To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Ronnie Lynn Booher entitled "The Concept of Life in the Philosophy of José Ortega y Gasset." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Philosophy.

L. B. Cebik, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
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THE CONCEPT OF LIFE IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF JOSÉ ORTEGA Y GASSET

A Dissertation

Presented for the

Doctor of Philosophy

Degree

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Ronnie Lynn Booher

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ABSTRACT

The primary and basic "fact" in the universe for Ortega is the existence of human life, always in the mode of a personal life. The core of Ortega's philosophical endeavors consists in revealing the structures and characteristics of this basic reality which is in each one's own living existence. Life, however, is an attribute which is predicated of beings other than humans--all animals of course are living entities. Ortega is well aware that life is not a quality peculiar to humankind, but he insists that human life is most unlike other types of life forms.

The phenomenon of human life then may be approached in either of two manners. It may be situated within a cosmological setting in which case it is necessary to accent the affinity of human life to other life forms. On the other hand, one may analyze the nature of personal existence itself without explicit concern for the modes of existence of other animate beings. In this context, one's own personal life is the most intimate of "data" and the most evident of "experiences" upon the basis of which philosophical inquiry might proceed.

Both lines of approach are discernible in Ortega's work. As a result an ambiguity is present in Ortega's conception of life which obscures the unity and solidity of his major theme. On the one hand, human life is used in a zoological sense by Ortega to denote an animate being existing within the context of animate being as a whole. On the other hand, human life is used in a philosophical sense and denotes the basic and irreducible reality which is each person's own

unique and untransferable existence. I argue that these two perspectives are not incompatible and that Ortega sees these two lines of approach to the phenomenon of human life converge and culminate in an ontology of human existence which links man to the processes of animate life as such while respecting the personalist dimension of existential experience.

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INTRODUCTION

The intent underlying this project of investigating the concept of human life in the philosophy of José Ortega y Gasset has a dual nature. On the one hand, the concept of life has been of central importance for contemporary phenomenological philosophy. The most conspicuous appearance of the term "life," in this context, has been in conjunction with the term "world." The notion of the Lebenswelt or life-world has become the focus of much speculation and investigation--speculation into its role in the later philosophy of Edmund Husserl and investigation into its concrete structures and formal aspects in its own right. On the other hand, Ortega's work has to a large extent been ignored or else attention to it has been limited to his major work in English, The Revolt of the Masses.[1] As a result, the truly philosophic

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[1]José Ortega y Gasset, The Revolt of the Masses (New York: W. W. Norton, 1932, 1960). This book was the first and the most widely read of Ortega's works in English. Although the book describes the social and political situation of Europe as Ortega saw it at the time the book was written, the concept of life can be detected as the backdrop against which Ortega analyzes then current affairs.

The most important of Ortega's works are available in English and for the most part I shall make use of these translations. All references to his works in English are correlated to the original Spanish. Reference to Ortega's works in Spanish will be to his Obras completas, 11 vols. (Madrid: Revista de occidente). Reference to the collected works will follow the English reference and is set aside by means of parentheses. The Revolt of the Masses is thus correlated with the Spanish in the following manner: (O.C., IV, pp. 113-278).

The one exception to the above stipulation concerns Ortega's Some Lessons in Metaphysics, trans. Mildred Adams (New York: W. W. Norton, 1969). This text does not appear in the Obras completas and cross reference will be to Unas lecciones de metafísica, 2nd ed. (Madrid: Alianza editorial, 1968). Parenthetical reference to this work will be to Unas lecciones.

Where reference is made directly to the Spanish texts due to the

import of his work has been missed for the most part. My intention, however, is not to spell out that import in its entirety, but rather to concentrate upon a central and important aspect of it--his conception of human life.

It seems not only to be the case that Ortega's philosophical significance is ignored due to concentration upon one particular work. In fact, the nature of his writings themselves provide difficulties in comprehending Ortega's thought. He was not a writer of philosophical treatises. Rather, his thoughts are expressed in the form of essays on various topics, in prologues to the works of other authors, in lectures the notes from which were saved and later published and in works published in book form but which were not concerned exclusively with philosophy. As a result, much of the philosophical content of Ortega's work has not received ample attention, particularly his conception of human life.

The very manner in which he expressed himself obscures the fact that Ortega is a systematic philosopher. Although he does not devote a philosophical treatise to the clarification of a central theme, that theme is evident throughout his published work. Ortega is systematic in the sense that a unifying theme persists in his writings and that he makes a consistent attempt to investigate the nature of human life in a conscientious and forceful manner.

The systematic nature of Ortega's thought is not limited to his manner of exposition or style. It is not a matter of mere consistence.

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fact that an English translation is nonexistent, the parentheses are dropped.

By his own admission Ortega situates his desire for system to the rigorous attempt Husserl had made to analyze the structures of consciousness. In his last major work he recalls the theme of his philosophical career:

> In 1925, I stated my theme--some of my students may recall it--saying literally: (1) the traditional problem of Being must be reformed from its roots up; (2) this must be accomplished by the phenomenological method insofar, and only insofar, as this means synthetic or intuitive thinking and not merely the kind of conceptual-abstract thinking which is the traditional way; (3) but it is necessary to integrate the phenomenological method, giving it a dimension of systematic thinking which, as is well known, it does not possess; (4) and finally, so that systematic phenomenological thinking may be possible, it is necessary to start from a phenomenon which might be the system itself. This systematic phenomenon is human life and it is necessary to start with its contemplation and analysis.[2]

There appears to be at least two other senses, then, in which Ortega's philosophy may be viewed as systematic. First, the universe is construed as an ordered and unified field of realities which is capable of being comprehended within a conceptual framework. Second, the system is not an abstract construction of thought, or an ordered set of concepts each one of which is intrinsically related to the others, but a discovery of that which is the case. The system is not so much

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[2]José Ortega y Gasset, The Idea of Principle in Leibnitz and the Evolution of Deductive Theory, trans. Mildred Adams (New York: W. W. Norton, 1971), pp. 279-280 (O.C., VIII, p. 273). Hereafter referred to as The Idea of Principle. All emphases, unless specified, are in the original.

In regard to system Herbert Spiegelberg seems to be correct when he says that "from the very start Ortega bent the intuitive method of phenomenology in the direction of a systematic analysis guided by his conception of human life. . . ." Spiegelberg, The Phenomenological Movement: A Historical Introduction, 2 vols., 2nd edition (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971), p. 616.

constructed as it is brought to awareness; that which is systematized is the real itself. Ortega's philosophy at base is the persistent effort to analyze the systematic nature of human life and to show that it is the primary reality in relation to which all other realities are "founded."

The drive toward system is a continuous aspect of Ortega's thought. Not only does he speak of system in The Idea of Principle just quoted, but in another context identifies philosophy itself with system.[3] The importance attributed to system is also evident from the title of one of his most important essays, "History as a System." Robert McClintock notes that the impulse toward system was a "deep, personal concern for Ortega."[4] McClintock traces Ortega's drive toward system to the Spaniard's neo-Kantian education in Germany.

This perspective differs from the general conception of Ortega. The common view seems to be that he is a philosopher noted more for "literary brilliance and striking metaphor" instead of argument and explanation. As a result his followers "have often confounded philosophy with fine writing and emotional declamation."[5] That is,

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[3]José Ortega y Gasset, "Preface for Germans," Phenomenology and Art, trans. Philip W. Silver (New York: W. W. Norton, 1975), p. 47 (O.C., VIII, p. 37). "Prólogo para alemanes" was written as an introduction to a new edition of his El tema de nuestro tiempo in German. The "preface" never appeared in Germany, however, because Ortega decided against its publication.

[4]Robert McClintock, Man and His Circumstances: Ortega as Educator (New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 1971), p. 45.

[5]Neil McInnes, "José Ortega y Gasset," entry in the Encyclopedia of Philosophy, vol. 6, editor in chief Paul Edwards (New York: The Free Press, 1967), p. 6.

Ortega seems to be noted more for style than for system. In a recent work devoted to his sociological and historical thought, the author writes of Ortega's "rejection of systematic explanation." In fact the claim is made that the notion of system is the "antithesis" of human life for Ortega.[6] Such an opinion goes against Ortega's own expressed intentions regarding his work.

Ortega was not unaware of his critics. At one point, in speaking of the appropriate form of writing applicable to philosophizing, he speaks in rather pointed terms concerning those who failed to see the philosophical content of his writings:

> Perhaps it is . . . noteworthy that there has never been a genus dicendi truly adequate as a vehicle for philosophizing. Aristotle was unable to resolve this problem that fools ignore. His work has been preserved because he held on to his own lesson notes. I personally have had to contain myself for thirty years while fools accuse me of producing only literature, and the worse part is that even my own students find it necessary to pose the question of whether I have been writing literature or philosophy, along with other ridiculous provincial notions of this order![7]

Ortega's writings represent a synthesis of style and philosophy.

Ortega's efforts to develop a systematic philosophy did not proceed in an intellectual vacuum. His philosophical endeavors were directed toward a phenomenological theme which was to become a difficulty in the later philosophy of Edmund Husserl. The noting of that historical situation, however, while situating the Orteguian theme to phenomenological

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[6]Oliver W. Holmes, Human Reality and the Social World: Ortega's Philosophy of History (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1975), pp. 71-72.

[7]José Ortega y Gasset, The Origin of Philosophy, trans. Toby Talbot (New York: W. W. Norton, 1967), p. 86 (O.C., IX, p. 404).

research, provides little assistance in mapping out the strategy which this study is to follow.

I. THE PROBLEM

A particular difficulty arises in regard to Ortega's conception of human life, the unravelling of which constitutes the theme of this investigation. For Ortega the primary and basic "fact" in the universe is the existence of human life, always in the mode of a personal life. The core of Ortega's philosophical endeavors consists in revealing the structures and characteristics of this basic reality which is in each case one's own living existence. Life, however, is an attribute which is predicated of beings other than humans--all animals of course are living entities. Ortega is well aware that life is not a quality peculiar to humankind, but he insists that human life is most unlike other types of life forms.

The phenomenon of human life, then, may be approached in either of two manners. It may be situated within a cosmological setting in which case it is necessary to accent the affinity of human life to other life forms. On the other hand, one may analyze the nature of personal existence itself without explicit concern for the modes of existence of other animate beings. In this context, one's own personal life is the most intimate of "data" and the most evident of "experiences" upon the basis of which philosophical inquiry might proceed.

Both lines of approach are discernible in Ortega's work. As a result an ambiguity is present in Ortega's conception of life which obscures the unity and solidity of his major theme. On the one hand,

human life is used in a zoological sense by Ortega to denote an animate being existing within the context of animate being as a whole. On the other hand, human life is used in a philosophical sense and denotes the basic and irreducible reality which is each person's own unique and untransferable existence. I shall argue that these two perspectives are not incompatible and that Ortega sees these two lines of approach to the phenomenon of human life converge and culminate in an ontology of human existence which links man to the processes of animate life as such while respecting the personalist dimension of existential experience.

II. THE PROGRAM

The investigation which follows attempts to show that although Ortega states his views concerning human life in terms of situating humankind within a cosmological setting by establishing "man's place in nature," he also is able to complement this perspective by means of an inquiry into the structures of personal life. The first three chapters set these two perspectives in bold relief.

Ortega's views concerning "man's place in nature" is established in Chapter I. Humankind is there specified as the kind of vital being which has access to an "interior," a being which can be concerned with its own subjectivity and which can comport itself toward the world in a creative and imaginative manner.

In Chapter II I take up the clarification of human life from the philosophical perspective. The arguments which Ortega levels at the intellectualist tradition of modern philosophy are analyzed with the

result that human life becomes explicit as the "primary reality" from which philosophy is to proceed.

The philosophical perspective of the nature of human life is continued in Chapter III. There the personal dimension of life is accented and its structures clarified. The reality which Ortega discovers from the philosophical perspective is shown to be a structured reality, one accessible to philosophical investigation and clarification. Personal existence possesses the characteristics of being evident to itself, of being circumstantial, involving decision, as being perplexing as well as being untransferable.

After the zoological and the philosophical perspectives have been set in bold relief in the first three chapters, I argue in Chapter IV that these perspectives converge to form a consistent and unified view of human life on Ortega's part. By careful analysis of the three forms in which Ortega expresses his conception of human life during his philosophical career, the exact manner in which he sees personal life "immersed" in the world becomes clear. In regard to his phrase "I am I and my circumstance" Ortega arrives at an ontological characterization of the human conditioon which situates humans within the context of living existence as a whole. Due to the fact that Ortega's ontology of life is in marked contrast to traditional Darwinian conceptions, attention is also directed to a tradition of biological science to which Ortega is related historically and conceptually through the work of the German biologist Jacob von Uexküll.

The full ramifications of Ortega's ratio-vitalism are driven home, so to speak, in Chapter V. The Orteguian theme is shown to be a

problematic which resides at the very core of contemporary continential philosophy. By situating the Orteguian theme against the background of its philosophical setting through consideration of Husserl, Heidegger and Sartre, Ortega's conception of life is shown to capture the personalist dimension of existential philosophy while yet situating human existence within a "natural" setting. Personal existence in Ortega's sense is affiliated with all forms of living entities.

Attention is now turned to an analytic exposition of Ortega's views concerning human life from a cosmological perspective.

CHAPTER I

MAN'S PLACE IN NATURE

Max Scheler once noted that the term "man" was deceptively ambiguous. On the one hand, the term could signify man as a biological being, in which case it signified "the particular morphological characteristics of man as a subclass of the vertebrates and mammals." On the other hand, it might be used to denote a characteristic or set of characteristics whereby this unique being, man, is distinguished from the concept of animal, a concept including within its scope all mammals and vertebrates.[1] The same ambiguity seems to reside in Ortega's concept of life. A clarification of the concept of man, or in the case of Ortega the concept of human life, is inseparable from the task of determining man's place in nature or the characteristics of human life within the context of organic life as a whole.

The manner in which Ortega's notion of human life can be situated in relation to natural life is to be approached by consideration of two not mutually opposed attempts which Ortega devoted to this purpose. First, I shall investigate the phenomenon of hunting, which is common both to human life and to animal life, with the intention of showing how this common and natural characteristic undergoes a marked modification with the advent of man.

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[1]Max Scheler, Man's Place in Nature, trans. Hans Meyerhoff (New York: The Noonday Press, 1961), p. 6. The German work entitled Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos was first published in 1928.

Second, and building upon that which is discerned from the analysis of the phenomenon of hunting, I shall concentrate upon another attempt which Ortega gave to clarifying man's place in nature. In this context, attention will be directed toward the specific and unique attribute which Ortega claims definitely distinguishes humans from the other animals. The analysis of this attribute--interiority--will reveal that the abstract and complete opposition of human life and animal life, between thought and action respectfully, cannot be maintained.

A look at the vital and concrete aspects of human existence will, in turn, lead to a consideration of Ortega's views on technology and its source in the human power for imagination. As a result of these inquiries, human life will become manifest as basically unadaptable to the environment. This unadaptability characteristic of the human condition will then be used to reveal a marked anti-Darwinian dimension to Ortega's conception of human life.

After tackling the theme in this manner, I shall then summarize Ortega's views of the relationship between human life and other forms of animate being. The possession of thought or "interiority" which is peculiar to humankind does not radically separate human life from the realm of zoological existence according to Ortega.

I. THE PHENOMENON OF HUNTING

A common characteristic which is manifest in both man and animal is the phenomenon of hunting. It is in an analysis of this phenomenon written as a prologue in 1942 to a book by his friend Count Yebes

entitled Veinte anos de caza mayor (Twenty Years a Big Game Hunter)[2] that Ortega provides perhaps the clearest exposition of his view of the overall relationship of man's place within the biological order of nature.

In this work Ortega insists that man is a mundane entity which is related intrinsically to the zoological scale of living beings. Even the higher functions of the intellect, as characteristics of a distinctly human mode of life, are vital phenomena and as such are intimately related to the concrete life of individual men. Zoologically, man appears as the animate being which has a specialized nervous system and a unique and peculiar capacity for imagination and self-projection. Ortega situates man within the confines of a natural existence in such a way that even the psychological and the cultural character of human existence cannot be radically divorced from the conditions of biological being. If the higher functions of mind have a biological basis, however, they cannot be reduced to such being. Nowhere does this rather paradoxical relationship between man and natural being manifest itself most evidently, it seems, than in the phenomenon of hunting. By offering a description of this vital function Ortega attempts, on the one hand, to protect the integrity of man's higher functions while, on the other hand, insisting upon man's affinity with other zoological beings.

In the natural condition man, as well as many other creatures, must search, capture and kill game as a means for keeping himself

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[2]This prologue was published in English as Meditations on Hunting, trans. Howard B. Wescott (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972) (O.C., VI, pp. 419-491).

in existence. Like many other animals, man is a hunter. This natural aspect of life, however, does not persist beyond the conditions of animal life. From being a natural necessity, hunting is now a form of diversion from human concerns, a sporting escape from civilized life. The sport and diversion which is hunting is an attempt to return to a natural state, to live once again in the "orbit of animal existence."[3] In the hunt the hunter is the "alert" man and within the context of the hunt "life is complete alertness"--precisely "the attitude in which the animal exists in the jungle."[4] This mode of human occupation, then, reveals at one and the same time the affinity of man to purely animal life and the impossibility, since hunting is a human diversion, of his complete return to it. It is this paradoxical relationship and affinity between human life and natural existence which is to be uncovered in the analysis of hunting.

Ortega insists that hunting occurs throughout almost the entire zoological order and reveals a hierarchy and structure within the zoological scale of life. This hierarchy is revealed by the fact that hunting is a non-reciprocal relationship between living beings. "In hunting," Ortega states, "the question is always that of one animal striving to hunt, while the other strives to not be hunted." He continues:

> Hunting is not reciprocal. And the reason it is not is because it is a relationship between animals which excludes an equality of vital level between the two, and, of course it excludes even

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[3]Ibid., p. 129 (O.C., VI, p. 476).

[4]Ibid., p. 150 (O.C., VI, p. 489).

> more the possibility of an inferior animal's practicing it on a superior animal.[5]

In other words, "hunting is what an animal does to take possession, dead or alive, of some other being that belongs to a species basically inferior to its own."[6] The hunt, then, is an activity which takes place between species, one of which is the hunter and the other the hunted; the bird of prey hunts rabbits or other small game and the spider hunts flies for instance. Species differences become manifest in the peculiar manner in which the instincts are organized in relation to the search for game, or in defense from predators.

> Each species has its own peculiar way of hunting, a way that hardly varies. But in turn the species hunted by it rely on a set of defensive instincts that makes their capture difficult. This is what hunting really is: a contest or confrontation between two systems of instincts.[7]

Hunting, then, since it is non-reciprocal, reveals instinctual differences between species and generates a hierarchy of biological life based upon the vital expertise of obtaining game.[8]

Man is a hunter, Ortega insists, and hunting is a natural

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[5]Ibid., p. 55 (O.C., VI, p. 437).

[6]Ibid., p. 57 (O.C., VI, p. 438).

[7]Ibid., p. 59 (O.C., VI, p. 440).

[8]The non-reciprocal nature of hunting requires that it be distinguished from combat or fighting, which is a confrontation between two beings which is reciprocal and thereby a contest between equals. Moreover, both "systems of instincts" in the hunt must function freely and naturally, which is to say that success is not guaranteed in the hunt and, indeed, is not essential to the hunt as such. Ibid., pp. 57-59 (O.C., VI, pp. 438-440).

phenomenon which reveals hierarchical differences in the zoological scale of life. Man is, however, a hunter in a different manner than the other animals. First, even the most primitive of men, those who still exemplify the first form of human life, show a marked difference from the pure animal, a difference reflected in their way of hunting. Second, hunting has changed through history from being the chief vital occupation of man, as it was for the Paleolithic, who was the first to domesticate animals, to become a sport, something indulged in for recreation and leisure.[9] These two aspects of man's nature as a hunter are mutually related.

The marked change which hunting undergoes with the advent of humankind in the scheme of things is latent even in the first form of human life. Man finds himself with a minimum of instincts in contrast to the animal. It became necessary for him to call upon the assistance

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[9]Recreation and leisure--sport--is a privilege in that it presupposes a respite from ordinary and natural conditions of existence. Historically it becomes an aristocratic activity. A detailed investigation of the relation between hunting and social struggles through history might be very rewarding, Ortega seems to suggest:

"Once we have underlined the almost universally privileged nature of the sport of hunting, it becomes clear to what extent this is no laughing matter but rather, however strangely, a deep and permanent yearning in the human condition. It is as if we had poked a trigeminal nerve. From all the revolutionary periods in history, there leaps into view the lower classes' fierce hatred for the upper classes because the latter had limited hunting--an indication of the enormous appetite which the lower classes had for the occupation. One of the causes of the French Revolution was the irritation the country people felt because they were not allowed to hunt, and consequently one of the first privileges which the nobles were obliged to abandon was this one. In all revolutions, the first thing that the 'people' have done was to jump over the fences of the preserves or to tear them down, and in the name of social justice pursue the hare and the partridge. And this after the revolutionary newspapers, in their editorials, had for years and years been abusing the aristocrats for being so frivolous as to . . . spend their time hunting." Ibid., p. 33 (O.C., VI, pp. 426-427).

of other animals so that their instincts might be used in the hunt. This effort to obtain the aid of other beings has caused man, according to Ortega, to promote the only "substantial progress that has been, or could have been, made in the history of hunting."[10] Man humanizes other animals, he domesticates them, principally the dog, to serve his own ends. This process is basically contrary to the zoological point of view, he says, and reflects man's "degenerate" condition, that is, his basic lack of definitive instincts:

> From the zoological point of view, the domesticated animal is a degenerate one, as is man himself. In the artificial existence which man offers, the beast loses not a few of his instincts, even though he refines others which man needs and tries to select in breeding. . . . Through training man introduces certain forms of human conduct in the animal. That is, domestication partically de-animalizes and partially humanizes the beast. . . . The domestic animal is an intermediate reality between the pure animal and man. . . .[11]

Man, then, is a creature who inverts the traditional zoological order, that is, instincts lose their importance. This inversion is due to the fact, Ortega contends, that man possesses more memory and has an imagination, the ingredients which reason needed to develop.[12] That is

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[10]Ibid., p. 88 (O.C., VI, p. 454).

[11]Ibid., p. 92 (O.C., VI, p. 458).

[12]Ortega was very impressed by the empirical discoveries made by Wolfgang Köhler and acquiesced in many respects to the results of his experiments with chimpanzees. He was impressed no doubt by the fact that the results of Köhler's experiments seemed consistent with his position and as a result gave them added strength. Köhler's tests indicate that chimpanzees manifest aspects of intelligence and a rudimentary but prominent ability to manipulate technically objects within their environment. It seems to be the case that these "higher" animals have a deficiency only in regard to memory primarily, and their

to say, even the most primitive of men have an "interior life" denied to the animal.[13]

Early man is very close to the animal. The powers of reason are very rudimentary. Nevertheless, the gap between man and other animals is great and substantial. A structural difference exists even here between man and the other animals. Nature, Ortega says, "makes a leap between the pure beast that was the anthropoid and the rough outline of humanity that was the first Paleolithic man."[14]

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intellectual and technical acts remain rudimentary due to this situation. Cf. Wolfgang Köhler, The Mentality of Apes (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1927).

[13]Early man differs from the brute in that he has an "interior life," no matter how latent its manifestations might be. Early man differs from the animal, Ortega states, "in that he has lost some instincts, or, which is the same thing, they have become dulled." He continues:

"On the other hand, he possesses a greater degree of memory and of that which is the inverse of memory: fantasy. He gathers and organizes more impressions, more experiences, than the pure beast, and this permits him to create more imaginative combinations, more intimate phantasmagoria, which give him an 'interior life' denied to the animal."

The function of the imagination cannot be underestimated in accounting for man's "interiority." The role of reason or intellect in itself, it might be said, only specifies a species difference in establishing man's place in nature. "Reason in primitive man has almost the same radius of action as instinct and in terms of its effects on the vital economy should be considered as one more instinct, which takes the place of those which have been lost." Increased memory correlated with the power of imagination propel humankind eventually from his natural existence and account for his interiority and specifically human life. Ortega, Meditations on Hunting, pp. 119-120 (O.C., VI, p. 473). Emphasis in the original omitted.

[14]Ibid., p. 119 (O.C., VI, p. 473).

For the first time, in Paleolithic man reason is seen to replace animal instincts. As man's interior life becomes more refined, as reason increases, two correlated series of events transpire. Techniques for hunting grow more effective, new and better ways for obtaining game emerge and traps of various kinds are devised. In other words, man grows away from the animal and begins to manipulate nature for his own ends. Likewise, as reason increases and the instincts decrease, man grows away from the direct contact with nature. As reason increases animal instincts lose their force and man becomes removed from the hunting scene directly. From being a hunter, he becomes a shepherd, tending to domestic chores; agriculture brings civilization and culture arises.[15] Hunting, instead of being primary, becomes an activity of leisure, a means of escape from the sedimentary mode of life, an artificial perpetuating of an archaic way of life. It becomes a devised escape from the humanized world to a return, insofar as that is possible, to the primordial past.

Man inverts the traditional order of zoological existence according to Ortega. Human life represents a degenerate condition from the perspective of biology. This degenerate condition, Ortega suggests in one of his last writings, might be compared to an illness. Man's degeneracy is the result of the fact that he is a "sick" animal. Ortega attempts to fill in the gaps in the natural evolution of the species in the following manner:

> Let us, then, imagine man as a sick animal, suffering an illness which I will call <u>symbolically</u> malaria because

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[15]Ibid., p. 121 (O.C., VI, p. 474).

> he lived in infected swamps. And that illness, which did not succeed in destroying the species, caused him an intoxication which produced a cerebral hyperfunctioning; this was the origin of a consequent excessive growth of the cerebral organs which brought with it, in turn, a greater degree of mental hyperfunctioning, the result of which was that man was filled with images and fantasies--in which, as is well known, even the superior animals are so poor; that is to say, he found himself with a whole imaginary world, therefore an interior world, which the animal lacks; an interior world confronting, separate from, and opposing the exterior world. And from then on, this last beast which is the first man has to live at once in two worlds--the one inside and the other outside--and therefore be irremediably and forever unadapted, unbalanced; this is his glory, this is his anguish.[16]

The human condition, then, marks a biological deficiency, a degeneracy which reveals man's inherent natural weakness, his lack of ever sufficiently incorporating himself into his natural setting.

The characterization of man as a "sick" animal and as a "degenerate" from the perspective of biology reveals Ortega's aversion to contemporary Darwinian biology with its emphasis upon the adaptability of living forms to their surroundings. The process of adaptation is accomplished by concealed mechanisms which regulate the behavior of individuals of any particular species. Individuals thus comport themselves toward their environment in terms of certain regularities which have accumulated in the species in question as a means of insuring the continued survival of that kind of being. Contrary to this, humans attempt to modify their surroundings in terms of conscious projects whose source lies in the powers peculiar to their "interior life." Since the behavior of humans must be understood

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[16]José Ortega y Gasset, An Interpretation of Universal History, trans. Mildred Adams (New York: W. W. Norton, 1973), pp. 247-248 (O.C., IX, pp. 189-190).

in terms of their own goals and projects, or in terms of the social collective within which an individual lives, biology in this sense can offer little help in comprehending that which is most genuine about human life.

Despite the metaphors and images which Ortega produces from this rejection of Darwinian biology, there is another and broader conception of biology which Ortega tacitly accepts. When biology is defined as the science which studies the characteristics of living beings as such, while respecting the unique and peculiar modes of existence of each kind of living entity without reducing them to one overriding explanation, the "negative" characteristics to which Ortega refers may be seen in a more positive light. Such a biology would of necessity be non-Darwinian. I shall have much more to say on this point in Chapter IV and limit my comments at this point to noting that these two views of biology do not involve an inconsistency on Ortega's part. In fact, much can be gained in an understanding of Ortega's conception of life through his characterization of human life in contrast to the Darwinian paradigm.

Contrary to Darwinian biology, then, that which distinguishes man from the pure animal is a negative characteristic of the human condition. The instinctive regulation which constitutes the conditions for animal life are relatively lacking in the human condition. The animals of any species will die out if their mode of adaptation to their surroundings does not allow them to cope successfully with the natural conditions within which the species exist. Successful coping with changing environmental conditions requires that the animal must

change in order to adapt itself to its new environment. That is, its instinctive equipment must be modified so as to insure the animal's survival. Erich Fromm speaks in terms of the "autoplastic" nature of animal life. Fromm's concept seems to capture adequately Ortega's view of animal existence. Through autoplastic changes the animal "lives harmoniously, not in the absence of struggle but in the sense that its inherited equipment makes it a fixed and unchanging part of its world. . . ."[17]

New qualities, however, make their appearance with the emergence of man. These qualities appear precisely when the processes

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[17]On this point the Orteguian position on the human condition may be found expressed very clearly by Eric Fromm in his description of a man's basic condition, which rests, Fromm claims, upon a basic biological weakness. I quote at length:

"The first element which differentiates human from animal existence is a negative one: the relative absence in man of instinctive regulation in the process of adaptation to the surrounding world. The mode of adaptation of the animal to its world remains the same throughout; its instinctual equipment is no longer fit to cope successfully with a changing environment the species will die out. The animal can adapt itself to changing conditions by changing itself--autoplastically; not by changing its environment--alloplastically. In this fashion it lives harmoniously, not in the sense of absence of struggle but in the sense that its inherited equipment makes it a fixed and unchanging part of its world; it either fits in or dies out.

"The less complete and fixed the instinctual equipment of animals, the more developed is the brain and therefore the ability to learn. The emergence of man can be defined as occurring at the point in the process of evolution where instinctive adaptation has reached its minimum. But he emerges with new qualities which differentiate him from the animal: his awareness of himself as a separate entity, his ability to remember the past, to visualize the future, and to denote objects and acts by symbols; his reason to conceive and understand the world; and his imagination through which he reaches far beyond the range of his sense. Man is the most helpless of all animals, but this very biological weakness is the basis for his strength, the prime cause for the development of his specifically human qualities." Fromm, Man for Himself: An Inquiry into the Psychology of Ethics (Greenwich, Connecticut: Fawcett Publications, 1947), p. 48.

of instinctive adaptation lose their force. Instinctive adaptation to the environment gives way to reason and distinct human activity. Specifically, humans develop a sense of self-awareness and self-consciousness. An "interior world" of reflection replaces the instinctive operations of animal adaptation. Through self-awareness, man turns toward the world in a creative endeavor to change his environment. Confronted with changed environmental conditions, man responds "alloplastically" by changing his environmental surroundings and using them to his own personal and collective advantage. He builds traps, constructs shelters and tills the soil, among countless other activities.

Interiority propels man outside the confines of mere animal existence. The loss of specific instincts and regularities is coupled with the growth of personal awareness. One's life becomes a personal endeavor. The characteristics of life become centered around the sum total of personal (which does not eliminate collective) experiences rather than the generic characteristics of the species. The changes brought about by the growth of the powers of thought change the restrictions of species existence and make self-awareness and personal existence possible.

Despite the speculative effort to reconstruct imaginatively the formation of man, the truth of which is not at issue, two important aspects of Ortega's thought may be seen incorporated into the description of man as a hunter. First, the assertion is made that humankind possesses an interior world which the animal lacks. Second, associated with this, is the further assertion that as a result human

life is irremediably and forever unadapted, that is to say that "man represents the triumph of an animal that is unadapted and unadaptable."[18]

II. INTERIOR LIFE

Even the most primitive of men possess an interior life, however latent, which distinguishes human existence from animal life and which arises coincidentally with the loss of vital instincts. Man's place in nature may be approached, then, through a consideration of this defining characteristic and the manner in which it differs from the "exteriority" peculiar to the pure animal.

The life of the animal is essentially alteración, Ortega insists, that is, a possession by that which is other then itself.[19] The animal is continually concerned with that which is other and external to it, its surrounding world. It is "pushed and tyrannized" by its environment to such an extent as to be estranged from any possibility of a

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[18]Ortega, An Interpretation of Universal History, p. 247 (O.C., IX, p. 189).

[19]José Ortega y Gasset, Man and People, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: W. W. Norton, 1957), p. 17 (O.C., VII, p. 83). The section of the work in Spanish is entitled "Ensimismamiento and alteración" and is rendered into English as "Being in One's Self and Being Beside One's Self." This section of the text of Man and People merely repeats a previous article of the same name. In the earlier context, the essay "Ensimismamiento and alteración" is united with another essay, which reveals the relationship of this topic to technology. The second essay is entitled "Meditacion de la tecnia," translated into English as "Man the Technician" and included in History as a System: And Other Essays Toward a Philosophy of History (New York: W. W. Norton, 1941, 1961) (O.C., V, pp. 291-371).

Since the essay appears in English in Man and People, for purposes of footnotes I shall specify the Spanish text to that work only.

genuine inner self.[20] Ortega thinks the behavior of the monkey provides perhaps the best example of this phenomenon. The monkey appears to be spontaneously busy, constantly moving "looking and listening for all the signals that reach them from their surroundings, forever intent upon their surroundings," he said, "as if they feared some constant peril from it. . . ."

> The animal, in short, lives in perpetual hunger for the things that are in the world and appear in the world, an ungovernable hunger that also discharges itself without any possible restraint or inhibition, just is the animal's fear does. In either case it is the objects and events in its environment which govern the animal's life, which pull and push it about like a marionette.[21]

The lack of interior life is also evidenced, Ortega thinks, by the fact that when the animal tires of its incessant activity or when it feels itself relatively secure it goes to sleep, it becomes dormant.[22]

Man, in contrast to the pure animal, can ensimismarse, by which Ortega means that he can "be inside himself."[23] He can withdraw from the world, in a sense, withdraw into himself and concern himself with his inner being, an inner being composed of images and ideas.

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[20]Ibid., p. 17 (O.C., VII, p. 83).

[21]Ibid., pp. 16-17 (O.C., VII, p. 83).

[22]Ibid., p. 19 (O.C., VII, p. 85).

[23]This process of being inside oneself, or the inwardness characteristic of human life is composed of images and ideas. There seems to be a universal tendency, when, in speaking of our ideas, that we situate them in the inside of our body. Since ideas are nowhere in the world, we symbolically situate them in the innermost part of the body. The ancient Greeks situated them in the vercera--the heart, liver or diaphragm, Ortega points out. Ibid., pp. 18-19 (O.C., VII, pp. 84-85).

