging, although it happened like our own aging and the aging of those with whom we have common endeavors.

In *El Hombre y la Gente*, Ortega presents two concepts that seem pertinent to me for the understanding of what is at stake in the difference between *Umwelt* and *Mitwelt*, namely, the concepts of intimacy and closeness. Intimacy characterizes others in my *Umwelt*, while closeness characterizes the relationship I have with those in my *Mitwelt*. In the first case, says Ortega, the other is a Thou; "Thou" does not designate any man, but someone unique and unmistakable (Ortega y Gasset, 2010b: 209). An I and a Thou are in the relationship "We," that is, they can interact and influence each other; "They" means all the others that I and Thou talk about, i.e., those who do not enter into the "We" relationship. In Spanish, as we all know, "we" is said "nosotros," that is, an I and a Thou (at least) in which each is the other of the other but, fundamentally, where all others who are not in this "We" relationship are not included and are said to be outside.

As I said at the beginning of this chapter, I don't intend to exhaust all the issues here. We must take a look to Ortega's anthropology in order to get a full understanding of his social philosophy. Therefore, I will set aside for the moment some very interesting aspects of Ortega's thought in *El Hombre y la Gente*, for instance, the opposition between "We" and those outside the circle of intimacy, namely, "They," which is fundamental for Ortega. "He" is an indeterminate individual. But Ortega further argues that it is in the circle of "We," that is, as opposed to a sheer

"Thou-relation," that I discover myself as an Ego (Ortega y Gasset, 2010b: 210). But all this is a matter for wider investigations, where social ontology would intersect with philosophical anthropology. Our next chapter will try to shed some light on this.

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Ortega's Philosophical Anthropology

In a paper published in 1925, in *El Espectador*, titled "Vitalidad, Alma, Espírito," Ortega speaks of the need for a topography (i.e., a description of the places) of our intimacy and divides internal phenomena into three types: vital, animated, and spiritual. This topography contrasts with the traditional division between soul and body, whose boundaries, says Ortega, are difficult to establish (Ortega y Gasset, 2004b: 568) and most of the time blurred in our actual behavior. Those three types differ in the spatial image that we can make of them and therefore in their relationship to the body. Vital phenomena, for example, manifest themselves in the body and can be located in different body zones: for instance, to thirst corresponds the well-known sensation of dryness of the mouth. In contrast, a spiritual phenomenon, like the discovery of a solution for a theorem, is not easy to connect to any part of the body.

Vital events are therefore phenomena—they have particular modalities of appearance—and not just facts subject to an explanation of a biological, physiological, or a similar nature. For example, we say that a tooth aches, but it aches not because it is the tooth or my brain that feel the ache, but myself. Pain always belongs to someone whose pain it is; to me, for instance, to whom it hurts and who says it is mine. The same could be said of the phenomenon of walking. My experience of walking is different from an anatomical or physiological description of it and from my seeing another person walk, which is only a visual phenomenon deprived of the particular muscular sensations that I feel when I walk. The muscular sensation itself is incommunicable to someone who sees me walking; it belongs to my body felt from within and not only seen from the outside. Ortega calls it the innerbody (Ortega y Gasset, 2004b: 571).

The distinction between the spiritual level and the animated level may not be very clear from the beginning. Ortega however underlines their different temporal structure. Spiritual phenomena are instantaneous—even if they may take some time to arise—but animated phenomena (those who concern our soul) usually unroll themselves in time. Two brief examples will prove it: I have the instantaneous evidence of the solution of a theorem, regardless the more or less extended period of

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time I spent trying to find it; but love or hate unroll in time and may undergo several phases, distinct from each other in intensity. To sum up, we must distinguish:

1. A pure vital level that could also be labeled "animal" level: it's the level in which I experience a pain that hurts, hunger, or thirst.
2. An animated level: it's the level in which it makes sense to say "I am sad." It is only at this level that we can speak of someone's individuality (Ortega y Gasset, 2004b: 575). On the contrary, as long as pain pertains to my bodily condition, it must be common to all members of the species who share the identical bodily conditions. Similarly, the solution for a theorem is valid for every thinking being.
3. A spiritual or mental level: thinking is an act that I myself carry out; it is the higher personal act, but not an act of the individual. Spiritual acts have meanings that don't have their origin in the particular individual that is performing them. Meanings are always objective and universal.

Is Ortega saying that my personality is not my individuality? It seems to be the correct interpretation of what he says in (Ortega y Gasset, 2004b: 577). There are several things to note here: (1) A man may split in a part that feels, desires, etc. and in another part that analyzes this split (makes a "police surveillance," as Ortega says). (2) This part that analyzes or judges, although belonging to me, is involved in a certain anonymity. All judgments claim universality and depart from the conditions under which they were made. (3) This is a split between a part that executes acts and another whose execution consists in observing the executed acts of the former, which are the only really executive acts. Only to them corresponds man's natural tendency to be "turned outward." It seems then that I am not entirely myself neither when I feel a pain (that's only the vitalistic level of my own being) nor when I analyze it (i.e., when my spiritual level is functioning). Nevertheless, it's me who feels the pain, and it's also me who analyzes it. We have not yet obtained the correct point of view to address this issue the way it must be addressed. Further analyses are needed here. The problem, if I have understood Ortega correctly, seems to be this: I am not destined to live like someone who feels pleasure or displeasure or like someone whose main imperative is to seek states of pleasure and avoid states of pain. But neither am I destined to live like someone for whom pleasure and pain are not intrinsic parts of life, i.e., whose bodily condition is not something intrinsic to his own human condition, and only a mere contingent fact destined to be put aside in a form of life committed to the achievement of "higher values."

Moreover, these "higher values"—to which of course everybody must commit his own life—are not the product of theoretical or spiritual acts alone, although "spirit" is need to acknowledge any hierarchy of values. Ortega speaks of the primary and deepest acts of consciousness that he labels acts of "evaluation"[1]. However, I think Ortega means they are animic and not spiritual acts, since he says that desires

[1] I am translating the Spanish word *estimación* (Ortega y Gasset, 2004c: 731). In the absence of precise references by Ortega, I risk the hypothesis that he is trying to give a Spanish equivalent to the German words *Beurteilung* and *Wertschätzung*, which appear very frequently in the works of Max Scheler.

and intellections are grounded in them. According to this view, every man is a "regime of evaluations" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004c: 731), and all his activities are framed by his evaluative character.

1 Man's Need for Security

Ortega's anthropology, in my opinion, offers the basis for two key concepts of his philosophy of culture. The first is the concept of the "virtual," and the second is the concept of "security." I will try to show the deep relationship that exists between the two, although their provenance is different: the first brings us back to Husserl's thought at the time of the publication of the first volume of *Ideas*, while the second refers to Plato's theory of ideas. Until a few decades ago, it was not customary to relate Ortega's thinking to phenomenology, let alone consider Ortega a member of the phenomenological movement. As we have shown in previous chapters, this led to a somewhat distorted view of his philosophy. For the then dominant interpretation, Ortega would have evolved from a neo-Kantian training, received at the University of Marburg, to a philosophy of vital reason and, finally, to a philosophy of historical reason. And while no one was unaware of the important influence on Ortega of thinkers like Max Scheler or Martin Heidegger, it was, to believe the prevailing opinion, the influence of those aspects of Scheler's and Heidegger's thought that had deviated from the actual course taken by Husserl's phenomenology. If Ortega's phenomenology is not addressed from the viewpoint of phenomenology, serious misunderstandings will ensue. Namely, his indebtedness to Nietzsche and Simmel, which is nonetheless real, will be greatly exaggerated. But speaking about Ortega's relation to phenomenology doesn't mean that he is only resuming Husserl's or Heidegger's thesis about man. In the first place, because when Ortega began to address anthropological issues, Husserl's most important texts on culture had not yet been published, and Heidegger had not yet began his philosophical career; in the second place—and that's the real important thing—because Ortega was just trying to apply the phenomenological method to those issues he believed (wrongly, but that's another story) were alien to the intentions and scope of Husserl's investigations.

I will start with some words about security. In 1912, just as his neo-Kantian phase, which begins with his first stay in Marburg around 1906, is about to end, Ortega makes a conference at the Ateneo of Madrid entitled "Plato's Idea" where, to explain what culture is, he uses the example of Plato's theory of ideas. I quote a brief passage from this conference, although it belongs to a phase of his thinking earlier than that I have been referring to, because it contains a theme that will reappear later when Ortega comes to phenomenology:

> Confidence, tranquility, is the emotion in which one can anticipate what is likely to happen within an hour, tomorrow or later. If fear right now is not the dominant emotion in us, it is because we have confidence in the regularity of architectural laws and the municipal laws that oversee architectural laws. Why don't we fear that in a moment the ceiling of this room will come down? Seek the source of our relative tranquility and you will find it in absolute trust in the laws of mathematics and in a less absolute trust in municipal laws. (Ortega y Gasset, 2007a: 224)

Now, as early as 1910, i.e., even before his contact with phenomenology, in an essay entitled "Adam in Paradise," Ortega had already defended a very similar thesis. It is therefore a permanent feature of Ortega's philosophies of culture and of man and his philosophical trajectory, from youth to maturity, will only offer different formulations of it. In 1910, then, referring to logic, ethics, and aesthetics, which roughly correspond to the three parts into which the system of philosophy is divided according to Hermann Cohen, Ortega states that they are the three prejudices that elevate us above animality and allow us to make a judgment. (I note that in Spanish "judgment" is "juícío" and therefore it is easier to establish, as Ortega does, the relationship between prejudice and judgment.)

As a kind of parenthesis, let me say that this sharp opposition between animal life and human life needs to be mitigated. It agrees with a neo-Kantian idea of man, but a phenomenological inspection of the human way of being (and I mean by this, one that is not vitiated by a priori constructions) will easily acknowledge that higher functions, like theoretical thinking or evaluative processes, are grounded on more basic functions. Later in his more mature thought, Ortega will recognize this fact. In "Vitalidad, Alma, Espírito," he will write: "The most sublime in our person is closely united to this animal underground, and it has no meaning to draw a line or frontier separating the former from the latter" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004b: 568). The issue, however, is more complicated than it seems at first sight. I have already said that, in a closer inspection, Ortega reckons that my existence as a person is not identical with my individuality.[2] I will come to this later and now I proceed.

Now, logic, ethics, and aesthetics were born because life puts several problems to man or, rather, because life has become problematic in him. (Life is not a problem for any animal species.) In 1932, in a paper about Goethe's centenary, Ortega says that each man is a survivor from a shipwreck and has to brace in order to stay above water. Culture is just this effort to brace and keep alive. Years later, in *El Hombre y la Gente*, Ortega retrieves this metaphor: each man is a survivor from a shipwreck, and each one's life is a permanent brace to stay above water. But we must not forget that *El Hombre y la Gente* is also the outcome of the painful experience of Ortega's exiles.[3] During exile Ortega was not only forced to brace but was also forced to reexamine his life, the meaning of the mission of the educator of Spain he claimed for himself since his first juvenile writings in the family newspaper, his relation to the philosophical public and to public in general. Those dramatic years taught him that man is the being that must occasionally turn to the inside, instead of just carrying out an external activity. This turn to the inside was labelled, as we already mentioned before, *ensimismamiento*. Eve Fourmont

[2] To put it more directly, I will only say, for the moment, that the issue here is not quite identical with the classical problem of overcoming the anthropological dualism, of a Cartesian kind or other. About some of these problems cf. Ortega (2010b: 124).

[3] We will address Ortega's exiles in full length in chapter "Ortega's Exiles".

Giustiniani has recently claimed that *ensimismamiento* reflects Ortega's experiences in exile (Giustiniani, 2020: 35–36), and she may be right regarding the opportunity to forge a new concept, but not regarding what we could call the heart of the matter. *Ensimismamiento* is a general characteristic of human beings in situations of distress; it's what distinguishes man from animals who have no need to turn inside. By the same token, someone could also argue that Ortega's deep feeling of loneliness during his years of exile—far from the University and its intellectual life, far from friend and members of his close family, far from the Spanish public to which he addressed most of his books and newspaper articles—led him to regard loneliness as a fundamental category of existence. It would be also true. Nevertheless, it would be tantamount to forget that since he discovered the radical reality of each man's life (i.e., since at least 1914), he conveyed that no one can discharge himself of the responsibility of his actions, because agency is untransferable.

As early as 1930, in *The Rebellion of the Masses*, Ortega stated that life, individual or collective, is the only entity in the universe whose substance is danger (Ortega y Gasset, 2010b: 422). This does not mean, however, that life is subject to constant threats to the point that it can succumb at any moment, but that we never know exactly what is happening to us, that no moment in life necessarily links with the next, contrary to what happens in a causal chain, so that the present always remains indeterminate in relation to its preceding temporal phases, just as the future will always be indeterminate in relation to the present. Therefore, as long as we live, we find ourselves inserted in a metaphysical teeter (Ortega y Gasset, 2010b: 421) among several possibilities of opposite sign. Then, once life has become problematic, one can only face it by following the maxim *divide et impera*.

By dividing the whole of life into its constituent elements, logic will be the solution to the problems of the first level, that is, to the knowledge of what things are in general, the relations they maintain between themselves, and which are almost identical for all of them; ethics is the solution for second-level problems, that is, no longer for the explanation of the relationship between things, but instead between people, or between different psychic stages of the same person; aesthetics, finally, offers the solution to the problems of the third level. Our question now is: What kind of problems are these third-level problems? What more will there be in the world to understand besides things (and states of affairs) and people? I will have to postpone for a moment the approach to this question, in order to speak of the neo-Kantian philosophy of culture, at least as Ortega understood it. The critique of Neokantian aesthetics will play a fundamental role in his distancing from this philosophical current and in his approach to phenomenology. It is also as an outcome of aesthetic considerations that Ortega will first recognize the need to elaborate a new concept of being, which will have its expression in the philosophy of vital reason.

2 The Neokantian Philosophy of Man

As I said earlier, Ortega's anthropology is strongly linked with his philosophy of culture, and any evolution regarding the latter has direct consequences on the way he addresses the former. In a very nice paper, José Lasaga highlighted the fact that Ortega speaks of culture in terms of "salvation," i.e., culture saves man from his fragility, not by offering him a way to escape his own finitude (like the Don Quixote of Cervantes' novel aimed at), but instead by teaching him how to assume it (Lasaga Medina, 2005: 163). Although I think Lasaga is correct, I also think that he failed to give the due relevance to Ortega's changing position from Neokantianism to phenomenology. Both philosophies offered ways to salvation, but those ways were different. And, as we will see, those differences were closely linked with their differences regarding human life.

So Ortega's first systematic philosophy of man is Neokantian, strongly influenced by the teaching of Hermann Cohen and Paul Natorp, whose lessons he attended at the University of Marburg. We can summarize Ortega's position in this youthful phase—until about 1912—by the following sentence: life is, first and foremost, universal life. In this simple sentence, which is mine and not Ortega's, but which I believe to be a correct synthesis of his thinking, we find the three constituents of philosophy of culture, which are, at the same time, the three tasks it has to achieve: (1) the cultural manifestations of a people must be directed toward the representation of the human individual free from the particularities of race and circumstance (as happens in the higher forms of painting and literature, for example, in a painting by Velasquez or Goya or in the *Quixote* of Cervantes). (2) Substantialist thinking must be purified by the concepts of relation, as happens in the categories of grammar and, above all, in the formal language of the physical-mathematical sciences. (3) The life of a people as a historical and cultural entity, the legitimacy of its institutions, and the characteristics of its public life are only justified in the light of its efforts to rise from particularity to universality. To each of these three tasks, we could easily oppose other three, stemming from a phenomenological and not a Neokantian philosophy of culture. For the moment, let's just take a look to the first task: to free men from the particularities of their circumstance or, in other words, to live in the universal. This can only mean not to be a real man, but a mere representative of humanity. We don't need to highlight the anthropological consequences of such a point of view. A phenomenological-based anthropology can only mean a complete overthrow of it.

On this subject, as is well known, Ortega, at least until the publication of the *Meditaciones del Quijote*, had several controversies with the main representatives of the so-called Generation of '98, whose main representatives were Miguel de Unamuno, Pio Baroja, Azorín, and Rafael de Maeztu. The meaning of these controversies is clear, as I have already shown in chapters "Spain Is the Problem; Europe Is the Solution" and "Ortega and Germany": it is necessary to raise Spanish life to the level that life has already achieved in other European peoples, the particularities of Spanish life must be overcome, particularities which, at the beginning of the

twentieth century, are only the backwardness of Spain and its inability to function as a nation. We can easily see how Ortega's theory of culture and anthropology are closely intertwined, both in his Neokantian and in his phenomenological phase. In the first, raising the Spanish cultural level meant to raise intellectual activities; the Spanish man needed to learn European science, its way of living, its hygienic habits. In the second, this program is not put aside, but rather incorporated in a broader program, where science is supplemented by a theory of values and hygienic habits are supplemented by rules of social conviviality, grounded, not in abstract laws, but on habitualities originating in the lifeworld.

The idea of a human endeavor that is justified by its *telos* or, rather, that is no more than a *telos* that perseveres to remain faithful to itself, an idea whose Neokantian origin would not be difficult to show, is very strong in the young Ortega. In the theory of knowledge which he develops in the years following his return to Spain, after the third sojourn in Germany, we find this idea with the utmost clarity. Thus, concluding a Cycle of Conferences pronounced in 1912 at the Ateneo of Madrid, entitled Current Trends in Philosophy, referring to the Kantian notion of thing-in-itself, Ortega states:

> I believe that a detailed, strict, philological study of Kant undoubtedly leads to the claim that Kant by the thing-in-itself did not understand something transcendent to our knowledge, but rather the characteristic of the latter of never ending, in overcoming all its already conquered positions. (…) This dynamic and essential moment of knowledge, by virtue of which every concrete determination is only relative and surmountable, all concrete things are only what they are in relation to the conclusions set yesterday, set today, set tomorrow, is the thing-in- itself. (Ortega y Gasset, 2007b: 266)

It is precisely this insistence on the effort to overcome the positions already conquered that prevents Neokantian philosophy from paying attention to immediate life in the variety of its manifestations. Now, it happens that there is as much clarity in the universal as in the particular; it is only necessary to develop the organs that allow one to see both.

3 The Virtual

In order to understand the meaning of the concept of virtual, we will have to go, even briefly, through some of the fundamental theses of the phenomenology of perception, as it was elaborated by Husserl. Incidentally, I must say in advance that one of Ortega's merits was that he realized very early—soon after his first contacts with phenomenology—that some essential concepts of this philosophical movement had a much broader scope than those originally given to them by their founder. It may seem hazardous to argue that in 1914, in his *Meditaciones del Quijote*, Ortega was already in possession of the fundamental concepts for the constitution of a phenomenologically based philosophical anthropology and a phenomenology of culture, issues for which Husserl, engaged at the time in investigations of another kind, will

only turn his own attention almost 20 years later.[4] And of course no one can ignore the fact that some themes of Ortega's anthropology, namely, the conflict between cultural imperatives and life imperatives, have philosophical sources other than phenomenology, for instance, Nietzsche's and Simmel's philosophies of life.[5] I just want to stress the fact that some important anthropological issues that Ortega already addresses in his early philosophy will only be publicly presented, in the case of Husserl, in 1936 in the two essays on *The Crisis of European Sciences*, which Husserl published in the journal *Philosophia*, even if they were already emerging in the set of articles he wrote in 1923–1924 for the Japanese journal *Kaizo*.

Let's then go back to the phenomenological theory of perception. We can organize it—and probably also all the phenomenological philosophy, at least according to Robert Sokolowski—around three major themes: the relation of the visible with the invisible, of the one with the multiple, and of presence with absence. The well-known example of the perception of a cube, which Husserl presents in the *Cartesian Meditations*, illustrates well what I have just said. In a single intentional act, the visible part of the cube hides its invisible parts (even if we see three faces, the other three cannot be seen at the same time as the other); a single act refers to the multiplicity of possible acts, which will constitute the object as a unity of identical meaning; the parts immediately present to the eyes will always refer to those that are absent, waiting that a change of perspective will make them in turn present. The complete noema—that is, the cube actually intended in a single act—is, as such, the correlate of a multitude of possible acts. We are faced here with a first occurrence of the concept of virtual; and this kind of virtual does not consist, as it is sometimes said, "in what may be, but is not yet," but, instead, in what, although hidden, already is and must be for the real to be what it really is and not something else. If, at the moment we perceive three faces of what we think to be a cube, the other three were not already waiting for a future act in order to be seen, it would not be a cube that we would be perceiving. (Which, incidentally, is always possible. In *Experience and Judgment*, Husserl offers us several examples of expectations that are not confirmed by the following acts that intend the same object.)

But the Husserlian theory of perception offers us other occurrences of the virtual, namely, through the notion of horizon intentionality. In fact, the previous example of the perception of a cube cannot be accepted without adding other explanatory elements of what we see. A cube will never be perceived outside a horizon that constitutes someone's actual field of visibility, even if it is precisely that field and not the object that is the focus of attention. But, as we know, our gaze can, at least

[4] In fact, since 1908, Husserl had, for more than one time, lectured about ethics, and those lectures also addressed anthropological issues. But of course only Husserl's direct students were acquainted with them.

[5] I will argue later that this conflict stems from a wrong interpretation of what is the meaning of life, i.e., a vitalist and non-phenomenological understanding of what life really means. I am not saying that Ortega interpreted life in a non-phenomenological fashion; on the contrary, I think he offers us some of the best phenomenological reflections about it. But I also think that the way he expresses his own phenomenological ideas about this issue is sometimes inadequate.

in principle, move freely from the cube to its surroundings and back again to the cube if so desired. The case of a virtual dimension of perception is even more evident here than in the previous example. In fact, if we ask whether the horizon exists or not, we will have some difficulty in answering. He does not have the same stable limits of all the things it encompasses. This has to do with our bodily condition. We are not purely contemplative egos, but egos that inhabit a body and have a sense of the distances, which are always dependent of the place where the body is. As a result, the horizon widens or narrows according to the movements we make as perceiving subjects.

4 The Embodied Self and Other Embodied Selves

There is an inescapable fact of enormous anthropological consequences: we are an embodied self, and the way things are perceived by us is its most striking consequence. Ortega stresses that only a lack of intellectual fairness, of which he accuses modern idealism (Ortega y Gasset, 2004b: 568), can overlook this fact. (I will set aside the too technical question of showing that this self of which I am speaking is not an empirical subject, but a transcendental subject and that the Husserlian transcendental subject can only be conceived in this way. This issue has to do with Ortega's overall interpretation of idealism and of phenomenology as a twentieth-century variant of idealism: what has already been said in our chapters "Ortega' s Social Philosophy" will be enough for a correct understanding of what follows.) However, there is an issue that has to do with embodied selves other than mine that we must also address: how do I know they are actually selves and not for instance robots perfect enough to deceive me about their nonhuman character? Let's put the question in another way: what has Ortega to tell us about the intersubjective relation between embodied selves? Has this embodied character of human selves anything to do with intersubjectivity?

Prior to this, a former question. It has to do with the characterization of the other as a "danger," which is one of the most salient features of the Orteguian theory of intersubjectivity and far-reaching for the social ontology he offers us in *El Hombre y la Gente*. It gives Ortega, moreover, a particular place among the phenomenologists who addressed this theme, namely, Husserl and Alfred Schütz. As it is well known, for Alfred Schütz, the relationship with the other is marked by a process of typifications: this means that a set of sedimented experiences that are part of the stock of knowledge that the lifeworld makes available to us will predetermine our expectations regarding this relation and will give rise to a system of relevances through which we can know what we have in common with each other—that is, what is relevant to both of us—and what may set us apart. Now, it is true that Ortega takes up the notion of typification. However, he gives it a completely different scope. For, in his view, the set of intentional activities in which the other is constituted as such, that is, in which his initial anonymity and neutrality gain little by little

more precise contours, has its starting point in a presumption of threat and in distrust. Indeed, we can read in *El Hombre y la Gente*:

> […] We all have, in the stock our habitualized knowledge, a practical idea of man, of what his general possibilities of conduct are. However, this idea of possible human conduct, as a rule, has a terrible content. In fact, I have experienced that man is capable of everything - certainly of the absolute and perfect, but also and not less, of the most depraved. I have the experience of the kind, generous, intelligent man, but at his side I also have the experience of the thief – the thief of objects and the thief of ideas -, the murderer, the envious, the wicked, the imbecile. As a result, before the pure and unknown other, I have to wait for the worst and anticipate that his reaction may be to injure me. (Ortega y Gasset, 2010a: 241)

I think we can read this text as a peculiar way of using the concept of virtual, of which we spoke in the previous section of this chapter. I think that when Ortega speaks of danger (even if the expected danger can turn out to be a favorable encounter), he wants to stress the fact that the intimacy of the other is, at the beginning, totally invisible for us. Only little by little will we get further acquaintance with him, thanks to his bodily movements and gestures, facial expressions, and uttered words. Husserl was not totally insensitive to this Orteguian point of view, though with some nuances. In a 1933 text—the Manuscript A VII 9—he speaks of the clash between alien familiar worlds: for example, between his world as a son of small merchants in a small provincial town and the world of a Prussian aristocrat student at a military academy or between that of a German and that of a Chinese (Husserl, 2008: 162–163). Each of these worlds differs from the other not only in its present state but also in its past as well as in its horizon of future expectations. To belong to two worlds at the same time, that is, to participate in two structures of typification, is impossible, although an alien world is always a part of the one and only common world.

For Husserl, of course, there were transcendental questions prior to the ontological issues I have just outlined, namely, the constitution of the other as a member of the community of transcendental subjects, the question he intended to address in the fifth Cartesian Meditation. This issue is not even mentioned in these pages of Ortega. However, I would like to make a few more brief references before proceeding. Husserl's problem in the fifth Cartesian Meditation is that of the conditions for the possibility of constituting someone as an "other self"—an *alter ego*—capable of constituting like myself a world on the basis of which it becomes possible to say that there is a common world. We may ask this question once again in the language of Ortega: if everything appears in my life, how can appear in it a life that is not mine and nevertheless, as a life, is for itself a radical reality, of which I can make the experience? Now, in the natural attitude, this problem does not arise. We all live in the conviction that there are other men with whom we relate, that this relationship is established on the basis of communication and mutual understanding, and, also, that there is a set of intersubjectively shared (namely, linguistic) signs and symbols which function within the framework of institutions of which no one is individually the maker. Without going into unnecessary details on this subject, I stress only that neither for Schütz nor for Ortega does the question of intersubjectivity have a satisfactory solution in the way Husserl addresses it.

I think all this becomes clearer as we move on to a second set of problems. Putting aside the difficulties related to the second *epoché*, new difficulties appear when—regardless of the possibility of a reduction to the sphere of property—we move on to the next stage of the Husserlian argument and analyze the emergence of the other from the experience of another body as a body analogous to mine. Let us remember that, in Husserl's perspective, the recognition of the existence of a common world lies in the fact that, as Schütz says, my perspective and that of the other can become congruent from the moment I switch places with him and each other of us sees then what the other saw a moment ago. However, the essence of the difference between me and the other may not lie in the fact that my body is "here" for me and his Body is "their" (Schütz, 1990: 316). Husserl, as is well known, spoke of knowledge—though not of a reasoning—by analogy or an "analogizing apperception." Husserl's concern with showing us how the other man "appears"—that is, is constituted—is consistent with his intention to show us how another "constituent subjectivity," along with mine, can become involved in the process of constituting a common world. In any case, in this process, as Husserl describes it, I think we can recognize four phases:

1. In the first phase, there is the knowledge of my own self or of my own stream of consciousness.
2. Secondly, the recognition of my body as my somatic body.
3. Thirdly, the recognition of the other's somatic body by the analogizing apprehension referred to above.
4. Finally, the presentification of another's psyche as something that inhabits that body and gives it that somatic body character that I experience.

This process, as it can be easily seen, rests in turn on four assumptions. Explaining them makes even more clear the difficulties that Husserl's theory faces, legitimizing the suspicions Schütz and Ortega put on it. The first assumption is that the knowledge of myself, or the solipsistic experience of myself, precedes the knowledge of the other; the second is that I must admit, in my primordial sphere, the appearance of other bodies prior to their constitution as somatic bodies as such (in other words, to admit them as mere physical bodies; this assumption is fundamental for Husserl's whole analysis not to be accused to fall into a vicious circle); the third is that it is through the body of the other that his psyche becomes present, which at the same time entails that his experience of his own body will be identical with the experience I have of mine; and finally, the fourth assumption is that for the constitution of the somatic body, neither the sexual difference nor, probably, the difference between human body and animal body is relevant. The third assumption is the most interesting and most charged with consequences. And the reason is that the presentation of the body of others will only correspond to the presentification of the psyche of others—that is, a presentation mediated by the immediate presentation of the somatic body, the only presentation that occurs, as it were, in flesh and blood—although in every experience the psyche and the body are always intertwined (Schütz, 1975: 62). In other words, throughout this process I transfer to the other the same structure

of lived experiences and the same units of value that characterize the experiences of my own ego (Husserl, 1950: 126).

