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JOSÉ ORTEGA Y GASSET,
PERSPECTIVES ON THE FORMS OF HUMAN TEMPORALITY

by

JOSEPH F. MARINO

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate
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Abstract

JOSÉ ORTEGA Y GASSET:

PERSPECTIVES ON THE FORMS OF HUMAN TEMPORALITY

by

JOSEPH F. MARINO

Adviser: Professor Charles Sherover

This dissertation is an analysis, interpretation, and critique of the thought of José Ortega y Gasset as it specifically relates to the theme of human temporality, and the possible development of a 'vital' interpretation of philosophical activity.

In the first chapter, attention is devoted to a clarification of the fundamental categories developed by Ortega in his description of the human existential condition.

In the second chapter, the manner in which man, referred to in this study as 'radical-reality', may possibly interpret his world and hence, his own being, is brought into relief. By showing an intrinsic connection among the 'moments' or levels of human existence, viz. 'realism' and 'idealism', and finally 'vital action', it is demonstrated that the mode of one's self-interpretation is subject to one's view of reality. Ortega's own position is illustrated

as a 'synthesis' of both realism and idealism which culminates in a view of human existence defined by 'vital action'.

In the third chapter, the concept of 'authenticity' is developed by depicting the 'genuine self' as the 'future oriented projection' of oneself within a problematic set of circumstances. The relationship between man (radical-reality) and his circumstances is again taken up from the standpoint of radical-reality's ability, and responsibility, to humanize his environment.

In the fourth chapter, analysis is directed towards the notion of the 'Philosophical I', and the temporal character of this possible human activity. Underlying this theme, the question regarding the possible development of a 'vital' understanding of philosophy is brought explicitly into the open. Is it possible for philosophical activity, whose standpoint is characteristically detached from everyday human life, to be a vital activity itself?

Finally, in the concluding chapter, the notion of the 'Vital I' is discussed in terms of the character of the immediacy of human experience qua experience. The primordial temporal orientation of human existence as 'futurity' is once again made explicit and brought into relation with the 'meanings' which radical-reality is free to impose upon his given circumstances.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
I	PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY; A GROUNDWORK FOR HUMAN TEMPORALITY . . .	1
	Scope of the Dissertation	1
	Ortega and the 'Philosophers of Life'.	3
	Ortega and the Philosophy of History .	4
	Ortega and Dilthey	7
	Ortega and Heidegger	10
	Orientation of Method	11
	The Fundamental Categories: The 'I-Circumstance' Unity	14
	Thrown-ness	15
	Circumstantial-Reality	17
	Worldhood	20
	Human Freedom and Destiny	22
	Socialization and Culture	26
	Comments and Questions	30
	The Following Chapter	32
	Footnotes	33
II	THE THREE MOMENTS: A PROCESS OF SELF-INTERPRETATION	39
	The First Moment of Human Existence: 'Realism' as <u>Alteración</u>	40
	Acquired Culture as a Form of <u>Alteración</u>	45
	The Second Moment of Human Existence: 'Idealism' as <u>Ensimismamiento</u>	48
	The Presentation of <u>Ensimisma-</u> <u>mamiento</u> as a Concept	50
	The Characterization of <u>Ensimismamiento</u> from a Temporal Point of View	53

Chapter	Page
The Third Moment of Human Existence: 'Vital Action' as a Synthesis	55
The Role of <u>Ensimismamiento</u> as a Necessary Step in the Synthesis	55
Comments and Questions	62
The Following Chapter	63
Footnotes	65
III AUTHENTICITY AND VOCATION: THE TEMPORALITY OF 'BEING-MYSELF'	69
<u>Hombre-Masa</u> (Mass Man) as the 'Patent' Self; The Temporality of 'Being Inauthentic'	70
The Hero as the 'Latent' Self: The Temporality of 'Being Authentic'	73
Vocation as 'Vital Design': Radical-Reality as the 'Preferential Being'	76
A Note on the Epistemological Status of Vocation	83
Vital Design and the 'Re-Absorption of Circumstance'	85
'Being Shipwrecked' and the Consciousness of Crisis	88
Vocation and the Temporality of Happiness	91
Comments and Questions	98
The Following Chapter	99
Footnotes	100
IV THE 'PHILOSOPHICAL I' AND THE TEMPORALITY OF 'BEING-AWARE'	105
Philosophy as a 'Theoretical Activity'.	106
Philosophy as a 'Sportive'; 'Non-Vital' Activity'	113
The Natural Attitude: A Husserlian Perspective; Theorizing as 'Spectating'	115

Chapter	Page
A Possible Conflict in Ortega's Perspective on Philosophical Activity	117
Two Forms of 'Being Aware': ' <u>Contar Con</u> ' and ' <u>Reparar</u> '	122
The Temporality of the Forms of 'Being Aware'	129
Comments and Questions	136
The Following Chapter	141
Footnotes	143
 V THE 'VITAL I' AND THE TEMPORALITY OF 'BEING WITHIN'	 147
Ortega's Critique of the Principle of Consciousness	148
The Character of Doubt and the Temporality of 'Being in Doubt'	158
Futurity as the Primordial Temporal Orientation of Radical-Reality	161
The Temporality of 'Being Within'	167
Futurity and Meaning	171
Footnotes	175
CRITICAL SUMMARY	179
Footnotes	187
BIBLIOGRAPHY	188

CHAPTER I

PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY: A GROUNDWORK FOR HUMAN TEMPORALITY

. . . men and women are not only themselves; they are also the region in which they were born, the city apartment or the farm in which they learnt to walk, the games they played as children, the old wives' tales they overheard, the food they ate, the schools they attended, the sports they followed, the poets they read, and the God they believed in.¹

W. Somerset Maugham

Scope of the Dissertation

The primary task of this study is the progressive exposition, interpretation, and critical commentary on the temporal essence of human living as it is discovered in the work of José Ortega y Gasset. From a given perspective, the manner in which human living and the being which, in this study, is referred to as 'radical-reality' (realidad radical) is temporally constituted, allows various interpretations. Hence, as the title of this dissertation discloses, I plan to indicate more than one form of human temporality with the key for any of these interpretations being the notion of 'life', 'our life', 'my life', understood as the radical-reality.

The progressive intimacy expressed by the personal pronoun 'my', is essentially more than a mere literary or grammatical qualification. The personal possessive character of human living, its mine-ness, is primordially an existential feature. As a result, although various modes of being temporally constituted are possible for the entity called radical-reality, an explication of that specific mode of being radically temporal is the ultimate goal of this study. The meaning of radical temporality, then, and its significance and implications for the 'possible' development of a 'philosophy of human existence', i.e. the search for a viable understanding of the expression 'vital philosophy', set the parameters for this dissertation.

It is to be demonstrated that an understanding of the forms of human temporality, within the context of José Ortega's thought, is determined by his analysis of the human existential condition. This analysis takes place through an examination of the existential categories which define the unique character of human life. In this context, an existential category is 'definitive' in the sense that it serves to reveal the essence of the phenomenon in question. However, although an apparent 'listing' of life categories is necessitated by the act of 'writing about' the entity called radical-reality, an underlying directive for this study is the understanding that radical-reality is not a mere composite of essentially disjointed elements. Hence, the categories to be analyzed are bound together by an integral relationship which is the genuine locus for their meaning.

Ortega and the 'Philosophers of Life'

In his work, José Ortega y Gasset: Circumstance and Vocation, Julián Marías expresses the manner in which Ortega's analysis and conception of human life is fundamentally distinct from that of the so-called Lebensphilosophie school of thought. According to Marías, the distinction does not reside in their respective interpretations of the phenomenon of human existence; rather, it is a more elemental distinction in terms of the very entity which is the subject of interpretation. To approach Ortega from the standpoint of Lebensphilosophie is to confuse and mistake that which Ortega intends for us to understand by the concept 'radical-reality'.²

Among those associated with Lebensphilosophie is Schopenhauer for whom, according to Marías, "life appears to be united to a certain 'mode of seeing it', and consequently of esteeming it or valuing it."³ Marías's suggestion is that, for Schopenhauer, the issue is not one of grasping life itself as the fundamental phenomenon but rather, of 'interpreting' something called life. As a result, the phenomenon of living, i.e. the phenomenon of life as life is lost and covered-over by the 'theorizing-about' which reduces human existence to the products of intellectual activity. Nietzsche too is considered to be a contributor to this type of Lebensphilosophie in the sense that "while Schopenhauer places absolute value in the non-living, Nietzsche . . . inverts the solution and places living in the position of absolute value."⁴ Accordingly,

the "consciousness of valuation"⁵ is one form of regarding the phenomenon of life from a derivative or secondary point of view. Others such as Bergson and James are likewise subject to similar criticism.⁶ In their thought, asserts Mariás, one discovers "the constant mixture of biological and vital factors in the meaning of human life" ⁷ In essence, life as life remains hidden. Since Lebensphilosophie originates from "various interpretations of life,"⁸ it becomes inevitable that such philosophical or 'theoretical' approaches fail to reveal the radical-ness of life as the "irreducible reality;"⁹ the reality which is 'first' in the sense that only through my life does any other reality make its appearance.

Ortega and the Philosophy of History

In his essay entitled "A Chapter from the History of Ideas—Wilhelm Dilthey and the Idea of Life," Ortega himself supplies us with some additional background which sets the stage for the development of his own position regarding the temporal orientation of human existence. For Ortega, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries retained the belief that man, in the final analysis, "possesses a 'nature', a definite, permanent, and immutable mode of being."¹⁰ This nature, this fixed substratum was no less than reason and as the rational animal, man's essence was seen to be without essential temporal or spatial parameters. This rationalized view of man, in effect, projects man in

the abstract; it is a "constructed idealization"¹¹ which removes the human being from his own vital reality as an actually living entity.

The inverse of this form of 'rationalism', however, is the assertion that 'being human' is essentially 'historical' in character; that "'the substance' of man is precisely his mutable and historical consistency,"¹² and that the being of man is "many and manifold, different in each time and each place."¹³ Such was the apparent perspective and orientation of the Historical School whose character lay in its emphasis upon the description and observation of the "untold patterns"¹⁴ and "stubborn peculiarities"¹⁵ of history or, as Hans Meyerhoff describes the thrust of historicism, it "is a by-product of the romantic revolt against . . . rationalism."¹⁶ As Meyerhoff continues to explain, historicism asserts that the "subject matter of history is human life in its totality and multiplicity,"¹⁷ and it is the business of the historicist attitude "to portray the . . . unsystematic variety of historical forms—people, nations, cultures, customs, institutions, songs . . . in their unique, living expressions and in the process of continuous growth and transformation."¹⁸ One of the specific means for accomplishing this 'historicist task' is, unlike the 'rational' attitude in philosophy, to utilize a "principle of empathy"¹⁹ which Meyerhoff discovers in the historicism of Herder, for example. The historicist attempts to achieve a sense or feeling for a particular person, event, or period, and then

'recreates' the reality.²⁰ The historicist tries, in effect, to bring "past experience in the living thought of the present."²¹ These historicist efforts are precisely the attempts to "bring back to life . . . past shadows of people and movements . . . in their specific and unique characteristics—instead of enshrining them in dry-as-dust categories of philosophy."²²

Nonetheless, although the historicist orientation attempted to combine, according to Ortega, "scientific consciousness with . . . the reality that is human life,"²³ it retained, for Ortega, a "residue of rationalism"²⁴ and "instead of dwelling upon the human variety already lying open before their eyes, they rushed on in search of substantive, immutable man. The idea of historical forms . . . had been conceived, but historical forms were regarded as mere deformations of the human substance."²⁵ Hence, in discussing the Historical School, Ortega comments as follows:

Satisfied to see and to describe, [italics mine] rejecting intellectual construction as prone to do violence to reality and to behave antihistorically, those thinkers failed to give to their vision an adequate architecture. . . . It is not enough to elucidate past events so that they can be discerned in their purity. History is not only seeing; [italics mine] it is thinking what has been seen. And in one sense or another, thinking is always construction.²⁶

As a result, the Historical School, despite its individualistic orientation, reduces itself to a form of "positivism"²⁷ applied to "human phenomena,"²⁸ a method, according to Ortega, "content with merely seeing, [italics mine]

and did not proceed to effective historical thinking."²⁹
 In effect, historicism establishes the 'past' as its primordial theme and, in doing so, sets out to 'make present' to the consciousness of the observing historian the 'facts' of history for analysis.

Ortega and Dilthey

The most prominent of the Lebens philosophers and, for Ortega, "the most important philosopher in the second half of the nineteenth century,"³⁰ was Wilhelm Dilthey. According to Ortega, Dilthey was among the first to discover the Idea of Life. However, this Idea "which at its first appearance had seemed so easy to lay hands on, proved more and more elusive to any attempt at capture by clear concepts."³¹

Dilthey's efforts to formulate a uniquely 'historical reason' and to develop a "critique of historical reason"³² relied upon the fundamental structure of consciousness as the basis for all knowledge.³³ Citing Dilthey, Ortega points out that, for this thinker, "all science is empirical; but all experience has its original connection in the conditions of our consciousness wherein it arises—in the whole of our nature."³⁴ Although Dilthey is concerned with an historical study of man and is, therefore, aware of the "historical consciousness"³⁵ which avoids an "apriori"³⁶ definition of man in terms of a single and immutable form,³⁷ the "general science of man," for Dilthey, has "for the subject matter of its investigation the whole of human nature. . . ." ³⁸ As

Ortega points out, the general means for carrying out such an investigation is, within Dilthey's context, "experience" or the "psychology of oneself,"³⁹ and "history"⁴⁰ which reveals something about man in the past. As Ortega views it, therefore, Dilthey's methodology understands first, that man "assumes . . . varied and diverse forms"; second, that man's present "includes a past . . . to have a past and to come out of it"; third, that recalling our past is an "interpretation" of the present; fourth, that each of these aspects of his (Dilthey's) orientation assists the historian in the formulation of a kind of "universal history" by producing a view of man "from the viewpoint of all mankind in so far as mankind forms an actual and real unity, not an abstract ideal. . . ."41

It appears, then, that Ortega's concern with the Historical School and the work of Dilthey revolves around the following considerations: first, the fundamental attitude by both the Historical School and Dilthey that 'history' is a matter of interpretive analysis of the 'past' in so far as the 'past' is the essential, i.e. fundamental, horizon for historical concerns; second, Ortega's own conviction that an attitude which elevates the past as the primordial or fundamental temporal horizon in which human existence and its meaning is revealed fails to formulate a concept of effective historical thinking in the sense that thought may be most genuinely understood as a constructive function of

the human reality; third, Dilthey's underlying pre-disposition that 'consciousness' is the basis of experience and that through "self-reflection,"⁴² the historian may conduct his "analysis of the human phenomenon as such."⁴³ In his emphasis upon this last point, Ortega states that, for Dilthey, "self-reflection . . . reveals that what is given in consciousness is, first . . . integral connectedness. . . . At the same time, self-reflection reveals that this connected unity is the ultimate reality that can be reached."⁴⁴ This last point serves as a contrast and a point of entry into the distinct character of Ortega's thought. Dilthey affirms the inherent 'connectedness' of experience, however, the primordial locus or foundation of this essential unity is consciousness itself. In his own work, The Idea of Principle in Leibnitz [sic] and The Evolution of Deductive Theory, Ortega asserts his own opposition to this 'principle of consciousness' and claims that the primary reality is indeed, not the 'subject-object' relationship inherent in the intentionality of consciousness, but rather a "man in relation to things and things to man, that is, human existence."⁴⁵ Ortega is suggesting a transcendence of the 'historical' reason of Dilthey to what, in this study, is referred to as 'vital' reason. In effect, although Dilthey was among the first to discover the Idea of Life in terms of the individuality of man and his elusiveness from being subsumed under a single, unchangeable form, Ortega views Dilthey's reliance upon 'consciousness' as the reason why he "stopped midway"⁴⁶ towards an authentic grasp

of the radical-ness of human living.

Ortega and Heidegger

Although he is not specifically a member of the Lebensphilosophie group, it is important to distinguish the philosophical endeavor of Martin Heidegger from that of Ortega. In his work, Being and Time (1927), Heidegger's analysis of human existence asserts the "possibility and necessity of the most radical individuation"⁴⁷ for the entity called Dasein; however, this radical character of Dasein's being serves, for Heidegger, as a point of departure for the task of disclosing the 'meaning of Being'. The analysis of human existence becomes the "guiding line for all philosophical inquiry";⁴⁸ however, for Heidegger, the analytic of Dasein remains provisional and preparatory. The radical character of human existence is not the primary goal of the philosophical enterprise; rather, it is a prelude through which philosophy seeks to address the 'Being-Question'.

For Ortega, on the other hand, the guiding theme is radical-reality in and for itself. Radical-reality is Ortega's starting point and his destination; it is the root reality within which all other realities make their appearance for me. Radical-reality is the fundamental reality and hence, for Ortega, there is no 'Being-Question'; no general ontology which over-rides the radical-ness of human living.

Orientation of Method

According to Julián Marías, the failure of Lebensphilosophie to grasp the 'vitality' of human living is due to a lack of "adequate method"⁴⁹ which implies that the 'interpretive' approach towards life leaves life itself unresolved. The 'life' of Lebensphilosophie is not the radical-reality itself but an accumulation of 'theories about' life.⁵⁰ Hence the difficulty, referred to by Ortega, in grasping the Idea of Life through "clear concepts."⁵¹ Ortega, according to Marías, "does not at first give the name of 'life' to the reality he has discovered."⁵² The "philosophical sense"⁵³ of life which Ortega eventually arrives at in his analysis evolves from an original intuition that the reality, the radical-reality, is "neither more nor less than life, not in the sense in which the philosophers have used this word, but in the more immediate and radical sense that it has in language."⁵⁴

Ortega is careful to emphasize the non-theoretical character of the notion of 'radical-reality'. For Ortega, theory carries within itself a sense of the 'non-vital', rigid detachment of a mere 'talking about' or 'looking at'; it becomes a derivative account of 'something' established as an object for observation by conscious reflection.

. . . fasten your attention on the common meaning which the word 'life' has when each human being—the sage as well as the peasant or the savage—talks of his life and says that things in it are

going well or bad for him, in short, of life in the biographic sense of the term.

.
 I am not, then, creating a theory about our life. . . . My mission for now is only to make you become aware of the essential components of your lives, of the principle ingredients which make up its structure.⁵⁵

In contrast to the Platonic requirements for 'giving an account' of the essence of something or providing the logos which amounts to a clear 'seeing' of the rational structure of the phenomenon in question, for Ortega, such 'intellectualization' of life, for example, covers over or misses the immediacy and radical-ness which makes the phenomenon what it is. For Ortega, life is 'evident' to itself. Evidence, in this sense, is the very immediacy in and through which living makes itself manifest to me. Accordingly, within the Ortegan analysis, it is not necessary to 'rationalize' the structure of life and develop any formal or theoretical interpretation regarding its structure. Living is evident to me in so far as it is as it shows itself to me in my living. Hence;

. . . see whether the same theory that is being talked about and is here in front of us fulfills just what our words are saying about it, this is what is called evidence. And when something has been said that is evident in that sense, one has uttered an absolute truth.⁵⁶

Again, consider the following:

All the evident truths have this characteristic-- that when we discover them for the first time, it seems to us that we have always known them, but had not noticed them; there they were before us,

but veiled and covered. Therefore, it is true that truth is discovered; perhaps truth is no more than discovery.* the lifting of a veil or a cover from what was already there and on which we were already counting.**57 (italics mine)

Hence, it is the 'immediate and radical sense which life has in the language of the people' to which 'philosophical speech' must accomodate itself. It is not life which adjusts itself to theory, but theory which must 'discover life' as it appears to me in the very act of my living.

*Regarding the notion of truth as 'discovery', see José Ortega y Gasset, The Origin of Philosophy, trans. Toby Talbot (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1967), pp. 62-63. Ortega states: "Aletheia . . . presents philosophy for what it is—an endeavor at discovery . . . to place us in contact with the naked reality itself.

Aletheia signifies truth. For truth must not be regarded as the dead thing that twenty-six centuries of custom and inertia would have us believe, but as a verb—something alive, something at its moment of attainment, of birth; in short, as action. . . . we often speak about the 'naked truth', a tautology. That which is naked is reality and denuding it is the truth, inquiry, or aletheia."

In addition to this, see also Ortega's essay "Notes on Thinking," found in the W.W. Norton publication Concord and Liberty. The original title is "Apuntes sobre el Pensamiento," Obras Completas (11 vols.; 7th ed.; Madrid, Spain: Revista de Occidente, 1970), V, 525. It reads as follows: "Es hacer patente lo oculto, es desnudarlo de sus velos, des-cubrirlo. Y esa manera de estar algo ante nosotros nudificado es su "verdad". Por eso es redundancia hablar de la "verdad desnuda". Ortega is re-emphasizing the redundancy of the expression 'naked truth'. To 'un-veil' something is to make it patent, i.e. true.

8*The notion of 'counting upon' (contar con) is a key concept which is to re-appear in Chapter IV of this study. I emphasize the expression here because it stresses the idea that 'life' possesses a primordial character, i.e. that life 'supports' or 'grounds' us in a way which is often 'hidden from view'. Hence, the rising paradox that life is, at once, 'evident to me' and yet 'hidden'; 'taken for granted'.

In the remaining sections of this chapter, I plan to introduce and clarify the basic existential categories which serve to bring into relief the structure of radical-reality. But the very act of 'bringing into relief' is no less than the process of 'dis-covering' or 'making patent' the truth of that which is already there but which goes un-noticed. Within this process of 'dis-covering', however, there resides a distinct and unavoidable philosophical intention. In other words, there appears to be an inescapable philosophical character to Ortega's analysis despite his inclinations away from a so-called 'conceptual' approach to human existence. There is, at least, an ambivalent character attached to what Ortega is doing in terms of his 'non-theoretical' understanding of human living. As a result, an underlying question directing the course of this study addresses the possibility of such an orientation, and the means for dealing with this question are to become more explicit as the perspectives regarding human existence and human temporality are developed.

The Fundamental Categories: The 'I-Circumstance' Unity

In order to view the advance of this study, it is necessary to achieve immediately a point of departure; a starting point which is also a goal. The initial approach towards radical-reality is achieved through Ortega's notion that living is a 'confrontation' between ourselves and our circumstances or, better, between myself and my circumstances

within which I discover myself to have my being.⁵⁸ But the very notion of 'confrontation', and the apparent numerical assertion that there are two distinct elements which constitute this confrontation which is the very character of human life, already suggests an abstraction inappropriate for an adequate understanding of Ortega's meaning. The confrontation between the 'I' and the I's circumstances is essentially not the meeting of two existentially separable components. Although 'I' and 'circumstance' may be conceptually distinguishable, for Ortega, they represent a united and essentially integrated existential system.

We are born with it . . . world and person are vitally like those pairs of divinities of ancient Greece and Rome who were born together and lived together; the Heavenly Twins . . . Castor and Pollux . . . the unanimous gods.⁵⁹

Thrown-ness

The initial encounter between radical-reality and the circumstantial aspect of his being is effected and described by means of the phenomenon or event called 'thrownness' or 'being thrown'. This existential category embraces both a temporal and a spatial signification in the ordinary sense that each radical-reality finds himself in a definite historical and geographical locus "without knowing how he got there."⁶⁰ Radical-reality finds himself "projected into and submerged in . . . a set of fixed surroundings."⁶¹ In a chronological sense, then, radical-reality is existentially

'determined' because of his 'thrown condition'. One's initial environment is not selected but is imposed upon each human being. "At the moment of coming alive I am thrown* [he sido lanzado] into a set of surroundings, into a chaotic, stinging swarm of things. . . . "62 Suddenly, and without benefit of choice, each radical-reality is immersed within a network of situations; a package of problems and obstacles, assets and conveniences, whose dimensions are 'place and date', 'time and space', 'geography and history'. Hence, although the notion of 'being thrown' is a general existential category applicable to each and every radical-reality, each occurrence of 'being thrown' is essentially the radically personal and possessive event of 'my being thrown'.

Thrown-ness, therefore, becomes the means by which radical-reality enters the existential arena and by reason of his presence, completes and fulfills that arena. Radical-reality and the circumstances into which he is thrown provide for each other a mutual and complementary relationship. Nonetheless, to this point, only the presence of a relationship is established; the fact of a mutual 'standing against'. In order to round out this portion of the study, therefore, it becomes necessary to determine the nature of this unique existential union by making a conceptual distinction regarding the 'circumstantial' aspect of the phenomenon.

*See also Ortega's comment in Some Lessons in Metaphysics, p. 41 wherein he states: "Life is given to us—or better, it is thrown at us, or we are thrown into it. . . . "

Circumstantial-Reality

In order to eliminate any terminological ambiguities, I am about to specify the use of such terms as 'circumstance', 'surroundings', and 'environment' as basically synonymous.

In a preliminary sense, it may be stated that the 'circumstances' into which each radical-reality is thrown is an ambit constituted by situations and opportunities which may either assist or hinder the plans, projects, or ambitions of the radical-reality who must deal with them. In short, circumstances is "that which affects us"⁶³ in whatever manner. But encountering my circumstances as 'that which stands against', as 'the other', is also an occasion for discovering myself; my own radically personal being. Once this discovery has been made, radical-reality simultaneously discovers the need to 'deal with' this 'other'.⁶⁴ Immediately, radical-reality is revealed as one who must fashion his own 'working relationship' with the given environment. In effect, "I am given . . . the inexorable necessity of having to do something under the threat of ceasing to live."⁶⁵ The resistant character of my circumstances, then, motivates my activities. Radical-reality is provisionally understood, therefore, in terms of his status as a problem solver, as one who is forced to 'cope with' his environment. Hence, "all living is a matter of busying oneself with the other person, the other living thing, the other matter that is not oneself. . . ."⁶⁶

The relationship between radical-reality and his circumstances emerges as one which is intrinsically paradoxical. Person and environment stand in mutual interdependence and primordially with each other; each aspect of the existential equation fulfilling the other within a unified vital system. But in turn, the relationship exhibits an equally primordial antagonistic character. The inherent 'opposition' between myself and my circumstances; the series of obstacles and difficulties, problems and questions which face me, define for me my own special, i.e. personal, existential tasks.

In a metaphorical way. Ortega describes the character of this existential relationship between radical-reality and his surroundings as 'dramatic'* in as much as "each one must go on doing for himself [*italics mine*] moment after moment, in a perpetual tension of affliction and hardship, without ever having complete security within himself."⁶⁷ For Ortega, the understanding emerges that human living is essentially an unfinished occupation; "it is the happening of something to someone... ."⁶⁸ The gerund 'living', therefore, is the most appropriate form for expressing this 'happening' since it emphasizes the inherently incomplete and problematic character of the phenomenon. Hence, living is not understood

*See Ortega's Man and Crisis, p. 32 where the author states: "Drama is not a thing which is there—it is not in any real sense a thing, a static being—but drama happens, it occurs. . . ." Perhaps, then, 'metaphorical' is not the way in which 'drama' relates to 'life'?

as a mere "being here,"*⁶⁹ [estar ahí], but rather, as a perpetual 'making of myself' in the face of the problematic environment which stands against me.

The need to 'create myself' is consistent with the notion that circumstantial-reality is 'other' than myself. In addition, it implies a peculiar temporal characterization regarding the being of radical-reality. Employing an appropriate Heideggerian expression, it may be said that, if human living were no more than 'presence at hand', i.e. an entity or 'thing' whose nature was definable in static and closed terms, there would be no need for 'creating' the phenomenon. Likewise, there would be no circumstantial problem as such since the nature or 'being' of the entity would be 'given' and, therefore, automatically self-fulfilling. There is no dramatic encounter between things which are already there. For things 'present at hand', no happening can occur which alters in any essential respect their fixed natures. Hence, my existing which is also a 'resisting'⁷⁰ is the motivation for fashioning myself. As a result, 'dealing with' implies the construction of the being which I am to be.

*The expression "being here" (estar ahí), also translated as "being there," is significant. Although it is not emphasized by Ortega in the present context (Man and Crisis, 1933), nor formally developed by Ortega as a specific philosophical term, it appears as early as Ortega's Meditations on Quixote, trans. Evelyn Rugg and Diego Marín (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1961), p. 145. Ortega states: "But reality is a simple and frightening 'being there'. It is presence . . . an inertia." In the original text, the expression is stressed: "Mas la realidad es un simple y pavoroso 'estar ahí'." Obras Completas, I, 387. Hence, "being there" represents the kind of being not appropriate for radical-reality in so far as it misses the notion of 'construction' as a necessary human task.

