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ORTEGA Y GASSET'S CONCEPTION OF PHILOSOPHY

A Thesis

Presented for the

Master of Arts

Degree

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Wendie S. Jekabsons

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to Dr. W. Kim Rogers and to the Philosophy Department of East Tennessee State University. Dr. Rogers not only introduced me to the philosophy of Ortega y Gasset, but also to the discipline, freedom and joy that the activity of philosophy is. It was surely to people like Professor Rogers that Ortega was referring when he stated, "He who gives us an idea increases our life and expands reality around us." (Meditations 99) My life has increased and my reality continues to expand because of the ongoing encouragement and support I receive not only from Dr. Rogers, but from the entire community of philosophers at East Tennessee State University.

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ABSTRACT

Due primarily to the literary nature of Ortega y Gasset's writing, his work is often dismissed as being of little philosophic consequence. A close examination of Ortega's thought, however, reveals that his literary method of expression, most especially his use of metaphor, is a direct reflection of his philosophical investigations and metaphysical conclusions.

According to Ortega, all human activity, including the activity of philosophy, is based on a "vital belief". This belief is a basic orientation, a meaningful set of possibilities, which allows consciousness to choose and to realize a particular kind of existence in relationship to circumstance. Human activity, both collectively and individually, is necessarily expressive of the vital belief which founds it. As an expression of such paradigmatic belief, all human living reflects this vital action of consciousness that creates and maintains a human order of possibilies.

The challenge for philosophy, as Ortega conceives it, is to become fully transparent human activity. By so doing, philosophy will succeed not only in realizing its own vision of "presupposition-

less thought," but also in disclosing the basic structure of human life. The means for such disclosure includes metaphoric speech which can illuminate the structures of relationship between consciousness and circumstance that constitutes human life.

Accepting this challenge does not just require philosophy to adopt a new method of explication. It requires philosophy to commit itself to a whole new agenda. This new agenda is the achievement of human freedom, which will replace the classical goal of human certainty. The reason for this change is that the truth of human life--which is philosophy's only legitimate quest--can only be found in conscious creative activity, not in the completed expressions of that activity. For Ortega truth is a quality of human life, not a property of logical propositions. By giving up the elusive dream of eternal truth, philosophy can become a means to realize the human destiny of freedom through achieving a fully transparent form of reason.

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To think that for more than 30 years--it is quickly said--I had, day after day, to endure in silence, never broken, when many pseudo-intellectuals of my country disqualified my ideas because I 'wrote only in metaphors,' they said. This made them conclude and proclaim triumphantly that my writings were not philosophy. It is clear that fortunately they were not, if philosophy is something that they have the capacity to set aside. Certainly, I carried to an extreme the hiding of the definitive dialectic musculature of my thought, as nature takes care to cover fiber, nerve and tendon with the ectodermic literature of the skin where it took great pains in placing the stratum lucidum. It seems impossible that concerning my writings--whose importance, apart from this question, I recognize as scant--no one had made the generous observation, which is also irrefutable, that in them it is not a matter of something given as philosophy which turns out to be literature, but on the contrary, of something presented as literature which results in philosophy. But those people who have no understanding of anything understand less than nothing of beauty of style, and do not conceive that a life and a work can cherish this virtue. Nor do they have the least suspicion for what grave and essential reasons man is an animal with style. Dies irae, dies illa.

(Ortega y Gasset, The Idea of Principle in Leibniz and the Evolution of Deductive Theory, 304.)

INTRODUCTION

In the philosophical circles of logical analysis, the writings of Ortega y Gasset are often received with suspicion and held at arm's length, their authentic philosophic pedigree questioned and found inadequate. Even such an august source as the Encyclopedia of Philosophy, known specifically for its objective presentation of material, reflects and adds credence to this kind of pejorative judgment by describing Ortega's work as more a matter of "literary brilliance and striking metaphor" than of "argument" and clear "explanation" (Vol. 6: 3). As a consequence of this characterization, Ortega when encountered, more often than not, is accorded only shallow, incomplete consideration, and, on that basis, summarily dismissed as possessing little philosophic worth.

I believe that such a quick dismissal is itself philosophically unjustifiable. While the first assumption for such an evaluation may certainly be true--that thought is of philosophic worth only to the extent that it is systematic--the additional corollary--that argument and explanation are the only valid indicators of such system--is patently false. In fact, I would want to argue that the systematic

organization of thought can be achieved through a variety of ways. And if this is the case, that system can infer something other than argument and explanation, then these two traditional standards of philosophic evaluation are not, by themselves, totally sufficient criteria by which to render an impartial, fair appraisal of philosophic worth in all instances. Most especially this would seem to hold true in the case of Ortega.

One commentator particularly, Jose Mora Ferrater, has addressed this issue of system in regard to Ortega's work. He is of the opinion that while "Ortega's is certainly no philosophical system of the Hegelian type"--"the more carefully we look at the strokes of the brush, the most consistent and organized appears to be the picture" which emerges from his work when viewed in its totality (Ortega y Gasset 9).

Ortega, himself, employs a different image to demonstrate his understanding of system and its philosophical function. For him, system composes the "definitive dialectic musculature of my thought" (The Idea 304). It is that which provides form and enables movement for the expression of his ideas. Even so, from Ortega's perspective, intellectual systems should never be allowed to become the total

focus of attention; that is, they should never be considered as ends in themselves, as truth. Rather, systems should be understood simply as the means for the illumination of truth, for clarity of perception and expression--in other words, as the means of philosophic integrity.

Hence, given the fact that Ortega himself identifies system as being nothing less than "the thinker's honor," (Circumstance and Vocation 342) it would seem most appropriate to begin a critical investigation of his work by applying the principle of charity; that is, by assuming the presence, rather than the absence, of system in his thought, and then attempting to map the particular parameters of it. It is then Ferrater Mora's contention, as well as mine, that the specific criticism of Ortega's lack of system is based upon the erroneous assumption that system must refer exclusively to an explicit kind of formalized, stylized, and standardized arrangement of ideas. Simply stated, such a narrow definition of system is an inappropriate, as well as inadequate, standard of measurement to use in the evaluation of a philosophical work that far outdistances its detractors in expansiveness and depth of thought.

My motivation for writing this thesis is to provide an explanation of Ortega's conception of

philosophy, which will support this basic claim of Ferrater Mora's. I hope to show that Ortega's particular method of expression, his system, is grounded, not only in his understanding of what philosophy is and should be, but also in what human life is and could be. For Ortega thinking is nothing less than the very action that "makes life possible"; from this idea, he derives the notion that fully self-conscious rational activity is nothing less than the human destiny (Historical Reason 24). System, as the methodology of thought, in this sense then, constitutes "the thinker's honor," and as such must refer to something more than simple argument and explanation as far as Ortega is concerned. In this broader sense, system implies a far more subtle, more profound and complex method of connections for Ortega, one which is based primarily on an "analogical rather than a univocal" process of reason (Ferrater Mora 10).

Hence, readers of Ortega would do well to begin their study with a clear awareness of the possibility that systematic structures of thought can be achieved through other than exclusively and explicitly formal methods of established procedure. Ferrater Mora specifically identifies "cogency of thoughts, and recurrence of themes" as the more informal, subtle

means of organization which Ortega uses to structure his philosophy (10).

A different, and yet complementary, response to the stylistic criticism of Ortega's discourse comes from Julian Marias, a student of Ortega's, as well as a philosopher in his own right. Directing his comments most particularly to those who find fault with Ortega's extensive use of metaphors, Marias explains that "Ortega's metaphors have played an important role from the beginning, as an indispensable point of convergence of literature with philosophy" (Circumstance and Vocation, 290-291). Unfortunately, Ortega's amalgamation of literary style with philosophic content for the sake of increased comprehension has itself often led to some confusion and misunderstanding.

On the one hand, many readers have mistakenly identified some of Ortega's basic philosophical concepts as mere metaphors; while on the other, they have taken literally as straightforward statements, creative explanations that were simply intended as metaphorical images. For Marias,

> Proper comprehension of Ortega falls between these two [uses of metaphor], and asks only that we do not forget what he has said, that we do not renounce any of the means he has used in order to make himself understood. (Circumstance and Vocation 290-291)

According to Marias, this confusion regarding Ortega's use of metaphors (whether and when they should be understood either as simply colorful, but superfluous, illustrations, rather than as substantive concepts, or as factually descriptive statements, rather than as analogical images), is easily resolved once Ortega's basic rationale for metaphorical speech is comprehended.

The rationale for his extensive use of metaphor is based upon Ortega's own understanding of human life and human perception--that is, on the assumption that both human action and knowledge, in essence, function originally to establish and subsequently to reaffirm possible modes of experience for an individual consciousness to choose in relationship to circumstance. Historically, communities of individuals have chosen collectively, on this basis, to invest themselves in specific modes of relationship which give effective definition and meaning to themselves and their environment. These relationships, according to Ortega, structure experience so effectively they become equivalent to the essential form of reality itself for those who invest in them. In other words, they serve as systems of and for "vital belief," providing a secure basis for

meaningful human action. Only when a changing environnment can no longer mirror such a system effectively, does doubt arise to call for new possibilities, new ways of thinking and acting toward the changed situation. For Ortega, to be fully, actually human is consciously to respond to one's environment by creating new possibilities; to be potentially, but not actually human, in other words, to be less than human, is unconsciously to react to one's environment by imitating the habitual actions of others.

Metaphors for Ortega are simply the best linguistic tools available for highlighting the basic configurations of these possibilities. Metaphors themselves are analogous to graphic flow-charts; functioning linguistically, in effect they lay out the elemental structures of the relationships upon which human actions and knowledge are based. In sum, Ortega's use of metaphorical speech is based upon his interpretation of the essentially relational quality of human existence, which he feels cannot be fully demonstrated in any other way. It is based as well on his understanding of the role of philosophy to uncover the hidden patterns of human relationships that dictate certain modes of thought and action, while excluding the possibility of others.

Ortega thus believes that philosophy can serve as a means for human freedom, by itself becoming nothing less than a fully reflective method of thought. Completely transparent to its own processes of creativity, philosophy as one form of human life will be able to recognize and illuminate the similar processes of imagination from which all other forms of creative expression arise. As such a means for freedom, philosophy can represent and realize the fullness of human life through its careful expression of the truth regarding the creative power of imagination.

Hence, given this profound role and responsibility Ortega envisions for philosophy--particularly when considered in the light of our present critical need for new and better ways to preserve and enhance the quality of human life in the midst of an increasingly impersonal, technological environment--it seems more than just appropriate, perhaps even necessary, to investigate thoroughly and completely the substantive nature of Ortega's philosophy. The possibility for human freedom that it offers should not go unnoticed or unexamined. To continue to dismiss his ideas lightly may be to promulgate a great loss.

For these reasons, I want, and feel the need, to

respond to the criticism of Ortega's philosophic worth and his use of metaphor. The aim of my discussion will be simply to demonstrate that, given Ortega's conception of philosophy, his literary rather than analytical form of expression constitutes a legitimate, systematic method of presentation for his ideas. Specifically, my task will be to show that Ortega does succeed in providing a coherent schematization of ideas, a philosophy, which effectively demonstrates connections between the operations of thought, the motivations of action, and the expressions of experience that account for the perspectival, multivalent, nature of human life. I will attempt to demonstrate that one particular way Ortega accomplishes this is by making his own work both an exhibition and example of his own philosophical assumptions--by making the medium, the message. In other words, it is my contention that his method of expression is both dictated by and conforms to his philosophical view. Precisely in this way Ortega is able, on both an experiential and theoretical level, to achieve the "cogency of thoughts and recurrence of themes" that Ferrater Mora has identified as Ortega's subtle means of system building (10).

The effectiveness of this kind of system building, I will argue, lends credibility and

philosophic worth to the far more profound, more all-inclusive, reason for Ortega's employment of "literary brilliance and striking metaphor"--one which includes and surpasses the stylistic concern for cogency of expression, as important as that is (Encyclopedia of Philosophy Vol 6: 3). In effect, his rationale connstitutes the very core of his philosophical assumptions. As Marias explains, "The theory of reality, as Ortega understands it, is inseparable from that method which makes access to it possible. . ." (Circumstance and Vocation 413). Hence, given that Ortega believes "knowledge of the universe" is the true purpose and goal of all philosophic activity, and that such human knowledge by its very nature is essentially perspectival and therefore relational (although certainly not relative); he further holds that metaphorical speech, denoting qualitative relationships, is a most especially effective means for the expression of such knowledge (What is Philosophy? 132).

While accepting Marias's notion of the special significance of metaphor in Ortega's work, as well as Ferrater Mora's claim of the legitimate presence of system in the philosopher's "cogency of thoughts and recurrence of themes," I have chosen as my primary approach a methodology similar to Ferrater Mora's.

This particular procedure focuses on the whole-part relation of the components of Ortega's thought. The objective is simply to trace the connection of ideas, one to another, locating and identifying the main themes in relationship to one another and to the whole of Ortega's philosophy, taken in its entirety. In this way I intend to present a descriptive narration of his philosophy as an open system--as a conceptual framework deliberately designed to allow for continual expansion and adaptation to new insights--and therefore as a legitimate, coherent, justification for itself. Consequently, I will only refer to the historical evolution of a particular idea in those instances where the chronological cause and effect relation has a significant bearing on the clarity of description.

My rationale for choosing this particular procedure comes specifically from Ortega's own understanding of philosophic system:

> Philosophic thought is systematic, and in a system each concept carries all the others within it. But language can at one moment say only a few things; it cannot say them all at once. It is a discourse, a going on saying and never having finished saying. (Concord and Liberty 136)

In effect, Ortega is saying that, by virtue of the very nature of thought, each idea implicitly suggests

other possible ideas to which it can be meaningfully related. Hence, for Ortega, to philosophize simply means to identify and highlight the possible relationships that imaginatively can connect ideas, thereby creating effective systems of possibility for the purpose of conscious consideration and evaluation.

In this sense then, philosophic thought can be understand as systematic, as a demonstration of connections, particular kinds of connections. In this sense also it can be comprehended as possessing a definite form or configuration. As illustration, the particular assumptions out of which any specific philosophic questions arise not only determine the form those questions will take, but likewise the form in which their answers will appear also. For this reason, Ortega perceives each particular philosophy as constituting a "circular reality," a necessarily circular construct of theory that "establishes a new center around which a new circle can be drawn" (Historical Reason 25-28).

Directly related to this view of philosophic system is Ortega's understanding of philosophic method. More than once he describes his own specific approach as being analogous to the activity of the Hebrews marching around Jericho:

> This is a strategy of cycloid approach. As we circle the city the same views appear again and again with stubborn repetition, but each time closer and from a different angle (The Idea 295; What is Philosophy? 30, 70).

For Ortega, "Jericho," the center of his own philosophical system, must represent and reflect theoretically that which can be identified absolutely as constituting the basic datum of the universe. And for this Spanish philosopher that "basic and undeniable fact is not my existence but my coexistence with the world" (What is Philosophy? 200). It is the concrete, individual, "untransferable" life of each one of us within, and as a part of which all else--abstractions, phenomenon, experiences--is to be found. The core of his thought, then, involves the continually emerging drama, the event, of human life, which always manifests itself in total particularity (201-204).

It is the process of this manifestation, this self-discovery of life which constitutes human life, that is precisely what Ortega believes philosophy should make explicit. By so doing philosophy can realize its own original intention to be a fully self-conscious, completely rational form of human activity. In order to achieve this goal, Ortega understands that philosophy must first go "behind

itself," see itself as a vital expression of life, "as a form of life, which is what it truly and concretely is" rather than as a priviledged explanation of life. And because he comprehends this as a new approach, radically different from past ways of doing philosophy, he assumes that "none of the concepts of traditional philosophy are of any use in it . . ." (204). As a consequence, he feels impelled to implement a different way of speaking philosophically, a way that will allow concepts to reveal life rather than obscure it. This way for Ortega involves developing a kind of "literature" of life, which "results in philosophy," bringing the dynamic relationships which comprise human existence into clear focus (The Idea 304).

Accepting Ortega's description of the circularity of philosophical systems as a genuine rationale for his own "cycloid" method of expression, I will adopt a modified version of this approach as the best means by which to investigate and present Ortega's own concept of philosophy. For this reason, repetition will be unavoidable at times. I hope its occurrence will prove relevant rather than merely redundant.

Specifically, the first chapter will serve as a general introduction to the main themes of Ortega's

thought: belief as an essential function of human life; truth as an essential need of conscious, creative individual life; and philosophy as an essential activity to achieve the fullness of human life and to ensure the freedom of individual choice. The second chapter will be a second 'spiral' built on the first, addressing the same themes from the higher, closer vantage point reached through the preceding discussion.

CHAPTER 1

PHILOSOPHY AS A FORM OF LIFE

1. Vital Belief--The Foundation for Human Life

Traditionally philosophy has been understood as a search for certainty, for what is essentially real in a world of changing appearance. Moreover, philosophers generally have perceived their work as a procedure of reason, rather than of faith, of justified thought rather than of blind belief. Ortega's position is that this total identification with reason demonstrates not only philosophy's failure to assess critically its own assumptions and methods as a particular form of human activity, but also reveals its foundation as a 'naive believing' in the unqualified value of certainty and in the absolute power of reason to obtain it.

