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## The Sociological Thought in the Writings of Jose Ortega y Gasset

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THE SOCIOLOGICAL THOUGHT  
IN THE WRITINGS OF  
JOSE ORTEGA Y GASSET

by

Pedro Negro S.J.

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School  
of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of  
the Requirements for the Degree of  
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## INTRODUCTION

There will always be some question as to how the writings of Ortega y Gasset should be classified. Thus far his work has been variously designed as philosophical, political, esthetic, humanist. Ortega considered himself an intellectual.<sup>1</sup> At the beginning of his literary career he was fond of the name The Spectator, and he himself defines for us the meaning of this name: "The spectator has, consequently, a primary purpose: to raise a bastion against politics for myself and for those who share my desire for pure vision and for theory."<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, the name Spectator could have been interpreted as a camouflage for a marked political tendency at the beginning of the twentieth century. Ortega founded the League of Education "to study in detail Spanish life and to closely scrutinize Spanish society by means of propaganda, criticism, defense, protest and the organs of education, economics and technology."<sup>3</sup> The role that he played in the establishment of the Republic and

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<sup>1</sup>Ortega y Gasset, La rebelion de las masas (Madrid, 1958), p. 18.

<sup>2</sup>Ortega, "El espectador," Obras Completas, II (Madrid, 1954) 17.

<sup>3</sup>Ortega, "Vieja y nueva politica," Obras Completas, I (Madrid, 1953), 305.

later his tenure of office as deputy of Leon, as indications of his marked interest in politics, despite the fact that he did not wish to enter any party. Nevertheless, it could be disputed to what extent he really maintained an interest in politics. Be that as it may, his work gives a prominent place to political writings such as: Vieja y nueva politica, Espana invertebrada, and above all, La rebelion de las masas.<sup>4</sup>

None of the principal critics and commentators of Ortega has denied him the name of philosopher. But this word is understood in such a wide sense that it does not add anything to the name intellectual. When we restrict the sense of the word phil- and apply it to Ortega, we find ourselves in the midst of a heated and interminable polemic among many critics of Ortega, a real "intellectual intrigue."<sup>5</sup>

All the commentators of Ortega present what we could call a systematization of his thought. For Ortega was not--and on this all agree--a systematic thinker. He was tempted, several times, to write his basic philosophical positions in a more schematic form. But he never did so.

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<sup>4</sup>Obras Completas, IV (Madrid, 1955), 113-312; II (Madrid, 1953), 37-131; I (Madrid, 1953), 265-307, respectively.

<sup>5</sup>Julian Marias, Ortega y tres antipodas (Madrid, 1950) and the article, "Intriga intelectual contra Ortega?" Razon y Fe, CXLIII (1951), 568-591.

Although Ortega accepted various chairs of philosophy--one at the University of Madrid and several in Latin America Universities--in his classes and writings he lost himself in useless esthetical digressions. The spectator has overrun the philosopher.

However, the fact that Ortega was an accomplished assayer adds little to our discussion except that he excelled in this literary form; for he did write literary, philosophical, historical essays of all types. From this wealth of literary output one still can legitimately gather a philosophy and a political doctrine. The writer does not intend to overlook what has been said so far about the whole work of Ortega. But the sole intention at the moment, is to offer a new point of view of his work, the point of view of sociology.

There are a number of works which indicate a sociology in Ortega. The most outstanding of all is Sociologia y politica en Ortega y Gasset by Hernandez-Rubio.<sup>6</sup> To appreciate the nature of this work, the term sociology as well as the term political science must be understood in the European sense still prevailing in countries like Spain. In reality, this book of Hernandez-Rubio is nothing more than a treatise on political and social philosophy.

The writer can offer two main reasons for a systematic approach to the sociology of Ortega. The first is that his phil-

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<sup>6</sup>(Barcelona, 1956).

osophical conclusions are not formulated in an abstract, purely philosophical manner inaccessible to empirical verification. And secondly, if one as some critics do, decides to deny that Ortega is a philosopher in the strict sense of the word, then the majority of his ideas are nothing more than scientific propositions, some verified; others to be verified. Let us hear the authorities in this matter. Ferrater Mora says: "The philosophy of Ortega is extraordinarily difficult to classify because our writer is one of the few who in modern history have pointed up the problematic character of philosophical activity."<sup>7</sup> And Rubio Hernandez: "His whole philosophy is troubled with a lack of roots."<sup>8</sup> It is possible"--these are the words of Iriarte --"that what is gold in the field of humanism and mental aptitude, may be clay in the realm of philosophy."<sup>9</sup>

If, on the contrary, one would agree with Julian Marias who classifies Ortega as "the greatest philosopher which Spain has had since Suarez,"<sup>10</sup> still one would be justified in intro-

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<sup>7</sup>La filosofía de Ortega y Gasset (Buenos Aires, 1958), p. 9.

<sup>8</sup>Sociología y política en Ortega y Gasset (Barcelona, 1956), p. 14.

<sup>9</sup>La ruta mental de Ortega (Madrid, 1949), p. 6.

<sup>10</sup>Philosopher espagnols de notre temps (Paris, 1954), p. 65.

ducing into the field of sociology those statements of Ortega which are open to empirical verification. In this case, Ortega should be considered as a philosopher who has made contributions to the field of sociology just as did Hegel, Dilthey, Scheler, Marx, etc.<sup>11</sup>

For many reasons, however, which will be pointed out in the present work, the writer believes that Ortega's contribution to sociology cannot be considered merely in this wide sense. While authors of "grand theory" and metasociologists are treated in books of sociological theory, there seems to be no reason why the work of Ortega whose social doctrine is empirically relevant, should be excluded.

The argument in defense of this thesis will appear in the first chapter which will constitute the main proof, and, so to speak, the major of the syllogism of the thesis. In this chapter we will discuss the requirements which the works of Ortega, or anybody else, for this matter, ought to have to merit being called sociological. This will depend on our definition and concept of sociology and its limits. The rest of the thesis will be like the minor of the syllogism. In it one will be able to observe how Ortega fulfills the requirements set forth in first chapter.

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<sup>11</sup>As an example of what is meant here, see Merton's Social Theory and Social Structure (Glencoe, 1959), pp. 456-489.

Before beginning the main burden of this thesis a few facts of the life of Ortega are in place. Jose Ortega y Gasset was born in Madrid in May of 1883. Consequently, he belonged, at least chronologically, to the generation of writers who contemplated the final collapse of the Spanish colonial empire in 1898 and dedicated themselves to mourning the death of Spain. "The rebellion of the masses," says Ortega," and the radical demoralization of humanity is one and the same thing."<sup>12</sup> The generation of the 98, as it has been named, is a group of gloomy writers whose historical mission, according to them, is to stimulate the people of their generation doomed to social and political disaster.

Ortega was born in a house of writers. His father was the editor of the publication, El Imparcial, a daily newspaper to which Ortega would later contribute articles. He studied in the boarding school of the Jesuits of Miraflores del Prado, but later he abandoned the faith, attacked the Church and especially the Jesuits.<sup>13</sup> In 1904, he received his doctorate of philosophy and humanities in Madrid. Afterwards, he carried on the studies in Germany, and the influence of the German life made a great im-

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<sup>12</sup>La rebelion de las masas (Madrid, 1958), p. 109

<sup>13</sup>One of his most bitter articles against the Jesuits is "Al margen del libro 'A.M.D.G.'" Obras Completas, I (Madrid, 1953) 532-535.



pression on him. He says, "There is a light haired German, meditative and sentimental, who breathes in the twilight of my soul."<sup>14</sup> He took courses in the universities of Leipzig, Berlin, and Marburg. Among his teachers he was especially influenced by Cohen, his master, and Dilthey. Furthermore, there was his Bre-  
tano, his Nietzsche, his Rickert, Buckle, Gobineau, Spengler, and such historians as Renan, Mommsen, Ranke, and Rostovtzeff.<sup>15</sup>

The identification with Germany in the early years of his career was blended with the influence of Bergson, Michelet, Descartes, Marianne, and many other philosophers.

He returned to Spain with the mission to Europeanize it. He edited the periodical El Faro, in which he dedicated himself to the diffusion of the doctrines of the great European sociologists and philosophers. In 1910 at the age of 27, Ortega took the chair of Metaphysics at the Universidad Central de Madrid. On March 23, 1914, he made his grandiose appearance in the public life of Spain with a speech in the Teatro de la Comedia de Madrid.

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<sup>14</sup>Obras Completas de Ortega y Gasset (Madrid, 1936), p. 44, cited in Jose Sanchez Villasenor, Jose Ortega y Gasset (Mexico, 1943), p. 11.

<sup>15</sup>Time, October, 31 (1955), p. 22.

In his speech, "Vieja y nueva politica, he denounced the evils of the monarchy, the regency and the restoration, and he presented the program of the Liga de educacion politica espanala.<sup>16</sup> As an official organ of his League of Political Education, a daily paper called Espana. was published by him with A. Nessi and Baroja. His main purpose was to create a new intellectual atmosphere and to stimulate the great writers of the time. In 1917, he published the review, El Sol, with Nicol and Urgoiti in Argentina. He returned to Madrid and organized the famous Revista de occidente. Time called it "the most widely quoted Spanish review."<sup>17</sup> He took an active part in the overthrow of the monarchy through the Association para el servicio en la Republica. "Spaniards," he said at this time, "our country does not exist, rebuild it. The monarchy must destroy itself."<sup>18</sup> In 1932, he was elected deputy to Congress. "The magnificent moment has arrived when fate has imposed upon the Spaniards the right to act grandiosely," said Ortega saluting the new Republic.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Obras Completas, Ortega y Gasset, Jose, I (Madrid, 1953), 265-308.

<sup>17</sup>Time (January 17, 1949), p. 45.

<sup>18</sup>Time (October 31, 1955), p. 24.

<sup>19</sup>Time (January 17, 1949), p. 45.

With the onset of the civil war in 1900, he fled to France "sad and sour."<sup>20</sup> Concerning his role in the civil war, Iriarte says: "Let us not make one who was present in the revolution, its author. There has been exaggeration in this respect."<sup>21</sup>

Franco wanted to nominate him the official philosopher of his movement at the end of the war providing he would change certain lines of his thought. Ortega flatly refused, as might be expected and in so doing condemned himself to be a voluntary exile of twelve years in France and South America. His return to Spain in 1949, was noted in the press of the world over. "In times of great passion the duty of the intellectual is to remain quiet, for in times of great passion one must lie, and the intellectual does not have the right to speak untruth."<sup>22</sup> He retired from all activity that could associate him with the government. That same year (1949), he attended a congress on the centenary of Goethe and presented a paper in Aspen, Colorado. Much could be said about this event and his attitude towards the English-speaking countries, but his seclusion and his ideas with respect to Ameri-

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<sup>20</sup>Time (October 31, 1955), p. 23.

<sup>21</sup>Iriarte, "Ortega en su vivir y pensar," Razon y Fe (1956), pp. 344-357; also cf. Jose Sanchez Villaseñor, Jose Ortega y Gasset (Mexico, 1943), pp. 11-21; and Julian Marias, Philosophes espagnols de notre temps (Paris, 1954), pp. 65-76; and Manuel Granell, Ortega y su filosofía (Madrid, 1960), pp. 13-22.

<sup>22</sup>On this point, see Iriarte's article "Ortega y la dimension anglosajona de su pensamiento," Razon y Fe (1949), p. 344.

can democracy prevented him from reviving a universal acclamation. The Revolt of the Masses was a best seller in the United States.

Ortega died of cancer on October 19, 1955, in Madrid. According to his wife he died a Christian death.<sup>23</sup> Curtius praised him highly and gave him the priority of thought which it was supposed would go to Heidegger or Jaspers. Niedemayer called him a rival of Heidegger.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Time (October 31, 1955), p. 22.

<sup>24</sup>Iriarte, La ruta mental de Ortega (Madrid, 1949), p. 33.

## CHAPTER I

### ORTEGA Y GASSET: THE SOCIOLOGIST

The approach of Julian Marias and the present work. The philosophical thought of Ortega y Gasset has been systematized by Julian Marias. Marias had one main purpose in performing this service for philosophers; to reorganize the various essays of Ortega around salient ideas and problems rather than around the original but disconnected topics which inspired them. The writer has a similar purpose in the systematization of Ortega's sociology, namely, to present his ideas in terms familiar to sociologists, and to reorientate his works around problems of sociological significance.

Ortega can be considered as sociologist. Ortega's extensive treatment of social realities covers their cultural and ideological aspects as well as their political implications. As we will see his studies are often in agreement with the ideas of contemporary sociologists; but at times, he disagrees emphatically. His more meaningful sociological works have dealt with the nature of social facts and with the origin of the power element in society.<sup>1</sup> From his ideas on these two elements of society he formed a general

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<sup>1</sup>Nicholas S. Timasheff, Sociological Theory (New York, 1957) pp. 97-99.

thesis similar to Pareto's circulation of the elites.<sup>2</sup> The struggle between majority and minority groups, which is a synthesis of Toennies and Pareto, determines all social changes, and constitutes a general theory similar to the works of Sorokin, Marx, and Danilevsky.

While it is true that Ortega's literary expression is somewhat ambiguous, the thought conveyed by it is unified. Using as a starting point his general theory of the sociology of knowledge about the social implication of ideologies, he takes many of the questions that occupy the mind of sociologists today. He applies his theories to such problems as war, progress and decadence, and internationalism. He also gives a prominent place to methodological discussions, as for example, in the situation and value of the moral sciences, a term borrowed from Weger whose works Ortega partially translated into Spanish.

In one of his last essays, El hombre y la gente, he treats the whole problem of social facts and their reality. In this work, he informs us of the moving concern that inspired him, in his early years, to read the works of the first sociologists.<sup>3</sup> He tells us the great wonder that was stirred in him by the fact that no one had devoted much time to formulating an accurate definition of society. Ortega undertakes the task himself and finally ar-

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 163.

<sup>3</sup>Ortega, Man and People, Translated from Spanish into English by Willard R. Trask (New York, 1957), pp. 178-179.

rives at his own definition.

In general, historicism, the culturo-social approach to society and the doctrine of the point of view, are the main ideas which stimulated Ortega to stress the immediate empirical aspect of social facts.<sup>4</sup>

The problem of systematization. One of the first difficulties encountered with the sociological thought of Ortega y Gasset, and, therefore, the main problem of this thesis, is the lack of systematization. Lest one fall into a rather meaningless discussion of generalities, one must have clear ideas about what constitutes sociology. Does one mean by sociology a systematic approach to social facts that involves methodological tools and empirical verification? That the works of most sociologists are orderly and methodical and aimed at a definite scientific purpose cannot be doubted. Yet if one were to restrict the notion of sociology to the systematic treatment of society, one should be unnecessarily limiting the scope of the science. On the other hand, a pure nominal definition of sociology would be equally inadequate. For it would not help the discussion to say that sociology is whatever is contained in books bearing such a title.<sup>5</sup>

But there is a prior question to be asked with regard to this point: just how explicit should be the systematic treatment.

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<sup>4</sup>Furfey, The Scope and Method of Sociology (New York, 1953), p. 19.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 303.

and methodology of an author? Comte, Durkheim, and Weber dressed their thought in a style that more closely resembles philosophy than any of the natural sciences. Within the realm of philosophy, the novels and plays of people like Sartre and Camus are accepted by philosophers as contributions to their field. But in the field of the natural sciences no work is accepted unless it is systematized and contains a method. The scientific criteria for sociology should be as independent of the criteria for philosophy as it should be independent from the criteria for natural science. Ortega at times offers methodological tools to verify his statements, but he is totally unsystematic. If one prefers not to call an unorganized treatment of society a sociology, still this does not mean that a sociology cannot be written by those who systematize Ortega. On the other hand, Ortega did not write novels or plays, but essays--the literary genre which most participates in the style of sociological writers. In conclusion, it does not make a great difference whether one wants to consider Ortega a strict sociologist or not, if one cannot deny the fact that sociological content can be extracted from his writings.

The problem of Grand Theory. The second difficulty somewhat connected with the former is the problem of a weltanschauung sociology or grand theory of Ortega's work. Ortega makes sweeping generalizations. He deduces his sociological conclusions from



comparisons of various cultures different in space and time. From the downfall of the Roman Empire, for instance, he has derived metasociological considerations that he applies to our age. Parallel are drawn between such different countries as Rome and England; Germany and Greece. The principles of democracy are traced to the middle ages, and the division of nationalities are established even before this time.

How can we give a solution to the long quarrel centered around the so called grand theory when we have such great names as Parsons and Merton, Sorokin and Mills on different sides of the battle? It is well to notice that Parsons sees the need of a wide sociological theory in the same arguments that his adversary, Merton, uses against him.

"One of Merton's consistent emphases with reference to theories of the middle range has been on codification. Codification, however--necessarily, as he makes clear--involves reference to levels of generality higher than the level represented in the particular items of theory being codified. It does constitute one of the most important types of link between lower and higher levels of generalization in theory."<sup>6</sup>

This insoluble dichotomy between grand theory and theories of the middle range is more clearly seen in Merton's treatment

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<sup>5</sup>Talcott Parsons, "General Theory in Sociology," Sociology Today, ed. by Merton, Broom and Cottrell (New York, 1959) p. 39-40.

of the sociology of knowledge of Mannheim. In his Ideology and Utopia, the latter attempted to end permanently the friction between European and American sociology with a long defense of the sociology of totality (weltanschauung), more cultivated in Europe: "The mass of facts and points of view is far greater than can be accommodated by the present state of our theoretical apparatus and systematizing capacity."<sup>7</sup> This paragraph, written at the beginning of the nineteenth century is a direct answer to the current writings of Merton. Mills defends a type of theory similar to that of Merton on the bases that it is necessary in order to solve the social problems of our times.<sup>8</sup> Mannheim uses the same argument in defense of the opposite position: "Likewise it is possible to explain, on the basis of this difference, the type of thought involved in the American formulation of the problem, as represented by the following: How can I do this? How can I solve this concrete individual problem? And in all these questions we sense the optimistic undertone: I need not worry about the whole, the whole will take care of itself."<sup>9</sup> Who? Mannheim has also dealt with the shortcomings of a matter-of-factness in sociology, based on the study of concrete data without a general theory. He even goes to the extent of saying that those studies which abandon

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<sup>7</sup>Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia (New York, 1960), p. 252.

<sup>8</sup>Wright Mills, The Sociological Imagination (New York, 1959), p. 48.

<sup>9</sup>Mannheim, p. 255.

the whole and limit themselves to immediate problems cannot have any scientific value.<sup>10</sup>

Merton's criticism of Mannheim is the following: "Mannheim's analysis is limited, as well, by his failure to specify the type or mode of relations between social structure and knowledge."<sup>11</sup> Does that mean that Merton wants a sociology of knowledge formulated in terms of middle range? He is not too explicit on this point, but it would seem utterly contrary to the trend of a sociology of knowledge the rejection of grand theory.

The conclusion we could form from such a puzzle of arguments would reflect little more than personal preferences. We must somehow transcend the whole discussion and search for a solution on another level. There is one point on which both sides agree, and that is the problem of perspective or weltanschauung: the general theme of the sociology of knowledge. Merton agrees with Mannheim on the fact that sociology as a science is modified by the existential situation of a determinate culture. "When....in the face of the tendency to introduce further concreteness into formulation of sociological problems, it (sociology) sets itself up as the only sociology, it is unconsciously guided by motives similar to

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid. p. 102: "Empirical research which limits itself to a particular sphere is for a long time in the same position as common sense."