Worldhood

Each human being is initially 'disoriented' in the face of the 'other-ness' of his environment; he is, in terms of Ortega's own metaphorical expressions, 'lost' and 'shipwrecked'. Radical-reality's initial task, then, is to regain or, better, to first gain order and stabilize his own being. 'Having a task' is essentially definitive in so far as human living is characterized as a problem solving enterprise. Since human living is not closed or 'something-present-at-hand', it must be continually created. As a result, from the 'circumstantial problem', a 'world solution' is devised; my response to my surroundings, my way of dealing with the circumstances which resist me.

The introduction of the notion 'world solution' establishes a new dimension in the existential analysis. From the blatant encounter with his problem ridden circumstantial-reality, the initial dimension of human living, radical-reality then projects "an intent or an effort to resolve the problem."⁷¹ According to Ortega, radical-reality exerts an intellectual effort, "an architectural design of the pure problem, of the chaos which in the first instance our surroundings appear to be."⁷² Hence, "this architectural design which thought lays over our surroundings, interpreting them, we call world, or universe. This is not given to us, nor is it simply there; it is created by our convictions."⁷³ Radical-reality, then, sets out to construct or adopt a repertoire

of ideas, convictions, beliefs, and methods for ordering his existence. Radical-reality becomes an active participant in the existential arena as he assumes the role of 're-ordering', 're-structuring', 'modifying', and 'controlling' the initial insecurity of his given circumstances. Accordingly, "the world is the instrument par excellence"* which man produces, and . . . the act of producing it is one and the same thing as his life, his being. Man is born a fabricator of universes."⁷⁴

Nevertheless, although radical-reality is thrown into a definite 'historical period' which is generally shareable with others, an 'era' characterized by certain publicly available dimensions in terms of its problems and opportunities, each individual, in his radical 'alone-ness', must deal with this period on his own.⁷⁵ As the historical circumstances are given, therefore, the response to them is constructed. Once again, all of this indicates that the very necessity for a 'creative response' to my circumstances reveals the essentially problematic character of human living, and the act of re-structuring my environment is, at the same time, an attempt at 'self-construction'. So, "man constructs himself, whether he wishes to or not—hence the profound phrase of St. Paul, oikodumein, the need that man be a builder. . . . We are the novelists of our selves. . . ." ⁷⁶

*Ortega emphasizes the 'instrumental' character of man in a sentence found in an essay under the general heading "Espíritu de la Letra," Obras Completas, III, 555. Man is, for Ortega, "el homo faber, o, como Franklin solía llamarle, animal instrumentificum."

Figuratively, the convictions and methods by means of which radical-reality responds "against the basic insecurity of life,"⁷⁷ constitute the "raft"⁷⁸ upon which existence is steadied, and since radical-reality has no nature in the sense of being 'present at hand', it is "a matter of inescapable necessity"⁷⁹ to possess such a repertoire of beliefs and an arsenal of vital interpretations.

As a result, "the basic and truest meaning of the word life is not biological but biographical; and this is the meaning it has always had in the language of the people."⁸⁰ A biological interpretation of human life assigns to the phenomenon a nature with a determined character, a 'being' completely settled and predictable with no essential possibilities. The biographical sense of human living, however, indicates that human life is to be understood in terms of its 'doings', the plans according to which radical-reality conducts his living, the decisions which are executed.⁸¹

If . . . actions and occupations which compose our living were produced in us mechanically, the result would not be human life. The automaton does not live. The whole difficulty of the matter is that life is not given us ready made. Like it or not, we must go along from instant to instant, deciding for our-~~ourselves~~ selves. . . . the life of man is an ever recurrent problem. . . . There is simply no possible life . . . which is not essentially characterized by its proceeding with reference to some plan.⁸²

Human Freedom and Destiny

The need to construct a plan of action for myself indicates that human living is oriented towards a field or

an "atmosphere of definite possibilities."⁸³ Accordingly, circumstantial-reality is also characterized by its lack of a 'settled being'. Human existence, then, "is precisely freedom to be."⁸⁴ Although circumstances are inexorably imposed upon each individual, once within those given circumstances, radical-reality discovers the equally inexorable responsibility and necessity to choose or decide upon a life interpretation from among the limited and definite possibilities offered.⁸⁵ In short, each individual is required to 'sustain himself', to 'uphold himself in his own being'.⁸⁶

. . . our times form our destiny. . . . The present, in which the past—the individual and the historic past—is summarized and condensed, is that portion of fate which intervenes in our life; in this sense life always carries a fatal dimension and some hint of having fallen into a trap. Except that this trap does not strangle us, but leaves to life a margin of decision and always permits us, out of the imposed situation, to achieve an elegant solution and to forge for ourselves a beautiful life. Hence . . . life is part fate, and part the freedom we need to make decisions for ourselves. . . .⁸⁷

In terms of its possibilities, the circumstantial ambit offers opportunities for action on the part of radical-reality and, hence, assumes the possibility of human freedom. Freedom as an existential category thus emanates from both 'myself' as a radical-reality, and from my 'circumstances'. The offerings of the environment "force us to choose. . . . To live is to feel oneself fatally obliged to exercise our liberty."⁸⁸ In terms of its limitations, my circumstances 'determine' the extent of the possibilities available to me,⁸⁹ however, the very possibility for

decision making by radical-reality is the result of these "relative determinations"⁹⁰ which constitute my environment.

Genuine possibilities are not unlimited, therefore, but are determinate and exclusive of others. "Circumstance is something determined, closed, but at the same time open and with internal latitude. . . ."⁹¹ My freedom is, then, bound to the determinations of my surroundings; the "determined and inexorable repertory of possibilities"⁹² which define my thrown condition. I am given a destiny which in turn may be modified and 'given form' by my 'doings', by the decisions which each radical-reality executes upon the raw material of his circumstances. "Life is at the same time freedom and fatality; it is being within a given destiny. . . . We accept the fatality and within it we decide on a destiny."⁹³ So, although circumstances provide the range of possibilities, each individual must choose a particular destiny for himself, a particular thing to do, a particular way to be. As a result, if reality itself was completely determined, then living would not possess the problematic character it does; on the other hand, if reality was completely un-determined, with un-limited possibilities, then the possibility of definite choices would not be available to radical-reality; there would, in effect, be no parameters within which radical-reality could 'rationally' select viable alternatives for himself.

. . . one must have to be doing something, but when he finds himself facing so many different possibilities of doing, or being, he does not know which to choose. . . . Man's existence is a constant cross-roads. . . . Faced with this keyboard of possible things to do, we are free to prefer one or another; but the keyboard, as a whole, is fateful. Surrounding circumstances make up the circle of fatality which forms part of that reality which we call life. And . . . this fateful character of our surroundings, of the world in which we live, does not oblige us to do or to be any one single thing. . . . Within the destiny marked out by your environment, you are free; even more, you are fatefully free because you have no choice, like it or not, but to select your future within the range and margin that your fateful environment offers you.⁹⁴

The category of human freedom and its correlate 'fate' or 'destiny', imply a definite temporal orientation. If the understanding of this feature of human existence remains on the level of a 'mere picking and choosing' from among a given set of possibilities, the notion of that which may be called radical freedom remains hidden. Radical-reality needs to 'create itself', to 'give form' to ~~his~~ own being. The individual assumes an active role in deciding, to some extent, what its possibilities can be. Radical-reality is not simply subject to possibilities but possesses a certain capacity for discovering possibilities 'not present at hand'. To conceptualize the very notion of possibility as something which is 'here awaiting my response' is to misrepresent the manner in which radical-reality may most authentically comport himself towards the possible. Being attentive to possibilities is, in effect, to be 'future oriented', "leaning towards it [the future] , attentive to it. . . . Having to decide implies that my being is never decided ahead of time. . . . "⁹⁵

Socialization and Culture

The existential feature of radical-reality which next throws itself into prominence is the primordial social character of human life. The qualification that 'being social' is primordial for radical-reality indicates that 'being with' is a definitive aspect of that entity's existential condition.

Recall that each human being needs to devise an interpretation of his essentially problematic environment. The ideas, opinions, methods, and convictions which compose this interpretation are, initially, a product of my thrown condition in the sense that 'being thrown' implants the individual into an ambience of 'things' and 'other men'. This ambience or society offers radical-reality an already created interpretation of life, a given repertoire of ideas, a given set of "ruling convictions about the universe."⁹⁶ Hence, 'being thrown' includes 'being given over to' that which may be described as the 'thought of our time'; "the mass of circumambient convictions in which we find ourselves. . . . ready made solutions for the problems of our lives."⁹⁷ From the beginning, then, each radical-reality is 'socialized' in so far as he is handed a package of inherited beliefs, whether they be ideological or technical, social or scientific in character, which are imposed through custom, tradition, or "usage";⁹⁸ they are, in effect, "ideas received from the outside."⁹⁹

Ortega's spatial description regarding the origin of one's ideas, i.e. his assertion that they are received from the outside, relates directly to my earlier reference to the notion of radical freedom. 'Being socialized' overcomes the radical-ness of human freedom in as much as the strictly social possibilities are simply 'there' awaiting their turn to be chosen; they are outside myself in the sense that they have not been created by me. As a result, a crucial question emerges regarding the possibility of 'radical-freedom'. In what sense does a human being possess freedom 'of his own' in terms of creating possibilities not already there? In what sense can radical-reality transcend his socialized state of being if, in fact, transcendence is possible at all?

Nonetheless, 'being socialized' is itself an interpretation of reality. In so far as human being is initially social, his thrown condition encourages an understanding of reality in terms of the 'social', i.e. in terms of that which is 'already present' in my environment. Within this framework, there is again a definite temporal implication and orientation; an attitude which interprets 'my living' as a matter of 'making present' the already available 'possibles' which are there around me. My 'doings' are not viewed as a genuine process of 'bringing into being' or creation of possibilities but as an acceptance and passing on of possibilities already 'there'.

. . . ordinarily we live installed, too safely installed, within the security of our habitual, inherited, topical ideas, until we become accustomed to taking them for reality itself; the result is that we do not understand even our own ideas, but think them in vacuo, without proof.¹⁰⁰

'Being social', then, is grounded upon that which Ortega refers to as the natural attitude,* the fundamental orientation of radical-reality towards that which is 'outside', towards the other, towards the surroundings of my thrown condition.¹⁰¹ This natural attitude or realism acknowledges that "reality is things and their utility, or the real world."¹⁰² For Ortega, this sense of realism is chronologically prior in so far as it is "the first in human history and in each man."¹⁰³ From within this so-called natural attitude, then, radical-reality "has his world set so that it starts from his belief that it is found there."¹⁰⁴ But this realist attitude also indicates the manner in which radical-reality comes to interpret his own being. Since realism's attitude is the "first in the reaction of the individual mind," and "meets the characteristics or attributes of being in the thing,"¹⁰⁵ radical-reality subsequently understands his own being in terms of the 'being of the thing'. Hence, radical-reality views itself "as a thing of the external world."¹⁰⁶

*Supporting the 'natural' character of this attitude, see Ortega's Some Lessons In Metaphysics, p. 106, where he states that there is an "almost instinctive resort of the genuine 'I' to the unauthentic social 'I' unauthentic, because . . . I am not the others, not 'the people'. 'The People' . . . is not born and does not die . . . does not have to decide its being, does not think for itself but only repeats thoughts. . . . "

Once again, the 'thing interpretation' of radical-reality carries within itself a definite temporal significance. As Ortega states it, when explicating the 'realist' attitude, "things are what is already here. . . . The aggregate of things is the world. This world is here and I am in it; I am a piece of it. . . ." ¹⁰⁷ The understanding of 'thing' as that which is 'already present', is that which is 'already here before us' in its being; it is settled. This is precisely the meaning of 'culture' in Ortega's sense. The secure, pre-fabricated network of 'ways and means' through which radical-reality settles his relationship with circumstantial-reality provide the individual with at least adequate methods for "keeping afloat" ¹⁰⁸ amidst the shipwreck of his initially thrown condition. Culture, then, is an "abstract, generic, schematic" ¹⁰⁹ framework to which radical-reality can refer when confronted by a circumstantial problem. But once again, note the temporal implications of the 'culture' phenomenon.

For the very reason that an effective solution has been created, for the very reason that "here it is," subsequent generations do not have to create it, but to inherit and develop it. . . . the inheritance which frees one from the effort of creation has the disadvantage of being an invitation to inertia. He who receives an idea from his forebears tends to save himself the effort of rethinking it and recreating it within himself. ¹¹⁰

But this intuition regarding the temporal quality of the culture phenomenon was expressed by Ortega as early as 1914 when, in his Meditations on Quixote, he states that "culture presents us with objects already purified which once possessed

a spontaneous and immediate life, and which now, thanks to our reflective process, seem free from time and space. . . . They form, as it were, a zone of ideal and abstract life, floating above this personal existence of ours. . . . "111

It is appropriate to note, at this point, that the Ortegian objection to realism is similar in kind to his rejection of the Historical School which, in Ortega's phrase, failed to produce an 'effective historical consciousness'. The temporal orientation of the Historical School and the form of 'realism' described in this chapter places emphasis upon 'making present' the past. For Ortega, however, the radical-reality can construct his own being and by being constructive, this entity exhibits a future oriented dimension in his being. Radical-reality is never finished in his living but is understood in terms of his plans, projects, and ambitions. Ortega's suggestion for a re-interpretation of human temporality, therefore, is the means by which the notion of 'vital reason' comes into relief. But the very possibility of such a re-interpretation motivates several questions and observations.

Comments and Questions

Ortega exhibits an apparently contradictory attitude towards the status of 'thought' or intellection. Although 'thinking about' life is a derivative and secondary form of activity, once removed from the actual process of living, that very process, vitality itself, is characterized as a

form of thought, an 'architectural design' by means of which radical-reality deals with his circumstances. A crucial task, therefore, is to clarify and resolve this ambiguity by defining the place of 'thinking' within vitality itself. Hence, the clarification of this question includes a clarification of the temporal character of 'thinking' from various perspectives.

An additional question which relates to the being of the entity called radical-reality revolves around the possibility of 'radical freedom'. In what sense does radical-reality possess the possibility to be himself? On what basis can radical-reality transcend his initial and natural socialization and hence arrive at an interpretation of himself which abandons 'presence at hand' as the primary temporal mode of self-interpretation?

Finally, how can the Ortega analysis of human existence resolve the dilemma of philosophical activity? If philosophical or 'conceptual' attempts to capture the essence of human life are theoretical and, therefore, secondary activities, how can any 'account' or 'explicit saying' become vital? If 'making ~~patent~~' is the un-covering of that which is already there before me, and if such un-covering is the essence of truth, how does the criterion of evidence, in its immediate and radical sense, relate to philosophy? In effect, can philosophy itself be interpreted as a vital form of activity?

The Following Chapter

By utilizing the categories introduced in this chapter, Chapter II of this dissertation is to develop the stages or 'moments' through which radical-reality may conduct and interpret his own being. In brief, these stages are 'realism', 'idealism', and 'vital action', however, it is important to emphasize a dynamic relationship between these stages rather than a mere 'linking together' of strictly distinct items. The task of the following chapter, then, is to present the character of these moments or levels of human development in terms of their relationship to each other, and to assess their adequacy for resolving the search for a possible 'vital philosophy' within the context of an appropriate temporal interpretation of human existence.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER I

¹W. Somerset Maugham, The Razor's Edge (Philadelphia: The Blakiston Company, 1944), p. 2.

²Julián Marías, José Ortega y Gasset: Circumstance and Vocation, trans. Frances M. Lopez-Morillas (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970), pp. 380-81.

³Ibid., p. 78.

⁴Ibid., pp. 78-79.

⁵Ibid., p. 79.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid., pp. 79-80.

⁸Ibid., p. 80.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰José Ortega y Gasset, "A Chapter from the History of Ideas—Wilhelm Dilthey and the Idea of Life," Concord and Liberty, trans. Helene Weyl (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1946), p. 148.

¹¹Ibid., p. 149.

¹²Ibid., p. 148.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Hans Meyerhoff, "History and Philosophy: An Introduction," The Philosophy of History in Our Time: An Anthology (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1959), p. 9.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 10.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 11.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid.

²³Ortega y Gasset, "A Chapter from the History of Ideas," Concord and Liberty, pp. 143-44.

²⁴Ibid., p. 148.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid., p. 149.

²⁷Ibid., p. 152.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid., p. 153.

³⁰Ibid., p. 131.

³¹Ibid., p. 132.

³²Ibid., p. 154.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Ibid., p. 163.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 166-67.

⁴²Ibid., p. 178.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 180.

⁴⁵José Ortega y Gasset, The Idea of Principle in Leibnitz and the Evolution of Deductive Theory, trans. Mildred Adams (New York: W.W. Norton & Compant, Inc. 1971) p. 281.

⁴⁶Ortega y Gasset, "A Chapter from the History of Ideas," Concord and Liberty, p. p. 140.

⁴⁷Martin Heidegger, Being and Time, trans. John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson (New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 62.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Mariás, Circumstance and Vocation, p. 381.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Ortega y Gasset, "A Chapter from the History of Ideas," Concord and Liberty, p. 132.

⁵²Mariás, Circumstance and Vocation, p. 381.

⁵³Ibid., p. 382.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵José Ortega y Gasset, Some Lessons in Metaphysics, trans. Mildred Adams (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1969), pp. 55-56.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 56.

⁵⁷Ibid., pp. 49-50.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 40.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰José Ortega y Gasset, "The Structure of Life, The Substance of History," Man and Crisis, trans. Mildred Adams (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1958), p. 22.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Ortega y Gasset, "Truth as Man in Harmony with Himself," Man and Crisis, pp. 109-110.

⁶³Ortega y Gasset, Some Lessons in Metaphysics, p. 39.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 89.

⁶⁶Ibid., pp. 39-40.

⁶⁷Ortega y Gasset, "The Idea of the Generation," Man and Crisis, p. 32.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰José Ortega y Gasset, "Personal Life," Man and People, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1957), pp. 40-41.

⁷¹Ortega y Gasset, "The Structure of Life, The Substance of History," Man and Crisis, p. 24.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Ortega y Gasset, "The Idea of the Generation," Man and Crisis, p. 36.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 34.

⁷⁶Ortega y Gasset, "Fifteenth-Century Man," Man and Crisis, p. 176.

⁷⁷Ortega y Gasset, "The Idea of the Generation," Man and Crisis, p. 34.

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹José Ortega y Gasset, Mission of the University, trans. Howard Lee Nostrand (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1944), p. 70.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 71.

⁸¹Ibid., pp. 70-71.

⁸²Ibid., p. 71.

⁸³José Ortega y Gasset, The Revolt of the Masses, trans. anonymous (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1932), p. 41.

⁸⁴Ortega y Gasset, "The Other as Danger, and The I as Surprise," Man and People, p. 156.

⁸⁵José Ortega y Gasset, What Is Philosophy?, trans. Mildred Adams (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1960), p. 241.

- ⁸⁶Ortega y Gasset, Some Lessons in Metaphysics, p. 42.
- ⁸⁷Ortega y Gasset, What Is Philosophy?, p. 248.
- ⁸⁸Ortega y Gasset, Revolt of the Masses, p. 48.
- ⁸⁹Ortega y Gasset, What Is Philosophy?, p. 241.
- ⁹⁰Ibid.
- ⁹¹Ibid.
- ⁹²Ibid.
- ⁹³Ibid.
- ⁹⁴Ortega y Gasset, Some Lessons in Metaphysics, pp. 92-93.
- ⁹⁵Ibid., p. 91.
- ⁹⁶Ortega y Gasset, "The Structure of Life, The Substance of History," Man and Crisis, p. 26.
- ⁹⁷Ibid.
- ⁹⁸Ortega y Gasset, "Reflections on the Salutation. Etymological Man. What Is a Usage?," Man and People, pp. 192-221.
- ⁹⁹Ortega y Gasset, "Truth as Man in Harmony with Himself," Man and Crisis, p. 110.
- ¹⁰⁰Ortega y Gasset, "Again the Concept of the Generation," Man and Crisis, pp. 78-79.
- ¹⁰¹Ortega y Gasset, Some Lessons in Metaphysics, p. 132.
- ¹⁰²Ibid.
- ¹⁰³Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁴Ibid., p. 136.
- ¹⁰⁵Ibid., p. 127.
- ¹⁰⁶Ibid., p. 134.
- ¹⁰⁷Ibid., p. 127.
- ¹⁰⁸Ibid.

108 José Ortega y Gasset, "In Search of Goethe From Within: Letter to a German," The Dehumanization of Art and Other Essays on Art, Culture, and Literature, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1968), p. 136.

109 José Ortega y Gasset, Meditations on Quixote, trans. Evelyn Rugg and Diego Marín (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1961), p. 44.

110 Ortega y Gasset, "Change and Crisis," Man and Crisis, p. 97.

111 Ortega y Gasset, Meditations on Quixote, p. 43.

CHAPTER II

THE THREE MOMENTS: A PROCESS OF SELF-INTERPRETATION

Men's curiosity searches past and future
And clings to that dimension. But to apprehend
The point of intersection of the timeless
With time, is an occupation for the saint. . . .
For most of us, there is only the unattended
Moment, the moment in and out of time,
The distraction fit, lost in a shaft of sunlight,
The wild thyme unseen, or the winter lightning
Or the waterfall, or music heard so deeply
That it is not heard at all, but you are the music
While the music lasts. These are only hints and guesses,
Hints followed by guesses; and the rest
Is prayer, observance, discipline, thought and action.¹

T.S. Eliot

Although this study is, on one level, interested in the possible development of a 'vital philosophy' within the context of Ortega's thought, it also, on another level, seeks to critically question the possibility of such a philosophy against the background of a renewed temporal interpretation of human existence. The task of the present chapter, therefore, is to present Ortega's historical view of man's understanding of himself as it is illustrated in a general philosophical form, along with the understanding which the individual arrives at concerning his own self-interpretation.

In a preliminary manner, it is stated that Ortega's own perspective attempts to be both a conservation and a transcendence of previous philosophical standpoints; viz. 'realism', on the one hand, and 'idealism', on the other. The Ortegan 'synthesis', as it may be called, culminates in a concept of 'vital action' which seeks to resolve what is, for Ortega, an inadequate view of human existence and the inadequate notion of human temporality which it implies. In addition, a complementary task of this chapter seeks to determine precisely why the traditional standpoints are, for Ortega, inadequate interpretations of human existence within the context of a vital understanding of human life.

The First Moment of Human Existence:
'Realism' as Alteración

The previous chapter concluded with a presentation of Ortega's notions of 'socialization' and 'culture'. The concept which initiates the present chapter, alteración² ('being beside oneself'), is directly related to those concepts but is now to be more intimately examined as an existential feature of the phenomenon known as radical-reality.

In his translation of Ortega's work Man and People, Willard R. Trask specifies 'being beside oneself' as the English equivalent for alteración; however, I suggest that 'being outer directed' and 'being other' are equally valid expressions for grasping the sense of alteración as it used in the present context.

In order to illustrate the character of alteración, Ortega alludes to animal psychology and points out that the animal is governed strictly by external stimuli. The environment and everything contained therein serve as constant objects of attention for the animal. The animal is in a perpetual state of attention to what is 'other' than itself; in fact, the animal possesses no 'self' but is "perpetually the other—he is landscape. He has no chez soi, no home, no inside. . . ."³ In effect, the beast is best described, by Ortega, as that which is "pure alteración,"⁴ the creature is ever 'beside itself' in the sense of being always 'outer directed'.⁵ Hence, the animal is essentially a 'realist'; it is 'socialized', "tyrannized . . . by that other."⁶ Environment 'overtakes' the animal to the extent that it may "pull and push it about like a marionette."⁷ In an extreme sense, therefore, the animal is the outwardness of its surroundings so that "when things cease to threaten it . . . when what is other ceases to move it and manage it, the poor animal has virtually to stop existing . . . it goes to sleep."⁸

*See Ortega's essay entitled "Notes on Thinking" in Concord and Liberty where he states: "The existence of philosophy in the world signifies . . . that a living being who has none is little better than a brute. Wherever in this . . . world philosophy is absent, there reigns somnambulism; animals are characterized by their sleep-walking existence." (p. 77) The original text appears in Obras Completas, V, 541 and the final portion of this reference reads: "los animales se caracterizan por su existencia sonambulica."

It does appear that such an analysis or description of animal psychology is, at the very least, somewhat problematical since to 'know' the contents of the animal's mind or to gain access to the animal's experience is itself a radically problematic enterprise.* Nonetheless, in a more concrete and direct manner, the research of Jean Piaget relating to the development of thought processes in children indicates the presence of this original 'realist' orientation in the individual's personal history. According to Piaget, the peculiar form of 'egocentricity' in children points to, not an explicit awareness of personal subjectivity, but, in the initial stages of development, the child "confuses his self with the universe."⁹ This is not to say that the child possesses no subjectivity; in fact, "the child is no less conscious of the content of his thought than we are of ours,"¹⁰ however, when it comes to 'localizing' certain 'mental commodities' such as 'thoughts' or 'dreams', "he locates them elsewhere. He situates in the world or in others what we seat within ourselves, and he situates in himself what we place in others."¹¹

*The most recent research being done in the field of animal psychology, however, and the investigations being done regarding the capacity of certain primates to learn language, all indicate that Ortega may not be correct in some of these observations. See especially Carl Sagan, The Dragons of Eden: Speculations on the Evolution of Human Intelligence (New York: Random House, 1977), pp. 105-24. Chimpanzees who were taught American sign language seem to acquire a sense of subjectivity and identity in their 'conversations'. (See esp. p. 111 in the chapter entitled: "The Abstractions of Beasts").

Within this general 'realist' phase of human development, Piaget distinguishes definite sub-phases wherein certain identifiable, developmental levels are achieved culminating in the first awareness of 'self'. First, a phase of absolute realism in which "no attempt is made to distinguish the instruments of thought and where objects alone appear to exist";¹² second, immediate realism in which "the instruments of thought are distinguished from the things but are situated in the things";¹³ third, mediate realism in which "the instruments of thought are still regarded as a kind of things and are situated both in the body and in the surrounding air";¹⁴ fourth, subjectivism or relativism in which "the instruments of thought are situated within ourselves."¹⁵

Gradually, for Piaget, through a "series of disillusionments,"¹⁶ the child learns to distinguish the objectivity of things from the subjectivity of the self which is his own. Such 'disillusionment' seems to result from "being contradicted by others";¹⁷ through the 'resistances' offered by the 'other-ness' of the environment. As Ortega's own analysis of the human existential condition indicates, my need to 'deal with' the problematic character of my own circumstantial-reality brings me to an awareness of the self who must execute this 'dealing with'. But the crucial point is the presence of this initial 'realist' attitude or orientation inherent in the early stages of

human development. As Piaget once again asserts, "children speak of themselves in the third person before they use the pronoun 'I',"¹⁸ and Ortega, in an equally direct repudiation of the Cartesian primacy of the 'I', states in his essay "Prologue to a History of Philosophy," that "the 'I' is born after the you,"¹⁹ and again, in Man and People, the "first person is the last to appear."²⁰

From the perspective of early human history, alteración corresponds to primitive man's "unending war with nature"²¹ wherein environmental problems provided the basis for the manner in which each human being comported himself in the world. Similarly, in the philosophical realm, and in particular that of the ancient Greek period, 'thought' itself was essentially 'other directed' to the extent that philosophers "elaborated concepts which transcribed into pure theory all the reality around [tham]."²² The Pre-Socratic's notion of hylozoism perhaps best illustrates Ortega's point that "in essence, ancient man kept the texture of primitive man,"²³ since, for these thinkers, attention was "nailed to the cosmic scene, leaving his own self at his back. The 'I' concerns itself directly with things."²⁴ According to Ortega, even the notion of 'idea' or 'spirit' is interpreted, by ancient Greek philosophy, in terms of the 'external' and 'corporeal'. In effect, "the very word 'idea' and its relatives means 'visible figure', 'aspect'."²⁵ This orientation is continued and

exemplified further in the work of Aristotle* by his association of the soul with biology. The soul is understood as a "principle of bodily vitality"²⁶ and, as a result, the soul is "no less external than bodies."²⁷

Hence:

That thesis [realism] is so obvious, so natural, that. . . . when we want to say about something that there truly is this thing which is the prototype of being, we call it reality. Now, this word does not properly mean any more than the peculiar manner of being of things, the res, the external, the corporeal.²⁸

Accordingly, radical-reality first comes to an understanding of himself in terms of the 'other'; each human being originally comes to know his own circumstantial-reality and, therefore, arrives at a temporally oriented interpretation of himself as 'thing present at hand'.