This faith in reason, according to Ortega, is not an inherent human disposition. Rather, it is an acquired attitude, drafted as a particular solution to the disorienting, anxiety-producing experience of doubt, which at a certain point in western history began to erode the foundations that society had rested securely upon until then. As such, philosophy's original intent was to make up for the loss of what Ortega identifies as a more basis human

attitude--that of pure belief, absolute certainty in 'the world' as known and received from tradition.

In this sense the historical achievement of philosophy is to be "a substitute for shattered tradition" (Concord and Liberty 114-115; The Idea 295). However, the most significant, irrevocable difference between belief and philosophy, according to Ortega, is that "philosophic conviction is not vital conviction--it is quasi-conviction, a conviction of the intellect" (What is Philosophy? 142). For Ortega, the term "vital" refers to a level of life which is constituent of, and hence a necessary, preliminary ground for all human activity.

A basic premise of Ortega's own philosophy of that "vital belief" is a creative consequence, an immediate product, of the dynamic relationship that happens between human consciousness and its circumstance. In fact, at one point Ortega uses a play on words to illustrate that this relationship is the primary constituent of human life, defining man as pure event and therefore as "happenstance" (Historical Reason 79, 117). Life itself is doing, and human life, beyond that, a particular, specialized kind of doing, allowing for a certain range of possibilities, while excluding others.

In effect, Ortega's thesis involves recognition

of the initial power of consciousness to organize the circumstance which confronts it, as well as the subsequent vulnerability of consciousness to be affected and altered by that vital organization in an ongoing, dialectical process of creation, preservation and recreation which constitutes human life. On this basis Ortega regards human reality as a mediated, interpreted reality. Such elementary organization constitutes a basic pattern of meaning, an interpretation and belief, which consciousness gives to itself and its circumstance, to the relationship it is (72-73).

In other words, the foundational action of human life from Ortega's perspective is paradigmatic definition: the creation and achievement of meaning in and through the relationship of consciousness and circumstance. Given this, all other particular meanings, or derivative relationships, must be understood to follow from and be nested within this meta-meaning, presupposing and conforming to its structure. Specifically, for Ortega "meaning" in its fullest, most complete sense, refers to what would be "the highest form of coexistence" the most authentic, complete relationship imaginatively possible for consciousness to effect with circumstance (Meditations 89). It follows from this that human life,

even in its most elemental form, would involve dynamic, meaningful relationship.

Thus, the potential and the possibilities of human life can be seen as the achievement of a unique, metaphysical execution which distinguishes an elemental form of coexistence in the vital interaction of consciousness and circumstance. This execution is a simple act of orientation enabling consciousness to experience itself in relation to the circumstance which calls forth such awareness. Ortega's expression for this thesis was formulated early in his work, proving itself subsequently to be the philosophical foundation for all of his thought: "I am myself plus my circumstance" (45). This cryptic statement is a definition of human reality, positing two mutually dependent, inseparable dimensions of existence, a self and a circumstance, which interact continually to recreate a human world ever anew. For Ortega this effective execution of human life is essentially an individual, solitary doing. It is the execution and expression of a particular perspective, only realizable by a unique awareness that discovers its being and meaning within the concrete circumstance that calls it forth. (As we will see, Ortega identifies as a part of circumstance, the cultural, historical traditions

within which an individual develops.)

Ortega further explains that this "coexistence of myself with things" is "at once unitary and dual." Referring to this relationship as "that magnificent fact of essential duality," he cautions that by using the term "coexistence" he does not mean by it "only that one thing stands beside another," each possessing sufficient being and separate existence apart from the other (What is Philosophy? 210). Instead he intends that each has being precisely as "being for", and only in relationship to, the other (Man and People 77).

Ortega's claim is that what he is "trying to express is rendered false by the prone and static character of those two old concepts, being and existing." Hence for him coexistence involves a condition of interdependence and mutual interaction, one that is at once unitary and dual; in other words, it is what we might term a complex unity.

> The world is what is continues to be because of me. . . its character is dynamic, confronting me, opposing me; and I am the one who acts upon it, who looks at it; dreams it, suffers it, loves it and detests it . . . The world's being as it confronts me is, we might say,a matter of functioning with respect to me, and similarly of my acting toward it. (What is Philosophy? 210; Some Lessons 155-158)

Not in an ontological sense then, but only in a

limited, existential sense does Ortega perceive a kind of dualism operative in the human life process--only and precisely in the sense that as an occurrence of effective action, human life produces and involves specific, real consequences. The critical implication of this for Ortega is that human life as a complex unity, includes the achievement of its own ends. In his own words, "Man, a pure and continual do-ing, a constant activity, is total movement, drawn forward toward a goal" (Historical Reason 207). By this Ortega means that human life as "purely and exclusively occurrence," involves a particular kind of action, effective action. And in precisely this sense, that such occurrence produces real, substantive consequences, it should be understood as an effective "execution" and "achievement" (70; Some Lessons 68-69).

As such, human life can be distinguished as essentially purposeful, meaningful action, always executed in response to itself, as well as in anticipation of itself. In Ortega's own words,

> This is what I call 'sustaining ourselves in mid-air, upholding our own being' . . . for [human] life is made up of carrying itself, supporting itself, and leading itself forward (Some Lessons 42-43).

Going on the assumption that phylogeny recapitulates ontogeny, Ortega hypothesizes regarding the par-

ticular characteristics which necessarily would define the primal moment of human awareness, both for the race universally, and for the individual particularly. (The 'primal moment' refers here specifically to the original human situation within which awareness became self-conscious awareness.) According to him, it would constitute an experience of total enigma, akin to that of being "shipwrecked in a world we neither built nor thought about" (What is Philosophy? 220).

He theorizes that this elemental awareness would necessarily be one of essential disorientation, of pure problem arising through the discovery and revelation of oneself as "immersed" and "lost" in an alien environment, in that which appears totally other than oneself as conscious presence. Again using Ortega's words:

> Our lives begin with the perpetual surprise of existing without any previous consent on our part, castaways on an unpremeditated globe. We did not give life to ourselves, but we met it at the very point we met ourselves. (Some Lessons 41).

The immediate response to this experience of enigma is a necessary, human act of orientation which distinguishes a human existence apart from the world's existence (see p. 20 above). In order to continue this relationship which constitutes human

being, man is compelled to activate "his intellectual faculties, above all his imagination" (Historical Reason 73). In effect he is compelled to create an ideology, a system of vital beliefs to realize, to live the meta-meaning which is human being (see p. 17 above). This ideology presents an implicit plan of action for continuing his coexistence as a self inhabiting a circumstance, for the preservation of his life. In this sense vital belief can be comprehended as an elemental expression of naive imagination, as "vital reason," which bestows on both consciousness and circumstance a configuration of particular possibilities for human life (Some Lessons 62, 110, 111, 117).

In this sense, Ortega explains that "belief in anything and that thing's being real for us are one and the same thing" (Historical Reason 22). For him reality, the quality of realness, is to be attributed to "everything with which I have to reckon." As a consequence, this

> attribution of reality allows and even demands a scale or gradation or hierarchy [of distinctions] . . . the reference being not to the content of the given reality but to its pure character of being reality" (Man and People 95-96).

This "pure character" of reality, to which Ortega is referring, is one of belief in the very notion of

reality itself as a particular quality of existence, which can be attributed to 'things' in varying degrees.

Here Ortega is distinguishing between reality and realities, meaning and meanings respectively (Meditations 186). Reality refers to that which is "primary and primordial," realities to that which is "secondary and derivative" (Man and People 94). Primordial, "radical," reality signifies the constituting relationship of consciousness and circumstance within which all other realities, 'things' must make their appearance. To the degree that something appears to consciousness, either as a material or immaterial something, to that degree it is established, located, in one of the graduated orders of human reality, of meaning. Ortega identifies these orders as being the "pragmatic fields . . . of concerns and importances" that comprise human life (Man and People 80, 82).

Hence, prior to self-conscious doubt, and subsequent to the primal experience of enigma, human existence occurs within the absolute security of vital belief. It is the home in which one lives and upon which one "counts." In effect it is the authentic circumstance that constitutes one's life, that which appears informed, organized, by belief.

It is the circumstance to which one responds, and by so doing, makes one's life (The Idea 264; Historical Reason 34, 38, 39, 61, 64; Some Lessons 49).

Precisely in this sense, Ortega describes concrete, individual life as "preknown" or "preconscious"--in the sense that it always occurs, discovers itself self-consciously within the sure framework of a belief system, which is the product of more original acts (Some Lessons 53). For this reason human life is always historical life: because its occurrence is founded upon all that has happened before (The Origin of Philosophy 30; Phenomenology and Art 69).

Hence, as an indispensable tool for creating a human circumstance, a world, from a primal, alien environment, belief can be identified in Ortega as an essential prerequisite for, as well as an element of human existence. Just as this naive expression of imaginative conviction, belief constitutes the necessary condition for both the originating and continuing occurrence that is human life.

Because this basic interpretive action comprises "an inevitable ingredient of human life," Ortega calls it a "metaphysical activity" (Some Lessons 120). He argues that his special use of the term "metaphysics," however, is not intended to denote the

idea of a "science," but rather, an existential "construction of the world." In effect,

> this making a world out of what surrounds you is human life. The world, the universe is not given to man; what is given to him is his circumstances, his surroundings. . . But this circumstance and everything in it is, in itself, pure problem . . . the pure problem is the absolute insecurity which obliges us to make for ourselves a form of security. What saves us is the interpretation which we give to our circumstance. . . and in the measure in which it convinces us, we believe in it, and it makes us secure. And as the world . . . is not more than that interpretation, we will hold that the world is the security in which man succeeds in being. The world is that in which we are secure. (Some Lessons 121-122)

Thus, "Man makes his world in order to install himself in it, to save himself in it; man is metaphysics. Metaphysics is a thing inevitable" (Some Lessons 121-122). In its most elemental form then, metaphysics is the imaginative construction and establishment of a necessary human system of security, of belief.

In this sense then, metaphysically speaking, human life can be understood as having originated itself on the fragile image of a possibility--on an organizing thought so compelling that it united consciousness to circumstance in the form of a plan worthy of absolute belief. Providing the security of orientation, of knowledge, this elemental plan

introduced both the need and the motivation for continuing human action, conscious action, by requiring from consciousness an ongoing response to the reality it prescribed.

2. Human Life--the Foundation for Historical Expression

Vital belief begins as a primary act of orientation which establishes certain potential orders of value, a specific range of possible experiences that necessarily eliminates others. Such belief brings a particular world, a human world, into view, constituting a set of possible agendas, ways of being, out of which consciousness must choose yet an even more specific plan of action in relation to circumstance. "This obligation to choose" a particular kind of being, a self, represents the "untransferable" responsibility that is the freedom of individual human life (Man and People 44-46; Some Lessons 133; Historical Reason 73). Ortega derives this interpretation of human freedom as personal obligation from his assumption that human consciousness is essentially creative, imaginative consciousness. He explains that, "If man did not have the psychological mechanism of imagining, man would not be man" having neither the vision to perceive

possibility, nor the obligation to realize it. Thus he understands that human life "in one of its essential dimensions" is "a work of imagination" (Man and Crisis 179). This creative work is a total involvement in the concrete and specific circumstances within which individual, personal life discovers itself, comes to be for-itself.

According to Ortega, the fragile image of possibility, which is the basic motivation for human action, for human life, "may be instaneous (sic.), [or] lasting, permanent in a man or constant in man, in 'humanity.' Humanity is the name of a situation which has lasted approximately a million years" (The Difficulty of Reading 3). More specifically, humanity is the name, the meta-meaning, consciousness has given to its coexistence with circumstance which allows for the possibility of a human world of meanings (see p. 17 above).

Essentially then, in the human situation, meaning presupposes coexistence as its necessary condition (see p. 17 above). Hence, there can be no meaning that does not imply relationship, nor a relationship that does not involve meaning. It is exclusively in relationship that circumstance is seen through the lens of consciousness, as likewise consciousness sees itself, through the meaning of

circumstance, creating the particular panorama of possibilities that is human reality. Concerning this idea, Ortega muses that "Life is like crystal, the transparent medium through which we see other objects" (The Modern Theme 73). In other words, consciousness and circumstance are each equally vulnerable to the existence of the other, "transparent" to one another in the sense that each reflects, illuminates, the reality of the other. The vital orientation of consciousness is hidden, 'latent,' within the circumstance consciousness perceives; while the appearance of circumstance is hidden, 'latent,' within the self-awareness consciousness experiences.

"Latency" is one of two terms Ortega introduces to signify the two fold nature of human experience. While "patency" refers to "the world of mere impressions," "latency" denotes "a world beneath it made up of structures of impressions" (Meditations 64-66). Patency represents the uninterpreted phenomena of consciousness and circumstance, the "pure enigma" of their "primordial" coexistence (Historical Reason 73). Latency represents the elemental patterns of interpretation, the belief systems, which create a hierarchical structure of value, a human world of possibilities. In effect,

Ortega understands that the primary act of believing **arranges** the patent and latent aspects of reality, **sense** impression and imaginative possibility, into a hierarchical order of meaning which conforms to the form of that believing itself.

The function of this emergent, skeletal design of meaning can best be compared to that of a metaphor in Ortega's view. As a simple form of speech enabling greater possibilities of communication, metaphor conventionally is used to establish relationships of meaning between sets of linguistic items on the basis of their significant equivalence as well as creative ambiguity as pairs. Ortega, however, uses the term in a very specialized sense, employing the linguistic form of metaphor itself metaphorically. That is, he uses the term analogously to refer to the creative, dynamic relationship between consciousness and circumstance because, not unlike the syntactic relationship of the linguistic device, this living relationship creates complex unities of meaning from simpler ones. In the case of consciousness and circumstance, the complex unity created is human life itself.

To this creative capacity of consciousness, Ortega assigns the ambiguous name of "foreshortening." He describes this capacity as an "organ of

visual depth," which uses "simple vision with a purely intellectual act," which combines patent impression and latent possibilities to create a world of meaning. Marias attempts to explain Ortega's use of this term by saying that is refers to "at one and the same time, seeing and what is seen." Emphatically, Marias states that "reality is seen in foreshortening--that is, perspectively . . . [in other words] reality is foreshortening." (Circumstance and Vocation pp. 422-423; Gasset, Meditations, 69, 176). In effect this vague term, "foreshortening," simultaneously denotes that vital action which creates a reality, a particular perspective, as well as its 'product,' that reality itself.

This effective action is possible because of the imaginative work of consciousness imbuing itself and its circumstance with the quality of transparency (see p. 30 above). It is Ortega's assertion that the whole reality of human life rests on the foundation of this imaginative quality. A creative function of perception, transparency, enables an awareness of something other than and in addition to immediate sense impression, which at the same time is also related, identifiable with it. That is, it enables consciousness to perceive more than the immediately given, to perceive in the given precisely

what is not-given, the hidden structures of both possibility and actuality.[1]

Thus, it can be said that the quality of transparency is that which enables consciousness to have a past and to possess a future in the immediacy of a present. For instance, it is that which allows a woman to see her past in a photograph, and her future in a ring--it is that which effects meaning. Hence in this sense, the "medium of transparency" which is life (The Modern Theme 73) can be comprehended as a metaphorical operation, enabling one reality to be seen in the light of another as a means to create yet a third more complex form of existence.

For this reason, Ortega is able to say, "that the whole edifice of the universe and of life rests, in the end, on the tiny ethereal body of a metaphor" (Circumstance and Vocation 276). Marias amplifies this idea that life essentially involves a metaphorical operation by explaining that for Ortega the idea

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[1]For purposes of clarification, it is important to note here that Ortega employs the conception of transparency in two different senses, depending upon the context and focus of his discussion. As an ideal, or end, for human life, transparency refers to the achievement of complete self-awareness for consciousness; as a condition, or means, of human life, transparency refers to an essential act of imaginative perception.

of "being" represents "the greatest metaphor of all . . . the most famous illustrious interpretation of reality", (Hopper and Miller 49, 52, 53). An original interpretive experience of reality, this metaphorical idea has generated out of itself whole systems of "interconnected metaphors," each of which has functioned to draw attention to specific aspects of that first definitive and multifaceted intuition.

Referring generally to whatever elementary organization and basic pattern of meaning consciousness could conceivably bestow upon its relationship to circumstance (see p. 18 above), Marias notes that "as long as we remain inside . . . [this] single metaphor . . . so elementary so simple," our interpretation of reality will be informed, "conditioned" by it (Hopper and Miller 52). Precisely because the essence of this metaphor is vital belief it has the force of being an organizing "central metaphor" for the interpretation of all further experience. In fact its particular function is to provide fertile ground for the spontaneous growth of "other complementary metaphors which in turn discover other connected aspects of reality"--substantiating its own implicit, systematic order as a complex unity, a total world view. According to Marias,

The role of the central or original

> metaphor is simply to trigger . . . the whole set of connected metaphors that come to mind so I can follow the whole series of them into reality as such. (Hopper and Miller 53)

In effect, Ortega understands that the particular form of any founding relationship between consciousness and circumstance will necessarily exclude from its content certain further possibilities of coexistence, just as it necessarily will include others.