<sup>11</sup> Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure (Glencoe, 1959), p. 498.

those which prevented its historical forerunner, the bourgeois liberal mode of thought, from ever getting beyond and abstract and generalizing mode of observation in its theory,"<sup>12</sup> says Mannheim. In other words there is a point that has been left out of the whole discussion, namely the personal motives that compelled Merton to favor the middle range theory and the facility with which this theory has been accepted in some cultural milieux. If we analyze these motives and their group-determinants--an area formerly thought to lie outside the domain of sociology--we would probably discover that the main difference between the two great sociologists lies in their cultural background, for one culture is prone to the concrete and verifiable, and the other to prospective and vision. Most probably, both are incomplete with regard to scientific systematization.

The cultural milieu of Ortega must enter into consideration. From what has been said need to approach a sociologist from the viewpoint of his own background and culture is obvious. In the introduction we already said something about Ortega's own background. About the culture in which he lived, namely the Spanish culture, Moore and Gurvitch say that it is characterized by an uncritical tendency to theorize and set norms of behavior.<sup>13</sup> The

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 278.

<sup>13</sup>Twentieth Century Sociology (New York, 1945), p. 653.

last point: the normative character is due not only to the moralist temper of the Spaniards, but mainly to the urgency of social solutions for a number of social problems. As Moore and Gurvitch point out, most of the Spanish sociologists have been exclusively preoccupied with the cuestion obrera.<sup>14</sup> Even to the present day, Spanish sociologists have spent more of their time and effort in associations for working men. Spanish sociology has been nourished by socialism, on the one hand, and the social teachings of the Church, on the other.

Regarding the normative aspect, we should say from the outset, that Ortega was not very influenced by it. It is true that he manifested a strong tendency for action, but he conceived of science as divorced from the question of value.<sup>15</sup>

On the other hand, we do find in Ortega the second point, that is, the tendency to theorize. "Ortega has brought to the study of society and of its structure the keen perception of his up-to-date philosophical talent, evaluating the functional character of the 'mass' and of the individual in his possibilities of action and orientation to it."<sup>16</sup>

The problem of methodology. There is one more question that must

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Ortega, "Introduccion a una estimativa," Obras Completas, VI (Madrid, 1955), 315-336.

<sup>16</sup>Gurvitch and Moore, p.657.

be touched upon more specifically in our quest for a precise definition of a sociologist. This question is method. There is no sociologist or any scientist, for that matter, without a methodology. Ortega deals with cultures and other social phenomena--most especially with the mass phenomena of today. Does he ground his theories in a sound method? If by method we understand statistics and indices, the answer is obviously, no. But he does have a historico-cultural method that Mannheim believes indispensable for a sociology of knowledge. Ortega has written a great number of pages on historicism and the historical method. Mannheim says about this methodology of history: "Historicism is neither a mere fad nor a fashion; it is not even an intellectual current, but the very basis on which we construct our observations of the socio-cultural reality."<sup>17</sup> Few writers in the field of sociology to day show as profound a grasp of historical facts and theories as Ortega y Gasset, or indicated before when we were talking about his sources.

Within the historical method, Ortega makes great use of the comparison and comparative systems of Weber.<sup>18</sup> His essays about races and cultures are formulated and discovered with the help of Weber's methodological tool: the ideal-type.<sup>19</sup> The main dif-

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<sup>17</sup>Mannheim, Essays on the Sociology of Culture, ed. by Ernest Mannheim and Paul Kecskemeti (London, 1959), p. 84.

<sup>18</sup>See as an example "Sobre la muerte de Roma," Obras Completas, II (Madrid, 1954), 537-547.

<sup>19</sup>Ortega, La rebelion de las masas, p. 346.

ference between him and Weber, however, is that the former never discusses explicitly his methodology.

Ortega's method, for the most part, is historical, as we said. He has been called a meta-historian and a philosopher of culture, and not with any intended compliment.<sup>20</sup> He is often enough criticized for not isolating historical facts, and for his interest in similarities throughout history, rather than in facts. Timasheff describes the difference between historians and sociologists in this way: "The historian shows the variable; the sociologist emphasizes the constant and recurring."<sup>21</sup> The keynote in Ortega's theory of history is the notion of generation; an idea that has occupied also the mind of Mannheim and other sociologists of history.<sup>22</sup> The basic discoveries in the field of historical sociology are used by Ortega on the fields of political sociology and sociology of knowledge. About the historical approach, Jansen says: "With this recognition of the importance of theory as such, there is growing up a corresponding appreciation of the necessity of the historical approach for a proper understanding of current

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<sup>20</sup> Joaquin Iriarte, "Ortega en su vivir y pensau," Razon y Fe (1956), p. 428.

<sup>21</sup> Timasheff, p. 6.

<sup>22</sup> Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge (London, 1959), p. 276-320.

theoretical problems and issues."<sup>23</sup> And Mills, who hopes for a science that can solve many of today's problems, observes the necessity of the historical point of view in sociology: "Men nowadays often feel that they cannot solve the troubles they are up against, so long as they remain within their private situation... limited by the boundaries of their everyday worlds, most people never transcend the close-up horizons of their job and family and neighborhood... And the more aware they become of ideals and threats, ambitions and promises which do not transcend these immediate locales, the more trapped they come to feel."<sup>24</sup>

The need of a theory of action and of an orientation that faces the present political, economic and social decisions of our times, cannot be removed by partial sociological studies. With such reports, tentative and disconnected, one does not have adequate data for the formulation of solid synthesis that might serve as an orientation for action. The need to act is pressing, and, if we want to assure our future, we must act rationally. This is the point that is continually reiterated by those who defend a weltanschauung sociology. We could also bring in here

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<sup>23</sup>Howard E. Jensen, "Developments in Analysis of Social Thought," in Becker and Boskoff's Modern Sociological Theory (New York, 1957), p. 41.

<sup>24</sup>Mills, "The Promise of the Social Sciences," Paper given in 1960.



all the arguments of Sorokin's Fads and Foibles in Modern Sociology against the modern tendency to atomize social problems and to forget about the whole.<sup>25</sup> This work contains one of the major statements for a historico-social approach to sociology.

Ortega's main goal. Sociology as a practical science. Ortega's main purpose in all his historical studies was to give to the Spaniards of his time solid material upon which they could form adequate ideas of their problems and the way to solve them. The future was the great question that Ortega saw hovering over Spain and the rest of Europe. His attempt to answer that question merited for him the epitaph of social prophet. "If there is anything that characterizes my life, it is that I have had to struggle with the world's dramatic future, the future always tending to shake the ground of the present on which I had my feet."<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Fads and Foibles in Modern Sociology, (Chicago, 1956), Sorokin, Pitrim, Chicago U. Press.

<sup>26</sup>Time (January, 1949), p. 46.

## CHAPTER II

### GENERAL SOCIOLOGY OF ORTEGA

The main sociological work of Ortega. One of the favorite themes of Ortega's essays is the political problem. Around it, Ortega builds up a sociological theory as a meta-political foundation. The publication of this theory had been promised for many years. The work, entitled Man and People, was edited with alight finishing touches, after the author's death. El hombre y la gente is, among the few systematic works of Ortega, the best organized. It contains his main propositions about social facts, association, social organization, social change, and normative action.

The title of this chapter fits the parallel that Ortega establishes between sociology and cultural anthropology. The point of departure for these two fields is the same, because, as we will see immediately, the social facts are primarily normative, and norms are identified with culture.

Sociology as a meta-political foundation. Man and People opens with a long preamble which is an almost verbatim transcription of his early essay: "Ensimismamiento y alteracion." In this introduction, Ortega stresses the imperious need that our age had to know sociology in order to solve the problems of an ever changing

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<sup>1</sup>Man and People, Translated from the Spanish by: Willard R. Trask, and ed. by: W.W.Norton and Co. (New York, 1957).

social order. More specifically. he would say, we need to have clear and definite ideas about the essence of society and of the social facts:

My subject is this: Today people constantly talk of laws and law, the state, the nation and internationalism, public opinion and public power, good policy and bad, pacifism and jingoism, "my country" and humanity, social justice and social injustice, collectivism and capitalism, socialization and liberalism, and individual and the collectivity, and so on and so on. And they not only talk, in the press, at their clubs, cafes, and taverns; they also argue. And they not only argue; they also fight for the things that these words designate. And once started fighting, they kill each other--by hundreds, by thousands, by millions."<sup>2</sup>

If we asked the people who argue about political ideas in the streets and cafes, what do they mean by the State, the law, the national, etc., we would discover their total ignorance. They do not know anything about the phenomena represented by political terms. On the other hand, law, capitalism, collectivism, etc., are nothing more than idealizations of social realities. They are abstractions that we have learned from the society we live in, about this society. "If this idea is not clear,"--namely the idea of society--"all these words do no mean what they pretend to and are mere empty show."<sup>3</sup> To define what society is in a new way, is the goal of the whole work.

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<sup>2</sup>Ortega, Man and People (New York, 1957), p. 11.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

Nature of social facts and society. Ortega tells us about his search for a definition of society in the works of the sociologists: "All the sociologists have left us unsatisfied, even in respect to the fundamental notions of their socialologies--for the simple reason that they never took the trouble to come really to grips with the most elementary phenomena out of which the social reality arises."<sup>4</sup>

Choosing anthropology as a point of departure, the author invites us to place ourselves in front of an ape's cage. The behavior of this animal--the nearest of all to man--surprises us because of its total absorption into its physical environment. The ape lives a purely extroverted life; it reacts immediately to the objects and alterations induced into its field of perception. The savage lives also as though imprisoned in a world of threats and obstacles. Around them he directs exclusively his attention. But there is a great difference between the savage and the ape; namely that sometimes the former strives to disentangle himself from the difficulties around him and he reflects and ignores to his environment. When we put ourselves in place of the ape in the cage, we tend to think that it would be extenuating to have to answer to any new stimulus, and to live so absorbed in things

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<sup>4</sup>Ortega, Man and People (New York, 1957), p. 159.

outside us. When the ape does not have anything to react to, he falls asleep. Man, on the contrary, has an inwardness where he can hide, and, so to speak, bend himself to. This inwardness is an intus, and from this work, Ortega deduces the category interiority. This is the first observable human behavior and has a vital importance for social behavior. From the depths flows meaning and purpose.<sup>5</sup> All the other differences between human and animal behavior are minimal compared to this. However, we do not intend to skip over a great number of similarities between the two. What leads man to recollect himself is his biological need. Between the biological drives and their fulfilment, reflection and its derivate, sulture, set in. Thought and action, therefore, appear intimately connected in primitive man: "Accordingly, it is impossible to speak of action except in so far as it will be governed by a previous contemplation; and vice versa, contemplation, or being within one's self, is nothing but a projecting of future action."<sup>6</sup>

We can even add this further consideration: within this biological context, thought is merely functional and its role is to organize our behavior in order to survive: "This is something of

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<sup>5</sup> Ortega, Man and People pp. 16-17.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

what I wanted to suggest in the epigram...that we do not live in order to think but we think in order to succeed in subsisting or surviving."<sup>7</sup> Notice that we are talking here about a plan, an orientation for action. How can Ortega, then, identify this plan with culture? The individual plan cannot become culture until it becomes socialized. This socialization consists, first, in the imposition of something private through a long process of transformations. Finally this practice becomes accepted as a use or costume of the tribe, the region, the country. What is, therefore the main difference between the individual and social action or culture, for Ortega?

Those human actions that we put on account of an impersonal and indeterminate subject which is the 'all' and 'nobody' which we may call, people, collectivity, society, are properly called social facts. Such facts are irreducible to the life of the individual. They appear in the realm of human interaction, but are not mere facts of simple interaction.

That which we thing or say because it is said; that which we do, because it is done, is usually called usage."<sup>8</sup>

Social and individual action. Reflection or ensimismamiento, as Ortega calls it, is the human act par excellence. Its correlative is usage, which is the individual act socialized. From the former, we must somehow deduce the latter. Ortega holds that the first characteristic of this transmission from the individual to

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>8</sup>Ortega, El hombre y la gente, p. 25.

the social is that of de-personalization. The idea, plan or skill that is born in the individual today, in a conscious fashion tomorrow will be a social stereotype. What was responsible in its origin becomes impersonal and meaningless social behavior; something that we all do because everybody else does it. So that social and individual action are mutually exclusive. This is, of course a schematic way of looking at the social facts. Ortega's attention is directed toward the characteristics of individual and social action, so that he is dealing with abstractions. In reality, however, these two aspects are going to be mixed. But as such individual and social action are irreducible. Another characteristic of social action is its lack of meaning. Ortega says: "That is human, which I do, because it has a meaning for me and which I understand."<sup>9</sup> When individual action becomes socialized, it loses the original meaning that created it, and keeps only its purpose. The purpose of social action is normative and performs a great service, so far as social integration is concerned. In order to verify this whole thesis about the irreducibility of social into individual action, Ortega gives a detailed description of the origin of social acts.

The third level of human action: the interpersonal. There is one element that mediates individual and social behavior: interper-

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., pp. 23-24.

sonal action. Human existence has as much need of objects as of society. From a biological viewpoint, the environment is so connected with human behavior that the external stimulus, or circumstances, as Ortega calls it, is an integral part of human organism; "The environment is not something external to the organism, but rather an organ of life, the organ of excitation."<sup>10</sup>

Things and People. Characteristics of interpersonal action.

As a biological being, man never looks at the external objects or "things" of the world as sheer objects of contemplation. From the tree that blocks our path to the food we eat, things are the obstacles or helps with which we have to deal in order to survive. In their first relation to us, external things are presented as facilities or disadvantages that expand or contract the possibilities of our life. This is the primordial aspect of things outside us:

The world of circumstance, we said, is thus an immense pragmatic or practical reality--not a reality made up of things. 'Things' in present-day parlance means anything that has its being by and in itself, hence that is independent of us. But the components of the vital world are only those that are for and in my life--not for themselves and in themselves. They are only as facilities and difficulties, advantages and disadvantages whereby the I that each one of us is can succeed in being. They are, then, in effect, instruments, utensils, chattels, means that serve me...<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Ortega, "Epitogo al libro 'De Francesca Beatrice,'" Obras Completas, III (Madrid, 1955), 325.

<sup>11</sup>Ortega, Man and People, p. 62.



Things are ordered according to a pragmatistical hierarchy, one to another, their final organization ending in the satisfaction of some needs of mine. I see them in terms of a personal goal.<sup>12</sup> In order for this hierarchy to be useful, things have to be determinable and predictable. Things have a definite pragmatistical value once I know them, because I can predict beforehand the reaction of my organism with regard to them: "An adult human being's every action toward or upon something obviously takes into account his earlier experiences in connection with that something, so that his action starts from the qualities that, according to his knowledge, the things possesses. In our example, he knows that that stone is very hard but not as hard as steel; and if what he wants to do, for some purpose of his own, is to break it to pieces, he knows that he can do so by merely hitting it with a hammer." <sup>13</sup> But the other presents himself to me in a diametrically opposed fashion. Let us see the way Ortega depicts this appearance of the other man:

Now indeed, in the area that my horizon encloses, appears the Other. The 'Other' is the other man. As a sensible presence, all that I have of him is a body, a body that displays its peculiar form, that moves, that manipulates things in my sight, that in other words exhibits external or visible 'behavior' to use the term of the American psychologists. But the surprising thing, the strange and finally mysterious thing, is that, though there are present to us

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<sup>12</sup>Ortega, "El tema de nuestro tiempo," Obras Completas, III (Madrid, 1955), 182...

<sup>13</sup>Ortega, Man and People, p. 85.

only a figure and some bodily movements, in or through this presence we see something that is essentially invisible, something that is pure inwardness, something that each of us knows directly only of himself...<sup>14</sup>

We are in the field of social psychology, to which de facto, Ortega reduces all his sociological investigations of this essay. What we discover first, or rather, glimpse in the other man is an inwardness like our own. So far the universe has been unified. Now it becomes dispersed. Before, everything had its own place in my universe in relation to me. Now my "here" and "there" begins to be relative. There are other people and therefore there are other points of reference. "I can change my place, but whatever place it may be, it will be my 'here,' Apparently 'here' and 'I' and 'here' are inseparable for life. And since the world, with all the things in it, must be for me from here, it automatically becomes a prespective--that is, its things are near to or far from here, to right or left of there, above or below here. This is the structural law of man's world,"<sup>15</sup> When other people appear into the scene of life: "The Other Man also has his here--but this 'here' of the Other is not mine."<sup>16</sup>

Another great difference between the thing and the Other Man consists in the fact of reciprocity. "Hence, in our relation with the stone, our action has only one direction, it runs

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 91-92.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 74

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 75.

from us to the stone, and there simply ends."<sup>17</sup> "In distinction from the stone and the plant, the animal,"--or, in our case man--appears to me as something that responds to me and in this sense as something that does not simply exist for me but that, since I also exist for it, co-exists with me. The stone exists but does not co-exist."<sup>18</sup> Man becomes interpreter as well as interpreted. I become, for the first time, an object of somebody else. Things were blind and could not see my inwardness. Now eyes are looking at me and somebody answers me in an unpredictable manner. With regard to our relation with animals and people, Ortega says: "However our total relation with the animal is at the time limited and confused. This suggests to us a very natural methodological reservation--that we should look for other facts in which the reciprocity would be clearer, unlimited and evident, that is, in which the other being that responds to me should in principle be capable of responding to me as much as I respond to it."<sup>19</sup> Evidently this is the case of a man-to-man relation. Reciprocity, as Ortega calls that relation, is an immediate nudity of man before man that constitutes the interpersonal phenomenon. The interpersonal world

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 85.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 87.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 103.

is the world of affective and indormal meetings; the world of friendship and kindship.

Difference between the interpersonal and the social level. Usages

When the Other Man has not entered this realm of interpersonal relations, I do not as yet have either a social or an interindividual bond with him. The Other Man can turn out an enemy or a friend. Therefore, when we meet, we have to break the barrier between both of us, at the same time. Therefore, we start out with the odd gesture of holding and shaking each other's hand. This socially patterned gesture, meaningless to both of us is the social action par excellence. We do not know anything about the origin and primitive meaning of the handshake. We do it just to conform. On the other hand this gesture has the marvelous effect of symbolically placing both of us under a common shelter: the law, the mores, the usages. In shaking hands we seem to tell each other that it is our wish to submit to some general code of laws stipulated by a society. But we implicitly symbolize those things without explicitly revealing ourselves, because the handshake is an impersonal act. It is the means to manipulate a "stranger". "Between us," says Ortega, "only a relative and indirect and always dubious communication is possible. But, first and last, that is, at the beginning and at the end of my experience in respect to the Other Man, for me he is fundamentally the Being who is strange to me, the

the essential stranger."<sup>20</sup> The note of foreignness permeates all social reality: "In a man's body which, as such, belongs to my world, I have the intimation and the declaration of a being--the Other--and a World--his world--which are absolutely alien, absolutely foreign to me, strange to me and to everything that is mine."<sup>21</sup> Ortega calls this world of social relations the world of the not-I, so that in it I am leading a pseudo-life.