Acquired Culture as a Form of Alteración

Radical-reality, as it is originally given over to the circumstantial-reality of its thrown condition, readily adopts the technical and ideological usages discovered within that reality. These usages are readily 'at hand', they are present to me and 'there' for me. But acquired culture, in this sense, is conceptually discernible from two distinct perspectives: first, culture presents to each radical-reality the repertory of 'problems' or questions which are there to challenge the individual

*See Aristotle's De Anima, esp. Bk. II.

in the process of his living; second, culture offers a system of pre-fabricated resolutions for these questions which have already been created by others.

The notion of 'acquired culture' is, therefore, according to Ortega, a system of "memories and promises, an irreversible past"²⁹ which serves "only as the instruments and weapons of new conquests."³⁰ As the storehouse of technological and social usages increases, the need to 'create' new solutions, on my own, decreases. Radical-reality merely refers himself to the present catalogue of answers or resolutions 'already there'. Acquired culture, therefore, is "inheritance which frees one from the effort of creation."³¹ As the "hammer is the abstraction of each one of its hammerings,"³² so is acquired culture the 'generic' response to an equally 'generic' problem. This latter point is significant since it points to the manner in which radical-reality arrives at an initial understanding of his own being. Not only are the 'resolutions' given by the circumstantial-reality through its traditions and usages, but the very questions themselves are the questions 'already there'. Having my questions already determined for me determines as well the manner in which I come to orient myself towards the fundamental question of my own being. 'Who am I?', 'What am I to do?', 'who am I to be?' are not understood 'radically' since culture diverts attention away from the radically personal entity which I am towards the publicly available 'ways and means' for settling my concerns.

In the state of 'being other', then, radical-reality "runs the risk of losing himself in the jungle of his own knowledge; and he ends up by not knowing what his own genuine knowledge is."³³ The result of adopting the tenets of acquired culture is no less than "not [knowing] which of them are those he actually thinks" and hence, radical-reality "becomes used to living on pseudo beliefs . . . which falsify his own existence."³⁴

The notion of 'falsifying' my being points to the acceptance, the un-reflective acceptance by radical-reality, "of that of which he is not convinced."³⁵ What I become, what I do, who I am, are not mine in the sense that I have not created my own convictions or devised my own 'doings'; they have been created for me by others. At this stage, however, the Ortegán notion of 'falsification' remains a strictly existential category. The description of alteración as a form of realism which in turn is the natural attitude, indicates that the falsification of my being is natural and hence, an inexorable existential mode of being. I am originally 'other' than myself and 'lost' to myself due to my thrown condition into a circumstantial ambit which, although forming a portion of my life is, at the same time, essentially 'other' than myself. Hence, the distinction between my 'life' and my 'self'. I am essentially 'other' than my circumstances, but I would not be myself without those circumstances which resist me. Inexorably, "I live among interpretations of

of reality which my social environment and human tradition have been inventing . . . things . . . which we have heard from others and which, without further analysis, conditions, or reflections, we accept as genuine, true, or probable."³⁶

The Second Moment of Human Existence:
'Idealism' as Ensimismamiento

Ortega's characterization of alteración as a 'natural' mode of being is underlined by his assertion that the overcoming of this orientation is accomplished by an "unusual [*italics mine*] twist of . . . attention"³⁷ away from the ambit of circumstantial realities towards that which is "the only possible without to this without";³⁸ towards the within of the self which is radically mine. Ortega even asserts that such a move points to the "most antinatural and ultrabiological of phenomena"³⁹ which again brings into relief the peculiar character of the second moment or level of human existence referred to as ensimismamiento ('~~being within oneself~~!').

. . . the world is the whole of exteriority, the absolute without, which can have no other without beyond itself. The only possible without to this without is, precisely, a within, an intus, the inwardness of man, his self, which is principally made up of ideas.⁴⁰

The concept of ensimismamiento, 'being within oneself', now referred to as the second moment or level of human existence, is initially encountered by means of a spatial characterization, i.e. as within-ness or inward-ness and, therefore, is now characterized as a form of

being within. I qualify ensimismamiento as a 'form' of 'being within' because I intend to demonstrate that, within the context of a vital understanding of human existence, that mode of 'being within' expressed by ensimismamiento is, in itself, not an adequate means for achieving an authentic and vital understanding of the entity called radical-reality. In addition, it is to be shown that an alternative form of 'being within oneself' or 'authentic inward-ness' represents a more appropriate means for grasping the radical-ness of human living. Does this imply that ensimismamiento is an 'inauthentic' or 'non-vital' form of 'being within'? I intend to show, within the present chapter, that the answer to this question demands an affirmative reply since, along with its spatial designation, the concept also reveals a definite temporal orientation. Basically, the concept of ensimismamiento reverts to a form of temporality akin to the temporal character of 'realism', viz. that of 'presence at hand'. As a result, the current task of this study demands the following procedure: first, a presentation of ensimismamiento against concept; second, a characterization of this concept against the background of realism understood as alteración, from a temporal point of view; third, the role of ensimismamiento as the 'antithesis' to realism and as a necessary step towards the synthesis required for the development of a possible 'vital philosophy'.

The Presentation of Ensimismamiento
as a Concept

The concept of ensimismamiento, as indicated above, first becomes characterized in terms of the spatial designation 'inward-ness'. Ortega asserts that radical-reality:

... can, from time to time, suspend his direct concern with things, detach himself from his surroundings . . . and subjecting his faculty of attention to a radical shift . . . turn . . . his back on the world and take his stand inside himself, attend to his own inwardness . . . concern himself with himself and not with what is other, with things.⁴¹

The 'turn within' effected by ensimismamiento represents a change from the passive existential voice, so to speak, towards an active and personal 'being concerned with' my own being; with the self which is mine. This change in the direction of my attention re-emphasizes the distinct status of the self in its relation to the 'otherness' of my circumstances.

The world . . . is only a term in my life; but I am not the world, nor is my life a thing of this world. For this very reason, my life is not there—as are the stone, the tree, the star—but I must make it for myself, and to me it is pure effort and pure problem.⁴²

In one sense, the first moment of human existence, alteración, tends to 'cover over' the character of human living as 'problematic' since culture readily helps radical-reality to deal with his problems and thereby assumes the role of making or 'putting together' the life of radical-reality. But through an 'unusual effort', radical-reality may detach himself from the allurements of convenient social usages and "achieve an instant of concentration"⁴³ which

reveals for him the radical question of his own being.

But the 'radical question of my own being' is no less than deciding for myself what I need to do and, therefore, who I am to be. Ensimismamiento as an introspective device reveals the "properly human in me"⁴⁴ in so far as I come to face "only what I [*italics mine*] think, want, feel. . . . I being the creating subject of all this."⁴⁵ Hence, although alteración promotes the feigning of beliefs and the 'falsification' of my being, ensimismamiento is a process of 'searching out' that which "makes sense to me. . . ." ⁴⁶

Metaphorically, this second moment of human existence is characterized, by Ortega, in terms of the 'gerfalcon', the "bird which, leaving space and the firmament, annuls space with its flight, coming back to itself, folding itself within itself. . . . an undoing of natural flight."⁴⁷ Historically, the return to the self is the specific character of the modern period of philosophical thought, i.e. 'idealism'.⁴⁸ Philosophically, the phenomenon of 'thought' assumes a renewed significance in so far as the 'ideational character' of reality acquires a distinctly human form. In other words, 'conscious reflection' directed towards the self is not simply the assimilation of pre-established forms and fixed ideas which coerce radical-reality into an understanding of himself as a 'thing among things', rather, it reveals human living as an "active process of being . . . a constant making and remaking of itself. . . ." ⁴⁹ Hence,

ensimismamiento effects "the discovery of subjectivity"⁵⁰ and the 'thinking self' as the fundamental reality. With Descartes, in particular, the 'thinking self' as the indubitable 'root' reality becomes the vehicle in terms of which man arrives at an understanding of himself. In effect, "the self exists insofar as it knows itself to be—its being is its knowing—and that reality of thought is first in the order of theoretic truths."⁵¹

. . . when man encounters his conscious self, his own subjectivity, he realizes that this cannot exist in the open air, in contact with the outside, like the rock . . . but that the human self is what it is for the very reason that it separates itself from the surroundings, is closed within itself.⁵²

As a result, ensimismamiento, as an instance of 'idealism', makes a definitive inversion regarding the orientation of radical-reality's attention, and the perspective from which that entity interprets its own being. The focus of attention is on the self and the character of the interpretation which radical-reality assigns to being is 'thought' understood as the fabric and activity of the self. Idealism's identification of the self as the basic datum of reality revolves around the radical 'mineness' of the newly discovered phenomenon; the self which I indubitably possess and whose nature is beyond question. Accordingly, for idealism, the self is a non-problematic entity in so far as it shows itself as a 'being there'; it is present to me. Hence, along with this radical sense of certitude which accompanies the discovery of the self, there

results a by-product, viz. 'radical solitude'⁵³ to the extent that:

Leibnitz [sic] makes of it a monad, closed within itself and set aside from the great Cosmos, it becomes an intimate little world. . . . And as idealism reaches its culmination in Fichte, so in him the self touches the zenith of its destiny and becomes the entire Universe, everything.⁵⁴

The Characterization of Ensimismamiento
from a Temporal Point of View

The 'natural attitude' inherent in 'realism' interprets the surroundings as 'given^hthere', as present before me. Retaining this characterization of reality, 'idealism' merely trades entities and portrays the 'thinking self' as res, as that which is 'there'.⁵⁵

In place of leaving the wall to exist with this peculiar characteristic of existing which is being there in front of me, it dissolves the wall into me and makes reality consist in something independent like the realist's reality, except that now the independent element in my thought, is I.⁵⁶

Hence, despite the ostensive break with realism, the idealistic interpretation of the self again identifies this phenomenon as a 'thing' which is 'there'. Descartes' understanding that the self is a 'thinking substance', a 'mind' whose role is to 'think itself' is defined in static terms. The self is 'objectified' in the sense of being 'thingified'; the self becomes a substance whose nature is given in its very discovery. As a result, for both 'realism' and 'idealism', human existence is temporally characterized as a 'thing present at hand'; an entity

completely definable in terms of its 'being there' for me. Whether the interpretation of human existence derives from the 'external-ness' of the environment (realism) or from the self as that which is discovered 'internally' as 'thought' (idealism), the temporal understanding of its nature as that which is 'present at hand' persists. But within the context of a search for a possible 'vital philosophy', such an interpretation remains inadequate. Both 'realism' and 'idealism' understand the human reality as essentially 'non-problematic' in the sense that human nature is 'given'. The mere inversion effected by idealism in the form of ensimismamiento, 'going within' rather than 'going without', reveals itself as an 'inauthentic' and 'non-vital' form of 'being within' in so far as this form of 'being within' reverts to the 'thing interpretation' of human existence. Ensimismamiento as an 'introspective' activity or 'look within' does, by its very essence as a form of 'looking at', thingify the object of mental perception and in doing so, fixes the nature of human existence as 'thought'. For idealism, I become a compilation of 'things' called ideas and thoughts. As a result, the question which remains is this: by what means does Ortega formulate an 'authentic sense of vitality' regarding the being called radical-reality? As a correlate to this, it may also be asked: what is the role of ensimismamiento in the development of this 'authentic sense of vitality'?

The Third Moment of Human Existence:
'Vital Action' as a Synthesis

The Role of Ensimismamiento
 as a Necessary Step in
 the Synthesis

Ortega's own analysis and re-newed orientation towards a genuinely 'vital' understanding of human life is grounded in the attempt to synthesize the first two moments or levels of human existence. But the notion of 'synthesis' is to be understood, not as a mere rejection of former perspectives, but as a 'conservation' as well as a 'transcendence' of that which has come before. For Ortega, "all surpassing is conserving,"⁵⁷ and the development of a new perspective needs to be grounded upon the points of view that have made the new perspective possible.

We go beyond idealism . . . we leave it behind us like a stretch of road which we have already passed. . . . We carry idealism with us . . . we hold onto it, we preserve it. Idealism was a step upward in the intellectual ascent. . . . 58

The characterization of human living as 'problem' and 'effort' indicates a departure from idealism in the sense that, for idealism, human life is precisely non-problematic—it is 'there'. Ortega, however, has indicated that human living is 'dynamic' and 'processive', i.e. the entity known as radical-reality is essentially incomplete and unfinished. For Ortega, then, human life cannot be defined in terms of the 'thing'. But the notion that human life is not 'thing-like' in the sense of being not 'an object', does not need to imply an interpretation which must,

therefore, be 'subject-ive' in character. Extreme subjectivity is precisely that aspect of idealism which causes that position to reduce the self to an isolated and closed entity. As a result, the Ortegian synthesis is best understood if the notions of extreme objectivity, which is an aspect of both realism and idealism, in terms of their 'thing interpretation' of human existence, and extreme subjectivity which is idealism in terms of its portrayal of the 'thinking self' as subject, are each avoided. Ortega's re-orientation is a synthesis of these perspectives. As the 'natural attitude' is radical-realities condition of being "open to the other . . . whether he likes it or not. . . ." ⁵⁹ he is, equiprimordially, alone.

In every human action . . . there is a subject from whom it emanates and who is thereby its agent, author, or responsible for it. A consequence of this is that my human life, which puts me in direct relation with everything about me . . . is, essentially, solitude, aleness. ⁶⁰

Hence, although my own radical-reality is the "root of all other realities," ⁶¹ "I perceive . . . that I am also there, in you. . . . my living is a living with." ⁶²

For Ortega, the indubitability of the external world is retained (realism) and the discovery of the self is upheld (idealism); however, although idealism re-interprets realism by assigning priority of being to the self as 'thinking substance', Ortega's synthesis enhances and vitalizes the notion of human existence through the concept of 'radical-reality'.

Insofar as is possible the self would like to overcome its solitude. . . . what it wants now is to be a little less in order to live a little more. . . . In short, the self needs to go out of itself, to find a world around it. Idealism has reached the point where it smothers the sources of vital energy and weakens the springs of living. It has almost succeeded in convincing man seriously . . . that everything around him is only himself and his image.⁶³

// In effect, Ortega asserts that the 'first given' is not the solitary subjectivity of the 'thinking self' nor the objectivity of realism's 'outer directed' orientation (alteración) but rather, the immediacy of my co-existence with the world."⁶⁴ The peculiarity of this standpoint is precisely the inversion it effects regarding the intimacy of the self. The self is not primordially 'evident' in terms of itself as the executor of thought, but is rather 'brought to life' or vitalized in its relationship with the objectivity of that which it confronts, the circumstances which demand from radical-reality a response of some kind. Living, then, is no less than the interaction of the 'reckoning process' between radical-reality and circumstantial-reality. The character of this interaction is one of 'mutual dependence' between radical-reality, on one hand, as the executor of his 'doings', and circumstances, on the other hand, as the horizon for vital problems. Neither one nor the other assumes any degree of existential priority. Accordingly, Ortega states the following:

. . . we do not find any indubitable basis for the assumption that "being" can mean only "self-sufficient being." On the contrary, the only indubitable being which we find is the interdependence between things and the self—things are what they are to me, and I am what suffers from things—therefore the indubitable being is for the moment not the sufficient being but the "needy being." It is a mutual need which defines beings. To be is to need; I need things, things need me.⁶⁵

From the standpoint of a 'vital orientation' towards human existence, idealism's view of 'thought' as the primary reality is an abstraction, hypothesis, or theoretical interpretation which misses the immediacy and vitality of the I's encounter with circumstantial-reality.⁶⁶ From the perspective of the Ortegian synthesis, that which is first given to me is the reality of my need to deal with my surroundings. Hence, the problematic character of reality is made manifest in the immediacy of this confrontation. The static character of being implied by the mere distinction between the self as the executor of thinking, and the exterior reality understood as the 'contents of consciousness' or field of possible objects to be known, is overcome by a dynamic sense of being which interprets radical-reality as the incessantly actuating being.⁶⁷ 'Encounter with reality', then, is prior to 'thought of reality'. Radical-reality must concern himself with his circumstances to the extent that "life . . . finally consists in nothing but mattering to itself. . . . The world . . . consists in a system of importances, concerns, or pragmata."⁶⁸ In effect, within

this vital framework, 'I am always outside myself', not in the mode of pure alteración which is the 'being determined by' the other, but in the sense of being a 'fulfilling feature' of the total existential network into which I have been thrown.

The complete 'exteriority of realism' and the equally final 'interiority of idealism' reach a new level of interpretation in the sense that "absolute reality, as life, is at once immanent and transcendent."⁶⁹

I am not my life. This, which is reality, is composed of myself and of things. The things are not I, nor am I the things. We are mutually transcendent, but we are both immanent in that absolute coexistence which is life.

Reality, then, is a network of concerns, a field for activity in terms of which human existence builds itself. Without discarding the realist's conviction that the circumstantial-reality is in fact a reality, or the idealist's adherence to the radicality of the self, Ortega utilizes these convictions in order to develop the notion of 'vital interaction' between these existential components. But life is not merely the juxtaposition of two elements, it is the 'vital relationship' itself which subsists between them. As a result, it is within this very 'relational' aspect of reality where the 'third moment' of human existence, 'vital action', makes its appearance.

The inadequacy of idealism understood as 'going within', ensimismamiento, represents the "idolatry of the intelligence"⁷¹ which, as Ortega asserts, "isolates thought from its setting . . . of human life."⁷² But 'being within', although in itself an inadequate means for grasping Ortega's sense of vitality, still serves as a positive prelude to the development of a vital understanding of reality. Within this context, the proper role of 'being within' is its preparation of radical-reality for 'dealing with', for action. Radical-reality is "primarily and fundamentally action."⁷³ But action is now viewed against the background of a prior reflective process, a "period of meditation or thought"⁷⁴ which inundates radical-reality's activity with an authentically conceived plan. The resolution of this plan is mine because it has been conceived by me and hence, has meaning for me. Ensimismarse ('to be within oneself') is, then, the prelude to authentic action; 'authentic' action because through reflection, I humanize my circumstantial-reality with meanings which are peculiarly mine. In other words, I impose upon reality my own convictions, ideas, and beliefs. Hence, the role of 'being within' is to;

. . . form a plan of attack against his circumstances. . . . From this inner world he emerges and returns to the other. But he returns as protagonist, he returns with a self which he did not possess before, with his plan of campaign—not to let himself be dominated by things but to govern them himself, to impose his will and his design upon them, to realize his ideas in that outer

world, to mould the planet after the preference of his inmost being. Far from losing his own self in this return to the world, he carries it thither, projects it energetically . . . upon things . . . he forces the other—the world—little by little to become himself. Man humanizes the world, injects it . . . with his own ideal substance. . . . 75

Authentic action, then, proceeds from a pre-conceived program devised by radical-reality himself. But this 'third moment' of vital activity is itself a problematical enterprise in so far as "each one of us is always in danger of not being the unique and un-transferable self which he is."⁷⁶ That which makes this level of human existence problematic is the element of choice or freedom inherent in the process of deciding what I am to do and who I am to be. Are my actions in accord with my convictions? Are my 'doings' the products of my own authentic beliefs? Is my manner of 'dealing with' circumstantial-reality meaningful to me in the sense that I have decided for myself my mode of behaving in the world? Hence, as Ortega states in an essay entitled "Man the Technician":

. . . human life, the existence of man, appears essentially problematic. To all other entities of the universe existence presents no problem. For existence means actual realization of an essence. It means, for instance, that "being a bull" actually occurs. A bull, if he exists, exists as a bull. For a man, on the contrary, to exist does not mean to exist at once as the man he is, but merely that there exists a possibility of, and an effort towards, accomplishing this. Who of us is all he should be and all he longs to be? In contrast to the rest of creation, man, in existing, has to

make his existence. He has to solve the practical problem of transferring into reality the program that is himself. For this reason "my life" is pure task, a thing inexorably to be made. It is not given to me as a present; I have to make it. Life gives me much to do; nay, it is nothing save the "to do" it has in store for me. And this "to do" is not a thing, but action in the most active sense of the word.⁷⁷

Comments and Questions

The second chapter of this study has provided the first indications regarding the role and character of 'intellecion' within the context of Ortega's analysis of human existence. The notion of ensimismamiento is apparently a traditional mode of 'introspecting' or process of 'self-perception' which, for Ortega, seeks first to discover 'who I am', and secondly, to direct the activity which I execute within my circumstantial field. But what does this really mean and what are the implications of such an orientation? If radical-reality is originally 'thrown and lost' in the circumstances which are 'there' and 'given' to me, what is there for the 'I' who introspects to discover other than the very thrown condition in which it finds itself? What resources does radical-reality possess in the effort to overcome socialization and to what extent can radical-reality direct the interpretation of his own being? In effect, to what extent is radical-reality free to realize himself within the circumstantial ambit of his thrown condition?

Underlining these questions is the even more fundamental question which addresses the possibility of a temporal interpretation of human living which does not rely upon 'presence at hand' as its guiding clue. Is such a re-newed interpretation of human temporality possible and, if so, what form does this interpretation assume? I have stated in this chapter that ensimismamiento is a form of 'being with oneself' which is essentially 'non-vital'. This characterization is not intended as an evaluation of ensimismamiento but as a descriptive account of the phenomenon in so far as the act of 'looking within' at 'states of mind' or 'internal states of affairs' does not, in itself, make manifest the essence of human living as it presents itself to me 'evidentially'; i.e. in the immediacy of my experience of human living as an essentially problematic and unfinished task. Is, then, all intellection condemned to being inexorably non-vital? Is there a possible alternative interpretation of 'intellection' which is an integral element of, rather than a mere prelude to, vital activity? In other words, what sense can be found in the notion of a 'vital reason'?

The Following Chapter

In order to approach the resolution of these questions, a re-orientation of categories must take place so that 'thought' may find its way into 'vitality' in a manner which is more intimate and existentially related.

Accordingly, the next chapter of this study is to serve as a transition stage in the process of determining the possibility of a 'vital philosophy'. This transition stage, which is an investigation into the notion of 'authentic selfhood', attempts to ascertain the peculiar temporal constitution of radical-reality from the standpoint of its unique and radically personal role as an executor of its own being. As a result, the ability to humanize my circumstances, along with the notion of 'having a potentiality for being' which is uniquely mine, and the specific temporal constitution of 'authentic individuality', constitute the basic themes of the following chapter.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER II

¹T.S. Eliot, Four Quartets (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1943), p. 44.

²Ortega y Gasset, "Being In One's Self and Being Beside One's Self," Man and People, pp. 16-17.

³Ortega y Gasset, "Change and Crisis," Man and Crisis, p. 95.

⁴Ortega y Gasset, "Being In One's Self and Being Beside One's Self," Man and People, p. 19.

⁵Ibid., pp. 16-17.

⁶Ibid., p. 17.

⁷Ibid., pp. 16-17.

⁸Ibid., p. 19.

⁹Jean Piaget, The Child's Conception of the World, trans. Joan and Andrew Tomlinson (Totowa, New Jersey: Littlefield, Adams & Co., 1969), p. 125.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 124.

¹¹Ibid., p. 125.

¹²Ibid., p. 126.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 127.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 130.

¹⁹Ortega y Gasset, "Prologue to a History of Philosophy," Concord and Liberty, p. 94.

²⁰Ortega y Gasset, "Inter-Individual Life. We, You, I," Man and People, p. 111.

- ²¹Ortega y Gasset, What Is Philosophy?, p. 163.
- ²²Ibid., p. 166.
- ²³Ibid.
- ²⁴Ibid., p. 165.
- ²⁵Ibid., p. 166.
- ²⁶Ibid., p. 167.
- ²⁷Ibid.
- ²⁸Ortega y Gasset, Some Lessons in Metaphysics, p. 134.
- ²⁹Ortega y Gasset, Meditations on Quixote, p. 145.
- ³⁰Ibid., p. 44.
- ³¹Ortega y Gasset, "Change and Crisis," Man and Crisis,
p. 97.
- ³²Ortega y Gasset, Meditations on Quixote, p. 44.
- ³³Ortega y Gasset, "Truth as Man in Harmony with
Himself," Man and Crisis, p. 110.
- ³⁴Ibid., p. 111.
- ³⁵Ibid.
- ³⁶Ortega y Gasset, "Inter-Individual Life. We, You,
I," Man and People, pp. 97-98.
- ³⁷Ortega y Gasset, "Being In One's Self and Being
Beside One's Self," Man and People, p. 22.
- ³⁸Ibid., p. 18.
- ³⁹Ibid., p. 22.
- ⁴⁰Ibid., p. 18.
- ⁴¹Ibid., pp. 17-18.
- ⁴²Ortega y Gasset, Some Lessons in Metaphysics,
p. 133.
- ⁴³Ortega y Gasset, "Being In One's Self and Being
Beside One's Self," Man and People, p. 21.

⁴⁴Ortega y Gasset, "Structure of 'Our' World," Man and People, p. 59.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Ortega y Gasset, What Is Philosophy?, p. 156.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 169.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 159.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 170.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 174.

⁵²Ibid., p. 178.

⁵³Ibid., p. 161.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 180.

⁵⁵Ortega y Gasset, Some Lessons in Metaphysics, pp. 154-55.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 156.

⁵⁷Ortega y Gasset, What Is Philosophy?, p. 201.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 179.

⁵⁹Ortega y Gasset, "Inter-Individual Life. We, You, I," Man and People, p. 106.

⁶⁰Ortega y Gasset, "Structure of 'Our' World," Man and People, p. 59.

⁶¹Ortega y Gasset, "Personal Life," Man and People, p. 40.

⁶²Ortega y Gasset, "Again the Generation," Man and Crisis, p. 75.

⁶³Ortega y Gasset, What Is Philosophy?, pp. 180-81.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 200.

⁶⁵Ibid., pp. 209-10.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 202.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 210.

⁶⁸Ortega y Gasset, "Structure of 'Our' World," Man and People, p. 62.

⁶⁹Ortega y Gasset, Some Lessons in Metaphysics, p. 158.

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Ortega y Gasset, "Being In One's Self and Being Beside One's Self," Man and People, p. 30.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Ibid., p. 32.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 29.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 20.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 25.

⁷⁷José Ortega y Gasset, "Man the Technician," History as a System and Other Essays Toward a Philosophy of History, trans. Helene Weyl (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1961), pp. 115-16.

CHAPTER III

AUTHENTICITY AND VOCATION: THE TEMPORALITY OF 'BEING-MYSELF'

Trippers and askers surround me,
People I meet, the effect upon me of my early life
or the ward and city I live in, or the nation,
The latest dates, discoveries, inventions, societies,
authors old and new,
My dinner, dress, associates, looks, compliments, dues,
The real or fancied indifference of some man or woman I
love,
The sickness of one of my folks or of myself, or ill-doing
or loss or lack of money, of depressions or exaltations,
Battles, the horrors of fratricidal war, the fever of
doubtful news, the fitful events;
These come to me days and nights and go from me again,
But they are not the Me myself.¹

Walt Whitman

The present chapter is an investigation into the notion of 'authentic being-myself' within the context of Ortega's concept of vocation. It is to be demonstrated that this concept carries within itself a unique temporal characteristic which is distinct from the 'present at hand-ness' of the realist and idealist perspectives on human existence. Perspective, understood as 'point of view', indicates that radical-reality can interpret his being from a standpoint which is essentially distinct from the thrown condition of 'being socialized' or 'cultured'; i.e. a perspective which is radically individualized. However, if radical-reality is

essentially a 'being with', an entity which is inexorably thrown into a circumstantial-reality not devised by himself, does this not challenge the very possibility of radical individuality? Hence, the concept of radical individuality reveals itself, at the outset, as essentially problematic. As a result, this chapter is to determine what this radically individual perspective may mean while bringing into relief the specific mode of temporality which this perspective implies. Finally, the present chapter is to indicate the direction and manner in which the concept of 'vocation' may guide the search for a possible 'vital philosophy'.