He has in other words the ability to think, contemplate or meditate. This is not to say that man is not also possessed by that which is other, by the world about him, that he is not at the same time alteración. The perpetual harassment which animals undergo in reacting to the environment and from things in their surroundings remains essential to the human condition as well. Nonetheless, there is an ability which humans possess of withdrawing from their surroundings and of resisting the fear imposed by the uncertainty of their relationship to the immediate environment. Thereby they establish a "haven" from the harassment of natural life. This aspect of life he attempts to capture with the concept of ensimismamiento (within-oneself-ness), a concept he identifies with the Roman idea of vita contemplativa and the Greek theoretikos bios.[24] Contrary to the monkey, exemplifying animals as such, who are either dormant or in continual unrest and excitement in regard to the environment, man can be freed from this perpetual uneasyness; man can direct his attention inwardly and withdraw from the pure alteración which characterizes animal life.

Although the human species finds itself possessed of an ability to think, to withdraw into itself, man is, like the animal, consigned to the world, having to be aware of his circumstances and to feeling the pressures and dangers of natural life. He is thereby not radically separated from the vital conditions which propel animal existence.

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[24]Ibid., p. 23 (O.C., VII, p. 88).

His mode of existence at first may not seem to be distinguished from that of the other animals which is for the most part concerned with responding to difficulties and tasks imposed by the immediate environment. By his behavior the primitive may even seem to reflect the conduct of the animal toward that which is other and external to him. Nonetheless, notwithstanding the fact that "he too lives governed by his environment, is set among the things of the world as one of them," Ortega claims that

> . . . no sooner do the beings around him give him a moment of repose than man, making a gigantic effort, achieves an instant of concentration--enters into himself, that is--by great efforts keeps his attention fixed upon the ideas that spring up within him, ideas which things have evoked and which have reference to the behavior of things, to what the philosopher will later call "the being of things."[25]

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[25]Ibid., p. 21 (O.C., VII, p. 87). Human life, Ortega insists, is impossible without a retreat into the self, without "vigilant thought." It is a mistake, however, to think that Ortega sees a progressive effort on the part of man to humanize himself by "withdrawing into himself" or that history is the progressive unfolding in some manner of man's ability to withdraw into himself considered in and for itself. It might seem at first glance that Ortega is praising this ability for itself alone:

"Without a strategic retreat into the self, without vigilant thought, human life is impossible. Call to mind all that mankind owes to certain great withdrawals into the self! It is no chance that all the great founders of religions preceded their apostolates by famous retreats. Buddha withdraws to the forest; Mahomet withdraws to his tent, and even there he withdraws from his tent by wrapping his head in his cloak; above all, Jesus goes apart into the desert for forty days. What do we not owe to Newton! Well, when someone, amazed that he had succeeded in reducing the countless phenomena of physics to such a precise and simple system, asked him how he had succeeded in doing so, he replied ingenuously: Nocte dieque incubando, 'turning them over day and night'--words behind which we glimpse vast and abysmal withdrawals into the self." Ibid., p. 35 (O.C., VII, pp. 96-97).

These withdrawals are not of importance considered solely in and

In other words, ensimismamiento signifies the ability to theorize, the attempt to comprehend reality, whether such attempts are primitive or relatively advanced.

Ensimismamiento is in fact a possession of a type of creature which is at one and the same time characterized by alteración. First, the privilege man possesses of freeing himself from his environment and resting in himself is never a completed act nor is it to be pursued as an end in itself for Ortega. To be in oneself is not to escape from reality; it simply changes the character of life, distinguishing genuine human life from animal life. The imperatives of natural existence still persist, natural needs must still be met if life is to continue. Nourishment and shelter continue to be required to sustain the life of the existing being. Second, the ability to withdraw into the self, against which is given the imperatives which natural existence imposes upon human beings, is enough to give rise to a feeling of loss when man has to concern himself solely with things. This concern with things and natural requirements is nonetheless, according to Ortega, the primary attitude which human life takes. He characterizes human life as being "shipwrecked" among things and as being "submerged" in a world where the natural concern is to direct

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for themself, but for the values and hopes that were generated by thought and which reveal themselves through specific orientations toward the world. Primitive or advanced, being in oneself is only a relative withdrawal from reality and does not preclude, in fact it presupposes, activity directed toward the world in some manner or other. All attempts at thought or meditation tend equally to provide evidence for the basic human condition of being in the world.

attention toward the world and to be attentive to the requirements it imposes.[26]

Thought is but a respite, so to speak, from natural concerns and instead of radically separating human life from natural life is, in the last analysis, but another way of confronting the world in a distinctly human manner. The retreat into the self is not a permanent retreat from that which is other and external to man. From the inner world man emerges and returns to the outer world, now with goals and intentions to change his environment.

> . . . He returns as protagonist, he returns with a self which he did not possess before, with his plan of campaign--not to let himself be dominated by things, but to govern them himself, to impose his will and his design upon them, to realize his ideas in that outer world, to mould the planet after the preferences of his most inmost being. Far from losing his own self in this return to the world, he carries it thither, projects it energetically and

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[26]One of Ortega's most forceful metaphors is that comparing human life to being "shipwrecked." Human beings must exist in a reality which appears external and foreign to their "inner" character:

"Now, the life of every one of us consists . . . in finding oneself having to exist in a circumstance, an environment, a world, or whatever else you choose to call it. That circumstance, that world, in which, like it or not, we have to live, we cannot choose; but without our leave and without knowing how it happened, we find ourselves tossed into it, shipwrecked in it, and, in order to sustain ourselves, we have no choice but to keep doing something, to come forth, swimming." Ortega, Some Lessons in Metaphysics, p. 89 (Unas lecciones, p. 121).

Ortega seems to have meant basically the same thing as Martin Heidegger attempted to express by the notion of "thrownness." For example, compare Ortega's remarks with the following: ". . . [Dasein's] character is determined by thrownness as a Fact of the entity which it is; and, as so determined, it has in each case already been delivered over to existence, and it constantly so remains. . . . As something thrown, Dasein has been thrown into existence." Heidegger, Being and Time, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), p. 321. Pagination is to the English text.

> masterfully upon things, in other words, he forces the other--the world--little by little to become himself. Man humanizes the world, injects it, impregnates it with his own ideal substance. . . .[27]

Not only is man shipwrecked in the world, he is also condemned to remain in it despite his ability to withdraw into himself. His thoughts are but a means of maintaining himself in existence and securing an environment tailored after his own expectations and intentions.

Stated more precisely, three distinct movements can be distinguished in the structure of human life, only a part of which corresponds to the structure of animal life. In regard to the structure of human life the following stages are evident: (1) Man is alteración, lost and "shipwrecked" among things within the world; (2) the practice of withdrawing into himself (ensimismamiento), prominent only in human life since only man can withdraw into himself "to form ideas about things and possible ways of dominating them," is manifest in thought or the ability to theorize; (3) man again directs himself outwardly toward things with a preconceived plan to change or organize reality according to his own goals and aspirations with the intent of realizing himself in the world. This third movement may be identified by the notions of vita activa or praxis.[28]

The natural condition of man, like that of the animal, is to be "lost" in the world, to be directed toward that which is other than

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[27]Ortega, Man and People, p. 20 (O.C., VII, p. 86).

[28]Ibid., p. 23 (O.C., VII, p. 88).

itself. Man suffers from alteración. Despite the ability to think and to theorize, to free himself from his circumstances and surroundings, each life is, nonetheless, intimately related to those circumstances. To be embodied and to live within a world permeates the human condition in such a manner that thought is always at the service of activity directed toward the world.

III. TECHNOLOGY

Technology is the means by which man returns from himself, so to speak, and creatively directs himself toward the world. The human attempt to theorize is always in some manner linked with the attempt to comprehend the environment in such a way as to allow for its technical or practical manipulation. Thought is always directed toward the world as a whole or to portions of it in such a manner as to provide a field or horizon for possible human actions.

To comprehend the nature of technology and the role it plays in Ortega's work, however, closer attention must be given to the vital condition of man which is presupposed by practical activity in the world. The dichotomy between ensimismamiento and alteración will thereby be broached in another manner.

Both man and animal are conditioned by vital necessities and these necessities must be satisfied if either being is to continue in existence. Unlike the animal, however, man meets natural necessities within a modified context. For the animal vital necessities are objective prerequisites of life. Man too is susceptible to the material and objective character of natural necessities, but he

experiences their objective "necessariness" subjectively as necessities.[29] Food and shelter, for example, are needs and necessities of life, but it is the case that man may decide not to eat or not to seek shelter. In other words, for human life necessities are conditional, are not necessary in themselves. Rather, they are necessary "for" living. Biologically, the primary necessity is that one lives, or otherwise expressed, all other necessities are consequences of this original necessity, the "necessity of necessities." To live, however, involves a resolve to live, an act of the will to choose life rather than to end one's existence. This original necessity is necessary only in a subjective sense and rests upon the desire to continue living, a desire which may be rejected. Man is the "sole known being," for Ortega,

> . . . endowed with the faculty--such a strange, paradoxical, frightening faculty from the ontological or metaphysical point of view--of annihilating himself and voluntarily renouncing his existence in the world.[30]

The fact that man can call into question this original necessity, can make a resolve "for" life, changes the character of necessity for this being which is man. His life does not consist merely in the satisfaction of natural necessities, necessities which remain objective requirements of life. Rather he becomes concerned with necessities "for" life, a good life or a distinctively human life lived well. Man imposes conditions upon himself "for" living, conditions which,

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[29]Ortega, "Man the Technician," History as a System, p. 90 (O.C., V, p. 321).

[30]Ibid., pp. 90-91 (O.C., V, p. 321).

Ortega claims, do not coincide with the system of organic necessities. The necessities for a genuine human life, in other words, do not wholly coincide with the system of organic necessities.[31] The phenomenon of suicide seems to reveal that well-being, and not just the satisfaction of organic necessities, is the goal striven for by human endeavor. The privilege which man possesses of rejecting life itself is manifest most evidently in situations where man cannot obtain what he considers well-being and would have to content himself with bare life.[32]

This disharmony between a distinctly human life and a merely natural existence can be approached in another manner. Man is an entity which has no other way of existing than by being in another entity, namely nature or the world. Man exists in the world. There seem to be three possible ways in which man might exist in the world. First, the being of man might coincide fully with that of the world

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[31]Ibid., p. 93 (O.C., V, p. 322).

[32]John-Paul Sartre notes that all projects take place against the background of, and have a foundation in, an "original project," which he claims is "the original choice of our being" (my emphasis). This foundation of all secondary projects, he contends, consistently with Ortega's position, is the original project of living. The attitude one takes toward death, he says in criticism of Heidegger, is essentially related to this original choice of one's being. Sartre, Being and Nothingness: An Essay in Phenomenological Ontology, trans. Hazel Barnes (New York: Washington Square Press, 1966), pp. 719-722.

Albert Camus perhaps expressed most vividly the metaphysical implications of this original choice and the nature of suicide: "There is but one serious philosophical problem, and that is suicide. Judging whether life is or is not worth living amounts to answering the fundamental question of philosophy." Camus, The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays, trans. Justin O'Brien (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), p. 3.

or of nature. Ortega claims that this is the case with the stone, the plant and to a limited extent the animal. A being, however, which coincided with the world fully would not find the world alien to it; man would exist in the world as though he were in himself.[33] This obviously is not the case since man experiences the world as a medium opposed to his exertions. The second possibility is the exact opposite of the first: the being of man and the being of the world might be antagonistic one to the other to such an extent that the world could not be the place or home of man. Under this option human life is an impossibility because the environment must provide some minimal conditions for survival. The third possibility, a relative mean between the two extremes, offers a better view of the relationship between man and the world. "Living in the world, man finds that the world surrounds him as an intricate net woven of both facilities and difficulties."[34] Man's being and nature's being, that is, do not fully coincide. Being surrounded by both facilities and difficulties, man is in the constant process of keeping himself in existence, keeping himself alive in a not too hospitable environment. Human existence is a possibility thanks to the facilities which are supplied to life, but this possibility is always imperiled by environmental difficulties and dangers.[35]

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[33]Ortega, "Man the Technician," History as a System, p. 109 (O.C., V, pp. 336-337).

[34]Ibid., p. 110 (O.C., V, p. 337).

[35]Ortega also thinks that the human condition can be comprehended in another manner:

Because of the essential disharmony between man and nature, man's vital necessities, whether they are distinctly human or objectively necessary, always run the risk of being unsatisfied. In the face of not being able to satisfy its vital necessities the animal seems unable to do anything about it and thereby ceases to exist. Rather than letting himself die, however, "man . . . comes forward with a new type of activity; he produces what he does not find in nature, whether because it does not exist at all or because it is not to hand when he needs it."[36] This activity consists in an attempt to modify nature and is meant to "abolish necessities as such by guaranteeing their satisfaction under all circumstances." That is to say, the results of this activity become abiding possessions of the human community in which they arise as established skills and techniques useful in insuring the satisfaction of human necessities and as a body of cultural accomplishments. Technical activity and its systematic expression in the form of technology leads to the growth of a cultural

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"The existence of man, appears essentially problematic. To all other entities of the universe existence presents no problem. For existence means actual realization of an essence. It means, for instance, that 'being a bull' actually occurs. A bull, if he exists, exists as a bull. For a man, on the contrary, to exist does not mean to exist at once as the man he is, but merely that there exists a possibility of, and an effort towards, accomplishing this. . . . For this reason 'my life' is pure task, a thing inexorably to be made. It is not given to me as a present; I have to make it. Life gives me much to do; nay, it is nothing save the 'to do' it has in store for me. And this 'to do' is not a thing, but action in the most active sense of the word." Ibid., pp. 115-116 (O.C., V, p. 341).

Cf., Jean-Paul Sartre on the nature of essence and existence insofar as these notions refer to man, Existentialism and Humanism, trans. Philip Mairet (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Haskell House, 1948), pp. 26-30.

[36]Ibid., p. 92 (O.C., V, p. 322).

dimension or a "super-nature interposed between man and" original nature. These technical actions are, then, essentially different from the biological complexes of brute actions.[37]

This "new type of activity" which becomes manifest in technology arises due to the technical ability humans possess. Technology is the means by which the technical ability becomes systematized in such a way that nature is organized and manipulated so that human needs might be satisfied. As an aspect of human activity technology presupposes an element in man which is not available to the animal. It presupposes the character of being within oneself or, in other words, "the possibility of disengaging oneself temporarily from the vital urgencies and remaining free for activities which in themselves are not satisfaction of needs."[38] Thus, Ortega claims that the privilege humans possess of being within themselves accounts for that set of non-primary activities whereby man becomes genuinely technical. Being different from his external circumstances, not being identical with them, but yet being embedded in them, he develops means for modifying his environment "for" life.

Technology is the effort to adapt nature to satisfy human needs and as such is concerned with the attempt to insure security for human life by guaranteeing vital necessities. It is difficult, however, at the technical level or at the level of a distinctly human life to distinguish the objectively necessary from the objectively superfluous;

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[37]Ibid., p. 95 (O.C., V, p. 324).

[38]Ibid., pp. 92-93 (O.C., V, p. 322).

that is, as was noted, it is difficult to distinguish the biologically necessary from that which is subjectively experienced as necessary "for" life. The desire to live well has as a consequence the result that the field of necessities is expanded for man. "As old as the invention of tools and procedures for keeping warm, feeding, etc., are many others serving to procure obviously unnecessary objects and situations." Ortega provides an example:

> As old and as widespread as the act of lighting a fire, for instance, is that of getting drunk. I mean to say the use of substances and procedures which produce a psychophysical state of delightful exaltation or delightful stupor. So much so, in fact, that it is even open to discussion whether fire was invented primarily for the purpose of avoiding the cold--an organic necessity and a sine qua non of life--or of getting drunk.[39]

The concept of vital necessity used in referring only to that which is objectively and biologically necessary, then, does not do justice to the human condition. Its meaning must be expanded to include that context where the superfluous appears to be just as necessary as the biologically necessary.

Human well-being, then, has to do with both the biologically necessary and the superficially necessary. Technology is a system of actions which are intended to satisfy both these necessities indistinguishably. Just what the good life is for man, or what necessities are required for such a life to be achieved, cannot be determined abstractly. The question as to the character of well-being, and the vital necessities which define it, can only be answered through a

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[39]Ibid., p. 97 (O.C., V, p. 327).

survey of the various historical and cultural attempts to define it. In other words, well-being for man is a historical variable. Unlike life in the biological sense, which is a fixed entity in the order of nature, well-being or the good life for man, is infinitely variable and susceptible to continual historical and cultural variation.[40] Technology, Ortega concludes, possesses a variable nature and should not be thought of as an independent entity distinct and separate from man's existential and historical attempts to realize his projects and expectations concerning the type of life he might prefer. Technology then is not directed by a single known purpose. The progressivism peculiar to the modern era, the idea that technology is the progressive attempt to manipulate the world in a scientific manner, is mistaken insofar as it ignores the historically relative necessities which bear witness to the variable nature of the technical function in man. Man's vital desires are not the same over time and need not be scientific in orientation.[41]

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[40]I quote at length from Ortega: "Take Pompey, to whom what really mattered was not living but sailing the seven seas, once more flying the flag of the seafaring people of Miletus, the country of the aei-nautei (the eternal mariners) to whom Thales belonged and who had been the creators of a new bold commerce, a new bold policy, a new bold knowledge, Occidental science. Or take, on the other hand, the fakir, the ascetic, and, on the other, the sensualist, the pleasure lover! Whereas life in the biological sense is a fixed entity defined for each species once and for all, life in the human sense of good life is always mobile and infinitely variable. And with it, because they are a function of it, vary human necessities; and since technology is a system of actions called forth and directed by these necessities, it likewise is of Protean nature and ever changing." Ibid., p. 101 (O.C., V, p. 330).

[41]Ibid., p. 102 (O.C., V, p. 330).

Technology is not a characteristic peculiar to contemporary or even modern scientific culture, although Ortega thinks it is correct to typify the modern period as preeminently the technological age.[42] Technology may quite properly be called a "function" which belongs to man as such and is not limited to any specific historical period. Human activity in the world is coincident with the technological function to manipulate reality in some concrete way. Technology varies in direct proportion to the attempts men have made to produce different "programs of being," different cultural and historical realities.

Since Ortega's view of the role of technology in human affairs is basic for understanding human activity in the world, the technical function provides an avenue by means of which man may be distinguished from the animal. In this respect, considering the technical function as such, Ortega discerns three main moments in the evolution of technology. These moments are the technology of chance, the technology of the craftsman and the technology of the technician.[43]

The technology of chance is that practiced by the primitive and is not distinguishable from his natural acts. Indeed, at this most primitive level of human existence, it is difficult to distinguish the technical ability from the natural existence man shares with the animal. His technical acts are:

> . . . scattered over and merged into the totality of his natural acts and appear to him as part of his natural

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[42]Ibid., p. 138 (O.C., V, p. 358).

[43]Ibid., pp. 141-142 (O.C., V, p. 360).

> life. He finds himself with the ability to light a fire as he finds himself with the ability to walk, swim, use his arms.[44]

At this level of technology no particular group or person possesses a monopoly on technical skills, and the methods of manipulating reality at this stage are common to all. Technical acts are undertaken indiscriminately by all members of the group or community. At this stage, in other words, man does not conceive himself as homo faber.[45] As a result technical progress rests upon purely chance occurrences rather than explicit attempts to invent and discover.

As for the other two stages of the technological function, the technology of craftsmanship and the technology of the technician, the former stage has two distinct but interrelated characteristics. The technical acts are performed by a specific group of persons who occupy themselves systematically with such acts and who are known as artisans--the cobbler, blacksmith, etc. With this stage comes the realization that technology or the arts specify a type of activity which is not natural and common to all persons. Technical acts are recognizable as technical acts. This stage of technology is rather static and non-inventive in that the arts and skills of the technician stand out as permanent fixtures of the cultural environment and the rigidity of artistic style is common.[46] Technology becomes a modern phenomenon with the use of machinery. The machine, the weaving

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[44]Ibid., p. 142 (O.C., V, p. 360).

[45]Ibid., p. 144 (O.C., V, p. 362).

[46]Ibid., pp. 145-148 (O.C., V, pp. 363-365).

machine for example, is a tool which works by itself and produces an object by itself. "In the crafts," Ortega noted, "the tool works as a complement of man; man with his natural actions continues to be the principle agent." The situation is otherwise once the machine makes its appearance.

> In the machine the tool comes to the fore, and now it is no longer the machine that serves man but man who waits on the machine. Working by itself, emancipated from man, the machine, at this stage, finally reveals that technology is a function apart and highly independent of natural man, a function which reaches far beyond the bounds set for him. What a man can do with his fixed animal activities we know beforehand; his scope is limited. But what the machine man is capable of inventing may do, is in principle unlimited.[47]

The technological function, then, undergoes a marked change once the machine comes into existence. The manifestation of the technical function through machinery opens unlimited possibilities for human achievement through the manipulation of reality in a quest to change nature for man's own ends and purposes. These possibilities are nonetheless latent in the function itself even at its most primitive level. Although seemingly indistinguishable from natural abilities at its most primordial level, the technical function contains the latent possibility of indefinite future development, modification and variation.

IV. MAN'S BASIC UNADAPTABILITY

Despite the emphasis Ortega places upon the technical function in human life, he is far from defining man as the "tool-making animal."

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[47]Ibid., pp. 148-149 (O.C., V, p. 365).

The extent to which technology does distinguish man from the animal rests upon the prior ability of man to ensimismarse, to withdraw into himself. Further, Ortega claims that the distinct human ability of withdrawing into himself cannot be captured by the notion of intelligence! It seems clear that to assert either position--that the distinguishing characteristic of man is the technical function or the intellect--is to do so in the face of much evidence to the contrary. Animals he notes, referring to the experiments of Köhler, seem to exhibit aspects of intelligence, and it is relatively obvious that animals as well as man are capable of developing tools.[48] Yet there is a peculiar quality which lies at the basis of the fundamental difference between man and brute, a difference associated with and fundamental to being inside oneself.

Viewing the organic function of living beings externally, then, evidence would tend to support the assertion that animals do possess intelligence to a degree and, moreover, that they have the ability to manipulate tools. Internally, so to speak, Ortega insists, that which distinguishes man from animal is not necessarily a difference of the psychic mechanisms considered "in themselves." Rather, the characteristically human property lies, he says, in the "consequences of a difference" which gives a different "structure" to human existence which the animal lacks. The essential difference between man and animal lies in the fact that man possesses an imagination, something the

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[48]Ibid., p. 136 (O.C., V, p. 357).

animal cannot exercise because of a deficiency of memory.[49] I quote at length Ortega's effort to state his position:

> What distinguishes man from animals is not so much the difference of their psychic mechanisms in themselves as the consequences which arise from this difference and give completely dissimilar structures to their respective existences. The animal has not imagination to draw up a project of life other than the mere monotonous repetition of its previous actions. And this is enough to bring about an absolutely different reality of life in the two cases. If life is not realization of a program, intelligence becomes a purely mechanical function without discipline and orientation. One forgets too easily that intelligence, however keen, cannot furnish its own direction and therefore is unable to attain to actual technical discoveries. It does not know by itself what to prefer among the countless "inventable" things and is lost in their unlimited possibilities. Technical capacity can arise only in an entity whose intelligence functions in

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[49]Ibid. (O.C., V, p. 357). Two very pertinent themes for contemporary philosophy have been touched upon in the foregoing--themes which are beyond the scope of the present project. The imagination, it is claimed, is the distinguishing and uniquely human attribute. Without fantasy the human ability for withdrawing into the self, contemplation or thought is impossible. The immense task imposed for philosophy of mind in delineating the relationships between the nature of images, ideation and the various cognitive efforts cannot here be the object of concern. As well, various terms have been used in speaking of aspects of the "interior" quality of human life of which the term "thought" is perhaps the most prominent. This usage, however, should not obscure the fact that I have been and will continue to be interested in the "inward" character of man as a totality, without attempting to show how the various ingredients are integrated, except that Ortega specifies imagination as the primary characteristic of man.

Another theme beyond the scope of the present work is that of the relationship between technology and theory from the perspective of philosophy of science. Suffice it to say that technology in the broad sense which Ortega gives it must refer to any attempt to articulate the structure of the world. In other words, thought is essentially given over to articulating the world in such a fashion that human acts--and human life is active--are related pragmatically toward the world.

> the service of an imagination pregnant not with technical, but with vital projects.[50]

The imagination, then, serves two functions for Ortega. It accounts for the distinctive "interior" character of human life and is thereby the source of human creativity and thought. It also is the source of the vital projects initiated by man with the intentions of forcing the environment to provide human existence with a minimum of well-being, that is, it is the vital source which technology presupposes.

It would be incorrect, however, to view the ability man possesses of withdrawing into himself as a positive asset. As a matter of fact, to call this phenomenon an "ability" which humans "possess" is to misunderstand its character. At first reading it might seem that ensimismamiento is a positive ability, a talent, one might even say a gift which is innately a characteristic of humankind. The situation is otherwise. To withdraw into the self is not a positive

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[50]Ibid., p. 137 (O.C., V, p. 357). Practical activity in the world thus supposes the imagination and the "interior" life which it makes possible. John Dewey was of the same basic opinion:

"There actually occurs extremely little observation of brute facts merely for the sake of the facts, just as there is little discipline that is repression and nothing but repression. Facts are usually observed with reference to some practical end and purpose, and that end is presented only imaginatively."

The quote should not end there, however, since Dewey's position on the imagination seems to have much in common with the Orteguian position:

"The connection between imagination and the harmonizing of the self is closer than is usually thought. The idea of a whole, whether of the whole personal being or of the world, is an imaginative, not a literal, idea. The limited world of our observation and reflection becomes the Universe only through imaginative extension. It cannot be apprehended in knowledge nor realized in reflection. . . . The whole self is an ideal, an imaginative projection. Hence the idea of a thoroughgoing and deapseated harmonizing of the self with the Universe (as a name for the totality of conditions with which the self is connected) operates only through imagination. . . ." Dewey, A Common Faith (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934), pp. 18-19.

or natural asset; it is a negative, non-substantive characterization of human existence. To be in oneself evidences a deficiency revealing man's inability to be fully incorporated into nature and of being essentially unadaptable to his surroundings.

> Man's power of withdrawing himself from the world and his power of taking his stand within himself are not gifts conferred upon man. I must emphasize this for those of you who are concerned with philosophy: they are not gifts conferred upon man. Nothing that is substantive has been conferred upon man. He has to do everything for himself.[51]

Man's ability of entering into himself, of possessing a self, is realized only thanks to the toil, effort and energy he gives to humanizing himself and his surroundings.

The fact that being in oneself is the product of self-creation or humanizing may be captured by the concept of de-humanization. The tiger, for example, cannot but be a tiger; it can never "de-tigerize" itself. Man, on the other hand, is always in danger because he is susceptible to dehumanization.[52] The essential condition of man is marked by uncertainty, a reversion back to the condition of animality is always a possibility. The human condition, Ortega insists, is essentially drama, a "hazardous adventure" in which, without permanent foundations, and without guarantee of success, man does not know if he can realize his potential. Life, in this sense, is a problem, a task, which must be accepted without knowing the outcome.

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[51]Ortega, Man and People, pp. 19-20 (O.C., VII, p. 85).

[52]Ibid., p. 25 (O.C., VII, p. 89).

Thought is not a gift, talent or positive ability conferred upon man by nature. Thought or inwardness, then, is not an innate quality or inalienable attribute belonging to the human being. As a result, Ortega resists any attempt to define man as a static, thing-like entity, as the "rational animal" as Aristotle would have had it, or as a "thinking thing" in the sense Descartes gave that term. Likewise he rejects the definition Linnaeus gave man, namely that of homo sapiens.[53] Contrary to that which the philosophical tradition might authorize, man does not live in order to think, as though thought were an extrinsic quality of life. From Ortega's perspective man must think in order to survive and subsist.

> We do not live in order to think but we think in order to succeed in subsisting or surviving. And you see how this attributing thought to man as an innate quality--which at first seems to be a homage and even a compliment to this species--is, strictly speaking, an injustice. Because there is no such gift, no such gratuity; there is only laborious fabrication and a conquest which, like every conquest--be it of a city or of a woman--is always unstable and fugitive.[54]

Man's being is given over to praxis. Thought is always related to human activity directed toward the world. Thought, that is, must not be divorced from activity and given a free floating existence in and for itself.

Any attempt to grant thought supreme rank in the universe he names intellectualism. Its opposite is voluntarism, pure action divorced from intellectual mediation. Both intellectualism and

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[53]Ibid., pp. 24-28 (O.C., VII, pp. 88-91).

[54]Ibid., pp. 28-29 (O.C., VII, p. 92).

voluntarism misrepresent the role of thought in human life.

Intellectualism, for Ortega, isolates intelligence or thought from its vital setting, that is, from its function in the service of human life. This prejudice he attributes to the Greeks who seemed to have been charmed by ideas to such an extent that the logos was for them the highest aspect of the universe. The highest and most sublime activity in Aristotle, for example, was contemplation, thought reflecting upon itself, which was an activity he attributed to God.[55] The same intellectualism persisted in modern philosophy under various names: "reason," "enlightenment" and "culture."[56] All these forms of intellectualism insist upon placing the intellect and things of the mind on a different plane of reality, so to speak, from mundane existence.

If the "glorification" of ensimismamiento is mistaken, that is, if intellectualism is an aberration, so is its opposite. Voluntarism is a "celebration" of pure alteración. Voluntarism sacrifices intellect for spontaneity, reduces man to animality and misses the proper character of human activity. The absence of reflection and thought in the name of voluntarism is to be equated with stupidity according to Ortega.[57]

Human life differs from animal life to the extent to which the interior self or ensimismamiento becomes the source of projects for

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[55]Ibid., p. 29 (O.C., VII, p. 93).

[56]Ibid., p. 30 (O.C., VII, p. 93).

[57]Ibid., p. 33 (O.C., VII, p. 95).

life. Attention has been directed upon the character of this inwardness and I have noted that it is a possession, of sorts, which belongs to a vital and mundane being. The "uncertainty" of such a life realizing itself, its "degenerate" character and the fact that ensimismamiento is a negative and non-substantive characterization of human existence implies that such a life form is incomprehensible from the biological or zoological point of view. The immediate consequence, then, is that traditional biological concepts are inappropriate in an analysis of the human condition. Primarily the concept most in need of correction when applied to human life is the Darwinian notion of adaptation.

The notion of the adaptation of living beings to their surroundings owes its persistence to the Darwinian view of biological life. The view of human life which Ortega espoused, then, is markedly anti-Darwinian. Ortega thought that Darwinism threatened the integrity of human life by incorporating it within, and making it inseparable from, the field of animal existence. Ortega thought Darwinism was ultimately an attempt to view human life from within the confines of a natural science, and that to him implied determinism. This anti-Darwinian trait can be seen as early as his first book:

> The natural sciences based on determinism conquered the field of biology during the first decade of the 19th century. Darwin believed he had succeeded in imprisoning life--our last hope--within physical necessity. Life is reduced to mere matter, physiology to mechanics. The human organism, which seemed an independent unit, capable of acting by itself, is placed in its physical environment like a figure in a tapestry. It is no longer the organism which moves but the environment which is moving through it. Our actions are no more than reactions. There is no freedom, no originality. To live is to adapt oneself; to adapt oneself is to allow the

> material environment to penetrate into us, to drive us out of ourselves. Adaptation is submission and renunciation.[58]

Adaptation, for Ortega the biological equivalent to physical determinism, is the process by which the organism is controlled by that which is other than itself, a process which would prohibit man from being "within himself." The true situation is otherwise according to Ortega. The possibility of escape from the pure alteración of the animal is the distinctive trait which characterizes human life. Man, insofar as he is an animal and shares in the nature of alteración, of course, partakes of aspects of adaptation while yet remaining in principle unadaptable. Stated another way, humans always remain in a position of disequilibrium. Man, Ortega claimed, in the face of all Darwinism, "represents the triumph of an animal that is unadapted and unadaptable."[59]

The most forceful criticism of the notion of adaptation, and by implication the Darwinian view of human life, is perhaps contained in a series of lectures on Arnold Toynbee's A Study of History given by Ortega late in his philosophical career.[60] In these lectures Ortega attempted to show that adaptation or equilibrium does not

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[58]Ortega, Meditations on Quixote, trans. Evelyn Rugg and Diego Marin (New York: W. W. Norton, 1961), p. 164 (O.C., I, pp. 399-400).

[59]Ortega, An Interpretation of Universal History, p. 247 (O.C., IX, p. 189).

[60]The work which was published as An Interpretation of Universal History was originally presented as a series of lectures entitled "Concerning a New Interpretation of International History (Exposition and Examination of A. J. Toynbee's Work, A Study of History)." Ibid., p. 7 (O.C., IX, p. 11).

adequately characterize man's vital condition. The immediate objective of Ortega's criticism was to refute Toynbee's ideas concerning the origins of civilization. Toynbee had postulated that the primary civilizations, that is, those from which other and later civilizations were generated or have their source--the early Egyptian civilization along the Nile River Valley or the Chinese civilization which existed along the Yellow River for example--where preceded by static societies, societies existing in a state of equilibrium with their surroundings. Changes in the environment forced these primitive societies to become dynamic in confronting the disequilibrium imposed upon them by the challenge of their new circumstances in an attempt to establish a new equilibrium. Original civilizations would appear, given Toynbee's position, to have been generated in the form of a response to meet a challenge imposed upon an otherwise static society. The dynamic nature of civilization, its organic and changing nature, thus rested upon the mechanism of challenge-response. The dynamics of civilization is generated upon the basis of a previous static and inert society, one in equilibrium with its environment.[61]

To assume that man was capable of such a stable relationship with his surroundings is totally mistaken from Ortega's perspective. Ortega's view is quite clear in contrast:

> Toynbee imagines that those societies represent a state of equilibrium as between man and his medium. But, then, the result is that civilization also consists in the fact that

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[61]This adumbration of Toynbee's position has been culled from Ortega's analysis of that position. Cf., ibid., pp. 224-249 (O.C., IX, pp. 173-190).

> man would create a new equilibrium before the change in the medium. As usual, he ends by tripping over his own idea. Not only is this a grave error, but it hampers an understanding of history and human destines [sic] to believe that a state of equilibrium in living has ever existed. Such an equilibrium is utopian; one can speak only of a greater or lesser degree of imbalance. Man is essentially an unbalanced animal who, nevertheless, exists; this means that he is not precisely and solely an animal, for to an animal, existing is always equilibrium, or if not, it is ceasing to exist, succumbing. To this paradoxical condition of constitutive lack of balance man owes all his grace and all his disgrace, all his misery and all his splendor. Hence man's origin must be represented by the most anti-Darwinian image there is; this cannot consist, as the people in the seminaries ingenuously and stubbornly think, in separating man from animal--a thing which is completely senseless--without sufficient courage and intellectual acuteness to take the problem by the horns, but rather like an animal which tries to escape animality, evading it or fleeing from it.
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> In the face of all Darwinism, man represents the triumph of an animal that is unadapted and unadaptable. Without doubt he will constantly achieve partial adaptations, but each one of them serves him for a new adaptation. But an animal at once unadapted and continuing to live is, from the zoological point of view, a sick animal.[62]

Rather than being represented by the biological category of adaptation, man's vital condition can best be represented by a most "anti-Darwinian image," the idea of a sick animal. Man suffers from that which from the zoological perspective is a biological weakness and deficiency. He suffers from the lack of definitive instincts and from the possession of an "interiority" which provides a distinctly human structure to his existence. As a result man is essentially unadaptable. Against Toynbee, then, Ortega asserts that adaptation is foreign to the human condition. Disequilibrium is the permanent condition for man.[63]

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[62]Ibid., pp. 246-247 (O.C., IX, pp. 188-189).