Our normal life consists in our occupying ourselves with pregmata, with things or concerns and importances that are not properly such but are new irresponsible interpretations put forth by others or by ourselves; "--that is to say, the usages. "I mean that since our life consists in always doing something with or about these pseudo-things, it would inevitably be a pseudo-doing (*hacer*), precisely the pseudo-doing that appeared to us earlier as the very common but very profound expression '*hacer que se hace*' (pretend), that is, we habitually pretend to live, but we do not actually live our genuine life, the life that we should have to live if, freeing ourselves from all these interpretations accepted by the other people--who are commonly called 'society.' we from time to time made energetic and clear contact with our life as radical reality."<sup>22</sup>

From all this previous discussion, Ortega concludes, against Max Weber and Durkheim, that social reality must be distinguished not only from individual but also from inter-individual action. "The social appears not, as has hitherto been believed and was far too obvious, when we oppose it to the individual, but when we

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., pp. 140.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., pp. 119-120..

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 120.

contrast it with the inter-individual."<sup>23</sup>

Accordingly, there are three levels of human behavior: the individual, the inter-individual and the social. These levels are irreducible when they are considered abstractly, but in real life, they intermingle with one another.

Coercion of the social facts. A further characteristic of the usage, or social fact, which is particularly relevant to political sociology and cultural anthropology, is the moral strain. Our determination to live in a society implies a whole variety of usages, to which we must necessarily adjust. But who exercises this moral compulsion of the usages? The collectivity, the people, everybody.<sup>24</sup> Ortega mentions an example where this moral compulsion can be better recognized. Suppose we try to cross the street and a policeman halts us. Certainly, Ortega would say, it is not the policeman as an individual who forbids us to walk. The policeman is a mere public instrument of an organization: the government, society, the people. Now the people, is everybody and nobody in a certain way.

And we ask ourselves: who is the subject of this human action that we call 'to forbid' to command legally? Who

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 179.

<sup>24</sup> "Well then, who says what 'is said'? Obviously, each one of us; but we say what we say in the same way that the policeman stops us, we say it not on our account but on account of this unseizable, indeterminate, and impossible subject, people, society the collectivity." p. 173.

forbid us? Who commands us? It is not the man policeman nor the man superintendent, nor the man Chief of State who is the subject of this action of forbidding and commanding--we say--come from the State.

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But then who or what is this state that commands me and stops me from crossing from one sidewalk to the other?

If we put this question to someone, we shall see him begin by spreading out his arms in a swimming gesture--which is what we commonly do when we are going to say something vague--and he will say: "Why, the State is everything, society, and collectivity."<sup>25</sup>

Physical force and usages: The Government. Somebody could object that the government has nothing to do with social facts. However

political laws are legalized usages that have a stronger degree of coercion. It is agreed among the political scientists that one of the essential notes of governmental activity is precisely the use of physical coercion. Moral coercion consists in the pressure that society exercises upon the individual for the maintenance of its usages. The coercion that usages carry in themselves can be very slight, but to break any kind of usage always involves some sanction. One case of slight coercion would be the lover that does not want to use the common expressions of his society to communicate his subjective feelings.<sup>26</sup> In such a case, the lover is condemned to solitude.

When, on the contrary, usages are strong they are reinforced by physical law. Strong usages are called vigencies, and they

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., pp. 171-172.

<sup>26</sup> Ortega, Man and People, (New York, 1957), pp. 223-224.

become public opinion, and the latter, in its own turn, becomes power.<sup>27</sup> Hence we have related in one and the same system of explanation sociology and politics as two classes of social facts different only in degree.

Facts and explanation. The foregoing explanation is more logical than real. In real life, the process of human behavior begins with usages and ends up in recollection (ensimismamiento). Man does not begin his human life with the strong effort to become recollected and to retreat from his milieu. Previous to the ensimismamiento there must exist a society. By breaking off from this society, to which he has adjusted, the individual becomes an exception and his self develops. The "I" is the last thing to appear, and the "we" is the first. This psychological observation is described as follows by Ortega:

Apparently our "I" is the last character to appear in the tragicomedy of our life. We have often referred to him, but irresponsible, taking him for granted, so that we might begin to understand one another. Nevertheless, I have several times pointed out that all the names I found myself obliged to use for the 'subject' of living were inadequate; that it was incorrect to say that Man lives. We have already seen that original Man is the Other and that rather than live he co-lives with us and we with him. But co-living is already a second and presumed reality whereas living in radical solitude is primary and unquestionable.<sup>28</sup>

Without a social milieu, the "I" cannot emerge. Robinson Crusoe migrated to an island after he had lived in a normal society and formed an adequate concept of himself through other men. Had he been left in the island at an early age, he would not had

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., pp. 268 and 260.

<sup>28</sup> Ortega, Man and People, (New York, 1957), p. 148.



reached the stage of a human person, according to Ortega.

Transition from individual to social action: exemplarity. We stressed the fact that the usages are born in the individual and are progressively incorporated into society when they become de-personalized and lose their meaning. However, it is clear that not all individual acts come to be usages. Which is then, the essential note of the usage with regards to its institutionalization? It would not suffice to explain the institutionalization of usages by means of imitation. The theory of Ward about imitation has been proved wrong, because imitation is selective and we cannot explain and predict until we discover the laws and function of the selective process of imitation.<sup>29</sup>

At this point, Ortega introduces his theory of exemplarity. In his studies of language-formation, Ortega describes the phenomenon of exemplarity in this way: "For a usage to be constituted not all the individuals in a society need be in agreement...It is enough if--consciously or not--those who constitute a certain number are in agreement. What number? The majority? This is the majoritarian error. Sometimes it is the majority; but at other times--and nearly always--is precisely a minority...which, by adopting a particular behavior, succeeds, with a strange automatism impossible to describe briefly, in making that behavior...

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<sup>29</sup>See Krech and Crutchfield, Theory and Problems of Social Psychology, (New York, 1948), Chapter III.

become that terrible and inexorable social force, a usage."<sup>30</sup>

A few lines later, he calls this phenomenon "binding observance."<sup>31</sup>

When several people meet the next singular phenomenon takes place. Somebody stands out from the group and takes the initiative. He says or does something interesting which is adopted by the rest of the group. People imitate this individual action because it satisfies some unconscious need, and also because the originator of the action has a certain authority.<sup>32</sup> The leader will succeed if he is able to choose the course of action that fits the present social circumstances of the group. The conditions for the acceptance of the individual action by the group are therefore, satisfaction authority consists in an interpretation of what the group needs together with a power of exemplarity or suggestion. From the side of the group-members, there has to be a docility or submission, so that exemplarity and docility are the two sides of the social process.<sup>33</sup> The process of socialization starts out in the core of the family. The child sees in his parents his only models of behavior. They are for him the prototype of humanity, so to speak.<sup>34</sup> On the other hand, the parents have to interpret.

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<sup>30</sup>Ortega, Man and People, p. 210.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Ortega, "Espana invertebrada," Obras Completas, III (Madrid 1955), 55...

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., pp. 103-109.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 104.

the child's needs. Childhood ends when the parents cease to be the only authority and become members of a larger society. At this moment docility is reduced as also is selective imitation. Other values will have to be introduced into the scene to give a foundation to the authority of the parents. Also, this authority begins to disintegrate. The school, the peer-group, the community, become new social models for imitation. They are looked upon as an example.

The social leader. The true leader is the one who has the right insight into the real circumstances and knows how to coordinate the efforts of many in order to bring about the end. When this phenomenon is extended to society the social circumstances of the group become the sociohistorical scene. Napoleon, Alexander, Caesar, were not only men who electrified the crowds (exemplarity), but they also were men who had a deep insight into a socio-historical situation. They possessed a clear vision of the future in terms of the present; the present being the anxieties and needs that were unconsciously felt by their contemporaries.

Thus, during the days of Caesar, Rome was crumbling because of the lack of political imagination. The nation followed an old pattern of political organization and expansion that did not square the times. This plan consisted in looking at the big cities as the political focuses and at the country as a mere annex. The countrymen were forced to go to the cities in order to vote. The

empire, on the other hand, was getting larger and larger. The provinces became so numerous that it was impossible to control them. The army had to be increased and as a consequence, the political consciousness of the countrymen increased. What was Caesar's solution? According to Ortega, Caesar's main political quality was a great mental clarity, to define the problem. We said at the beginning of this chapter that politics is constituted by a number of abstractions: law, the national, the international, etc. The main difficulty in the art of politics is to find a simple scheme of ideas with a social appeal and at the same time, capable of solving the great social puzzles. "He",-that is, Caesar "wants a Roman empire which does not live on Rome, but on the periphery, on the provinces, and this implies the complete suppression of the City-State." <sup>35</sup> The historical leader has his hand immersed in the confused stream of socio-historical facts. This work of leadership that Caesar exercised alone, is performed in society by a minority that stands out from the crowd. The function of such a minority is historical and consists mainly in foreseeing the future. Through a process of natural selection, societies become organized in the form of a minority-majority relation, and this minority is usually an aristocracy in the primi-

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<sup>35</sup> Ortega, The Revolt of the Masses, p. 175.

tive sense of this word (government of the best ones), "This reciprocal action between mass and minority...is, to my judgment, the basic fact of any society and the main agent of its evolution for the better or the worse."<sup>36</sup>

Authority and force as normal functions in society. There has to be something in common between a majority and a minority so that society comes to be and keeps together. Ortega does not distinguish between Gesellschaft and Gemeinschaft as Simmel does, because for Ortega, there is no such a thing as a mere spontaneous organization of society.<sup>37</sup> The moral or physical coercion that usages bear, clearly indicate that the process of socialization is not a natural one. According to Ortega, man is just as social as antisocial, and society is constituted by a dominance of the social forces over the anti-social tendencies of men. In this theory society is not previous to a association. The former consists in a will to live in common. The people and the cultures says Ortega, are born when they have the determined will to do so. The striving for a common goal planned by a minority, constitutes society itself. Such a common goal must be appealing and practical if society wants to perpetuate itself. It has to change according to the significant cultural changes throughout history. Society is a dynamic reality that increases and diminishes. Strictly speaking there is no such a thing as an immobile

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1955)<sup>36</sup> Ortega, "Espana invertegrada," Obras Completas, III (Madrid p. 163.  
<sup>37</sup> Timasheff, Sociological Theory p. 98.

society. Society is always a mobile one." "Its reality is purely dynamic; something to be done, the community in action."<sup>38</sup> Talking about Rome, Ortega also says: "Rome was a great vital enterprise where everybody could collaborate."<sup>39</sup>

Let us reflect on two implications of this theory of society. The first one, is that it tends to identify society with political society, that is, society politically organized under a government. The second is that, by making society depend on the plan of a minority--a minority that Ortega calls frequently the intellectuals--such a theory becomes a kind of ideological determinism. We will see later on which are the implications of these two points with regards to political sociology and sociology of knowledge. Unity of the points of departure of sociology and anthropology.

When we referred to the usage as the social act par excellence, we established a parallel between sociology and cultural anthropology. Let us see now more closely this relation.

For Ortega culture is nothing more than an aspect of the social fact. If we make the latter the material object, culture, we would say, looks at this material object as a product of human reason, rather than as a means of communication and social inter-

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<sup>38</sup>Ortega, The Revolt of the Masses, p. 184.

<sup>39</sup>Ortega, "Espana invertebrada," Obras Completas, III (Madrid 1955), p. 56.

course. The first thing that man does when he reflects is to order the phenomena around him so that he might carry out his plan of action. To perform this plan, he has to catalogue these phenomena. The cultural act par excellence is, therefore, the concept. The ensimismamiento creates ideologically what will become later technique, usages and social action in general. Without culture, the cosmos becomes chaos. "Besides the continuous need of a hierarchy, without which the cosmos becomes chaos, I consider very urgent, that we direct our attention and reflection to what surrounds us. Man is at the utmost of his capacities when he acquires full consciousness of his circumstances."<sup>40</sup>

After the act of reflection man comes back to the world with a plan, but most important of all, he comes back with a feeling of security. Now, man has grasped the dangers and facilities and possibilities of action. Culture, whether it be material (technique) or formal (norms, thinking-patterns, language) is the way man controls his environment. "Culture," says Ortega, "is not the whole life, but the moment of security, firmness and clarity. We invent the concept as an instrument, not to substitute for the spontaneity of life, but to secure it."<sup>41</sup> And in another place he explains what is the meaning of this clarity: "Clarity means

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<sup>40</sup> Ortega, "Meditaciones del Quijote," Obras Completas, I p. 319.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 356.

quiet possession, dominance of our consciousness upon images and anxieties caused by the objects that threaten us."<sup>42</sup> Concepts are the necessary condition for the creation of any material control of the environment. But man needs also an intellectual control of his circumstance for its own sake. Man has to have a reason to live. He asks for an explanation of everything. Material culture is only the condition for reflection, according to Ortega. Instead of living immersed taking care of our needs, we invert something so that the needs can take care of themselves, so to speak, and thus we can reflect. "Technique is not the adaptation of the subject to his environment; it is rather the contrary; the adaption of the environment to the subject."<sup>43</sup> For man, being is never a goal. Man seeks for a well-being, and it is this well-being that justifies his life. The product of ensimismamiento is an individual action is potentially social, because it is directed to other men. The reason for this is that our life is threatened by everything around us. Our tendency to survive impells us to make allies out of people around us, in order to preserve our lives together. "I am Me and my circumstance," is the famous say-

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 357.

<sup>43</sup>Ortega, "Ensimismamiento y alteracion," Obras Completas, V (Madrid, 1955), 326.



ing of Ortega," and if I do not control it, I cannot save myself"<sup>44</sup>  
 So the first thing man must produce in his act of reflection, is  
 language. Language gives birth to social beliefs and ideologies,  
 because language always bears in itself attitudes and values  
 which are inseparable from itself. Ortega almost confuses man  
 with his talking, instead of confusing him with his thinking or  
 doing: "Do not believe those who say that what is most important  
 in man is the inexpressible...What is human is the articulate  
 and sayable, and the inexpressible is infra-human."<sup>45</sup>

Culture and barbarism. Culture and life are intimately connected.  
 First is a tool for the conservation and expansion of the second.  
 We think in order to live; not vice versa. When life is abundant,  
 the instinct of spontaneity and creativity registers high on the  
 social thermometer. Then culture becomes more and more stagnant  
 because by becoming usage, it loses its original meaning. The  
 coercion of the usage becomes irrational. Then a new period of  
 creativity and improvisation takes place. Without it culture would  
 become stagnant and finally would be absorbed by another culture.  
 This period of creativity is called Barbarism, by Ortega. Barbar-  
 ism is the predominance of life upon culture, and its main char-  
 acteristic is the lack of norms and obligations.<sup>46</sup> Differences

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<sup>44</sup>Ortega, "Meditaciones del Quijote," Obras Completas, I (Ma-  
 drid, 1953), p. 322.

<sup>45</sup>Ortega, "Ideas y creencias," Obras Completas, V (Madrid,  
 1955), p. 547.

<sup>46</sup>Ortega, The Revolt of the Masses, p. 143.

in culture, says Ortega, are caused by differences in the spirit of creativity or barbarism of each country. The period of invasion of the Germanic races is the period of great culture-formation that builds the different European nationalities.<sup>47</sup> This culture-formative period produces its results in the beginning of the middle ages. "The middle ages were personalist," says Ortega.<sup>48</sup> Honor and right, law and war, are studied by Ortega in their creative process. For purpose of brevity we must omit these socio-historical studies that constitute, so to speak, the main bulkwark of verification of all these ideas.<sup>49</sup>

The conclusion seems to be that culture and barbarism are identically important for the maintenance of the historical flux. Ortega seems to identify creativity with lawlessness. Creativity implies, it is true, some escape from old molds, but not necessarily from law, if law is understood in a dynamic form.

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<sup>47</sup>Ortega, "Espana invertebrada," Obras Completas, III (Madrid 1954), pp. 110-112.

<sup>48</sup>Ortega, "Notas del vago estio," Obras Completas, II (Madrid 1954), p. 420 *passim*.

<sup>49</sup>Cf. "Meditaciones del Quijote," Obras Completas, Obras Completas, I (Madrid, 1953), pp. 309-401. and "Articulos" Ibid, pp. 170-263.

## CHAPTER III

### THE POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY OF ORTEGA

The field of Political Sociology: Political Sociology constitutes an inter-disciplinary field. The political sciences are a number of disciplines that prepare the scientist and the politician for political evaluation and political action. Whether political science is considered as an art or a science or both, we may always say that it helps people to better understand problems of our time and to solve them.

Political science is considered by many sociologists as a branch of general sociological theory. Thus Weber describes it as that part of sociology having to do with power and physical force: "Ultimately one can define the modern state sociologically only in terms of the specific means peculiar to it, as to every political association, namely, the use of physical force."<sup>1</sup> Weber does not only apply to political phenomena the same methodological tools he uses in sociology, but he treats a great deal of political matters grouped under larger sociological problems.<sup>2</sup> His main

<sup>1</sup>Max Weber, "Politics as a vocation," From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology, translated and edited by Gerth and Mills (New York, 1958), pp. 77-78.

<sup>2</sup>Weber, Theory of Social and Economic Organization, translated by Henderson (New York, 1947), pp. 341...

studies were directed to the problem of political authority and politics as a vocation and an institution of society.

Parsons following the same trend, considers the power element as a concrete case of his general theory of action. "Neither power in the political sense," he says, "nor the operation of government as a subsystem of the social system can be treated in terms of a specifically specialized conceptual scheme of the same order as that of economic theory."<sup>3</sup> And Mills focuses it as a special case of the problem of values in sociology.<sup>4</sup> Politics as an art, or as a theory of action, involves the knowledge of the social sciences among which sociology plays the most important role. Besides the general studies of groups and institutions, family and communities and minorities, there are a number of social problems that by their nature, are more related to politics. Such are the studies of social movements, social control, authority, bureaucracy, electoral trends and many others.<sup>5</sup> "The term, Political Sociology," says Bernard, "is relatively new in this country, but it has long been in use in Europe, where a number of text books bear that name."<sup>6</sup> Among those European countries listed on the

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<sup>3</sup>Talcott Parsons, The Social System, (Glencoe, Illinois, 1952), p. 126.

<sup>4</sup>See Seymour Martin Lipset, "Political Sociology," Sociology Today (New York, 1959), pp. 191-112.

<sup>5</sup>C. Wright Mills, The Sociological Imagination, (New York, 1959), p. 178.

<sup>6</sup>L. Bernard, "The Field of Political Sociology," J. Soc. Phil., III (1938), 124.

same page, he mentions Spain. The groundwork of Political Sociology, continues Bernard, is sociological, but its aim is political. The subject that has been studied perhaps with most interest by political sociologists is social movements.<sup>7</sup> "Society means a system of ordered relations...social regulation is always present, for no society can exist without some control over the native impulses of human beings," McIver says. The same author seems to consider Political Sociology as the study of a particular type of regulation or control of society.<sup>8</sup>

The difference between Sociology and Political Science is based on the traditional distinction between man and citizen, society and state.<sup>9</sup> But such a distinction, as Lipset points out, is based on the old political theories of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries which proved wrong throughout history.<sup>10</sup> The state is nothing added to society, and its presence only means that such a society is politically organized, which means just that it is a

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<sup>7</sup>Rudolf Heberle, Social Movements (New York, 1951), and Robert M. McIver, The Web of Government (New York, 1958).

