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# Imitation and Experience

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PART ONE

THE LINGUISTIC TURN AND LIFE EXPERIENCE

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THE LINGUISTIC UNIVERSAL

Only science exists for what is universal, but a universal can be one of two things: concrete or abstract. The linguistic universal is necessarily an *abstract universal*,<sup>1</sup> because common names in our language always refer to the generic *eidos* and never to individual substances. If we say (if we think) the nouns “table” or “tree,” we say and think “a table in general,” “the idea of a tree,” abstract universal essences, the *eidos* of a table or a tree, rather than a particular table or a specific tree. This abstraction of essence has always posed major difficulties for the speaking subject faced with the need to use determiners like *this* tree or *that* table (the Aristotelian “*tode ti*”), a situation that is often accompanied by extra-linguistic support, such as the act of pointing or looking at the designated object. Language in and of itself lacks a spatio-temporal context and, nevertheless, truth always depends on context. This can be

demonstrated with the simple proposition “it’s raining today,” which is true one day and false the next. The abstract nature of a linguistic universal conditions the equally abstract nature of philosophical thought, which, for its part, finds in language an extremely efficient instrument for meeting its requirements of necessity and precision. For this philosophy, the experienced reality of the concrete has always constituted a colossal problem. Because reasoning develops as a syllogism of abstract universals (names and definitions and connections between subject and predicate), the main task of philosophy has been to explain how to transmute what is concrete in experience into material suitable for reasoning. To this end, intuition and sensation, which experience the concrete, are turned into instruments for a process of abstraction in which passive intellect, though feeling the individual, is able to grasp the universal, “*sense-perception of man, but not of the man Callias.*”

One of the objectives of the present study is to develop, within the general theory of imitation, a philosophy of the example understood as an individual case that contains a universal law; in short, as a *concrete universal*. Insofar as it is universal, it shares in the general legality, yet this legality is concrete, and can consequently be intuited and grasped by desire. The imitation of the example is therefore set in opposition to the abstract universal of language. Despite philosophy’s critical attack on traditional metaphysics throughout the entire twentieth century, philosophical thought has remained within the linguistic paradigm, becoming widespread —by way of an odd turn— in all contemporary philosophy. As a result, the theory of imitation has still not found a suitable intellectual context in which it can be made fully intelligible.

Since its very beginning with Parmenides, philosophy has been founded on the fundamental *identity* between thinking and being, on the axiomatic assumption that the structure of reality must correspond to the structure of human thought. Although knowledge is defined as the adaptation of thought to a thing, in reality the same concept of thing is already provided by the structure of thought and, consequently, the adaptation of thought to the thing assumes a previous adaptation of the thing to the thought. The subject only considers real what is thinkable, and for him, only the rational is real, although not everything that is rational is actually real (herein lies the possibility). Therefore, the identity between thinking and being is ultimately resolved with a preeminence of the identifying thinking of the subject, of the structure of subjective thought, and this is as valid for philosophical idealism as it is for realism.

Since Parmenides the structure of thought is and has always been a linguistic structure. This does not mean that philosophy reveals itself as a philosophy of language, but much to the contrary. Language in itself has not been a philosophical subject until recently and, nevertheless, it is the ether of philosophy, the air that sustains its flight. Language structures and categorizes thought; thinking is reasoning syntactically with words: naming, defining, classifying and arguing. While only what can be thought is real, it is equally true that only what can be expressed in words can be thought. If something cannot be expressed in words, if it cannot be said or spoken, because it is *unsayable* or *ineffable*, it cannot be thought and, if it cannot be thought, it consequently follows that it is not real. The Greek word “*logos*” extends its semantic field to include thought, language, and reality all at once, and expresses this essential agreement in the philosophy of identity between “reason,” “what is said,” and

“what is.” The identity between thinking and being, mentioned above, appears as a *linguistic* identity.

However, in one way or the other, twentieth century thought as a whole is a vast refutation and criticism of the traditional philosophy of identity. With growing audacity, the criticism has become so large that it has taken on monumental proportions: first, the narrowness and reductionism of nineteenth century positivism and psychologism is condemned; then, it is modernity from Descartes onward that the new philosophical movements attempt to leave behind; finally, a few thinkers proclaim the destruction of the entire history of Western metaphysics because, underlying all the varieties of systems and schools of thought, the same foundation remained – Platonism, metaphysics of presence or identity, the subject-object framework, etc. – that would now be revealed as being inadequate or inauthentic. Criticizing the philosophy of identity is, almost without exception, the point of departure for every single contemporary philosophical trend, all of which strive to point out solutions to this general crisis. Phenomenology, hermeneutics, critical theory, analytical philosophy, structuralism, communicative action, and pragmatism propose, each in its own way, new paradigms set in opposition to the paradigm of the metaphysical tradition, a tradition extending from Parmenides to logical positivism. Every one of these movements offers an original and new perspective, but all of them agree on one common, fundamental assumption: all are based on the *discovery of the primary and constitutive nature of non-formalized, common or natural language*. They discover that this language has several characteristics –it is preexistent, unconscious, historical, social and relative– which makes it a particularly suitable instrument for moving beyond the assumptions in the philosophy of identity. Hence the so-called “linguistic turn” used by all of the main movements, understood here as the unanimous acceptance by twentieth century schools and doctrines of the first and fundamental condition of a common language preexistent to the formalized language of science and metaphysics.

If the above is true, it follows that the extensive criticism of the philosophy of linguistic identity launched by contemporary thought has entirely and definitively detached itself from the old axiom of identity. However, in doing so with the help of natural language, having agreed on its essentially constitutive nature, at no time has it left behind the traditional linguistic paradigm. And, consequently, it could be said – at least for our purposes here – that the aforementioned criticism, despite its unquestionable scope, has not explored an even more radical avenue. In other words, *the new solutions to the crisis of traditional philosophy remain within the tradition*. This would be far from being censurable in itself if it were not the case that this tradition, abstract-linguistic in nature, has invariably eliminated –for the reasons expressed above – the very possibility of a theory on the concrete universal.

All the same, in the wake of the research of Dilthey, as an alternative solution to the bankruptcy of philosophy, some thinkers have suggested the avenue of a *new way of thinking*, equally different from identity and from language. Outstanding among them for the wealth and variety of his philosophical experience is Ortega y Gasset, who also remains, at least in his official doctrine, within the traditional linguistic paradigm, upon which he constructs his original approach, although he does seem to intuit other ways of thinking on some

occasions. Indeed, at one point Ortega suggests restoring bygone ways of thinking and, among others, mentions the knowledge of *life experience*. Taking this suggestion as a point of departure, life experience will be provisionally defined as the repertory of *concrete* examples and counter-examples accumulated from a subject's experience throughout time, examples and counter-examples that the subject imitates in order to react to new situations. Finally, it will be maintained that in life experience exists the possibility for an innovative thinking, based on the imitation of an example, which, in its metaphysical aspect, leads to the idea of a concrete universal.

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THE HEGEMONY OF THE LINGUISTIC TURN IN CONTEMPORARY THOUGHT

During the last half of the nineteenth century the doctrine of positivism reached its peak. In the wake of the Hegelian tide of the first half of the century, coinciding with the Second Industrial Revolution and colonialism, an imperialist development of positive sciences took place in Europe. The concept of truth was associated with the method of empirical sciences. The only things worthy of being called real are those that can be declared so by the tribunal of the senses: observable and verifiable facts. There are sensory phenomena that can be perceived from external experience and psychological phenomena that can be perceived from internal experience. Consequently, only two areas of knowledge are acknowledged: natural sciences for external experience – with the help of exact sciences – and descriptive psychology for internal experience. The objective of both is to formulate laws that explain the repetitions of natural phenomena, so that these phenomena are understood in the present and, at the same time, are predictable in terms of their future behavior. In scientific ideology, philosophy is subjugated and its function reduced to researching the foundations of the different sciences –*ancilla scientiae*– in an attempt to construct the positivist ideal of a unified science.