But for Ortega, the fourth assumption is equally important. In fact, he seems to accuse Husserl of distinguishing my own body from an alien body, in the first place, because my body is here for me (*hic*) and the body of the other there (*illic*). But the reason for the distinction is, for Ortega, from the beginning, deeper and more radical. It is, he says, that I experience my body from within (Ortega y Gasset, 2010a: 221) and any other somatic body only from the outside. The pleasures and pains of others are inaccessible to me; likewise, the experience of owning a female body will always be inaccessible to a man; finally, the existence of certain similarities between a human body and an animal body could legitimize the conclusion that the latter hedges a psyche identical to mine.

5 Science, Life, and Authenticity

Nelson Orringer (1979: 142 ff.) finds certain similarities between Ortega's stylistic resources, particularly in the *Meditaciones del Quijote*, and Wilhelm Shapp's style in the *Beiträge zur Phänomenologie der Wahrnehmung*. In the first place, they both avoid a direct approach to their respective themes, preferring an indirect approach, a method that Ortega will later characterize as drawing "concentric circles of ever shorter radius." A direct approach is appropriate for science. According to Orringer (1979: 144), this means that science has to avoid some basic problems for which, according to the scientific method, there is no possible solution. That's probably what Ortega thinks about anthropological issues: science can offer a great amount of knowledge about man, but only the intuitive method of phenomenology will allow us to grasp the essence of man.

If we now turn the focus of our attention to what Ortega has to say about the fate of man in a world dominated by modern science, we will find, besides a diagnosis similar to Husserl's, also some interesting differences. Ortega stresses the fact that humanity faces a general crisis, i.e., a general feeling of the loss of meaning of its most ancient and most venerable institutions, beginning with politics and ending with science. In his 1940 Argentinian Lectures about *Historical Reason*, he argues that no one knows any more what to do in political matters but also in scientific matters. And he mentions what was then happening in mathematical logic, with the work of the Dutch mathematician Luitzen Brouwer (Ortega y Gasset, 2009a: 479). Later in the same Lectures, he speaks about the metaphorical character of scientific concepts, like the concept of wave in Broglie's quantum mechanics (Ortega y Gasset, 2009a: 495), which is only a symptom of the crisis of the modern idea according to which language and contents of thought can easily overlap. Brouwer's claims that mathematical thought is independent of mathematical language are, for Ortega, just another symptom. But even in common perception, we can find the same symptoms. The color of a particular orange is richer in intuitive content than the concept "orange color"; a color actually seen—or intuited—always has

gradations that the concept cannot determine (Ortega y Gasset, 2008a: 301). And so we come to what Ortega calls an "earthquake of reason." In order to understand and evaluate its effects, the Spanish philosopher, as I shall now explain, asks for the help of Husserl's phenomenological analysis.

In the Third Lesson of *Historical Reason* (a series of Lectures held in Lisbon in 1944, where he resumes some of the ideas of the old Argentinian Lectures), Ortega quotes at length the Preface to *Formal and Transcendental Logic* (Ortega y Gasset, 2009b: 664). I think we can specify the three main ideas of this text as follows: (1) Sciences have lost the faith in themselves and in their own achievements. (2) Sciences are no more considered the self-objectivation of human spirit, i.e., they no more perform the functions for which they existed for centuries. (3) In a world historically fashioned by scientific progress, at least since the beginnings of Modern Times, but that has become increasingly incomprehensible, men have lost faith in culture and now raise the following questions: "what for?" and "where to?"

All this has to do with what Ortega calls the problem of authenticity. And I am not thinking about what Heidegger says in *Being and Time* about authenticity, regardless the influence the reading of *Being and Time* may have had in Ortega. Authenticity, for Ortega, broadly speaking, means two different albeit closely connected things: first, that the kind of life one lives and the prospects one makes regarding the future are in accordance with his or her basic beliefs; second, that one's beliefs are in accordance with the tasks that the circumstance imposes upon him. For instance, I may, in my personal life, take profit of the technological advances that scientific progress has put at my disposal and, in line with this, even if I am not a professional scientist and have only rudimentary notions of physics, mathematics, or biology, be committed, in my own limited sphere of action, with the search of truth. That's what Husserl calls a life according to reason. Or I may not care about it, or proclaim that there is no truth and reason is only an effective means to ensure the survival of the species (which it certainly is), or even deplore the scientific progress of which I take advantage in my daily life.

We find here a concept of life that is not entirely coincident with—I am not saying it is opposed to—the concept we found earlier, with its strong Nietzschean reverberations.[6] Indeed, this last concept can only be found in *El Tema de Nuestro Tiempo*, published in 1923, and in some essays of the same period. But as soon as 1929, in the Lectures titled *¿Qué es Filosofía?*, Ortega says not only that life as he means it is not the object of the biological sciences but also that it was a fatal error to call biology the science of life. The Greek word βίος meant not life in general (that modern biology studies) but the specific human way of living. Unfortunately, many of Ortega's interpreters and critics did not pay due attention to this warning, although one must reckon that Ortega himself was not always careful in handling his concept of life.

[6] In *El Hombre y la Gente*, Ortega will even say that Nietzsche completely missed the concept of life and his motto "live in danger" ignored the fact that life is in its substance danger. It is nonsense to make an imperative out of which is the way men live according to their own essence (2010a: 150).

Now, if with our previous considerations we just meant that an authentic life is a life according to the specific way humans must live, we would not tackle the issue completely. The reason is that this specific way is not something general. It means, first and foremost, to live according to one's own vocation. And one will never know what this vocation is unless one looks at his own self as situated in a circumstance that imposes upon each man a specific task. Of course, one can live without finding one's vocation,[7] i.e., one can live without never knowing what one has to do. It seems that, for Ortega, Goethe was one of the most prominent examples of this dramatic fact, so more dramatic as he was indeed a great poet and thinker, endowed with remarkable intellectual capacities.

Like Husserl, Ortega acknowledges the fact that Greek civilization meant a long-lasting trend of though whose main characteristics are clarity, rationality, and logical coherence (Ortega y Gasset, 2009b: 645). But Ortega also stresses the fact that this new form of life emerged from an older form of life and is characterized by two different but complementary attitudes: on the one hand the primacy of belief over reason and on the other hand the primacy of phantasy over the sense of reality. I won't address directly these issues in this chapter and will only remark that we have some difficulties here.

Regarding the first topic, the opposition of reason and belief, perhaps it cannot be addressed exactly as Ortega does, and we could defend that there are also reasonable beliefs in man's lifeworld experience, with its own so to speak epistemic justification. Husserl wrote some very nice pages about this, especially in the *Crisis* book. I am thinking, namely, about what he labels the "universal invariant style" of the lifeworld (Husserl, 1954: 29). I can only understand by this a set of rational beliefs that originate a horizon of expectations that are for the most part fulfilled. Perhaps, in spite of Ortega's conversion to phenomenology, some tenets of the Neokantian theory of culture never completely disappeared from his mature thought. That's a bit strange, as I will show in a moment, since the critique of Neokantianism played an important role in his philosophical evolution. As late as 1947, in his unfinished book *The Idea of Principle in Leibniz*, he maintained an opposition between beliefs and ideas (Ortega y Gasset, 2009c: 1131). Moreover, Ortega seems, sometimes, to look at the opposition between belief and reason as a kind of permanent struggle, in which epochs of reason come next to epochs of belief, before being overthrown by new epochs of belief, in a kind of cyclical process. This is particularly evident in a series of Lessons from 1948 about Arnold Toynbee's *A Study of History* (Ortega y Gasset, 2009d: 1201).

Now, regarding the second of the two Ortega's topics I mentioned above, the relations between phantasy and the awareness to what really exists in the world—in

[7] Perhaps it would be better to speak about the vocation the circumstance imposes upon each of us, to remain faithful to the etymology of the word that comes from the Latin word *vocare*, which means "to call." Of course, we face here the difficult issue of human freedom. I only remember that Ortega always criticized the idea that we are free just because we can randomly decide between to opposed alternatives. Listening to a call, which means deciding according to what someone has to do, due to his own system of preferences, is the real free act. See Cerezo (2011: 222 ff.).

other words, the sense of reality that prevails either in lifeworld experience or in scientific research—his position is not entirely coherent. It would be easy to show that Ortega sometimes admits that beliefs have their own sense of reality, their own kind of certitude, no less than allegedly scientific and solid knowledge, and also that phantasy is the necessary condition for the existence of ideas that are free from practical concerns and offer us only hypothetical knowledge. "Science is pure exact phantasy," says Ortega in 1947 (Ortega y Gasset, 2009c: 1133). In other words, when he addresses the intentional achievements of consciousness, he sometimes stresses the fact that lifeworld experiences consist of thetical acts (regardless their naivety), i.e., perceptions accompanied by belief; other times, he says they are mainly phantasies destined to be surmounted by other phantasies or other historical beliefs or even definitively removed by scientific or philosophical knowledge.

In the 1920s and 1930s, especially since the publication of *El Tema de Nuestro Tiempo*, in 1923, Ortega uses frequently a vitalistic jargon that can endanger a correct understanding of his thought, albeit his warnings against the temptation of understanding man like just one more zoological species and culture as a natural process. One has to know that Ortega was trying to avoid in the first place the danger of opposing the higher forms of culture (especially science and philosophy) and the historical and social milieu in which they arise, an opposition of which he accused—at least since 1911 and the papers he wrote about the Spanish painter Ignacio Zuloaga (San Martín, 1994: 27)—the Philosophy of Culture of the Neokantian School of Marburg. But Ortega's overall view of the fate of western culture in the twentieth century is very close to Husserl's, and his final conclusions are very similar to Husserl's: European science—and that means, reason in its higher and most sophisticated form—has lost all confidence in itself (Ortega y Gasset, 2009b: 665). What is at stake in our epoch, as Ortega stresses, is not what the common man thinks or believes about the value of science for the practical purposes of life. The crisis affects science in its very foundations. Concepts like matter, causality, and logical consistency, among others, became questionable, with quantum mechanics and intuitionistic mathematics, for instance. Perhaps we may call this crisis a crisis from above; but to this crisis is added a crisis from below, I mean, a crisis in the way science is understood and its achievements are evaluated in the lifeworld. Together, they make the one big crisis of western culture.

6 Individual Life as a Philosophical Problem

I said earlier that for Ortega, in 1910, aesthetics was the only way to answer a problem that neither logic (or theoretical philosophy) nor ethics were able to answer. It's now the time to resume this problem. The fact that Ortega changed his philosophical stance after 1912 has some relevance for the kind of answer he has to offer, but not for diagnosing the underlying issue. And this issue, in my opinion, has to do with the fact that we have not yet found the final clue to the essence of man when we say that he needs ideas and concepts to orient himself in the world he leaves in or that

he needs to evaluate things and events in order to make the best possible choices for his acts. For this reason, I am inclined to interpret Ortega's metaphor about man as a shipwrecked very much like I interpret Descartes' metaphor in the Second Metaphysical Meditation, when he says that his previous Meditation arose in him the sensation of having fallen in a very deep hole. That's why Ortega's position on this subject is very curious, as we will find in 1910 expressions almost identical to others we will find in 1914 in the *Meditaciones del Quijote* and even in 1923 in *El Tema de Nuestro Tiempo*. The differences are only evident to those who read these last two works from phenomenology, which, as is well known, not all Ortega's interpreters are willing to accept, but the similitudes are nonetheless real.

Let me start with the reference, in "Adam in Paradise," which belongs to what I have been calling the Neokantian phase of Ortega, to a sadness that is not sad, that is, to sadness as a psychological state that psychology takes as its subject of study. This sadness is not sad because it is no longer the individual sadness that is being felt by someone, with his own unique changes, and became a sort of universal sadness, defined and classified along with other moods, more or less unpleasant (Ortega y Gasset, 2004a: 67). This reference to a sadness that is not sad reminds us immediately of another reference, which Ortega makes in 1914, to a toothache that does not hurt. We have already asked what kind of pain this is. We answered it cannot the pain one feels, but the pain that one reflects upon, from which, thanks to reflection, one has himself distanced. It is—in the case of this pain that does not hurt—a state of consciousness that we can no longer describe as "painful consciousness," but as awareness of a pain that has been felt. That is, we face a second consciousness that reflects on a first consciousness, having already lost the executive character of the latter. I think there are some misconceptions here about the nature of reflection, but that is not what matters to me. The problem is this: how do we restore this first, individual, unique consciousness that was lost both by science, which seeks the universal, and ethics, which seeks the relationship of an individual behavior to the universal moral law? Here is the third problem that life poses to itself: how to restore the individuality of life itself, how to prevent it from getting lost in the maelstrom of the fleeting experience that everyone, as he lives, has of his own states of mind? Or, in other words, as Ortega asks at the end of § VIII of "Adam in Paradise": where do the stones of the Sierra de Guadarrama exhibit their individuality, in mineralogy or in Velásquez's paintings?

It seems, then, that Neokantian philosophy, from a theoretical and practical point of view, cannot restore our individual life. It can only do so through its aesthetics. However even this aesthetics, as Ortega will come to recognize, only restores us to individual life insofar as it sees it in tension with its idea, which is not individual but universal. Basically, Neokantism is just an expression of what Ortega calls the Germanic culture, the culture of the depths that hide behind the sensible appearances of things. Of course, depth is a dimension of reality as real as the surface that appears to everyone. Using another famous example of Ortega here, the flesh of an orange is as obvious as its peel, one referring to the other, although in one and the same intentional act it may not be possible to intend both at the same time. I will have to multiply my acts so that all the dimensions of the thing concerned—what

phenomenology calls the complete noema—both the latent and deep, as well as the patent or superficial, can be given to me. And it is from this phenomenological perspective that Ortega will see the failure of Neokantism and its aesthetics. For, from the Neokantian point of view, if the dwarf Gregory el Botero does not represent an individuality in tension with his idea, then he will only represent an individuality reduced to his bare condition of a sociological document or a variety of a human type. If this were true, he will only represent the Spanish man's backwardness in relation to the European man, whose life is guided by the higher forms of culture.

7 Final Remarks

After having revisited the fundamental theses of Ortega's philosophy of man and culture, as well as his critiques of Neokantian philosophy and other varieties of idealism, we are in a position to understand his peculiar phenomenological position—that is, the philosophy of vital reason—which Ortega proposes for the first time, in a systematic fashion, in the *Meditaciones del Quijote*. In short, we could say: culture does not identify with immediate life, but it is not opposed to it either. (That is, it is not the execution of acts of consciousness, but it is not opposed to that performance.) Ortega states, as we have seen, that culture is security; in other words, culture is the whole of the ideas man had to create in order to be able to live, i.e., so that life may not be, as for Plato was the sensible world, just a flow of fleeting impressions and sensations. But there are, in Ortega's theory of culture, three aspects, above all, that deserve to stop them in order to conclude. First, culture, understood as a set of ideas that are useful for life, is an intersubjective creation that claims truth and objectivity. The fact that the products of higher culture—like physics, mathematics, or even philosophy—are universal means that they are the outcomes of what all men have in common. On the other hand, culture is also a point of view about reality that may not exhaust what that reality is as a whole. However, if it is ultimately unable to do so, for reality always gives us perspective, like the orange of the example we gave above, what each culture says of reality must express what that reality is, with the risk that, by failing to do so, it will turn into a sham. (It should be kept in mind that for Ortega sincerity is a fundamental attribute of man.)

This brings us to a second aspect. Authentic culture, for Ortega, is an act of kindness or love, since it refers to dimensions of the human being that go beyond those abstract universals that result from the life of the spirit. Through culture—that is, through concepts—we express what in each particular thing goes beyond it and refers to everything else, constituting the depth dimension that is latent in what, in each, is evident when it is offered to a person's unqualified look. Culture is thus the virtual element that extends beyond the real, is the existence of one thing in all others and of all others in it, is the unitive force that Plato called Eros in the *Symposium* (Ortega y Gasset, 2008b: 782).

Finally, as a third aspect, which I have not developed but which is highlighted by my previous words: culture is also the answer to the human need to see things clearly. But, as is evident from what I said earlier, there is a clarity of superficial

things and a clarity of deep things, there is a clarity proper to impressions, and a clarity that signifies the calm spiritual possession of things (Ortega y Gasset, 2008b: 788). As Ortega states in the first pages of the "Preliminary Meditation" of the *Meditaciones del Quijote*, the depths of the forest surrounding the Escorial Monastery are no less clear than its borders, which can be seen before entering it; but the depths will gain clarity only if I have entered them, having previously developed the organ of sight capable of perceiving them. Ortega calls "culture" this clarity of vision. Culture is not life or its depths. But—in the nice expression that Ortega uses—it is the commentary on life, not in the sense of something accessory to it, but as life itself led to its fullness.

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Ortega's Aesthetics

1 Introduction

An attentive reading of Ortega's essay production easily leads us to conclude that art and aesthetics are vital components of his philosophical system. For the Spanish thinker, there is an intrinsic link between philosophy and art, given the need for philosophy, as radical knowledge, to comprehend all forms of human activity and creativity: science, morals, aesthetics, and religion. In fact, his writings on art and aesthetics must be understood in the light of philosophical, phenomenological, and anthropological principles that underpin his historical and vital reasons (Gutiérrez Pozo, 2000; Molinuevo, 1984; Villacañas, 2004; Morón Arroyo, 1968).

As a thinker in search of his own method and as an intellectual committed to national regeneration, Ortega worked solidly from his youth on reflecting on and searching for solutions to the problems of Spain, which he believed, mainly in his first phase, to reside in Europeanization (Ortega y Gasset, 2004c). To accomplish this purpose, Ortega builds a humanizing program of culture, which progressively completes itself in accordance with the evolution of his dialectical thinking and the modern currents of his time, between Neokantianism in the early years and Husserlian phenomenology in his intellectual affirmation and consolidation phases, between 1912 and 1955. Influenced by Edmund Husserl on the need to look for the truth as a vital imperative and for the evidence of facts; driven by Heidegger's concept of life as authentic existence; and moved by the Platonic idea of recognition with a view to the implementation of a national regeneration project, Ortega focuses on social reality, looking deeply at Spain as "a problem to solve, a duty to accomplish" ("Un problema a resolver, una tarea a cumplir, un edificio a levantar: esto es patria") (Ortega y Gasset, 2004b: 340). Seeking to understand the "vital sensibility" of his time (Ortega y Gasset, 2012c: 562), Ortega assigns his generation the task of bridging centuries in order to better prepare the following one to fulfill Spain, as expressed in the following sentence: "España es una cosa que hay que hacer. Y es

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una cosa muy difícil de hacer. Ya es difícil querer hacerla; pero, aún logrado esto, queda íntegra la suprema dificultad: saber hacerla" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004g: 605).

Ortega's thinking is profoundly humanistic, focused on the problem of life, understood as a drama that impels humans to action, in "eagerness to live" ("afán de vivir"; Ortega y Gasset, 2004x: 768). His racio-vitalist humanism contains an ethics of intention, insofar as he conceives life as a radical reality, as a task or project to accomplish, and appeals to the fidelity of one's circumstance, in which each person will have to save their own life, filling it with dignifying occupations such as culture and art. Struggling for a balance between oneself and one's reality, Ortega's philosophy takes art as a manifestation of human creativity, mirroring a particular historical time in which each generation lives its executive reality. Life is therefore at the center of Ortega's metaphysics, the approach of which is undertaken through aesthetics, because it is focused on intuition and feeling as basic manifestations of life.

In the wake of Husserl, Ortega seeks to understand phenomena, moving toward the existentialist phenomenology that Heidegger will portray in *Being and Time* (1927), given the need to understand humankind in the existential, circumstantial world. Bearing this reference in mind, Ortega revises significant historical, political, and philosophical milestones in order to understand the phenomena and challenges of his time. Placing humanity in its chronological course and focused on the problem of Spain, Ortega gives attention to the "historical substance," fluid and dynamic, as the "intimate sensibility of each people in transformation" ("sensibilidad íntima de cada pueblo […] en transformación"; Ortega y Gasset, 1990: 70). Transformation, grounded on "national vitalities" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004j: 718), through moral and cultural improvement raises the Spanish people's political, cultural, and artistic awareness (Ortega y Gasset, 1990: 23). Ortega advocates the establishment of a pedagogical science that ensures the intellectual and aesthetic means necessary for human growth (Ortega y Gasset, 1990: 44): "Politics has become for us social pedagogy and the Spanish problem a pedagogical one" ("La política se ha hecho para nosotros pedagogía social y el problema español un problema pedagógico" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004n: 97).

Along with new political thinking, Ortega aims to create a Spanish cultural system bearing on artistic manifestations of all forms: literature and the visual and performing arts. Under the influence of Neokantian idealism, particularly Cohen's tripartite philosophical system based on logics (reason), ethics, and aesthetics (Heis, 2018; Orringen, 1979), Ortega has meditated since his youth on the faculty of judging the work of art through sensation or sensibility and comprehension or understanding,[19] as he declares in an attempt to look for its definition: "Art is a fact that happens in our soul when we see a painting or read a book" ("El arte es un

[1]Carlos Morujão states that Ortega soon understood that "neo-Kantian aesthetics did not provide him with the concepts that would articulate such an understanding," since the contemplation of Zuloaga's paintings, for instance, focusing on the "anecdotal aspects of life," contradicts the "essence of the artistic" (Morujão, 2018: 190) raising new emotions and therefore demands a new aesthetic conceptualization (Morujão, 2018: 187).

hecho que acontece en nuestra alma al ver un cuadro o leer un libro," Ortega y Gasset, 2012e: 894). Sensation is at the level of the consciousness, which leads to awareness and ultimately reaches knowledge ("consciencia equivale a sensibilidad, capacidad para darse cuenta, conocimiento"; Ortega y Gasset, 1990: 22).

Aesthetics had already been one of the key concepts of the Generation of '98, by creating a Spanish philosophical style through pictorial narrative texts (Molinuevo, 1997). Nevertheless, demarcating himself from the aesthetic model followed by the previous generation, which he considers pessimistic and therefore of "negative sensitivity," Ortega assumes the mission, as a member of the Generation of '14, to bring a "new sensitivity" to the Spanish cultural milieu, faithful to the present and able to respond to the challenges of modern times (Molinuevo, 1997: 157).

After his contact with phenomenology around 1911–1912 (Morujão, 2018; García Nuño, 2014), it becomes clear to Ortega that art and aesthetics have an ontological-political dimension, aiming at saving social and cultural phenomena (Gutiérrez Pozo, 2001: 142). This idea of salvation is associated both with the Hegelian concept of overcoming limitations (*Aufhebung*) and with the Platonic idea of salvation to create a new concept of saving one's self and one's circumstance, as the Spanish thinker emphasizes in *Meditaciones del Quijote* (1914). Ortega progressively leaves the Neokantian school, which has in culture the object of its transcendental method, to embrace historical reason, turning the transcendental into the relative (Heis, 2018). On the other hand, art is raised to a universal metaphor, used to free the spectator of art from concrete reality. Music, painting, and literature (in its lyrical and narrative modes), as well as the stylistic resources of metaphor and irony, become the object of careful and critical analysis. Culture—be it art, science or politics—comes to be seen as an interpretation of life (Ortega y Gasset, 2004y: 237), rooted in the concrete facts of people's lives, allowing an understanding of the reality around us. Claiming the right to an integral human culture, Ortega imposes culture as a task, endowed with "scientific seriousness and social justice" (Ortega y Gasset, 1990: 37). Orteguian cultural theory means clarity and sensibility in solidarity. It is therefore dynamic, in constant change, since new scientific theories replace the previous ones.

For all the abovementioned reasons and given the number of essays that the Spanish thinker devotes throughout his life to this innermost matter, we clearly realize that art and aesthetics have a vital relevance in Ortega's thinking, reflecting the new artistic trends in effervescence in the first and second decades of the twentieth century. Affirming on several occasions that he does not consider himself an expert in aesthetics or any particular artistic form, whether poetry, music, or painting, Ortega produces pertinent and innovative studies that prove to be invaluable contributions to the understanding of artistic creativity. His critical essays on art follow the philosophical and aesthetic evolution that took place during these decades, in an attempt to crystallize concepts, identify crucial traits, and, ultimately, create a guiding theory.

Our aim here, therefore, is to analyze Ortega's most relevant writings on aesthetics in the light of his philosophical ideas at a given point on his philosophical journey, be it within the framework of Neokantian idealism, clearly expressed in "Adán

en el Paraíso" (1910), or in the context of the phenomenology that is already glimpsed in "Ensayo de estética a manera de prólogo" (1914) or *Meditaciones del Quijote* (1914), and is fully mature in "Elogío del murciélago" (1921), *La Deshumanización del arte e ideas sobre la novela* (1925), or in the last essays in the 1950s dedicated to painting, in particular to Goya and Velázquez (Ortega y Gasset, 2010h, 2010i).

2 The Idea of Art and Aesthetics in the Young Ortega

Ortega turns his attention to literary criticism at an early stage of his philosophical career, from "Glosa," "De la crítica personal" (1902), and "Moralejas" (1903), focusing not only on the novels of Valle-Inclán, one of his favorite Spanish writers, but also on the aesthetics of the new poets, namely, the Belgian writer Maurice Maeterlinck (Ortega y Gasset, 2004a: 29–33). As we will see in the following pages, Ortega's deep knowledge of the most relevant Spanish and European writers and artists is spread across numerous critical essays, with in-depth and diversified studies in the field of art criticism and aesthetics, proving his aesthetic feeling of life as eclectic and encompassing diverse phenomena, following closely social and cultural transformations between centuries.

One of Ortega's first public references to art is uttered in an essay called "¿Una exposición Zuloaga?" (1910), published in *El Imparcial*, written between May and August 1910, after his studies in Germany and particularly his contact with the Marburg school, strongly influenced by Neokantian idealism. Closely linked to the civic activity and educational policy that Ortega will be devoted to in the following decades with his action in *Liga de Educación Política Española* (1913) and *Agrupación al Servicio de la República* (1931), this essay expresses his concerns about the modernization of Spain, starting by bringing the "anonymous mass" closer to culture through inviting European personalities to deliver conferences in Spain and to organize an exhibition dedicated to the Spanish painter, in order to raise in the public opinion "high concerns" and "motives of superior vitality" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004c: 342). The accomplishment of this exhibition, suggested to the Minister of Public Education, would bring to the public square the discussion about the controversies portrayed in Zuloaga's paintings, triggering the "Spanish problem," which resides in the devotion to traditional ways expressed in the form of the "castizo" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004c: 343), a trait that Unamuno[2] and other members of the Generation of '98 would emphasize, except for the young Ortega, an enthusiastic supporter of a modern Spain, guided by German science and thinking. Zuloaga's paintings would consequently function as "spiritual exercises," leading to a "national assessment" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004c: 343).

Nevertheless, "Adán en el Paraíso," published in the same year, is a decisive text in Ortega's increasingly solid thinking on aesthetics, and mainly on Spanish artistic

[2] On this matter see *En Torno al Casticismo* (1902) and *Del Sentimiento Trágico de la Vida* (1912).

peculiarities, despite the public's difficulty in understanding it in full (Ortega y Gasset, 2004d: 437). The myth of Adam represents the beginning of human existence, him being the first one to perceive human life as a problem: "Adán in Paradise is the pure and simple life, it is the weak support of the infinite problem of life" ("Adán en el Paraíso es la pura y simple vida, es el débil suporte del problema infinito de la vida"; Ortega y Gasset, 2004m: 65). Subscribing to Neokantian idealism and especially Nietzsche's philosophy of overcoming, that human beings should always strive for betterment ("Ser hombre es un perene superarse a sí mismo"; Ortega y Gasset, 2004o: 123), Ortega understands art as a device capable of creating infinite and clear insights and perspectives on the problem of life. Engaged in the activity of giving sense to things and understanding their relation to human being, Ortega analyzes artistic activity from an ontological point of view, since he starts from the premise that "the life of a thing is its being" ("la vida de una cosa es su ser"; Ortega y Gasset, 2004m: 66). In that sense, the Spanish thinker places artistic creation in the vital, concrete, and unique, which does not imitate nature, because nature is stable and life ephemeral, even equivocal and contradictory. The dichotomy between nature and culture will be further developed in "El Greco en Alemania" (1911), where Ortega associates nature with the instinct for conservation and culture with people's lives, and therefore it is subject to decay and change (Ortega y Gasset, 2004e: 525). Aesthetics, on the other hand, has the purpose of systematizing knowledge about art: it is a form of organizing sensibility and assessing culture through rational forms such as logics and ethics (Ortega y Gasset, 2004m: 58)[3] If culture is a product of the traditional condensation of pre-concepts ("pre-juicios"),[4] there is always an evolution in the passage of knowledge from one generation to the next, emphasizing the historical approach to aesthetics. As we have already stressed in this text, the generational problem, as method, is a recurrent topic in Ortega's thought, closely linked to his historical and vital reasons, and discussed throughout his work from different perspectives, since it is Ortega's intention to make a diagnosis of past and present Spanish generations to formulate a Spanish thought.

