1975

José Ortega y Gasset and the Dilemma of Modern Man

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JOSE ORTEGA Y GASSET AND THE
DILEMMA OF MODERN MAN

by

Thomas Bucaro

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University of Chicago in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

February
1975
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my thanks to the people who have helped me in finishing this work and giving me advice and assistance: Dr. Richard S. Hartigan and Dr. Corey B. Venning. My special thanks go to Dr. James L. Wiser, for his invaluable aid and direction as my advisor; and to Eleanor Bucaro, for her particular efforts in helping me complete this project.
VITA

Thomas Bucaro was born in Chicago in 1952. He completed all his schooling in the city, finishing his higher education at Wright Junior College, DePaul University and Loyola University. His major area of interest is in political philosophy.
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INTRODUCTION

"Yo est yo y yo est circumstancia." This sentence most basically summarizes the thinking of Jose Ortega y Gasset. A twentieth-century Spanish philosopher, Jose Ortega y Gasset has been heralded as one of Europe's greatest modern thinkers. His work has been neglected in North America, and it has been only recently that he has received posthumous recognition for his contributions to modern philosophical and political theory. Jose Ortega y Gasset is most remembered for his studies on the emergence of the modern type man he labeled the "mass-man." To him, the mass-man had become threatening force to all of modern civilization and had to be dealt with before he completely ruined society.

This dissertation will dwell on the concept of man as he is today, according to the guidance of Ortega's thought. Modern man will be first studied as what actually he is, both as an individual and as a member of society, in section one. Section two will deal with the concept of the mass-man, specifically looking at how he emerged, what he is, and what he has done to modern society. The third section will explain how Ortega feels that it is best to cope with the mass-man. The work will end with an
examination of some of the faulty points in Ortega's thought.

It would do well for the contemporary observer of political and social affairs to review Ortega's thought. He possessed a keen insight into modern problems, and his predictions seem to becoming truer every day. This author does not feel that justice has been given to Ortega's concepts. There has not been that much work done on Ortega; and much of his writings are still being published and translated posthumously. The early books and commentaries have often misunderstood Ortega's message, but this could be credited to the possible lack of material available in the past by Ortega himself. It is hoped that this work will perhaps shed new light on the genius of the man. Of course, nothing can be better than for one to actually read the works of Ortega; thus, this work will be a success if it stimulates interest in the original writings of the Spanish philosopher.
PART I

WHAT MAN IS
CHAPTER I

BASIC MAN

An understanding of the dilemma of modern man would best begin with the knowledge of what man essentially is according to Ortega's perspective. To see what man basically is will aid in revealing what he has been perverted into.

Recognition of Existence

To Ortega, the most elementary thing man knows is that he is aware of things he can identify. To identify means the process by which man confronts things physically in his environment and recognizes them as distinct and separate from his own self. It is irrelevant to this discussion whether the thing in confrontation is an illusion or a true thing, or whether man truly knows that which he confronts. The important aspect is that the thing imposes itself upon a man's existence and forces itself to be recognized. This, for Ortega, is the basic start for all men, the recognition that there are other things surrounding him.

This recognition of other things in the world besides one's self leads Ortega to discover what he calls the
"distinct I." ¹ This "I" is what lives one's life, and that life which it lives is distinct from any other, even under similar circumstances. When one becomes aware of his "I," states Ortega, one becomes aware of his existence. This "I" is completely unique to anything else in the world. When one "I" experiences pain, it can communicate that it is experiencing pain and arouse a feeling of understanding, but this understanding can never be total because the pain is unique to the individual "I." No one else can know exactly what that pain is, even if the pain was acquired in a way many others have experienced pain.

Ortega wrote that the way man becomes aware of his distinct "I," namely his own awareness, is by reflection.² Man becomes aware when, after he has gathered information on what his circumstances are, he retreats from the world, ceases to give notice to his circumstances, and recalls his collected information of what his situation is. Through this process of self-reflection, says Ortega, the individual will attain a perspective of the world. Self-reflection enables one to make sense out of the display of activity that infringes upon one when he is present in the world. In Ortegian thought, self-reflection makes man aware that

²Ibid., p. 59.
there are two parts to his life. The first part consists of what Ortega calls "in living." This is living outside of reflection, participating with in the world as it acts upon man, as if one were a ball on a billiard table. The second part of life is the "I" in the surrounding circumstance, which is not a facet of the "I." This is simply life in reflection. It is as if the billiard ball knows its particular role in the game it is involved in; as if it could know exactly what it was and what it was doing, and plan its own course of action.\(^1\) To Ortega, man reaches his fullest capacity when he is in complete consciousness with himself and his circumstances. This state allows one the best understanding of his own cosmos.\(^2\)

For complete consciousness to be most effective, it should be conscious of truth. Truth, for Ortega, is not dependent upon anything. It is distinct and independent in itself. Man, states Ortega contrary to Cartesian method, is not ultimately alone in the existence of his thought. Ortega wrote that,

\[ I \text{ am not my life. This, which is reality, is composed of myself and of things. The things are not I and I am not things. We are mutually transcendent, but we are both immanent in that absolute coexistence which is life.} \]

\(^1\)Ibid., pp. 76-77.


\(^3\)Some Lessons in Metaphysics, p. 158.
Thought is thus alone and distinct, like Descartes wrote, but Ortega adds that life is coexistence in the world. This is Ortega's basic truth. Things live or exist together, distinct within themselves.

Ortega deduced that since man can recognize his existence and that of things in his circumstances, it would not be beyond man's powers to possibly understand more truths. The outside world, that which is distinct and separate from one's own being, he felt, must be understood. This understanding would be the result of one's recognition of the world. An understanding of the world can only come in the same manner as recognition of the "I," through self-reflection. Self-reflection will not necessarily give a true explanation of the world. Ortega concedes that the belief in man's power of reason to solve all problems is a false belief. Ortega thought that man was incapable of pure reason, although man makes every effort to be so.

This leads to what Ortega calls the basic philosophical problem. Man, he wrote, can know that he exists, that his world exists, and that objects exist in the world. Philosophy must answer what man is to make of this world

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and its objects. The world is many things, all of which possibly can become evidence or facts. Of all these innumerable facts, none of them give justification of existence to man. These facts do not even justify their own existence and are thus of their own existence unjustified. This total world of unjustification is not rational; thus the world is irrational and needs explanation from an outside force. This outside force can only be man.

**Concept of World**

Ortega felt that there was an order in the world, and that man was capable of recognizing that order. Science may offer explanations of this order in the form of theories and these theories may be technologically functional but be untrue in their conception of world order. The reason that man theorizes incorrectly on the true order of the world, Ortega wrote, is because man conceives of his structural laws by his senses. Man, in recognizing his surroundings, utilizes sense perception. Things exist for man in Ortegean thought because man is endowed with the body apparatus to experience them in their various shapes,

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smells, colors, and sizes.¹

The senses provide information on the outside world to the individual, but Ortega realizes that the senses can not be totally trusted to provide an absolutely truthful reality to man. As was stated, sense reality provides evidence that gives no justification of itself. Man, to Ortega, must know what is important to his life. This importance is his actual situation, because man must not only cope with reality but find possibilities of existing for him within it.² Man must reason to make an order he can understand about the world. Ortega admits that reason is faulty and filled with traps and diversions, yet man must do it if he is to make any sense out of this existing world. Man's conceived order of the world is faulty, but man must resort to it on the "principle of preference for the best," namely because man has nothing else to resort to.³ Man must resolve himself to the notion that his conceived world he knows is the best he can ever know. Ortega calls this the optimism of philosophy, to make the best of the existing world.


³Ibid., p. 361.
Realization of Solitude

Man sustains his life with a basic idea or knowledge of what life is. This idea Ortega called the "experience of life." This knowledge is not necessarily scientific but it is acquired automatically through living. Life, to Ortega, discovers its own reality and it is the only kind of knowing which is at once and of itself, living knowledge. Things which happen to a man throughout life become eventual habits. These habits mix with other traits to provide a profile of what life actually is. It is irrational but at least provides the orientation man needs. It enables man to know, and to know is to understand what to look for, what needs to be done with life, and how life should be viewed. This is philosophy for Ortega, the activity man involves himself in to make his construction of the world out of what surrounds his known existent life. Man can not orient himself to his life, or anything for that manner, until he has oriented himself to everything else that surrounds him.

This leads to the topic of this section: the activity of philosophy leads man to a realization he could not achieve elsewhere, that of his solitude. As was stated, Ortega felt that man must convince himself of his beliefs


2Some Lessons in Metaphysics, pp. 120-21.
because no conviction is perfectly constructed to be readily accepted. Every time man hears a new proposition, he, and he alone, must decide for himself whether he will accept that proposition or not. No one else can ultimately make that choice for him, because each person is a distinct "I." Everyone must convince themselves.¹ There are two main types of propositions that man judges before deciding. The first is the type of proposition supported by others that are also themselves solid. The second is the type of which are independent of any previous propositions. It has solidarity within itself. This is the basic problem of orientation; propositions depend upon other previous ones for their solidarity, and yet, through these predecessors, they make themselves solid.

Given Ortega's conception that man realizes his existence in the world, he must now realize the decision to his beliefs lies ultimately within him. Man realizes that he is distinct in his recognition to others. He is a distinct "I."² This "I" is separate from any other "I," and this is evident in that each "I" must make its own decision. It can not rely on any other. Man is forced to be ultimately alone in the world. He must face the world alone, in his own solitude. Ortega believed that this is not as shocking as it may first appear. Since man is in solitude

¹Ibid., p. 123. ²Ibid., p. 119.
within the world, no one else can know exactly what each
other feels, thinks, or is at any given moment. Man's soli-
tude can offer a security from the outside world. Every
man, at will, can detach himself from the outside world
and enter into his own private world of his solitary self. ¹
He can escape the world as it imposes itself upon him into
the realm of his imagination. Here he is secure from worldly
impositions and reflect upon his true situation. It is
within the distinct "I" that one's beliefs are formed,
chosen, and resolved.

This "radical" solitude constitutes the inner
world for man. Ideas are not realistic objects; they are
abstractions that compose the inner world. This leads to
a distinction between the man and the animal. Ortega
writes that the animal is constantly in the outer world.
The animal is incapable of going into solitude, of finding
an inner world. The animal must constantly be aware of his
surroundings; it can never rest and contemplate, and thus
remains an animal. ² This is easily demonstrated by observ-
ing a squirrel. The squirrel scampers continuously about,
stopping only to view the actions of a passing dog or human.
It is constantly on the alert for attack and can find no
security even in its nest, for there it must sleep with "one
eye open." A dog, on the other hand, is in a relatively

¹Man and People. ²Ibid., p. 19.
secure area, that of his owner's home. When the house is quiet, the dog need not worry of intrusions upon him. Instead of contemplating his situation in these moments of peace, the dog sleeps. When the environment stops, so does the animal. Both are so tightly linked that neither can be separated.¹

Thus, the animal exists always in the outer world. It has no solitude or individuality. It is always one with its circumstances. Man exists in both the outer and inner world. His solitude offers relief from his environment and the chance to act independent of it. In return, the price for this is that man must sometimes be forced into his solitude, to have the responsibility of his own choice, to be forced to operate alone.

Manipulation of Circumstance

It must now be answered what is exactly accomplished in this retreat into solitude in Ortega's thought; namely, what is its primary objective? Man retreats into his inner world to escape the outer world. The outer world appears to man as a labyrinth before him, confusing him at every turn. The retreat into solitude is first, a rest from the confusion of the outer world and second, a search for

understanding that chaos. Ortega sees the attempt to understand as the first basic orientation man indulges in.\footnote{\textit{Some Lessons in Metaphysics}, p. 124.} Man tries to gain some certainty out of the perplexing outer world in which to rely upon. The first basic orientation seeks the primary reality of how there is, what there really is, or the being of what there is.\footnote{Ibid., p. 126.} This search for a true reality is essential for man to establish a base for his thoughts, his understanding. It must be remembered that this can only be done in retreat to solitude, since it was stated that the senses are proven unreliable.

The reality that man perceives in this inner retreat is presented to him as the "great thing."\footnote{Ibid., pp. 127-28.} It is composed of many objects which are called things, all united in one gigantic environment. These things are what is already present to one overtly; they do not require solitude for their recognition. Man realizes that he is one in this world of things. He is in the midst of them. Realism for Ortega comes to imply the affirmation "that everything that is, is by definition as the thing is." Things are everywhere with man, separate and distinct, appearing ready and waiting. But, what are they ready and waiting for?
That question will be discussed in a moment. One more statement of importance must be handled here; that of why man has this urge to know, the feeling of needing to retreat to solitude to understand what is happening about him. The answer is that man is continually occupied with learning. Man must learn in order for him to live in the assured freedom and efficiency he craves. Ortega stressed that this can only be accomplished by education. To survive, man must know how to do it.¹

Ortega believed that man can never be positive that the result of his thought is totally correct. Man remains constantly confused with no apparent outlet. This constant confusion is the signal of man's uniqueness. No other thing in the universe is quite like man in this respect. "The condition of man . . . is essential uncertainty."² Ignorance is man's privilege. God is all-knowing and is thus never confused. Animals need no knowledge because they are directed and guided by their instincts. Instincts keep animals from being confused. Ortega places man in the middle of these two extremes. Man does not live to think, as is often presumed, but he must think to live. An animal has no need to worry that

²Man and People, pp. 24-25.
it will become less of an animal because, limited to its
instincts, it can never be more than an animal. Man, on
the other hand, is always dangerously near of becoming un-
man. If one stops his thoughts and acts instinctively, he
is no longer the man acting, but the homo animalis, the one
who senses as an animal.

For man to be man, he must control his instincts
and desires and decide himself if he is to survive or not.
Man is not a creature who lives by his instincts but he is
one who controls them. Man is ruled by other faculties,
namely his will and thought which inhibit the urge of the
instincts.\(^1\) The proof of this is clearly illustrated in
the example of Socrates. He preferred death to life in
his final decision, obviously a choice contrary to the
instinct of self-preservation. Many others have made
similar choices proving that instincts do not rule supreme.

Now to return to the question that was previously
posed: as Ortega leads us, what are things in the world
ready and waiting for? Upon contemplation, he says, man
suddenly realizes that things are waiting and ready for
him. This is a shocking discovery for man. He knows he
must deal with all the things confronting him in his cir-
cumstance.\(^2\) To Ortega, life for man becomes potential.

\(^1\)History as a System (New York: W. W. Norton and

\(^2\)Man and People, pp. 42-43.
Man was thrust into the world with nothing to himself but now he discovers that things are all available to him. Life can be made by the individual man. One has the choice of whether to use things or ignore them. Since life is not ready made for man as it is with the animal, man must decide. Ortega stressed that man is forced to do something if he is to continue surviving in the world, and things supply the accessories to make this possible. All man has to do is to use these things. Man's necessities are cared for because each individual man must decide for himself to care for them. Ortega felt nature imposes necessities on man if man decides to survive. Necessities are the challenge of existence. Given this view of Ortega, man's response to this challenge is to change, manipulate, and conform his natural environment to conform to his necessities.¹ Man's reaction to nature is his technology, the new man-made nature, the artificial world of man.

The Ortega man has no choice in his making of technology. Nature refuses to give life to man as it gives it to animals. Man must make his life at every moment; one must earn life. One can not remain passive and expect to survive in the world. A stone can exist in the world because it requires no activity for its existence. Man's existence requires activity; this to Ortega is the

¹History as a System, p. 95.
substructure of technology. At the same time man provides for his basic physical necessities, he must also justify this action to himself. Ortega assumed it would have no meaning to man to simply satisfy physical necessities. This would revert one back to the animal. The reason man exists is to strive for the attainment of his "potentiality," the possibility of making more of one's basic self. All things in the world exist as what they are, but only man exists as what he is yet to be. Man, for Ortega, can not choose what world he wishes to exist in, but he can decide what he will be in the world he does exist in. He can aspire to be his potential self, and this realization is existence.

Ortega construed that the discovery of the true understanding of a thing will expose an essential element of all things, namely that each thing is linked in a chain of events to other things. Ortega calls this the thing's "vital episode." A thing serves for another thing, which in turn serves for another; the eventual end of this chain is the thing's service to man (Ortega's name for this concept is serviceability). The world becomes a chain of means with the ultimate end in man. The world is composed of things linked together for the use of others, providing a positive or negative service, known as the "pragmatic

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1 Ibid., p. 111.  
2 Ibid., pp. 112-13.  
3 Man and People, pp. 78-79.
field."\(^1\) Everything belongs to one or more of these pragmatic fields, interlinking its being with that of others. In man's vital world, nothing is material; everything is pure dynamism. Man resides in a world of pragmatic fields, available to his disposal. Ortega felt each man makes of them what he desires.

Whatever any particular man desires, he desires because it holds value for that individual. Ortega believed a thing is not a value in itself, but it has a value; it is valuable in fact.\(^2\) All objects have a dual existence; an object has real qualities to be perceived; and, the structure of values becomes apparent only to one's personal judgment. For Ortega, there is no middle ground in regard to values. Every value is either positive or negative to the individual. Every positive value is always superior or equal to other values, while negative ones must be below or at most equal to other values.\(^3\) This credit of positive or negative to values makes their distinction.

Since life has been shown as being unlimited potentiality, Ortega deduced that the value of life consists in something transcending it. Life is the mechanism which enables one to achieve the higher potential it is capable

\(^1\) Ibid., pp. 80-81.


\(^3\) Ibid.
of; namely its transcendence. Life, to Ortega, has no value in itself. It has value only when it can become more than what it originated in.\(^1\) Thus, transcendent values are positive, but they are equal to the value for the capacity to life. Just to live is in itself positive and desirable.\(^2\) Ortega thought life is valuable for its own sake.\(^3\) The values of transcendence and life are equal and positive. One desires to live in order to become more than he is to begin with, to achieve his total potential. This total potential can only be achieved if one is alive to pursue this transcendence; thus, life becomes equally valuable in itself, for without it nothing would be possible for man. In pursuing ultimate potential, Ortega felt there is no need to have recourse to "extra-vital considerations," such as theological, cultural, ethical, or moral values.\(^4\) The individual for Ortega selects and formulates its own hierarchy of values. These values, though individual and neither positive nor negative, are still in pursuit of the positive values of life and transcendence.

Since values are not universal among all people, but each individually distinct, this variation will produce infinite variations of life styles. Ortega calls

\(^1\text{Ibid., p. 71.}\) \(^2\text{Ibid., p. 72.}\) \(^3\text{Ibid., p. 74.}\) \(^4\text{Ibid., p. 75.}\)
this concept of various life man's "extranatural destiny."¹ Different styles of life, the result of different values among men, will pursue various goals and develop varieties of technology. Technology is not universal but is geared towards the necessities of the individual who utilizes it. The only thing natural of technology is that it is used by most men to achieve their necessities.

It should now be apparent that Ortega believed man without technology is not a true man. Technology and man are one and the same to him. Besides handling man's necessities, he also believed technology provides man with pleasure.² Drugs were not found naturally by man; they had to be processed. Extravagant luxury items are the outcome of advanced technology (the abundance of electrical appliances is evidence of this). Ortega realized that technology has allowed man to satisfy another of his desires: not only to live in the world but to live as comfortably as possible. The primitive man feels he lives well by the mere fulfillment of his necessities. This accounts for his low level of technology.³ Modern man demands more than basic fulfillment of necessities. He wants luxury and pleasure items: convenience besides satisfaction.

¹History as a System, p. 123.
²Ibid., pp. 96-97. ³Ibid., p. 98.
pleasure derived from advanced technology presents its own problems. Technology allows man more leisure time, but this time is not always used to man's best advantages.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 107-8.} To fill the void of time opened by technology, man creates human activities. Ortega imagined that human activities are excursions for man to occupy him in his space time. It is up to the individual how productive these activities will be. To conclude, to exist is what Ortega calls "life as autofabrication."\footnote{Ibid., p. 115.} This means that the existence of each man does not infer any man live the life of what he is, but to become more than what he possibly can be. Life is to be made; it is all action. The world is the vast supply that man manipulates with his tool, technology, to assist him in his existence. Man is not endowed with technology. He must utilize it to become human. Technology provides the easiest and safest way to provide for necessities so man can become more human. The goal, the final objective of all this activity is the consummation of happiness, man's ultimate effectuation.

Maker of Destiny

Pushed by reason, man is condemned to make progress, and this means that he is condemned to go farther and farther away from nature, to construct in its place an artificial nature.\footnote{Meditations on Hunting (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972), p. 79.}
These words of Ortega echo man's inevitable career. To Ortega, the history of man consists of three basic movements. In the beginning, man feels lost within the world. He has no place and no security. To emerge from this, man withdraws into his solitude to understand his situation, reorganize himself, and realize he must work to survive. In the final stage, man moves out of his solitude into the outer world to initiate his premeditated plans. Man's destiny is action. Action is impossible to speak of without it having first progressed through the first two stages. Contemplation and action are unconditionally fused. In order for man to be what he can, a true man, he needs to find out first what he is. One must observe what is around him and what he is among those things that surround him.

This brings the discussion to what the true essence of man is: Ortega perceived man as a being that has no choice but is forced to know, to make science, to ultimately solve the problem of what he is and what are his surroundings. Man, for Ortega, can not be judged by what he has accomplished or what he makes. He can not be called the "tool maker" or the "rational animal"; if man could be possibly labelled under one inclusive title, Ortega would probably call man the "thinking being." He felt that all

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1Man and People, p. 23.
2Man and Crisis, p. 21.
titles of man now only give a segment of the activities of the thinking being. They are too fragmentary to be all inclusive. Ortega assigned to man the task of living. By this he meant the essence of living is finding oneself alone in a fixed world. In order for one to survive, one must do something, become active. This activity is the work required to survive. Only things like the stone can remain passive and still exist. Man must act, and at every moment man must decide what he is to do with his life. The Ortegean conception of life is not ready-made; acts do not come naturally and must be decided upon.¹ The decisions one makes are not directed for immediate situation, the here and now, but are geared for future action. Ortega viewed life as the preoccupation of preparing oneself for the future.² Man always looks to the future in his decisions, his choices.

As was previously stated, man can never be absolutely positive of the validity of his choices. He must wait to see if they fit the future circumstance. Thus, as Ortega says, the situation before a decision is one where man is perplexed. Thus, he concluded that life is perplexity.³ There are always many possibilities and alternatives to any question. Man is the creature who must

¹Ibid.
²Some Lessons in Metaphysics, p. 91.
³Ibid., p. 92.
decide amongst them. Ortega states that God, encompassing all truth, is never perplexed. The animal, having no choices or questions and guided by instincts, is also never perplexed. When the animal faces a situation it does not understand, it ignores the question, and retires from the situation.

Ortega understood that the numerous acts one must decide within a life have relation to each other only when they are seen in relation to one's entire life. As isolated incidents, he felt they are meaningless; but, united together, they reveal the story of one's life. Life, according to Ortega, is so apparent to man that he looks right through it. It is obvious to him that to live is to find one's self in the world. Man often seeks to know what life is, but is abstracted at what life produces and looks completely past life. The thing that clearly exists is man, and man acts upon the world. When man discovers himself, he also discovers that he is doing something. If one is thinking, Ortega felt it sufficient to say that one is occupied with thinking. To occupy one's self is to do one thing or another. The mere act of sleeping is to occupy

2 What is Philosophy, p. 231.
3 Ibid., p. 236.
one's self with rest. The occupation of activity in life is specific; it is limited to the here and now. One who is thinking does so at that specific moment, and he does so because he chooses to do so. Life is the constant process of choosing among an endless variety of possible activities. Each man decides upon a possibility and charts his destiny. Ultimately, Ortega felt life is destiny,¹ chosen by the individual. The young student's actions of working for good grades to qualify his admittance into medical school is his ultimate destiny to become a physician. When Ortega poses the question, what is life at this moment?, his answer is that it is the process of doing whatever one is doing at the moment.² Whatever one is doing at a specific moment is the preparation for the future.

