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The Philosophy of Ortega y Gasset Reevaluated

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“Spain Is the Problem; Europe Is the Solution”

I The Krausist Movement

During Ortega's youth and the first years of his apprenticeship that began at the Jesuit college of El Palo, after which he studied philosophy in Deusto and Madrid, the leading philosophical and political current in Spain was conducted by a series of thinkers inspired by the German philosopher Karl Krause, a former student of Fichte in the University of Jena. Although the main sources of their Krausist-inspired philosophy were Krause's followers, Heinrich Ahrens and Guillaume Tiberghien, two philosophers of Law, one cannot simply dismiss the idea that Krause's own philosophy was unknown to them. One of the leaders of the Spanish Krausist movement, Julián Sanz del Río, published a book entitled *El Ideal de la Humanidad para la Vida*, whose first edition appeared in 1860, where he stated the political and educational ideals of the Spanish Krausism. Actually, his efforts to make a public presentation of the philosophy of the German thinker began with a series of lectures, in 1854, in the Central University of Madrid.¹

During the second half of the nineteenth century and the first years of the twentieth century, Krausist-oriented politicians tried to bring Spain closer to the leading European nations, not only by strictly political means but also by serious efforts in the domain of public education. In 1906, the young Ortega—already studying in Berlin at the time—writes: “We Spanish don't believe in education” (Ortega y Gasset, 2004a: 63). In March 1909, in an article published in *El Imparcial*, Ortega regrets that the efforts of Giner de los Ríos (another Krausist thinker) to give his Spanish fellow citizens good reasons for choosing the Europeanization program were fruitless (Ortega y Gasset, 2004d: 241). And again 7 years later, in his 1916 public lecture “pedagogía social como programa político”—although strongly influenced by the

¹Ten years before, in 1844, Sanz del Río had been sent to Germany by the Spanish government, charged with the mission of getting acquainted with German philosophy.

educational ideas of the Neokantian philosopher Paul Natorp—Ortega retrieves the Krausist educational program, claiming a pedagogy able to educate the “inner man,” i.e., the man that, at the same time, thinks, feels, and wants. Criaco Morón Arroyo has stressed the strong connection that the young Ortega established between these two philosophical traditions—i.e., Spanish Krausism and Neokantianism—regarding the problem of education and its political consequences. Albeit the aims of education are only attainable, according to Neokantian philosophy, in an asymptotical approach, and for the Krausists, on the contrary, they seem to be attainable in the course of history, as the outcome of the progress of culture (Morón Arroyo, 1968: 412), for both—Neokantians and Krausists—to work for the education of humanity has quite the same meaning: it means to work for the state, as the entity that, in each historical epoch, better embodies those aims (Morón Arroyo, 1968: 397).

The Krausist education program was not carried out exclusively inside the University. In 1874, Giner de los Ríos founded the *Institución Libre de Enseñanza* and 3 years later its *Boletín*, and both had a large cultural and political influence in Spain, until the beginning of the twentieth century. Joaquim Costa, a famous liberal Krausist politician that Ortega greatly admired and whose political action he publicly supported, was a close collaborator of Giner de los Ríos in the *Institución*. Costa's claims that University Chairs should be open toward the public space (Jeschke, 1946: 41) will have a deep impact in the way Ortega looked to the role he was destined to play in the Spanish circumstance of his time²: he wrote intensely in newspapers about cultural and political matters until the beginning of the 1930s.

Education, however, was not the only concern of Krausist thinkers and politicians. The other was Spain's national problem and the question of the claims for autonomy from the several nationalities that formed the Spanish state, namely, the Basques and the Catalans. Krausists were strong supporters of a unified Spain, but they looked to that unity not as the outcome of military power, but as the outcome of the voluntary process of unification that—at least so they thought—was going on in Spain for centuries. A certain form of nationalism meant for them particularism or even provincialism; Krausists, on the contrary, believed in the universal ideas of Modern Age.³ In matters concerning the political regime, some Krausists were inclined to a republican solution: the monarchy had atrophied Spain's process of formation and contributed to its backwardness compared with the more advanced European nations. One has only to read some of the most important political texts of Ortega of the first two decades of the twentieth century, like, for instance,

²It seems that, much later, the Spanish dictator Primo de Rivera adopted some points of Costa's political and social program. Perhaps that is the reason why Ortega adopted a somewhat dubious position regarding Primo de Rivera's dictatorship, to which he was accused at the time to give a mild support. Anyway, the future republican governments of Spain will also adopt significant parts of Costa's ideas.