<sup>8</sup>McIver, The Web of Government p. 22.

<sup>9</sup>Lipset, "Political Sociology," Sociology Today (New York, 1959), p. 82.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

society. For, excepting the primitive historical periods, we can say that without political organization there is no society. This does not mean that the same reality cannot be looked upon from a different angle by the sociologist and by the political scientist.

The "Weltanschauung" approach to political phenomena: Political science as an art is not a modern phenomena. But the knowledge that it requires has varied impressively throughout history. Until two centuries ago, the only scientific knowledge relevant to the art of government was history and warfare. Today something more is required to face the present complex political problems. Political Sociology can contribute as no other science to adequate political decisions and judgments. But such political decisions today require something more than the data of these social sciences. Mannheim has stressed the importance of a sociology of knowledge that provides a perspective or weltanschauung in order to meet present political demands.<sup>11</sup>

Ortega as a Political Sociologist: In what sense can Ortega y Gasset be called a Political Sociologist? Ortega's studies in this area constitute one of his main contributions to sociology to the present day.<sup>12</sup> The text--books that mention him consider him almost exclusively a political sociologist. Ortega has

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<sup>11</sup> Karl, Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia (New York, 1959), pp. 109-185.

<sup>12</sup> We mean that some other sociological studies may be more considered in the future. The present work aims at this goal.

studied a number of political questions that go from the electoral techniques to his great thesis of Revolt of the Masses. The point of view that prevails in all those works in his general thesis about political facts that he describes in this fashion; "Neither this volume nor I are politicians. The fact is that what we talk about here, is something that is previous to politics and belongs to its background."<sup>13</sup> This background of the political facts for Ortega, is clearly the sociological constitution of society. For all the political works of Ortega are unintelligible without his theory of usages, association and exemplarity. As a matter of fact the political works of Ortega are a mere application of all his sociological studies to the political facts of today. "The State," says Rubio, "is therefore the most external form of the collectivity, something like the superlative form of the social."<sup>14</sup> Let us remember what we said at the beginning of the second chapter about political facts. Political facts are abstractions that stand for social realities, and the only way to study them scientifically is to penetrate the nature of their basis: the social facts. This corresponds to the

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<sup>13</sup> Ortega, La rebelion de las masas, p. 25.

<sup>14</sup> Rubio-Hernandez, Sociologia y politica en Ortega y Gasset (Barcelone, 1958), p. 82.

modern studies about myth and the State.<sup>15</sup> The State is based on general usages that Ortega calls beliefs, and that constitute its justification. "By myths," McIver says, "we understand the value impregnated beliefs and notions that men hold, that they live by or live for. Every society is held together by a myth, a complex of dominating thought-forms that determines and sustains all its activities."<sup>16</sup> And among these activities, one is politics. All this will appear more clear in the next few pages and especially in the chapter about the sociology of knowledge, that should be related to the matter presented under consideration.

Leading themes of Ortega's Political Sociology: The bulk of the political work of Ortega is constituted mainly in these three essays: listed in order of importance: The Revolt of the Masses, Invertebrated Spain and Old and New Styles in Politics. (If we invert this order we have them lined up chronologically). The political ideas of Ortega y Gasset, however, are spread throughout all his essays. The Revolt of the Masses is the best known of his political works. This book is nothing more than a look at present European conditions from a sociological point of view. It begins by saying: "One of the most unfortunate things of our times is that when the people from the West face the terrible conflicts of today's public life, they have found themselves stuffed with a

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<sup>15</sup>Ernst Cassirer, The Myth and the State, (New Haven, 1946).

<sup>16</sup>McIver, The Web of Government, p. 4.



primitive equipment of erroneous notions about what society, the collectivity, individuals, usages, the law and justice are."<sup>17</sup>

Man and People and its political implications: Man and People is the tool for the interpretation of this work just as for all other political essays. In spite of the fact that Ortega intended to write Man and People as an introduction of a work that never came out, from the last few pages of the essay and from the references to it of many other works, we can reconstruct the main course of transition from the sociological aspect of usages to their political aspect.

The Sociological Approach to Political Facts: Two of the features of usages were : first, their impersonal character and second, their coercion. I want to cross the street but I find myself inhibited by a custom or law. This inhibition is primordial due to a moral pressure of a social character that can become at times physical also. In the case of the lover that we mentioned before, we discovered an infirnal degree of moral coercion in so far as he could not express his feelings. "But sooner or later--and this is important to be noticed--there exists the eventuality of physical force."<sup>18</sup>

The second characteristic of usages, namely their impersonality, has to do with the subject of their coercion. Who exercises this authority? Who forbids us crossing the street?

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<sup>17</sup>La rebelion de las masas pp. 13-14.

<sup>18</sup>Ortega. Man and People. p. 196.

And this power, which generally manifests itself with euphemisms of moral coercion and pressure, of causing us moral damage, but which in the end always threatens with the eventuality of a physical violence--this power, which, then, is physical, brutal, which--as we shall see--also functions brutally, this power that belongs to no one, that is no human, that, in this sense, is something like gravity that propels the lifeless mass of the star in its course--this power is the 'social power.' And 'social power' functions in the coercion that is 'usage.'<sup>19</sup>

At first glance, the State appears as something abstract, impersonal, distant. Of course, in a country conscious of its democratic government, people will say that who commands and forbids is the people, all of us, because we are the State. But what part or dimension of us? Certainly not our private or even interpersonal life. Yet to say that usages, in general, exercise coercion in the form of political force would not be true. The family, the school, and many other social institutions that are sources of usages, exercise a moral coercion accompanied at times by physical force. Ortega has to introduce here another distinction in the social facts, "This shows us...that usages can be classified as 'weak or strong.' These two degrees of force in usage are measured by the force manifested in the accompanying coercion."<sup>20</sup> Strong usages have to do with public opinions and vigencias, Vigencias are also called norms and they bear a strong moral support. They are the main constituents of public opinion. Ortega

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p.225.

describes this phenomenon as follows:

Both these things--being an ~~imposition~~ and being a recourse--imply that society is, in essence, power, and insuperable power facing the individual. Public opinion, 'reigning' opinion, has this power behind it and makes it function in the various forms that correspond to the various dimensions of collective existence. This power of the collectivity is public power.<sup>21</sup>

public power

At the beginning this privilege of using physical coercion for the social control of usages is left out to the private responsibility of the tribe and the community. But as time goes on and society grows in number and complexity, physical power becomes institutionalized. The State is the substitution for this power of the community.<sup>22</sup>

When the realm of physical force becomes institutionalized, the power in the hands of a few tends to increase and corrupt if there is no social control over it. Whatever form this social control takes on, it will always be artificial if it is not based on the social function and nature of the state. According to Ortega liberalism is the only political doctrine that respects this social function and nature of the State.<sup>23</sup> His arguments in defense of liberalism are based on social considerations of its

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 269.

<sup>22</sup>Ortega, Man and People, p. 269.

<sup>23</sup>"Vieja y nueva politica", Obras Completas, I (Madrid, 1953)  
288.

socio-historical origin and mechanism. We skip this part of Ortega's thought because it is fairly known and could induce many to reject his whole political sociology, which, for the most part, can be considered independent of his political positions.

The important point to be considered in all this doctrine of usages and strong vigencias is that the political facts are based on culture. Nowadays, used to the bureaucratization of modern States, we tend to consider the government as a mere instrumental and administrative organization that is able to solve all its domestic or internal problems in its own sphere. Ortega says about public opinion on which the State is constituted. "Our social environment, which is full of words, of things said, is eo ipso full of opinions."<sup>24</sup> These opinions are most intimately culture in the full sense of the word. Culture is what we take for granted and what is thought to be the common belief of a country. And it is the bidding force and coercion of this belief that constitutes the State.

If we contemplate the countless ideas or opinions that forever hover and buzz around us.....we shall observe that they can be divided into two great classes. Some of them are said as something that is self-evident and in saying them the speaker is confident from the outset that they will be accepted by what is called 'everybody'. Other ideas or opinions, on the contrary, are uttered with the more or less definite suggestion that they are not accepted opinions, or sometimes as completely and confessedly opposed to commonly accepted opinions."<sup>25</sup>

Ortega goes on showing how afraid people are of disagreeing

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 264.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 265.

with "everybody" and means that they do not need support and backing from particular individuals or groups, but that, on the contrary they impose themselves on everyone."<sup>26</sup>

The Cultural approach to political facts: This cultural or sociological approach to politics is what makes Ortega write: "The governing classes during centuries--save for a short period--have ruled wrongly not because of chance, but because the Spain they were ruling over, was as sick as they." In other words, the problems in politics, that are transcendent and not merely sporadic, are the result of more profound sociological factors. Sociologically speaking, society is polarized around a minority and a majority. The cause of the ill functioning of the society can be the lack of a good minority, or the lack of respect for them on the side of the majority together with lack of docility and discipline. A great number of today's political problems do not result from economic and political sources alone, but from forgetting about this fact which Ortega mentions. One of the main factors for international political decisions lies outside the political sphere and belongs to the problem of understanding the national character of each country. What is the reality of this national character according to Ortega? Is it a type of common mind of person? The national character is constituted by some common beliefs of a country's people about what should constitute their special way of life. Public opinion, over a period of many

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 264.

years, constitutes a national credo to which people submit. The submission is not an automatic process, but depends on the ability of the minority to rule and on the correct use of physical force that, by its very nature, goes along with public opinion.

Physical force and the State: Physical force, according to Ortega is never something to be looked down upon. The Philosophy of physical force is more complicated than appears at first sight. Society, we said before, is always a victory of the social forces against the antisocial. What philosophers say about the social nature of man, says Ortega, could also be said about the antisocial nature of man.<sup>27</sup> "At one time or another," he writes, "almost all men have felt longings to flee from society. But the vivid image of the effort implied by a solitary life...is enough to suppress the impulse to flee."<sup>28</sup> Ortega examines the tendency to seclusion from society as the natural way by which societies are born and expanded. What keeps society together is the coercion that usages exercise upon the individual, and this coercion sometimes cannot be moral alone but must depend on the ability of the minorities to use physical force in an intelligent way. People are born, says Ortega, when they have the will to do so. But the will will does not arise spontaneously. Rather it is imposed to

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<sup>27</sup> Ortega, Man and People, p. 227.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

the mass pressed upon it "like the oil in the automobile."

With the foregoing metapolitical basis that sociology has provided, Ortega examines a number of political phenomena. He will only mention the three most important ones, namely the concept of nation, the sociology of war, and the revolt of the masses. The Revolt of the Masses and its theory about the nation: In his The Revolt of the Masses Ortega rejects the old definitions of the nation for failing to provide us with the real origin and constitution of a country. They rather pointed out accidental factors which usually accompany the notion of nation,

The common origin of the people within the boundaries of one country was one of the points the ancients emphasized most. The Romans, for instance, called their country gens. "It", namely the State, "is not a horde or a tribe or other societies based on consanguinity which nature takes on itself to form without the collaboration of human effort."<sup>29</sup> Not only has the modern phenomenon of the birth of countries like Switzerland and Canada denied this conception, but so also has the very beginning of Western civilization. Romanization is an old concept and an example of what we call today nationalization. It means the unity within one State of such different countries as Spain, France, England, and Africa. So Ortega rightly states: "On the contrary, the State begins when man strives to escape from the natural soc-

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid. p.263.

ity of which he has been made a member by blood."<sup>30</sup>

Another main conception of nation consists in what has been called the natural boundary theory. This theory states that what constituted the modern nationalities was a result of a long process of wars and conquests between countries. During these wars, they had natural hindrances for their campaigns against other tribes and provinces. These hindrances were the natural boundaries that exist today between the different nations. Ortega finds two things wrong with this position:

The historic reality of the 'natural boundary' consists simply in being a hindrance for the expansion of the country A and over country B. Because it is a hindrance for the country A, is also a defense for B. The idea of 'natural boundary' implies naively, as more natural even than the boundary, the possibility of an unlimited expansion and fusion between countries. As it seems, only a natural hindrance is an obstacle to them.<sup>31</sup>

Similarly Ortega reflects the theory that defines nation in terms of soil, language, etc.. All these definitions, Ortega thinks, have two main difficulties. First, they are factors external to the life of the nation. We have to look for a justification of the State, in its daily life, because it is a human reality and as such it must have a self-explanation, in the way it operates. "It is necessary to resign oneself to look for the secret of the

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<sup>30</sup> Ortega, La rebelion de las masas, p. 137.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.



national State in its peculiar inspiration as such State, in its own policy and not in some foreign principles of a biographical or geographical character."<sup>32</sup> But besides being peripheral, those old definitions are static and belong to the past not to the present. The State is not something estatic, but a movement. It is something that either increases or decreases. Like the society it is founded upon, it is mobile. If we cut this movement by means of abstractions, we will only see the terminus a quo of the movement. The essence of the State, in this case, will appear as a unity of people which is found on a material thing like idiom, blood, boundary. But if we look into the future we immediately see that this community which we have called State, is striving towards some end. More than that, in this project, it tries to overcome that unity of the past, which we thought constituted the State itself. When the drive toward the future dies, the State itself ceases to exist. That is why all the unities of the past were definitions of the State before the State was accomplished, but now they are realities and realities can no longer be ideals and goals.

The word ideal, therefore, is the keystone according to Ortega, in all this definition of the State, "The State is, no matter what its form may be, the invitation that a group of men makes

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 135.

to other human groups, to execute together a great enterprise."<sup>33</sup> But this does not mean that the past is irrelevant here. It only amounts to saying that it is important inasmuch as it influences the future. With the countries of South America, Ortega insists Spain has a common past, but since it does not share with them a common project or future, they do not constitute one nation with Spain. The past, according to Ortega, makes us irreversible beings. History is never a repetition, because history is an experience and men do not like to copy in history.

The European has been democrat, liberal, absolutist, and feudal...but he no longer is all this. Does that mean that he does not continue in any way being those things? Clearly not.

The European continues being all those things, but he is them in the form of having been them.<sup>34</sup>

This can also be applied to the national level:

To have common glories in the past, a common will in the present; to carry out great things together; wanting to do some more things; behold the essential conditions to become a country. In the past, inheritances and glories; in the future, one program to realize... The existence of a country is a daily plebiscite.<sup>35</sup>

What is the nature of this program that the State always presupposes? "The program is a suggestive project of common life...

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid. p. 139.

<sup>34</sup>Ortega, El hombre y la gente, p. 163.

<sup>35</sup>Ortega, "Historia como sistema," Obras Completas, VI (Madrid, 1955), 37.

they," that is the citizens, "do not live only in common for the sake of living in common, but rather to carry out something together."<sup>36</sup> Ortega mentions here the conquests and expansion of the Roman empire as something that caused the strong national unity of the Romans.<sup>37</sup> When the imperialistic fervor was strong, Rome had a cause that justified its own existence. When this spirit died, Rome ceased to exist. In Invertebrate Spain, he describes a similar process of expansion that created the Spanish national unity.<sup>38</sup> Since those are the only examples he gives of the so-called program of common life, his notion of nation seems to be restricted to those countries that possessed a colonial or imperialistic goal in history.

The Sociology of War: The sociology of war of Ortega is an application of his notion of physical force to the national and international level. Ortega thinks that today's fear of war--he wrote these ideas at the beginning of the century--is irrational. He criticizes severely a type of pacifism originated in England that wanted to avoid any type of war at all costs. Such an attitude, Ortega writes, comes from considering physical violence as the only reality in war. "I believe," he continues, "that the

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<sup>36</sup>Ortega, La rebelion de las masas, p.141.

<sup>37</sup>Ortega, "Apuntes sobre el pensamiento, su terurgia y demiurgia," Obras Completas, II (Madrid, 1944), 537.

<sup>38</sup>Ortega, La rebelion de las masas, p. 130.

terrible thing about war is that it is a punishment inflicted upon the Europeans for not having thought out calmly about the nature of war."<sup>39</sup> Violence is only a manifestation of the wills and powers that come into conflict in a war. War is not, in most of the cases, the brute dominance of force over intelligence and reason, but rather the external manifestation of a conflict of wills and programs between two countries.<sup>40</sup> The determination of a society to carry out a program of common life, and the minority's exercise of authority, both require if necessary the use of force if necessary. More than that, physical force is the best indication of the determination of this majority and authority to overcome all obstacles and bring about its goal. People are born and heard this expression before when they have the indomitable will to do so; and this will is not firm if it does not want to risk everything. "War is not the exercise of power by one State, thus in general, but the concrete determination to exercise such power by means of violence and coercion."<sup>41</sup> Ortega goes as far as saying that if any mono-determinism should be held as an explanation of history, it would not be the geographic determinism of Buckle or the economic determinism of Marx, but the monodeterminism of war.<sup>41</sup> War is the dynamic principle of his-

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<sup>40</sup>"Invertebrate Spain", Obras Completas, II (Madrid, 1954), 91

<sup>41</sup>Ortega, "El genio de la guerra y la guerra alemana," Obras Completas, II (Madrid, 1958), 205.

<sup>42</sup>Ortega, "Sobre el fascismo," Obras Completas, II (Madrid, 1958), 205.

tory; something natural to it, just as the natural function of any organism. But this does not just mean that war is not a sorrowful experience and should not be avoided when it is not necessary. "War causes fatigue but not extenuation, it is a natural function of the social organism already prepared for this function."<sup>43</sup>

The periods of war are periods of creativity and nationality formation. During such periods the usages of society change. The periods of peace are times of adaptation of the social institutions to the political changes introduced by previous wars. War is not historical initiative or creativity, but a manifestation of the solidity and determination of society to remain unified. Ortega is just as much against the modern theories of direct action and government based on the mere use of force, as he is against a blind pacifism. The former position is a modern phenomenon called Nazism and Fascism that claims no other rights than violence without even bothering about a rationalization of its own position. These modern political theories and the revolt of the masses are one and the same thing. "Under the species of Syndicalism and Fascism there appears for the first time in Eur-

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<sup>43</sup> Ortega, "El genio de la guerra y la guerra alemana," 40.

Europe a type of man who does not want to give reasons or to be right, but simply shows himself resolved to impose his opinions.<sup>44</sup> The latter position departs from a static conception of society. War is only a means to maintain a status quo. Pacifism shows a complete ignorance about the whole historical process of nation-formation, which is a process of conflict between races resulting in war. This theory considers the present status quo as a natural and perennial state. Even accepting the fact that, after the formation of the present nationalities war should disappear, what should we say about some countries that appear late in history when all nationalities are formed? Who is going to determine the boundaries of such countries, or how many nations there should be? Pacifism errs when it considers international society as an equilibrium which is not a balance of powers but a static conception which is the negation of life.<sup>45</sup> In all this discussion Ortega confesses himself a follower of Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and especially Scheller. He disagrees with the latter regarding his ethical position.

In spite of his rejection of the Darwinian conception of war, prevailing in his time, Ortega's position is heavily influ-

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<sup>44</sup> Ortega, The Revolt of the Masses, p. 80.

<sup>45</sup> Ortega, "Notas del vago estio," Obras Completas, II (Madrid, 1954), 428.

enced by the biological discoveries of his time, a fact that seems to function significantly in the main arguments enumerated before.