After all of this tedious discussion, what is man? The first answer is what Ortega states man is not. He is not his body, soul, psyche, conscience or spirit, which are mere things to accommodate him; tools at his disposal for his assistance. Ortega conceived of man as no nature, nothing to unerringly or positively drive him on his life's course. Man is only a "drama," the pure happening which happens to each individual. Man is the conglomeration of human happenings, of which he decided upon.³ Life is what

man does. This introduces what Ortega calls "radical reality." Radical reality is the knowledge of all, including human life. Ortega defines human life as only the life of each individual person, only "my distinct life" and no one else's. The pain one feels from a wound is a distinct and individual private pain. No one else experiences it but the wounded. Radical reality is only "my" life, and it is the source of all other realities because any other reality must make itself known to the specific person to be known to that person.

The radical reality of life in Ortega's thought means that there are many things in the world, and among those things in the world is man. The radical solitude of life is man's radical reality, his individual actuality. Since this radical reality is reserved only to the individual, other human beings have their own radical reality; thus, Ortega wrote, man resides in solitude with creatures similar to him. Within this solitude, man finds himself forced to deal with his surroundings, his world. He cannot ignore it because it imposes itself upon man; it forces itself to be dealt with. When man does finally decide to deal with his environment, he can do so in only one way; namely, the human way. Man can only do what is human

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1Man and People, pp. 38-39. 2Ibid., p. 40. 3Ibid., p. 49. 4Ibid., p. 51.
because it makes sense to him to act in that manner.\(^1\) Ortega presumed that actions must be human actions because man can not understand the non-human actions.

Ortega adds that radical reality, besides being understandable only to the specific holder of it, can also only be of interest to the specific individual. Each man is interested in himself whether he desires to be or not because he must be if he wishes to ensure his existence.\(^2\) Ortega staunchly believed that every man can only live his own life; no one else can live the life of another. If one refuses to live his life, he simply will perish and no one can do anything about it. Since life is so unavoidably individualistic, each man, by his own individual effort, creates for himself an interpretation of the universe.\(^3\) Ortega describes the world man enters as composed of many ready-made solutions available for man. The task for the individual is to decide among these solutions the one he finds most appealing. Life is not ready-made, but decided upon. The radical reality of human life means strictly and exclusively the life of each individual.

Since the decisions each man makes are individualistic, Ortega makes each person responsible for the decision. Each man is responsible for his own life. He must

\(^1\) Ibid., p. 59.  
\(^2\) Man and Crisis, p. 9.  
\(^3\) Ibid., p. 26.
make the most of his life himself. Responsibility is untransferable, and resides among each individual.\(^1\) The world offers various possibilities to man, and each man must decide on the possibilities with its resulting responsibility. One can make no excuses or avoid commitment in an improper choice. Ortegan life is radical reality, namely, untransferable in itself; thus, resulting decisions within life are also untransferable.\(^2\) To insure the appropriateness on any decision, Ortega advises man to follow a specific method of thought.\(^3\) Man should periodically reflect upon his past life on the acts he already committed and is responsible for. This reflection is done within the realm of one's solitude. In solitude, the inner world of man, one finds his truth. In the outer world (society), man tends to be swayed by mere convention or false truths. It is the duty of responsible humans to withdraw into their solitude to reorganize their thoughts. This withdrawal, to Ortega, results in what is called philosophy. The truth that results from philosophy can be shocking to man because it defies conventional life; it forces man to see wider reality.\(^4\) Philosophy is thus the criticism of conventional life.

One's essential nature is most overtly revealed through one of the most unique human phenomena, human love.

\(^1\)Man and People, pp. 44-45. \(^2\)Ibid., p. 46. 
\(^3\)Ibid., p. 99. \(^4\)Ibid., p. 101.
Ortega thought that in love, one reveals more of his true nature than at any other period. One's ultimate personality is exposed in the choice of lovers by both sexes. Ortega writes that "the type of human being which we prefer reveals the contours of our heart." Love, to Ortega, is the impulse that emerges from the depths of one's being, the true expression of one's self.

It should now be apparent that life for Ortega is precisely what we are and what we do. Man is situated in a place and makes the most of it in the manner he decides upon. At the same time this decision-making takes place, life continually collides with the future. Life, to Ortega, is executed in relation to the future. Life is always "what comes next, what has not yet come to pass." All human activities universally start with an anticipation of what will occur, because life is always concentrated upon what will happen next. Man reflects back to his past to gain some insight into the future. Man is concerned with the future only in the realm of what he can demand from it, namely what it will satisfy him with. He views the present only to coordinate his activities to make his future result from his plans. The past is the reference

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2 What is Philosophy, p. 214. 3 Ibid., pp. 224-25.
4 An Interpretation of Universal History, p. 49.
section of finding sufficient means to satisfy desires he plans to strive for. The past is the referral for present activities. Thus, Ortega groups the future first within man's mind, followed by the present which supports the "leader future"; the past takes up the rear, the element with no support for itself. How man uses the reference points of the past to decide his future is reserved within the individual. The world presents some events which cannot be foreseen, and these two must be dealt with. These events are known as fate, but fate does not solely determine life. Life is part fate and part the freedom which one decides to make his own life.2

Ortegean life is composed of three characteristics: life is awareness of itself; life makes itself; and life decides itself.3 Life is an occupation to be undertaken. The only choice is to refuse the occupation and take its alternative, death. Life, in Ortega's perspective, is offered a variety of possibilities. The past offers no direction to this scope of possibilities; life must discover its own destiny. Life, to Ortega, means what it is possible for one to become from the choice of possibilities offered. Life does not choose its own world but finds itself involved in the present world, a world already

1What is Philosophy, p. 246. 2Ibid., p. 248.
3Some Lessons in Metaphysics, p. 57.
determined and unchanging. An individual life can not change the course of the world, but the world is only the circumstance offering possibilities. The world can not change one's life.¹

The past does not direct the individual life, but it is useful for the guidance it preserves for reference. Man, as Ortega sees it, always seeks to advance his life, not regress or revert to the past. One can not regress even if he tried to do so, because past experiences can never be duplicated. They are lost forever in their individuality, and only their memory survives.² Past experience is not just limited to one's own personal past experiences; it includes all of history. Ortega believed man emerges from his personal solitude when he has composed his static program of life to guide him.³ This program provides the satisfactory answers for man to respond to his circumstances. Man places great faith in this program and believes it to be his true being. He trusts his "created character" and allows it to grow and progress alongside him. It will serve its purpose until man loses trust in it; when it eventually fails him. Thus, the total effort man calls thinking is the process of man

²History as a System, pp. 209-10.
³Ibid., p. 215.
deciding what to do about something. It is the occupation for originating action. Every creature, to Ortega, is most happy when it fulfills its destiny, when it finally realizes itself, and when it is the being which in truth it actually is. He felt that man is the only creature that must search for what it is. It must find itself.

To summarize Ortega's thought, human life is a personal being. It is mine, and mine alone. Life consists of finding oneself in a circumstance, namely the world. Things exist with the individual person within the world and are available for their use, though independent in themselves. The circumstances of men offer a variety of possible activities. Man must decide what action he wishes to pursue, and this decision is reserved to the individual alone and can not be transferred. Each person must decide for himself. Since man wants to become more than what he is, to transcend, he will seek an activity which will enable him to do so. Life becomes meaningful because it is the medium man has that allows him to make his destiny. When one realizes his destiny in its full glory, he attains happiness.

1 "Notes on Thinking," Concord and Liberty, p. 60.
2 What is Philosophy, p. 16.
3 Man and People, p. 58.
CHAPTER II

MAN IN SOCIETY

Recognition of Others

Ortega believes man exists in a "radical" solitude within the world, but this solitude is not absolute. He wrote that things in the world resist man; they impose themselves upon man's path. If things did not resist man, Ortega says, they would not be recognizable, and would probably not exist. When one is in a room, he cannot leave that room by exiting through the wall. The wall, a separate thing from man, opposes and resists man. This undeniably affirms that the wall exists in its own being, distinct from man.\(^1\) The reality of the world is composed of many things beside the individual man. Ortega calls things in the world "mutually transcendent . . . but . . . imminent in that absolute coexistence which is life."\(^2\) The important term in this quote is "coexistence." Things co-exist with man.

How does man know of these things he coexists with? What makes the Other knowable? This answer is quite easy

\(^1\) Some Lessons in Metaphysics, p. 153.
\(^2\) Ibid., p. 158.
for Ortega. Man enters the world equipped with a body.¹ The body, he states, separates man from the outer world, but besides being a barrier, it is the source of physical senses. Of the physical senses, Ortega says the most important to man is the sense of touch.² Touch enables man to know this barrier between himself and the outer world. He can feel the other and realize it is not a hallucination, but something opposing him. As the human being grows, it continually finds itself in the world of things, which man comes across one by one. In Ortegean thought, man, by the use of memory, accumulates data of all the things he comes across to formulate a more complete picture of his circumstance.

The most exciting confrontation man has with a thing is when that thing is another living creature. When man comes across a plant or a rock, these things do not respond in any overt way to man; they just remain there. Ortega sees the confrontation with the animal as entirely different. Besides man recognizing the animal, the animal recognizes man. Both, upon the other's appearance, begin to attribute qualities to the other each believes the other possesses.³ Both recognize the other as not passive, like the rock, but active. This begins the realm of coexistence.

¹Man and People, p. 73. ²Ibid., p. 72.
³Ibid., p. 87.
According to Ortega, the appearance of the animal confuses man. Man can give it certain basic qualities, but these do not truly describe the animal's condition. Man must observe the animal longer, to learn more of its being, before he can commit himself to act upon it. This preliminary relationship of man to animal is similar to that of man to man. Other men appear before one and confuse man. The first phase of coexistence in Ortegaan thought is one of observation, simply because man does not know enough of how to act to the Other. Both know the existence of the other, and presently must be satisfied with only this. This is the primary relationship. It is only mutual observation.

Expansion of Relationship with Other

As time progresses, the contact with the other may take on a new form. There exist in the world certain individuals who are more apparent to the individual than the ordinary other. Ortega feels that these figures may be noticed sooner than most characters, and their recognition takes on importance. One attributes to these people special attention.

As one continues to share the same circumstance with this Other, the Other moves from beyond the first

\(^1\)Ibid., pp. 89-90.
Ortega phase of mere observation. The action of the Other and the frequency of the Other's appearance makes this Other particularly memorable. In Ortega's philosophy, this one particular Other becomes unique; one begins to know him instantly. This specific Other becomes easily recognizable from all others, as one learns more of its qualities. Eventually, the frequency of confrontations will develop what Ortega calls a closeness.¹ When this closeness reaches its pinnacle, it is labelled intimacy. Since this Other acts upon one, there is the reflex action to desire to act upon it. Ortega construes that there needs to be some communication between man and his intimate Other if the closeness is to continue. Man, he wrote, is capable of communicating with others in his circumstance. This is capable because both man and others share the world in common. They both manipulate common elements, face common obstacles, and experience similar phenomena. Man sees occurrences happening to others that he feels have happened to himself; things he can relate to. This world in common is essential in Ortega's thought, for when man feels that the world he exists in is no longer common to that of others, he plunges deep inside his radical solitude for readjustment. The unique world of the

¹Ibid., p. 110.
individual can not be shared, thus can not be communicated. It is the social relation with the others that make it possible for man to view something as their common and objective world.\(^1\) This agreement upon common things does not come natural; Ortega believes it is only known through chance, mutual confrontation of self and other upon something.

Men do not agree in common on many particular things. The truth of the matter is that men only see in common gross, obvious, huge elements of the world. This is the reason that Ortega concludes existence in the world is coexistence; men exist together on a certain common ground.\(^2\) Total disagreement would not be compatible with coexistence. To coexist, man must develop what Ortega calls basic altruism, namely, to be open to the other and act on him as he responds to me. Seclusion leads to disagreement, and disagreement is unharmonious with coexistence. Altruism establishes basic social reality. If one is in pain and another tends his wounds, the other will return the favor at a time when the originator of the action needs it.

The Other, the distinct being that most attracts one, is recognized and known through its movements. Ortega states that man could be called his gestures, since they are basic communication.\(^3\) Most of what the Other does aludes

\(^1\)Ibid., pp. 107-8.  \(^2\)Ibid., p. 109.  \(^3\)Ibid., p. 114.
the observer as useless movements. Gestures leave their impression and constitute meaning. The rock makes no gestures and remains unexpressive. It can never develop a relationship because it can not be active upon a man. The physical body movements of man encompass their own vocabulary. Man expresses himself through "body language" that is very easily interpreted. A specific look of the Other can convey a precise meaning.¹ Not only is the vocabulary of this language precise, Ortega argues that it is also inexhaustible. The body of the Other is a constant, expressive signal to man. The one element of the Other that can not be known is the "I" of the Other. Ortega calls this the pure "not-I."² It is the ego of the Other that is deep within him, residing in his own inner world, his radical solitude, and it can not be communicated. The Other may try to communicate his "I," but it will be to no avail; one will never know it as the Other knows it. Likewise, one's own "I" can never be known to the Other.

Now to return to the main discussion: the growing intimacy of the "I" with the Other. As the intimacy grows between the two, a feeling will be aroused within both. Man is distinct from all other things within the world and knows his radical solitude. In intimacy with the Other, a point will arise where the "I" wishes to break free of this

¹Ibid., p. 116. ²Ibid., p. 120.
solitude and bind in one, even if only temporarily, with the other. This desire for union of the two separate solitudes is love.¹ In the confines of love, the individual is extended to absorb other things into it, which unites them to the individual's being. This union creates a deep understanding of the other thing. Hate is the exact opposite; it is the desire to remain further apart from the specific other. As love unites, hate separates.

It would be foolish to think that all contacts with the Other remain either observational or result in intimacy. Many manifest themselves in this third Ortegean form, an element of danger. When approaching a new Other for the first time, man will respond to one's actions upon him, so it is essential that one know in advance generally how his reaction will be. At the same time, Ortega continues, the Other is calculating its new acquaintance's reaction. A social relation exists when one can reckon with the Other's action, such as in speech or non-verbal communication, and expect the same reciprocal response. One who is incapable of reciprocal action Ortega defines as not human.² This stranger must give some kind of response to one's action in order to identify its intentions.

Trouble may arise if what Ortega calls the genuine

¹Meditations on Quixote, p. 33.
²Man and People, p. 140.
"not-I" of the Other tries to control the situation. It can project itself upon the objective world and cause confusion to those who perceive it. The world to this "not-I" appears as things having their own being instead of a mere being for, a tool for man. The things that the group has humanized are not the genuine world for the "not-I." It does not have an unquestionable reality and seems illusory. Its only solution to understanding is reflection. The only similarity the "not-I" holds in Ortega's thought with the man confronting it is the possibility of being dealt with on a social level. The man seeing it knows that the "not-I" is similar to him, but it remains confusing. As contact increases with this "not-I," the confusion increases. Recognition gets more abstract and distant. This situation will eventually reach a level of what Ortega calls "zero intimacy." In zero intimacy, there is no idea of the composition of the observed "not-I" Other. In his presence, one can only remain confused and expect the worst. This other can be a potential friend or a potential enemy. The crisis of the situation Ortega describes is that there is no way to know what to expect. There is no direct intuition beyond that which comes from the Other's momentary presence and compresence; the body

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1Ibid., p. 142. 
2Ibid., p. 145. 
3Ibid., pp. 149-50.
of one who can not be understood.

The reason that the Other must be regarded as dangerous is that Ortega feels, strictly speaking, man is a carnivorous mammal, and thus must be considered potentially ferocious. One can only approach the unknown Other with caution. The Other will treat one in the same manner of wariness. The situation does not have to remain at this stage. Whereas scientific knowledge is closed and stable, the vital knowledge of others is always open and changing. Ortega states that knowledge of man must change because man is always changing. This change of man is due to his freedom, the ability to determine his own destiny. Life is always change; only death can make the human being constant. New experiences produce new possibilities and courses of action; man is a perpetual change. The danger of the Other is subject to the laws of diminishing returns. He is essentially dangerous but becomes less so as more is known about him. The "I" is gradually known in a slow, step by step, revelation by the virtue of experiences both the Other and one shares. It is discovered by mutual contact with others. The result of this extended observation will expose the final decision regarding the Other, as either positive or negative. If it moves to the final

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1Ibid., p. 152.  
2Ibid., pp. 156-57.  
3Ibid., p. 159.  
4Ibid., p. 168.
end of a negative meeting, Ortega concludes, there will be no hope for any reconciliation and terminate in zero intimacy.

**Origin of Society**

To understand the origin of primitive society, one must first grasp the Ortegean concept of life in prehistorical time. The activity of life during this era was twofold to Ortega; there was the sportive life, life for the sheer delight of it, and the laboring life, the life of necessity. The sportive life ranked first, as it was the life of creativity and expansion of the self. It was the enjoyable feeling of living, though totally serious and important to the individual. Ortega felt that the will to live is most exerted in the sportive life. The laboring life is secondary to the sportive life. It is the fulfillment of physical necessities, the drudgery of having to provide for oneself in order to survive. Ortega calls it "relatively mechanic and a mere functioning."¹

For Ortega, the family has always existed as the basic unit, a unit that is natural and probably instinctive, and one which did not evolve into what it is. The human baby can not survive by itself, and thus desperately needs the mother to provide necessities until it matures to provide for itself. During the period of early infancy, the

¹*History as a System*, p. 18.
human being is not really human to Ortega, in that its thoughts are limited to physical demands, and its actions are instinctive responses. If to be human is to make one's destiny, Ortega states, the baby is in the process of becoming human; it is not a true human to begin with, but only an animal, a weak, defenseless one at that.

The first stage in the fourfold Ortegean scheme of childhood development consists of the time when the child plays alone. In this early stage, the child is still very much self-centered and resides in his own limited conception of the world. The child has yet to learn that there are others in the world besides himself; he is not the center of the universe as he thinks he is. In the second stage, the child has a "spectator friend," one who does not play with him but is known to him. The child is still in his own conception but has now included a spectator into it. In the third stage, the child enters into a group of friends who have invaded his privacy and forced themselves to be recognized. The character of the child abandons its private domain and becomes socialized into the mold of the group. By playing with others now, the child becomes one with the others, a member of the group and no longer the isolated individual. This third stage is near puberty and marks the deterioration of infantile isolation.
The bonds of youthful friendship are created coupled with a drive to sociability.¹

Social life begins with children, for Ortega. He wrote that this development of children took place in primitive society just as it does today in modern civilization. In Ortega's conception of primitive society, the mature men of the tribe lived with the women and children, as the main providers for them since the youth only provided for themselves. The women sought the protection of the men about them. Eventually, the woman became the center of the social group, since it was for her that the man in her life, her care-takers, provided for. The first family was, to Ortega, the first matriarchy. The old, being the most experienced, were looked to for guidance in decision making and became a primitive senate.²

The society remained stagnant according to Ortega until an individual emerged in the group with more courage and warrior skills than anyone else in the tribe. This man organized better, found necessary resources, and reaped benefits more easily than anyone else. He instilled the dynamism needed to motivate the tribe to make new progress and creates enthusiasm within the group. This unique individual, Ortega wrote, saves the tribe from dangers, becomes heroic, and emerges as the focal point for all of the males

¹Ibid., pp. 24-25. ²Ibid., p. 32.
in the tribe. The group gives its faith to the individual and he becomes the first central leader of the society. All decision making is given to the leader because the people feel he has the wisdom to decide best; they put faith in the leader.¹ This, Ortega concludes, is the beginning of monarchy. When the leader dies, the group entrusts its faith in his son, who they believe will continue the good deeds of his father. This creates an unending line of succession built on the original trust given to the founding hero.

Ortega surmised that the moment eventually arrived when the faith of the people was lost, due to an incompetent heir of the founder. His bungling caused the people to lose faith and become confused, after having so long been satisfied with their system. Once the faith was lost, Ortega wrote, it could not be recovered. Feeble attempts at restoration always proved unsatisfactory, thus a new system had to be devised. No man could restore the trust that had been lost, so the social contract emerged. Modern society is, thus, deduced Ortega, established on the social contract, an implied declaration of distrust of all men. Men bound themselves to the agreement of this contract, an abstraction outside the power of contracting parties. Anyone who rejected the contract became a criminal.²

¹ An Interpretation of Universal History, p. 128.
Ortega expresses his disgust for such an arrangement, stating that man now puts more faith in an abstraction instead of a trust in the human being. The unfortunate thing is that there presently exists no alternative. Present affairs only help entrench the need for maintaining the contract. Distrust has grown and with it have its implications.

**Concept of Generation**

Modern man, according to Ortega, does not find himself born into a situation where he must decide between placing his trust in a leader or a social contract. The modern man is born into an already-made society. Whereas primitive man preceded his society, society precedes modern man. Ortega feels that modern man must still make a decision, but it is different than that of primitive man. Primitive man found himself in a confused, unorganized society. Modern man finds that he exists in a society with established ideas and beliefs. These ideas and beliefs are the results of the work of people who lived before the modern man, and these ideas are what Ortega states that the modern man must contend with.¹

To Ortega, the present is derived from elements or events from the past. The past is geared for the making of the present, which at that time was the future. The present is always advancing and anticipating the future. Thus,

¹*Man and Crisis*, p. 50.
the future makes its weight felt by influencing present actions. None can be separated from the other. The immediate, present human destiny, the human world of this exact moment, is the way it is because it is the product of all the other previous presents of humanity, namely all other generations. Ortega wrote that if past ages, with their respective generations had been different, the present human world would not have been what it is today. In truth, to Ortega, it does not matter if one generation applauds the previous generation or condemns it, whether a "generation gap" exists or not, because each generation plays the role that determines what the preceding one will be. Ortega affirms that this determination can not be avoided nor transferred. It is inevitable.

Ortega views modern society as a number of co-existing generations. Each man is a member of one of the existing generations. One's life, according to Ortega, is a certain span of years with its maximum length fixed in advance. Man, the drama that Ortega sees, has during this time the job of fulfilling his destiny. Ortega divides man's life into five stages, each composed of fifteen years: childhood, youth, initiation, dominance, and old age. The time of action upon the future comes within two of

1Ibid., p. 53.  
2Ibid., p. 55.  
3Ibid., p. 60.
these stages, initiation and dominance. In the initiation stage, the time between ages thirty and forty-five in Ortega's scheme, man enters a period of gestation, creation and conflict. He has just emerged from youth, the troublesome time of personal turbulence, and he is mature enough in his ideas and young enough to act upon them. The stage of dominance, between forty-five and sixty, confronts the man in the stage of initiation. The men in the stage of dominance have already strove in their goals, attained them, and now wish to preserve them. These men are the power holders of society. They have worked long and hard to entrench themselves and are not about to yield themselves to the challenges of the men in initiation. The men in initiation always challenge those in dominance, says Ortega. They can be compared to the rising young executives trying to obtain seats on the board of directors of the firm, held by those in dominance. At any time in history, these two generations will confront each other for the vital positions in the society. The member of the fifth stage, that of old age (age sixty to death), is seen as the survivor of the past, the living historical relic. He does not interfere in the power struggle of stages three and four, because he is either ignored, just used for consultation, or wise enough to passively observe these actions. The survivor in old age has gone through the entire
process and knows the results. Ortega stresses that the essential point to gain out of this discussion is not whether the stage of initiation will succeed over that in dominance (which is inevitable) but that the period before transition is one of coexistence.\(^1\) The stability of society, to Ortega, rests on the peaceful succession of each generation, utilizing what the previous one leaves for the arriving one. The new generation brings with it new ideas that build on the old ones, thus stabilizing society in a solid foundation of beliefs.