³One must read the abovementioned booklet of Sanz Del Río, *El Ideal de la Humanidad para la Vida* (in part a paraphrase of some texts from Karl Krause) to be convinced of this. On the relation between universalism and patriotism in the Spanish Krausists, see Serrano (1990: 109–111). On the originality of Sanz del Río's book regarding the accusations of plagiarism, see Rueda Garrido (2015: 617).

“Vieja y Nueva Política” to see that, regardless the sometimes bitter criticisms, Ortega and his generation were indebted to the Krausist efforts to redress Spanish life. To prove the extent of this debt, one could also quote some sentences of an emotional article Ortega wrote in the Madrid newspaper *El Sol*, in December of 1917, by the occasion of the death of the last representative of that Krausist generation that fought for the ideal of the Spanish republic: Gumersindo de Azcárate. Ortega writes, “[...] nothing perhaps shows better what the Spanish future will be than the fact that we, the men of white shield, feel much more closer to the men of 1869 than to the restorationists”⁴ (Ortega y Gasset, 2005: 33).

Why Sanz del Río and his friends chose, among other German philosophical systems, the system of Karl Krause has been much debated. Sanz del Río himself stressed the fact that it was the most close to the Spanish mind and way of feeling, especially in religious matters (Jeschke, 1946: 25 ff.). This book is not the proper place to discuss the Spanish Krausist movement, but one thing seems clear: it inaugurated a huge controversy between Spanish intellectuals about the meaning of the Spanish way of being, about the means to regenerate Spanish public life, and the relations between Spain and European culture. As we will see below and in the next chapters, this controversy, 50 years after the publication of the abovementioned book of Sanz del Río, i.e., during Ortega's youth, was still going on.

2 The Generation of '98

The Krausists failed to redress Spain, although the Krausist program has left some imprints in Ortega's thought, as we will see later. This failure was not only the personal failure of a group of men but also the failure of a whole nation, incapable of redressing itself. The consequence was the crisis of 1898, the loss of the remains of the Spanish empire, the dramatic awakening of the consciousness of Spain's insignificance in the world political affairs. That's the reason why Ortega tries to save the men of '98 from the criticisms addressed to them: they were accused of having done nothing except criticize the state of affairs of their time. However, Ortega asks: when nothing can be done because the soil that would make action fruitful doesn't exist, what else remains except the critical and analytical work that a future generation may perhaps resume, in order to prepare the possibility of a new life (Ortega y Gasset, 2004f: 603)?

The expression “Generation of '98” was probably coined by Ortega himself, in the article “Competencias” written in 1913 and published in *El Imparcial*. At the end of this same year, Azorín, one of the main representatives of that generation, resumed it in “La generación de 1898” (Abellán, 1991: 190). According to José Luis

⁴By “men of white shield,” Ortega means his own generation. The fact that the shield is white, i.e., without an emblem, probably means that this generation is still looking for the way to accomplish its tasks. 1869 is the date of a revolutionary upheaval whose major outcome was to give Spain a liberal constitution.

Abellán, the Generation of '98 may be characterized by two main features: (1) a strong relation with the previous generation, the generation of the "restauración" with which it shared the same concern for a reform of Spanish institutions, which led at least their main representatives—Azorín, Baroja, Unamuno⁵—to share in their youth socialist-oriented ideals; (2) a characteristic aesthetic way of addressing the Spanish problems. Consequently, while the members of the "restauración" wrote textbooks of sociology or political science, the members of the Generation of '98 wrote above all novels and poems (Abellán, 1989: 173). Even if we think that Abellán's diagnosis is a bit exaggerated, nevertheless it agrees with the broad Ortegaian diagnosis of the "insufficiencies" of the Generation of '98; that's one of the reasons why Ortega will replace its cultural program by his own doctrine of "salvation" of the Spanish circumstance.