Hombre-Masa (Mass Man) as the 'Patent' Self:
The Temporality of 'Being Inauthentic'

The elucidation of one concept may require an antithetical idea against which its essential features may be brought into relief. In order to determine and examine the existential import of 'being authentic', then, 'being inauthentic' provides this guiding background.

'Being cultured' in the sense that one is socialized and overcome by, what Ortega calls at one point, "inertial thinking,"² characterizes radical-reality as the 'one' who can be 'no-one in particular'. The depiction of radical-reality as an entity which can assume such an un-distinguished or non-individualized existential posture does, moreover, have a definite history. George H. Mead,

for example, developed his sociological notion of the 'generalized other' in his work Mind, Self, and Society; Martin Heidegger, in Being and Time, introduces the concept das Man (the 'they-self'); and Ortega himself presents the idea of hombre-masa (mass man) whose most popular formulation appears in The Revolt of the Masses, but which stands as a constant motif throughout his work. Although each of these labels are variations on a theme, the theme itself revolves around the understanding that a human being, as inauthentically constituted, assumes as a ground for what it believes and for what it does, that which is believed and done by others, in short, popular social usages. The actions of the so-called 'cultured man', then, are determined and sanctioned for him by a simple reference to custom or tradition.*

*As a concrete illustration of the 'mass man', Plato's character Euthyphro provides a clear example. Euthyphro portrays the type of person who is prepared to execute extreme legal proceedings against his father merely because the 'law' or 'traditional' lore suggests that one ought to prosecute another under certain conditions. Euthyphro is prepared, in other words, to act 'without reasons', without the requisite logos that will justify his actions to himself and for himself. Without ensimismamiento, self-scrutiny or self-examination, Euthyphro is not himself convinced that he is acting 'piously'. Euthyphro abdicates the need and the responsibility for 'convincing himself' by transferring this responsibility for conviction onto society; by allowing 'what is done' by others to determine for him what course of action he is to follow. Hence, Euthyphro is a cultured man who resides in the past, in tradition, as the convenient and secure source of supply for ready-made solutions to otherwise vital questions. See Plato, "Euthyphro," The Collected Dialogues of Plato: Including the Letters, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, trans. Lane Cooper (New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1961), esp. pp. 173-74.

'Being inauthentic', then, means no less than 'standing in the security' which culture or the past provides. Within 'inertial thought', the past assumes priority in terms of settling the present. The past is effortless, free from genuine difficulties simply because, along with the problems which radical-reality may inherit, he also inherits, for the most part, their solutions or the suggestion of solutions. The past is attractive in the sense that it appears "easier, less full of anguish, than the present life; it is a charade [*italics mine*] whose solution we possess beforehand. Its problems have ceased to be open and therefore have ceased to be truly problems: the solution has closed them on themselves."³ Hence, radical-reality, "submerged in the greater complexity of his present existence, normally feels nostalgia for the past. . . . the past is a voluptuous siren. It has 'sex appeal'."⁴

In a series of essays under the major heading "Ideas Sobre Pio Baroja," (1916), Ortega depicts radical-reality, inauthentically constituted, as the farce,⁵ i.e. life characterized as a 'fraud' or, perhaps, 'masquerade'.* The 'fraudulent self' is, generally, the self 'open to view', the patent or 'outside' self, most appropriately understood by this locational metaphor since it is determined by that which is 'outside' or 'other; it is, in effect, life as alteración, directed from without. Later, in

*See Obras Completas, II, 84-85. At one point, Ortega states: "Llamamos farsas a aquellas realidades en que se finge la realidad." In other words, those 'realities' which masquerade as the true reality, we call farces."

his essay, "El Hombre del Siglo XV," ("Fifteenth-Century Man," 1933), Ortega states that human beings, for the most part, "defraud themselves [estafarse a sí mismo] by substituting for their genuine selves a false course of life. . . . And if he persists in adhering to other opinions he will live in intellectual conflict with his own self."⁶

Nonetheless, this inauthentic mode of being suggests the possibility of an alternative manner of comporting oneself, viz. an 'authentic perspective' which derives from what Ortega refers to as 'my own self'. The following sections, then, seek to determine the character of this own or authentic self, along with the re-oriented temporal character implied by this concept.

The Hero as the 'Latent' Self:
The Temporality of 'Being Authentic'

The approach towards authenticity is initially a departure from socialization or the 'natural attitude' and the security inherent in these standpoints. But since radical-reality attempts to abandon that which is natural, such a tearing-away is an act requiring the "greatest exertion"⁷ and as such, is characterized by Ortega as an "heroic action."⁸

Heroism, in this sense, is a "perpetual resistance to what is habitual and customary. Each movement that [the hero] makes has first to overcome custom and invent a new kind of gesture. Such a life is a perpetual suffering, a

constant tearing oneself away from that part of oneself which is given over to habit. . . . "9 In contrast, then, to the inauthentically constituted self, the hero is the individual whose "will is not that of his ancestors nor of his society, but his own."¹⁰ The hero, in effect, is a figure of paradox, the tragic figure, since he is what he wills not to be while he wills to be that which he is not yet. "The will," for the hero, "begins in reality and ends in the ideal, since one only wants what is not— this is the tragic theme. . . . "¹¹ Hence, the hero is essentially future oriented in so far as the very structure of his existential constitution is problematic and, therefore, unresolved. The hero "lives by aspiration,"¹² he is the one who "anticipates the future and appeals to it. . . . He does not say that he is but that he wants to be."¹³

Accordingly, authenticity is not to be understood as an actually 'present state of being'. 'Being authentic' interpreted in any static sense of 'having arrived at' authenticity and thereby 'embracing it' and 'making it present' would be a falsification of the concept by reverting to a 'present at hand' characterization of the phenomenon. Authenticity is essentially, and this means always, problematic in the sense that radical-reality needs to continually affirm and re-affirm itself in the face of decisions which it must execute in the process of creating itself. "Life," states Ortega, "is never done,

rather we have yet to do it. Life is . . . essentially a task and an open problem. . . . "14 Hence, "human life is made up of the problem of itself. . . . its substance . . . is not a thing but an absolute and problematical task."15

As a result, although the hero is, for the most part, 'covered-over' by the natural condition of 'being thrown' and, as such, is the latent self, the characterization of 'being authentic' has so far exhibited two constitutive elements: first, the heroic will directed towards the realization of that which is personally mine and, hence, existentially authentic; and second, the future as the horizon for this realization of personal aspiration. Still unresolved, however, is a direct consideration of this latent self which is most authentically my own. It is to be demonstrated in the following section that these elements of the latent, heroic self, viz. 'will' and 'futuraity' are, in themselves, still inadequate categories for grasping the primordial character of that which Ortega develops as his concept of 'vocation'. It is to be shown that vocation is most adequately understood as an even more fundamental existential category which grounds the 'future directed will'. Hence, the following section investigates the concept of vocation with particular emphasis upon the following questions: what is the meaning behind the expression, 'my own authentic self'? and ~~what~~ what is that which is, for the most part, covered-over?

Vocation as 'Vital Design':
Radical-Reality as the 'Preferential Being'

To this point in the analysis, nothing direct has been postulated regarding the meaning of vocation itself other than certain indications that radical-reality may re-direct his temporal orientation by choosing, as the goal of his 'doings', that which is uniquely his own. But what is that which is uniquely mine? In what sense can anything be 'my own' if I am, after all, initially and inexorably thrown into a social ambience which determines, to some extent, my destiny and which sets parameters to my freedom? In effect, what is that which radical-reality carries into his thrown condition which allows for the possibility of having an 'authentic self'?

In his work, The Divided Self: An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness, R.D. Laing states that "biological birth is a definitive act whereby the infant organism is precipitated into the world. There it is, a new baby, a new biological entity, already with its own ways. . . ."¹⁶
 [italics mine] Laing's point is that each human being is an instance of 'already having' its own mode of being; of already possessing a 'potentiality for being' uniquely his own. It is this peculiar mode of being which individuates the individual.

In a less biologically oriented manner, Ortega makes reference to this same innate 'mode of orientation' in his concept of the insobornable core. In his essay entitled

"El Fondo Insobornable,"* Ortega states;

I was speaking of a certain insobornable core which exists in us. Generally this ultimate and extremely individual nucleus of personality is buried under the accumulation of judgments and sentimental manners which fell upon us from the outside. Only a few men gifted with a peculiar energy succeed in glimpsing in certain instances the attitudes of what Bergson called the profound I.¹⁷

Although radical-reality is inexorably thrown and bound to a set of circumstances which serve to categorize him as a 'type', he still needs to 'individuate' himself. "Destiny is never abstract and generic. . . . When we speak of life, every word must be completed by the appropriate index of individuation."¹⁸ 'Being an individual', however, is no less than the 'making patent' of that which, for the most part, remains 'covered-over'; bringing into the open that which remains 'hidden'. This, in fact, expresses the principal theme of Ortega's essay entitled "Truth as Man in Harmony with Himself" (1933). When the patent self coincides with the latent inclinations and attitudes inherent in the individual, when that which is hidden becomes 'un-hidden', radical-reality expresses his own truth (aletheia).

*In Spanish, the verb sobornar ('to bribe' or 'to compromise') serves as the root for the now technical term 'insobornable' which describes the 'core' (fondo) of radical-reality. The sense of 'in-sobornable' indicates, then, that the core or 'foundation' of one's own authentic self is 'not subject to compromise'; i.e. while sobornar indicates an effort to falsify, the insobornable core may not be falsified; it is what it is. But a paradox arises; on the one hand there stands the 'un-compromising' character of the 'core', and on the other hand, the possibility that radical-reality may indeed 'falsify' his life by not realizing that core; by not making patent his authentic self.

The process of personal individuation is brought into relief by emphasizing that it is integral to radical-reality's existential constitution to be a 'preferential being', an entity who has been assigned a "system of preferences and prejudices . . . which each one of us carries within himself like a battery of sympathies and repulsions. . . ."19

For the Greek, virtue—arete—means nothing else than authenticity—that is, "actual capability" or simply "capability" of something; being what one is in full reality. Everything living possesses its arete, its virtue, namely its plenary mode of being.20

In effect, for Ortega, radical-reality is not essentially a tabula rasa upon which specific experiential imprints are etched thereby determining our likes and dislikes. 'Having preferences' is an existentially constitutive condition of radical-reality which precedes any intellectual effort to evaluate the possibilities offered by circumstantial-reality.

As a result, because of our pre-conceptual "preferences and distastes"21 not every mode of being or option available appeals to radical-reality. For Ortega, it is the 'heart' which is the "foundation of our personality."22 The 'heart', characterized as the "secret self"23 or the "subterranean penumbra"24 is, therefore, the locus of the insobornable core of authenticity. Hence, the 'heart' is no less than the "intimate and secret depth of our own"25 which inclines radical-reality towards one particular mode of being while excluding others simply because "only one appears to us as the one which we have to be."26

The heart, that tireless machine of preferring and disdaining, is the support of our personality.

Do not, then, say that the first thing is the impression. . . . He who desires material riches did not wait to want them until he saw the gold; he would seek it wherever it could be found, giving his full attention to the business side that every situation holds within itself. The artist, on the other hand, the man of esthetic preferences, will go through those same situations utterly blind to their economic side and will seek whatever there is in them of grace and beauty. . . . all living is an incessant, original preferring and disdaining.²⁷

The sentiment of 'love', according to Ortega in his essay On Love: Aspects of a Single Theme, provides the avenue for the revelation of the latent, authentic core of individuality. Unlike the 'will' or other intellectual functions which are 'deliberate' performances that "suspend the vigor of spontaneity"²⁸ and "deters this or that involuntary impulse which . . . rises from the subconscious,"²⁹ "love is an impulse"³⁰ and hence, is an "instantaneous"³¹ showing forth of that which constitutes my authentic preferences. It is precisely this 'making patent' of my preferences within my given circumstantial-reality which constitutes my fundamental existential task.

The I which is our vital design, 'that which we are to be', is here called Bestimmung. But this word suffers from the same ambiguities as "destiny" (Schicksal). What is our destiny—the inner or the outer, that which we were to be or that which our character and the world force us to be? . . . our real—that is, actual—destiny. . . . arises from the deformation which is inflicted on us by the world, "with its perpetually troubling influence," which leads us astray with respect to our [ideal or higher] true destiny.³²

Accordingly, it is not the 'will' which determines the character of my 'insobornable core'. In a paradoxical sense, the will is a projection towards that which 'is not yet' but which 'is already available'. Such is the paradoxical and tragic condition of heroic radical-reality. Radical-reality, in facing the task of personal realization, is bound by the 'freedom to be' that which he must be. 'Building my life' refers to a level of being wherein I "resolve [my] life loyally and sincerely,"³³ by choosing, and this means by patently expressing through action, that "field of thoughts or opinions"³⁴ which are properly my own. But the 'choosing', the 'will towards' realizing my own vital design is derivative and secondary to the design itself. In Being and Time (1927), Heidegger, in his discussion of the 'call of conscience' which "summons Dasein's Self from its lostness in the 'they'";³⁵ emphasizes that "the call is precisely something which we ourselves have neither planned nor prepared for nor voluntarily performed, nor have we ever done so. 'It' calls, against our expectations and even against our will. . . . The call comes from me and yet from beyond me."³⁶ Six years later, Ortega echoes this view by stating that vocation "is not an idea or plan ideated by the person involved, and freely chosen. It is anterior to . . . all the ideas which his intellect forms, to all the decisions of his will."³⁷ Accordingly, the 'will' and the intellectual apparatus of radical-reality are tools

which serve the individual in his effort to resolve the 'problem of his being'. "Our will is free to realize or not to realize"³⁸ our vital design, "but it cannot correct it, change it, abbreviate it, or substitute anything for it."³⁹ Hence, the tragedy and the paradox of human existence. Unlike the being of entities 'present at hand' whose natures are pre-given, radical-reality may indeed fail to be himself since "being man signifies precisely being always on the point of not being man. . . . And this is true not only abstractly and generically but it holds of our own individuality."⁴⁰ So, radical-reality "may try to supplant himself . . . to falsify his life."⁴¹ In effect, radical-reality "can be precisely what it is not, the negation of itself, the void of itself."⁴²

Once again, the inherently 'problematic' character of the human existential condition is made manifest. Living becomes the "desperate struggle—with things and even with our character—to succeed in being in fact that which we are in design."⁴³ This is the 'vital imperative',* the demand that I adopt a particular mode of being if I am to be myself. This imperative is not, however, the ethical demand which in some abstract, "generic" or "normative"⁴⁴

*See Ortega's Obras Completas, 5th ed., IV, 406. "No se confunda, pues, el deber ser de la moral, que habita en la región intelectual del hombre, con el imperativo vital, con el tener que ser de la vocación personal, situado en la región más profunda y primaria de nuestro ser." Ortega distinguishes between the 'ought to be' of morality and the 'have to be' implied by the notion of personal vocation; the former situated in man's intellectual region, the latter in the most primary region of our being.

sense requires the use of the intellect and will as instruments for the ordering of my behavior so that I might "justify [my] existence with the abstract meaning of the species."⁴⁵ The call to authentic selfhood is provoked by our basic being. . . . which the man's inner destiny sets it."⁴⁶ In effect, since "life always has a voice and is therefore vocation;"⁴⁷ it results that "life is in itself [italics mine] ethical in a more basic sense of the word . . . in man the imperative forms a part of his own reality."⁴⁸

The man whose entelechy is, let us say, to be a thief has to be one, even though his own moral ideas are opposed to it, suppress his unchangeable destiny, and manage to make his actual life that of a law-abiding citizen. It is a terrible thing, but there is no denying it: the man who had to be a thief and, by a virtuous effort of will succeeds in not being one, falsifies his life.⁴⁹

In his critical essay "In Search of Goethe from Within," (1932), Ortega further qualifies his own 'dynamic' understanding of the realization of the authentic self in contrast to what he calls Goethe's own "botanical image of life."⁵⁰ Goethe's notion of Naturfrömmigkeit portrayed living as an inevitable process towards a pre-determined endpoint, according to Ortega, "with no painful straying from the road, in accordance with a gentle cosmic necessity."⁵¹ Free from the necessity of discovering itself, nature simply follows its instincts and thereby portrays life as "evolution."⁵²

When, undertaking to answer the . . . question . . .
 Who am I?—[Goethe] replied: An entelechy. . . .
 perhaps the best word to designate that vital design,
 that inexorable plan, in which our real I exists. . . .
 But the ancient vocable carries with it a millennial
 biological tradition which gives it a smack of the
 zoo. . . . 53

And later, in the same essay;

But man's life is exactly the opposite: it is having
 to decide every moment what he must do the next
 moment and, therefore, having to discover the very . . .
 design of his being.⁵⁴

A Note on the Epistemological Status
 of VOCATION

An immediate question provoked by the very concept
 of 'vocation' understood as 'vital design', is one which
 challenges the possibility of 'accounting for' the concept
 itself. Within the Ortegian analysis, the character of
 radical-reality as a 'preferential being' must remain,
 at bottom, unexplained. The state of being unexplained,
 however, is not due to any neglect but is a condition of
 the phenomenon itself, i.e. it is, in principle, unexplain-
 able. As Ortega states it; "The selective principles which
 determine vital design are at the same time the most
 intimate and mysterious preferences which form our indiv-
 idual character."⁵⁵

. . . the mystery of the authentic I lies behind
 our actual life like its mysterious root . . .
 which cannot be conceived under any of the exter-
 nal and cosmic categories.⁵⁶

In a primordial sense, then, since authentic vocation is
assigned to radical-reality and is essentially an irra-
 tional "source located beneath our consciousness,"⁵⁷ there

resides, along with the 'vital design', an equiprimordial inability to provide an explanation for its presence. It becomes apparent, for Ortega, that as one attempts to 'speak about' the authentic core, "it is as difficult for us to perceive as it is to see the span of ground upon which our feet step. Neither can the pupil of an eye view itself."⁵⁸ Hence, the only qualification that can be made regarding the vital design of radical-reality is that it is "the strangest and most mysterious ingredient in man"⁵⁹ or, as Heidegger asserts in Being and Time in his discussion of 'conscience as the call of care', "These phenomenal findings are not to be explained away. . . . they have been taken as a starting-point for explaining the voice of conscience as an alien power by which Dasein is dominated."⁶⁰ As a result, for Ortega, the insobornable core of my life is "the mysterious reality . . . in the sense that we do not know [*italics mine*] its secret. . . ." ⁶¹

The assertion that 'vital design' is itself a ground and the unavailability of a preceding basis for explaining vital design qualifies this concept, within the Ortegan analysis, as an "absolute principle";⁶² an "element which has no precedent."⁶³ But 'having no precedent' indicates that the 'truth' of the concept is "neither reasoned nor reasonable"⁶⁴ and hence, relies upon a "spontaneous and immediate"⁶⁵ acceptance in the light of its 'self-evidential' character. Nevertheless, within the context of this

study, this question is secondary. The primary question provoked by the concept of vocation revolves around a determination of the temporal character of this phenomenon.

Ortega's understanding of vital design offers, it appears, a dual temporal orientation. On the one hand, vital design 'is already there' in so far as it is 'carried into' my thrown condition along with me and, on the other hand, it remains 'problematic' in the sense that 'it is yet to be realized'. But the realization of that which is 'already there' suggests a re-newed investigation into the interactive process between radical-reality and the circumstances into which he is thrown. As a result, the following section is precisely an attempt to bring this interaction into relief more completely.

Vital Design and the 'Re-Absorption of Circumstance'

To this point in the analysis, the notion of 'destiny' has acquired meaning from two distinct perspectives; on the one hand, from the standpoint of the parameters established by radical-reality's thrown condition within his circumstances and, on the other hand, from the perspective of having a 'vital design' which defines, in some primordial manner, who we have to be if we are to be ourselves. The human condition, then, is bound by a set of givens, a set of conditions within which radical-reality may exercise his freedom 'to be or not to be'

himself. As a result, "life is as far as possible from a subjective phenomenon. It is the most objective of all realities."⁶⁶ But the 'givens' provide only the horizon within which radical-reality may execute his fundamental existential task which is "to mould the planet after the preferences of his inmost being."⁶⁷ It is precisely this process of 'renovating' my circumstantial-reality which constitutes the 're-absorption of circumstance'.

In a footnote commentary to Ortega's Meditations on Quixote, Julián Marías asserts that "The destiny of man . . . is to impose his personal project on what is real, to give sense to what has none, to extract the logos from the inert, brutish and 'il-logical', to convert that which simply 'is there around me' . . . into a real world, into personal human life."⁶⁸ It would, perhaps, be more appropriate to state that, rather than 'extracting' logos or meaning from the 'il-logical' circumstances, radical-reality implants such meaning since meaning derives from radical-reality himself.

The 'objectivity' of radical-reality's life points to his primordially given destiny, his personal and radically own vital design which stands in need of being realized. Nonetheless, although circumstantial-reality cannot be the primary field for resolving the authentic I since circumstances tend to 'cover-over' radical-reality's 'true core', they must still be 'taken into account', modified by me and

humanized through my activities. "In short," states Ortega in 1914, "the reabsorption of circumstance is the concrete destiny of man."⁶⁹

The notion of 're-absorption', derives from the initially thrown condition of radical-reality who lives life as alteración. Through alteración, radical-reality absorbs reality and is hence, absorbed by it.^{*} This initial absorption into reality means that radical-reality is 'taken over' by circumstances and is essentially 'other directed'. However, the 're-absorption of circumstance' indicates that radical-reality may abandon those circumstances to 'be within himself' (ensimismarse) in order to discover and examine his own convictions (vital design) and ultimately, re-emerge into those circumstances with a personally devised 'plan of action' which, when executed, humanizes the reality which once 'covered-over' his authentic being. Re-emerging into circumstantial-reality is precisely this 're-absorption'. It is circumstantial-reality which now absorbs my own authentic being; it is my own radical-reality which now impresses my circumstances and modifies them in terms of my being.

^{*}See José Ortega y Gasset, Invertebrate Spain, trans. Mildred Adams (New York: Howard Fertig, Inc., 1974), p. 111. Ortega expresses the powerful and intimately vital influence of circumstances upon man. He states, "Only in the form of one's region does the earth have a vital influence on man. The configuration of the land, covered with familiar plants, bathed in air which may be damp or dry . . . this is the great sculptor of mankind. As water, drop by drop, wears away the stone, so the landscape models its men, custom by custom."

My natural exit towards the universe is through the mountain passes of the Guadaramma in the plain of Ontígola. This sector of circumstantial reality forms the other half of my person; only through it can I integrate myself and be fully myself. The most recent biological science studies the living organism as a unit composed of body and its particular environment so that the life process consists not only of the adaptation of the body to its environment but also of the adaptation of the environment to its body. . . .

I am myself plus my circumstances, and if I do not save it, I cannot save myself.⁷⁰

But why must radical-reality 'save' his circumstances? What provokes radical-reality to 're-adjust' the surroundings of his thrown condition? What, in other words, motivates the individual to overcome alteración and to re-order his environment in terms of his own vital design?

'Being Shipwrecked' and the Consciousness of Crisis

In his essay "In Search of Goethe from Within," (1932), Ortega states that "a consciousness of security kills life"⁷¹ and again, in Man and Crisis (1933), he emphasizes that "the inheritance which frees one from the effort of creation has the disadvantage of being an invitation to inertia."⁷² However, the turning point between 'having the security' of inherited cultural traditions, and the 'problematic insecurity' of having to seek out my own ways for dealing with reality, is the 'consciousness of shipwreck', the sudden awareness that circumstantial-reality and the repertoire of solutions it readily provides fail to uphold me or cease to have meaning for me. 'Being shipwrecked', then, is no less

than a 'moment of crisis' which brings into relief the troubling event of 'being left on my own'. 'Being shipwrecked' is radical-reality's dramatic encounter with the need to search out personally meaningful solutions for himself. But 'being shipwrecked' is a positive experience. It is the counter movement to cultural inertia and the antithesis of 'being socialized'.

To be shipwrecked is not to drown. . . . centuries of cultural continuity brings with it—among many advantages—the great disadvantage that man believes himself safe, loses the feeling of shipwreck, and his culture proceeds to burden itself with parasitic and lymphatic matter. Some discontinuity must therefore intervene, in order that man may renew his feeling of peril, the substance of his life. All his life-saving equipment must fail, he must find nothing to cling to. Then his arms will once again move redemptively.

Consciousness of shipwreck, being the truth of life, constitutes salvation.⁷³

Akin to this 'consciousness of crisis' in Ortega is John Dewey's observation that a state of 'tension' or 'discord' presents the "occasion that induces reflection"⁷⁴ upon the environment. According to Dewey:

Life itself consists of phases in which the organism falls out of step with the march of surrounding things and then recovers unison with it. . . . In a growing life, the recovery is never mere return to a prior state, for it is enriched by the state of disparity . . . through which it has successfully passed. . . . If its activity is not enhanced by the temporary alienation, it merely subsists. Life grows when a temporary falling out is a transition to a more extensive balance of the energies of the organism with those of the conditions under which it lives.⁷⁵

These remarks expressed by Dewey in 1934 are precisely in accord with the theme of 'salvations' which Ortega

introduces through his own work as early as 1914.* Radical-reality sets out to re-establish himself as himself by both overcoming and conserving the circumstances which define his thrown condition. But it is the experience of 'crisis' which motivates the 'saving' of my circumstances and hence, the salvation of my own authentic being. Once again, as Dewey expresses it; "life goes on in an environment . . . through interaction with it. . . . The career and destiny of a living being are bound up with its interchanges with its environment . . . in the most intimate way."⁷⁶ Hence, it is not the mere juxtaposition of 'self' against 'circumstance' which defines the character of human existence, but the dynamic relationship between these mutually dependent elements of radical-reality.

But the key question which has served as the guiding background for this chapter remains: what is the temporal character of 'authentic being myself'? Although certain indications have already been provided regarding the temporal orientation of 'heroic' radical-reality, in the following section, a more direct approach is to be taken towards a clarification of this question, and its implications for the development of a possible 'vital philosophy'.

*See Ortega's Meditations on Quixote, especially the section entitled "To the Reader." The original text is found in Obras Completas, I, 311 (Meditaciones del Quijote).

Vocation and the Temporality of
Happiness

A key concept which assists in an interpretation of the temporal character of radical-reality's vital design or vocation, and his struggle to realize this design in actuality, is the concept of 'happiness'. In the previous section, the notion of 're-absorption of circumstances' was discussed in terms of radical-reality's humanization of that which is essentially 'other'. In order to round out the vital character of radical-reality's unique relationship with circumstantial-reality, Ortega emphasizes, in his book on Leibniz, that each human being must;

adapt the world to his essential needs. . . . he must exert himself to transform this world, which is foreign to him . . . which is not in harmony with him, into another and related world where his desires may be satisfied—man is a complex of desires that are impossibilities in this world. . . . The idea of a world in harmony with man is called happiness. Man is an unhappy being, and by the same token, his goal is happiness. Hence, everything that man does, he does in order to be happy.⁷⁷

The understanding that radical-reality is the 'unhappy being' derives from his paradoxical condition as the entity 'estranged' from the world into which he is thrown while, at the same time, being essentially 'bound' to that world. All of this brings into relief Ortega's characterization of the relationship between radical-reality and his circumstances now understood as a 'field of resistance'. As Ortega asserts in Man and People, "everything [with which] we have to reckon . . . it is there, it exists, re-sists."⁷⁸

Again, in the Goethe essay, "I am a certain absolutely individual pressure upon the world; the world is the no less definite and individual resistance to that pressure."⁷⁹ Accordingly, radical-reality's efforts are directed towards reducing the resistance of his circumstances and his degree of success is measured "only through the liking or aversion aroused in him by each separate situation."⁸⁰ Hence, the vital design which is my authentic self is made manifest in my affective response to my situation in the world. As a result, for each radical-reality, "only his sufferings and satisfactions instruct him concerning himself."⁸¹

In his work Meditations on Hunting, Ortega remarks that human life is "given to us empty . . . it is a simple 'being there'."⁸² But 'being there', it is to be recalled, is that mode of being inappropriate for a vital understanding of human existence. Within the present context, it represents radical-reality's initially un-fulfilled condition for the reason that radical-reality stands in need of resolving his own life. Human living is no less than the process of creating myself in the sense that I must accept the responsibility for my life and "fill it"⁸³ with particular 'doings' or 'occupations'. But all of this indicates a unique temporal character. Since "life is brief and urgent,"⁸⁴ radical-reality must "choose one way of life to the exclusion of all others. . . ." ⁸⁵ Radical-reality's character as the 'preferential being', then, derives specifically from his temporal constitution as the 'finite

being', the being who does not have unlimited time to do everything. In effect, finite-ness coerces each individual to choose particular activities to serve as the content and substance of his life.