In the wake of an initially naïve positivism, lacking any criticism of its own method, a new breed of positivism was developed in Germany and the Anglo-Saxon world which was more aware of the philosophical problem posed by the foundations of science. In Germany, Cohen and Natorp's Neo-Kantianism declared a return to critical Kantian philosophy and in particular to the *Critique of Pure Reason* as a sound foundation upon which to attempt to move beyond Hegel's speculative idealism. In England, the advances in *a priori* formal logic – evident in *Principia Mathematica* by Whitehead and Russell (1910-13) – once again raise the question of the link between *a priori* logic, whose scientific legitimacy had been proven, and the empirical facts of positivism. Russell's solution would be "the Philosophy of Logical Atomism" (lectures given in 1918), which proposes the breaking down, by way of a logical analysis of language, of the molecular or complex propositions of ordinary language into simple or atomic propositions. If an ideal or perfect logical language could be created, the atomic propositions would correspond, in the logical order, with the "facts" or

“atoms” in the empirical factual order, and this would be a language whose syntax would show plainly the logical structure of the facts. The early Wittgenstein, for his part, in his *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus* (1921) on the subject of the relationships between *a priori* logical propositions (which don’t say anything but only *demonstrate*) and the real world of atomic facts, introduces his picture theory (*Bild*). And while Russell and Wittgenstein pondered this identity between logic and physics from the perspective of *a priori* logic, the “logical positivism” of the Vienna Circle situated itself in *a posteriori* reality from the start, adopting Wittgenstein’s assertion that all logic is made up of tautologies or contradictions, and deducing from this that only empirical science offers true knowledge. The logic that they used was no longer the *pure* logic of Russell’s ideal or perfect language, but an *applied* logic, that is, logic as an instrument for analyzing propositions with the aim of reducing them to empirical or formal propositions:

“To pursue philosophy can only be to clarify the concepts and sentences of science by logical analysis. The instrument for this is the new logic.”<sup>2</sup>

Logical atomism and logical positivism remain within in the strictest positivist ideology to the extent that they do not acknowledge an area belonging to philosophy that is separate from the natural sciences and they consider philosophy to be merely auxiliary to these sciences. On the other hand, at the turn of the century phenomenology emerged with extraordinary force with the aim of restoring the dignity of philosophy as well as claiming its own primary status. Although it is true that both logical atomism-positivism and phenomenology attempt to move beyond nineteenth century psychologism and to assert, with the help of logic and mathematics, the supra-psychological objectivity of certain entities (the mathematical number, for example), there is nevertheless a difference between them that separates them decisively: positivists are *monists* because they maintain that there is only one world, the world of positive facts, which logic describes or reflects in its syntax, while Husserl defines a monumental *dualism* in imposing a radical distinction between the descriptive empirical sciences and the pure, *a priori* logic that he studies. The comparison between these two theoretical and real categories is at the heart of *Logical Investigations* (1901-1902) and is the very point of departure in *Ideas* (1913), in which Husserl distinguishes between the “natural attitude” of man, which, when approaching phenomena, produces the empirical sciences (positivism), and the philosophical attitude or pure phenomenology, which, by way of certain “reductions” of the natural phenomenon, arrives at the transcendental purity of ideal or eidetic essences. The dualism of phenomenology represents a first move beyond nineteenth century positivism in the sense that it recognizes for philosophy its own object of knowledge: essences or ideas, autonomous and superior to the phenomena investigated by science.

This first step taken by phenomenology would be the beginning of a major movement of general criticism of the previous state of philosophy during positivism and of the truth paradigm in the empirical sciences, which would largely reiterate Romanticism’s criticism of the philosophy of the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment introduced a concept of universal-abstract rationality, *a priori*, necessary, ahistorical, suitable for a Nature conceived as a machine.<sup>3</sup> Romanticism conceives of Nature as a living, organic being, and

advocates a synthetic rationality instead of a dissecting analysis, or simply dispenses with reason in favor of other faculties like imagination, intuition or feeling, exalting all that the assumptions of the Enlightenment had swept aside: the individual, his story, the yearning for the Absolute and the Infinite, etc. Some of these subjects would be taken up again in the extensive criticism of positivism during the twentieth century. Two major arguments would be put forward against the laws of the sciences.

The *first* is that the general, typical laws of the sciences are suitable for describing repetitive and foreseeable phenomena of physical or biological Nature, but they cannot do justice to human beings because humans are endowed with freedom, which makes their behavior essentially unpredictable, and because the dignity of the individual –whose existence is a whole universe in itself– cannot be reduced to the abstraction of a general law. The *second* argument is directed against the claim of a “value-free” science, which could achieve objectivity without the presence of any personal or subjective elements. A whole new discipline, the Sociology of Knowledge,<sup>4</sup> is based on the discovery of a cognitive instance that precedes scientific knowledge –beliefs, pre-understanding, prejudices– whereby society itself, through language and mental habits, shapes and defines the horizon of understanding beforehand. Within this second argument should be situated the assertion that there exists a prior instance, not only cognitive but also volitional, inherent to science. As such, it is not only a knowledge but also a will that precedes science. This is imagined to be a neutral and objective knowledge, independent of the will of the individual or of a class. Yet in reality this supposed objective neutrality conceals within it an interest of its own, whether the pragmatic interest of an instrumental intelligence, or the interest of a conservative bourgeoisie striving to maintain an unjust social order.

The criticism of nineteenth century positivism will almost simultaneously, in a more or less conscious way, lead to a criticism, firstly, of European modernity, and subsequently, of the whole philosophical tradition since the Greeks. Some of the arguments directed against science as a paradigm of thought would likewise be applied to modern subjectivism or the entire history of metaphysics, as though it were understood that, in the end, Platonic-Aristotelian metaphysics has never been anything other than a theoretical projection of scientific pragmatism. In contrast with Heidegger, who from the first page of his *Being and Time* sets out to argue a gigantomachy against all the previous metaphysics and declares the necessary destruction of metaphysics as a first step towards an authentic way of thinking, Ortega y Gasset, on the other hand, regarding the criticism of the philosophy that had come before him, progresses through the successive stages *in* a process of recognition of the dimension of the crisis. And because of this, it is worthwhile to offer at least a general outline of this evolution of the Spanish philosopher in order to illustrate the extension of the philosophical period that *is* to be left behind.

When Ortega began writing at the beginning of the twentieth century, he was a perfect representative of the Marburg School’s Neo-Kantian positivism and supported the relevance of the following equation: culture=science=Enlightenment=Classicism=Europe. However, this Ortega was long gone by 1914 when, on his return from his second trip to Germany to study phenomenology, he began to rationalize his spiritual distancing from the Neo-

Kantianism of his youth. In *Meditations on Quixote* (1914), he no longer proposes German science as the only solution for a defective Latinism; instead, his slogan for the new period is the *integration* between science and life. This integration gives rise to a thought as different from Greek-medieval realism as it is from modern idealism: revealed in this is how moving beyond Kantian positivism pushed Ortega, as though without realizing, to consider the beginning of a new period in philosophy. Ortega says in 1915: “It should surprise no one when I say that the totality of the sciences, the *integrum* of European scientific knowledge, is today undergoing the deepest of crises (...) On occasion I even think that, quite probably, a change of orientation comparable only to what took place during the Renaissance has already begun to take place in the present state of mind.”<sup>5</sup> As early as 1916 he was able to disassociate himself from Modernity, describing himself in the title of a well-known article, “Nada moderno y muy siglo XX.” (In English this means: “Not at all modern, but very twentieth century.”) A few years later, he would affirm in *The Modern Theme* that his generation “is witnessing the most radical crisis in modern history” and he again refers to “the imperative of integrity” between Socrates (reason) and Don Juan (life), i.e., vital reason.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, in his subsequent writing Ortega increasingly emphasizes one of the two elements of integration, dramatic and irrational life, at the expense of the rational element. This is because reason, from a vital perspective, serves as just one interpretation of the world among others, and does not differ much from poetry.<sup>7</sup> Even the term “integration,” previously meaning the conciliation and synthesis between the two elements, is now being used to express the subordination of reason to life’s most radical truth: “Scientific truth is exact, but it is incomplete and penultimate; it is of necessity embedded in another kind of truth, complete and ultimate, although inexact, which could be called ‘myth.’ Scientific truth floats, then, in mythology; and science itself, as a whole, is a myth, the admirable European myth.”<sup>8</sup>

It’s clear that, if one cultural era is ending and another beginning, the true dimension of the crisis will depend on the extension given to the period left behind, and on this point Ortega demonstrates a continuing ambiguity. The main point on which he most frequently elaborates is the advent, after realism and idealism, of a new stage that would be a synthesis of the two or, on other occasions, a combination of the second —reason and subject— and the discovered principle of life. From this perspective, his doctrine would be a new form of rationality, and to describe it he tends to associate the noun “reason” with a wide variety of adjectives: *vital* reason, *historical* reason, *narrative* reason, *etymological* reason; at other times he speaks not of reason but of philosophy; *dialectical* philosophy, philosophy as the *history of philosophy*.<sup>9</sup>

Although this is, as mentioned above, his main point, placed alongside it is another, bolder point about the end of reason and philosophy, in which there is a questioning of the philosophical tradition *in toto* and in itself. Indeed, around 1932 Ortega announced a second navigation in his philosophical journey and from that point on, he focuses much more on the principle of life as radical reality.<sup>10</sup> If, for life, reason and science are only one of the possible interpretations of the world and, in any case, all of the interpretations are secondary and derived from radical reality, the most important consequence that follows is that it seems irrelevant to divide the history of philosophy as tends to be done, first into realism and then into idealism, because each of these

merely constitute periods within an interpretation that is in itself of a second order and, moreover, in crisis. From this it likewise follows that the entire history of metaphysics, despite its modulations, rests on the same foundation and can therefore be described uniformly by a single, albeit changeable, term: *knowledge*, Eleatic *naturalism*, or simply, *philosophy*. The entire past of philosophical tradition is thus viewed as a unit that must be moved beyond, and what is announced is no longer the end of modernity and idealism, or the end of the whole philosophical era including realism and idealism with the beginning of a new philosophical period, but rather the *end of philosophy* as a way of thinking.