Ortega's reaction to the ideals of the Generation of '98 was not immediate and seems to have even resisted his first contact with German science in 1905–1906. In August of 1906, he published an article in *El Imparcial*, "Pedagogy of the Landscape," which is in part a reaction to the *Social Pedagogy* of Paul Natorp (Ortega y Gasset, 2004b: 101). Natorp's "wonderful book," as Ortega labels it, lacks the reference to the relation of the individual with the landscape, which is as important for his education as the acquisition of ethical principles. In this article appears the alter ego of Ortega's youth, the mystic Rubín de Cendoya. As Morón Arroyo rightly notes, this alter ego (that was also the pseudonym under which he signed some of his early writings) is not the proof of the eventual relevance of mysticism properly speaking for Ortega, but rather, in the years from 1906 to 1908, the proof of his close relation with the Spanish spirit, at least regarding those features that opposed it the more to the spirit of modern Europe.⁶

On the whole, however, the experience of the social and cultural program of the Generation of '98 seems to have been for Ortega one of deception. In 1909 he wrote a very critical article in *El Imparcial* regarding Miguel de Unamuno's views about the Europeanization program. A close analysis of this article is of great importance for our present purpose. Unamuno had published in the Madrid daily newspaper *ABC* an article against the "Europeanizers" that he just labeled "simple minded people."⁷ Ortega comes again to the problem of the Spanish science, but the problem is actually twofold: there is the problem of the existence in Spain of a scientific research comparable to the research made in the most advanced European countries; but there is also the problem of the scientific study of Spanish culture, namely, its language and its literature. Even in the latter case, he concludes, Spain is far beyond what European nations and particularly Germany are doing. Behind Ortega's rather

⁵ I count Unamuno as a member of the Generation of '98, like Ortega. It seems the issue is debatable. Jeschke (1946: 91 ff.) puts the members of the Generation in two different groups, but doesn't count Unamuno in any of them, calling him a precursor.

⁶ As Morón Arroyo also notes (1968: 72), from 1908 onward the ideas of Rubín de Cendoya, namely, in the field of religion, are those of Hermann Cohen. Cendoya is Ortega's alter ego insofar as, through him, the Spanish philosopher shows his own philosophical evolution.

⁷ The original Spanish word was "papanatas." It can also mean "fools."

fierce irony, we guess the melancholic conclusion that Spanish affairs are more thoroughly addressed by foreigners than by Spaniards.

Ortega's polemic relation to the Generation of '98 will only come to an end by the time of the publication of his first book, the *Mediations on Quixote*, which was the outcome of a long reflection about Spain and the ways of redressing it. In its early form, i.e., most likely in 1911, when Ortega began to assimilate Husserl's phenomenology through the reading of the *Logical Investigations* and was still imbued with the spirit of Neokantian philosophy that had marked his training at Marburg University, this work was entitled "The Agony of the Novel" and was an attempt to explain what Ortega then called the failure of the novels of Pío Baroja, one of the exponents of the Generation of '98.

The evaluation of the meaning of the Generation of '98 intersects with two other problems in the genesis of Ortega's thinking: his Neokantian training in Marburg (where he stayed twice: in 1906 and 1910–1911) and the assimilation of phenomenology and the farewell to Neokantism (which happens in 1912). (This evaluation covers two different phases, the pre-phenomenological and the phenomenological, changing, however, during the transition from the first to the second.) To respect the chronological order, the second and the third items must be postponed until the Part Two of this chapter. For the moment, I will only address the first, i.e., Ortega's evaluation of the Generation of '98, or at least its "hard core": Pío Baroja, Ramiro de Maeztu, and Miguel de Unamuno.

As Ortega says, they all are "barbaric" authors. Strange as it may seem, the word "barbaric" here has a positive connotation, which it does not always retain in Ortega's texts. They may be called barbarians owing to the way they rebel against a cultural, social, and political order that is fundamentally false. This reaction of the Generation of '98 is purely negative, although Ortega acknowledges the positive side of its sincerity: and sincerity is a key concept for understanding much of Ortega's thinking and the way he evaluates a great number of philosophical and cultural trends. One must not forget that he accuses philosophies as different as Neokantism or German Idealism of "insincerity," that is, of projecting their own systematic constructions on the reality they are trying to grasp (Ortega y Gasset, 2009: 147). The Generation of '98, therefore, is sincere: it seeks to dethrone the dishonest dominant culture (i.e., the values prevailing in Spain in the terminal period of the Regeneration), a culture that is mere convention with no roots in life, and it seeks a return to the "natural," to the wild man, as Ortega says, to the "orangutan," which is a part of us all, our animal part. A text by the young Ortega, written in 1912, entitled "Pío Baroja: Anatomy of a Dispersed Soul" (Ortega y Gasset, 2007: 270–294), is essential to understand this problem, because there are very complicated problems here. First, because sincerity, being essential to the philosopher or the artist, cannot be their only virtue; secondly, because our animal part has to be educated and cultivated, the "orangutan" that each of us brings in himself must rise to the awareness of his own humanity. In this form of an opposition between animal life and culture, partly inherited from Georg Simmel, appears the opposition, which we will find again in later phases of Ortega's philosophy, between two egos: the one who strives to be human and the one who keeps below human possibilities.