[63]Toynbee, it would seem, had inappropriately used the notion

V. SUMMATION

The use of a contrasting opinion should make the Orteguian position show forth all the more clearly. To accomplish this feat, attention is directed briefly to another view of man's place in nature which differs substantially from that of Ortega. Max Scheler conceived his philosophical anthropology at about the same time as Ortega's mature work, and although he had projected a major work in which he intended to elaborate his position, he died without achieving his desired goal except for a brief and cursory exposition entitled Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos.

Like Ortega, Scheler had been impressed by the experiments Köhler had conducted with chimpanzees and had likewise acquiesced to the opinion that it was neither intelligence nor technical ability which

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of challenge-response to explain a supposed crisis evoked when a state of equilibrium or adaptation is challenged. Such a supposition does not do justice to the human condition which, according to Ortega, is always dynamic. The entrails of the human condition, then, are always dynamic and never static, contrary to Toynbee's inclination to believe otherwise. Because of this, however, human life is permeated by the dynamism of challenge-response, though in a different sense than that the Englishman had originally intended. This is the crux of the difficulties separating Ortega and Toynbee. If the challenge-response dynamism belongs to human life as a universal characteristic, one must hold then that that dynamism is evident in the lives of primitive peoples and societies as well as civilizations. The most that would be justified in attempting to make a contrast between a civilized society and one classed as primitive is that there is merely a "different rate of acceleration" between them. In other words, it is appropriate to speak of a rate of change or perhaps of rhythm and even in terms of periods of paralysis (in Toynbee's sense of "detained" civilizations) without speaking of a fundamental difference between primitive society and civilization. This denial of a fundamental difference between primitive life and civilization constitutes a specific difference between Ortega and Toynbee. Ibid., pp. 224-249 (O.C., IX, pp. 173-190).

marked the essential difference between man and animal.[64] He was of the opinion that the uniquely human attribute was not a vital one, that is, not one instinctly linked to life. The uniquely human that is, not one intrinsically linked to life. The uniquely human psychic and vital functions and capacities" of a living being. He continued:

> The new principle [which accounts for the ontological difference between man and animal] transcends what we call "life" in the most general sense. It is not a stage of life, especially not a stage of the particular mode of life called psyche, but a principle opposed to life as such even to life in man. Thus it is a genuinely new phenomenon which cannot be derived from the natural evolution of life, but which, if reducible to anything, leads back to the ultimate Ground of Being [<u>öbersten Seinsgrund</u>] of which "life" is a particular manifestation.[65]

This principle or source is higher than intellect and the human capacity for choice. The Greeks, Scheler claimed, recognized such a source and had called it reason; he is content to call it "spirit."[66] Spirit, appearing finitely in a "center of action," which is denoted by the concept of person, has the special function of detaching the spiritual being from the pressures of life; it liberates the individual from the concerns of the organic world, freeing reason from psychological drives and the organic attachment to the external environment. Such a spiritual being, he insists, "is capable of grasping the qualities of objects without the restriction imposed upon this thing-world by the system of vital drives and the mediating functions and

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[64]Scheler, <u>Man's Place in Nature</u>, p. 35.

[65]Ibid., p. 36.

[66]Ibid.

organs of the sensory apparatus."[67] In other words, spirit engenders objectivity, knowledge and truth. Spirit itself, however, cannot be located in time or space, nor is it a part of the world--it can only be located in the "highest Ground of Being."[68]

Since man is a "spiritual" being and is capable of objectivity, he confronts a world of objects--the objects themselves organized in an objective matrix of space and time. Man then differs drastically from the animal which is immersed "ecstatically" in a pre-objective, thing-less horizon of environmental contingencies which form a purely functional system reflected in the physiological and morphological character of animal existence.[69]

An extensive survey of the similarities and differences between Ortega and Scheler is, of course, beyond the range of the present topic. The principle and fundamental difference is evident, however, and it is this contrast which is useful for the present purpose. Scheler's view of the nature of man must place him outside the cosmos

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[67]Ibid., p. 37.

[68]Ibid., p. 47.

[69]Ibid., pp. 39-41. It does not seem to be the case, however, that animals might not be said to experience objects. Alfred Stern's criticism of Scheler on this point seems cogent. Stern, recalling one of Köhler's experiments with chimpanzees notes one in which a chimpanzee is placed in a room in which a banana is suspended from the ceiling, just out of reach of the animal. Also in the room is a box loaded with stones. The chimpanzee has to unload the stones in order to lessen the weight of the box so that, in turn, it can be pushed under the banana, thereby placing the fruit within reach. Surely, it would seem appropriate to say that the actions of the animal were intelligent and that it must have recognized the box, stones and the banana as objects in some sense. Cf., Stern, The Search for Meaning: Philosophical Vistas (Memphis: Memphis State University Press, 1971), pp. 346-348.

and characterize him as being, in principle, radically distinct from the processes of life and nature. In contrast to this Ortega conceived man as a living being existing in the world, an ingredient of it. Human life is related intrinsically to the processes of nature. Nonetheless, it is a being whose structure cannot be reduced to the natural or biological perspective.

The present chapter reveals how Ortega's philosophical view of human life is related to a natural perspective. That is, I have been concerned with how human life in Ortega's sense is to be placed in a cosmological setting. Three points have been made. First, the human condition is a vital one, one involving a living being existing in a world, being "shipwrecked" and "submerged" in natural being. Second, from the natural perspective this being is a deficient one, noted more for its lack of definitive and permanent being than for its abundance of positive attributes. Third, man's lack of natural definitiveness makes it necessary that man create or fabricate a project of being for himself, that his life be given to the task of obtaining a degree of security and well-being.

The human condition throughout is mundane. As a vital being, man's physiological and psychological functions reveal an affinity with biological being as a whole. This affinity with biological being is seen most clearly, it seems, in the phenomenon of hunting. Man, Ortega claimed, is biologically a hunter, a distinction he shares in common with most of animal life. As well, for Ortega, hunting as a natural relationship between species bears witness to a structured and hierarchical order within the zoological scale of life. As the

phenomenon of hunting reveals, man is excluded from the possibility of escaping the sphere of animal existence in any radical sense. The type of life of the animal, which Ortega specified by the term alteración, persists in the human condition. Man, like the other animals, is conditioned and oriented to that which is other than himself, being more or less constantly attentive to his surrounding world and external circumstances.

If alteración persists as an essential ingredient of the human condition, it is nonetheless opposed by a specifically human attribute which Ortega calls ensimismamiento, the having of a self, of being inside oneself. This trait essentially resides in memory and the imagination. From the biological perspective this trait appears as an aberration and gives man the character of being a "sick" animal. To be in oneself, to have an interiority, is always a task, a goal, and thereby evidences a constitutive lack as the essential aspect of the human condition. Rather than being a definitive and complete being, as is the pure animal with its set of fixed and permanent instincts, man's condition is marked by impermanence and fabrication. In principle man is never adaptable to his circumstances, according to Ortega. The notion of adaptation, applicable to a degree to other living entities, is not applicable to man. The human situation is permeated by an essential unadaptability to its circumstances.

Man is unadaptable, biologically speaking, to his surroundings because of the concrete unity of the two opposing tendencies of alteración and ensimismamiento. These two distinguishable elements in human life, since they are concretely united, do not specify two

abstract and unmediated aspects of that life. Alteración becomes genuine activity in the world when man expresses himself in a creative endeavor to change reality to conform to his own communal and individual plans and expectations--his desires for well-being. Ensimismamiento, likewise, is never a radical separation from the world and in one way or another is a latent orientation toward that which is other and external to the existing being. The manner in which genuine activity is undertaken in the world is technology, a function not to be limited to the modern attempt to manipulate nature as a result of strictly scientific knowledge. Any attempt to structure a world to meet human needs and aspirations involves techniques, skills and values which coalesce to form a more or less explicit and conscious desire to establish conditions which might make life worthy of being lived. Technology and creativity, thereby, are historical variables and history testifies to the many and multifarious attempts which have been made to give life meaning and content.

CHAPTER II

THE PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVE

The theme of the previous chapter was to place the phenomenon of life within its proper natural and zoological setting. The chapter was devoted to establishing Ortega's view of man's place in nature. The discovery was made that for Ortega human life both has an affinity with and differs from the life of the pure animal. Human life possesses structures and aspects which distinguish it from brute existence. Ortega specifies the distinguishing characteristic of humankind as ensimismamiento, the ability to entertain thought and to structure the world in accord to human hopes, concerns and aspirations. Human life is marked, then, by intelligence, imagination and rational activity, or, in other words, by consciousness. This ability to think and to reason distinguishes man from the animal, which is given over to change and environmental manipulation, that is, alteración.

Ortega, however, rejected any attempt to separate radically ensimismamiento from alteración. He was opposed to any attempt to "glorify" thought as well as any attempt to "celebrate" spontaneous activity solely for its own sake. He labeled the first tendency intellectualism and the second tendency he termed voluntarism. Intellectualism over-emphasizes the role of thought in human endeavors, while complete absence of thought and reason is identified

with voluntarism[1] and stupidity.[2]

For Ortega, reason must be united to the conditions which characterize human life. He introduced the concept of vital reason to account for the living unity of thought and action. The present chapter attempts to state the Orteguian view of human life more explicitly by focusing on the relationship between thought and life. As a result, an important aspect of his conception of human life will be amplified and the philosophical importance of his concept of life made more vivid. In essence, his conception of human life must now be placed within its philosophical setting.

I. CRITIQUE OF INTELLECTUALISM

Ortega's conception of life has its source in the criticism he levelled at idealism and its rationalistic or intellectualistic tendencies. A careful reading of several key texts, which represent his most consistent efforts to state his position against the backdrop of idealism, will provide an avenue by means of which his notion of vital reason can be approached. The texts selected date from 1923 to

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[1]By voluntarism Ortega does not mean free, uncoerced and reasoned activity but its complete opposite. Voluntarism in Ortega's sense is activity lacking in reason and is equated with purely animal spontaneity.

[2]Stupidity may also be expressed by means of the concept of primitivism. Primitivism exists not only before the advent of culture and civilization but also in the very midst of a cultured reality. Cf., Ortega, The Revolt of the Masses, pp. 78-96 (O.C., IV, pp. 193-206).

1934, years during which Ortega's thought reached maturation. The sources thus include The Modern Theme (1923), What Is Philosophy? (1928), Some Lessons in Metaphysics (1932) and "Preface for Germans" (1934).

All four texts level criticisms at the intellectualist tradition. The first text, The Modern Theme, represents Ortega's attempt to state his view of reason as a vital aspect of existence by showing his opposition to rationalism. At the same time, Ortega makes it clear that he also rejects relativism. The other three texts drop the biological language of The Modern Theme, but take up the same topic from other directions. The second text, What Is Philosophy?, contains an "internal" criticism of Cartesianism, and the Orteguian notion of life is approached from a Cartesian framework. Some Lessons in Metaphysics continues the critique of rationalism through a discussion of possible forms of human orientation. Last, in "Preface for Germans" Ortega criticizes what he takes to be a contemporary case of idealism and rationalism--Husserl's phenomenology. Throughout, Ortega is insistent that rationalism and the idealistic tradition must be discredited. Through various arguments he attempts to show that reason must be related to life, that it must be associated with a "primary reality," the analysis of the structures of which reveals man's ontological condition. By showing that thought and reason are elements of a "basic datum," intellection is revealed as an aspect of life itself.

The Modern Theme

In 1923 Ortega published The Modern Theme[3] in which he laid the foundations for his philosophical view of human life. Somewhat like Nietzsche, he attempted to prophesy the future of philosophy.[4] In this work he sought to provide a brief outline of the coming outlook of European philosophy by showing its central theme. As Ortega saw the philosophical situation at the close of the War of 1914-1918, the contemporary thinker was presented with a dilemma--the dilemma posed by the competing claims of relativism and rationalism. This situation could not long endure, he thought: "The sensibility of the age that is now beginning is characterized by its rejection of this dilemma."[5]

Relativism and rationalism were both unacceptable from Ortega's perspective, although both had redeeming qualities. Rationalism captures the fact that truth, insofar as it is adequate, must be invariable and complete in itself, while relativism accents the multiform character of human development and change: The dilemma is

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[3]José Ortega y Gasset, The Modern Theme, trans. James Cleugh (New York: Harper and Row, 1961). This work appeared in English as early as 1933. The text is entitled El tema de nuestro tiempo in Spanish. Since the Spanish title clearly refers to "our time," the English title involves a mistranslation. The English title unfortunately suggests that Ortega is offering the theme of modern philosophy, whereas, in fact, he is offering a theme expressing the contemporary philosophical situation.

[4]Ortega, however, ignores Nietzsche and compares his endeavor to outline the future to the attempt Fichte made to comprehend his own age. Ibid., p. 27 (O.C., III, p. 156).

[5]Ibid., p. 35 (O.C., III, p. 162).

thus posed in the following manner:

> On the one side stands everything vital and concrete in his [each personal man's] being, his breathing and historical reality. On the other, that rational nucleus which enables us to attain truth, but which nevertheless has no life. It is an unreal phantom, gliding immutably through time, alien to the vicissitudes which are a symptom of vitality.[6]

Rationalism sacrifices vitality for the sake of reason, while relativism sacrifices reason in the name of vitality and spontaneity.

Rationalism made its philosophical appearance in modern form through the person of Descartes, whose enthusiasm "for the constructions of reason led him to effect a complete inversion of the perspective natural to mankind."[7] Rather than dealing with the world in which humans actually live, rationalism is an attempt to confine thought to the realm of "pure intellection" or of a "pure" reason. Reason in this sense "is nothing else but our understanding functioning in the void, without let or hindrance, in contact with itself, and controlled only by its own internal standards."[8] The Cartesian attempt to view the world purely quantitatively and rationally goes against the more "solidly founded" direct world of lived experience. For Ortega, then, rationalism is unacceptable because it goes against the grain of life and spontaneity.

If rationalism is not a viable alternative, neither is relativism. Although noting that relativism is a "praiseworthy attempt to respect

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[6]Ibid., p. 30 (O.C., III, p. 158).

[7]Ibid., p. 32 (O.C., III, p. 160).

[8]Ibid. (O.C., III, pp. 159-160).

the glorious independence natural to all vitality," it is an attempt which fails.

> This renunciation of truth, so lightly undertaken by the relativist theory, is a more difficult business than may at first appear. It is claimed that by this means a lofty impartiality of outlook is obtained upon the multiplicity of historical phenomena; but what is the price? In the first place, if truth does not exist, relativism cannot take itself seriously. Second, belief in truth is a deeply-rooted foundation of human life; if we remove it, life is converted into an illusion and an absurdity. The operation of removal is itself devoid of common sense and philosophic value. Relativism is, in the long run, scepticism, and scepticism, when its justification is that it opposes all speculative theory, is in itself a theory of suicidal character.[9]

Relativism, then, while attempting to do justice to the multiform nature of life, misses the "belief in truth" which resides within human life. Intellection, therefore, is not without some foundation in human affairs. The contemporary philosopher must see the plausibility of both rationalism and relativism while recognizing their complementary inadequacies.[10]

The principles of relativism and of rationalism arise not only in regard to questions of truth. The dilemma posed by their competing claims can be extended to cover the topics of goodness and justice, that is, ethics and law, as well as art and religion. When such an extension is made, "the problem of truth is dispersed throughout the spiritual orders which we imply when we use the word 'culture.'"[11] That is, once the extension is made such that the

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[9]Ibid., p. 29 (O.C., III, p. 158).

[10]Ibid., p. 36 (O.C., III, p. 163).

[11]Ibid., p. 37 (O.C., III, p. 164).

dispute between rationalism and relativism concerns the entire "spiritual order," one must face the issue of how to characterize culture. On the one hand, culture might be viewed as a manifestation of pure thought, or as an attempt to realize in some way the ideals which are discernible to the intellect, ideals which are trans-temporal and transcultural and which possess an invariable and permanent character. On the other hand, culture might be viewed relativistically as a mere means which the human organism, as a living and functioning being, has adapted in the pursuit of multiple life-styles and forms. In the latter case, any attempt to view cultural or "spiritual" creations as embodying objective standards seems impossible.

According to Ortega, the situation is such that culture cannot be construed as a manifestation of the pure intellect divorced from mundane considerations. Likewise, it cannot be viewed as a mere extension of man's biological being. Culture is more than an extension of man's organic and zoological existence. "Spiritual life" or culture thus retains aspects of both intellection and of biological processes. He thinks that this becomes clear if proper attention is given to the functioning of the intellect and of volition in particular. Considering the intellect, he is not amiss to describe thought as an organic process "like digestion, or the circulation of the blood." Even though the latter processes are "active in space and among bodily tissues while thought is not," he claims there is no real difference between the two processes.[12] Nonetheless, the purpose of

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[12]Ibid. (O.C., III, p. 164).

thought, he insists, is to reflect the world of phenomena or, in other words, to think the truth. An act of the will, likewise, emanates from out of the depths of the living organism. Each act of the will, however, when done consciously and with full awareness and deliberation, involves a decision involving a preferable course of action. "Every wish, therefore," he insists, "is constitutionally a wish to do the best that can be done in any situation, and this is an acceptance of an objective standard of what is good."[13] To prefer one course of action to another is to have in mind a standard upon the basis of which to judge one act better than the other.

The living being is at one and the same time a spontaneous and a thoughtful being. This duality permeates both the intellect and the will. These two facets are to be found also in aesthetic feeling and religious emotion he claims.

> In other words a whole series of vital phenomena exists endowed with a doubly dynamic character, a strange duality. On the one hand they are the spontaneous product of the living person and have their cause and government centered within the organic individual: on the other hand they are bound by an inner necessity to submit to a government or law which is objective. Both aspects, it should be carefully observed, are mutually interdependent. I cannot think usefully, for my biological purposes, if I do not think what is true. Thought which would normally present us with a world divergent from the true world would lead us

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[13]Ibid., p. 39 (O.C., III, p. 165). That which is objectively preferred of course is preferred not because of its biological utility but because of its function within an enlarged context wherein specifically human necessities are involved. Good intellectual reasons are required in the choice of preferable actions and these involve non-organic criteria.

> to commit incessant practical errors and consequently human life would by now have disappeared.[14]

As a biological entity man cannot exist solely in himself; he must take into consideration that which transcends his own organic being. The intellect must assist the organism in its attempt to adjust itself to its environment or "transorganic world" in such a way that a distinctly human life becomes possible. The intellect is the means by which man transcends his own organic and subjective being:

> For thought to be true it must coincide with phenomena, with what transcends my own being; but at the same time, for this thought to exist, I must think it, I must believe in its truth, give it an intimate place in my life, make it immanent in the tiny biological globe which is my life.[15]

Culture or "spiritual life" in all its forms, then, cannot be radically separated from biological activities.[16]

Ortega also speaks in terms of the "contrasted imperatives" which guide human life and give it a dramatic character.

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[14]Ibid., pp. 39-40 (O.C., III, pp. 165-166). "Biological purposes" may be both necessary and superfluous. The success which truth might bring human life is not the result of a blind mechanism which insures mere biological survival. The "need" for truth is a distinctly human phenomenon which arises from the human demand for well-being and hence is, biologically speaking, superfluous but nonetheless necessary for human survival. In this context, Ortega is obviously equating biology with vital processes of any kind and hence is not restricting biology to its Darwinian variety. Biology here takes on a characteristic which is non-Darwinian.

[15]Ibid., p. 40 (O.C., III, p. 166).

[16]Ortega in this work is also criticizing the "culturalist" tendency which he sees as definitive of German thought during the 19th century. That tendency he thought was an attempt to separate the "spiritual" from the biological and to deify certain entities of an intellectual sort--the Concept (Hegel), Supremacy of Practical Reason (Kant, Fichte), Culture (Cohen, Windelband, Richert). Ibid., p. 70 (O.C., III, p. 186).

> The fact is that the phenomenon of human life has two faces, the biological and the spiritual, and is for that reason subject to two distinct forces which act on it in the manner of two poles attracting it in opposite directions. Thus, intellectual activity gravitates on the one side toward the centre of biological necessity and on the other is exposed to the intimations or rather positive orders of the extra-vital principle of logical law.[17]

When he points out that life must be cultured, culture is also bound to be biological or vital. Uncultured life is barbarism, while devitalized culture is byzantinism or formalistic utopianism.[18] He thought that the opposition of relativism and rationalism, of cultural and biological life, could be overcome once careful attention is given to the character of human life. As he saw it, the mission of his contemporaries and the essential theme for philosophy was to be "constituted by an energetic attempt to regulate the world from the point of view of life."[19] He insisted that life be viewed in its own right as a philosophical problem and be raised to the level of a theme worthy of consideration.

Ortega's insistence concerning the biological nature of the living person produces difficulties in the understanding of this text. He clearly recognized that his seeming identification at times of the "spiritual" with the basic forms of biological processes like pancreatic secretions and the circulating of the blood might lead to misunderstandings of his position. The case seems to be, however,

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[17]Ibid., p. 45 (O.C., III, p. 169).

[18]Ibid., p. 46 (O.C., III, p. 169).

[19]Ibid., p. 60 (O.C., III, p. 179).

that even an impartial reading of this work would tend to support the assertion that Ortega's position at this point was a form of biologism, an attempt to reduce the "higher" aspects of human endeavor to biological drives and processes.[20] This reading must be avoided.

There are two ways in which Ortega attempts to avoid misunderstandings associated with The Modern Theme. First, he distinguishes between culture or "spirituality" and "infra-spiritual life." He insisted that the former has value and significance which transcends the organism, while the latter refers to "purely biological life" with no value or significance aside from the biological processes internal to the organism concerned.[21] Considering the independent value of justice, for example, he says,

> It is an element in the actual concept of "the just" and includes the irresistible demand for its own existence. The requirements of what is just have to be fulfilled, though they may be inconvenient for life. Justice, truth, moral rectitude and beauty are things that are of value in themselves and not only in the proportion in which they are useful to life. Consequently, the vital functions in which these things are produced possess a value in themselves, apart from that of their biological utility. On the

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[20]Ortega does seem to come close to identifying intellection with basic biological processes:

"When we hear talk of 'culture' and 'spiritual life' there appears to be no question of anything but a separate life distinct from and out of all touch with the unfortunate and much despised 'spontaneous' life. Anyone would suppose that thought, religious ecstasy and moral heroism can exist in the absence of the humble pancreatic secretion, the circulation of the blood and the nervous system." Ibid., p. 43 (O.C., III, p. 168).

He is only asserting, perhaps over strongly, that "spiritual life" cannot be radically separated from the living being.

[21]Ibid. (O.C., III, p. 168).

> other hand the pancreas has no more importance than what is due its organic utility. The secretion of such a substance is a function that ends with life itself. The value that justice and truth have in themselves, that plenary sufficiency in them that makes us prefer them to the very life which produces them, is the quality we denominate spirituality.[22]

While maintaining that cultural values and "spirituality" cannot be radically separated from the living beings within which they move and have force, "spirituality" cannot be reduced to the "purely biological" processes of the organism.

Second, Ortega points out that what he has in mind when he argues for a consideration of life is a question of a theoretical principle. To consider the point of view of life differs in no way intellectually from the consideration of any other point of view. That is to say, a consideration of any point of view "implies the adoption of a contemplative, theoretical or rational attitude." He continues:

> We might just as well substitute the word, principle, for the expression, point of view. Now, there is nothing more hostile to biological spontaneity, to pure living, than the search for a principle from which we may derive our thoughts and actions. The selection of a point of view is the initial action of a culture. Consequently the vital imperative which dominates the destiny of the coming race bears no relation to the return to a primitive manner of existence.[23]

What is being suggested, then, is a rigorous attempt to establish a new principle which is to guide philosophical inquiry and to lay to rest the dilemma posed to philosophy by relativism and rationalism.

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[22]Ibid., p. 42 (O.C., III, p. 167).

[23]Ibid., p. 60 (O.C., III, p. 179).

Much more is at stake than a simple reduction of philosophical issues to biological explanations.

As though these disclaimers were not enough, Ortega undertook in the following year to separate himself from vitalism. In an article appropriately entitled "Neither Vitalism Nor Rationalism," he denied that his critique and condemnation of rationalism implied a move toward irrationalism or toward vitalism. Vitalism, he pointed out, exists in two forms: first, biological vitalism or, more appropriately, biologism, and, second, philosophical vitalism. He rejected biologism because he viewed it as a concealed attempt to deal with life by means of "physical-chemical principles" and hence was a product of rationalism. The second form of vitalism--philosophical vitalism--he also rejected because it generally accents the difference between rationalism and irrationalism, rejecting rationalism in favor of a non-rational procedure. Vitalism in this second sense, then, skirts too closely with irrationalism to be an acceptable position for Ortega. Properly speaking, then, vitalism is an inappropriate term to be applied to Ortega's philosophy and that because, as he says, "Mi ideologia no contra la razón, puestor, que no admite otro modo de conocimiento teorético que ella: va sólo contra el racionalismo."[24]

Actually, the situation in regard to vitalism, in its second sense of philosophical vitalism, is even more complex than the

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[24]"My ideology does not go against reason, inasmuch as it doesn't admit another method of theoretical knowledge other than itself: it goes only against rationalism." Ortega, Ni vitalismo ni racionalismo, O.C., III, 273. Cf. Holmes, Human Reality and the Social World, pp. 55-57.

preceding paragraph reveals. Following the text of "Neither Vitalism Nor Rationalism," José Ferrater Mora analyzes the different senses which Ortega gives this usage of the term:

> On the one hand, it claims to be a doctrine (defended among others, by pragmatists and empirio-criticists) according to which reason is a biological process governed by biological laws: the struggle for life, the law of economy, the principle of the least action. On the other hand, it purports to be a theory (chiefly worked out by Bergsonians) according to which reason is epistemologically helpless and must give way to an intuitive insight which only "life" is capable of affording. In this last sense, vitalism is a method of knowledge sharply opposed to the rational method. Finally, it claims to be a philosophy asserting that knowledge is, and must necessarily be, of a rational character, except for the fact that as life remains the central philosophical issue, reason must try to probe its significance. Only this third brand of philosophical vitalism is accepted by Ortega as a fair description of his own philosophical position.[25]

Although the third brand of philosophical vitalism may be a "fair description" of Ortega's position, a less ambiguous and controversial term is needed to categorize Ortega's view of life and reason. Ferrater Mora uses the term "ratio-vitalism" and has good reason for doing so, since Ortega himself names his position just that in "Wilhelm Dilthey and the Idea of Life."[26] To assert then, as Ortega

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[25]José Ferrater Mora, Ortega y Gasset: An Outline of His Philosophy (London: Bowes and Bowes, 1956), p. 38.

[26]Ortega, "A Chapter from the History of Ideas--Wilhelm Dilthey and the Idea of Life," in Concord and Liberty, trans. Helene Weyl (New York: W. W. Norton, 1946), pp. 129-182. Portions of a footnote from p. 164 are of value in an evaluation of terms applicable to Ortega's position:

"The irrationality of the principles of knowledge, with which rationalism is faced in the end, is due to the fact that reason is understood as "pure reason," detached and isolated. But when "pure reason" is founded on the totality of "living reason," the irrationalism to which proud reason sees itself condemned dissolves and turns into clear and ironical rationalism. For many years I have

does, that reason is an ingredient of human life, inseparable from it, is to hold a ratio-vitalist position. The relationship captured by the term ratio-vitalism is also shown in Ortega's use of the term vital reason, as opposed to the rationalist's "pure" reason.

What Is Philosophy?

The attempt to articulate the "theme of our time" by providing a systematic expression of "the point of view of life" did not cease with the publication of The Modern Theme. The attempt to clarify that theme was to be a persistent aspect of Ortega's philosophy. In a series of lectures entitled What Is Philosophy? given in Buenos Aires in 1928 and again in Madrid in 1929, Ortega once again attempted to state his conception of life, this time against the background of idealism and realism.

For Ortega, philosophy is the attempt to fathom the nature of the universe or, in other words, to attempt to provide a rigorous knowledge of all that there is. It is an attempt to provide some coherence, order or system to the world. Because the universe is a problem for humankind, because the world is a medium within which man must seek an orientation, Ortega claims that philosophy is an inevitable and necessary endeavor. Philosophy, like any other inquiry, however,

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described my own philosophical standpoint as a ratio-vitalism. My book El tema de nuestro tiempo (The Modern Theme), Madrid, 1923, presents the issue of embedding pure reason in living reason as the theme of our time" (O.C., VI, pp. 195-197).

Cf., Ortega's essay "In Search of Goethe from Within," The Dehumanization of Art: And Other Essays on Art, Culture, and Literature (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1948, 1968), pp. 146-148 (O.C., IV, pp. 403-404).

requires data, something indubitable and certain upon the basis of which investigation and inquiry can begin. Such basic data must be self-evident and cannot tolerate being doubted.

> These things whose existence is indubitable, which reject all possible doubt, which deprive it of meaning and destroy it, these things which are proof against everything including a bombardment of criticism, are the data of the Universe . . . . Data are not the only things there are in the Universe, nor even the only things which are surely there, but they are the only things which there are without any slightest doubt, things whose existence is based on a most special certainty, an indubitable certainty, an arch-certainty.[27]

That which has been taken as the basic datum of the universe provides a clue to the philosophical tradition and the various philosophical positions.

Modern philosophy since Descartes has taken that basic datum of the universe, the basic fact for philosophy, to be thought itself. Descartes' procedure of methodical doubt generated idealism and rationalism, that is, the thematic position of the primacy of consciousness. Despite Ortega's objections to Descartes, the discovery of consciousness as a philosophical theme should not be minimized he thought. "No other thing in the Universe, even assuming that there might be other things, consists basically in being for its own sake, in recognition of itself."[28] The position of realism--that the external world and the bodies in it have an abiding existence in themselves--which Ortega sees as the essence of philosophy before

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[27]José Ortega y Gasset, What Is Philosophy?, trans. Mildred Adams (New York: W. W. Norton, 1960), p. 137 (O.C., VII, p. 361).

[28]Ibid., p. 153 (O.C., VII, p. 372).

Descartes, becomes suspect upon the discovery of subjectivity. Methodic doubt destroys the realist's pretensions concerning the abiding existence of objects and reveals only thought to be a being for its own sake.

> For theory, the first truth about reality is this--thought exists, cogitatio est. We cannot take as our point of departure the reality of the outside world: everything that surrounds us, all bodies including our own, are suspect in their pretension that they exist in themselves and independently of our thinking of them. But on the other hand, it cannot be doubted that all this exists in my thought, as my ideas, as cogitationes. The result is that the mind becomes the center and support of all reality. . . . This principle leads one to attempt a system of explanation of what there is, interpreting all that appears to be neither thought nor idea as consisting merely in having been thought, in being idea. This system is idealism, and modern philosophy since Descartes has been idealist at root.[29]

The basic datum of the universe for modern philosophy is centered around the idealist notion of the primacy of consciousness.

Despite the praise which Ortega bestows upon the "heroism" of Descartes, he thinks the idealist position is in drastic need of correction. Although the discovery of subjectivity is of immense significance, he finds some of its implications unacceptable. Continuing the theme of the previous work, he asserts that by considering thought as self-centered and complete in itself, rationalism and idealism cut "the cables which unite us and mix us with the world."[30] Idealism and rationalism separate thought from the concrete world of lived-experience and makes the mind the preserve of a

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[29]Ibid., p. 152 (O.C., VII, p. 371).

[30]Ibid., p. 156 (O.C., VII, p. 374).

"recluse" having no commerce with the world.[31]

Idealism conceives thought as separated from life. The Cartesian cogito separates the self from the world around it.

> The self needs to go out of itself, to find a world around it. Idealism has reached the point where it smothers the sources of vital energies and weakens the springs of living. It has almost succeeded in convincing man seriously, which means vitally, that everything around him is only himself and his image. As the primary mind, on the other hand, spontaneous and incorrigible, goes on presenting us with all that effective reality which is very different from us, so idealism has been a rough and tenacious march against the grain of life, an insistent pedagogue trying to make it quite clear to us that to live spontaneously was to suffer an error, an optical illusion.[32]

While retaining the insights that idealism permitted, Ortega nonetheless insists that this fundamental mistake of idealism be corrected. The idealist self must not be allowed to "swallow" the outside world.[33] The "theme of our time" is to show that idealism is not the whole truth. The historical and philosophical mission of his generation, he argued, was the great intellectual task of superseding idealism.[34]

Ortega is not satisfied with an "external" criticism of Descartes and rationalism. The difficulty with Cartesianism can be pointed out by a direct consideration of Cartesianism itself. He claims that the theoretical difficulties with idealism--with Cartesianism in

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[31]Ibid., p. 157 (O.C., VII, p. 374).

[32]Ibid., pp. 180-181 (O.C., VII, p. 390).

[33]Ibid., p. 179 (O.C., VII, p. 389).

[34]Ibid., p. 183 (O.C., VII, p. 392).

particular--lies in Descartes' inability to abandon the cosmic categories of the Greeks.

> Descartes, who discovered the fact, and who had sufficient intuition of the thing called "thought," did not give up the cosmic categories, and faced with what he sees, he loses his serenity--that is, faced with a being which consists merely in "seeming," in pure virtuality, in the dynamism of reflection. Like an ancient, or a Thomist scholastic, he needs to hold onto something more solid, to grasp a cosmic being. And behind that being, he seeks the thought which consists in mere seeming to itself, referring to itself, giving an account of itself--a thing being, a static entity. Thought ceases to be a reality for him; scarcely had he discovered it as a primary reality when it was inverted into a simple manifestation or quality of another reality which is latent and static.[35]

The discovery of subjectivity does not place us in touch with an indubitable being--the self. Rather, thought is a process of reflection referring to a personal center of activity, which in essence is never static nor permanent.