Physical force and Rights. Ortega's Sociology of Law: However, Ortega does not think that the main question about war has been solved with his foregoing arguments. He believes that today's indecisions about the use of force is the sign of a lack of solid ideas regarding a more profound reality: the juridical aspect. During the spell and centuries a group of French people and English philosophers suddenly discovered the existence of certain inalienable rights and duties that men had just by being born. Although they claimed that those rights and obligations existed prior to the State, yet, without the presence of the latter, these rights seemed to be completely meaningless. Just as in the time of Rome, the people derived all their social status from their citizenship, so also is the man of the post-French revolution powerless to exercise any of his rights without the permanent vigilance of the State. This "original doctrine" of the rights of man was a copy of the discovery made by the Romans, and ignored the long experience of achievements in history. This attitude consisted also in a rejection of the spirit of the Middle Ages which were considered as a period of barbarism. These Eighteenth Century thinkers committed two errors. The first consisted a notion of progress as a negation of the historical past.

"Progress does not consist in today's annihilation of yesterday; on the contrary, it consists in conserving the essence of yesterday that had the power to create a better today."<sup>45</sup>

The second error had to do with a false idea about barbarism. As we said before, barbarism for Ortega's not only a period of lawlessness and lack of normative bounds. This is the negative side of barbarism. But there is another side, completely forgotten by the philosophers of the XVIII Century, namely, the aspect of creativity. Ortega predicted that our ideas on the Middle Ages were going to change within a short time, and history has proved him correct on this point. Again, the Middle Ages are the period of nationality formation and nationality change.

Since the time of Spencer, Ortega continues, the spirit of war has been opposed to the spirit of industrialism in the same way as barbarism is opposed to culture. The spirit of war consists basically in the attitude of creativity that far from disregarding the danger, does not consider this danger as a sufficient motive to avoid a great enterprise. The industrial spirit, on the other hand, is so affected by fear of war that it risks nothing and looks at war a threat trying to subvert the status quo. The spirit of war, though affected by fear of war in a rational way, still considers its own determination to carry out a creative

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<sup>45</sup>Ortega, "Notas del vago estio," Obras Completas, II (Madrid 1954), 428.



social plan, above the danger of war. Life is conceived as a permanent vigilance. The period of barbarism is a period of selfconfidence. Decadence is just the opposite. We are not confident because we have lost the power of self-determination that opens new historical paths. We only want to keep a static balance. War is considered as a mere threat, and militarism is our tool against it. "The Middle Ages," says Ortega, "did not know militarism. The military man is a degeneration of the warrior corrupted by industrialism."<sup>46</sup> The concept of physical forces in the Middle Ages is based on the principle: he who cannot defend his right, cannot claim the right. The knight cannot rely on the State for the security of his own rights because public life, in the Middle Ages, was almost non-existent. The king only solves the most difficult cases of violation of, and conflict between, rights. Private life is identified with public life. The Middle Ages are personalist. Rights are a gift and noble dignity bestowed to the knight for his personal victories. This conception of rights is fully resented in the castles, says Ortega. "The castles symbolize a daily struggle, life as a warfare."<sup>47</sup> In the Middle Ages humanity makes the discovery of self-discipline, braveness, and gentleness that noble war always engenders.

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<sup>46</sup> Ortega, "Notas del vago estio," Obras Completas, II (Madrid, 1954), 429.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. p. 427.

All these virtues were virtues of the citizen, during the time of Rome; now they belong to the individual as a private man. They have travelled from the periphery to the core of the people. The important point to be remembered in this whole treatise, is the conception of rights in a dynamic fashion.

With the background offered by these socio-historical considerations, the author attacks the complicated problem of international peace and international rights. The rights of the State considered as a person, should be compared to the nature of rights of the individual. The readiness of one State to defend its own rights is the best indication of its ability to rule. "This power does not consist in an intelligent, artistic, or industrial capacity. Nothing of this sort constitutes the specific power of the State. The power is rather a peculiar kind of energy and cohesion among those who form a country and among the different collectivities that are conquered. The long and painful process of discovery of rights during the Middle Ages, produced future results in the creation of national constitutions in the XVII and XVIII centuries. The people, however, who wrote these constitutions never looked back to the so-called "Barbaric" ages that made possible the whole reality of rights. One of the most advanced countries in the philosophy of rights is England, according to Ortega. England produced an unwritten constitution that became a model for many nations. The development of such a con-

constitution required great conquests and wars, life conceived as a daily struggle. But the great paradox is that England, wholly oblivious of its own past, has evolved the modern doctrine of pacifism, which is a denial of her own historical experiences.

In the opinion of Ortega, all modern doctrines of international right have failed to prevent war because of the basic error in the conception of individual rights that is extended to the State. The only solution for international peace must be a dynamic and historical conception of rights as an achievement, and the idea of physical force as the best indication to keep these rights. This rather simplified conclusion of Ortega the historical and dynamic origin of rights probably contained in his mind a great deal of ramifications, but since he never made them explicit, his sociology of law and war, ends up in a very simple solution.

#### Social and Political consideration about the Revolt of the Masses:

The Revolt of the Masses is one of the best known and commented works of Ortega, and therefore we will limit ourselves to make a rundown of his leading ideas. This will be most in accordance with the purpose of this study which is to give an account of the sociology of Ortega never exploited by his commentators.

Revolt of the Masses is the name Ortega uses to characterize the great mass-movement of the beginning of this century that consisted in the "accession of the masses to complete social power".

er."<sup>48</sup> The revolt of the masses has changed completely the modern European way of life. All the other political and social changes must be considered unimportant when they are compared to the former mass-movement. Its causes are hidden in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries; more specifically in the doctrines of liberalism, scientific experimentation, and industrialism. The coming of the masses to power has produced a type of man that Ortega calls the mass-man, with the following features: an outlook on life with all its technological and cultural products, as a second nature; something that man finds out-there, and that he has a right to, with complete inadvertence to the sacrifices and struggles that humanity has gone through to create. As a consequence the mass-man looks at his rights as things of caprice with no regard to the fundamental facts that at all times should give value to them. The mass-man is rebellious by nature. He has no docility to the minority for which he has no respect whatever. Life for him becomes something common that has lost all the values of life created by the sacrifices of the ruling minorities. The basic attitude is that of a "spoiled child" that considers his toys as necessary as his food, as something he has a right to, just because they lie there.<sup>49</sup> The mass-man is the man who looks for a definition of what he is in the crowd, who is nobody outside

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<sup>48</sup> Ortega, La rebelion de las masas, p. 11.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 90.

the crowd. He learns how to do everything as other people do. He has no opinions of his own. In the world of the masses, quantity repalces quality and crowds begin to invade theaters and meeting-halls.<sup>50</sup> Authority becomes a mere representation of the mass-spirit. Bureaucratization means the disappearance of the ruling minority and the use of authority as a weapon in the hands of the mass. The natural basis on which society is found the minority-majority relation, authority and exemplarity, docility and determination to live in common are placed by the reign of the masses. Basically the rebellion of the masses is the corruption of democracy envisaged by Tocqueville.<sup>51</sup> The lack of initiative and norms --a natural result of a society where authority is not esteemed-- and practically the lack of complete cultural values characterized by the coming of the masses result in these three facts synthesized by Oromi: "Free expansion of vital desires. 2) Radical ingratitude towards the rest of humanity. 3) Deep conviction that nobody is superior to anybody."<sup>52</sup>

Together with all these factors, there is the barbarism of specialization.<sup>53</sup> People have not only lost the notion of history

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>51</sup>Tocqueville, Democracy in America, (New York,) pp.258-261.

<sup>52</sup>Oromi, Ortega y la Filosofia, ed. E.T. Cruz (Madrid, 1953), p.252.

<sup>53</sup>Ortega, The Revolt of the Masses, p. 119.

and time, but they are no longer able to comprehend the weltanschauung of their politico-social realities. The mass-man is not an ignorant man, a worker, or any special class member and this makes it so much more the difficult. "By mass..is not to be specially understood the workers; it does not indicate a social class, but a kind of man to be found today in all social classes, who consequently represents our age, in which he is predominant, ruling power."<sup>54</sup> The typical way the mass operates is by imposing its own rule with irrational force. The sole political technique of masses is direct action. The masses not only intervene everywhere; they do so violently, says Ortega. The reason for this is the lack of "auditive faculties."<sup>55</sup> When this is missing, culture disappears.

When all these things are lacking there is no culture; there is, in the strictest sense of the word, barbarism. And let us not deceive ourselves, this is what is beginning to appear in Europe under the progressive rebellion of the masses... Barbarism is the absence of standards to which appeal can be made.<sup>56</sup>

The State becomes the uncontrolled ruling force, the tyrannical rule of the majority. Instead of revolutions now there is only left a coup d' etat that changes the subject of government without changing the basic form and nature of the State.

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<sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 120;

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

<sup>56</sup>Ortega, The Revolt of the Masses, (New York, 1938), p. 79.

Since 1949, that is to say, since the beginning of the second generation of bourgeois governments, there have been no genuine revolutions in Europe. Not assuredly because there were no motives for them, but because there were no means. Public power was brought to the level of social power. Good-bye-forever Revolutions. The only thing now possible is their opposite: the coup d'etat.<sup>57</sup>

The result is the creation of a State that is based on pure physical force, like Nazism, Fascism and Bolshevism. During the time of the great philosophical developments in Nazi Germany, we had scientists and philosophers defending with the most simplistic reasons the rightness of their government, whose philosophy was the most ridiculous in history. This total lack of norm, typical of barbarism, is not as in the other periods of creativity, because the mass does not have any plan, does not want anything. Decadence is a relative concept. Nations become decadent with respect to certain ideals they intend to realize. But absolute decadence is the lack of enthusiasm about life, because of a lack of program and initiative.

The characteristic of our hour is that the commonplace mind, knowing itself to be commonplace, has the assurance to proclaim the rights of the commonplace and to impose them wherever it will. As they say in United States: 'to be different is to be indecent.'<sup>58</sup>

Ortega thinks that the social situation is very serious but not an insoluble problem. Yet he realizes that all solutions have been superficial because they have been applied in the mere periphery: in the political sphere. The solution he proposes is the

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<sup>57</sup>Ibid., p. 131.

<sup>58</sup>Ortega, The Revolt of the Masses, p. 18.

European State, based on a common culture and normative system-- all these are socio-cultural and historical facts, Ortega writes-- that the West has to re-discover in its own history. He believes that the national differences are minimal as compared with the community in history of Europe. His unification of the West is treated extensively in his sociology of law, and is made dependent on the dynamic conception of law that depends, in its turn, on a historical consciousness that has to be aroused everywhere. This will bring Europe to the discovery of an identity in culture and especially with regard to the formation and development of the doctrine of rights of man. This will also help societies to re-discover the powerful minority and to accept its ruling role. Only with the fulfillment of these conditions can a new society be born and the revolt of the masses fade.



## CHAPTER IV

## THE SOCIOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE OF ORTEGA

General considerations about the Sociology of Knowledge: The sociology of knowledge is a relatively new field in sociology. Marx was the initiator of the school, but the main systematic treatment appeared with the work of Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia.<sup>1</sup> He was the one who coined the term, Wissenssoziologie. The English translation of this German term, sociology of knowledge, according to Maquet, expands the somewhat restricted German notion and includes not only scientific knowledge but any type of thought-product.<sup>2</sup> This English term seems to apply better to what most sociologists of knowledge have been doing. "The sociologists of knowledge have not limited their inquiries to scientific knowledge."<sup>3</sup>

The sociology of knowledge explores the existential basis of knowledge. "The Copernican revolution," says Merton, "in this area of inquiry consisted in the hypothesis that not only error (this was the hypothesis of Marx) but also the discovery of truth was socially (historically) conditioned."<sup>4</sup> Different philosophi-

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<sup>1</sup>Ideology and Utopia (New York, 1960), Mannheim, Karl.

<sup>2</sup>Maquet, The Sociology of Knowledge, translated from the French by J.P. Locke, (Boston, 1951), p. 4.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Robert Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure (Glencoe, 1936).

cal schools have emphasized, throughout history, the logico-cultural origin of thought. The very definition of philosophy as the science studying the ultimate principles of things under the light of natural reason, does not seem to explicitate the fact that such natural reason belongs to people who are living in a socio-cultural milieu.

We do not want to limit ourselves to philosophical thought and we should arrive at the same conclusion with regards to sciences, art, and any area of human knowledge. Thought circumscribed to its social context had never been given special consideration. In the beginning of his Ideology and Utopia, Mannheim talks about the directive principles of this social science. "This book is concerned with the problem of how men actually think."<sup>5</sup> So far history of ideas was the only science encharged of establishing relationships between philosophical and literary ideas and historical phenomena. The central thesis of the sociology of knowledge is that the history of ideas is still incomplete. In order to have an adequate historical knowledge of ideas we have to consider scientifically their socio-cultural dimension. The social determinant of knowledge--what is called by Mannheim the group-determinant of knowledge--can be restricted to small groups or to a whole culture or historical epoch.<sup>6</sup> In any case the historical

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<sup>5</sup> Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia. p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 118.

factor will also have to enter into consideration. "Manifestly, then, the sociology of knowledge is concerned with problems which have had a long history. So much is this the case, that the discipline has found its first historian, Ernst Gruenwald."<sup>7</sup> And Mannheim says:

The philosophy of history which mostly treats historical periods as units, overlooking their inner differentiation and stratification, must be supplemented by a socially differentiated view of the historico-social process as a whole, explicitly taking into account the distribution of social roles and its significance for the dynamics of the whole.<sup>8</sup>

The sociology of knowledge was first discovered, as we said before, by Marx. In his German Ideology, he set out to demonstrate that the historico-social environment of a class or a historical economic system influences a determinate ideology to the point of the latter being a tool for the conservation of the former in a determinate economic system. There is a long lapse between this narrow ideological determinism of Marx and Sorokin's work, Cultural Dynamics.<sup>9</sup> In this interval we discover Levy-Bruhl, Durkheim, Ricket, Troeltsch, all of whom were read by Ortega y Gasset. In

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<sup>7</sup>Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure, p. 256.

<sup>8</sup>Karl Marx, German Ideology, (New York, 1947), p. 20.

<sup>9</sup>Sorokin, Social and Cultural Dynamics, III, (New York, 1937).

addition, Sorokin, Merton, and Znaniecki have contributed detailed studies of special cases of the general theory of the sociology of knowledge. After these preliminary considerations we want to treat some of the main problems of the sociology of knowledge.

We will try to point out the main sources of divergence from the standpoint of the three elements that constitute a sociology of knowledge: thought, existential basis, and the relationship between these two.<sup>10</sup>

### The first element of the Sociology of Knowledge: Knowledge

With regards to thought, we have already seen how a certain precision of this concept resulted from the way in which the German notion of wissensoziologie is translated into English. In general it can be stated that the sociology of knowledge is not concerned with those ways of thinking and talking that are socially irrelevant and pays more attention to thinking-processes reflected in ideologies. This term ideology points to a historico-social reference. It was used by Marx for the first time in this sense. With this name Marx directs a basic attack against all preceding social and political systems born, according to him, within a false social structure created by the struggle between classes. Whereby the concept ideology has taken on, in many posterior sociological writings, the connotation of rationalization in defense of the interests of one class or economic system. "All

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<sup>10</sup>Maquet, The Sociology of Knowledge, pp. 28-36.

the ideas, true or false, have their origin and inspiration in the material conditions of man and his life-struggle," says Marx.<sup>11</sup> Marx will call his system a science, as opposed to ideology, and will make the object of this science treat and interpret all past ideologies.

In contrast with German philosophy which descends from heaven to earth, here we ascend from earth to heaven. That is to say, we do not start out from what men say, imagine, or conceive. We set out from real active men, and, on the basis of their real life-process, we demonstrate the development of their ideological reflexes and echoes of this life-process.<sup>12</sup>

Engel explained this general thesis of Marx modifying it with his positivistic-logical style. Under such an influence, modern textbooks on communism read in the following way:

If we deduce different ideological schemes not from our minds but only through our minds, from the real work, and from what happens in it, what this yields is not philosophy, but positive science.<sup>13</sup>

However, for Marx, the idea of a science independent from any ideology involves, at times, more than one contradiction.<sup>14</sup> If his own criticism of past ideologies is also conditioned by the social and economic structures of his age, how can he expect to escape his own arguments? Communism as a general interpretation of history cannot explain that history in a purely relativistic or

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<sup>11</sup>Karl Marx, German Ideology, p. 14.

<sup>12</sup>Handbook of Marxism (New York, 1953), p. 233.

<sup>13</sup>Karl Marx, German Ideology, (New York, 1947), p. 14.

<sup>14</sup>Handbook of Marxism, p. 233.

deterministic fashion.

The main point of all this discussion is that the term ideology in the Marxist sense has too many philosophical connotations to be introduced uncre~~di~~cally into the field of empirical science. Mannheim was the first to take pains at reformulating this Marxist conception. He created a value-free terminology that cannot succumb with the failure of a philosophical system. The notion ideology is split into these two sociological categories: ideology and utopia. We are not interested here in the specific terminology, for Ortega will offer great differences in this point but rather in the basis for this distinction of Mannheim. Ideology and utopia are differentiated not by a criterion of truth or validity, but by a social function.

Here we refer to the ideology of an age or of a concrete historico-social group, e.g., of a class, when we are concerned with the characteristics and composition of the total structure of the mind of this epoch or of this group.<sup>15</sup>

And a few pages later:

Only those orientations transcending reality will be referred to by us as utopian which, when they pass over into conduct, tend to shatter, whether partially or wholly, the order of things prevailing at the time."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia, p. 56.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 192.

It is important to notice, therefore, that the word utopia does not correspond to what we call myth, meaning an irrational belief of society.<sup>17</sup> This distinction between ideology and utopia marks the separation of philosophy from sociology and makes Mannheim a sociologist in spite of his philosophical preoccupations. The philosophical questions that Mannheim thought should be treated in a sociology of knowledge are, first, the problem of weltanschauung, and second, the epistemological basis of this science. With regards to the former point, we might say that a social psychologist and an anthropologist cannot relate an attitude to a concrete socio-cultural situation unless they fully understand such an attitude. This attitude, which is reflected in signs and behavior, will have to be interpreted. As a consequence a communion with the culture in question will be required. In the same way the sociologist of knowledge who studies thought-patterns has a need to interpret them. This is something that mere statistical correlations cannot substitute for. On the other hand, the sociologist is a scientist and not a philosopher. So the main difference will consist in these two points: 1) The sociologist interested in the sociology of knowledge will try to understand, not to evaluate, the correlations between thought and

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<sup>17</sup>As an example see McIver, The Web of Government, (New York 1958), p. 4; or Cassirer, The Myth and the State (New Haven, 1946), p. 6.

social structures. 2) The understanding of thought-products will only be a prerequisite for further conclusions outside the scope of philosophy.

Epistemological Bases The second problem with regards to the first element of the sociology of knowledge: thought-process, is the epistemological question. Sociology is not directly interested in the critical problem of knowledge. However, once we have established a determinate relation between social facts and thought, we have indirectly made some philosophical statements. This is why Merton, following Mannheim, believes that epistemology has to be treated in some way within the metasociology of knowledge.<sup>18</sup> Maquet has also studied this problem extensively, but his interest is quite different: "The relation between the sociology of knowledge and the philosophy of knowledge."<sup>19</sup> The sociologists of knowledge are interested in the relation between sociology and philosophy only in so far as they have to solve a methodological problem and give validity to what-ever discoveries they intend to make. In a general way we can say that the main thesis of the sociology of knowledge does not necessarily implicate a relativistic position in philosophy. It is true that

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<sup>18</sup>Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure p. 494, Mannheim Ideology and Utopia, p.270.