Ortega also stresses in "Adán en el Paraíso" the difference between science and art. While science is the method of abstraction and generalization, art is the method of individualization and concretization, as is patent in literary works such as *Don Quixote*, capable of arousing in readers' minds a "sudden and spontaneous revelation" of the ordering of all things, elevating it to a higher intuition (Ortega y Gasset, 2004m: 68). The same happens in the visual arts, where the artist's mission is to portray the "form of the totality of life," merging nature and spirit. In opting for the category of relation over the category of substance, Ortega stresses that there is a whole world of ideal unities, of internal energies that characterize and individualize

[3] According to Carlos Morujão, Neokantianism understands culture as a science that "allows the human being to overcome the contingency of the sensible knowledge that is passive in relation to the impressions coming from the outside world" (Morujão, 2018: 191).

[4] Nelson Orringer states that the word "prejuício" is the exact translation of the term *Begründung*, which means "foundation" this being the basis of the concepts that produce aesthetic judgment (Orringen, 1979: 65).

artwork (Ortega y Gasset, 2004m: 66). That is the case in Zuloaga's paintings: Ortega states that the artist transmits both reality and "something transcendent," even unreal, creating an interior world that gives unity to the painting (Ortega y Gasset, 2004m: 59). From a radically opposite perspective to what Ortega will find years later by analyzing avant-garde movements, in these first years, under the influence of Neokantian idealism, which values form over matter, Ortega expresses what the artist should strive for, by replacing trivial and patent forms with artistic, deep, and secret ones, raising the artistic object to a symbolic level. This idea is further developed in "La Estética de El Enano Gregório El Botero," also published in 1911, where the Spanish thinker stresses the eclecticism of Zuloaga's painting, given the confluence of methods, traditions, and antagonistic influences expressed in his work (Ortega y Gasset, 2004o). The "vital dynamism" portrayed in this painting translates a "living force at war with matter" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004o: 119). The dwarf represents the Nietzschean image of man, between the animal and the superman, and the painter, by contextualizing the dwarf in an unreal landscape, saves the character from his tragic condition, elevating him to the symbol of "the tragedy of race," which, according to Ortega, is perishing by its conservation instinct (Ortega y Gasset, 2004o: 122).

Back to "Adán en el Paraíso": Ortega notes that art is under different evaluation systems and each reality is a new perspective, "each pair of eyes sees a different thing" ("cada par de ojos ve una cosa distinta"; Ortega y Gasset, 2004m: 69). In this quest, and under the influence of Leibniz and Nietzsche (Ortega y Gasset, 2004p: 153–182), Ortega analyzes the work of art in a first approach to his later developed theory of perspectivism, since each individual has their own vision of things, a topic to which Ortega will devote deep attention in "Sobre el punto de vista en las artes" (1924), at that time clearly under the authority of Husserl's phenomenology. Also in "El Greco en Alemania" (1911), and possibly having in mind Carl Justi's bibliographical approach to the study of painting, Ortega emphasizes the need to understand the circumstances that led the painter to create a work of art. This approach will culminate in the bibliographical method of analyzing the creation process, to which Ortega will be faithful until his final studies on Spanish painting, especially in "Papeles sobre Velázquez y Goya" (Ortega y Gasset, 2010h: 603–774).

In this essay Ortega also endeavors to explain painting techniques, focusing on the notions of coexistence and contiguousness to define the air-space equation in a painting accomplished by light (Ortega y Gasset, 2004m: 71). The painter interprets the problem of life by organizing a system of spatial relations in coexistence united by light (Ortega y Gasset, 2004m: 71). Ortega differentiates idealism from realism in art, the first being the illusion and pretense of art and the second the pictorial "res," translating the object that is copied or fictionalized (Ortega y Gasset, 2004m: 69). The meaning of art lies in the "radical sense of expression that there is in man, that is man" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004m: 63), solving humanity's existential problems that science and morals cannot solve. Art is individualization, since things and reality itself are individuals, and for the Spanish thinker it is the reality of the painting that matters, not that of the copied object. He takes the example of Greco's seventeenth-century Toledan model, expressed in the painting "Hombre con la

mano al pecho." It is not the painted model that interests Ortega, but who is represented in it, the traditional Toledan man, individualized and eternalized in the painting. Here, according to the young Ortega, lie the fecundity, scope, and transcendence of the artist, which go beyond the time in which he lived (Ortega y Gasset, 2004c: 343). Influenced by Worringer's ethnic psychology, Ortega assesses the significance of Greco's paintings, synthesizing Spanish and Mediterranean cultures, as he states in "El Greco in Alemania" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004e: 525). Ortega seeks to find a formula that defines the ideal in painting, since art is the realization of an ideal, and each art form expresses a different aspect of human feeling (Ortega y Gasset, 2004o: 121).

He starts by focusing on the concepts of "true art" and the "true artist," this being one who seeks among the chaos of realities the guidance to master them, taking hold of the reality of things (Ortega y Gasset, 2004m: 70). Contrary to science and morality, in which the concept is sovereign, in art the feeling is central, making the concept a guideline (Ortega y Gasset, 2004m: 62); while science breaks with the unity of life, nature, and spirit, art recovers that unity, seeking totality (Ortega y Gasset, 2004m: 63). That is the case for Cézanne, who understood art as realization, possessing a radical sense of painting, a "huge aesthetic transcendence" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004m: 69). After reading A. Schmarsow and, mainly, W. Worringer's *Form in Gothic* (*Problemas formales del arte gótico*, 1911), Ortega reformulates in "Arte de este mundo y del otro" (1911), and especially in "El Greco en Alemania," what he had stated in "Adán en el Paraíso." Understanding that the course of art history has shifted and that each epoch has a different aesthetic will, which is no longer the reproduction of nature, the ultimate tendency is to focus on an ideal, as necessary as religion or science. Approaching psychology of art, Ortega begins to make sense of what he will develop in *Meditaciones del Quijote*, focusing on the Spanish culture. He becomes interested in the ethnic aspect of art, understanding it as social work ("labor social"), because it reflects the "pathos" of each people, which will necessarily have a reflection on the artistic objects produced.

It is precisely his intention to contribute to the systematization of Spanish culture that leads Ortega in 1911 to write "Una visita a Zuloaga," published in *La Prensa* in 1912, after returning from Germany. He describes his visit to the painter's house in Paris as the starting point for an analysis of the problem of Spain, its sentimental awareness and sensitivity, appealing to the need for conceptualization as mediation between things and human beings (Ortega y Gasset, 2004f: 534), one of the guiding themes of his theory of culture that will be deepened in *Meditaciones del Quijote* (1914). The Spanish thinker insists once again on the ability of art to enhance sensitivity in humans, considering this to be the fourth dimension of the work of art, its mission being "bringing us into intimacy with the elemental mysteries of human confession, with the cardinal problems of the cosmos" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004f: 532). Certainly under the influence of Unamuno, who had just published *Del sentimiento trágico de la vida*, Ortega considers that the artist lives with the basic tragedy of the human being. While other peoples have embraced social, moral, and intellectual change, Spain has been the only country to resist modernization, and it is this resistance that makes Spain's problem a tragic one. In that sense, Zuloaga is

the interpreter of the Spanish people, expressing the universal in the local: "[he] presents an eternal theme of history expressed in Spanish gestures" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004f: 533).

And it is specifically the Spanish gestures expressed by another Spanish painter, Velázquez, that are highlighted by Ortega in "Tres cuadros del vino" (1911), an essay inserted in *El Espectador*, where the author returns to his reflection on the mission of art and of the artist, persisting in the idea that all forms of art—sculpture, painting, and music—translate "eternal themes" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004r: 192). With wine as a common topic expressed in three different paintings, produced at a particularly fruitful time in art history, between the Renaissance with Tiziano and the Baroque with Poussin and Velázquez, Ortega notes that each century brings a unique sensitivity to deal with the problems of humanity and that true progress lies in the "increasing intensity" with which the "cardinal mysteries" are understood (Ortega y Gasset, 2004r: 192). Still moved by idealism, Ortega meditates on the real in art, taking as a "higher meaning" the way in which the real is represented in connection with the ideal (Ortega y Gasset, 2004r: 199). Proceeding to an analysis of different historical periods and artistic movements, Ortega seeks to explain his contemporary era (free of mythologies and idealisms), which he calls the "administrative age." Ortega concludes that the cultivation of mythological themes, with its narrative that enhances perfection in humankind, provides an "ideal meaning" that "religious temperaments" such as Tiziano and Poussin, in their own way, sought to represent. That is not, however, the case with Velázquez, "the giant an atheist, an unholy colossal" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004r: 199), who places the figure of the "pícaro" at the heart of his mockery of classicism: "Es una valiente aceptación del materialismo, un desafío al cosmos, un soberbio malgré tout" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004r: 199). This "materialism" refers to the attention to objects in their corporality, which Ortega considers a characteristic of the Mediterranean spirit in contrast with the taste for abstraction and construction of the German spirit. As a result, Velázquez's painting, to which the Spanish thinker will repeatedly return throughout his life, manages to bridge the gap not only to modernity, but to Ortega's historical-narrative reason, because it portrays, individualizes, and gives to artwork a real dimension of depth, guided by the demands not of beauty but truth.

3 Ortega's Meditations on Aesthetics in the Light of Phenomenology

From 1912 onward, Orteguian studies on art will gradually be under the influence of phenomenology, becoming a method of inquiry (Holmes, 2007). The seminal "Ensayo de estética a manera de prólogo" (1914), having as pretext the mission of writing a foreword for "El Pasajero" by Moreno Villa, an avant-garde poet from Malaga and a member of the Spanish Generation of '27, is converted into an essay on aesthetics and the value of metaphor (to which we will later give further

attention) and on the understanding of literature and philosophy to ultimately save the Spanish culture. Reflecting on the evolution of aesthetic thinking in the last two centuries, bearing in mind that "common sense" demands "plenitude, harmony and correction,"[5] a work of art should also reflect originality. In an attempt to define the poet's essence and mission (a topic strongly cultivated throughout the nineteenth century), and focusing on the Husserlian concept of the executive self, Ortega highlights individuality in art, stating that poets/artists must aspire to be themselves and by their unique style are capable of increasing reality, converting matter into a work of art (Ortega y Gasset, 2004i: 665). The irreplaceable style of the poet is a peculiar way of unrealizing things. Art being "desrealización e irrealidad" is placed beyond the real world, converting the enjoyment of the poetic text into a "religious emotion," which the Spanish thinker himself confesses to experience when facing a true artwork (Ortega y Gasset, 2004i: 679). However, already perceiving a turning point in the creation and understanding of art, Ortega draws attention to the trend of vulgarization, giving the example of the English people's pragmatic relationship with art, and particularly of the Victorian art critic John Ruskin, who, according to Ortega, converts the artistic piece into a domestic object, bringing it closer to everyday life.

Considerations on art and especially on Don Quixote and the modern novel are broadly developed in *Meditaciones del Quijote*, published in the same year of 1914, Ortega's first book on Quixote criticism (Close, 2010), in a response to Unamuno's attack against the young generation who advocated Spain's approach to Europe and German science and thinking as a reference (Orringen, 1979: 169–170). Previous contributions to the critical analysis of the Spanish character, either in Spain (Unamuno, Azorin, or Marañón) or abroad (Schelling, Heine, Turgenev), are considered as "momentary and insufficient clarities" ("claridades momentáneas e insuficientes"; Ortega y Gasset, 2004y: 241) that Ortega aims to overcome. These essays are first of all meditations of intellectual love to Spain, in the wake of Plato and Espinosa's idea of understanding as the madness of love (Ortega y Gasset, 2004y: 158), focusing on the union between things that it understands, that is, the intimate relation they have with each other. Ortega's philosophy is therefore optimistic, trying to present a synthesis of ideas with intervention in reality, admitting the fall and failure since they are centered on the problem of life, its limitations and possibilities (Ortega y Gasset, 2004y: 177).

Considering Cervantes a thinker, given his fidelity to the present reality and the way he saves them (Molinuevo, 1997), and *Don Quixote* as the "foundational novel," pioneer of the modern genre because it analyzes life, exploring the possibilities of existence, Ortega seeks to define a national aesthetics that works as national salvation. Against the "inert appearance" of tradition, Ortega advocates an ideal, a "creative organization" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004y: 245) inspired by German scientific

[5] These qualities, which he calls "virtues of eternity" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004i: 664), line up the best classical tradition regarding the literary, philosophical, and aesthetic canon of the work of art, especially if we bear in mind that to these "virtues" can correspond, along the line of Burke or Kant, the notion of beauty and even the sublime in art.

pedagogy (Villacañas in Ortega y Gasset, 2004y: 107), to save the Spanish circumstance prefigured in the "Hispanic module," raising "ethnic consciousness" and fulfilling its role as the "spiritual promontory of Europe" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004y: 242).

In his "Meditación primera" (*Breve tratado de la novella*), in an attempt to define literary genres, Ortega presents humanity as the essential theme of art, and literary genres are seen as "irreducible aesthetic themes," as "wide views" of the human (Ortega y Gasset, 2004y: 252). In the wake of Cohen's *Ästhetik des reinen Gefühls* (*Estética del sentimiento puro*, 1912), Ortega follows the idea that the human is the original model of art (Ortega y Gasset, 2004y: 252; Orringen, 1979: 173) and that each historical time has a radical interpretation of the human, adopting the genre that better suits its needs and expectations. Art, and especially literature, is a process, a reflection of human improvement, limited to time and the circumstance in which it was created, and the artist, starting from vital reality, launches creativity in all its aspects (Ortega y Gasset, 2004y: 240).

In *Don Quixote* two "spiritual continents" arise (Ortega y Gasset, 2004y: 270), the adventure side, where fantasy, imagination, and myth stand, and the reality side, the nobleman who, lacking discernment, leaves his village imbedded with his old-fashioned principle of saving the world. In Cervantes's novel there is, in Ortega's opinion, respect for the internal world of consciousness, saving the reality of adventure through irony (Ortega y Gasset, 2004y: 275). In this sense, Cervantes's humanist novel, combining idealism and positivism, inaugurates the modern Spanish essay, the one that best reflects the truth of the modern human. *Don Quixote* therefore meets Ortega's metaphysics of reality, in particular his theory of circumstance, and the historical and evolutionary approach to literary genres, combining epic, comedy, and tragedy to unveil the human as a "hero," in permanent struggle with the surrounding environment, trying to achieve humanization. In this sense, the novel is the literary genre of modernity, reflecting a new style of life.[6]

4 Language, Metaphor, and Irony

From his earliest writings, language is a key issue to Ortega. We may even say that the Spanish thinker was a precursor of cognitive semiotics, combining theoretical and empirical principles in the wake of the Husserlian phenomenological method, focusing on the consciousness and anticipating modern theories on language in the line of Chomsky, Vygotsky, or more recently Sonesson (2012) and Zlatev (2009). These contributions converge with Ortega's thinking, especially Zlatev's theory of

[6] Ortega establishes a confrontation between characters in the epic and the modern novel, such as Elena and Madame Bovary, and between characters with poetic value, such as Achilles, and extra-poetic characters like Sancho or Bovary. The realist novel reflects the problem of the harassed individual in the social positivist and evolutionist environment. Balzac, Dickens, Flaubert, and Dostoyevsky are therefore considered "Labradores de la novela contemporánea" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004y: 249).

meaning based on hierarchical levels: life, consciousness, sign function, and language (Zlatev, 2009).

Therefore, a recurring topic throughout Ortega's philosophical discourse is the notion that the human being is gifted in the creation of signs and semantic activity, language and fine arts being semantic work, "a sign, symbol, or system of a human design" (Ortega y Gasset, 2010h: 610). Ortega also stresses the importance of the word as a sign, containing a meaning and a signifier, which means that it carries a concept, a mental intention of conceptualizing something (Ortega y Gasset, 2004w: 506). Art is, for that reason, a semiotic system of communication, since an artwork is understood as an "apparatus of meaning," expressing the author's purposes (Ortega y Gasset, 2010h: 610),[7] as is the case with painting. This "aesthetic organism" (Ortega y Gasset, 2010h: 612), the most hermetic form of all arts, requires an effort of interpretation, mainly for avant-garde works, which are conceived as a challenge or game.

Ortega starts with the premise that language, as a means of communication and thinking, has the function of translating the unity of thought, since in the light of the phenomenological method, language supports ideas, verbalizing the human consciousness (Ortega y Gasset, 2004k: 916). Despite its limitations and the difficulty in keeping up with the ever-changing historical reality, language is vital for classifying the phenomena surrounding human beings. According to the Spanish thinker, communication in spoken language is essentially dialogue, expressing the idea of coexistence and a sense of wholeness when referring to, along the lines of Plato and Goethe, the "whole man" ("el hombre entero"; Ortega y Gasset, 2010a: 20).[8] Following this principle, Ortega will find his own style in philosophical discourse, in permanent dialogue with his audience.

In the wake of Natorp's social philosophy, Ortega notes that language is a social product since the individual is a social being, living in a mutually influential community (Ortega y Gasset, 2004n: 94–95), seeking new ways of communicating the problems of science, philosophy, and aesthetics (Pérez Martínez, 2010). Having as a reference Schelling's *Filosofía de la mitología*, Ortega advocates that each community has its own identity, language being the distinctive element that intimately differentiates peoples. With this premise in mind, Ortega gives attention to the improvement of the Spanish language and culture, as is the case for the critical review of Menéndez Pidal's *Orígenes del Español. Estado lingüístico de la Península Ibérica hasta el siglo XI*, on the origins of the Castilian language (Ortega y Gasset, 2010b: 119).

Another of Ortega's concerns is the distinction between philosophy and literature. Following Dilthey's concepts, Ortega states that while literary expression is more expansive, returning to the reader all its meaning, philosophical expression is

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[7] The Spanish thinker was at this time preparing the edition of *Princípios de una nueva filología*, focusing on the relevance of the functions of language—transmitter, receiver, and context—as "radicales supuestos" and comprehension facilitators (Ortega y Gasset, 2010h: 613).

[8] An idea expressed in "Un libro sobre Platón" (Ortega y Gasset, 2010a: 20) and *La rebelión de las masas* (Ortega y Gasset, 2010c: 350)

hermetic, uttered as a system of concepts, and is therefore inclusive. If on the one hand language is vital to communicate philosophical concepts and values (Ortega y Gasset, 2012b: 531–549), on the other hand it "imprisons ideas," making it impracticable to strictly characterize them (Ortega y Gasset, 2004f: 529–530). This limitation is also extendable to translation, whose challenges and perspectives Ortega insightfully analyzes in "Miseria y esplendor de la traducción" (1940). Considering both in *Meditaciones del Quijote* (1914) and *La deshumanización del arte* (1925) that philosophy has no genre of its own, which led thinkers to create their own style, Ortega finds that the essay, as a hybrid genre, has rhetorical potentialities capable of merging literature and philosophy (Pérez Martínez, 2010). Nevertheless, the coexistence between aesthetics and language is complex. The philosopher finds himself in the "dramatic situation" of discovering and revealing realities never seen before, being obliged to create his own language and even a new terminology in order to meet scientific and aesthetic advances. The thinker must therefore possess a "denominator talent" ("talento denominador") to reform language from its linguistic or etymological roots, as Husserl or Heidegger had advocated (Smith, 2013). Given the inability both of language to express real themes in their entirety and of the Spanish cultural milieu to understand philosophical text (Gutiérrez Pozo, 2001: 144), it becomes a pedagogical necessity for Ortega to decode philosophical notions through the use of metaphor, which soon becomes the prominent figure of speech in his philosophical discourse. In fact, at least from 1913, Ortega proposes the creation of a dictionary of philosophy, given the need to standardize and systematize new concepts (Ortega y Gasset, 2007).

Plurisignification of meaning is necessary to express ideas in philosophical discourse, from the surface to the depth of sense, which only metaphor can provide, turning ideas into a thesis (Ortega y Gasset, 2010j: 806). Metaphor represents for Ortega the most powerful trope used by humankind in all areas of knowledge. "[Each] metaphor is the discovery of a law of the universe" ("[Cada] metáfora es el descubrimiento de una ley del universo"; Ortega y Gasset, 2010i: 677).

His writings on the relevance of this figure of speech in philosophical, scientific, and literary discourse reveal a keen intuition, and his reflections are pioneering of later contributions conferring validity to his thinking (Rodrigo Mora, 2002). Metaphorical discourse is, then, best suited to Ortega's sui generis discursive mode, between academic essay and colloquial style, since his essays are in general either the reproduction of lectures addressed to his students or easily perceptible by his press readers (Aranguren, cited by Pérez Martínez, 2010: 124), as proven by the following passage where a Neokantian Ortega defines his monadology recurring to metaphorical speech:

> Lodged in the material organ, each soul is an ideal spinner, producer of very subtle threads that pierce other twinned souls like sun rays, then others and others. Slowly the threads multiply; the fabric of culture becomes tighter and complicated. (Ortega y Gasset, 2004l: 43)[9]

[9] "Alojada en el órgano material es cada alma una hilandera de ideal, productora de hilos sutilísimos que traspasan otras almas hermanadas como rayos de sol, luego o otras. Lentamente los hilos

One of the first of Ortega's essays devoted to the theoretical approach to metaphor is "Ensayo de estética a manera de prólogo" (1914). In this decisive study, Ortega reflects on the materialization and rationalization of the aesthetic object, which conveys an executive reality, reflecting the intimacy of the self: "es todo en cuanto yo" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004i: 672). Taking as paradigm Rodin's *The Thinker* (*Pensieroso*), this artistic object of contemplation "works as a narration about us" ("[O]bra como una narración sobre nosotros," Ortega y Gasset, 2004i: 671), breaking the usually existing gap between what is given in the image and what it refers to. In contrast to narrative, which refers to facts in the past, the image offers a peculiar form of knowledge about the object, and whoever contemplates the work of art sees themselves projected on it. In the case of *The Thinker*, we have "the very act of thinking while being executed" ("[E]l acto mismo de pensar ejecutándose," Ortega y Gasset, 2004i: 671). Recognizing metaphor as a form of mental activity and as an "elementary aesthetic object" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004i: 673), Ortega provides as an example a suggestive verse by the Valencian poet López Picó, "el cipres es com l'espectre d'una *flama morta*," explaining in detail the mechanism of metaphor where three operations take place: first, the comparison between two real objects, the cypress and the flame; second, the transference from reality to fictional transposition or mutual transfer between them; and third, a new sui generis corporeality created as a result—"ciprés-espectro de una llama," placed on an imaginative and ideal level (Ortega y Gasset, 2004i: 677).

In the 1920s, Ortega rethinks the role of metaphor as a central rhetorical figure and distinguishes its use in science, philosophy, and the arts (Ortega y Gasset, 2004w: 505). In "Las dos grandes metáforas," an essay written in 1924 on the second centenary of Kant's birth, Ortega stresses the essential use of metaphor as knowledge, as a means of expression and intellection, capable of translating human thinking, and as a support in decoding what seems difficult to understand (Ortega y Gasset, 2004w: 508). Metaphor is hence capable of capturing and grasping complex concepts (Rodrigo Mora, 2002: 267–268), which in philosophy are constantly changing. Metaphor is a facilitating resource for understanding the phenomena of reality and ultimately an essential tool for speculative thinking. In this sense, the comprehension and use of metaphor, by both the transmitter and the receiver, are relevant for Ortega. The way we understand the mechanism of metaphor and how it reverberates in consciousness, of its realizing—"darse cuenta" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004w: 516)—depends on our whole conception of the world, extending to the comprehension of morals, politics, and art (Ortega y Gasset, 2004w: 514). If metaphor performs a substitute function in science, it is constituent in poetry, since the aesthetics of metaphor is beauty, truth, and knowledge of realities (Ortega y Gasset, 2004w: 509). Poetry and science are, however, equal in the dimension of inquiring into positive facts, but while scientific law merely affirms the identity between abstract parts of things, poetic metaphor implies the full identification of concrete things (Ortega y Gasset, 2004w: 510).

de multiplican, el tejido….el gran artífice, el promotor del bien." (Ortega y Gasset, 2004l: 43)

As Ortega will claim a decade later, in *La deshumanización del arte* (1925), metaphor is probably the most fertile power that humans possess ("la metáfora es probablemente la potencia más fértil que el hombre posee"; Ortega y Gasset, 2012e: 865). Bridging reality and imagination, metaphor is a lyrical weapon because it has the power of creating new worlds: "Metaphor facilitates evasion and creates imaginary reefs among the real things, flourishing of weightless islands" ("la metáfora nos facilita la evasión y crea entre las cosas reales arrecifes imaginarios, florecimiento de islas ingrávidas," Ortega y Gasset, 2012e: 865). And even further in 1946, he will state this trope to be a "mental atomic bomb" (Ortega, 2009: 839). Searching for the origin of this vital rhetorical figure, Ortega notes that it began as a taboo, as a result of human nature seeking to avoid reality (Ortega y Gasset, 2012e: 865). Metaphor in modern times serves the "imaginative faculty," springing from the intimacy of the subject to become fantasy, game, and humor. The new artist tends to recover this principle, transforming metaphor into poetic *res*: "la poesía es hoy el algebra superior de las metáforas" (Ortega y Gasset, 2012e: 864).

There is a radical change of perspective and a reversal in the aesthetic process in avant-garde aesthetics. Metaphor reverses the value of things, ceases to ennoble them, becoming the most radical instrument of dehumanization (Ortega y Gasset, 2012e: 866). That is the case for Expressionism/Cubism, "worldifying the internal and subjective." ("[M]undificamos lo interno y subjetivo," Ortega y Gasset, 2012e: 868). Valuing imaginative consciousness, new art creates and annihilates objects at the same time, giving space to humor and irony. Also in Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, instead of acting like people the characters act like ideas/schemes. Furthermore, Baudelaire's blasphemous "Black Venus" intends to subvert the order of things. This new approach to metaphor leads to irony, since the goal of art is game and farce, creating unreal worlds and teasing reality.

Irony, together with metaphor, becomes a vital trope of modern art. More than essential to the artistic style (literature, painting, and performing arts), metaphor and irony are central to Orteguian philosophy, serving the new racio-vital narrative that overlaps the canon of pure reason initiated with Socrates and consolidated with Kant. In the representative chapter "Ortega's Philosophical Anthropology", "Las dos ironías, o Sócrates y Don Juan," of *El tema de nuestro tiempo* (1923), following Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz, who redefined from 1700 onward the limits of reason within the scope of the irrational (Ortega y Gasset, 2012c: 592), Ortega includes himself in the generation responsible for opposing Socratic rationalism, rediscovering spontaneity (Ortega y Gasset, 2012c: 593).

The theme of our time, says Ortega, consists of submitting reason, culture, art, and ethics to life (Ortega y Gasset, 2012c: 593). This hermeneutic turn contains a "new irony," since the modern individual does not deny reason but represses and mocks its claims to sovereignty. On the other hand, in Don Juan the irony lies in the fact that the character himself rebels against morality, because it has risen against life (Ortega y Gasset, 2012c: 593). However, irony is also visible in the modern novel, as Ortega develops in *Meditaciones*, leading the heroic to ridicule and farce, converting tragedy into comedy.

New art saves life from seriousness, given the way it creates puerility in an old world. Through irony, art becomes understood in a playful way as a "fenómeno de índole equivocal" (Ortega y Gasset, 2012e: 872), depriving it of transcendence (Ortega y Gasset, 2012e: 875).