Idealism is correct when it asserts that thought exists. But it falls into error and "magic" when it is assumed that the phenomenon of thought must be predicated to an underlying substance which sustains thinking and of which thought is a mere manifestation. Thought becomes for Descartes an attribute of the res cogitans--the self becomes the thinking thing in the same manner as the res extensia has extension. For Descartes, this substantial self is arrived at by inference--"I think therefore I am." Insofar as the cogito is arrived at by a process of inference, it is, according to Ortega, not evident nor is it a primary datum of the universe upon the basis of which

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[35]Ibid., p. 188 (O.C., VII, pp. 395-396).

knowledge is to be acquired.[36]

Rather than putting the philosopher in contact with an immutable and self-sufficient being, thought is none other than reflection, which is always related to a personal center of activity:

> Reflection, in its turn, is none other than a thought of mine, having no more reality than that of being thought, than seeming to me to be "reflection." And thus successively and on all sides we find that being consists solely in terms of reference to itself, in making itself, in moving toward itself; we find only unease. Do not take this expression metaphorically; but in all seriousness; thought is in its essence unease, restlessness; it is not static being, but an active giving of itself to itself.[37]

Thought, in other words, has a being only insofar as it is a thought of someone. Thought exists to the extent that it is associated with an individual who is actively engaged in the process of reflecting.

The fundamental difference between Ortega and Descartes can be best summarized in the following manner:

> Descartes does not say it as we do: not "thought exists, cogitatio est," but he says--who does not remember? "I think, therefore, I am, I exist." "Cogito, ergo sum." How does this proposition differ from ours? The Cartesian theory has two parts: one says, "I think," the other, "therefore I am." To say, "I think," and to say, "cogitatio est," thought exists--is one and the same. The difference, then, between Descartes' phrase and our own stems from the fact that he is not content with what to us seems entirely sufficient. Substituting, as in a mathematical equation, an equal for an equal, we put in place of "I think" the phrase "thought exists," and then the sense of the Cartesian refrain becomes clearer--"thought exists, it is; therefore I exist, I am."
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> We are in the midst of a surgical operation: the scalpel has cut deep into the cogito, into the very viscera of idealism. Let us proceed with all due care.

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[36]Ibid., pp. 188-189 (O.C., VII, p. 396).

[37]Ibid., p. 186 (O.C., VII, p. 394).

> For us to say that thought exists, that it is, includes saying that my "I," my self, exists and has being. Because there is no thought which does not contain as one of its elements a subject who thinks, just as it includes an object which is thought. If, then, thought exists, and in the sense in which it exists, its subject, the self, will have to exist, and so will its object. That sense of existing is what is genuine and new in thought. My thought is what it is for the sake of my thought: I am and I exist insofar as and because I think that I am, and such as I think that I am. This is the new thing which idealism wanted to bring to the world, and that is the true spiritualism; the rest is only magic.[38]

The self which Descartes <u>really</u> discovered is "pure virtuality" and consists of the "dynamism of reflection" rather than being a substantial being.[39] With this correction of the Cartesian position, Ortega feels secure in offering a way out of modern idealism and orienting his reader toward a more basic datum of the universe.

Part of the idealist thesis, then, is acceptable and part of it is not. The existence of the external world independently of a subject is highly problematical. Given this situation, a position which asserts the theoretical importance of thought and consciousness is more than plausible. Cartesianism and the idealistic tradition, however, went beyond the bounds of the evident in arguing for a <u>res</u> or substance conception of the nature of consciousness. The immediate result of this view of consciousness is that the mind is portrayed as a complete and self-contained reality, existing independently of the world. The notion of the primacy of consciousness gives rise to the notion that the reality of the world exists only in the cognition of that world. For idealism, cognition is a mental act reducing the

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[38]Ibid., pp. 187-188 (O.C., VII, p. 395).

[39]Ibid., p. 188 (O.C., VII, p. 396).

external world to "contents of consciousness," to representations which are somehow in the mind. The thinking subject can be aware only of representations of objects in the world without the possibility of genuinely transcending the self, of emerging from subjectivity.[40]

The world and objects in it, however, stand related to consciousness in such a way that they are not reducable to thought itself. "External reality, always remains outside of me, it is not within me," Ortega asserts.[41] The idealist thesis obscures the correct nature of representation. The correction of the idealist thesis is undertaken with the goal of showing that the world is represented to the subject as the world while that which belongs to the subject is solely the act of representing.

The world which is represented to the self is not the subjective representing of that world; it is that which is represented.[42] This correction of the idealist thesis produces a change in philosophy's point of departure, Ortega claims:

> The basic datum of the Universe is not simply that either thought exists or I, the thinker, exist, but that if thought exists, ipso facto, I who think and the world about which I think also exist; the one exists with the other, having no possible separation between them. I am not a substantial being nor is the world, but we both are in active correlation; I am that which sees the world and the world is that which is seen by me. I exist for the world, and the world exists for me. If there were no things to be seen, thought about, and imagined, I would not see, think, or imagine; that is to say, I would not exist.[43]

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[40]Ibid., p. 195 (O.C., VII, p. 400).

[41]Ibid., p. 196 (O.C., VII, p. 401).

[42]Ibid., p. 197 (O.C., VII, p. 401).

[43]Ibid., p. 199 (O.C., VII, pp. 402-403).

The self and the world are essentially related--neither one exists without the other. The subject always finds himself as part of a dual fact, one element of which is the self, the other element is the world. "The basic and undeniable fact is not my existence, but my coexistence with the world."[44] Thought and world exist in active correlation.

That which has been discovered in the Orteguian critique of idealism--the fact that a subject always coexists with a world--is the basic datum of the universe. It is generally referred to, Ortega claims, as personal life. The primary reality, "the fact of all facts," is none other than human life itself--a subject living in a

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[44]Rather than the subject being separate and distinct from the world, the self is an opening onto the world:

"The conscious self is not a recluse, but on the contrary, is that most strange primary reality assumed in every other reality, which consists in the fact that someone, I, am myself precisely when I am taking account of things, of the world. This is the sovereign peculiarity of the mind which must be accepted, recognized, and beautifully described just as it is, in all its marvelous strangeness. Far from the self being closed, it is par excellence the open being." Ibid., pp. 200-201 (O.C., VII, pp. 403-404).

The similarities of the self as an "open being" in Ortega's sense and Heidegger's conception of Dasein's openness to being should be apparent. A full review of the similarities (and differences) between Ortega and Heidegger on this point is beyond the scope of this writing. Much like Heidegger, however, Ortega views humankind's openness to the world as the means by which things are discovered and revealed. Both philosophers make use of the Greek term aletheia to denote their conception of truth, but Ortega was the first to use it in his writings. Cf., Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," Poetry, Language, Thought, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), pp. 17-88. The term makes its first appearance in a work by Ortega dating from 1913, Meditations on Quixote, p. 67 (O.C., I, p. 335). For a clarification of the relationship between Ortega and Heidegger in regard to the notion of truth as aletheia, cf., Julián Marías, José Ortega y Gasset: Circumstance and Vocation, trans. Frances M. López-Morillas (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970), pp. 435-446. Hereafter this work is referred to as Circumstance and Vocation.

world. "'My life' is given to me," Ortega says, "and my life is primarily a finding myself in the world: nor is there any vagueness in this. I am in this very world, the world of now."[45] The primary reality, then, is always a personal life--"the life of every one of us." All other realities must be pursued only in relation to this primary phenomenon.

The initial and primary task for philosophy is to clarify the nature of that primary reality, to make of it a theme. By so doing, reason will be revealed to be an ingredient of that reality. Thought does not separate a subject from the world. Rather, it involves a living contact with it.

Some Lessons in Metaphysics

Another attempt which Ortega made to situate his conception of life in relation to the philosophical tradition is to be found in Some Lessons in Metaphysics. The text presents material from courses which he gave at the University of Madrid in 1932-1933 and reveals marked similarities with the previous text.

Much like the attempt in What Is Philosophy? to find a basic and fundamental datum from which philosophy or knowledge of the universe could begin, Ortega here sees the task of metaphysics as the establishment of a "basic orientation" concerning reality. A basic orientation presupposes, however, a "first certainty" or a "first conviction" which appears as an indubitable truth.[46] Ortega considers

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[45]Ortega, What Is Philosophy?, pp. 201-202 (O.C., VII, p. 404).

[46]Ortega, Some Lessons in Metaphysics, p. 124 (Unas lecciones, p. 177).

two theses of orientation only to find them both unacceptable. Nonetheless he seeks to retain those aspects of both themes which he finds acceptable. Against these two positions he offers his own opinion that the basic reality and first certainty is individual life.

The first thesis of orientation concerning that which is fundamental, he points out, is "the same thing that occupies first place, chronologically speaking, in the history of philosophy." It consists in asserting that the basic reality is none other than things and their aggregates which is called the world.[47]

> This thesis well defines a certain manner of being which is that of what are called "things," and as these are undoubtedly something-there-is, it defines the being of something there undoubtedly is. But it is not said that "things" are the most basic objects, and that everything there is can be reduced to that manner of being. This thesis means raising to the status of prototype of all being the peculiar manner of being which pertains to the "thing," the res; and for this reason it is called realism. Realism, then consists of the thesis, or affirmation, that everything that is, is by definition as the thing is.[48]

The persistent and static existence implied by the realist thesis, however, is not indubitable. The realist thesis implies the continued existence of objects apart from the perception of them--a position which is not at all certain and beyond doubt. Where certainty is required, the continued existence of objects aside from the perception of them will not suffice for a philosophical starting point.

The realist thesis is "complicated" by another thesis which takes thought to be the basic reality of the universe. "The reality

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[47]Ibid., p. 127 (Unas lecciones, p. 181).

[48]Ibid., p. 128 (Unas lecciones, p. 183).

of this wall," Ortega asserts by way of example, "is problematical." The vision of the wall, however, is indubitable. Ortega continues: "This, then, the reality of my thoughts, my ideas, is the firm and solid reality. The realist thesis is annulled, leaving in its place the idealist thesis."[49] The idealist position owes its historical existence to Descartes he again points out.

The idealist finds himself with the fact that realist security and the world with it "have been pulled out from beneath his feet; all that is left as the sole reality is the subject himself."[50] In other words, for idealism the basic reality is thought; there is nothing to lean on outside the self and consciousness.[51] This position is unacceptable as witnessed previously, Ortega claims, because it misses the lived experience with the world and thereby separates thought from the world.

Instead of criticizing idealism from a Cartesian framework and correcting Descartes' insights as was done in What Is Philosophy?, in these lectures Ortega attempts to refute the idealist thesis by insisting that it presupposes a living contact with reality and hence must be a derived and not a basic starting point for philosophy. Something is said to be "derived" to the extent that it presupposes something anterior to itself from which it has emerged or from which it has been abstracted. The idealist thesis, the contention that

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[49]Ibid., p. 130 (Unas lecciones, p. 185).

[50]Ibid., p. 136 (Unas lecciones, p. 195).

[51]Ibid. (Unas lecciones, pp. 195-196).

thought alone is the primary reality, is annulled if it can be shown that thought can be derived from a prior reality. In order to show that this is the case, Ortega distinguishes between the active being of thought or consciousness and its objective being. The former implies a living contact with the world while the latter is an attempt to objectify thought and to make it exist solely for itself. The idealist thesis falls into the error of objectifying thought, he claims.

> There is no such thing as a thought while it is being a thought, as something that happens; and while it is happening, it is not an object for itself, it does not exist for itself. Hence, it is inaccurate to call it thought. In order that there may be thought, it is necessary for it to have already occurred and for me to contemplate it from outside itself, to make of it an object.[52]

Thought or consciousness, then, is not an "absolute position." It is secondary and derivative and does not completely annul the reality of the external world or reduce that world solely to its being thought.

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[52]Ibid., p. 145 (Unas lecciones, p. 207). Ortega's position on this point does not appear to differ substantially from that expressed by Jean-Paul Sartre:

"The mode of existence of consciousness is to be conscious of itself. And consciousness is consciousness of itself insofar as it is consciousness of a transcendent object. . . . The object with its characteristic opacity is in front of consciousness, but consciousness is purely and simply consciousness of being consciousness of that object; this is the law of its existence.

"Further, this consciousness of consciousness . . . is not positional--i.e., consciousness is not for itself its own object. Its object is by nature outside it, and this is why consciousness posits and grasps the object in the same act. Consciousness only knows itself as absolute inwardness. Such a consciousness we shall call primary or unreflected consciousness."

Sartre, The Transcendence of the Ego: An Existentialist Theory of Consciousness, trans. Forrest Williams and Robert Kirkpatrick (New York: The Noonday Press, 1957), pp. 40-41.

Both the world and thought persist as elements of the fundamental condition or first truth concerning reality.

> This is not, then, a matter of my sometimes finding the immediate made solely out of my subjectivity and, therefore, of my existing exclusively by myself, but of this--that when I find myself, I always find that self coexisting with something facing that self, something in front of it and opposing it; the world or the circumstance, the surroundings. It is certain that this something does not exist by itself, apart from me. To believe the opposite was the realist error which we have forever overcome. But neither do I ever exist alone and within myself; my existing is coexisting with that which is not I. Reality, then, is this interdependence and coexistence.[53]

Reality is the coexistence of subject and object. Neither element of this primary reality should be taken as absolute in such a way as to overshadow the interdependence of the two elements of this reality.

From differing perspectives, then, Ortega has criticized the idealist and rationalist tradition of modern philosophy. The operation of the intellect, he insists, must be related to the human life within which it functions and of which it is an element. The notion of the theoretical primacy of consciousness must be superseded by a consideration of the vital function which the intellect plays in a distinctly human life. The ratio-vitalist position which is found articulated in The Modern Theme is argued for throughout his continued work. Reason cannot function in and for itself; rather, it presupposes a previous reality which Ortega calls the primary and basic reality, or a basic datum, from which philosophic inquiry must begin. This basic datum is a concrete and personal

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[53]Ortega, Some Lessons in Metaphysics, p. 155 (Unas lecciones, pp. 221-222).

life of which the intellect is a mere component.

Ortega's criticism of idealism becomes particularly relevant for contemporary philosophy when it is directed against Husserlian phenomenology and by implication the German idealist tradition. Attention is now directed to his perspective upon the transcendental philosophy of Husserl.

"Preface for Germans"

The influence of German philosophy upon Ortega's philosophical development is immense. He received his philosophical education at the neo-Kantian university at Marburg and also attended the universities at Leipzig and Berlin. As a result, it is particularly instructive to see how Ortega's concept of life is related to German thought and later idealism. Ortega himself attempted to describe his relationship to German thinking in an essay written in 1934 and intended as a prologue for a new edition of the German translation of The Modern Theme.

The same themes are to be encountered here that were encountered in his other works--all relating to the deficiency of idealism and rationalism. This time, however, he states his case against the background of Husserlian phenomenology. The advantage of phenomenology in overcoming idealism, Ortega thought, was that it worked out the question of the nature of consciousness to such an extent "that it became possible to grasp the moment and place where idealism committed its crime of making reality disappear by transforming it into

consciousness."[54] The phenomenological approach developed by Husserl unwittingly reveals that consciousness is not a primary phenomenon. On the contrary, consciousness can be shown to rest upon a more basic preconscious presence to the world.

Husserlian phenomenology, like idealism in general, starts with the assumption that primary reality is pure consciousness. The primary reality to which philosophical inquiry must cling is a transparent consciousness, complete and self-contained and providing an awareness of everything else. Consciousness takes the form of a purely contemplative ego separated from the ingeniousness of life.

> Pure consciousness is an "I" that is aware of everything else. But understand one thing: this "I" does not want, it is only aware of wanting and what is wanted; it does not feel, but only sees its feeling and the values felt; in short, it does not think in the sense of believing what it thinks, but is reduced to noticing that it thinks and what it thinks. This "I" is, then, a pure and impassive mirror; it is contemplative and nothing more. What it contemplates is not reality, but only a spectacle.[55]

The result of this contemplative attitude on the part of pure consciousness is to make "unreal" that which is given to it; it is to convert the reality of objects of the world and the lived experiences of them into meanings (Husserlian noema). Reality is reduced to its pure intelligibility.[56]

The implications and consequences of this reduction should not

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[54]Ortega, "Preface for Germans," Phenomenology and Art, p. 65 (O.C., VIII, p. 50).

[55]Ibid., p. 62 (O.C., VIII, p. 48).

[56]Ibid. (O.C., VIII, p. 48).

be minimized. The givenness of pure consciousness is seen to be a fabrication, that is, something which can only be obtained as a result of an intellectual manipulation--Husserl's famous phenomenological reduction. Instead of finding a reality, the phenomenologist manufactures it, Ortega claims. What is really found is a pre-thematic "primary consciousness" which is "unreflective" and "ingenuous." Pre-thematically, instead of merely being aware of beliefs, desires, etc., "man believes what he thinks, wants things in fact, and feels his aching tooth without any possible 'reduction' of pain other than aspirin or an extraction."[57] Actually, to call this primary presence to the world "primary consciousness" is to commit an error. The concept of consciousness should not be used to name that presence to the world which is life: "What exists . . . is myself and the things of various sorts around me . . . but there is not in addition and together with all this, any 'consciousness.'"[58] Consciousness can arise only subsequently as a reflection upon experience and thus involves a memory of a past experience. He insists also that the actual process of reflection and its involvement with memory should not be called consciousness. In the reflective process, consciousness may become the object of attention, but this living concern with consciousness as an object still remains a process which remains "ingenuous, primary and unreflective" precisely because

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[57]Ibid., p. 63 (O.C., VIII, p. 49).

[58]Ibid. (O.C., VIII, p. 49).

it consists of a new living situation.[59] Even the process of viewing consciousness as an object, regarding it as pure, is a living process, an experience within one's life. Reflection and the intellect are not "pure" and thereby separate from the mundane experience of the world.

The idealist and phenomenological error may be stated in another form. If consciousness is to be considered the primary mode of "positing" the world, of direct and immediate access to the proper nature of the world, it would seem that consciousness would provide immediate contact with reality. The idealist thesis, however, considers the world as an unreality. A consideration of consciousness carries with it, as is the case with Husserl's reduction, a "suspension" of the positing operations of consciousness. Ortega claims that this is precisely what cannot be accomplished. The operations of a "consciousness" in direct and immediate contact with the world cannot be suspended. A pure consciousness, then, does not provide contact with a real world. Ortega recommends that the appropriate move to be taken to do justice to the immediate man-world relationship, which he classifies as the basic reality, would be to

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[59]"The supposed 'reflective consciousness,' designated to find that the true and absolute reality is consciousness and pure experience, is, on the contrary, less basic than the 'primary consciousness,' and for two reasons: (1) because it implies the existence of primary consciousness as its own 'object' and (2) because, ultimately, it too is an ingenuous and unreflecting 'primary consciousness.' Every attempt to dislodge ingenuousness from the universe is in vain. Because, in a word, there truly is nothing other than sublime ingenuousness, that is to say, reality. Reality supports and is the world and man." Ibid., p. 65 (O.C., VIII, p. 50).

discard the term "consciousness." Thereby the idealist confusion would be eliminated.

> The term consciousness ought to be discarded. It was meant to stand for the positive, the given, that which posited itself and was not put there for thought, but it has turned out to mean just the opposite: it is merely a construct of our divine fantasy. What there truly and authentically is is not "consciousness" and its "ideas" of things, but rather a man existing in a landscape of things, in a set of circumstances that also exists.[60]

The case which Ortega makes against phenomenology in particular and against idealism in general in this prologue, then, is but a continuation of his contention that an over-concern with consciousness and subjectivity is to go against the grain of a living and immediate concern with the world. Subjectivity cannot be given a free-floating existence in and for itself, separated from the reality of which it is an element.

II. VITAL AND HISTORICAL REASON

From various perspectives Ortega has been seen criticizing the philosophical tradition of idealism. His purpose in such criticism, however, is not to elicit a return to realism. Rather, his purpose and intent is to show that reason, rationality or subjectivity cannot function in a void, so to speak. Thought cannot be separated from the concrete matrix or world within which individuals must live their lives and in which reason must arise and operate.

The four texts just reviewed reveal a consistent criticism of

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[60]Ibid., p. 66 (O.C., VIII, p. 51).

the intellectualist tradition of modern thought. The Modern Theme reveals how Ortega thought that a consideration of life in a serious philosophical manner provided a way out of the impass posed by the dilemma of rationalism and relativism in contemporary philosophy. This dilemma had its roots in the tradition which had its beginnings with Descartes. In What Is Philosophy? the critique of idealism and rationalism takes the form of an "internal" correcting of the Cartesian position when it is noted that the cogito involves a living and personal contact with the world. This living and personal contact with the world is the basic datum from which philosophy must begin. By concentrating upon the two great theses concerning the nature of reality from the philosophic past, Ortega, in Some Lessons in Metaphysics, shows that the idealist thesis which claimed thought to be the primary theme for philosophy was mistaken. The idealist thesis had superseded the realist thesis which had proclaimed the ontological independence of objects and things in the world apart from their reference to subjectivity. Consciousness or subjectivity, however, is not an absolute position because it presupposes the coexistence of subject and world. Before consciousness is construed as self-contained, it exists in immediate and active contact with the world. Ortega's remarks in "Preface for Germans" concerning the nature of the phenomenological reduction reveal that he thinks the difficulties with idealism and rationalism become most explicit in Husserl's philosophy. The reduction as practiced by Husserl "brackets" reality and limits consciousness to a "realm" of unrealities or pure objects--noema. Consciousness and pure subjectivity thus require a previous

presence to reality from which it can then by methodological effort be distinguished and made a theme in its own right. From various perspectives, then, Ortega insists that the idealist is mistaken when he takes thought or consciousness as primary. Previous to the consideration of thought in and for itself, thought is inseparable from an active concern with the world. Thought is but one ingredient of a primary condition, whose other ingredient is the world. One's own personal life is that active concern with the world which necessitates the vital unity of thought and world.

Generally, however, the texts which have been the focus of attention reveal two topics which merit consideration in the attempt to make Ortega's notion of life more explicit. First, since reason and thought are not to be separated in reality from the concrete world in which the thinking subject lives, it is necessary to provide a more adequate description of the nature or role of reason and thought. Against the idea of a pure consciousness or of a pure reason immune in principle from the tribulations and difficulties of the world, Ortega proposes a living reason--a vital reason which is at one and the same time a historical reason.[61] Second, since Ortega

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[61]Although the attempt has been made to show that reason in Ortega's sense is an aspect of man's vital existence, it is also the case that this existence is historical. The different attempts humankind has made to structure the world and to manipulate it in accord to their own betterment bear witness to the historically variable nature of human life. In Ortega's sense life is, then, both vital and historical. Julián Marías expresses the relationship of vital reason and historical reason in the following manner:

"These two expressions have been used principally by Ortega almost from the beginning of his work in philosophy. They cannot be considered as exactly synonymous, but neither have we to deal with

speaks in terms of a basic or a primary reality, an indubitable datum upon the basis of which philosophical inquiry must begin, attention must be given to an analysis of that reality. The basic reality is none other than life, the ingredients, aspects and structures of which have yet to be articulated properly.

The attempt to fully clarify Ortega's views concerning a basic reality, however, is to be held in abeyance until the notion of vital reason has been more adequately established. As a result the remainder of the present chapter will be devoted to a consideration of the proper relation of reason to life. The next chapter will take up the topic of the nature and character of life as the basic reality in Ortega's sense.

Thought and rationality must be related to man's mundane condition, Ortega never ceases to insist. Reason cannot be separated from life or from the plans and projects which individuals and groups make to realize themselves in the world. Reason must be seen as subordinated to life and to be an element of that reality. The theme for present thinkers, Ortega remarks in 1923, "comprises the subjection of reason

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two kinds of reason; strictly speaking, the same reason which is vital is also historical; and light is thrown on both these names, which are often misunderstood, by a third one, also used by Ortega: living reason; this new term at once indicates in what sense reason is vital; and as life--including the life of the individual--is already historical, vital reason is essentially historical reason." Marías, Reason and Life: The Introduction to Philosophy, trans. Kenneth S. Reid and Edward Sarmiento (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1975 rpt.), p. 186.

The two terms are not exactly synonymous, because, as Marías shows in another work, historical reason should be viewed as specifications or variations of vital reason. In this manner he claims that: "This means that the concrete form of vital or living reason is historical reason." Marías, Generations: A Historical Method, trans. Harold C. Raley (University, Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 1970), p. 78.

to vitality. . . ."[62] Instead of being "pure," reason must be viewed as a vital phenomenon.

Thought or rationality is not an extrinsic quality of life, as though man could dispense with thought and exist without it. Thinking is intrinsic to human survival. "We do not live in order to think but we think in order to succeed in subsisting or surviving."[63] From Ortega's perspective, the pure animal can dispense with thought or, more properly, its subsisting and surviving does not depend to any appreciable degree upon its ability to project itself creatively over time and to keep itself in existence by intellectual means. For the animal, either its drives and instincts are sufficient to keep it in existence or they are not, in which case the animal cannot do anything about adverse conditions except surrender to their dictates and in many such cases cease to live. The animal, in other words, is totally conditioned by its organic necessities. When these necessities are not to be met, it has no other choice but to lose its contest with death.

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[62]Ortega, The Modern Theme, p. 58 (O.C., III, p. 178). To preface "reason," or any other term with the word "vital" is not to introduce a superfluous qualification. Rather, to note that something is vital to human well-being is to say that it is related as an essential aspect to human life. To say that reason is vital to man is then to say that it is a requirement of life, that life itself in its human sense is inseparable from the reason which is intrinsic to it. Since the term "vital" can be used ambiguously, the point at issue for a ratio-vitalist perspective might easily be missed. "Vital" in ordinary discourse may be taken in two senses: (1) it may be related to life by way of specifying the on-going teleological and historical character of life, or (2) it may mean crucial. In the context of Ortega's notion of vital reason and concept of human life only the first sense is relevant.

[63]Ortega, Man and People, p. 28 (O.C., VII, p. 92). Italics removed.

Human life, however, differs from animal life in that it does not coincide with the conditions of organic necessities. Human life is distinguished from animal life by the fact that humans can project goals and aspirations, that is, manipulate the world in accord with their own ideas. Instead of life being totally controlled by natural necessities, man imposes certain conditions upon himself by means of which life becomes meaningful. He requires conditions not only to live but to live well; he invents conditions "for" life. Man is concerned for the conditions not <u>of</u> life in a biological sense, but <u>for</u> a rewarding life lived well. As was seen previously, the arena of necessities is expanded for humankind to include more than the merely organic necessities to include that which, from the biological or zoological perspective, would appear as superfluous necessities. Vital reason is the means by which these variable programs and projects of human existence are projected and realized through history.

The non-coincidence of man and nature is expressible in another manner:

> Living in the world, man finds that the world surrounds him as an intricate net woven of both facilities and difficulties. Indeed, there are not many things in it which are not both. The earth supports him, enabling him to lie down when he is tired and to run when he has to flee. A shipwreck will bring home to him the advantage of the firm earth--a thing grown humble from habitude. But the earth also means distance. Much earth may separate him from the spring when he is thirsty. Or the earth may tower above him as a steep slope that is hard to climb. This fundamental phenomenon--perhaps the most fundamental of all--that we are surrounded by both facilities and difficulties gives to the reality called human life its peculiar ontological character.[64]

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[64]Ortega, "Man the Technician," <u>History as a System</u>, p. 110 (O.C., V, p. 337).

Both facilities and difficulties exist for man. This abstract statement of man's "ontological character," however, does not tell the entire story of the human situation. The mere existence of facilities do not of themselves guarantee the concrete success of human life. That is, the faculties upon which human life must rely do not guarantee that human hopes and projects will be realized. Facilities, which are aspects of man's surroundings, only offer the possibility for human existence. As if this were not enough, the possibilities which facilities offer are always challenged, disturbed and imperiled by difficulties. As a result, Ortega explains, "man's existence is no passive being in the world; it is an unending struggle to accommodate himself to it."[65] Man must take account of his circumstances, which is the same as to say that he must manipulate his surroundings in such a manner that he can dominate his situation to some degree. This process of taking account of his situation is precisely the proper role of reason in life. Vital reason is life itself in the sense that human life consists in reasoning about circumstances or surroundings.

Given the ontological condition of human life--existing in the context of facilities and difficulties--reason is inseparable from human life. As Julián Marías expresses it,

> Vital reason is life itself, one and the same thing as living. What does this mean? Its meaning becomes clearer if we consider another statement: to live is to have no other recourse than to reason in the face of inexorable circumstance. Since life is not complete, but rather something that must be

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[65]Ibid., p. 111 (O.C., V, p. 337).

> completed, and since we at every moment must choose from among the possibilities offered by our situation, we need to be fully aware of this condition in its entirety. This is what is meant . . . by "reason." Therefore, because he does not have a prefabricated being, man cannot live without orienting himself, that is, without thinking or reasoning. Hence life in its very substance is reason. . . . This means that reason--the instrument that allows us to comprehend reality--is nothing other than life itself. This is the meaning of "vital reason": the reason of life, or with greater accuracy, the reason that is life.[66]

Human life is not "prefabricated." Life in its human sense demands orientation, something impossible without thinking or reasoning. Reason is, then, an aspect, an intrinsic element, of man's vital existence.

Reason is associated with the attempt to establish an "orientation" in the world. The possibilities which the facilities of life offer human existence can only be actualized upon the basis of a theoretical orientation toward surroundings in such a way that action can have some degree of success. To say that an orientation is needed to insure life in some manner implies that previous to such orientation the basic ingredient and aspect of human life is disorientation, or as Ortega is apt to say, "insecurity." Reason and thought consist of the fact that "man seeks a basic orientation in his situation."

> But this assumes that man's situation--that is, his life--consists of a basic disorientation. This is not a matter of man's finding himself, in his own life, partly disoriented in this or that respect--in his business, or in his strolling through the countryside, or in politics. He who is disoriented in the country looks at a map or a

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[66]Marías, Generations, pp. 76-77.

> compass, or questions a passerby, and this is enough to put him right. But our definition presupposes a total and fundamental dislocation; that is to say, it is not that man happens to be disoriented, to be losing himself in life, but that, insofar as one can see, man's situation, his life, in itself is disorientation, is being lost. . . .[67]

The point of departure for inquiry or reason is insecurity.[68] Condemned to exist in the world, man's primary relationship to that world is one of insecurity and disorientation. The world is a vast arena of facilities and difficulties in which he must find his way.

Idealism and rationalism overlook the fact that the intellect is a functional component of life. Rationalism separates the intellect from life with the result that reason appears estranged from the world, being theoretically independent of it. With the discovery of the reality of life, the intellect comes into focus as a "simple function" of man's vital and historical being.[69] Stated another way, "knowing" constitutes only a portion of the being of man and it functions only to provide a mode of orientation for existence.

> The idea of orientation is more basic, deeper, and earlier than the idea of knowing, and not the opposite. Being oriented is not made truly clear by the concept of knowing; orientation is not a form of knowing, but, on the contrary, knowing is a form of orientation.[70]

The intellect and theory only function to provide a means by which man

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[67]Ortega, Some Lessons in Metaphysics, p. 27 (Unas lecciones, pp. 29-30).

[68]Ibid., p. 132 (Unas lecciones, p. 189).

[69]Ortega, "History as a System," History as a System, p. 230 (O.C., VI, p. 49).

[70]Ortega, Some Lessons in Metaphysics, p. 30 (Unas lecciones, p. 34).

might "orient" or comport himself in some concrete manner toward the world.

Reason has thus been shown to refer to life. Attention has yet to be given to an analysis of that basic reality which is human life and of which reason is an element. The next chapter is devoted to that analysis of the reality called human life.

CHAPTER III

HUMAN LIFE

The "interiority" peculiar to human life means not only that man is distinguished from the animal in respect to the projecting of goals and aspirations with the result that the world is structured in accord to the task of establishing and securing his own well being. Associated with the growth of an interior self and implied by it comes the realization of personal existence. Ensimismamiento must signify not only the ability to entertain thought but also the aspiration to personal individuality. The present chapter consists of an expansion of this point. By coupling this theme with the theme of the previous chapter which was devoted to a clarification of the Orteguian view of the relation of reason to life, the systematic structure of human life will have been amplified at its most important points.

Life in its human sense is always a personal life. The use of the concept of life in its human sense, then, denotes a subject which is unique and irreplaceable. In other words, the term will always denote the life of a personal self, or more properly, the life of each individual as such in its most personal aspects. Life, then, is a personal phenomenon and can be best approached in the first person, i.e., by use of personal pronouns.

> Whenever and wherever I speak of "human life," unless I make a special exception, you must avoid thinking of someone else's life; each of you should refer it to your own life and try to make that present to you. Human reality as radical reality is only the life of each person, is only

> my life. I shall sometimes call it "our lives," but you must always understand that by this expression I refer to the life of each individual and not the life of other people nor to a supposed plural and common life.[1]

The basic aspect of human life, then, is personal existence as opposed to species existence.

The critique of intellectualism, i.e., idealism, which Ortega undertook reveals the primary or radical reality to which every other reality is related to be a personal life. Instead of being a pure consciousness or thinking entity existing separately and apart from the world, a subject always coexists with and in the context of a world. After criticizing idealism, Ortega states at one point:

> The basic fact of someone who sees and loves and hates and desires a world, and who moves within it, suffers from it, and in it exerts himself--that is what has always, in the humblest and most universal words been called "my life." What is this? It is simply that the primordial reality, the fact of all facts, the datum for the Universe, that which is given to me . . . "my life"--not myself alone, not my hemetic conscious self; these things are interpretations, the idealist interpretations. "My life" is given to me, and my life is primarily a finding of myself in the world, the world of now. . . .[2]

One's own personal life is the radical and primary reality, a reality which is the primary and immediate coexistence of subject and world.

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[1]Ortega, Man and People, pp. 38-39 (O.C., VII, pp. 99-100). In this respect there is a parallel between Ortega's conception of the reality he calls human life and Martin Heidegger's concept of Dasein. The reality which is termed Dasein for Heidegger is also intimately personal: "That Being which is an issue for this entity in its very being, is in each case mine." He continues, "Because Dasein has in each case mineness [Jemeinigkeit], one must always use a personal pronoun when one addresses it: 'I am,' 'you are.'" Heidegger, Being and Time, pp. 67-68.

[2]Ortega, What Is Philosophy?, pp. 201-202 (O.C., VII, p. 404).

Likewise, in Some Lessons in Metaphysics Ortega had established a first certainty concerning reality. This certainty was indubitable and gave equal weight to the claims of realism and of idealism. The self always exists in a world which is composed of its circumstances or surroundings. The indubitable immediacy of self and world, which is none other than personal life, does not affirm the priority of either element--self or world--of which it consists. Rather it affirms their immediate coexistence. Reality is the "interdependence and coexistence of a subject and its circumstantial reality."[3] That is to say, life is constituted by the coexistence of subject and world and is the primary and radical reality of which philosophy must take note.