Ortega's later thought floats in the ambiguity toward the magnitude of the cultural collapse alluded to above.<sup>11</sup> Having mentioned the two major possibilities encompassed in Ortega's ambiguity—a new phase of philosophy or a new non-philosophical way of thinking—we may now turn to the rest of the examination in this chapter. According to the *first possibility*, a new philosophical period is initiated. The positions of thinkers differ about whether the new philosophy proposed maintains the scientific paradigm, albeit a reformed science adapted to the new era (1), or on the contrary, philosophy has to free itself definitively from the scientific paradigm (2). In any case, according to the thesis of this essay, all of the proposed solutions to the crisis of philosophy are one, insofar as they all share the postulate of the symbolic-constitutive quality of natural or non-formalized language, which means that the solutions to the crisis prolong the linguistic tradition of the previous history of philosophy from which they seek to escape (3). As this context is unsuitable for a general theory of imitation, it will be necessary in the following section to explore the *second possibility*, according to which, having rejected abstract reason, new ways of thinking in a non-linguistic context must be attempted.

1. Trying to remain within science, but a new science. Science is and will always be a reliable and sure method of obtaining knowledge about Nature. It is possible that science and the scientific method will no longer be the exclusive model for all thinking, that truth will not be conceived only as reliability and certainty, that whatever does not strictly fit in with the assumptions of scientific research will no longer be judged to be superstition or false knowledge, and that other legitimate ways of thinking can be imagined, ways which differ from scientific thinking and are recognized as possessing or searching for authentic knowledge. In any case, despite having lost the exclusivity of all thinking, scientific activity continues with growing success and has a privilege that all the other ways of thinking long for and never achieve: its wondrous discoveries and contributions, debated by the scientific community, that everyone experiences on a daily basis.

Science's prestige is so great, its identification with true learning and knowledge so complete, that many of the most important attempts at solutions to the crisis, even while criticizing the previous positivism, retain the term of science for the new thinking. The most influential and enduring of these attempts is one carried out by Dilthey in his book dating from 1883, *Introduction to the Human Sciences: An Attempt to Lay a Foundation for the Study of Society and History*, the first of two volumes, ultimately left unfinished. In this book he contrasted human and natural sciences and proposed a foundation for the human sciences, not metaphysical but rather gnoseological, based on the



phenomena of awareness. Years later, at the heart of the Neo-Kantian Baden School, following Kant who, in his first two critiques distinguished between Nature and freedom, and in other works between Nature and History, Windelband and Rickert put forward two autonomous planes or levels of reality, identifying a different method and special type of science for each. Nature is characterized by the deterministic repetition of phenomena, but what characterizes man lies in his freedom, history, and time. While the natural sciences are suitable for studying the repetitive phenomena of Nature, these sciences lack an appropriate method for approaching the unrepeatable and singular phenomena of man. Therefore, along with the natural sciences, we must admit the epistemological status of “idiographic sciences” according to Windelband. Rickert calls them “historical cultural sciences” and characterizes them as always containing a reference to values that are neither real – like Nature – nor unreal.

In the Baden School, human or cultural sciences can be as empirical and susceptible to systematic regulation as natural sciences, the pursuit of which is mainly entrusted to jurists, historians, and philologists. Therefore, although they have different methods and aims, human sciences are scientific in the sense that they pursue true, reliable, and verifiable knowledge. Philosophy, while no longer the queen of sciences or the tribunal of reason as in days gone by, is elevated beyond the status of being merely the foundation of the natural sciences and finds an object in a region of being distinct from Nature: man. All of the philosophical attempts proposing a new science as a solution retain this term or the term “reason” in order to highlight, with greater or lesser intensity, the assumption of an enlightened scientific project, rescuing it from the reductionism to which it was subjected by the positivist method: such is the case, for example, of strict science (Husserl), social science with reference to values (Max Weber), or communicative rationality (Habermas).

2. Philosophy emancipated from science. The majority of philosophical movements have definitively abandoned the claim to science, which they consider to be a prolongation and epitome of the entire system of classical metaphysics. This metaphysics, in all of its changing manifestations throughout history, always presents the same underlying structure: the *subject-object* relationship, the identity of thinking (subject) and being (object). But the latest philosophy discovers new possibilities for going beyond the traditional philosophy of identity and proposes –moving beyond the object-subject relationship in every way– other alternative non-identity metaphysics, or perhaps even post-metaphysical thought. A common argument of the new movements runs as follows: the subject and object in traditional metaphysics were thought of spatially on the pattern of the thing and thus the subject or *res cogitans* was as much a thing as the object or *res extensa*; but man, a privileged being, is fundamentally *time*, non-space, and so everything, including objects, would be configured in accordance with the temporality of the subject. Therefore ahistorical science must be a secondary, derivative product of a previous historicity which only philosophy could demonstrate. Another of their arguments is that the subject-object model in traditional metaphysics seems to be unaware that a subject’s other is not always an object, but is rather, sometimes, and perhaps significantly, another human subject, an *ethical other*. Yet another argument is that the object, Nature, should not be considered a

mechanical and inert extension, an infinite depository of energy and beings at the service of an egocentric and dominating man, as it is also a living, finite organism like the subject which, also like the latter, cannot be used as an instrument. Metaphysics currently approaches ethics in this way because the traditional process of knowledge of an object now falls upon a living being, and the best way of understanding what is living does not entail applying the categories of pure reason to it, but rather applying an ethical attitude of love and responsibility. A form of rationality, the true foundations of which had been lost since Antiquity, is thus recovered: *argumentative rhetoric*, suitable for dealing with contingent and merely possible human things, successfully replacing the necessary-logical reason of subject-object metaphysics.

And above all, regarding what has been taken from the philosophy of identity, contemporary philosophy abandons the assumption of identity, the  $A=A$ , which, being based on a rational-logical equality between being and thinking, effectively dismissed as irrational, barbarous, and inhuman anything that proved to be in disagreement with it. In contrast, the new movements exalt *difference* and argue, for example, that in the subject-object relationship, the subject has always been male, adult, bourgeois, European, white, and heterosexual. The woman, the child, the proletariat, the colonized native, dissidences of the metaphysical subject, equated as mere objects in the previous tradition, now take on a central position precisely because of the decentralization of the subject. It is not a question of placing difference at the level of the being, but rather, the being is difference. The margins and the marginalized, left out of identity, blow it up into fragments, because fragmentation acquires an unexpected legitimacy. The old values of metaphysics – certainty, objectivity, precision – lose validity; the well-defined boundaries of old that separated scientific texts from literary texts vanish. The claim of objective knowledge dissolves in rhetoric and persuasion, not entirely different from poetry, and it is argued that scientific doctrine is just another literary genre, that truth is a trope. *Logos* is immersed in myth. *Esthetics* and the idea of truth in art is the door at which many of the contemporary movements arrive to redeem themselves from the end of philosophy. In direct connection with this would be the current prominence of the *game* as a model for an emancipated philosophical thinking and the relativization of reality in its status of *simulacrum*.

3. Unity of all solutions. Western metaphysics, which rested on the subject-object structure, entered a crisis with nineteenth century positivism. Only the unbiased scientist was acknowledged as subject and only the phenomena of perceivable experience were acknowledged as object. Truth was understood as correspondence or adaptation —and ultimately, identification— between subject and object. Coinciding with certain historical events, awareness of the crisis of the validity of this classical-modern paradigm spread quickly at the beginning of the twentieth century and resolving the crisis became a priority among the philosophical movements and schools of thought of the era, with hardly an appreciable exception. Indeed, the new thought tested a wide variety of solutions to the crisis that were based on criticizing this basic structure and proposing a reconsideration of the concept of subject or object or a simultaneous abandonment of both. It is now worth asking whether all of these solutions, granted their diversity, have some common element uniting

them, whether some idea or assumption prevails among all of these many movements and schools that seek to offer an alternative to the theoretical model in crisis.