<sup>19</sup>Maquet, The Sociology of Knowledge, pp. 13-14.



Mannheim's relationism is a camouflaged relativism but this is so because he does not distinguish too well between the social and the logical factors in thought. Scientific and philosophical work is limited in scope and interest by social factors, and even tends to accept with more ease this or that truth, but this does not mean that the desire for truth and valid knowledge is a pure myth. As sociologists, it is enough to know that some correlations can be established between thought and socio-cultural facts, and unless we find a one-to-one correspondence we cannot say that the sociology of knowledge is the only explanation of truth and falsity. As a matter of fact, Mannheim himself left out the problem of true or false ideologies.

The second element of the Sociology of Knowledge: The Existential Basis: The second element is the existential basis. To what socio-cultural phenomena is thought related? The differences of solution to this question seem to be as wide as the sociologists of knowledge. Mannheim, in all the pages he devotes to the problem of the bases of knowledge, does not state clearly just what he means by his group-determinism. However, his studies about the influences of political groups with regards to their classes and ideologies, seems to offer a vague answer to the question asked before.

Merton also noticed this fact.<sup>20</sup> A more concrete answer is given--it seems to me--by Znaniecki, but his work does not of-

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<sup>20</sup>Mannheim's analysis is limited, as well, by his failure to specify the type or mode of relations between social structure and knowledge," Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure, p. 498.

fer any explicit statement with regard to the methodology of the sociology of knowledge in general. The categories, audience, public, etc., as Merton says, could be taken as an attempt to discriminate some of the irrelevant social facts in relation to knowledge.<sup>21</sup> Sorokin has given more importance to the cultural determinants of thought.<sup>22</sup> We will see that his approach is closer to Ortega's. Merton claims that Sorokin's correlation between systems of truth and particular scientific and philosophical trends of thought of one epoch, is a tautology.<sup>23</sup> Maquet answers this objection as follows:

In certain sense the establishment by the facts of a meaningful relationship may always be said tautological...But then we must admit that only the discoveries of inexplicable relationships (in regard to the present state of the theoretical elaboration of science) are not tautological.<sup>24</sup>

Perhaps Ortega offers a more concrete answer to this objection of Merton. As we will see in the following pages, Ortega proposes a basic ideological perspective or sensibility of life

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 482.

<sup>22</sup>Sorokin, Social and Cultural Dynamics, III (New York, 1937).

<sup>23</sup>Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure, p. 497.

<sup>24</sup>Maquet, The Sociology of Knowledge, p. 196.

of one epoch--the belief-system of Sorokin is thus more sociological in nature--as related to particular manifestations of art, political systems, and social action of a determinate age.

The third element: Relation between thought-processes and social bases: The type of relation that exists between the existential basis and thought-products can go from an exaggerated realism (as it would be the theory of a universal mind that created the cultural systems of truth) to the moderate position stating the mutual influence of thought and culture upon one another and bypassing other factors without denying them.

It is sufficient that we can establish certain relation between these two variables, social facts and knowledge, in order to justify a scientific treatment. Maquet chooses the relation of "causal condition."

Necessary: when the constellation of social circumstances by which we define a fascist group does not exist, the inarticulate conception of history never appear.

By definition, the necessary and sufficient condition is the circumstance in the absence of which a fact cannot take place and whose presence always entails a fact.<sup>25</sup>

Another question is that which is concerned with the direction of the relation between the two variables. Which the dependent and which the independent variable? Till the present, time, the sociologists of knowledge have been almost exclusively interested in one direction: that which treats knowledge as a de-

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<sup>25</sup>Maquet, The Sociology of Knowledge, p. 55, 54.

pendent variable and the social basis as an independent variable. But the inverse direction of the relation, if it could be established, would also fall within the limits of the sociology of knowledge. Ortega's treatment of beliefs and ideas offer an analysis of the functional character of thought and ideologies, so that thought is treated as an independent variable. He has studied the influence of science, art, and philosophy upon the march and dynamics of society.

Ortega's Sociology of Knowledge. From usage to belief. In the chapter about the social facts, we discussed the appearance and nature of usages in a general way. Expanding somewhat the notion of usages, we discover that they represent attitudes which in turn represent opinions. These social opinions refer to the things around us, to society, to our relation with other people and the world. They constitute what we may call beliefs and they are our interpretation of life.

When we discover ourselves as existing in this world, we find ourselves not only with things, but with people; not only in the world, but in society; and these people and that society we happen to live in, already have an interpretation of life; a complex of ideas about the universe.<sup>26</sup>

What is the social function of these belief-systems? Let us remember that the usage is something impersonal and irresponsible. The individual rises up as an opponent of the usages and therefore

<sup>26</sup>Ortega, "Ideas y creencias," Obras Completas, V (1955) p.26.

of society. The way in which the individual constitutes himself as individual is by thinking, by retiring to his own solitude (ensimismándose). But in order to think by ourselves, we must depart from certain premises and unquestionable truths. We must start from the known in order to arrive at the unknown. What happens to a savage that enters a modern factory in order to learn how to work? If a man of our culture takes on the same work, we will presuppose that he has a compilation of common sense knowledge upon which we can build an explanation about the tools and machines with which he is supposed to work. But the savage has never seen a machine in his life. Our work of instructing him becomes almost impossible. We do not know where to begin "only when something has been thought out, falls under our possession, and only when the elementary things are submitted to us, can we go on to more difficult things."<sup>27</sup> Men have to make continually important decisions, not only of an individual, but also of a social character. Thought is instrumental, according to Ortega, and is submitted to action and life. We cannot choose irrationally and therefore the infinite possibilities for action must be previously limited and selected. Who makes this selection for us? A social context of values and norms; the weltanschauung of our

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<sup>27</sup> Ortega, "Meditaciones del Quijote," Obras Completas, I (Madrid, 1953), 353.

age and culture. This is a system of truth that enables us for social and political decisions as well. Before science has developed in many areas, we must act and make political and social moves. This system of beliefs is, according to Ortega, culture itself.

Culture, rigorously speaking is the system of ultimate convictions about life. Culture is what one believes with unobjectionable faith about the world... The totality of these convictions or 'ideas' is not manufactured fictionally by the individual, but he receives them from his historical milieu.<sup>28</sup>

Ortega calls this belief-system the social dogma.<sup>29</sup> The social dogma offers to the individual a point of departure for his creative thinking.<sup>30</sup>

#### Characteristics of the Belief-system:

To live is to have to take care of something--the world and oneself. But this world and this "self" with which man is confronted, already appear to him as organized under an ideological interpretation about the world and himself.<sup>31</sup>

The first characteristic about social dogma is that we do not think about them but departing from them. Beliefs are accepted as something that belongs to a kind of religious faith.

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<sup>28</sup>Ortega, Obras Completas, II, (Madrid, 1954), p. 723, and IV, 342.

<sup>29</sup>Ortega, Obras Completas, VI (Madrid, 1956), 9.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., II, 723.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., II, 342.

According to Ortega, this division between ideas in general and social faith or social beliefs is more primordial than the division between religious faith and knowledge in general. Within the context of a general belief, a nation, an organization, and finally, an individual will be forced to see some realities to which he is more inclined and to be blind to other realities. This is what Ortega calls the doctrine of the point of view.

The psychic structure of each individual results in a perceptive organism, gifted with a determinate form that permits him to understand some truths and blinds him with regards to some other truths.<sup>32</sup>

The function of this social point of view that beliefs create is similar to the role of the myths and tales during childhood. In a study that Ortega wrote about the education of children, "facts provoke sentiments in us. What would happen not only a child, but to a man, the most intelligent man in the world, if suddenly all the efficacious myths were taken away from his soul?" Things awaken in us a twofold re-action of history and legend. What rules our lives is not so much things, as what we intend to do with them. And this goal of ours is an ideal, a legend in a way. The sportman has only a realistic grasp of those realities

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<sup>32</sup>Ortega, "Ideas y creencias," Ibid., V (Madrid, 1955), 384.

<sup>33</sup>Ortega, "El 'Quijote' en la escuela," Ibid., II, (Madrid, 1953), 296.

that are not connected with sports. "Myth, says Ortega, is the psychological hormone."<sup>34</sup> When we find someone who is not interested in anything and we try to inject in him some new interests so that he can live again, we do not tell him about things and facts--he probably knows as many things as we do--but about possible reactions and experiences to which he is closed psychologically. "What we are interested in, is that things be beautiful," says Ortega.<sup>35</sup> And in another place he says: "Life, before being an adaptation of man to his environment, is a reception of this environment by man, who needs in some way to feel it."<sup>36</sup> This feeling depends on the perspective of an age. The belief system of a determinate cultural period is called by Ortega, the sensibility of life. Ortega calls it also the spirit of the time. "At all moments, men live in a world of convictions, the greatest number of which are convictions common to all people who live in the same age. These convictions constitute the spirit of the time."<sup>37</sup> "Any life," says Ortega, "willingly or unwillingly, needs to justify itself."<sup>38</sup> Not only the individual must find an answer to the

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 297.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 289.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>Ortega, "La historia como sistema," Ibid., VI (Madrid, 1956),

<sup>38</sup> Ortega, "En torno a Galileo," ibid., V (1955), 25.



riddle of life, but also society. The spirit of the time is the answer to this riddle. It consists in a general attitude on the basis of which existence appears in a determinate way. Things are perceived and interpreted according to their consistency with regards to this spirit of the time. Social, political and economic problems are looked from the same viewpoint.

Origin and Change of belief-systems: What is the mechanism of the transmission and alteration of these beliefs? The belief system is nothing else than the general structure of all usages; their consistence and organization. However, when usages change, the systems of belief can remain. Rather it is modified progressively, until the moment comes when the old structure is no longer compatible with the existing usages.

Belief systems give us the sensibility of the epoch, and are not transmitted to us directly. Rather they are implicit in configurations of usages which are transmitted to us directly.<sup>39</sup>

Difference between beliefs and ideas: The main characteristic of belief-systems is their latent function. They are "everything that we take for granted, and that, as a result, we do not even think of."<sup>40</sup> Beliefs are opposed to ideas. Ideas are always fabricated in an explicit way. They constitute science, litera-

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>Ortega, "Ideas y creencias, Obras Completas, V (1955) 387.

ture, and many other forms of oral or written speech arbitrarily used. Ideas only exist when we are thinking about them, whereas beliefs constitute our way of looking at life. "Theories only exist when they are thought," says Ortega.<sup>41</sup> From this he concludes: "Therefore they exist, in a way, founded on our will."<sup>42</sup> Ortega does not speak at any time about the validity of ideas or beliefs. He is only interested in their psychological and social function. It is true that beliefs offer a great chance of being false, because of our uncritical acceptance of them. So far as ideas are concerned, their truthfulness depends on their objectivity, which in turn, depends on the consistency of one idea with all other ideas, and finally on the consistency of this whole scheme of ideas with the belief-system.

Ideas require a critical attitude, just as the lungs need oxygen. They are sustained and reaffirmed in other ideas, which, on their turn, are sustained in other ideas, constituting a whole system. So that the firmness of an idea is reduced to the solidity that holds it and refers it to all others."<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

<sup>42</sup>Ortega, *Revista de Occidente*, Ibid., I, 336, (1953).

<sup>43</sup>Ortega, "Ideas y creencias," Ibid., V (1955), 389.

Man orientates himself through his age; through the socio-cultural belief-systems in which he finds himself. This, and not any consideration about a social appetite, is what makes man social and cultural at the same time. "According to Ortega, there are profound reasons that explain the social structure of human beings; these reasons are based on the fact that a belief cannot exist under the form of belief of an individual or group," says Ferrater Mora.<sup>44</sup>

The way in which beliefs are born and develop is the same way in which culture and usages appear and change.

Little by little, science, ethics, art, religious faiths, a juridical norms get loose from the subject who created them and acquire a consistency and an authority by themselves.<sup>45</sup>

Importance of Ortega's Sociology of Knowledge. Ortega professes a strict determinism with regard to beliefs. They are for him the main basis of social life, and it is on account of them that one can predict historical and social phenomena:

The idea that all things influence one another and that each thing depends on everything else is a vague mystical thought which is repugnant to anyone who likes to see things as they are. No, the body of historical facts possesses a consistency and under perfectly hierarchical. Thus the mere transfor-

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<sup>44</sup>Ferrater Mora, *La filosofía de Ortega y Gasset* (Buenos Aires, 1958), p. 78.

<sup>45</sup>Ortega, Obras Completas, III (1954), 146.

mation of an industrial or political order is hardly profound, and depends on ideas and moral and esthetical preferences that mirror the contemporary scene. But ideology, taste, and morality are nothing more than the specific result of the radical sensibility of life.<sup>46</sup>

Ideas as artificial beliefs: The basic difference between beliefs and ideas is explored: About beliefs: "it is possible to say that they are not ideas we have, but ideas we are. More than that, precisely because they are most radical beliefs, they are identified with reality itself...they lose, therefore, their character of ideas, of thoughts of someone."<sup>47</sup> Ideas on the contrary, "are our own products, and therefore, they presuppose our existence which is grounded on beliefs."<sup>48</sup> Ortega continues: "What we cannot do is to live by them,"<sup>49</sup> namely, in the same way in which we live by a belief. Since ideas are irrelevant to our life, the process by which we create them, namely thinking, is a supra-activity, a sort of sport. This is the basic difference between thinking and believing. We build ideas, says Ortega, precisely because we do not believe in them. Beliefs are intimately connected with life; ideas with adventure, sport, etc.. And this is a special case of the general theory about the function of the intellect in life.

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<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

<sup>47</sup>Ortega, "Ideas y creencias," Obras Completas, (Madrid, 1956) p. 384.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid.

The intellectual life is secondary with respect to our real authentic life, and represents only a virtual or imaginary dimension of our lives.<sup>50</sup>

This way of speaking of Ortega--so it seems--is opposed to every modern interpretation of science, especially of the social sciences. We do not practice sociology for the sport of it. Much less do we engage in practical social activities for pure fun. Since the time of Comte, sociologists are believed to have an important role in our age of change and confusion. From the knowledge of the moral sciences, man today expects to resolve his problems and prepare a better world for the future. What is the answer of Ortega to those objections?

Social function of ideologies: science, literature, etc. Science, he would say, explains everything except what makes us believe in it. In the last instance, we will see that what makes us do so is not put into question because it is something that usually belongs to the general feelings of our generation. In the Middle Ages, religious faith was believed to be the great weapon to solve social and political problems. That is why science was enclosed within the walls of the monasteries and had no influence on public life. Today we expect everything from science. This dogma of reason, Ortega points out, began with Socrates and reached its climax with Descartes, "Among the beliefs that present men have,

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 388.

the belief in 'reason' is still one of the most important."<sup>51</sup>  
 The fact that impresses Ortega, is that science, like philosophy, does not justify its foundation: what brings us to philosophize or to scientific research?

Science cannot only be a science of society, but it pretends to be also a science of man. Now what has science or reason to say with precision about this fact so urgent and so pertinent to it, namely, its value and importance. Well, nothing. Science does not know anything clear about this point.<sup>52</sup>

Ortega y Gasset is talking here about the natural sciences. Can we apply the same ideas to the social sciences? Ortega says that the social sciences are intimately connected with the natural. "In Comte as well as in Stuart Mill, everything depends on the immutability of the laws of nature."<sup>53</sup> That Ortega accepts this position of Comte and Mill, is easy to deduce from paragraphs like the following, where he treats common opinion: "For we are not dealing with an opinion based on facts more or less frequent and probable, but on a law of social 'physics' much more immovable than the laws of Newton's physics."<sup>54</sup> The dogma of reason is

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<sup>51</sup>Ibid., p. 390.

<sup>52</sup>Ortega, Obras Completas, VI (1956), 21.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., p.29

<sup>54</sup> Ortega, The Revolt of the Masses, p. 127.

never analyze in detail by Ortega. He gives it as a fact. So the very logical nature and objectivity of thought, seems to be made dependent on socio-cultural factors:

It has been held, that thinking is principally logical thinking, in other words, thinking according to determinate laws that logicians have called 'principles.' But logical thinking--as we have said--is only one of the multiple forms of thought and a very restricted one. If the limitations of logical thought have not been discovered before, it is because philosophers have had an unlimited trust in a unilateral type of logical thinking.<sup>55</sup>

And this trust, we may add, is a belief according to Ortega.

Belief change and social instability The second step in the explanation of beliefs and ideas, is their formation and change into one another. This section of Ortega's sociology of knowledge corresponds in a way to the modern categories of cultural change and cultural lag. Beliefs certainly change. Today, Ortega writes, the Europeans have lost their faith in science and they start doubting the role of reason in life.<sup>56</sup> The moment when man or society asks about the validity of a social belief, is the moment of doubt." In the elementary ground of our beliefs, enormous gaps of doubt open up here and there."<sup>57</sup> Ortega continues: "One doubts

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<sup>55</sup>Ortega, "Ideas y creencias," Obras Completas (Madrid, 1955), p. 406.

<sup>56</sup>Ferrater Mora, La filosofía de Ortega y Gasset p. 85.

<sup>57</sup>Ortega, "Ideas y creencias," Obras Completas, V (Madrid, 1955), 388.

because one is placed between two contradictory beliefs that bump into each other, pulling aside the ground on which we rest."<sup>58</sup> Notice the great difference that exists between this doubt as described by Ortega, and the doubts that come up when we are manipulating ideas. While on the intellectual level the doubt does not affect us; in the area of beliefs, the same doubt leaves us in the air and robs our lives of something that has to be repaired. The ultimate reason for the importance of doubts in this area is that we believe in them. Or rather we believe in the two antagonistic beliefs that the doubt tries to reconcile.

Do not take this as a pure paradox, but I consider very difficult to express what a real doubt is without saying that we believe in it. If that were not so, if we doubted about our doubt, it would not be a doubt at all.<sup>59</sup>

Our whole life seems to crumble because beliefs are the general possibilities of courses of action, of vital expansion. The doubt, like the belief, can begin in the individual, but it does not constitute a menace until it is incorporated into society. A period of social doubt is a period of change of culture and perspective of life. How does the individual or society react in such a case? Man devotes himself to thinking. And such thinking

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<sup>58</sup>Ibid., p. 392.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., p. 394.



is no longer a sport, but an activity which constitutes a matter of life or death. Finally, man constructs an idea, an artificial belief, and society progressively forgets about the way this idea was attained and about its logical basis. The artificial belief or idea is transformed into a social dogma.

Then we have no other way out but building a new idea or opinion about things, the things we are doubting about. Ideas are, in this case, the objects we consciously build and elaborate precisely because we do not believe in them.<sup>60</sup> From this thinking, man returns to the reality that has been stolen from him, and now he has recuperated.

From his ensimismamiento man comes back to reality, to the reality that he sees now as through an optical device, with his interior world of ideas, some of which are transformed and consolidated in beliefs.<sup>61</sup>

Not all the ideas are transformed into beliefs. In order for an idea to become belief, it has to be revealed--this is the Ortegian expression--to society. The idea becomes a new faith that is accepted without argument.