The Krausist generation was the first to point its finger to the causes of the backwardness of Spain, even before the crisis of 1898. The reason is the long and persistent withdrawal of Spain from the more advanced European nations. The desire—not at all shared by the Generation of '98—to get Spain closer to the level of civilization already attained by France, England, or Germany was very strong since the middle of the nineteenth century in some sectors of the Spanish *intelligentsia*. In "Competencia" (Ortega y Gasset, 2004f: 604) Ortega mentions the fact that the famous Spanish biologist Ramon y Cajal (and Nobel Prize in Medicine) writes in his book *Reglas y Conceptos sobre Investigación Biológica* that the cause of Spain's illness consists in its withdrawal from European science, not in its climate, the poverty of its people, or its bad governments.

In *El Sistema de Ortega y Gasset*, Morón Arroyo makes some interesting remarks on Ortega's interpretation of the meaning of European culture (Morón Arroyo, 1968: 324 ff.).⁸ For the young Ortega, Europe and especially Germany meant science and hygiene, i.e., clarity in the realm of ideas and a healthy lifestyle. In a way close to the one Husserl will adopt later, in the *Crisis of the European Sciences*, Europe means life as it has to be, i.e., life according to reason, and not life as it has always been, according to tradition and long established moral standards. Later, when Ortega comes to a valuation of the Mediterranean spirit, namely, in the *Meditations on Quixote*, he will modify his earlier point of view, but will never give it up completely. If the Mediterranean nations and above all Spain are characterized by a sensibility to luminosity, to the vividness of forms and to the small details that daylight can reveal, the nations of the north have contributed to the European spirit with the no less necessary attention to man's inner life. And at least in his Neokantian phase, Ortega thinks that without this attention—be it conducted by cognitive, ethical, or aesthetic motives—no man can be called cultured, no matter the amount of material progress (above all scientific) he can take profit of. In an article for *El Imparcial*, of 28 October 1907, he writes:

Perhaps no other plainly historical epoch has been so alien as ours to the feeling of and to the concern with culture. Today, civilization, which is a very different thing, is enough for us, and we are satisfied when someone tells us that we go today, from Madrid to Soria, in lesser time than a century before, forgetting that only if we go to Soria to do something more exact, more just or more beautiful than what our grandparents have done, will the fastness of the voyage be humanely praiseworthy. Now, we must recognize that civilization is nothing more than the set of techniques, of the means with which we tame this huge and wild animal of nature to obtain supernatural ends. (Ortega y Gasset, 2004c: 117)

⁸If we accept the general line of Morón Arroyo's arguments, we don't accept the periodization he advances in his book of Ortega's evolution that seems to be very close to that of Ferrater Mora. According to Ferrater Mora, this early phase of Ortega's evolution, corresponding to his journeys to Germany, should be labelled "the objectivistic phase." Anyway, what Morón Arroyo says about the meaning of Europe for Ortega is not affected by his periodization. In the following chapters, we will propose a totally different one.

This small quotation tells us a lot about Ortega's thinking at the time. First of all, it says that Europe is not only the place of scientific reason, but above all the place where science is put at the service of higher-order ends, i.e., ethical ends. Civilization is not downright technical progress, like, for instance, the increase in velocity to overcome the distances. To be a man is not the same as to be a good technician. However, that is not the most important. Ortega's motto in 1914, in the *Meditations on Quixote*, *benefac loco illo quo natus est*, is clearly perceptible in these words of 1907, and it indicates the right path to the understanding of his Europeanization program. Only the sharp opposition at the end, between the "wild animal of nature" and the "supernatural ends," still sounds too much Neokantian.