Specifically, the original 'vital metaphor,' which establishes human being as a definitive orientation for consciousness, itself, in relation to circumstance, suggests certain latent plans of action, possible relationships of meaning for the implementation of concrete, self-conscious life. Thus, Ortega states that while the relationship of consciousness and circumstance constitutes, is, human life, it is also obligated to become itself in the sense of disclosing, making patent, that life which it conceals within itself.

The initial human 'situation,' in Ortega's view, is of consciousness finding itself "lost" in respect to its circumstance, "shipwrecked on a unpremeditated globe" (Some Lessons 41; see pp. 23, 24, 29 above). According to him, "man consists in substance of feeling himself lost" (Some Lessons, 30). Thus, in

the primal awareness of circumstance as "pure problem," consciousness experiences its own existence likewise as pure problem--the pure problem of a lack, of an ignorance and a terrible need to know. In Ortega's words, "man is the living insufficient one. Man needs to know, he is desperately aware he is ignorant" (What is Philosophy? 70; see also p. 25 above).

This founding awareness of human consciousness as an insufficient self bears within it the persuasive power of certainty, which engenders vital belief. As such, it represents the organizing "central metaphor" of human life, setting the parameters of interpretation within which all further experience will be defined and given meaning (Marias, in Hopper and Miller 53). It constitutes a metaphysical, systematic frame of reference within which all other "complementary metaphors" will be discovered and to which they ultimately must refer.

This initial meaning of consciousness 'being-lost' or in regard to circumstance evokes the peculiar and sustaining human orientation of need, the need to know. Hence, Ortega argues,

> the idea of orientation is more basic, deeper and earlier than the idea of knowing, and not the opposite . . . orientation is not a form of knowing, but on the contrary, knowing is a form of

orientation. (Some Lessons 30-31)

In other words, knowing is a method of orientation; orientation is not a method of knowing. Hence, the more primary human characteristic is not knowing, but rather needing to know as a means of locating oneself in the world.

As human being, therefore, consciousness comprehends itself as an ignorance, a question demanding from its own existence an answer (What is Philosophy? 70). Necessarily in order to qualify as such an answer, the total human response to the problem of circumstance must, and can only be self-expressive--that is, a creative execution and revelation of the relationship of which it is a constituent part. In this sense, Ortega understands human life as the need "to say"--to express the unique answer which human being is and becomes, thereby fulfilling its own originating need to know. Here he is employing the phrase "to say" in a very special sense--specifically to refer to this total self-expression that circumstance evokes from consciousness.

Thus, Ortega explains that "constitutively" man is "the Sayer, he who has things to say" (Man and People 243). "Speech gushes out as reactive behavior in response to a situation" (The Difficulty of

Reading 3). Ortega insists that the kind of speech to which he is referring here be understood as much more than a simple verbal action: for him it signifies and encompasses a total response to the existential demand to live, to act, that comprises human existence. "To speak," then, "is to gesticulate" (Man and People 253); it is to act in the full-blooded, bodily sense. In fact, Ortega refers to this act as "the whole gesticulation of the human body" (Man and People 253). As such, he understands 'saying' to be the fundamental, authentic act of human life, the constitutive response of individual consciousness to the concrete and specific circumstance within and through which personal life makes itself.

This fundamental, authentic act of human life comprises an integral dimension of what Ortega has elsewhere identified as the metaphysical activity of imaginatively constructing a system of convictions (see pp. 24, 25). Essentially, such activity is that "operation and function which is 'saying the thing' that we call naming" (The Idea 303). For Ortega, to name a thing is to attribute to it a certain quality of realness, which, in other words, means to believe in it (see p. 22). He explains further that "Just to give them [things] a name is to begin to interpret

them; the name itself is a form of definition"; and concludes that "These expressions are metaphors . . . [and that] the metaphor is the authentic naming of things" (The Idea 303).[2]

Metaphors establish relationships of meaning which enable definition and identification, and for this reason Ortega proposes they be considered instruments of "naming." Effectively, metaphors express the form of configuration of vital belief arising out of a specific interaction of consciousness with circumstance. Ortega, himself, defines metaphors as "a saying by suggestion" (Historical Reason 36). It is precisely in the sense of possibility that he wants the act of naming to be understood as a form of imaginative suggestion rather than of absolute identification. Simply because, for him, to name something means to discover a new, creative way to relate to one's circumstance, and hence to expand the boundaries of one's life (see pp. 26, 27 above).

Relating this interpretation of metaphor as a "saying by suggestion" to his notion that "the boundless universe is built with metaphors" Ortega

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[2]The idea of authenticity is an important one for Ortega; in Chapter 2, especially section 2, I will investigate Ortega's particular view of authenticity in more detail.

explains in more detail that

> From the small and latent comparison, which was the origin of almost all words, to the enormous cosmic myth . . . we find scarcely anything but metaphors in the history of man. Take out of our lives everything which is metaphorical and we will be nine-tenths diminished. That flower of the imagination, so fragile and minute, forms the immutable layer of subsoil on which this our daily life rests. (Circumstance and Vocation 269; see also p. 29 above)

In other words, metaphor as saying represents for Ortega both the vital creative activity of consciousness that enables it to reveal its own relationship with circumstance as meaningful, as well as the expression of such meaning. As an action of naming, saying is an immediate and total response of consciousness to its intuition of circumstance. As an effective action--just insofar as it is an achievement--it represents the establishment of an identity as 'a form of definition' for circumstance, and thus implicitly for itself in relationship to such a circumstance. In this sense, then, saying is suggestion: as an outlining and expression of the vital meaning reality assumes when experienced in, and thus as, a certain perspective.

In effect, Ortega is proposing that all naming is by means of suggestion because all naming involves an expanded awareness of possibility. It is his view that the perception of contrast and comparison,

rather than the recognition of essential absolutes, actually makes up the basic tool (or condition) of knowledge, which is identification. Likewise, the identification something is given--in as much as it involves the meaning it has--refers specifically to the order of relationships constellated between that something and the conscious knower, as well as the surrounding realities that comprise the overall circumstance of their mutual coexistence. Hence, fundamentally, 'meaning' just as a function of these relationships which outline and define the thing in question can be recognized as "the description of a vital episode," or in other words, "an extract of intuition" (Man and People 78; The Idea 58).

Naming is productive evidence of the imaginative power of consciousness to create a human world of discrete realities, of substantive things. This elemental orientation--that there are things to know--in fact, comprises the originating paradigm and first metaphysical form of the western perspective, which is the determination of what is 'real,' what is necessarily of an for itself. Intuitive experiences of constancy, consistency, and sufficiency are specifically those which inform such an awareness of what is regarded as real. These intuitions themselves constitute essential qualities of identifica-

tion for the attainment of knowledge. Accordingly, the real is conceived as those discrete appearances manifesting constancy, consistency and sufficiency, which together comprise the unique aggregate, the totality, of what is and can be knowable. And so it is precisely to this notion Ortega is referring when he says "Life . . . relies on evidence" (Some Lessons 39). Indulging in a form of word-play, Ortega means here by the term "evidence" simply that which is evident, i.e., that which appears to be for consciousness.

In this sense then, man is and has a need to say: because he is the meaning of his gesture, and his gesture is his meaning. In other words, he is both the creator and the creation of his need to know. Given this, human life can be understood as hidden, concealed life to the extent that it is always in the process of disclosing its 'being' to itself. Thus, human being is essentially potential being, which must constantly actualize its existence through its own effort. Likewise, the human individual must be understood as inherently incapable of performing an absolutely meaningless act. Though the expression of one's meaning may be distorted in the achievement of the gesture, it 'is' nonetheless, simply because meaning is an integral aspect of human

act. Meaning is the expression of its human agent--'evidence' of the living existence, the meaning, that one becomes and is. Hence, Ortega contends that every gesticulation is a 'saying'--because it is an act of self-expression.

In other words, Ortega wants to identify man as "the Sayer," (Man and People 243) precisely because human being for him refers to the continuing occurrence of self-expression. Human being constitutes a revelatory event in which the concealed potential of imaginative consciousness manifests itself in actions that realize a relationship of meaning with a specific circumstance. Saying is, then, the quintessential human act and achievement, which names, identifies, consciousness in respect to the circumstance which confronts it, and circumstance in conjunction to the consciousness which perceives it.

The act of saying achieves 'naming,' while the achievement of the name generates certainty in the form of vital belief, as a necessary condition for the possibility of continued human action in the light of, and in response to it. The sustaining power of saying for human life is exactly proportional to the creative possibilities for action latent in the particular form of coexistence it decrees for

consciousness and circumstance.

It is on this basis that Ortega justifies his understanding that the answer to the problem of human existence is to be found and disclosed in the self-expressive human action of saying (see p. 37 above). Simply, the saying is the answer for him. It is self-revelation, the im-pressing upon outer circumstance of an order and form which arises from the inner imaginative awareness of possibility (Man and People 249-250).

Here emphasis should be placed on the notion of particularity, which previously has been identified as an essential component of Ortega's view of human life (see pp. 19, 26 above). To summarize briefly, for him, human life is always to be understood as individual, personal and unrepeatable life, historical life, constructing its own challenge, its own vocation, on the skeletal structure of its originating belief, from the blueprint of its own paradigmatic metaphor. For these reasons Ortega describes life as nontransferable, as "an event that happens to each of us exclusively, that is, properly and originally 'life' means 'my life,' the life of the 'I' that each of us is" (Historical Reason 190). This constitutes an essential, authentic solitude for human being which imposes an imperative demand and

irrevocable 'obligation on human life to choose' a self. Such solitude comprises what has been previously identified as the freedom of individual life (see p. 25).

As a qualification and circumscription of this notion that human being is an essentially solitary life form, Ortega specifically defines the idea of "my life" as an occurrence that is founded upon all that has happened before (see p. 25). Thus, necessarily I find my life within a human circumstance. This human circumstance, which is always an instance of my circumstance in Ortega's philosophy, refers to and includes the achievements of all the human actions that have occurred before the particular action that is I. For Ortega, it is precisely through the on-going interaction between individual selves and their specific circumstances, established by a founding order of human possibilities, that order is continually preserved, reformed, and transformed, allowing a new set of possibilities to develop. This operation of preservation, reformation and transformation amounts to nothing more nor less than the unfolding narrative that is human history (What is Philosophy? 49-50).

History unfolds for the very reason that saying is authentic, effective action, that it always

signifies an expansion and transformation of circumstance as well as of consciousness. As effective action, saying implies achievement. As an achievement of action, however, rather than as the act itself, saying has been transformed; it is no longer a vital insight of consciousness, but instead an integral aspect of the new circumstance as name.

No longer a vital act of consciousness in relationship to circumstance, the name is an abstraction from life, concealing the outline of that relationship within it. In other words, it is a collapsed metaphor of the living event which it originally 'spoke.' Transformed into a usage of speech, a convention of thought, eventually the name as a word, a linguistic bite, indicates only an habitual mode of existence upon which one may rely without awareness, without thought.

Ortega identifies history, language, and tradition as collective records of this systematic accumulation, preservation, and degeneration of human achievements, and as such a constitutive dimension of the changing appearance of circumstance to which consciousness must meaningfully respond. History, language and tradition, then, from this perspective, can be considered simultaneously as both positive and negative elements of the circumstance in which an

individual finds herself. They have the potential to both facilitate and obstruct individual self-awareness, depending upon the particular orientation one assumes in relation to them. Effectively, past human achievements can be used either as a substitute for individual life-action, as a prohibition for individual creative action, or as an opportunity for individual imaginative action (Man and People 266, 268).

In this view language represents "a fertile index of realities," containing names that have become words, social usages, belonging to everyone, and to no one in particular. "Every word is already a contracted, and as it were saturated definition," an authentic naming that has become "archaic, mummified, in some cases completely outdated" (Man and People 181-182). In other words, Ortega states that "the existence of language is, in a way, a continual denigration of words" as names. Even more specifically he wants to claim that language as a "usage" represents "everything human, dehumanized, 'despiritualized,' and transformed into a mere mechanism" (The Origin of Philosophy 21).

For Ortega, history, tradition, and language are the social usages which make up "the collectivity"--which "is indeed something human, but is the human

without man, the human without spirit, the human without soul," in other words, "the human dehumanized." In effect,

> here, we have human actions of ours that lack the primordial characteristics of the human, that have no particular subject who creates them and is responsible for them, for whom they have meaning. We have, then, a human action; but it is irrational, without spirit, without soul, in which I act in the fashion of the gramophone on which someone puts a record that it does not hear, of the planet circling blindly in its orbit, of the vibrating atom, the germinating plant, the nest-building bird. We have a human activity that is irrational and soulless. (Man and People 173-175)

More precisely, Ortega states,

> that it is of the essence of usages to have lost their meaning, hence to have once been inter-individual and intelligible human actions, actions with a soul, which were then drained of meaning. . . ." (Man and People 197-198)

The lost meaning to which Ortega is specifically referring is the order of a thing's coexistence with everything else that comprises a particular circumstance (see pp. 18, 38, 39). In other words, it is "the relationship in which any object finds itself with respect to all other objects," and precisely that which the name is designed to make patent, to reveal (Meditations 92). Because this order of relationship is both a real consequence and manifestation of a view point, it is essentially tied

to the particular perspective of a lived event which has become submerged within the name.

Perspective is a function of the dynamic union of consciousness and circumstance from which it arises. Without the mutually efficacious relationship occurring between consciousness and circumstance there would be no perspective; and without perspective, there could then be no 'true reality.' The very notion of a reality "which remained the same from whatever point of view it was observed would be a ridiculous conception" according to Ortega (The Modern Theme 90). The idea of perspective provides justification, evidence, for the real nature of appearance, phenomena. Manifesting reality itself--and therefore being an essential, "organizing element" of it, perspective comprehends and reflects the reciprocal, mutually dependent relationship of consciousness and circumstance which structures and presents reality in the form of a particular appearance (The Modern Theme 90).

Just as a linguistic designation of particular appearance, as language, the name belongs to an "ocean of usages," which Ortega describes as "the first and strongest reality that we encounter." Even so, "the vast system of verbal usages" that is language can only vaguely reveal this reality we

assume, simply because it represents "a repertory of worn-out words and stereotyped syntactic forms" (Man and People 191, 190). For this reason, Ortega argues that "Social reality implies no authenticity whatever. Or, which is the same, all social reality is unauthentic" (Concord and Liberty 108). This form of human expression, dehumanized speech, is inauthentic for Ortega to the very degree it obscures conscious awareness, and thus, thwarts the human agenda of self-revelation, of freedom.[3]

Essentially then, usages reflect, and refer to, habitual modes of conduct that together comprise a system of things "upon which one counts." This is none other than that system of vital beliefs in

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[3]Ortega's statement that 'all social reality is unauthentic' is an extreme and controversial statement, easily misunderstood if not related to the total context of his philosophy. However, a thorough exposition of this statement would carry the present discussion far beyond the bounds of its stated objectives. Suffice it to say, that Ortega makes a crucial distinction between "interindividual life" and social life. Social life is comprised of forms of mental and physical actions accessible to all--available to all without the effort of thought; while interindividual life involves an active collaboration and interaction of essentially inaccessible 'worlds' of perception. This interaction includes the gradual, altruistic self-disclosure of each to the other, allowing the unique form of knowledge which is "intimacy." It is the "co-living" of individuals who present themselves to each other as ultimately, "unpresentable . . . [who] are accessible [to one another] as in accessible, [who] become patent as essentially latent" (Man and People, 109-111, 120).

which we live, and to which we are confined to the very extent we believe in it, identify our life as being one with it (Man and People 192). Hence, for Ortega, "Insofar as he lives by collective usages, man is an automaton directed by social suggestion; he lives in a perpetual state of catalepsy" (The Idea 249).

3. Philosophy as a Form of Historical Expression

For Ortega philosophy is the quintessential endeavor of freedom; because it is a deliberate, self-conscious process of thought, it represents the one form of historical life capable of achieving an authentic, human expression of self-revelation. Hence, in regard to the "cataleptic" condition of common life, he claims that,

> The only possibility man has of waking [from it], of coming to his senses and living with perfect clarity is precisely by doing philosophy. In this sense life is inevitably one of two things: either sleep walking or philosophy. (Historical Reason 192)

In other words, it is either lived in unawareness, and so 'unlived,' or lived in awareness, and so lived fully and completely.

In other words, Ortega wants to say that authentic human life is the on-going achievement of

an evolutionary operation of consciousness, which realizes itself in self-consciousness. One way to understand this notion is to recognize the sharp, but implicit distinction Ortega is drawing between the existence of what he might call 'biological man' and that of 'human man.' In his view, while biological man is the necessary condition for human man, these two states of being are not, nor should they be considered, equivalent to one another. Biological man is he who goes through life "sleep walking"--he whose human consciousness exists in a state of catalepsy. In comparison, human man is he who goes through life awake--he whose human consciousness is a state of awareness.