The problematic character of human existence, however, assumes two distinct forms or, perhaps better expressed, appears on two distinct levels. On the one hand, there are the everyday obstacles with which each radical-reality must reckon in order to 'make a living for himself'. This form or 'level' of 'doing' is expressed through one's 'job' or 'chores' which are mandated by the basic necessities of 'maintaining oneself' or simply 'keeping alive'. 'Being a chore', however, implies a negative characterisitic; it assumes the form of an obligation, something which must be done, not because it is in harmony with the personal intimacy of my 'vital design', but because it is a way of 'acquiring something', a profit perhaps, or some goal which is not integral to the activity itself. In itself, the endpoint of the chore is 'something' beyond the chore. On another level, however, there is a form of 'doing' which seeks to resolve or 'make patent' that vital design which I am. These activities are, in themselves, self-fulfilling; they represent a "plan of life successful in itself."⁸⁶ Hence, as Ortega states;

. . . what most torments us about work is that by filling up our time it seems to take it from us..... Life used for work does not seem to us to be really ours . . . it . . . seems the annihilation of our real existence. . . . When someone tells us that he

is "very occupied" he is usually giving us to understand that his real life is being held in suspension. . . .

All this indicates that man, painfully submerged in his work or obligatory occupations, projects beyond them, imagines another kind of life consisting of very different occupations, in the execution of which he would not feel as if he were losing time, but, on the contrary, gaining it, filling it satisfactorily and as it should be filled. Opposite a life which annihilates itself and fails—a life of work—he erects the plan of a life successful in itself—a life of delight and happiness.⁸⁷

It is precisely at this point where a significant observation needs to be made regarding Ortega's characterization of these forms or levels of 'doing', and the specific temporal orientation which they each represent. It is important to recall Ortega's notion that life is "by definition, always incomplete. . . ." ⁸⁸ For Ortega, living remains understood as a process of "dramatic substance of open enigma and unanswered urgency."⁸⁹ But this portrayal of the human condition as a processive occurrence stands out over and against Ortega's claim that, in seeking happiness, I seek to "immerse"⁹⁰ myself in vocational activities, i.e. in those 'doings' which define or make manifest my vital design. This sense of 'being immersed', however, bears a crucial temporal signification. Although laborious activities or 'chores' are directed beyond themselves, vocational activities are executed "for the pleasure of them. . . . for that reason we want them to never end. We would like to eternalize [*italics mine*] them. And really,

once absorbed in a pleasureable occupation, we catch a starry glimpse of eternity."⁹¹ According to Ortega, then, radical-reality is 'pleasure oriented' in his doings and this means that radical-reality seeks to 'eternalize' those activities which coincide or harmonize with his own vital design. But 'eternalizing' is no less than a form of 'making present' which is precisely that form of temporality not appropriate for a vital understanding of radical-reality's existential constitution. How then can this characterization be accomodated by the existential analysis so far provided within this study? How, in other words, may a 'vital' interpretation of human existence be 'salvaged' against the background of the temporal character of 'eternalizing' or 'making present' in the sense indicated in this section?

As if in response to this apparent contradiction, Ortega establishes a distinction between 'pleasure' and 'happiness'; a distinction which attempts to preserve the vital sense of human living as an essentially 'incomplete activity'. The notion that pleasure is a 'state of being' implies that it is a "passive occurrence,"⁹² 'something' which is imposed upon and experienced by radical-reality. For Ortega, however, "pleasure is the least of happiness."⁹³ Although happiness includes pleasure, "happy occupations . . . are not merely pleasures; they are efforts";⁹⁴ hence, they are active occurrences executed by radical-reality. In effect,

there is no 'state of happiness' in any static or fixed sense of 'being happy', but rather, the "energetic effort"⁹⁵ and the active struggle of ceaselessly seeking to resolve my own life. Circumstances, culture, and the power of tradition are relentless in their tendencies to 'over-come' me and 'cover' my authentic self, hence, the need to re-affirm 'who I am' is a constant task.

Radical-reality, then, faces the problem which evades complete resolution. It has already been pointed out that authenticity is not to be interpreted as a fixed state of being, a condition which is once and for all mine. Rather, 'being authentic' is the projection towards that which I already possess. But the paradoxical sense of the human condition derives from the simultaneous effort to resolve my vital design, to make it patent, while understanding that it is the effort itself which constitutes the most authentic way of comporting myself within my circumstances. Since the nature of my circumstances is such that they are always present to me, they inevitably tend to 'cover me' and overwhelm my vital design. Hence, "man is condemned to an inability to be substantially happy if he cannot be happy in the style of his own time."⁹⁶ But, 'being happy in the style of one's own time' means precisely that I do not rely upon the 'ready made simplicity' of a "golden age"⁹⁷ or past time which solves my problems for me. In terms of authentically resolving his own life, radical-

reality "cannot return to any previous age. He is assigned, like it or not, to a future that is always, in fact, new and different. . . . In spite of our species' age and our inheritance of all the past, life is always new and each generation finds itself obligated to begin the act of living. . . . "98 Hence;

If those past problems were of the same caliber as ours, we could take advantage . . . of the solutions provided. Then it would be possible to inscribe our existence within the orbit of antiquity, with the advantage of already having, thanks to that past, our problematic situation resolved through anticipation. . . . history would be stabilized; life would have lost its dramatic substance of open enigma . . . over the planet there would have surged a reality radically different from life, with opposite characteristics—to wit, beatitude.99

As a result, authentic resolution is a 'future oriented' activity which is never finished. Although radical-reality seeks freedom from nostalgia and desire, from past and future, and to be totally immersed in an eternal state of 'pleasurable activities' which coincide with my vital design, this search for 'temporal detachment' is precisely a search for 'something' unavailable to radical-reality. In one sense, then, human living seeks to transcend itself by getting beyond its own finitude while, at the same time, being inexorably bound to finitude. 'Being bound to finitude', then, radical-reality's happiness is the incessant effort to achieve that which is, properly speaking, not his own, viz. a permanent 'state' of 'being fulfilled'. Radical-reality ceaselessly encounters the past which offers a 'false sense of security', and a

problematic future assigned to him through his own circumstances. Hence, the search for authenticity is permanently 'historical' in character.

Comments and Questions

The current chapter has been devoted to an interpretative analysis of Ortega's concept of vocation, and its temporal significations. Attention to this theme has demonstrated that radical-reality may comport himself from various temporal standpoints. However, the question which still emanates from this analysis is the following: how has the concept of vocation, understood as 'vital design', made possible the development of a 'vital philosophy'?

At this stage, however, only half of the expression, 'vital philosophy', has been clarified. If 'authentic vitality' is characterized as the future directed will towards the realization of my vital design, a derivative question is: Is this the only sense of vitality available to radical-reality? And, to complete the remaining half of the expression, this study asks, what is the character of philosophy and 'philosophical activity'? Is philosophy itself a vital activity in the sense that it exhibits a temporal character akin to the temporality of authentic vitality? Or, does philosophy inexorably result in being a non-vital form of activity? Ultimately, the question may be reduced to this: Is there a sense to the expression 'vital philosophy' or is the concept a compilation of mutually exclusive terms?

The Following Chapter

The final section of this chapter has considered the possible 'forms of doing' available to radical-reality, and has characterized these forms in terms of their bearing upon that entity. In the following chapter, this study is to examine the issue of 'vitality' from the perspective of the character of 'philosophical activity'. Philosophical activity itself, and Ortega's concept of philosophy, in particular, are to be analyzed with particular emphasis upon the status of the 'I' who performs philosophically. The following chapter, then, is an attempt to determine the specific character of philosophy as a form or 'level of doing' which radical-reality is capable of executing. In addition, the analysis of the next chapter is to consider the temporal orientation of the 'philosophical I', and the 'temporality of philosophizing'.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER III

¹Walt Whitman, "Song of Myself," Walt Whitman: The Complete Poems, ed. Francis Murphy (Great Britain: Penguin Education, 1975), p. 66.

²José Ortega y Gasset, Meditations on Hunting, trans. Howard B. Wescott (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972), p. 67.

³Ibid., p. 130.

⁴Ibid., p. 131.

⁵José Ortega y Gasset, "Ideas Sobre Pio Baroja," Obras Completas (11 vols.; 7th ed.; Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1966), II, pp. 84-85.

⁶Ortega y Gasset, "Fifteenth-Century Man," Man and Crisis, pp. 180-81.

⁷Ortega y Gasset, Meditations on Quixote, pp. 157-58.

⁸Ibid., p. 152.

⁹Ibid., p. 149.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid., p. 152.

¹²Ibid., p. 158.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ortega y Gasset, Meditations on Hunting, p. 129.

¹⁵Ortega y Gasset, "In Search of Goethe From Within," The Dehumanization of Art, p. 146.

¹⁶R.D. Laing, The Divided Self: An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness (Great Britain: Penguin Books, 1971), p. 41.

¹⁷Ortega y Gasset, "El Fondo Insobornable," Obras Completas, II, 84. [The translation used is that of Frances M. López-Morillas and is found in Julián Marías's work, Circumstance and Vocation, pp. 461-62.]

¹⁸Ortega y Gasset, "In Search of Goethe From Within," The Dehumanization of Art, p. 159.

¹⁹Ortega y Gasset, What Is Philosophy?, p. 244.

²⁰Ortega y Gasset, "Prologue to a History of Philosophy," Concord and Liberty, p. 109.

²¹José Ortega y Gasset, On Love: Aspects of a Single Theme, trans. Toby Talbot (New York: The New American Library, Inc., 1957), p. 79.

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid., p. 80.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ortega y Gasset, "Fifteenth-Century Man," Man and Crisis, p. 180.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ortega y Gasset, What Is Philosophy?, pp. 244-45.

²⁸Ortega y Gasset, On Love, p. 83.

²⁹Ibid., p. 84.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 82.

³¹Ibid., p. 83.

³²Ortega y Gasset, "In Search of Goethe From Within," The Dehumanization of Art, p. 150.

³³Ortega y Gasset, "Truth as Man in Harmony With Himself," Man and Crisis, p. 116.

³⁴Ortega y Gasset, "Fifteenth-Century Man," Man and Crisis, p. 181.

³⁵Martin Heidegger, Being and Time, p. 319.

³⁶Ibid., p. 320.

³⁷Ortega y Gasset, "In Search of Goethe From Within," The Dehumanization of Art, p. 141.

³⁸Ibid., p.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ortega y Gasset, "Being In One's Self and Being Beside One's Self," Man and People, p. 25.

⁴¹Ortega y Gasset, "In Search of Goethe From Within," The Dehumanization of Art, p. 144.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Ibid., p. 141.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 150-51.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 151.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 151-52.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 166.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 151.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 153.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid., p. 149.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 153.

⁵⁵Ortega y Gasset, On Love, pp. 89-90.

⁵⁶Ortega y Gasset, "In Search of Goethe From Within," The Dehumanization of Art, p. 149.

⁵⁷Ortega y Gasset, On Love, p. 85.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 80.

⁵⁹Ortega y Gasset, "Fifteenth-Century Man," Man and Crisis, p. 180.

⁶⁰Martin Heidegger, Being and Time, p. 320.

⁶¹Ortega y Gasset, Meditations on Hunting, p. 105.

- ⁶²Ortega y Gasset, The Idea of Principle in Leibnitz, p. 15.
- ⁶³Ibid.
- ⁶⁴Ibid., p. 18.
- ⁶⁵Ibid.
- ⁶⁶Ortega y Gasset, "In Search of Goethe From Within," The Dehumanization of Art, p. 142.
- ⁶⁷Ortega y Gasset, "Being In One's Self and Being Beside One's Self," Man and People, p. 20.
- ⁶⁸Ortega y Gasset, Meditations on Quixote, p. 172.
- ⁶⁹Ibid., p. 45.
- ⁷⁰Ibid.
- ⁷¹Ortega y Gasset, "In Search of Goethe From Within," The Dehumanization of Art, p. 161.
- ⁷²Ortega y Gasset, "Change and Crisis," Man and Crisis, p. 97.
- ⁷³Ortega y Gasset, "In Search of Goethe From Within," The Dehumanization of Art, p. 136-37.
- ⁷⁴John Dewey, Art as Experience (New York: Capricorn Books, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1958), p. 15.
- ⁷⁵Ibid., p. 14.
- ⁷⁶Ibid., p. 13.
- ⁷⁷Ortega y Gasset, The Idea of Principle in Leibnitz, pp. 39-40.
- ⁷⁸Ortega y Gasset, "Personal Life," Man and People, p. 41.
- ⁷⁹Ortega y Gasset, "In Search of Goethe From Within," The Dehumanization of Art, p. 143.
- ⁸⁰Ibid., p. 152.
- ⁸¹Ibid.
- ⁸²Ortega y Gasset, Meditations on Hunting, p. 28.

⁸³Ibid., p. 27.

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵Ibid.

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 28-29.

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 130.

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 131.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 30.

⁹¹Ibid.

⁹²Ibid., p. 35.

⁹³Ibid.

⁹⁴Ibid.

⁹⁵Ibid.

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 132.

⁹⁷Ibid.

⁹⁸Ibid., p. 133.

⁹⁹Ibid., pp. 130-31.

CHAPTER IV

THE 'PHILOSOPHICAL I' AND THE TEMPORALITY OF 'BEING AWARE'

Great geniuses have the shortest biographies. Their cousins can tell you nothing about them. They lived in their writings, and so their house and street life was trivial and commonplace. If you would know their tastes and complexions, the most admiring of their readers most resembles them. Plato especially has no external biography. If he had lover, wife, or children, we hear nothing of them. He ground them all into paint. As a good chimney burns its smoke, so a philosopher converts the value of all his fortunes into his intellectual performances.¹

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Against the background of the characterization of radical-reality as the kind of being who is constituted primarily by his activities, his 'doings', the present chapter seeks to clarify and critically analyze the concept of a 'vital philosophy' and indeed, the very possibility of such a concept, the possibility, that is, of making compatible the composite terms 'vital' and 'philosophy'. In essence, this chapter is an attempt to expose the character of philosophical activity from within a temporal framework, along with the 'I' who performs philosophically.

Accordingly, this chapter's principal themes are to include the following: a description of the character of philosophy as a 'theoretical', non-pragmatic activity whose fundamental problem is the problem of radical-reality 'finding himself'; the notion of philosophy as a 'sportive' and 'non-vital' enterprise; 'finding oneself' as a form of seeing or 'being aware'; and a clarification of the 'forms of being aware', contar con ('counting on') and reparar ('to take account of'), which reveal a distinct temporal orientation.

Philosophy as a 'Theoretical' Activity

If radical-reality, in his thrown condition, conducts his existence from within reality, from within his given circumstances, he is, in effect, 'one who stands upon firm ground', one who has a 'secure footing' and can thereby deal with things and problems from a fixed standpoint. Indeed, the fundamental notion of 'problem', for the 'mass man' (hombre-masa), assumes the character of an obstacle; the practical or strictly 'utilitarian' character of 'something at hand' in the way of my existence. In effect, "life poses problems for man. . . ." states Ortega in his lectures entitled What Is Philosophy? "but these problems, which are not of his making fall on him from the outside, posed for him by the very act of living . . . are the practical problems."²

The practical problems, then, the problems addressed by the individual sciences, are specifically introduced and directed by the circumstantial-reality in terms of which each radical-reality initially interprets his own being. In particular, in dealing with the 'practical problem', radical-reality adopts a specific "mental attitude in which we plan to modify reality, consider giving being to something that does not yet exist but would be more convenient for us if it did."³ Utilitarian interests, then, and the 'problem solving' appropriate to such interests, 'make present' a condition of being which is convenient for me; it is the effort to 'realize' and produce 'something' whose existence would 'make my life easier' in some respect. The keynote for scientific activity is, therefore, the actual 'bringing into being' of a solution. Hence, both 'problem' and 'solution' are interpreted as 'present at hand' commodities which are there. In effect, since radical-reality, as originally 'thrown and lost', is primarily the 'social entity', the being who is first a 'being with', the status of his problems is such that they are precisely those problems with which everyone must deal. As a result;

Each science is primarily a system of problems which are invariable or of very limited variation, and it is that treasure-house of problems which travels the length of the generations, passes from one mind to another, and in the long history of a science constitutes at once the patrimony and the safeguard of tradition.⁴

Hence, problem solving on this level of utilitarian interests is grounded within a tradition, a given past which has accumulated for one, a repertoire of methods, or, at least partial methods and solutions, for dealing with those problems which are publicly available. As a result, such problems are essentially 'non-radical' in character for two distinct reasons: first, because they are not strictly and unreservedly 'my own', and second, because such problems are, as Ortega states in his Leibniz book, "in principle, solvable"⁵ to the extent that science itself "exists to find solutions. . . . Sciences are sciences because they achieve proper solutions."⁶ It is precisely with this point where the Ortegian understanding of philosophy begins to make its appearance.

In contrast to this level of problem solving in the 'practical' sense, philosophical activity assumes, for Ortega, a completely non-pragmatic attitude; an attitude which "stands apart from the natural opinion which we use in daily life, because it considers as theoretically doubtful the most primary and elemental beliefs which in the process of living do not seem to us at all questionable."⁷ The philosophic attitude, then, is no less than an abandonment of the most natural mode of comporting oneself; that mode of being wherein radical-reality uses circumstantial-reality and tradition as the guiding clues for the interpretation of his own being.

In effect, the philosopher adopts that which Ortega refers to as the "principle of autonomy,"⁸ the radical independence from 'what tradition says' about things. This attitude of independence means no less than "renouncing the right to lean on anything prior to the philosophy which [the philosopher] may be creating and pledging himself not to start from supposed truths."⁹ Philosophy, for Ortega, becomes "a science without suppositions."¹⁰ Initially, the philosopher is portrayed as the individual who effects an act of 'intellectual heroism' for the reason that he adopts the condition of 'being shipwrecked' with 'no-thing' to secure his being. So, in his "Prologue to a History of Philosophy," Ortega tells us that;

In order that philosophy be born, life in the form of pure tradition must have become impossible; man must have lost "the faith of his forebears." Then the individual person remains isolated and uprooted, and nothing but his own exertion will help him to find new ground on which to settle in new security. Only where this happens and to the extent to which it happens have we philosophy.¹¹

And once again, in Some Lessons in Metaphysics, Ortega states;

Unlike the sciences, philosophy does not progress in a horizontal dimension by means of successive broadenings. It progresses downward toward the depths, and its advance consists in questioning that which previously had not been questionable.¹²

Abandoning 'faith in one's forebears' means no less than abandoning that which may be called the 'natural

standpoint' and opting for a refrain from 'being in the world' as this condition is defined by one's 'thrown and lost' condition. Giving up the security of tradition and those given circumstances which, for the most part, overwhelm us and 'absorb us', radical-reality becomes conscious that he is 'disoriented', that is to say, radical-reality assumes a 'consciousness of being shipwrecked'; an awareness of 'crisis'. But 'being disoriented' is an integral existential feature of human living since it points to "a total and fundamental dislocation . . . it is not that man happens to be disoriented, to be losing himself in life, but that, insofar as one can see, man's situation, his life, in itself is disorientation. . . . "13

Accordingly, disorientation, along with the consciousness that one is 'shipwrecked', without grounds, serves as the starting point which radical-reality assumes for the resolution of that problem which is the most radical of all problems: the problem of 'my own being'. . . . Because radical-reality can be disoriented, "metaphysics exists,"¹⁴ metaphysics understood as radical-reality's attempt to "seek a basic orientation in his situation."¹⁵ But seeking orientation means, for Ortega, 'going within', 'being within'. Giving up his reliance upon the 'other', that which is 'outside', radical-reality retreats to the 'only without to this without', viz. his 'within'. 'To be

within himself' (ensimismarse) serves radical-reality's "need for a periodical and thorough going over the accounts of the enterprise that is his life. . . . when we withdraw to our solitude. In solitude, man is his truth. . . ." ¹⁶ Hence, metaphysics becomes, at least initially, 'withdrawing' from the world with a suspension of belief in that which seems to be most real and natural; retreating within to the point where "our most habitual and plausible beliefs, those which constitute the assumptions, the native soil* on which we live" ¹⁷ are put aside. Metaphysics as philosophy, therefore, means "settling accounts with oneself." ¹⁸ But settling accounts means no less that 'making manifest' that which is primarily hidden and 'covered-over' by one's thrown condition; disclosing or 'making patent' that which is there but which remains unseen. Such 'disclosure' is 'truth' since, for Ortega, "truth means things laid open . . . a-letheia. . . . to bare." ¹⁹ Hence, if the so-called natural standpoint clings to reality as the means by which radical-reality comes to an interpretation of his own being, the 'philosophical standpoint' is anti-natural, it is, in effect, "paradoxical to its very root." ²⁰

*See Ortega's The Origin of Philosophy, pp. 73-74 where he elaborates upon the use of the 'soil' metaphor. He states: "a thinker's ideas always possess a subsoil, a soil, and an adversary. . . . The subsoil, composed of deep layers rooted in ancient collective thought from which a . . . thinker derives his ideas. . . . The soil is of recent creation . . . newly founded ideas accepted by the thinker . . . the soil in which he is grounded. . . . Finally, all thought represents thought against. . . . I call this the adversary, . . . in contrast with which . . . our own doctrine takes form."

The "doxa" is opinion which is daily and spontaneous; even more, it is "natural" opinion. Philosophy sees itself obliged to give this up, to go above or below it in search of another opinion, another doxa which is firmer than that which is spontaneous.²¹

It follows from this that, unlike the practical concerns of science which attempt to resolve the 'present at hand' difficulties of 'getting along in life', those problems which are imposed upon me from without, philosophy addresses the 'problem of life' itself, but in a manner which makes of this problem the most radically problematic enterprise of all. The philosopher seeks the resolution of 'his own', that is, 'my own being' which is an issue prior to all other issues; not prior in any chronological sense or sequential order, but in the 'primordial' sense of being exclusively mine. It is the search for the 'root being' which is completely other to all that is merely 'present' before me. In a most paradoxical sense, then, that which is most completely 'other', most distant from me, is no less than my own radical-reality which is not present; that which is closest to me, most intimately my own, is, in effect, that which is furthest away.

When philosophy recovers its position of independence with respect to the sciences, it must see with superlative clarity that it not only differs from them in its way of thinking, which is knowledge whether it likes it or not; not only for its theme, that is to say, for the very special content of its problem, but because of something prior to all this, namely, because of the character of its problem as such. . . . the problem which stimulates philosophical effort is limitlessly problematical, it is an absolute problem. . . . 22

As a result, philosophy is not merely the means or technique by which one solves a problem, it is itself a problem. The philosophical standpoint is the most radical since it addresses that problem which is 'radically non-practical' in character. One can exist without doing philosophy, one does not need to ask the question of his own being. The philosophical problem, then, is the purely 'theoretical' question and the radical-reality who assumes this problem as his own is no less than homo theoreticus.²³

. . . there is no doubt that the theoretical attitude will be purer in proportion as the problem is more of a problem. . . .

Because philosophy's problem is the only absolute problem, the only pure fundamentally theoretic attitude is philosophy's attitude.²⁴

Philosophy as a 'Sportive'; 'Non-Vital' Activity

The theoretical character of philosophy has indicated that philosophy opposes the 'natural attitude' of radical-reality. It is not part of radical-reality's character to be philosophical, i.e. to be 'aware of himself'. In fact, in terms of the orientation of the natural attitude, radical-reality is originally 'self-forgetful' and open to the 'not-self'. Because philosophy is theoretical, one need not be philosophical in order to live, but one does need to be 'practical' since human living is defined precisely in terms of its 'practices' and 'performances'. Hence, since the theoretical attitude is dispensable, it is characterized as the sportive attitude.²⁵ "Compared with

life a theory is not a grave terrible, and formal thing, but a kind of play."²⁶ Hence, my actions constitute the primary fabric of my life; my life precedes any attempt to 'think about' my life. As a result, philosophy is qualified as one of many possible "vital facts,"²⁷ to the extent that "the philosopher in the act of philosophizing . . . in the act of living the process of philosophizing . . . might later be found wandering in a fit of melancholy through the streets. . . . it is a detail of his life and within his life. . . . So the first thing that philosophy must do is to define that datum . . . 'my life'. . . ."28

I must 'define', 'put into words', 'make manifest', or become aware of the meaning of my life in order to be a philosopher, but I need not be a philosopher in order to live. Philosophy, or theoretical activity is "not utilitarian . . . but a . . . luxury effort. . . ."29 So, "Even thinking is not anterior to living—because thinking is found to be a piece of my life. . . . philosophizing is . . . a particular form of living which assumes this living."30 As a theoretic activity, then, is philosophy is this attempt to 'grasp living', its only posture is one of 'stepping outside of' living in order to 'see' the phenomenon. As Ortega states it, "the meaning of philosophizing is nonliving. . . . To philosophize is not to live, it is to stand consciously aside [*italics mine*] from vital beliefs."31 The 'standing aside from vital beliefs' is no

less than an abandonment of the natural attitude in which my life, initially, and for the most part, resides. Hence, "in order to begin, philosophy goes behind itself, sees itself as a form of life . . . for the moment it is meditation on [italics mine] our life."³²

. . . theorizing, philosophizing are, properly speaking, not living—precisely because they are a form of living. . . . Theory, and its extreme form, philosophy, are the attempt which life makes to transcend itself; it is to de-occupy itself, to de-live, to cease to be interested in things. But this dis-inter-esting of oneself is not a passive process. On the contrary, it is a form of being interested . . . to be interested in something while cutting the introvital threads which link it to me—saving it from its immersion in my life, leaving it alone, in pure reference to its own self, seeking in it its very being. . . . Contemplation is an attempt at transmigration.³³

The Natural Attitude: A Husserlian Perspective;
Theorizing as 'Spectating'

In an analogous manner, Edmund Husserl, in his work Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology (1913), emphasizes that the natural standpoint is "prior to all 'theory'". . . . by 'theories' we . . . mean anticipatory ideas of every kind."³⁴ But note that, for Husserl, the so-called natural standpoint is no less than my condition of being "aware of a world. . . . I am aware of it . . . I discover it immediately, intuitively, I experience it. . . . corporeal things somehow spatially distributed are for me simply there . . . 'present', whether or not I pay them special attention. . . . "³⁵

Husserl, like William James who speaks of the naif immediacy of one's lived experiences,* represents the natural standpoint by means of this same term; immediacy.³⁶ My natural manner of comporting myself within the world is understood as "my intuitional grasp . . . of the reality which immediately [italics mine] surrounds me,"³⁷ and again, "I become acquainted with the world as immediately [italics mine] given me, through spontaneous tendencies to turn towards it and to grasp it. . . ." ³⁸ The 'spontaneity' of the natural attitude emphasizes a contrast with the next phrase of the same sentence; ". . . whether in addition I do or do not assert the cogito, and whether I am or am not 'reflectively' concerned with the Ego and cogitare. If I am so concerned, a new cogito has become livingly active, [italics mine] which for its part is not reflected upon, [italics mine] and so not objective for me."³⁹ The latter part of the statement, by Husserl, indicates that reflection upon the cogito is not spontaneous, not natural nor even necessary. The cogito which 'actively executes' and directs itself towards an object of awareness remains 'livingly active' as Husserl states it, but itself is not an object of such awareness. To turn the cogito itself into an 'object' of awareness, a new cogito must take over as subject; as executor, so to speak, of consciousness. This new cogito which becomes aware of the

*See Chapter V of this study where James is discussed in reference to Ortega's concept of the 'lived experience'; vivencias or 'radical immediacy of life'.

original 'subject', now taken as 'object', assumes the posture of a 'transcendental ego', which in its own turn remains itself un-noticed. Hence, in the natural attitude, although I am aware, I am not aware that I am aware, and the status of the ego stands as an un-seen executor of consciousness.