**Societal Impositions**

The emergence of the social contract corresponded with the rise of social regulations. It was inevitable that this should happen, for the generation that resorted to a social contract had to establish a contract with binding terms for the contractors. Although now indubitably linked with the social contract, social regulations evolved independent of the contract. The regulations evolved, states Ortega, as man, the individual, increased contact with the Other. As the frequency of contact increased, men extended friendly gestures to those who they felt were capable of reciprocating. This practice became standard procedure between men until it became sociality. Ortega describes it as:

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 59.
Only when we encountered men, and found them beings capable of responding to our action by their reaction with a range on the same level of response equal to our capacity for acting on them—capable, therefore, of corresponding and reciprocating to us—only then did we seem to find a reality worthy to be called intercourse or social relation, sociality.¹

The social relation is the incident when two people meet and both agree, within themselves, to carry on this relationship. Both people involved respond in pursuit of their own ends, and decide consciously to do so. Ortega wrote that this is the recognition of one, in his own individuality, acknowledging the recognition of another similar to him.² For instance, (excluding done in jest) one does not approach a dog and say "How do you do?" The animal, clearly recognizable as an animal, does not and cannot respond, "I am fine, thank you. How are you?" This same question, when posed to a person just confronted, is an implication that the person asking the question recognizes the other as similar to himself. Hence, the need to response is not so much out of courtesy, but out of the likewise acknowledgment that the other sees the questioner as similar to himself too. The exchange is the realization of two distinct existents, similar to each other.

One has to make this exchange for a very important reason in Ortegean thought. This example of a social relation, which Ortega calls a "usage," is essential for one

¹Man and People, p. 177. ²Ibid., pp. 178-79.
to judge the character of the strange, new Other. As was stated before, when man first approaches a new Other, Ortega believes he must do so cautiously because he does not know the type of response he may provoke from the Other. The Other feels in the exact same manner; he questions what the one will do. The usage is the effort to display one's intention to the Other in case of an eventual violence directed at the one. The usage becomes then, the action to show intention, to convey to the Other what the one thinks in return for the display of the Other's thinking.¹ Each time people meet this usage, a specific social relation, is exercised. Eventually, Ortega concludes, the usage becomes a custom.

Ortega defines a custom as a specific mode of behavior, which because of its repetition, turns customary, or habitual. The frequency of contact makes the Other unique, and this uniqueness makes the Other easily recognizable and known. The usage no longer holds its original purpose but is still done, because by now it has become a social habit. Habit, by Ortegean definition, is the conduct, that having been so frequently done, becomes automatic in the individual and is produced unconsciously.²

There are two inner commands, according to Ortega, which govern man's acts. The first, known as the cultural

¹Ibid., p. 196. ²Ibid., p. 192.
imperative, orders man to be good; this good being the society defined good. The second, called the vital imperative, must be expressed and satisfied by the individual and is necessary to one's life. The vital imperative is analogous to human emotional response. It is the inner command of feelings. The most obvious method to distinguish between these two imperatives is to observe them under the same situation. Both will arise in a situation and the individual must choose between the two as to which he will obey. These imperatives need not necessarily work against each other, though it may appear that they often do. To take a simple example, if in the activity of volition, one is hungry and must decide upon the food to consume. The will of the cultural imperative, in this case goodness, would demand a nutritional food; the vital imperative, on the other hand, would stress one in which the individual found particularly appetizing and tasty, but maybe not that nutritional. The problem for man is to answer both imperatives as best as possible at each situation.

The danger Ortega sees in these imperatives arises if one becomes so involved in adjusting himself to the conviction of what one's reason calls for to be the truth, that he believes it and in turn believes an untruth. One runs the risk of believing that one believes truth, because

1 The Modern Theme, p. 45.
one is always pleased to desire knowing truth.\(^1\) The false satisfying of an imperative will only procrastinate the issue until it emerges again, usually with more potency to the problem because it was not resolved the first time. The imperatives of the culture, the society, arise from the basic life of the individual and is victim to one's subjectivity.\(^2\) Ortega states that one can only decide between the cultural commands or his inner-self commands and hope the choice is the true one, ever on guard that he may have to reverse a decision in case of error.

With this in mind, it can be seen that culture only survives while it continues to receive the continual response from those who practice it.\(^3\) If no one obeyed the cultural imperatives and always followed the vital imperatives, Ortega is certain that culture would disintegrate. Society would just become men grouped together. All concepts, such as law, authority, order, government, imply cultural imperatives; and cultural imperatives are expression of the social, of society.\(^4\) Animals act solely by their vital imperatives. They do not take in consideration the presence of their peers or of activity in a group that is not instinctive response. The outcome of this is that there is no such thing as real animal society as a

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\(^1\) The Modern Theme, p. 45. \(^2\) Ibid., p. 49. \(^3\) Ibid., p. 50. \(^4\) Ibid., p. 51.
pre-planned activity. Animal society is purely instinctive.

To Ortega every cultural, moral code must be flexible enough to reform. If it is strict and rigid and prohibits the acts of the free will, it will be perverse.\(^1\) This will seal the code's doom. Man is not rigid and fixed, but persuadable and bendable. The codes must bend with man or they will be ignored completely, never having the chance to show their potential truth.

According to Ortega, it can be seen now that upon confrontation with the Other, one, through the two imperatives, opts to start a social relation or reject one. By the implementation of a usage, one proclaims a mutual will to peace and sociality with the Other. It is the acceptance of a social relation with the Other.\(^2\) Ortega believed that the usage becomes ingrained in one another by repetition and becomes difficult to stop. The sudden termination of a usage with another will appear as an insult and probably provoke hostility. To discontinue a usage or custom, Ortega cited that the two individuals involved must discuss the situation and mutually agree on the usage's abandonment. Both must make known to the other they reject the usage. To make this widespread, each party involved must in turn communicate to all others that they wish to

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\(^1\) Meditations on Quixote, p. 37.

\(^2\) Man and People, p. 206.
discontinue employing a particular usage.\(^1\) This process
is necessary, Ortega felt, to avoid possibly threatening
situations where one person will use the custom and the
other will not. The lack of communication will cause con­
fusion and a probable misunderstanding. This process
happens to all customs and usages eventually.

Formation of State

The strength of a usage lies in its prevalence
within the society. It does not really matter how a usage
originated; what matters is how long it is to be adhered to.
Ortega argued that the usage is a product of public support
for it. The opinion of an individual may be dynamic,
forceful, wise, and energetic, but it will be nothing when
contrasted to the public opinion. This brings one to the
Ortegaan difference between the private and public opinion:
the public opinion, regardless of its content, is the one
that is in observance. It is the established usage or
attitude.\(^2\) The intellectual content of one or the other
does not count in this case; what matters is the power the
one holds over the other.

In Ortega's perspective, the public opinion cre­
ates what are known as social observances. A social ob­
servance is a thing, usually a usage, that exists and can

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 208. \(^2\)Ibid., p. 266.
not be ignored by the members of society. It is an authority, a base of power supporting the individual in social affairs. One is bound by social observances and protected by them. Science as a methodology is composed of usages one follows to arrive at scientific solutions, and these usages were imposed upon one by the scientific community. Man accepts this authority and resorts to it when attempting to solve scientific problems, feeling guided and protected by it. Society is, in essence, to Ortega a power facing the individual, commanding him to live in the group in a particular manner. The public opinion has the power of society behind it and employs it to operate within the realms of collective existence. This power of collectivity is called public power.¹

Ortega views public power as the overt expression of public opinion. Public power is the base for the support of all societal usages and binding observances. The structure of public power varies to the degree of which public opinion conforms or deviates from usages. For example, in Turkey presently there is strong public opinion against drug use; hence, the public power exercised to control it is very strong. At the same time, Great Britain has a weaker public opinion towards drug use, thus resulting in a more lenient public power regarding it.

¹Ibid., pp. 268-69.
For a minimum of sociability to prevail in any society, it must occasionally exert full public power, violently if necessary, to coerce individuals into obliging with the society. When the society develops out of the primitive stage, it creates a special group for the fulfillment of public power. This special section of society, Ortega concludes, is the state.1 Without the state, the public power could not be brought down upon the uncooperative individual. Anarchy would become rampant and the society would collapse. This expression of normal public power may become illuminated with this example. In the United States, it is the public opinion that all automobiles drive on the right side of the road. Public power exerted itself upon the state to make this universal within the country. Hence, the state enforced the opinion that all drivers remain on the right side and it punishes those who do not obey.

This extension of the public opinion is not the infringement upon individual freedom as it may appear. Ortega feels that it is a necessity for the functioning of society. One can live satisfactorily within society if freedom in public life for the individual is insured by three standards Ortega contrived: first, that the collectivity does not have severe internal problems, something that may require the enactment of martial law, for instance;

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1Ibid., pp. 270-72.
second, if the collective mind has genuine ideals of the public life, namely overt standards that can be referred to illustrating what public life should be; third, every member of society must feel he is active in society and that he can have a responsible voice in its affairs.¹ If one feels that the public life is not worth the effort of participation, he will extend that feeling to all relations within the society. Ortega stresses that man needs to feel that he is a part of what he belongs to.

To Ortega, the institutions of society do not function by the law, but by the effort of the people who operate within them. No institution can properly function in society in absolute independence. It requires the cooperation and assistance of all the other institutions in the society, including non-institutional social activities. Collective life is life in cooperation with all people in the society. This cooperation must arise from within the people of the society itself. The manner, style or method of the society's cooperation can not be imposed by outsiders upon the people. Ortega sees the stability of a society founded in the base of public power, derived from a strong public opinion. This can only come about naturally and not be forced upon a people.²

The state power acts as a social power. It is

¹_Concord and Liberty_, p. 38. ²_Ibid., pp. 46-47._
derived from men and acted out by men.¹ It is the expression of public opinion to the fullest. The individual who rejects state power is not fighting an abstract thing, he is disagreeing with the whole of his society. The state power does not accept individuality. Its sole purpose to Ortega is the force of socialization, the attempt to get one to conform.² This mass conformity is needed for the smooth functioning of society. Massive individualism, a place where everyone did precisely what he wanted to do when he wanted to do it, would no longer be society, but would be a regression back to before primitive society. Ortega states that it would be animal life.

Ortega describes the two extremes to living in society as "life in freedom" or "life in adaptation."³ To understand them, it must be stated that modern man does not make society today; he is born into a ready-made society of which he has no choice of preference and can not escape. The state exerts pressure upon those in the society to conform to its rules. This pressure is channelled through the institutions of the society. Given this situation, it is up to the individual to decide which life he is to live. Ortega's "life in freedom" is where one lives in a society formed after his vital imperatives. This

¹ Man and People, p. 180. ² Ibid., p. 183. ³ Concord and Liberty, pp. 33-34.
would seemingly be one's utopia, for not only would one do what he always desired, but what he desired is what is expected to be done. "Life in adaptation" is the life style of one whose existence has been formed by the state, not the individual. One has no choice to the public life but is under state control.\(^1\) Most states are between these extremes, leaning towards either one or the other.

The ideas of a utopian society, in one extreme or another, are unrealistic to Ortega. He wrote that society creates as many problems as it solves and can never be perfect. Society is not merely groups of people living together, but it is the attempt to become one true cooperative group. Any society functions best when its good parts outweigh its bad parts.\(^2\) Since society is not perfectable, he wrote, man can not expect to live his life in one of the extremes and satisfactorily exist. The good periods that are spoken of any given society are only relative to the one making the statement. Man must resolve himself to live in what he finds himself placed into. Society is nothing more than the living of groups together bound by common interests. The unity of principles, the prevailing strong public opinion, is society.\(^3\) Principles hold the people together, and opinions of the public express them.

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 35. \(^2\)Ibid., pp. 25-26. \(^3\)An Interpretation of Universal History, p. 47.
The state, Ortega's outcome of public power from public opinion, enforces the social guidelines, or laws, of the society. The individual, according to Ortega, acts in the manner he does, not so much because he wants to, but because he does what people tell him to do; namely he usually conforms to the society rules. It is other people that force man to become human in a manner in which they conceive of it, not in the conception of the individual. One can not remain the lofty, romantic individualist in a society, argues Ortega, because one can not become more powerful than the collectivity.\(^1\) One can look to any manifested act to see how powerful the influence of the collectivity is. The act is first done by a man towards another human. This act was copied from others who do the same act (Ortega uses the example of shaking hands). Shaking hands is a copied act, but the time to perform it originated in one's own mind originally in that circumstance. The first few times one shakes hands he does so reluctantly. After a while, the event of hand-shaking becomes a mechanical inhuman movement. One meets another, the Other extends his hand, and one automatically shakes hands. One begins to realize that he does not even know why he shakes hands with another; he just does it. Finally, one realizes that he must shake hands or face the social consequences.\(^2\)

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\(^{1}\)Man and People, pp. 172-73.  
\(^{2}\)Ibid., pp. 186-87.
Thus, the person is socialized beyond his control. The entire act of shaking hands did not originate in the individual, but existed before him and imposed itself to be performed.

Total freedom within society is impossible because its condition is inherent upon the freedom of forces acting upon it. To be politically free, one must be equally economically free. Necessities would have to be provided for, and not worrying about necessities would result in total economic freedom. Yet, to be totally free in the political sense, one would be capable of deciding political problems himself in lieu of economic ones. This cannot be done, for all freedoms to Ortega are mutually linked together.¹

The good society for man according to Ortega lies in one which allows man the amount of freedom necessary to determine his destiny, while at the same time protecting him from the perils of over obstructing intrusions by the collectivity. By limiting free thought, he wrote, men can be herded together as animals and lose their individuality. In total absorption within the collectivity, man is now allowed to withdraw to his radical solitude. Life loses its value and becomes an animal world. It is essential in any society that man be allowed to retreat

¹Concord and Liberty, p. 28.
into solitude in order to periodically reflect on his situation and regroup his thoughts. The dangerous societies to Ortega are the ones that do not permit this. Society could be a useful tool for men. It is the main instrument he has for reaching his maximum effectiveness. Through its proper functioning, society could provide the outlet for man's fullest potentiality.

1 Man and People, p. 33.
PART II

WHAT MAN HAS BECOME
CHAPTER III

RISE OF HISTORICAL CRISIS

The modern man lives in probably one of the most challenging times ever in human history. Torn between his individual self and his self in society, he is forced, as Ortega sees it, to choose among them to find the happy medium between the two extremes. The result to Ortega is that man in modernity is no longer the basic man he should be. The present era has changed most men into something entirely new, and worse yet, far from better. Ortega felt that the question of what man has become is the most important question facing the modern world. This chapter will describe how modern man has become what he is today, and what according to Ortega caused this change into a new type of human.

Confusion from the Past

Man is the maker of his destiny, and this implies that man must also be concerned with his future. The problem is that the future is always unknown to man; he can speculate about it but never be exact. The only thing to Ortega man can rely upon for assistance in his life is the past. Man can know the exact past, and he does so in
an effort to know better the future.¹ The future is of much importance to man because man’s present situation is the result of the whole human past.²

Just as the generations of one family advance through time, so too do the cultures advance, until a point is reached where, in Ortegean framework, three things may happen. First, the ideas, opinions, and concepts that made up the past culture of the present man become too complex for his understanding. This results in, secondly, the decay in the zeal for the old ideas. The motivating spirit they once held is lost. With the loss of this zeal, thirdly, the society no longer has the organic spontaneity and higher culture it once held. The zest of the old society’s individuals is gone and is replaced by a socialized man, one who Ortega states is not his authentic self.³ This decline in the old ideas results in a feeling of being lost, which Ortega says is followed by despair. To recuperate from this sickness of despair, Ortega feels man reverses all the old values and attempts to start all over again.⁴ The hope of this revaluation effort is that a new light will be shown, brightening the despair and regaining the harmony of the past.

When man lives in a society, he becomes exposed to

that society's tradition. If he is influenced by the tradition, he does not choose his own method of thinking but is forced to use the one imposed on him by the society. Ortega believed that the society received its traditional thinking from the limited scope of its own past. One in society must choose among the past histories in that society to find the possibility for his life. This limitation causes one to change because he continually doubts which possibility is correct. True reason, according to Ortega, is born when one realizes he must make his destiny, but it will be perverted if limited to one scope. Man craves the need to a wide range of possibilities, not to those just limited by his society. If he remains limited, he will choose a belief he feels is correct and become immersed within it, tricking himself as to its adequacy. He will live in the world of his false belief and never in reality itself.¹

One's beliefs and his destiny are vitally linked in the Ortegean conception. Primitive man held the belief that his possibilities barely transcended his material needs. The caveman assumed that what man has to do in his life corresponds to what he does.² As Ortega understands

¹An Interpretation of Universal History, pp. 171-72.
it, prehistoric beliefs were very simple and easily com-
pensated for. As material wealth increased for man, he
wrote, the range of man's possibilities also increased.
Man now had a wider chance for acquisition and possession.
Living became relying on what there was and giving thanks
to God for providing it. Life in itself was not rich.
Richness was left to the economic realm. The ancient man
lived a "life in poverty." Needs existed to the amount of
materials to satisfy them. As civilization advanced, there
became more material available. Lust and luxury began as
the desire arose in man to acquire more than he actually
needed. To Ortega, the abundance of materials opened more
new possibilities to man than ever before. Man thanked
God for creating him in this new and better world. One
no longer resigned himself to mere survival; now one could
live, and live pleasurably. God was worshipped as the One
who made all this possible. He was no longer thanked for
granting mere existence, but now for providing essentials.
Life was just lived with little thought upon how it was
accomplished or how it should be completed. Man was in
the beginning stages of taking things for granted.

As history advanced according to Ortega's inter-
pretation, man, to create a new life, knew change must take
place. It is here that Ortega believes revolutions began

\[^1\text{Ibid.}, \text{pp. 98-99.}\]
and traditions fell. Man was confronted with many new ideas and chose the ones he found most convincing. Life became worth living for its own sake as the world seemed to offer endless possibilities.¹ In the primitive world, God was the source of life. In the age of rationalism, God and man separated due to the enchantment of worldly riches brought on by man's new confidence in himself to succeed.² Man felt that his mind was becoming capable of answering all questions.

A time was reached, though, when pure reason failed to supplement life as a firm belief. According to Ortega, the idealist theory became confused when men did not know how much more they could believe beside their thoughts. The culture of abstract intelligence is not, when compared to the spontaneous life, a further type of life. The previous ages after Descartes did not know how to take idealism to its logical conclusion.³

This digression illustrates the problem conceived by Ortega that men had in the formation of a basic belief. In times when one theory predominated, the transition from one generation to the next was said to be normal. The new generation in dominance generally accepted the preceding generation's concepts and change was done smoothly. The problem occurred when this change was not

¹Ibid., p. 100. ²Ibid., p. 101. ³The Modern Theme, p. 57.
done comfortably; it creates the Ortegean known historical crisis. Ortega feels that modern man is entering this period today. The old convictions of the past generations do not hold relevance to the present generations. Man is confused because he has no firm base on which to support his actions. By not knowing, by having no base, the only thing man can do is return to his radical solitude. Modern man, states Ortega, has lost his way in life and pretends to know what he is doing.\(^1\) Change to man now is threatening because he does not know what to expect from it. His pretensions are only temporary as doubt prevails within the society. Man is lost without orientation.

This negative conviction, this lack of feeling certain about anything important, prevents man from deciding with any precision, energy, confidence or sincere enthusiasm for what he is doing.\(^2\)

Ortega stressed that man must have a conviction to something in order to fulfill his destiny. Modern man, he feels, faces the historical crisis of having no convictions on anything. The beliefs of the past have failed to convince the modern man of today. The change of generations is not being done smoothly, and man is in historical crisis.

\(^1\)Man and Crisis, pp. 85-86.
\(^2\)Ibid., p. 87.
Decline of Beliefs

Before it can be shown why the decline in beliefs is so important to an understanding in Ortegean thought to modern man's dilemma, it would be best to first define exactly what is meant by a belief according to Ortega.

Ortega construed beliefs to be the guide to action in life. He wrote that man is a creature who must act in order to exist. The rock can remain passive and yet still exist, but man is forced into action for his existence. Man has no choice on the matter. Life is a task that must be fulfilled. Before one acts, each man must decide what he is going to do. One does not act instinctively or automatically. A decision has to be made on the type of action to be performed. In order to decide, Ortega stated, the man refers to the structure of his thought, namely his beliefs, for guidance in making the decision. A belief to Ortega is not just an idea; it is a firm base of what one puts his trust in. One's convictions are the basic composition of one's character. In Ortegean thought, they are the starting point of any action.¹ One's basic beliefs are the foundation of any supplementary ideas the one may hold. Ortega makes a strong distinction between a belief and an idea. An idea is the product of reason, something conceived, and something subject to challenge. A belief is such a

¹History as a System, p. 166.
strong conviction that it can not be questioned nor dis­
cussed. It is considered correct and left untested because
of its awesome power in being believed to be absolute
truth.¹ One refers to it but does not investigate it like
an idea. Ortega viewed religion as the concentration of
beliefs. Religion is that unquestionable reality that man
believes with no given contemplation on the doubt of its
concepts.² To question religious beliefs, he wrote, would
mean that one did not hold them as beliefs. According to
Ortega, only one who does not truly believe can question
the beliefs.

Besides individual beliefs, Ortega believed man
faces a conglomerate of collective beliefs which he can
not avoid. The collective belief is socially operative,
whereas the individual belief moved the individual. The
collective belief, wrote Ortega, does not depend upon the
individual's acceptance nor rejection for its existence;
it appears as a physical object independent of man.³ One
may disagree with a collective belief but that disagreement
has no effect upon it. For example, a particular law is a
collective belief, such as adhering to traffic lights.
If the individual dislikes this belief, he still must con­
form to it to function smoothly in the society. The collective

¹Concord and Liberty, pp. 18-19.
²Ibid., p. 22.
³History as a System, pp. 175-76.
belief in obedience to traffic signals is beyond the power of the individual.

Ortega argued that beliefs are essential to man because man must know things. He stated that things do not possess their being on their own accord, but acquire their being when, and only when, man confronts them and attributes them a being; and this only occurs when man is forced to recognize the thing and exist along with it. Man must know what things are so that he can know whether he can rely upon them or not. "Knowing [is] on what I can depend."¹ Once one knows what he can depend on, he can launch his action and remain at peace with his surroundings. Man can adapt himself to what he believes is inevitable. The only thing Ortega said man can not bring himself about to do is this; to live in a state of mind where he is not positive on what he can rely on. This would be a state of total distrust and confusion, and the human mind is incapable of existing in such a circumstance.

In modernity, Ortega believed that science has risen to take the spot as the basic belief of humanity, a belief in the power of man. This new belief in science decreased the belief man once held in God. The decrease in the belief in God heralded the belief in human reason, of which

¹Man and Crisis, p. 108.
is exemplified in science.¹ Ortega describes that the intellectual movement of man proceeded from a point in believing that God was the absolute truth to the conviction man was capable of knowing truth and into the present belief, that truth is to be found in science. Ortega assumes history can thus be seen as a movement from Christianity to humanistic rationalism.² Science has become a faith in the same sense religion was once a faith. Science has become man's basic belief.

In the past, according to Ortega, religious leaders were the dominant social power in the society because they held the most knowledge of basic convictions. As evidence he cites the power of the Middle Ages popes or monarchs who claimed the mandate of heaven. The collective belief was one in religion, and the society's leaders were those nearest God. In a village in the Middle Ages, it was the church that was the center of the community, and the local priest was considered the most respected and knowledgeable person in the town. His words of advice were always heeded, and he was considered the final judge in all moral matters. The people placed more trust into the priest than in any other public figure, and even rulers needed the support of

¹History as a System, p. 174. This rise of science, Ortega feels, is the result of man's achievements beginning in the Renaissance, the starting point and termination of God-centered beliefs in the Middle Ages.

²Man and Crisis, p. 103.
the church to retain their power.