In the sense, then, that human life presupposes a particular form of biological life, Ortega refers to the reality of human man as a 'secondary reality.' This form of biological life has the coincidental, outward appearance of humanness, but does not possess the essential, inward form of humanness, which Ortega recognizes as imaginative, effective action, Specifically, human reality is fully self-conscious, active life, awakened to its primary foundation of unself-conscious actions which is presupposes, and is built upon. In this sense also, Ortega speaks of life as "preknown" or "preconscious"--in that it

always occurs, finds itself self-consciously within the framework of a belief system, which is the product of more original acts (Some Lessons 53; see also pp. 24, 25 above). He explains that

> the character of reality as distinct from thought consists in already being there before hand, in its being prior to thought. Thus, the great discovery thought must make is that it is essentially secondary, the result of a preexisting, not a 'found,' reality; a reality one may even want to avoid. (Phenomenology and Art 69)

Precisely what Ortega means here by "the character of reality" is the particular vital belief system which structures it; in direct contrast to (human) reality, itself, which he wants to equate with thought in the form of deliberate, self conscious action. In other contexts, however, Ortega often uses some of these very same terms in a manner which tends to obscure this distinction between belief as the form, or foundation, of human life, and human life itself, which is an evolutionary achievement, contingent upon more elementary acts of orientation that engender belief. The only possible explanation for this seemingly inconsistent use of terms--one which bears frequent repetition--is that Ortega employs words specifically as they pertain to the contextual circumstance of his immediate discussion, focusing in each instance on the nuance

of meaning which will most effectively convey his major point.

As an example, he identifies thought as referring to two different sorts of mental achievement--those in the form of spontaneous insights, generating beliefs, and those in the form of self-conscious creative perceptions, of 'ideas,' generating new possibilities. Within the parameters of this definition beliefs are simply equated with reality rather than with "the character of reality" as such, while ideas appear to be relegated to being 'mere' forms of 'imaginary life.' In this instance, his immediate concern is to draw a clear distinction between ideas and beliefs, rather than to explicate the nature of human reality per se. Concerning this important distinction he explains:

> To recognize a thing without counting on it . . . that is an 'idea.' To count on a thing without thinking of it, without taking account of it . . . that is a 'belief'. (The Idea 299)

Purposefully employing exaggerated terms for effect, Ortega claims,

> Now if beliefs are reality itself--since a belief in anything and that thing's being real for us are one and the same thing--it means that the stratum of our lives where beliefs hold sway is the most serious stratum of our lives; by comparison, all other strata are mere imaginary life and therefore totally lacking in seriousness, that is, in reality. (Historical Reason

22; see also p. 22 above)

Pursuing this line of thought, Ortega identifies the "other strata" as containing theories and ideas, all that is "spectral, unreal and imaginary." Suggesting that "even the most consistent and proven ones [ideas]" should not be taken "altogether seriously," he explains that "ideas" are products of thinking, and "thinking is nothing but imagining" (The Idea 299-300).

In evaluating these particular statements, it is important to keep in mind the metaphysical worth Ortega usually assigns to the idea of imagination in his general theory of human life. And, just because of the high premium he usually places on imagination, it would seem appropriate to assume here that his present underestimation of it is done to serve a particular purpose. In effect he appears to be challenging the reader to give serious attention and weight to this distinction he is making.

Reality in this particular context is the notion of "everything with which I have to reckon," out of which I must make my life--the circumstances with which I must deal that include the linguistic, cultural and historical products of previous thought (Man and People 96); see p. 22 also). In this same

sense, "ideas" are deliberate constructs of human thought, products of the imagination that have been made, and hence can then be unmade. Accessible to conscious thought as mere ideas, theories, they are "revocable" (The Idea 300). Ortega notes that

> we never believe in an idea, and as theory--science, philosophy and so on--is nothing but 'ideas,' it makes no sense to pretend man believes in theory . . , 'Ideas' persuade us, convince us, they are 'evident' or are 'proven'; but they are all this because they are always mere ideas and they are never reality itself for us, as is that in which we believe. (The Idea 299)

In sharp contrast to ideas per se, beliefs are much less 'evident' because they appear to us as the very shape of reality itself; and therefore are much more difficult to identify, and even more difficult to rescind. Ortega explains that beliefs originate from moments of original insight, of authentic saying. In exactly this sense then, as a form of mental achievement, beliefs can be described as by-products of the orienting action of vital reason. Precisely in this sense then, of being imaginative, insightful creations of thought, of being 'sayings by suggestion,' they can be regarded as new ideas which immediately compel the response of belief. That is, such sayings are so attractive as a means of orientation that they compel consciousness immediately to invest them with a quality of realness, of

certainty, of belief.[4]

Even more important to grasp however, is the overall notion Ortega is attempting to convey, which is that human life, human reality, consists in being a stratified affair. The evolutionary operation of consciousness that achieves human life is a process of thought building upon itself. Simply stated, "Thinking makes life possible" (Historical Reason 24). For Ortega, it is the activity of thinking which essentially characterizes and identifies the presence and possibility of human life.

From this vantage point, Ortega's definition of philosophy as 'a substitute for shattered tradition' can better be understood (see p. 17 above). In those places of consciousness where the foundation of belief has given way under the sheer weight of daily life, philosophy has deliberately constructed a bridge of deliberate thought, of ideas, upon which to stand. In Ortega's words, "ideas are born of doubt, that is to say, born in the empty space or hole

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[4]Thus, because Ortega understands beliefs to originate as 'sayings,' he feels justified in identifying many such beliefs as being "old ideas, often extremely old ones, sometimes as old as the human race." More specifically he explains that "They are ideas that have ceased to be mere ideas and have been compressed into beliefs. The vast majority of these beliefs operate within us without our realizing it" (Historical Reason, 20).

vacated by a belief" (Historical Reason 20).

Using yet another image, he explains that "Philosophy is orthopedics for fractured belief" (The Idea 264). In this manner he comprehends it as a particular kind of human activity of thought that produces a particular kind of product, a "quasi-conviction, a conviction of the intellect" to serve in the place of a belief that has failed--i.e., a belief that has been recognized as a "mere belief" and thus is simply no longer equatable with the shape of reality itself (What is Philosophy? 142; See p. 16 above).

"At certain definite junctures in history which are characterized by a breakdown in faith," philosophy "is born and reborn," according to Ortega (The Idea 305). In such moments, the original meaning of the imaginative, human expression, which has nurtured and supported daily life, loses its 'vitalness,' and is no longer able to adequately interpret circumstance in the light of current human need. In effect, each succeeding system of quasi-conviction in the history of philosophy is evidence of yet one more deliberate attempt to discover a more certain orientation and conviction, to gain an even more secure hold on reality than its predecessors could provide.

The very first philosophers were the Greeks, who suffered a severe disorientation, after having "fallen into universal doubt" (Ibid., 273). Eroded away by such doubt, the traditional convictions, which they had once inhabited as 'world,' were no longer certain and secure, so that for them reality became 'pure problem.' The crucial need that moved the Greeks to deliberate thought, and hence to their discovery of new ideas, was the need for certitude, the need to know on what they could count.

Precisely the kind of "certitude" achievable by such a premeditated endeavor of thought "is the ersatz of belief" in Ortega's words (The Idea 301). However, as long as a person 'inhabits' her belief completely--as long as this belief alone forms the contours of her particular circumstance--this need for certitude, which defines the very question of truth, is not suffered. Simply, there is no room in the confines of her circumstance for its harbinger, doubt, which itself constitutes the very "living core of truth" for Ortega (The Idea 332).

It is not the presence, the 'mere coexistence,' of other beliefs alongside one's own which sets the stage for the precursor of doubt. Only the interaction, the real confrontation of another's 'effective' reality with one's own, formulates truth as a

question and compels one to the search for certainty. Hence, in Ortega's view, doubt does not represent a deficient situation, but instead an abundant one, positing multiple possibilities for belief (The Idea 298, 300, 302). In this situation it might even be said that

> the doubter believes more than the believer, who is a close prisoner in the monolith of his faith. Doubt is believing in two things at the same time, seeing at the same time two ideas which are disparate and different. This seeing with double vision . . . is doubting. Doubt is the cross-eyed sister of belief. (The Idea 303)

In this state of having to decide, reality is no longer perfectly coincident with one's set of beliefs (see p. 50, 51, 52). Hence, it appears as something more, more than one's form of belief; and thus, is experienced as problem, as an enigma to be solved. Likewise, the awareness that belief may be 'mere belief,' an idea about reality, rather than reality, saps the strength of that very belief itself. As a belief-in-question, it becomes an idea-to-be-concerned about. In fact, Ortega strictly defines ideas as being "those things we consciously construct or elaborate, precisely because we do not believe in them" (Historical Reason 19-20). Because we do not believe in them, we cannot count on them, and so must think about them, be concerned with them.

This condition of ambivalence in effect destroys an individual's innocence, and assures his freedom. As Ortega explains, "When man realizes that his beliefs are not the only reality but that there are others . . . With regard to them he acquires a freedom which he did not previously possess." Precisely because he no longer lives in them, but has, experiences, his life as something other than his beliefs, they "become revocable." This freedom "is paid for by exchanging the security of belief for perplexity, insecurity, worry, vacillation, fluctuation, in short for uncertainty in facing 'ideas'" (The Idea 300).

Just as an event of self-awareness, awareness of what has been the vital, dynamic relationship between consciousness and circumstance to this point--of what has constituted 'the self'--this moment of transcendence is an experience of freedom. And just as an experience of freedom, this event of self-transcendence realizes, achieves, a moment of human destiny. An authentic instance of 'self-transparency,' this event represents both the fulfillment of the human need to know, as well as the genesis of a new need which compels one to want yet an even more authentic definition of oneself, consistent with this new circumstance of freedom. Also then, as an occasion

of self-conscious will, it is a manifestation of the creative matrix of human acts, forever calling forth from imagination, a new orientation, yet another new, and different way of 'being' (Meditations 191, 334).

Hence, on the basis of Ortega's view of human life, it can be said of biological man, existing in a catatonic state, that he is potentially, but not actually human (see pp. 47, 48 above). Hermetically sealed within his belief about the world, he has no absolute need for truth, because he has certainty. According to Ortega, "while one lives fully in belief, it is impossible to feel or even to understand what sort of thing Truth is"--the necessary condition of truth being "the need, necessity . . . for deciding between two [mere] beliefs" ('mere' precisely in the sense that one recognizes them as ideas of belief) (The Idea 298). Conversely, it can be said of human man, living in an awakened state, that he has been thrown from belief and is a 'shipwrecked castaway on an unpremeditated globe,' alert, vulnerable, and in need of truth (see p. 22 above).

In this sense then, Ortega without contradiction can say,

> [Human] life without truth is unlivable. Truth exists in such a way as to be man's reciprocal. Without man there is no truth,

> but by the same token without truth man is not man. He can be defined as the being who has an absolute need for truth. (Phenomenology and Art 51)

Essentially, human life is conscious, creative living. Therefore, while one inhabits belief, human life is not realizable simply because "the idea of Truth is not in [that type of existence]," nor can it be--truth being a condition of both consciousness and creativity (The Idea 296).

For these reasons precisely, Ortega wants to identify the work of philosophy as "paradoxical," in that it is "anti-natural," premeditated quasi-conviction in direct contrast to the "natural" and "spontaneous . . . doxa," the vital opinion which is the "native soil" of daily life (What is Philosophy? 133). In just this way philosophy can be understood as human artifice--deliberate, 'necessary thought,' contrived in response to the destruction of vital belief. This specialized form of mental activity is a self-conscious operation and achievement of unique intuitions, of ideas and concepts (What is Philosophy? 126-135).

Additionally, Ortega explains that "Thinking is a dialogue with circumstance"; even more specifically, that "an idea is the reaction of a man upon a definite situation of his life . . . is an action

taken by a man in view of a definite situation and for a definite purpose." In the particular case of the Greek philosophers, their situation was the loss of belief, their purpose, the attainment, the reattainment, of certainty (Concord and Liberty 99).

Hence for Ortega, while reason comprises a vital function of human life, it is not, and must not be mistaken for, human life (Ferrater Mora 41); Meditations 91-92; The Modern Theme 57). Accordingly, he emphasizes the distinction that "To philosophize is not to live, it is to stand consciously aside from vital beliefs." It is to critically identify and assess the assumptions upon which one counts, and routinely acts without deliberate thought. Precisely in Ortega's view, to stand consciously aside from one's beliefs signifies nothing less than the very condition which enables one to live fully, to live humanly. For this reason, he goes on to suggest that philosophy, as just such an active withdrawal from belief, has the potential to effect "a way of adding to the ingenuous process of living a magnificent eagerness for super-living!" (What is Philosophy? 142, 121)

It is precisely Ortega's contention that philosophy has yet to realize this potential. During the course of its history, philosophy came to confuse

reason with life itself--in other words, the means subsumed the end. He explains that ironically this confusion occurred as a consequence of the joyful "exuberance" that attended the birth of philosophy. In essence, Man believed he had found "a way by which he [could] proceed, go forward and arrive at Reality by his own means." Belief in reason, in deliberate thought, as the cure for his despair, imbued the early philosophers with an absolute trust in the total sufficiency of rational thought to achieve Truth (The Idea 273, 307, 308; Concord and Liberty 15). Such truth soon came to disregard the subtle, but profound distinction between reason as a means to secure life, and the very life it would secure. The deliberate reason of philosophers came to believe that its own ideal form, "pure reason," not only could achieve absolute certainty, but was itself "the true reality" (The Modern Theme 55-56).

Thus, it is Ortega's interpretation that philosophy, formulated in response to doubt as a solution to the loss of certainty, of vital belief, historically represents an increasing, unquestioned trust in the exclusive power of reason to disclose certainty. By virtue of promoting this trust through its very activity, philosophy unknowingly and unwittingly took upon itself the burdens and

obligations of being a particular kind of belief system for its adherents; even as it also continued to identify its task as one of exposing the deceptive assumptions of belief.

In one sense then, Ortega is claiming that philosophy has become what it started out to fight against. Further, he contends that it is precisely due to the inherent contradiction between philosophy's implicit function and its explicit goal, that philosophy continues to remain unaware of the basic nature of its own creations as 'substitute belief' (see p. 17 above). Herein also, he locates the cause for philosophy's failure to realize its potential, to become fully transparent reason, completely critical of its own historical expression. For this reason, inadvertently, philosophy exempts itself from meeting its own standards of critical, objective evaluation and presuppositionless thought.

Accordingly, Ortega describes philosophy as

> always two: that which is expressed, made up of what the philosopher 'wants' to say, and what is latent--latent not only because the philosopher is silent and does not tell us about it, but also because he does not see it. The reason for this strange double reality is that all 'telling' is an animate action on the part of man; therefore the genuine and real thing in a 'saying' is not what is said . . . but the fact that someone supports, works with and is committed (s'engage) to it . . . [T]he very assumptions that are active in him as

> a man and that have led him . . . to enunciate his philosophy and no other . . . are the author himself as a living reality, the beliefs in which he is . . . . (The Idea 260-261)

It has only been since the work of Descartes that philosophy in Ortega's opinion, has begin to investigate its own infrastructure of belief, and to consider the influence that foundation may have exerted on its pursuit of certainty. Hence, for his own systematic thought, as well as for all philosophical endeavors, Ortega fully accepts the criteria of credibility imposed by the Cartesian Method of radical doubt. That demand, as Ortega understands it, is for philosophy "to includes in its own anatomy the organ of its own justification"--in other words, to take account of "the motives from which it springs," if it is to avoid the "naive" blindness of failing "to recognize as a constitutive part of itself the facts that prompt its creation" (Liberty and Concord 76-77; also Historical Reason 66-67).

It is with Descartes' Discourse on Method that philosophy became actually capable of fulfilling its potential. His insight enabled philosophy to come of age, in Ortega's view, taking upon itself the burden of total self-consciousness, of being aware of itself as specifically an achievement as well as a process of intellectual activity (Liberty 78; What is

Philosophy? 144-146; Historical Reason 46). For this reason, all post-Cartesian philosophy is required to begin by identifying its own foundation. Only in this way can a conscientious philosopher hope to achieve the crucial philosophical "principle of autonomy" that demands "extreme intellectual heroism" for its fulfillment. This rigorous requirement involves "renouncing the right to lean on anything prior to the philosophy he may be creating and pledging himself not to start from supposed truths" (What is Philosophy? 101).

Due to this absolute imperative of presuppositionless thought, Ortega understands that "the justification of philosophy is [in fact, must be necessarily] its first principle." In other words, since "what impels man to philosophize forms part of the philosophic theory itself"--and "what impels man to philosophize" is the belief that justifies that act--philosophy is required to take into account its own motivation (Liberty 78). Hence, for all these reason Ortega identifies the current philosophical challenge, and his own task especially, to involve adherence to this imperative for the sake of philosophic honesty.

Ortega perceives that his own work must not only include an investigation of the basic belief systems

which have grounded the major historical philosophies to the present, but that it also must offer an alternative to them in the form of a fully acknowledged, conscious belief. In this manner he hopes to effectively meet the requirements of full philosophic integrity. And by so doing he perceives himself to be explicating a new way of thinking about reality, exploring the possibility of a new method of conceiving reality, which could transform and expand philosophic thinking (The Idea 20, 185, 186). In effect, Ortega is calling for a new evolution in philosophical thought, saying that "a new method must be found that is neither the rational one of the philosophical tradition, nor the visionary one which philosophy replaced" (Historical Reason 203).