The schools and movements of contemporary philosophy compete amongst themselves in an effort to assert their various approaches. However, despite the huge differences separating them, all of them share in common the discovery of the constitutive and fundamental quality of natural, non-formalized language. Natural language exhibits two properties: it is, on the one hand, a typically social and historical creation, a spontaneous formation in a concrete society that is useful for the interactions between the people who comprise this society; yet, on the other hand, language is the most personal possession of the individual, because, by way of language, individuals become aware of reality and of themselves. With language all society is present in our most private and solitary meditations, and symbolic elements of a linguistic nature are even in the structure of sensory perception; in this sense there is a certain dose of alienation, because in reality, there **is** no thought that is not formulated with borrowed words that are never truly one's own. Yet, at the same time, language is essential for the most personal, authentic, and enduring functions of man, because language is the element of awareness, of perception, and affection. Before thinking about language it must be acknowledged that it is language that allows us to think, or, in other words, man does not know the world, but rather he knows in a linguistic world and from the perspective of a linguistic world. Language provides prior, unconscious evidence, which, in illuminating reality, defining it and interpreting it, is the foundation for later understanding, and orients our perceptions and feelings. The idea which, to varying degrees, underlies the perspectives of the schools and movements of the twentieth century could be expressed as follows: all of the representations of our awareness, from the most mundane and common to the most scientific and technical, depend on a *prior mental constellation of symbolic, unconscious, historical evidence of social origin that comes with the ordinary use of natural language*. In other words, what is known depends on what is expected, what we see on what is obvious, judgment on prejudice, knowledge on prior acknowledgement, science on belief.

The recognition of the constitutive metaphysical nature of natural language is the delta into which three previous traditions flow, traditions that are clearly definable with respect to language: first, the German-metaphysical tradition, which begins with the studies of the language of Romanticism (Herder, Hamann, and Humboldt), and which, through Dilthey, is continued in Heidegger and Gadamer's hermeneutic school of thought; second, the Anglo-Saxon/analytical tradition, which, originating in the work of Frege, continues with Russell's mathematical-logical research and the works of Wittgenstein – the bridge between Russell and logical positivism – and culminating, through Moore's influence, in the analytical philosophy of Oxford (Ryle, Austin, Strawson), which, in the decades following World War II, was the only academic philosophy in the United Kingdom and the United States (Quine, Davidson, Serale, Putnam, Rorty); and third, the semiotic-linguistic tradition in France, originating in Saussure's posthumous courses and a direct influence on the structuralism of Lévi-Strauss and Jakobson, emerging in the sixties with the work of Barthes, Foucault and Derrida, all of whom attempt to argue against

and deconstruct the metaphysical element inherent in language. The three traditions mentioned, with their diverse cultural and philosophical origins, nevertheless coincide in simultaneously positing the new theory of the fundamental-ontological power of ordinary, everyday language, although each tradition will name this intuition in its own way: collective consciousness, ideology, the generalized other, pre-understanding, beliefs, tradition, or discourse, among others.

The convergence of three broad traditions, unknown to one another, on the same idea or assumption suggests that all three found genuine potential and theoretical power in this idea during a time when the scientific-metaphysical paradigm lacked validity. The reason for its success lies in the effectiveness that it demonstrates in moving beyond or leaving behind the criticized subject-object relationship and suggesting basic elements for a new paradigm based on the constitutive nature of natural language. This new paradigm, with its inherent acknowledgement of a “prior mental constellation of symbolic, unconscious, historical evidence of social origin that comes from the ordinary use of natural language,” dissolves the subject-object relationship into a reality that transcends both of them: the counterposition of awareness and positive-empirical objectivity is abandoned, replaced by a condensation of the two in a prior, superior instance. Awareness returns to a pre-subjective state (or perhaps jumps to a post-subjective one), where the object is also not susceptible to an exact truth, because the traditional concept of truth (correspondence between the thought and the thing) is transformed into a multiple, living, mobile, and relativist concept, in which every perspective shows one angle of the inexhaustible wealth of truth.

This supra-subjective, supra-objective transcendence inspires all of the new ways of thinking in one way or another, unifying them in a common paradigm. Indeed, the current importance of *time* and *history* is in keeping with the historical, changing, and evolutionary nature of a common language. Because common language is a social, collective creation, the current relevance of the question of the *other* is explained as well as the influence of the *ethics* of the other and of undistorted *social communication*, an issue that has always been considered in the context of language. Associated with this, the linguistic nature of the new directions concerning *rhetoric* and *pragmatics* is clear; although pragmatics attempts to emphasize extra-linguistic elements, these elements are always considered in connection with the use of language, which is ultimately the main focus. In connection with pragmatics, naturally accommodated within the same language is the theory of *Sprachspiele*, language games, which contrasts with the claim of an exact language and complements the linguistic syntax and semantics of the scientific model with a new breed of linguistic pragmatics. The convergence of philosophy and *literature* demonstrates the linguistic nature of this attempt, as does the association of identity metaphysics with *difference* by French authors, wherein this difference arises and is maintained in the system of signs and language (in Saussure’s *Course*). Moreover, the arbitrary nature of the linguistic sign, as well as the acknowledgement of the plurality of languages and their evolution over time, despite its unrestricted atemporal-ontological function for each individual awareness —i.e., the fact that our most basic ontological foundation is at the

same time a social and historical product— confirms, on a theoretical level, the cultural relativism that sets the tone for our era.

We must therefore extend Rorty's well-known program on the "linguistic turn," initially limited only to analytical philosophy, to all contemporary philosophy.<sup>12</sup> The turn provokes a definitive departure from the philosophical principle of identity between thinking and being as well as from the traditional subject-object relationship. Herein lies the great originality of twentieth century thought, in that it moves beyond the philosophy of identity by recognizing a fundamental metaphysical moment in the learning and use of ordinary everyday language. In a certain sense, contemporary philosophy is ultimately a *philosophy of language*, because, by exploring non-formalized language, it has acknowledged the linguistic nature of being and thinking. Although it is true that, as noted earlier, the philosophy of identity, from Aristotle to early Wittgenstein, was also based on the linguistic structure of identity between being and thinking, the language that established identity in this philosophy was formalized (logical or scientific) language, that is, an artificial language situated beyond spatio-temporal limits, which sought to express an eternal and objective truth. Consequently, the difference between the philosophical tradition and the new, contemporary movements does not stem from the fact that one operates within a linguistic structure and the other does not, because both do so; rather, the difference lies in the fact that the first bases its principle of identity on formalized language whereas the second attempts to go beyond the principle of identity, which is in crisis, by way of a turn towards natural non-formalized language. And in this effort to move beyond the thought, it looks towards the essence of language, an essence that had remained hidden throughout the tradition. If a reflection on language is almost unheard of in the history of metaphysics, and, in contrast, during the twentieth century there is hardly a philosophical reflection that does not have to do with language in some way, this is largely due to the fact that the assumption of the identity between being and thinking —never doubted or questioned, a synonym for rationality— was based on the linguistic nature of this identity. The criticism of this identity with the help of natural language compelled us to ponder the true function of language.

In short, the linguistic turn is a turn of awareness, not of essence, which has not changed before or since. And in the solutions to the crisis can be seen, without diminishing their originality in any way, a continuity of the linguistic tradition that on this point does not contradict that tradition, but rather, on the contrary, prolongs and confirms it. In Greco-Roman metaphysics, dialectical-rhetorical language prevailed; in the Middle Ages, it was scholastic-logical language; in the Modern Age, the mathematical language of natural sciences; and now, in postmodernism, natural non-formalized language. If, as Heidegger says, the culture of an era depends on a decision about the essence of truth, our era has not changed the decision inherited from the previous era on a fundamental point, the centrality of language, which is the same as saying the preeminence given to abstract thinking.

THE POSSIBILITY OF A NON-LINGUISTIC CONTEXT:  
THE NEW WAYS OF THINKING AND LIFE EXPERIENCE

The general situation of philosophy today is also unfavorable, in principle, for a theory of imitation maintained in an abstract linguistic tradition that does not admit non-representative concrete thinking without facing major difficulties. Nevertheless, the abandonment of the scientific logical paradigm as a model of thinking removes a centuries-old obstacle to the perception of the concrete, and the attempts of new philosophical paths taken in our time encourage new possibilities, particularly those paths that recover for philosophy subjects like the truth of art and beauty, the emancipating Eros, or the ethical substance of metaphysics. Despite the linguistic root of the solutions, some of them contribute to creating a more favorable *context* for a theory of imitation, in which this theory could finally prove intelligible, compensating for the enduring incomprehension that it has suffered on the part of the dominant conceptual-linguistic mode of thinking. It is still surprising to note the clear contrast between the universality and general acceptance of the power of the phenomenon of imitation and the example in all aspects of life and all areas of knowledge, on the one hand, and the complete absence in the history of thought of a unifying theorization of this phenomenon on the other. The long-repressed theory now finds, after the breakdown of the old paradigm, a more opportune moment that allows us to meditate on the seriousness of the example and imitation as primordial ways of being and thinking.