There is revelation whenever man comes into contact

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<sup>60</sup>Ibid., p. 393.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., p. 391.

with a new reality different from him, and it does not make too much difference what type of reality this is, if it appears to us as sheer reality and not as a cav-  
 illion or imagination of ours.<sup>62</sup>

Difference between usages and beliefs: Up to this point we have established a perfect parallel between usages and beliefs. However, beliefs, as we stressed at the beginning of this chapter, are implicit in the usages. Usages and beliefs originate in the same way, but not every usage implies a new belief. Usages are manifestations of beliefs, and can be at times irreconcilable with them. The change of beliefs always constitutes a change of culture and weltanschauung.

"The individual," says Ortega, "can only orientate himself in the universe through his race. For he is immersed in it like a drop of water in a wondering cloud."<sup>63</sup> Ortega tends to discover the historical epochs not so much in their factuality, as in their meaning. To grasp the latter, one must look at the facts in their historical perspective or style of life. "We tend to forget," Ortega says, "that each race is an experience of a definite type of life, of a new sensibility."<sup>64</sup> History

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<sup>62</sup>Ibid., p. 401.

<sup>63</sup>Ortega, Obras Completas, VI (Madrid, 1956), 44.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., p. 61.

becomes in the hands of Ortega the verification of his theory of beliefs and ideas. As men evolve, their historical set changes and as a consequence he changes too. "When the living being evolves, his environment and especially the perspective of things around him, change with him."<sup>65</sup>

Historicism of Ortega: Ortega has many different essays about almost any period of European history. Some of his general conclusions have already been explained, like his sociology of war deduced from the idea of the knight and from different historical doctrines like pacifism, direct action, etc.. Time does not allow us to study in detail all these essays of Ortega.

We do not pretend to consider these studies as a mere sociological tool..As a matter of fact, Ortega considered history as a metaphysical explanation during a great period of his life. Furthermore, his dialogue with Mommsen, Spengler, and other great historians, place him in the field of history itself. At this point of our work we only want to enumerate the basic original ideas more closely connected with the sociology of knowledge.

One of these questions is the following: "Without any doubt, the greatest question to be asked by historians today sounds like

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<sup>65</sup>Ortega, Obras Completas, I (Madrid, 1953), 362.

this: Who is the real subject of history?"<sup>66</sup> A few pages later Ortega gives the answer: "The real historical subject are cultures not races or people."<sup>67</sup> Ortega's answer to the same question had been, a few years earlier, different. He considered the generations as the real subjects of history. However, when he defines it, there seems to be no noticeable difference between generation and culture.

Communion in time and in space are the main characteristics of a generation. These two things together mean the communion in a general destiny.<sup>68</sup>

A generation not a group of illustrious men, nor simply a mob. It is like a new social body completed with its selected minority and its multitude which has been sent into existence.<sup>69</sup>

The connection of all this discussion about the subject of history with sociology can be seen from the next paragraph: "Each generation represents a vital attitude from which existence is felt in a particular way."<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>66</sup>Ibid., III (1954), 192.

<sup>67</sup>Ortega, Obras Completas, III (Madrid, 1954), p. 293.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid.,

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., V, (1955) p. 39, III, p. 147.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., 148.

In other words, the important factor in determining what a generation is, is the social dogma. But this corresponds, says Ortega, with the communion in space-time. The secondpoint to be noticed is the aristocratic conception of society that has with its minority-majority relation determines the creation and evolution of the weltanschauung or perspective of life. The very historical changes are changes in belief-systems, according to this theory. History, for Ortega, changes not because the facts are different, but because the interpretation that men give to the same or different facts evolves. Ortega differs from the historical theories of Spengler and Froenius about the importance of the generation for he looks at the generation as an open system that evolves according to the laws of change of social beliefs. The culture, he says, not the peoples, make history.<sup>71</sup> And in another place he says:

When the modification that the world suffers does not affect what I believe to be its main constitutive elements, the general profile of this world remains intact.

Man does not have the impression that the world has changed, but only that something has changed in the world.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup>Ortega, Obras Completas, Ibid., (Madrid, 1954) 300.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., V (1955), 35.

The important factor about this generation is that they should not be considered as succeeding one another (coetaneas) but as living together in the same historical scenery (contemporaneas). The today, Ortega continues, signifies three different things, one to the young people, another to the adults and another to the old people. Who precisely, asks Ortega, is the real subject of historical change?

Children and old people hardly play a significant role in history, the former by defect, the latter by excess. But men in their first years of youth do not have any positive contribution in history whether, for the historical role of this age is passive: it consists in learning in the schools and military service.<sup>73</sup>

Ortega descends to such details that he appears at times influenced by the common way of thinking of the first sociologists as expressed in the three stages of Comte, or the Darwinian periods of Spencer. History, he says, is carried out by people between the ages of 30 and 60 years. So far as the historical cycles of a culture, its birth and death can be determined once we know the ages of the subjects of history. Ortega ends up in with almost mathematical way of determining cultural changes, and he tries to verify his methodology by placing people like Descartes,

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<sup>73</sup> Ortega, Obras Completas, VI (1956), 47.

Galileo, and many others at the top of cultural changes. The cultural shifts take place every fifteen years more or less. These cultural shifts result in rythmes or historical views. Ortega analyzes these rythmes with regards to the outlook of different periods about sex, age, buying, and things of this kind. Some of these studies, like "Los escaparatés mandan," or "Masculino o femenino" offer very little subject-matter for the sociologist and anthropologist and place him more in the realm of literature than science. To a great degree, these studies offer a similarity with Spencer's cultural descriptions and observations.

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<sup>74</sup>See La rebelion de las masas (Madrid, 1958), pp. 189-193, 200-208.

## CHAPTER V

### THE SOCIOLOGY OF ART OF ORTEGA

The scope and orientation of this tentative field of sociology is described in these words by Barnett:

as In some respects this field can best be described as a point of view or attitude toward art, rather than as a recognized area of study encompassing a specific subject matter, employing accepted methods of investigation, and secure in its possession of an established frame of reference. On the whole, the sociologist who studies art is not yet clearly differentiated, in terms of scholarly function, from the social historian, the art historian, or the art critic.<sup>1</sup>

The sociology of art, like the sociology of knowledge, is a modification of the general history of ideas--in our case history of art--inasmuch as it uses a scientific methodology and restricts its interest to art as influenced by socio-cultural phenomena. The general thesis of the sociology of art is that art reflects the nature of cultural interaction, cultural change, and social norms of society. The sociological approach to art is almost as old as art itself, but has taken on a new dimension in the works of Hegel and Colingwood. Hegel's volgheist or spiritual princip-

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<sup>1</sup>James H. Barnett, "The Sociology of Art," Sociology Today (New York, 1959), p. 198.



le of a culture reflected in its art forms, has also been discussed by men like Comte, Spencer, Toynbee. These discussions were scientific theories and not mere common sense considerations; however, they are still very far from the goal of scientific verification. With the philosophical ground provided by men like Hegel, Dilthey, Marx, and with the methodological tools of Weber, Durkheim, and others, who studied art as part of the sociology of religion and culture, the sociology of art can today stand on its own feet as an independent field. Currently the field of symbolic expression and art have been treated extensively by some writers: Cassirer, Langer, Levy-Bruhl, and sociologists like Simmel and Wach.<sup>2</sup> Cultural anthropologists have also done a great deal of research in this area. Malinowski, for instance, considered myth as a revelation of the social character within his functional approach. Mead has applied some of the basic insights of Freud to symbolic forms.<sup>3</sup> The general contribution of these writers about symbolism to sociology can be best summarized in these words of Albrecht: "Toynbee finds that art styles more ac-

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<sup>2</sup>Hugh Duncan, "Sociology of Art, Literature and Music: Social Contexts of Symbolic Experience," in Modern Sociological Theory, ed. by Becker and Boskoff (New York, 1957), p. 482.

<sup>3</sup>"For Mead, the social was a category in its own right, to be explained by the social aspects of the role-taking in communication, rather than by analogy to physical nature, biological environment, or the substantiation of Spirit, God, or Society." Ibid p. 483.

curately establish the span of a civilization, its growth and dissolution, than any other method of measurement."<sup>4</sup>

Literature reflects the socio-cultural milieu and exercises a great influence and social control over the social attitudes and behavior. Studies in this area, tend to treat art as a product as well as a determinant of social structure. Other sociologists tend to emphasize more empirically relevant aspects, such as the institutionalization of art in different societies. They offer a general theory for such research areas as the influence of group-affiliation and artistic creativity, the social status and role of the artists, public and critic, and their mutual interaction.<sup>5</sup> But the sociological approach to art which is more relevant for our treatment of Ortega is that founded on the sociology of knowledge. Marx was also the first who treated art as a mirror of the economic structure of society. Of course, here, as before, we must stress the philosophical commitment of Marx without which his sociological view are nothing but indications for future research. "Marx argued that even art preferences differ according to class position and outlook."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Albrecht, Milton, "The Relationship of Literature and Society," Am. J. of Soc., VI (1959), 427.

<sup>5</sup>Barnett, "The Sociology of Art," p. 408.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 200.

For Sorokin, art is one of the dependent variables of the three systems of truth.<sup>7</sup> Mannheim's central thesis, namely, that "there are modes of thought which cannot be adequately understood as long as their social origins are obscured," is especially relevant to the social study of art. Art is a type of knowledge closer to the qualitative than to the exact sciences, according to Mannheim. The relation of the latter to social groups and epochs is somewhat obscure in Mannheim, but the relation of the former to the same groups is more definite. And among the examples Mannheim has given of the qualitative sciences, many refer to art.

Just as in art we can date particular forms on ground of their definite association with a particular period of history so in the case of knowledge we can detect with increasing exactness the perspective due to a particular historical setting.<sup>8</sup>

And in another chapter he says:

This process of the complete destruction of all spiritual elements, the utopian as well as the ideological, has its parallel in the most recent trends of modern life,

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 205.

<sup>8</sup>Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia, p.271.

and in their corresponding tendencies in the realm of art.<sup>9</sup>

Still there is a reluctance in Mannheim, to treat art as a definite type of human knowledge, like science. This problem does not exist for Ortega, who identified the sociological origin of art with that of science.

As in the case of the general sociology of knowledge, we cannot avoid preliminary considerations about thought-interpretations so here we must engage in interpretations of art which are beyond the scope of the sociologist. Not only the general nature of art forms must be studied and defined, but particular interpretations are to be manipulated in order to relate them in an adequate manner to the general weltanschauung of a cultural age.<sup>10</sup>

The central work of the sociology of art in Ortega is constituted by his essay: The Dehumanization of Art and a few remarks of his Ideas and Beliefs. Ortega approves full heartedly the possibility of a sociological approach to art. "Among the multiple ideas of the French genius Guyau, his attempt to study art

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 256.

<sup>10</sup> Albrecht, pp. 426-27.

from a sociological point of view must be considered."<sup>11</sup> As a matter of fact, Ortega confesses that this is the only genial idea of Guyau since of his sociological interpretation of art: "only the title exists; the rest of the work has yet to be written."<sup>12</sup> For the Spanish sociologist, art, together with science, is the main manifestation of the change of the sensibility of an epoch. The reason is that art and science constitute this realm of human activity which is more independent of social taboos and norms. That is why when a cultural change starts developing, its blueprint can be found in art and science. Art appreciation and art response becomes, in this context, a typical case of what we describe before as exemplarity. The artists are social leaders. Art is not only a by-product of imagination in general, but of a definite type of imagination: that by which men plan their lives and control their social and political environment. Art is the first message of this change of attitude and choice-patterns of a culture. According to Ortega, the way in which art has to be approached by the sociologist is not with an undetached analytical attitude but by a sympathetic observation. Of all the products of human knowledge, art is the one that requires more preparation on the side of the scientist. This general methodological ques-

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<sup>11</sup>Ortega, "La deshumanización del arte," Obras Completas, III (Madrid, 1955), 353.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

tion creates many difficulties. To what degree is it possible to have objective outlook to empirical research when art-interpretation is a conditio sine qua non of posterior sociological considerations? "Why", Ortega asks, "is the point of view of the indifferent and not of the lover considered as decisive?"<sup>13</sup> Examining the case of the man who falls in love, he continues: "I will only say that, according to my judgment, if we analyze the phenomenon of this sublime feeling of love, it will be found very soon that love cannot see because its function is not to see...The normal fact is that the lover of an object or of a being has a more exact vision than the indifferent."<sup>14</sup> Art is a manifestation of the vital attitude of a culture, of its over-all reaction to the historical surroundings. If interpretation of culture require a minimum of participant behavior, how much more will it be necessary to have participant behavior when the question is about the implicit synthesis of a social epoch. "Only men can experience what is human," says Ortega paraphrasing Goethe.<sup>15</sup> Man always acts in an artistic way. He defends himself from the weather with dresses and houses, etc., which never fulfill a mere material function. On the contrary, they become objects of artistic and symbolic expression. In a more general way,

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<sup>13</sup>Ortega, Obras Completas, III (Madrid, 1955), 292.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

we can say that it is impossible to understand any human action materially considered. We must refer it to the context where it is directed. To live is as much an individual problem as a social one, and all attitudes and behavior of men reflect their social environment which is full of artistic behavior.

Every human gesture, is a gesture of mastery or of slavery. Tertium non datur. This is the reason why everyone decides this or that style an attitude in life. The servile gesture is servile because the man who performs it does not exist founded on himself, and lives, at all moments, by comparing himself to other people.<sup>16</sup>

"Every generation," says Ortega, "has a definite vital attitude."<sup>17</sup> Ortega divides the ages into masculine and feminine, according to the prevalence role given to one or other sex; into young and old; into times of plenitude and poverty, and so on. These different attitudes are usually discovered in art. The present attitude of the revolt of the masses is discovered in the so-called phenomenon of the dehumanization of art. Following very closely this essay we can observe how the sociology of art is manipulated in the hands of Ortega.

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<sup>16</sup>Ortega, La rebelion de las masas, p. 193.

<sup>17</sup>Ortega, Obras Completas, III p. 148.

A striking sociological aspect of modern art, Ortega writes, is its unpopularity. Modern art is not only cultivated but appreciated by an elite which does not exercise any influence upon the masses. Any new artistic tendency, it is true, is unpopular for a short period, until it is finally incorporated into the realm of the masses. But today's unpopularity in art is much more radical.

The disjunctive is produced in a deeper level than that in which the varieties of individual taste function... To my judgment the characteristic note of modern art from a sociological viewpoint, is that it divides the public into two classes of people: those who understand it and those who do not.<sup>18</sup>

There is a marked effort on the side of the artist to make art for its own sake, above, or, we could even say, against, the response of the public. This sociological fact is particularly surprising--Ortega notices--in an age when the masses have come to the fore of history. Nothing is more opposed to the equality of all men as modern art, says Ortega.<sup>19</sup> The nineteenth century is the age of great massive movements. The crowd invades all the important places and determines all codes of behavior. The art be-

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<sup>18</sup>Ortega, "La deshumanización del arte," p. 355.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 356.



comes popular as never before. Romanticism is the popular art par excellence. Its tendency to imitate nature and its themes of love, suffering, hatred and envy, etc., have a great appeal for all kinds of public. Romanticism is an instrumental art, and all its values are taken from the objects it symbolizes.

During the 19th century the artists have proceeded too carelessly. They reduced to a minimum the artistic elements and made their art consist almost exclusively in a fiction about human realities.<sup>20</sup>

The sorrowful fate of Tristan and Isolde only influences those who consider it a reality, or as a symbol of many possible similar stories. In other words, the artists aim at a pure imitation and the artistic forms tend to disappear and leave the audience in contact with reality.

Today there is an opposite tendency and art is sought after for its own sake. There is a compelling need to arrive at the pure artistic form. Whether this is possible or not, is another question. "The new art," says Ortega, "is an artistic art."<sup>21</sup> Ortega's examples are taken from painting, music and literature. Through them he arrives at the following generalization: "Each style that appears through history, can engender a certain number of different forms within a generic type. But the day comes when

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 358.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 359.

the magnificent source of forms is exhausted."<sup>22</sup>

Modern art opens the door to infinite new possibilities, because it is not an imitative art. The forms of imitation are, therefore, as numerous as man's imagination. This artistic expression of modern art, instead of being a pure crystal, like in Romanticism, becomes the only point of interest. The sign replaces completely the signified object. This is what Ortega means by art for its own sake. And the avoidance and positive deformation of reality constitutes the dehumanization of art. The Romantic art is easy to evaluate because it is easy to participate in its creations. It is an art that portrays the common experiences of life, in which we all are experts. Modern art, on the contrary, refuses this attitude totally and demands from the audience an undetached spirit of contemplation rather than participation. Ortega establishes a scale of art-appreciation:

In one extreme we find an aspect of the world, persons and things that constitutes the experienced reality. In the other we see everything under the aspect of contemplated reality.<sup>23</sup>

The dehumanization of modern art consists in the artist's in-

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 360.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 362.

terest in the idea in itself, not in the object. Now it is on this level of the idea for its own sake, where any vital and experiential reaction is suppressed. So that the art does not become inhuman because it represents inhuman elements, but mainly because its goal is to dehumanize. The important element therefore is not the terminus a quo, but the terminus ad quem, says Ortega. The fact of today's opposition to Romanticism is nothing surprising from a meta-historical viewpoint. The rhymes of history, according to Ortega, proceed by opposition. There is always an initial period of discovery and few years later, the saturating point, when the possibilities of a type of art are exhausted. Then people invent something different, something which is usually opposed to the old type of art. However, the significant and peculiar aspect of today's art, according to Ortega, is that it is going against the past in general, so that the result is not an attack on a definite type of art, but an art in general. "Because at the end, to attack the art is to rebel against art itself, for what other thing is art if not what has been done in the past?"<sup>24</sup> Art, according to Ortega, is symbolic by nature, and a pure objective or contemplative attitude in art is impossible. But the mistake is to confuse a mere objectivistic with an undetached attitude of contemplation. There is lack of objectivity whenever we react disproportionately to some stimulus. The man who wins

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 380.

a great prize reacts disproportionately if he does not feel anything, or if he feels too much. So, Ortega concludes: "Under the mask of a love for art in its purity there hides a contempt and hatred for art."<sup>25</sup> And this contempt is a mirror of a sociological attitude: "Hatred for art cannot exist without generating a parallel hatred for the whole cultural reality of an age."<sup>26</sup> This hatred for culture is the revolt of the masses against all cultural norms.

Art together with sciences belong to the realm of the sociology of knowledge that Ortega called ideas. However all our ideas are, as we said before, grounded on some beliefs. Since art and science are also as we said before, more independent from taboos than any other type of knowledge, they are a strong indication of the new change in the sensibility of life; of the new type of belief system. Art, especially, has a strong individualistic aspect, and as such, reveals to us the new type of belief-systems that substitute for and take the place of the old social dogma. Ortega, in the forms of modern art, envisages a future time when all norms and cultural values will be dismissed by the masses, if society does not discover again a "powerful minority" that leads it to some definite goal.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Ortega, La rebelion de las masas, p. 180.

Art, like any idea, is the product of a super-activity, or sport, Ortega would say. What we do in this area of ideas is irrelevant to our life. However, ideas, in the long run, consolidate into credes and they become artificial beliefs, as we said before. The sociological conclusion then, is that an art for its own sake is never going to be transformed into belief, since art for its own sake is like an idea that is never going to be anything but an idea.