To introduce properly this new philosophic possibility, Ortega employs the procedural device of comparison, not simply to distinguish his ideas from the classical methods, but, interestingly enough, also to connect his work to them as a legitimate heir of the original philosophic quest. To establish this connection is a necessary and critical step in Ortega's attempt to initiate an authentic reform in philosophical thinking. He explains in his own words

> Throughout history all conquest implies assimilation; we must devour what is going to be overcome, must take within ourselves

> the very thing we wish to abandon. In the life of the spirit only that is superseded which is conserved . . . in the life of the spirit it is the new ideas, the daughter ideas which carry their own mothers in their wombs. (What is Philosophy? 150)

For Ortega, past philosophical theories are an integral part of the intellectual circumstance of which any authentic philosopher must take account, and from which he must begin his own unique quest (Phenomenology and Art 69).

Hence it is not Ortega's intent to refute the significance of classical philosophy in and for its own time, nor to reject it out of hand. Instead his desire is to build on it, to use it as a foundation for the construction of a new vision which will expand the horizons of philosophical concern.

This new philosophic agenda, which Ortega suggests by his work, involves nothing less than making thought and its operations totally transparent to itself. In different words, he expresses this same basic idea: "man has a mission of clarity upon earth," which determines that he will only be able to reach "his full capacity when he acquires complete consciousness of his circumstances" (Meditations 98, 41).

Because, according to his metaphysics, immediate, unreflective consciousness originally imposes an

order of relationships on its circumstances to meet its need for meaning, a self-conscious reclamation of such acts would signify the fulfillment of that creative need. Accordingly in this view, the quintessential task of humanity is to discover complete meaning for its situation--in other words to gain awareness of the "highest form of its coexistence," of the widest range of its possible action with all that is (Meditations 89). The recovery, or discovery, of this complete meaning ideally represents total self-comprehension by each individual of his/her own unique situation. Thus in each case, this complete self-comprehension by human thought would involve the identification of a self with its "whole personal reality" in accordance with Ortega's fundamental formula of human person: "I am myself plus my circumstance" (Meditations 45, 173).

On the basis of this understanding, Ortega argues that philosophy, if it would take upon itself the task of becoming a means of transparency, of clarity and illumination for human 'being,' must begin by transforming and expanding its methodology.

CHAPTER 2

PHILOSOPHY AS THE FULLNESS OF LIFE

1. Philosophy as the Means to Freedom

Philosophy can only begin to facilitate the human "mission of clarity upon earth" (see p. 69) when it becomes transparent to itself as one particular kind of historical, rational activity (Meditations 98). According to Ortega, this clarity of philosophical thought has yet to be realized, due in large part to a fallacy which originated in Greek thinking. It involved a simple error of omission, a philosophic oversight that confused thought with the object of thought; that mistakenly equated reality with reason, rather than correctly identifying it with the life that produced such reason (see pp. 63, 64 above).

Put another way, Greek philosophy failed to perceive that the rational products of its thought were simply evidence of life (of life-having-happened), and therefore as such--in and of themselves--not absolutely accurate indicators of the nature, the reality, of that life itself. Given that the intellectual results of reason are achievements of life, they can never alone serve as adequate references of correspondence for life, simply

because the essential nature of that reality is a complex unity which includes both act and achievement (see p. 21 above).

In Ortega's opinion, this simple oversight had profound repercussions, allowing philosophy to confuse life with knowledge of life, and to identify them as one and the same (see pp. 21, 47, 54, 55 above). Further indirect consequences of this mistaken equivalence of knowledge with life was the notion that life itself involves the '<u>mere</u> coexistence' of knower and known (see p. 17, 18 above). That is, reality was made up of knowing 'things' as well as knowable 'things,' all of which were essentially self-sufficient, separate entities--if not deliberately hostile, then at the very least, basically indifferent to, and unaffected by, the existence of each other. This type of coexistence predicated life essentially as a duality of inimical opposites, of knowing and knowable objects, each continually thwarting the natural intention of the other--one to reveal, the other to conceal, respectively. In contrast, Ortega perceives life as an essential, rather than a mere or coincidental, coexistence based on mutual interaction, a duality of reciprocal pairs, of consciousness and circumstance, mutually in need of each other for meaningful

existence (see p. 19, 21 above).

By identifying itself completely with reason, and hence with reality, the old, traditional philosophy was able to proceed naively on the assumption that it was at least equal to, if not greater than, the object of its knowledge, which was life. And in this way--by equating reason with reality, and reality with itself--philosophy also was able to assign to its efforts an importance, a seriousness far exceeding their actual significance in relationship to life.

To proceed on the basis of this assumption, however, in Ortega's opinion, is to overlook the simple fact that "complete and genuine reality is for us simply what we believe and never what we think" (The Idea 298). Reiterating his claim that reality is found in the basic belief stratum of our consciousness (see pp. 53, 54), Ortega explains

> Thus it is that theory and ideas, even the most consistent and proven ones, have in our lives a spectral, unreal, and imaginary character, not really serious. I say this because we are never our ideas, we never confuse them with ourselves, we merely think of them. . . .

Hence, it is also that the stuff of philosophy, ideas, should never ultimately regard itself as "a serious matter in comparison with the believing life, the credulous life" (The Idea 299, 321).

Accordingly, philosophy should be entered into with a "freedom of spirit," with a lightness of heart, a "joviality" and an exuberance not unlike that of "the tone proper to . . . a game" (The Idea 320,321,333). Simply because "all thinking, to put it in concrete terms is only fantasy," that is, the exacting, creative work of imagination (The Idea 299; see also pp. 37, 51, 52 above). From Ortega's perspective this lighthearted approach would constitute a reformed philosophy. In effect it would achieve a discipline of transparent thought, and therefore of "superlative" theory, which could add to the "process of living a magnificent eagerness for super-living!" (What is Philosophy? 121; see also p. 61 above). It would do this 1) by recognizing its activity as a creative execution of possibilities, rather than as a definitive declaration of actualities; and 2) by equating the shape of reality with the vital operation of definitive belief, rather than with the historical activity of self-conscious thought (see pp. 23, 51, 52, 54, 55).

The magnificent eagerness for living would follow, in part, from the revelation of, and consequently the freedom from, formative belief systems, as well as the authentic possibility of choice that such awareness would allow. This freedom

would come precisely in the fact of being able 'to step aside' from these beliefs rather than 'inhabiting,' or living in them; that is, in being able to distinguish them as particular interpretations of reality, rather than as reality itself. Even more importantly, however, such eagerness would evolve from an additional awareness that the revelation of formative belief indicates the real possibility of individuals being able consciously to create new, more enabling and enlightening convictions for themselves. In other words, it would herald the discovery of a means for expanding the human potential. Such eagerness and 'sportive gaiety,' which would characterize philosophy, thus would achieve a genuine freedom of conscious, joyful, creative activity at its best (The Idea 321).

The old philosophy, philosophy as it has existed, according to Ortega, "was born on one fine day and it will disappear on another" (The Idea 274). Built on a foundation of unexamined assumptions, on the vital belief system of western culture, for the sake of its own integrity, this old philosophy must humbly expose its subterranean depths to the light of day. There simply is no other recourse for it because, in Ortega's words,

Philosophy is an enormous appetite for the

> transparent and a resolute will toward midday. Its basic proposal is to bring to the surface, to declare and describe the veiled and the hidden. (What is Philosophy? 111)

Teasingly he suggests, "Perhaps we are at the dawn of this other 'fine day'." In effect, he appears to be proposing that his own method of thinking could quality as the precursor to "a totally new way of facing up to the Universe intellectually" (The Idea 274-275).

The new approach, which Ortega's philosophy attempts to introduce, specifically involves making explicit what has remained implicit, hidden and unstated within all previous historical philosophies --that is, the belief system in which they are rooted. Concerning his own philosophy, Ortega regards his first premise as being as true and consistent an expression of his particular operative belief as he is capable of formulating. This is none other than the simple awareness that human life arises out of a certain interaction of consciousness and circumstance. On the strength of this core conviction, he imposes upon his philosophy the requirement to give equal consideration to both inseparable dimensions of this interaction in order to convey its total significance as meaningful life, human life.

Most especially, however, it is Ortega's definition of essential human life as effective doing, rather than conscious knowing, which prevents him from falling into the subject/object split of classical epistemology. That is, by this means Ortega avoids the irresolvable problem which attends the correspondence theory of truth--namely, the necessity to correlate a purely objective world with subjective experience in the determination of truth. In effect, the definition prohibits him from confusing life with its achievements--from identifying human life exclusively with its own knowledge, the product of its own creativity.

Simply, for Ortega, the essential doing of effective, human life must be equated with the action of infusing circumstance with meaning--of giving shape and order to one's experience--and responding to that circumstance on the very basis of such meaning. Thus, by understanding human life as essential doing, Ortega safeguards himself against inadvertently shifting the weight of philosophical significance from life's action to its accomplishment. In this way, he is never tempted to make the achievements, the 'products,' of human doing equal or equitable to that doing itself.

More importantly, the very inequality of this

existential dualism (see p. 21) provides him with a philosophical explanation and assurance for the perpetual continuation of the doing that is human life. Ortega identifies the disequilibrium, the tension, which arises from the inherent inequality of act and product, as that vital need to know that is the necessary condition for the ongoing creative execution of human life (see p. 36).

As concrete evidence of this tension effecting the human world, Ortega points to the "real strife," "suffering," "antagonism," and "doubt" which constellate human events. For him the vital human need in manifest in the strife of freedom, of authentic individual expression executed in the face of anachronistic collective forms of behavior (Man and People 160, 161, 212). As such it constitutes the suffering of creative action, which is the "active originality of the hero" --- that authentic individual whose "life is a perpetual resistance to what is habitual and customary" (Meditations 149). It is the creative act carried out in response to--because of and in spite of--the 'products' of previous creative actions. Likewise, it is the antagonism of contradiction revealed in the philosophical desire to attain certainty by making transitory, temporal experience perfectly coincident

with permanent, "semi-eternal" truth (What is Philosophy? 21).

This vital human need to know precisely that upon which one can count is also, and perhaps most profoundly, evident in the doubt of uncertainty. Such uncertainty appears in the form of an irrevocable, metaphysical suspicion that one is "living amid deceit and fraud"--of a nagging doubt that grows with the awareness that one's beliefs are no longer perfectly coincident with one's reality (The Idea 306). This awareness occurs as a result of confronting, interacting with, another's reality in the form of an alternative, effective belief. In other words, it is a 'metaphysical disorientation' which attends one's experience of circumstance as being something more than one's own belief, and compels one to undertake a new 'existential reconstruction' of her world (see also pp. 25, 58 above).

In actuality, when the shape of one's reality does coincide perfectly with the form of one's belief, one is at home in her circumstance. In other words, one is enclosed in her circumstance, and thus not free to choose in respect to it. One unknowingly is her environment in the form of her belief. Precisely in this state, there exists a simple, rather than a complex, unity, a nondifferentiated,

undefined relationship between consciousness and circumstance which does not fulfill the requirements of--and hence cannot be called--human life according to Ortega.

In such a state of being, no disequilibrium, no need is suffered in regard to that on which one counts, specifically belief. In direct contrast is the state of disequilibrium, of disorientation, which is indicative of vital human life for Ortega. In this human situation, real strife and crucial need precede, and attend the formation of new possibilities, 'ideas'--precisely those 'things' upon which one is unable immediately and absolutely to rely, and to which one must consciously attend--because in Ortega's words we "do not believe in them," and therefore, are unable to count on them (Historical Reason 19-20; see also p. 57 above).

Specifically, the conscious concern and deliberation about ideas that defines philosophy represents a particular historical attempt to fill the vacancies of belief with such ideas as might mediate belief, by 'suggesting' a possibility upon which one could conceivably come to rely. It is Ortega's thesis that the successive investment of certainty, and therefore of belief, in certain ideas and systems of ideas, constitutes the dynamic of

human history. In other words, historical narrative reflects the essential, dialectical movement of human consciousness from original insight, to creative saying to habitual belief. An unstable ground susceptible to erosion, habitual life inevitably necessitates human life, the effort of deeper insight, and more creative, recreative speech, which in turn introduces yet another possible form for collective 'life.' This ceaseless dialectic ever anew forms the basic "inescapable" plot of the human story that is western history (The Idea 330).

Human activity initiates, gives birth to itself in a moment of original insight. This authentic moment involves a 'spontaneous,' effective organization of circumstance, an unself-conscious mental activity of ordering, which Ortega refers to as a form of reason, as "vital reason," which bestows on its own achievements the certainty of unquestioned belief. In this context, he is identifying "Thought [a]s a vital function, like digestion, or the circulation of the blood" (The Modern Theme 37, 59; see also pp. 50-51 above).

However, this vital form of thought is not to be confused with its more self-conscious form of activity, which is a function of the historical life of individuals, a deliberate production of 'ideas'

for the expansion and enhancement of knowledge. On occasion, Ortega refers to this form of thought as "pure reason" which is simply

> the state of understanding when left to its own devices . . . [which] constructs, on its own foundations, a number of prodigious weapons, of a sublime accuracy and rigidity. Instead of seeking contact with phenomena it ignores such contact, and tries to ensure the most exclusive fidelity to its own internal laws" (The Modern Theme 110).

More often he identifies this kind of thought as 'historical reason,' precisely the form of reason which traditional philosophy has employed in its attempt to repair 'fractured belief.'

It is Ortega's contention that just so long as philosophy remains only and exclusively a mere form of historical reason, it can never achieve its potential destiny, never become fully self-conscious, presuppositionless thought. In order to realize its fullest possibilities, philosophy must acknowledge that historical reason (of which it is one expression) is always preceded by, and therefore presupposes and is tied to, the activity of vital reason. Such an acknowledgement would include the humbling recognition that "pure reason has, then, to surrender its [absolute, autonomous] authority to vital reason" (The Modern Theme 59). In other words, this awareness would require philosophy, for the sake of

its own integrity, to begin to act in concert with, rather than in ignorance of, vital reason as the very means to achieve authentic, self-conscious insight.

Understood as both an achievement and an action, a creation and a creator, of the open-ended evolution of human consciousness, philosophical thought can be identified as an integral part of the process of human history. Additionally, in the light of Ortega's definition of philosophy as "orthopedics for fractured belief," (The Idea 264; see also p. 54 above) this exacting formulation of theory, which philosophy represents, can be recognized as the deliberate construction of a foundation of meaning for all human action. As a method of valuation, philosophy creates convictions of the intellect, potentially capable of belief as formative principles of human life, as expressions of truth. Hence, from this view it would appear that philosophy should be undertaken with all the seriousness worthy of such a noble endeavor, which is quite contrary to Ortega's idea that it should be carried on with the light-hearted attitude of a game of sport.

Clarification of this seeming incongruity in Ortega's thought depends once again upon identifying the precise kinds of distinctions he is drawing in this particular context. Most certainly for him, in

the sense of 'sport' as irrevelant play, "Thoughts, ideas are not just a game." It is only in the sense that their clearest expression requires the objective "disinterestedness of the trained sportsman," in contrast to the subjective biasedness of the religious devotee, that Ortega wants to equate the discipline of theory with the sport of a "game" (The Idea 320-321). In fact, he deliberately warns that "thinking is no game" as far as its effects are concerned. "Games are without responsibility; they create nothing . . . [while] Thinking makes life possible" (Historical Reason 24).

In this latter sense then, thoughts are indeed more than worthy of this greatest form of respect, 'disinterestedness,' because from them are derived "the beliefs which create the weighty and irrevocable reality of the seriousness of our lives." Hence, "the correct conduct for a thinker" must exhibit a "freedom of movement" not unlike that demonstrated by an expert athlete, which manifests neither the rigidity of "overbearing seriousness," nor the inchoateness of trivial "play" (Historical Reason 24, 25). It is because of this potential to provide a possible foundation of truth for human action that philosophy, as an activity of premeditated thought, must ascribe to the rigorous discipline of disinter-

estedness in order to avoid the predilection which is so characteristic of unquestioned belief. By such means maximum freedom is assured to the activity of deliberate thought.

Just as that deliberate discipline of thought which embodies the essential human search for meaning--for a solution to the pure problematic of existence--philosophy should recognize itself as a particular historical manifestation of the vital, self-motivating need of consciousness to become fully transparent to itself. Accordingly, while philosophy must not equate its theorems, its products, with life, at the same time it must recognize its activity as a part of life. As a form of thinking, it is a specialized activity of human life dedicated to the achievement of full human awareness, which must not, then, confuse the accomplishments it realizes with the life it is, nor dare to presume that either is equitable with human reality itself. Also, in the very sense that Ortega wants to identify human life as fully self-conscious action, in this same sense he wants to identify philosophy as being an essential activity of human life, in that it is the very means by which an expression of complete human life may be executed.

Thereby, having established the fundamental

priority "that living comes first and then philosophizing,' Ortega is now in a better position to qualify his remarks, explaining that

> in a very strict sense this is, as you see, the principle of my entire philosophy. It is well that this should be said, but not without noting that the root and heart of living consists of knowing oneself and what surrounds one, of being transparent to oneself. (What is Philosophy? 217)

For Ortega, human life, fully conscious life, is none other than transparent life that is attentive to "the highest form of its coexistence with circumstance," that is, aware of its own meaning (Meditations 89; also see p. 17 above). "In short," he describes this kind of attentiveness as effecting nothing less that "the reabsorption of circumstance [which] is the concrete destiny of man" (Meditations 41, 45).