The next series of three articles in *El Imparcial*, from November and December of 1907, entitled "Teoría del Clasicismo," spreads a new light in the complex problem of the meaning of Europe. Now, Ortega stresses the fact that without Greek civilization, Europe would only be one more cultural variety, like Asia or Africa. But that implies that we know how to look to Greece; not with romantic (or nostalgic) eyes, as if Greece was something belonging to the past. Ortega labels this way of looking "materialistic"; through it Greece appears like something rigid and fixed, immobilized in a distant past. Surprisingly, Ortega says that to put our eyes in Greek civilization is not the same as contemplating the beauties of Greek art. The reason is that art can be looked at from a mere historical point of view, even if some epochs in art history (namely, Greek art) may be seen as a kind of a historical pattern. Only to the extent we share the same ideals of Greek knowledge and ethics can Greece have a historical meaning for us, modern Europeans, or for us who endeavor to attain the level that the advanced modern nations have already attained.⁹

4 Ortega's Early Political Ideas

If one reads the first volume of the critical edition of Ortega's *Complete Works*, one will easily note the great number of newspaper articles dedicated to political matters. If one is not acquainted with Ortega's work and his university career, one could be inclined to think that all those articles were not also the outcome of an intensive philosophical training. Perhaps those articles can be read and understood by the sole reference to the Spanish political and social situation of those days. But one who follows this narrow line of thought will be missing something very important, and this will be the roots and the final purpose of the overall Ortegaian educational program, of which politics alone was just a part. One will not understand why a trained

⁹A very fine analysis of this early Ortegaian theory of culture can be found in San Martín (1998: 39 ff.). Regarding the problem addressed above, the point, at least it seems to me, is the following, from the Neokantian perspective Ortega adopts at the time: when someone looks to Greek art (or to any other artistic work of the past), there is the danger of looking to the final product and not to the process of production. And the last, not the first, is the really important from an anthropological point of view. I will come to this issue later, in the Second Part of this chapter.

Neokantian philosopher that will afterward embrace phenomenology has spent—and will spend in the next few decades—such amount of time writing for newspapers.¹⁰

We have already spoken about the importance of the Krausist movement, and we must come to it again. Perhaps Ortega's reaction to his Neokantian training, at least in political and social matters, was not exclusively motivated by his discovery of the new philosophical continent represented by phenomenology. Some of the ideas he opposes to Neokantian philosophy of culture had roots in the way the Krausist liberal thinkers (and especially Joaquín Costa) looked to the task they intended to carry during the time of the so-called Spanish *Restauración*. Little after Costa's death in 1911, Ortega wrote an interesting article for *El Imparcial* entitled "Observaciones," published in the edition of March 25. One feels immediately that Ortega's presentation of Costa's program aims to show two different albeit complementary things: (1) that Costa and his generation were unable to fulfill what they has promised and (2) that this promise, i.e., the regeneration of Spain, has to be resumed by those who dare to inherit Costa's program. But the way Ortega makes this presentation needs further analysis. Actually, Ortega says that Costa's program looked for a balance between the universal ideals of Enlightenment and the "particularism" of the romantic generation. Of course, as Ortega acknowledges, we need universal concepts to see clearly, i.e., not to get lost in the irrelevant details; but the function of the concept is just to allow us to see better the particular, not to make it disappear. A tendency toward the universal and a tendency toward the particular are like two opposed virtues (Ortega y Gasset, 2004c: 407), which have in themselves the limitation that stems from that virtuosity they have. But Enlightenment and romanticism are just two dogmas.

Since that time Ortega defined himself as a liberal, although his concept of "liberalism" has undergone some changes during his philosophical activity. In the years of his Neokantian training, perhaps under the influence of the social thought of Paul Natorp, he felt himself close to the political program of the Spanish Socialist Workers Party, although to call him a socialist would be greatly exaggerated. Ortega has an "ideal" view of socialism as much as he had an "ideal" view of liberalism, in his early years. In some of his early writings, he explains that an ideal view of reality means to put before the acceptance of what exist the acknowledgment of what ought to be, i.e., moral values. To be a conservative means exactly the opposite, to deny the ethical value of ideals and keep an attachment to old political formulas (Ortega y Gasset, 2004c 143).

Ideals go beyond constitutional rules; they are a kind of norm that urges to go beyond established all norms in search of the realization of justice. In a very Kantian fashion, Ortega argues that no political constitution can allow its own political subversion, but those things can happen any time ideals find no way to accomplish themselves in the constitutional order. As he states, we face in these cases a kind of

¹⁰ In 1917 Ortega will regret that someone with specialized philosophical training finds in Spain so few people with whom to hold a conversation in strict scientific or philosophical terms. Although this might be true, it's only a part of the issue.

agrophoi nomoi, i.e., not written laws that urge us to act in a certain way.¹¹ One may be surprised by seeing Ortega connect liberalism and revolution, a connection that in his mature years he will no longer sustain. But what Ortega means by revolution in his juvenile writings has nothing to do with the twentieth century's notion of revolution, especially the one that takes as it model the Russian Revolution of 1917. For Ortega, liberalism is revolutionary as long as it maintains the faith in the moral ideals it inspired throughout the nineteenth-century history and keeps his distance from parliamentary games and skinny political compromises with conservative policies.