His criticisms of idealism had revealed to Ortega's satisfaction that human life in the sense of personal life is the primary or radical reality. After the trappings of rationalism have been removed from the philosophical horizon, Ortega felt confident in asserting that the basic datum of the universe is not thought, as idealism had maintained. Neither is the basic datum of the universe the world, objects or things existing independently of the experience of them--as the realists had insisted. The basic reality is human life which consists in and is composed of the immediate coexistence of subject and object. The world is presented in a living presence to a personal self.

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[3]Ortega, Some Lessons in Metaphysics, p. 155 (Unas lecciones, p. 121).

The critique of intellectualism, however, although leading to this view of a basic reality, has been of no assistance in a description of the characteristics and structures of life itself. Attention is now directed to that task. I shall proceed in two steps. First, a consideration of the essential characteristics of life is necessary. Second, attention must be directed to the schematic structure which Ortega discerns in human life and which is revealed in his definition of life as "I am I and my circumstance."

I. CHARACTERISTICS OF LIFE

What are the characteristics of this radical reality which Ortega terms human life? What should a description of it reveal? First and foremost, a description will consist of a revealing of that which is always already the case. One simply and straightforwardly finds oneself living. "Living," he says, "is finding oneself suddenly--and without knowing how--projected into, fallen into, submerged in a world that cannot be exchanged for any other."[4] Imagine, he suggests, a person deep in sleep who is placed upon a stage with footlights glaring, in the presence of an audience, and who is suddenly awaken upon the opening of the curtains. This image he insists "paints with some clarity the essence of living."

> Life is given to us--or better it is thrown at us, or we are thrown into it--but the life we are given is a problem which we ourselves must resolve. And this is not only true of those cases of special difficulty which we describe

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[4]Ibid., p. 41 (Unas lecciones, p. 49).

> as peculiarly filled with conflicts and afflictions, but of all cases. It is always like that.[5]

This "finding" of oneself living may also be expressed in another manner. One's personal life is simply and immediately present to one. Life is a "surprising presence which one's life has for every one of us."[6] Rather than being an intellectual construct, to live is a feeling of oneself existing, a feeling to be confirmed by each and every individual through personal experience.

Since that which is discovered in this finding is a coexistence of a self and a world, a mistake would be made if personal life were to be construed as a solipistically enclosed unit. Although personal life is the radical reality, it is not the only reality. The radicalness of personal life consists in its function of establishing the condition for the possibility for there being other realities for a subject. This statement must not be misunderstood. To say that life serves as the condition for the possibility for other realities for a subject must not be taken to mean that the subject "creates" other realities. Other realities only become evident for a subject within

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[5]Ibid. (Unas lecciones, p. 50). The notion of thrownness gives witness to another conceptual similarity with Martin Heidegger: "It [Dasein] is not a free floating self-projection; but its character is determined by thrownness as a Fact of the entity which it is; and, as so determined, it has in each case already been delivered over to existence, and it constantly so remains. Dasein's facticity, however, is essentially distinct from the factuality of something present-at-hand. Existent Dasein does not encounter itself as something present-at-hand within-the-world. But neither does thrownness adhere to Dasein as an inaccessible characteristic which is of no importance for its existence. As something thrown, Dasein has been thrown into existence. It exists as an entity which has to be as it is and as it can be." Heidegger, Being and Time, p. 321.

[6]Ibid., p. 38 (Unas lecciones, p. 46).

the context of a life and hence are "rooted" in life. This function of life Ortega attempts to capture by labelling it the primary or basic reality.

There are, as a result, at least two reasons which Ortega gives for calling life the radical or basic reality. First, he states that "this inexorable genuineness of our life, the life . . . of each of us, . . . is evident, indubitable, unquestionable to itself."[7] Ortega's inquiries into rationalism and idealism leads him to assert that thought presupposes a more basic and indubitable datum which must be reckoned with. Second, he asserts,

> Calling it [life] "radical reality" does not mean that it is the only reality, nor even the highest, worthiest or most sublime, nor yet the supreme reality, but simply that it is the root of all other realities, in the sense that they--any of them--in order to be reality to us must in some way make themselves present, or at least announce themselves, within the shaken confines of our own life. Hence this radical reality--my life--is so little "egoistic," so far from "solipsistic," that in essence it is the open area, the waiting stage, on which any other reality may manifest itself. . . .[8]

Everything must express or manifest its existence within the context of a personal life. No matter how intimate or remote the relationship with them may be, objects, the lives of other persons and states of affairs in the world must make themselves evident to a life. Even God must make Himself evident within the ambit of a personal life.[9]

A finding of oneself is at one at the same time a finding of

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[7]Ortega, Man and People, p. 40 (O.C., VII, p. 100).

[8]Ibid. (O.C., VII, p. 101).

[9]Ibid., pp. 39-40 (O.C., VII, pp. 99-100).

one's personal life within the world. Careful observation will reveal some basic characteristics of that life as such. In Some Lessons in Metaphysics, perhaps better than in other contexts, Ortega expresses these characteristics clearly and straightforwardly. In that text he distinguishes four characteristics of life which provide the basis for an analysis of the "primary reality." These characteristics are: (1) life is evident, (2) life is circumstantial, (3) life is decision and (4) life is perplexity.[10] An analysis of these characteristics of life will reveal the structure of the primary reality in Ortega's sense.

Life As Evident

How is life evident? To live is to be actively engaged with the world. One simply finds oneself emersed in the world, acting upon the world in some form or other. Our lives, the life of each and every person, consists of a relationship to the world. The first view of "life's pure essence" thus appears "to us as what we do and what happens to us."[11] Such activity is evident and transparent to itself. Life is transparent to itself not only in the sense that it involves a presence of the living being to itself, but also because actions are capable of being known consciously.

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[10]These four headings are explicitly enumerated in Some Lessons in Metaphysics, pp. 57-58 (Unas lecciones, p. 74), but are to be found also in other works: Man and People, p. 58 (O.C., VII, p. 114) and What Is Philosophy?, pp. 236-252 (O.C., VII, pp. 428-438), for example.

[11]Ortega, Some Lessons in Metaphysics, p. 36 (Unas lecciones, p. 43).

> In its very root and heart, living consists in knowing and understanding ourselves, in noticing ourselves and what surrounds us, in being transparent to ourselves. Therefore, when we posed the question "What is our life?", we could clearly answer, gaily and without effort, "Life is what we do," because life is knowing what we are doing; it is in short, finding ourselves in the world and occupied with the things and the beings of the world.[12]

This "knowing" is more precisely a preconscious awareness of our lives, which Ortega attempts to capture by the term "contar con," which means to count on, to rely on or to depend on. That is to say, personal life, and the concrete situations within which one finds oneself, are anterior to intellectual and reflective efforts. Individual life, with its concrete ingredients, are "relied upon" to provide a basis for thought.

That which is relied upon may become an object of thought, may be made into a "consciousness of." Opposed to contar con, Ortega introduces the term reparar, which means the process whereby one is in the state of "being conscious of something." For example, one's life may be given over to the task of climbing a flight of stairs. This activity can be accomplished without an explicit consciousness of climbing the stairs. In such a case, one's life is precisely a relying upon the dynamic coexistence of the self and the stairs which are being climbed. One's life is at that moment composed of the activity of climbing the stairs, an act which later may be reflected upon or recalled consciously.[13]

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[12]Ibid., p. 39 (Unas lecciones, pp. 46-47).

[13]On the distinction between contra con and reparar, cf., Ibid., pp. 46-53 (Unas lecciones, pp. 57-68). The same distinction

> As my life with whatever forms a part of it is here, present before me, as it exists in the peculiar form of my relying on it, depending on it, it is always possible in principle that I may reflect on it, may lift it into full and clear consciousness, into effective knowing.[14]

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may also be made by use of the opposing concepts of ideas and beliefs. The concrete situation of a personal life is always historical and that which is "relied upon" may be analyzed under the concept of belief. In any concrete situation, man always comports himself toward his surroundings upon the basis of definite "beliefs" concerning the nature and structure of the world. Beliefs may become evident, that is to say, conscious, as "ideas," in which case they lose their effectiveness as beliefs. For example, the climbing of the flight of stairs presupposes the belief in the "support" of the stairs, which means an acceptance of the physical theories, ideas and laws with the aid of which the stairs were constructed. Once it becomes evident that the theories of the stairs concern hypotheses as to how matter acts and so on, the climber is no longer relying exclusively upon the prereflective and lived presence of the beliefs he had assumed to be the very structure of reality. Rather than being firm these beliefs now take on the appearance of hypotheses which are susceptible to conscious consideration. In climbing the stairs I prereflectively "know" they will provide the necessary support, whereas, as ideas, the validity of that prereflective "knowledge" becomes questionable. Beliefs are not radically opposed to ideas, however, in that beliefs are ideas which have become "confused" with reality itself. Ortega expresses the relation between ideas and beliefs in the following manner:

> The "ideas that truly are 'beliefs' form the container of our life; and, consequently, they are not so constituted as to be particular contents inside of our life. This means that they are not ideas that we have, but ideas that we are. And even more precisely, because they are fundamental beliefs, they are confused by us with reality itself--they are our world and our being--; and, therefore, they cease to have the character of thoughts that might very well not have occurred to us." Ortega, Ideas y creencias, O.C., V, p. 384. Cf., Harold C. Raley, José Ortega y Gasset: Philosopher of European Unity (University, Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 1971), pp. 48-50. The distinction between ideas and beliefs serves a central function in Ortega's essay, "History as a System," History as a System, pp. 165-177 (O.C., VI, pp. 13-20). He also speaks of beliefs in terms of "usages" in Man and People, pp. 192-221 (O.C., VII, pp. 212-231.

[14]Ortega, Some Lessons in Metaphysics, p. 53 (Unas lecciones, p. 67).

The sense in which life is evident, then, is not counter to conscious experience. Life is evident and transparent to itself potentially and in principle.

Life as Circumstantial

The second characteristic of life is that it is circumstantial.

> When man encounters himself, he does not do this in and by himself, apart and alone; on the contrary, he always finds himself within another thing which, in turn, is made up of many other things. He finds himself surrounded by what is not himself, by a surrounding, by a circumstance, by a landscape. In the vital idiom of our most common life, we usually, and in general, call this circumstance the world. Let us say, then, that always when I meet myself, I find that self in the world; but again, one must be careful not to give this term "world" any learned meaning, but hold to the commonest one: "world" means everything about me, everything that surrounds me. This means that on finding myself, I find myself a prisoner.[15]

A personal life is always inscribed within an environing world. By circumstance Ortega means "that which surrounds me," from the Latin: circum-stantia. Circumstances may be said to "stand around" the individual in two different senses. Circumstances are organized spatially, i.e., some objects within the surroundings are given as near, others are further away, still others are off in the distance and so on. As well, there is a real sense in which circumstances are conditioned by time. The earth or world differs depending upon the time in which one lives.[16] Circumstances are, then, historical as well as natural.

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[15]Ibid., pp. 60-61 (Unas lecciones, pp. 78-79).

[16]Ibid., p. 62 (Unas lecciones, p. 82).

The term "world," Ortega warns, is not to be given any learned meaning. Since the world is the circumstantial horizon of a life, it is to the issue to inquire into this warning in order to make the concept of circumstances clearer. Not so simply put, circumstances are not what we think about them! What can this mean?

Generally the world is conceived as a huge arena or an immense "container" holding things of various kinds--there are plants, animals, minerals and other humans. Areas of discipline exist which are given over to the investigation and clarification of the various kinds of objects which compose the world. What the world is straightforwardly and immediately in relation to life, in the sense of vital circumstance, however, differs from the world as comprehended through disciplined and thoughtful effort. Before science, things are what they are primarily in their relationship to life. Before one assumes the theoretical attitude of the scientist, e.g., of a physicist, mineralogist or biologist, one is in a living contact with the realities which are the objects of study of the various theoretical disciplines.[17] An example should make the point clearer. The earth, Ortega points out, is described by astronomers as a "planet in a certain solar system belonging to a certain galaxy or nebula." The astronomer will probably continue that the planet is:

> . . . made of atoms, each one of which in its turn contains a multiplicity of things, of quasi-things or guess-what things called electrons, protons, mesons, neutrons, and so on. But none of this knowledge would exist if the earth did not exist before it as a component of our life, as

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[17]Ortega, Man and People, p. 52 (O.C., VII, p. 109).

> something with which we have to come to terms and hence something that is of import to us, matters to us--that matters to us because it confronts us with certain difficulties and provides us with certain facilities.[18]

The primary and basic presence of the earth to life is previous to disciplined inquiry or interpretations as to the nature or being of that reality aside from its living presence.

The earth in the sense of a vital presence, and hence in its sense as circumstance, can be seen only in contra-distinction to any scientific or thoughtful knowledge of it. It is that which consists of both facilities and difficulties for a living being. Straightforwardly, the earth is terra firma--that which can be relied upon to support one.

> It is what I sometimes have laboriously to climb, because it inclines downward, it is what parts and separates me from the woman I love or forces me to live close to someone whom I loathe, it is what makes some things far from me and others near me, some here and others there and others yonder, and so on and so on. These and many similar attributes are the genuine reality of the earth, just as it appears to me in the radical ambit of my life.[19]

Circumstances are elements or aspects of the world toward which the living being is attending and with which it is occupied. The world "is a body of means and impediments, facilities and difficulties which, in order to live in any real sense, I encounter."[20] Circumstances are the surroundings toward which one is pragmatically related and are not so much known as taken for granted, i.e., relied upon.

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[18]Ibid. (O.C., VII, p. 109).

[19]Ibid., pp. 52-53 (O.C., VII, p. 109).

[20]Ibid., p. 53 (O.C., VII, p. 110).

To live in the world in this most direct and immediate sense anterior to thought, is to be immersed in the world, unmindful of oneself and without consciousness or reflection upon one's relationship to the world. The real sense of living amid circumstances, or being in the world, is now revealed with more clarity. For Ortega when man encounters himself, "he does not do this in and by himself, apart and alone; on the contrary, he always finds himself within another thing which, in turn, is made up of many other things."[21] Before thought and reflection, man is actively engaged with his circumstances, which is the same as to say he exists outside himself, without self-awareness and possessed by that which is other than himself. In a word, man is given over to alteración. Since being amid surroundings or in a world is a constituent part of human life, Ortega concludes,

> This means that man exists outside himself, in another, a foreign country . . . not at different periods and from time to time, but essentially and always. Man is essentially a stranger, an emigrant, an exile.[22]

He continues: "To live is for me to exist outside myself."[23] Living, then, is a process of involvement, a continual process of doing something concerning the environment or circumstance. Living in the world is an actual living with the world; and being in a vital circumstance means being estranged from oneself, being in the

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[21]Ortega, Some Lessons in Metaphysics, p. 60 (Unas lecciones, pp. 78-79).

[22]Ibid., p. 66 (Unas lecciones, p. 87).

[23]Ibid. (Unas lecciones, p. 87).

circumstances as being inseparable from them.

All activity, of course, is not unmindful of itself. There is a type of activity which is precisely thinking about the objects which exist within the surroundings. A subject may entertain thoughts concerning the nature of the reality which is encountered in life. Human life may be divided into two unequal parts:

> You will note that the division separates our lives into two very unequal sectors in that, on the one side, there is only that form of doing which is thinking and, on the other, there are all the other innumerable forms of doing which make up our existence. Thinking is neither more nor less a form of doing than any of the others. . . .[24]

This doing which is thinking about the circumstance or about objects in the world requires the ability for abstraction, of withdrawing from the pure and spontaneous involvement with the world characteristic of purely animal life. Thinking and theory construction remain activities directed toward the world, but such activity is mediated by the demand man places upon himself of modifying the world to reflect his own desires for security and well-being.

The world of circumstance is that which is relied upon, that toward which one comports oneself prereflectively. As was noted when considering the evident characteristic of life, that which is contar con, relied and counted upon, may become an object for consciousness, i.e., that which is relied upon may become an object of reflection in principle. The case is not that consciousness, on its own accord and arbitrarily, selects which element or aspect of the environment

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[24]Ibid., p. 86 (Unas lecciones, pp. 117-118).

which is being relied upon or taken for granted is to become a theme for consciousness. The process of raising the circumstance to conscious attention is not so much "mental" as it is vital. That which is relied upon becomes problematic and a need arises for settling its problematic character by situating that object or aspect of the circumstance into a coherent theoretical structure wherein one attempts to explicitly know what that object is. By so doing, activity might take place on a more firm foundation.

Two examples may make this point clearer. I shall use one example which is applicable to natural realities and another which is more historical and cultural in context. Returning to the example of the earth, I noted that it is not what the astronomers tell of it, so much as it is a concrete ambit composed of both facilities and difficulties. So far difficulties associated with the earth in its sense as a prereflective presence or as a series or system of circumstances have been all but ignored. The aspect of difficulty, therefore, has been minimized. As long as projects are realized and are unrestricted by the environment, the environment does not appear as opposed to us; nor we to it. We and the environment are one, in the sense that I, that is to say, each one of us, is "outside ourselves" <u>in</u> the environment. Difficulties make us aware of impediments and provoke a desire that they be overcome. Let us assume that the earth fails us, that it becomes problematic and difficult in a radical and complete manner:

> The earth is here beneath my feet or under the foundations of the building in which I find myself. It has, in my life, a primary role which is to uphold and sustain me. But

> suddenly it shakes, moves from side to side, ceases to be firm and to sustain me.[25]

With Ortega's model, the result is that the earth becomes pure problem. I become aware that I do not really know what the earth is and the need, indeed the vital human necessity, arises of establishing the being of the earth. The question "What is the earth?" arises in such a way that only an answer which can elucidate its real nature or being provides some satisfactory account of its behavior in relation to me.

Another example Ortega offers is more historical and cultural in character and concerns the nature of light.[26] Consider that I am sitting in my recliner reading by help of a light which is provided by my trusty lamp. My act of reading requires, that is, relies upon, the shining of the light. I may preconsciously "know" that the light is costing so much money--after all I pay the electric bill every month, that it is shining on me and that I may flick the lamp off. In this manner the light constitutes part of my life, that is, my living relationship to the light. Suppose that for some reason the light ceases to shine and I should begin to think <u>about</u> the nature of light (not, of course, about the electrical apparatus--the lamp). That body of knowledge which presently offers explanations concerning light is optics, and it is to it that I must go in search of information concerning the exact nature of light. The attempt by thought to

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[25]Ibid., p. 97 (<u>Unas lecciones</u>, pp. 132-133).

[26]The example has been changed somewhat from the original. Cf., Ibid., pp. 81-86 (<u>Unas lecciones</u>, pp. 110-118).

comprehend the nature of light is related to a theory about light which attempts to give light a more abiding existence and to make my relation to it as a phenomenon more predictable and secure.[27]

Two ways of being concerned with the world have been discerned in the previous paragraphs. The first way of being concerned with circumstances involves a preconscious and prereflective presence to vital circumstances or surroundings. The second involves a conscious, reflective or thoughtful concern with the circumstances. The latter is no less vital than the former. The latter, thoughtful mode of being concerned with the circumstances differs from the prereflective mode due to the fact that the thoughtful mode involves the ability for the thinking subject to be "inside himself," that he separate or abstract himself theoretically from the world which is his immediate vital horizon. This "separation" is not radical. It allows for the possibility that man may project himself into the world and, through technical manipulation and *praxis*, produce another vital horizon which is an attempt to guarantee his own distinctly human demand for well-being.

The two modes of acting upon the world are both vital. The earth may fail us; the light may cease to shine. In their immediate presence to life, circumstances have a very tentative character. Guarantee is lacking that the environment is to remain stable and

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[27]The type of thought used as examples have been scientific in character. There is also another way which man has of "expressing and of thinking about what makes up his life, that is, those things on which he counts." This second way is not scientific but mythological. Ibid., p. 99 (*Unas lecciones*, p. 135).

reliable. In fact, the situation is the opposite: the very instability and unreliability of circumstantial reality is the rule rather than the exception. This very instability of vital circumstances generates the need to establish something permanent about things in the environment. The earth shakes, it becomes problematic, and the attempt is made in some way to establish its real being. Thought consists of the attempt to comprehend the real nature of the earth or any other element and aspect of our circumstance behind their living presence. This thoughtful endeavor is an attempt to provide security and permanence to life by guaranteeing a permanence and immutability or consistence to things.

The preceding can be expressed in another manner. Life, as the coexistence of self and world, must not be construed as a static and inert being together.

> The basic fact, we were saying, is the coexistence of myself with things. But scarcely have we said that when we perceive that to call the manner in which I exist with the world, that primary reality, at once unitary and dual, that magnificent fact of essential duality--to call all that "coexistence" is to commit an error. For coexistence means only that one thing stands beside another, that the one and the other have being. What we are trying to express is rendered false by the prone and static character of those two old concepts, being and existing. This is not merely a matter of the world being by itself, next to me, and I for my part being here, next to the world, but a concept that the world is what it continues to be because of me, that its character is dynamic, confronting me, opposing me; and I am the one who acts upon it, who looks at it, dreams it, suffers it, loves it and detests it.[28]

Rather than coexisting side by side statically, the coexistence of

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[28]Ortega, What Is Philosophy?, p. 210 (O.C., VII, p. 410).

self and world, which together constitute life, is active and dynamic.

Life As Decision

Since the coexisting of self and circumstances is dynamic, life is revealed in its third characteristic: life is decision. "Life's pure essence," Ortega always insisted, is "what we do and what happens to us."[29] To be alive is to be involved, to be doing something in respect to vital circumstances. Life, then, in its human sense, since humans are characterized by ensimismamiento, is a continual process of deciding what it is that is to be done. Upon finding oneself with the world, one also finds oneself doing something in regard to that world. The reader is presently reading, for example. Previously, the decision was made that his or her life would be composed of reading what is here expressed. That decision, of course, has to be continually reaffirmed if the reader is to continue reading. The act of continuing reading is sufficient evidence that that decision is being continually reaffirmed. That is to say, reading involves an effort--perhaps an effort to comprehend, at least an effort to avoid distraction by innumerable other aspects of the environment. The reader may, of course, decide to cease reading and to do something else. Life always involves a process of decision which may be more or less conscious. Although deliberation may not be a permanent aspect of life in the sense that each instant

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[29]Ortega, Some Lessons in Metaphysics, p. 36 (Unas lecciones, p. 43).

of life involves or may not involve deliberation, every event in life implies decision.[30]

The image which Ortega thinks best represents man's plight of finding himself in the world may also be used to make the characteristic of decision all the more clear. The image to be recalled is that of a person suddenly finding himself on a stage in the presence of an audience, but without preparation or warning. The notion that Ortega is trying to represent concerns not only the surprise someone would experience at the shock of finding themselves in that situation, but also the fact that something must be done in that context. A decision is called for. Living is similar to the representation to the extent that a person finds himself caught in a

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[30]Any act then implies a decision. Given this ontological framework of human life, concrete acts lose their seemingly arbitrary character which the existentialists--Sartre in particular--are accused of accenting. The most arbitrary seeming decision can be proven, upon analysis, not to be arbitrary at all. The consciousness of decisions, however, might differ in degree and intensity due to the importance and significance of a particular decision for one's vital projects. Consider, for example, Sartre's famous example of the young French patriot who would prefer to fight for his country, but who is charged with the care of his mother. Sartre asks: "What gives his feeling for his mother value?" He answers:

"Precisely the fact that he remained with her. I may say that I like so-and-so well enough to sacrifice a certain amount of money for him, but I may say so only if I've done it. I may say 'I love my mother well enough to remain with her' if I have remained with her. The only way to determine the value of this affection is, precisely, to perform an act which confirms and defines it. But, since I require this affection to justify my act, I find myself caught in a vicious circle." Sartre, Existentialism and Humanism, p. 35.

Sartre does not say whether the "vicious circle" is a logical or a vital one. To be a vital "circle" would not mean that it is illogical in the sense of unreasonable, but it does reveal the significance of the decision for the young Frenchman. Rather than being arbitrary, the decision is important.

more or less difficult circumstance without really knowing how or why. "Somehow," Ortega says, each person "must, with some decorum, resolve that sudden appearance before the public which he neither sought, prepared for, nor foresaw."[31] The image captures the fact, then, that in life one is called upon to act and thereby to decide upon appropriate courses of action.

> We have seen that it [life] is finding oneself occupied with this or that, a form of doing or making. But all doing is a process of occupying oneself with something and for something. The occupation which is now an expression of ourselves is rooted in and directed toward what is commonly called an end. That "toward" in view of which I now do this, and in so doing live and have my being, I chose because among the possibilities which lay before me I believed that my life would be better if I occupied myself this way.[32]

Decision is bound up with the expectations and beliefs concerning the possibilities associated with well-being and self-realization.

Life as Perplexity

The fourth attribute of life concerns its perplexity. By perplexity Ortega means that life is puzzling. The fact that one finds oneself alive, that life is a given, but given in such a way that decision is necessary is disturbing and puzzling to a supreme degree. The disturbing and puzzling aspect arises from the essential dynamic of life: life is always a given, but at the same time necessitates that decisions be made. One is required and necessitated to exercise one's free capacity for decision in a circumstance one did not choose.

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[31]Ortega, What Is Philosophy?, p. 220 (O.C., VII, p. 417); Ortega, Some Lessons in Metaphysics, p. 41 (Unas lecciones, p. 49).

[32]Ortega, What Is Philosophy?, p. 240 (O.C., VII, p. 430).

> If the shot fired by the gun had a soul, it would feel that its trajectory was pre-fixed by the powder and the firing pin, and if we call this trajectory its life, the shot would be simply a spectator, with no way of intervening in it; the shot neither fired itself nor did it choose its target. But for this very reason, that kind of existence cannot be called life. Life is not felt as predetermined. However sure we may be as to what is going to happen tomorrow, we always see it as a possibility. . . . For the same reason that it is continually a problem, big or little, which we must solve without any chance of passing it on to someone else, it is never a solved problem; at any moment we find ourselves forced to choose among various possibilities. If it is not given us to choose the world in which our life is to be unrolled--and this is the fateful dimension--we find ourselves with a certain margin, a vital horizon of possibilities, and this is the dimension of its liberty; this life is fate in freedom, and freedom in fate. Is this not surprising?[33]

In another context Ortega states:

> That circumstance [in which we live] always offers us different possibilities for acting, hence for being. This obliges us, like it or not, to exercise our freedom. We are forced to be free. Because of this, life is a permanent crossroads and constant perplexity. At every instant we have to choose whether in the next instant or at some other future time we shall be he who does this or he who does that. Hence each of us is incessantly choosing his "doing," hence his being.[34]

One has no choice but to exercise one's freedom. In the famous phrase of Sartre: we are condemned to be free.

The nature of perplexity may be approached in a more concrete manner which avoids the more abstract opposition between fate and freedom. Circumstances offer both facilities and difficulties for the living being, which is to say that personal life is always faced with possibilities and hence with the need for decision. Paradoxically,

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[33]Ibid., pp. 221-222 (O.C., VII, p. 418).

[34]Ortega, Man and People, p. 58 (O.C., VII, p. 114).

however, a decision is never decisive. A decision does not guarantee that the possibility opted for will be realized; the future always remains uncertain. One must continually be on guard, so to speak, must constantly be deciding and evaluating the circumstances of one's life. Man, Ortega noted, is always under threat.[35] Hence the necessity that he be ever on the alert, ready to respond to situations appropriately.[36]

Life As Untransferable

Another characteristic is to be discerned as an attribute of human life and though it has not been overlooked it has yet to be made

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[35]Ortega, The Idea of Principle, p. 302 (O.C., VIII, p. 291).

[36]The concept of perplexity need not possess a perjorative sense. Perplexity, in Ortega's sense, should not be confused with the concepts of "anxiety," "dread" or "uneasiness" which have been coined and used as standard concepts of existential philosophy. For Ortega the character of perplexity is not synonymous with an essentially hopeless attitude concerning human life. Such "phrases of terror" typify a kind of response to the essential perplexity which is too pessimistic. Another type of response in the face of perplexity is possible and it is this response which Ortega is inclined to accent:

"On whichever side one takes existentialism, one sees that the other side, the opposite, is equally true and basic. For example, the World and the unheimlich, the 'strange' and disquieting. Good, already in Dilthey the World is proclaimed as resistance, but one does not stop there. On resisting the World, I discover myself as 'another than I' and as being that other. But on rejecting this, I discover that in that World there is also something 'good,' favorable, useful, pleasant. A shipwrecked man, I yearn for that wonderful feeling which is the 'resistance' of solid ground. Because the World is not only a great sea in which I am drowning, but also a beach that I can reach. In short, the World as resistance to me, shows me the World as 'assistance.' If it were only unheimlich, disquieting, unfamiliar, I would already have left it, and the sentiment of 'unfamiliarity or disquiet' would not exist unless its opposite--the cozy and restful--were also existing. So the World is equally rough weather and warm hearth." Ibid., pp. 312-313 (O.C., VIII, p. 299).

explicit. Life is untransferable. Since life is intrinsically personal and because life is decision, "my life, then, is constant and inescapable responsibility for myself."[37]

> Among all the characteristics of radical reality or life which I have mentioned, and which are a very small part of those that would have to be described to give any adequate idea of it, the one that I now want to emphasize is the one expressed in a great platitude: namely, that life is untransferable and that each man has to live his own; that no one can take over his task of living for him; that the toothache he suffers from has to hurt him and he cannot transfer even a fraction of the pain from it to anyone else; that he can delegate no one to choose and decide for him what he will do, what he will be; that no one can replace him or surrogate for him in feeling and wanting; that, finally, he cannot make his neighbor think for him the thoughts that he has to think in order to orient himself in the world (in the world of things and in the world of men) and thus find his right line of conduct--hence, that he must be convinced or not convinced, must see truths and see through nonsense, on his own account, without any possible substitute, deputy, or proxy.[38]

Life cannot be exchanged. Human life is always the life of a personal self and that self is "condemned" to its embodied existence and to its own private and subjective sensations and organic peculiarities. Moreover, because of the fact that personal life is at each moment a matter of decision, each personal life is intimately responsible for its own actions and self-realization.

To say that human life is untransferable is also to say that human life is essentially solitude.[39] The radical and basic reality is also a radically solitary reality. The radicalness of solitude,

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[37]Ortega, Man and People, p. 58 (O.C., VII, p. 114).

[38]Ibid., p. 46 (O.C., VII, p. 105).

[39]Ibid. (O.C., VII, p. 105).

however, does not imply that nothing but the individual self exists. Living is that which one does in the presence of many other realities, some of which are also radically solitary. Not only does the world exist in relationship with solitary and individual lives but it also persists as a "strange and always more or less disturbing, negative, and hostile and at best unconcurring element."[40]

Human life is, then, always a personal life which is a solitary and nontransferable reality. This nontransferable reality is not the only reality which exists but it is that reality in which all other realities are "rooted" and in relation to which they appear. It is, therefore, the primary and basic reality. Other realities exist only within the ambit of a personal life and hence have a distinctly human significance. These realities, however, are not manufactured or "created" by the internal operations of a pure consciousness nor are they merely illusions which the mind projects into the world. Moreover, certain characteristics adhere to life which together constitute or account for its dynamic character. Life is clear and transparent to itself in principle, exists only in the context of a circumstance or world, involves constant activity and therefore decision and, as a result, is perplexing. The being which is human life is, then, difficult to capture or conceptualize with the aid of simple formulas or statements. In the face of such difficulty, however, Ortega is noted for having offered such a formula. Consideration is now directed to a consideration of that formula.

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[40]Ibid., p. 51 (O.C., VII, p. 109).

II. I AM I AND MY CIRCUMSTANCE

As a result of his criticism of rationalism, Ortega had asserted that thought was not a separate and distinct attribute of a subject; subjectivity does not exist in and for itself. The solitary self of idealism lives within a world and is not radically distinct from that world--a fact which idealism attempted to ignore. Thought or subjectivity is but an element of a fundamental datum, he said, which is the coexistence of a self and a world. His position is stated quite explicitly in the following passage:

> This [life] is not, then, a matter of my sometimes finding the immediate made solely out of my subjectivity and, therefore, of my existing exclusively by myself, but of this--that when I find myself, I always found that self coexisting with something facing that self, something in front of it and opposing it; the world or the circumstance, the surroundings. It is certain that this something does not exist by itself, apart from me. To believe the opposite was the realist error which we have forever overcome. But neither do I ever exist alone and within myself; my existing is coexisting with that which is not I. Reality, then, is this interdependence and coexistence.[41]

The interdependence and coexistence of subject and world is reality, however, only within the context of a personal life. Stated another way, life is the interdependence and coexistence of a self and its world. Note that Ortega says, "My existing is coexisting with that which is not I." A second reference to the person, designated by the possessive "my," is assumed. This can be made more vivid if that second reference is inserted: "My existing is [I] coexisting with

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[41]Ortega, Some Lessons in Metaphysics, p. 155 (Unas lecciones, p. 221).

that which is not I." In this case, the assumed "I" becomes an ingredient or element which coexists with that which is other than it, i.e., the circumstance. These two elements are ingredients of a primary reality which is an individual life. The use of the formula "I am I and my circumstance" is an attempt, then, to state explicitly and clearly the structure of human life itself.[42]

The expression captures both Ortega's insistence that his

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[42]Although the formula "I am I and my circumstance" is an attempt to grasp the general structure of human life, Ortega does not explicitly use that formula in the texts which I have used primarily to present his conception of life. The formula appears in his first book, published in 1914, some years before he decided to express his philosophical thought in terms of a ratio-vitalist position. Marías argues that the formula expresses an "original discovery" the "exploration" of which required the "construction of an adequate theory about it." His mature thought is seen by Marías as an attempt to analyze and to construct a theory concerning this discovery. Marías, Circumstance and Vocation, pp. 402-403.

Attention to the formula is all but required in an understanding of Ortega's concept of life for at least three reasons: first, the fame of the expression necessitates that it be noted in any consideration of Ortega which aims at being substantial; second, though not explicitly used in the analysis of life to this point, it is nonetheless present implicitly, as I attempted to show from the selection from Some Lessons in Metaphysics; third, the formula seems to state rather clearly and in a brief way--but not in a simplistic manner--the reality which Ortega refers to under the term human life. In this last respect, it opens an avenue by means of which the being of living entities can be understood.

The expression appears in Ortega's first work in the following manner: "Yo soy yo y mi circunstancia, y si no la salvo a ella no me salvo yo. Benefac loco illi quo natus es, leemos en la Biblia. Y en la escuela platónica se nos da como empresa de toda cultura, esta: 'salvar las apariencias,' los fenomenos. Es decir, buscar el sentido de lo que nos rodea." (I am I and my circumstances, and if I do not save my circumstances, I cannot save myself. Benefac loco illi quo natus es, we read in the Bible. And in the Platonic school we are given this as the task of all culture: "save the appearances," the phenomena; that is to say search for the sense of that which surrounds us). O.C., I, p. 322. Compare the expression as translated into English in Meditations on Quixote, pp. 45-46.

conception of human life supersedes the perspective of rationalism and also reveals the nature of the concrete unity of the being which is at one and the same time alteración and ensimismamiento. The definition of personal life as "I am I and my circumstance" also allows for an examination of the dynamic character of that reality.