Similarly, Ortega understands that human destiny represents the realization of truth-full life (see pp. 60, 64 above)--truth being nothing more nor less than this coexistence illumined, known, and accepted as reality. In other words, truthful human life constitutes the living awareness of a differentiated, defined relationship between consciousness and circumstance which effects a complex unity (see p. 79 above). In this sense then, Ortega means that

> Life is knowing oneself, it relies on

> evidence . . . in its deepest and most secret roots, living consists in knowing ourselves and comprehending ourselves, in being aware of ourselves and of what surrounds us, in a form of being that to itself is transparent. (Some Lessons 38, 39, 50, 51)

Put another way, life relies on evidence because life is the need to be, more specifically, the need to be known, the need to make itself evident.

With this particular connections Ortega extends and completes his basic, philosophical formula, 'I am myself plus my circumstance,' adding "and if I cannot save it [my circumstance], I cannot save myself" (Meditations 45, 46). As explanation and justification for this philosophical notion of salvation, he refers to the original Platonic motive as an heroic, conscious attempt "to save" the reality of fleeting "appearances" thorough identification with, and participation in the eternal Forms. Plato was simply trying "to look for the meaning of what surrounds us," or in Ortega's words, trying 'to save his circumstance and himself' through the discovery of 'truth' understood as certainty (Meditations 45-46). In effect then, for Ortega, salvation is a matter of finding our 'selves' within our circumstances, and of claiming, affirming, celebrating what we find there as that which makes us authentically

who we are.

Further, on the basis that truthful human life essentially consists in being a solitary endeavor and an individual expression of freedom (see pp. 26, 41, 42 above), human destiny can be comprehended as a universal imperative, to which each individual is called to give a unique response--a response that constitutes one's very life as a creative act of freedom, and as a particular and authentic disclosure of truth. Each and every such disclosure can be regarded philosophically as a concrete instance of the utopian notion of 'transparent human life,' which itself is nothing more than a 'mere' abstraction of the real human possibility. In other words, for man 'to save' his circumstance means that each man must accept the challenge of recognizing the full and authentic meaning of his own circumstance. In Ortega's terms, each man must 'reabsorb' the particular circumstance in which his life consists; that is, he must claim circumstance as part of his own 'human being,' as a constitutive element of the human life he is.

In the achievement of this 'salvation' lies the fullness--the alpha and omega--of freedom for Ortega. As he envisions it, the existence of freedom involves

> the aspect assumed by a man's whole life

> when the diverse components in it reach a point in their development to produce among themselves a particular dynamic equation. To have a clear idea of what 'freedom' is presupposes we have defined or found with some rigour the formula for that equation. (The Origin of Philosophy 97)

Simply stated, freedom involves self-knowledge, living knowledge of the dynamic relationship between consciousness and circumstance, which creates and sustains an authentic, individual 'self'. Ideally then, to achieve this kind of salvation, humankind, individually, and finally collectively, must consciously and deliberately reclaim those vital belief systems that structure the living relationship of consciousness and circumstance.

Hence, in this sense, philosophy can enable the human "mission of clarity" by realizing itself as "superlative theory," that is, as fully self-conscious theory, or as what might be called meta-theory, the theory of theories (Meditations 98; What is Philosophy? 121; also see pp. 67 and 71 above). In this way, then, it can become "a magnificent eagerness for superliving," precisely as the means for fulfilling "the concrete destiny of man," which Ortega defines as "the reabsorption of circumstance" (Meditations 45). In sum, the human destiny is to know one's circumstance fully; it is to become transparent to oneself. It is to know oneself as

both creation and creator of the structures of that circumstance, to accept it as one's own 'self,' to recognize its meaning as one's own meaning, and thereby to differentiate oneself from it through the reabsorption of it.

Elaborating on this theme, Ortega equates philosophy with reason as the primary means to achieve the human destiny of self-realization:

> To be a philosopher, or to be 'reason,' or something like both things, is perhaps the human Destiny, because at a certain level in human experience it is the only suitable way of reaching the state of <u>being genuinely oneself</u> [my emphasis]. But this is not to recognize that man <u>has been</u> and <u>is philosophy</u>, but on the contrary, it is to say that perhaps he <u>must be it</u>. Thus Reason appears, not as a gift which man possesses of himself . . . but vice versa, a compromise that man makes with himself . . . because he undoubtedly . . . has not arrived at being rational. He is simply on his way to it. (<u>The Idea</u> 331)

For Ortega, to be 'reasonable' means to be fully self-aware, to be fully what one is--it is "the state of being genuinely oneself," realizing a total comprehension of those actions in which one's life is founded and consists. Needless to say, humankind has yet to realize this type of rationality, only a compromise form of it that rests on belief.

Thus, Ortega understands "Reason" as representing both a "utopian intention" and "an admirable utopia," both its own means and end. And precisely

in this manner, reason imposes itself on individuals as both a necessity and capacity of human life, specifically in the form of an unceasing "obligation." In explanation Ortega states that "philosophy" is

> an inescapable duty which we have toward ourselves, and hence, it is of no use to say that philosophy also fails in trying to serve that essential function of life which is interpreting the Universe . . . [Simply because man] must, whether he likes it or not and although he perpetually fails, keep on repeating his effort without pause, and this must be recognized as an effort which is necessarily perpetual and perpetually necessary. (The Idea 331)

Self-motivating, the activity of "Reason" is always a directed activity of human life, in that it is initiated and pursued as a promise of itself, an anticipation of its own ideal fulfillment. "Reason," in this particular context, is being understood as that unique activity of thought which is the common characteristic of both the vital and historical acts of human expression that Ortega has distinguished in his philosophy (hence, the use of the capital "R"). In this broadest and most general, most inclusive sense of the term, "Reason" is to be understood as an activity of thought which arranges the objects of its intention into an ordered pattern of relationships that thought, itself comprehends as significant, or meaningful.

In this way the activity of Reason is an effective and successful human endeavor: by never fully and completely achieving its own ideal vision it necessitates the perpetual renewal of its own activity. By this means Reason undergoes continual rebirth as that human effort "which is necessarily perpetual and perpetually necessary." (For Ortega the 'product,' the achievement, can never supercede its action because its action is the very fulfillment and realization of life.)

By so defining Reason, Ortega is able to identify it with the ongoing constitutive human act that lies at the core of his metaphysical system. Here within the context of this ontological event of primal saying, Ortega can identify Reason as 'vital reason.' That is, as the creative, imaginative operation of consciousness, which imposes on circumstance an order of value, a belief system, for the sake of its own further action, its own future existence.

As a reflection and extension of the 'vital,' unreflective, ordering activity of spontaneous life, Reason reappears in the 'secondary reality,' the interpreted reality, of conscious life as premeditated theory; it is a deliberate form of expression occurring in the practical everyday life of par-

ticular individuals, and historical societies, which presuppose, and are grounded in, the achievements of vital reason, that is, in vital belief. In this 'secondary reality,' Reason realizes particular possibilities of its own vital activity through the cultural, temporal expressions that are its own prolific creations as historical reason. As one particular form of historical reason in which individuals engage, philosophy can identify itself as a specialized activity of thought, the purpose of which is to illumine the complete operation of Reason itself with full 'clarity.'

Hence, at its very best, at its most authentic, philosophy represents the 'inescapable duty,' the human obligation, to achieve full self-expression in the form of a completely transparent, historical reason which would thereby necessarily reveal the vital reason upon which it rests. In conclusion, it would appear that for Ortega the most authentic foundation of meaning that philosophy really can and should provide is the full and explicit disclosure of the operations of Reason which construct the very framework for meaningful, historical thought and purposeful action through the creation of vital belief.

Such a philosophical intention--to disclose the

full power of thought as creator of the metaphysical, vital beliefs which structure circumstance into a world of human value--is in essence nothing more nor less than a reflection of the 'utopian intention' of Reason itself. It is simply the human need and desire for self-disclosure, self-knowledge. Ortega explains that while any historical expression of philosophy, fulfilling this utopian intention, would certainly "have the right to call itself the 'first philosophy'," it is a "science" of freedom that "does not yet exist; it is 'the sought after' . . . that which is searched for!" (The Idea 266).

2. Philosophy as an Expression of Truth

On the basis of Ortega's view that human life is the continual achievement of an evolutionary process in which thought builds upon itself--that 'thinking makes life possible'--a further claim can be made that while thinking is essential for human living, it is not, nor should it be considered, equivalent to it. Life and thought are not philosophically interchangeable (see pp. 61 and 64 above). Hence, if Ortega is consistent with his own theory that reason is an integral part, but not the whole, of human life, it is crucial that his own systematic thought not allow reason to "supplant," or to be mistaken

for, life itself (Meditations 91; The Modern Theme 57, 57, 59). Only through such rigorous consistency can he hope to make his own work a 'self-conscious' (transparent) form of philosophical discourse.

To briefly summarize Ortega's ideas regarding the notion of thought: as a specialized, original action of human life, 'thought'is to be understood as both a 'vital' and 'historical' occurrence of human life. As an original and originating act, thought involves an 'authentic saying.' In effect, this is a total human gesture executed in response to a particular, historical circumstance of vital need, which provides the motivational orientation for a further range of possible human actions (see pp. 35 and 39 above). In turn, the particular actions actually chosen from that set of possibilities produce certain kinds of results which comprise the artifacts and accoutrements of life-lived, the very environment within which human activity continues to occur and from out of which it ceaselessly generates itself.

It is in this general theory of thinking that Marias locates "the deepest nucleus of Ortega's philosophy: vital reason" (Circumstance and Vocation 434, 377). Often confused, and equated with Ortega's concept of 'historical reason' (even Ortega himself

appears at times to use both terms interchangeably), 'vital reason' should be understood as referring exclusively to the more primary activity of thought that effects the basic 'metaphysical' patterns of vital belief necessary for human action.

In contrast, historical reason should be understood as denoting the secondary, particular manifestations and extensions of vital reason.

A conscious function, historical reason operates within the parameters of basic beliefs formulating theories, ideas, for the conscious, interpretive execution of human life. In other words, all forms of conscious intellectual activity are predicated within the elementary structures of perception (beliefs) created by the operation of vital reason. At one particular juncture, Ortega, attempting to clarity this important distinction, explains that

> Reason, as its most authentic, is vital reason . . . Or, as I wrote in The Vital Theme in 1923 pure reason is circumscribed by vital reason. (Historical Reason 66)

By "pure reason" Ortega means specifically historical, intellectual reason; the achievements of which are deliberately extracted, 'abstracted,' from temporal existence for the sake of certainty, and thus appear immune to the vagaries of change, of circumstance and time.

Actually, however, because human life is essentially a dynamic relationship occurring between consciousness and circumstance, any truthful, real, disclosure of it necessarily must assume a narrative, and therefore an historical form that takes into account time and place (see p. 42 above). Simply because the occurrence of life is always situated, it follows that reason is always a particular kind of thought, taking place within a specific context, itself constituting an integral aspect of the truth it discloses.

Consequently, any authentic disclosure--that is, one which corresponds effectively with the circumstance it reveals--will reflect in some manner the dimension of time. For this reason, authentic expressions of truth, for Ortega, can be neither totally abstract nor dogmatic in order to include this temporal, finite factor of time and place. However, neither can they be completely concrete or subjective to be understood as truth at all. Truthful expression, by definition, must be able to account for both the changing and enduring elements of human life. In Ortega's words, "To bring both (the temporal and the eternal) together must be the great philosophic task of the present generation..." if it would strive for transparency of thought (<u>What</u>

is Philosophy? 28).

In fact, Ortega emphatically states that because "Truth is historical," for the sake of intellectual integrity philosophy must demonstrate "How truth can, and indeed must, claim nevertheless to be super-historical--not relative but absolute" in order to regain credibility for the very notion of truth (What is Philosophy? 50). For Ortega "super-historical" truth would include and go beyond history, in the sense that it would clarify the changing aspects of life by placing them within the larger, paradigmatic and enduring structure of human meaning.

It is his view that both the "plausibilities" and "complementary inadequacies" attending the philosophic schools of rationalism and relativism have over time jeopardized the validity of truth as a relevant philosophic concept. In effect,

> Each [school] . . . renounces what the other retains. Rationalism clings to truth and abandons life: relativism prefers the mobility of existence to the calm and immutability of truth. (The Modern Theme 36-37)

Precisely as a way to surmount this dilemma, Ortega refers back to his identification of the twofold nature of meaningful reality: the 'latent' patterns of order, and the 'patent' appearances of sense impression (see pp. 27, 28 above). Simply, the

whole reality that is human life rests upon the imaginative, vital union of that which is 'immediately' given by circumstance, and that which is 'mediated' to circumstance through consciousness. In other words, human life is precisely that imaginative, 'metaphorical operation' which perceives the immediately 'given' through the mediation of what is 'not-given,' not immediately accessible to sense impression.

For this reason, Ortega wants to describe human life as a creative search for the 'not-given' in the very midst of the 'given.' From this perspective then, human life can be understood as the eternal quest for what is potentially 'present,' and concealed in the depths of possibility that are defined by the boundaries of the 'immediate.' Specifically, Ortega understands that what exists in human life as always 'potentially present' is the future in the form of possibility. Put yet another way, necessarily the human present is a moment which involves an implicit awareness of the future, an intuition of possibilities.

In his own words, Ortega explains,

> life is that paradoxical reality which consists in deciding what we are going to do, therefore in being what we not yet are, in starting to be the future. . . . Psychologically, then, the decisive thing

> is not the sum of what we have been, but of what we yearn to be: the appetite, the desire, the illusion, the ambition. Whether we like it or not, our life is in its essence futurism. (What is Philosophy? 243, 247)

In this sense, "human living" is essentially "a constant anticipation, a pre-forming of the future" (What is Philosophy? 246). Furthermore, this future, more precisely, the awareness of this future, is that which completes the past, and defines the present in relationship to itself. Hence, it is that awareness which makes life human, makes life an intentional event, a story (What is Philosophy? 224-225). Just as a future intention and orientation, human 'being' realizes and transcends its present through meaningful recognition of its past: "thought creates time" (Historical Reason 24).

In other words, based on Ortega's philosophy as a whole, it can be said that the future is 'potentially present' in the life of individuals in the form of latent possibilities hidden within the belief systems that have been set in place by the past. Regarding this notion, Ortega explains that "Seeking is a strange operation. In it we hunt for something which in a certain way we are already holding" (Concord and Liberty 66).

In effect, what 'we are already holding' and

'that which is searched for' by philosophers (see pp. 86, 92 above) is one and the same; it is our life. According to Ortega,

> what truly exists is a man in search of simple reality, of what is given . . . [and] What is 'self-positing,' what is imposed on a philosopher's thought, is all that stands behind him, gives him birth and thus, what he leaves behind. The philosophical enterprize is both inseparable from what was there before it began and linked dialectically to it; it has its truth in a pre-philosophical realm. The most inveterate mistake has been to think that philosophy must always discover some new reality that only appears under philosophy's lens, when the character of reality as distinct from thought consists in already being there before hand, in its being prior to thought. Thus, the great discovery thought must make is that it is essentially secondary, the result of a pre-existing, not a 'found' reality. . . ." (Art and Phenomenology 69)

As has been previously noted, 'the character of reality' for Ortega is none other than the form of belief (see pp. 53, 54 above).

In a similar vein, almost offhandedly, Ortega suggests that "perhaps truth is no more than discovery, the lifting of a veil or a cover from what was already there and on which we were already counting" (Some Lessons 50). In order to comprehend fully what Ortega is saying about truth here, it is important to keep in mind his theory of belief.

Precisely in the sense that Ortega understands human reality as a structure of belief--an execution

of vital reason--which necessarily precedes historical, cognitive thought, he describes concrete, daily life as 'preknown,' 'preconscious' (see p. 26 above). It is an activity carried out on the firm foundation of what is "already there"; it is a foundation on which we "count" without ever having "to take account of it," think about it (Some Lessons 49, 50; Art and Phenomenology 69; Concord and Liberty 67; The Idea 299). It is in this same sense then that he defines truth as an experience of discovery, a moment of 'self-transparency' whereby we come to awareness of that 'something' which 'we are already holding,' and 'on which we were already counting.'

Hence, truth is a moment of pure clarity in which the individual surpasses, transcends, her own 'vision,' thereby expanding the horizon of her possibilities. And as a moment of transformation, this event represents an experience of freedom, precisely that freedom which Ortega identifies as the essential 'nature' and destiny of human life. In sum, truth constitutes an instance of transparent clarity, in which conscious thought perfectly coincides, or aligns itself, with vital belief in respect to circumstance. By means of this perfect coincidence, thought is able to recognize the source of its own meaning in the pattern, or form, of that

belief, and in so doing expand awareness to attend to possibilities that lie outside the limits of the original belief.