Earlier I made reference to the ambiguity in the later works of Ortega y Gasset, which left two contrasting possibilities open for the role of philosophy in the new era. According to the first, a *new stage in the history of philosophy* was beginning, a new science or a philosophy emancipated from science. This has already been examined above<sup>13</sup> and the conclusion was that all philosophical movements fall into or stay within the linguistic paradigm of tradition; we must therefore now turn to the second possibility, hinted at in several places, referring to the *end of philosophy*. Indeed, the intuition, expressed several times by Ortega, that the entire history of philosophy shares the same principle, which he now felt to be lacking in veracity, raised the question in his mind of *other ways of thinking* distinct from philosophy.

This question of other ways of thinking had been taken up by Dilthey, who, in turn, was inspired by the Hegelian theory of absolute spirit. Absolute spirit includes art, religion and philosophy, which means that Hegel puts art and religion on the same plane as philosophy and considers the three to be the highest manifestations of the human-divine spirit, thereby justifying a philosophy of art as well as a philosophy of religion. Similarly, with the term "human sciences" Dilthey basically designated the *Weltanschauung* ("worldviews") on religion, poetry, and metaphysics (cf. the essay published in 1911 *Types of Worldview and Their Development in Metaphysical Systems*.) With his essays Dilthey creates an intellectual climate in which it is no longer viewed as extravagant or inappropriate to consider human productions,

distinct from science, as valid and legitimate. However, Dilthey lacks conviction about the transition between two eras, about the end of philosophy and its replacement with other ways of thinking. Ortega y Gasset, who, in contrast, from a particular moment on situates himself in this perspective of transition, would make use of Dilthey's studies in order to suggest new ways of thinking that replace scientific knowledge. For this reason, the brief presentation that follows on the new ways of thinking will focus on Ortega's later works.

The other thinker who makes the new position of philosophy a recurring theme in his writing is Heidegger. This can be seen from his initial and programmatic *Being and Time* up to his last essays, *Overcoming Metaphysics* and *The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking*,<sup>14</sup> in which the proclaimed end of metaphysics and philosophy becomes compatible with the absolute rule of metaphysics throughout history, so that according to Heidegger, the end of metaphysics will be prolonged for a very long time, possibly for even longer than the history of metaphysics as a whole.<sup>15</sup> What must replace this representative reason of philosophy is, for Heidegger, the *essential ways for truth to occur: thinking and poeticizing*. Poeticizing and thinking are not the same, yet they say the same thing in different ways; they are the non-subjective, non-representative places for the unveiling of truth.<sup>16</sup> Although these formulations are highly inspiring, the new paths that are opening up unfortunately remain fully within the sphere of linguistics. In his *Letter on Humanism*, Heidegger expressly presents thinking and poeticizing as two essential ways of serving language and word as the "house of being," granting thinkers and poets the dignity of guardians of this home. Language is the nucleus and heart of Heidegger's thought throughout his works, although on two different planes that are worth distinguishing. In *Being and Time*, language takes on a symbolic-constitutive function as the "disclosure of world", However, in the analysis of the existence of an "average and everyday term," language is considered the element of impropriety and inauthenticity of man, where being remains concealed and forgotten, as the original and authentic possibility of man is rooted in silence, in non-language.<sup>17</sup>

In his later works, the place of silence is again occupied by language as the unveiling of truth and the house of being but with one primary difference: while the language considered in *Being and Time* is everyday, ordinary or average, the later works refer to artistic or philosophical language, the essential word of thinking and poetizing.<sup>18</sup> When abstracted from the Heideggerian destruction of metaphysics as well as from the philosophy of the past, the constructive part of his thought is, in the end, a reflection on the essence of language from an original point of view,<sup>19</sup> and consequently, does not leave the abstraction of the linguistic or prove useful for exploring other non-linguistic ways of thinking. It is true that the nodular contribution in Ortega y Gasset's later work, the theory of collective beliefs, which is the basis of his other philosophical, social, and historical constructs, also has a primarily linguistic nature because theoretical beliefs are, strictly speaking, linguistic interpretations of the world.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, Ortega sometimes seems to intuit the possibility of ways of thinking that are independent from the linguistic dominance or structure that would replace philosophical knowledge in the near future. It is precisely this possibility of non-linguistic thinking in Ortega's later philosophical works that is explored below.

I made reference earlier to Ortega's fundamental distinction between individual ideas and collective beliefs, which in a sense reproduces the old dialectic tension between faith (in beliefs) and reason (of ideas). Indeed, we *have* Ideas (philosophy, science, religion, poetry), but we are in, we live in, and we exist in Beliefs; *we rely on* beliefs, which "form the stratum of terrifying and irrevocable seriousness that is constitutively and ultimately living." The idea is an island in an ocean of beliefs, and the philosophical idea—that is, the origin of philosophy—is explained by Ortega when he says that philosophy came about in Greece because at that time there existed the subsoil for some specific historical beliefs, what Ortega calls *naturalism*. The notion of "naturalism," a term that is first presented in some depth in *History as a System*, refers to the belief of classical metaphysics and modern science, which is nothing more than a continuation of metaphysics, in an identical and fixed Nature. The concept of "naturalism" is further developed in the conferences published in 1940 with the title *On Historical Reason* (Lesson V). Naturalism involves considering to be real what appears to conform to the structure of thought. Because human thought consists in looking for identities, because it is a mechanism for identifying, it follows that the reality imagined by the identifying thought consists in the invariable of the variable, the immutable in movement, the identical in the contradictory. In short, there are two postulates of naturalism: one, that reality is identical to thought; and two, that it is enough for reason to act logically (according to the principle of identity, pure reason), in order to know this reality.

This belief in naturalism was consolidated in classical Greece and gave rise to knowledge and philosophy.<sup>21</sup> If this is the case, all necessity and universality in Western philosophy is based on a mere pre-rational, historical belief, existing at the time of Parmenides, Plato, and Aristotle, that is far from having been proven because there is no certainty that reality is rational. On the contrary, Ortega describes reality as illogical, life as change and movement, contradictory, variable, without identity. In *Notes on Thinking- Its Creation of the World and its Creation of God* (1941) he stresses the essential historicity of philosophy, which here he calls "cognition," and emphasizes the paradox that this arose in Greece because of the presence there of what is precisely the opposite of cognition, namely, a faith – the collective and unconscious beliefs of naturalism. Cognition, which "is the attempt to solve the riddle of life by making intellectual mechanisms function in a formal way under the ultimate direction of concepts and their combinations in ratiocination,"<sup>22</sup> is a way of thinking, but just one way, and if, like everything human, it had its beginning, it will also come to its end.

All philosophy is a certain idea about being, but this idea about being derives from and depends on an idea about thinking, on a way or method of thinking. In *The Idea of Principle in Leibniz and the Evolution of Deductive Theory* (1947), Ortega maintains that there have been two ways of thinking in the history of philosophy: the traditional Aristotelian-Euclidean way of thinking and the modern Cartesian-Leibnizian way of thinking. Ortega makes an effort to highlight the differences between the two,<sup>23</sup> but ultimately conceives of the second as a radicalization of the attempt of the first, participating one and the other with equal determination and purpose: both deal with an *exact* way of thinking. Instead of looking for concepts adapted to things, they looked for



things adapted to concepts and these things were called ideas (Plato), substance (Aristotle), and more generally, entity (Parmenides). Philosophy came about with the general notion of entity, which is not extracted from perceivable reality, like the concept of specific entities, but rather is preexistent and invented by man: "...the Ens is not in *entia* but the other way around, *entia* are in the Ens. This would be a hypothesis invented by man to interpret both the things around him and his own destiny. The effort to regard things *as entia* began in the first third of the fifth century before Christ, and still goes on. That effort has been called *philosophy*."<sup>24</sup> Philosophy is an interpretation of reality as constituted by entities, that is, a reality that adapts to logical principles of identity, non-contradiction and relationships between things.