Things are not this way today. To Ortega, the person who exercises social power today is far from being the religious, but now he is the technician. Ortega labels the ultimate technician as the scientist. The scientist is the prototype of the mass-man. (It should be understood that by masses Ortega does not mean the common workers, but means the common stereotype of any age who exercises social power.) Science, proclaims Ortega, is the core of modern civilization. It was originally the tool of man the technician, an accessory which man could utilize to help satisfy his needs. Today, he argues, science has become the center of attraction instead of an assisting device, and it is on the verge of converting man into a primitive all over again. Science was only supposed to make the acquisition of needs easier, but due to its development today, man has made the satisfaction of desire and needs predominant in his life. The reason science has developed into this social monster in Ortega's view is because of specialization. In order for science to progress, he explains, men had to specialize in their work. Aristotle, the father of science, did not specialize at all compared to the work done presently. Science itself is not specialized; it encompasses a wide variety of activities. But the work of science to be

1The Revolt of the Masses, p. 108.
exact must be limited and minutely focused. For example, one of the most proclaimed studies in modern biology is the work of Watson and Crick in their investigation of the DNA model. Their work took years in the formulation of only a small but essential point in discovering the reproduction of a cell. A review of graduate curriculums or doctoral dissertations will also reveal the point Ortega is trying to stress. This author came across a dissertation in Education that extended for over 150 pages on the seating arrangements in one particular grammar school class for the period of six months. The study was trying to correlate seat assignments to the student's class achievement.

Ortega views the result of such an emergence in scientific technicism as changing the old thoughts of justice and truth. He states that justice became equal treatment before the law, and truth became that which was scientifically proven. The problem was that this representation of justice and truth were abstractions that had tried to be manipulated into a concrete matter. Lawyers spoke of justice as a concrete part of the law, as something actually observable and testable, and not as an expression of the spirit. Culture tried to establish itself as the separate and self-sufficient thing one could pledge allegiance to. The culture became an end in itself. All of these concepts, stresses Ortega, were illusory and can

1Ibid., p. 109.
be properly considered as only an illusion.\(^1\) Man was fooling himself by placing his beliefs in these dreams. The superabundant world created from technicism was not necessarily desirable. It produced a degenerate type of man, one, Ortega describes, with the selfishness of a small child, desiring immediate fulfillment of his desires and needs. It created the Ortegean mass-man, who lived in his illusions of the grandeur of himself. The respect for the true intellectual was cast aside, because everyone began to think himself equal to the intellectual.\(^2\) The problem of the times as Ortega sees it is that the illusion that technicism has created is beginning to crack. The belief in this fake reality is being shattered and men again are becoming lost.\(^3\)

Although the rise in modern beliefs is credited to science, the historical crisis now emerging is also due to science. Ortega accuses science of failing to respond to the question "what is man?" Science, once the most revered virtue of man, comes to a complete halt when asked this question. Ortega feels it not only has no knowledge on the topic, but it does not have a method to even accumulate some knowledge dealing with the question. This

\(^1\) Meditations on Quixote, pp. 141-42.
\(^2\) The Revolt of the Masses, p. 100.
\(^3\) Concord and Liberty, p. 20.
failure of science to respond to this question is its fateful shortcoming. ¹ Science, to Ortega, has shown its true face; the mere creation of man that rose to illusory heights of expectations. The idea of technical progress promising man absolute truth in a vague tomorrow has proved to be "a dulling opiate to humanity," ² the pacifier that comforted man as his past beliefs crumbled around him. Man had endowed a great trust in science, but, wrote Ortega, science failed man when it could not give man the answer to his existence. Science, heralded as the new promised redeemer, had shown itself to be an impostor.

The reason Ortega gives that science declined was because of the very thing that had vaulted it to greatness: specialization. In each generation preceding this modern age, he states, scientists had to limit their investigations in order to discover more precise facts. It was essential that the scope of work of the individual researcher be limited, so as to keep from being annoyed by irrelevant tangents. As the scope of work was reduced, the individual scientist progressively lost contact with the other fields of science. He became totally wrapped up into his own study. For example, Newton was once asked how he discovered his famous laws of gravity. His response was that he

¹*History as a System*, p. 178.
²Ibid., p. 182.
concentrated on the subject continually day and night for most of his life. The individual scientist became so involved in his work he not only lost contact within his discipline, he became isolated from his society.¹

Now, Ortega feels, this forced isolation was necessary for the purpose of investigation. The scientist had to systematically limit his work and explore minute parts, leaving the consideration of the rest to others. In this manner, the majority of scientists helped in the advancement of science. The result of this specialization, he cites, created a strange man. The scientist became one who held the knowledge of a small portion of a thing very exact, but this same person knew little outside of this knowledge. He became strictly limited to his field and was naive of anything else. Ortega labels such a character a "learned ignoramus."² The specialization of science had made the scientist a virtual hermit, confined in the boundaries of his discipline, and self-satisfied by his limitations. This type of man could not successfully operate in other sectors of society outside his discipline because he did not know how to behave in them. Specialization had made great progress for humanity, but should not be continued. If the scientist is limited to one sector

¹The Revolt of the Masses, p. 110.
²Ibid., p. 112.
of thought, he is not capable of grasping the knowledge needed to successfully organize man's community. Ortega believes that the knowledge of governing man is the conglomeration of various realms of knowledge; and one who possesses only one of those realms will fail in any governing structure he proposes for he will not have calculated the other realms.¹

The fault of science, as Ortega understands it, in the perennial quest of seeking what man is, is that it tries to reduce man to one definite concept. Human life, he argues, has no definite nature, so science will never be capable of solving the problems of humanity.² Still, this is the fallacy Ortega believes that scientists work under. The economist portrays man as an economic creature; the biologist states man's problems stem from biological needs; the psychologist sees the trouble of the world in respect to mental disorders. All disciplines attempt to limit their scope to provide the final explanation of man, and it is here that they fail.

Science assumed the confidence of man's reason, and when it failed to answer the question of existence, it lost the confidence it once had. Ortega describes the current Christian extremist life as theocentric once again, as in

¹Ibid., p. 114.
²History as a System, p. 186.
ancient times. To this type of Christian, the world again becomes a supernatural other world of little true meaning.\textsuperscript{1} Man does not depend upon the world, and science as the investigator of the world, because it is only a barrier between him and God. Man's thought has progressed, according to Ortega, to the point where now the proposed natural human reality is rejected. It has been replaced by the search for the other reality man feels is there but of which he knows nothing. This other reality is a search for God. The man today has felt that present life is a meaningless existence, a life in nothing. He has focused all his attention on the life beyond this out of desperation. This life beyond is the hope of some meaning that can not be found here.\textsuperscript{2}

Ortega states that the problem with this new search for the life beyond, for the discovery of God, is that it can not be done. Man realizes that it can not be accomplished, so the very hope he has placed in this search is shattered. He wrote that man is now completely lost; man knows that he must search for truth and yet knows that he can not know the truth he seeks. This vicious circle Ortega sees as the point of despair for man. Human life, by its very nature, has to be directed to something. The function of moving toward a goal, of commanding and obeying

\textsuperscript{1}Ibid., pp. 157-58. \hfill \textsuperscript{2}Man and Crisis, p. 162.
is decisive in every society. It is a thing, Ortega stresses, that must be done. Man can not guide his life alone because one's life will become lost if it remains isolated. A command must be made by someone in order to proclaim a direction for man, and not just let existence wander.\(^1\) Man must know what is going on in the world, namely, who is in command and operating society. In the present crisis, men have faith in no one. In Ortegean thought, the rulers of the state are not considered to know any more than anyone else. They are as equally lost and confused as the common man. The authority of the state now appears as a fraud. Its directives have no meaning because the leaders do not know themselves what they are doing.

Ortega views man today living in utter confusion. He does not know where he came from or where he is going. He has lost his destiny and he only has his immediate sufferings and his simple physical satisfactions. The past belief of science molded each man to be filled for a specific specialization. The problem now is that man can seldom find the specific thing he has been trained for.\(^2\) Man's limitations have made him lose his place in the world. Ortega believes man has lost the wide range of possibilities

\(^1\) The Revolt of the Masses, pp. 141-42.

he once had and is incapable of becoming the maker of his destiny. Pessimism has grown among men, blinding them to the greater things in life.\(^1\) No meaning can be found in life, so what is the sense in living and suffering through it.

To Ortega, this rejection of any worth in life is also prevalent regarding the right of government towards men. A government is considered legitimate, he wrote, when the ruler has the consensus of the people to act as a ruling authority. When public opinion issues its public power on a government, that government is legitimate. Ortega likens this feeling to almost a religious acceptance in the ruler.\(^2\) States have risen and fallen due to this intimate feeling of legitimacy. The exercise of public power by a state has always gone through the cycle of first being illegitimate, then becoming legitimate, and finally turning illegitimate again.\(^3\) In the third part of the cycle, revolutions and rebellions start again in the effort to re-establish legitimacy. It would be apparent to Ortega that the world is now entering the third stage. A confusion exists presently regarding the control of the state and the commanding position in worldly political affairs.

\(^1\) Meditations on Quixote, p. 47.

\(^2\) An Interpretation of Universal History, p. 147.

\(^3\) Ibid., p. 198.
There is a world-wide feeling of demoralization. Europeans realize that they no longer control the international affairs, but the two great powers, the United States and the Soviet Union, do not have exclusive domain over these affairs either. Current events have shown that neither is capable of total dominance. In ancient times, people knew Rome to be the center of power. The masses were directed in their lives because they held a staunch belief in the governing of one authority. Today, a feeling of impotency is occurring. The European powers feel that they do not have the capabilities to solve the major international problem themselves, yet they doubt the ability of the super powers to accomplish this either. Ortega felt that governments have lost their prestige, and not because of their defects, but because of the people's belief that they could not actually accomplish anything positive. There now exists a loss of respect for the traditional aims of public life. Men no longer cherish a dream of their nation accomplishing this or that feat, but have resigned to live in a country as passive citizens. He would cite as evidence that people care more for movie stars than for keeping abreast in their state's political affairs. Elections receive minimal support. Politicians

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1 The Revolt of the Masses, pp. 135-39.
2 Ibid., p. 146.
are scorned and considered deceitful. To Ortega, the modern man places his trust in no one, not even himself.

_Emergence of Supplementary Beliefs_

This problem of the decline in beliefs had to be settled. In Ortegean thought, changes in the world occur because as the youth of each generation grow towards dominance, they bring with themselves a variation on the idea of the times. It is due to this variation that the world is continual change upon the departure and arrival of each generation.¹

As has been said, for man to live he must base his life on certain convictions, whether he wishes to do so or not. These convictions form a security for him within the world by summarizing the world into a certain understandable way. These beliefs, according to Ortega, are necessary so that one may direct his life accordingly from them.²

The man who lives in any era has certain beliefs that he formed but these ideas coincide with those of the collective ideas of his time. Man is exposed to his collective ideas and absorbs them into himself; thus feeling that he originated them.³ The collective ideas and the individual ideas mix and fuse together to give one his basic beliefs. Every man is a mixture of these two kinds of thought.

¹_Man and Crisis_, p. 41. ²_Ibid._, p. 34. ³_Ibid._, p. 40.
Now, since one's ideas are both his own and those of the collective, and since the collective ideas originated in the society's past, the source of today's ideas could be found in the past generations. The problem with modern man, as Ortega sees it, is that these basic factors that modern man received, the result of the nineteenth century, have been considered absolute. The system created in the nineteenth century, the belief held in science, have not been properly interpreted by modern man. Modern man, he argues, inherited these factors, but what would have been natural for him to do with them would be to use them to the extent until he could originate his own. Modern man, states Ortega, should have just accepted them as basic factors, let them serve their purpose, and then move on from there. Instead, the modern masses have considered these factors as natural forces of the world. They did not look at them as only creations of the nineteenth century, but considered them as natural, eternal phenomena. The high standard of living created in the nineteenth century, the attitude of infinite human potential to increase materially, all of this, writes Ortega, is considered by the modern masses as a part of nature, and not as the mere creation of a previous creation.¹ The masses are now gullible enough to not see reality as it is. They are accepting the past

¹The Revolt of the Masses, p. 60.
generation without the least bit of questioning as to its exactness.

The masses have now totally accepted what they are told. Ortega believes they have fallen prey to the commonplace, to prejudice, and to conformity. The tragic part of this all, he writes, is that the mass-man thinks he is right and imposes his distorted opinions everywhere.¹ The mass-man now feels that he can explain all things. The result of this arrogance, wrote Ortega, is that he has lost the power to listen to others. Each man of the masses has become his own personal source of all knowledge. The ideas of the masses are not at all genuine, nor is their culture which they created out of this. The masses, argues Ortega, appeal to no higher standards than themselves to decide on what is the basis of their culture. This has resulted what Ortega calls barbarism, an absence of standards to which any appeal can be made. Each man feels he knows the way things are, so there is no need to question further than himself. Special experts do not exist anymore; the mass-man feels himself an expert on everything, be it politics or literature, religion or science.²

The modern state, according to Ortega, is the most outstanding achievement of the past generations. It is the foremost product of the history of civilization. The masses,

¹Ibid., p. 70. ²Ibid., pp. 71-72.
he says, quickly adapted to it because they realized that it safeguarded their existence. The mass-man now feels equal to the power of the state. Ortega states that he has forgotten, as he has forgotten so much, that the state is only a human creation capable of faltering. Instead, man has dedicated himself to the state and has made himself one with the state, a thing impossible to do. To Ortega mass-man saw the modern state as a powerful creation, and thinking himself powerful, has tried to make himself and the state identical. He has tried to do what can not be done. In the process of this union, mass-man has used the state to destroy any non-conforming minorities within society. As the state and mass-man try to become more one, man as a whole loses. Society begins to appear as existing solely for the state. Man is seen as a governmental machine. The state overbears society with its supremacy.\(^1\)

In Ortega's mind, this entire situation is a contradiction to itself. Society created the state in order to advance itself. In the modern age, the state has turned and is using society to advance itself. Society, for Ortega, now lives for the state. People have become the tools of the state, working to support its existence instead of the other way around, the way it was originally created. State operators now cry out slogans of "the

\(^1\)Ibid., pp. 120-21.
people's republic . . . the people's cause . . . the people's action" when all the time they mean the intervention of the state to control all. The people supply and nourish the state in modernity, while the state thrives off the masses. To operate effectively, Ortega believes, direct action and violence are the most common tools of the modern state.¹ State standards have been established that people are supposed to strive for. Those in power no longer refer to precedents of law and order, but determine themselves what the law and order of the society is to be. The state has risen to a creature totally within itself, separate from any question and subject to no foreign control.²

Ortega believes that conformity is the dominant theme in mass society. To insure this, he wrote, the state refers to coercion. The maximum coercion is physical coercion, and society utilizes it whenever there is a deviation from the prescribed usages in the society. Ortega conceives that the usages of mass society become its laws. Customs are weak wages and laws are the strong usages; thus, the breaking of the law is a deviation of societal usage,

¹See Carl Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski, Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972). In part IV of the book, there is an extensive discussion of the use of violence in modern totalitarian states to most effectively accomplish their ends.

²The Revolt of the Masses, pp. 122-23.
punishable by coercion. The social environment exhibits itself as a permanent and universal coercion. One who resides within the social environment must obey its regulations or become a social outcast. Ortega writes that "there is coercion whenever we cannot choose a behavior different from that which is practiced in the collectivity and not suffer punishment for it."\(^1\)

To Ortega, there are two ways of existing in life: to do whatever one feels; or, to restrain immediate impulses and conform to established norms.\(^2\) The mass-man is of the first type, he wrote, unrestrained and a glutton in satisfying his desires. The rise of the historical crisis has unveiled the "satisfied man" of the masses. He is the one who knows that certain things can not be done, and yet Pretends in his words and actions to be convinced that they can. This form of insincerity, to Ortega, keeps the mass-man a tragic joke. He knows that science is not the savior of man, yet thinks that technology is the key to man's happiness. All of the actions of the mass-man are void of the inevitability of his catastrophe. Men live in their own created illusions today because they do not want to seek reality. Man does not have any firm base of beliefs to guide him today, so he Pretends he does not need any beliefs or creates his illusory world of forsaking his

destiny. Ortega fears that the imaginations of the past has been killed, and what is praised now as new and creative is the "rhetoric which hitherto lay hidden in the latrines."¹ Mass-man has created nothing and has done nothing. He pictures himself in any image that he is not even sure of, but nevertheless accepts. To Ortega, mass-man is a fraud of real man.

¹The Revolt of the Masses, p. 106.
CHAPTER IV

MASS-MAN

Ortega contends that mass-man is the holder of a false identity. He has been created out of the past, but he does not recognize that this has happened. Mass-man has fixed himself into living in a world he has not helped to make. This section will deal with the problem of the mass-man in relation to himself, his treatment of others, and his living in society, according to Ortegaan thought.

Relationship of Masses to World and Self

One living today in modern society need not go far to discover the mass-man. The mass-man is everywhere; one can not avoid missing him. Society to Ortega is always the duality between minorities and masses. He defines the minorities as the society's specially qualified people. They are a minority because by definition, they need to be separate from the majority. Mass-man is the majority, the average people. They abound in all segments of society, he wrote, even in areas that were previously reserved to the minority.¹ They have infiltrated into all areas of art and culture, so that it is now impossible to find someplace pure of them.

¹Ibid., p. 13.
The masses' most striking entry has been into modern thought. To Ortega, they have succeeded in destroying the entire system of seeking knowledge. The masses have ignored any definite thought process in finding truth with reality. They have played games with metaphysics and have created a distorted reality. "There can be nothing more contrary to knowing reality than constructing reality."¹ This statement by Ortega sums up the fallacy of mass thinking. Their vision of the world is distorted because they have not allowed reality to show itself. They have conceived a reality independent of actual reality. The philosophies of the past varied to the degree in which their methodology of thinking differed.² Ortega felt past philosophies can still be credited with gaining fragments of truth from their method. Mass-man thinking, he argues, has gained nothing. Instead, it has distorted reality and put a heavier cover over truth.

Ortega feels that the rise of the masses can be attributed to the fact that mass-man inherited past doctrines and now has adopted them for his own. In doing this, each mass-man feels that he alone is the proper authority for speaking on truth. Each person has become a sovereign in himself. This feeling in the masses is a perverted psychological misconception of how true knowledge is to be actually

¹The Idea of Principle in Leibnitz and the Evolution of Deductive Thought, p. 34.
²Ibid., p. 44.
pursued.\textsuperscript{1} The result of this thinking has created the true mass-man: "he is to history what sea-level is to geography."\textsuperscript{2} Ortega believes that man is able to be more, but that fulfillment is not being accomplished today.

The modern man to Ortega finds himself already full of ideas. He considers himself intellectually complete and is content with this. He feels no lack of the outside realm and, due to this attitude, he eventually self-obliterates himself. Ortega calls this attitude of the mass-man who considers himself perfect as "intellectual hermetism."\textsuperscript{3}

The present man feels that he lives in the finest period of man's history. The masses, stresses Ortega, think that the "not yet has succeeded at last."\textsuperscript{4} The era is said to be the epitome of human advancement. Man has reached its goal at last. Man thinks that he is now really free, free in reality. Everything is possible if man desires. Ortega feels that when this attitude prevails, people begin to dig into a rut as nothing new ever happens. Material advancement is commonplace, so that new materials are not really new, but expected. For example, if a new cure is found for cancer, it will not be heralded as a scientific breakthrough or a vast new human achievement. It will be seen as the eventual human occurrence. The masses will have

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1}The Revolt of the Masses, p. 23.
\item \textsuperscript{2}Ibid., p. 24.
\item \textsuperscript{3}Ibid., p. 69.
\item \textsuperscript{4}Ibid., p. 31.
\end{itemize}
wondered what took so long. People will consider it as the natural thing to have a cancer cure, and will not be thankful for its discovery. Ortega believes the only true way to see one's life is from looking out within the inner world, in radical solitude, for traces or signs of decay. Mass-man does not do this. He feels himself presently strong, but he does not know what to do with this strength. He is proud of his strength, yet he also fears its potential if he can not control it. Mass-man does not know his destiny.

Ortega feels that life is a variety of movements, each distinct in themselves, that have to be operated on individually. Any distinct incident in a person's life was not determined by a previous incident; it was decided by that individual at that specific moment. Ortega deduced that the history of humanity is also like this; each historical incident was the choice of the people who made up that incident, not the result of a chain of planned experiences determining that incident.¹ The problem with mass-man is that he is irresponsible. When one acts, he has the choice of many possibilities, but it is his obligation to choose the correct one and be responsible for his act. The mass-man, to Ortega, is a primitive in the sense that he is irresponsible. Mass-man lives in a civilized world but acts

¹Ibid., p. 78.
as a primitive. The civilization to him is like a vast, lush jungle, and the technicism that bounds in civilization is the fruit to be picked when mass-man has the craving of his desires. It disgusts Ortega that mass-man's actions are irresponsible, for he thinks of no one but himself.

Civilization, to him, is a natural force to be exploited. The animal does not care for others; it uses its environment only to fulfill its needs and this feeling to do this comes to the animal naturally. The mass-man has made himself natural to civilization. Ortega sees him acting as an animal in civilization, negligent to the civilization's survival. The animal just expects his environment to flourish in independence from it, of its own power. This is the way mass-man lives with his civilization. Ortega believes that mass-man feels that his technology will survive independent of him, and that it will be his source of nourishment and life.¹

Man's progressive feeling of retrogression, barbarism and decadence is attributable, according to Ortega, to this feeling of the masses that everything is possible. Life has become unprogressive and unsubmitive. It is a mere floating existence of one day to another. Ortega argues that the man who truly realizes what his life is knows that it is not exactly certain of what will happen tomorrow.

¹Ibid., pp. 81-83.
He knows life does not follow a simple pattern, as described by mass-sociologists. This knowledge makes one insecure, yet gives one the desire to make his own life. To Ortega, it forces one into action, to break from the mass floatation into active existence.¹

For one to live means that one is obligated to decide for himself. As was stated earlier, Ortega adhered to the idea that one must be the maker of his destiny. What actually is the final decider in an option is one's character. This role of the individual holds equally valid for the collective life. The society, he wrote, must make itself, not let itself ride on past laurels. By deciding itself, the group has a multitude of possibilities, and its decisions will make the collective existence. As with the individual, the determining factor will be the character of the society, namely the character of the type of men who dominate the particular society. The tragedy today is that the mass-man dominates modern society.²

The domination of society by the masses leaves society with no destiny. Ortega feels that the mass-man has no purpose and simply drifts along. When the mass-dominated government is forced to justify itself, it does not say that it is the holder or guidance to the society's destiny; it

¹Ibid., p. 48. ²Ibid., p. 49.
claims that it was just the product of necessity. Its job is not to be the harbinger of the society's greatness, but it functions to stabilize the society and preserve the status quo. Presently, the system of values by which activity was regulated has lost its convincing character to men. Modern man, to Ortega, lives in radical disorientation because he no longer knows by what standards to guide his life. He flounders in his existence as a fly in water, barely swimming and going nowhere.

Ortega cites the decline of the novel as evident of this dull, unimaginative mass-man. The novel as a form of literature has seen progressive decay to Ortega due to the lack of new material and the problem of impressing the modern reader. Modern novelists have tried to create a new form from the standard type novel, but in so doing have destroyed much of the novel's finer points. For instance, characters are now overtly defined instead of allowing the reader to figure them out himself, as was done in past novels. The novel should not attempt to be more than a novel. Due to the mass attitude of know-it-all, Ortega states that the modern novelist has tried to impregnate his work with political and social comment. This habitually fails to have any effect because the novelist's political or social opinions rarely attain any true significance to

1 Ibid., p. 49. 2 The Modern Theme, p. 79.
politicians or sociologists. They only detract from any positive elements within the novel.¹

This is the bleak atmosphere mass-man has produced in Ortega's perspective. It is a stagnant life, unfulfilling in its destiny. The mass-man accepts civilization as a natural part of the world. He feels no compulsion to seek deep into the faulty beliefs that abound around him. He has become a primitive, content to gluttonize himself off of civilization with no responsibility for his actions. He demands from society and offers nothing in return.