The word "I" is used twice in the expression, but it is the second "I" which is synonymous to an extent with the "I" of idealism. Stated another way, the second "I" is the subject which functions as the center of a circumstance. When this "I" is considered as subjectivity, it is found to be conjoined with that which is not subject, namely, the circumstance. This "I" and that which is "not I," the circumstance, are related. The circumstance exists only in being around a subject and the "I" is intrinsically related to its circumstance. The concrete unity expressed in the conjunction "I and my circumstance" is falsified if the attempt is made to view each element of the conjunction separately, e.g., as idealism attempted to do when the reality of the circumstance, or "external" world, was made dependent upon subjectivity and consciousness.

The conjunction "I and my circumstance," however, is only part of the Orteguian formula. The total formula expresses much more than the mere conjunction of the self and its world. The circumstance is never the surroundings merely in relation to an abstract "I," to any "I" as such. The circumstance does not "circle" just any "I" which serves as its "center." A circumstance is always mine--always a "my circumstance." Julián Marías expresses the point clearly:

> This second I, which could be identified with the "I" of idealism . . . is the subject of living, center of a circumstance; this, in fact, is constituted by being around--circum--an I: its mode of being is to "circle" or "circum-state"; it is, then, the I which gives the circumstance its character as such; therefore it is unitary, and, in short, vital; but, on the contrary, the circumstance is only constituted around an I which is not simply defined by being its "center," which is not just any I, but an I myself, capable of entering into itself, and who is someone.[43]

A circumstance is, he continues, an "effective possession" and not a mere "localization." A circumstance is a possession because "I am I myself," or, perhaps better expressed, "because I have a selfhood and am master of myself, I can have something which is mine."[44] The conjunctive relationship of an "I" and its circumstance is that only within the context of a personal life, of an "I myself."

Stated another way, the mere conjunction "I and not I" is not yet real, its being is "deficient." The conjunction of an "I" and its circumstance is real only within the folds of a personal life, in relation to the totality of such a life. In the expression "I am I and my circumstance," it is the first "I" which is primary and which "denominates" or "designates" me as a living entity and of whom it is said that "I am I and my circumstance."[45]

> Very well, then, if there is no possible "composition" of the I and the circumstance, this means that both are already "com-posed"; that is, they are "moments," "ingredients," or whatever you want to call them;--in short, subordinate

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[43]Marías, Circumstance and Vocation, p. 383.

[44]Ibid.

[45]Ibid., p. 384.

> and secondary realities with regard to another primary reality from which they are discovered and found, and in which the deficient and needy reality is rooted. This reality is, in terms used by Ortega in 1914, the I as an executive position of reality, as a subjectivity which "only exists while it is occupied with things"; that is, as not only subjectivity, but primary position which includes, and therefore can distinguish, "I" and "things." In short, opposed to the reality of the I--its "I-ness," its "subjectivity," its "polarity" as opposed to things, for the moment--the reality which is I, defined by very different attributes: position, executivity, priority with respect to its ingredients, intrinsic duality.[46]

This formula, "I am I and my circumstance," expressed early in Ortega's career, captures clearly and concisely the reality he was later to analyze and describe in more detail--human life.

Although the phrase is here introduced in such a manner as to accent its opposition to the idealist view of subjectivity--as Ortega had originally intended--and thus to reveal the continuity of Ortega's thought from its earlier formulations to his later criticisms of rationalism and idealism, the seeds of his distinction between alteración and ensimismamiento is also to be discovered concealed in this formula. The dynamics of life, which Marías insinuates when he speaks of the "executive position" of this reality, are also evident in the early formula.

Considering the distinction between alteración and ensimismamiento, it is clear that the distinction can be made within the context of Ortega's formula. Ensimismamiento, let it be recalled, is that characteristic of humankind which enables man to distinguish himself from the brute. To be within one's self, i.e., to introspect or to

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[46]Ibid., p. 402.

reflect, must be identified with the second "I" within the expression "I am I and my circumstance." That "I" denotes the "interiority" from which one emerges, so to speak, to make the circumstance one's own, to realize the genuine sense of the "my" in "my circumstance." Man is distinctly human insofar as I am I and my circumstance. Once again, the "self," referred to by the second "I," cannot be separated from the totality of the personal life of which it is an ingredient. The first "I" designates the concrete and corporeal entity, points out my total reality, while the second "I" designates who I am, the personhood of the individual. The moment of selfhood and personhood presupposes the vital reality which I am.

The coexisting of self and world has been shown to be correctly apprehended within the context of a reality to which these elements belong as ingredients. The previous treatment of the Orteguian notion of life has shown life to be an active and dynamic reality. Likewise, the formula "I am I and my circumstance" refers to a reality which is non-static in its composition. The first "I" designates the reality of a person in the process of possessing a circumstance, of making it "my circumstance." The process of realizing one's self and one's circumstance is captured by the Orteguian notion of the "executivity" of the personal I. Ortega discusses the nature of the executant "I" in a preface to a book of poetry by José Moreno Villa published in 1914--the same year as the Meditations on Quixote in which the original formula appeared--entitled "An Essay on Esthetics by Way of a Preface."

There are two ways in which Ortega attempts to make the executant character of an I evident. First, the executant character of personhood requires that persons be distinguished from things. Ortega argues that persons can assume a utilitarian posture toward things, but not toward their own personal and unique reality.

> We can only utilize things. And vice versa: things are those points at which our utilitarian activity is inserted. Now then: we can assume a utilitarian posture before all things save one, save before one solitary, one unique thing: our "I."
>
> Kant reduces morality to his well-known formula: act so as not to use others as means, but as ends of your actions. To make these words, as Kant does, the expression of a norm and a guide in all obligations is the same as declaring that in fact each of us uses his fellow man, that we treat them as we treat things. Kant's imperative, in its various forms, would have us regard other men as people, not things to be used, not things. And this human status desolves on something when we fulfill the immortal maxim from the gospel: treat your neighbor as yourself. Making a I myself of something is the only way it can cease being a thing.[47]

The executant "I," then, is not a thing and the character of being "I myself" must be distinguished from the mode of existence of a mere thing.

The distinction between person and thing, however, does not reveal the reality of executant being with full clarity. A second manner of making the executant character of the I evident is adduced by Ortega. It is not only the case that the I is the one reality which one cannot desire to turn into a thing; it cannot be turned into a thing by its very reality. This, he points out, becomes

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[47]Ortega, "An Essay in Esthetics by Way of a Preface," Phenomenology and Art, p. 131 (O.C., VI, p. 250).

clear upon an analysis of the difference between the change in the meaning of a verb from first to third person indicative. Using as an example the verb "to walk," Ortega notes,

> . . . if we direct our attention with some insistence to precisely that reality to which "I walk" alludes, we cannot help but notice how different it is from that alluded to by "he walks." His walk is a reality that I perceive with my eyes as happening in space; a series of successive positions of legs over the ground.[48]

The expression "he walks" refers to a reality which is not I myself. It is an outer event which can be observed and is not, strictly speaking, a personal experience. The expression "I walk," however, refers to another reality, namely, I myself. Ortega continues:

> In the "I walk" the visual image of my feet moving may occur to me; but beyond that, and as if more directly alluded to in those words, I find an invisible reality and one foreign to space--the effort, the thrust, the muscular sensations of tension and resistance. The difference could not be greater. One could say that in the "I walk" I refer to walking "seen" from inside what walking is, and in "he walks" to walking seen as an external result.[49]

Obviously, Ortega is referring to the activity of walking in the expression "I walk" as a lived experience, as opposed to the perception or even the reflective apprehension of the act of walking. The primary meaning of the verb "to walk" is the "external" one he is quick to admit, but the lived reality of the activity is accessible only through the "interior" meaning. There are verbs, however, whose ordinary meaning is the one expressed in the first person--"I want,"

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[48]Ibid., p. 132 (O.C., VI, p. 251).

[49]Ibid. (O.C., VI, p. 251).

"I hate" and "I feel pain," for example.[50] "I" means, then, primarily the reality of entities insofar as they are occurring, being or "executing themselves." Ortega concludes:

> With one thing only are we on intimate terms: our individuality, our life, but when this inwardness of ours becomes an image it too ceases to be inwardness. When I said that in "I walk" we referred to walking as seen from within, I was alluding to a relative inwardness; by comparison with the image of a body moving in space, the image of the movement of my sensations and feelings is like an inwardness. But true inwardness, or anything in the act of executing itself, stands at an equal distance from our image of the external and our image of the internal.[51]

The first "I" referred to in the expression "I am I and my circumstance" is, then, not a static nor inert being. It is constantly executing itself, being what it is in a dynamic and active sense.[52]

Ortega's formula "I am I and my circumstance" reveals the reality which is human life to be most personal and concrete. Moreover, human life is in each and every case an executant reality.

III. SUMMARY

In the previous chapter, I showed that reason is intrinsic to life itself for Ortega. Ultimately, reason refers to man's living

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[50]Ibid., p. 133 (O.C., VI, p. 251).

[51]Ibid., p. 136 (O.C., VI, p. 254).

[52]Julián Marías presents a very forceful analysis of this preface which he concludes in the following manner: "I means executiveness, presence, full reality. It is not a question of "the I," or of the man, but of the true intimacy which is something insofar as it is executing itself; and that is our life--not as an image, but precisely in its very execution, which in its turn is possible only while it is occupying itself with things." Marías, Circumstance and Vocation, p. 399.

relationship with the world. The present chapter has taken as its theme a clarification of this relationship by focusing upon the structures of human life. Certain essential characteristics of life have been ascertained through analysis. Human life is evident, circumstantial, decision, perplexity and is untransferable. These characteristics in unity are the possession of a dynamic and personal reality which Ortega calls the basic or primary reality. It is in the ambit of such a life that reason functions.

The dynamic relationship between man and world is also captured by the phrase "I am I and my circumstance." Personal life, designated by the first "I" in the expression, is a process involving the vital possessing of a circumstance. The personal self, moreover, "executes" itself, manifests itself in the world. Personal life is the dynamic coexisting of subject and world. The dynamic structure which is thus captured in the expression applies to a vital being which is uniquely and untransferably itself and which is always, in one mode or another, actively engaged with the world.

In Chapters II and III I have concentrated upon Ortega's conception of human life from a philosophical perspective. His view of human life from the philosophical perspective has been made against the background of his criticisms of the intellectualist tradition of modern philosophy since Descartes. The basic datum for philosophy is not the intellect considered solely in and for itself. The primary reality is the coexistence of subject and world within the context of a personal life. As well, an eidetics of the structure of

personal life has been the subject of the present chapter. The primary reality of human life has been discovered to be a structured reality with certain well-defined characteristics.

In the first chapter attention was given to another perspective upon life to be found in Ortega's work. From the zoological perspective, human life was seen to be intrinsically related to other animate beings. Man differs from the other animals due to the fact that he possesses an "interior" and is capable of projecting himself toward his vital horizon in an attempt to change his environment to conform to his own expectations and goals. Despite the differences between man and animal an affinity persists between them.

The affinity of human existence with animate life as a whole is the theme of the following chapter. There, I shall show that Ortega's analyses of the structures and characteristics of human life which constitute the philosophical perspective are not incompatible with the claim that human life is ontologically related to the nature of life as such. The nature of this ontological affinity has its basis in Ortega's conception of executant being.

CHAPTER IV

THE CONTINUITY OF LIFE

In previous chapters Ortega's conception of life has been considered from differing perspectives. The intent of this chapter is to reveal how these differing perspectives converge. These views of the nature of life share the one basic insight--human existence is intrinsically tied to the world and cannot be separated from it. That insight was contrasted in the first chapter with the position of Max Scheler. Like Ortega, Scheler was fully aware of "man's place in nature" and situated humankind within the context of biological and zoological existence. Nonetheless, human personality and individuality, the acquisition of knowledge and other distinctly human attributes have an "extra-vital" origin according to Scheler. Ortega, on the other hand, has insisted that human attributes are aspects of life itself and hence are vital phenomena. The purpose of this chapter is to give the vital unity of man and world fuller expression.

The first chapter of this study was devoted to a consideration of human life within the context of nature. Human life was seen to be related to the zoological scale of life. Man is a zoological being. From another perspective, the philosophical perspective, life was seen as the basic datum of the universe. Life in its human sense as personal existence is the "given" datum upon the basis of which the difficulties posed by the intellectualist tradition are to be superseded. Within this context, in the third chapter, attention was

directed to Ortega's analysis of human life in its essential structures.

Through these differing perspectives, three distinct ways of comprehending the reality of life have been attempted. First, human life is viewed as a concrete unity of animal existence and of the distinctly human, of alteración and ensimismamiento. Second, Ortega has provided an analysis of human life in which he describes its basic components and structures. Third, attention has been directed toward the analysis of the "basic datum" by means of the phrase "I am I and my circumstance." These three ways of describing the reality which is human life are unified by and share in common the basic insight which underlies them: man is a mundane being and even his "highest" aspirations and intellect are vital realities.

The present chapter represents an attempt to show that these distinct ways which Ortega used to approach the phenomenon of human life are not incompatible. All three views coalesce to reveal man's vital affinity with other living beings while the existential integrity of human life as uniquely personal is respected.

Moreover, since Ortega's contention is that man is in vital unity with other organic beings, his themes are not irrelevant to biology. Considering his rejection of Darwinian biology, it should prove profitable in understanding Ortega's philosophical stance if attention is devoted to some consideration of a non-Darwinian study of living beings which offers biological confirmation to Ortega's position. This topic will be approached toward the end of this chapter.

I. CONCEPTIONS OF HUMAN LIFE AND RELATION TO ANIMAL BEING

The order in which I shall present Ortega's descriptions of life are not in the order in which they appear in his writings. I shall present them in reverse chronological order, as has been the practice throughout this study. Ortega's discussion of alteración and ensimismamiento dates from 1939 and the position seems not to have been abandoned. His analyses of the structures of human life date from 1929-1932 and his famous phrase dates from 1914. All three formulations capture the same insight and reveal the unity of Ortega's thought over a number of years.

Part A below is a critical overview of the zoological perspective which was presented in the first chapter of this study. Part B attempts to show that the analyses of the characteristics of human life which Ortega provided are valid to a certain extent for non-human animate life and hence that the analyses of human existence does not entail a radical separation of human life from other kinds of animate existence. Part C represents an elucidation of Ortega's notion of executant being. All living forms will be shown to be executant beings.

Alteración and Ensimismamiento

Ortega attempted to show the continuity between human life and the rest of the zoological scale of life by pointing out that man is an entity which at one and the same time exemplifies alteracion, the spontaneity of the pure animal, and ensimismamiento, the ability for being self-absorbed. Reason and intellect exist thanks to the ability man has of concerning himself with his own thoughts and images

and thereby of projecting himself toward the world in a creative and technical manner. Alteración and ensimismamiento are "intra-vital" phenomena. Reason is a vital and pragmatic function of human life. The character of the "lower" forms of life thus persist within the human context.

Alteración signifies the life of the animal and perhaps can best be translated as "other-ation," the character peculiar to the animal of being solely concerned with that which is other than itself. The animal seems to be continually concerned with that which is other and external to it. Its incessant movements reveal the animal to be spontaneously busy with its surroundings, attentive to its circumstances and distracted from its own self by the external "signals" which govern its behavior. When the animal tires it simply becomes dormant; it goes to sleep. Man, on the other hand, can ensimismarse, he can concern himself with his own "interior" life; man can be "inside himself." Humans can "withdraw" from the world and concern themselves with their own images, ideas and memories which constitute their inner life. They think, contemplate and meditate, which means that they can separate themselves, so to speak, from the immediate concerns which have to do with environmental conditions. Men are, of course, also animals and do not entirely escape the form of existence of the animal. As animate beings, man too must be attentive to the environment and be more or less continuously aware of dangers and aspects of his surroundings as they reveal themselves. Ensimismamiento, in fact, modifies the nature of alteración for man. Although "condemned" to the world like other animals, the power of

being self-aware and self-concerned allows humans to modify their surroundings through productive activity in the world. Thought and reason do not allow man to escape his submission to the natural world, but he can modify that world, through his activities, to conform more with his own demands. In other words, the human mode of having an "interiority" allows them to project themselves toward the world in an effort to change it to accord with their own mental constructions and plans. Human thought and interiority thus manifests itself in the form of technical manipulation of the natural world in some manner or another.

Three aspects of alteración and ensimismamiento need to be noted. First, each living person is the concrete unity of "interiority" and "exteriority." Humankind is not other than an animal; man is an animal with an "interior," an animal which is aware of itself. It would be a mistake to see "interiority" as an attribute opposing animal movement. The conjunction of ensimismamiento and alteración does not establish a radical "break" between the human and the merely animal and, in fact, when the human condition is adequately described, the growth of self-awareness is not made at the expense of animal movement. Ensimismamiento in the last analysis is a means for the extension of bodily spontaneity by way of technical manipulation of reality which, as technology, is a historical variable. What is essential to an understanding of these two elements of the human condition is not their opposition but their interrelationship and interpenetration.

Second, the concepts of alteración and of ensimismamiento, taken separately, denote "pure" conditions. When the conjunction is dropped and each of the concepts is considered separately, each of them appears in the abstract. That is to say, alteración has reference to the "pure" animal and hence denotes an abstract mode of life. It is, in other words, a term denoting a limiting condition and is contrasted with ensimismamiento which can be seen as denoting the "pure" person. The full range of criticism which Ortega levelled at idealism centered around the supposed mistake rationalism had made when the abstract conception of the self was taken as absolute reality. If a pure consciousness or subject does not exist, neither does a pure animal. The notions of human "interiority" and animal "exteriority" are limiting concepts in the sense that both are ideal types and are not descriptions of real entities. Self-absorption is relative to the time and effort individual persons have to devote themselves to thoughtful endeavors, and likewise "exteriority" does not denote a complete absorption of the individual entity by its surrounding environment--something which cannot be said of the plant much less of the animal. The boundary between man and non-human animals, rather than being rigorously established, has been left an open question at this point.

Third, the inability to distinguish radically man from the animal by aid of the concepts of alteración and ensimismamiento is reflected also in Ortega's description of the developmental evolution of man in geological time. Being unable to discover a "break" between animal and man in the evolutionary history of the species, Ortega must resort to an unscientific but a most graphic--which should not be taken

to mean less true--portrayal of the human condition. Instead of specifying the evolutionary prehistory of man, Ortega must resort to symbolic reconstruction of that development. The result of this is that the being of man is represented by Ortega in terms of an image--the image of the "sick animal."

The symbolic reconstruction can best be placed within the context of Ortega's rejection of Darwinian biology as an adequate instrument for comprehending the nature of life and particularly his rejection of the Darwinian notion of adaptation. From the beginning until the end of his career Ortega was consistent in his rejection of Darwinian biology, especially the notion of adaptation. This anti-Darwinian trait is very explicit:

> The natural sciences based on determinism conquered the field of biology during the first decade of the 19th century. Darwin believed he had succeeded in imprisoning life--our last hope--within physical necessity. Life is reduced to mere matter, physiology to mechanics. The human organism, which seemed an independent unit, capable of acting by itself, is placed in its physical environment like a figure in a tapestry. It is no longer the organism which moves but the environment which is moving through it.[1]

For Ortega, then, Darwinian biology is the biological equivalent of physical determinism. If by physical determinism is meant--and this most certainly is the sense Ortega would give the notion--a causal-deterministic theory, Darwin's theory of natural selection and adaptation is a version of determinism.

Ortega is not alone in asserting that biology in this sense is deterministic. For example, Marjorie Grene asserts that the real

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[1]Ortega, Meditations on Quixote, p. 164 (O.C., I, pp. 399-400).

explanatory power of Darwin's theory of natural selection "resides in the specification of environmental changes necessary and sufficient to bring about corresponding changes in the gene-frequencies that support the heritable structures of inter-breeding populations."[2] Darwin's theory eliminates telelogy from biological explanations and is solely concerned with necessitating conditions. Although space prevents a full consideration of Darwin's determinism, some very brief remarks are in order since the deterministic character of his theory might be overlooked due to the fact that his conceptions do recognize and take into account the contingency of the evolutionary process through random events and mutations. Although Darwin's scheme is deterministic, everything might have happened differently. This emphasis upon contingency does not imply, however, that chance is the underlying principle of the universe nor distract from his causal explanations. The determinism evident in Darwinian biology is both physical and contingent. The random occurrence of mutations does not distract from the deterministic nature of its explanatory force.[3]

Human life, however, is purposive, and an attempt to comprehend it with the aid of a deterministic biology can be accomplished only at the cost of ignoring the projective character of human life which distinguishes man from animal. Projection and the resulting technical manipulation of reality is a possibility due to the fact that man

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[2]Marjorie Grene, The Understanding of Nature: Essays in the Philosophy of Biology (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1974), p. 228.

[3]Ibid., pp. 229-231.

possesses a sense of self-awareness, that he can ensimismarse, that is, be self-absorbed. Darwinian biological concepts are hence inappropriate in a systematic analysis of human life.

If Darwinian concepts attempt to comprehend life from the perspective of a positive science and if these concepts are not applicable to the human condition, the best way to describe that condition might be through opposition to those conceptions. This alone seems to justify Ortega's choice in describing human life in the manner he does. In contrast to the Darwinian notion of adaptation, human life is in principle unadaptable; human life is always in a state of disequilibrium in relation to the environment. Man is never capable of establishing a stable relationship with his surroundings. Rather than being static, life is essentially dynamic. I noted earlier that Ortega opts for an anti-Darwinian image to appropriately characterize the human dilemma. Once again I quote the following passage:

> In the face of all Darwinism, man represents the triumph of an animal that is unadapted and unadaptable. Without doubt he will constantly achieve partial adaptations, but each one of them serves him for a new adaptation. But an animal at once unadapted and continuing to live is, from the zoological point of view, a sick animal.[4]

The image of the sick animal is to be taken, then, as one way by which Ortega places his conception of human life beyond the range of deterministic biological and zoological concepts.

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[4]Ortega, An Interpretation of Universal History, p. 246 (O.C., IX, p. 189).

But, how separate is the "sick" animal from the other, "healthy," animals? How is it that a sick animal came into being and persisted? At this point Ortega resorts to symbolism when he speaks of the biological genesis of humankind. In regard to man as a sick animal, he speaks in terms of an original "illness" which he symbolically calls malaria. The illness arose from the environmental conditions of living in infected swamps where proto-man supposedly dwelt. "And this illness," he continues,

> . . . caused him an intoxication which produced a cerebral hyperfunctioning; this was the origin of a consequent excessive growth of the cerebral organs which brought with it, in turn, a greater degree of mental hyperfunctioning, the result of which was that man was filled with images and fantasies. . . .[5]

Note that this account is not to be construed as describing what really happened in primeval swamps; it is not meant to convey the evolutionary truth. It is intended to convey a forceful image representing the human condition.

Not all attempts Ortega makes to distinguish man from other animals are contrasted with Darwin. Ortega implies that human life involves a lack of instinctive regulation as opposed to animal life. The use of the idea of instinctive regulation to distinguish man from animal, where instinctive regulation is to apply only to animals other than man, is not without its difficulties. The conception of the animal as a purely instinctive creature, while man is portrayed as essentially non-instinctual and reasonable by nature, is once again

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[5]Ibid., p. 247 (O.C., IX, p. 189).

to operate in the realm of limiting concepts and to speak in abstractions rather than to refer to realities. Rationality, in Ortega's sense, is a vital phenomenon, and arises where instincts are minimized. The instinctive regulation which constitutes the conditions of animal life is relatively, and not totally, lacking in human life.[6]

The problems with the notion of instinctual regulation become more explicit when the same basic idea is approached by way of the concept of autoplasticity. Autoplastically, the animal "lives harmoniously, not in the sense of absence of struggle but in the sense that its inherited equipment makes it a fixed and unchanging part of its world; it either fits in or dies out."[7] Surely, autoplasticity cannot denote a real condition, because if the animal were a "fixed and unchanging part of its world" one could not speak of autoplastic change in the first place. Moreover, it seems absurd to say that an animal might live in "harmony" with its surroundings and yet have to "struggle" with them. The complete insertion of animal life as a fixed and unchanging entity in the world seems to be an impossibility. Autoplasticity can only realistically specify a relative lack of self orientation and development in respect to the contrasted type of change which refers to the distinctly human way

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[6]In reality it likewise seems impossible to establish any concrete living entity which could be construed as totally controlled by means of instinctual regulation.

[7]Fromm, Man for Himself, p. 48. Both the terms "autoplasticity" and its opposite "alloplasticity" were coined by Fromm.

of living which is termed the alloplastic.

As a result of these considerations, the point at which life in its human sense is to be separated from non-human animal life becomes problematic. Sufficient consideration has been given to a description of animality within the context of human life to show that human life involves animality as an intrinsic element. As a result it is impossible to separate the animal from the human in reality because the concrete man is both. Likewise, it is impossible to divorce man radically from the natural processes and the zoological scale of life because as a vital being he is a part of that reality.

The affinity which human life possesses in relation to other forms of living beings should not be taken to mean that differences are not there to be noted. Ortega insists that human life is structurally different from animal life. This structural difference resides in the fact that human beings possess a greater degree of memory and imagination than the animal.

> We should imagine . . . early man as being still very close to the animal. He differs from the animal in that he has lost some instincts, or, which is the same thing, they have become dulled. On the other hand, he possesses a greater degree of memory and of that which is the inverse of memory: fantasy. He gathers and organizes more impressions, more experiences, than the pure beast, and this permits him to create more imaginative combinations, more intimate phantasmagoria, which gives him an "interior life" denied to the animal.[8]

Even for the most primitive of men, then, a difference is evident between man and brute in that man possesses a "greater degree" of memory and imagination.

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[8]Ortega, Meditations on Hunting, p. 119 (O.C., VI, p. 473).

The difference between even the earliest man and the animal is only slight, but it is enough to make a substantial difference in the structure of the life of man. This is not to say that the animal does not possess a rudimentary "interior life." The activities of higher animals, chimpanzees for example, seem to exhibit purposive behavior. Ortega was aware of this fact via his knowledge of the experiments of Wolfgang Köhler.[9] I repeat here a description provided by Alfred Stern concerning one of Köhler's experiments which reveal most clearly that the behavior of certain animals is most similar to that of man. In one of Köhler's experiments a chimpanzee is placed in a room in which a banana is suspended from the ceiling just out of reach of the animal. Also in the room is a box which could be of assistance to the chimpanzee in his quest to obtain the fruit. The box, however, is filled with heavy stones which make it too heavy to be of immediate use to the animal. During the experiment the chimpanzee does indeed unload the box of the stones, pushes the box under the banana and, using the box as support, is able to reach the banana. As Stern points out it is entirely appropriate to say that the animal exhibited intelligent activity and clearly recognized the box, stones and the banana as objects for goal directed activities.[10]

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[9]Ibid. (O.C., VI, p. 473).

[10]Stern, The Search for Meaning, pp. 346-348. Ortega seems not to have believed that the relationship between man and monkey was one one of direct evolutionary development, that man evolved from the monkey and that the monkey is inferior to man because of a relationship defined by geological time. Although not specifying his sources, Ortega at one point makes the following remark: "According to many

In relation to human being, however, the activities of these animals reveal only rudimentary forms of intelligent behavior. Through the increased power of memory and imagination man can turn toward the world in a qualitatively different manner than the animal. He can structure and produce a reality--a socio-cultural world--which becomes an abiding and historical reality. Despite similarities, an immense structural difference persists.

Ortega's characterizing of human life as alteración and ensimismamiento, then, portrays man as intrinsically vital. Human life is the conjunction of these two elements, not their opposition. Despite a structural difference in human life brought on by the "interiority" peculiar to man, a radical and ontological separation between man and animal is impossible. This is reflected in his reversion to images and symbolism when Ortega discusses human life against the deterministic notions of Darwinian biology.

The intrinsic continuity between human life and animal life has been established from the consideration of man's place in nature. Attention is now directed to establishing the continuity of life from within the context of Ortega's analysis of the structures of human life.

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modern zoologists the human species is much older than all the tribes of apes. Rather than man descending from monkeys, the monkey apparently descended from man." Ortega, An Interpretation of Universal History, p. 247 (O.C., IX, p. 189).

The Structures of Human Life

There is one interpretation of Ortega which would cause suspicion to be cast upon my attempt to link human life intrinsically with other animate forms of life. This interpretation has a certain plausibility and to a degree is correct, but can lead to erroneous conclusions regarding Ortega's conception of life. This interpretation appears in the work of Ortega's main expositer, Julián Marías. Marías, trying to establish the point that Ortega's conception of life did not materialize from or was influenced substantially by German Lebensphilosophie, writes:

> Naturally, Ortega had employed the word "life," just as everyone does, since he began to speak or write, and innumerable cases in which he uses it can be found in his writings; and, since the basic meaning which it has in language is the designation of what Ortega one day will come to call "life," it is not impossible to find in his youthful writings sentences which seem to be "antecedents" of his philosophical discovery, but which it would be a misconstruction to take as such. . . . Ortega arrives at that reality [which he called life]; he designates it with expressions proceeding from the different perspectives from which he discovers it; and only later, in the early maturity of his doctrine, does he find that what he has found is better named than in any other way by the elemental and age-old words which man has used ingenuously, and which he has habitually debased by converting them into "cliches": life, to live.[11]

Ortega does seem to have "arrived" at his position outside the context of Lebensphilosophie, but what is troubling about Marías' assertion is that the concept of life as used by Ortega is claimed to have arisen only because of the usage of common language. Given this position, the term "life" is applicable to one's own personal existence and need

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[11]Marías, Circumstance and Vocation, p. 382.

not contain implications concerning the nature of life in any other than its human sense.

There does seem to be some ground for the claim put forward by Marías. At one point, for example, Ortega writes,

> . . . a reality consisting of a self which sees the world, thinks about it, touches it, loves it or detests it, is enthusiastic about it or irritated at it, transforms it, exhausts it, suffers it--this is what has always been called "living." This is "my life," "our life," the life of every one of us.[12]

It is a mistake, however, to think that Ortega's use of the term "life" to designate the reality he discovered has to do only with the non-substantial and naive way in which the term is used in common language. Although such explanations may be of help in first approaching the notion of life in Ortega, the term is a technical one in his philosophy and contains a dimension which is missing in common expression. He used the word to express his discovery not only because it was in use, but because it amply fit to reveal the being of man who is related intrinsically to nature through his own presence to the world.

Likewise, the full ramifications of his conception of life should not be overlooked due to Ortega's constant distinguishing of his sense of life from its biological usage--a biology which has its basis in the utilitarian thinking of Darwin.

> Biologists use the word "life" in order to designate the phenomena of organic beings. The organic is only one class of things that are found in life, together with another class of things called inorganic. What the

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[12]Ortega, What Is Philosophy?, p. 210 (O.C., VII, pp. 410-411). My emphasis.

> philosopher tells us about organisms is important, but it is also evident that when we say we live, and talk about "our live," the life of every one of us, we give this word a meaning which is more immediate, broader and more decisive.[13]

A bit further his rejection of biology as an instrument for analyzing the "primary reality" is even more explicit:

> What is our life, my life? It would be naive, and out of order, to answer this question with biological definitions or to talk of cells, somatic functions, digestion, the nervous system, and so on. All these things are hypothetical realities with a good basis, built up by the science of biology, which is merely one activity in my life when I study it or when I dedicate myself to its investigations. My life is not what happens in my cells any more than what happens in my stars, in those tiny golden points that I see in my night-time world.[14]

To say that biological concepts are not appropriate in an analysis of the distinctly human structures of life does not imply that an intrinsic relationship to other forms of life may not make an appearance or that the science of biology might not be reconstrued to accord more fully with philosophical evidence.

One must beware, however, of letting this rejection of biology imply that life is a peculiarity of humankind. Although the structures of life which he analyzed in his works which appeared shortly after Heidegger's publication of Being and Time show a particular propensity to be concerned with the analysis of human life, a more cosmic view of life, so to speak, is included also. Aside from an analysis of the structures of a life which is conscious of itself and which is

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[13]Ibid., p. 203 (O.C., VII, p. 405).

[14]Ibid., p. 214 (O.C., VII, p. 413).

attempting to grasp itself reflectively, an affinity and continuity with other living beings is manifest.

In the context of the works--actually lectures--which offer an analysis of the ingredients of human life and an enumeration of its structures, the distinctions which were made in the previous section of this chapter are found. The "natural attitude" of life is for it to be directed toward the world, unmindful of its "within." In the natural attitude, man, like the primitive and the animal, "lives alert on his own frontiers, looking toward the outside, absorbed in nature, attentive to the external."[15] The animal mind must be similar to this "natural man," Ortega asserts.

> So I say that nature, the external world, solicits man's attention with a terrible urgency, constantly setting before him the problems of subsistence and defense. Human existence, especially in the primitive ages of mankind, is an unending war with nature, with things, and the individual cannot rest from it by turning to any other form of work than that which will solve the needs of his material life. This means that man attends only to the periphery of his being, to the visible and the tangible.

He continues:

> In the always problematical measure in which we can imagine to ourselves the souls of animals, we would say that their internal situation would somewhat resemble that of "natural" man. Remember that the animal is always alert. . . . Nothing that happens around them escapes them. The word "ecstasy" means, etymologically, to be outside oneself. In this sense the animal lives in a perpetual state of ecstasy, kept outside himself by the urgency of external dangers.[16]

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[15]Ortega, What Is Philosophy?, p. 164 (O.C., VII, p. 379).

[16]Ibid., pp. 163-164 (O.C., VII, pp. 379-380).

Both man and animal share a "natural" relationship with the environment.

Despite the absorption in the external world, the "natural" man has a subjectivity which becomes evident when his attention is directed inwardly. Man normally pays heed to his circumstance or surroundings. A counter-movement is necessary if subjectivity is to be discovered: "I suspend that normal attention to what lies about me and seek myself in it, hunt for myself among things, disregarding them, and focusing on myself."[17] These "normal" and "counter-normal" attitudes are identified by Ortega with the tendencies of the two philosophical theses concerning life, that is, with the claims of realism and idealism, respectfully.[18]

Ortega's analysis of the structures of human life as presented in Chapter III must not be forgotten. His analyses were centered around the four main characteristics of human life which account for its essential structure. These characteristics were discussed in the following order: (1) life is evident, (2) life is circumstantial, (3) life is decision, and (4) life is perplexity. As well, a fifth characteristic became evident in the body of the text: (5) life is untransferable. The characteristics of human life, however, when looked at more closely, reveal a "depth" and a latent complexity which provides a means for a consideration of human life in relation

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[17]Ortega, Some Lessons in Metaphysics, p. 61 (Unas lecciones, p. 80).

