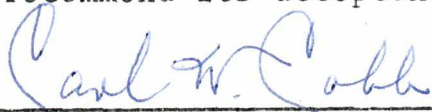
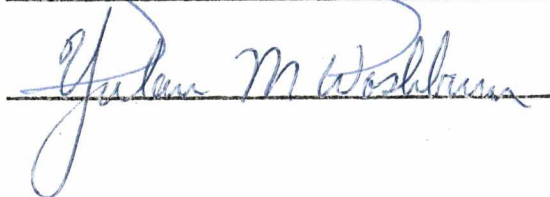


To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Nicholas P. Kostra entitled "The New Humanism of Samuel Ramos: A Study of Hacia un nuevo humanismo." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in Spanish.


Thomas B. Irving, Major Professor,

We have read this thesis
and recommend its acceptance:

Accepted for the Council:


Vice Chancellor
Graduate Studies and Research

116

THE NEW HUMANISM OF SAMUEL RAMOS: A STUDY OF
HACIA UN NUEVO HUMANISMO

A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Arts
Degree
The University of Tennessee

Nicholas P. Kostra

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this investigation has been to examine Hacia un nuevo humanismo, the text of the Mexican philosopher, Samuel Ramos. Ramos, who published his work in 1940, stated that a crisis existed within the modern technocracy of Mexico--a crisis which was dehumanizing man by stifling the needs of the spirit. Professor Ramos proposed to answer this crisis by analyzing Mexico's problems with a new method, philosophical anthropology. His aim was to re-examine the nature of man, and in terms of his conclusions, develop a new humanism.

The method employed in this investigation has been a direct analysis of the text itself. Several sections of this thesis, however, were designed to trace the historical origins of Ramos' thought and the crisis situation in Mexico.

The results of the investigation have been the following: It has been shown that Samuel Ramos is an eclectic philosopher drawing on the works of such men as José Ortega y Gasset, Nicolai Hartmann, Max Scheler, and Edmund Husserl. Ramos' system succeeded in defining man as an ethical being capable of objectifying moral values in society, thus enriching culture and civilization. While many sections of the text, Hacia un nuevo humanismo, were found to be incomplete, nevertheless Ramos defined adequately the role of Spirit in the modern world.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Es característico de la conciencia moderna un hondo dualismo en la valoración de la vida que separa en dos terrenos aislados lo espiritual y lo material. El individuo se encuentra colocado frente a una alternativa, sin otra solución que la de optar por uno solo de los valores en conflicto. ... El dualismo parece tener su raíz en el ser profundo del hombre dividido por tendencias que lo impulsan en direcciones opuestas ya sea para la satisfacción del alma o para la del cuerpo.¹

The theme of man's progressive dehumanization induced by the radical demands of modern technocracy is quite popular in contemporary literature. The above quotation, however, is not from the pen of a contemporary writer. Rather it is the opening words of an important philosophic work, Hacia un nuevo humanismo, written by the Mexican philosopher, Samuel Ramos.

Ramos began his philosophic career in the early twenties and in 1934 published an analysis of Mexican culture, El perfil del hombre y la cultura en México. But the main concern of Ramos did not lie entirely with the situation in his native country. The needs of the Mexican people were related to the universal needs of mankind, and Ramos dedicated himself to a solution of these needs. The result was Hacia un nuevo humanismo, which was first published in 1940.

¹Samuel Ramos, Hacia un nuevo humanismo, (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1940), p. 9.

Many modern writers in the Western Hemisphere have pondered the problem of man's dehumanization in a technological society and have proposed various solutions. However, outside of the philosophical and literary communities of Mexico few readers are aware of the brilliant insights of Samuel Ramos into this problem and his philosophical solutions. The peculiar genius of this Mexican philosopher consisted of his ability to synthesize the great ideas and visions of thinkers such as Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, José Ortega y Gasset, Henri Bergson, Nicolai Hartmann, Max Scheler, and others, and to develop from this synthesis an important philosophic instrument--an instrument designed to free the Mexican conscience from a radical nationalism and to create a cultural atmosphere in which the spirit of man's personality could fulfill its destiny.

The main sections of the thesis will deal with the ontological and epistemological presuppositions of the philosophical synthesis which Ramos develops in Hacia un nuevo humanismo, the origins of Ramos' ideas, and his ultimate description of man as a "debe ser." The main thrust of the thesis will be to demonstrate that Hacia un nuevo humanismo, while admittedly a synthesis of philosophic ideas, represents an important contribution not only in the world of Mexican thought, but also in the philosophic world as a whole.

The scope of the thesis will be limited to the thought of Samuel Ramos between approximately 1920 and 1940. During this period following the Mexican revolution many writers, artists, and intellectuals began to flourish. Novelists such as Mariano Azuela and Martín Luis Guzmán, Rafael Muñoz and Jose Revueltas; poets such as López Velarde; artists such as Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, and Alfaro Siqueiros; philosophers such as Antonio Caso and José Vasconcelos became widely known in their respective fields. To comprehend the works of these men fully it is necessary to understand the various schools of philosophic thought which have shaped Mexican culture.

While it is not within the scope of the present study to explain and justify the relationship of philosophy and the political, social, and literary life of Mexico, this author believes nevertheless that such a relationship indeed exists and that an understanding of this relationship is necessary for any scholar undertaking a study of any area of Mexican culture. Professor Leopoldo Zea, a noted contemporary Mexican philosopher, describes this relationship quite succinctly.

Esquematizar el movimiento de lo que podríamos llamar pensamiento filosófico mexicano, equivale a esquematizar la historia de México, pues, como veremos, existe una estrecha relación entre dicho pensamiento y las peripecias de su historia política y social.²

²Leopoldo Zea, La filosofía en México, (México: Biblioteca Mínima Mexicana, 1955), Vol. 17, Tomo I, p. 9.

manner. The spiritual consciousness of life, originating in Greek and Christian thought, is the vertical column of modern culture. Within this vertical column the sum of man's spiritual aspirations find expression. These aspirations represent the finest creations of mankind as well as the values and ideals which have inspired their production. The world of art, music, and drama; the intellectual achievements of writers in every academic field; the ethical and moral values of society--these are the life of the spirit.

The advent of natural science heralded man's opportunity to dominate the material universe and enhance his freedom. As Ramos observes, "En una palabra, la ciencia natural, en su creciente progresión, transforma y amplifica el concepto del universo y pone en las manos del hombre un instrumento formidable para dominar las fuerzas materiales."⁶ However, the success of natural science had a profound effect on civilization.

Los centros nerviosos de este nuevo organismo son las ciudades modernas que viven del trabajo industrial y del comercio. Este ambiente urbano despierta y multiplica en todos los sentidos los intereses materiales del hombre, cuya personalidad se pone a tono con las exigencias del medio, en virtud de un mimetismo semejante al de esos animales que toman el color de los objetos que los rodean.⁷

The civilization created by man's advancement in the natural

⁶Ibid., p. 10.

⁷Ibid., p. 11-12.

sciences is a city-oriented structure. The transfer of goods and the erection of factories demands that the workers cluster in large groups. In order to perpetuate this structure civilization creates false needs in the minds of its citizens which increases the demand for greater production of material goods. And the new man in this type of civilization measures success in terms of acquisition of wealth and material items.

The modern reader does not need to visit the crowded streets of Mexico City to understand the structure of the civilization described by Ramos in Hacia un nuevo humanismo. The advertising campaigns in the United States today are aimed at producing the same material needs--needs totally superfluous to the basic demands of man's existence.

El disfrute del dinero como instrumento de poder, y como medio para obtener el bienestar material y la vida confortable, los placeres sexuales, el deporte, los viajes, la locomoción, y una multitud de diversiones excitantes constituyen la variada perspectiva en que se proyecta la existencia del hombre moderno. ... Impulsada por su principio material, la civilización se desarrolla en un sentido divergente al de la cultura, hasta crear una tensión dramática que hace sentir sus efectos dolorosos en la conciencia de muchos hombres modernos.⁸

Ramos' description of the tension which develops between culture and civilization, between the spiritual and material principles in man's life is totally applicable to the current situation in America (From this point on in this study the term "America" will be used to refer to both Mexico and the

⁸Ibid., p. 11.

United States in conjunction.)). The acquisition of material goods continues to be the norm whereby a man's worth is judged. This norm gradually erases the possibility of spiritual fulfillment by creating a system of superficial values which deadens man's awareness of his true nature as a being having both corporal and spiritual needs. Also this norm allows man to appear to be cultured by merely possessing those material goods conceived as indicators of the cultured mind. The person who possesses an extensive library, stereo equipment, record collections, and travels widely is automatically judged by society to be more cultured and refined than his fellows who lack these indicators. The quality of mind is never questioned--the simple possession of these goods proves the importance of one man over another.

The description which Ramos presents in the opening section of Hacia un nuevo humanismo would be nothing more than a superficial sociological account if he did nothing more than present examples and decry modern civilization. Ramos believed, however, that the true role of the philosopher consisted of prescribing a cure for the ills of society. In his earlier works, particularly in El perfil del hombre y la cultura en Mexico, he had warned about the facile appropriation of foreign ideas which attempted to impose biological and psychological explanations and solutions. Such ideas led only to "infrahumanity." Ramos

firmly believed that a philosophical answer was needed.

The opening pages of this study indicated that the tension which affects modern life in Mexico was created by the philosophy of the scholastics and positivists. The only possible solution to the situation which both Caso and Ramos had described had to be philosophical in nature. Therefore Ramos devoted only three pages of Hacia un nuevo humanismo to the statement of the problem, and then immediately began to establish the philosophical structure of the crisis and its eventual cure.

The first justification of the dualism which modern man feels in his life appeared in the beginning of the seventeenth century with the doctrine of Descartes.⁹ The Cartesian system described the world as a machine whose operations are entirely understandable in terms of mathematics. Man participates in this mechanistic structure insofar as he is a corporeal being but also differs from all other corporeal beings. "El hombre no es, como el animal, una pure máquina, sino una máquina pensante."¹⁰ Descartes' ontology forced him to posit two distinct principles to account for man--extension and thought. The results of his ontology are well known. Descartes himself was forced to maintain that the spiritual and material touch in the pineal gland of man. The history of philosophy was

⁹Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 12.

immediately transformed into two camps--those who emphasized mind as the most important ontological principle, and those who emphasized matter. By the end of the nineteenth century this dualism was no longer a mere philosophical concern, but had affected the lives of men in the Western world in a radical manner.

El dualismo se percibe sobre todo en la civilización y la cultura que exhiben, de un modo casi tangible, la división interna del hombre. Al llegar a un cierto desarrollo, la civilización ha tomado un impulso propio que el hombre no ha podido detener, acentuando cada vez más su carácter mecánico. El maquinismo, creado para facilitar el trabajo humano, se convierte en instrumento de servidumbre.¹¹

Originally the new sciences, along with the industrial revolution, had been envisioned as the great liberators of man. Even present-day writers are fond of perpetuating the myth of increased leisure time--the increase being the direct result of new machines. Such an ideal has never been realized. Ramos pointed out correctly that the direct consequence of the new technocracy was overproduction. "La consecuencia determinada por el culto de la técnica es la sobreproducción que multiplica innecesariamente la variedad y el volumen de la cultura y la civilización hasta agobiar al hombre bajo un peso abrumador."¹² Such oppression eventually destroys the life of the spirit in man and renders him a machine without values or free will.

In the face of such a spiritual crisis Ramos asserts

¹¹Ibid., p. 13-14.

¹²Ibid., p. 20.

that man needs to re-evaluate his system of values and achieve an awareness of his true nature. Such an awareness would allow him to restore the balance between the physical and spiritual principles of human existence.