Ortega maintains that we are in a new era representing the advent of a new way of thinking.<sup>25</sup> "We are at the dawn of the greatest 'philosophic' era. The quotation marks I cannot explain at the moment."<sup>26</sup> Yet he does explain this further on when he puts forward his thesis on the historical nature of philosophy, which, like all things human, originated in Greece and is now showing symptoms of being in its epilogue: "This progress may consist at the end in the discovery on another fine day that not only was this or that philosophic way 'way of thinking' limited, and therefore erroneous, but that philosophizing, all philosophizing, is a limitation, an insufficiency, an error, and that man must *begin again with a totally new way of facing up to the Universe intellectually, a way which will be neither one of the precursors of philosophy nor philosophy itself*. Perhaps we are at the dawn of this other 'fine day.'"<sup>27</sup>

What would be, according to Ortega, this "*new way of facing up to the Universe intellectually*," distinct from philosophy and what came before it? Without a doubt, this question is extremely significant and the philosopher's formulations give rise to the expectation of an imminent response. However, in contrast with the brilliant, lengthy, and convincing discussion of the whole history of philosophy as bygone naturalism, the pages about the new thinking are slim and confusing. In certain places he formulates the possibility of a new non-Eleatic ontology or of reason that is not naturalist, but rather historical, but he stops short at the mere formulation. In his writing from the forties the hints of these other ways of non-philosophical thinking, never developed systematically, will follow intuition he expressed previously in his essay *Ideas and Beliefs*, where he states that there are four types of ideas: philosophy, science, religion, and poetry. On saying this, Ortega awards poetry and religion the same theoretical status as philosophy and science (he would even make from these a class of poetry and of imagination, as was discussed above), and it is possible to deduce that poetry and religion would make up the new ways of thinking, replacing the other two, in a sense that is not specified but is in any case different from a mere philosophy of religion or a philosophy of art.

Possibly tying in with the last page of *Ideas and Beliefs*, in the posthumous text *Origin of Philosophy* (1943-1953) Ortega says that Dilthey rightly distinguished between philosophy, poetry, and science, considering all three to be *permanent functions or possibilities for man*. We are witnessing, he says, the end of philosophy and its replacement by other permanent functions or possibilities for man. "Western thought —and I refer to the best of it— has of late, under this name, comported itself in forms where the designation 'philosophy' becomes highly questionable. Without attempting to at the moment to formalize an

opinion on this matter, I merely wish to suggest the possibility that what we are now beginning to engage in under the traditional aegis of philosophy is not another philosophy but something new and different from all philosophy.”<sup>28</sup> Moreover, in the essay mentioned above, *Notes on Thinking- Its Creation of the World and its Creation of God* Ortega maintains that philosophy is glimpsing its own demise, “a philosophy aware of its own end and foreseeing further forms of human reaction destined to supersede it.”<sup>29</sup> He defines thought generically as “man’s intellectual adaptation to his surroundings.” Philosophy, or knowledge, is only one way of thinking, and he subsequently suggests the possibility of other intellectual adaptations to surroundings. One of these would be prayer, as “praying is a form and technique of thought,” and thus while the Greeks look for logical truth, *aletheia*, Hebrews say amen, *‘emunah*. And he concludes:

The contrast between Greek *aletheia* and Hebrew *‘emunah* is so striking that the clash between the two cannot fail to open our eyes to the merely historical character of cognition. This confrontation may then be used for clarifying finer points. It will allow us to view from within, with an intimacy heretofore unobtainable, other earlier modes of thinking that have remained incomprehensible to modern man, as, for instance, those operative in mythology, magic, ‘wisdom’ or ‘experience of life.’”<sup>30</sup>

It is important now to take this text seriously and seek out all of the rich implications it contains. Unfortunately, to do so the work of Ortega y Gasset itself will not be helpful, given that, after pointing out the direction, he doesn’t take the path he indicates. It is worth holding on to Ortega’s description of the dimension and characteristics of the crisis in the previous metaphysical-scientific cultural paradigm as well as his thesis on new, different ways of thinking, which he calls a “*new way of facing up to the Universe*,” new “tests of human reaction,” and another “intellectual adaptation of man with his surroundings,” without necessarily admitting all of the emphatic turns about the end or epilogue of philosophy, a question that is in reality irrelevant, related to the use of one term or another to designate this new reaction or intellectual adaptation. In any case, it is not apparent how the new ways of thinking proposed by Ortega are consistent with his constant assertion about the new principle of life as radical reality—understood as a repertory of facilities and difficulties for living—and it remains unclear whether, once the validity of philosophical and scientific ideas are lost, the new *ideas* would be religious and poetic—the others on the list—or whether perhaps we would have to think of other unidentified “permanent functions or possibilities for man.”

The “clash of ideas” between Greek logical truth and the religious assent in the Hebrew amen favors, on one hand, Ortega says, the understanding of the merely historical nature of knowledge and, on the other, “allows us to view from within, with an intimacy heretofore unobtainable, other earlier modes of thinking that have remained incomprehensible to modern man.” Of the ways of thought he mentions—religious thought, myth, magic, and sapience or life experience—the most fertile and relevant for the purpose of this study, not surprising given the times in which we live, is the last one, *life experience*. Myth and magic, without ignoring the fact that they are present in all stages of culture including our own, nevertheless belong, because of their very essence, to a pre-modern era of civilization’s development, and as such there is little to be gained in attempting to build new thinking upon them. As for religion, while admitting that it involves true thought, distinguishing between religion and philosophy should

still be possible today, and the present essay intends to be a purely philosophical contribution.

What remains is life experience, which, like the theory of the example and imitation, has lacked an adequate theoretical approach. In the history of philosophy and its classification of different types of human knowledge — theoretical, practical, and technological— the *techne* or *ars*, knowledge of technology, acquired by experience and aimed at transforming Nature, holds a primary position. Human technology is learned through understanding the rational rule that regulates it, but also through experimentation and the repeated exercise of the same act following a previous model. The objective of technology is always to alter Nature in order to try to direct it in accordance with a rational plan devised by man. Philosophy is well acquainted with this type of knowledge of technology, *techne* or *ars*. In contrast, philosophy is not well acquainted with the notion of life experience, i.e., knowledge acquired by experience that is useful, not for transforming Nature, like technology, but rather as a guide for man's own ethical conduct. A provisional definition of what is understood here as life experience could be the following: it is *the repertory of concrete examples and counter-examples that a man accumulates in his consciousness as time goes on, that serve to adapt the newness of a present situation to what he has already lived and experienced in the past, with the aim of repeating the success or avoiding the failure of a previous action.*

Every subject discovers in his own life, or often in the behavior of others, that an action produces an ethical effect and, if he approves of this effect, he takes it on as his own. He thus adopts this conduct and its agent as a model or counter-model, so that, if a situation arises that admits to being subsumed in the previously experienced act, it is enough to repeat the exemplary action in order to ensure the desired result. Man reacts to what is new by taking a step back, seeking out models with the objective of turning what is threatening and strange about the new thing into something familiar, previously known and assimilated. Children are afraid because they lack experience; the vital experiences that every individual has produce life experience. There is no one who does not value life experience as a hidden treasure, because nothing can be considered superior to the art of knowing how to be, how to do, and how to steer oneself in life.

Life experience is, as Ortega said of the new ways of thinking, an “intellectual adaptation” to the surroundings and a “human reaction” to life. The experienced man dominates the unexpected in life by returning to the depository of examples and counter-examples that he has amassed in what he has already lived, and imitating them. Because, by definition, examples are always concrete and never abstract, the imitation of these models of awareness presupposes *concrete thinking* about the choice of the correct example as well as the subsumption of the new situation experienced. In the rhetorical-dialectical works of Aristotle, when example (*paradeigma*) is presented as an incomplete induction in the absence of authentic logical syllogism, its rational nature was recognized.<sup>31</sup> Although in this it carries out a subsidiary and auxiliary function, its inclusion among the rhetorical proofs nevertheless indicates that for Aristotle the example is, undeniably, in its concreteness, a mode of reasoning.<sup>32</sup>

It now becomes clear how this intellectual adaptation or human reaction presents an exceptionally concrete nature. Life experience would therefore be the context in which to situate a theory of imitation in an intelligible way, in preparation for a metaphysics of example and the idea of the concrete universal.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Abstraction in the two senses understood by Husserl in his *Logical Investigations* (Chapter Six of Investigation II) “The Ideal Unity of the Species and Modern Theories of Abstraction”: first, it is abstracted when a non-independent content of the thing is stressed, and after, when the Species contained in the thing is elevated.. Indeed, we can visually pay attention to a part of the thing, so that this part is *abstracted* from the whole (abstraction 1); and we can also abstract something by intuiting the essence of the thing, the Species, the idea or concept that participates in the thing, *abstracting* it from its individual and singular moment (abstraction 2). This second abstraction, in Husserl’s doctrine, is produced by the pure logic of linguistic meanings and belongs to language and metaphysics. Nevertheless, it can be maintained that abstraction 2 is only a type of abstraction 1, because he who elevates the essence of the thing, in reality, is abstracting one part – this essence – of a concrete whole that is broader than the thing itself and that, in addition to essence, has other qualities. So that language, according to this, would be doubly abstract or abstract in two different ways.