**Mass-Man and Others**

Now that it has been stated what this mass-man has become, it could easily be surmised that his relations with the Other are not of the typical kind experienced between normal human beings. If one recalls, it was rationalism, as has been stated, that introduced to man the idea that he should resort to his own reason, and his individual reason alone, to solve the problems he confronts. The downfall of rationalism according to Ortega was due to the fact that it expected too much from man. Ortega contends that man was not capable of solving all problems by the exclusive use of his own reason. The tool of rationalism had been science, and it proved to be inadequate in solving some of man's basic questions. The result of this inadequacy of rationalism

¹ "Notes on the Novel," The Dehumanization of Art, pp. 55, 86-87.
is that man abandoned it, but when he did, he had nothing to take its place and became lost. This, Ortega states, is the state he is in today, one of being lost and not knowing in which way to turn. Due to no firm base of beliefs, man does not know how to choose. He fears to make a choice because he has nothing to base his choice on. Man can no longer be the maker of his destiny. Ortega sees that his only alternative from this predicament would be to have someone make his destiny for him. Man eventually sought the security of a protectorate who would choose for man, one who would guide him and tell him what to do. To Ortega, mass-man offered himself up as a slave rather than meet the challenge of determining his own life. It is for this reason that Ortega argues the ruler of the state yields so much power today. The masses simply surrendered this power unto him.

Ortega wrote that mass-man is afraid of culture and society. They demand that he make a choice in regard to his actions, and mass-man does not want to make any choices. In his fear to make a choice in society within the guidelines and rules of society, continues Ortega, mass-man took the attitude that it was not his indecision that failed him, but it was the dictates of society that were wrong. Mass-man, through his own condition, had despaired against

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1 "Epilogue on the Mental Attitude of Disillusions," The Modern Theme, pp. 133-34.
society, and in his despair he ridiculed culture, laws, and societal norms as foolish and inadequate. He called for their abolition because he saw no purpose in them. Since he viewed society as just a natural phenomena, just something that always existed, he scoffed at society's guidelines because he could not abide by them. Mass-man, concluded Ortega, felt satisfied by this declaration against society, as if he had actually triumphed over something. He felt culture had too severely limited him, and that his declaration against it was the expression of his escape from them.

Ortega defines civilization as a will to live in common among people. Its opposite is barbarism, a tendency to live in disassociation. Liberalism is the principle of allowing a minority to live within society with the majority. The mass-man, hating all cultural standards, has created his own standards on how civilization should be. Since he can not discipline himself, Ortega states, the mass-man can not accept the standards of a minority that may differ than his and expect a certain type of behavior from him. The mass-man demands adherence to his standards; he can not tolerate nonconformity because it is an expression of his weakness. The masses hate all that is not of the masses. Thus, deduces Ortega, it can be seen how truly

\[1\text{Man and Crisis, p. 148.}\]
barbaric the masses have become.\textsuperscript{1} Everyone must be like them, liberalism is totally condemned, and conformity is commanded. Nonconformity is distorted by the mass-man to appear as subversion, the "lunatic fringe," or criminal elements. Ortega criticizes the mass-man when he does not support these labels he applies to minorities because mass-man feels no need to justify them to anyone. Another person of the masses will automatically agree with the labels, while one who questions must be one of those whom the label applies to. Ortega contends that it is a foolish escapade arguing with the mass-man, because he defies reason. Reason, to him, is within him and nothing more. The minority wishes to be separate from the mass-mind. The two life styles to Ortega are not compatible. The minority, by Ortega's definition, is composed of individualists in the true sense of the word. They are people who make their own destiny. The masses have no value on life or on themselves. They wish to feel like everybody else and are content to be like that. They are true conformists.\textsuperscript{2} The best distinction Ortega sees between the two types is that: the minority puts demands upon themselves; the masses have no demands on their life.

This lack of tolerance by the masses poses a fundamental problem according to Ortega to modern society. Two

\textsuperscript{1}The Revolt of the Masses, pp. 74-75.

\textsuperscript{2}Ibid., pp. 14-15.
groups with basically divergent beliefs can not coexist in one society. Both sides will not give in to the other because they feel that it will be a weakening of their position. There can also be no concessions made by either side because there would be no justifications for either group to do so. Ortega states that communication can only exist when the two parties can find common ground to discuss on. This will at least serve as a starting point. From a shared starting point, he felt, both parties can find some supporting reasons to debate with the other. When there are no common principles between the parties, there can be nothing else but disagreement. In a society, it is impossible for two groups who share dissenting views to coexist. Ortega believed that conflict will inevitably occur and the state will crumble.\(^1\) This is precisely the situation that the minority finds itself in today with regard to the masses. The minority problem is that they do not have much of an alternative in dealing with the masses. Open conflict would be their suicide. Yet, existence with the masses is an exhibition of their disgusting behavior. The masses have purged the fields of the minority and continue to do so.

To support his claim, Ortega says that art is an example of the masses acting within a field they know nothing about. The artistic style of romanticism was very

\(^1\)Concord and Liberty, p. 16.
popular with the masses to whom the old classical style of art never appealed. Romanticism became the prototype to the popular modern style. The truly stylistic modern art has been rejected by the masses. The rise of true modern art divides people into two Ortegean classes: those who enjoy it and those who reject it. It is not that the masses realistically dislike the new modern art, writes Ortega, but it is that they fail to understand it. The masses cling faithfully to the definite aesthetic norms and are disgusted by the new artistic values that modern art presents to them. When one does not understand something, he says, there should be action taken to see its real meaning. If one dislikes a piece of art but understands it, that critic feels superior to the work. One who dislikes an art work but does not understand it feels inferior to the work, and thereby insulted. This is the feeling Ortega realizes the mass-man holds. Mass-man feels inferior to modern art, and as is all his behavior whenever he is in a situation like this, this inferiority must be counterbalanced by a response of indignant self-assertion. The masses are so accustomed to ruling supreme that the new art, which is a product of an appreciatable minority, is considered an insult from the minority and a threat to the rights of the masses.\footnote{Ortega expresses the notion that}

\footnote{The Dehumanization of Art, pp. 4-6.}
the masses act as if a vital secret was being denied them, as if the minority was enjoying something they did not have access to. This, to Ortega, is the typical mass response to a situation perplexing them, and it is due to their failure to try and think it out.

Ortega believes that the mass-man is a creature of a voracious appetite and no taste; hence, he will devour that which comes easiest to him. Mass-man believes he has only rights and no obligations. Ortega states that the mass-man has no true identity to himself and is always open to play whatever role he deems suitable for his situation.\(^1\) This continual role-playing has given birth to what Ortega calls "the gentleman type." This is a character who displays the preconditioned social behavior in the corresponding social situation. The gentleman type lives one big game, never a realistic life. It is a life of leisure, for he never struggles with his environment, but simply seeks its easy paths. Through the accumulation of wealth, his primary goal in life, the gentleman can deter the labor in life to machines or other men. Politics is just another setting for the gentleman game. The importance of life to the gentleman type is to be sure to do the appropriate thing at the proper time. Life is nothing more than acting in the standard, prescribed procedure. Intellectual affairs

\(^1\)History as a System, p. 56.
do not matter, because they serve no purpose in the gentleman's role. Appearance and preoccupation with the center of the group are the trademarks of the gentleman. It is the group that supports him, so at all times he must remain the center of attraction, promoting the proper image.¹

The mass-man has little dignity, which is just one of many human traits Ortega feels that he lacks. When Ortega is judging the domesticated animal zoologically, it is a degenerate beast as is the mass-man. In domestication, the animal loses its instincts. It becomes docile and tame where it once was wild and cunning. The domestic animal becomes humanized as it becomes deanimalized. The domestic animal reaches a state where it is nothing more than a tool of man.² The mass-man, to Ortega, is similar to the domestic animal. His whole life centers around the commands of its master, the state. Ortega argues that the mass-man is trained specifically for service to the state, and this is all he knows. If he is released to go back to society in another facet, he is lost, like the animal returned to the wilds. Both are unsure of what should be their natural environment. The only security both the mass-man and the domestic animal have is under the wings of their master. Without him, they are completely lost and will soon perish.

¹Ibid., pp. 129-32.
²Meditations on Hunting, p. 92.
Masses Imposition on Society

The life of a man is best lived when the common needs of life are no longer a pressure on him to fulfill. Ortega believes it is best when man cares for himself without an excessive agony in doing it. If the task of mere survival becomes overwhelming, man will be forced to focus his entire life at survival. This is similar to the life of a wild animal, in an Ortegaean example, who does nothing else but fight for his survival. In a life of mere survivals there is no time for reflection, for inner contemplation. One must have the correct attitude regarding physical needs and work. Ortega defines this proper attitude as sport. In sport, work is that which is free and is the hearty impulse of one's vital potential. It is not the doldrum existence of mechanized labor, for the quality of the effort made in the interest of sport is always the best. One's life finds its own powers more interesting and valuable than those of the past, and in this manner, advancement is made. Life in sport to Ortega creates its own importance.¹ Work by Ortegaean definition is the act of accomplishing some feat that could not be done if the worker did not exert pressure on it. Work is always the activation of the person to do something. Things do not happen by themselves, and man must work to survive. The work of

¹The Modern Theme, p. 83.
man is of two types; that which he enjoys doing and that which he loathes. Both are essential to the individual, for their result will be something that man deems it necessary to work for. Sport is merely the name of work man enjoys doing. Man wishes to do sport, but tries to ignore that work which he despises.

Sport, states Ortega, requires a prethought plan of action in the individual. He bases his action after having decided what he wishes to accomplish, and how it is best for him to accomplish. The difference Ortega sees between this normal man and the mass-man, is that the mass-man does not conceive of such a thing as sport. To the mass-man, all work is undesirable work, and anything that may attract him but that requires action on his part is to be avoided. There is nothing to the mass-man that requires additional effort beyond basic necessities that could be desirable. The effort needed to create art, literature or any expression of one's intellect is considered worthless to the mass-man, because they do not serve any primary physical need. There is work that must be done, and tediously and meticulously done, beyond the range of material satisfaction. As Ortega understands the mass-man, he can see no keen worth in endeavoring into such kinds of activities. The spare time of the mass-man is spent on over consumption of material items, instead of any productive activity. If
work can not produce material benefits, the mass-man rejects it.

This prevailing idea of the masses Ortega sees as typical of their mentality. It is a very superficial notion, one which did not emerge from any great degree of thought. Ortega feels that the absurdity of the masses is that they feel they have a distinct right to an opinion on any subject without any further contemplation on their past. They are perfectly content to voice absurdities, which they call true opinions, and feel no regret that these statements were never thought out. This attitude that they have an undeniable right to their false opinions is frequently exhibited in the mass movements (unions, parties, etc.). The leaders of mass movements do not cite evidence or give reasons for their demands and statements, because they feel they are right. They simply impose their opinions on society and do not even care if they are refuted. Ortega acknowledges that the mass-man has ideas in his possession, but he feels that the mass-man lacks the power to justify these ideas. It is for this reason that the masses will just espouse them at will and demand that they are truth. Mass ideas are nothing more than one's hunch, one's first impression or feeling on a subject, but mass-man believes in himself to such an extent that he thinks it is truth.

1The Revolt of the Masses, p. 68.
2Ibid., p. 73.
He feels his reason is infallible, so that no matter what he thinks will always be correct, even if he himself does not know the reason why he thinks that way.

Ortega regretfully states that it is this type of person, the mass-man, who rules modern society. It is precisely this type, who by definition as a mass-man, should not and can not even direct his own life; it is he who is now running society. In the past, the qualified minorities cared for the tasks of insuring the proper functioning of society. Minorities, trained in organization and capable as heads of government, controlled societies and cared for the masses' security. This provided a very healthy atmosphere in the society. Ortega contends that the masses in the past knew they were not qualified to handle the affairs of the state and they did not intervene. Past society, according to Ortega, ran very smoothly due to this proper arrangement of the minority and the masses. In the modern era, the masses demand their active participation in the control of the state. The masses now wish to interfere in positions of which only a select few qualify. The very reason the masses wish to interfere, states Ortega, is not because they feel they are better qualified than the minorities who used to govern, but the masses seek the pleasures that the minority had while they were governing. The

1Ibid., p. 11.
minority, Ortega argues, being better qualified than the mass-man, was better qualified due to their higher education, wider experience and self-discipline. These factors helped in their procurement of pleasures which the mass-man, who lacked this, could not attain. The mass-man now wishes to have these same pleasures without the qualifications needed for their attainment. He erroneously assumes that if he becomes the holder of state power, he will automatically receive the pleasures of the minority.\(^1\)

There can be no justification for the mass acquisition of activities of the minority simply for pursuit of pleasures. The way the masses have accomplished this change in power to Ortega is through perverting democracy. They have created what Ortega calls "hyperdemocracy."\(^2\) Through democracy, they have imposed their opinions on all segments of society. They have demanded conformity and exalted the commonplace. They believe that by putting their mass leaders in power positions, the pleasures of the minority will now be extended to them. They falsely believe, contends Ortega, that they have finally conquered prejudice, when they are the most prejudiced by their effort to annihilate the minority. Their vision is total materialism for all. It is through democracy, the direct

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 16. \(^2\)Ibid., pp. 17-18.
action of the vote, that they feel they can triumph over the laws of history.

Ortega has bluntly rejected this goal of the masses for material equality and bliss. He feels that the masses have not realistically considered what they are doing, and yet, how could they? If they did truly understand the perverted society they were creating, they would no longer be the mass-men that they are. The horror of the times to Ortega is that the masses are now performing activities that previously only the minority did because they were the only ones qualified for the task. The masses, he says, have failed even worse because they do not listen to the advice of minority people who try to guide them.\(^1\) It is a characteristic of the masses to be deaf to all voices except their own individual one which they consider infallible. The masses, due to their blatant irresponsibility, care for no one but themselves.

The masses have infiltrated to all segments of society. Ortega believes that their worst and most painful intrusion has been in politics. The masses have sought for "total politicalism, the absorption of everything and of the entire man by politics."\(^2\) Politics for the mass-man will replace everything. The mass-man, wrote Ortega,

\(^1\) *The Revolt of the Masses*, pp. 21-22.

\(^2\) *History as a System*, pp. 71-72.
feels that it will be the replacement for knowledge, religion and wisdom. Men will be drawn away from their solitude and intimacy into the confines of the political circle. Politics is the ultimate socializing tool, the instrument to bring all under conformity. The question of what man is will be replaced by what party does one belong to. Individualism will be forsaken for group action, the ultimate of this seen in the party. Ortega foresees that the party will be one's guiding light, and one's destiny will be to obey it. Individualism will be scorned since it will be assumed that the group is the only meaning.

Ortega believed that a nation is great in history only to the extent of the character of the average man who make up that particular nation. A country may have some extraordinary individuals within it, he wrote, but the nation will still appear vulgar if the average people are ungenteeel. It is the quality and stamina of any country's average man that will make that country great. Ortega thought individual great men will serve as models to the people, but they alone will not make a country great. If the people of a country follow the example of its great men, the country will enrich itself.¹ The trouble with the masses is that they do not care about any individual greatness. To Ortega, their concern is for all to be the same;

¹On Love, p. 124.
thus, their model is conformity. Ortega argued that a great man can only become so if he goes off on his own, if he is individualistic. The mass society suppresses individualism and demands conformity. It is for this reason that the mass society can never actually hope to be anything. It stifles what creative spirit it may produce. It is the rule of conformity, the tone of docile existence.

The most alarming fact to Ortega of this rule of the masses is that it is void of any morality. The conformity is conforming to no morality. It is not that mass-man has left a past morality; he had none to begin with. Ortega feels that there is not a place in modern society one could go to find an emerging moral code. In his eyes, it simply does not exist. The so-called new morality is nothing. Man does not know the meaning of morality any more. Mass-man has shunned all his obligations and responsibilities. The rising generation of youth show no signs of recovery.¹ Ortega regretfully predicted a dismal future awaiting men when the masses continue their rule, a rule of amorality, irresponsibility and no obligations.²

¹The Revolt of the Masses, p. 187.
ATTEMPTS TO END THE HISTORICAL CRISIS

The beliefs of past generations proved themselves to be unacceptable to the modern man. Ortega contends that every society needs basic beliefs on which to guide itself and to justify itself. There are no basic beliefs for modern society, and this resulted in the historical crisis. Men were lost in the world and did not know what to make of their lives. Men had placed great faith into science, but science proved to be inadequate. Science could provide answers for man's simple questions, but it was useless in answering any of man's perennial queries. The emergence of this modern dilemma produced the mass-man, a human creature with no true direction in his life. Mass-man sought something to grasp onto for his basic beliefs. This section will deal with the effort modern man fabricated to alleviate the situation of unsubstantial beliefs.

Reflex to False Beliefs

While modern man groped about for some basic beliefs, he remained tied to the society. Man never went into complete isolation from other people. There are many times, though, when the individual may act in an antisocial manner. In these temporary outbreaks, the person
wishes to remove himself from all of society into his own world. To cite an example, the main character of Richard Wright's excellent novel, *Native Son*, often wishes that he could "erase" people out of his world. Bigger Thomas, the center of the story, is constantly frustrated by his fellow men, and in moments of anger, wishes to become the only person on earth, thus relieving his frustrations. After the anger subsides, Bigger Thomas again returns to the social sphere. It always draws him back to begin over again his human relations.

Man is social, to Ortega, even though he is unsociable. A particular individual's sociality or belonging to a specific society does not depend on his sociability. Ortega believed that the real character makeup of an individual is formed by the society he belongs to. Bigger Thomas, as Wright reveals in the story, was the eventual product of his society. The man did have the opportunity to act in a different manner than he did, like his friends, but his society affected him in such a way that he felt he had no choice in the way he acted. To Ortega, all men behave according to the way society presents itself to them. One may see other opportunities for another person, but one is not viewing the society from that person's perspective. Man is free from the society if he desires to totally leave

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1*Man and People*, p. 251.
it, but if he leaves it he will have to forsake what good society has to offer. Ortega deduces that it is for this reason that men remain social.

The origin of the modern society to Ortega is similar to that of the social contract. It begins with diverse groups who decide that it is for their best interests to live in common instead of remaining separate. By living in common, the groups will acquire more human potential to find solutions to the burden of work for physical necessities. It is only logical that two can do the same job better than one can, he wrote, and this idea was one of the reasons groups joined in common society. This uniting of people in common had nothing to do with the proximity between different groups or their ethnic background. To Ortega, the unity came about by the sheer will of the groups involved to join together. It is because of this reason, namely that nothing material bound the original society together, that the society has no boundaries; it is potentially limitless in its growth.\(^1\) The reason that modern society continues to exist, though, is that each generation simply continued its existence for no real reason. Each society has succeeded itself for the reason that no one generation has ended it.\(^2\) Ortega never states so

\(^1\) *The Revolt of the Masses*, p. 162.

\(^2\) Ibid., p. 165.
directly, but he seems to imply that past civilizations, such as those found in Central America or Timbuktu collapsed and disintegrated because the people in them decided to let them collapse. Whatever need it had served for its past generations, it did not furnish that same need for the final generation; so, the civilization was abandoned. Due to the evidence that much of these past civilizations have their ruins intact, it suggests that their abandonment was probably not due to vast destruction of the cities. The American "ghost towns" are a contemporary example of human centers that served their purpose and were then abandoned.

The proper role for the state as Ortega argues is to prepare and guide its people for the future. Life is always a preoccupation with the future. Man does not live for the past or the present, but for his future. The state, being the tool of man, directs its existence to the future. To Ortega, this is obvious when one looks at the operation of any country's army. The army is always preparing for future defense. It has no other purpose but the possible enactment of its forces for a future crisis.¹

For a group to join in common to form a society, continues Ortega, it must have had some future goal in mind for this formation. Therefore, before a state can

¹Ibid., p. 172.
rely on a common past, it must of had a common existence. There had to be some preconceived notion among the state's founding fathers for the reason of creating the state. This means that the state was not a natural thing, but a contrived plan for some future purpose.¹ This future plan for the state, he wrote, developed specifically different for each new generation in that state.

As time progressed, the state set up guidelines of behavior to be followed by the residents of society. Known as laws, Ortega feels they were made because men could not trust the independent behavior and thinking of other men. Laws set up an established behavior that enabled all men in the society to know how the other one would act in a certain situation. Laws eliminated the possibilities of human action to one specific choice. No one was exempt from the power of a law. The power of the rulers was subject to the limits of the law, so that the true sovereign of the state was the law. Everything had to be within the confines of the law. Ortega states that this feeling towards the law carried on throughout history up to the present time. Modern man does not really care who rules in the state, only that the ruler regulate his power within the boundaries of the law.² To Ortega, politics does not play the essential function in human affairs as many believe.

¹Ibid., p. 175. ²Concord and Liberty, pp. 29-31.
politics is something that man finds available for him to do. Politics is the situations man finds himself in, and the actions he does in those situations.¹

Now to summarize what all this means for Ortega's conception of the mass-man. The mass-man had gone searching for beliefs on which he could guide his destiny. The first failure he met, states Ortega, was with science. Science is still very essential for the mass-man as the ultimate provider, but it did not suffice for the core of his basic beliefs. He needed something more substantial to answer the question of what he is. Ortega said that in turning to religion, mass-man found a temporary satisfaction, but then realized that he was not the true maker of his destiny; God was. This, Ortega continues, discouraged him so that he turned to accept fate as being the final explanation for all that he could not understand. In keeping this as his fundamental belief, mass-man came to see that this solution led him to doubt more of his reason than ever. Ortega wrote that if everything was subject to fate, then any pre-thought plan for one's destiny was mere speculation. The only way to live life in this belief was to take each day as it came and see what would happen. Mass-man seemed to be finally stumped as to what he was, when it occurred to him that what he had really

¹The Revolt of the Masses, p. 158.
been searching for was right before his eyes.

Ortega concludes that mass-man, seeing himself surrounded by other men, assumed that his life must be a social life. This idea came about, as always, from his failure to investigate a situation to its roots. Nevertheless, since he saw that his life consisted of life with many people, he considered it natural for him to be with people. He believed society to be a natural phenomena, as natural as the air and earth, and thus saw his destiny to be the destiny of his society. Since he held the notion that all men are equally qualified to do anything, it would be simple cognition that all men are capable of directing the society's destiny. The method to control the destiny of society would be to operate its controls, namely to be the ruler of the state. Thus, to Ortega, the mass-man linked himself to the state as equals. Anyone who did not understand the proper functioning of the state, or who disagreed on who should be the rulers of the state, was obviously trying to impede the state's destiny. Therefore, everyone must work in society for the proper destiny of the state. Any deviations, or nonconformity, will hinder the progress of all of the society.

It is with this manner of thinking that Ortega feels mass-man has demanded that he rule society today. He thinks he has found his true purpose in life in the state, and imposes his will upon all segments of society. Ortega states
that under the banners of patriotism or nationalism, he calls for the united effort of all in society to work for the state. Individualism can not be quietly tolerated, for it is subversive to the mass dream. The mass-man does not know what this goal or destiny of the state is, but he is willing to follow it. For him, the social life is the only life, because it is within the social, the collective, that the state operates. The laws of the state offer positive directives for the mass-man's behavior, relieving him of the problem of deciding for himself what he should do. Laws and social norms tell one how to act in any situation. In Ortegean concepts, the mass-man thinks the state is the expression of his true self.

This is why Ortega believes the mass-man is doomed to failure. The state is not the natural thing he supposes it to be. The state is the result of people making the state. People, through their imagination, originated the state and it will only be people who continue the state. The state is not just existing by itself, and if mass-man continues to think that the state will survive regardless of what he does, he is grossly mistaken. The state exists only to the degree that people wish the state to exist. Positive action must be done in regard to it; it can not exist by itself.