Nuestro propósito se limita por ahora a mostrar que existen también ciertos factores psicológicos de influencia decisiva en la crisis del hombre moderno, el cual necesita de una reforma espiritual como condición indispensable para recuperar el equilibrio de su ser. La reforma será posible cuando el hombre haga un examen de conciencia y descubra la raíz del mal en una contradicción interna.¹³

The new civilization which Ramos was describing in Mexico had altered man's sense of values. The means to leisure, freedom, and happiness had become the ends of man's life. The satisfaction of physical needs had completely engulfed the spiritual side of man's being. The material creations of man simply rebelled against their creator. In Ramos' terms, they annihilated man's freedom. Many other authors, including Marx, have described the same process in terms of alienation. No matter what phrases are used, man's life in the age of technocracy is a total disharmony.

The description of the crisis of modern life which Ramos presents in Hacia un nuevo humanismo is perhaps a trifle boring to the contemporary reader. The opening pages of this chapter have presented in some detail the precise thoughts of Professor Ramos in order to demonstrate the tragic conditions of his own country and allow the reader to

¹³Ibid., p. 18.

reflect on the similarity of these conditions to modern life in the United States today. The crisis is by no means limited to Mexico. It has affected the majority of those nations of the world which have been radically transformed by the new technocracy. Ramos summarized this universal situation by quoting from Sombart's work, Le bourgeois:

Basta una cita tomada del economista Sombart, para explicar en qué forma el capitalismo lesiona los valores humanos. "Lo que caracteriza al espíritu burgués de nuestros días, es un indiferencia completa por el destino del hombre. El hombre está casi eliminado de la tabla de valores económicos y del campo de los intereses económicos; la única cosa que interesa aun es el proceso, sea de la producción, sea de los transportes, sea de la formación de precios. Fiat productio et pereat homo!"¹⁴

Ramos' philosophical solution to the crisis which he beheld in his native Mexico came to be called "a new humanism."

"De todo lo anterior podemos derivar la conclusión de que los valores fundamentales del humanismo están en crisis."¹⁵

Ramos hoped that his proposal for a new humanism would re-establish those fundamental values.

B. Un nuevo humanismo

In the opening section of Hacia un nuevo humanismo Ramos reiterates the theme that man had lost sight of his true end. As will be shown in later sections of this study Ramos believes that the true end of man is a life in which there is a fundamental harmony of man's essential principles.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 26-27.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 27.

Before man could bring those elements proper to his being into harmony, however, he had to come to know the precise ontological structure of those elements. The project which would provide this knowledge Ramos calls a "philosophical anthropology"--a term which will be defined more completely later on in this study. The outcome of this project--a complete delineation of man's ontological structure--was hinted at in the early pages of the text. On page 27 Ramos gives indications that he would attempt to demonstrate the fundamental moral character of man's being.

Alrededor del humanismo se agita no sólo un problema estético o académico, sino hondamente moral, que no puede ser excluido de un plan generoso de reorganización social, si se propone seriamente el mejoramiento de las actuales condiciones de existencia.¹⁶

For Ramos the ultimate solution--the new humanism--has to account for the total man, and he believes that the moral dimension of man's being could fully bring to light the fundamental qualities of man as a social being.

There is a sincerity in Ramos' literary style--a sincerity which reveals those moments when he was bursting with enthusiasm for his new project. As the opening chapter of the text comes to a close and he is about to launch the investigation, his mind's eye is on the future.

Es evidente que toda organización futura de la sociedad debe planearse en vista del bienestar y la felicidad de todos los hombres, sin distinción de clases, corrigiendo todas las injusticias que hoy existen; pero este

¹⁶Ibid., p. 27.

fin no será plenamente logrado si no se toman en cuenta la totalidad de las aspiraciones humanas.¹⁷

He envisions a complete analysis of man's being. Only then would the work of philosophy bear fruit.

The basic question of Ramos' investigation is simply, "¿Cómo debe ser el hombre?"¹⁸ Ramos' choice of words is most crucial because the use of the verb "deber" reveals again his moral preoccupation and the eventual outcome of his investigations. The last paragraph of the chapter is quite important and it is reproduced here in its entirety. In reference to this grave interrogacion Ramos replies:

La respuesta no es fácil de dar. Es un problema que ha inquietado al genero humano en todos los tiempos, intentando resolverlo por diversos caminos. Aun cuando existan otros problemas más inmediatos y apremiantes, aquella interrogación no pierde su importancia vital. Se necesita una gran frivolidad u ofuscamiento para que no interese la meditación sobre el destino humano. Precisamente en tiempos de crisis y de catástrofes como el presente, es cuando la humanidad repliega su conciencia con la mira de sondear el enigma de su vida. El conocimiento del hombre es hoy un interés que se sitúa en el centro de la meditación filosófica, poniendo en juego todos los recursos de la inteligencia. Mas para asegurar sus resultados, es preciso, de antemano, elaborar un método riguroso que analice y mida las posibilidades del conocimiento aplicado a la esfera de los problemas antropológicos. La intención de este pequeño libro no es tratarlos minuciosamente, sino fijar un itinerario, de acuerdo con el estado actual de la antropología filosófica, en el que se plantean algunos problemas y se indica en que sentido trata de resolverlos el pensamiento actual.¹⁹

¹⁷Ibid., p. 27.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 28.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 29.

CHAPTER II

THE REACTION TO POSITIVISM

In order to understand the basic structure of Ramos' thought it is necessary to examine in some detail the historical situation in Mexico against which this Mexican philosopher reacted with his new humanism. It is beyond the scope of this study to trace the evolution of philosophic thought from the time of the Conquistadors to the present. But one system of thought--positivism--dominated the political, social, and educational life of Mexico for approximately half a century, and this system in a very real sense caused Ramos and his contemporaries to react and counterattack. Positivism was formally introduced into Mexico on September 16, 1867 and was later to become the official philosophy of the Díaz regime. In this chapter the first section will explain the nature of this brand of Mexican positivism and the second will show how the anti-positivism of the early twenties developed.

A. Mexican Positivism

One of the finest works on the positivistic movement in Mexico was written by Leopoldo Zea and is entitled El

positivismo en México.¹ This work will serve as the basic guide for the analysis of positivism in this chapter. In the strict sense positivism is the system of thought proposed by the French thinker, Auguste Comte (1798-1857). Comte proposed a system of scientific thought which maintained that all knowledge is born out of experience and that all knowledge is relative. The term "experience" for Comte meant the "facts" of man's sensory life, in other words, the data presented by the senses to the mind. "Not only is human knowledge assigned for its province to the reciprocal relations of phenomena, but there is nothing absolute whatever, that might lie unknown, as it were, at the basis of phenomena. The only absolute principle is, that all is relative."²

This new positive system of the sciences would begin with mathematics and advance through the development of the other basic sciences: astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology (which included psychology), and finally sociology. The goal of Comte was to establish a new social order and a new "Religion of Humanity." This new order would be established by the positive system of the sciences after man had passed through the three stages of theology, metaphysics, and reconstruct the entire social order. In Mexico this

¹Leopoldo Zea, El positivismo en México, (México: Ediciones Studium, 1953).

²Wilhelm Windelband, A History of Philosophy, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958), II, 650.

doctrine was adjusted to meet the needs of a particular set of circumstances. As Zea so aptly states:

El positivismo será una doctrina con pretensión universal, pero la forma en que ha sido interpretada y utilizada por los mexicanos, es mexicana. Para poder saber lo que de mexicano hay en esta interpretación, es menester ir a nuestra historia, a la historia de los hombres que se sirvieron del positivismo para justificar ciertos intereses, que no son los mismos de los positivistas creadores del sistema.³

Positivism was introduced into Mexico for a pragmatic purpose. The scholars and philosophers were not simply impressed by the cogency of its principles nor by the fact that it was sweeping the Continent and Britain as the fashionable trend of thought. "Lo importante de esta interpretación es la relación que establecía entre la doctrina y la realidad social."⁴ In Mexico positivism was introduced in order that the new ruling class--the bourgeoisie--might change and order the country for their own ends. "El positivismo no era otra cosa que una doctrina que ahorraba a un grupo de mediocres el pensar. El positivismo representaba la doctrina de la cual este grupo de mediocres se servía para guardar sus intereses."⁵ And so the theory of Comte was introduced into Mexico, into a set of peculiar circumstances, and within these set of circumstances the universal theory became a pragmatic program designed to change the structure of the social order.

³Zea, El positivismo en México, p. 31.

⁴Ibid., p. 35.

⁵Ibid., p. 35.

The formal introduction of positivism into Mexico, as was indicated earlier, took place in the city of Guanajuato on the sixteenth of September, 1867 when Gabino Barreda (1818-1881) delivered his famous "Oración Cívica." Gabino Barreda, a physician by profession and a member of the Liberal party, had been a student of Auguste Comte, having attended his lectures in Paris from 1849 to 1851. In this famous "Civic Oration" Barreda explained the history of Mexico's development in terms of the positivistic stages of history. He identified the colonial period with the theological stage of Comte; the period of revolt with the metaphysical stage; and finally the third stage of reform and reconstruction which the Liberal party would bring about with the positivistic stage. The result of this reform and reconstruction would be a new social structure whose watchwords would be "peace" and "order."

Very soon after his "Oración Cívica" and probably on the strength of it, the Mexican government under President Benito Juárez invited Barreda to form part of a commission to reorganize the entire system of Mexican education from top to bottom. Barreda was the brains of the commission and its recommendations were immediately embodied in the Education Law of December 2, 1867. The following year he founded and directed the Escuela Nacional Preparatoria, the educational headquarters of Mexican positivism during the last third of the past century. In fact, we are not exaggerating when we say that positivism in some form or other became, from that day to 1910 or so, the official philosophy of Mexico.⁶

⁶Patrick Romanell, Making of the Mexican Mind, (Lincoln, Nebraska: The University of Nebraska Press, 1952), p. 45.

The goal of Barreda's form of positivism was a threefold emancipation: a scientific emancipation; a religious emancipation; and a political emancipation. This threefold emancipation would be mediated by a mental emancipation--this was the goal of Barreda's educational programs.

Gabino Barreda believed that each man possessed a group of prejudices which could be destroyed only by a complete education, "... es decir, mediante una educación que abarque todo conocimiento."⁷ Such an education within the positivistic system of the sciences would establish a common intelligence and thus the risk of social anarchy would be totally eliminated. Ultra-individualism which created and allowed a diversity of religious and political beliefs could only be detrimental to the establishment of a strong social order. It was Barreda's plan to remove the old prejudices and ideas which gripped Mexican life and prevented the development of a sound social, economic, and political order in Mexico. "Como se ve, el desorden social y político tiene sus raíces en el desorden de la conciencia. Si se lograra ordenar la conciencia, se podría ordenar la sociedad."⁸

The program which Barreda proposed contained problems which Comte himself had never envisioned. Mexico in the latter half of the nineteenth century was engulfed in a

⁷Zea, El positivismo en México, p. 132.