5 The Dehumanizing Aesthetics of New Art in the 1920s

In the 1920s Ortega intensifies his production of essays on aesthetics, deepening the problem of the dehumanizing trend of new art, a process in which the Spanish thinker places avant-garde aesthetics in a time period between the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. In a significant contribution to Spanish art theory within the framework of European artistic currents, Ortega's essay "Sobre el punto de vista en las artes" (1924), published in *Revista de Occidente*, focuses on the evolution of philosophical and artistic thinking, questioning how to reconstruct the future of philosophy, bearing in mind that there is an inevitable "synchronic coincidence presiding over the phenomena" between the latest trend of consciousness-oriented philosophy and Expressionist/Cubist painting. Ortega returns to this topic in "Sobre la crítica de arte" (1925), stating that due to its iconoclastic nature, new art has no established principles and that traditional aesthetic standards are not applied, a breach that represents a challenge for critics (Ortega y Gasset, 2012d: 841–844). In the wake of Impressionist tradition, where ideal objects are produced independently from those who imagine or create them (Ortega y Gasset, 2010b: 171), and moving toward Expressionism, Ortega focuses on Cézanne's Cubism, which produces geometrical objects with unreal volumes, giving bodies a "metaphorical nexus," while Picasso annihilates the closed form of the object to retain himself in the symbolism of ideas (Ortega y Gasset, 2010b: 170–171).

A similar phenomenon occurs in modern literature as it is fully developed in *Ideas sobre la novela* (1925). Although considering himself "unfit" to theorize the novel, Ortega aims at filling the existing gap of solid reflections on the subject and decides to make his contribution. He starts by announcing a turning point in the public interest (Ortega y Gasset, 2012e: 884) and the decay of this literary genre (Ortega y Gasset, 2012e: 880), endowed with a limited number of themes (Ortega y Gasset, 2012e: 881) and more focused on characters than on plot. Like American movies, to which Ortega confesses being very attracted (Ortega y Gasset, 2012e: 885), the modern novel must focus on "idealizing attractive persons" ("idear personas atractivas"; Ortega y Gasset, 2012e: 888–889) and be dynamic and time-consuming, in which a long plot is developed around the character, as is the case in the works of Dostoyevsky, Proust, or Stendhal. As in classical tragedy, Dostoyevsky's novels have a concentration of space and time that reinforces their density (Ortega y Gasset, 2012e: 891), drawing Ortega's attention once again to the relevance of form over matter in art, stating that "la materia no salva nunca a una obra de arte" (Ortega y Gasset, 2012e: 890). The "realism" of the Russian writer is not in the acts referred to, but in the way of dealing with them. It is not the matter of life that

constitutes its "realism" but the form of life (Ortega y Gasset, 2012e: 892). What is also noteworthy in the modern novel is the notion of presence, where the reader enters the world of the characters and lives in their atmosphere (Ortega y Gasset, 2012e: 882). Descending underground from reality, the artist (poet) deals with the irrelevant events of everyday life, lacking the drama that Ortega assigns to Spanish theater (Ortega y Gasset, 2012e: 894). The Spanish thinker is interested in the psychological dimension of art and the reader's inner experiences, considering that it is the drama that catches the reader/viewer's attention.

However, Ortega's most relevant considerations on modern art are expressed in *La deshumanización del arte* (1925), written at the height of the Spanish artistic avant-garde,[10] also in effervescence throughout Europe and America. Adopted by the Generation of '27 as its theoretical, critical, or historical manifesto, this set of essays aims at analyzing and structuring the aesthetic thinking of the emerging artistic manifestations in the early twentieth century. At the same time, *Revista de Occidente* had since 1923 played an active role promoting modern currents in all art forms and new talents in poetry. First published in the form of newspaper articles in *El Sol* in 1924, this book is an attempt to provide the general public with an understanding of the new art's sensibility, guided by "highly interrelated" tendencies, devoid of transcendence and seen as a sport or game.

Ortega identifies the common characteristics of the new artistic manifestations: "Si se analiza el nuevo estilo, se hallan en él ciertas tendencias sumamente conexas entre sí. Tiende: 1°, a la deshumanización del arte; 2°, a evitar las formas vivas; 3°, a hacer que la obra de arte no sea sino obra de arte; 4°, a considerar el arte como juego, y nada más; 5°, a una esencial ironía; 6°, a eludir toda falsedad; y, por tanto, a una escrupulosa realización. En fin, 7°, el arte, según los artistas jóvenes, es una cosa sin trascendencia alguna" (Ortega y Gasset, 2012e: 853–854).

The effort to understand and even accept this new trend in art is not a sign of Ortega's contradiction of earlier writings, but rather a symptom of the dynamic evolution of philosophical and aesthetic thinking, in which Ortega is simultaneously actor and spectator.

Following Jean-Marie Guyau, Ortega approaches art from a sociological point of view, starting by identifying the most prevalent feeling around the new artistic expression: its unpopularity. Given both the disapproval by the general public and the artist's rejection of the public's opinion, the new art is simultaneously unpopular and anti-popular (Ortega y Gasset, 2012e: 848). Starting with this premise, Ortega focuses his analysis on the role of the public in the new art, highlighting the ambivalent reaction between those who understand the artwork, a minority, and those who reject it, the majority, also called the masses or crowds. The second premise regards the restricted profile of art nouveau's target audience, it being an art of caste, only destined to be understood by artists and educated people, "a specially gifted

[10] According to Constanza Nieto Yusta, Ortega points out the date of 1905 for the beginning of the avant-garde movements. She also stresses, and we agree, that the term "dehumanization" is related to a certain social, political, and scientific ideology that Ortega intends to convey in his essay (Nieto Yusta, 2008: 288).

minority" ("va desde luego dirigido a una minoría especialmente dotada"; Ortega y Gasset, 2012e: 849). Throughout this essay Ortega opposes nineteenth-century romanticism to new trends, conveying his conservative ideology. Under the extended influence of romanticism, the masses are used both to the seriousness and solemnity of art and to the emotional effect that the work of art has on them, totally incompatible with the new art's assumptions. In this sense, Ortega accuses the new artists of rejecting traditional art, considering it a sign of a grudge against art itself and of the very historical essence of Europe (Ortega y Gasset, 2012e: 872).

Firstly questioning equality between people, which romanticism had striven to achieve, this idea is then taken even further by stating that the crowd is a "secondary factor of the spiritual cosmos" (Ortega y Gasset, 2012e: 849). This statement confirms that, in a way, *La dehumanización del arte* conveys an ideological program, reinforced by the elitist premises previously developed in *La España invertebrada* (1921) and further extended in *La rebelión de las masas* (1930). The third premise is that there is an identity common to all artistic manifestations expressed in painting, poetry, theater, and music (Ortega y Gasset, 2012e: 848), the emergence of new art being the logical result of all previous artistic evolution, and therefore it is a "new sense of art perfectly clear, coherent and rational" ("nuevo sentido del arte perfectamente claro, coherente y racional"; Ortega y Gasset, 2012e: 853). Here clearly Ortega includes himself in the group of those who accept and strive to understand it in the light of philosophical and sociological assumptions. The fourth and last premise has to do with the iconoclastic nature of the new art, a symptom of political and social disruptions in process. Since Debussy and Mallarmé, new art tends toward the creation of new dehumanized worlds (Ortega y Gasset, 2012e: 198), which Ortega identifies as "suprarealism," and when dehumanization happens from a lived reality, Ortega calls it "infrarrealism" (Ortega y Gasset, 2012e: 868).

With dehumanization of modern art's leitmotiv, which consists in distancing from human and lived reality, life is guided by the principles of abstraction, irony, and a new kind of metaphor that translates the disbelief in universal values. The new art is dehumanized insofar as it represents abstract objects and geometrical figures that seem to be alienated from human essence. Many interpretations have been expressed by the critique of the meaning of "deshumanization" (Gutiérrez Pozo, 2012). Clearly following the phenomenological method, Ortega argues the notion of "perspectivism" analyzing phenomena according to perspective to reach the "scale of spiritual distances between reality and us." Art nouveau artists move from lived reality to contemplated reality, the triumph of abstract ideas over the human. The degrees of closeness are equivalent to the sentimental participation of facts; the degrees of detachment are degrees of liberation. The actual event is objectified, converted into a "pure theme of contemplation." Instead of painting things, one paints ideas, one abstracts from the outside world to focus on inner, subjective landscapes (Ortega y Gasset, 2012e: 868). In *Meditaciones* (1914), Ortega already attributed to the modern novel the mission of describing an atmosphere that leads the reader to "contemplate" the antagonism between action and contemplation becoming a philosophical theme for him (Ortega y Gasset, 2012e: 895).

In search for a meaning and a methodology of interpretation of the new artistic manifestations in the light of their sociological scope, Ortega proposes that the spectator, a select minority, can find a new aesthetic sensibility, a new device that allows the decoding of nonhuman forms (Ortega y Gasset, 2012e: 858).

5.1 The Role of Theater as Unrealization and the Actor as Universal Metaphor

One of the most significant of Ortega's essays on theater is "Elogío del murciélago" (1921), included in "Incitaciones" of *El Espectador* IV (1925). A starting point for this essay is the Russian touring revue *The Bat*, directed by Nikita F. Balieff, which Ortega has the opportunity of watching in Madrid, his attention particularly drawn to the variety of different artistic manifestations performed on stage: sketches, dances, songs, choirs, and "buffoons" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004t: 441). This innovative show triggers in the Spanish thinker a reflection on theater renovation. Imputing responsibility to the Generation of '98 for the failure to create a "new collective diversion that fully coincided with their sensitivity" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004t: 442), Ortega calls urgently for a new theater that fits the new spirit of the time, allowing the reconstruction of the national spirit and capable of highlighting a solidarity and unity of style (Ortega y Gasset, 2004t: 443). Claiming that European theater has not adapted to the new artistic sensibility that takes art as "artifice, farce, thaumaturgic power to unrealize existence" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004t: 447), Ortega alludes to the "purification of art" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004s: 371), since only pure theatrical elements, which delight the viewer, are allowed.[11]

> It is essential that in theatrical work the necessary and substantive is the theater; therefore, that the scenic work consists primarily of a plastic and sound event, not in a literary text; may it be an irreplaceable fact executed on the scene. (Ortega y Gasset, 2004t: 446)[12]

Questioning himself on the mission of theater, and amazed by the impact on the public of the Russian show, Ortega announces a new age ("edad naciente") of theater (Ortega y Gasset, 2004t: 443), emphasizing that it is meant to cause a nontransferable pleasure, the play or performance being an irreplaceable event performed at the scene (Ortega y Gasset, 2004t: 446). Undertaking an in-depth

[11] Orringer presents the evolution of Ortega's thinking on theater: from 1914, when art is seen as escapism; then around 1921, when Ortega emphasizes the return to its purest elements; and finally in 1946, when the Spanish thinker stresses the historical approach in which the theater must adapt to social changes. Theater absorbs all art forms, becoming the universal metaphor of human problems (Orringen, 1994: 21–22).

[12] "Es preciso que en la obra teatral sea lo necesario y sustantivo el teatro; por lo tanto, que la obra escénica consista primordialmente en un suceso plástico y sonoro, no en un texto literario; que sea un hecho insustituible ejecutado en la escena" (Ortega y Gasset 2004t: 446).

analysis of the differences between the dramatic text (eminently literary) and the theatrical text represented on stage, he gives as an example the role of the "sublime drama" of *Hamlet* in modern times, which, like other canonical dramatic works, does not require to be put on stage since cultured people do not need to go to the theater in order to enjoy a classic of dramatic literature (Ortega y Gasset, 2004t: 447). For Ortega, the new theatrical art resembles Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, taken by the same "phantasmagoria" that attracts the audience and that the thinker also finds in Zuloaga's painting (Ortega y Gasset, 2004f: 531). Fantasy is therefore a powerful asset of the modern theater, where an imaginary world is metaphorically represented to meet audience needs.

Ortega challenges the new actors to lend plasticity, sound, movement, and surprise to the new theater, since they should gather all the characteristics of the performing arts—acrobat, dancer, mime, and juggler—so that their bodies become universal metaphors. As an example of the renewal of Spanish theater, Ortega gives a new approach to classical works, taking to the stage Calderon de la Barca's *La vida es sueño*, valuing the decoration, costumes, rhythm, fantasy, musicality, and the dramatic sense of the new artists (Ortega y Gasset, 2004t:446). The new art, a mirror of a changing society, makes use of irony as a critical and playful function, which gives it an aesthetic sense of life.

Returning to *Ideas sobre la novela* (1925), where Ortega refers to the modern drama, he makes an interesting comparison between French and Spanish theater. The first, influenced by Greek theater, deals with the psychological anatomy of the characters for ethical purposes, with a view to moral improvement given by the exemplary actions of its characters, mainly expressed in Racine's works; the second deals with sentimental and adventurous drama, provoking in the audience passion and intoxication as is characteristic of Lope de Vega's pieces.

In an essay also written in 1921, "Introducción a un 'Don Juan'," Ortega fully develops a methodological approach to the Spanish myth, claiming its return to the national theater and raising the character to the essential symbol of the radical anguish of humankind, as an aesthetic category and myth of the human soul (Ortega y Gasset, 2010g: 188). In "Idea del teatro," a speech delivered in both Lisbon and Madrid in 1946, Ortega deepens the role of the actor and his ambivalent reality, because by denying his reality he replaces it with the character he performs, converting himself into a "universal embodied metaphor." In this essay Ortega also refers to theater as a "visible metaphor" placed in an imaginary world, where unreality and phantasmagoria take place. Theater thus has a vital function in modern society, helping the public escaping from reality (Ortega, 2009: 842). This new perspective meets the new artistic trends developed in the following decades, highlighting the audience's involvement in the show or play and letting them be carried away by the farce represented on stage (Roberts, 1998).

5.2 *Avant-Garde Music in Ortega's Aesthetics*

To understand Ortega's thinking on music, we must consider his close relationship with composer and music critic Adolfo Salazar Castro, author of numerous conference papers and essays on musical reception published in *El Sol* and *Revista de Occidente*. Salazar was a keen diffuser of avant-garde musical trends, bridging the unpopularity of new art and being responsible, among other events, for the foundation in 1915 of Sociedad Nacional de Musica to promote contemporary chamber music (Neves, 2012) and for the tribute to Debussy on his death in 1918 (García Laborda, 2005: 8). On the other hand, it is acknowledged that Ortega closely followed the activity of the Madrid Symphony Orchestra, founded in 1903 (García Laborda, 2005: 4), and attended the dynamic cultural circles of Madrid, Ateneo, El Circulo de Bellas Artes, and Residencia de Estudiantes, where Manuel de Falla, José Subirá, Conrado del Campo, and Adolfo Salazar delivered lectures on the new musical trend led by Debussy and Stravinsky. In 1915 Ortega attended one of those conferences, presented at Ateneo de Madrid by Manuel de Falla and entitled "Introducción a la Nueva Musica," where the Spanish composer highlighted Debussy's Impressionist music as a milestone in musical innovation (García Laborda, 2005: 4; Neves, 2012).

Two months after attending the debut of Debussy's "Iberia" in Madrid in January 1921, and despite assuming his lack of musical expertise, Ortega publishes "Musicalia," a sociological essay on the new musical tendencies. Noting that the new art is only understandable by a select minority, this essay is a didactic exercise to enlighten the general public on the new musical style and is eminently aesthetic. In the wake of Nietzsche's "sovereign individual," Ortega stresses the value of those "selected men" who operate social change. This elite is capable of approaching the work of art as a spectator and understanding it as an unrealized reality, keeping a distance from feeling, in order to access a pure form of contemplation since "art is contemplation."[13] But art, especially modern art, is also contemplation of the aesthetic object, forcing the viewer to keep a distance:

> This music is something external to us: it is a distant object, perfectly located outside of our self and before which we feel like pure contemplators. We enjoy new music in concentration towards outside. It is what interests us, not Its resonance in us. (Ortega y Gasset, 2004s: 373)

For Ortega, the new artist/composer has a different spiritual attitude to art, only concerned with expressing their own point of view (Ortega y Gasset, 2004s: 367) over the interests and emotions of the public and keeping a distance from the artistic object. To understand this new aesthetic perspective, Ortega distinguishes "inferior

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[13] It is in 1911 when Ortega first refers to this term in the essay "El Greco en Alemania" (1911), considering that El Greco's work demands active contemplation, "una contemplación activa" grounded on intellect (Ortega y Gasset, 2004e: 523). Also in "Sobre el concepto de sensación" (1913), Ortega deepens this same idea of "contemplation" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004h, 631) and in "Acción y contemplación" of *Ideas sobre la novela* (Ortega y Gasset, 2012e: 893–896).

art" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004s: 373, 2012e: 861)—ruled by mediocre sentiments, profusely cultivated by nineteenth-century romanticism (Ortega y Gasset, 2004s: 370), giving as an example the aesthetic effect that Wagner's work had on the viewer of overwhelming emotion—from "superior art," which awakens a high feeling of aesthetic emotion, as is the case with Debussy's or Stravinsky's works, with less "ecstasy but more authenticity" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004u: 457). Inter-arts dialogue is symptomatic of cutting-edge movements, as with Debussy's *Prélude à l'après midi d'un faune*, intended to be a musical overture to Mallarmé's poem "Le Faune" (Neves, 2012). Ortega highlights this artistic exchange, encompassing in his critical essays the different artistic manifestations from the trends of late nineteenth-century Impressionism/Symbolism with Debussy, Mallarmé (Orringen, 1994: 13–14), Verlaine, Maeterlinck, and Rimbaud to the avant-garde Expressionism and Cubism (Harvard, 2007: 93).

In both "Ensayo de estética a manera de prólogo" and "Musicalia," there is an attempt to convey a doctrine of art enjoyment but also to consolidate aesthetics as a discipline within a hierarchy of values that meets Ortega's perspectivism (Ortega y Gasset, 2004s: 372).

In "Apatía artistica," also published in 1921, Ortega notes that each epoch corresponds to different aesthetic sensibilities, which is reflected in the change in attitude to works of art, and emphasizes the notion of perspective as the order, structure, and hierarchy necessary for the organization of life (Ortega y Gasset, 2004u: 458). He claims that there is dullness on behalf of the masses about pictorial and musical beauty, recovering the idea, also expressed in other essays, of a widespread prejudice against new artistic manifestations, symptomatic of the crisis experienced by public opinion. Ortega goes further by considering that the public's rejection of the new art is "artistic terrorism" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004s: 372).

The musical evolution of the last 50 years has therefore witnessed major changes on the part of both the artist and the public. Avant-garde music is iconoclastic because it breaks with the tradition of the past, based on sentimentality seizing romantic tastes,and imposes now a spiritual distance, exterior to oneself, depriving it of the human element, converting art into an aesthetic object.

Notwithstanding all these transformations, and remembering the place of music in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Ortega prefers to place music as a background curtain to our vital chores, rather than dissecting it at a public concert (Ortega y Gasset, 2004u: 459).

5.3 Ortega's Last Writings on Art (1950–1954), Under the Principles of Vital and Historical Reasons

In "Papeles sobre Velázquez y Goya," published in 1950, and after a lifetime dedicated to philosophy and aesthetic thinking, Ortega continues to claim that he understands little of art: "Before painting, I have been, therefore, nothing more than a

passerby" ("Ante la pintura no he sido, pues, más que un transeúnte," Ortega y Gasset, 2010h: 606). However, Ortega's contribution to the understanding of the Spanish painting of the last three centuries, which had been considered over decades, has here its highest maturation. In this treatise Ortega retrieves his ideas on art and especially the artist's motivation, conveyed since his first essays, as "a vast repertoire of human actions," reflecting the author's intentionality. Already in "Estética en el tranvía" (1916), refusing the Platonic normative of beauty, away from reality and Kantian idealism based on abstract criteria, Ortega appealed to the individual's desire to be faithful to their own reality and accomplish it: "Become who you are" ("Llega a ser el que eres"; Ortega y Gasset, 2004q: 181).

Emphasizing the relevance of history as a key to understanding other epochs, Ortega proposes a new method for the interpretation of painting and, broadly, the meaning of art from a philosophical perspective, articulating historical reason and aesthetic contemplation (Ortega y Gasset, 2010h: 621). A pioneer in this approach, later followed by phenomenologist Max Scheler in *The Essence of Philosophy*, which consists of first defining the artist and then his (or her) work, Ortega values the "circumstance" of being a painter, his motivations and biographical background, with reflections on his creation, analyzing the time in which the artist lived and what he is like as a human being, since a "painting is a fragment of a man's life" ("un cuadro es el fragmento de la vida de un hombre"; Ortega y Gasset, 2010h: 622). Ortega emphasizes the painter's executive act as he paints, whether he depends on the time he lives in or is conditioned by the aesthetic currents of his time, as is the case with Velázquez, who, according to the Spanish thinker, underwent the most radical change in modern painting. Velázquez repeatedly draws Ortega's attention because his paintings meet Ortega's aesthetic hermeneutics, particularly his circumstantial philosophy, arguing that it is up to each being to look for all the mechanisms to faithfully follow oneself and build one's own path. It is therefore a new idea of painting, based on the function that painting plays in the system of human occupations (Ortega y Gasset, 2010h: 650).

Taking as an example "El Pablillo de Valladolid," Ortega speculates on the evolution of art in the time of Velázquez, who, more than creating a "new style," operates a turning point in the direction of art. The Spanish painter fought against the aesthetic canon of his century, his paintings being ruled by hardness, "relentless, dismissive and distant" ("implacable e infinitamente desdeñoso y distante"; Ortega y Gasset, 2010h: 620). For Ortega, life is intimacy; it can be seen from its interior, abstracted from the sequence of events to be converted into drama and tension. Yet life is also a vocation, given the ideal character that inhabits each person. This vocation clashes with circumstance and constitutes two magnitudes, which along with mischance form a dynamic system, and these three factors must be weighed when building a bibliography (Ortega y Gasset, 2010h: 636). Contrary to the tendency of the time, which elevated art to a "trasmundo" level of fantasy and mythology, Velázquez seeks to make a "cismundo" art, seeking the root of all myth in reality (Ortega y Gasset, 2010h: 649). Painting thus ceases to be a mere craft and becomes "a system of aesthetic problems and intimate imperatives" (Ortega y Gasset, 2010h: 648). Along with Descartes, Velázquez focuses the activity of culture in the

immediate reality. Belonging to the same generation, both face the same problem: how to get to things in their reality or in their materiality. Moving away from the themes of previous painting trends (which represented mythological, religious, or historical scenes), Velázquez became the painter of real things, focusing on the unreal of the real. In addition, more than representing things in their details, Ortega is interested in capturing their way of appearing, and in that sense the Spanish thinker measures the notions of movement and space in Velázquez's painting, which give life and grace to the Spanish people. Each painting is, thus, an "ethnic treasure," a repertoire of Spanish attitudes, a narrative that tells the elegance of "great Spain." Ortega's interest relies on the immediacy of a photographic-looking scene (Ortega y Gasset, 2010h: 654).

The work of art reflects the life stories that constitute the story, since "every life is a drama, and every drama has a certain plot" ("toda vida es drama y todo drama tiene un determinable argumento"; Ortega y Gasset, 2010h: 726). Ortega focuses on the notion of space and depth in Velázquez's works and on a certain "aire en torno," an "atmosphere" that comes from the figures portrayed in a naturalist mode (Ortega y Gasset, 2010h: 740). Velázquez moves away from formalist beauty to represent the object in its daily life. When transposing reality to the canvas, the painter unrealizes the painted object, operating the metamorphosis of the unreal (Ortega y Gasset, 2010h: 644–645).

In addition to deepening understanding of Velázquez's pictorial work, Ortega's considerations also fall on Francisco Goya, the romantic painter of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Valuing life, the Spanish thinker states that while following the tradition of the pictorial past and the trends of his time, Goya's work is endowed with originality, portraying dramatic episodes of life that few testify to or imagine. Seeking to renew the dominant thinking about Goya's painting, Ortega wants to challenge the preconceived ideas of populism, "plebeyismo," and "casticismo" (Ortega y Gasset, 2010h: 757) attributed to his work and proposes to do an inventory of themes portrayed in his painting, in order to understand the scope of his work. To this end, Ortega analyzes the social circumstances that have conditioned Goya's creativity. "Hombre de su tiempo" (Ortega y Gasset, 2010i: 751), Goya is a romantic painter, divided between the popular and the erudite, and the figures portrayed execute themselves in the form of "apparitions," intensifying the drama of absence and presence.

6 Conclusions

We have followed Ortega's philosophical journey during his years of formation, maturation, and consolidation, proving that throughout his life the Spanish thinker turned his attention to the definition and critical analysis of art and aesthetics, converting this theorization into a vital constituent of his philosophical system. In his own peculiar style, Ortega tries to understand the political, historical, and social disruptions of his time and their reflection in culture, aesthetics, and art in the early

twentieth century. Between 1908 and 1925, there is an evolution in Ortega, from Neokantian objectivism (rational reason) and his social, political, and cultural concerns to save the Spanish circumstance to a phenomenological turn, which leads to his racio-vitalist system. Orteguian vitalism consists in combining vital, historical, and narrative reasons to be capable of understanding reason as intellectual action in liaison with reality and the transcendent.

It is via speculative thinking that Ortega sees the world and in particular the creative phenomenon of art and the function of aesthetics, resulting in invaluable contributions to both modern philosophy and art. The Spanish thinker goes beyond defining what art and aesthetics are, clarifying the meaning of some of its inner elements like the relation between art and life, being conditioned by social, geographical, generational, and environmental circumstances, having nevertheless the freedom to choose one's own path, to save the circumstance following one's own perspective on the truth of life (Correa Camiroaga, 1982: 560). There is a totalizing sense that Ortega attributes to aesthetics, as a manifestation of human creativity and therefore vital since related to the notion of imperative sensibility, a historical phenomenon that aims to understand an epoch, in short "sensación radical ante la vida, de cómo se siente la existencia," as stressed in *El tema de nuestro tiempo* (Ortega y Gasset, 2012c: 562).

Ortega's writings on the state of the art have a pedagogical purpose. They have an enlightening mission to reveal to the general public the phenomena that led to the rupture of traditional aesthetic values and the outburst of the avant-garde movements.

In the first phase, art is seen as a cultural ideal, allowing the highest elevation of the Spanish people and the human being (Morón Arroyo, 1967). Influenced by classicism and Neokantianism, Ortega stresses individuality in art, connected to the concept of the executive self, realizing unreality and even reaching transcendence. Art is, therefore, seen as a superior and ideal and should arouse higher feelings in the public.

In the second phase, due to a progressive transition under the principles of phenomenology and having in mind the human perception of things and events (phenomena), Ortega focuses on the capacity of metaphor to create new ideas, new worlds, or virtual universes. This new art brings new ethical and aesthetic values, which Ortega places in a philosophical and ontological perspective, between the real and unreal of being (Gutiérrez Pozo, 2012: 643). Rooted in unreality, the essence of the new art, crossing between dimensions, allows the artist to create new fictional, purified, ideal, and metaphorical objects. There is therefore a change of perspective in Ortega's thinking regarding art in general and painting in particular. Far from the idealism of youth, the Spanish thinker no longer understands art as a superior creation, but as an expression of the circumstance of its author, reflecting the time and narrative of his history. Aware of the new changing times, Ortega states that the new art demands distancing, the enjoyer of the work of art being a mere spectator, without sentimental attachment to the contemplated work. Along Ortega's philosophical journey, he will support the work of art as artifice and unreality. Yet if in the early years the work of art is seen as the representation of the human, in the consolidation and maturity phase Ortega's thinking falls on the eminently aesthetic

value of the work of art, in its metaphorical and ironic aspects. For all these reasons, we may say that Ortega was clearly an "aesthetician" (Close, 2010: 171), looking for the essence of art, and that vital reason conveys an aesthetic philosophy (Gutiérrez Pozo, 2000).

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Ortega's Exiles

1 The Escape from Spain

Ortega fled from Spain in September 1936, in face of the serious threat of being shot by the partisans of the Republican Government. In fact, the daily newspaper *Claridad*, very close to the Spanish Communist Party, published an article where Ortega was accused of being the philosophical mentor of several intellectuals belonging to the nationalist side. After several dangerous adventures, he and his family were able to reach Marseille, in the south of France, from where they managed to reach Paris, after a brief stay in Grenoble. In spite of belonging, he and his wife, to the upper middle classes, they soon found out that the *peseta*, the monetary currency of a country ravaged by a Civil War, was highly undervalued. In order to survive, Ortega had to rely on his most close friends and on the royalties of the translations of his books. Some money came from two Argentinian friends, Victoria Ocampo and Elena Sansinena, the President of the Buenos Aires' Cultural Society "Amigos del Arte." Actually, Ortega was, at the eve of the Spanish Civil War, planning a long journey to Argentina. Political events and serious illnesses prevented him to do so in the scheduled time. He was to arrive at Buenos Aires, after a French and Dutch exile, only 3 years later.