1Ibid., pp. 154-55.
Failure of Past Minority

Ortega criticizes the ruling minority of the past generations for not doing a sufficient job in stopping the onslaught of the masses. They can be equally blamed for succumbing to the masses in the mass quest for power. Ortega wrote that society always has its special minority, its "aristocracy," for it to truly be a society. A society can not be a society, to Ortega, without an aristocracy. This elite group is not the social elites, such as the debutantes and their families, but the intellectual elite, literally, the brains of the society. It is not necessary for the state to have within its midst an aristocracy, but if the society wishes to have any resemblance to what a society should be, Ortega stresses that it is essential that the aristocracy exist.¹ This aristocracy is not comprised of merely the elite men of the society. The women of the aristocracy are of equal importance for its success.

Ortega wrote that the "political institutions depend in no small measure upon the predominant type of woman" in the society.² Both the aristocratic men and women must coincide for the society to survive. These are complementary traits.

The decline in the aristocratic intellectual can be compared, states Ortega, with the decline in reasoning over the ages. Man, as has been stated, began to lack confidence

¹Ibid., p. 20. ²On Love, p. 127.
in the reason of the human mind. Ideas presented themselves to the individual, but he did not know what purpose they served for him. The intellectual was faced with many possibilities, and he found it exceedingly difficult to choose among them.¹ As his confidence in himself faltered, it appeared in his work.

Ortega contends that all areas that the masses have entered have been encouraged by the failure of the minorities to remain competent in their work. He cites that the decline in the intellectual's faith in his reason weakened the universities. The modern university, faced with the problem of the times, could not provide the standard support for the society because it felt itself too weak for the challenge. Modern schools tried to provide students with the kind of education it could not teach, and it required its students to be a caliber that they were not. Education was not done realistically, he wrote, and when it failed to meet its impossible standards, the schools became demoralized and felt they had failed. The modern university taught what ought to be, the Utopian dream, and it functioned on this same principle, the abstraction of what a perfect school should be. The university should only teach what can be taught, that which can be known to the student, not the utopianism it now deals in.² Ortega

¹"Notes on Thinking," Concord and Liberty, p. 58.
²The Mission of the University, p. 45.
feels that the universities failed because they did not live up to their own false expectations. This striving for false goals created an entire inadequate, illusory educational system. When some educators realized their mistake, he states, they did not know what to do about it. They had limited their possibilities to only the realm of an impossible dream, and when it failed to materialize, they had no alternate course of action. They were lost without beliefs as were the masses who looked to the educators for guidance. This failure of the universities Ortega believes was yet another death blow to the minority in staving off the masses.

The final cause Ortega gives for the deterioration of the role of the minority to the masses is due to the increased technology of the world. All men are born into a specific circumstance not of their choosing. This situation may demand a more intolerable survival than another, but man can not pick where he is to be born. Every man's life is survival in his environment. Man must take what is available to him in his situation and survive with these materials. The aristocrat, says Ortega, has always been born into a situation above that of his peers in the society. The common man always had slightly less, at best, than the aristocratic rulers. The increase in advanced

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1The Mission of the University, p. 45.
technology helped make the life of the aristocrat as well. To Ortega, the modern aristocrat was born into a situation where survival was hardly even a minimal effort on his behalf. He lived in an abundance of resources, and because of this, life was no struggle for him. There was nothing for the aristocrat to strive for, because all was available to him. Life was no challenge to him. The aristocrat was like an expensive pet; all was provided for him and all he had to do was live among his materials.

This overabundance, concluded Ortega, for the aristocrat caused him to degenerate. His life without any struggle was no longer a true life. There was no chance to make his destiny, to become anything, because he had everything. For example, the pitiful ignorance displayed by the final czar of Russia indicates that his life was meaningless because he knew nothing of reality. He lived in his own illusory world, surrounded by luxuries, and failed to realize the struggle of true life. When he was eventually faced with a challenge, he did not know how to respond to it. His life was such an utter simplicity that he could not make anything of it. The masses who looked to the aristocrats for knowledge and guidance found that they knew nothing. The past aristocrats held no notions of real life, due to their birth into super abundance. The masses inevitably became disenchanted and deserted them, deciding to

1The Revolt of the Masses, p. 99.
take affairs into their own power.

**Outcome of Historical Crisis**

Ortega believes that the masses are now resolved that they will have to find their own way in the world by themselves. The past beliefs of generations have failed them, and so has the old ruling aristocracy. The rosy picture science portrayed of the future has crumbled; mass-man, having lost faith in the future, turns his head ultimately to the past. Ortega wrote that instead of trying to solve the future critical problems confronting civilization, mass-man yearns for the security of the past. The past offers seemingly reachable pleasures, simply because they have already been done. Mass-man feels that the past security is something secure he can become a part of.¹ Instead of the natural progression of society, Ortega knows mass-man will lead society in regression.

To insure the success of this drive into the past, all of society must cooperate. Since the state is the main organizer of the society, those who cooperate with it and are loyal to the state are called patriotic. Patriotism is expounded as helping the state advance and achieve, when in reality, states Ortega, it is conformity. To Ortega, something is not patriotic merely because the state condones it. He believed the ways of the past are guides

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¹ *Man and Crisis*, p. 215.
to enable man not to make future blunders, not goals to be strived for.¹ Mass-man is confused when he does all of these things, yet, he does not know what else to do.

It is easy for Ortega to see how a dictatorship soon emerges out of mass-man's control. In ancient civilizations, when a time of crisis appeared, the people flocked to the allegiance of the single man who promised to deliver the society from their predicament. As the people joined this leader and followed him, all those who hesitated or rejected his plan were called traitors. The people had no beliefs to guide them but the one belief they held in the faith of this leader. He was the only guidance that could be seen. The masses swarm to the new leader in blind devotion. They have nothing to put their faith in, so they entrust it all into this one central figure.

This leader, who becomes head of state, unites the masses and the state into one. As was shown before, this results in the collectivity becoming the goal of the mass-man's life. He surrenders all his freedoms to it in return for the guidance and security he feels it offers. Ortega predicted that the eventual outcome of the historical crisis is the power of the state. With the masses in control, only the masses can have any worth or value in this illusory society. Ortega feels society will remain in the

¹Meditations on Quixote, pp. 106-7.
guidance of one mass-leader until he fails, and then he
will be replaced by another mass-leader echoing primarily
the same illusions that his deposed prior leader promised.

The rule of the mass-man stagnates human society.
To Ortega, instead of continuing evolution, the mass-man
allows the rest of the animal kingdom to catch up to *homo
sapiens*.¹

¹Some thinkers have misleadingly labelled Ortega's
polemic of the masses as corresponding to conservative
political thought in the tradition of Burke. (For example,
see Peter Viereck, *Conservatism* (New York: D. Van Nostrand
thought with conservative thought was done by Edward Burns
in his book, *Ideas in Conflict* (New York: W. W. Norton and
Co., Inc., 1960), pp. 341-44, but Burns does not dwell
depth enough into Ortega's thinking to see that he is not an
adherent of conservatism. The best refutation of Viereck's
and Burns' position and others that claim Ortega was a sup­
porter of conservatism due to his attack on the masses is
offered by Julian Marias, in his book (Julian Marias, *Jose
Ortega y Gasset: Circumstance and Vocation* (Norman: Univer­
sity of Oklahoma Press, 1970, p. 224) where he states,
"[Ortega's] basic political attitude is liberalism, with
certain details which distinguish it from the existing
liberal party."
PART III

THE REPARATION OF MAN
CHAPTER VI

AUTHENTIC MODERN BELIEF

Ortega labels the modern age as the domain of the mass-man. Mass-man is the product of generations of unsubstantial beliefs, he wrote, and he now clings to the belief of security in the collectivity. It is in mass society that the mass-man now finds his basic beliefs, and he imposes this belief to all the sectors of the society. The problem is that this collective belief that mass-man abides by is illusory; thereby, it is also unstable and results in continual turmoil for modern society. The collective belief, which Ortega believes rests upon the trust for the state, deteriorates every time the state falters. Only the resurrection of a new government restores trust in the state, meaning that the collective belief is a continual rise and decline of governments. The result of this constant rise and fall of governments is the stagnation of society. Ortega would say that one need only witness the progress of several bad cases of this phenomenon in certain countries throughout the world. Post World War II Italy has made little progress as a society by itself. It is in a constant confusion over stabilizing the government. The same can be said of many
Asian and South American countries. The masses of these countries have tried to secure a government that they could put their trust, only to ultimately reject a regime and start over again with a new one. Coup d'etats have become commonplace in these areas.

The cause to Ortega of this constant turnover in governments is because of the false belief the masses hold in regard to the collective and the state. The state according to Ortega is a means for man, not an end. The truth the masses think they have found in the collectivity is an illusion. This section will explain what Ortega assumes to be the authentic belief of the world today and how it is to be found. If it can be brought out, he believes, the minority may be spared from a final slaughter of the masses.

What Authentic Truth Is

Truth, for Ortega, is the type of radical, constant knowledge obtained only through a specific mode of thought methodology. It is always hidden and must be discovered.¹ This is the basic definition of truth for Ortega, though it is inadequate as a complete definition. As said in this simple definition, truth is known through thought.

To the mass-man, truth exists in an absolute realm that can be known by science. That truth which science can

¹The Origin of Philosophy, p. 124.
not discover still exists, grants Ortega, but it is so well hidden from the human mind, any attempt at uncovering it becomes relative, namely, only one's opinion. Since man's opinions are the product of his so-called inner contemplation, they may be authentic truth. Ortega states that there is no way of scientifically verifying this opinionated truth for all people, so the mass-man feels that everyone is entitled to his own ideas, because they may be either true or false. To summarize Ortega, the thinking in search of truth for the mass-man is a combination of idealism, relativism, and rationalism.

The problem thought faces is not yet solved. Philosophy, defined by Ortega as the method of human thought, must tackle the three part problem of finding authentic truth. In the first place, he wrote, when man seeks what absolute truth is, he does not know how complex absolute truth may be. In the beginning, all the thinker knows is that truth is out there in the abstract universe, but he has no idea of where this truth may be. Secondly, the thinker does not know how comprehensive the absolute truth may be. Truth, says Ortega, may not be one sentence, for example, but it may possibly be hundreds of volumes of diverse truths each corresponding yet independent of themselves. Finally, and this Ortega calls the most depressing obstacle to the thinker, one can not be sure that authentic truth is knowable. It is difficult to ascertain if what is
thought is truth, or merely another misconception. The thinkers must keep open the possibility that this knowledge is refutable. All this according to Ortega does not deny truth from man, but clarifies its active pursuit.

To Ortega, man searches for truth in his life with every other man in the world. It is obvious that they do not all arrive at the same opinions of what truth is. The reason given by Ortega for this is that it is not impossible to grasp truth, but because an individual, in his search, can only find fragments of truth. He believed that every life is the separate point of view of the universe. Strictly speaking, he argues, what one person sees in the world no other can possibly see. Every individual thus discovers his own concept of truth. More of the universe is known when one combines these various viewpoints to gain a wider picture of truth. Reality has an infinite number of views, all of which are equally authentic. No single person can claim to have the only positive view of truth. The ultimate reality of the world is neither matter nor spirit nor enlightenment; but it is perspective. Ortega wrote that God is perspective and hierarchy; Satan's original sin was an error in perspective. Since all reality is perspective, true reality, namely authentic truth, is the result of the multiplication of its viewpoints and the

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1. *What is Philosophy*, p. 78.
precision one makes to observing it at its different levels.¹

Since authentic truth to Ortega is derived from a variety of viewpoints on reality (this due to the fact that no one man can grasp all truth), the multiplicity of individual destinies stemming from different views of the universe is essential for a healthy society. He sees all these various viewpoints as respectable and acceptable. It can be seen that various destinies are natural in a true society. Ortega states that there may be men in such a society that reach their true complete fullness as a human in a secondary social role. These people would be destroying their true self if they strive for a primary social role, a role they can not naturally be fulfilled in.² It is according to this concept that Ortega feels it is natural for some men to be in the elite minority and for some to be in masses.

The masses, of course, totally reject this notion of different destinies in men deriving from different viewpoints of the world. To the Ortegean mass-man, the world is one perspective only, the mass view of a world for man's consumption, and this view is the only true view. It is this mass view that drives them to conformity. A divergent view of the world would tend to alter their worldly

¹ Meditations on Quixote, p. 45.
² Ibid., p. 61.
consumption, and thus can not be tolerated. As Ortega understands it, the one mass view gives the masses one destiny. They have nothing else and can not be said to really grasp authentic truth. He attributes the fall of great historical figures and societies as their failure to allow a multiplicity of viewpoints. For example, the decline of ancient China was due to its strict adherence to the belief that China was the center of the universe. It was a tremendous shock to the eighteenth century Chinese when European invaders proved that China was far from the invincibility it thought it had. Thus, concludes Ortega, the only thing one can believe is that what he believes is only a belief, not necessarily truth. To Ortega, men must realize that their now unquestionable truths are, in reality, only one's firm beliefs.

How Authentic Belief is Obtained

Ortega realizes philosophical thought is systematic, but its true meaning is often difficult to discover. Thinkers, he says, do not let their meaning in a philosophical discourse be readily available. Meanings are closed or hidden, and one must enter into philosophy itself if he is to discover their meanings.¹ There is an alternative to Ortega for seeking the philosopher's individual thoughts for truth, and this is history. History, Ortega claims, is

a perfect chain of events. Ideas in history follow a recognizable sequence; one thought clearly follows another. Things do not, just spontaneously appear in history. The trail in its logical pattern, he wrote, is rigid so that it will never mislead one who travels it.¹ When one seriously studies history, Ortega states that he discovers that what appeared as a mass of events, data, or thoughts is actually a continuation of human thinking that progresses from one conception to another. Instead of being an illogical mess, it is completely logical when one finally discovers its pattern. (Ortega attributes the genius of Dilthey to being one of the first to make this discovery.) Historical systems follow each other in a rational movement through time.²

According to Ortega, all of the ideas of history are directed toward one ultimate goal, the attainment of truth. Philosophical doctrines have been established in a continuous progression toward ultimate truth. When a thinker reviews past philosophies and then returns to his own, he finds that all of the concepts of the past exist in his own thought. If something is missing in his philosophy, he amends it so that it will conform to his thinking.³ The path of historical thinking, argues Ortega, can

¹Ibid., p. 133.
²"Prologue to a History of Philosophy," Concord and Liberty, p. 103.
³Ibid., p. 117.
not be ended. Once thinking starts, it must stay in motion. Thought progresses from one point to another; it is not limited to a solid, complete conclusion. Thought, when it is done, completes what was previously potential thought. The thinker who expresses a new idea, actually gives expression to the potential of that idea.

Ortega affirms that the reason that historical thought is always continuous is because human life is always continuous and changing. The Ortegean conception of life is not permanence or stagnation. The existence of the rock can afford to be rigidly the same, but human life must keep changing to exist. Ortega sees man as not the same from his birth to his death. He always changes, takes on new characteristics and traits, and becomes something else than what he originally began as. This has been true of all men in all times. What Ortega calls the specific human reality, man's life, is a historical consistency. History, he wrote, proves that man is a changing being. The two fundamental laws of history according to Ortega are that (1) man is continually making the physical world he finds himself in to conform to his demands and desires. Man manipulates his environment. (2) Every change in the world done by man brings a change in man's life. By making

1Ibid., p. 123.

2"Notes on Thinking," Concord and Liberty, p. 74.
the world easier to live in, one erases the previous barrier one had to survival and thus eliminates the past work required to satisfy that need.¹ Man is always trying to change his environment, and in the course of doing so, he changes himself.

The importance Ortega gives to history is that it is the reality of man. Man, he claims, has no other reality besides history. To deny history is foolish and illusory because history reveals man's nature.² Ortega believes that all the blunders and triumphs of man are seen in history. It is more than just a guidance or a recognition of where present man came from; it is a part of modern man himself. The past experience of a people molds them into a collective spirit. In Ortega's mind, it is an identity of a past collective life to which the present people feel they belong. The collective life creates an entire human historic process, which is passed on from one generation to another in its memories, folk lore and tales. This historic process will continue until the end of man, a time when there will be no one to change and behave as a human being.³ As Ortega writes,

man and everything human in him is historic reality; it is literally true that he is, at the moment, made

1Man and Crisis, pp. 37-38.
2History as a System, p. 61.
3An Interpretation of Universal History, p. 30.
up of the past, because one of his parts . . . consists of the past, the most effective past.1

Ortega sees historical reason as vital to human cognition. It is neither induction nor deduction, he states, but the pure observation of facts. Historic reason is the only way to understand man, done by reviewing his past which is his reality.2 The failure of the mass-man to Ortega is his lack of understanding historical reason. Mass-man forgets the importance of it or completely ignores both which eventually doom his attempts at attaining truth.

Modernism, to Ortega, is the consciousness of living one's life in a new style while knowing the traditional style.3 This is a true modern life, one of human progression, not the stagnation of the mass-life, guided by the wisdom of the past. Society is a reality in modernity when two people meet and mutually acknowledge the being of the other.4 This too is different from the mass-man view of society, which takes society and the Other as something to be used by him.

Ortega defines the task of the historian as uncovering the motives that induced the past generations to continue to live. Man, he states, must know the basis of philosophy, and the reason for living is this basic answer.

1 Ibid., p. 102.
2 An Interpretation of Universal History, p. 108.
3 Man and Crisis, p. 72. 4 Ibid., p. 75.
Men have persisted through all of the most depressing times of the past, like the Dark Ages or the fall of great civilizations. Historians, writes Ortega, must find out why these people lived on in life's gloomiest moments.¹ This knowledge, once attained, will enlighten present man to new meanings for his life. The failure of historians has been that they have made some past figures greater than they actually were. Modern philosophers often try to mold their writings to match the ancients.² Instead of progressing from the ancient thinkers, Ortega criticizes them for indulging in a debate with them. They feel successful, he says, when their work corresponds to that of some ancient thinker, one who has been elevated beyond what his work deserves. Hero worship of the past philosophers detracts from their true meaning. They should be appreciated for their worth, but nothing more than that. They should not be credited with what they did not do.

The proper thing one does after reviewing and knowing history, is what Ortega labels as autognosis (self-reflection). This is necessary to know and express concepts in purely descriptive terms. Autognosis is the process by

¹"Prologue to a History of Philosophy," Concord and Liberty, p. 86.
²Ibid., p. 91.
which reality is recognized.¹ The accumulated data is interpreted, and here man recognizes it for its worth. The mind is the interconnectedness of all information, and the world is seen in relation to this data by autognosis. According to Ortega, self-reflection clarifies the world in the presence of all of its information. Without self-reflection, the world would remain as one conglomeration of facts with no meaning or connection.² Self-reflection reveals that by the uniting of facts, ultimate reality can be attained. Ultimate reality is reached by analyzing the activities of the mind as they exist in their external, "outer world" form, and by reducing this immense knowledge of the outer world to certain conceivable, definable, and recognizable elements.³ To have an authentic self-reflection, one must establish a theory of knowledge. This theory would embody information on nature, morality and human matters.⁴ This is an enormous task for man, but Ortega claims that he must keep seeking for absolute truth. Man fails when he thinks he has attained such an absolute theory, or when he thinks he is near to doing so.⁵ To Ortega, it is beyond the power of mortal man to contrict

² Ibid., p. 179.  
³ Ibid., p. 180.  
⁴ Ibid., p. 181.  
⁵ Ibid., p. 182.
absolute truth, but he must nevertheless attempt to grasp fragments of it.

The ideal theory, for Ortega, and this would hold true for political theory, is to deny apparent reality and begin thought in nothingness. The thinker, he wrote, should start his thought with no previous notions of what should or should not be, and try to let truth reveal itself.¹ The thing that is being thought about will coincide with one's thought only if one's thought is flexible enough to coincide with the thing. The thing must make the theory, argues Ortega, not the theory make the thing.² Ortega did not intend to downgrade man's ability or past efforts to philosophize. To Ortega, man must philosophize because he can not rely only on his physical senses to interpret the world to him.³ Some men have done very well in seeking truth, and this has resulted in true guidance for their lives. Thus, Ortega concludes that philosophy is an essential occupation for man. Science, he wrote, in its theories, explains what the physical matter of a thing is. Philosophy explains what value that thing has as a fragment of the universal truth. Philosophy reveals the ultimate truth of a thing.⁴

¹What is Philosophy, p. 82.  
²Ibid., p. 86.  
³Ibid., p. 103.  
⁴Ibid., pp. 109-10.
This chapter dealt with what Ortega felt the belief should be and how it could be obtained. The question must now be presented, can the mass-man know the authentic belief so that he will be freed from his illusions of truth? Ortega would answer no. The masses, he states, can not be saved from becoming the masses.\(^1\) The only thing Ortega sees that can be done is for the minority to recognize the tremendous difficulty of residing with the masses and their problem. There is little that can be done in the face of a crisis. Human affairs, he wrote, are not like the experiments in chemistry. If something goes wrong in chemistry, the scientist can make some additions to the experiment and quell the arising danger. According to Ortega, historical reason provides solid evidence that the problem of the masses is much more complex and probably not capable of being remedied.\(^2\) Hope for the true individual means that he must resort to the past to carry him through the historical crisis. The minority can only hope to survive the scourge of the masses until the crisis subsides.\(^3\) This, unfortunately, is the only solution Ortega has to offer.

\(^1\)History as a System, pp. 73-74.
\(^2\)Ibid., pp. 76-78.
\(^3\)Ibid., p. 81.
CHAPTER VII

ROLE OF MINORITY

Ortega paints a gloomy picture for the minority in its stand against the masses at first glance, but it may not be as painful as it seems after further investigation. Given, the masses will not suddenly change, but this does not mean that the minority must succumb to mass domination. The masses are dragging much of mankind into the abyss of ruin, but the minority, if it is willing to struggle, can escape the clutches of this fate. It is in this section that directions will be given to those who wish to remain alive and free from the historical crisis. Ortega does not promise victory for the minority; he only offers a slim ray of hope for those who must do something in these critical times.

Task of the Individual

Man in Ortegaan thought becomes aware of his life when he first becomes aware of himself. Man realizes that his life is his own, and that it is of his own making. Man can do what he wants with his life, including the possibility of terminating it, if he so desires. Usually, man decides to continue his life, and by desiring to stay alive he also implies that he cares about what will happen to his
life. Only by living do various things happen to man. In death, all the interaction of the individual to his environment ceases. By living, the activity of life continues. By deciding against suicide and living, man shows that he cares about his being.\(^1\) Every man must make his own life himself. In doing this, every individual life becomes a constant prophecy and is composed of its own substance. In the Ortegean framework, one plans what he wants to do in life. Whether one likes it or not, life is the anticipation of the future. The more genuine the conduct of one's life is, "the more authentic will be the prediction of the future."\(^2\) The true man to Ortega realizes that life is what he makes of it by himself. The responsibility of his life is his, and untransferably his alone.

Life, states Ortega, is never pre-conceived and made for any man. He wrote that life must be made by the individual at every moment. All life offers to one is the possibilities to different activities, to become various styles of human existence. Since life is made by each man himself, no man is capable of making the entire world by himself. Humanity for Ortega is comprised of individuals, each of who decide for themselves what they plan to do. History is not the adventures of one man, no matter how powerful or great that one ever became. History is the

\(^1\)Man and Crisis, p. 33. \(^2\)Ibid., p. 178.
product of many people. It is the result of masses of people who decide to collectively act in a specific manner or toward a collective goal.\(^1\) Mao would never have succeeded without the peasants. Lenin would have been nothing without discontented workers. The course one ultimately decides upon out of life's possibilities is the one the person deems that he must do; it is his authentic being. To Ortega, one's authentic being is his vocation in life, and if one is to live peacefully with his self, he must follow this vocation. Only he who lives his own self, he that lives his vocation, it is he who lives a life in agreement with his own true self.\(^2\) Many men reject the calling of their vocation, and live instead a false life, a life of uncertainty, disturbance, and constant change in its direction.