[18]Ibid., pp. 124-131 (Unas lecciones, pp. 177-189).

to life in its non-human manifestations. Although space prevents more than a cursory attempt to provide a more adequate philosophical anthropology through an expansion of these thoughts, a clearer description of the relationship between human and animal life should proceed in somewhat the manner which is revealed in the following paragraphs.

The characteristics of human life will be considered in the order in which they have heretofore been presented.

Concerning the characteristic of life as being evident to itself, Ortega specified two senses in which this would be the case. In the first sense the living being is aware of itself in the sense that life implies a presence of the entity to itself. In a second sense life is evident insofar as activities and events of the living being are subject in principle of becoming objects of its own consciousness. Since ensimismamiento denotes the self-conscious dimension of life which distinguishes human life from animal existence, only the first sense of evidence can adequately be applied to purely animal life. Surely the life of the animal is evident to it insofar as it is a sentient being and is a total and concrete unity which comports itself as such a unity. The animal's ability to be aware of itself, and to project itself intentionally would have to reside in its powers of memory and imagination which are relatively lacking in even the higher animals and whose manifestation is the less conspicuous the further one descends the biological scale of life.

The animal's life is also circumstantial like that of man. The animal must comport itself in the midst of an environment or series

of surroundings. It must pay constant attention to its surroundings and must sustain its life by means of its circumstance. The circumstance of man, however, differs substantially from that of the animal to the extent that man's surroundings are historical and social, which is to say that man's circumstances are not immediately natural but always bears witness to the abiding attempts to humankind to achieve well-being.

The characteristic of decision evident in human life seems to be non-existent in animals. Decision rests upon the ability to ensimismarse, a skill noticeably absent in the animal. In its full and proper sense decision requires the ability to conceive and evaluate alternative courses of action and hence an ability to evaluate consequences and purposes. No doubt an animal might appear to make decisions, to choose between alternative courses of action, but animal "dispositions" would lack motivational force. To speak of animal actions as dispositions or as inclinations would clearly distinguish them from intentional human actions which may be spoken of in terms of motivation. Motivation is susceptible to conscious inspection. Decision, then, in its genuine and human sense is an act of volition whose inducement and object are accessible in principle to reflection. Dispositions and inclinations, on the other hand, exist below the threshold of consciousness, so to speak. Animal actions hence may be said to be dispositional and subject to inclination while distinctly conscious acts possess motivational strength and genuinely involve decision.

A complete theory regarding the relationship between motivation and disposition, while not inappropriate, cannot be articulated here. Much exists in the literature of this topic which necessitates some brief comment. I am asserting that animal behavior might best be viewed as dispositional while distinctly human acts, insofar as they involve consciousness and decision, must be motivational. Dispositions are not lacking in humans, of course, and a motivation may arise upon the basis of a disposition. Nonetheless, a motivation may be counter to a disposition. Although both dispositions and motives may be viewed as purposive in some sense and although animal behavior may exhibit purpose, one should beware of claiming as a result that animal behavior is motivational.[19]

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[19]Much recent discussion of dispositions centers around Gilbert Ryle's The Concept of Mind (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1949). His work is deficient in one important respect and I shall limit my comments to this one criticism. He is interested in the nature of dispositional statements and is concerned with the analysis of their usage in ordinary language. As a result he fails to distinguish the appropriate from the inappropriate or metaphorical senses dispositional statements may take. It seems highly inappropriate to speak of glass, to use one of his examples, as having a disposition to break under certain conditions. Attributing dispositions to non-organic and non-animate entities is metaphorical and should not be confused with proper usage.

My position may be made clearer by a distinction made by Alvin I. Goldman in A Theory of Human Action (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1970), especially his chapter on "Wanting," pp. 86-125. He distinguishes between two kinds of wants--in my terminology vital needs, occurrent wants and standing wants. The latter wants or needs are dispositional. An occurrent want is a mental event, he says, that is "going on" or "happening" in consciousness. A standing want "is a disposition or propensity to have an occurrent want." It is possible "for a person to have such a disposition without ever having any manifestations thereof. . . ." He thinks this is unlikely however and that such dispositions would eventually present themselves to consciousness. No doubt his position might be correct in regard to

Regarding the characteristic of perplexity, animal life too must be said to be marked by it also. Although space prevents a fuller analysis of the nature of perplexity, it would seem to be the case that perplexity is a quality attributable to animal life as such, although its human manifestation would be markedly different from its other manifestations. This can be seen to be the case from different perspectives. First, in the analysis of human life perplexity issues from the condition in which man simply finds himself alive and that the life in which he finds himself demands decision. Life, in other words, provides both facilities and difficulties or various possibilities from which one must choose. Obviously, since the animal does not decide, does not possess intentional volition, human perplexity must differ from animal perplexity. Man is capable of being conscious of his perplexity and of making an issue of it and thereby seek to resolve it or in some manner come to terms with it. Second, since there is a difference in the manner in which life is evident to

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persons insofar as dispositions become the basis for motivation. But, this would not be the case for animals where a standing want would be a disposition but could not be said to become a conscious occurrent want.

The nature of disposition in my sense is also touched upon by Paul Ricoeur. He speaks in terms of "preformed skills" and of the nature of embodied existence. Since the human body is an animate body, his remarks concerning bodily spontaneity are not unrelated to the topic of animal existence. "Prior to all learning, all knowledge of the body, we possess a primitive pattern of behavior of our body in relation to perceived objects. . . . In such initial functioning of the body, whose prototype in humans is the liaison between hand and sight, coordination of movement and thought is effected prior to all concerted willing." Such initial functions of the animate body he terms "preformed skills" to distinguish them from both acts of the will which have motivational strength and from strictly determined instinctive actions. Ricoeur, Freedom and Nature: The Voluntary and the Involuntary, trans. Erazim V. Kohak (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1966), pp. 231-235.

man and to the animal, animal perplexity would differ from human perplexity on this account. Human life is evident in the sense that in principle the acts and events of such a life are open to consciousness. The animal would be evident to itself in the sense that life is a presence of the living being to itself. At best its consciousness and volitional qualities would be most rudimentary.

Despite these differences between man and animal in regard to the perplexity of their lives, an essential affinity between the two is manifest. Both man and the animal must be continually on their guard against environmental dangers, both those which are real and those which are merely possible. If man is always under threat, as Ortega claims, the animal would seem to be much more so. Animate beings face the necessity of being alert to their circumstances and of being able to respond appropriately to environmental changes. Animal perplexity has generally been captured under the concept of fear and an analysis of that phenomenon cannot but reveal the essential structures of perplexity. Francisco José Moreno notes that the human condition is permeated by a "basic fear" which is usually concealed under the definitions of insecurity, anxiety, apprehensiveness and phobia.[20] Fear and perplexity permeate the animate condition.

A fifth characteristic of life revealed itself through Ortega's analysis of human life, namely, the characteristic of life as being untransferable. Each and every living being is untransferably the

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[20]Francisco José Moreno, Between Faith and Reason: Basic Fear and the Human Condition (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), pp. 1-15.

individual entity which it is. Although selfhood and a clear sense of individuality are evident in consciousness and hence only explicit in human life, individuality and uniqueness are not attributes peculiar to human beings. Animate beings hold sway over their own living bodies and insofar as they experience themselves or are present to themselves as living beings they must be said to be individuated intrinsically. They are present to themselves as individuated wholes.

The structures of human life as presented in Some Lessons in Metaphysics and What Is Philosophy? are shared to a large extent by non-human animate life. The affinity of human and animal life becomes even more explicit in a consideration of Ortega's phrase "I am I and my circumstance."

Executant Being

The phrase "I am I and my circumstance," exemplifying the structure of human life, also provides an avenue by means of which human life may be seen to be related intrinsically to other modes of life, particularly animal life.

Subject and world coexist within the context of an individual and personal life. In the expression, the "I" functions twice. It is the second "I" within the statement "I am I and my circumstance" which signifies the subject which functions as a center for a circumstance and which to a certain extent is synonymous with the subject of idealist philosophy. When this "I" is considered as subjectivity, it is conjoined with that which is not it, i.e., the circumstance. As well, the second "I" signifies the "interiority" which establishes

who the individual is and functions as the arena of self-consciousness and reflectivity.

It is the first "I" in the expression, however, which is fundamental and designates the individual as the vital being which it is. The circumstance is never related to an abstract "I," to just any "I" as such. Rather, a circumstance is always localized and taken into consideration as "my circumstance." A circumstance is always of the concrete character of being mine. The "I" and its circumstance are real only within the context of an individual life which is its "I" and its circumstance: I am I and my circumstance. The first "I" in the expression, then, designates the concrete entity which possesses and makes effective the circumstance. The first "I" designates me as a concrete and individual entity of whom it is said that I am a self in the possession of a circumstance.

The process of being one's self and of being related to one's circumstance is captured by Ortega's notion of the "executivity" of the possessive I. As noted previously, there is a fundamental difference between the expression "he walks" and the expression "I walk"; a difference is also manifest between "I feel pain" and "he feels pain." The phrases "I walk" and "I feel pain" designate processes viewed from the "inside," so to speak, while "he walks" and "he feels pain" refer to walking and the feeling of pain as external occurrences. The reality referred to in the statement "I walk" is an invisible reality "foreign to space--the effort, the thrust, the

muscular sensations of tension and resistance."[21] In short, the concept of executivity refers to the felt presence of the living being to itself as it exerts itself in its circumstance. Living beings execute themselves, make themselves manifest through their effective presence to the world. "With one thing only are we on intimate terms: our individuality, our life" which is "true inwardness" always "in the act of executing itself." The "I" denotes the reality of entities insofar as they are occurring or "executing themselves."[22]

The first "I" in the expression "I am I and my circumstance," then, denotes a vital being which is executing itself, asserting its existence in the world. Our life, seen from inside is always in the process of directing itself outwardly toward the world. This basic insight was to be repeated many years later:

> Nothing of what we do would be our life if we did not take account of it. This is the first decisive attribute that we encounter; living is that strange, unique reality which has the privilege of existing for its own sake. All living is one's own living, feeling oneself live, knowing oneself to be existing, where knowing does not imply intellectual knowledge or any special wisdom but is that surprising presence which one's life has for every one of us.[23]

Executivity is a characteristic of living beings as such and of

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[21]Ortega, "An Essay in Esthetics by Way of a Preface," Phenomenology and Art, p. 132 (O.C., VI, p. 251).

[22]Ibid., p. 136 (O.C., VI, p. 254).

[23]Ortega, Some Lessons in Metaphysics, pp. 37-38 (Unas lecciones, p. 45).

animate beings in particular. Animate beings "hold sway" over their organic bodies and may be referred to as executant beings and individuated by use of the term "I," which represents the living beings effective presence to itself and control over its own being.

The concept of executivity is not without its obscurities in Ortega's philosophy. Its complete clarification involves metaphysical considerations of the first order. The basic difficulty becomes clear through a consideration of the following passage:

> "I" [as executant being] means . . . not this person as distinct from another, nor, even less, people as distinct from things, but rather all things--men, things, situations--inasmuch as they are occurring, being, executing themselves. Each of us is "I" according to this, not for belonging to a privileged zoological species equipped with a project-making apparatus called consciousness, but more simply because he is something. This red leather box that I have before me is not an "I" because it is only an image I have, and an image is exactly not what is imaged. Image, concept, etc., are always image, concept of . . ., and that of which they are an image is the real being. There is the same difference between a pain that someone tells me about and a pain that I feel as there is between the red that I see and the being red of this red leather box. Being red is for it what hurting is for me. Just as there is an I-John Doe, there is also an I-red, an I-water, and an I-star.
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> Everything, from a point of view within itself, is an "I."[24]

The difference between something or somebody being present to themselves and their being thought of has already been noted through the discussion of the differences in expressions of the forms "I walk" and "he walks." In this passage, however, Ortega seems to suggest that executivity is not only the mode of being for living entities, but also for

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[24]Ortega, "An Essay in Esthetics by Way of a Preface," Phenomenology and Art, pp. 133-134 (O.C., VI, p. 252).

non-living things as well.[25]

The notion of executivity is closely associated with Aristotle, as Ortega shows in his consideration of the concept of existence in Some Lessons in Metaphysics.[26] There he identifies effective existence with the Aristotelian concept of energeia on. But it is in his introduction to the Spanish translation of Émile Bréhier's History of Philosophy which is more instructive in regard to the nature of executant being.[27]

In his introduction to Brehier's work, Ortega draws upon some remarks from Aristotle's De anima (417a, 21-418a, 5). Aristotle's remarks have to do with the nature of actuality and potentiality, the nature of change and of knowledge or thinking. Thinking is a kind of

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[25]Marías points out that "Ortega is fully aware that he is not expressing his intuition adequately. . . ." He is satisfied to point out how Ortega falteringly attempts to give his insight better expression. Marías, Circumstance and Vocation, p. 396.

Philip W. Silver notes the "poetic" character of this passage and, after a most fruitful and productive inquiry into the notion of executivity from several of Ortega's later works, finally comes to the conclusion that Ortega's "catachresis is perfectly justified." Silver, Ortega as Phenomenologist: The Genesis of "Meditations on Quixote" (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), pp. 97-107.

For a clearer view of what Ortega means by executant being, the qualification must be taken into consideration. Ortega says: "'I' means . . . all things . . . inasmuch as they are occurring, being, executing themselves." The appropriate question at this point is to ask of what kinds of things is it correct to say that they execute themselves.

[26]Ortega, Some Lessons in Metaphysics, pp. 66-73 (Unas lecciones, pp. 88-98).

[27]This introduction has been translated into English as "Prologue to a History of Philosophy," and included in Concord and Liberty. See especially the section "Thinking and 'Progress Toward Itself' in Aristotle," pp. 118-128 (O.C., VI, pp. 409-415).

actuality whole potential does not concern an end external to the process itself. Thinking is a movement, i.e., the release and actualization of a potential, but it is not the kind of movement wherein the end of the action is distinct from the movement itself. For example, Aristotle names the following as instances of actions or movements whose ends are external to them: reducing is different from being thin, learning is different from having learned. Thinking differs from these kinds of movements in that its end or goal is immanent in the movement of thought itself. "The change called thinking contains its terminas ad quem; the end is immanent in the movement." Or, otherwise expressed, "the change is performed not for the sake of an entity alien to it but for the sake of the change itself."[28]

> Those changes whose end lies beyond the change proper, and which terminate when they reach it, making room for a new stable state and a new actuality or complete being, Aristotle calls movements sensu stricto. . . . But a change that terminates in itself, and that, through being transition and passage and march, marches only to march and not to get somewhere, is what Aristotle calls action (energia), being in the fullness of its meaning.[29]

Henceforward, "to be" acquires "the value of an active verb, of exercising and operating." Ortega continues, "being will come to denote the effort of something to maintain itself in existence."[30]

Although Ortega is concerned with the phenomenon of thinking in this view of Aristotle, and is fully aware that these passages point

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[28]Ibid., p. 121 (O.C., VI, p. 412).

[29]Ibid., pp. 121-122 (O.C., VI, p. 412).

[30]Ibid., p. 125 (O.C., VI, p. 415).

to a new view of ontology, he is aware that thought is not the only movement which retains its end as an intrinsic component of itself. He points out that Aristotle names other such movements: to see, to be happy and to love. Most importantly, however, Ortega notes that this "action" and mode of being is fundamental to "to live."[31]

Although in this prologue he notes that all such forms of "action" belong to the domain of human reality and are "visions from within," the same distinctions are expressed somewhat differently in another work.

> The concept, in effect, is immutable (identical with itself); it does not vary, it does not exert itself, it does not live. It is what it already is, and nothing more. But Being to the Greeks, although marked by that fixity and paralysis imposed on it by the concept is--which is its projection on the plane of "outside existence," τὸ εκτος, consists, if I may be permitted the expression, in to be making its essence, in to be doing so. This aspect of Being--vis-à-vis its static aspect--is formulated authoritatively in the Aristotelian ideal of Being as actuality: ένεργεία ον.(energeia on), the operative Ens. "Being" is the primordial and more authentic operation. "Being horse" is not only presenting man with the visible form "horse" but being it from within, making or supporting its "horseness" in the ontological ambit; in short, to be a horse is "horsing," as being a flower is "flowering" and to be a color is "coloring." Being, in Aristotle, has the value of an active verb. It is not enough, then, to establish the special character of man as an Ens whose Being consists in "his own being existing in him," in his own existence being problematical to him, because this also happens to the animal and the plant, although in very different ways in each of the three--plant, animal, and man. It is patent that Being, for the animal, is "to feel itself in danger." If there is an entity which consists of a permanent alert it is that of the animal. In its "dormant" form the same thing happens with the plant. We know nothing about the mineral. We know a little about the animal and

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[31]Ibid., p. 125 (O.C., VI, p. 415).

> the vegetable, thanks to the fact that biology is not properly a science.[32]

The passage concerning executivity in "An Essay in Esthetics by Way of a Preface," thus, becomes clearer. An entity is effectively itself when it actualizes its own potential, when it affects its own being. Obscurity in the passage arises from the fact that Ortega has not bothered to state what kinds of entities can genuinely be said to have a "within" or executant being. As Ortega points out with his example of color, the Aristotelian notion of energeia on implies kinds of beings other than living ones which would be executant realities. By equating executivity with problematicalness, however, Ortega clearly limits executivity to living beings, remaining mute in regard to minerals. Executant being is a term and designation applicable to living beings. Only they effectively execute themselves and are genuinely active.

This characterization of the first "I" in "I am I and my circumstance" is in accord to the previous analysis of alteración and ensimismamiento and, although the concepts have changed within the course of Ortega's philosophical work, the basic insight remains the same. Before the I withdraws into itself, that is, before the movement of thought and reflection, and before the discovery of that interiority peculiar to humans, man is actively engaged with his circumstance, given over to alteración, possessed by that which is

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[32]Ortega, The Idea of Principle, pp. 285-286 (O.C., VIII, p. 278).

other than his genuine self. That is to say, his life manifests itself without conscious direction and guidance. In such a situation man's life is nonetheless operative, executing itself in animal fashion, sustaining itself in existence. Animal beings as such execute themselves through the effective control each individual exercises over its lived body and directs itself toward the world in some concrete manner, effectively taking possession of its environment. Such animate "self expression" is prior to consciousness and sustained and explicit projecting of the self in its full and genuine sense toward the vital surroundings.

Human life is a component of the living order for Ortega. It is intrinsically related to animate life. Man is the human animal. The analysis of life which he has offered from within the context of human existence is valid not only for human life but also for animate life as such, once recognition is made of the distinguishing attributes of human life. Life itself is seen to involve the combination of sensibility, appearance and preservation. Animate being by being present to itself is sentient and thus possesses sensibility while, as executing itself and being occupied by its surroundings, the animal "self"--in some sense--appears and is subject to observation. Lastly, the living being seeks to sustain itself, to preserve its existence.

As this study is drawing its last breath, so to speak, attention may now be directed to a consideration of a view of biology which appears consistent with Ortega's position. Ortega's rejection of idealism also carries with it a rejection of idle speculation.

His perspective upon life is not without empirical confirmation and import.

II. ORTEGA AND BIOLOGY

Much importance has been placed upon Ortega's rejection of biology in this study. His attitude toward biology, however, is not totally negative. The type of biology which Ortega is emphatic in rejecting is the Darwinian sort whose sole explanatory force rests upon considering only one of the attributes of life. The Darwinian notion of adaptation is a means for accounting for the preservation of living beings and as a result omits the aspects of sensibility and appearance which also are aspects of life.

Ortega's thought was itself strongly influenced by biology, particularly by the work of the German biologist Jacob von Uexküll. Ortega explains in an introduction to one of Uexküll's works in Spanish in 1922 that,

> . . . since 1913 [hence, before Ortega's first major work] his [Uexküll's] biological meditations have exercised great influence on me. This influence has not been merely scientific, but also heartening: I know of no suggestions that are more effective than his at putting order, serenity, and hope into the confusion of the contemporary spirit.[33]

Affinities between Uexküll and Ortega are not difficult to find.[34]

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[33]Ortega, O.C., VI, p. 308. In another work Ortega speaks of his role in "bringing the biological ideas of von Uexküll into philosophy." Ortega, "Preface for German," Phenomenology and Art, p. 71 (O.C., VIII, p. 54).

[34]The relationship between Ortega and Uexküll has been pointed out quite clearly by Robert McClintock, Man and His Circumstances,

Through actual observations of living beings, Uexküll constructed a neo-Kantian theory of biology in which he insisted that living beings possess an "inner world" through which they encounter and organize the "external" or surrounding world. In other words, the animal possesses a subjective capacity which gives structure to its world. The correlation of the subjective "interior" of the living being with its vital surroundings is species specific. Each kind of living being has a specific living structure of drives and functions which give the "world" of that organism its specific characteristics. Thus, the vital horizon of a rabbit and of a walrus are quite different due to the differing natures of the animals in question. The relationships of the living being in regard to its environment, from Uexküll's perspective, could not be reduced to adaptability or survival functions.

Uexküll's view of living beings is retained somewhat in the work of the ethologist Adolf Portmann.[35] Portmann considers the current

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pp. 300-304, pp. 551-552. See also his article "Machines and Vitalists: Reflections on the Ideology of Cybernetics," American Scholar 35 (Spring 1966): 249-257. Uexküll's most important work is Umwelt und Innewelt des Tiers (Berlin: Verlag von Julius Springer, 1909). His only work rendered into English is Theoretical Biology, trans. John Mackinnon (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Tuebner and Company, 1926).

[35]Two major works by Portmann are Animals as Social Beings, trans. Oliver Coburn (New York: The Viking Press, 1961) and New Paths in Biology, trans. Arnold J. Pomerans (New York: Harper and Row, 1964). An excellent analysis of Portmann's position is to be found in Marjorie Grene, The Understanding of Nature: Essays in the Philosophy of Biology, pp. 254-293.

emphasis upon the survival of the species and the individual as the guiding biological approach to life as drawing its strength from two sources. First, the prevalent Darwinian theory is interested in the function of the organism--the function into which the metabolism of the organism, i.e., digestion, respiration, nerve and muscle functions as well as genetic processes, can be subsumed in a general way--as contrasted to the living beings vital "plan."

> Metabolism may serve the survival of the individual, but however important it is, we must remember that the individual is not there for the sake of its metabolism, but rather that metabolism serves manifest individual existence. That is why the special structures, which we call this plant or that animal, are much more than organized complexes of survival mechanisms. Thus, while it is true to say that all flowers serve the reproduction of their kind, this statement fails to explain why a given flower should have one form rather than another. In the current view, the structural plan is ignored. However, before it can serve any function, the plan itself must be there, and the fact that it varies from species to species deserves much more attention than most biologists seem to pay it.[36]

Second, the current theories of evolution reflect a practical concern on the part of man. He notes that "we concentrate quite particularly on all those characteristics which we wish to control," which are all reducible to preservation.[37] Although Portmann agrees that survival mechanisms provide an effective avenue for research, he is convinced that the characteristics of organic life processes cannot be comprehended adequately in terms of survival values. The biologist should

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[36]Portmann, New Paths in Biology, p. 152. My emphases.

[37]Ibid., p. 149.

pay more attention to the "structural plan" which the organism exhibits before proceeding to inquire into general laws having to do with the function or survival characteristic of living beings.

The "structural plans" which define particular kinds of living beings are to be investigated by a morphology which is to view animate behavior prior to and independent of the traditional approach. Through such an approach many phenomena appear which are not susceptible to explanations in terms of survival value. Examples of such phenomena are not lacking in Portmann's works but the two which receive most attention concern the elaborate patterning of the peacock's fan and the patterns on the wing of certain butterflies.[38] These two phenomena, among many others, he claims, are completely lacking in survival value.

Portmann's morphological investigations led him to specify three characteristics of living beings. The first characteristic is that life "shows itself," reveals itself on the surface, so to speak. This characteristic he attempts to capture with the concept of Selbstdarstellung or self-expression of the living being. Marjorie Grene opts for the term "display" in translating the concept into English.[39] For Portmann a living being "displays" itself through its bodily existence. Whatever may be the final explanation regarding the mechanics of such self-expression, Grene states Portmann's position

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[38]Ibid., pp. 113-119, 77-88, respectfully.

[39]Grene, The Understanding of Nature, p. 268.

well by noting that "we should honestly admit the existence of organic display as a given, an ultimate, fact of the organic world."[40]

Associated with the characteristic of display there is a second which must be considered. Living beings display themselves; "organisms are centers of perceptions, drives and actions."[41] Although such "selves" are not truly conscious and hence do not know themselves, it is nonetheless appropriate to speak of the "self" of animate being "behind" the displaying. Animate being is "self-centered." Indeed, self-expression can be used to gauge the "inner" or mental development of living beings.[42]

Besides self-expression and animal centeredness, there is a third characteristic which is essential for life--self-maintenance, or survival. "Animals must indeed be adapted to their environments if they are to survive, and such techniques for survival do form a very substantial, perhaps even the major, segment of the totality of living structure and process."[43] For Portmann, the mechanisms which support self-maintenance and species existence should not be allowed to overshadow the other characteristics which also apply to living beings.

Ortega's view of life is not lacking in biological confirmation.

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[40]Ibid., p. 269.

[41]Ibid., p. 270.

[42]Portmann, New Paths in Biology, p. 156.

[43]Grene, The Understanding of Nature, p. 276.

On the one hand, animal life is viewed by Portmann as much less "constrained" than previously thought. "It is important," he says,

> . . . to understand that we are today liberating ourselves from this rigid conception of animal life, and that we assess very highly the degree of freedom and openness in the animal's view of the world. Contemporary research into animal behavior is closely concerned with this point.[44]

On the other hand, man appears more like the animal than previously thought. Human sense organs "correspond so conspicuously to those of the vertebrates that on the basis of them alone no fundamental difference or individuality could be discovered."[45] How is it that specifically human life differs from other modes of life? The "structural plan" of human life must differ substantially from that of other animals as Ortega claimed.

> Thus, that which is unique to man must inhere in the way in which the sense impressions are processed, the way in which our image of the world gradually arises out of the achievements of our senses. It is not, after all, our eyes that see and our ears that hear, as one so easily assumes--it is always Man who sees and hears. It is the whole organism that processes stimuli and determines what is peculiar to our experience of the world and in our behavior in it.[46]

According to Portmann, then, man is intrinsically related to the other forms of life but differs from them due to the different manner in which sense impressions are organized and structured. From Ortega's point of view, such structuring would arise from the increased memory

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[44]Adolt Portmann, "The Special Position of Man in the Realm of the Living," Commentary 40 (November 1965): 39.

[45]Ibid.

[46]Ibid.

and increased power of imagination which are definitive for man and constitute genuine subjectivity and "interiority."

Portmann thus confirms Ortega's insights concerning life from an unrelated source. The unique position of man within the animal kingdom and in general the nature of life as such both point to the veracity of Ortega's views.

III. SUMMARY

The intrinsic relationship between man and animal, and by implication the realm of living beings as such, has now been made explicit. Ortega's various ways of describing the "primary reality" of human life are consistent in situating human existence within the context of animate being. Despite the structural differences between man and other forms of living beings, an ontological affinity between all vital beings is stressed.

The ontological affinity between living beings is clearly expressed through Ortega's notion of executant being. Living beings take possession of their circumstances or surroundings. Ontologically, living beings assert their existence in the world and direct themselves, in some sense, outwardly toward the world. The being of such entities consists in the effective presence and control such beings have of themselves.

Although this view of living beings is not foreign to biological thought--as witnessed by the work of Portmann--its philosophical ramifications are far-reaching. For Ortega, human existence is

incorporated into a comprehensive setting wherein man is intrinsically related to animate nature without sacrifice of the personalist dimension which constitutes the philosophical strength of existentialism. The fact that this is the case is to be seen by way of a general appraisal of Ortega's conception of life against the background of some of the major figures of contemporary philosophy.

It is to that appraisal that attention is now turned.

CHAPTER V

TOWARD A GENERAL APPRAISAL

Human existence has been shown to be a vital reality for Ortega. Furthermore, as a vital reality human existence has been shown to be intrinsically related to other forms of living beings. While immersed in a natural world and being a part of that world, human life possesses a structure peculiar to itself, a structure which cannot be reduced to the biological or somatic processes of the animate body considered solely in themselves. Human life is always a personal life and is given as the basic or radical reality within the context of which all other realities are presented or "rooted." Objects do not exist independently of a presence to a subject, counter to the claims of the realists. Neither does a subject exist ontologically distinct from the objects and states of affairs which it confronts. Both subject and object, self and world, coexist in a dynamic relationship which is both natural and historical. Life is precisely the dynamic coexistence of self and world.

The significance of Ortega's thought is intertwined with a clear articulation of man's presence to the world. In his quest to describe man's living relationship to the world, Ortega rubs elbows, so to speak, with other important figures in contemporary philosophy. As a result, one way of appraising Ortega's import is by way of seeing his position in relationship with the contributions of other

major philosophers. Once this is accomplished, the significance of Ortega's philosophical position will be surveyed by way of an examination of its general profile.

I. ORTEGA AND THE MAINSTREAM

Ortega worked in the mainstream of continental philosophy and the nature of his work is clearly visible in regard to others with whom he shared major ideas. The influence of Husserl's phenomenology upon Ortega's thought is immense and the fact that Husserl recognized the importance of a systematic approach to the world of life in his later philosophy reveals an affinity between Ortega and the later Husserl. The similarities between Ortega and Heidegger are clearly evident as I have attempted to point out by means of footnotes throughout the text. The relationship between these two thinkers is perhaps more relevant than any other comparison in an appraisal of Ortega's importance. Lastly, certain parallels between Ortega and Sartre are to be discovered considering in particular the latter's notion of a prereflective consciousness.

Edmund Husserl

The concept of life was to surface in Husserl's phenomenology, revealing that the theme with which Ortega had concerned himself for so many years had proved to be an essential aspect of phenomenological research.

Husserl's attempt to establish a "rigorous science" under the name of phenomenology seemed no less secure at the end of his career

than it did at the beginning. Toward the end of his life Husserl faced the difficulty of justifying his transcendental reduction or epoche in relation to the historically relative life-world. Thought and science presupposed a living contact with the world and until this presupposed relationship was clearly articulated a presuppositionless philosophy in Husserl's sense was impossible. As a result, the "problem" of the life-world was not a partial difficulty for him. He viewed it as a universal problem for philosophy.[1] In the face of these difficulties, Husserl proposed an investigation into the a priori of the life-world. The fundamental science, on which all others are to be "founded," was to be devoted to an inquiry into the a priori structures and forms of the Lebenswelt.[2] Husserl seems

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[1]Edmund Husserl, The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy, trans. David Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), p. 132.

[2]A classical statement of the difficulty imposed by the notion of the life-world for Husserl follows:

"The supposedly completely self-sufficient logic which modern mathematical logicians [Logistiker] think they are able to develop, even calling it a truly scientific philosophy, namely, as the universal, a priori, fundamental science for all objective sciences, is nothing but naivete. Its self-evidence lacks scientific grounding in the universal life-world a priori, which it always presupposes in the form of things taken for granted, which are never scientifically, universally formulated, never put in the general form proper to a science of essence. Only when this radical, fundamental science exists can such a logic itself become a science. Before this it hangs in mid-air, without support, and is, as it has been up to now, so very naive that it is not even aware of the task which attaches to every objective logic, every a priori science in the usual sense, namely that of discovering how this logic itself is to be grounded, hence no longer "logically" but by being traced back to the universal prelogical a priori through which everything logical, the total edifice of objective theory in all its methodological forms, demonstrates its legitimate sense and from which, then, all logic itself must receive its norms." Ibid., p. 141.

to have departed from his transcendental egology which had been the basis of his philosophy.[3] The problem of life was thus raised as a phenomenological theme.

In an essay written in 1941, Ortega rejects the pretentions of a Husserlian phenomenology of consciousness even as articulated in the later part of Husserl's career. "Husserl proposes to arrive at the roots (we are promised 'radical reflection') of knowledge by way of phenomenological analysis." He continues:

> He anticipates--how can he help it?--that these roots are pre-theoretical, let us vaguely say "vital." But since he comes upon all this in the process of philosophizing and making phenomenology, and since phenomenology has not justified itself, the whole consideration remains hanging in the air.[4]

Ortega's attitude toward the notion of a phenomenologically purified consciousness was definitely unfriendly. His negative opinion of Husserl's endeavors comes out most clearly, however, in a closing footnote to the essay just quoted. Paradoxically, this same negative opinion of Husserl reveals an affinity between the two thinkers.

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[3]Others insist that, on the contrary, Husserl remained true to his original insights. Hans-Georg Gadamer writes, for example: "When we read the explicit summary of the new role of transcendental reduction that Husserl gives in the Crisis . . ., we are astonished to find that the old, well-known problems and insights of the earlier program have returned, though in a somewhat altered form. The analysis of the a priori of the life-world and its methodical founding involves a change of attitude that is none other than the familiar transcendental epoche of the Ideas." Gadamer, Philosophical Hermeneutics, trans. David Linge (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), p. 190.

[4]Ortega, "Notes on Thinking--Its Creation of the World and Its Creation of God," contained in Concord and Liberty, p. 82 (O.C., V, p. 546). Parentheses in the original. The essay appears in Spanish as "Apuntes sobre el pensamiento--su demiurgia y su teurgia."

I quote at length:

> In his Formal and Transcendental Logic Husserl . . . expounded his "genetic phenomenology." This genetic phenomenology through which he sought to come in touch with the pre-theoretical reality which is "life" cannot react upon general phenomenology of which it is a component part. Husserl died without publishing any concrete investigation on genetic phenomenology. He but put forth a summary program. . . .
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> While reading the proofs of this essay, I happened to see that in 1935 Husserl gave a course of lectures at the University of Prague under the title "Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology," the beginning of which was published in the journal Philosophia, vol. I, 1936, Belgrade. In it the great philosopher gives a more detailed exposition of the ideas he entertained in his later period. We would therefore seem to have been mistaken in calling that passage unique in Husserl's intellectual style. In fact, we were not. The article in Philosophia was doubtless agreed on with Husserl in conversations, and ideas from his manuscripts were used in it. But the work--the last Husserl would have published in his lifetime--was obviously put into writing not by him but by Dr. Fink, whose style--of writing and thinking--is manifest throughout the text. Not only does the style differ from Husserl's but in this study phenomenology jumps to views that could never have organically grown from it. Personally, I am much gratified by this leap of phenomenological doctrine which means nothing less than a recourse to "historical reason." I should, however, like to state that my essay "History as a System," published in 1935, precedes those pages in Philosophia. . . .[5]

Contrary to Ortega's opinion, Husserl is generally credited with writing the Crisis. A shared concern with the problem of life had, without his knowledge, brought Ortega to praise this aspect of Husserl's thought.