⁸Ibid., p. 133.

heterogeneity which would boggle the mind of the most astute sociologist. Besides the various political groups which represented many conservative and liberal factions, there were groups such as the clergy, the military, the rich landowners, the mestizos, and so on. Barreda realized that the construction of a political and social order which would allow for the development of a sound economic order demanded an end to radical individual liberty. In place of this individual liberty he would proclaim the new liberty of the social man. In his initial speech Barreda had wisely planned for just such a switch when he substituted the word "libertad" for the word "love" in Comte's trinity of love, progress, and order. But the new liberty which would bring about progress and order in Mexico restricted man's individual freedom within the framework of the social order. Man as a social being could only act freely when he chose to act in conformity to the new positivistic laws of society. "Esta es para los positivistas la verdadera libertad, la que la ciencia enseña. El hombre no es libre para hacer lo que quiera, sino aquello que convenga a la sociedad que es la que impone sus leyes."⁹

The middle class bourgeoisie, the new ruling class which Barreda had hoped to create, were quite disturbed with such a concept of freedom which would inhibit their own individual

⁹Zea, La filosofía en México, p. 34.

efforts to become as wealthy as the clergy and military officers who had preceded them. Thus a new brand of positivism arose which incorporated Herbert Spencer's law of progress. Justo Sierra, the new leader of the Mexican Spencerians, ". . . tries to show in his popular book, Evolución política del pueblo mexicano (1902-03), that the decisive step in the political development of his country was taken when the bourgeoisie replaced the caudillo as the governing class of the Mexican people."¹⁰ Under this form of Spencerian positivism the new middle class could justify their drive for wealth by encouraging the economic evolution as a necessary step in the political development in Mexico. This form of positivism developed during the regime of General Porfirio Díaz from 1880 to 1910.

Again the problem of freedom raised its head as it had during the period of Barreda's positivism. The Liberal party which supported Díaz and embraced the thought of Spencer held that true freedom was indeed an ideal to be attained at a future date, but insisted that the economic imperatives in the Mexican system precluded its existence. Freedom from hunger and want was more important than freedom of speech. As a result Francisco G. Cósmes told the people that an honest tyranny was required. Within the Díaz regime this tiranía honrada became the watchword, and it was

¹⁰Romanell, Making of the Mexican Mind, p. 51.

used to justify the middle class's drive to take over the wealth of Mexico.

This was basically the historical set of circumstances against which the Ateneo de la Juventud and later, Ramos and his contemporaries, reacted. As Patrick Romanell describes the situation: ". . . the Mexican bourgeoisie during the larger part of the Reconstruction period had at the service of their ideals--political order and economic progress--a beautiful working team: positivism as intellectual tool and Porfirio Díaz as political 'stooge.'"11

B. The Anti-Positivistic Movement

On October 28, 1909 the Ateneo de la Juventud was founded by a group of young intellectuals headed by Antonio Caso. "Though the group was heterogeneous in composition, the members all had a common goal: to contribute to the spiritualization of a demoralized country. Their plan of action was to concentrate on those fields which had been sorely neglected during the reign of Positivism."12 As Henríquez Ureña described the situation:

We felt the intellectual oppression together with the political and economic oppression which a large part of the country was aware of already. We saw that the official philosophy was too systematic, too definitive not to be mistaken. Then we embarked on reading all the philosophers whom positivism used to condemn as useless, from Plato, who was our greatest

11Ibid., p. 53.

12Ibid., p. 57.

teacher, down to Kant and Schopenhauer. We even took Nietzsche seriously (imagine that!). We discovered Bergson, Boutroux, James and Croce.¹³

Antonio Caso and José Vasconcelos were the dominant voices of the new anti-positivistic movement. The former was appointed professor of philosophy in the National University after it was opened following the revolution. Caso developed a theory of creative freedom to oppose the narrow concept of freedom developed by the positivism of Barreda and Díaz.

Caso distinguía dos terrenos: el práctico y el espiritual. En el primero el hombre se encontraba forzado a someterse a las leyes de la materia; pero no así en lo segundo, donde el hombre podía actuar libremente y por lo mismo desinteresadamente.¹⁴

Although Caso and the others around him did not actively take part in the overthrow of Díaz regime, nevertheless their work in attacking the official philosophy of the tiranía honesta had a profound effect on the intellectual climate of the country.

This brief account of Mexican positivism and the regime of Díaz should enable the reader to understand the philosophic milieu in which young Ramos found himself. The social, political, and intellectual life of Mexico had been upset. The undercurrents of positivism and its effects were still present in the thought of many thinkers and writers. Indeed, as was mentioned earlier in regard to

¹³Ibid., p. 58.

¹⁴Zea, La filosofía en México, p. 59.

Ramos' reaction to the thought of Caso, he felt that perhaps the Ateneo in general and Caso in particular were concentrating on describing the crisis created by positivism. That is, the philosophy of the post-positivistic period was extremely negative in nature and no step had been taken to fill the philosophic vacuum in Mexico.

The philosophy of Samuel Ramos, then, can be said to be a reaction against both positivism and the style of philosophy practiced by Caso and his contemporaries. Ramos felt that his master, Caso, was quite brilliant in analyzing the crises of thought in Mexican philosophy, but he was not at all content to confine his philosophical activity to the mere elaboration of problems in society. He accused Caso of anti-intellectualism with a formal statement published in two articles in the review Ulises: "El irracionalismo," and *Mi experiencia pragmatista*.¹⁵ Part of Ramos' discontent was rooted in the belief that the philosopher must provide an answer to those problems which gripped the spirit of every Mexican. Influenced radically by the works of José Ortega y Gasset, he felt such an answer was possible through the analysis of the works of the German phenomenologists and existentialists.

The remainder of Ramos' philosophic career was dedicated to finding a solution to the problems of Mexican culture. For Ramos the unique character of the circumstances

¹⁵Ramos, Hipótesis, 1924-1927, (México: Ediciones Ulises, 1928).

which shaped the life of Mexico demanded a philosophical solution because this character had been determined for the most part by philosophical modes of thought. Scholasticism had radically affected the educational system of Mexico, and had enabled the clergy to exercise an almost complete dominance. Positivism, in turn, had exercised a similar dominance in both education and politics. Such a crisis demanded a philosophical analysis and solution--this became the goal of Ramos' life. The specific character of this goal was conditioned not only by the thought of Caso and Vasconcelos, but also by his early family life and ideals. Ramos' father was a doctor by profession and young Ramos himself at first embarked on a medical career.¹⁶ Even though his career was to change radically, Samuel Ramos seems to have considered himself a philosopher-doctor--a thinker destined to cure the sickness which infected his native country.

His philosophical anthropology which he elaborated in Hacia un nuevo humanismo proved to be one of the first positive attempts to formulate a philosophical theory which

¹⁶Samuel Ramos was born June 8, 1897 in Zitácuaro, a small town in the western state of Michoacan, México. Young Ramos completed his bachelor's degree in Morelia at the Colegio Nacional de San Nicolas de Hidalgo. He then journeyed to Mexico City to begin his medical career, but soon abandoned his studies in order to pursue philosophy under the tutelage of Antonio Caso, a professor at the National Preparatory School (Escuela Nacional Preparatoria). Besides Professor Caso, José Vasconcelos also exerted an early influence on Ramos, granting him a post in the Secretaría de Educación.

would re-evaluate the situation of Mexican man and his peculiar set of circumstances in the twentieth century and present a definitive account of human nature. It is for this reason that Ramos stands in a prominent position in the history of Mexican thought.

The remaining chapters of the thesis will be devoted to a textual analysis of Hacia un nuevo humanismo in order to demonstrate the success of Ramos' synthesis as a solution to the crisis of modern civilization.

CHAPTER III

PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

The task of philosophy, or perhaps it would be more correct to say, the task of philosophizing has never been considered an easy enterprise. Indeed it is considered to be an arduous affair which requires intense intellectual concentration and has little visible reward except the philosopher's personal realization that he has perhaps brought to light some small part of that reality called truth. In the twentieth century the task of philosophizing about problems which actually grip a certain people within a specific time and space dimension is even more arduous. The image of Socrates and Plato come to mind since philosophy in its origins sought to solve man's problems and enrich his life. Our modern world again needs a philosopher-doctor, a person unafraid to give philosophy a practical task. Samuel Ramos believed that this was the true role of the philosopher and applied himself diligently to the resolution of Mexico's problems.

Even though Ramos held that the text, Hacia un nuevo humanismo, was not a systematic treatise, nevertheless he was a systematic thinker trying to formulate a body of thought which would mediate between the intuition of Bergson and rationalism in the search for man's true nature.

He proposed a solution--the new humanism--and a new method--philosophical anthropology. The style which Ramos used throughout his work was eclectic, but this eclecticism was part of his belief about the nature of philosophy.

La filosofía no vive solamente por la creación original de nuevas ideas, sino también en el acto mas modesto de volver a pensar lo pensado, en la reproducción mental de todo el proceso de la especulación filosófica que es, en cierto modo, una recreación de la filosofía. Este metodo es el único que puede conducir al mundo filosófico y abrírnos a la comprensión de sus secretos.¹

In this chapter two sections will be devoted to giving the reader a better grasp of Ramos' thought by presenting certain basic definitions of terms used during the course of this study, and by analyzing the philosophical presuppositions which Ramos brings to his study of man. These presuppositions will be ontological and epistemological in nature. Ramos admitted that Hacia un nuevo humanismo had a certain autobiographical tone. "Las ideas expuestas en este libro constituyen un resumen de las convicciones filosóficas del autor."² And again on the same page:

No pretenden ser estos escritos un tratado de filosofía en el que se expongan sistemáticamente sus problemas. Sólo deben tomarse como una selección de ideas filosóficas ordenadas de acuerdo con una perspectiva personal. Considero que todas las cuestiones filosóficas desembocan en un problema central que es mas o menos directamente el foco del interés especulativo: el problema del hombre y su mundo.³

¹Ramos, Hacia un nuevo humanismo, p. 32.

²Ibid., p. 32.

³Ibid., p. 32-33.

In the following two sections this "selection of ideas" will be examined in order to reveal the philosophical underpinnings of Mexican philosopher's thought.

A. Basic Definitions

The two most important terms in this study are "humanism" and "philosophical anthropology." In the Renaissance humanism in its classic form was a movement designed to direct man's attention from his ultimate, supernatural goal and allow him to appreciate fully the richness of his earthly existence. The essence of classical humanism, then, was a movement "de arriba hacia abajo." Leopoldo Zea points out that the movement of the new humanism is the exact opposite. That is, the new humanism of Ramos is "de abajo hacia arriba."⁴

A word of caution is necessary at this point. The typical form of humanism in the Renaissance is frequently interpreted as a movement designed to put man's feet back on the ground. Study of Greek and Roman literature combined with a new consciousness of man's ability to deal with the hic et nunc of worldly life produced a truly new outlook. Such an interpretation of Renaissance humanism, while admittedly facile, is nevertheless adequate for an understanding of the general movement. But Ramos' new humanism

⁴Leopoldo Zea, "El humanismo en Samuel Ramos," Revista Nacional de Cultura, (Caracas), XXII, (1959), 27.

does not admit of such a facile description or interpretation.

The temptation to interpret "de abajo hacia arriba" as a movement designed to elevate the masses of Mexico from their stagnation and positivistic crisis is admittedly great. But there is much more contained in the project which Ramos undertakes in Hacia un nuevo humanismo. Zea explains: "De abajo hacia arriba; de lo concreto a lo universal; de lo mexicano a lo humano sin más."⁵

If the new humanism of Ramos was simply a movement "de abajo hacia arriba" his text Hacia un nuevo humanismo as well as El perfil del hombre y la cultura en México would be merely sociological analyses or descriptions. That is, they would only be provincial in scope and would not attain true philosophical status. Ramos designed his new humanism in order to give the Mexican man a new way of life, a new vision; but this vision was a means to experience his participation in the universal nature of man and to see his life in terms of the human race as a whole.