During his long exile—he was only to return to Spain in 1946—Ortega kept silent about Spanish political events. In fact, he had already, before the beginning of the Civil War, ceased to intervene publicly, namely, by newspaper articles, a practice he had kept regularly since his youth.[1] Political dissatisfaction with the Spanish

[1] In a sketch, dated from March 1945 (Ortega y Gasset, 2009c: 703–706), in the last year of his exile in Portugal, of a projected series of newspaper articles that were never written, Ortega speaks about the difficulties in being understood in the public space. This sketch was entitled by the organizers of the *Obras Completas* "Llevo doze anõs de silencio," i.e., "'I've kept twelve years of silence'," which is in fact the first sentence of the text. This theme—the difficulties in being understood, in an epoch where there is much to say, but where, at the same time, people talk too much

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Republic, whose establishment Ortega at first saluted—but whose growing radicalism he looked as contrary to his liberal convictions—is probably the main reason. For this silence, he got huge criticisms even from people who were in general sympathetic to his philosophical ideas. During the Civil War, i.e., until March 1939, he refused to engage in any international campaign in favor of peace or in favor of any kind of political negotiations between the two conflicting parties. While some of his friends in exile[2] considered themselves as a part of a "third Spain"—among others his lifelong friend Gregório Marañon—Ortega thought that the mere thinking of mediating between the two factions in conflict was an ingenuity. Above all, he strongly disbelieved the possibility of a foreign intervention of the liberal western democracies in the Spanish affairs. It seems that for him the Spanish "affair" had roots too deep in the Spanish way of being and in Spanish history to be understood by well-intentioned foreigners. It may seem a rather pessimistic point of view, but it was in accordance with his general view about the cultural individuality of nations.

Once arrived in Argentina, in one of his first public activities there, he spoke of the "secret illusions and the secret anxieties of a people" (Ortega y Gasset, 2009b: 235); a nation, he added, is a *repertoire* of intimacies almost as impossible to unveil as the intimacies of a person. In fact, he was only repeating the words he wrote in the first of two articles published in October 1936 in the Argentinian newspaper *La Nación* about the impressions he got during his journey to the Netherlands. In fact, some months before his exile in France, Ortega had been invited to make a series of lectures in the Netherlands. In May 1936, he made four conferences in Rotterdam, Delft, Amsterdam, and Leyden. Only the first one, *El Hombre y la Gente*, was a new text, although some parts of it belonged to a conference with the same title held at Valladolid 2 years before. Still, important parts of the Rotterdam text were resumed in the French translation of *The Revolt of the Masses*, namely, in its "Prologue to the French," that Ortega dated of May 1937. At the beginning of the first article in *La Nación*, he speaks about the most elementary things that happen in the life of a people, which lie down under the surface of its public life, the only a foreigner can grasp without too much difficulties (Ortega y Gasset, 2006a: 401).[3]

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without really listening to each other—was already addressed in the "Prologue to French" of the *Revolt of the Masses*, written during the first year of exile. I will come again in a moment to this issue.

[2] In this chapter we will speak interchangeably of exiled and immigrants. Although the two words today, at least in English and French, have two distinct meanings, this was not always the case in Ortega's time. He sometimes called himself an "immigrant," perhaps thinking about the similarities between his personal destiny and the destiny of the political immigrants during the French Revolution. Eve Fourmont Giustiniani mentions in her paper about Ortega's exile that he collected a great number of references about the situation of the French *émigrés* during the Revolution, sometimes accompanied by personal comments. Those texts are now in Ortega's assets in the Fundación Ortega y Gasset/Gregório Marañon, in Madrid (Giustiniani, 2020: 31–32).

[3] In these articles, that belong to Ortega's relatively scarce intellectual activity during 1937–1938, due certainly to the personal troubles that drove him to exile, we can find two important statements (Ortega y Gasset, 2006a: 401–402): the concept of race is of scarce utility to understand human affairs, since humanity is not just one zoological variety; everything that man is, is what he has

2 Ortega in France

The French period was not one of the most productive of Ortega's life. There are good reasons for that: the financial difficulties that we mentioned above; the painful adaptation to a foreign milieu—Ortega's philosophical activity was always closely connected with his teaching at the University of Madrid; and his serious illness in 1937. In 1938, he published nothing, and the delicate chirurgical operation to which he was submitted forced him to long months of recovery, some of them he spent in Portugal, which he then visited for the first time. Anyway, at least two texts of this period deserve some attention: the abovementioned conference of Rotterdam and an interesting essay (although the issues addressed were not entirely original), published in *La Nación*, entitled "Bronca en la Física".[4]

Someone familiar with the more important (and more widely spread) texts of Ortega may perhaps not find the Rotterdam conference particularly interesting. Ortega is repeating himself. That happened too often during his philosophical career. However, he is repeating himself in new and tragic personal circumstances. The same words don't have the same weight. The conference begins with a reference to language. Since the conference was held in French, neither Ortega nor his audience were using their respective mother tongues. Trying to communicate something to someone is always a difficult task, but it becomes even greater when the *medium* is a foreign language. I think that what Ortega was trying to say is that any successful communication presupposes a certain community between the speaker and his or her addressee that goes far beyond the mutual understanding of the meaning of the words or a similar grammatical competence. There is always a certain amount of ingenuity from the part of those who think themselves able to speak to humanity in general.[5]

Regarding its content, the conference resumes a series of ideas whose origin goes back to Ortega's first book, *The Meditations on Quixote*, as he himself acknowledges (Ortega y Gasset, 2009a: 206); some others were recently stated in *The Revolt of the Masses*; but perhaps the most interesting ones are those Ortega will develop at length later in *Man and People*, the posthumous book that received the same title of the Rotterdam conference. However, when Ortega asks his audience, like he had done before, in 1932–1933, to the students of the University of Madrid when lecturing *The Principles of Metaphysics*: "why are you here?" (i.e., why have you decided to attend a philosophical conference?), we recall at once the dramatic personal and historical situation that gives this apparently trivial question a quite different accent.

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come to be, so that "race" is at best the name for the point he has arrived at, at a certain historical moment. (Ortega calls this point *historia consolidada*.) We will address this issue in the chapter "Historical Reason".

[4] "Row in physics" is perhaps the best English translation of the Spanish title.

[5] See what Ortega says in (Ortega y Gasset, 2009a: 205) about Victor Hugo. The anecdote (probably false) about the way the French writer saluted the ambassador of Mesopotamia, addressing him as the representative of humanity, had already been told by Ortega in the past and will be told again in the future.

Two things must be stressed: Ortega's "here" was a foreign country, because a new circumstance had been imposed to him, having found untenable the conditions under which he was living in Spain; nevertheless, that new "here" did not remove him from the responsibility of trying to understand what was going on in the world and of trying to find the best way to act under these new circumstances.[6]

"Bronca en la Física" has been published as a series of articles in *La Nación*. The editors of Ortega's *Complete Work* (besides some minor linguistic corrections) did not add any critical notes to this text, mentioning only the fact that in each issue was written, under the title, the place and the date. For instance, in the first issue, "Paris, August 1937".[7] We already know that, for Ortega, modern physics (i.e., physics after Einstein's theory of relativity and quantum mechanics) was a sign of the end of modernity, since it implied a new concept of subject and above all a new way of looking at the relations between subject and object. Modern physics was one of the symptoms of what Ortega called "the XXth Century."

Now, why is there a row in physics? As we know, old habits die hard. And an old habit in physics—at least apparently as old as modern physics since the times of Galileo—advised physicists that science must begin with the observation of facts and that simple hypothesis should not be taken for well-established theories. However, in the issue of May 8 of 1937, a certain English physicist, Doctor Herbert Dingler, publishes a paper entitled "New Aristotelianism" where he accused physicist of abandoning those accepted ideas. The problem is—as Ortega remarks (Ortega y Gasset, 2006b: 421)—that they were never fully accepted, in spite of what Dingler said. Moreover, Galileo was accused by the Aristotelians of his time of not being entirely faithful to experience and preferring at times the mathematical reasoning. Notwithstanding, in classical physics there seemed to obtain a certain correspondence between the observed facts and the mathematical theories that allegedly explained them; that correspondence, Ortega adds in his second article (Ortega y Gasset, 2006b: 423), is broken in contemporary physics. On the one side we have a series of empirical observations and on the other side abstract mathematical formulas that must correspond to facts, albeit one does not know exactly how they do it or to what extent.[8]

It is not necessary to follow all Ortega's arguments against Dingler. However, some aspects of his arguments must be stressed. The articles of *La Nación*, as we said above, were written and published in 1937. Almost 25 years ago, Ortega said

[6] This conference has other interesting aspects. We won't address them here since they were already addressed in chapters "Ortega's Social Philosophy" and "Ortega's Philosophical Anthropology", namely, the main characteristics of man's being in the world, or "life as having to do" (Ortega y Gasset, 2009a: 209–210), the impersonality of social norms (Ortega y Gasset, 2009a: 213–214), and the apparent absence of meaning of some accepted social habits (Ortega y Gasset, 2009a: 215).

[7] The fourth issue was dated "Lisbon, September 1937." In fact, after having been subjected to a serious chirurgical operation, as we said above, Ortega, exiled in France, spent some weeks in Portugal in recovery.

[8] Later, in *The Idea of Principle in Leibniz*, Ortega will develop these ideas. See (Ortega y Gasset, 2009h: 944 ff.).

farewell to Neokantianism. Nevertheless, some aspects of his Neokantian training seem to be still present in his arguments against Dingler. Near the end of the second article, Ortega says that physics is the wonder of the western civilization, without it, western culture would not exist, nor perhaps philosophy. At the beginning of the third article (Ortega y Gasset, 2006b: 426), he resumes the same idea. At the same time, some fundamental phenomenological tenets seem to be also present; like Husserl, whose book from 1929 *Formal and Transcendental Logic* he had read, Ortega stresses the fact that the mathematical axioms and the general laws of physics don't stem directly from experience through generalization or induction. In fact, Ortega describes—without using the word—a process that Husserl labeled in 1929 "idealization." Even his final diagnosis—physics has not yet achieved fully clarity about itself—could be compared to Husserl's diagnosis in the *Crisis* articles of the previous year, which Ortega had not yet read at the time.

3 The Beginning of the Argentinian Exile

The Argentinian exile was not an easy one for Ortega, in spite of his previous illusions. Actually, Argentina had been a happy place for Ortega in the past, especially in 1916, when he visited the country for the first time. (He visited Argentina a second time in 1928.) His Lectures at the University of Buenos Aires, in 1916, meant the beginnings of phenomenology in Argentina and perhaps in South America. He was also a successful author there, and his books were well sold. But when he arrived for the third time, on the 29th of August 1939, times had changed. A place at the University was not easy to find (in fact it proved impossible), and the political and intellectual disputes between Spanish immigrants—escaping from the end of the Civil War and the victory of the nationalist army—were bitter and harsh. Besides, there were different kinds of immigrants: those who fled since the beginning of the war, those who fled during the war, and those who fled after it ended. Ortega and his family belonged to the first group, which means that his political opinions were suspicious, not only to other Spanish exiled but also to the Argentinian public opinion that had supported the Republican side. This was particularly true for the group of intellectuals that gathered around the journal *Sur*. Despite his friendship with Victoria Ocampo, a leading member of this group, Ortega's relations with it were almost always distant. When he left Argentina, in February 1942, he was even falsely accused by some of them of returning to Europe under Nazi protection only to resume his old Chair of Metaphysics, under Franco's nationalist regime, in the Central University of Madrid.

Moreover, regardless of differences in the social condition, those groups of immigrants were sometimes politically very different from each other; sometimes, at least according to Ortega, they didn't know exactly—and they didn't care—what were the exact political opinions of their antagonists. No wonder that in a superb text written in 1939, soon after arriving at Buenos Aires, the "Mediatación de la

Criolla,"[9] Ortega speaks about his condition of almost an outcast. In this text echoes the words he wrote at the beginning of his exile, in the "Prologue to the French," a kind of Preface he wrote in Netherlands for the French translation of the *Revolt of the Masses*. Says Ortega in 1939:

> The man who at this moment is drowning before you - before those who are hearing me throughout the wide Argentina - is me. Most of you did not know anything about me until this moment and most of those who know about me have never seen me and now they discover me the moment I disappear, in which I immerse myself in the invisible, I erase myself from the corporeal world as volatilized, and from me remains for you, and from me you only have a residual survival of me, something even less than a hand clenched in the see foam […]. (Ortega y Gasset, 2009b: 231)

Ideas and Beliefs was written before Ortega arrived at Argentina but was partially published in the Argentinian newspaper *La Nación*,[10] in 1936. It was also the basis of his first Lectures after arriving at Buenos-Aires in 1939. The first edition of this text was published in a German translation in 1937, in the Journal *Europäische Revue*. Its title there was "Von der Lebensfunktion der Ideen" (San Martín, 1998: 216). Finally, the text appeared in Argentina as a book in 1940, as the first part of a future longer book with the same title. However, in the Prologue, Ortega says it is only the first chapter of a book he was writing at the moment, whose title would be *The Rise of Vital Reason*. This book was never written.

The main ideas developed in *Ideas and Beliefs* stem from the times before Ortega's exiles, and since we have already addressed them in previous chapters, we won't come back now in great detail to this issue. We have also mentioned some flows in Ortega's notion of belief. In the same fashion, in the Argentinian exile, Ortega seems to flow between a phenomenological notion of belief (i.e., beliefs as our basic but nonetheless rational systems of orientation) and a "historical" notion (Ortega y Gasset, 2006c: 667). So, in an otherwise very nice talk in the Institución Cultural Española, in November 1940, on the occasion of the celebration of the 400th anniversary of the death of Juan Luis Vives,[11] he says that every man lives from some basic beliefs about himself and the universe and only on the basis of these beliefs he is able to develop ideas and opinions. Solely on basic beliefs can be grounded a repertoire of ideas about what is possible or impossible and a system of evaluations that separates what is excellent and desirable from what is despicable

[9] The "Meditación de la Criolla" was a series of three radio Lectures held in Buenos Aires on the 22nd and 29th of November and on the 13th of December 1939.

[10] Although *La Nación* was at first a liberal conservative newspaper, in the course of time it became more and more close to the nationalist rebels in Spain and a supporter of General Francisco Franco, the chief of the nationalist army and future Spanish dictator.

[11] This is a very important talk, and we will come to it several times in this chapter. It offers a very good panorama of Ortega's ideas at the time, particularly about the notion of historical reason. However, it was intended for a large (albeit cultivated) audience. That's why Ortega says that the more informed philosophical listener must understand that in some serious matters he can only offer the conclusions and not all the premises. Nevertheless, he begs these listeners to believe that he has also the premises and can offer them if someone asks him.

and worthless. Accordingly, when those basic beliefs change—and since they appeared until then so evident that a clear distinction between beliefs and reality seemed impossible—our whole system of life is constrained to change (Ortega y Gasset, 2009d: 447).

However, it would be wrong to think that Ortega, in *Ideas y Creencias*, is only concerned with the epistemological side of the problem of their mutual relations. Although the philosopher has been deprived of his immediate audience, i.e., the Spanish people with which he could speak by means of the University lessons or the press, he thinks that he can play a similar role with the Argentinians, since they have to a great extent inherited the Spanish culture. Of course, we know that Ortega always stressed the fact that he could not address humanity since humanity actually doesn't exist. There are only peoples, with a certain history and a community of habits, and perhaps a set of identical perspectives regarding the future. Nevertheless, Argentina, like Spain, has an identity problem, a difficulty in making for itself a common basis of existence grounded in shared and accepted beliefs (Campomar, 2016: 312). He thought perhaps that Argentina had to solve the same problems he diagnosed in Spain at the time he wrote *España Invertebrada*. That's the role beliefs play in Ortega, and that's the reason why he can claim that beliefs are just ancient ideas that through time have lost their novelty and became consolidated as beliefs (Ortega y Gasset, 2009e: 482). Behind beliefs we can always uncover ideas that have lost its primal freshness. We find once more the problem of the relation between universal and particular that never ceased to occupy Ortega's mind—especially his theory of culture—since he gave his farewell to Neokantianism. New ideas have always the character of universality, since they oppose the ancient ones that meanwhile have become the "common good" of a particular nation. To find the right balance between these two opposed tendencies is the task of the political *elite*.[12]

4 El Hombre y la Gente

El Hombre y la Gente is the first important series of Lectures Ortega gave in Argentina in 1939. It took place in "Amigos del Libro" and begun on September 27 of that year. These Lectures are significantly different from those, with the same title, that were held after Ortega's return to Spain, of which we have already spoken in chapter "Ortega's Philosophical Anthropology". In these Argentinian Lectures,

[12] We must also mention the four articles in *La Nación*, from June, July, and August 1940, about the Roman Empire. Ortega is still thinking about Argentina's social situation and its deep divisions between the liberal elite of Buenos Aires, descending from the Spanish colonial settlers, and the small people of the Argentinian *Pampas*, with its large percentage of *mestizos*. He regarded this situation as very similar to the situation of Rome—i.e., the division between *senatus* and *populus*—in the last decades of the Republic.

the indirect reference to the contemporary events and even to the author's personal situation is much detailed. Ortega begins by stressing the radical insecurity of every human life, meaning not the fact that each man can die at any moment, but the fact that changing circumstances are the only thing in life that does not change (Ortega y Gasset, 2009c: 283). Anyway, the theme of these Lectures is the nature of society (or of the "social", as Ortega says most of the times), and the references to contemporary events or even to circumstances of the author's personal life have only one aim: to show that we live in the ignorance of what the "social" means and so we ignore the kind of threads that are woven between men by social existence. It is not only the middle class man that ignores what the "social" means (albeit he can speak relentlessly about it in the newspapers or in the coffeehouses); even those who were supposed to give us a correct definition of the social, i.e., sociologists, don't seem to have clear ideas about the issue.

We won't repeat here what has already been said in chapter "Ortega's Philosophical Anthropology" about Ortega's social thought. But two ideas deserve to be mentioned again. In the first place, Ortega resumes his old conception of life as a "having to do," from which results his definition of man as "someone who always has something to do," an inescapable task of choosing between several possibilities of action (Ortega y Gasset, 2009c: 298). Of course, a man can chose between creation and imitation, but the latter is no less a possibility than the former. And he stresses that this definition is the really adequate one, provided that we look to men's lives with an honest and unprejudiced vision, exempt of any false theory. In the second place, he comes again—as he has always done since 1914—to the relation between man and his circumstance, but now to underline the fact that in any circumstance we can find inanimate objects (like stones, for instance), animals, and other human beings, and the relation we establish with each of them is not the same. Strictly speaking, only with fellow men do we establish relations, although the analysis of the case of animals offers some difficulties. This is one of the central themes of Ortega's anthropology, and he will come to it again during his Argentinian exile, in the abovementioned talk on the occasion of the celebration of the 400th anniversary of the death of Juan Luis Vives. In his talk Ortega begins by stressing the fact that stones and animals have the whole of their beings given and fixed from the moment they begin to exist (Ortega y Gasset, 2009d: 443). For a stone to fall in a certain direction, he says, is pretty much the same as for a nightingale to begin to sing at a certain stage of its development.

Now, Ortega can draw an important conclusion. Society—although not visible as such—is not something mysterious that philosophers must uncover digging it out from the depths. It is the outcome of the common relations between men that have to live the radical reality of their own lives. Society is something that can be easily shown, it is no less patent than a lot of other things, provided we use the correct methodological—and Ortega here means phenomenological (Ortega y Gasset, 2009c: 325)—devices.

5 *Historical Reason*: The Last Lecture in the Faculty of Arts of Buenos Aires

The Argentinian Lectures on *Historical Reason*, from 1940, held in the Faculty of Arts of Buenos Aires, are one of Ortega's most important intellectual achievement before his return to Europe. The circumstances of the exile, the war that was ravaging the world for almost 3 years, perhaps also a bitter personal feeling of having been misunderstood regarding the fundamental tenets of his own philosophy—perhaps also a desire to justify his personal resolution to remain in exile, due to the international political situation in Europe and the outcome of the Civil War in Spain—can still today be deeply felt by the contemporary reader. Above all, Ortega comes again to the question of the meaning of philosophy and of the failure of the philosopher in the way he carries out his mission. Because as a man the philosopher is not different from the other men: he has to deal with things, to orient himself among them, or, as Ortega sometimes liked to say, he has to "rescue" himself and his circumstance. In fact, as Ortega says at the beginning of his first Lecture, man has once more lost himself and is looking for salvation. When that man is a philosopher, however, he knows—or at least endeavors to know—the essence of things (Campomar, 2016: 326). In a philosophical Chair, the philosopher is supposed to talk about essences, albeit the things he is speaking about are those very same things of which men are talking about, especially in times of distress—namely, the disagreement between nation, the war, or the exile—as was the case in 1940 (Ortega y Gasset, 2009e: 477).

So, as Marta Campomar correctly stresses, the tone of these Argentinian Lectures is centered in an analysis of the present: Ortega thinks that we need history to understand the present, i.e., we must know what happened in order to understand what is now going on. These ideas are also present in his Argentinian Lecture *Man and People*, resumed in Madrid after the exile. Man comes to life as in the middle of a shipwreck, and he has to brace in order to survive. However, the things he finds in life and which he needs to save himself are not just mere objects: they can facilitate or hinder human life, and that's why they deserve to be called by the Greek word *pragmata*.

Now, for Ortega, to live in the present means to live amid a crisis—not only a political crisis, but a general crisis affecting the totality of knowledge. As he says, physicists don't know what to do in physics (i.e., they are not sure of the value of their main concepts), mathematicians don't know what to do in mathematics, logicians don't know what to do in logic, they are not sure any more of the value of the main logical concepts, like Brouwer (Ortega y Gasset, 2009e:481) who put in question the logical value of the principle of the excluded middle. Ortega seems to have been impressed by Brouwer's criticisms to traditional logic, since he mentions Brouwer's ideas several times in his writings. Logic has to do with thinking, the privilege of that "reasonable animal" that we call "man"; perhaps he thought that the doubts about the way we think would also raise doubts about what we are.

The whole idea of these Lectures is not very original. One feels that Ortega needs to communicate the main tenets of the philosophical system he has built in the precedent decade. He has already done that elsewhere, namely, in *Ideas y Creencias*, but also in the talk about Luis Vives. Ortega is approaching his 60th anniversary, an age in which, as he himself has said several times, a man becomes an ancestor. It means that his generation does no longer occupy the forefront of the cultural battles. His personal future is also unpredictable. The possibility of his return to Spain is uncertain; Ortega is a republican, he saluted the establishment of the Spanish republic in 1931, and he strongly disliked the illiberal tendencies of Franco's regime. Anyway, we can synthesize his ideas in these Lectures in the three following topics:

1. Up to the present, European man lived in three different epochs: the ancient Greco-Roman culture, in which the meaning of life was given by the world and its eternal forms; the Middle Ages, in which the mean of life was given by God; and the modern world, in which the meaning of life was given by reason or, in other words, by man himself.
2. The former ideas may not seem very original, but Ortega has something more to say. Between those epochs we can find epochs of transition. In those epochs man is looking for a new meaning for life, since the ancient one is no longer at the height of the times. That's what happened in the period called Renaissance. Man no longer lives facing only God, although he still believes in his existence. However, the whole of his life no longer is solely determined by God and by the expectation of a super-mundane existence.
3. In each historical epoch, men live according to a certain system of beliefs. Nevertheless, history is not a succession of epochs with no relations between each other. One never gets rid of the past, and an epoch is always related to the proceeding one, at least in the sense that it refuses it.

Ciriaco Morón Arroyo argues that Ortega, at this moment of his intellectual evolution, looks at beliefs at the proper object of history, by which Morón Arroyo seems to mean historical science. In a previous moment—roughly corresponding to the time following the publication of *The Theme of our Time*, in 1923—the object of historical science was the changes in the general feeling toward life (Morón Arroyo, 1968: 296). Of course, the two moments are not really opposed, and one needs not to accept Morón Arroyo's theory about the phases of Ortega's development to acknowledge a difference between them. However, the explanation for this difference is perhaps much simpler. In 1923 Ortega was speaking from the standpoint of vital reason, and in 1940 he is speaking from the standpoint of historical reason (Ortega, 2005a: 604–605). That's why he needs to stress, in 1940, that beliefs can change and history—not in the first place the historical science (i.e., the history of *rerum gestarum*), but rather the *res gestae*—is history as long as beliefs are subject to change.

6 Argentinian Deceptions: The Return to Europe

Ortega always looked at his 3 years exile in Argentina as the worst period of his life. The coming to Portugal, where her daughter Soledad rented an apartment in Lisbon that the family kept until Ortega's death, meant a kind of relief. And although Ortega never cease completely his relations with some of his most intimate Argentinian friends, it's very significant that his departure to Lisbon, in February 1942, took all his friends by surprise, friends to whom he hardly said farewell (Campomar, 2016: 409). Significantly too he never returned to that country, where he had been so happy during his first two stays. We have already mentioned some reason for this deception, namely, the impossibility of finding an academic place in the Argentinian universities and the intrigues between Spanish *émigrés* and between himself and the intellectual elite of Buenos Aires. Money problems (especially after the "Espasa-Calpe affair") also played an important role, so much so that, once in Portugal, Ortega could more easily count with the support of his two sons that remained in the nationalist Spain.

However, we should also look for more deep reasons. Perhaps what we will say next is just trivial, but one should never forget that in the case of a philosopher—and in the opinion of the author of these lines Ortega is a very great philosopher—personal events and philosophical reflection go hand in hand. If things were different, the narrative of Socrates' death in Plato's *Phaedon*, or Plato's Seventh Letter, would remain unintelligible. In the case of Ortega, the Argentinian exile and the Argentinian political and cultural situation were the opportunity to test, so to speak, the ideas he had been developing in the previous years and that can be found in *The Revolt of the Masses* and *Man and People*. That's what we must see next.

The reader probably recalls two important social and political theses Ortega developed over the years: the fact that modernity means the belief in progress and the fact that the twentieth century lacks historical sensibility. The first fact is a historical belief; other epochs either didn't share that belief and looked rather pessimistically to the future or had a cyclical notion of historical development, in which epochs of progress and epochs of decay would alternate. The second fact—the lack of historical sensibility—is the natural consequence of the first. Progress is in a large measure scientific and technical progress, and it meant, in Europe and in the United States, for a large part of the population, the rising to a historical level from which it seems rather improbable to recede. We saw in chapter "Ortega's Social Philosophy" that this general albeit ungrounded conviction is the origin of the anthropological type Ortega labels the "mass-man." Now, Argentina seems the victim of the same illusions. More than that, Argentina doesn't benefit of a past similar to the European one; what for European nations is the outcome of a long historical effort can only be imported, with all the dangers attached to it. Ortega saw in the Argentinian intellectual *milieu* the rise of the same defects he had in *The Revolt of the Masses* detected in the European mass-man. Moreover, he thought that, due to the decay of Europe, swallowed by a bloody war, Argentinian intellectuals were just

hopping for the opportunity to replace Europe in what they looked as the leading cultural role Europe had played until then.[13]

Of course, this rather pessimistic outlook was not the main reason for Ortega's departure. The relations with the Argentinian's and the Spanish émigrés' intellectual milieus became bitter as time passed; the prospects of an academic career in the Argentinian universities were frustrated: financial problems were never overcome. Besides, there were also family motives. Europe meant being near to Spain, where his two elder sons had remained. Ortega was now grandfather, without knowing his grandson. So, in the middle of the war, with naval combats being carried out between the German submarine fleet and the allies, he crossed the Atlantic. His daughter Soledad had advanced him and his wife and already rented an apartment in Lisbon.

Ortega was not much happier in Lisbon than he had been in Argentina, although there the political disputes between Spanish émigrés were inexistent. At the time, the Portuguese dictatorship was largely favorable to the Spanish regime, and any public debate was impossible. Moreover, besides some personal friendships, Ortega's relation to the Portuguese intellectual and philosophical milieus was scarce. Although he held an important lecture on *Reason in History* in 1944—the only one he gave at the Department of Philosophy of the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Lisbon—that was attended by two important Portuguese philosophers at the time (Delfim Santos and Vieira de Almeida), he was never able to make strong and enduring connections. A first sympathetic approach to his philosophy and his personality turned out in overt hostility. Vieira de Almeida even joked about Ortega's reference to Brouwer in his Third Lecture on *Historical Reason* (Ortega y Gasset, 2009f: 667).[14]

The contacts that he managed to establish, once in Lisbon, with his homeland took place primarily through friends and ex-students from Madrid, such as Julián Marías, Emílio Garcia Gómez, Dolores Franco, José Germain, or José Antonio Maravall. Through the Ambassador Nicolas Franco, he was in contact with some important Spanish intellectuals, who were invited to give conferences in Lisbon, like Dámaso Alonso, Antonio Tovar, and Pedro Laín Entralgo. Ortega enjoyed regular walks through downtown Lisbon alongside his Spanish compatriots Juan Carreras and Julio Camba. There are also records of his having met, on several occasions, the Romanian philosopher Mircea Eliade, who was also exiled in Lisbon. In his diary, written during the exile, Eliade confirmed the information that Ortega refused to regain his university position in Madrid, while maintaining a good

[13] Most of these harsh opinions were expressed in letters or in private conversations. In the second case, one must trust the individual memories of Ortega's friends, who kept a close contact with him until the end of his stay in Argentina or continued to exchange letters with him after the return to Europe. For an appraisal of all these testimonies, see Campomar, 2016: 403–413).