As a result, the ego which transcends the natural standpoint, the ego which, in effect, attains an awareness of the natural ego, assumes the character of a 'spectator'. The transcendental ego is not the self who is actively involved in the everyday immediacy of living, but is one level removed from this immediacy. Hence, the expression 'self-reflective ego' is a misnomer. The ego cannot be 'self-reflective' but can, at best, 'stand back' and assume the posture of a spectator which views a distinct object of awareness. Hence, although "it is from the Ego, the con-sciousness, the experience as given to us from the natural standpoint, that we take our start,"⁴⁰ the ego which performs the phenomenological epokhe or 'putting aside of' the natural attitude, this transcending ego becomes, for Husserl, the philosophical self.

A Possible Conflict in Ortega's Perspective on Philosophical Activity

Ortega's understanding that philosophical activity is a form of 'deliving' which requires the setting up of a 'transcendental ego' for its performance, and his concept

that philosophical activity is a form of 'being within oneself' (ensimismamiento), i.e. a withdrawal into the self in order to come to terms with my being in an attempt to 'find myself', provide the basis for a possible conflict and ambiguity in Ortega's depiction of the philosopher and the temporal character of philosophical activity. The conflict or possible inconsistency which I allude to begins with a spatial characterization of philosophical activity and posture of the philosopher, and leads to a temporal understanding of the phenomenon. I am suggesting that Ortega's concept of ensimismamiento, 'being within oneself', in this context, is actually not a genuine or authentic form of 'being within' but another form of 'being without', a 'standing outside of' the natural attitude and, in effect, philosophy itself, as 'going within', is actually a form of 'being beside oneself'.

Recall that, for Ortega, the natural attitude, or realism, was characterized as a form of 'being without' in the sense that radical-reality is an entity 'other directed' (alteración) and, therefore, in a state of not being aware of oneself. But now, the philosophical attitude as the anti-natural standpoint, reverts, contrary to Ortega's own characterization, to a new form of alteración. The self who philosophizes stands beyond the natural attitude and attempts to 'find life'. Such a move, however, necessitates a 'suspension of actual living' and, hence, the posture of

the self which stands beyond living is one which 'views life from without'. Ortega himself reinforces this spatially oriented characterization of philosophy when he states;

We are not going to live things, but simply to theorize about them, to contemplate them. And to contemplate a thing implies maintaining oneself outside it, *[italics mine]* resolved to keep a chaste distance between it and ourselves. . . . It is more like a pleasant exercise, a favorite occupation.⁴¹

Philosophical activity, here designated as 'contemplation' which 'keeps a distance', prompts a question regarding the Ortegian concept of that which I call 'being aware'. Attention to this concept addresses formally an underlying issue throughout this study, viz. the role and character of intellection within Ortega's notion of philosophy along with a related question; how does the character of intellection influence or allow for the possibility of a 'vital philosophy' in the Ortegian sense of 'being vital'? Furthermore, through an investigation of this concept, 'being aware', its temporal character and hence, the temporal orientation of philosophical activity are to make their appearance.

Recall that living, in the everyday 'natural' sense, is precisely a state of not seeing oneself, not being aware of who I am. Becoming aware of oneself, then, requires a transcendence of human living. But when philosophy raises the question of 'being' in the form, 'what is my life?',⁴² radical-reality who does the asking, not only takes hold of

and notices the 'words' which are the vehicle for the question, but also, in uttering the words 'my life', makes of that question a radically personal interrogative wherein my own being becomes patent, at least in the form of a question; in the asking, "I saw [*italics mine*] my own self."⁴³ In this context, the specific import of 'seeing' means precisely that "I took hold of myself, that I grasped myself with complete attention, that I had a full, complete, immediate, and distinct consciousness of myself as I am. . . ." ⁴⁴

However, 'being aware of myself', as Ortega describes it, is simply 'finding myself' "there where I already was; namely, in the immediately previous 'now'. . . . And as I became aware of myself in this new 'now'. . . . I did nothing now but catch a glimpse of my previous situation."⁴⁵ The temporal import of this description of 'finding myself' as seeing myself is significant in so far as Ortega depicts the 'seeing of myself' as a 'looking back' at a previous point of time; a reversion to an Aristotelian image of temporality wherein time itself is a succession of 'now points' each following the other.* This temporal concept fails to accommodate the kind of 'projection' which Ortega has characterized as belonging to the authentically constituted radical-reality who 'looks ahead' towards a problematic future. Radical-reality, in his role as the

*See Aristotle's Physics, Book IV, Ch. 11.

metaphysician, is depicted in terms contrary to what has been called 'authentic projection' towards an unresolved future in so far as philosophy is now described, by Ortega, as an 'at hand' form of 'doing', i.e. as an activity which 'makes present' the life which is to be made patent and resolved. Hence, although authentic living faces the radically problematic future, my future, and realizes that the future as future is the inexorable horizon of my being so that the future and, therefore, 'problem', constitute the 'permanent' framework or substance of my life, philosophical activity is understood in terms of the present.

By utilizing a favorite concept of Ortega, that of 'hunting', which in the present context I interpret as a metaphor for philosophy, this interpretation of philosophy is brought into sharper relief. The hunter, the one who seeks his prey, effects a peculiar stance. The initial task of the hunter is to "raise" his prey, to "bring about the presence [*italics mine*] of the prey," to make the prey "show itself," to sight the prey.⁴⁶ But perhaps these are significantly more than mere metaphorical significations. Ortega tells us that "the hunt is the effort . . . to capture," i.e. to "take possession [*italics mine*] of the hunted"; and the culmination of the hunt, the successful hunt, is "having [*italics mine*] the prey."⁴⁷ Hence, philosophy, here understood as a form of hunting, seeks to have its prey which is no less than the life of radical-reality

itself; in a sense, the hunter is the hunted. But again, notice the consequences of characterizing the philosophic effort in this way. The philosophical ego stands outside of life in order to 'capture' it, but this 'standing outside of' living is also a standing outside of 'vital temporality'. It is to 'make present', not only the object of the hunt, human life, which is authentically a phenomenon 'not present', but also, it is to 'make present' the ego itself which does the philosophizing. These observations are to be made more emphatic in the following sections.

Two Forms of 'Being Aware':
'Contar Con' and 'Reparar'

Ortega has already described 'being aware' of oneself as a form of 'looking back' at that which I was doing in a former 'now'. But in looking back, I discover the questioner, 'myself', asking the question, i.e. the question of my own being, and "it was strange to find something which . . . you already knew was there although not in the form of a clear and separate consciousness."⁴⁸ 'Bringing something into a clear and separate consciousness' is, for Ortega, a significant and peculiar move. It brings into contrast two distinct forms of 'being aware' or 'being conscious of' something, and the expressions contar con ('to count on') and reparar ('to take into account') serve to define this distinction.

In order to make this distinction stand out in adequate relief, I refer to an essay by Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," as a pedagogic device for clarifying the 'forms of being aware'.

In his effort to define the 'art work', Heidegger proceeds by first delineating that which he calls 'the equipment being of equipment' which is defined specifically by its character as that which serves. But this character of 'serviceability' is the key for determining, not merely the nature of equipment as something which displays a utilitarian or practical kind of being, but the character of serviceability is significant because of its 'non-explicit-ness'; its peculiar character as that which is 'un-attended' or 'not taken into account'. According to Heidegger;

. . . what about this serviceability itself? In conceiving it, do we already conceive along with it the equipmental character of equipment? In order to succeed in this, must we not seek out the serviceable equipment in its service? The peasant woman wears her shoes in the field. Here they are for the first time what they are. They are such all the more genuinely the less the peasant woman thinks about the shoes while she is at work, or sees them at all, or even takes any heed of them. [*italics mine*] She stands and walks in them. This is how shoes actually serve. It is in this process of the use of equipment that we must actually encounter the character of equipment.⁴⁹

Hence, equipment, in its essential equipmental character, is 'employed', 'made use of' without explicit knowledge or 'consciousness of' the equipment. Only in its service does equipment become what it is. The peasant

woman does not perceive the working shoes that she wears in any formal or 'explicit' sense; she 'pays them no attention'; she is not consciously thinking about them. It is not part of the essential being of equipment that it be 'thought about from a distance' or taken into account. However, it is necessary for such equipment to render service. In the very act of executing its service, equipment fulfills its mission. If one abstracts and merely imagines an indifferent pair of shoes, that which one imagines does not possess the character of equipment. Hence, equipment as equipment does not lend itself to explicit revelation. It assumes a quiet, unassuming character wherein it performs its duty and is itself in the very course of its performances; it remains silently active.

What is implied in the very articulation about the 'equipment character of equipment'? There is something peculiar about 'explicitly making manifest' that which is essentially hidden. If equipment is essentially only in the course of its serviceability and unpretentious reliability in so far as such equipment 'continues to serve' successfully, how does one come to discover the essential equipmental character of equipment so that it can be articulated 'in the open'. Consider the following:

From the dark opening of the worn insides of the shoes the toilsome tread of the worker stands forth. In the stiffly solid heaviness of the shoes there is the accumulated tenacity of her slow trudge through the far-spreading and ever uniform furrows of the field, swept by a raw wind. On the leather there lies the dampness and saturation of the soil. . . . In the shoes there vibrates the silent call of the earth, its quiet gift of the ripening corn and its enigmatic self-refusal in the fallow desolation of the wintry field. This equipment is pervaded by uncomplaining anxiety about the uncertainty of bread, the wordless joy of having once more withstood want, the trembling before the advent of birth and shivering at the surrounding menace of death. This equipment belongs to the earth and it is protected in the world of the peasant woman. From out of this protected belonging the equipment itself rises to its resting-in-self.⁵⁰

This is what we learn when we 'attend to' or 'take account of' Van Gogh's painting of the peasant's shoes. We view this art work and we 'become acquainted' in a most explicit way with that which is essentially 'covered over' and 'un-attended to'; the equipment character of equipment. Again, such explicit revelation is not granted by equipment as equipment. How, then, does such revelation or 'un-veiling' come about?

. . . only by bringing ourselves before Van Gogh's painting. This painting spoke. In the vicinity of the work we were suddenly somewhere else than we are accustomed to be. . . . The art-work told us what shoes are in truth. . . . the work does not, as might first appear, serve merely for a better visualization of what a piece of equipment is. Rather, the equipment being of equipment first arrives at its explicit appearance through and only in the work.⁵¹

In effect, 'explicit awareness' or the 'taking into account' of equipmentality is granted through 'looking at'. But concurrently at work with this act of 'becoming explicitly aware of' something is a 'disclosure', an 'un-veiling' of

that which is essentially hidden from view. Once again, the notion of truth as aletheia comes into play. "In the work of art," states Heidegger, "the truth of what is has set itself to work. . . ." ⁵²

This diversion into Heidegger is meant to illustrate a crucial point made by Ortega in his distinction between the concepts contar con ('to count on' without being explicitly aware of) and reparar ('to take account of' in an explicit manner). Each of these expressions refers to a form of 'being aware' although they do so on what I call distinct 'vital levels'. In order to bring this distinction into greater relief, then, it is possible to implant Ortega's concepts within the Heideggerian illustration.

The peasant's shoes, which serve as equipment, are essentially what they are in terms of their 'reliability'. The shoes are 'depended upon', 'counted on' (contar con) by the peasant, but are not 'explicitly thought about' or 'taken into account' (reparar). In effect, the primary character of the shoes, in their relationship to the peasant who uses them, is that of contar con. The art work makes this un-thinking reliance a matter for explicit awareness; the art work makes manifest that which is, in itself, an essentially hidden and 'covered over' reality. As a result, the art work stands once removed from the primary reality or being of the equipment, viz. its being as 'hidden-ness'. Hence, the root of that which I refer to as a distinction of 'vital levels'.

That which simply exists 'for me' "without my reflecting upon it"⁵³ (contar con), is that which makes my life evident to me. The use of the term 'evident' in this context may appear inappropriate or even contradictory to the meaning of contar con as that which I simply 'rely upon' in its hidden-ness, however, 'evidence' in Ortega's sense actually preserves this meaning. 'Being evident' simply implies that "life is evident" because "everything in [life] and whatever forms part of it exists for me and is transparent to me."⁵⁴ 'Being transparent' to me is, then, a mode of my being which, on its primordial level, expresses a condition of being not explicitly aware of itself and yet, at the same time, "what exists for me . . . is manifest to me. . . . to live is to know oneself to be alive, to know oneself existing, to be well aware of what I am. . . . But to know, to be conscious of, something is a special and more or less intellectual way of being aware. Therefore, I [add] immediately to those terms this correction- 'where knowing does not imply any intellectual knowledge or special wisdom, but deals with that surprising presence which one's own life has for each and every one of us. . . ." ⁵⁵

Again, Ortega's description of the 'surprising presence' which makes life 'evident' to me, approximates Husserl's comment that "all the objects . . . which I precisely 'know' that they are there and yonder in my co-perceived surroundings— [is] a knowledge which has nothing of conceptual thinking [*italics mine*] in it. . . ." ⁵⁶

Accordingly, as the peasant shoes, in their primary reality, are hidden and as such provide the ground and the very possibility of art which 'reveals' the being of the shoes in their equipmental character, human living, in its primordially hidden yet evident mode of being, provides the ground and the very possibility for any activity which radical-reality may choose to execute, including metaphysics. 'Taking life into account' presupposes the primary 'surprising presence' which is the 'un-reflective awareness' which my life thrusts at me. Hence, as Heidegger emphasizes that the shoes are what they are in their very 'inconspicuous-ness', so that their most genuine reality is the condition of 'being hidden from view' in the execution of that which they are designed to do, Ortega tells us that "things are primordially what they are when we are not thinking of them, before we are thinking of them; they are what they are when we are counting on them, taking them for granted, when we simply live them."⁵⁷ Hence, on a primordial level, 'being evident' to me is no less than a 'pre-conscious' or "preknown"⁵⁸ form of knowing which is manifest to me in its very 'transparency' to me. Radical-reality 'unreflectively recognizes' his life; he 'knows' that he is there. Such 'evidence' is "the taking account of [his life] in the sense of having to recognize it. . . ."⁵⁹ But this is a "simple and primary [*italics mine*] taking account of the matter. . . ."⁶⁰ Hence, it is this primordial

form of 'being aware', contar con, of my being which grounds any possible revelation of that being; so, revelation or 'dis-closing', reparar, understood as the specific role of metaphysics, i.e. philosophy, and truth interpreted as aletheia, are derivative and secondary forms of 'doing'.

The Temporality of the Forms
of 'Being Aware'

What has already been said about the 'thrown' condition of radical-reality is actually the fundamental framework for understanding the form of 'being aware' designated by the expression contar con. As thrown and lost, I am inexorably bound to my circumstances, not in a mere 'linking together' of one thing next to another, but in the sense that human living means 'dealing with' those circumstances. But, if the essential character of living is a 'dealing with', then radical-reality's primordial mode of being comports itself towards a reliance or dependence upon, a 'counting on', those ways and means which tradition has handed over to him for the successful management of reality.

As Ortega states that "existing is coexisting with that which is not I,"⁶¹ emphasizing the mutual "interdependence"⁶² between radical-reality and his circumstances, it can be further qualified that such coexistence is radical in nature in the sense that it is an unrealized coexistence, one that is not initially explicit or apparent. But this

lack of awareness lasts only as long as my reliance upon my environment stands undisturbed. The appearance of difficulties, of practical problems, however, is inevitable and through a series of such 'disillusionments', radical-reality gradually comes to an awareness of the other as other, as that which opposes him and resists him. As a result, radical-reality then becomes aware of himself as himself.

If the surroundings or circumstance in which we are submerged—and this submergence is what we call life—should have a being, and to live would then be to find that being clear before us, man's existence would be the very opposite of what it is. In the first place, we would not have to think about things, but they would reveal their being to us by themselves and in their appearance before us; that is, living would then be knowing what the world is, and, in knowing this, we would know its past and its future; and, in knowing the world's future, we would know our own future in it rather than finding ourselves amid perplexity, having to decide among various possibilities what that future of ours is. A world whose being is known is composed solely of necessities.⁶³

Radical-reality 'raises questions' because there are moments when my circumstances 'fail to uphold me'. As Ortega states it, "the earth. . . has, in my life, a primary role which is to uphold and sustain me. But suddenly it shakes. . . . It is then that I make a question of it. Before then, it was . . . that which sustained me. Now it is . . . a problem. . . . Thought begins to function, spurred on by the vital, pre-intellectual urgency of having to be upheld by the earth. . . ." ⁶⁴ 'Being upheld', 'being sustained', successfully, entices radical-reality into a

state of being 'secure', of being 'radically at one with' his circumstances, and provides the existential framework defined by contar con. But such a 'being radically at one with' is no less than 'having at hand' a foothold in which my being is firmly settled. Hence, the lack of 'being shipwrecked' is reinforced by that naive dependence upon 'that which stands beneath me'. No questions are asked since no questions arise. But when a question does arise, when crisis intervenes, there is no presence; all security of 'being here' at one with my surroundings is absent and suddenly, a problematic future makes its appearance. Hence, contar con as a simple 'counting on' is a temporally oriented state wherein 'being present' to and with my circumstances is the key. But again, the state of contar con is fleeting since my circumstances are inexorably problem-ridden. As Ortega once again states it; "if the world about me were responding to all my needs, I would never have raised a question about any part of it; it would never have occurred to me to think about it. . . . "65

This question about being comes, then, inspired by having lost confidence in our surroundings; this is what we do when we do not know what to do about something. . . . Our previous confidence consisted in our not having paid attention to the thing as such, in our not having seen it as another thing, independent, foreign, and strange to us. When it fails us, we see this failure as a resistance to us, as a denial of ourselves, and this being which is not 'I' separates it from me. . . . Confidence in the habitual, in the things one pays no attention to, is replaced by a lack of confidence, disorientation, an incessant watchfulness.66

Hence, the beginning of thought, the awareness of 'being shipwrecked', and the 'raising of a question' is a consciousness of a lack of presence, a sense of 'not being at one with' that which is around me. When radical-reality becomes 'one who questions' and hence, one who discovers living to be inherently 'risky', he 'sees' reality in its un-hidden-ness. The relied upon foundations of my existence are made manifest in their uncertainty because they are now held in doubt; no longer naively accepted. For the first time, radical-reality, in having to 'come to terms with' this problematic reality, also 'sees himself' so that the issue now becomes a question of the manner in which I understand myself; 'what am I to do'?, 'how do I now behave in the face of an uncertain world'?, reduce themselves to the fundamental question: 'who am I to be'? Radical-reality, as the metaphysician, now 'intellectualizes' in order to resolve this uncertainty. Intellectualizing or 'thinking about' reality attempts to interpret a meaning for that which is doubted; it is an attempt to stabilize and re-secure my being.⁶⁸

This initial interpretation of reality originates from a 'questioning of myself'⁶⁹ so that in asking 'what am I to do'?, which amounts to 'who am I'?, the question itself is originally asked "in the fundamental solitude which is every man's life. . . ." ⁷⁰ But radical-reality soon abandons this solitude and resorts to answers which are "not within

himself; he is not busy asking himself the question, but he tends to find it ready-made in his social environment."⁷¹ This is a significant observation. The question itself, the very uncertainty, the 'consciousness of crisis', and my questioning is mine in the most radical sense of 'belonging to me'; it is my question, my crisis. But "now I admit within myself as a reply an idea which is not mine. . . ." ⁷² Admitting ideas which are not mine imply, of course, that they are the ideas of others. In addition, such ideas emerge from my "memory"⁷³ or from the tradition handed over to me, from "public opinion".⁷⁴ Hence, in losing contar con, the 'naive reliance upon' my circumstances, I become aware of myself, I become a question to myself in so far as my world becomes questionable. But I lose the radical individuality inherent in this feeling of 'being shipwrecked' when, through my adoption of public opinion as a resolution of this question, I become hombre-masa; "I practice vital commonalty."⁷⁵ But note the consequence of this maneuver. 'Taking account of', reparar, given solutions to a problem or crisis which was originally personal to me, assumes a temporal character akin to that which belongs to contar con. My ideas and interpretations become 'present at hand' conveniences, ready-made and readily available through memory and tradition. The past fills my present with answers that are 'already here' and which need not be sought after and authentically discovered for myself and by myself.

'Taking explicit account of' (reparar) is, for the most part, an inauthentic mode of comporting oneself. If metaphysics is an attempt to orient myself, it is apparent that orienting myself is generally a 'fleeing from myself' in so far as the orientation which I adopt originates, not from myself, but from the publicly available repertoire of 'possible orientations' which are already there. In effect, my question is 'settled for me by others'. My 'being aware of' in the sense of 'taking into account' reverts to a consciousness of what others have said and done. 'Being aware of myself' in this manner is, in fact, not an awareness of myself as I am in my radical solitude, but rather, of myself as an element of that tradition and 'culture' which I now employ as my new foundation. As a result, the temporal interpretation which I now employ is essentially no different from that of my naive reliance in a state of contar con. The difference is one of degree or level, not one of kind. There is no qualitative or temporal distinction between contar con and reparar since the latter is nothing other than a substitution of foundations; it remains an inauthentic way of comporting oneself. In general;

. . . the old, established opinion, 'what is said', completely dominates individual thought. There is no one who discriminates, judges, and passes sentence—according to his personal criterion of intimate evidence—on the truth or error of the traditional idea; but on the contrary, the individual submits his spontaneous conviction to the tribunal of tradition. When a thought before me bases its truth on what seems evident to me, the principle which moves me to adapt [sic] it is called reason. When, on the contrary, it bases its 'truth' on 'what is said' by people since time immemorial, hence, on the crude fact of its repetition, the principle which moves me to adopt it is called

tradition. Here, reason appears to us as an imperative of each man's reversion to himself. Tradition, on the other hand, appears as an imperative to put aside our 'I myself', melding it into the collective. . . . He who is most resolved to follow only reason—that is to say, his inmost evidence—cannot, in fact, follow this norm except in small sectors of his life; the rest of it he entrusts to tradition and lives on it. Without this sector of conventional ideas he could not live; his lack of security with regard to the greater part of his surroundings would be intolerable. Society, which is to say, tradition, carries him in its arms and, at the same time, keeps him prisoner.⁷⁶

Hence, Ortega emphasizes the indigenous inauthentic quality of human living in the sense that radical-reality 'has to be' inauthentic in order to simply 'get along' in his everyday dealings with his world. If philosophy means, for Ortega, 'settling accounts', this is accomplished most conveniently and readily through tradition. It results that the 'philosophical I' is no less inauthentically constituted than the 'I' who 'naively depends upon' his circumstances in his everyday attitude. Accordingly, Ortega's suggestion that philosophy is a transcendence of ordinary human living reverts to a form of 'getting beyond' which is an intellectualization of reality; an interpretation which now 'counts on' (contar con) tradition. It results that reparar is simply another form of contar con and the 'philosophical I' is, for the most part, another form of naiveté.

Finally, it is to be noted that philosophy's 'non-vital' transcendence of 'everyday human living', and its character as a kind of art which serves to reveal that which primordially remains hidden, is further illustrated by noting that, as philosophy is interpreted as 'settling things', one

need only recall that human living itself is essentially unsettled; it is the radically problematic affair between radical-reality and the circumstances of his thrown condition. The 'philosophical I', then, 'gets beyond human living'; it looks at life from without. In view of all this, what becomes conspicuous is that philosophy, in this sense of 'being explicitly aware of' (reparar) is, for the most part, that which is inauthentically constituted. In other words, philosophy has not yet been grasped in terms of a 'genuine being within oneself'. Philosophy, and its temporal orientation towards 'making present' a resolution for my problematic relationship with my surroundings, stands in need of a re-interpretation. A specifically vital characterization is needed in order to develop a clear understanding of the expression 'vital philosophy' and its principle element 'vital reason'.

Comments and Questions

The analysis of this chapter has indicated a conflict or, at least, an ambiguity in Ortega's concept of the 'philosophical I'. Initially, Ortega depicts the philosopher as one who 'goes within' in order to discover an orientation for himself against the problematics of an opposing circumstance. Such 'going within' seeks to discover, however, not merely a 'way to get along' within these circumstances, but my 'authentic self'; the 'core' (fondo) of my being. But because radical-reality is essentially one who needs to do things, and because he is essentially

a 'being with', radical-reality inexorably reverts to an inauthentically acquired set of solutions. With this in mind, Ortega's own analysis does not appear to provide a clear-cut description of the manner in which philosophy might be an authentic 'being within oneself'. In addition, the philosopher, interpreted as 'spectator', is forced to 'stand beside life' in order to re-secure it within the context of a given culture or repertoire of solutions 'already present'. Hence, philosophy as the 'settling' of problems is not authentically a form of 'being within' and, for the most part, fails to understand itself in terms of authentic radical-reality's 'projection' into a future defined precisely by its problematic character which is the essence of human vitality.

On the surface, therefore, the question regarding the possibility of a 'vital philosophy' appears to be, from the analysis provided in this chapter, a non-viable one. The character and role of intellection seems to preclude a genuine form of 'being within' because intellection is intentional and hence, essentially 'other directed'. Even when the proposed object of awareness is the self itself, the setting up of a 'spectator' or 'philosophical' ego who 'stands beside' and observes the original, vital ego, now taken as 'object', takes place. The vital ego, i.e. the ego who performs is then 'made present' to the spectator-philosophical ego. Hence, the vital ego who performs is 'transparent to itself' and requires a 'point of view' if

it is to be seen; a distance needs to be established between the ego seen and the ego which sees. But is not the ego who sees also a kind of 'vital ego' which performs its own unique activity, that of 'standing back' and 'viewing itself'? Only half of this is the case. The spectator-philosophical I stands back to view, but it is not itself which is the object of its vision. The 'I' which executes or performs is the 'I' which generally relies upon (contar con) itself in the sense that this 'I' as an executant center does not see itself as such.* But the 'philosophical I', as an executant center for viewing the so-called 'vital I', is also unseen to itself. In this sense, then, there is no functional distinction between the vital and the philosophical standpoints other than a distinction of level, and it is perhaps misleading not to call the philosophical standpoint 'vital' since it does comport itself in a manner identical to the way in which the common, everyday I comports itself. Each is un-noticed to itself in the execution of their peculiar doings or performances.

*See José Ortega y Gasset, The Modern Theme, trans. James Cleugh (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1961), p. 73. Ortega states that "life is like crystal, the transparent medium through which we can see other objects. If we permit ourselves to be deluded by the strong desire that any transparent thing implants in us, to pass heedlessly through it to something on the other side, we shall never see the crystal. In order to reach the point of perceiving it we have to disregard everything behind the glass and bring our eyes back to itself, to that ironical substance which seems to have a self-annihilating quality. . . ." See Obras Completas, III, 188 for the original reference.

But is this enough to justify the existence of a vital philosophy in Ortega? The problem still remains regarding the temporal orientation which both everyday human living and philosophy adopt, and this orientation still needs to be further clarified.

It was claimed that philosophy is theoretical and that the unique problem for philosophy, its 'absolute problem', is the radical problem of 'my own being'. But when does my being become a problem for me? Only in the moment of crisis, disturbance, or doubt; only when my being is challenged and my manner of 'being in the world' meets opposition. Doubt prompts philosophy which means that doubt prompts a look for an answer, a resolution to my doubt, a re-securing of my being which is a 'fleeing from doubt'. In this sense, doubt which makes me aware of myself in my radical individuality, also seeks to 'forget me' by getting me back in sync with my circumstances. Doubt runs away from itself and seeks to 'cover over' the personal 'me' with a workable solution to my question. But this is science, the work of the intellect in its attempt to re-secure for me a safe position in terms of how I am to behave in the world. In this sense, 'the settling of doubt' as the attempt to 'abandon crisis' and the 'consciousness of being shipwrecked', is an act of 'covering over' my most radical form of individuality which is made patent in the very moment of crisis.