Thus, the new humanism of Samuel Ramos is a spiritual movement which functions to investigate the universal nature of man, to redefine the nature of man as a material and spiritual being, and to allow each Mexican to experience his national and universal status. "Un hombre que, al igual que el mexicano, a partir de sí mismo va tomando conciencia

⁵Ibid., p. 27.

de esta solidaridad humana universal. Tal es el humanismo que se apunta y proyecta en Samuel Ramos."⁶

The method Ramos uses in Hacia un nuevo humanismo is termed "philosophical anthropology." At this point in the analysis a brief definition will suffice, since the next section deals with the origin of Ramos' thought, and it will be shown how many of Ramos' ideas concerning philosophical anthropology had their origins in the works of Max Scheler and Nicolai Hartmann.

The unique character of philosophical anthropology is explained quite aptly by José Ferrater Mora in his Diccionario de Filosofía.

En cambio, la antropología filosófica limita y a la vez extiende su problema a la cuestión de la esencia del hombre, de su puesto en el cosmos y de su destino, y constituye, por tanto, según Scheler, el puente que une las ciencias positivas con la Metafísica.⁷

Professor Ramos views the task of philosophical anthropology in precisely the same manner. "La tarea primordial de la antropología filosófica es analizar lo que necesariamente pensamos en la idea del hombre, antes de tomar cualquiera posición doctrinaria, antes de adherirnos a esta o aquella teoría antropológica."⁸ While anthropology centers on the physical being of man, his habits, customs, etc. (a biological being), philosophical anthropology asks the question,

⁶Ibid., p. 31.

⁷José Ferrater Mora, Diccionario de Filosofía, (México: Editorial Atlante, S.A., 1944), p. 40.

⁸Ramos, Hacia un nuevo humanismo, p. 58.

"What is the nature of man and what is his place in the Universe?" Ramos' basic question continues to ring, '¿Cómo debe ser el hombre?'"

The origins of Ramos' method will soon become obvious. The choice, however, of such a method by Ramos is quite important at this point in the analysis because it demonstrates at the outset the fact that Ramos' work will go far beyond a purely natural or physical conception of man. The method itself dictates the outcome of the inquiry. Thus, Ramos betrays an early bias. But as shall be pointed out, this bias is constituted by much more than just the method. The initial bias lies in the epistemology of Ramos, which in turn dictates the method of philosophical anthropology.

B. The Origins of Ramos' Thought

Samuel Ramos' selection of ideas in Hacia un nuevo humanismo reveals a tension of mind. Ramos is an eclectic by his own admission. He feels drawn backward to the moderate realism of scholasticism, particularly that of St. Thomas Aquinas; he recognizes the genius of Kant in the realm of the intuition and the field of axiology; Husserl, Scheler, and Hartmann tempt him to embrace phenomenology; the existentialism of Heidegger entices him to center his ontological analyses in man; and the perspectivism of Ortega y Gasset inspires him to formulate a system of philosophy geared to answer the specific problems of the

circumstances in Mexico. In short, Ramos had varied sources from which to draw and while this situation provides many rich traditions from which to draw, nevertheless the unity of Ramos' thought is at times threatened and damaged. The ultimate goal of Ramos' project--his new humanism--proves to be the main unifying force in Hacia un nuevo humanismo. In discussing the origins of Ramos' thought, this study will present them as they influence the basic ontological and epistemological presuppositions of his philosophy.

Ramos devotes one brief section of Hacia un nuevo humanismo to the origin of the notion of reality. Basically his presentation is phenomenological insofar as he shows how reality (or in another way, our sense of reality) is a primordial given. That is, the reality of other people, things, and events forces itself on consciousness as soon as it comes into being. The baby becomes aware of a vast parade of items within the scope of its consciousness. While the organization of these items remains for some time in a state of chaos, nevertheless "... el individuo descubre relaciones entre todos los objetos y poco a poco va ordenándolos en grupos que, a su vez, se integran en la idea total de un mundo."⁹

Within the framework of consciousness man becomes aware

⁹ Ibid., p. 34-35.

of both his own being and the world of objects outside of his consciousness.

En esta plenitud de conciencia es cuando el hombre toma su posición en el mundo y se siente existir como la parte de un todo. Su ser se presenta, pues, como una noción referida a un mundo que lo contiene.¹⁰

Such an analysis is obviously right out of the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl. In a special bibliography Ramos mentions the specific text of Husserl, Ideas para una fenomenología.¹¹

Ramos explains that man discovers his own being in the awareness of consciousness and this being has two essential dimensions--space and time. "La existencia aparece en la intersección de dos coordenadas, una ideal que viene del mundo histórico y otra material del mundo físico."¹² This idea is reminiscent of Heidegger's use of the term "Dasein" to refer to the reality of man's being and then uses two intersecting lines to emphasize the spacial and temporal dimensions of man's life and primal concern with the being of man over and above all other existents.

As man becomes increasingly aware of his own position in relation to the objects which surround him and invade his consciousness, he also discovers that he is able to assume different postures toward one and the same object. "Una misma cosa puede ser objeto de nuestra voluntad, de

¹⁰Ibid., p. 35.

¹¹Ibid., p. 53.

¹²Ibid., p. 37.

nuestro sentimiento o de nuestro conocimiento."¹³ Some of these postures are more basic than others: the important thing which consciousness discovers is that the world which surrounds the human being is something which is "indócil" and resists our wills and desires, and within this discovery or awareness the phenomenological sense of being, of reality as distinct from the subject of this awareness, is produced. "Se adquiere entonces el sentimiento, la evidencia plena de que existe como realidad en sí, de modo diverso al nuestro. Surge, pues, en esta experiencia vital, la noción de realidad."¹⁴

The basic reason for Ramos' phenomenological analysis of the primordial contents of consciousness seems to be the grounding of a moderate realism which allows for the refutation of subjectivism in any of its forms. "La noción de una realidad que existe en sí como algo extraño, hace surgir la necesidad del conocimiento."¹⁵ If this necessity of knowledge is to be preserved then the tenets of idealism must be refuted. For Professor Ramos total idealism represented radical subjectivism, and such a position was untenable for him if the true nature of the relation of knowledge was to be demonstrated. "El conocimiento es

¹³Ibid., p. 37.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 36.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 36.

siempre conocimiento de algo y ese algo es un objeto real."¹⁶ As the phenomenologists had reasoned, in order to be conscious, one must be conscious of something, for if one is conscious of nothing, then he is simply not conscious. The existence of a subsistent reality of some sort (another person, a thing, or an event) was an absolute necessity for understanding the relationship of knowledge.

Idealism, then, according to Ramos can never fully explain the basic existence of man in the world as revealed by the basic givens of consciousness. Professor Ramos refers to Descartes' Meditaciones metafísicas to justify the basic fact that existence is not subordinated to thought; rather thought is subordinated to existence. "¿Cómo puedo dudar y pensar si antes no existo?, es lo que en el fondo quiere significar aquel filósofo..."¹⁷

It is necessary to pause at this point in the analysis to question Ramos' motives in using the phenomenological method of Husserl and Descartes' philosophical analysis of mind and the ego in order to establish a basic ontology for his system of philosophical anthropology. His motives are evident if the conditions surrounding his philosophic background are recalled. In the previous chapter this study

¹⁶Ibid., p. 38.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 39.

analyzed in brief detail the positivistic system which gripped Mexico from 1867 to 1910. This system of thought was essentially a French import. Of course it had been the fashion throughout Latin America to look to France and England for new ideas. This afrancesamiento did not escape Mexico either, and the results were the same as in other Latin American countries--the basic problems of the people remained the same.

Ramos believes that the Mexican crisis demanded a purely Mexican solution. As will be pointed out later in this study, Ramos agreed wholeheartedly with the thought of Ortega y Gasset concerning the nature of philosophy. Each man begins to philosophize from his own particular circumstance in life. He possesses in his immediate awareness a set of persons, things, and events which make up the circumstances defining and determining his reality. "Cada individuo tiene un mundo concreto como parte de su existencia, que es la única ventana de que dispone para asomarse al mundo en general."¹⁸ This basic position will allow Ramos to conclude later that the Mexican people occupy a special position in the modern world which enables them to understand their own being and their relationship to the world.

Quiero decir que lo que cada sujeto conoce mejor que cualquier otro es el paisaje natural en que vive, la

¹⁸Ibid., p. 40.

sociedad, el país a que pertenece. Estas cosas las conoce desde dentro, por decirlo así, porque son la mitad de sí mismo, está vitalmente fundido con ellas. Estos objetos concretos tienen que ser por fuerza las instancias particulares que den vida y color a sus conceptos genéricos del Universo, la humanidad o la sociedad.... Esto es, sin duda, una limitación de nuestro conocimiento, pero también, por otro lado, una ventaja, la de descubrir en el mundo algo que los demás no podrían nunca ver.¹⁹

Basically then Ramos elaborated an epistemology and ontology which refuted radical idealism and subjectivism. This refutation allowed him to maintain a moderate realism similar to the realism of the scholastics which had been taught in his native country for several centuries. However Ramos' realism took into account each man's "point of view." Some critics might interpret this account of the numerous points of view possible to the human observer as subjective in nature. If there is the element of the subjective in Ramos' theory, it is the subjectivity of an entire nation. But this subjectivity according to Ramos does not detract from the nation's or era's ability to judge objectively about its own nature and destiny. Rather the recognition of this point of view, this subjectivity, guarantees the objectivity of the judgement.

Ramos' view of the manner in which each person sees his world from a particular point of view is grounded in the phenomenological awareness of the existential unity between man and his world. This view allowed him to refute the

¹⁹Ibid., p. 40.

theory of Kant that each person views the world through the same set of a priori categories. "Sabemos que el repertorio de categorías no es fijo ni inmutable sino que cambia con las épocas de la historia. Las categorías no son, como suponía Kant, una pura emanación del sujeto..."²⁰

The intellect of man according to Ramos is a "plastic instrument" which constantly is adapting to the changing set of circumstances which surround it. Within the intellect he distinguished two powers, intuition and reason, the intuition being the major force in "revitalizing" the intellect, allowing it to attain real contact with the world of objects, and from this contact to achieve true knowledge. He envisions this process in a manner similar to the phenomenological reduction of Husserl in which the intellect would suspend judgement concerning the objects until the intuition selected the proper categories of interpretation. Ramos does not devote a great deal of explication to his notion of intellect. His definition in Hacia un nuevo humanismo is quite brief, "...evidencia inmediata de ciertas verdades fundamentales."²¹ Perhaps Ramos intends to rely on his readers' understanding of Bergson in this matter of the intuition. Nevertheless he assigns this power of man's mind a major role. "La intuición debe ser la base para vitalizar a la razón y hacerla

²⁰Ibid., pp. 43-44.

²¹Ibid., p. 46.

reformarse cuantas veces así lo requieran los cambios de las circunstancias en que tiene que actuar."²²

One is tempted to describe Ramos' epistemology as a mere hodgepodge--a radical eclecticism. To some degree such a description is valid until the purpose and inspiration of Ramos is understood. In spite of his rigid rationalistic background, Professor Ramos seems to have been greatly influenced by the works of José Ortega y Gasset. Patrick Romanell in his text, Making of the Mexican Mind, indicates the reason Ramos espoused the theories of Ortega.

The subsequent development of neo-Orteguianism in Mexico makes one thing clear, namely that what his Mexican disciples have learned most of all from their Spanish master is the 'epistemological justification of a national philosophy,' to repeat the key phrase from the pen of Samuel Ramos, the initial spokesman for the Generation of Contemporáneos.²³

Ramos saw Ortega's epistemology of objective relativism as the unification of the three schools we have mentioned in this chapter: Scholastic realism, the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl, and the intuition of Bergson and Kant. It can best be termed "Perspectivism."

The central idea of Ortega's system can be expressed simply: Yo soy yo y mi circunstancia. Ramos apparently saw the "existential" formula as the unifying principle of

²²Ibid., p. 46.