[14] Vieira de Almeida was at the time a full professor at the University of Lisbon. He was very close to the Vienna Circle and published some important works on logic and philosophy of knowledge. Although well-informed in philosophical matters, he was more of a dilettante than a philosopher. His courses were, so it seems, a kind of philosophical "happening," and he was always unable to carry out a syllabus until the end. He clearly did not understood how Ortega evaluated Brouwer's intuitionistic logic.

relationship with Spanish intellectuals such as jurist Luis Díez del Corral (Gracia, 2014: 576), a former student at the University of Madrid before the Civil War.

Ortega's home, at n°. 10 on Avenida 5 de Outubro in Lisbon, was his official residence until his death in 1955. There he installed part of his library and his office, where he kept a regular correspondence with the multiple translators and publishers of the international editions of his works. Ortega always looked at his stay in Portugal as temporary. That's one of the reasons why he never got significantly involved with the cultural environment. His ambiguous sociopolitical condition as someone who was a supporter of the founding of the II Republic in Spain, in 1931, and as someone who, following his departure from Madrid in 1936, became suspicious of counter-revolutionary sympathies by the Republican Government also did not enhance any steady and strong connection with Portuguese universities. Furthermore, while not an anticlerical, his neutrality before Catholicism did not favor any close contact to the Portuguese academic institutions under the regime of the Estado Novo (Amoedo, 2017: 13).

However, some of Ortega's Portuguese relations are worth mentioning. Writers and intellectuals such as Délio Santos or António Ferro, and the Director of the Faculty of Letters of the University of Lisbon, Oliveira Guimarães, kept a close contact with him. Vitorino Nemésio, a famous novelist and professor of Spanish literature in the Faculty of Letters, who, when a student at the University of Coimbra, had interviewed Ortega in Madrid, in 1924, was one of his Lisbon friends. However, in an article published in the journal *Seara Nova*, some years after the Madrid interview, Nemésio had shown how little he had understood Ortega's philosophy (Nemésio, 1929: 106–107). The reader grasps easily that Nemésio is mentioning Ortega's Lessons *What is Philosophy?*, but if Nemésio had actually attended them or is speaking by mere hearsaying is hard to tell. Trying to explain to his Portuguese readers the main tenets of Ortega's philosophy at the time, he says, for instance, that for the Spanish philosopher truth is always dependent on a point of view and one can change at will his point of view to obtain the truth that most suits him.

To get an idea of the social and cultural milieu that surrounded Ortega in Lisbon, it is also worth mentioning his regular gatherings in the *Caravela* teahouse, in Chiado, in downtown Lisbon. There he met classicist Pedro de Moura e Sá, poet Carlos Queirós, and newspaper columnist General Luís da Câmara Pina, advisor of the Bertrand bookstore and the Portuguese translator of *La Rebelión de las Masas* (Gracia, 2014: 575). With the passage of time, his social circle became reduced to the house of doctor Fernando Martins Pereira, a friend since his first journey to Portugal, in convalescence, following a surgery to remove gallstones. Moura de Sá bears witness to the social gatherings he would attend, with his wife Marta de Lima Mayer and his friends from *A Caravela*, in the residence of Martins Pereira, with lively debates about culture and intellectual life. He confessed his admiration for Ortega's thought and appreciated his endeavors to ensure that philosophy acquired "flesh and blood." In his work *Vida e Literatura*, he affirmed how Ortega, throughout this whole period, always showed a sense of gratitude, how his personality was deprived of any kind vanity or economic interests. In the way he understood things, he sought to give them the maximum of its potential expressiveness, adding a lyrical

facet to the vital and historical rationality (Amoedo, 2002: 142). Following 11 years of silence, he was welcomed in Spain with a large photograph in the *ABC* magazine, announcing his return through a public conference held at the Ateneo of Madrid in early May 1946. There was a full house to hear his "Idea of the theatre," which he had already presented at Lisbon's D. Maria II National Theatre, including such figures as Ramón Menéndez Pidal, Xavier Zubiri, and José María Alfaro (Gracia, 2014: 586).

Ortega also took advantage of the Lisbon exile to advance some literary work. In 1942, he wrote the prologue to the book *Veinte años de caza mayor* by Eduardo Yebes, reflecting on human life, on the diversity of perspectives through which reality is revealed, and on the methodological conditions of living a life according to reason. In 1943, he wrote another prologue for the book *Aventuras del Capitán Alonso de Contreras*, approaching notions of actions and adventure, and began his study of Velasquez's paintings, writing the text *Introducción a Velázquez*, the first of a series of articles dedicated to leading Spanish artists. In the same year, he founded the publishing house *Editorial Azar*, summoning Fernando Vela to take up residence in Lisbon in order to guarantee the success of this venture with the objective of publishing, in the Portuguese capital, either Spanish originals or translations. The project, however, never went beyond its first publication, *Homo Ludens*, of well-known Dutch historian Johan Huizinga (Amoedo, 2002: 144).

In this same year, Ortega wrote some brief notes for a reflection on *saudade* (the Portuguese term for yearning or longing), which was entitled *Hipotesis a la Saudade, un estúdio de mitologia*, but not subject to further developments. In this reflection, mentioning some classical Portuguese texts on this issue, namely, from Francisco Manuel de Melo and Carolina Michaëlis, he acknowledged that he had never entered the spiritual intimacy of Portuguese culture and that his analysis of its physiognomy was only from an external and almost spectral level. As he stated: "[…] to 'enter' a village is not merely to be in its streets, but to *live* in it, to *be* in it" (Ortega y Gasset, 2005b: 17). He criticized Carolina Michaëlis[15] for centering the theme of *saudade* on eroticism, which he deemed universal and present in all peoples, and sought for the specific characteristics of this feeling within the concrete case of Portuguese historical experiences: "Saudade *is* not a Portuguese theme, it is rather *the* Portuguese theme *par excellence*" (Ortega y Gasset, 2005b: 21). However, this identification was accompanied by a strong criticism of the prevailing conditions of Portuguese culture according to the meaning of *saudade* put forward by Teixeira de Pascoaes, with its implications of a closed off to the world and to the social, scientific, and technological progress carried out beyond the Pyrenees. In counterbalance with the Portuguese theme of the *discoveries*, which he attributed to the "anxiety to depart," *saudade* is perceived as a mythical and imaginary Portuguese condition, associated

[15] Carolina Michaëlis was a German scholar who married the Portuguese philologist and anthropologist José Leite de Vasconcelos. Carolina Michaëlis' book that Ortega addressed in his criticisms was *A Saudade Portuguesa*, whose 2nd revised and enlarged edition has been published in 1922.

with the "anxiety of returning," implying the country's current cultural stagnation due to the long-term radical rejection of progress and development:

> The Discoveries are a breaking of a horizon and a search for the unknown that extends beyond, and the "oceans never braved before" mean radical openness. Saudade is the solidification of an entire given horizon: a fall into the old, into the customary. (Ortega y Gasset, 2005b: 22)[16]

However, in this period, the Spanish thinker was primarily occupied with writing an epilogue to the 2nd edition of *Historia de la filosofía* of Julián Marias. This epilogue would lead onto an autonomous book entitled *El origen y epilogo de la filosofía*, which included the 1944 lessons lectured at the Faculty of Letters of the University of Lisbon on the art of philosophizing, on the crisis both of logical rationality and life, on biographic meaning, as well as on the unquestionable and prior reality of any act of thinking (Gracia, 2014: 574). In this work, through historical analysis of western philosophy, he talks about philosophical errors as incomplete truths that should not entail the ignorance or rejection of philosophy, but instead the effort to improve it through the production of new theories. Each philosophical theory discloses the truth of a historical context, expressed in a perspective or point of view. This text, however, that meanwhile was enlarged to a manuscript of near 400 pages, will only undergo posthumous publication (Amoedo, 2002: 146).

The 1944 lectures at the Faculty of Letters on historical reason, in the year Vitorino Nemésio published his famous novel *Mau Tempo no Canal*, caused a major impact, and, due to the number of participants enrolled, the majority of which were not university students, it became necessary to replace the small University amphitheater by a larger venue at the Society of Geography. The description of the first lesson, made by the Lisbon correspondent of the Madrid newspaper ABC, details a heterogenous audience made up of professors, financiers, politicians, diplomats from every country accredited in Lisbon, aristocrats, artists, and senior members of the clergy. This series of only five Lessons (from the 20th of November to the 14th of December) would end due to Ortega's poor health condition. A sixth projected Lesson in January 1945 was never delivered. In March 1945, Ortega would request the Director of the Faculty of Letters to terminate his agreement with the University of Lisbon, due to his repeated health problems (Amoedo, 2017: 32–33).

Since historical reason will be the theme of our next chapter, we won't address these Lisbon Lectures here. Instead, we will make a mention to Ortega's last public lecture in Lisbon before his return to Spain. It's entitled *The Idea of the Theater* and was held at the headquarters of the Portuguese newspaper *O Século*. Delfim Santos expressed publicly in harsh terms his disagreement, both regarding the content and the form[17] of the lecture.

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[16] "Oceans never braved before" is the English translation of the third verse of the 1st Canto of *Os Lusíadas*, an epic poem written by the sixteenth-century Portuguese poet Luís de Camões.

[17] Of course, regarding form, one must reckon that Ortega's Lecture is far from being perfect. Delfim Santos, in a newspaper article, even says that, at the beginning of his Lecture Ortega promises to address two different issues—the problem of truth (*aletheia*) and the problem of ruin (from the Latin *ruere*)—promises he will be unable to keep until the end. (See Ortega y Gasset, 2009g:

The interest of this lecture has to do with the fact that it exemplifies how Ortega was able to handle the phenomenological method in matters far distant from usual philosophical issues. Of course, nobody in the audience was familiar with it, except Delfim Santos, who having studied in Austria and Germany had written about Husserl and Heidegger and was perhaps, at the time, the best-informed Portuguese philosopher about German contemporary trends in philosophy. However, his harsh reaction had, very probably, personal reasons, not yet completely clarified, which we will deliberately skip here.

The title of this Lecture, as we have said, is *The Idea of the Theater*. Nevertheless, although Ortega recalls Plato's notion of idea, he undoubtedly means the Husserlian one, i.e., what Husserl also called essence or *eidos*. Accordingly, if there is an idea of the theater, that idea must express what every theatrical production has in common; Ortega means of course something that has to be present in every theatrical production, regardless all the other differences—no matter how important they may be—that separate them from each other. Next, Ortega mentions the importance of the theater as a special kind of building. One may joke about this reference to architecture and conclude that the author is just postponing his theme, about which he knows perhaps too little. Closer inspection shows it's the other way around. The place where theatrical spectacles are carried out always have some importance regarding how the author thinks the plot will develop; some of Shakespeare's long dialogues would be unintelligible without our knowledge of the special characteristic of the Elizabethan scene. Perhaps the same could be said about *tempo* in Greek tragedy. Anyway, that is not very important. We must instead look to the peculiarities of Ortega's method.

In fact, Ortega resumes what he had been saying since the *Meditaciones del Quijote*: reality has two different levels, one patent, the other latent. Philosophical method aims to uncover the latent that the patent hides from our sight. The patent reality of theater is its building. This is not a trivial matter, what Ortega used to call in Spanish a *perogrullada*. If the building hides an interior, at the same time it announces it. Each building has a peculiar form, which is adapted to its function. Anyway, we must go inside the building. We enter now a second level of reality; we begin the examination of what had been hidden until now.[18] In the inside we find a division in two distinct parts: one—the scene, as we now call it—where the representation takes place; the other intended for the public. (Of course, Ortega is thinking about a rather traditional form of representation, where both spaces, the one for the actors, the other for the public, are physically distinct, namely, due to the fact

828–829.) Needless to say that anyone familiar with Ortega's normal procedures is used to this. (The most relevant features of Ortega's theory of theater have already been addressed in chapter "Ortega's Aesthetics". The references to it in this chapter will be sketchy; only Ortega's method is of interest to us here.)

[18] We could correlate this procedure with another one we have described in chapter "Phenomenology Revisited", regarding Ortega's investigation of the ultimate data of the universe. As we said then, he looked at his method as comparable to the one use by the Hebrews in the conquest of Jericho, approaching slowly in circles to the center of the aimed target.

that the scene level is higher than the level of the audience.) We will not follow Ortega's analysis until the end. Those who argue that his knowledge of modern theatrical techniques was scarce are probably right. We only intended to note that Ortega remained faithful to the phenomenological method and even thought that it could be extended to understand certain forms of culture for which it was not created by its founder.

To sum up, one could say that Ortega's Lisbon exile—with the exception of the Lessons on *Historical Reason*—was most philosophically productive regarding those texts he never completely finished in order to be published. We already spoke of *The Idea of Principle in Leibniz*, which he wrote in his Lisbon apartment and kept until his death and to which he returned several times in holidays. (The manuscript of this work was published only posthumously, in 1958, in Buenos Aires.) In Lisbon, before returning to Spain, he also wrote an important essay on Goya, at the beginning of 1946, but Ortega's works on painting (especially on Spanish painting) have already been addressed in chapter "Ortega's Aesthetics".

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Historical Reason

1 Introduction: Why Is Reason "Historical" and History "Rational"?

As Ortega claims at the beginning of Lesson IV of *The Historical Reason* (the series of Lectures held in Lisbon in 1944), man is an animal doomed to have ideas. And man needs ideas because everything he does must be grounded in phantasy, i.e., in a sketch of the future situation he wants to make appear. But this rather strange condition also means that men are always delivered to themselves, instead of being delivered to nature's liberality, like the animals (Ortega y Gasset, 2009c: 673). John Graham, in *Theory of History in Ortega y Gasset: The Dawn of Historical Reason*, explains that Ortega's notion of historical reason corresponds to a new approach to the way of doing philosophy that stems from the idea that man does not have any prior and given nature in the static and unvarying meaning of this word but rather has an individual and concrete historical life in which he has to make himself (Graham, 1997: 105). For this reason, Graham maintains that, following a period of time during which "vital reason" was the central concept of Ortega's philosophy, the philosopher ended up identifying it with historical reason. Only if we pay attention to its historical dimensions we will be able to understand life as a form of relationship between man and the social and historical-cultural circumstances in which he lives (Graham, 1997: 109–110).

The several phases of this evolution are documented first by the 1923 published book on *The Theme of Our Time* and the article "Neither vitalism nor rationalism" published in *Revista de Occidente* in October 1924; next by the 1935 texts *History as a System* and *On the Roman Empire* and subsequently developed in Lessons such as *On Galileo*, given in Madrid in 1933; and lastly by the Argentinian Lessons of 1940 *The Historical Reason* and the Lisbon Lessons with the same title held 4 years later. Several distinct but interconnected issues are addressed in these texts. In the first place, the problem of "meaning" in history, i.e., the problem of the possible

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existence of a logic linking the apparently contingent historical events in such a way that they can be looked at as milestones in a process that aims a common end. Secondly, the problem of the exact nature of this link, be it of a spiritual kind (as, for instance, in Hegel's philosophy of History) or of a material and economic one (as, for instance, in Marx). Thirdly, the problem of the greater or lesser value of the historical "acquisitions" of each historical period or, in other words, the problems of progress and "relativism." Lastly, the role of the individual and of the generations in history. As one can easily see, the first two problems are, in Ortega's terms, of a "historiological" kind, i.e., they pertain to the realms of philosophy of history (Moreno, 2005: 176) and epistemology of the historical sciences; the last two have to do with the historical and temporal condition of men. The next pages will be devoted to the analysis of these fundamental issues.

A striking characteristic of Ortega's conception of History has to do with the way he evaluates the role of crisis. The Spanish philosopher describes the period of crisis that mediated between the end of Middle Age and the beginning of Modern Times making an analogy with his own times, which were also times of crisis. The crisis of Modernity meant that the living faith in biological and naturalist sciences, which had dominated the entire modern period, had turned out into a dead faith, since science was no longer able to provide answers to human problems. At the same time, i.e., at the rise of the twentieth century, philosophers became aware that nature only represents one dimension of the far vaster reality of human life, a reality that *physical reason* was insufficient to embrace. Man does not have a "nature," like plants and animals, i.e., a stable and permanent being. Physical bodies may also vary, but only inside the invariable boundaries established by scientific laws. If physical reason can say nothing about man's nature and problems, we must look for another kind of reason: "(…) the failure of physical reason leaves a free way for vital and historical reason" (Ortega y Gasset, 2006b: 56).

Thus, through this notion of "historical reason," Ortega aims to explain how each epoch pays attention to a certain dimension of reality. For instance, in certain periods of history God was kept apart from the human affairs; those were periods of agnosticism and positivism where prevailed a human type that Ortega characterizes in the following manner: "The agnostic man is a perceptive organ that is exclusively accommodated to the immediate" (Ortega y Gasset, 2009b: 607). In other periods, this state of affairs seemed difficult to bear, and God came again to the foreground. Other epochs, as, for instance, ancient Greece, had a certain idea of God, but could not think of a God endowed with the power to create the world. For Greek philosophy, to be—stresses Ortega—meant to be autonomous or independent (Ortega y Gasset, 2009b: 497). Accordingly, as long as the world is it cannot be just the creature of a worldless being. In the same way, the individual things that make up the world may have some influence over each other, but their true being does not consist in being created. However, Christian medieval philosophy gave place to the idea of the creation of the world through the power and will of God. On the other hand, for Greek and medieval philosophy the being of things consisted in their independence regarding the intellect. But a new epoch—Modernity, which lasted until the first decades of the twentieth century—began with the Cartesian critique of this

philosophical realism. Sense data, Descartes thought, are doubtful: if I close my eyes or cover my ears, if I don't touch the things that surround me, they cease to exist. Idealism began when philosophers asserted that the radical reality philosophy is in search of is not the world but thought (Ortega y Gasset, 2009b: 500). All these examples mean that reason is intrinsically historical. History is its own substance. And history is also rational, since it is composed of the changeable ways along which men try to account for the existence of the world and for their own existence.

2 History as Tradition and as Innovation

Reason is not something absolute but rather an instrument in the concrete lives of individuals and in the historical life of peoples. Truth stems from the dynamic correlation between these two dimensions—individual and social—of reality. But are all historical truths or systems of ideas only valid for the circumstance in which they were discovered? And if this is true, can any historical epoch be fully understood by those that come after it? Enlightened reason thought that the one and same concept of reason was at work in every historical epoch, only imperfectly developed in the past but reaching in the present its maturity. Ortega looked suspiciously to these ideas that, according to him, were just a projection—in the historical past but also in forms of culture other than the modern European ones—of a narrow concept of reason that characterized European culture since the beginning of Modernity (Cerezo, 2011: 185).

The being of the things that Ortega tries to grasp does not correspond to the traditional ontology of Hellenic origin, which, since Parmenides, has always meant a fixed, static, and unvarying being that precedes the variability of existence, an ontology that is reflected both in Aristotle's notion of nature and Thomas Aquinas' notion of substance, as well as in Hegel's notion of "spirit." Ortega's notion of being corresponds to a new metaphysical categorization that conveys the dramatic, unique, and unstable existence of each man's life in his free action and the acknowledgment that the only given fact is circumstance: "Therefore, in order to talk about being-man, we need to produce a non-eleatic concept of the being, as if we were elaborating a non-Euclidian geometry" (Ortega y Gasset, 2006b: 66). A living being is not only accidentally mobile but also metaphysically and hence has to be conceived by means of concepts that inevitably question its identity and exhibit its contingent nature:

> Human life, therefore, is not an entity that changes accidentally but, instead, the "substance" within which the change precisely occurs, which means that it cannot be conceived in the Eleatic fashion as a substance. (Ortega y Gasset, 2006b: 67)

Abandoning the concept of being, with its connotations of immobility, Ortega highlights the fact that man neither "is" nor "is becoming" but rather "lives." If life must be conceived as a drama, the subject of this drama is not a "thing" that exists previously or independently of it, but rather as a "function" of it. Man keeps his own

individuality in a process of constant change, like some words (for instance, "here" or "there") keep their meaning regardless the objects they are pointing to (Ortega y Gasset, 2006b: 67).

In the fourth lesson of *What is Philosophy?*, lectured in 1929, Ortega affirms that philosophy is constitutively necessary to the intellect and holds the function of searching for the Universe in its totality, recognizing that which is given to us only represents one part or one fragment of this broader and more latent reality that is the world. The trivial reality of the colors we see refers to colored surfaces; the room we are in refers to the house to which it belongs; even a single state of mind refers to other states of mind. Similarly, when we theoretically encounter the world, it appears to us as a problem that does not explain itself by its own means. The world is an object that is not in itself sufficient and that does not sustain its own being: "The world is an object that is insufficient and fragmentary, an object founded on something that is not it, that is not what is given. That something has, thus, a founding mission in the strict sense, is what is fundamental here" (Ortega y Gasset, 2008a: 281). In a fashion distinct from traditional metaphysics, Ortega identifies this fundamental being, which is not given but rather postulated as a problem, as a reality that is not manifest in the world and is not present in knowledge and thereby constituted by an absence: "(…) the fundamental being is the eternal and absent essential (…) the completely other, the formally distinct, the absolutely exotic" (Ortega y Gasset, 2008a: 281–282).

Philosophy affirms it is experiencing an epoch characterized by the resurgence of the divine, in contrast to the modern period in which the agnostic perspective prevailed (Ortega y Gasset, 2004b: 606) and a period falling under the guidance of the phenomenological perspective of history with supra-historical requirements. We experience the rise of a new kind of reason that replaces the former belief in reason and incorporates a meta-historical and ontological dimension and hence a metaphysical dimension (Graham, 1997: 111). This new kind of reason must apply to history categories similar to those categories that philosophy applies to the understanding of man's individual existence. Men's lives are, at the same time, restrained by what men inherited from their predecessors, by the past events of their lives, and by the habits contracted; identically, every historical epoch inherits from the precedent epochs. But a heritage is not something an epoch can just live upon, as if it was an inextinguishable stock of resources; rather, any receptive attitude must be complemented by an operative attitude that may allow innovation (Cerezo, 2011: 195).

3 How Rational Historical Events Are?

Let us begin with a small thought experiment. What would we figure out if a strange noise was heard coming from behind the door of the room in which we rest in a chair? We could imagine that someone was just knocking on the door, waiting that we allowed him to enter the room, or that he bumped into the door while going from

one place to another in the next room; other noises would perhaps give us a hint of what he was doing, but other noises could be meaningless and arouse our curiosity about what was really going on. Suppose that I ask: "who's there?" and getting no answer I get up from the chair where I was sitting and open the door. Now, seeing the person who was moving around in the room next to mine I grasp the meaning of all those noises, connecting them with a stretch of a life whose intentions I'm acquainted with. What at first was a set of noises devoid of meaning is now rationally justified.

If we want to think seriously what human life is, we must use the concept that Aristotle applied exclusively to God, the concept of *energueia*. Not that human life is a kind of divine life in the Aristotelian sense; but at least it has—as long as a man lives—that characteristic that God's life enjoyed permanently, the endeavor to go on living. We must notice this marvelous characteristic of human life: when someone thinks of his own existence, he finds himself already existing for a long time. This means that my birth strictly speaking does not belong to my life: it's a tale I have heard of. The same applies to immortality. It is a speculative idea. That's why for Ortega human life is endless, albeit not infinite: it has not begun for me—only for others who witnessed my birth—just like its end state is impossible to imagine (Ortega y Gasset, 2009b: 530–531). Due to man's limitations, human life is no more than a system of possibilities and impossibilities that history has the task to investigate. However, possibilities for human action are never indeterminate, but rather grounded on the soil upon which men have to act; that's why the outcomes of human action are not merely contingent, and, for someone who knows how to look at them, they seem most of the times as if they could have been easily predicted. That's why Ortega can say, at the same time, that although a historian is no fortune-teller only as prophecy does a historical science become possible (Moreno, 2005: 180).

Ortega illustrates the resistance reality imposes upon man resorting to the biblical narrative of Adam's expulsion from paradise. Paradise is a symbol of a condition in which man feels no resistance from the surrounding world and the world merges with man. The exterior world, following the expulsion, means the strange and hostile reality that man does not know how to deal with. Indeed, in the present conditions, any circumstance man lives in is composed of facilities and difficulties. If it was only composed of facilities, it would be like an extension of our own body, and, facing the world, men would be like gods; if instead the world were exclusively composed of difficulties, man would not exist because he wouldn't be able to find a place in it (Ortega y Gasset, 2009b: 532).

In addition to the body, the soul, and all of the mineral, vegetal, and animal realities, there are the other persons and all of this collected into a landscape that we call planet Earth in a permanent sense of future belonging. Graham highlights how Ortega moved away from the metaphysical model of Parmenides to adopt the model of Heraclitus in the sense that change and movement do not gain recognition according to any logical-analytical reason but rather by historical and narrative reason (Graham, 1997: 118). That's why history as a science is not entirely constituted by its own methodological procedures, like natural sciences. Something different from method is necessary to understand historical events. That's why Dilthey spoke of an

understanding of other men's actions, which is totally different from the accumulation of facts and statistics. As Ortega himself stresses, a non-Eleatic concept of man is as necessary as a non-Euclidean concept of space was necessary for modern physics: "Man, Gentlemen, has no nature but rather has history" (Ortega y Gasset, 2009b: 557). The radical reality is not in the world of things (as in Antiquity) nor in the world of thinking (as in Modern Age) but rather in the fact that each human life is aware of the things it encounters (Contemporary Age). I see horses, or flowers, or people in front of me, I don't see my seeing of horses, flowers, or people. I am as real as those things I see, but reality now has acquired a new meaning: reality means that I and all those things I claim to be around me are mutually dependent (Ortega y Gasset, 2009b: 505).[1]

Nevertheless, man is not permanently turned to the outside, i.e., to the other men, the other leaving creatures, inanimate things, or states of affairs. With man happens a characteristic turn (which is incomprehensible from a zoological point of view) to the inside, i.e., to himself as a leaving and acting person, engaged in actions and projects and in permanent intercourse with other fellow human beings. With the help of words so worn as old coins (Ortega y Gasset, 2010: 143), we use to label this attitude "thinking" or "meditation"; Ortega calls it, in Spanish, *ensimismamiento* (the act of returning to one's own self).

Contrary to the stone that is from the outset everything that it is, in the substantial Greco-Scholastic sense that it lacks nothing for its existence, according to Ortega, man is not yet what he is to become and hence lives under the constant aspiration of self-realization before his own self, striving for his own being and struggling to exist in accordance with his program and aspirations in life. Life is thus a given but in the dynamic sense that implies that each of us has to make their lives, humanizing the world with their ideas and values through to self-fulfillment in what the author terms a kind of "materialized soul" (Ortega y Gasset, 2010: 145). Happiness is the supreme goal of life and must be turned into an ethical imperative. But happiness is not an easy task, because it means to achieve one's own life program, i.e., one's own Ego. The main difficulty to obtain this goal is the circumstance in which every man lives, that strange and heterogeneous milieu in which our projects and aims can fail. That's the reason why Ortega says that men sometimes envy the animals: not because they are happier than we, but because their adaptability to nature prevents them from being unhappy (Ortega y Gasset, 2009b: 540).

4 Is There a Historical A Priori?

At this point of our investigation, a distinction has to be made in order to continue, namely, the well-known distinction between *res gestae* and *historia rerum gestarum*

[1] We encounter again one of the main tenets of Ortega's philosophy and the ground for his critique of idealism. This issue has already been addressed in chapter "Ortega's Social Philosophy", and the reader is asked to refer to what was said there.

or between historical events and the historical science that recounts them. For Ortega as for Martin Heidegger a historical science is possible due to the fact that man himself is a historical being, i.e., lives in time. An understanding of the basic structures of human existence is the first condition for an understanding of human history. Just as, in a human life, the present is a small portion of the total life span, which mediates between birth and death, so the historical present is a small portion of the vital trajectory of humanity (Ortega y Gasset, 2006c: 400).[2] Historical changes produce changes in the idea of truth that is proper to each epoch; different epochs may have different ideas of what truth is. But this also means that each historical epoch has a certain idea of what truth in itself is. Only the changes in the circumstances that surround every human life may lead humanity to choose one kind of truth instead of another. Circumstance is thus a problem for the historian, as well as a difficulty for the men who leave in it, or the background of the vital and historical drama of the life of each person. Lesson X of *En Torno a Galileo* offers us some nice examples of this situation.