Ortega's concern with the phenomenon of life, of course, predates the attention that same phenomenon was to receive in Husserl's last work. The attempt to view the significance of the Orteguian concept of life by showing the relevance of that concept in Husserl's

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[5]Ibid. (O.C., V, pp. 546-547).

philosophy is not intended to produce the impression that a reciprocal relationship existed between the two thinkers or that Ortega was a follower of Husserl. Since Husserl's views on the nature of life were never fully articulated, an evaluation of the similarities between Ortega and Husserl is difficult to make. The fact that the master phenomenologist himself came to see the life-world as a problematic which needed to be investigated, however, does reveal that the theme which guided Ortega's work was not of minor importance.

Ortega was keenly aware of Husserl's work prior to the Crisis, however, and was instrumental in introducing his ideas into Spain. After an initial infatuation, Ortega appears to have abandoned the philosophy of Husserl because of its lack of "foundation"--a defect which Husserl himself decided could be rectified only by a systematic analysis of the life-world.

In his last major work, Ortega recalled the theme of his philosophical career, which I repetitiously repeat since I also made use of it in the introduction to this study. The repetition is justified due to the importance of the quote.

> In 1925, I stated my theme--some of my students may recall it--saying literally: (1) the traditional problem of being must be reformed from its roots up; (2) this must be accomplished by the phenomenological method insofar, and only insofar, as this means synthetic or intuitive thinking and not merely the kind of conceptual-abstract thinking which is the traditional way; (3) but it is necessary to integrate the phenomenological method, giving it a dimension of systematic thinking which, as is well known, it does not possess; (4) and finally, so that systematic phenomenological thinking may be possible, it is necessary to start from a phenomenon which might be the system itself. This systematic phenomenon is human life and it is necessary

> to start with its contemplation and analysis. In this way I abandoned phenomenology at the very moment of tasting it.[6]

Husserl's phenomenology, then, appeared to Ortega as a means for accomplishing his own desired goal--to investigate human life.

In fact Ortega's view of life evolved out of a consideration of Husserl's work as early as 1914, shortly after the publication of Ideas.[7]

> Since 1914 the basis of all my thinking has been contemplation of the phenomenon of "human life." At that time I formulated it--in order to explain Husserl's phenomenology during various courses of lectures--in particular correcting the description of the phenomenon "consciousness of . . ." which, as is well known, at that time constituted the basis of his doctrine.[8]

Phenomenology seems not to have presented itself to Ortega as a philosophy; its lack of system disqualified it as that. Rather he accepted it as a methodology, as a "prodigious instrument."

> Its [phenomenology's] inestimable value lies in the "delicate structure" of fleshy tissues it can add to the architecture of a system. This is why phenomenology was never a philosophy for us; instead it was . . . a stroke of good fortune.[9]

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[6]Ortega, The Idea of Principle, pp. 279-280 (O.C., VIII, p. 273).

[7]This work appeared in German under the title Ideen au einer reinen Phanomenologie und phanomenologischen Philosophie, in 1913. It appears in English as Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology, trans. W. R. Boyce Gibson (London: Collier-Macmillan, 1962).

[8]Ortega, The Idea of Principle, p. 280 (O.C., VIII, p. 273).

[9]Ortega, "Preface for Germans," Phenomenology and Art, p. 54 (O.C., VIII, p. 42).

Rather than accepting Husserl's philosophical standpoint, which he considered a contemporary form of idealism, Ortega makes use only of the phenomenological method.

Ortega's conception of life thus grew out of his early interest in the work of Husserl. Ortega rejected the idealism implied by Husserl's epoche and the notion of a pure consciousness related to the world solely in terms of intentional acts. An analysis of consciousness did not account for the presupposed and preconscious or living presence to the world which is the natural condition of human existence. Ortega was thus interested in the methodological significance of Husserl's phenomenology but he rejected its philosophical implications. Preceding consciousness and reflection, Ortega discerned the structured and systematic reality of human life which he was to explicate.

Martin Heidegger

Ortega's relationship to Martin Heidegger is much more difficult to clarify than his relationship to Husserl. The importance of Ortega's views on human life were overshadowed to a large extent by the work of Heidegger to such a degree that it might appear that Ortega mimicked the German's descriptions of human existence. Although Ortega recognizes the similarities in their thinking, he insists that his views preceded those of Heidegger. In his analysis of human life presented in What Is Philosophy?, Ortega is quick to point out that he had arrived at his position independently of Heidegger. Considering

the definition "to live is to find oneself in a world" he insists that it, like all the other major concepts in the lecture,

> . . . can be found elsewhere in my published work. It is important to me to mention this, especially with regard to the idea of existence, for which I claim ideological priority. For that very reason, I am glad to recognize that the man who has gone deepest into the analysis of life is the German philosopher, Martin Heidegger.[10]

On another occasion, however, Ortega criticizes himself for not being more forceful and vocal with his conception of human existence. Although he claims that the principle "ideas" concerning the structures of human life can be found in his work, the full ontological importance did not dawn upon him until around 1925 when he realized that his philosophical project necessitated a requestioning of Being.[11]

The reason for his "silence" he says was "purely and simply . . . timidity." The timidity was a reaction to the "enormity" of his discovery, he claims.

> The doctrine of human life includes the greatest enormity which, between 1900 and 1925, could be uttered in philosophy, namely that there is no consciousness as a primary form of relationship between the so-called "subject" and so-called "objects"; what we have is man in relation to things and things to man, that is, human existence. The young people of Montmartre who today play the guitar of "existentialism" by ear still do not know this fundamental, but without it there is no way to reach the high seas of metaphysics.[12]

Despite his claims to priority in regard to the existential conception of existence, Ortega insists that there is something

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[10]Ortega, What Is Philosophy?, p. 218 (O.C., VII, p. 416).

[11]Ortega, The Idea of Principle, p. 280 (O.C., VIII, p. 275).

[12]Ibid., p. 281 (O.C., VIII, p. 275).

amiss with existentialism, a mistake to be found exemplified in Heidegger's approach to the question of Being. But before I direct attention to this criticism of Heidegger and of existentialism, more attention must be given to their shared ideas and concepts.

Ortega discusses his relationship and affinity with Heidegger in a lengthy footnote contained in his essay "In Search of Goethe from Within" written in 1932.[13] There he notes that Heidegger had arrived at a definition of life not far from his own conceptions. It should not be inferred from this that either one was influenced substantially by the other--in fact Heidegger does not analyze life, but a reality he terms Dasein. Ortega notes:

> It would be impossible for me to say how close Heidegger's philosophy comes to that which has always inspired my writings--among other things, because Heidegger's work is not yet finished, nor, on the other hand, have my ideas been adequately developed in print. But I am obliged to say that I owe Heidegger very little.[14]

Heidegger, Ortega is saying, reopened the question of Being in print, something he had failed to do adequately by 1927, the date of publication of Being and Time. It would seem to be the case that the two men arrive at their respective positions independently of each other.

Ortega remarks that many of the concepts which were to be equated with Heidegger and which were to receive their philosophic force through Heidegger's book were brought forward by him in 1914 in Meditations on Quixote. He is not without examples: "the idea of

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[13]Ortega, "In Search of Goethe from Within," The Dehumanization of Art. The footnote is to be found on pp. 146-148 (O.C., IV, pp. 403-404).

[14]Ibid., p. 146 (O.C., IV, p. 403).

life as uneasiness, preoccupation, and insecurity, and of culture as security and preoccupation with security. . . ." Two other concepts are worthy of note: life as futurition and the notion of truth as aletheia. Concerning futurition Ortega remarks: "The structure of life as futurition is the most persistent leitmotiv of my writings." As well, he notes that his use of aletheia as truth also occurred in his first work--well before Heidegger's use of the term.[15] In other words, most of Heidegger's concepts involved in describing being-in-the-world are to be found in the early work of Ortega y Gasset. Furthermore, he remarks that his notion of vital reason was intended to accomplish basically the same task of clarifying the nature of human existence as was accomplished by Heidegger's analysis of Dasein.[16]

Anxious to point to the "originality" of his own endeavors, Ortega attempts to correct the philosophic record:

> To find here such facts as I have transcribed in this note will perhaps bring some slight feeling of shame to young men who were ignorant of them in good faith. If it were a matter of bad faith, it would be of no importance; the important thing for them is to discover that they were ignorant of them in good faith, with the result that they will be doubtful of their good faith.[17]

Then, as though he had corrected the record, he continues:

> As I have kept silence for many years, I shall return to silence for many more, with no further interruption than

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[15]Ibid., p. 147 (O.C., IV, p. 403).

[16]Ibid., p. 148 (O.C., IV, p. 404).

[17]Ibid. (O.C., IV, p. 404).

> this hurried footnote, which really does nothing but set any strayed good faith on the right path.[18]

If keeping silent is identified with keeping out of print, Ortega had prescribed his future mode of conduct toward discussing his affinity with Heidegger. It was not until after his death that Heidegger was to be mentioned in print again in his posthumous work The Idea of Principle. There the differences between the two thinkers are accented.

In The Idea of Principle Ortega takes Heidegger to task for not establishing his "fundamental ontology" on a firmer foundation.

> Although I admire his indisputable genius, which entitles him to be considered as one of the greatest philosophers who have ever lived . . . I can accept almost none of his positions except those which we hold in common when we approach living human reality. Thus it is not acceptable that he starts forthwith by attributing to man what he calls Seinverständnis, "comprehension of being." Because in none of his books does he take the trouble to try to clarify what he understands by that term.[19]

Ortega acquiesces to Heidegger's descriptions of human existence but finds fault with his attempt at ontology. Heidegger views man as having an "understanding of Being" but fails to state what he means by Being. As a result he analyzes the structures of a certain type of being, namely, that type of being which he terms Dasein. Heidegger, Ortega claims, has merely offered an existential analysis of human life and has not properly come to grips with the nature of Being.

Moreover, and associated with this, Heidegger's entire approach

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[18]Ibid. (O.C., IV, p. 404).

[19]Ortega, The Idea of Principle, p. 282 (O.C., VIII, p. 275).

to ontology is based upon a "terminological arbitrariness" according to Ortega. Heidegger distinguishes between Being as Zuhanden-sein and as Vorhanden-sein, between the ready-to-hand and the present-to-hand, respectfully. He then proceeds to analyze a third type of Being, "being in the there," Dasein, which is the mode of existence of man. The term Dasein takes the place in Heidegger, the Spaniard insists,

> . . . of the simple and natural term "life" with that terminological arbitrariness which was always so prevalent among German thinkers; who, not experiencing "loneliness" like every human creature but converting themselves anomalously into "solitaries," shut up in themselves, "auto-ists," invert the usual language in which the individual speaks with his neighbor and start "talking with themselves," inventing a language of which the use is intimate and untransferable.[20]

Opposed to the concept of Dasein or existence, Ortega claims that the word "life" is the more "natural" term for denoting the human reality. From Ortega's perspective it is crucial that the proper word be chosen to denote human reality. His justification for his claim that "life" is the natural term is not based on aspects of ordinary language useage. Although it might appear that calling human reality "life" is just as arbitrary as any other term, Ortega is not without reasons for criticizing Heidegger's choice of terms.[21]

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[20]Ibid., p. 284 (O.C., VIII, p. 277).

[21]Alfred Stern claims, contrary to Ortega, that from an etymological point of view, the term "existence" is not an arbitrary term with which to designate human reality. He thinks that Ortega is the one who is being arbitrary by insisting upon use of the term "life." He also notes that Ortega himself makes use of the term "existence" in many places in his published work. Stern fails to note, however, that Ortega is not opposed to the notion of existence when it is used to describe the human condition. Ortega rejects the

In one context Ortega insists that human beings do not exist! Existence, he claims, is a concept to designate realities which are given within the context or ambit of a life. He notes that a "terminological wrongheadedness that verges on the intolerable" has been made to use the terms "exist" and "existence" to denote human reality.[22] Although these remarks are aimed at the French existentialists, they provide a means for justifying Ortega's criticism of Heidegger.

> Today some writers attempt to make the term ["existence"] designate man's mode of being. But man who is always "I"--the I that each of us is--is the only being that does not exist, but lives or is alive. Precisely all the other things that are not man, not "I," are the things that exist, because they appear, arise, spring up, resist me, assert themselves in the ambit that is my life.[23]

Those things may be said to exist which reveal themselves in the ambit of a life and which resist that life or stand opposed to the living being. Existence is attributed to realities which are conspicuous in one's life, and which offer resistance to life. He thus insists that the term is to be applied to realities insofar as they must be reckoned with and are to be found external to and resisting the living being.

In Some Lessons in Metaphysics further details can be found concerning Ortega's attitude toward the concept of existence. There

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ontological element in existentialism, or, better still, he criticizes existentialism because it does not raise the issue of what the being is which is said to exist. Stern, The Search for Meaning, pp. 265-266.

[22]Ortega, Man and People, p. 41 (O.C., VII, p. 101).

[23]Ibid. (O.C., VII, p. 101).

he distinguishes two senses of the term. The one sense has already been discussed.

> When we say of something that it exists, that it is there, we do not, strictly speaking, say anything about that something, but about ourselves. Therefore, on saying 'there is a thing' we understand that we can or we must find it within a certain compass [of our lives]. Of the thing itself, we say nothing; we say only what happens to us concerning it, namely, that we can or we must encounter it. But this implies no effort from the thing. Because the finding of it is a matter that happens to us, nothing happens to the thing.[24]

In this sense existence refers to realities which are encountered within the ambit of a life. Those things which are encountered within the ambit of a life, it should be pointed out, include not simply spatio-temporal objects, but also ideas, beliefs and even objects of the imagination. Imaginary objects, for example, exist within the ambit of the imagination, which is a part of life.

There is another sense of existence which differs substantially from the former sense. In speaking of the existence of something, Ortega remarks, two things must be clearly distinguished, namely, the thing that exists and the existing of that thing. There is a difference, in other words, between the existence of something and its being--its <u>real</u> existence. Consider, he suggests, the difference between a centaur and a horse. Both may be said to exist, but only the horse may be said to <u>really</u> possess being, i.e., the horse <u>really</u> exists. A real horse, in contrast to the centaur, is effectively itself, it makes itself effectively what it is, it "executes" itself.

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[24]Ortega, <u>Some Lessons in Metaphysics</u>, p. 69 (<u>Unas lecciones</u>, pp. 91-92).

The centaur cannot do this.

> The centaur and the horse each has its essence, the one neither more nor less than the other. But the centaur does not make its essence effective, it is not effectively what it is; the centaur is ineffectively itself--it does not exist. The essence remains without being put in force. Well then, in its primary and strict sense, the existence of something means the execution or achievement of that something. In place of our 'existence,' Aristotle said, 'taken as word, accomplished'--energeia on--and the Scholastics translated that term saying, 'put into action,' to be in force, in actuality.[25]

For something to be means, for Ortega, that it is actually making itself, realizing its potential. That is to say, such existence would involve a seeing of the thing from its own point of view, to see it as "exerting itself in order to make its essence effective, to be itself."[26] For Ortega the process of executivity and of self exertion is the precise characteristic of life. Only the living being can be itself effectively.[27]

Instead of referring to human reality by use of the term Dasein or existence, then, which designates "being in the there," Ortega

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[25]Ibid., p. 68 (Unas lecciones, pp. 90-91).

[26]Ibid., p. 69 (Unas lecciones, p. 92).

[27]Ortega's major refer ces to his conception of executant being is to be found in the following works: "An Essay in Esthetics by Way of a Preface," Phenomenology and Art, pp. 131-136 (O.C., VI, pp. 250-254); "Prologue to a History of Philosophy," Concord and Liberty, pp. 118-128 (O.C., VI, pp. 409-415); and The Idea of Principle, pp. 285-286 (O.C., VIII, pp. 278-279). Cf., Silver, Ortega as Phenomenologist, pp. 96-107. Silver seems to make one minor mistake. He incorrectly infers that "man, unlike all else, has no essence to execute." Man, as a living being, does have an essence, but it is always in the process of being made. Human life is a process of executing itself.

insists that the concept of life is a more adequate and more basic term to denote the Being which is present to the world. Ortega thus feels that he has requestioned the problem of Being in a more satisfactory manner than did Heidegger.[28]

Similarities thus exist between Heidegger's analysis of Dasein and Ortega's view of human life. Both see man's existence as a being "thrown" into the world; man is immersed in the world and in the face of this is "uneasy" and "insecure." He feels himself a stranger, being a part of but yet distinct from the world. Human life is an involvement with the world and a preoccupation with circumstances.

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[28]Heidegger had explicitly rejected an approach to Being by way of "life," in particular the work of Wilhelm Dilthey:

"It's [Dilthey's view of life] philosophical relevance . . . is not to be sought here [in the results of his work], but rather in the fact that in all this he was, above all, on his way towards the question of 'life.' To be sure, we can also see here very plainly how limited were both his problematic and the set of concepts with which it had to be put into words." Heidegger, Being and Time, pp. 72-73.

In criticizing Heidegger from the perspective of life, Ortega had to distinguish his position from that of Dilthey. Ortega saw part of his task not in showing his intellectual independence from Heidegger but in pointing out that he and Dilthey differed substantially. The result, then, would be that Heidegger's objections to Dilthey--objections which Ortega thought were valid--did not discredit his own position.

In regard to his relationship to Dilthey, Ortega claims at least three things: (1) He did not "discover" Dilthey until after his own thoughts had matured. (2) Dilthey is important only in retrospect, that is, he was a precursor to his own work and to that of Heidegger. Dilthey is important only because of current developments. (3) Dilthey's work was inadequate. The reason for this is that he is tied to the subjectivist tradition. He did not possess, and hence was unable to make use of, the "methodical tool" elaborated by Husserl. "This instrument has enabled some thinkers of my generation," Ortega states, "to tackle the problem from the first, on a level above that of Dilthey." Ortega, "A Chapter from the History of Ideas--Wilhelm Dilthey and the Idea of Life," Concord and Liberty, p. 177 (O.C., VI, pp. 208-209). This work appears in Spanish as "Guillermo Dilthey y la idea de la vida." Ortega also distances himself from Dilthey in "Preface for Germans," Phenomenology and Art, pp. 58-59 (O.C., VIII, pp. 45-46).

Their descriptions of the human condition are very similar; both speak of futurition, truth as aletheia, the nature of authenticity, and the insecurity of human existence. Ortega insists, however, that only he captured the genuine ontological problematic of human existence through his use of the concept of life.

Jean-Paul Sartre

In many respects Ortega is a precursor of many of the ideas of Sartre. Space prevents a full consideration of the relationship between Ortega and Sartre, so I am forced to concentrate only upon certain striking similarities. In this manner Ortega's work will be shown to be not unrelated to the major themes of French existentialism. I shall limit my comments to noting two important similarities between Ortega and Sartre which are fundamental to both philosophers. First, both philosophers opt for a psychological view of phenomenology and discredit its transcendental and idealist tendencies, i.e., they reject the Husserlian doctrine of the epoche and its egological inclinations. This comes out strongly in Sartre's views on the primacy of the prereflective consciousness. Second, the famous emphasis upon existence rather than upon essence is to be found in both Ortega and Sartre.

Sartre, as well as Ortega, criticizes Husserl's egology, his insistence that consciousness is fully transparent to itself through reflection. Sartre points out in The Transcendence of the Ego that consciousness reflecting upon itself is for consciousness to make itself into an object. The phenomenon "consciousness" which results from such reflection, however, should not be taken, Sartre insists,

as "primary" consciousness. The primary mode of being for consciousness is to be conscious of an object, and precisely in such consciousness it is conscious of itself. One way of being conscious of an object is for consciousness to view itself as an object, but in such a case the primary mode of consciousness remains "consciousness of." This primary consciousness is not to be equated with its object when it considers itself as object.

> The mode of existence of consciousness is to be conscious of itself. And consciousness is consciousness of itself insofar as it is consciousness of a transcendent object. All is therefore clear and lucid in consciousness. The object with its characteristic opacity is in front of consciousness, but consciousness is purely and simply consciousness of being consciousness of that object; this is the law of its existence.
>
> Further, this consciousness of consciousness . . . is not positional--i.e., consciousness is not for itself its own object. . . . Consciousness only knows itself as absolute inwardness. Such a consciousness we shall call primary or unreflected consciousness. . . .[29]

Thus, the primary relationship with the world involves a pre-conscious or prereflective presence to the world.

This view of consciousness is in essential respects identical to Ortega's critique of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology as expressed in Some Lessons in Metaphysics some years before Sartre's publication of his thesis. In these lessons Ortega makes a distinction between the active being of consciousness and its objective being. Ortega differs from Sartre in insisting that primary and active "consciousness" not be referred to as thought at all.

> So it is necessary to distinguish between the active being of the thought or the consciousness and its objective

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[29]Sartre, The Transcendence of the Ego, pp. 40-41.

> being. There is no such thing as the thought while it is being a thought, as something that happens; and while it is happening, it is not an object for itself, it does not exist for itself. Hence, it is inaccurate to call it thought. In order that there may be thought, it is necessary for it to have already occurred and for me to contemplate it from outside itself, to make of it an object.[30]

In these remarks Ortega points out the difficulties with the idealist attempt to consider thought or consciousness as reality or to raise the ego to the level of the "absolute," as Sartre says.[31] Reflection involves a prereflective presence to reality, which Ortega terms a living presence. Thought alone cannot be the primary reality because it presupposes a living and prereflective presence to the world. The active being of thought is then the primary mode of presence to the world.

Not only do Ortega and Sartre agree concerning a prereflective relationship to the world, but another similarity is to be discovered regarding Sartre's doctrine of existence preceding essence. Sartre rejects the notion that man has an immutable essence. Man is not a product as is the paper-cutter which as a manufactured item existed in the form of a concept before its realization. Nor is man a creature of God. Neither does man have a nature as some have believed. Man first exists, and then makes himself substantial. The first principle, so called, of existentialism is that "man is nothing else but what he makes of himself."[32]

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[30]Ortega, Some Lessons in Metaphysics, p. 145 (Unas lecciones, p. 207).

[31]Sartre, The Transcendence of the Ego, p. 42.

[32]Sartre, Existentialism and Humanism, p. 28.

Ortega seems to say much the same thing.

> To all other entities of the universe existence presents no problem. For existence means actual realization of an essence. It means, for instance, that "being a bull" actually occurs. A bull, if he exists, exists as a bull. For a man, on the contrary, to exist does not mean to exist at once as the man he is, but merely that there exists a possibility of, and an effort towards, accomplishing this.[33]

Thus, Ortega seems to acquiesce to the first principle of existentialism.

The use of the term "seems" in the closing sentence of the last paragraph is not an arbitrary choice of words, because, as I pointed out in the consideration of Heidegger, Ortega disfavored the "terminological wrongheadedness" he associated with the French existentialists.[34] He thought the term "existence" was inappropriate in denoting human reality.

I noted previously that Ortega distinguishes two ways of speaking about existence. A distinction must be made between a thing that exists and the existence of that thing. Even unreal things may exist--imaginary entities, concepts, ideas, etc. In contrast to them are those things which <u>really</u> exist. Those things which genuinely exist, live. The difference, for example, between a horse and a centaur is that a <u>real</u> horse lives while a centaur, being unreal, does not live. To live is to be effectively oneself, to be actualizing a potential in the Aristotelian sense of <u>energia on</u>. The living being

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[33]Ortega, "Man the Technician," <u>History as a System</u>, p. 115 (O.C., V, p. 341).

[34]Ortega, <u>Man and People</u>, p. 41 (O.C., VII, p. 101).

exerts itself, feels itself from the inside and executes itself. Living beings realize their essence, achieve and make their essence through living where the goal and end of the process is intrinsic to the process itself. Ortega, then, only seems to acquiesce to the first principle of existentialism. For Ortega, there is a priority of existence over essence, but this is the result of the process of living. Existentialism obscures the living nature of human being and has a tendency to divorce human existence from its vital affinity to other forms of life.

One objection is apparent to this interpretation which, if its truth could be established, would reveal an inconsistency in Ortega. In the passage quoted from "Man the Technician," Ortega distinguishes the being of man from the being of a bull. Both a man and a bull are living entities, but an unguarded reading might leave the impression that man exists in a manner radically different from the bull, as though the bull is a static and inert realization of an essence.

The point may be expressed another way. According to the doctrine of executant being, life is precisely a process of the living entity realizing itself, whether it be man or bull. But as living beings, both kinds of entities involve a process of actualization of a potential where the end of the process is intrinsic to the process itself. The thrust of the passage, however, is to distinguish human life from the life of another kind of animal by calling attention to the difference in their modes of existence. The passage is consistent with Ortega's general conception of life and does not imply a radical separation of human being from other forms of living beings.

In the passage Ortega is drawing a distinction between human life and other entities. What makes the passage peculiar is that in it Ortega fails to distinguish between living and non-living things. As a result non-living and non-human living entities appear to belong to the same category and both together are contrasted to human life. Given Ortega's notion of executant being, however, living beings differ from non-living beings; the former execute their essences, realize themselves. Non-living things do not exist or possess being in this sense. A human life realizes itself in a radically different manner than a non-living entity. Further, Ortega claims that a human realizes himself in a different manner than a bull realizes its being. The life of a bull is circumscribed by the fixed system of drives and instincts which give structure to the bull's vital experience of the world. Human being, however, is a historical variable, having its basis in the increased power of imagination and memory peculiar to human existence. In other words, human life is structurally different from that of the animal due to the functioning of its mental apparatus. Nonetheless, human existence is a vital reality and is a form of life. Man's vital being is to be historical, and as the name of the section which contains the passage suggests--the title is: "Life as Autofabrication"--involves the ability or the necessity for human life to be self-fabrication. Ortega is thus appealing to the fact that man projects himself into the world in a living effort to realize his own possibilities for well-being. Understood in this way, any alleged inconsistency at this point is refuted.

Ortega criticizes the existentialists for failing to recognize the ontological priority of life and with using the term "existence" to conceal the fact that man's primary relationship to the world is vital and not merely cognitive. This criticism must be softened somewhat in regard to Sartre, or so it would seem, because Sartre does make use of the concept of life in his essay devoted to phenomenological ontology. Like Ortega, he uses the concept of life in an explicit critique of Heidegger. Sartre criticizes Heidegger's assertion that human being is a being toward death primarily. He says:

> Now if death causes anguish, and if consequently we can either flee that anguish or throw ourselves resolutely into it, it is a truism to say that this is because we wish to hold on to life. Consequently anguish before death and resolute decision or flight into unauthenticity cannot be considered as fundamental projects of our being. On the contrary, they can be understood only on the foundation of an original project of living; that is, on an original choice of our being. It is right then in each case to pass beyond the results of Heidegger's interpretation toward a still more fundamental project.[35]

Unlike Heidegger, Sartre is not unaware of the problematic contained under the heading of life. He fails, however, to clarify his theory of life sufficiently by showing the relationship between human life and other forms of life. Despite the merits of his descriptions, a theory of life seems to be presupposed in Sartre's ontology--a theory which he does not adequately elaborate.

Many of the themes which are equated with the work of Sartre, then, are to be found in the context of Ortega's work and his conception of life.

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[35] Sartre, Being and Nothingness, p. 721.

II. A GENERAL SUMMARY

The survey of Ortega's affiliation with other major philosophers makes it easier to ascertain the general profile of his philosophical position.

Ortega's relation to Husserl is bifurcated. On the one hand, he accepts the phenomenological method and the rigorous descriptive analyses which it entails. On the other hand, he rejects the idealist presupposition behind Husserl's philosophy. Considering the last point first, Ortega's rejection of the idealist tendency of Husserl's thought is consistent with his rejection of the modern subjectivist tradition. Since Descartes, modern philosophy has been centered upon subjectivity and Ortega considered Husserl's work to be a continuation of that theme in many ways.

The modern rationalist tradition is centered upon subjectivity. The "basic datum" of the universe is taken to be consciousness or thought. Contrary to the realist thesis which would insist upon the ontological independence of the world and objects in the world, the idealist thesis contends the opposite. Rather than objects existing independently of consciousness, they are ontologically dependent upon thought. As a result, idealism is concerned with a "pure consciousness" divorced and separated in principle from the world. The idealist thesis is most evident, Ortega insists, in Husserl's egology. Husserl starts his inquiries with the assumption that primary reality is pure consciousness, a consciousness which is in principle fully transparent to itself. This consciousness is self-contained and provides an

awareness of everything else. Consciousness takes the form of a purely contemplative ego.

To make consciousness open to phenomenological analysis, Husserl proposes a reduction the result of which is to make the objects with which consciousness is concerned into pure meanings or noema. In other words, objects of consciousness are changed into irreal "meanings." Rather than being concerned with the immediate presence of objects precisely as they are experienced, experiences are "neutralized" by means of the phenomenological reduction, and objects are considered only as unreal correlates of intentional acts of consciousness.

For Ortega, the effort of phenomenological reduction exemplifies the difficulty of idealism. The primary and absolute reality which is construed as pure consciousness can be arrived at only by means of a process of fabrication. The pure consciousness is accessible only by means of an intellectual manipulation. Rather than being primary, pure consciousness is a derived reality. The idealist "fabricates" a reality instead of confronting a reality straightforwardly. That which is to count as primary reality is that given before the "intellectual manipulation" of thought. What is given and "found" is not a pure consciousness but a prereflective presence to the world. Rather than being aware of the world only in thought, the primary presence to the world involves a multiplicity of ingredients. Not only is the world confronted in the process of thinking, but also in the modes of feeling, believing, desiring, etc. The idealist thesis obscures the lived presence of man to the world.

Primary reality is for Ortega not pure consciousness, nor is it things separated from experience and existing ontologically independent of human life. Primary reality is the dynamic co-existence of subject and world. The coexistence of subject and world is centered in a life. The primary reality, then, is always a personal, unique and untransferable life. Life consists precisely in the dynamic interaction between a subject and its world in such a way that neither subject nor object receives ontological priority. This position is captured by the expression "I am I and my circumstance." Self and world are concrete components of a living reality designated by the first "I" in the phrase. This "I" denotes the concrete and living entity which is always an "I myself."

Ortega's conception of life, then, involves a rejection of rationalism and its idealistic tendencies. His rejection of Husserl's idealistic doctrine, however, does not entail a rejection of the methodological aspects of phenomenological research. It is this aspect of phenomenology which Ortega retains. The result of this retention of the methodological aspects of phenomenology is immense. His rejection of rationalism, as a result, does not entail a turn toward irrationalism. That is to say, instead of viewing life as an ineffable process, inaccessible to conceptual scrutiny, Ortega attempts to bring its structures to light. The primary reality of life is accessible to descriptive analysis and philosophical clarity. Life is revealed not as an irrational process, but as a systematic reality.

Two aspects of Ortega's position thus become evident through a

survey of his relationship to Husserl. First, he rejects rationalism and its idealist presuppositions and in its place insists that primary reality is always a personal life. Second, the rejection of rationalism does not entail a turn to irrationalism. The structures of life are subject to philosophical inspection and phenomenological description.

Ortega's position becomes even more explicit in the light of his philosophical relationship to Heidegger and Sartre. Like his relationship to Husserl, there is both a positive and a negative dimension; there are both similarities and differences between them. He shares with Heidegger and Sartre a descriptive approach to philosophical issues, an approach which arises out of their affiliation with Husserlian phenomenology. More essential in an appraisal of Ortega's philosophy, however, is the fact that, like Heidegger and Sartre, there is a pervading personal dimension which is related to his conception of life.

Considering the descriptive approach practiced by Ortega, there is an attempt to abandon speculation, abstract definitions and the idealism of modern philosophy. Ortega proposes a return to the world of human experience, a world open to descriptive analysis and comprehension. Philosophical inquiry is to begin upon the basis of man's living contact with the world. This insistence upon the starting point for philosophy reveals the persistent personalism which is at the root of his conception of life. The "primary datum" for philosophy is not the <u>cogito</u>, nor is it objects in the world. Rather the starting point for inquiry is life itself. The primary reality which is life

is not to be taken in a generic sense. The primary reality for philosophy is not just any life as such, but a particular, unique and untransferable existence which is always a "my life." Philosophy is hence founded upon personal experience, upon an openness to the world which is a prereflective and living presence to the world. Furthermore, personal life has a structure which is accessible to philosophical scrutiny. It is a reality within the ambit of which other realities appear and are experienced. Theoretical inquiry and thought thus presuppose a vital presence to the world, a presence which in each case is always "mine."

Personal life is at one and the same time vital and historical. Not only is personal existence a vital reality, a living presence of the self to the world, but also human life is always situated within the context of a particular culture and society. Human life is a task and a project which takes variable forms in the course of history.

If Ortega shares the personalist approach of Heidegger and Sartre, he differs from them in one fundamental respect. The ontology of "my life" reveals an intrinsic affinity with other living beings. Life is the process of a being realizing itself in the world. Not only is life always a "my life," but ontologically it is akin to any type of being which realizes itself and asserts itself in a living way. An analysis of human life reveals an ontological affinity with living beings as such. Human beings as vital entities execute themselves; their existence consists in the process of living their lives. Their <u>being</u> consists in living. Ortega's concept of life, then, involves an ontological perspective which demands that human

existence be intrinsically related to other living forms. Instead of being ontologically distinct, man is related ontologically to living nature. In other words, man is immersed in natural processes.

This point has been brought out most forcefully in the analysis of the animate nature of human life. Man has been shown to be a being composed of alteración and of ensimismamiento. Alteración is the mode of being of the pure animal and represents the movement and spontaneity of purely animal existence. Ensimismamiento, on the other hand, is used by Ortega to signify the peculiarly human, the ability to think and to possess a sense of self-awareness. I have shown that, for Ortega, although ensimismamiento is contrasted with animate being, it is not opposed to it. Thought and reason, as products of this ability to be self-aware, are not unrelated to activity in the world. The "interior" life peculiar to humankind, rather than freeing man from activity in the world, allows him to act in the world in a distinct human fashion. The residues of "interiority" in the form of tools and implements of whatever kind always bears witness to the presence of a distinct kind of animate being--humankind. Ensimismamiento is not counter to executant being, but accounts for a type of existence which is distinctly human. Human life, then, though ontologically similar to all forms of life, differs structurally from all other forms.

Human existence is thus incorporated into the horizon of vital beings, but yet with a difference. The difference is precisely that which makes human life a genuine possibility. Humans project themselves into the world in an effort to modify their surroundings to

accord to their plans and expectations concerning their possible well-being. Such plans and expectations have their origin in the human power of imagination which is lacking to other animate beings. Human existence and reality is thus approachable through a study of the various attempts man has made to realize himself in the world. History is the record of these variable attempts man has made to realize a distinctly human life. History, as the dynamic manifestation of human existence, has its basis in the executant character of living being. Historical existence--and one's own personal existence which is always within a historical context--is thereby ontologically associated with other life forms.

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