²³Romanell, Making of the Mexican Mind, p. 160.

his work in philosophical anthropology. It involved looking at the world from a standpoint which would take into account the historical situation of the viewer. For Ramos such a position was irrefutable since the phenomenology of consciousness revealed it: "Lo que sería inconcebible es la posibilidad de un pensamiento que se realizara desde ningún punto de vista."²⁴ Naturally, Ramos believed that the epistemology of Ortega was the basis of a sound world-outlook for the Mexican man. It would allow him to be self-conscious of his own nationalism and view himself as a concretization of the universal essence, man. Ortega's perspectivism solved Ramos' epistemological problems in one sweep.

Ortega's perspectivism maintains that the world is made up of perspectives or landscapes which are known selectively by means of the "vital reason." Such a theory implies that reality does not possess a completely independent status apart from the point of view from which it is known; and "truths are points of view, all of which are 'equally veridical and authentic.'"²⁵

There are many names for such a theory. It may be termed "objective relativism" or "perspective realism." The main importance, however, of Ortega's thought as far as

²⁴Ramos, Hacia un nuevo humanismo, p. 41.

²⁵Romanell, Making of the Mexican Mind, p. 161.

the study of Ramos is concerned is that it mediates between many difficult extremes which the Mexican philosopher sought to avoid. Obviously, such a relativistic theory is not the pure relativism of Protagoras. It maintains a half-way status, neither confirming the pure reason of Kant nor asserting the complete objectivity of scholastic substance. In perspectivism Ramos saw a means of giving his Mexican man a "national window" and of holding onto the objectivity of reality.

Many modern critics of Ortega's theory of perspectivism have pointed out the flaws in his conceptions. Ramos' epistemological accounts in Hacia un nuevo humanismo are also much too brief, presuming without reason that the reader is aware of a vast amount of material which justifies his assertions. The reader can always return to the opening pages and point out Ramos' words to the effect that the text is simply a brief introduction, a sketch of a total philosophy. But the impression still remains that Ramos wrote the text for a specific group of readers, perhaps the Contemporaneos (the group of scholars who joined Ramos in opposing Caso and the anti-rationalism of those philosophers around him), and he was more concerned about the real heart of his research--his philosophical anthropology--than about the underpinnings of the system. Nevertheless the critical reader is left with many questions about the role of intuition, the specific character of Ramos' subjectivist

tendencies, etc. In the final chapter of this study, perhaps some conclusions can be reached. It suffices now to be aware of those principles and schools of thought which Ramos relied upon for grounding his basic theories.

Epistemological discussions lead naturally to ontological concerns. Briefly, it is necessary to mention that Ramos holds that reality is composed of "territorios ontológicos." This position agrees with the perspectivist influence of Ortega, with the phenomenological theories of Husserl that reality is composed of "ontological regions," and with the intuitionism of Bergson which reveals the divergency of reality.

Many ontological schools have tried to reduce the multiplicity of reality to a single unified concept. Ramos prefers to separate the various regions or zones, à la Husserl, and devise divergent methods for analyzing each.²⁶ (It is interesting again to note that this fact of multiplicity--the revelation of many zones of reality--is another given for Ramos. This given appears in the intuitive glance of consciousness. "... la idea de multiplicidad de lo real es un dato evidente de la experiencia."²⁷)

²⁶The influence of existentialism on the thought of Ramos is most evident. He intended to explore the ontic depths of man in order to construct a new humanism which would reveal the true nature and destiny of man. Many existentialist thinkers could be mentioned. Perhaps Heidegger had the most influence on Mexican philosophers.

²⁷Ibid., p. 50.

The "territorios ontológicos" are as follows:

1- El de los objetos reales, que comprende a su vez tres capas, a).-Hechos físico-químicos. b).-Hechos biológicos. c).-Hechos psicológicos. 2. -Objetos ideales que a su vez se dividen en a).-Relaciones. b).-Objetos matemáticos. c).-Esencias. 3. -El mundo de valores. 4.-La existencia humana.²⁸

In Hacia un nuevo humanismo Ramos centers his attention on the fourth territory--human existence. According to his thought this territory is the most independent and within it all the other realms of being are reunited.

Por existencia humana no se entiende, como ya se explicó antes, sólo la del sujeto humano, sino al mismo tiempo la de los objetos reales, ideales y valores que están en relación directa con ella. La existencia humana comprende pues al hombre y su mundo y por eso las otras tres categorías ontológicas quedan incluidas y referidas a esa existencia. Sólo comprendiendo dentro de la 'existencia humana' al sujeto y al objeto es posible superar las antítesis de idealismo y realismo.²⁹

In conclusion, then, this study of the presuppositions of Ramos' philosophy has attempted to point out the main influences in his epistemology and ontology. Ramos himself admits that the main figures were Boutroux, Bergson, Scheler, Hartmann, Heidegger, Ortega y Gasset, and García Morente. In addition this study has attempted to point out that there are definite strains of scholasticism, of Edmund Husserl's phenomenology, and others.

Ramos sees Bergson as the "precursor" of this whole movement toward an existential philosophy. Two works of

²⁸Ibid., p. 50.

²⁹Ibid., p. 51.

Bergson stand out: Los datos inmediatos de la conciencia, and Evolución creadora. The former is particularly important for Ramos since Bergson uses it to point out "...el error de la psico-física al aplicar las categorías del mundo material, especialmente la noción del espacio, a la comprensión del mundo del alma."³⁰

This chapter has deliberately omitted any discussions about the influence of two important German phenomenologists, Nicolai Hartmann and Max Scheler. Both of these men had a profound effect on the thought of Ramos, but since their influence extends primarily to the realm of ethics and morals, this study will leave the discussion of their influence on Ramos until the chapter on the nature of man as an ethical being. In that specific context it will be easier to show the relevance of their thought.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 52.

CHAPTER IV

THE NATURE OF MAN

"Cultura y conciencia de los valores son expresiones que significan la misma cosa."¹ So far this study has attempted to introduce the reader to the background of Ramos' thought. It is difficult, if not impossible, to comprehend the work of any philosopher fully without a study of the influence and motives which shaped his thought. An analysis of these influences is admittedly tedious, but necessary. Once the various parts of the background are delineated, then the reader can begin to understand the main theses. The sentence beginning this paragraph could be considered as a summary of Hacia un nuevo humanismo. Using the background material already developed this analysis will attempt to show in this chapter the genesis of the statement that "culture and consciousness of values are one and the same thing."

Philosophical anthropology first must establish an a priori definition of man. Ramos realizes that it is necessary at the outset to give certain basic axioms which could serve as a starting point for his analysis. Even though these axioms may appear as simple, undeniable truths

¹Ramos, Hacia un nuevo humanismo, p. 93-94.

or even tautologies, "El valor de aquellos ideas sólo aparece si se las toma como punto de partida, ..."2

The basic axioms of the Ramos' system are as follows:

(1) "La existencia humana se distingue de todas las otras en que tiene conciencia de su existir."3 This self-consciousness is not a super-added feature of human existence; it is in fact an inseparable part of the ontological structure of human existence.

(2) "La conciencia me hace sentirme pues, como una existencia en medio de otras, ocupando entre ellas un sitio determinado."4

(3) "La conciencia da pues a la existencia humana su dimensión temporal."5 (This axiom is another way of defining conscience for Ramos.) "Llamo conciencia precisamente a esa capacidad de retener imágenes de lo pasado y de proyectar mi imaginación hacia lo porvenir."6

(4) "El hombre es, como los demás vivientes, un proceso en constante devenir."7

(5) "La vida se le presenta como un problema imperioso que debe resolver."8 This axiom covers the whole range of "fatality," "risk," "insecurity," "death," etc.

²Ibid., p. 60.

³Ibid., p. 61.

⁴Ibid., p. 61.

⁵Ibid., p. 62.

⁶Ibid., p. 62.

⁷Ibid., p. 62.

⁸Ibid., p. 63.

(6) "La incertidumbre de la vida humana indica que no es exclusivamente fatalidad. Dentro de una gran proporción de fatalidad la vida contiene un margen de libertad."⁹ This final axiom is constituted in Ramos' thought by the fact that in a person's life multiple possibilities are presented--ways in which a man can preserve and enrich his existence. Ramos maintains in his new humanism that "Este rasgo característico sólo puede existir en el hombre porque está provisto de conocimiento y previsión."¹⁰

These axioms lead Ramos to a redefinition of the human being. Man no longer is simply a reality constituted essentially as a being conscious of itself--that is, conscious of his own being. By reason of this consciousness, man comes to the realization that he is constituted as a being-in-process, a being to whom a vast spectrum of possibilities are available. This spectrum embraces not only possibilities which protect and secure his existence, but also those which allow him to expand and develop his existence.

No puede desconocer la ontología de la existencia humana el hecho de que el hombre es un 'animal político,' un ser que vive en la sociedad. Cada individuo tiene por fuerza que inscribir su vida dentro de los cuadros de la civilización que la sociedad ha creado. La vida humana lleva implícita la tarea de armonizar la voluntad individual con las exigencias genéricas de la civilización.¹¹

⁹Ibid., p. 63.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 64.

¹¹Ibid., p. 65.

Ramos inserts the above statements into his analysis to indicate that man in the exercise of his will is free, but must act within a given range and this range is his particular cultural situation. How he must act, what values he must put in his life, what cultural enrichment he can achieve in civilization--all these describe the central problem of human existence for Ramos.

Human existence is constituted by more than just a consciousness of its own being. "La conciencia humana no es sólo conciencia del ser, sino también del 'deber ser,' que es como puente que lleva al hombre del mundo de la realidad al mundo de los valores."¹² Ramos points out that he agrees with Kant in that man is a citizen of two worlds. As the above quote indicates, man is not only conscious of his own being, he is also conscious of the way he ought to be. His life in the world is a constant process of choosing various goals or ends. These choices demand that he not only evaluate things, persons, and actions outside of his own being, but he must also have an adequate conception of his being in order to determine if the things, persons, or actions he chooses contribute to the way he ought to be, that is, to his destiny. "El destino es algo que el hombre debe descubrir. He aquí el gran problema metafísico de la existencia humana."¹³

¹²Ibid., p. 65.

¹³Ibid., p. 66.

The positive sciences study and analyze man and his "ingredients" but they do not evaluate them, according to Ramos. In fact they abstain from saying just what that specific factor is which constitutes the essence of man and humanity. But this is precisely the task of philosophical anthropology. "... es necesario avanzar hacia una metafísica del hombre que nos diga cómo debe ser." Here is the core of Ramos' thought, the point to which his entire background and the preparatory elements of Hacia un nuevo humanismo have been leading. And at this point the thought and philosophizing of Ramos takes on a universal tone. The problems of Mexico which prompted Ramos to enter a career of philosophy and help solve these problems did not isolate his thought from the mainstream of philosophical currents. The conclusions of his philosophy are applicable to every man and woman in a technological society, and the project which he proposes for Mexican man must be carried on in each country which discovers that culture is no longer enhancing men's lives, but rather is swallowing them up within a system which denies the true nature of man. The task is always in front of modern man and the question is always the same: "¿Cómo debe ser el hombre?"