Medieval man, says Ortega, when faced with situations of despair, when discovering the shortcomings in their life, makes himself Christian, assuming the need to accept the firm existence of another life. True reality thereby becomes the spiritual reality of divine life, and man feels himself to be a creature, totally dependent on a higher being. The world of politics, economics, and science is thereby devalued as the true reality lies in the ultra-mundane and absolute life of God, which cannot be accessed through the means of reason. However, according to Ortega, this other intemporal or eternal life appears in Christian belief as a counter position to this world.

To the contrary of Greek polytheism, the Christian God is perceived as absolutely transcendent, and the only means of communication is attained through revelation, i.e., the Christian God is not just what He is, but must make Himself known to man. Accordingly, in Saint Augustine, the *motto* is *Credo ut intelligam*, which means that there is a knowledge of God that can only arise out of faith through the intuitive process of illumination through intellectual contemplation (Ortega y Gasset, 2006c: 473). According to this interpretation of the philosophy of Saint Augustine, man in himself does not have any reality, his labors in the world are a punishment, and knowledge consists only of the passive reception of illumination of the truth revealed in God.

However, Ortega identifies how, a few centuries on, this movement is no longer viewed as unilateral in which faith is not received by man in a passive form because it has to be assimilated and understood. However firm the Augustinian thesis of illumination may be, there is a point to be acknowledged: in the process of reception of divine truth by man, there is a moment of assimilation that is no longer pure passivity. In this sense, Ortega cites Saint Anselm, for whom man would not be able to find the illumination of faith without the working of intelligence. Notification about

[2] This idea in Ortega is closely linked to his conception of "generation" and of the importance of generations for historical development. We will return to this subject later.

the absolute and supernatural God may only be accepted naturally by man so that the divine science of revelation demands the divine science of scholastic theology. From Thomas Aquinas onward, we move on from an intelligence illuminated by faith for a better understanding of God to arrive in the presence of a separation between intelligence and faith: evident reason lives with its own principles independently of blind and irrational faith. Within the absolute reality of God, there is now a place for the autonomy of creatures acting of their own accord and recognizing their powers and their rights in a conscious fashion, endowing them with a new valuation of science and theology. As Aquinas' thought has become for centuries accepted in the Catholic Church, men tend to ignore the crisis it represented at the time[3]. Because if God is, at least to a certain point, accessible to human reason, if He is, so to speak, within the range of human reason (Ortega y Gasset, 2006c: 476), He is to a certain extent a part of nature.

These examples will allow us to understand one of the enigmas of history. If truths can be considered timeless, they must nevertheless appear in the course of time. And they must appear through the action and the thought of a man or some men. Historians must try to grasp the conditions that allowed these men to do so. On the other hand, there is a correlation between a truth and the kind of man able to think it. Men of the fifth century AD, in the time of Augustine, were not able to think about God what, eight centuries later, Thomas Aquinas said about the divine essence and the relation of God to man.

Scotus' ontology and Ockham's nominalism are a sign of the crises represented by late medieval thought. Ockham, namely, stated that conceptual reason does not serve to grasp the particular realities of the world, with its universality resumed by names and that do not serve to understand the universal realities of God that thereby become conceived as irrational. Man gets lost or disoriented, due to the fact of becoming obliged to live only with the experiences of the senses: "The irrational God that communicates bureaucratically with men through the ecclesiastic organization is left in the background of vital human landscape" (Ortega y Gasset, 2006c: 478). Indeed, Ortega considers that this constitutes the crisis of fifteenth-century man that then gives rise to modernity and a new level of attention to the world, to nature, and to social values. Man despairs of the ecclesiastic model of Christianity and, breaking away from God, tends to remain only with worldly things and with the hope of encountering a new instrument, a new rationality, a new science for helping resolve the problem of his surrounding world. Such a new instrument stems from the physical-mathematical reason of Galileo (Ortega y Gasset, 2006c: 479).

To sum up, two strong ideas may be taken from what has been said. In the first place, human culture, in different epochs, even the most divergent cultural orientations, as long as they have been produced by a rational being, i.e., man, have a minimum of coherence and are endowed with a minimum of meaning, which allows them to be understood in epochs sharing divergent ideas and values. In the second

[3] The concept of crisis is fundamental to the understanding of Ortega's Philosophy of History. We will have something more to say about it below.

place, history as a whole has an a priori structure, constituted by permanent changes that lead to the choice of certain set of ideas instead of another.

That's what makes the nineteenth century so interesting from the point of view of historical reason. It's an epoch of crisis in which some of the ancient beliefs, namely, those of Christian theology, may still be current but life follows divergent paths. In the fifteenth century, following the crisis opened by the nominalist critique of the great scholastic systems, God is seen as a power of creation, and there is no apparent reason, excepting God's will, for the world to be what it is and not something different. God's *potentia absoluta* merges with his *potentia ordinata*, i.e., there could have been any other reality and not that which actually exists. This means that the ground in which men's beliefs rested until then begins to lose its stability. The content of our faith could even be different, if others were the dogmas that God revealed to us. Ortega describes the spiritual situation of man at the beginning of modern times in the following manner:

> We are certain that God made the world but that it all ends there because, at the same time, we are certain that He did not made it for a reason. This matter of reason is something created, human, and an instrument we possess to deal with nature but not with what is above nature. (Ortega y Gasset, 2006c: 490)

The previous considerations will help us to understand the nature of periods of crisis and the way humanity may overcome them. Historical crises are characterized by two main factors: on the one hand a symptom of disorientation and of loss of roots and on the other hand the weakening of long-time established beliefs. This means that, in periods of crisis, reason and life are no longer in harmony, as well as culture and vital spontaneity (Cerezo, 2011: 181). But even historical crisis cannot make a radical tendency in human life disappear, namely, the fact that men are everywhere committed to the pursuit of truth; skepticism offers no way out and only seems to triumph thanks to the absolutism of abstract reason. But reason is first of all "vital reason," despite the idealistic misinterpretation of its tasks. That's what can make us hope, as it happened in the past, that a sound regime of harmony between individual aspirations and the claims of truth will always be re-established after an epoch of crisis.

5 The Concept of Generation

The concept of generation plays a central role in Ortega's philosophy of history. However, before entering in details about its meaning and importance, some words must be said about the historical and philosophical context in which Ortega carries his thoughts about the meaning of history. A lot has already been written about the coincidence between some of Ortega's main theses and Wilhelm Dilthey's conception of the moral sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*). Ortega always claimed his originality regarding the German philosopher and stressed the fact that his own theories about the meaning of history and man as a historical being preceded the posthumous

publication of Dilthey's works on the subject. Strong similarities exist, nevertheless, but they can be easily explained by factors alien to a direct influence. Both were, at the same time, trying to save the "spirit" from the attacks of positivist-oriented trends in philosophy and the social sciences; both were, also, committed to a rational explanation of historical events and of the outcomes of spiritual activity, while avoiding teleological explanations of a Hegelian kind.[4]

Now, like Hegel, Ortega wanted to explain historical changes, i.e., he wanted to find some kind of logical necessity and not only mere contingency, and this necessity he believed to have found in the way generations react to the problems with which they are faced. But, first of all, what is a generation? Although Ortega sometimes speaks of a generation as some kind of zoological variety, the more exact way of approaching this phenomenon is to say that a generation is a group of men united by the consciousness of the urgency to answer some historical tasks. However, historical science is not the study of generations, as if they were the true subjects of history. Societies—i.e., groups of men tied by a set of common practices and beliefs—are the true subjects of history.

Speaking about his own generation, he says that around 1911—when he was 28 years of age and made the acquaintance of 2 German young philosophers, about the same age, Nicolai Hartmann and Heinz Heimsoeth—he felt a strong necessity that was also felt by his 2 fellow students at the University of Marburg: Neokantianism had to be overcome. Of course they all had certain ideas about what philosophy should be, about the way the philosopher school fulfill his tasks, but that was not the most important (Ortega y Gasset, 2009a: 143): the important factor was that they thought that truth must have a certain meaning and consist in certain things regarding which Neokantianism was not false strictly speaking, but surely lacked that strong commitment to the pursuit of truth that must characterize authentic philosophy. To sum up, Neokantian philosophy had, says Ortega, a "forced" character (Ortega y Gasset, 2009a: 143), in the sense that it always ends up distorting the nature of things. In our chapters "Ortega and Germany" and "Ortega, Phenomenology and Idealism", we have already talked about the consequences, for Ortega, of that lack of commitment regarding the understanding of Spanish cultural situation. This way of presenting the tasks of a generation, however, has more than one consequence:

1. A generation is composed of active personalities that, so to speak, point the way and of a great number of passive people who just follow the others.
2. A generation is not a homogeneous group of men. They can be divided (and usually are) by distinct social, political, or religious programs; what unites them is a

[4] However, the aim of avoiding teleological explanations is not obtained if one just replaces them by a collection of facts—even though causally connected—with the aim, as Leopold von Rank puts it, of saying only what happened exactly as it has happened. Although history as a positive science has the praiseworthy goal of saving itself from logical deductions in a realm where there is no place for deductions (since historical events are not logically connected, at least in a Hegelian sense of logic), it cannot save itself from the trouble of creating its own categories to understand historical events. See Ortega (2006a: 234).

clear consciousness that those divergent programs are the answer to the same questions.

3. Men of the same generation feel a kind of proximity to each other, regardless their divergent programs, and a distance from men of previous generations, even in cases where there are great similarities between their programs.

Now, a generation, regardless its internal differences, is always a system of beliefs (Ortega y Gasset, 2006c: 391). In *En Torno a Galileo*, Ortega says there are two kinds of beliefs: those that are proper to a single individual and those that are current at the social level and have the character of anonymity. (Social life for Ortega, as we have learned in chapter "Ortega's Philosophical Anthropology", is the realm of anonymity.) Regarding this last kind of beliefs, everybody accepts them because they are endowed with current acceptance; they offer everybody a social pattern of action. They consist of everything I can count with, just like, says Ortega, I know that I cannot walk through a wall to get out from a room. However, something is not right here. The well-founded belief that I cannot walk through a wall is both individual and social (in the sense that I cannot imagine a human being that does not share it), but, unlike to what happens to most social beliefs *stricto sensu*, it is not subjected to historical change. What I mean is the following: this last belief is connected in such a way with man's normal experience of the world and the ways of getting oriented in it that it cannot be subjected to the historical change that characterize other social beliefs.

What we have just said is not just about historical-philosophical issues: it has to do in the first place with Ortega's anthropology. I must resume some ideas that have already been advanced in chapter "Ortega's Philosophical Anthropology" to understand this complex issue. First of all, we must remember that life, for Ortega, is a permanent "having to do," men live like the victims of a shipwreck that must brace to keep themselves at the water level. Of course, this is a metaphor, but this Orteguian metaphor, which he repeats time and again in his Lessons and books, stems from his conception that living is always dangerous, because future is unpredictable, the others appear as strangers before becoming familiar and friendly, human achievements are always in risk of being lost. The danger is not always the same,[5] and so human answers to the drama of life must vary.

Now, a second problem. Which are the temporal limits of a generation? For how long does a generation lead the destinies of humanity? Although Ortega gives us some figures (and I will mention them I a moment), the most interesting of his concept of generation is the conception of time that underlies it, because it is true historical time and not just the physical time that science applies in the study of things and we, with some naiveté, apply to man's achievements.

[5] Perhaps with the exception of some very general dangers, like death, that rather seem to be the common lot of every member of the human species. The question is in itself relevant, but we will skip it due to our present purposes in this chapter.

6 Perspectivism

According to Ortega, there is no unique method valid for the evident knowledge of reality as each man and each people provide their contribution or "point of view," in accordance with their epochs and circumstances, with only God the absolute responsible for them all (Ortega y Gasset, 2005c: 616). This approach resolves the problem of the relationship between truth and history without giving way to relativism. Actually, relativism is the huge problem that Ortega's philosophy of History has to face, like before him Dilthey and Hegel also had to face. Ortega addresses the problem in these terms: can a philosophy be, at the same time, faithful to the truth that human mind seeks in every circumstance and to the vitality of human existence that in each epoch calls "truth" the opinion that prevails on that epoch? The alternative seems clear: either we claim the impossibility to know what truth is—even admitting that it exists—or we claim that truth exists, although it is independent of human life and only valid for man as long as man is a pure rational being. If we accept the first term of this alternative, we fall in skepticism, and, while preserving human vitality, we deprive life of landmarks and guidance of any kind; if we accept the second, i.e., the viewpoint of rationalism, an invariable truth will deprive life of its substance that is change and variability.

Regarding the relation between God and the World, Ortega's response is provided in a chapter of a small text written in 1926, even before having embarked on his second navigation under the title of "God in sight," defending that the perspective of his epoch began to impose a notion of a secular God interrelated with mental acts that are alien to religion. This change of perspective characterizes every domain of human activity. Analyzing Spanish painting of the seventeenth century, Ortega stresses the fact that painters like Velasquez, whose paintings seem almost unfinished (since the background often is just sketched), would be misunderstood by the public of the former generation. So, the explanation for this fact cannot lie on Velasquez particular style, but on a change in the meaning of painting itself (Ortega y Gasset, 2006d: 618). However, regarding the relations between present and future—two of the three temporal dimensions of time and history—rationalism seems to be more dangerous for Ortega than skepticism, since it is the cause of the utopian thought that characterized the nineteenth century. Utopia means looking to the future without perspective, and that means without one of the basic characteristics of every human relation to circumstance. Utopianism believes that reason is not closely connected to its own time and is able to legislate for any imaginable future and human intellect can prevail over past and present.

In each epoch, the infinite reality of the Universe and the place man occupies in it unveils the attentions of man in a specific form, in accordance with a regime of preferences and blind spots. Indeed, in relation to the problem of the first and last questions as regards understanding the relationship between God and the World, the modern epoch is characterized by the notion of "agnosticism," in a sharp contrast with the first phase of Christian thought, where human temporal existence was totally reabsorbed in God's eternity (Ortega y Gasset, 2006c: 471). In the modern

epoch, there is only recognition of the immediate reality, and that ignores any need for a complete reality and the scope for "another life" and of any eternal "ultra-world" completely distinct from temporal reality:

> Man renounces on worthy pretexts of prudence the discovery of the secret of the ultimate things, of the "fundamental" things, gazes affixed exclusively to 'this world'. Because 'this world' is what is left from the Universe after we have removed all that is fundamental; thus, a world without foundations; without location, without cement, an islet that fluctuates adrift on a mysterious element. (Ortega y Gasset, 2004b: 607)

Through his philosophy of history, Ortega presents the transition from medieval religious culture, which gave way to the irrationalist overlapping of faith and reason, to a modern culture that reacts to this distortion through the predominance of scientific reason and the abandoning of adhesion to the divine through agnosticism. The contemporary epoch, to which the thinker belongs, expresses a return to the divine, no longer by means of fideist irrationality or through confessional faith but rather according to a deist rationality. In this historical analysis, Ortega puts at the same level, on the one hand, fideist irrationality and, on the other hand, Gnosticism, which was characterized by the devaluation of the world and an exclusive dedication to the "ultra-world" and the divine reality. Ortega mentions the gnostic metaphysical position of Marcion, according to whom the world was the work of a malignant entity and enemy of God, redemption meaning the undoing of this malignant action of creation, and characterizes these two antagonistic positions in the following terms: "(…) the agnostic's word is 'experience'—which means attention to 'this' world—the Gnostic's word is 'salvation', which means escape from this world and attention to the other" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004b: 607).

But all this only means that man has to invent a program for his own life, what Ortega calls a "static form of being" that may answer satisfactorily to his problems and difficulties (Ortega y Gasset, 2006b: 72). Man looks at himself as that imaginary being he intends to be and experiences it at the extent that he comes to believe that it corresponds to his real being. However, as we have already stressed, man has no static being, no substantial nature, but instead a history. This means that that imaginary being he intended to be in the course of history—history in the sense of res gestae—and the system of beliefs that accompanied them were not his real being. Man's real being consists only in the historical projects he makes for himself. When a project fails, men try to replace it with another: so, every historical epoch must be explained according to two factors, namely, the circumstance that originates a life project and the past projects that have failed and to which the present project reacts.[6]

Ortega arrives at this conclusion by applying the historical reason method on the assumption that man is "a pilgrim of being," without any limitations for that which he is capable of being and how his being is variable and grows in a progressive form, creating his own identity in the circumstances that surround him (Ortega y Gasset,

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[6] That's the reason why Ortega says that the past projects are still effective, as projects that must be avoided (Ortega y Gasset, 2006b: 72). We will come to this issue soon.

2006b: 72–73). The modern conception of man, the world and God is different from the Christian and stoic conceptions but could not exist without them. Progress requires that the new forms exceed the former but that for this to happen, it has to draw support from them in a cumulative process of being. The only aspect that is fixed is and determined in man is his free condition to make himself and to interpret the world: "(…) the being of man is irreversible, it is ontologically forced to advance always over itself" (Ortega y Gasset, 2006a: 69). However, the future is not conceivable without the past. That's the important issue addressed in *History as a System*, written in 1941. So, let us suppose man facing the present crisis. (One must remember that Ortega is writing more than 75 years ago, when the world was plunged into World War II.) He tries to find the best political solution for it, after the experiences of democracy, liberalism, monarchical absolutism, and feudalism. The first question is: is modern man no longer any of these different things? In a certain way they are his past, i.e., they show him past experiences or ways of living that, at their own epochs, were thought to be the solution for the crisis they should overcome. Now, man has made all these experiences; he has them over his shoulders, so to speak; and this means he is able to evaluate them, both successes and failures. As John Graham stresses, for Ortega man's present possibilities contain his whole past (Graham, 1994: 63). However, historical circumstances having changed, man knows he cannot repeat past experiences, the very fact that he has made them is like a force that prevents him from making them again and propels him toward the future. Ortega resumes this idea saying that the proof that the past stills exists is the fact that it remains active within ourselves, preventing us to repeat it (Ortega y Gasset, 2006b: 70).

Taking up opposition to idealism, Ortega affirms that radical reality is not only thinking but rather "my life," this trans-objective intimate center in which there is no divide between the Ego, the Universe, and God: "(…) that things, that the Universe, that God Himself are the contents of my life – because "my life" is not only me, me the subject, but living is also the world" (Ortega y Gasset, 2008a: 350). Primordial reality is neither any mundane or divine thing nor the subjective intimacy of cogito. However, it is human life in his intimacy with itself and with things, in a dynamic coexistence in which the things, the Universe, and God himself are constituted as contents in "my life." This notion of correlation between the reality that is there in the evidence of the cosmos and the invisible perspectivism of the beliefs and the subject that confronts this with his ideas appears in further detail in Berta Pimentel's conception that life is made in mundanity, in events independent of any a priori element: "The ideal feeds history but it is historicity that constitutes actual reality" (Pimentel, 2007: 254). The being in man is a passage, a personal and collective circumstance, ever since stoicism and Christianism through to rationalism and vitalism, and with this narrative escaping capture by pure physical-mathematical reason but instead by historical reason. This progression in the configuration of reality is not a priori defined—in the sense of the utopian way of thinking we mentioned above—but may only be stated a posteriori by historical reason (Ortega y Gasset, 2006b: 71). That's why the only way to understand the being of a particular man is to tell the story of his life. The same holds for

civilizations: “It would be impossible to understand very well just what is the European ‘rationalist’ man should we not know exactly what it means to be a Christian, what it means to be Christian without knowing what it means to be stoic, a and so forth” (Ortega y Gasset, 2006b: 75).

Now, we come to a decisive point; historical reason is a biographical reason. We have discovered the intimacy of man’s life. Antiquity only acknowledged the world of things; man was only a small part of this world, that part that was endowed with reason. Modern Times have gone a step beyond, as long as “subjectivity” was put at the basis of reality: from then on, things could only justified that they were real and how they were real once subjectivity reckoned their existence. However, as we have seen before (namely, in our chapters “Ortega and Germany” and “Ortega, Phenomenology and Idealism”), a subjectivity opposed to the external reality is only half of the entire subjectivity. That why philosophy had to come to “life” (Ortega y Gasset, 2008a: 348). Life—i.e., the new continent Ortega claims to have discovered—is not subjectivity. That’s why Ortega may also claim that discovering life philosophy has attained a higher lever than Antiquity and Modernity: “higher” means here that objective reality and subjectivity have not disappeared; they only have been, *sit venia verbo*, swallowed by a new kind of reality, place in a higher level than the other two. The digestive metaphor is quite appropriate here. Something that has been swallowed does not disappear; it just changes its original state.

The problem with idealism, the reason why a historically oriented philosophy is impossible if someone takes an idealist point of view, is its unilaterality. The existence of things has become problematic from the moment onward we think about their relation to us; but, even if, so far, we can follow the idealistic trend of thought, its consequences are inacceptable as long as we have discovered the radical reality of human life. And the consequences are the fact that idealist philosophies are just “contents” of our consciousness (Ortega y Gasset, 2008a: 348). That is, according to Ortega, the first and more important tenet of every idealist philosophy. It’s not nonsense, in the sense that it clearly has a meaning that anyone can understand, just as I can understand that someone who says that 2 + 2 = 5 is just trying to make an addition, although the result is false. In the same way it’s false that things are “contents” of my consciousness. When I look at a thing, I do not look at an element of my inner life: I look at a thing that is “out there,” occupying the place where I see it, but in a special kind of relation to me that I call “perception.”

It’s true that Ortega uses the word “content” when he speaks about the “contents” of my life, but here “content” has quite a different meaning. If I can say that everything that is in the universe is a content of my life—that even God, if he exists, must be a content of my life—that is because my life is not only me, the subject that Modern Times put at the ground of reality, as the radical *datum* of the universe (Ortega y Gasset, 2008a: 350), but also the world. Idealism, the philosophy of Modern Times, brought to philosophy the idea that being or existing meant, in the first place, existing independently from any other reality. This “superlative of ontological independence” (Ortega y Gasset, 2008a: 349) cannot have any kind of history. History is only possible for a being that exists in time. That’s why, faced with the fact that there are two different kinds of reality, the thought and the things that

are thought, idealism was forced to ask: which of these two is independent from the other? Which of these two really is, i.e., independent of time and its vicissitudes?

According to Ortega, the being of man is his biographical or historical life that is not predetermined but made in accordance with his decisions, containing all of the past and everything to come in his circumstance in the world (Ortega y Gasset, 2008b: 574). To be a man always means "to become a stranger"; to be in a circumstance that was not created for him, with which he has to struggle; in a way, to live is to have the nostalgia of not being God, the Being that floats in his own element, for whom nothing is alien or strange (Ortega y Gasset, 2008b: 611). The world in which we are enclosed does not correspond to our needs, and, for this reason, we feel the need to question the ground upon which we live and to conceive "another world": "A world in that sense favorable to man is exactly another world, the world man dreams for himself because this world is rather the opposite—an unfavorable world to man" (Ortega y Gasset, 2008b: 616).

7 Meaning in History

As I said earlier, Ortega's philosophy of historical reason addresses the problem of human action in time as well as the historiological problem of reconstructing this action and the aims of historical actors. Before addressing this last issue, one must remember that for Ortega concepts and ideas—and, above all, scientific ideas—only touch reality in some of their aspects; for their greatest part, they are a kind of free speculation, an intellectual sport done for its own sake. This is most true of modern theoretical physics, namely, quantum mechanics, but any scientific endeavor (including History) has this same feature. Now, how to fill the inevitable gaps between facts? As we shall see, that's the task Ortega gives to imagination in science.

However, regarding History as a science—the *historia rerum gestarum*—the problems are even more complicated than with physical science. Material objects can be submitted to the experimental procedures a researcher thinks as the more appropriate to the theme he is addressing. The same doesn't hold for historical events. The physical and scientific truths are exact but incomplete and penultimate, due to be overcome by ontological truths, which are inexact but complete and ultimate, giving us the integral radicality of the world (Ortega y Gasset, 2008a: 265). This continues to be a speculative and theoretical approach but one which recognizes the infinite mystery of reality that emerges in the multiplicity of the perspectives stemming from rooting the subject in the dynamism of the historical circumstance which, in the words of Ortega, is constituted as the "negation of the Ego" and "being against myself": "Paradise is the magic world we talked about the other day. The world, in contrast, is the anti-paradise" (Ortega y Gasset, 2008b: 619).

As Julián Marías highlights, by the action of man on the World, it is inevitable that he reaches beyond physical science and asks about his origins and his destiny as it is not possible to renounce the desire for a complete and integral notion of the Universe and of a notion about the essential meaning of life (Marías, 1950: 180). If,

like idealist philosophies of Modern Times postulated, the radical reality of the universe is me and my thoughts, to exist would only mean to enter in oneself; correlatively, to be a historian would mean to be a kind of psychologist. Man would not be limited except by himself; in other words, he would be in the same position as God (Ortega y Gasset, 2009b: 530). Ortega makes a contrast between this divine condition of existence, in which God has everything immediately present to him, with the human condition: "When the catechism ensures that God is everywhere, it is only symbolizing this peculiar condition of divine existence that turns it into such a distinctive thing that contradicts what we understand by 'human life'" (Ortega y Gasset, 2005d: 589). Contrary to what would be the point of view of God, men have always looked at the circumstance in which they live as an element distinct from themselves. We say that human beings exist because the word existence means, according to its etymology, a being out of oneself, i.e., in a world where there are other things, a world that is distinct from me, alien to me, where things should not be merely called "objects," but rather "facilities" or "difficulties," depending on whether they are favorable or unfavorable to men's projects. Moreover, each man is a system of possibilities and impossibilities; so, when a historian tries to grasp the significance of a human existence, he must, above all, take notice of that system (Moreno, 2005: 183). And just like the actions of a single person stem from the individual system of his life, in the same way historical actions stem from a much more complex system that is constituted by the totality of the social, economic, and political relations of an epoch.

From this perspective, where philosophic knowledge looks like a search for the being of the things of the world, a search which stems from the radical human dimension that is man's ignorance, Ortega considers that the light that shows us the provisional realities of the world is not sufficient to us and demands that we strive to know the stable and permanent being of these things. In "Qué es el conocimiento?" Ortega puts in the following manner the distinction between the finite and limited reality of human life in the world and the infinite and perfect reality of God, whose existence coincides with the things, not needing to search for the being that is latent in them:

> God may deal directly with infinite things in number and in ways of behaving. He takes into consideration each one of them, those from the present and those from every tomorrow. He is as infinite as they are; His sphere of existence coincides with the sphere in which those things inhabit. (Ortega y Gasset, 2005d: 589)

Indeed, this confirms here Ortega's rejection of an idea he had already rejected in his 1923 work *The Theme of Our Time*, namely, the refusal to associate the divine to an ideal of "infinite emptiness" (Ortega y Gasset, 2005c: 597), in the fashion of a nirvanic extinction that annihilates the existential reality of life. Moreover, he rejected the opposition between the divine, as the center of all perfections, and any form of mundane life. Affirming life as that which is what it is, in its immanent qualities certified by science, morality, and art, cannot mean any separation and breaking away from God as sought after by Christian Gnosticism, with its exclusive valuation of a transcendent and ultra-vital reality:

> Given these two antagonistic and equally exclusive preferences, the understanding should be established by an intermediary line, precisely the line that sets the frontier between one world and the other. This line where 'this world' ends, belongs to it, and has therefore a 'positive' character. However, in turn, such a line begins in the ultra-world and is therefore transcendental. (Ortega y Gasset, 2004b: 607)

Following this line of thought, Ortega values Hegel's efforts to think things rationally from within, i.e., his endeavors to avoid an intellectualist and constructive methodology that could only entail an imposition into historical events of a reason alien to them. Historical events, Hegel acknowledged, possess an original form of being, prior to the rational activity of the historian who tries to grasp their meaning (Bonilla, 2013: 109). However, as Clementina Cantillo argues, Ortega rejects the Hegelian process in which the nexus between reason and history, universality and particularity, thinking and life were submitted to the pure dimension of the logic of spirit and of a rational teleological development. Only a narrative and biographic reason is capable of learning the unrepeatable aspect of particularity (Cantillo, 2016: 199). That's why one of the main critiques Ortega addresses to the Hegelian notion of Spirit—that according to Hegel sets history in motion—has to do with its static character, the opposite of the dynamism that is proper to life. Ortega, of course, acknowledges Hegel's efforts to give Spirit some kind of activity (Ortega y Gasset, 2006b: 63). However, as Ortega immediately notices, that activity is an internal motion, Spirit comes to be at the end what it already was at the beginning; while in motion, the Hegelian Spirit keeps its identity with itself. "Spiritualism" in the Hegelian sense is just a kind of up-side-down naturalism, because naturalism doesn't consist in speaking of ideas as if they were material things, but rather in speaking of material things as if they were ideas that kept an identity with themselves.