In Ortega's words, essentially "truth is the strict measurement of ideas against what shows itself as reality" (Phenomenology and Art 51). And precisely what shows itself as reality does so in the form of belief from his point of view. According to Ortega, in the same way that human life can be recognized as essentially an event, a happening; so also truth can be identified as primarily an event, in that it involves a particular human activity of perception, an advent of awareness. Given this understanding, Ortega's definition of truth as "strict measurement" likewise must be understood as referring to the act of measurement, rather than to the measurement itself. That is to say, the philosophical focus should center on the action of measuring rather than upon the consequence, or product, of such measurement as is usually the case. In other words, truth is a vital quality of human life, of human action, rather than a property of statements or an attribute of achievements. More precisely, truth is clarity of perception. And, hence, understood in this way, truth necessarily conveys an impression of 'newness,' the very

characteristic which insures its identification.

Explaining this defining characteristic of 'newness,' Ortega points out that

> once known truths acquire a utilitarian crust; they no longer interest us as truths but as useful recipes. That pure sudden illumination which characterizes truth accompanies the latter only at the moment of discovery. (The Origin of Philosophy 62-63)

For this very reason, and also as a justification for his own thought, Ortega adds that the Greeks identified such experience as "'aletheia' which originally meant the same as 'apocalysis' later, that is discovery, revelation, or rather removing a veil or cover" (Meditations 67; What is Philosophy? 111).

Truth can be considered then, a quality or aspect of clarity, of illumination, that circumstance discloses when viewed in a particular way, perceived from a certain 'perspective" (see pp. 87, 97, 100 above). Hence in this way it can also be said to be nothing more, nor less than, a matter of perspective. "In Ortega perspective is the condition of the real and the possibility of access to its truth," Marias explains. In like manner, that which represents an evasion and unfaithfulness to the perspective is to be understood as the condition of the false and inauthentic. It is, in Marias's words, "making a particular point of view absolute; that is, forget-

ting the perspective quality of every vision" (Marias's emphasis) (Circumstance and Vocation 375).

Ortega himself presents this theory in even stronger terms: "The ultimate reality of the world is neither matter nor spirit, is no definite thing, but a perspective" (my emphasis) (Meditations 45). According to his theory of perspectivism, human reality is constituted through the illumination of vital appearance by the interpretive perspective of individual consciousness. "Life . . . in its root and essence," for Ortega, "is indisputably altruistic," generously offering itself as a gift of possibility to consciousness (The Modern Theme 72). He explains that while "Perspective is the order and form that reality takes for him who contemplates it," in fact, it is circumstance which first offers itself, "responds" to the presence of a "'conscious subject' . . . by appearing to it."

Precisely in order that his theory will not be mistakenly identified as a form of idealism, Ortega emphasizes that

> Appearance is an objective quality of the real, its response to a subject. This response is . . . different according to the condition of the observer . . . according to his standpoint of contemplation. (The Modern Theme 142-143)

In effect the idea of 'perspective' provides evidence

of the real nature of appearance, phenomena. An "organizing element" of reality--perspective illuminates and reflects the interdependent relationship of consciousness and circumstance which structures reality in a form which allows for the possibility of a particular set of appearances (The Modern Theme 90).

Thus, for all these reasons, dogmatic statements cannot be ultimately truthful statements, simply because they are perspectiveless. In like manner truthful expressions cannot be dogmatic pronouncements because they are 'suggestions,' sayings which suggest the particular perspective out of which they originate (see pp. 87, 93 above). Likewise, Ortega advises that "He who wants to teach us a truth should place us in a position to discover it ourselves" because "the pedagogy of suggestion" is "the only delicate and profound pedagogy." He even goes so far as to say that anyone

> who wishes to teach us a truth should not tell it to us, but simply suggest it with a brief gesture which starts an ideal trajectory in the air along which we glide until we find ourselves at the feet of the new truth. (Meditations 67).

This 'brief gesture' refers to none other than the 'saying by suggestion' which constitutes a 'metaphorical operation' (see pp. 33, 38 above).

Hence, within the context of Ortega's understanding it is correct to say that the idea of reality "which remained the same from what every point of view it was observed would be a ridiculous conception" (see p. 49 above; also The Modern Theme 90). Theoretically, in this regard, it would appear that the more appropriate philosophical definition of the concept 'reality' would refer to the totality of all effective, experienced perspectives, rather than a utopian, transcendent, absolutist point of view.

Theological metaphysics traditionally has recognized this kind of omniscient vision as exclusively comprising the purview of God. Ortega argues that, in fact, such an understanding is not adequate to the idea of God, doing little more than equating 'the God concept' with a supraindividual, rationalist point of view, which in his opinion is really no point of view at all. Rather, a more appropriate concept of God would be such that it would signify a point of view which "enjoys the use of every point of view." It would seem that the only way to posit divine 'truth,' as well as to retain human truth, is to make each individual perspective represent a "partial [but nonetheless real] truth" of the whole. In this manner authentic reality is not only a possibility that is accessible to human life,

but also one that is attributable to human experience. For Ortega the achievement of authentic reality represents the revelation and realization of individual truth, the transparency of human life, which is both the obligation and destiny of human kind (The Modern Theme 95).

Elimination of all perspectives is the work of abstraction, which constitutes theoretical knowledge, imaginative, exact, scientific knowledge (Historical Reason 22-23; What is Philosophy? 82). The truth, the authenticness, of this knowledge lies not in itself as a revelation of reality, but only in its function as an effective manipulation of reality (The Idea 299-300; Concord and Liberty 68). In effect, knowledge of abstraction comprises what Ortega defines as 'the utilitarian crust of truth" (see p. 98 above). Hence it is the case that without the imposition of a perspective, a viewpoint, though the subject, the knower, remains intact, the concrete object of her knowledge, the 'world' literally vanishes into 'abstraction' and is no longer real. The relationship between consciousness and circumstance has been momentarily displaced by the secondary and derivative relationship occurring between consciousness and its own thought (Circumstance 377; Meditations 186-187; Concord and Liberty

81-82).

In this manner Ortega assigns to the notion of 'perspective' a philosophical value of objectivity, long denied it by both dogmatic and skeptical epistemologists alike. While on the one hand rationalism would assure the existence of an absolute reality by sacrificing particularity to establish one universal truth; on the other hand, relativism would ransom the notion of universal truth in order to secure the inviolable sanctity of particularity. In contrast to both, however, Ortega would establish objective truth in and through the real particularity of appearance as a means to authentic individual, human experience.

Interestingly enough, however, it is Ortega's doctrine of perspectivism that has provoked some of the strongest criticism of his philosophical abilities, especially by those who want to defend the essential, objective nature of truth. Such criticism equates his work with other pseudo-philosophical attempts over the last century which "'toy' playfully at killing reason in life"; and identifies it as a denial of truth and a refutation of reason, rather than as an instantiation of both (Sciacca 121-122). In response to these critics, Marias contends that the theory of perspectivism developed specifically "

out of the claim to the maximum demands of truth" which Ortega imposed on himself; and that "perspective is precisely the concept which . . . permit[s] Ortega to make sure that truth is not going to escape him." According to Marias, it is, in fact, Ortega's unswerving commitment to the truth which enabled him to push beyond those "philosophical positions which used perspectivism to evade the truth" (Circumstance 376).

3. Philosophy as the Fullness of Life

For Ortega, in the same sense that humankind and truth are mutually inclusive terms, truth and belief are mutually exclusive categories of existence. Basically, what this means is that while one is 'catatonic,' in a state of belief, one cannot be 'awake,' in a state of truth, of 'awareness.' In other words while one inhabits belief, human life is not realizable: truth being a 'absolute' requirement for human action (see pp. 48, 58, 62 above). Thus, according to Ortega, philosophy, precisely as a potentially 'active withdrawal from belief,' represents the possibility of awakening--awakening to the truth of one's being, which is none other than freedom, 'the human destiny' in his view.

However, just as all other forms of life-

activity are based upon a paradigm of belief, so also is the philosophical action of thought. Hence, necessarily, as Ortega explains, philosophical expression is dual: made up of what the philosopher explicitly wants to say, and of what she implicitly needs to believe (see pp. 62, 63 above). In this instance the philosopher's need to believe can be comprehended as a particular expression of the universal human need to know, to inhabit an orientation that gives meaning to one's actions within the context of it (see pp. 36, 37 above). Specifically, philosophical activity, can only be meaningful activity within the context of a belief system which recognizes sustained, systematic thought as a means of truth.

For this reason, philosophy must first 'awaken' to its own motivational belief, if it would justify its claim of 'presuppositionless thought,' and, by so doing, realize the human potential of 'transparent thought' as well (see pp. 65, 66, 67 above). In other words, those who would aspire to philosophy must attempt 'to stand aside' from their beliefs, to disinvest their lives from their beliefs, precisely because each of us is defined by the beliefs in which we invest, inhabit, our lives. By so doing, we can identify our beliefs, and on the basis of that

identity either consciously accept or reject them as valid premises of thought. Freedom presupposes the possibility that we can define the beliefs in which we would choose to invest our lives.

In this manner, philosophy can become 'superlative theory' and a means for 'superliving' (see pp. 64, 75, 90 above). That is, philosophy can realize a self-conscious form of theory which will enable a truthful form of living, enable human freedom through the effective action of authentic choice. In this sense then, philosophy is to be understood as

> the criticism of conventional life--including, and most particularly of his own life--which man finds himself needing to undertake from time to time, haling [sic,] his conventional life before the judgment-seat of his genuine life, of his inexorable solitude.

Ortega explains that this execution is done

> by constantly resorting from our conventional, habitual, daily life and its constituent perspective to our primary reality and its unwonted, difficult, and severe perspective. (Man and People 101)

The full realization of such vital 'autonomy' requires 'extreme intellectual heroism,' precisely because its achievement involves the discovery of "a new reason" (Historical Reason 203; see also p. 58 above). This third kind of reason, what might be termed "superlative" or "meta-" reason, for Ortega

represents the ideal: a perfect coincidence of vital and historical reason in self-comprehensive, transparent human action. As he describes it, the evolutionary "new thought that is achieved will result from going beyond the rational method that was used heretofore. . . ." (Historical Reason 203). This transcendence of pure rationalism is necessary simply because in truth "philosophy is a form of living," in contrast to

> the philosophic doctrine, as it is or can be in books, [which] is only the abstraction of the authentic reality which is philosophy--is only its precipitate, its semi-moribund body. . . ." (What is Philosophy? 239)

'Abstraction,' we have learned from Ortega, is in effect 'the utilitarian crust of truth,' but not the truth itself (see pp. 99, 103 above). Abstraction is the elimination of perspective, while truth is the illumination of it. Abstraction, as well, is the basis of language, of 'social usages,' simply, of conventional modes of perception. Simply stated, however, the dilemma of philosophy is the employment of language for the disclosure of truth. Hence, the philosophical challenge is to cleanse, clarify, the utilitarian crust of truth that is habitual living by removing the opaqueness of abstraction in order to reveal the transparency of perspective. This, in

fact, is the goal Ortega sets himself in the exposition of his own philosophy.

Perspective, itself, is constituted by the particular confluence of the two 'interdependent' and inseparable aspects of human reality, the form of thought and the content of appearance. Ortega uses the categories of 'latency' and 'patency' respectively to refer to each. By distinguishing these categories as elemental aspects of perspective, of truth, he is able to identify "certain ultimate, most abstract patterns of circumstance," which he recognizes as "permanent patterns of [the] human situation"--basic configurations of meaning arising from the primary interaction of thought and circumstance (Concord and Liberty 100). He explains that the very fact "we are able to gather some sort of meaning from any expression and to understand somehow the so-called absolute value of an idea" testifies to the efficaciousness of these patterns which inform our thinking, and hence, shape our world (Concord and Liberty 100). By such means consciousness is able simultaneously to take note of "the world of mere impression"--which circumstance presents for its purview--as well as to intuit beyond, beneath, that patent world, a latent realm of order and relationship, of "structures and

impression"--which vital reason "actively" summons from the depths of possibility in order to answer the human need for meaning (Meditations 65, 66, 87-89).

By recognizing that the hidden, (latent) dimension of reality consists in structures of possibility, rather than in entities (forms) of actuality, of essential 'being,' as the Greeks had done, Ortega feels he has overcome the Aristotelian notion of 'physis,' of necessary, discrete essences. According to Ortega, precisely because Aristotle had wanted to fulfill the classical agenda to distinguish "'the true' from 'the sensible appearance'," he had focused exclusively on the positive aspect of the pre-Socratic term 'aletheia.' That is to say, Aristotle had understood aletheia as referring to the effects, the objects of knowing, rather than to the action of knowing. This conception of truth--from which the 'old' philosophical method evolved--is based specifically on the identification of 'what is' essentially, in contrast to 'what appears' coincidentally, circumstantially (Circumstance and Vocation 443).

As Ortega explains,

> The Greek took reality to be . . . the essential, the profound and latent; not the external appearance but the living sources of all appearance" (Meditations 124).

Holding this assumption, classical philosophers, in Ortega's view, inadvertently neglected to note the crucial connection that the pre-Socratics had originally drawn between "alethes and phaimonenon (what appears or shows itself)" in their conception of the real. In other words, they had simply overlooked the truth of appearance, and the vital relationship it constitutes (Circumstance and Vocation 142-143).

In order to compensate for this one-sided approach to the pursuit of truth, and to provide the proper balance for his own theory of knowledge and reality, Ortega deliberately chooses to focus his attention on the "negative quality" that is necessarily implied by the meaning of "aletheia" (Circumstance and Vocation 444). Hence, to the extent aletheia, truth, explicitly refers to what is "not hidden," what is disclosed, Ortega recognizes it also must necessarily suggest, and implicitly refer to what is "hidden," what is concealed. Simply truth constitutes the basic integrity of appearance--that is, it refers to a 'moment' in which appearance actually reflects and reveals the foundational order of thought which enables its possibility. Truth, then refers to a distinction as well as a connection between what is disclosed and what is concealed from

conscious perception. What is made manifest as truth, and becomes an object of knowledge, necessarily must, and always does, offer itself as a reference to the hidden 'living sources' that authenticate its appearance precisely as truth. Because what is 'hidden' is the structure of belief, truth is precisely the discovery of a perfect coincidence between appearance and interpretation, occurring within the parameters of a particular perspective that constitutes the living sources of both (see pp. 29, 30, and 94 above).

By linking this understanding with the term's original connotation as an action of uncovery and discovery--as "apocalipsis," as "revelation and unveiling"--Ortega develops his own reformation of the Greek system of philosophy. He perceives the quality of truth in knowledgeable affairs as being analogous to the dimension of depth in spacial matters. Found only within, and not apart from, the appearance of "surface," the dimension of depth constitutes a paradoxical aspect of that very appearance itself. In other words, 'depth' is at one and the same time both an affirmation and negation of the very notion of 'surface.' Likewise, truth is discovered, uncovered, only within, and not apart from 'sensible appearance,' constituting a vital

human aspect of it. Essentially, the activity and achievement of truth is at one and the same time a formation and a realization of perspective for Ortega (Circumstance and Vocation 444; Meditations 69).

Additionally, as an essential prerequisite for the apprehension of both depth and truth, Ortega identifies the quality of 'transparency.' It is on the foundation of this imaginative quality that the whole reality of human life rests in his estimation. A creative function of vision, 'transparency' enables an awareness of something other than and in addition to its own 'immediate' apprehension, which at the same time is also related, and in some way identifiable with it (see p. 30 above). The vital human capacity for 'transparency' enables consciousness to establish identifications, meanings, on the basis of a relationship, on the basis of an imaginative correspondence of similarity between pairs of different things. In effect, 'transparency' enables the possibility of meaning through the metaphorical operation of 'saying' that is human life.

To the very degree that saying is naming--the establishment of a particular identity, a meaning predicated on the basis of a vital relationship--it carries the persuasive power of realness which evokes belief. According to Ortega, it can even be argued

that naming is a particular form of believing. Thus, to name a 'thing' is to make it 'real,' specifically in the sense that "belief in anything and that thing's being real for us are one and the same thing" (see p. 24 above; also Historical Reason 22).

Briefly then, to name a thing is to secure its meaning, to set its limits, precisely by recognizing its degrees of constancy, consistency and sufficiency, within a particular perspective, that is in relationship to everything else (see pp. 38, 39 above). It is to define its way of "being for"--either as 'instrument or impediment'--in relationship to a specific human project (Man and People 77). Essentially for Ortega, this "meaning," this 'being for,' represents 'the highest form of coexistence' that conceivably a thing can realize with other things. In fact, it constitutes "its depth dimension," precisely that which is hidden, and hence calling for revelation (Meditations 89).

In this way Ortega identifies 'meaning' as a referent to the latent aspect of a particular reality, most especially to its imaginative possibilities. These possibilities themselves are to be understood as inherent derivatives of the particular perspective bestowing 'realness' on the 'thing.' And thus, as this meaning, as the depth

dimension of this 'thing,' they specifically refer to the order of relationships which surround and connect it to other things. Most especially as meaning, they indicate those relationships of 'pragmatic concern and importance' which clearly serve to outline and define the object in question within the circumstance of a certain human agenda (see p. 25 above; Man and People 80; also Meditations 88).