Whenever a question is asked, the very formulation of the question in an important sense determines the nature of the reply. So it is in the case of Ramos' questions about

the nature of man. His insertion of the words "debe ser" indicates that the essential nature of man as well as the conclusions which his philosophical anthropology will reach, will be essentially ethical in character. For Ramos man is essentially an axiological being, that is, he always lives and acts for something. His life is determined by a set of values and goals. "Una típica manifestación de esta exigencia es la cultura. ("Exigencia" here refers to man's need to live for values outside of himself.) La cultura como lo ha visto muy bien Scheler, no es más que un proceso de humanización que irradia del hombre y se extiende a la naturaleza que lo rodea."¹⁴ This section of Hacia un nuevo humanismo is perhaps the most critical for Ramos' thought. First he reveals the nature of the positivistic crisis which gripped Mexico and the nations of the technocratic world. He asserts that the world of the spirit is opposed by the world of material values in such a way that each man's life is caught in a "dramatic tension." He proposes a new humanism based on a study of man called philosophical anthropology which would ask the basic question, "How should man be?" The formulation of this question was determined by the fact that man is essentially an axiological being. This axiological factor sums up the essential activity of man. It is the process of humanization, a process which is constituted by

¹⁴Ibid., p. 67.

man's need to enrich his life and lift himself up to new levels. The principle which carries on and inspires this process--the principle by which culture is formed--is spirit.

En la cultura descubre pues la finalidad que exige para su existencia. Y esa finalidad consiste en crearse a sí mismo, enriqueciendo su vida a cada paso con valores nuevos. A esa función de dar a las cosas y a sí mismo una finalidad de valor llamamos espíritu.¹⁵

Ramos believes that philosophical anthropology could order the various values in man's life and obtain some concept of man as a totality. Throughout history different values had been emphasized according to the various conceptions of man. The Christian life emphasized man's immortal soul and his other-worldly goals; the Greeks stressed reason; modern theories described man in various ways: a social creature, a sexual creature, a creature in search of power; pessimistic views denied the higher values and principles in man's life and emphasized the purely animal or biological side of man. One could almost plot a graph of history to show the different values stressed and the times in which the stress occurred. The final period would be called "Nuevo Humanismo."

Ramos does not deny that modern science had revealed a vast amount of information about man, but he believes that the studies of this science had left man in compartments:

¹⁵Ibid., p. 68.

"vida física, psíquica, social, jurídica, etc., ..."16

"El problema de la antropología es mas bien determinar cómo esos elementos particulares se integran en una unidad, qué relaciones hay entre ellos y cuál es la estructura esencial que forman."17 This compartmentalization of man by the positive sciences has succeeded in destroying the essential unity which human existence demands. If these sciences cannot discover the relationship of the various levels of man's life, then it is the task of philosophy.

Ramos uses the term "las capas" to refer to the various levels or ontological territories present in the human being. Philosophical thought from Plato through Descartes and into modern times employed a facile analysis which separated man into two ontological categories--body and spirit. According to Ramos this division simply does not square with the facts. "Si este esquema clásico reproduce dos de las caras más prominentes del ser humano, no se ajusta del todo a su verdadera estructura tal como ésta aparece a una observación más rigurosa de los hechos."18 A new analysis or division is necessary and Ortega y Gasset has provided one. "Ortega y Gasset ha logrado una visión más justa y más cabal de la arquitectura humana distinguiendo en ella tres estratos fundamentales que llama Vitalidad, Alma, y Espíritu."19

16Ibid., p. 72.

17Ibid., p. 72.

18Ibid., p. 79.

19Ibid., p. 79.

The positing of a new schema to describe the essence of man poses many difficulties, one of the main ones being methodological. When modern scientists analyze the human subject, their results are readily amenable to verification. Experiments can be reproduced and data checked. Philosophy, however, frequently poses hypotheses which cannot be readily checked and verified. Such a criticism could easily be directed at the new schema proposed by Ortega y Gasset. But Ramos immediately anticipated such a criticism: "No se trata de una hipótesis filosófica que hace distinciones artificiales, sino de una descripción que se atiene a lo observado directamente en los fenómenos."²⁰

In order to determine if this claim of Ramos is justified the final part of this chapter will be devoted to an analysis of Vitalidad, Alma, y Espíritu. The main concern will be to demonstrate that such a division does actually conform with the facts of human existence.

(I) Vitalidad: Ortega y Gasset called this first stratum "el alma corporal" or the bodily soul of man. Within this strata he placed such instincts as offense and defense, power and play; organic sensations; pleasure and pain; the sexual drive; and even the sense of rhythm. In short, everything which the human being experiences at the bodily or sensual level is included in this strata. Another

²⁰Ibid., p. 79.

name for this stratum is "el intracuerpo." "El intracuerpo esta constituido por el conjunto de todas las sensaciones internas: de movimiento, táctiles, de las vísceras, músculos, articulaciones, arteriales, etc."²¹

According to Ortega certain people live almost entirely in this realm, for example, children and savages (One wonders if this particular choice of examples is telling!). In any case when the person acts in this realm, he places himself outside of the center of his personality and is forgetful of his own ego. A person engaged in sports activities frequently experiences this phenomenon.

(II) Alma: Ortega states that each man experiences certain movements within himself over which he does not have control nor does he experience himself as the author of these movements. In this category or stratum Ortega places such movements as the emotions, sentiments, passions, feelings of sympathy and dislike, etc. In some cases the person does not wish to have these movements, but nevertheless they persist within him. They are his feelings, but they do not belong to that intimate center which he calls "I."

(III) Espíritu: "El espíritu es el centro de la persona, el 'conjunto' de actos íntimos de que cada cual se siente autor y protagonista."²² This is the most important

²¹Ibid., p. 79-80.

²²Ibid., p. 81.

and most fragile stratum of the human being. Here is the life of the mind and the will--the center of man which is called "yo."

One of the elements which differentiates soul and spirit is the factor of temporal duration. Ortega and Ramos maintained that spiritual phenomena do not have a temporal dimension, but everything which pertains to the soul develops within a temporal dimension.

The most important factor, however, which differentiates the life of the spirit from that of the soul is objectivity. "... el alma es el reino de la subjetividad y el espíritu el de la objetividad."²³ Oretga states that spirit must obey certain objective norms in order to apprehend truth. "Por eso el pensamiento puro es idéntico en todos los individuos y al pensar todos piensan lo mismo. La voluntad obra también de acuerdo con normas objetivas, lo que debe ser, los valores."²⁴ The objectivity of spirit will be central to Ramos new humanism because within the life of the spirit man discovers the universality of his being, and his participation in a social existence.

This concept of spirit as elaborated by Ortega and Ramos "does not correspond to the traditional signification of a metaphysical entity beyond the phenomena."²⁵ They find that their concept of spirit is fully justified by the

²³Ibid., p. 81.

²⁴Ibid., p. 81.

²⁵Ibid., p. 81.

CHAPTER V

THE OBJECTIVITY OF VALUES

Ramos realized that the goal he had set for his philosophical anthropology depended on the establishment of an objective set of values on which Mexican man could ground his spiritual yearnings. Mexico had experienced the effects of subjectivism during earlier periods in her history--periods in which value systems were imposed arbitrarily either for utilitarian or purely personal reasons.

Podemos, pues, concebir un mundo cultural fundado en un orden de valores que obedece también como el mundo la naturaleza a leyes rigurosamente objetivas. El autor de este ensayo piensa que en México, donde ha prevalecido desde hace muchos años el escepticismo y la desconfianza, urge difundir estas ideas. El sentido de los valores es algo que en nuestro país ha carecido de principios fijos, ejercitándose siempre con la mas completa arbitrariedad. Será pues beneficio todo intento de corregir nuestras viciosas costumbres estimativas, propagando la convicción de que existen valores intrínsecos en la vida humana que nuestra conciencia puede reconocer o ignorar, pero cuya realidad es inalterable y no depende de nuestros puntos relativos.¹

The crucial point of Ramos' study thus becomes the establishment and justification of an objective system of values. In this chapter this study will concentrate on showing how such a project was possible for Ramos, and how Ramos used the systems of Nicolai Hartmann and Max Scheler to support his project. Once such a study is complete,

¹Ramos, Hacia un nuevo humanismo, p. 88-89.

Ramos' claim that "consciousness of values and culture are but expressions of one and the same reality" becomes clear.

A. El valor

Ramos' theory of value in Hacia un nuevo humanismo relied heavily on the work of Nicolai Hartmann. The following quote from Herbert Spiegelberg's The Phenomenological Movement concerning Hartmann's theory of values summarizes succinctly the views which Ramos espoused, and provides this study with a fitting introduction to the current chapter concerning values and morals.

Hartmann too is concerned about the fact that the ethical convictions and philosophies of individuals and civilizations differ and change. Yet he is firmly convinced that values are independent of our differing and changing. Values are discovered as mankind develops and grows. It is in terms of such new discoveries in the realm of value that he explains the changes from the Greek to the Christian values, and again from the Christian values to the modern values of such a seeming revolutionary as Nietzsche. It is not the values which change, but the value consciousness in which values reveal themselves. . . . The idea that values are the object of a process of discovery, which it has been implied by other phenomenologists, has never been stated as explicitly as by Hartmann.²

A careful analysis of Hacia un nuevo humanismo shows without a doubt that Ramos followed Hartmann's views to the letter.

Even though many philosophic theories have held that our choices are entirely subjective, Ramos refuses to allow himself to be persuaded by these theories. Although he agreed

²Herbert Spiegelberg, The Phenomenological Movement, Vol. I., (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1965), p. 384-385.

with those who maintained that our judgements are frequently colored by our desires and passions, he argued that these desires and passions do not constitute the value of the things, persons, and objects which are chosen. Desires and values are independent of each other. A person may desire something upon which he places no value; likewise he may also value something and yet never desire it in the least. Despite the claims of the subjectivists, Ramos holds that the testimony of an unprejudiced observer would confirm the existence of a world of objective values. "En los momentos en que el sujeto se desprende de si mismo y abre su conciencia a la realidad de las cosas, descubre que, tras el velo de los valores aparentes, ellas poseen otros valores que son parte de su naturaleza y que nuestra voluntad no puede cambiar."³

Besides the existence of values inherent in persons and things, there also exists an objective world of abstract values. We refer to these values when we make judgement about the world and how it ought to be. It is at this point that Ramos asks the critical question: "¿Como reconoceríamos en la realidad sus valores efectivos, de no tener de antemano la noción de esos valores ideales?"⁴ His answer is facile. "Esta concepción es ni más ni menos que

³Ramos, Hacia un nuevo humanismo, p. 91.

⁴Ibid., p. 93.

platonismo puro, sólo que Platón hablaba de Ideas y ahora hablamos de Valores."⁵

Ramos admits that the masses in general are not usually capable of discovering this world of values. Certain "superior individuals" come to know certain values, objectify them in the particular society in which they live, and thus make them real for the rest of the society. This essentially is the purpose of culture. "La finalidad de la cultura es despertar la más amplia conciencia posible de los valores, y no como se supone erróneamente la simple acumulación del saber."⁶

One of the most important of Ramos' insights is the notion that the "ought," which is the point between what is real and what is ideal, is dynamic in nature. It creates a certain tension in man's life which impels him to raise himself above his present level. Ramos held that a person could not simply realize a pure value in an isolated fashion. He perceives una exigencia, a need which tends towards its realization. This dynamic ought is the point between non-being and being. "El impulso de realización inherente a los valores es un dato suficiente para comprender cómo es posible una comunicación entre ambos mundos. El mundo del valor y el de la realidad son esferas que se complementan."⁷ The function of culture is to effect

⁵Ibid., p. 93.

⁶Ibid., p. 93.

⁷Ibid., p. 95.

this communication and ultimately transform the world of nature to higher levels. Such a transformation is possible only in terms of the objective hierarchy of values previously discussed.