The true life to Ortega is thus the one that is self-directed toward its own future. The guide in seeing what is this future is not a glance at that which is beyond one's life, but an examination of one's self. Ortega realizes that self-examination is an extremely difficult task because one's passions can often distort one's reason.\(^3\) Nevertheless, it is a task that Ortega says must be undertaken. No man can avoid the responsibility of making his

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\(^1\) The Mission of the University, p. 17.
\(^2\) Man and Crisis, pp. 179-80.
\(^3\) Ibid., p. 183.
own life. In deciding what to do with his life, each man must test the possibilities of succeeding with his certain plan. Once it is admitted that one's life plan is plausible, all that is needed is the will to activate it.\footnote{The Mission of the University, p. 18.} One must put his plan into action. Those that do not activate their plans are guilty of what Ortega calls "slovenliness." This he defines as the behavior of one who procrastinates on his life's plan, and thus lives in a sort of limbo, a life between being nothing and being something. The state as well as individuals can be guilty of slovenliness. To Ortega, the state that acts in this manner operates half heartedly; it sometimes enforces its laws or decrees, and at other times, citizens take advantage of the governmental agencies and exploit them. There is no regular order in such a state, and confusion arises in its citizens because they do not know if the state will enforce any specific regulations or ignore them.\footnote{Ibid., p. 19. Ortega accused the Spain of his day as an excellent example of a state in slovenliness (1930). Ortega stated that the situation was widespread in Spain.}

The opposite of slovenliness according to Ortega is to "be in shape." He defines an individual in shape as one who knows what he is doing and does it. He is one who makes his destiny. The group, as well as the individual, is capable of being in shape. The group in shape Ortega
sees as the perfect organization that succeeds in fulfilling its goals. The successful groups in history were only those that were in shape.¹ For example, Lenin's bolsheviks were successful due to their training, discipline, and loyalty to their principles. The method a group gets in shape is the same as that of an individual. Ortega compares the man in shape to him that is not as the example of the athlete and the slob. The athlete is able to physically do what he wants easier because his body is prepared to respond to its commands; the slob struggles because he has not adequately prepared himself first for fulfilling his physical requirements. Thus, the group that is not in shape will struggle unnecessarily due to its failure to condition itself for its task.

According to Ortega, the reality of life consists in not what it appears to be to others, but what it is to the individual who lives it. Each one makes up his own life, and his life is his reality. One could only know the reality of another's life if he lived that other's life.² No one else can exactly know the life of the Other because no one else can precisely experience that Other's life. The authentic Ortegean man is he who realizes that all men are different, and does not generalize on any of them but views all as distinct and problematical. Man, he

¹Ibid., p. 21. ²Man and Crisis, p. 32.
wrote, is problematical because each new situation creates a question that must be answered. The man who holds that certain fundamental bases guide all men fails to see the reality that men are only uncertainty and variation. Variation is part of humanity's elemental character; ignoring this fact makes man a sub-human being.¹ A man to Ortega can be known by his individual characteristics, but this does not imply any generalizations about men nor leave out the possibilities that this specific person may change. No person is necessarily absolute; he can change at will to be whatever he wants to be.

Ortega felt that the beliefs of man must be recognized by the individual as mere ideas. Beliefs, he says, are only those concepts that man places trust in for the purpose of giving him a base of action in his life. Beliefs are only ideas, and ideas are the expression of one's opinion. In this view, Ortega believes that it is obvious that beliefs are not the truth that the holder of a belief thinks they are. Beliefs are those ideas that convince one, concepts that one accepts without question as truth. Questioning would reveal the instability of beliefs, while truths endure no matter what is done to them. Ortega felt that by rejecting beliefs, man frees himself from a limited view. He can then approach the world as it presents itself,

¹The Idea of Principle in Leibnitz, p. 290.
not as the way the beliefs report reality to be. The consequence Ortega sees of this freedom from beliefs is that man must then face perplexity, worry and the unknown. With beliefs gone, man will confront things that he has no answer for. The world will appear as a vast puzzle, and man soon becomes lost. This demonstrates to Ortega the need man has for being certain. Most people would rather live in false beliefs, satisfied in not questioning them, because it is not possible to survive long in perplexity.¹

Ortega concludes that the man of today must be open to all about him. He must have faith in his own being and vital nature. He must be confident that he can accomplish what life demands of him. The authentic person for Ortega is the one who realizes the vocation that nature presents to him, accepts that vocation, and fulfills it.² His life will be a true life, unlike that of the mass-man or the extremist. This is the challenge that Ortega presents to the individual of today. It is one that must be accepted if one is to live an authentic life. The only alternative is submission to the will of the masses.

Action of the "Noble Man"

According to Ortega human society is a stable situation. He wrote that society itself is not the source of new inventions, creative ideas or diverse interests for

¹Ibid., pp. 300-1. ²The Modern Theme, p. 96.
man. Society is regularity and can not initiate change. To Ortega, philosophy is the creation of new concepts, new in only that they present previously unknown truth. If society heeds the work of philosophy, he claimed, it can progress; but for society to be able to know philosophy, it must first have a few individuals within societal boundaries to create it.\(^1\) Ortega found the source of philosophy in those few people who create it. Society, he wrote, borrows their knowledge and uses it for its purpose. Ortega felt that the masses themselves are not able to create true philosophy because they are too concerned with the society and their place in it. It must be remembered that truth is revealed by retreating to the inner world, in self-reflection. The mass-man never does this, he stated, and thus never discovers truth himself. Beside that, the masses are never "in shape." They are always guilty of being in slovenliness. The group that wishes to exert influence on the masses must be something other than the masses; namely, they must be a group in shape.\(^2\)

Ortega believed that social change could happen very rapidly if it was directed by the proper leaders. Social change,

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\(^1\)"Prologue to a History of Philosophy," Concord and Liberty, p. 107.

\(^2\)The Mission of the University, p. 21.
to Ortega, did not necessarily have to be a long, evolving transition. History has shown that certain groups have exercised definite social change within a short time, although Ortega fails to provide any modern examples of what he means by this.

Ortega believed that traditions usually guide the actions of the common man. He assented that philosophy is the "tradition of non-tradition," in that it questions traditional action and values and replaces them with its own action and values. Philosophy emerges when the existing tradition fails to satisfy the thinker; it replaces the faltering old tradition. The object of philosophy to Ortega is to elevate man from his depths of despair and give him the belief in his own reason.¹ In this sense, philosophy is not a rebellion, but a salvation. The thinker needs philosophy because he has nothing else. Tradition fails the thinker in its inadequacy to answer basic questions, so philosophy takes its place. Tradition fills itself by being weak.

Philosophy is not as simple an exercise as it may now appear. According to Ortega's views, one does not just decide to philosophize, and then be done with it in his new thoughts. The chore of philosophy, he wrote, demands a reciprocal action from the thinker, and this is

¹"Prologue to a History of Philosophy," Concord and Liberty, p. 113
responsibility in freedom. Ortega felt the mass-man finds freedom as a natural condition around him in which no special obligation is required of him. Since the mass-man merely finds freedom, he is satisfied with the way in which he sees it. He does not think himself to be vain, and he considers all of his characteristics as good and desirable. He unconditionally accepts himself as he first sees himself, and he is pleased with this. Ortega wrote that when the mass-man faces a problem, the first solution he thinks of is the best solution for him. He never questions himself because he believes he is always right.\(^1\) Contrasted to this type of character is the "noble man." The noble-man, as Ortega calls him, does not accept things or his will unquestionably. He does not let himself do whatever he desires, and he disciplines his body and mind. Whereas the mass-man thinks himself perfect and in need of no reform, the noble-man seeks to perfect himself by discipline. The noble-man puts great demands upon his character and does not give in to all worldly whims. He realizes that there are obligations in life, and he neither rejects these nor ignores them. This is Ortega's man par excellence. The private rights and possessions one has during a lifetime are not given or naturally deserved enjoyments to the noble-man; these are the earned rewards resulting from one's personal efforts. The mass-man, of course, views

\(^1\)The Revolt of the Masses, p. 62.
these things as natural and belonging to him. The noble-
man realizes that one must work for what he desires,
because benefits do not come naturally. To Ortega the
noble-man is the well known man, namely because he has
put himself above the masses in his behavior and efforts.
This does not mean that Ortega felt only celebrities were
noble-people, because obviously many of them are truly in
the masses. A noble-man could be known through his own
community, or be internationally renowned. The point is
that the noble-man according to Ortega is he who is above
the mass-man, only because he desires to be more than the
masses and accepts the responsibility of this challenge. ¹

To Ortega, the noble-life is synonymous with the
life of effort, a life excelling above one’s duty or ob-
ligation. ² There is a striking correlation between what
Ortega speaks of and a study of great historical figures,
both past and present. The people who disciplined them-
selves were most able to battle the difficulties of life,
compared to the masses who do nothing and simply coast along
in life. By Ortega’s definition the noble-man questions
his situation, and makes his destiny out of his own con-
templation, not from the dictates of those surrounding him.
His life is a perpetual resistance to habit and custom.
Each movement he makes in his life is the rejection of an

¹Ibid., pp. 63-64. ²Ibid., p. 65.
established custom; thus, his life is one continuous new gesture. Ortega felt that the result of such a life is that one faces constant suffering because one can not rely upon the security of habits. Each situation must be thought out and dealt with individually. The noble-man's life is his own distinct life, not the life of past generations, as is the mass-life. This will to be oneself is the true noble-life. Ortega wrote that it is essential for the noble-man to desire his tragic destiny. All the sorrow that is affiliated from the rejection of traditionalism must be accepted by the noble-man. He must reject the ideal role of the person in society for the acceptance of his imaginary role of what a man should be. He will undoubtedly be rebuked, because no one else can see his role besides him. He will be misunderstood and outcast from his groups, until the group may possibly see his situation as something better and then raise him to improper proportions.

To Ortega, it is the noble-men of any society that gives that society a true direction. The best government is that which is under the organization of the noble-man, because it will not be confused with the demands of the masses and will truly serve the best interests of the society. In Ortega's perspective, a political institution

1 Meditations on Quixote, p. 149.
2 Ibid., p. 154.
that was established to deal exclusively with one type of problem will be incapable of handling a different problem that may emerge. This is often what the masses will do, though, when they create new political institutions. In reality, he wrote, it is the political imagination of a person, not an institution, that inevitably solves real political problems. Institutions function properly only to the extent that those who operate them know what they are doing.

Historically, political and social revolutions are characterized by their violence. Ortega classifies revolutionary violence as the least essential element in a revolution. True revolutions, he said, do not have to be violent, because a true revolution is a state of mind. These states of mind only occur at certain times, and if the proper conditions exist, a revolution may occur. For example, the traditionalist will be content to reside in a world that existed before he was born. He sees no reform needed for the established structure because it suits his goals and needs. It is in epochs of traditionalism that Ortega feels that nations organize themselves. Here, a nation may reach its peak in wealth and physical comfort. Tradition will be the king of such a nation, and

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1 Concord and Liberty, p. 41.
3 Ibid., p. 106.
the masses will believe in it unflinchingly. Eventually, a person will come who will question the existing tradition. This person Ortega says will be the philosopher, the professional espouser of pure reason, who will test tradition for its truth content. As the tradition crumbles away under pure reason, so will the faith of the people in the state. A new state will have to be erected to replace the now false one that had thrived on an illusion for so long. Ortega believed that the philosopher is the center of the revolutionary core, for it is he who instilled into the active revolutionaries the fallacy of the existing state.\(^1\)

According to this view of Ortega, the noble-man may be able to bring the masses into a new situation and avoid the surmounting historical crisis. The hard core revolutionary to Ortega is not the philosopher, but the person who was influenced by the message of the thinker. The role of the noble-man today is to openly express the mistake the masses are plunging themselves into, in hope that some may hear this cry and remedy the situation. This discussion has still only spoke of the tasks of individuals; now, the role of groups must be stated.

**Reform of Institutions**

Ortega believed that philosophy originates in the situation of a man who finds himself unsatisfied with his

\(^1\)"The Sunset of Revolution," *The Modern Theme*, p. 131.
society's tradition. This man, he wrote, attains comfort in the security of his new thought, produced by his reason, which gives him his basic beliefs. This power of concepts resulting from reason is philosophy. Philosophy is the doubt against tradition. Doubt that does not offer any alternatives or solutions is desperation. Desperation, states Ortega, does not lead to philosophy, but to suicide.¹ Thus, it can be seen that philosophy originates in the individual, and from there progresses outward. When a problem confronting man is universal, Ortega felt the doubt resultant from that problem is also universal. If man knew all there was to know, he would have no need for philosophy; God does not adhere to any philosophical system because he knows all; He is the source of knowledge. For man, philosophy creates belief, and belief is the security without previous doubt. Man falters when his belief fails him. This produces the feeling of being lost, of having no direction in life.² The failure of human traditional beliefs to Ortega is that they are often constructed on weak principles. These poor foundations will eventually tumble, only to give rise to new bases, just as weak as the decadent old ones. This situation will continue to go on until man gains some unaltering truth, one that can survive the test of time and questioning.

² Ibid., p. 268.
According to Ortega, one of the foremost tasks of the philosophers in society is to denounce society's presumed true principles. They should reveal illusions for what they are so that men can progress to truth. This task of denunciation Ortega sees as the most important role of the philosophers. Of all of man's extracurricular activities, Ortega felt theology most aids the chore of philosophy in enabling man to ground his basic beliefs for his life. Thus, philosophy to Ortega is not demonstrating what truth in one's life consists of, but of showing man what truth is so that he can live his life. The institution in society of philosophers is assigned by Ortega the task of providing men with the knowledge necessary to destine their lives. It is for this reason, he wrote, that the heaviest burden of responsibility in society resides with them, for it is they who will make the society.

Ortega believed that certain men possess traits that the common man does not, and one of the most distinguishing of these rare traits is the love of knowledge. Certain people, he says, crave to know, and this craving leads them to search. The understanding they find is the quenching of their thirst for knowledge. Viewed in unphilosophical terms, Ortega felt that the sciences originated from the need of their founders to have a science. Each science

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1 Ibid., p. 263.
is a particular method to know a certain thing. The true scientist to Ortega is he who must know what he studies, not for fame or wealth, but for his own satisfaction. To Ortega's understanding, science consists of the urge of its founders to solve problems. The more indepth it proceeds, the better it accomplishes this problem-solving. Science is only research; the professions care for the application of science (medicine, engineering). Science, to Ortega, must remain detached from its professional application if it is to remain true.

The problem that often occurs in modern society according to Ortega is that science becomes so highly regarded by people that it is asked to find the answers to problems it can not handle. Culture, for instance, seeks the answers from science to justify its existence. Ortega argued that it is not within the capabilities of science to answer such a question; yet, self-justification is needed by man to continue his life. Society should not expect science to solve such problems. It is in this situation that science should not attempt to answer all by itself. For Ortega's satisfaction,

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1 What is Philosophy, p. 171.
2 The Mission of the University, p. 69.
3 Ibid., p. 73.
philosophy must be the guide of science.\textsuperscript{1} The difference Ortega saw between science and philosophy is that science has an objective goal; namely, the scientist knows that he is searching for a specific solution. Philosophy does not have a specific objective but must find it.\textsuperscript{2} Scientific knowledge requires that it be exact; philosophical knowledge is inexact. Yet, scientific knowledge is insufficient for man, while philosophy is sufficient.\textsuperscript{3} Science, to Ortega, can never satisfy all of man's question, but philosophy, in searching universal knowledge, can arrive at universal solutions for man.

The most important point to Ortega about a scientific system is that it be true and that it be able to be understood.\textsuperscript{4} In order for something to be scientifically true, it must be limited or broken down to precise data. This gives it a scientific truth and understanding only in its limited form. But before one can start to progress scientifically to a limited fact, one must have some universal view of things so he can start this process. This, deduced Ortega, makes philosophy inevitable, for every man, before he was a scientist, had to philosophize, to gain a universal view. This man continues to seek universal knowledge, but he has limited his study to minute facts.

\textsuperscript{1}What is Philosophy, p. 59.  
\textsuperscript{2}Ibid., p. 62.  
\textsuperscript{3}Ibid., p. 72.  
\textsuperscript{4}The Modern Theme, p. 11.
To Ortega, philosophy unites scientific facts with universal reality.\footnote{What is Philosophy, pp. 74-75.} This is why philosophy and science must be united. Science is incomplete if it remains to minute scientific facts. It loses its meaning in detail, and appears as trivia. According to Ortega, science detached from philosophy has no meaning for man because he sees only fragments, and becomes lost when he can not see the whole of a thing. Science, to be true, in the Ortegean conception, must escape from this meaninglessness and become human once again. Science as pure little facts is barbarian to Ortega, because it is limited to only one realm. The modern institution of science must be humanized; it must re-enter the realm of human understanding. This rehumanization of science Ortega assigns as the task of the scientist.\footnote{The Mission of the University, p. 79.} Scientific work is essential, but it can not become deified. Man must recognize it for what it is, and the scientist is responsible for accomplishing this modern role of science.

True modern science to Ortega is thus the investigation of phenomena, the setting up of problems, and the method of arriving at their solutions. Scientific investigation provides for the discovery of some truth or the exposure of error. It is primarily a process of the
individual scientist's creation. United with philosophy, science must seek knowledge for its own sake. Ortega saw that dependent upon science is the educational institution. Teaching, he wrote, aims at conveying what science discovers and instilling this knowledge into students, so that the student may accept this scientific knowledge for his own purposes.¹

The institution of higher education is in vast need of reform according to Ortega. This reform must be total, he wrote, not just limited to certain facets of advanced learning. Reform is the creation of new usages. The abuses that exist in education are of minor importance compared to the reform needed. Ortega compares an institution to a machine, in that the entire structure of it and its functioning must be seen in the light of the service it is to perform. Thus, he felt the base of reform in education is a new formulation of its purpose for society.² The purpose of the educational system is to live to the fullest extent of its powers. Its life must be authentically true for the fulfillment of its powers, not the falsification of its destiny imposed upon it by arbitrary societal preferences. The spiritual healthiness of a country's universities will reflect in its appearance in the total health of the nation. Ortega assumed that when a nation is

¹Ibid., pp. 60-61. ²Ibid., p. 27.
great, its schools will be great. Great nations do not exist, he felt, that do not have outstanding schools within it. (Although this is not the only thing that makes a nation great in Ortega's ideas, for its statesmen, economy, etc., are also important.) The basic principle of education according to Ortega is that the school, as a functional tool of the nation, depends upon its well-being on the atmosphere of the national culture, not the artificial atmosphere that is created in academia. Those who literally live in the "ivory towers" can stay there because they are of no benefit to their country. He believed that a condition of equilibrium between the academic world and the social world must exist to produce an excellent school system.¹

The modern educational system must change with its times. All of the creations in history, to Ortega, in science and in politics, were the outcome of a certain prevalent state of mind or spirit of the times. This state of mind he believed changes at intervals according to each new generation. Out of the spirit of the past generation emerges the evaluations of it. One can only evaluate and study any generation properly once it has passed beyond its time span and can be fully appreciated.² Presently, the modern university is a place where almost

¹Ibid., pp. 28-29. ²Ibid., p. 31.
anyone who desires an education can receive it. The problem with this to Ortega is that many who do enter college do not belong there. He believed that the modern university is right in offering education and knowledge to all classes of people. It is the concern of the schools to advance literacy as it is also the state's concern. The activity in university presently consists of instruction in the professions, and scientific research and preparation of future scientists.¹

The problem that has happened in society as Ortega understands it is that the universities have produced too many scientists. It is essential, he felt, that a society have scientists; but modern universities have produced too many illusory scientists, not those who are truly directed for research by their love for knowledge. He argued that the modern university should not be dominated by inquiry. This demand for all to be scientific eliminates the primary concern of the schools, and that is culture for the ordinary man. The scientific urge detracts from making proficient professionals.² For example, Ortega accuses the medical schools with being very scientific in explaining and demonstrating to its students the latest advancements in biology. When these students graduate, they may be exceptional biologists but they do not make adequate

¹Ibid., pp. 33-34. ²Ibid., p. 64.
physicians. They have failed in learning how to properly deal with patients.

The true university to Ortega should consist of the higher education that the ordinary man should receive. He construed the university's purpose in this is to make the common man a cultured person. Ortega defines a cultured person as one who is at "the height of his times." He knows what is the best course for his life and the method to accomplish his destiny. Ortega states that the graduate of a university should be a well-trained professional, capable of doing just service to his people he will serve. Ortega argued that the common man should not be trained as a scientist, because he has no need for the knowledge that makes a true scientist.¹

Proper teaching should be geared to what Ortega calls the "Principle of economy in education." This is the learning capacity of students. What it entails is that subject matter directed at students should be limited. The ordinary student should not be expected to grasp all the finer points in any particular field. His education should be a general education. Ortega calculated that the course load in a school program should be based on the ability of the students to learn, not on the teacher or amount of available knowledge in the subjects. The proper university is "the projection of the student to the scale

¹Ibid., p. 59.
of the institution." Ortega views the student in two dimensions: the student's limited learning capacity, and the need of education to one necessary for life. The ordinary student should not be expected to learn more than he can comprehend or that which is not vital for his future living. The curriculum of higher education to Ortega should consist of only what is strictly necessary for one's life among people. This should correlate to what the student can learn thoroughly and retain as his knowledge.\(^1\) The proper teacher to Ortega is one who places his students in a position so that they can experience truth themselves. This positioning makes for one who learns what he only wants to learn. Learning ceases to be a forced activity. Things exist for the student who wants them to exist. Learning, hence, becomes desirable instead of mandatory.\(^2\)

Ortega leaves the administrative handling of the university to the students. The students should be properly organized and direct the mechanical functioning of their university, impose necessary discipline, be responsible for the school's morale, and determine the structure of the university. He believed that teachers would coordinate their activities with those of the students and

\(^1\)Ibid., pp. 53, 55.

\(^2\)Meditations on Quixote, p. 67.
university.\textsuperscript{1} Since science should be de-emphasized in the Ortegean university, the "Faculty of Culture" takes its place as the source of justification for society's beliefs. The purpose of this group would be to provide enlightenment to the society. It would show students the world as it was and provide the proper guidance for the world of today and the future.\textsuperscript{2} Ortega envisioned that the scholars who compose this group would be the guiding light of the entire society eventually, since they would be the pinnacle of the university and exert great influence on the students. Students would graduate in the proper mold of the "Faculty of Culture."