Wanting to have an art that has no influence in society is going against the nature of art itself. All ideas are based on beliefs. An art which is not based in any belief is something to which we do not give any importance. The conclusion is that modern art, more than being popular is antipopular, rebels against any type of social dogma on which it could be founded. It is not the mere fact that the masses do not like or understand it, but the fact is that artists today want to avoid the masses with the same interest with which they avoid the forms of nature, Ortega says. This rebellion against the foundations of art makes art completely ludicrous and irrelevant. "For the man of our new generation art is a thing without any transcendence."<sup>28</sup> The artist has renounced to his social responsibility. He does not want the approval of the masses; he hates to be understood by them because he does not want art converted in something important from a sociological viewpoint. Art is sociologically irrelevant for the first

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 383.

time in history. It does not contribute to any change of attitudes and beliefs, as it always did. On the other hand, we may reverse the former statement, saying that art mirrors the general attitude of puerility of our age, thus becoming sociologically meaningful.

The young art is not so much differentiated from the old regarding its objects, but rather regarding the subjective attitude of the artist towards art...

This is the situation in which Europe finds itself today. The system of values that was controlling Europe thirty years ago, has lost its force of attraction and vigour. The Western man lacks a radical orientation because he does not know to which star turn.<sup>29</sup>

Art has introduced us, once more, to the general theme of Ortega: the revolt of the masses against all values and culture, and the consequent disorientation of human kind.

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<sup>29</sup>Ortega, Obras Completas, III 194 and 193.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

Up to this point our only concern has been to present an account of the sociology of Ortega y Gasset. This is why, except for a few remarks directed to clarify a few obscure points, we have intentionally avoided any personal evaluation and criticism of the sociology we have abstracted and systematized, so that we can put Ortega in his place in the field of the social sciences. Our work has been ambitious and, to a great extent, can and should be expanded. We could have limited ourselves to the development of a few sociological questions of Ortega. However, such an attempt would have been of little help for those who did not have an introductory knowledge of Ortega's general sociology. In the absence of such introductory work we have felt justified to write this thesis as an introduction to further studies. And we hope that our work did not close the door for those who, looking more for truth than for literary expressions, can rid themselves in order to accept whatever is valuable from his sociological writings. Now we want to complete that which has been so far a text book of Ortega's sociology, with a personal impression which should respect the synthetic form of our whole previous exposition.

The bulk of the sociology of Ortega y Gasset was written be-

tween 1910 and 1930 when sociology was still a new science. Except for his historical knowledge, Ortega did not bring many methodological improvements into the field of the social sciences. However, in the level of theory, his contribution was considerable. The variety of themes and the consistence of exposition, prescindig from validity and verification, which we will criticize in a moment, place Ortega's sociology very close to the social work of his contemporary writers. The general sociology of Ortega's contained in Man and People is a long and solid treatment which should be included in any text book of sociological theory and history of sociological thought. It is true that his studies about the sociology of war, law, and science are very sketchy. Yet his social study of political phenomena and of the social function and origin of myth and ideology (ideas y creencias) cannot be disregarded.

In the present work we have made a general value-judgment about Ortega's contribution to the different branches of sociology by the importance and length we have given to these different branches. We have hesitated about writing a separate section with Ortega's sociology of war and science, but these two fields can hardly be considered as independent from the sociology of knowledge of which they are sketchy ramifications. Nevertheless, we have written a chapter about Ortega's sociology of art, for his social treatment of the latter, though dependent on his gen-



eral sociology of knowledge and political sociology, presents enough material for those interested in the field.

From another viewpoint the disposition of the subject-matter of the thesis can be considered arbitrary. Here we have in mind the great logical connection and development of Ortega's sociological writings which we have had to reorganize around somewhat arbitrary chapters for purpose of charity. It is true that Ortega never did picture himself as a political sociologist of knowledge. The fact of the matter is that Ortega wrote political sociology, sociology of knowledge, etc. Finally, we have failed in presenting with complete faithfulness the logical network of Ortega's sociological ideas because we have preferred organization rather than argumentation and synthetic correlations. Ortega's work has to be considered like the pieces of a machine which cannot, strictly speaking, be put together gradatim, but rather all at once.

The general sociology of our author is the main doctrinal body to which all other social writings should be referred. Ortega, perfectly acquainted with the sociologists of his time, set out to write this general treatise, because he believed he could contribute something new. However, such a purpose seems to be ambitious and far above his accomplishment. We heard him saying:

I shall never forget the surprise mingled with shame and shock which I felt when, many years ago, conscious

of my ignorance on this subject, I hurried, full of illusion, all the sails of hope spread wide, to books on sociology...and found something incredible--namely that books on sociology have nothing clear to say about what the social is, about what society is.<sup>1</sup>

Certainly Man and People does not differ too much, prescind-  
ing from its literary form, from Durkheim's Rules of Sociological  
Method or from Weber's Theory of Social and Economic Organization.<sup>2</sup>  
Durkheim, for instance, considers social facts as independent from  
individual activities: "Here, then, is a category of facts with  
very distinctive characteristics: it consists in ways of acting,  
thinking, and feeling external to the individual, and endowed with  
a power of coercion, by reason of which they control him."<sup>3</sup> And  
Ortega writes: "To judge from what appears here, usages are not  
of the individual but of society."<sup>4</sup> From the two characteristics  
of social facts in Durkheim, namely, their coercion and diffusion,  
Ortega stresses mainly the former and identifies it with the in-  
stitutionalization of physical force: the government. This ident-

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<sup>1</sup>Ortega, Man and People, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup>Emile Durkheim, The Rules of Sociological Method, Translated  
by Solovary and Mueller (New York, 1958) Max Weber, The Theory of  
Social and Economic Organization, Translated by Henderson and Par-  
sons (New York, 1947).

<sup>3</sup>Durkheim, The Rules of Sociological Method, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup>Ortega, Man and People, p. 194.

ification of physical force with the government is Ortega's synthesis of Durkheim and Weber.<sup>5</sup>

Ortega's three levels of human action--the personal, the interpersonal, and the social--make him even more of an exaggerated realist than Durkheim.<sup>6</sup> In spite of the fact that the subject matter of sociology should be human interaction and therefore ought not to be limited to the study of mores and customs (usages) still the three levels of analysis of Ortega are useful categories for social psychology. Following Durkheim, Ortega identified sociology with social psychology to a great extent. The three levels of human action of Ortega, as we said before, are abstractions. Particularly important among them is his portrait of usages. Usages correspond very much to what Malinowski called the dead element, and Sumner called folkways.<sup>7</sup> If we make the subject matter of sociology consist of any type of human interaction, Ortega's characterization of the interpersonal level contains a good exposition of the main notes of the sociological unit. Human inter-

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<sup>5</sup>Weber, From Max Weber, Translated and edited by Gerth and Mills (New York, 1958), p. 159.

<sup>6</sup>Timasheff, Sociological Theory, p. 117.

<sup>7</sup>Bronislaw Malinowski, Scientific Theory of Culture (New York 1944), p. 46; and, Sumner, Folkways (New York, 1906).

action, Ortega's characterization of the interpersonal level contains a good exposition of the main notes of the sociological unit. Human interaction, then, according to our writer, is meaningful, involves reciprocity, contingency, and interpretation.<sup>8</sup> Reciprocity in so far as interaction implies always another subject or point of reference different from mine. Until the Other Man appears on the scene as we have pointed out before, the here and there were univocal, now they become equivocal.<sup>9</sup> Contingency because the reaction of the Other Man is unpredictable; and this is the reason for usages; to protect us from our mutual foreignness and unpredictability. Interpretation, inasmuch as the Other Man is an intus and we cannot reach him directly but only through his manifestations. Body and intellect play an important role in this interpretation of the Other Man. The former gives us something which the latter has to interpret. Ortega y Gasset holds that thought is purely instrumental and subordinated to the biological level, as we said before. To a great extent, this instrumentality of thought is a philosophical postulate necessary for the social approach to thought and for the ideational approach to culture, both of which aspects are treated at length in Ortega's sociology. However, we cannot agree with

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<sup>8</sup> Observe the similarity with Weber's meaningful action and causality; The Theory of Social and Economic Organization (New York 1947), pp. 87-124.

<sup>9</sup> pp. 31-32.

the exaggeration with which Ortega explains the instrumentality of intellect. As in many other instances, this is one of Ortega's postulates derived from his philosophy which was heavily influenced by the biological findings of his time. With regard to such postulates and philosophical position one commentor says: "With regard to the problem of how to emphasize in a correct way the importance of life as opposed to the biological expressions of Ortega could give greater strength to his arguments than the ontological and epistemological postulates. We do not know which was the specific goal of Ortega. But there is no doubt that he could not accept a biological interpretation of reason."<sup>10</sup> Another comments: "His thought seems to...adopt expressions openly realistic...Reason, subordinated to life, composes poetry to life. Pure reason leaves its place to vital reason...His contempt for conceptualizations makes him hesitate in front of the threats of relativism."<sup>11</sup> The same difference of interpretation regarding his philosophical position appears in all other commentaries of Ortega.

The concept of culture of Ortega corresponds to what Weber called civilization.<sup>12</sup> Ortega's disregard for invention, and in general, for any type of non-formal cultural activity restricts his concept of culture to ideological products. However, we find

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<sup>10</sup>Ferrater Mora, La filosofia de Ortega y Gasset, pp. 39-40.

<sup>11</sup>Jose Sanchez Villasenor, Jose Ortega y Gasset, p. 74.

<sup>12</sup>Robert Merton, "Civilization and Culture," Sociology and Social Research (1936), pp. 104, 109.

very similar definitions of culture among the old anthropologists.<sup>13</sup> Ortega's expositions of the origin of culture and its connection with usages are penetrating and rich; they express in a definitive fashion what occupies entire works of anthropology. We have particularly in mind a number of good observations about human behavior,<sup>14</sup> and about social elements. "Technique," says Ortega, "is the adaptation of the environment to the individual instead of the individual to the environment."<sup>15</sup> And we say how this simple observation is what distinguishes animal from human behavior. The conception of man as an organism which, even intellectually, needs the stimuli of the world around him, as something that belongs to the very nature of this organism is also stressed by Toynbee.<sup>16</sup> If we rid all these conceptions of their possibly false philosophical postulates, they can reorientate our research in social psychology.

Ortega unites the units of the different social sciences with too much readiness. However, his general scheme of social, cultural, and political action offers the possibility of an organization of theories and findings in these different fields. Ortega's

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<sup>13</sup>"Culture or civilization...is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society," Morgan, Primitive Culture, from Timasheff, Sociological Theory, p. 49. Similarly, p. 67.

<sup>14</sup>We refer to the distinction between man and animal behavior for instance, a theme that Malinowski explains in a very similar way. Malinowski, Scientific Theory of Culture, (New York, 1944) p. 3.

<sup>15</sup>Ortega, Obras Completas, V, (1955), p. 326.

<sup>16</sup>Ferrater, Mora notices this parallel between the two sociologists: La filosofía de Ortega y Gasset, p. 45.

grand theory, whether to reject or accept, should be considered as the product of a deep understanding of social phenomena. This is not only corroborated by the impression which his writings caused at the time, but mainly by the accuracy of the predictions of Ortega. Most of the problems which our social scene contains today were envisaged at the beginning of the century by Ortega.<sup>17</sup>

Importance should be given to the historical studies of Ortega, and especially to what we have called the historical rhythms. His ideological and cultural approach to historical facts is particularly relevant in such areas of research as war, law, social movements, etc. The historical sociology of Ortega could offer enough subject matter to anyone interested in writing a monograph. Care should be taken, however, that we prescind from a great variety of merely literary or philosophical digressions. Ortega's doctrine of the point of view is similar to the relationism of Mannheim, and seems to be a consequence of his historicism. All these problems should be treated more extensively because they touch upon the difficult problem of the conflict between sociological and philosophical commitments. Mannheim's Essays in the Sociology of Knowledge, and Stark's Sociology of Knowledge treat this problem at length and with depth.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Marias, Philosopher espagnoles de notre temps (Paris, 1954), p. 71.

<sup>18</sup>Stark, The Sociology of Knowledge (London, 1958), pp. 163-180.  
Mannheim, Essays on the Sociology of knowledge, Translated by Pauls Kecskemeti (London, 1959) p. 276.

The main thesis of Ortega's political sociology is his conception of political facts as mere reflection of social structures. It is interesting to notice how Tocqueville, whose work is one of the most classical political works, places the cause of many political realities in the political institutions and political attitudes of the people. We do not mean to say that Tocqueville's theory is not perfectly valid within some limits or determinate level of explanation. But a more profound understanding can be acquired by correlating social institutions and attitudes with political facts. Ortega gives us a key for this type of approach to political phenomena.<sup>19</sup> Merton's manifest and latent functions can help us to better grasp Ortega's idea of the role of beliefs and ideas; of the nature of the common plan that constitutes the nation, and the role of the minority in society.<sup>20</sup> The functional approach would try to verify just how much these social dogmas are the real independent variables of cultural and political change or rather mere rationalizations of deeper factors. As we pointed out before, Ortega is an ideological determinist.<sup>21</sup> Some sociologists in this country tend to take the opposite approach: "In studying the ideas in social movements, we shall take them as

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<sup>19</sup>Ortega's Revolt of the Masses expresses most of the central ideas of Tocqueville about the strong desire for equality in America. Tocqueville.

<sup>20</sup>Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure (Glencoe, 1959), p. 19...

<sup>21</sup>p. 93.



proclamations of aims and as expressions of will, rather than as statements of economic or political truth," says Heberle.<sup>22</sup> However, Ortega gave to the term idea a very wide sense. In his studies about technical progress, for instance, he presents the biological needs as secondary with regard to their intellectual justification. He writes: "Man does not want to die, on the contrary he wants to survive...but why does man want to survive instead of ceasing to exist?"<sup>23</sup> He says that the instinct of conservation is not a good explanation because many people choose death sometimes. The result of all this is the basic-----.

Ortega y Gasset simplified too much his social approach to political phenomena by making the State identical with the nation, or society. Society and State are different even though one might not exist without the other. Furthermore, there is a lack of terminology to distinguish Government from State when necessary. In the course of our exposition we tried to avoid such terminology because our author never bothered about this problem.

A good result of Ortega's cultural approach to political facts is his study of the Revolt of the Masses. Leaving aside the numerous rhetorical and literary expressions of this work, we must acknowledge the influence that it has had upon contemporary political phenomena, especially in reference to political ideologies. All

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<sup>22</sup>Heberle, Social Movement, Appleton, Century Crofts, p. 12.

<sup>23</sup>Ortega, Obras Completas V (Madrid, 1955), 382.

All these studies are of great importance in our world of political and ideological struggle. Riesman's Lonely Crowd is very similar in approach to the political works of Ortega and offers a great deal of parallel points with the former.<sup>25</sup> The general character of the revolt of the masses is treated in Riesman, and the other-directed and inside dopester have more than one similarity with Ortega's Mass-man.<sup>26</sup>

Ortega's definition of nation as a dynamic reality is especially relevant from a sociological point of view. Such a theory can be dynamics and social change and deviance.<sup>27</sup>

Finally Ortega, by carrying many of his ideas about myth and ideologies into the realm of political sociology, offers us a type of weltanschauung of our age that, according to Mannheim should be the main aim of the sociology of knowledge. Mannheim went so far as to state the impossibility of political science without the preliminary bases of the sociology of knowledge.<sup>28</sup>

With regard to Ortega's sociology of knowledge, it is significant that most of his sources are identical with those of Mannheim. Ortega's categories, in this field of sociology, show a sociological interest, rather than a philosophical one. We have pointed out this fact before, when we were dealing with the dis-

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<sup>25</sup>David Riesman, The Lonely Crowd (New York, 1953).

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., pp. 34, 191-260.

<sup>27</sup>Here we have mainly in mind the works already mentioned before, of Sorokin, Parsons, and Merton.

<sup>28</sup>Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia, p. 36.

inction of Mannheim between ideology and utopia and Ortega's beliefs and ideas.

Ortega's terminology, however, is markedly subjective, and reflects a great deal of his anti-religious feelings. The terms revelation, faith, belief, when applied to social phenomena are not only inadequate but they indicate bad taste.<sup>29</sup>

However, if we do not pay too much attention to the terminological aspect, the facts expressed by Ortega's terminology and their hierarchical organization are to be considered. Perhaps to many, Ortega might appear too theoretical and even vague; but such an accusation could as well be directed to the sociology of knowledge. Now we have written a few pages trying to present our views in regard to such an accusation.

In spite of his philosophical commitments, Ortega's studies of beliefs and ideas, of social doubts, social reorientation and change, are based on a great deal of historical research. Mannheim gave us the general theory of the relationship of political ideologies and parties to social groups and classes. Ortega focuses his sociology of knowledge around the problem of ideological change. Decadence, progress, and sensibility of an age are explained in terms of the change of ideas into beliefs and vice versa. Here, we must insist once more, the hypothetical character of this field

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<sup>29</sup>On November 24, 1950, Ortega made this announcement in a public theatre: "I announce that the Catholic Church is going to get rid of Aristotle and S. Thomas, and that a new Theology will be built in connection with the Holy Fathers." Granero, "Ortega y Gasset en el cine Barcelo," Raxon y Fe, CXLI (1950) 189-190.

of sociology permeates Ortega's Ideas and Beliefs.

Finally Ortega's theory of art as portrait in his La deshumanizacion del arte, must, one we get rid of his applications to modern art, constitute a well for further research and theory in this new field of knowledge. Although some art critics have shown little sympathy for the criticism of modern art of Ortega, yet, implicitly in this work of Ortega, we find all the sociological bases for a sociology of art.

Ortega's great qualities as an art critic and his socio-historical knowledge help him to understand the social nature of art. As far as criticism goes, we should consider the literary form of his essay; La deshumanizacion del arte; the paradoxes and exaggerated statements of this work have to be understood in the light of our introduction. Aranguren, a great disciple of Ortega writes: "It is fairly known that Ortega evaluates very much the exaggeration because of its expressiveness and ostentation, and, so to speak, its pedagogic power."<sup>30</sup>

What is more difficult to reconcile, is a contradiction that seems to lie beneath the whole interpretation of modern art when it is judged on the basis of Ortega's general sociology of knowledge. Ortega claims that knowledge, within a sociological context, is particularly creative in art and science. From this point

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<sup>30</sup> Jose Luis de Aranguren, La Etica en Ortega, Taurus, (Madrid, 1958), p. 19.

of view, the essay of Ortega about modern art, should be prior, logically at least, to his Revolt of the Masses. But we know that not only the main ideas of the former essay were formulated after the Revolt of the Masses, but also that his sociological interpretation of modern art implies, as an a prior scheme, his political and social outlook to the mass-movements of our age. If the socio-cultural views of any age can and should be discovered, in the first place, in art and science, Ortega's Deshumanizacion del arte should be prior to his political work. This seems to prove that Ortega's interpretation of modern art is biased by his social outlook to modern times.

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Approval Sheet

The thesis submitted by Pedro Negre, S.J., has been read and approved by three members of the Department of Sociology.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

Oct. 13, 1961  
Date

John J. Lennon  
Signature of Adviser