The authentically constituted individual, however, is so constituted because of his will, not his intellect. Authenticity is projection in seeking oneself and not merely some pragmatically available method for 'getting along'. Seeking myself implies 'not having myself' so that I am not yet. But if philosophy 'settles things' and authenticity means 'being un-settled' in the sense of 'looking forward to what I am not yet', how then can these two standpoints be reconciled? If philosophy reduces itself to science, what is the peculiar role of philosophy? How can philosophy be understood 'vitaly' if philosophy is theoretical and 'non-essential' for human living, sportive in character, and an activity which stands at a 'distance' from ordinary human living and 'objectifies' that living? Finally, how can philosophy be understood as a vital form of 'being within oneself' if it indeed appears to adopt an orientation and attitude contrary to such a standpoint? In effect, what is the relationship between 'being within' and 'authentic projection'?

As a result, I am suggesting that a concept of authentic being within is to find its orientation in terms of that moment of 'being disturbed by' that which un-settles my security, that which 'jolts me' out of my radical unity with reality. It is this very moment of being disoriented, the very event of being upset which depicts radical-reality's most vital mode of being because it is the moment of radical-reality's most personal recognition of himself as 'I'. It

is the precise moment of doubt, of personal questioning, which defines most adequately that which constitutes 'being within' in the most authentic sense. The doubt itself is vital because that which is at stake is no less than my own being. Doubt grounds my philosophic efforts, but those efforts quickly reduce this vital and authentic doubting to a mere 'becoming aware of' in the inauthentic sense of adopting public opinion as the guideline for resolving uncertainty. Hence, it is the 'doubt itself' which serves as the locus of authenticity, and the expression 'locus' is most appropriate because doubt 'places me' in my individuality. In fact, there is a 'temporality of doubting' which is suggested by Ortega in the following;

. . . circumstance and everything in it is, in itself, pure problem. Now, one cannot be present in a pure problem. The pure problem is like the earthquake or the sea, something in which one cannot be. We are not standing in the earthquake; we are falling. . . . The pure problem is the absolute insecurity which obliges us to make for ourselves a form of security. What saves us is the interpretation which we give to our circumstance. . . . And as the world . . . is no more than that interpretation, we will hold that the world is the security in which man succeeds in being. The world is that in which we are secure. . . . human life is not being what it already is, but it is the having to be, having to act in order to be; therefore, it is not yet being. . . . The present is no longer important to us. Hence, the fundamental substance of life would be insecurity. But by the same token, it is at the same time an impulse, a desire for security. . . .⁷⁷

The Following Chapter

In the following chapter, direct attention is to be given to the 'vital I' of radical-reality and the unique temporal orientation which it expresses. Since ordinary

'reliance upon' the given security of circumstances, and the philosophical way to resolve and settle problems each fail to define an authentic mode of 'being within oneself', the concluding chapter is to make explicit a viable interpretation of authentic inwardness and hence, an interpretation which suggests the possibility of a vital reason. In order to accomplish this, therefore, a principle task of the next chapter is to establish a connection between 'being within oneself' and the notion of 'authentic projection'.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER IV

¹Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Plato; Or, The Philosopher," The Selected Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson, ed. Brooks Atkinson (New York: Random House, Inc., 1950), p. 473.

²Ortega y Gasset, What Is Philosophy?, p. 81.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ortega y Gasset, The Idea of Principle in Leibnitz, p. 36.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ortega y Gasset, What Is Philosophy?, p. 102.

⁸Ibid., p. 101.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ortega y Gasset, "Prologue to a History of Philosophy," Concord and Liberty, pp. 113-14.

¹²Ortega y Gasset, Some Lessons In Metaphysics, p. 30.

¹³Ibid., p. 27.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ortega y Gasset, "Inter-Individual Life. We, You, I," Man and People, p. 99.

¹⁷Ortega y Gasset, What Is Philosophy?, pp. 132-33.

¹⁸Ortega y Gasset, "Inter-Individual Life. We, You, I," Man and People, p. 99.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 99-100.

²⁰Ortega y Gasset, What Is Philosophy?, p. 133.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ortega y Gasset, The Idea of Principle in Leibnitz, pp. 35-36.

- ²³Ortega y Gasset, What Is Philosophy?, p. 83.
- ²⁴Ibid.
- ²⁵Ibid., p. 93.
- ²⁶Ibid., p. 118.
- ²⁷Ibid., p. 202.
- ²⁸Ibid.
- ²⁹Ibid., p. 119.
- ³⁰Ibid., p. 230.
- ³¹Ibid., p. 142.
- ³²Ibid., p. 204.
- ³³Ibid., p. 238.
- ³⁴Edmund Husserl, Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology, trans. W.R. Boyce Gibson (New York: Collier Books, 1967), p. 95.
- ³⁵Ibid., p. 91.
- ³⁶Ibid., p. 93.
- ³⁷Ibid., p. 92.
- ³⁸Ibid., p. 93.
- ³⁹Ibid., pp. 93-94.
- ⁴⁰Ibid., p. 101.
- ⁴¹Ortega y Gasset, What Is Philosophy?, p. 114.
- ⁴²Ortega y Gasset, Some Lessons In Metaphysics,
p. 46.
- ⁴³Ibid., p. 47.
- ⁴⁴Ibid.
- ⁴⁵Ibid.
- ⁴⁶Ortega y Gasset, Meditations on Hunting, p. 76.

- ⁴⁷Ibid., p. 57.
- ⁴⁸Ortega y Gasset, Some Lessons In Metaphysics,
p. 47.
- ⁴⁹Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of
Art," Philosophies of Art and Beauty, ed. Albert Hofstadter
and Richard Kuhns (New York: The Modern Library, 1964),
p. 662.
- ⁵⁰Ibid., p. 663.
- ⁵¹Ibid., p. 664.
- ⁵²Ibid., pp. 664-65.
- ⁵³Ortega y Gasset, Some Lessons In Metaphysics,
p. 48.
- ⁵⁴Ibid., p. 51.
- ⁵⁵Ibid., p. 52.
- ⁵⁶Husserl, Ideas, p. 91.
- ⁵⁷Ortega y Gasset, Some Lessons In Metaphysics,
p. 81.
- ⁵⁸Ibid., p. 53.
- ⁵⁹Ibid., p. 52.
- ⁶⁰Ibid.
- ⁶¹Ibid., p. 155.
- ⁶²Ibid.
- ⁶³Ibid., p. 97.
- ⁶⁴Ibid., pp. 97-98.
- ⁶⁵Ibid., p. 98.
- ⁶⁶Ibid., pp. 101-102.
- ⁶⁷Ibid., p. 102.
- ⁶⁸Ibid., pp. 103-104.
- ⁶⁹Ibid., p. 105.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 106.

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 108.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 106.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 109.

⁷⁷Ibid., pp. 121-22.

CHAPTER V

THE 'VITAL I' AND THE TEMPORALITY OF 'BEING WITHIN'

Ivan Ilych saw that he was dying, and he was in continual despair.

In the depth of his heart he knew he was dying, but not only was he not accustomed to the thought, he simply did not and could not grasp it.

The syllogism he had learnt from Kiezewetter's Logic: "Caius is a man, men are mortal, therefore Caius is mortal," had always seemed to him correct as applied to Caius, but certainly not as applied to himself.¹

Leo Tolstoy

The analysis of the preceding chapter has indicated that the character of philosophy as 'being aware of' myself is first, an intentional activity which establishes the 'Philosophical I' as a form of transcendental ego, an 'I' which stands 'over and above' the vital ego which it attempts to observe. Second, the the motivation for asking the question of my own being is the experience of radical doubt about that which, in my 'natural condition', is naively accepted. Third, in settling these doubts, the 'Philosophical I' tends to fall back upon what 'they say' about things and hence, from the radically personal condition of 'losing ground' and falling into authentic doubt, radical-reality abandons authenticity which is 'shipwrecked-ness' and becomes the mass-man (hombre masa).

Accordingly, the present chapter is an explicit attempt to investigate the meaning of the 'vital I' which is passed over by the 'philosophical I', along with the temporal character of 'vitality in the Ortegian sense. Hence, the following themes are to be examined: Ortega's critique of the 'principle of consciousness'; the character of 'doubt' and the 'temporality of being in doubt'; 'futurity' as the primordial temporal orientation of human living; authentic 'being within' and the temporality of 'inwardness'; futurity and 'meaning'.

Ortega's Critique of the Principle of Consciousness

Viewed from the criterion of 'evidence' indicated by the Ortegian understanding of human existence, the very notion of a 'fundamental reality', a radical-reality, is that which is 'given'; it is something which, in effect, "imposes itself. . . ." ² But the disposition of the 'consciousness' in its state of 'being explicitly aware of', (reparar); i.e. the 'pure consciousness' or 'transcendental ego' which stands outside of the happening of human living, is not, for Ortega, the radically vital ego or the 'radical-reality'. Husserl's attempts, then, and that of all idealism, to elevate reparar and 'pure consciousness' to a basic principle, i.e. to make consciousness itself "the fundamental reality," ³ a given in the very structure of human existence is, for Ortega, a groundless attempt. Consider Ortega's description of this 'pure consciousness':

. . . this "I" does not want, it is only aware of wanting and of what is wanted; it does not feel, but only sees its feeling and the values felt; in short, it does not think in the sense of believing what it thinks, but is reduced to a noticing that it thinks and what it thinks. This "I" is, then, a pure and impassive mirror; it is contemplative and nothing more. What it contemplates is not reality, but only a spectacle. The true reality is the contemplation itself; that is, the "I" that contemplates only when contemplating, the act of contemplation itself, and the spectacle contemplated qua spectacle. . . . the absolute reality that is "pure consciousness" makes unreal all that is given to it and changes it into pure object. . . . Pure consciousness, "Bewusstsein von," makes a ghost of the world, transforms it into mere meaning. And since the consistency of meaning is exhausted when it is understood, this reduces reality to pure intelligibility.⁴

Rather than the 'pure consciousness', pura consciencia, the "pure Erlebnis,"⁵ assuming the status of a 'given', it "has to be obtained by a manipulation . . . a 'phenomenological reduction'."⁶ Hence, the pure consciousness is a 'fabrication'.⁷ 'Being aware', (darse cuenta de), in the sense of 'realizing' or knowing that I am aware, is itself grounded upon that which the philosopher, whether he acknowledges it or not, "really finds . . . 'primary consciousness', [consciencia primaria], 'unreflective' [irreflexa] and 'ingenuous', [ingenua], wherein man believes what he thinks. . . . The essence of this 'primary consciousness', then, is that nothing is only an object for it, but rather everything is reality. In it, being aware has no contemplative overtones, but is rather an encounter with things, with the world."⁸

Ortega's transcendence of idealism* is, in essence, captured by the notion of encounter. The interdependence and co-existence of radical-reality and circumstance is once again revealed as the "pure event of man's struggle with his circumstances"⁹ which is no less than Ortega's "idea of life as the fundamental reality."¹⁰ The primary fact is the 'struggle itself', not the mere abstract, philosophic 'awareness' of the struggle. The image is emphasized as a "dynamic dialogue between 'I and my circumstances'."¹¹ In effect, the primary consciousness, that form of being aware which is simple contar con, i.e. which believes what it thinks, is, in its very execution, "unaware of itself."¹² The event or happening which is my life in its actual living character is not determined by 'consciousness of' (consciencia de); in fact, for Ortega;

For there to be consciousness I must break off living my experience in the present and, turning back my attention, recall what has just previously happened to me. This memory is nothing more than the retention of what was there before. . . . But all this is now a memory and nothing more. . . . This memory recalls a past reality. This past reality is not . . . real now. The present reality is its recall and this is what we may properly term "consciousness". Because now there is "consciousness" in the world. . . . 13

*See Ortega's essay "Notes on Thinking" in Concord and Liberty where he states: "Husserl, like all idealistic philosophers . . . begins with affirming as the basic fact of maximum evidence that reality constitutes itself in consciousness of reality. . . . Now, if consciousness of is the absolute reality . . . philosophy would start from a reality in which the subject—I—exists enclosed within itself. . . . But such existence . . . being enclosed in oneself is the opposite of what we call living. Living means reaching out of oneself. . . ." (See Obras Completas, "Apuntes Sobre el Pensamiento," V, 545-546)

This creation of consciousness is the creation of a new entity in the world, a derivative entity, and as such it is specifically defined in terms of its 'intentional' character. The consciousness of consciousness is a new, another, level of 'being aware' but, regardless of its intentional object, the 'explicit consciousness of' remains transparent to itself. In other words, the 'executant consciousness' itself is unavailable to itself; its object of awareness must be something other than itself.¹⁴ "Reflection . . . is just as ingenuous-a real situation as the 'primary' one and equally unreflecting with regard to itself."¹⁵ Hence, if the 'reflective consciousness', the consciousness which 'takes account of', becomes an object for another level of consciousness, as such an object, it cannot claim priority as the fundamental or radical reality and must, therefore, remain derivative and secondary to the 'primary consciousness' which is the simple event of the human being's resistance to his circumstances.¹⁶ It results that thought is inexorably intentional in character; "thought always thinks something that is not itself. Even . . . when we do think of our thoughts, the latter are bound to have an object which, again, is not thought."¹⁷ Thought, then, is 'self-elusive', and it is this 'self-elusive' feature of consciousness which dis-allows 'thought itself' as the primary reality. So, "in order for idealism to make sense an 'act of consciousness' would have to be able to reflect on itself and not solely on another 'act of consciousness'."¹⁸

Ortega's move, then, is to invert the idealist order of priority which is a reduction of 'given reality', i.e. radical-reality's encounter with circumstances, to 'consciousness of' that reality, and a dissection of being into 'subject-object' components. For Ortega, reality, "very reality" is "the toothache hurting. . . ." ¹⁹ Consciousness may exist, but it does so because of reality.

If the "consciousness" of which idealism spoke were really something, it would be precisely weltsetzend (that which posits the world), the immediate encounter with reality. This is why it is a self-contradictory concept, since for idealism consciousness means precisely the unreality of the world it posits and encounters encuentra .

By suspending the executant powers of "consciousness", its weltsetzung, the reality of its "content", phenomenology destroys its fundamental character. "Consciousness" is precisely what cannot be suspended; it is irrevocable. This is why it is reality and not consciousness.

The term "consciousness" ought to be discarded. It was meant to stand for the positive, the given, that which posited itself and was not put there by thought, but it has turned out to mean just the opposite: it is merely an hypothesis, fortuitous explanation, a construct. . . . What there truly and authentically is is not "consciousness" . . . but rather a man existing in a landscape of things, in a set of circumstances that also exists. Naturally we cannot do without a man's existence, for then things would disappear, but, equally, we need the existence of things, for without them man would disappear. But this inseparability of both elements is falsified if we interpret it unilaterally as things depending on man for their existence—that would be "consciousness". What there in fact is, what is given, is my coexistence with things, that absolute event—a self in its circumstances. ²⁰

Prior to the setting up of objects for my conscious reflection, reality already is "for me." ²¹ Interdependence or "co-existence does not mean . . . a static being together of myself and the world, side by side in a neutral ontological realm; instead, this ontological realm—my existence and

that of things—consists of the pure and mutual dynamism of an event. . . . Being is something that happens, a drama. . . . a calculus of tensions."²² Contrary to Descartes and all idealism, then, the human reality "is not a res cogitans, but a res dramatica. He does not exist because he thinks, but . . . thinks because he exists."²³ Hence, the radical-reality, in his primary being, is the "insuperable spontaneity and ingenuousness"²⁴ which is essential to the pre-philosophical, pre-reflective occurrence of radical-reality's confrontation with his circumstances.²⁵

In essence, the case against idealism and, specifically, the 'principle of consciousness' is summed up, by Ortega, in a footnote found in the Leibniz book:

. . . consciousness in its character as phenomenon is the arbiter . . . a thing which Husserl recognizes and calls the "natural posture of consciousness!" Phenomenology consists in describing that phenomenon of natural consciousness from the viewpoint of a reflexive consciousness which looks upon natural consciousness "without taking it seriously;" without adopting its positions . . . suspending its operative quality (epokhe). To this I object on two counts: (1) that to suspend what I have called the operative quality . . . of consciousness, its quality as arbiter, is to eliminate what is most basic in it and hence in all consciousness; (2) that we are suspending the operative quality of one consciousness from another, the reflexive, which Husserl calls "phenomenological reduction," without its having any superior right to invalidate the primary and reflective consciousness; (3) on the other hand, it is left to the reflexive consciousness to be operative and to establish primary consciousness with the character of being absolute, calling it Erlebnis or living experience. This shows precisely how every consciousness has operative validity and has no meaning insofar as its consciousness invalidates one with another. . . . "consciousness of" . . . is not simple description but ultimately hypothesis. . . . there is no such phenomenon as "consciousness of"²⁶

In similar terms, William James had already formulated his own critique against the notion of consciousness as an 'entity' so that the 'pure' consciousness of Kant, for example, "becomes a bare Bewusstheit or Bewusstsein überhaupt of which in its own right absolutely nothing can be said."²⁷ The inability to take hold of such a 'pure consciousness' is characteristic of its "pure diaphaneity"²⁸ and points to its status as a "nonentity."²⁹ For James, consciousness is most appropriately interpreted as a "function"³⁰ of human experience.

James's account of the neo-Kantian concept of consciousness emphasizes that, for this group, "experience is indefeasibly dualistic in structure. . . . object-plus-subject is the minimum that can actually be. . . . To consciousness as such nothing can happen, for, timeless itself, it is only a witness of happenings in time, in which it plays no part."³¹ But in contrast to the neo-Kantians who have come to a determination of consciousness as a reality or 'first principle' "by mental subtraction";³² by taking from what is assumed to be the basic structure of reality, viz. its dualistic nature, and then finding that consciousness is merely the correlate to the 'contents' of experience,³³ James claims that the way to consciousness is "by way of addition."³⁴ The ground of consciousness, therefore, for James, is the 'pure experience' which is "situated at the intersection"³⁵ of consciousness and content so that what is called the "sense

of life"³⁶ is, in fact, a "numerically single thing."³⁷ In effect, "the instant field of the present is at all times what I [James] call the 'pure' experience. It is only virtually or potentially either an object or subject. . . . it is plain, unqualified actuality . . . a simple that. In this naif immediacy . . . it is there. . . ."38

That which James calls the 'pure experience' is, for Ortega, captured by the key concept of Erlebnis or 'lived experience'. The 'principle' which over-rides that of consciousness is no less than the 'principle of vitality'.³⁹ This primordial principle resides in the "relationship into which the subject can enter with certain objects."⁴⁰ In order to stress the immediacy of this relationship, Ortega utilizes the expression vivencias; "everything that arrives at my 'I' with enough presence to become part of it, is a 'vivencias'."⁴¹

It has developed that Ortega's notion of primary consciousness (consciencia primaria), understood as the pre-reflective encounter with circumstances, is the vital field for all vivencias (lived experiences). Within these concepts, the emphasis retreats from the mere 'reflection upon' experience to the very intimacy and immediacy of experience itself. With this re-orientation of emphasis, there also appears a re-newed consideration of what is called the 'vital ego' as opposed to the detached philosophical ego established through 'reduction'. In addition, the concept of vivencias indicates a re-newed temporal interpretation of

human existence. In effect, 'primary consciousness' and the happening of 'lived experience', become characterized by the following elements: first, the radical mine-ness of experience, i.e. 'lived' experience (vivencias); second, an 'authentic sense' of being within or 'inwardness' which helps to further qualify the meaning of human existence from a vital perspective; and third, a renewed sense of temporality which emerges from authentic being within. As a result, the remainder of this chapter is directed towards a clarification of these elements.

The essence of all vivencias or 'lived experiences' is precisely the 'personal possessive' character which they present to the radical-reality whose experience they are.

. . . if we direct our attention . . . to precisely that reality to which "I walk" alludes, we cannot help but notice how different it is from that alluded to by "he walks." His walk is a reality that I perceive with my eyes as happening in space; a series of successive positions of legs over the ground. In the "I walk" . . . I find an invisible reality and one foreign to space—the effort, the thrust, the muscular sensations of tension and resistance. . . . One could say that in the "I walk" I refer to walking 'seen' from inside what walking is, and in the "he walks" to walking seen as an external result.⁴²

'Thoughts of', 'images', 'concepts', in general, all intentional 'consciousness of' passes over the vital executor of lived experience. In fact, the explicit awareness of an experience, nullifies the experience qua experience; hence, "the pain hurting is the opposite of its image; in the instant that it becomes an image, it stops hurting."⁴³ In like manner, the experience of dreaming remains such only

as actual dreaming; any effort to capture oneself in the act of dreaming destroys the experience and establishes a new experience, viz. 'remembering that I was just dreaming' at some point of time in the past.* Accordingly, the vital ego, the "'I' means . . . all things . . . inasmuch as they are occurring, being, executing themselves."⁴⁴ In effect, the attempt to stand outside of the 'I' in order to become acquainted with it, the attempt to set up the 'I' as an 'object' for consciousness, is to destroy the 'I' as 'I'; "we cannot place ourselves before it. . . ." ⁴⁵

When I feel pain, when I love or hate, I do not see my pain, nor do I see myself loving or hating. In order for me to see my pain, I have to interrupt being in pain and become an "I" that looks on. This "I" that observes the other one in pain is now the true "I," the executant one, the present ". The "I" in pain, to be exact, was, and is now only an image, a thing or object that "I" have before me.⁴⁶

As a result, the 'vital I', or the executant ego, is such "from a point of view within itself."⁴⁷ 'Authentic being within' is not that form of coming to terms with oneself expressed by any introspective technique for 'getting to know oneself'. The attempt to examine my ideas, opinions,

*See Viktor E. Frankl, Man's Search for Meaning: An Introduction to Logotherapy, trans. Ilse Lasch (New York, Simon and Schuster, 1962) pp. 73-74. In a discussion of his prison camp experiences, at one point Frankl states: "I became disgusted with the state of affairs which compelled me, daily and hourly, to think of only . . . trivial things. I forced my thoughts to turn to another subject. Suddenly I saw myself standing on the platform of a well-lit, warm and pleasant lecture room. . . . I was giving a lecture on the psychology of the concentration camp! All that oppressed me at that moment became objective, seen and described from the remote viewpoint of science. By this method I succeeded . . . in rising above the situation, above the sufferings of the moment, and I observed them as if they were already of the past."

or any other personal state of my being all fail to embrace the 'authentically vital ego' since such efforts establish as their object of concern 'items' present at hand which are essentially 'other' than the vital ego itself. The vital ego is essentially elusive. As an "object of cognition," the vital ego "stops being what it is. . . ." Hence, "inwardness cannot be an object for us. . . . it is the true being of all things. . . ." ⁴⁸ But since 'true inwardness' or that which I call 'authentic being within' is the vital ego "in the act of executing itself," ⁴⁹ this suggests that which has already been indicated in the second chapter of this study, viz. that human existence is essentially action; the execution of doings by radical-reality within his problematic circumstances. It remains that this authentic sense of 'being within' be examined from the perspective of a possible temporal interpretation.

The Character of Doubt and the Temporality of 'Being in Doubt'

In order to determine the temporality of authentic 'being within', I am about to bring into relief the notion of 'doubt' since it is from the act of doubting that radical-reality discovers the necessity to resolve the instability and insecurity which existence presents. Resolving doubt is, therefore, no less than taking some form of action, doing or executing something. In a sense, 'being within' understood as the execution of my being, and the event of 'being in doubt' are related in an essential manner.

Along with Descartes, Ortega asserts that the starting point for philosophy, understood as the 'settling of oneself' within an inherently problematic circumstance, is the "doubting [of] all human knowledge. When one begins this way he is truly a philosopher. . . . to make of doubt itself the only all embracing principle."⁵⁰ But the 'principle of doubt' is not merely a starting point for philosophical activity, it is a 'principle of existence'. Doubt is not merely a standpoint which encourages the asking of questions and the settling of uncertainties, but rather, it is a fundamental condition of radical-reality's relationship with his circumstances.

While Descartes reduces doubt to 'thought', Ortega transcends the idealistic orientation when he notes that in absolute doubt;

there is the I who doubts, and there is that which I find doubtful. In order for there to be doubt, both terms are equally indispensable. And the doubtful thing is not itself doubt, nor is it I, nor subjectivity; but it is something here in front of me which I doubt, and it must exist in order that I, facing it, feel doubt. The 'doubtful' is the characteristic which the world shows me when I doubt. . . . 51

'Being in doubt', then, is an existential condition which arises whenever the comfortable public opinion fails us. In fact, being in doubt reveals itself as 'historical' in the sense that radical-reality is in doubt when he loses faith in those principles which uphold him in his being. Whatever the quality or origin of these principles, whether they are inauthentically adopted from the repertoire of social

usages, or personally devised principles which make sense to me, the absence of principle is the state of 'being shipwrecked' and 'being shipwrecked' is no less than the ground and basis for taking account of my circumstances and thereby accounting for myself. "There is no cognitive effort, without a previous problem which ignites it. The problem is the quaestio, the doubt. . . . "52

When Ortega states that there is no 'cognitive effort' without a prior condition of 'being in doubt', he is indicating, although implicitly, that 'being in doubt' is not, in itself, a cognitive activity. Cognition, intellection, 'being aware' understood as the intentionality of conscious reflection is a by-product of doubt. In doubt, radical-reality "has lost his traditional beliefs, he finds himself lost in life. That consciousness of being fundamentally lost, of not knowing what to cling to, is ignorance. But this primary not knowing, is a not knowing what to do."⁵³ Only in a very approximate manner does 'being in doubt' resemble a 'consciousness of' something. Although Ortega notes that, in doubt, a human being is 'conscious of being lost', the condition of 'being lost' is precisely the condition of 'not knowing where to direct my attention'. At best, Ortega can say, along with Socrates, that the only thing of which he is certain is that 'he knows nothing'. But this is where the intentionality of doubting ends. The essentially un-intentional character of 'being in doubt'

implies a form of temporality unlike that of 'being present at hand', and, in addition, doubt reveals itself as a form of vivencia, lived experience, which helps to clarify the authentic structure of human existence. If the essential structure of human living is 'insecurity', and if living is no less essentially a matter of 'doing' or 'executing' in the sense that the "having to act in order to be"⁵⁴ is the peculiar framework for human living, then human living is a 'looking ahead' towards that which is not yet; a world interpretation which affords security. In effect, the 'temporality of being in doubt' is essentially a future oriented condition.

Futurity as the Primordial Temporal Orientation of Radical-Reality

The condition of 'being in doubt' understood as a 'residing within problematic circumstances', reveals a future oriented mode of being; hence, the paradox of being insecure as an essential element of my being, and the equally essential 'projection towards establishing security'. The specific form of 'doing' or 'executing' which seeks security is 'interpretation', the fabrication of a world-view which puts order into circumstantial-reality. In effect, "to live is to find oneself forced to interpret life."⁵⁵ Accordingly, one cannot be in a problem in the sense of sustaining oneself in the problem as such. Rather, radical-reality comports himself as one who is already 'beyond the problem'. If the fundamental substance of life is insecurity, and if "living is always, ceaselessly, restlessly, a doing,"⁵⁶ then "all doing implies

bringing something future into effect. . . . "57 Radical-reality, therefore, is "constant anticipation, a pre-forming of the future . . . the future comes first. . . . our life is in its very essence futurism."58

This futurism, however, is not an attempt merely to isolate 'the future'. To speak of the future is to create an impression that futurity is, in grammatical terms, a noun, a 'substantive entity' and hence, is a misinterpretation of the concept. Futurism as projective activity is the 'vital execution' of radical-reality; it is processional, a 'movement towards'. The specific character of this 'movement towards' is further qualified as a dialectical interplay among the temporal dimensions of future, past, and present but, a dialectic which is radically individual in so far as it applies to the individuality of that entity called radical-reality.