Ortega thinks that the proper subject to be taught in the universities is the profession of governing. By governing he means that those who run the state are the people who possess the power to make their lives a vital influence in the society, in correlation to the theme of the era. In the present period, he felt those who exercise legal authority have never been trained to do so. The mass-man, the governing force today, is not qualified to govern the political society. Universities, he argued, should train people who will properly govern society, taking authority away from the ignorant mass-man.\textsuperscript{3} Ortega

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1}The Mission of the University, p. 54.
\item \textsuperscript{2}Ibid., p. 76.
\item \textsuperscript{2}Ibid., p. 39.
\end{itemize}
perhaps hopes for a massive, trained civil service or public administrators, but he does not specifically clarify himself on this point. Regardless of this, the totally educated Ortegean man would be one who has the proper conception of his world, his history, his physical body, and a general plan of the universe. He must be aware of his place in the time and area of infinite history. This man is the truly cultured person. The task of the university is to create such men. Presently, very few of these people exist, and because of it the world is chaotic. An uncultured man to Ortega is unable to properly function socially and politically with his society. The universities must remedy this problem by producing the proper men for future society.¹

The future expectations of the university to Ortega would be for higher education to provide for the teaching of culture and adequate professions to its students. The university should economize its subject matter; namely it should not teach that which is not useful to the student. The university should not overstress science, because culture and professionalism will make the complete person, not an excess in science. Science should be limited to what is only adequate. Ortega believed that professors should be selected to teaching posts on their teaching ability, not

¹Ibid., pp. 41-43.
their reputation. The university, he felt, should not im-
pose many requirements on the students. Required courses
should be kept to a minimum.¹ Science, as a study in it-
self, should be separated from the university and the role
of teaching. Science properly done is independent re-
search. The university should dwell on the real life of
its time, not on trivial problems. Students should not
have to face the shock of the "real world" when they gradu-
ate, because the proper university would be a part of the
real world.² Finally, Ortega hoped that the true univer-
sity should be the center of knowledge in the society.
It should replace science as the source of truth, answ-
ering the questions science previously could not solve.³

Ortega felt that guidance to those outside of the
academic realm can only come from what they are exposed to.
The most common exposure people have to new ideas is what
they read. Mass society, he stated, is now confused be-
cause there is such a superabundance of reading material
that they do not know which is the best or most accurate
source for their beliefs. Ortega assigns to the librarians
the responsibility of guiding the people to the proper in-
formation. Librarians should reduce the number of books

¹Ibid., p. 85. ²Ibid., pp. 88-89. ³Ibid., p. 91. For a more indepth analysis of Ortega
regarding his views on education, see Robert McClintock,
Man and His Circumstance: Ortega as Educator (New York:
Teachers College Press, 1971).
available to the public by eliminating the worthless trash and limiting the production of new material if it is not of any benefit to society. Ortega admits that this is a tremendous task for the librarians, but they must accept the challenge of seeing that the function of the book is properly served.¹

If education provides its correct function, then, Ortega believed, the future students will become proper citizens. This will produce the proper type of culture. Ortega thought that culture is what saves man from primitive disaster. Culture to him makes man human; it enables man to live a life above the meaningless animal existence. It is the composite of the ideas vitally important in that historical time. Cultural ideas do not have to coincide with scientific principles, because science is not culture. Humans, he felt, need ideas to live, and humanly ideas are the base of culture.²

According to Ortega the emergence of new ideas in men regarding their basic beliefs about human life is likely to find its first expressions in art. Men dehumanize art, he wrote, because they feel that traditional art no longer serves its purpose to them as it once did for past generations. Tradition hampers the modern


² The Mission of the University, pp. 37-38.
artist's current expression. He feels that he must move into new realms.\(^1\) Art, to Ortega, should not exist if it is content to duplicate the past or to reproduce reality. To be an artist means to cease taking the world seriously, to stop being the man of the absolute inner realm searching for basic truths. The artist creates imaginary worlds and abstractions of realities.\(^2\) This is particularly evident in the works of the dadaists or the surrealists. To the person who views them for the first time, they seem perplexing or mocking to the audience. Their work is limited to an appreciable audience, and it is not expected to be enjoyed by all.

To Ortega, society is, thus, first the basic beliefs that are derived from the philosophers. The philosophers influence the scientists, those people who seek limited, scientific truths. The educational institutions depend upon the scientists to provide knowledge that will enable them to produce the cultured people necessary for the proper functioning of society. Art, is finally man's excursion into his imagination. Whereas man is serious in all of his other occupations, art gives him an outlet for his humorous expressions.

To Ortega, political institutions in a society

\(^1\) The Dehumanization of Art, pp. 39-40.

\(^2\) Ibid., p. 45.
consist of as much multiplicity as the ideas of the men in society. He believed that there is no one rigid form of any political system in any country. There has never been an absolute monarchy, democracy, or aristocracy. Each political system has been a combination of all the various political forms, the distinction between them being the emphasis put on one particular type. It is typical in Ortega's thought that a country should be of multiple forms at once, because if it was limited to one it would be an inhibited society. The entire problem of the mass-man is that he does wish to limit all of society to one realm, the mass-realm.

Role of Society

The Ortegean authentic man functions best in the authentic institution he has chosen as his vocation. The authentic institution operates to its fullest capacity in the proper society. Ortega viewed society as the entire people of a country seen collectively. As with the individual, society must be correctly oriented if it is to meet its destiny. The society must have its firm base to succeed as does the individual. The society, to Ortega, is a representation of its people. If the people are lost and disturbed, so will the society be misdirected.

1 An Interpretation of Universal History, p. 33.
Ortega believed that people coexist in society; that is, people live in a society because they choose to do so, and at any time a peaceful coexistence may erupt into an aggressive existence. Ortega felt that language, that is common to all men of a particular country, allows for better understanding and, hence, a better chance for peaceful coexistence. He conceived that it would be impossible for any kind of coexistence in a country if everyone spoke a different tongue. There would be no basic understanding of the other. Although language is not the only reason that people coexist in society, it is the most important for Ortega. At the same time language promotes basic understanding between men. Ortega stated, it conforms men. Language makes everyone the same through its need to share common ideas. Language stereotypes and produces homogeneity. Instead of expanding knowledge and understanding, words tend to limit and conform thoughts into stereotype images. Words take on precise definitions, and human expression becomes hindered and subdued. The artist reverts to his paintings because he feels that he will never express himself through language.

As language conforms men into its molds, Ortega continued, people in a society begin to forget their

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1 *History as a System*, p. 50.
2 Ibid., pp. 67-69.
differences and tend to feel the same. They will eventually reach a point where they will identify, not with themselves, but with their state; namely, they will become nationalized. Nationalism to Ortega collects people into distinct categories and immediately recognizes the difference of other nationalist aliens.¹ This nationalism will progress to encompass total identity and conformity in a country's people. They will dress and think alike, eat and spend their leisure time alike, and profess their nationalism as the greatest among all others. Nationalism is acceptable to Ortega as long as it does not become inflexible to some variations within it. Proper nationalism is simply letting a people act as a group, as a unified country. In Ortega's view, the masses have perverted this idea today.

Humanity has always been a functioning machine, he wrote, in which the more active members of society have directed the majority of the society into some procedure of goal for the group. The leaders of a group have always been responsible for the group's outcome.² The masses are that part of society that does not act by itself. It has existed in order to be told what to do by the society's leaders. It lives to be directed and guided. For example, philosophy exists of its own making. The masses just are,

¹The Revolt of the Masses, p. 177.
and they must be shown what to do. Ortega felt that the purpose of the masses is not given in their existence.¹

Within the masses of society exist the various generations. The generation is not a group of people; it is a new social body that moves through existing circumstance left behind by the past generation. Differences in people arise in generation differences, not between members of the same generation.² According to Ortega, life, in each generation, consists of two definite tasks. First, each generation must be aware and receptive to what the generation before left behind. It must tackle the problems that present itself from the past and it must know the resources available to it to solve these problems. Second, each generation must let its own genius flourish and express itself. It can not be suppressed, for it is this inherent genius of each generation that makes that generation's mark in history.

Each generation, he wrote, like the individual discussed before, has a vocation that it can fulfill. This vocation of the generation Ortega called its historical mission, the generation's true destiny. The generation, also like the individual, often fails to conceive of its historical mission and fails to fulfill it.

¹The Revolt of the Masses, p. 115.
²The Modern Theme, pp. 15-16.
It passes away leaving its mission unaccomplished.\textsuperscript{1} Ortega believed that history possesses a fixed and unmistakable structure. It is similar to one's individual destiny. One knows the range of possibilities open to one's destiny and can generally predict what will happen if he does act on a certain possibility. Ortega felt that the outcome of most decisions is usually more than mere chance.\textsuperscript{2}

It has been stated that the natural order for society, according to the Ortega scheme, should be the minority directing the masses. The true role, or destiny of the masses, he believed, is to follow the guidance of the minority. For the masses to state that they are capable of directing themselves is therefore to reject its own destiny. Ortega foresaw the rejection of their destiny as the destruction of their own selves.\textsuperscript{3} Such activity cannot progress for any prolongation before disaster will strike. Every generation should have some direction in its existence. For it to properly exist, he believed that it should be progressing toward some destiny, as does the individual. In the modern age, the emphasis should be taken off science and individual reason, as the masses presently have done, and instill into society the glory of human culture. Ortega urged that the masses should be put back into their proper

\textsuperscript{1}Ibid., p. 19. \quad \textsuperscript{2}Ibid., p. 22. \\
\textsuperscript{3}The Revolt of the Masses, p. 116.
role of subordination to the minority, and culture, combined
with reason, art and ethics will be the dominant beliefs of
the society.\(^1\) If this proper relationship is established,
the historical crisis may be brought to a conclusion that
will not doom humanity. If it is left unsettled, Ortega
does not see much to hope for in mankind's future. Men
will have to decide for themselves what they will make of
their lives. The decision can not be avoided, and the
modern decision will have more consequences for future
generations than any choice ever made throughout history.

\(^1\)The Modern Theme, p. 58.
CHAPTER VIII

REFLECTIONS ON ORTEGA

In summation, Ortega thinks that man is a being inhabiting a world separate and distinct from himself. Man discovers his own individuality in the world when he retreats from it into his radical solitude. This radical solitude is one's inner world. It is here that man finds truth, and the basic truth he learns is that the world will not make man; man must make himself. Man knows that he is alone in the world and that if he is to survive, he must work to survive. The world, though it does not help man exist, does not hinder him either. The world is comprised of both good and bad elements confronting man. Man chooses among them, manipulates them, and makes his environment livable for himself. After man has made his own place in the world, he realizes that life is what he makes it; thus, each man is the maker of his own destiny. Man is what he chooses to be.

Existence in the world brings man to confrontation with beings similar to himself. Other beings impose their existence on the individual, so man must learn how to deal with them. Certain other beings become more distinctly recognizable to man as the contact between them increases.
The frequency of contact leads to intimacy between the other and the individual. Man learns that he lives in groups of people within his specific environment. These groups are differentiated chronologically, so that each generation is distinct from another in their environment. These groups, who live in coexistence, form a society. People identify with the society, and a certain type of men in society, the mass-man, lose their individuality and become totally one with the society.

The mass-men have gained control of modern society and hope to capture all under their power. To do this, society exerts great pressure on individuals to conform, to forget their separate identity and to become one with the society. The state is the societal instrument that administrates conformity. The mass-men act in this manner, namely in the glorification of the state, because they have forgotten what they truly are; they have lost their individuality and their belief in themselves.

History reveals the truth about men, and men will never survive as humans in a mass dominated society. If men would go back into their radical solitude and review history, they would recognize the mistakes they are making today. They could then emerge from their inner world and return to the external world ready to make their true life again. Each man has a true life to live, and the society too has its own specific destiny to fulfill. The authentic
civilization is one where both men and the society work towards their true destiny. The masses do not belong in power, and they should step down to let society be run by those best qualified to handle the task.

**Problem of True Happiness**

This is basically Ortega's thought of man and his society. There are certain points, though, in Ortega's thinking that he seems to have neglected or maybe not have considered important enough to go into deeply. The most obvious problem that one confronts is what Ortega thought to be the ultimate happiness of man. A quick perusal of his readings would indicate that he construed it to a true orientation to one's life. In most of his writings, it is he who knows his true vocation in life, who has the plan of his destiny, this is the person Ortega feels has found true happiness. To have strong, firm beliefs, to no longer be confused in one's existence, this is often mentioned as Ortega's true happiness. He states himself that any man, "if he thinks well, he is well adjusted within himself; and that is the definition of happiness."\(^1\)

Besides the role of the individual, Ortega contrasts it to that of the society. He feels that the true society is also one which knows its vocation, that resides on firm beliefs, and that knows what to make of its existence. The

\[^1\text{Man and Crisis, p. 113.}\]
trouble with Ortega's *summum bonum* is that he makes mention of another type of true happiness, escape from radical solitude. Given, according to Ortega's thought that man lives entirely alone in the world, he is trapped in his own realm, his unique total solitude. This is supreme loneliness for man if he can not escape from it into the external world with others. True happiness can come when one can unite his radical solitude with that of another. If this can be done, even if only temporarily, man can feel free from his lonely solitude, and experience the joy of being with another as one. By escaping from radical solitude with an unique Other, one no longer has to fear his own life, but lives in the security of two people that the solitude of one can never provide for. Ortega wrote, "Let others think what they like: for me, the culmina­tion of life consists of a pure and subtly dramatic passion."¹

The problem emerges on whether these two ideas, escape from radical solitude and making one's destiny, are contradictory or stating the same thing. First, an examination of the two as the same meaning will see if anything significant can be revealed. If one is truly happy making his own true destiny, would this true destiny be his escape from radical solitude? Ortega speaks often of man as the only creature that can be more than what he basically is.

¹*On Love*, p. 150.
Other things in the world, such as animals or plants, are
destined to be no more than a mere animal or a plant. Man
had endless possibilities, that it is best for him when he
makes the most of his life, when he fulfills his destiny
of being something more than a physical, biological human.
On the other hand, if man is truly happy when he is in
union with another, then his destiny is pre-defined for him.
For example, the true vocation for a dog is to be only a
dog. The dog is limited to this role, but it accepts the
role because it has no desire to be anything more than a
dog. Man is confronted with endless possibilities, says
Ortega, but his true self selects the proper role for his
being and becomes that thing. Now if, as Ortega states,
that man is most happy when in total love or union with
another, this limits his possibilities to only one, namely
the escape from radical solitude. This would reduce man
to a position not much above that of the dog; the dog has
its destiny charted out before it, and its instincts guide
it to fulfill its life as a dog. Man, if seen in this
view, has his one destiny before him, escape from radical
solitude, but the difference between man and the dog is
that man has no instincts to guide him to this destiny
and must make it himself.

In another sense, could one live in pursuit of his
true destiny and also be union with another? This is not
actually compatible after examination. To mix both of these
two concepts together would imply that in union with the
Other, one's destiny would be exactly the same as that of
the Other. The two people would both share the same goals
in life, and they could pursue it together. Theoretically,
it could be possible for this to occur, but, realistically,
it would seem highly improbable that two people with exactly
the same destinies would meet, join together, and then
jointly pursue their true vocations. If it was argued that
this often happens, then the first argument holds that man
must have obviously only one destiny, to escape from radi-
cal solitude. How could two people remain together for
any extended time in pursuit of their individual destiny
without imposing upon the other's destiny? If escape from
radical solitude was only an occasional fling for man, then
man would seldom experience any true happiness in life.
Life would certainly appear meaningless if happiness al-
ways eluded it; if happiness only came occasionally, it
would be an unbearable tease to man, one to surely drive
him insane or into despair.

According to Ortega's writings, he obviously puts
more emphasis on the pursuit of one's true destiny as the
path to absolute happiness. This emphasis does not negate
the statements on escape from radical solitude as the final
goal of men. Following the Ortega line on happiness in one's
destiny, history provides examples of people who appeared to be deeply satisfied in their own personal work. There have been people who seem to be content in the peace their inner world provides, or the recognition in some that life could be more than interaction with others. They were satisfied with the truth their radical solitude provided, and seemed to have no need for union with another. A hermit's destiny is the life away from others, a life where he can enjoy his own existence. Other people have rejected intimacy with others because they feel it brings an infringement on their life, an added burden of responsibility that they would rather be without. Literature, on the other hand, provides many examples of people who have been emotionally crippled by the extermination of their union with another. Some stories even demonstrate how people would rather die than not be in union with the Other, such as Romeo and Juliet.

Christian doctrine professes that ultimate happiness will occur when one becomes united with God. It may be a twisting of the concept of escape from radical solitude to compare this Christian doctrine with Ortega's meaning. God is Absolute Truth, and the complete knowledge of God would give one all truth. This would allow one to fully make his destiny because he could be exactly positive of what he was doing. Therefore, oneness with God is desired not as an escape from radical solitude, but as the most
perfect foundation one could have to make his destiny.

Finally, these concepts must be viewed in the question, can two different ultimate goods exist, and not impose or detract upon each other? If this were true, it would mean that a man could be in union with another and act on his own personal destiny at the same time. This seems like the only plausible explanation of the two concepts: one fulfills his destiny out of his radical solitude, and hence reaches ultimate happiness. This is obviously a difficult coordination to perform, as evidenced by the rising divorces throughout the world. Ortega neglected to satisfy this question himself, but the mixing of the two, without imposition on the other, seems to enable one to reach ultimate happiness. Many people never experience either of these dual happinesses, and some are lucky enough to have experienced one of them. It is he who lives in fulfillment of his destiny and in union with another that lives in highest level of human bliss.

On Technology's Origin

Ortega wrote that technology is the result of man's reflection in his inner self on how to best utilize and manipulate the world for a convenient life. Technology is not natural to man; it had to be invented by man and it was by contemplation in the inner self. Technology allowed man not to be concerned constantly with the external
world. Technology provided the free time available to contemplate. Now, if technology is the device that allows man to sometimes be free from his environment for contemplation, and if technology originated in man's inner contemplation, how did the first technician have the time to invent the first technology for his more advanced contemplation?

The primitive man had been compared by Ortega to the wild animal. The animal is always concerned with his environment in the jungle because there are always dangers lurking around it. Even when the animal finds momentary peace, all it can do is sleep from the sheer exhaustion of constantly being on guard. The primitive man was similar to the wild animal. He spent his entire day picking food or hunting and being on guard against natural dangers or creatures that preyed upon him. If the primitive was like the animal, he would have no time for contemplation, because he would always be preoccupied with survival. The few tools primitive man does fashion are nothing compared to what is needed to actually allow him time to rest.

Ortega wrote that primitive man was not aware of the fact that he could make more of the materials around him. He was unconscious of his technical ability. The

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1 Man and People, p. 20.
few tools he did make were only by chance and were very simple. The primitive did not know that he could invent more than what he had. He resided in his primitive state because he did not know, through reflection, that he could be more.\footnote{History as a System, pp. 142-43.} The explanation Ortega offers to show how primitive man eventually advanced is this:

The inventions of primitive man, being, as we have seen, products of pure chance, will obey the laws of probability. Given the number of possible independent combinations of things, a certain possibility exists of their presenting themselves some day in such an arrangement as to enable man to see performed in them a future implement.\footnote{Ibid., p. 145.}

If primitive man was unconscious of his ability to create advanced tools or invent things for his care, what would enable him to suddenly realize something before him as being able to be used? The chance theory is unacceptable, because even if by chance things present themselves in such a way as to be understood, the one who sees this presentation must be capable of recognizing it. It would assume that the viewer knew beforehand that what he saw could be put to a use he wanted. If one puts a pair of pliers in front of a person who always lived in a place where nothing ever needed tightening, the pliers would have no meaning to that person. Spontaneous enlightenment, which is what Ortega is suggesting, does not give an acceptable explanation of the first technicians.
If man needs to reflect in his inner world before he can invent something, and if he is not allowed time for reflection, he can never be expected to achieve that invention. Primitive man, forced to constantly deal with his environment, could not risk his life by shutting himself off from his hostile world. He could never have spent much time in reflection; hence, he could not have invented his basic technology in that manner. Primitive man must have escaped from his original environment to some place less hostile to him. Here, he conceivably had time to rest, contemplate, and make tools more advanced than what he used to have. Flight from the original hostile region was the first step in making technology for man. The life in the jungle or the desert was too precarious for man to spend his time in peaceful thought. Man's migration to more stable areas, places with less hostile environments, allowed man to think, and thus, give man the direction towards a better life.

On Public Power

The ruler in a state, to Ortega, was not he who exercised power; it is he who has the control of authority based on public opinion. The public opinion endorses one to rule by its authority, public power. Public opinion, according to Ortega, is the result of those in command in society giving certain beliefs to the masses. These beliefs
influence the masses and become public opinion. Without this influencing force, there would be no opinions and, hence, no public opinion but merely mass chaos. Since those who rule are also those who most influence public opinion, "there can be no rule in opposition to public opinion."¹

According to Ortega's thinking, if public opinion is only the manipulation of the mass-thinking by the rulers, does it have any real meaning or power? Ortega did not dwell deep enough with this problem to reach a positive conclusion. He is correct to say that the public opinion must correlate to the rulers for the rulers to continue in control. What he failed to mention is that public opinion is not really the ideas of the masses, but the trust of the masses. The state can act contrary to public opinion, but as long as it holds the trust of the people, it will continue to operate, even if the people do not know what it is doing. A state collapses when the trust of the people is shifted from the state to the revolutionary leaders. When this shift is complete, the revolution is successful.

This may not appear as a crucial distinction between Ortega's thinking and this author's, but an explanation will reveal that it is a distinction. There is a vast

¹The Revolt of the Masses, p. 128.
difference between the public opinion and the public trust. One may have an opinion on a certain topic, but he will respect and adhere to the statement of another if he trusts that other. Trust for the other results from the position one holds or the title one has. For instance, if a carpenter is talking to an electrician about his headache, the carpenter will probably simply acknowledge the advice of the electrician regarding a remedy. If the carpenter states the same problem to a doctor, he will follow the advice of the doctor because he has placed trust in the doctor's title. The relationship between the people and the government works in the same manner. The journalist can report a story to the people about the state's action, but if a government spokesman announces an official statement, the people, by their trust in the government, will think that the latter is the truer account.

The historical crisis is that now the governments of the world are being administered more and more by mass-men. The masses outside of government have no more respect or trust for those in government than their fellow neighbors. No one trusts anyone anywhere. It is for this reason that each person holds steadfast to his own opinion. He does not really trust his opinion, but he can not trust anyone else. To counteract this mistrust that is prevalent in mass society, the state must coerce its opinions on the
people. The rise in modern totalitarian states is an example of this. Public opinion does not support the state, but it does not oust the regimes. It is a return to barbarism where one must be always on the lookout for his own welfare. Discussion and persuasion are lost, and force is the only way to accomplish one's ends.

This discussion leads to another of Ortega's misgivings. Ortega wrote that the proper group, well trained and "in shape," could rapidly make social change. Major social change, under the direction of proper leaders, would not have to slowly evolve but could be accomplished in one generation. Ortega wrote that,

> History proceeds very often by jumps. These jumps, in which tremendous distances may be covered, are called generations. A generation in form can accomplish what centuries failed to achieve without form.¹

Ortega seems to be dreaming when he wrote this if he intended it for the modern era. By his own studies he had shown that the generations now of masses are incapable of doing anything, and that there is little hope in the rising youth to remedy the situation. Many changes today that appear to be great social changes are simply the replacing of past perpetrators of injustice for new ones. Social change has a possibility of being actualized, as Ortega said, but the process for its actualization will be

¹The Mission of the University, p. 23.
very long, and it will require the stamina of strong, faithful people to endure the tedious trek toward positive social improvement. It is much easier in modern society to revert a positive social gain into a loss than to accomplish it.

Finally, a word must be said about Ortega's view of the masses. He believed the revolt of the masses to be caused from the failure of past beliefs and the rise of the individual to think himself always right. In this, Ortega was correct. He fails to draw this to its full conclusion, namely, now that the masses think for themselves, what do they use for their beliefs? The answer is that they totally rely on their instincts. This is evident by the masses' total occupation with consumption of materials. Ortega noticed this himself, but he never realized the full meaning of this.¹ The drive toward meaningless consumption is the epitome of dehumanization; it makes mass-man truly kin to the animal. If one places food before a dog, that dog will keep eating it until he gets sick. It has no real hunger; it just eats for the sake of eating. Mass-man

¹"Consumption was regulated by production, and not, as now, production by consumption, which is, according to those who know, the essential mark of capitalism. This, may I say in passing, is a perversion of the natural and correct order of things ... but modern man begins by wanting riches, the acquisitive medium. To this end, he increases production indefinitely, not because he needs the product, but with the intention of getting more wealth. Hence the product, the merchandise becomes the medium, and wealth, money, becomes the ultimate end." Invertebrate Spain, p. 142.
exhibits his basic animal instincts when he produces products just for his consumption. He too, like the animal, has no real need for these extra materials, but simply gorges himself on his own materials. It is this drive to gluttony that is the basic belief of the mass-man. He lives to acquire as much as he can whenever he can.

Aside from the mention of these points, Jose Ortega y Gasset was the genius he is accredited to being because he was one of the first modern thinkers to foresee the perils of the present age. As what often happens, his words have been negligently ignored. This is to be expected, though, for if the mass-men heeded Ortega's warning of their inevitable destruction, they would no longer be the revolting masses they are today.
LIST OF REFERENCES

All works mentioned in the text were written by Jose Ortega y Gasset.


Secondary Sources


The thesis submitted by Thomas Bucaro has been read and approved by members of the Department of Political Science.

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 and form.

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

Dec. 4, 1974

Signature of Advisor