No wonder then that Ortega dares to call himself a liberal socialist. In 1908, he sees no contradiction between these two words. When a new and original right emerges, there should the liberal be; that's according to Ortega the meaning of a liberal political tradition. Now, the beginning of the twentieth century has witnessed the rise of a new idea: the socialist idea (Ortega y Gasset, 2004c: 145); the working-men claim for social justice. Anyway, we must reckon here the presence of a permanent feature of Ortega's social and political thought: the refusal of any kind of utopia. An ideal, he stresses, is not a utopia, nor a dream, but rather the anticipation of a future reality required by moral imperatives.

5 Ortega's Initial Philosophy of Human Life

Julián Marias, a famous disciple and interpreter of Ortega's philosophy, tried to find in Ortega's juvenile essays, namely, those pertaining to his Neokantian phase, the beginnings of his future racio-vitalistic philosophy. Marias mentions, for example, an essay written in 1910, entitled "Adán en el Paraíso," as a proof of that. And in fact, in this essay we can find the sentence "man is the problem of life." Anyway, it's arguable that this sentence means that life is a problem for man. Probably, it doesn't mean the emergence of a philosophy of life in the middle of a Neokantian-inspired philosophical anthropology, but just the other way around: life becomes a problem to itself by means of human life, which means that this one must be raised according to universal norms that give life its full meaning. A philosophy of life, for the mature Ortega, can only be a philosophy of individual life, because only individual life is a radical reality.¹² We will come to this issue again in the next chapters.

¹¹ Ortega is very probably remembering the famous verses of Sophocles' *Antigone* (454–455) where the heroine claims her divine right to bury his brother, against the orders and laws of the city.

¹² Of course, since his juvenile writings Ortega stresses the importance of beginning philosophical efforts by a radical, i.e., systematic reality. After his farewell to Neokantianism and his adhesion to phenomenology, he will resume this idea, and when later he begins criticizing phenomenology one of the reasons he conveys for his criticisms is the lack of systematicity that phenomenology shows. Speaking about the young Ortega, Morón Arroyo seems to say that this concern with systematicity means the transference of the physical-mathematical pattern of rigor to other domains (1968: 91). If this is Morón Arroyo's opinion, it is not totally acceptable, and Ortega's text that Morón Arroyo quotes before making this statement, from the article "Renan," of 1909, contradicts what he says. We discuss this issue in the next lines of our text above.

But Ortega's discovery of this radical reality had what we may perhaps call a preparatory phase during his Neokantian training in Marburg, in which Hermann Cohen's ethics (or Cohen's reinterpretation of Kantian ethics) played an important role. We can see the ongoing discovery of individual life behind utterances and statements inadequate to express its real nature. The article "La teología de Renan," from February 1910, is an interesting example of what we have just said. One cannot say that Ortega simply ignores individual life, but he values it only to the extent that it endeavors to achieve universal and objective goals, i.e., goals that can profit the whole humanity. But in these goals, one attained, the really significant is not the subjective effort that tended toward them, but their objective meaning or validity for all. (We find here the reason why Ferrater Mora labelled the early phase of Ortega's thought the "objective" one.) That is why, Ortega continues to say, men called them divine predicates: justice, for instance, is not the sum total of the just actions performed by men thanks to the inner forces of the human spirit (Ortega y Gasset, 2004f, 334). Only reflection is able to destroy such an illusion, showing that "God" is only the name for transindividual (i.e., objective) validity.

In March 1911, Ortega has changed. It's too risky to say that any early contact with phenomenological philosophy (perhaps the reading of the *Logical Investigations*) was the cause of this change. The fact is that in an article about the political situation in Spain and the legacy of Joaquín Costa's politics, Ortega comes to take some distance regarding the worldview of the Enlightenment and its extension in the nineteenth-century historicism; this, Ortega claims, allows us to see from a distance the general course of the historical events, but is unable to take hold of the individual life of each collectivity. Moreover, the nineteenth-century historicism is the creator of the idea of progress, i.e., the idea that each people must go through the same path and the same stages in order to attain a universal goal (Ortega y Gasset, 2004e: 407).

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