. . . the living being begins by being the creature over there, the one that comes afterwards. . . . Cosmic time is only the present because the future has not yet come, and the past no longer is. How, then, can past and future continue to be part of time? . . . "Our life" is set and anchored in the immediate present. But what is my life at this moment? It is not the process of saying what I am saying; what I am living this moment is not a matter of moving the lips; that is mechanical, outside my life, it pertains to the cosmic being. On the contrary, my life is the process of thinking what I am going to say; at this moment I am anticipating, I am projecting myself into the future. But in order to say this I make use of certain means—of words—and that gives me a portion of my past. My future, then, makes me discover my past in order to realize that future. The past is now real because I am re-living it, and it is when I find in the past the means of realizing my future that I discover my present. And all this happens

in an instant; moment by moment life swells out into the three dimensions of the true interior time. The future tosses me back toward the past; the past toward the present, and from here I go again toward the future which throws me back to the past, and the past to another present, in a constant rotation.⁵⁹

'True interior time', 'authentic being within', and the 'I' which is the vital executor of vivencias, lived experiences as lived, can be brought into relief by a brief contrast with other temporal concepts. For example, the Aristotelian concept of time as a series of 'now points' converts temporality into a form of 'exteriority'; time viewed as 'public' or 'clock time'. The externalization of time depicts the phenomenon as an entity 'present at hand' which stands outside of human existence as such. Rather than being constitutive of the being of radical-reality, time serves as a mere framework within which the human entity circulates and conducts his existence. "Hence time is not movement," for Aristotle, "but only movement in so far as it admits of enumeration. . . . Just as motion is a perpetual succession, so also is time."⁶⁰

Although 'interiority' distinguishes Ortega's view from the Aristotelian conception of time, interiority itself needs further qualification before the authentic sense of 'being within' and its temporal character become clear. The Augustinian version of temporality in the Confessions, which ostensibly expresses an interpretation of 'interior' temporality, resorts to an interpretation of time which fundamentally depicts time as presence. The 'past' does not exist as past,

nor does the 'future' exist as future; "wherever they are, and whatever they are, they cannot be anything except present."⁶¹ The import of this observation resides in the manner in which the 'presence' of these temporal dimensions is characterized. Augustine explains: "it is incorrect to say that there are three times—past, present, and future. Though one might perhaps say: 'There are three times—a present of things past, a present of things present, and a present of things future'. For these three do exist in the mind, and I do not see them anywhere else: the present time of things past is memory; the present time of things present is sight; the present time of things future is expectation."⁶²

The localization of time 'in the mind', by Augustine, and the conversion of temporality into a psychological entity does not, in the end, avoid what Ortega might call an inauthentic version of the phenomenon. Since 'past' does not exist in so far as the things of the past no longer are, and the future does not yet exist, time becomes something subject to measurement in terms of the 'mental operations' of memory and anticipation; the present serving merely as a passageway through which the future passes into the past.⁶³ Even the manner in which Augustine describes the way in which temporality is available to man, viz. through 'memory' which sets up a past 'before the mind' and makes it 'present', and characterizing such 'being present' as a sighting, all serve to emphasize that, for Augustine, temporality is reduced to a form of 'consciousness of'.

The performance of reciting, for example, is an activity "extended in two directions—toward my memory, as regards what I have recited, and towards my expectation as regards what I am about to recite. . . . as I proceed further . . . with my recitation, so the expectation grows shorter and the memory grows longer, until all the expectation is finished at the point when the whole of this action is over and has passed into memory."⁶⁴ Augustine's concern in these passages is clearly an attempt to account for what human experience understands as the 'passage of time'. Augustine is, in a sense, retaining an Aristotelian orientation which portrays time as a series of 'points' although, for Augustine, the points become psychological or mental entities. The 'stuff' of temporality is the memory of things past, and the expectation of things to come. But 'remembering' and 'expecting', are seen as essentially 'intentional' activities. The temporal 'now', like the geometrical point, has no measureable quality, no extension, and yet, Augustine's analysis 'places' both past and future in the present. But in order to provide this peculiar present with 'substance', with 'measureability', Augustine sets the parameters of human experience with memory at one end, and anticipation at the other. Within these boundaries, man discovers himself to be closer to one, and further from the other and hence, is capable of 'measuring' the distance of one or the other in the mind. As a result, "it seems to me [Augustine] that time can

only be a kind of extension; but I do not know what it is an extension of. Could it not be, I wonder, an extension of the mind itself?"⁶⁵ And again, Augustine states more emphatically, "it is in you, my mind, that I measure time."⁶⁶ Accordingly, the 'taking account of time', for Augustine, resorts to an abstraction. Only by converting time into 'presence' in a substantive or 'static' sense, of setting it within boundaries, can time be 'looked at', 'observed', or 'attended to'. Augustine's 'philosophical awareness' of time becomes the occupation of a kind of 'transcendental ego' which stands apart from the actual process of 'lived temporality'.

Hence, although Augustine begins to interpret temporality as a constitutive element of human nature, in contrast to the eternity or 'extra-temporal' essence of God, the interpretation, in the final analysis, resorts to a reduction of human temporality to 'static presence' which aspires to resemble the 'eternal now-ness' or 'eternal presence' which is God's. Hence, temporality as temporality is passed over and the phenomenon loses all sense of vitality. Augustine has, then, committed himself and his analysis of human temporality to an unmistakable form of idealism which depicts temporality as 'thought' and, from the Ortegian standpoint, reduces time to the status of a 'non-vital' entity. Returning to Ortega, then, he states:

. . . I have argued continuously against intellectualism, the root of idealism. This is why I have been and am the irreconcilable enemy of an idealism that, in locating space and time in the mind of man, has man existing outside of space and time.⁶⁷

The Temporality of 'Being Within'

If authentic 'being within' is not merely conscious reflection on internal states of affairs, but the active execution of my doings, and if 'doing' is necessitated by the essentially problematic character of reality made manifest in the existential state of 'being in doubt', and if doubting is a future oriented state of being, what, then, might be said regarding the temporality of 'being within' and in what sense is temporality, for Ortega, within the radical-reality?

Authentic inwardness as the activity of the executant I or 'vital ego' is that very projection itself which radical-reality performs in his dealings with problematic reality. In effect, 'being within' means looking ahead to that which is not yet but which might be.* But this form of 'looking

*Ortega makes this point explicitly in his essay "Fifteenth-Century Man" in the text Man and Crisis, p. 183 when he states: ". . . we are the ones who are making the future. . . . The way in which each one forsees the future is, then, not so much a matter of looking beyond as of scrutinizing within one's most secret self." For the original reference, see Obras Completas, V, p. 140. The text reads, in part, "No es, pues, tanto mirando fuera cuanto perescrutando en la más solitaria soledad de sí mismo como puede cada cual prever el porvenir." Hence, for the first time, the intimate relationship between 'looking ahead' and 'being within' emerges. It is this very mutuality and vital connection which serves as the 'key' for grasping vital temporality.

ahead' is not the mere 'making present' of 'something' but is rather, "always a coming from one thing and a going to something else."⁶⁸ Therefore, radical-reality is essentially an executor, a being always in the process of "making the future."⁶⁹ The future cannot be 'made present' for no other reason than it "is in its very essence a problematical thing . . . it has neither a determined shape nor a definite profile. . . . The future is always pluralistic; it consists of all those things that can occur. . . . "⁷⁰

The rotational characterization of temporality as the projection towards the future, retreat to 'my' past, and the finding of myself at that which is called the 'present', signifies that the precise form of temporality which constitutes the being of radical-reality, his "true and irreparable time," is "time which comes to an end;"⁷¹ finite time. "The now, the present, includes all time; now, before, and after."⁷² But it is the future which comes first tempered by a definite past which limits my possibilities. As radical-reality faces the possibilities of an open future, he faces those possibilities from the perspective of a given destiny which marks out and determines the general features of what I can do and hence, what I can hope to be.⁷³ In the final analysis, however, it is the concrete, vital, individual being which supplies the details for his own being. Hence, the ever problematic character of 'predicting' anything that possesses such a 'vital' dimension. Unlike "scientific

knowledge" or the exercise of a 'pure reason' which is "closed and stable,"⁷⁴ for example, the laws of mathematics, "vital knowledge of other men and of ourselves is an open knowledge. . . . The reason for this is plain: Man . . . does not possess a fixed or settled being; his being is precisely freedom to be. This implies that, while he lives, man can always be different from what he has been until that moment. . . . Our past undoubtedly weighs on us; it inclines us to be this rather than that in the future; but it does not chain us or drag us."⁷⁵

In his work, Man's Search for Meaning: An Introduction to Logotherapy, Viktor E. Frankl cites an example which illustrates very clearly this aspect of 'vital temporality' and the inherent 'freedom to be' which Ortega refers to above. Frankl states:

Let me cite the case of Dr. J. He was the only man I ever encountered in my whole life whom I dare to call a Mephistophelean being, a satanic figure. At that time he was generally called "the mass murderer of Steinhof," the name of the large mental hospital in Vienna. When the Nazis started their euthanasia program, he held all the strings in his hands and was so fantastic in the job assigned to him that he tried not to let one single psychotic individual escape the gas chamber. After the war, when I came back to Vienna, I asked what had happened to Dr. J. "He had been imprisoned by the Russians in one of the isolation cells of Steinhof," they told me. "On the next day, however, the door of his cell stood open and Dr. J. was never seen again." Later I was convinced that, like others, he had with the help of his comrades made his way to South America. More recently, however, I was consulted by a former Austrian diplomat who had been imprisoned behind the iron curtain for many years, first in Siberia, and then in the famous Lubanka prison in Moscow. While I was examining him neurologically, he suddenly asked me whether I happened to know Dr. J. After my affirmative reply he continued:

"I made his acquaintance in Lubanka. There he died, at about the age of forty, from cancer of the urinary bladder. Before he died, however, he showed himself to be the best comrade you can imagine! He gave consolation to everybody. He lived up to the highest conceivable moral standard. He was the best friend I ever met during my long years in prison!"⁷⁶

Accordingly, the dialectical movement of vital temporality is not, in any sense, an inevitable process towards an inexorably fixed goal. Neither my past which suggests or encourages a particular kind of future, nor that future itself which is suggested, are absolutes in terms of determining who I am to be. Hence, if "really to live is to be directed towards something,"⁷⁷ and "nothing has a sense for man except in as far as it is directed towards the future,"⁷⁸ then facing the future is no less than facing the "problem of [my] own individual being."⁷⁹ Dealing with the problem of my own being is, then, the problem of 'having a meaning', towards which my own being can be directed.

As a result, the specific character of the temporality of authentic 'being within' is futurity influenced by a given destiny. My 'now', my present being, is a tension between a definitive past and an undefined future. 'Being within', therefore, is not a spatial designation, but a temporal one in the sense that whatever I am doing I am doing for a purpose which has meaning for me. 'Being within' is a vivencias in the most radical and personal sense because the purposes of my actions have reference to my future and all such 'doings' bear within themselves that evidential

character of 'being mine'.

Futurity and Meaning

It is the finite-ness of human temporality which necessitates that each radical-reality discover, for himself, a 'meaning' in his choices. Being finite establishes parameters for human freedom and hence, sets limits to what radical-reality can do. As a result, whatever I do is a matter of 'having to choose', select, or decide upon those activities which make sense to me; have meaning for me. 'Having a meaning for me', is the essence of finite-ness. Just as my possibilities are, in part, determined by my past, my destiny, who I am now is equally determined, to some extent, by the future towards which I aspire; "life and plan are inseparable."⁸⁰ In other words, my 'doings', the manner in which I execute my life, "has to be dedicated to something, an enterprise. . . . if that life of mine, which only concerns myself, is not directed by me towards something, it will be disjointed, lacking in tension and in 'form'."⁸¹ Meaning, then, is discovered in the future as the horizon towards which my being is directed.

Some very practical applications for this form of vital temporality have been developed by Dr. Frankl; a technique for assisting patients who are experiencing certain difficulties with life situations. The label for this form of therapy is logotherapy which, by reason of its etymological structure reveals a portion of its character and intention.

Logotherapy is a form of psychotherapy which "in comparison with psychoanalysis, is a method less retrospective and less introspective. Logotherapy focuses rather on the future, that is to say, on the assignments and meanings to be fulfilled by the patient in his future."⁸² Hence, logotherapy embraces those two elements which are most relevant within the Ortegian concept of vital temporality: emphasis on futurity and the need for a 'program for being'.

On the basis of extensive prison camp experience, Frankl formulated his logotherapy in the realization that only by being 'future directed', by having a purpose in terms of which life can be dedicated, can individuals in the most adverse and oppressive circumstances sustain a will to live. Such adverse circumstances, what Frankl refers to as "provisional existence"⁸³ can be overcome by such a goal directed attitude. Individuals, for instance, who are dealing with a situation of undetermined duration in the most negative circumstances are prone to lose all hope and, as a result, lose all sense of a possible future.⁸⁴ Rather than being future oriented, the prisoner "found himself occupied with retrospective thoughts;"⁸⁵ hence, "in robbing the present of its reality there lay a certain danger. It became easy to overlook the opportunities to make something positive of camp life. . . . Regarding our 'provisional existence' as unreal was in itself an important factor in causing the prisoners to lose their hold on life; everything in a way became pointless."⁸⁶

The aim of logotherapy is precisely to help the individual discover, for himself, a meaning which will humanize and dignify even the most negative form of experience. Circumstances in themselves are not, then, the determining factor, but the human being, in his imposition upon circumstances of a personal 'why' for his existence gives those circumstances a meaningful character. As Frankl continues to emphasize, in the words of Nietzsche, "'he who has a why to live for can bear with almost any how'. . . ." ⁸⁷ 'Having a why' means having 'hope', and, for those who failed to survive, inundating the specific means of their death was "what may have been the real reason for their deaths: giving up hope." ⁸⁸

In essence, then, logotherapy is "activistic" ⁸⁹ in the sense that 'being future oriented' means 'to execute my existence' towards that which possesses meaning for me. The unity of futurity and meaning point once again to the fundamental 'within-ness' which characterizes the radically personal responsibility which living imposes. As Frankl states it: "'life' does not mean something vague, but something very real and concrete, just as life's tasks are also very real and concrete. . . . each situation calls for a different response." ⁹⁰ Hence, each response is a 'lived experience', a personally devised reply (vivencias) which, because it is my response, is the most genuine form of 'being within'.

As a result, logotherapy stands as a means for 'salvaging' one's circumstances. Since 'salvation' is the concrete destiny of man which, because it is 'concrete', 'individual', and radically personal, is essentially vital in character; and because such salvation requires the construction of or, at least, the renovation of my given circumstances which constitute my destiny, it must also be rational. Hence, salvation of circumstances is that which is a function of vital reason.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER V

¹Leo Tolstoy, The Death of Ivan Ilych and Other Stories, trans. Aylmer Maude (New York and Toronto: The New American Library, 1960), p. 131.

²José Ortega y Gasset, "Preface for Germans," Phenomenology and Art, trans. Philip W. Silver (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1975), p. 62.

³Ibid., p. 61.

⁴Ibid., p. 62.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid., p. 63.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid., p. 60.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid., p. 55.

¹²Ibid., p. 63.

¹³Ibid., pp. 63-64.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 64.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 64-65.

¹⁷José Ortega y Gasset, The Modern Theme, trans. James Cleugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), p. 71.

¹⁸Ortega y Gasset, "Preface for Germans," Phenomenology and Art, p. 65.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid., p. 66.

²¹Ibid., p. 67.

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid., p. 68.

²⁴Ibid., p. 69.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ortega y Gasset, The Idea of Principle in Leibnitz, pp. 280-81.

²⁷William James, "Does 'Consciousness' Exist," The Writings of William James, ed. John J. McDermott (New York: The Modern Library, 1968), p. 169.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid., p. 170

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid., p. 172.

³³Ibid., pp. 171-72.

³⁴Ibid., p. 172.

³⁵Ibid., p. 173.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid., pp. 177-78.

³⁹Ortega y Gasset, "Preface for Germans," Phenomenology and Art, p. 110.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid., p. 132.

⁴³Ibid., p. 133.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 134.

⁴⁶Ibid.

- 47 Ibid.
- 48 Ibid., p. 136.
- 49 Ibid.
- 50 Ortega y Gasset, The Idea of Principle in Leibnitz, p. 266.
- 51 Ortega y Gasset, Some Lessons In Metaphysics, pp. 155-56.
- 52 Ortega y Gasset, The Idea of Principle in Leibnitz, p. 268.
- 53 Ibid., p. 271-72.
- 54 Ortega y Gasset, Some Lessons in Metaphysics, p. 121.
- 55 Ortega y Gasset, "The Structure of Life, The Substance of History," Man and Crisis, p. 24.
- 56 Ortega y Gasset, The Revolt of the Masses, p. 172.
- 57 Ibid.
- 58 Ortega y Gasset, What Is Philosophy?, pp. 246-47.
- 59 Ibid., pp. 243-44.
- 60 Aristotle, "Physics," The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. Richard McKeon, trans. R.P. Hardie and R.K. Gaye (New York: Random House, 1941), p. 292.
- 61 Rex Warner, (trans.), The Confessions of St. Augustine (New York: The New American Library, 1963), p. 271.
- 62 Ibid., p. 273.
- 63 Ibid., p. 282.
- 64 Ibid.
- 65 Ibid., p. 279.
- 66 Ibid., p. 281.
- 67 Ortega y Gasset, "Preface for Germans," Phenomenology and Art, p. 57.
- 68 Ortega y Gasset, "Fifteenth-Century Man," Man and Crisis, p. 185.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 183.

⁷⁰Ortega y Gasset, "In Transition from Christianity to Rationalism," Man and Crisis, p. 120.

⁷¹Ortega y Gasset, "The Idea of the Generation," Man and Crisis, p. 42.

⁷²Ortega y Gasset, What Is Philosophy?, p. 244.

⁷³Ibid., pp. 247-48.

⁷⁴Ortega y Gasset, "The Other as Danger, and The I as Surprise," Man and People, p. 156.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Viktor E. Frankl, Man's Search for Meaning: An Introduction to Logotherapy, trans. Ilse Lasch (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1962), pp. 131-32.

⁷⁷Ortega y Gasset, The Revolt of the Masses, p. 142.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 173.

⁷⁹Ortega y Gasset, "The Structure of Life, The Substance of History," Man and Crisis, p. 23.

⁸⁰Ortega y Gasset, Mission of the University, p. 71.

⁸¹Ortega y Gasset, The Revolt of the Masses, p. 141.

⁸²Frankl, Man's Search for Meaning, p. 96.

⁸³Ibid., p. 70.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 71.

⁸⁵Ibid.

⁸⁶Ibid.

⁸⁷Ibid., p. 76.

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 81.

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 121.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 77.

CRITICAL SUMMARY

In a significant footnote found in his essay "In Search of Goethe from Within," 1932, Ortega makes the following statement:

In 1923 I published a book which—with a certain solemnity which my present maturity would urge me to avoid—was entitled The Theme of Our Time. In this book . . . I said that the theme of our time consists in reducing pure reason to "vital reason". Has anyone yet tried—not to draw the most immediate consequences from this phrase, but simply to understand its meaning? People have gone on talking despite my protests, about my vitalism, but no one has tried to think of the terms "reason" and "vital" in juxtaposition, as my formula proposes. No one, in short, has talked about my "ratio-vitalism." And even now, after I have emphasized it, how many can understand it, can understand the Critique of Vital Reason which was announced in that book?!

In the above mentioned book, El Tema de Nuestro Tiempo, whose literal translation is far superior, I think, to James Cleugh's The Modern Theme since 'nuestro tiempo' (our time) is precisely that which is beyond the theme of modernity, beyond, that is, 'idealism' and the priority of 'pure reason', Ortega makes explicit that which he refers to as the "schism [la escisión] . . . in man's personality [en nuestra persona],² the existential tension inherent in radical-reality. This tension is created by the co-present 'vital-rational' tendency in each human being,³ the mutual presence and opposition between

'concrete individuality' which is radically personal and mine, and the tendency, even the need in man, to seek generalities, to seek the 'rational'. This points to an integral distinction in the human being which is, on the one hand, an affirmation of 'creative spontaneity' and, on the other hand, a reliance upon all 'previous reality' as it already presents itself to me, i.e. culture. In short, life stands defined in terms of an indigenous freedom to be itself and a given fate in terms of which man comes to recognize and activate his freedom. It is not that vitality is only one of these aspects or tendencies and not the other; rather, authentic vitality is the tension itself which these opposites create. So intimate is this paradoxical relationship a part of the Ortegian understanding of vitality that he, in effect, elevates this concept to a principle; hence, as "duality," for Ortega, "is essential to the process of history,"⁴ so too is radical-reality's own intimate 'existential process' a matter of dealing with the duality in his own being.

On the one side stands everything vital and concrete in his being, his breathing and historical reality. On the other hand, that rational nucleus which enables us to attain truth, but which nevertheless has no life.⁵

The priority given to culture since Socrates,⁶ the elevation of "pure intellection [pura intelección], or reason, is nothing else but our understanding functioning in the void, without let or hindrance, in contact with itself, and controlled only by its own internal standards."⁷

Idealism in its most emphatic forms, "the 'raison' of Descartes," or "the 'pure reason' of Kant," for example, "can only operate among superlatives and absolutes."⁸ As a result, for Ortega, such rationalism reduces itself to a "foolish and purely fictitious abstraction."⁹

The absolutes and superlatives sought after by 'reason itself', divorced from life's immediacy and spontaneity, share that temporal character described throughout this study as 'presence at hand'. But note well that vitality, in the Ortegan sense, is not a discarding of 'presence at hand' nor an abdication of one's attachment to culture or the 'past' as such. Human vitality, in the sense of 'vital reason', embraces a 're-thinking' of what culture can mean for me, and a re-consideration of the past, not merely as the past, but as a means to a future which I have yet to make for myself. Culture, then, ceases to be an independent and privileged realm detached from the immediacy and individuality of my life. Culture becomes subject to the 'principle of vitality'. But the 'principle' of vitality is now understood as 'point of view'; 'my' own perspective from which culture acquires meaning for me.

But how does all of this assist in an understanding of philosophy as a 'vital activity'. Philosophy finds itself in the paradoxical position of having as its object of concern that which properly speaking cannot be 'object'. As a result, as Ortega's suggestion which opens this section invites us to consider, how are we to "simply understand"

the expression 'vital reason', and, perhaps more significantly, 'what immediate consequences' may be drawn from this concept?

The task of 'simply understanding' vital reason has actually been one of the underlying features of this study. Vital reason is a function of the executive ego, the 'vital I' in the process of rationally constructing its own future which necessarily emerges from within the context of a problematic environment. Hence, Ortega's theme of 'salvations' seems to reflect the fundamental orientation of 'vital reason'. The interplay between 'myself' and my 'circumstances', and my imposition upon those circumstances of a personally devised plan for being, have a crucial dual effect: first, an individuating effect upon those circumstances which, without me, remain formless and undefined; second, the imposition upon me of a definite character and 'form' provided by the 'culture' of my thrown condition. But what of Ortega's other, more crucial suggestion? How are we to define the consequences of the notion of 'vital reason'? How are we to take vital reason beyond itself? In effect, where does this concept for understanding human existence and, in particular, my human existence, lead in terms of a vital interpretation of philosophy?

It can justly be said that Ortega's thought is, much like the circumstantial-reality of which he speaks, problem ridden; in fact, his thought is essentially problematic.

This essentially problematic character of Ortega's thought is due to the 'wherefore' of that thought, its 'direction', its telos as it were. The import of adopting vital reason as radical-reality's existential definiens is such that radical-reality is always in the process of becoming himself. Vital reason leaves radical-reality incomplete, but essentially incomplete. Radical-reality has not yet become himself and indeed, 'not having become one's self' reveals itself as the very character of being human.

But again, how does this affect a possible interpretation of philosophy? If philosophy has traditionally been the attempt to absolutize life and 'make life present' within rational concepts, vital reason seeks simply 'to make life'. It is a constructive implement at the service of 'man the fabricator', homo faber. But is this, properly speaking, philosophy? Ortega himself consistently emphasizes that life is not philosophy nor is philosophy life. "In meditating on life one has to evade it . . . contemplate its flow from without."¹⁰ Can, then, vital reason be philosophical? Can something be rational yet not philosophical? Indeed, the entire thrust of Ortega's thought replies in the affirmative. Vital reason itself does not imply a vital philosophy. Does this mean that Ortega is anti-philosophical? Not in any formal sense of having evaluated philosophy as some form of undesirable activity. Rather, philosophy becomes subservient to and grounded upon human living. But this characterization

which reveals something of the nature and status of philosophical activity, suggests a further question of even greater significance. If philosophy is merely 'derivative', 'theoretical', and 'sportive'; if, in short, philosophy is a form of 'de-living' and hence, is a 'non-vital' activity, what can be said about the significance of philosophy at all? Why philosophize? It is not that Ortega has raised any explicit polemic against philosophy, however, it is apparent that Ortega has reduced philosophy to a sphere of human activity comparable to the observation of a game; a game whose rules are fixed abstractions and whose spectators stand once removed from a field or board of activity. What, then, has happened to philosophy? Ortega himself has already been distinguished from the so-called 'philosophers of life'; in fact, at one point in his "Preface for Germans," Ortega remarks: "I very much doubt if any philosophy can be adequately termed 'philosophy of existence. . . ." ¹¹ For Ortega, life is first in so far as all other realities are for me because I have life, i.e. because I am a radical-reality. In what sense, then, can philosophy be salvaged as a unique and peculiar form of human activity?

Since philosophy is precisely a 'looking at life' from beyond the everyday-ness of human living, it is philosophy which allows Ortega to come to this awareness of life as the first reality. Philosophy, in a sense, is the necessary tool and indeed, the only tool, which radical-reality

has at his service which reveals to radical-reality his own being and the very radical-ness which defines that being. Even if the act of philosophizing needs to retreat to a standpoint of objectivity and 'conscious reflection' upon life, this standpoint is the necessary condition for naming radical-reality. The act of radical-reality naming himself is significant. Naming becomes the peculiar form of aletheia appropriate to philosophy, and philosophical activity itself, like art, becomes a form of naming. To name is to 'make explicit', to 'reveal', to 'un-cover' and philosophy is an 'un-covering' of oneself. Ortega tells us that this peculiar function of philosophy is non-vital, but it is philosophy itself which allows for the very possibility of identifying the vital. Philosophy knows itself to be a 'conscious standing aside' from vital beliefs and knows too that living is precisely that which does not know itself since "in its root and essence [life] is indisputably altruistic" and is, as Ortega tells us, "the emigration of the Vital Ego in the direction of the Not-self."¹² In effect, philosophy does not need to be vital in so far as philosophical activity is the vehicle for making the vital itself patent and in doing so, announces itself as the means by which human vitality is itself 'brought into the open'. The very act of 'seeing' requires a distance and philosophy is this very distance. As Ortega states, "whoever wants to see a brick must look at its pores, and therefore must bring his eyes close to it, but whoever wants to see a cathedral cannot

see it as he sees a brick. This demands of us a respect for distance. Every single thing, if we want an optimum vision of it, demands of us a specific distance."¹³

A reconsideration of the status and significance of philosophy may, in effect, be called a 'search of Ortega from within'. To take vital reason beyond itself is to 're-view' its relationship to philosophy, to re-consider philosophy, not simply as a possible 'standing aside' from vital activity, but as a possible human activity whose peculiar role is to make patent, reveal, and dis-cover the ground of all possible activities and experiences; radical-reality. It may be said, therefore, that philosophy is a portion of those circumstances which define 'who I am' in so far as it is an activity which I may execute for myself. In this sense, philosophy is not merely derivative in character, but a very paradigm of problems; one of many vital problems for radical-reality. Hence, this study concludes by means of an approach, an approach towards the problematic character of Ortega's thought as a whole and, in particular, towards the specific problem of vitality's relationship to philosophy. Accordingly, as a search for Ortega 'from within', desde dentro, this study exemplifies the intrinsically paradoxical character of his thought. As Ortega himself proposed in his essay on Goethe, this study concludes not with "a figure whose external form is extremely clear" or "which presents no problems to the eye,"¹⁴ but, with a view of the very tensions and dramatic conflicts which made that thought possible.

FOOTNOTES

CRITICAL SUMMARY

¹Ortega y Gasset, "In Search of Goethe from Within," The Dehumanization of Art, p. 148.

²Ortega y Gasset, The Modern Theme, p. 30.

³Ibid., pp. 30-31.

⁴Ibid., p. 14.

⁵Ibid., p. 30.

⁶Ibid., pp. 54-55.

⁷Ibid., p. 32.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid., p. 44.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 72.

¹¹Ortega y Gasset, "Preface for Germans," Phenomenology and Art, p. 60.

¹²Ortega y Gasset, The Modern Theme, p. 72.

¹³José Ortega y Gasset, An Interpretation of Universal History, trans. Mildred Adams (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1973), p. 65.

¹⁴Ortega y Gasset, "In Search of Goethe from Within," The Dehumanization of Art, p. 139.

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