The possibility of discrete 'things' necessarily presupposes the possibility of coexistence, and also vice-versa. And both together suggest the possibility of structure and orders of value which Ortega identifies as constituting the essential components of human life. It is on the basis of a simple awareness of borders, of limits which function to outline and preserve the individual integrity of 'things,' that the profound intuition of coexistence, of relationships of similarity and difference, is predicated (Meditations 90). Any 'new,' authentic intuition represents none other than a moment of illumination and hence, a 'reabsorption of one's circumstance.' It is a clarifying moment of truth, an event of transformation, wherein circumstance is reordered and redefined specifically in the light of the new relationship effected between one's self and

one's focus of attention.

Thus, 'saying' gives 'being' to appearance by naming. As such a means of discrete identification, 'names' are "a form of definition" abstracted from intuition, which provide evidence of the effective power of imagination (The Idea 303). In their pristine moment of creation, they are, in effect, "a simple saying by suggestion." This is nothing more, nor less than a metaphor, according to Ortega, a pure outlining of the vital shape reality assumes when experienced in, and thus as, a certain perspective (Historical Reason 36).

Simply because there is no way to intuit circumstance without consciousness, nor consciousness without circumstance, neither is there any way to possess a true knowledge of things that does not in some manner manifest this relationship. It is for this reason that Ortega argues metaphor necessarily must constitute the most basic form of self-expression, of 'saying.' In his words, essentially

> this universal phenomenon of the relationship between subject and object, which is realization, can be conceived only by comparing it with some particular form of the relationship between objects. (Circumstance and Vocation 276).

The particular form of relationship between objects that Ortega has chosen as a means for comparison and

comprehension of meaning is precisely the relationship effected through metaphor.

Exclusively as a function of those relationships which outline and define a thing, meaning, for Ortega, refers to "the description of a vital episode," or more simply is "an extract of intuition" (see p. 41 above; also Man and People 78; The Idea 58). Even more specifically, this kind of 'description' and 'extraction' represent the unique function of "the concept" in his view. Ortega defines the concept as a "mechanism" of reason for the purpose of identification, in other words, for the ordering of a world where discrete 'things' exist in coexistence with one another (Historical Reason 104; Meditations 92). In essence then, as an 'extract of intuition,' "the content of the concept" refers to a revelation of boundaries, a disclosure of the outline and definitions of things, which allow for the possibility of structure, of separation, relationship and coexistence. Ortega explains that

> the concept contains all that the thing is in relationship with other things, all that superior treasure with which the object is enriched when it becomes part of a structure. (Meditations 90)

As a 'mere outline' of the thing experienced, its essential limits, the concept is both an affirmation and negation of the reality to which it

refers. That is, just insofar as the name as concept--is an abstraction of that experience--it can be said to be both identical and nonidentical with the reality of that particular experience. In this sense then the concept, itself, might be properly referred to as a 'metaphor of truth,' the primary function of which is to uncover "the relationship in which any object finds itself with respect to all other objects" (Meditations 92).

Thus, for Ortega, the concept at its most effective is "an instrument" of illumination. Precisely, it represents the very means of clarity which allows man the possibility to achieve 'complete consciousness of his circumstances'--in other words, to fulfill his mission on earth' (see p. 70 above). The complete 'transparency' of thought to itself, whereby freedom is realized through the union of historical and vital reason: this is the human destiny Ortega envisions, and refers to as 'the reabsorption of circumstance.'

As a veiled allusion to his argument that while reason is not living, it constitutes the very condition for the possibility of 'super-living,' Ortega in this present context contends:

> Clarity is not life, but it is the fullness of life. How is it to be attained without the help of the concept? The concept is

> clarity within life, the light shed on things; nothing more, nothing less. Each new concept [my emphasis--i.e., 'a saying' by the qualification of newness] is a new organ which opens within us upon a portion of the world which was silent and invisible before. He who gives us an idea increases our life and expands reality around us. (Meditations 99)

Representing the form of authentic saying, the concept, just as a metaphor of truth, serves to liberate the sayer by illuminating the 'preconsious' order of vital beliefs within the bounds of which she has lived until that very moment. In this way, her own thought becomes 'transparent' to itself--that is, the basis of her own thought becomes clearly comprehensible to her. Hence, in this way it becomes and 'is' a new circumstance. And, by this very process, wherein the outline of the new circumstance emerges, that concept itself "imposes," "forces" into existence, an imaginative new order of quasi-beliefs, convictions of the intellect, which 'captivate' and 'overwhelm' the sayer by the sheer power of its possibility (The Idea 248).

In the preservation of this experience of truth as a concept, the event of authentic saying to which it originally referred is transformed from a moment of pure illumination into the mere outline of a memory. That is, as a mere 'name,' over time the concept evolves into a linguistic usage, a "technical

term" (The Idea 57, 58, 304). By this very process reason gives to itself a "self-identical, self-consistent, fixed and unchanging" world of discrete things to know and to manipulate with precision and exactitude. In other words, historical reason gives to itself a pragmatic system of social usages (Historical Reason 104). It should be remembered, however, that this reality of fixed and separate things is none other than the pure realm of the concept, the utopian world of imaginative theory, which though its function is to fulfill human life, is not to be equated with the vital event it is (Meditations 91, 139, 142).

According to Ortega, what is missing from this utopia of "nonlocalized," universal truth is the necessary "condition of the truly real--that is, genuine perspective" (see p. 105; The Modern Theme 91, 92). Paradoxically, the particular point of view which structures an experience of truth, makes it 'truth,' is exactly that which is excluded from its formal definition as knowledge. While the concept, itself, implicitly refers to the specific perspective, that particular relationship of consciousness and circumstance from and in which the experience is illuminated; at the same time it explicitly represents itself, an extract of intuition totally

identical to and consistent with its own definition (The Idea 58; Historical Reason 104). Precisely in the sense then that it is only an outline of, and not the experience itself, the concept is an abstraction. And hence, to the very extent it is this abstraction, to this same extent it becomes unable to clearly convey the perspective which conceived it.

In summary, following Ortega's line of reasoning, it can be seen that the concept is first born an "authentic name," a concept, in a moment of "exceptional creative purity" (The Origin of Philosophy 60). By the light of the new truth it is, the circumstance of the perceiver is brilliantly illumined, transparent, enabling a 'clarity' of experience, which Ortega identifies as 'the fullness of life.' One having receives its 'name,' this new truth itself is transformed into something useful, gradually thereby acquiring a 'utilitarian crust' of habit and belief which restricts its power to illuminate and to clarify human life.

As pure event and 'happenstance,' human life is essentially 'a continual doing' that seeks to transcend itself through becoming fully transparent, self-conscious doing. Specifically, human life is that life which is in 'need' of itself, of its own awareness. And so precisely in order to have

himself, man must know himself. Historically, philosophy has attempted to carry out this vital challenge to know, most especially through its own efforts to liberate thought from the bonds of conventional, habitual action for the freedom of authentic life.

However, precisely because habitual action is the product and reflection of language as usage--in contrast to authentic action, which manifests the creative event of saying--philosophy, if it would achieve its goal, must recognize the nature of language, and be continually diligent in regard to its own manner of theoretical expression. According to Ortega, philosophical discourse, in order to be successful, must effect a conscious a deliberate work which unveils the authentic meaning implicitly suggested by its own words. It must in some way disclose the vital relationship concealed within its concepts which constitute genuine human meaning.

Exactly as a word, an abstraction, the concept shrinks the vital relationship between consciousness and circumstance that creates meaning into a perfect coincidence of identity. It is in this way, specifically, that the concept is able to distill and transform meaning into a discrete and isolated object of knowledge. And by the very creation of this

theoretical 'self-sufficiency,' the concept, itself, thus appears as giving reference to nothing else. Hence, precisely in this sense it can be understood that the philosophical employment of concepts as technical terms in the form of exact scientific language can only serve to obscure rather than to 'clarify' thought.

What is specifically required here is a method of expression that is able to expand the collapsed metaphor of the concept. Necessarily, this method would possess the conceptual power to illuminate the latent relationships of consciousness and circumstance that establish identities and their subsequent beliefs. In other words, it represents a method of rejuvenation, enabling the concept once more 'to suggest' that very perspective from which it originally arose as the authentification of a moment of truth.

Because "metaphor lives by the clear knowledge of nonidentity--insofar as it establishes a meaningful connection between two things--Ortega perceives that as a form of expression it can be a primary method for expanding the concept. That is, through the use of metaphorical speech, which suggests particular relational qualities, philosophy can reinflate its concepts to reveal the specific

relational forms of their perspectives (Circumstance and Vocation 268). Hence in this manner, precisely by means of metaphorical images, in Ortega's opinion, philosophy will be enabled to reinstate 'the perspective.' It will be able to illuminate the circumstance of human 'do-ing,' or more specifically the pattern, the structure, of the circumstance which called forth the activity of thought to which the specific concepts originally referred.

By so doing, philosophers can succeed in revealing the metaphysical activity of vital reason that creates the human world. Thereby, it can enable individuals to become aware of their own process of thought--or put another way, enable thought to become transparent to its own action. In this sense then, philosophy can be seen as a means for 'super-living' through empowering persons to act in freedom, to achieve fullness of life.

CONCLUSION

In the introduction to this paper I stated my intention to provide an explanation of Ortega's concept of philosophy which would support both: 1) Ferrater Mora's claim that Ortega's philosophy is indeed systematic by virtue of his "cogency of thought" and "recurrence of themes" and 2) Marias's claim that Ortega's metaphorical expression is a central aspect of his thought, rather than a poor substitute for more "exact" modes of explanation.

My working hypothesis has been that to understand the core philosophical elements of Ortega's thought is to understand the form of its presentation, as well as to appreciate its philosophical purpose.[5] In the last two chapters I have presented an exposition of Ortega's thought, which I believe achieves my aims. Because there are many interwoven strands in Ortega's overall system, it has been necessary to investigate a number of themes, approaching them from various points of view, tracing their particular connections to one another

[5]This, in brief, accounts for the circularity of Ortega's philosophy, which effectively contributes to the "cogency of thoughts, and recurrence of themes" Ferrater Mora has identified as Ortega's system.

in each instance. The complexity of such a procedure seems now to require a brief summation of Ortega's main philosophical concerns before this discussion can be brought to a close.

Ortega's conception of philosophy is as a means of human freedom, not as an exposition of timeless or eternal truth. Truth, for Ortega, is that which is discovered primarily in conscious creative activity, and only secondarily in and through the completed expressions of such activity. Hence, the challenge for philosophy--its intention being the disclosure of truth--is to find truth in its own activity through becoming a fully transparent, completely self-conscious, form of human reason.[6] In order to become a thoroughly self-conscious activity, philosophy must first recognize itself as a particular historical activity which, like all other human activity, is derived from, and thus is an expression of, vital belief. This requirement is based upon Ortega's contention that 'the immutable layer of subsoil on which our daily life rests' is none other than

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[6]In his "Preface for Germans," found in Phenomenology and Art, Ortega contends that there have in fact been a few times in the history of philosophy when the desire for system, for a particular intellectual form, has overridden "that strange frenetic nisus of philosophers for a thing called truth" (45-59).

simple, vital belief.

For Ortega, belief constitutes our basic method of orientation. It represents the metaphysical activity of vital reason that formulates an answer to the question of our human existence, which is essentially a question of do-ing, a simple matter of deciding what to do next. As Ortega has explained,

> Without previous consent, we are shipwrecked in a world we neither built nor thought about. We did not give ourselves to life, but we find it at the very moment when we find ourselves. . . . The great fundamental act . . . [is that] living is a constant process of deciding what we are going to do. Do you see the enormous paradox that is wrapped up in this? A being which consists not so much in what it is as in what it is going to be . . . This essential, this most profound paradox is our life. (What is Philosophy? 220-223)

In order to be able to solve this problem of what to do, we must first solve the problem of where we are and who we are. According to Ortega, out of the resolution of this first problem arises an answer to the second. This solution to the questions of identity and place constitutes a fundamental orientation whereby we locate, 'find,' ourselves in relation to our circumstance. Such a primary act of discovering ourselves and our circumstance, itself, involves an elemental decision concerning the nature of our reality, of our 'being.' That is, it represents an interpretation and identification of

what is to be taken with utmost seriousness, what is to be believed and taken as 'real.'

It is on this basis, then, that Ortega recognizes orientation as being a preliminary condition for the action of knowing and its products of knowledge, rather than knowledge as a condition for orientation (see p. 36 above). Likewise, it is for this reason that he defines the human individual as 'sayer' rather than as 'knower,' as Aristotle had determined (What is Philosophy? 68). 'Saying' represents this more fundamental, creative act of orientation, which necessarily precedes the derivative, secondary act of knowing that arises out of the establishment of a particular kind of orientation.

The fundamental ct of 'saying,' whenever it occurs, involves nothing more, nor less than the establishment of a certain kind of relationship between ourselves and our circumstance which will allow us to explore and discover certain forms of knowing, while prohibiting others. Ortega wants to understand this founding relationship as being essentially a metaphorical one, precisely in the sense that we are able to establish identity on the basis of difference and distinction, on the basis of a relationship between two nonidentical things. Specifically, Ortega is claiming that in comparison

to circumstance, we find our 'being' distinct; and in comparison to ourselves, we find circumstance separate from ourselves.

Ortega identifies as a clear instance of this primary even of 'saying' the very inception of western philosophy itself. Prior to its inauguration, and as a necessary condition of it, the question of what should be taken with utmost seriousness had cast the pre-Socratic Greeks adrift on "a sea of doubt." No longer then, was the solid ground of absolute certainty accessible to confirm either their identity or actions (Historical Reason 61). Precisely, they were in need of a new perspective, a new orientation to inhabit, and within which they could make their lives. This new foundation for action proved to be none other than a belief in the power of reason itself, in the acquisition of rational knowledge specifically as a method for life, and as a means for truth. However, in Ortega's view, over time, the effectiveness of such a belief led many philosophers to collapse the means into the end--that is, simply to identify the systematic acquisition and accumulation of knowledge as being truth itself, rather than recognizing it is the process of such acquisition which comprises and reveals primary truth in the form of human activity itself.

Ortega now challenges philosophy to make its belief in reason a fully conscious one by giving a rational account for such faith. For his own part, he identifies and explains the processes of reason as being the very source of a meaningful world in which to live. According to Ortega, reason has two forms of expression which must be recognized: 1) a vital operation which is the spontaneous organization of perception; and 2) an historical mode, which is deliberate reflection on that organization which its vital activity has produced. In other words, 'vital reason' can be identified as creative, organizing consciousness, while 'historical reason' can be understood as reflective self-consciousness, concerned with discovering and identifying the original act and products of its more primary, immediate counterpart. The first is absolutely essential for the possibility of self-awareness, the second is that self-awareness. Most significantly, for Ortega, without the second, the first is 'mindless,' unreflective and hence, less than fully human. The human destiny is simply to unite the two into a moment of self-comprehension, into a moment of human truth.

Thus, to be fully human means to be fully conscious of all the actions which constitute one's

life in Ortega's view. Essentially, being human involves knowing oneself not only as 'sayer,' but as the descendent and heir of a whole line of 'sayers.'

The human act of saying, for Ortega, involves the act of naming, which validates for the naming consciousness a particular perception of circumstance by identifying and setting the thing apart as an aspect of reality. Realness, itself, is a quality consciousness bestows on those things named to which it effectively relates. The name of anything necessarily involves a tacit reference to the parent-perspective which enables that particular experience of circumstance. The very act of identification through naming thus assumes and confirms the reality of a perspective. That perspective is hidden within the name, becoming the latent, depth dimension of its patent, explicit expression.

Hence, for Ortega, the name itself represents simply an outline, a blueprint of the particular experience possible to consciousness in relation to circumstance. Because names are concepts, they are representatives of experience and, therefore, not that experience itself. A concept simply cannot immediately and straightforwardly present that living experience to consciousness. Consequently, any concept or idea, over time, tends to become a mere

usage, that is an efficient means to manipulate, rather than to reveal reality. A usage, in Ortega's view, is a degenerate, dehumanized concept, compelling habitual, unreflective action. Only when consciousness once again is able to take upon itself the perspective which facilitated the initial experience can the concept serve to illuminate a moment of truth, be an effective revelation of reality. As a moment of truth, a humanized concept constitutes a means of freedom, because it allows the individual to identify the form of that perspective--and thereby, to move beyond it. This perspective of the perspective allows for the possibility of accepting or rejecting the particular relationship to circumstance which first engendered it.

Ortega's concept of philosophy is that it can and should serve as this means of truth, this vehicle of freedom on the basis of its own original and continuing aspiration to comprehend the reality of human experience. However, in order to realize fully this desire to comprehend such a dynamic reality as human life, philosophy must employ a method of approach and expression which will reveal the latent depth dimension of concepts that comprise not only the tools of its own trade, but of all forms of human knowledge. It must uncover what has been hidden

within the concepts; the living perspective from which their effectiveness is derived.

For Ortega, this method presupposes and requires an understanding of the basically metaphorical nature of language. On the basis of such an understanding philosophical concepts themselves can be employed in such a way that they are not simply understood as sufficient categories in themselves, but instead as transparent mediums of revelation, disclosing the creative relationship of consciousness and circumstance. Through just such means, Ortega believes, philosophical ideas can become expressions of freedom rather than dogmatisms of certainty.

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