<sup>2</sup> Rudolf Carnap, in his article from the first number of the magazine *Erkenntnis* (1930/31), titled “The Old and the New Logic” in *Logical Positivism* ed. A.J. Ayer, trans Isaac Levi. ( New York: The Free Press, 1959 )145.

<sup>3</sup> See the panoramic vision of Ernst Cassiere in Chapter One, “The Mind of Enlightenment” in *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, trans., Fritz C.A. Koelln and James P. Pettegrove (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1951) 3-36. The science used as a model in the seventeenth century is logic, and in the eighteenth century, natural sciences.

<sup>4</sup> “The Age of Enlightenment saw in a one-sided way only knowledge as the condition for society. It was an important realization of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to see that there is also a societal condition for knowledge,” Max Scheler, *Problems of a Sociology of Knowledge*, trans. Manfred S. Frings (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980) 199. The Sociology of Knowledge includes the sociology of philosophy, science, and religion. A similar discipline is Social Psychology, which studies the presence of the society in the configuration of our psyches, and also determines the process of knowing.

<sup>5</sup> José Ortega y Gasset, *Psychological Investigation* ,trans. Jorge García-Gómez, (New York: WW Norton & Company, 1987) 38. Here this “change of orientation” is intuited as domestic explosions within the realm of each science, and still not as the appearance of a new universal principle. “The philosopher has no doubt that his mission today consists in undertaking, once more, the vast and infinite task of reshaping the very foundations of general consciousness according to a new plan, as well as attempting to resolve anew the primordial problem involved in the relations between being and thought. The questions to be faced are nothing less than those implied in redistributing areas of jurisdiction between subject and object. There is no sense in returning to the realism of the Ancients, but neither is it possible to remain within the boundaries established by the quid pro quo which is at the basis of subjectivism” 104.

<sup>6</sup> In 1924 he points out the great task before him: “The new philosophy –and the new life– can only have a slogan whose negative formula sounds like this: superseding idealism” in *Kant, Reflexiones de centenario*.,José Ortega y Gasset, *Obras completas* Vol. 4 (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1983) 39. On the same subject is the article *Ni vitalismo ni racionalismo* in Ortega *Obras completas* Vol. 3.

<sup>7</sup> In the beautiful essay *Los dos grandes metáforas*, Ortega boldly says: “The metaphor is a truth, it is a knowledge of realities. This means that in one of its dimensions, poetry is research

and discovers facts as positive as those commonly found in science” (Ortega *Obras completas* Vol.2, 387-400).

<sup>8</sup> Originally published in 1924, José Ortega y Gasset “The Sportive Origin of the State,” in *History as a System and Other Essays*, trans. Helene Weyl, (New York; WW Norton & Company, 1961) 13-42. This paragraph is repeated in his course of 1929 in Ortega *What is Philosophy?* trans. Mildred Adams, (New York: WW Norton, 1960) 67, a course in which he insists on the same point: “...the superseding of idealism is the great intellectual task, the high historic mission of our era, the ‘theme of our time’” (Ortega *What is Philosophy?* 183). And in another place he states that the idea of subjectivity is the basic principle of the entire Modern Era, but that this idea has been superseded because “modernity is basically finished” (Ortega *What is Philosophy?* 150). At the end of the course he cries out, exultant: “We have moved past three centuries of subjectivism” (Ortega *What is Philosophy?* 211). All the same, in previous pages (Ortega *What is Philosophy?* 195-200) he still turns to the theory of integration, this time between the realism of old and idealism (Ortega *What is Philosophy?* 206-209).

<sup>9</sup> Cf. among other titles, Ortega’s *History as a System and other Essays* (1935), *Man and People* (course given in 1949-50), *Toward a Philosophy of History* (1942), and *The Origin of Philosophy* (1943-1953).

<sup>10</sup> In December 1934 he wrote the beginning of what promised to be a great book, perhaps his most ambitious production, which would be titled *Aurora de la razón histórica*. This book would never be written as such, but the sketches from 1934 would go on to form the course of 1935-36, titled *Ideas and Beliefs* when published, in which the old criticism of science as the predominant way of knowledge adopts a classical and masterly form. Physical science, which does not know reality, only establishes certain correspondences; it is an interpretation of reality imagined by the physical; it is a fantasy. The scientist “would test [various] imaginary shapes of the world and of his or her possible behavior therein. One among them would seem to him or her to be *ideally* firmer, and he or she would call that the truth. Let it be clearly noted, however, that that which is true, that which is *scientifically* true is nothing but a particular case of the fantastic. There are exact fantasies and what is more: only the fantastic can be exact. There is no way of understanding human beings adequately, unless one takes notice of the fact that mathematics and poetry spring up from the same root, namely, our imaginative gift.” José Ortega y Gasset *What is Knowledge?* trans. Jorge García-Gómez (New York: University of New York Press, 2002) 188. He insists that precisely because science is exact, it cannot be real: “What one calls scientific thought is nothing but an exact fantasy. Moreover, if one reflects at all, one would [readily] observe that reality is never exact, that only the fantastic (e.g. the mathematical point, an atom, a concept in general, or a character in poetry) may be exact” (Ortega *What is Knowledge?* 200). Therefore, he proposes a science sub specie poieseos [in the guise of poetry] (Ortega *What is Knowledge?* 197). And he states: “A triangle and Hamlet have the same pedigree. They are the offspring of the madwoman about the house; they are phantasmagorias” (Ortega *What is Knowledge?* 198).

<sup>11</sup> Evidence of this ambiguity can be found in Ortega’s *The Idea of Principle in Leibniz*, trans. Mildred Adams, (New York: WW Norton & Company, 1971) which was originally published in Spanish in 1947. Here he again declares the epilogue, the end of philosophy as a way of thinking, and predicts another way of intellectually dealing with the world. Nevertheless, he later goes on to state that philosophy is the most authentic way of approaching reality, because it entails escaping from the doubt of beliefs, while the other ways of inexact thinking, like religion or poetry, are beliefs without doubts.

<sup>1</sup> This is what was proposed by Javier Muguerza in the essay “Filosofía y diálogo,” included in his *Desde la perplejidad*, (Madrid: FCE, 1990) 89-113 where he argued that the transition of *syntax* to *pragmatics*, via *semantics*, would lay down the path of the detachment of the analytical philosophy of language with respect to positivism, promoting its coming together with other contemporary philosophical trends –such as phenomenology and *hermeneutics* or critical theory– and leading, ultimately, to the *generalization of the linguistic turn* in twentieth century thought. On the linguistic turn in German philosophy: Cristina Lafont, *The Linguistic Turn in Hermeneutic Philosophy*, trans. José Medina (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999) and *Heidegger, Language, and World Disclosure* trans. Graham Harman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.) In all other respects, Muguerza ultimately insists on the need to transcend the “linguistic turn” and revise some of its after-effects (the case, for example, of what is called

“postmetaphysical thought”) as is seen in his “De la conciencia al discurso, ¿un viaje de ida y vuelta?” in ed. J.A. Gimbernat, *La filosofía moral y política de Jürgen Habermas* (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 1997) 63-111 as well as his response to the question *Quo vadis, Philosophie? Antworten der Philosophen (Dokumentation einer Westumfrage)* ed. R. Fornet-Betancourt, Concordia, 28, 1999 (210-213).

<sup>13</sup> Broadly situated in the perspective of this first possibility is the important book by Pedro Cerezo, *La voluntad de aventura* (Barcelona: Ariel, 1984). Cf. the chapters “El mundo de la vida,” “La superación del idealismo,” and “El nivel del radicalismo orteguiano.” Ortega’s second possibility, object of the primary attention in the present essay, is basically developed in his later works, which Cerezo excludes from consideration because, in his opinion, from 1936 on Ortega “had lost the faculty of speech” (Cerezo 429).