B. La moralidad

The authority for Kant's categorical imperative, his "ought," came from reason. The "ought" was considered a law dictated by reason. Morality then was a rational phenomenon--a command of reason. Ramos on the contrary considers "... la moralidad como un hecho sentimental en donde el deber sólo tiene sentido como referencia a un fin reconocido como valioso."⁸ According to Ramos the notion of the "ought" does not acquire its full meaning until the moment of relating it to the concept of value. The reason for this is quite simple. "El sentimiento de los valores es el dato primordial de la conciencia moral, que luego incita a nuestra voluntad para obrar en el sentido del valor."⁹ An example will help clarify Ramos chain of reasoning.

If a young man is attempting to choose a career, in order to make a wise, free choice, he must first examine each possible life style, take stock of his own talents and then choose. But what motivates the choice? If he chooses, for an example, to become a medical missionary, it is

⁸Ibid., p. 102.

⁹Ibid., p. 102.

probably because that way of life possesses some degree of value. The intrinsic value within this way of life creates in the young man un sentimiento--a feeling, to use Ramos' own words. (The Royal Spanish Academy Dictionary defines the term "sentimiento" as "impresión y movimiento que causan en el alma las cosas espirituales.") This feeling is the primordial datum of the moral conscience, the datum which moves the young man's will in the direction of this way of life. The ought or "deber" is the dynamic dimension of values which attract the will and compel it to action. The young man chooses the life of the medical missionary because he became aware of the intrinsic value of this life and felt the exigency of this value which he realized would enrich his life and the lives of others.

The ground or foundation of authentic morality for Ramos is "a right consciousness of values." Those persons in society who attempt to live their lives according to the intrinsic values in things, persons, and events must constantly endeavor to be aware of the various possibilities open to them when they choose. In order to choose freely a person must know the values involved, determine if a hierarchy of values exists, and then actively apprehend the thing valued. Due to the vastness of civilization and the advances in many fields of knowledge men must have recourse to other sources of information besides their own

consciousness. The natural place to turn is the culture of civilization in which they live. "La cultura es justamente uno de los medios de que dispone el hombre para ampliar su horizonte hasta llegar a una visión universal de las cosas, de la cual desprender su concepto de la vida."¹⁰ The consequences of this insight are critical for the new humanism.

Descubrimos, entonces, que existe una interna relación entre la moral y la cultura. No se puede ser moral, en el noble sentido de la palabra, mientras no se es culto; mas para evitar una mala interpretación de esta idea, aclaremos que el saber puro no es la médula de la cultura, sino más bien el sentido justo de los valores, de suerte que si el hombre no lo adquiere, no merece el título de culto, por mas que acumule una gran cantidad de sabiduría.¹¹

The final consideration concerns the notion or concept of the ultimate end, the highest goal of the moral system. If Aristotle is correct in his assumption that all motion and activity is goal directed, then there must be a supreme or ultimate end towards which all the other choosing of goals is directed. For Ramos "El fin supremo es el valor moral, que hace las veces de estrella polar orientando la línea general de la existencia."¹²

Ramos' analysis at this point in Hacia un nuevo humanismo demonstrates a fact about the moral or ethical life which is sometimes forgotten. Can things ever be moral? In other words, in the search for the moral value, can man look to things such as trees, houses, triangles? Obviously

¹⁰Ibid., p. 104.

¹¹Ibid., p. 104.

¹²Ibid., p. 105.

not! The ultimate end must be something which is valued in itself and not valued as something which can be a means to other things such as happiness, success, etc. The only thing which fits this definition is man himself. "Si la noción de un fin último no es un concepto vacío y la ética le busca un contenido concreto, que sea el sumo valor moral, ese fin no es otro que el hombre mismo."¹³

If all of our choices in life must be directed toward this one end, man, then what is the ultimate destiny of man? Ramos states that he was in agreement with Fichte who believed that man was essentially a rational being and his ultimate destiny is to act in accord with his nature. At this point in his analysis Ramos extended Fichte's notion and stated that besides being a rational being, man is also essentially a social being.

Pero como el hombre no es un ser que vive aislado, sólo puede cumplir su destino dentro de la comunidad. Los valores morales tienen una dimensión social, en cuanto que aparecen solamente en actos cuya intención está referida a otros o a la sociedad, en conjunto.¹⁴

Man must judge and choose in accordance with the needs and interests of society. He must prescind from his own individuality in order to see things "sub specie humanitatis."

C. El hombre como libertad

The final section of this chapter is devoted to Ramos' concept of man's freedom--a concept totally dependent on

¹³Ibid., p. 107.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 107.

the phenomenology of Hartmann and his analysis of freedom. Hacia un nuevo humanismo, as hopefully this study has thus far shown, is essentially an ethical treatise. That is, the new humanism which Ramos proposes is ethical in nature. The manner in which the inquiry was begun, the types of questions asked and the answers given were all ethical in nature. Therefore, in order to complete the study a discussion of liberty is necessary. If man is an ethical creature, he must be free to fulfill his ultimate destiny. If he is to achieve his true stature as a person, that is a moral being, he must be free. Ramos presents Hartmann's theories in order to give the reader what he considered to be the final words on human freedom. Perhaps such a claim was too glib, but nevertheless Ramos seems quite sincere in his claims and since he uses Hartmann's phenomenology in so many instances in Hacia un nuevo humanismo, it is appropriate at this point in the study to investigate his reasons for using Hartmann's total theory of human liberty.

Ramos holds that Hartmann elaborated his theory of the will or freedom in order to satisfy certain scientific requisites with a minimum of metaphysics. Thus the crucial problem concerns the question of determinism and causality. "La contradicción más seria en teoría, para justificar la libertad, es la de explicar como es posible en un mundo regido universalmente por la determinación causal."¹⁵ For

¹⁵Ibid., p. 113.

Kant freedom and determinism posed an unsolvable antinomy. But Hartmann held that there is no problem at all with determinism and freedom; rather the problem concerns a deterministic monism. If there is in fact only one order of reality, then a true antinomy exists. For man, according to Hartmann, there are two causal series in which to act: "la determinación mecánica y la determinación axiológica."¹⁶ Man finds himself in a position to be the mediator between these two series; in fact, Hartmann maintains that the finality of the moral act is possible only in terms of a world which is causally determined. The reciprocity of these two series is explained by Ramos in the following manner: "... el causal recibiendo del otro el sentido de que carece y el proceso teleológico tomando del primero la fuerza que el no tiene para efectuarse."¹⁷ In this context of the two causal series the person is able to step outside of himself and gives the mechanistic process a meaning which it perhaps did not possess prior to the act of the person; on the other hand the person needs the force of the causal mechanistic system in order to realize or effect a value apprehended by the mind.

Ramos' text at this point is extremely brief in what is perhaps the most crucial part of his thought. Up to this point he has tried to develop a system of analyzing

¹⁶Ibid., p. 114.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 114.

the human being which would account for the person's dynamic ethical character, that is to say, the life of the spirit which freely actualizes a world of values in order to enrich the quality of life in a society and in turn elevate each person within that society. Hartmann's theories provide an apt tool for such a project. The reciprocity of the two series can be understood if Hartmann's theory of free will is explained in terms of "emotionally transcendent acts." Hartmann believed that ontology started out in strict neutrality towards idealism and realism. However there is no need for an ontology to remain in this state of neutrality. "Certain phenomena can give us access to the world of transcendent reality beyond. The key to reality lies in a group of acts which Hartmann calls 'transcendent,' obviously in a sense different from the one in which he has called the object of knowledge 'transcendent.'"¹⁸ Spontaneous acts of willing, that is, acts which are truly free acts of the person are examples of these special acts, these "emotionally transcendent acts." They are characterized by the ingredient of ". . . 'activity, energy, struggle, involvement, risk, suffering, and being affected' . . . , in other words, by a real causal contact with the object before us."¹⁹

¹⁸Spiegelberg, The Phenomenological Movement, Vol. I, p. 382.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 382.

The interplay, then, between the two worlds or two causal systems provides a condition for the freedom of the will. This condition is not a necessary constitutive factor of the freedom itself, but more the circumstance in which the will can actively experience its freedom and use the causal mechanism as a means of achieving a finalistic end, i.e., a value brought into being by reason of the intellect and will cooperating in a joint venture (knowledge of something as good and the free choice of that good) to effect an end. This is the nature of the "emotionally transcendent acts" of which the spontaneous act of willing is one of the most important. Spiegelberg points out this importance:

These acts 'step beyond' themselves, as one literal meaning of the word (transcendent) suggests, and thus give us access to a sphere otherwise beyond the range of our consciousness. It is these acts in which reality itself, in contrast to mere phenomenality, is given.²⁰

This short explanation of Hartmann's theory of freedom perhaps will provide the reader with some indication as to the importance of Ramos' theories. His answers to the Mexican crisis were ethical in nature and with good reason. Philosophic theories prior to the twentieth century in Latin America had been of a cognitive nature. That is, they had assumed that an adequate explanation of reality (either from the metaphysics of scholasticism or from the positivistic

²⁰Ibid., p. 382.

sciences) would suffice to bring about the necessary changes in man and society. Ramos' text, Hacia un nuevo humanismo, argues that knowledge was not enough. The crisis in Mexico and Latin America demanded a special type of activity which would create a new humanism, a new culture. This new system based on the ethical activity of man in society would be the key to revealing the true nature of reality. It would be man actually appropriating objective values which would transform the Mexican world.

Hartmann's next assertion concerned the world of axiological reality. "La esfera de los valores constituye un dominio ideal independiente del mundo de la realidad."²¹ The axiological determination of this realm of values is neither a factor of man's liberty nor a measure to curtail his freedom. Man is not determined in the action of his will by any necessary obligation which he discovers when the world of values is apprehended by consciousness. Hartmann and Ramos held that there is only an "ideal exigency," a need of a certain value to be brought to reality, but of such a nature that the will was always free to reject it. Ramos believed that this theory combined with the prior discussion about the interaction of the will with a mechanistic system made the will of man free in a double sense. "El hombre es, pues, libre en doble sentido, respecto a la

²¹Ibid., p. 115.

ley natural y respecto a la determinación axiológica."²²

This description of freedom does not mean that the will is simply indifferent in nature. Rather Hartmann thought that the freedom which he was describing in reference to the will of man could also apply to many levels of existence. Each new level of existence imposed a freedom on the lower structures which it embraced in its structure. "La libertad se entiende como la determinación nueva que cada ser introduce en la estructura inferior que lo sustenta. Es pues una libertad en sentido positivo."²³

Ramos' discussion of liberty does not have the unity which the rest of Hacia un nuevo humanismo possesses. He seems content merely to repeat the conclusions of Hartmann. In an additional attempt to persuade the reader that the will is free in reference to a world ordered by a law of cause and effect, he adds Hartmann's proof which states that there are certain phenomena in the moral life which seem to indicate the freedom of the will. These phenomena are "responsabilidad, la imputabilidad, y la culpa."²⁴

Hartmann holds that man experiences these phenomena and accepts them as basic facts of the moral life even when it would be more advantageous for him to reject them as fictions. "Es a tal punto evidente que tales fenómenos implican la libertad, en un sentido real, que toda

²²Ibid., p. 115.

²³Ibid., p. 118.

²⁴Ibid., p. 118.

explicación al respecto resulta obvia."²⁵

Ramos concludes his analysis of Hartmann's theories by asserting: "La más original de las ideas de Hartmann es aquella que, oponiéndose a un prejuicio tradicional, afirma que la libertad no sólo excluye la determinación causal, sino aún la exige como condición de su existencia."²⁶ Man experiences himself as acting in the world, experiencing natural forces which he must strive to overcome and direct, experiencing a world of values in which he must actively choose. Thus man is aware of himself as a creator, a free agent capable of putting into effect the Ley de libertad to control the Ley de la fuerza and the Ley de la materia.