However, this philosophy of life assumes that there always has to be a minimum of appropriateness or a common formal structure between thinking and reality, without which knowledge is not possible: "The world can only enter my mind if the structure of my mind partially coincides with the world's structure, if my thinking behaves in a manner that coincides with my being" (Ortega y Gasset, 2008a: 274). Hence, Ortega considers that, for the prospects of a correlation between the knowing subject and the object, and for there to be knowledge, the appropriateness has to be mutual: thinking has to coincide with the thing, but this is only possible because the thing in itself already coincides with the structure of our thinking. We may verify on the one hand the rejection of a skeptical perspective, according to which being does not coincide at all with thinking, and on the other hand the rejection of the epistemological optimism of coincidence, according to which either knowledge shall result from being (realism) or being results from knowledge (idealism). When a man looks at his own life, most of its details may seem to him contingent; but the overall contour of his life will seem perfectly understandable. This contour is not irrational, since, at the very moment he looks to his own life, it stems from the totality of his past, from his doings, and these were what they were due to the social milieu in which he was educated and raised, with its system of habits and beliefs. His life will appear to him as a system, just like the history of the "collective man" (Ortega y Gasset, 2006b: 74), i.e., human societies is also a system. According to

Ortega, this happens not due to the subterranean activity of a Hegelian Spirit, but because human experiences in history form a chain and each link in the chain is connected to all the others.

Now, since philosophy lost the belief in the Hegelian spirit, it seems that history has lost all its meaning. As Ortega describes this process, in the first lesson of the Lisbon Lectures on *Historical Reason*, things began to turn bad when the world lost its faith in progress. As long as that faith remained alive (until around 1900, according to Ortega), the idea of meaning was not abandoned altogether, and the intellectuals, especially in Europe, looked as if they were able to guide humanity, indicating the direction the course of history was to take. Around 1920 Ortega says that it was evident for everybody that intellectuals were no longer able to do so (Ortega y Gasset, 2009c: 630). He even adds that it is surprising that they were able to keep a guiding position for almost two centuries of European history; actually, the fact that intellectuals have a special role to perform has only been acknowledge, in the history of humanity, since 2500 years (at least in the West), with long periods of intermittence. But what is an absolute novelty in the twentieth century is the attempt to organize the whole human existence putting radically aside the intellectuals (Ortega y Gasset, 2009c: 631).

But that is not the whole story. Humanity has lost faith in the intellectuals, it has also lost faith in reason and in science, but the worst—says Ortega quoting from Husserl's *Formal and Transcendental Logic* (Ortega y Gasset, 2009c: 664)—is that science has also lost faith in itself. With quantum mechanics physics, no more knows what space and time mean; with mathematics, the validity of the principle of the excluded middle became uncertain; the science of law doesn't know what right means. Our present historical situation, stresses Ortega, is even worse than the situation Descartes had to face in the first half of the seventeenth century, which led him to put everything in doubt (Ortega y Gasset, 2009c: 678). Nevertheless, Descartes' example can be of some use to us. Like him we are bound to the requirement of overcoming a crisis. Descartes doubted about everything, but his doubt ended with the discovery of the cogito. Ortega has already shown that the Cartesian solution is of no use once modernity comes to its end. But he emphasizes that, like Descartes, the crisis must be overcome. At the end of modernity, we can no longer rely in a subjectivistic philosophy. Subjectivism (and its political counterpart, utopianism) is one of the reasons of modern crisis. Time has come to go beyond modernity, without falling back in the opposite unilateralism: the objectivism of ancient and medieval philosophy. That's the new task reason has to take upon itself.

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Epilogue

1 Ortega's System of Philosophy

Ortega's philosophical life was not a very happy one. His endeavors to give his philosophy a systematic form and to display it systematically before the public were not successful. Moreover, his remarkable literary gifts often led people to think he was more a talented disseminator of philosophical, aesthetic, and scientific ideas than an original philosopher. In *The Idea of Principle in Leibniz* Ortega says sourly that none of his contemporaries tried to grasp the following single fact: his writings were not literature that looked like philosophy, but instead a systematic philosophy that offered itself under the guise of a literary text (Ortega y Gasset, 2009b: 1136). Of course, there are two distinct issues here. The first has to do with the essence of philosophy itself, the other with the method of its exposition.

One can always wonder if a certain philosophy could or could not be presented in a way different from the way the philosopher actually chose. For instance: could Plato display the content of the *Sophist* in the fashion of, say, Aristotle's *Metaphysics*? Or was it possible for Kant to write the *Critique of Pure Reason*, without losing some of its content, in the form of a platonic dialogue? Ortega never addressed this kind of problems directly, but we have enough references to them in his writings in order to be able to get a general idea of his thoughts on the issue. At least three different items must be stressed.

1. In the first place, his well-known statement, in *What is Philosophy?*, that clarity is the courtesy of the philosopher. Ortega seems to think that deep philosophical ideas can be displayed before a large audience in a way accessible to those that do not master completely philosophical technicalities.
2. In the second place, the mission Ortega assigned to philosophy and to philosophical activities in the specific Spanish context in which he lived. Spanish backwardness—at least so he thought—forced him to avoid the literary style of

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the philosophical handbook, accessible only to the specialist, and even to address the general public in newspaper articles.

3. In the third place, the systematic character Ortega always assigned to philosophy, that character that Neokantianism struggled to revive in the middle of the nineteenth century, regardless of its failure as just one more idealistic variant of modern philosophy. Notwithstanding, philosophy has a specific level, and that level is the level of systematic thought (Ortega y Gasset, 2009a: 136).

Accidental circumstances also prevented Ortega from achieving the degree of systematicity and coherence he longed to give to his thought. José Lasaga points out that Ortega, after returning to Spain following his second journey to Argentina, cherished the project of a scientific explanation of the philosophical ideas he was maturing at least since 1912 (Lasaga, 2013: 70). The Spanish political circumstances prevented him from carrying out this systematic program, which was only left halfway in the Lectures at the University of Madrid between 1929 and 1936, which we addressed in chapter "Ortega, Phenomenology and Idealism" of this book. Nevertheless, if Ortega didn't have then enough time to be a full-time philosopher—he founded with some friends a political party and was for a time deputy at the Spanish parliament —his political commitment was largely due to his philosophy and the way he looked at the mission philosophy had to accomplish.

Of course, if one wants to know whether Ortega has failed or not in his purpose of giving his own philosophy a systematic form, one must first state what is the meaning of the word "system." Morón Arroyo argues that the apparent systematicity of many scholastic handbooks was only due to the order of exposition of the philosophical matters; in fact, they lacked that inner systematicity that is the outcome of the relation between philosophical disciplines and life (Morón Arroyo, 1968: 62). So, only after defining the meaning of "system" will one be able to say whether Ortega could ever accomplish his project; perhaps many commentators would be more willing to argue that in its essence Ortega's thought lacked that kind of intimate unity that would allow him to give it the systematicity he was looking for. Morón Aroyo, in *El Sistema de Ortega y Gasset*, gives six possible definitions of the word "system." In my opinion, his definition n. 4 is the one that suits better to Ortega's philosophy: a system—he says—is the search for a radical reality in which all other realities find their source and regarding which they all appear as secondary.

Now, for Morón Arroyo the problem of the systematicity of Ortega's philosophy seems to be a pseudo-problem (Morón Arroyo, 1968: 65). I don't agree. Three different albeit closely interconnected things must be stressed: (1) for Ortega philosophy is system, as Neokantianism, but also German Idealism (despite its lack of a sincere effort to search for truth), has proven; (2) when he criticizes phenomenology he says that its weakness lies in a lack of systematicity, despite the rich analysis phenomenology has been able to offer; (3) life has an intrinsic systematicity and this systematicity is the basis on which to ground any philosophy that wants to achieve its goals as a radical science. Our initial problem has now shifted and must be formulated differently: how can life be systematic, since it is not some kind of universal and abstract entity, but instead, always individual life?

That is perhaps the hardest problem of Ortega's philosophy, which we have tried to address in chapter "Phenomenology Revisited". Reflection gives life its systematicity. Not only the occasional reflection about difficult issues in everyday life—what might be labeled "empirical reflection"—but above all life's permanent taking hold of itself, since its executivity (or its permanent "having to do") always leaves mnemic traits that afterwards can be traced back to the act that was being executed and to its outcome.[1] Consequently, decisions about future acts arise out of the sediment of the previous ones. But this is more than a psychological fact; it is the way life structures itself, posits itself as individual life—as an always untransferable life, as we tried to explain in chapter "Ortega's Philosophical Anthropology"—and posits everything else as appearing in it.

However, it is important to stress once more that if life is to be the systematic reality that gives a philosophy its systematic character, it cannot be biological life, opposed to culture. Ortega has highlighted the misunderstandings associated with the use of the word "biology"; no doubt biology is a science of life; however, biology addresses life from its "animal side," according to the way sciences like physics and chemistry fashioned its own concepts.[2] Biology can offer useful concepts to address life from a philosophical point of view, but men don't live according to those concepts, for two main reasons: in the first place, because the great majority of men (with the exception of professional biologists and other health sciences specialists) don't know them or don't understand their true meaning, in the second place, because they are cultural products that are likely to change with the progress of science.

Now, what is life if it is not the series of biological events? Is life, perhaps, a series of psychical events? A small paper Ortega wrote for the *Neuer Zürcher Zeitung* in 1932, commemorating the second centenary of Goethe's birth, will help us find the right answer. Some may be inclined to think that the authentic human life is the one we grasp when we look within ourselves: our judgments, our decisions, and our evaluations may seem more authentically ours than biological events, i.e., those events that have some connection with our bodily condition. However, judgments, decisions, and evaluations are a part of our true story or of our true self only if we look at them from the outside (Ortega y Gasset, 2006b: 148). It we chose to look at them from an alleged "inside" we will only see them as psychical phenomena, as something that happens "in the mind," more or less connected with bodily events and with real things, whether judged, decided, or evaluated. Looking

[1] Ortega has two different concepts of reflection: the one we just mentioned (perhaps one could label it the correct one)—clearly stated at the end of his 1924 essay on Kant—and another one, on the basis of which he criticizes phenomenology. We talked about this in our chapters "Ortega, Phenomenology and Idealism" and "Phenomenology Revisited". We will come back to this again in the final section of this chapter.

[2] Ortega has clearly made these distinctions in 1929 in *What is Philosophy?*. Perhaps they were not clearly made in 1923 in *The Theme of our Time,* and this gave rise to an accusation of "biologism," perhaps not entirely unfair if we think of the way Ortega expressed his own ideas. About this issue see San Martín (2013: 57 ff.).

from the outside means looking at them from the point of view of the project each human life is, in its struggle (Ortega labels it also its "having to do") with the circumstance.[3] As we saw in chapter "Historical Reason", Ortega calls the totality of these experiences—i.e., the fact that man lives in a world where he has a direct contact with things[4]—a biography. Only biographical life is systematic.

Of course, one must add that life is not immediately systematic for itself. Men live, most of the times, according to certain beliefs, sometimes are forced to brace (as Ortega used to say) to survive in the ocean of difficulties life brings, while other times they just feel lost and their lives seem meaningless. The systematicity of life—its categorial character, as we may say—needs to be unveiled by means of philosophical analysis. Besides, this need stems from the fact that "in the last three centuries" (Ortega y Gasset, 2008: 231) things have become confused. Idealism turned the meaning of life into something that only comes to light the moment I take consciousness of what my life is. Instead, for Ortega, the consciousness that I am, for instance, making a chair is so transcendent to my life as the chair itself, i.e., both take place in the world where I live. Moreover, Ortega stresses that what must be called human life is not only the life that happens in me or in another human being. My life, as any man's life, has two ingredients: me and my circumstance. Therefore, the decisive point, as this book tried to show in chapters "Ortega, Phenomenology and Idealism", "Phenomenology Revisited", and "Ortega's Social Philosophy", is the fact that these categories of life are the categories of a life that puts, at the same time, itself and the world.

2 Ortega and Politics: A Philosopher *in Partibus Infidelium*?

To retrieve the relations between Ortega's philosophy and his political commitments we must recall what was said in chapters "Spain Is the Problem; Europe Is the Solution" and "Ortega and Germany" about his personal and philosophical relations with the Generation of 98, especially with Miguel de Unamuno. In the years before the publication of the *Meditations on Quixote*, Ortega was no less politically active and with a no less sense of the urgency of his commitments, than in the early 30s. At the time, however, he was still under the influence of Neokantian philosophy and especially of Natorp's Social Pedagogy. Ortega called himself then a "liberal

[3] It's well known that Ortega wrote, in 1932, an essay on Goethe entitled "Pidiendo um Goethe desde dentro" (Ortega y Gasset, 2006a: 120–142). But this "from inside" (*desde dentro*) is in fact "from outside," not because Ortega tried to state a paradoxical idea, but because the "inside" of a person is the sum total of her undertakings in the "outside," i.e., the circumstance in which she lives. In the 1940 Buenos-Aires conference on the life and work of Luis Vives (which has already been mentioned above, in our chapter "Ortega's Exiles"), he resumes the same idea.

[4] We tried to show, in our chapters "Ortega, Phenomenology and Idealism" and "Phenomenology Revisited", that whenever Ortega claims that a direct contact with thing is the primary phenomenon, the one from which philosophy has to start, he is criticizing idealism, for which representation (or "consciousness of…") is the primary phenomenon.

socialist." It is not clear that the expression meant for Ortega the same it means now at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Undoubtedly it meant for Ortega the adherence to a political program that assigned to the state the role of promoting, at the same time, civic education, economic progress, reinforcement of Spanish national identity, and the rise of the standard of living of the working classes. This political program stems directly from some basic Neokantian tenets, at least in the way Ortega understood them: the universal stands above the particular, the humanity stands above the individuals. We showed, especially in chapter "Ortega and Germany", how the first contacts with phenomenology, from 1912 onwards, contributed to a change in this point of view, a change that was particularly evident in Ortega's analysis of the paintings of Ignacio Zuloaga. That is the reason why the contact with Unamuno was so important for Ortega. Unamuno—who at the turn of the century had advocated a political and cultural program very similar to Ortega's program (Cerezo, 2011: 368–369), who was then even more intimately committed than Ortega with the Spanish Socialist Party—finally convinced him of the importance of the particular, of the necessity of giving reason of its existence, and of bringing it to the level of perfection it is able to attain, which may not be absolute perfection, but can at least be that level of perfection that makes it worth living for. That's what Ortega calls, following Plato—as we explained above, in chapter "Ortega and Germany"—to save the phenomena.[5]

If one reads everything Ortega wrote in the first years of the Spanish Republic—those writings are now gathered in Volume V of his *Complete Works*—one will probably regret that Ortega lost so much time addressing political issues. We can find there some interesting ideas about what he called the "decency" in political matters, an honest appeal to moderation, a clear analysis of the political proclamations full of rhetoric devices but devoid of ideas about what to do. Perhaps there is no more to find there. However, we must reckon that the aim Ortega tried to achieve writing them is in attunement with the mission he attributed to philosophy: to bring each thing or event to the maximum of perfection it can get. This mission was overtly proclaimed in the *Meditations on Quixote* and resumed a little before the proclamation of the Republic, in 1928, in the Prologue he wrote to the Spanish translation of Hegels' *Philosophy of History*.[6] Here, he writes that the insatisfaction that stems from the fact that things are not so perfect as they could be has a completely different nature than the apparently more radical insatisfaction of someone

[5] To my knowledge, there is no thorough investigation about the relations between Ortega and Plato. Plato was an important reference for Marburg Neokantianism. Ortega, however, will never follow Natorp's interpretation of Plato's theory of ideas, which consisted in making platonic ideas the equivalent of the complete possibility of determination of a phenomenon, in a Kantian sense. But Plato is important for him as the one who understood that the task of the philosopher is to grasp concepts—the philosopher is a kind of sportsman that hunts concepts—since they are the possibility of security in the middle of life's contingencies.

[6] This Prologue, published for the first time in *Revista de Occidente*, in February 1928, is now in Ortega's *Complete Works*, Volume V (Ortega y Gasset, 2006c: 229–247).

who refuses to see the hidden value everything has. Such a person only projects his own inferiority in what things show when they are viewed from without.

Ortega's political declarations and speeches of the years immediately before and after the proclamation of the Spanish Republic in 1931 were written a few years after the publication of *The Revolt of the Masses*, with the exception of its "Prologue to the French," written in exile. We should expect that his new conception of the role of the state, different from the role he attributed to it as a young "liberal socialist," came to the foreground and, at least to a certain extent, it does come. A new situation has arisen—Ortega states in *The Revolt of the Masses*—that could not be clearly seen before, although it was maturing for a long time: the connection between state power and a new anthropological type characterized by its lack of moral responsibility and contempt regarding any kind of effort to keep the inherited level of civilization. Sometimes there seems to be a kind of Nietzschean *pathos* in the way Ortega speaks about the role of the state and the harm it can do to social life. However, one must not forget that at the time of his first political initiatives Ortega accredited the state with a very important task: the task of rescuing the impotent Spanish nation, culturally and socially backward, and politically demoralized. Perhaps that's the reason why he speaks a lot of times of "nation" and not of state, sometimes in contexts where we expected him to talk about the state. To sum up, no clear-cut distinction between the two is made in his speeches and essays of the early 1930s.

So, until the dissolution of the political organization he created at the wake of the Spanish Republic, with some long-time friends and intellectual companions (like Gregório Marañon, among others), the *Agrupación al Servício de la República*, Ortega seems most of the times to speak indifferently of the nation or the state. However, some other times, for instance, in a newspaper article of December 1933, published in *El Sol*, state and nation do not coincide and even seem to be in conflict: private interests of opposed social and political nature—Ortega states—took hold of the state and, against this situation, it is urgent to affirm the moral values gathered around the idea of nation (Ortega y Gasset, 2006c: 286).[7] This issue deserves some attention. However, to address it we must also look to a paper written some years earlier, in 1927, although not of a strict political character, entitled "Mirabeau o el político." Sánchez Cámara (2005: 195) stresses the importance of this paper to a fair understanding of Ortega's political thought in the late twenties and the early thirties, even more so that some believe it could be presented as a proof of an antiliberal drive in Ortega's thought and of his move toward political conservatism.[8] In fact,

[7] Some years before, in 1923, Ortega said just the opposite, although the situation was not entirely the same. When the workers movement in Catalonia (led by anarcho-syndicalist unions, which means a political current strongly opposed to any form of state power) seemed to oppose its private interests to the interests of other parts of the society, Ortega urged for a moderate and competent state program, in order to keep the unity of Spanish society (2005b: 266).

[8] Exactly when Ortega's political thought underwent a conservative drive is a debatable issue. Perhaps we can retain the opinion of Jesús Álvarez that divides Ortega's political thought in three different phases: (1) the liberal socialist, until 1914; (2) the liberal properly, until his disenchantment with the Republic in the early thirties; (3) the liberal conservative, until his death in 1955

while Ortega stresses that the true politician is someone that grasps the dangers of a situation and installs order where there was none, he at the same time states that the knowledge of what to do with political power is also the politician's distinctive trait, namely, what separates him from the intellectual.

Mirabeau, although belonging to an epoch Ortega thinks surpassed, was not a "modern" politician, at least according to the slightly derogatory notion of "modern" Ortega's writings almost always convey. Modern politicians act as a consequence of ideas that were so to speak manufactured for their own perfection's sake, and not for the sake of reality. These ideas are revolutionary or utopian ideas. State power has become the means to get those ideas effective. That's the reason why Ortega argues in *The Rebellion of the Masses* that nowadays the greatest danger comes from the state. As I have shown in chapter "Ortega and Germany", Ortega, since his farewell to Neokantianism, thinks that the time of revolutionary or utopian ideas has come to an end, which does not mean that the time has come for reactionary ideas: in his own words, reactionary ideas are just the parasite of revolutionary ideas (Ortega y Gasset, 2005b: 631). Time has come for a different kind of ideas.

In short, I think that, when addressing political matters, Ortega is not *in partibus infidelium*. The reason is that, as we have seen, he looks at political ideas as an expression of the prevailing ways of thinking in a certain epoch. As he once said (Ortega y Gasset, 2005b: 626), one is not radical in politics if, first, one is not radical in thought. Radicalism in thought, however, is not only a characteristic, as one might be inclined to suppose, of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries political movements. In the first place, radicalism is the characteristic of the philosophers and scientists of the modern age. Descartes, Galileo, or Kant were radicals, since they believed that thought could fashion reality, tell reality what reality should be, in order for thought to know it and to act upon it. Theirs, however, contrary to contemporary radicalism, was a legitimate one, since it expressed the reaction against traditionalism, i.e., to a world vision that lived according to the past and did not reckon the validity of individual initiatives.

3 The Relevance of Ortega's Legacy

The philosophical community and the public that reads philosophical books have not always agreed on how to evaluate Ortega's philosophy. Is he a first-order philosopher or not? Let us reopen again Ortega's first book, *The Meditations on Quixote*. Reading the first four sections of the "Preliminary Meditation," a reader well informed about the most important philosophical issues of the beginning of the twentieth century could easily find there a clear and elegant presentation of some important themes debated in Husserl's first volume of *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure*

(Álvarez, 2013: 272 ff.). Pedro Cerezo seems to partake this opinion, although he evaluates differently the end of Ortega's public proclamations of his liberal creed at the beginning of the Civil War.

Phenomenology, regardless of this reader being a phenomenologist or not: namely, the distinction between facts and essences, the phenomenological reduction, the perspectivistic character of perception, among some others. Perhaps the same reader would argue that Ortega is only over-simplifying hard phenomenological issues. After all, in less than 20 pages it is very difficult, or even impossible, to address issues Husserl took more than 400 pages to address and, even then, in an incomplete and unsatisfactory way, as the historical development of his thought has shown. What chapters "Ortega, Phenomenology and Idealism" and "Phenomenology Revisited" of this book tried to show is that matters are much more complex and that our imaginary reader is just a superficial reader. The main reason is that this kind of reader overlooks the fact that in these 20 pages or so Ortega unveils an important characteristic of perception that, albeit not totally absent in Husserl's works at the time (namely, in *Ideas I*, which Ortega had read some months before the publication of the *Meditations*), was not clearly highlighted by Husserl himself.

It is no accident that the author of this "Preliminary Meditation" addresses the reader while he is himself walking in the woods of the El Escorial; during his walk he looks at the wood from within, has a certain perspective of it, hears different sounds whose origin he identifies and whose distance he tries to evaluate. Moreover, from the place he each moment occupies—getting successive perspectives from a totality he never grasps in its entirety—the trees he just saw and the ones he is about to see seem to extend beyond themselves in elusive forms that bring to his mind the nymphs of ancient mythology. Further in the same book, Ortega analyzes Dom Quijote's perception of the braces of a mill, where Dom Quijote believes to see the arms of a giant. What Ortega is trying to say is that what in each perception points beyond itself toward still unperceived perspectives—a huge problem in the phenomenological theory of perception—is always dependent on the cultural milieu of the perceiver. Today, we reckon that these ideas were not absent from Husserl's phenomenology, because we know the development of his thought and got the acquaintance of his unpublished manuscripts. That was not evident for Husserl's readers who approached his published works in 1914. Ortega was in the right track when he developed the phenomenological theory of perception in this direction. That is the first conclusion we can draw regarding the importance of Ortega's legacy.

Moreover, before venturing a final judgment about Ortega's philosophy, we better listen to his own words about the mission a man of letters assumes when he decides to write for the public. In the *Meditation on Technic,* he says:

> I have always thought that the mission of the man of letters is to forecast from far what will become a problem years later to his readers, and offer them in time, namely, before the debate comes out, clear ideas about the issue, so that they can come close to the fight with the peaceful mind of someone who, in principle, has already settled it. (Ortega y Gasset, 2006e: 553)

Occasionally, Ortega felt the necessity of justifying himself for his decision to be a public intellectual and undertake the task of raising the level of Spanish culture. *Meditation on Technic* was published (along with *Ensimismamiento y Alteración*) as a book in 1939, but it had already been published in newspaper form in 1935, in *La*

Nación, and in fact the text stemmed from a Lecture in Santander in 1933. Between these two last dates, i.e., in 1934, in the unpublished "Prologue to Germans," Ortega comes to this issue again. The question he asks there—perhaps a question both for him and for his readers—is the following: why after several semesters of strictly scientific training in the German University have I returned to Spain to write articles in the newspapers (Ortega y Gasset, 2009a: 1135)? The answer to this question will help us understand why it has been sometimes so difficult to evaluate Ortega's philosophical level and the importance of his philosophical legacy. But we can already draw a second conclusion: philosophy for Ortega has a practical function and the philosopher cannot fall out of the problems of his time.[9]

The answer is given by Ortega himself, about 25 pages after raising the question. Meanwhile, he had to explain what was the kind of philosophy he found during his training in Germany and the reasons of his discontent with it. He had to tell the story of his discovery of the new philosophical continent in which life becomes the center of philosophical endeavors. Regardless of the role played by phenomenology in the discovery of this new continent—this issue has been addressed in chapters "Ortega, Phenomenology and Idealism", "Phenomenology Revisited", and "Ortega's Philosophical Anthropology"—the fact is that Ortega returns to Spain with a stock of new ideas, and it was for these ideas' sake that he decided to write articles for the newspapers. The fact is that these ideas had shown him that man lives in a circumstance—which is "the hand the universe holds to everyone" (Ortega y Gasset, 2009a: 161)—not in an environment, and that circumstance is also a landscape, i.e., a small piece of world that other human beings had made fit for dwelling. To show to his other fellow men the most appropriate way of perfecting this landscape is the philosopher's unavoidable responsibility.

We have already said that philosophy, for Ortega, means system. However, philosophy means also a certain level from which things can be seen as they are. In chapter "Ortega, Phenomenology and Idealism", we also said that Ortega calls this level the level of radical reality. Here a comparison may be of some help. Imagine that first I hear a friend talking about his new car, then I see a picture of the car, and next I have the opportunity of looking to that car with my own eyes. Which of these three experiences—each one meaning or intending the same thing—is the radical experience of the car? Although the answer seems obvious, let's look carefully at what is going on here. In the first place, we can get acquainted with the car by mere hearing someone talk about it. Perhaps the description fits some characteristics of the car, perhaps we misinterpreted some words and imagined some features that didn't match with the car's real features; perhaps my friend was overestimating his new car. The picture will certainly allow us to correct some wrong ideas. For

[9] Or, at least he thought, the Spanish philosopher cannot. We tried to show this in chapter "Spain Is the Problem; Europe Is the Solution". Perhaps in countries more developed from a cultural and social point-of-view than Spain, a philosopher can fall out of the problems of his nation. The young Ortega thought that could happen to a German philosopher, for instance, who was able to live his life (at the University, at home, in holidays) without bumping with the shortcomings of a backward nation.

instance, I can now see the kind of dark-red tonality that colors the car, while before its mere description had made me think of a light-red tonality that is not really his. But now at last I have the car in front of me: I can see it, I can touch it, I can enter inside, and perhaps I will be lucky enough to drive it a little.

It is useless to deepen our noematic analysis of this trivial experience in order to draw the following conclusion: only in the third place the car has really entered into my life. Life is not dealing with descriptions or looking at representations, which only give us things *in absentia*. (Of course, descriptions and representations are a part of life.) As a living subject, I am someone that always has to do something, that has to deal with things that may facilitate or otherwise hinder my projects. As Husserl put it, I am a transcendental subject endowed with a capacity the German philosopher characterized by the expression "I can." Ortega offered us excellent analysis of this capacity, although he wrongly thought that, in so doing, he was deviating from the idealistic path Husserl's phenomenology had taken.

However, let us take a second look to the above-mentioned experience: at last, I see my friend's car and can ascertain its real existence. From the analysis of this lived experience, it is possible to draw another conclusion. Seeing the car from the outside, I have some expectations that perhaps will not be fulfilled. Its behavior in curves will not be what I expected, or the car trunk may be too small for the luggage of all the family. What is noteworthy here is the fact that I cannot live without going, at every moment, a little beyond what is immediately given: the given, or the real, is surrounded by a "halo." Ortega, as we said more than once, called it the virtual. This "halo" is so intrinsically connected with the circumstance in which human beings live that it becomes inseparable from it and, to a certain extent, it is as present as the real. At a time, Ortega thought that the opposition between the real and the virtual was also the opposition between the Mediterranean and the Spanish spirit. The philosophy of vital reason, however, highlights that this opposition between the real and the virtual is in fact a fundamental anthropological dimension. Ortega showed that men live at the same time in both, and no other way of living is authentically human. And that is a third reason why I think we are still benefitting from his legacy.

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