<sup>14</sup> From *Being and Time* Heidegger takes on all of Western metaphysics, which he will designate with more or less equivalent terms in this book and later works, and all of the terms will mean a forgetting of the being and succumbing to an interpretation according to a pattern of entities: metaphysics of presence, metaphysics of subjectivity, metaphysics of identity, on-to-logy. The expression and product of this metaphysics would be Renaissance humanism, anthropology, art and religion as experience, the idea of value. Hence, the destruction of metaphysics that he proposes likewise leads to the destruction of humanism, of the subject, religion, and the art of subjectivity.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. the essay *Overcoming Metaphysics*: “The decline has already taken place. The consequences of this occurrence are the events of world history in this century” (86) and “The development of the unconditional dominance of metaphysics is only at its start” (90) in Martin Heidegger *The End of Philosophy* trans. Joan Strambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1973). Metaphysics is the presupposition of the Western world’s planetary dominance. Hegel, the last metaphysician in *Being and Time*, is now only the beginning of the end, but not the end itself. With Nietzsche and his “will to will” begins the era of “completed metaphysics,” which is identified with the planetary dominance of “technology,” an unconditional dominance of reason, calculating, and reasoning. “Completed metaphysics, which is the ground for the planetary manner of thinking, gives the scaffolding for an order of the earth which will supposedly last for a long time. The order no longer needs philosophy because philosophy is already its foundation. But with the end of philosophy, thinking is not also at its end, but in transition to another beginning” (95-96).

<sup>16</sup> In Martin Heidegger *What is Called Thinking?* trans. J. Glenn Gray (New York: Harper & Row, 1968) it says: “...all poesy rests upon thinking...” (11). In the interview in *Der Spiegel* – included in *The Heidegger Reader* ed. Günter Figal, trans. Jerome Veith (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2009) – an elderly Heidegger pronounces his famous sentence: “Only a god can still save us,” and then goes on to say: “I see the only possibility of salvation in the process of preparing a readiness, through thinking and poeticizing, for the appearance of the god” (326). In *The Origin of the Work of Art* he develops a concept of art as the opening up or unveiling of truth, symmetrical to thinking: every work of art is poetry and all authentic poetry is an unconcealing of truth. In a work of art there is a happening of truth (*geschehen*) and this happening is defined as a *sich-ins-Werk-set-zen* of the truth of the entity, a setting-itself-to-work, at work in the work, for the work, getting to work.

<sup>17</sup> Facing the being in the world, succumbing to the vulgar and anonymous interpretation of Man, and facing this Da-sein absorbed by publicity and talk, death’s ability to be total and its own is described in paragraph 53 as the most particular possibility of Da-sein, in which this is “torn away from Man.” This authentic, irrefutable possibility that marks an end to the finite, a true but undetermined possibility, always threatening, that demands a reiteration or repetition (*Weiderholung*) of this state constantly; a possibility, lastly, that is irreferential, meaning, without references, without a sign or significance, without a world, without others; in short, without language, erased by angst.

<sup>18</sup> In the conference called *Language* – in Martin Heidegger *Poetry, Language, Thought* trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1975) – he goes as far as stating, in contrast with popular opinion, that “Poetry proper is never merely a higher mode (*melos*) of everyday

language. It is rather the reverse: everyday language is a forgotten and therefore used-up poem, from which there hardly resounds a call any longer” (208).

<sup>19</sup> It is not man who speaks (this would be like succumbing to a reviled anthropocentrism), but rather the language itself, language speaks (die Sprache spricht) and man listens. The exhortation on the essence of a thing comes to us from language, and through the correspondence to the invocation “mortals live in the speaking of language” (Heidegger *Poetry* 210). Language is not at all human, however “the human is indeed in its nature given to speech – it is linguistic. The word “linguistic” as it is here used means: having taken place out of the speaking of language” (Heidegger *Poetry* 207-208).

<sup>20</sup> Though already insinuated in *Meditations on Quixote*, Ortega’s theory of language is fundamentally presented in the context of his sociological theory in *Comentario al Banquete de Platón* (1946) and in Chapter Ten of *Man and People* trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: WW Norton & Company, 1957) 227-257, his second course at the Institute of Humanities in 1949-50. Cf. P. Cerezo *La voluntad de aventura*, “Pragmática del significado y razón vital.”

<sup>21</sup> In José Ortega y Gasset *The Origin of Philosophy* trans. Tony Talbot (New York: WW Norton & Company, 1967) Ortega uses three concepts: the *subsoil* of the era, the beliefs; the *soil*, the ideas; and the *adversary*. For the generation of Parmenides and Heraclitus the subsoil is mythology; the soil is the thought of the Ionic physicists; and the adversary is Pythagorean and scientific doctrines. In Chapter Nine he says that philosophy is a product that arises in Greece when its people began an era of freedom. Unnecessary occupations are discovered, life and its possibilities are increased, which compels a building of the world and a rationalizing of existence.

<sup>22</sup> *Notes on Thinking- Its Creation of the World and its Creation of God* in José Ortega y Gasset *Concord and Liberty* trans. Helene Weyl (New York: WW Norton & Company, 1946) 65.

<sup>23</sup> Ortega tries to prove that the traditional way, as it is based on what is sense- perceivable in its attempt that the concept is not only logical but also true and real because of its proximity to sense-perceivable intuition, made deductive theory imperfect; it contaminated the logical-exact thinking about sense-perceivable, inexact, intuitive elements (in the origin of concepts, in the proof, in the principles) and because thinking is an elevation to the primary genera, it also forced the conception of the sciences as separate and isolated, each one confined to its sensual object, without the possibility of a truly universal science, as can be seen in the fact that the primary principles of science are not proven and furthermore, in their every deductive step that is based on these principles, there is a new sense-perceivable principle (the specific difference of genus). Modern thinking is therefore a battle against sensualism (in Descartes-Leibniz-Kant) facing the isolation of the sciences in Aristotle, Descartes declares the communicability of genera in *Rules for the Direction of the Mind*, and states that thinking is thinking relationships. Thinking is now a search for relationships in the things that are useful for deductive theory, that is, in deliberately submitting reality to the needs of thinking. The relationships between things do not appear in the sense-perceivable impression, therefore sensation is absolutely disregarded. A universal science that deals with relationships in general is possible. However, the modern way of thinking essentially retains the same traditional method, which was taken by the sciences and applied to particular or specific subjects, adapting to every scientific object: Descartes and Leibniz look at mathematics, Kant at physics.

<sup>24</sup> José Ortega y Gasset *The Idea of Principle in Leibniz and the Evolution of Deductive Theory* trans. Mildred Adams (New York: WW Norton & Company, 1971) 218.

<sup>25</sup> This new way of thinking should take into account ultimate reality, that is man, fatally a prisoner in life – illogical, variable, without identity, changing and in movement –, whose imagination provides the other reality of a being, of an essence. Reason is, basically, a way of making fantasy function. “It would be amusing if, on investigating things more closely, it should appear, when all is said and done, that what defines man best is not his so-called ‘rationality,’ but his positive irrationality or phantasmagoricism, because it happens that the former assumes the latter, that is to say, that *reason is only one way among many in which imagination may function*” (Ortega *The Idea of Principle in Leibniz* 135).

<sup>26</sup> Ortega *The Idea of Principle in Leibniz* 269.

<sup>27</sup> Ortega *The Idea of Principle in Leibniz* 270 (my italics).

<sup>28</sup> Ortega *The Origin of Philosophy* 76. This announcement seems to be compatible with the proposal in the same essay of a completely philosophical perspectivism based on dialectics, which consists of obtaining a series of aspect-views of things.

<sup>29</sup> Ortega *Notes on Thinking in Concord and Liberty* 73.

<sup>30</sup> Ortega *Notes on Thinking in Concord and Liberty* 71-72. Along with Ortega's last provisional conclusion on the new ways of thinking, worth mentioning is an interesting passage extracted from Heidegger's essay *The Origin of the Work of Art* - in *Off the Beaten Track* trans. and ed. Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 37 – about the essential ways of unveiling or ways “in which truth establishes itself in the beings it has opened up,” which are 1. the “act which founds a state;” 2. “the proximity of that which is not simply a being but rather the being which is most in being;” 3. “the essential sacrifice;” 4. “the thinker's questioning, which, as the thinking of being, names being in its question-worthiness;” 5. the “setting-itself-into-the-work” of the art. If we do an abstraction of the last two, which are thinking and poeticizing, the central idea in his later production, the other three essential ways of unveiling – some of which, at the very least, have a disturbing tone – are not later developed elsewhere and here, light is briefly shed upon them only to be later condemned to obscurity.

<sup>31</sup> See Aristotle *The “Art” of Rhetoric* 1,2, trans. J.H. Freese (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1926) where two rhetorical reasonings are admitted: the enthymeme and the example, general rhetorical deduction and induction, respectively.

<sup>32</sup> Ch. Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation* trans. John Wilkinson and Purcell Weaver (London: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000) Part Three, Chapter Three: “The Relations Establishing the Structure of Reality,” A.) Establishment Through the Particular Case” 350-405.

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