What is the nature of the determining principle of freedom? "... el principio determinante es una fuerza positiva que radica en la persona, de eso no hay lugar a duda."²⁷ Ramos believes that there was sufficient phenomenological data to justify the positing of a free will, at least the real possibility of a free will. The fact that a person experienced himself in conflict when there were alternative values and courses of action to choose. The fact that persons did choose to solve this conflict by a choice for which they inherited a real responsibility indicated that a free principle was operative in man. "Sólo

²⁵Ibid., p. 119.

²⁶Ibid., p. 119.

²⁷Ibid., p. 122.

un ser capaz de verdadera iniciativa, es decir, libre, puede hacer esto."²⁸

Ramos' concept of free will is extremely important for the unity of his system. The final chapter of this study will analyze the notion of person and personality, two realities incapable of being realized and defined without the concept of freedom. In the conclusion this study will return again to this concept of freedom in order to show its vital place in the system which Ramos constructed.

²⁸Ibid., p. 122.

CHAPTER VI

TOWARD A SOLUTION: THE RELATION BETWEEN PERSONALITY AND CULTURE

The development of a new Humanism in Mexico was the ultimate goal of Samuel Ramos' life as a philosopher. He asserted vigorously that the solution to man's internal dissolution and the struggle between culture and civilization rested on the establishment of a new system of life in Mexico in which the spirit of man was free to raise those ultimate questions of his being: "What am I? What is humanity? How can we make life into something more radiant and profound?"¹

Ramos explained in El perfil del hombre y la cultura en México why the establishment of this new system of life demanded a philosophic solution. "I felt beneath these words ["new humanism"] an insistent philosophical preoccupation with the essence of man, which called for extensive discussion, and wrote another book published under the title Toward a New Humanism."² In this final chapter the present study will analyze Ramos' concept of personality in order to demonstrate the success of Ramos' philosophical synthesis

¹Ramos, Profile of Man and Culture in Mexico, p. 117.

²Ibid., "Prologue to the Third Edition," p. 12.

in solving the crisis of Mexican life, and in establishing the ground for a new Mexican culture.

The explicit objective of this study has been to show a successful synthesis of philosophic ideas. In particular Ramos borrowed extensively from the phenomenologists, José Ortega y Gasset, Max Scheler, and Nicolai Hartmann. But this borrowing was not for the sake of imitation: "No se trata ahora de imitar o seguir estas ideas, sino, como dice Ramos, de hacer de ellas un instrumento consciente al servicio de la solución de nuestros problemas."³ The most outstanding character of the synthesis which Ramos achieves in Hacia un nuevo humanismo is the dynamic spirit of his theory. This dynamism reveals itself most vividly in his concept of personality.

La personalidad no es, como pudiera suponerse, una estructura espiritual prefijada de antemano y representando, por decirlo así, una forma a priori de la acción. Es mas bien el sentido de un proceso infinito que se mueve hacia una meta casi nunca alcanzada. En esto comparte con la vida humana en general, el carácter programático.⁴

The most important terms for the reader to consider are "proceso infinito," and "programático," because it was Ramos' aim to demonstrate that the personality of a human being was "pure actuality." The personality of man as an ontological principle of his existence cannot be identified as any one act of the person, a group of acts, or a realm

³Zea, La filosofía en México, p. 42-43.

⁴Ramos, Hacia un nuevo humanismo, p. 132.

of activity. It is necessary to understand it as an existential project in which the true I of the person is revealed.

This concept of personality is analogous to the role which an actor depicts on the stage. Ramos notes that the ancient Greeks used a mask in their drama which was called a persona since their voices "sounded-through" (personare) the mask. Later this Latin term was used to refer to the role which the actor played--the personality being presented on the stage.

Pasemos sobre el indicio útil que puede proporcionar a la metafísica de la dualidad en cuestión esta cualidad particular y contentémonos con retener que el sentido primitivo de persona comprendía, en efecto, dos cosas: una máscara inerte por sí misma y una voz que en el drama primitivo significaba 'la voz de un dios.'⁵

The role which each person creates in the course of everyday life and presents to other people is this "personality" to which Ramos refers. By analyzing this analogy in more detail, it becomes clear that "La personalidad se nos aparece como una forma de la vida humana en que se conjugan dos dimensiones: una individual y otra social."⁶ Each individual person possesses the ability to develop his spirit, his existential project which appears in his relations with other persons. "En efecto, la personalidad es como un papel que representamos y sólo aparece en nuestras sociales, en la actuación pública."⁷

⁵Ibid., p. 126.

⁶Ibid., p. 127.

⁷Ibid., p. 126.

Within the concept of personality the terms "dominion" and "control" are extremely important, since the person who lives fully aware of his being and the being of other persons and things around him chooses the values and way of life best for him. He externalizes this awareness of his situation through his personality. In other words, "Deja resonar a través de ella su voz más íntima, y es la revelación de sus valores más altos. En el centro de la personalidad se encuentra el yo verdadero."⁸

At this point in Ramos' synthesis the notion of Spirit as developed by Ortega y Gasset and the notion of Spirit as pure objectivity as developed by Scheler are united to define the essence of the human personality. Ortega called the life of the intellect and will--the center of the person--Spirit; and, as was shown on page 56 of this study, Scheler defined spirit as objectivity--the possibility of being determined by the objects themselves. "Espíritu es entonces la vida de un sujeto que trasciende su individualidad para buscar su ley en el mundo objetivo, real o ideal. El espíritu es una dirección de la vida humana que es personal en su arranque, pero cuya meta es supraindividuo."⁹

Ramos agrees with Scheler in his identification of the concepts of spirit and person. Each individual person as spirit possesses an existential project--his personality--

⁸Ibid., p. 127-128.

⁹Ibid., p. 82.

which thrusts him out of subjectivity to relate him to his fellow human beings. The nature of this project is essentially axiological and for that reason Ramos argues that the personality of man is an "ought." He noted that the spirit of man, if it remains true to its nature, must constantly seek to enhance its own worth in free acts of the will. Since the person is the mediator between two realms--the axiological and the causally determined which exists outside the person--his personality, if he is true to himself, must be an "ought." That is, the personality as pure spirit and awareness is the only means available for objectifying the ideal world of moral values.

Not all men actively live the life of the spirit. Most people are content to live in society and their acts simply affirm the morality of the times. That is, they accept the values of the system and other people around them without any thought concerning these values except that they are highly utilitarian and thus produce the proximate ends which enable them to lead relatively unobstructed lives. But if personality as a pure ought has any meaning, it must seek to affirm the values of the system and appropriate new values if the older values destroy rather than enhance the life of the spirit. Which personalities in society take on this task of evaluation?

A los hombres aptos para ser grandes personalidades les toca soportar una gran responsabilidad histórica. Su inconformidad hacia los valores corrientes

los predestina a ser creadores de valores nuevos. Una vez que éstos se objetivan en obras de cultura, entran a permanecer al dominio público y se vulgarizan. Entonces habrá otros espíritus que huyendo de la vulgaridad encontrarán nuevos valores, los cuales a su vez se divulgarán y así sucesivamente hasta el infinito.¹⁰

This quotation serves to emphasize graphically the social dimensions of Ramos' concept of personality. The spirit of man as pure objectivity now can be related to the concept of culture.

Throughout Hacia un nuevo humanismo Ramos describes the dissolution of man's being which manifests itself in the struggle between culture and civilization. The precise meaning of this statement can now be elucidated. In his earlier work, El perfil del hombre y la cultura en México, Ramos explained the meaning of the term "culture" and the manner in which an already existing culture is related to the spirit or personalities of those persons who reside within the scope of its influence.

To believe that we can develop in Mexico an original culture unrelated to the rest of the world constitutes a total misunderstanding of what culture is. The commonest notion is that culture is pure knowledge. One fails to recognize the truth that it is rather a function of the spirit destined to humanize reality. But it is clear that this function is not spontaneous. Education, then, develops in the mind of each individual the wealth of culture already accumulated. Once that education is properly oriented, it should not simply work toward an increase in knowledge, but toward the transformation of the latter into a spiritual capacity to comprehend and elaborate the substance of every meaningful experience. Only by extracting from traditional culture its most subtle

¹⁰Ibid., p. 135.

essence and making it a basic element of our spirit, can we speak of an 'assimilation of culture.'¹¹

History reveals that most men have misunderstood the true meaning of culture considering it to be pure knowledge. But Ramos defines it as ". . . a function of the spirit destined to humanize reality." This humanization of reality is precisely the new Humanism which Ramos proposed as the goal of his philosophy.

When Ramos speaks of the struggle between culture and civilization in Hacia un nuevo humanismo, he means that modern technocracy had created a civilization in which the spirit of man could not function. The possibility of the development of human personality had been destroyed. Man could in this situation pursue the pleasures which material wealth afforded, but his spirit was no longer free to engage in his essential activity of progressive objectification in the social sphere of existence.

The essential question at this point in the analysis can be stated in the following manner: How does Ramos' synthesis function as a solution to the crisis of modern technocracy? Does the text represent a series of answers or prescriptions to be followed? Or is Ramos proposing a new educational system for Mexico? The latter two questions can be disposed of immediately for the reader of the text can find no clear-cut answers or a radical proposal for a

¹¹Ramos, The Profile of Man and Culture in Mexico, p. 106.

new system of education. The synthesis has a single, unique function--to establish a new definition of the essence of man which will take into account every force, material and spiritual, in the human framework and re-affirm the role of spirit as the source of true freedom in man.

The words of Leopoldo Zea quoted on page 74 of this chapter become increasingly more meaningful. Zea believed that Ramos was indeed an eclectic, a borrower, but this borrowing could not be equated with simple imitation. Ramos was using the works of many great thinkers in order to arrive at new definitions of man which would enable all men, not only Mexicans, to achieve their destiny.

Each man as the embodiment of objective spirit must constantly search for the meaning of his existence. He is required to ask the axiological question many times during his life: "¿Como debe ser el hombre?" Man, as Ramos conceived him, is not a static creature who acquires an intellectual comprehension of his being (no matter how simple or complex such a comprehension might be) and then retreats within his individual subjectivity. The onto-axiological analysis in Hacia un nuevo humanismo demonstrated that man is essentially a dynamic spirit which is required to go outside of itself to the other in order to achieve any semblance of reality. The "other" in this context refers to other persons, other spirits who participate in a vast web

of interaction through which they create and enhance their being. This is the social realm outside of which man loses his essential being and is condemned to live in radical subjectivity.

The opening paragraphs of this chapter proposed to show the relation between personality and culture. That relation can now be shown more completely. Ramos calls culture ". . . a station on the road along which the soul travels in its endeavor for self-discovery."¹² The spirit of each individual man must be envisioned as a project which evaluates the cultural milieu in which it finds itself and then presses forward in the proceso infinito of creating its own essence. "The ultimate goal of the spirit is not culture but the development of human personality."¹³ When civilization creates a situation in which the spirit of man cannot function freely, then man is at odds with his own being. Liberty is destroyed and man becomes simply another machine in the technocracy.

In retrospect, it is easy to understand the reasons which prompted Ramos and his contemporaries to reject positivism and see it as the source of Mexican man's dilemma. The method of the sciences could only yield a knowledge of man as dictated by the reports of the five senses. Thus man's being was seen to be essentially like that of all other material objects. According to Ramos such a method

¹²Ibid., p. 111.

¹³Ibid., p. 111.

completely eliminated the possibility of understanding the needs of the human person. The system of thought created by positivism allows the negative forces of civilization to destroy man's freedom and ultimately his personality.

Using what he termed "philosophical anthropology" as a method for defining the essence of man, Ramos produced a synthesis of philosophic thought which clearly showed that man is a free being who must achieve his true essence in the activity of his spirit.

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