INVERTEBRATE SPAIN

BY JOSÉ ORTEGA Y GASSET

Translation and Foreword by
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PREFACE

IN working toward a solution of political problems, I do not think it entirely useless to place them in their proper historical perspective, and then to stand off at a distance and look at them. Seen thus, they seem to clear of their own accord, and to take on the form and outline which best reveals their true reality.

Therefore the theme of these essays is historical, and not political. The judgments that concern groups and movements in modern Spain must not be taken as those of a combatant. They are the fruits of long and leisurely contemplation of the national scene. They have been directed by aspirations which are purely theoretic, and therefore without offense.

J. O. y G.

FOREWORD

THE manner in which a foreign thinker of wide and varied interests makes his first appearance before an American audience stamps him with a seal of the first impression which he never quite shakes off. José Ortega y Gasset, professor of philosophy, editor and statesman, stepped first before our literary footlights as author of *The Revolt of the Masses,* a book which appeared in the midst of the depression and which was hailed in the most diverse circles as "of first importance in aiding the reader to an understanding of the world's distress." Because of its economic and political implications, it created a stir in both Washington and Wall Street. It was read by liberals and conservatives alike, and within a short time achieved the status of a best seller.

To that small minority of Americans familiar with the whole Spanish body of Señor Ortega's work, this seemed a curious rôle for so deeply thoughtful a man. They rather regretted the atmosphere of a nine days' wonder which surrounded him, and spoke wistfully of the far more solid and enduring place he had built for himself in Spain.

Later events have shown that regret and that wistfulness to be even less in accord with actuality than those sentiments usually are. With that single book, Señor Ortega won for himself a place in the minds of thoughtful Americans that still endures. In presenting him as the author of a new book, this one devoted to an analysis of the problems that underlie the present Spanish tragedy, it is necessary neither to introduce him nor to vouch for his right to speak on such controversial matters. His name is his own best token of authority.

The publicity attendant on that earlier book presented him as a moving spirit in the Spanish revolution of 1931, and a deputy to the Republic's first Cortes. In view of the desperate difficulties which have overtaken that Republic, it is perhaps worth while to examine his career in a little more detail.

José Ortega y Gasset was born in 1883 in Madrid—the stuffy, sentimental, bombastic, nineteenth-century Madrid which, after years of royal misrule and civil warfare, had tried to be the seat of a republic and succeeded only in falling back into the antiquated shelter of a Bourbon monarchy. Victoria reigned in England, and in Spain a frail king who was soon to die and leave his battered country in the hands of a pious and pregnant queen. Ortega was just two years old when the child was born who at once became Alfonso XIII. Forty-six years later that same monarch was to leave his throne in the night and go away, and for that leaving the other child would bear a responsibility as yet unmeasured.

But first there was the Spanish-American War and contact with that group known as the Generation of '98. Señor Ortega was fifteen, the son of a newspaper-owning

family, when the Spanish fleet sailed out to administer a rebuke to the interfering upstarts of North America, and was incontinently captured. All the agony of spirit, the bitter blow to pride, the fury (deeper because of its impotence) engendered in the Spanish people by that defeat he shared. It started a fever of questioning among the alert young, and that, too, he shared, though he was only half the age of most of them.

The last two decades of the nineteenth century made up his childhood, but the first decade of the twentieth provided him with the impulse that has not yet worn out its force. It was a period of soul-searching and stock-taking, when thoughtful Spaniards were passionately engaged in examining all the manifestations of their ancient and beloved country to find out why she had fallen to such low estate. If, as a contemporary of Ortega's avers, the first mood of the Generation of '98 was fiercely negative, denying any good to anything, the second was questioning and constructive. Some of them sought for regenerative values in Spain herself; others felt that only by the infiltration of fresh currents of thought and criticism, fresh methods of inquiry, fresh techniques of scholarly endeavor from the rest of Europe could the dormant national life be stirred to fresh vigor.

Ortega y Gasset was born in the first group but bred in the second, which accounts for that puzzling combination in his thought and his character of the *castizo* (a word, deeply significant in Spanish, which has no English translation but the pallid "native") and the broadly European. In 1906 and 1908 he went to Germany to study, and there his unusual native ability was disciplined and sharpened by the painstaking methods of

German scholarship. The last essay in this book—Meditation in the Escorial—contains grateful acknowledgment of his debt to scholars then teaching there. In 1910 he was appointed to the Chair of Philosophy at the Universidad Central of Madrid. In 1911 he went back to Germany for further study.

In 1914 he produced two pieces of work whose significance can be appreciated only in the light of later events. The first was a speech on "Politics Old and New" which he delivered before the League for Spanish Political Education, a group whose then membership list constitutes almost a roster of the men who brought the Republic into being. The second was a small volume of essays which began thus modestly:

"This is the first volume of essays which, under the title, *Meditations,* a professor of philosophy is going to publish *in partibus infidelium*. Some of them, like this present series, will concern matters of high import; others will deal with more modest themes; others with humble ones. All of them, directly or indirectly, will refer to circumstances which are Spanish. . . . The passion which moves me is the most vivid I find in my heart. Reviving the beautiful name that Spinoza used, I would call it *amor intellectualis*. These, reader, are essays out of intellectual love."

Two decades of that *amor intellectualis* played no small part in bringing about the revolution of April 1931. Saying that he was first of all a newspaperman "cradled on a rotary press," he poured out articles, essays, pieces of criticism whose lucid prose was hardly less an achievement than the stimulating ideas they clothed. Through everything he wrote there ran that passion for

Spain; not, as had been the rule in his boyhood, an unquestioning passion born of blind and complacent loyalty, but an affection that insisted on looking facts in the face, on stripping away hollow beliefs, on discarding outworn illusions, on working towards the building of a new Spain that should be in every way worthy of her natural genius and her great tradition.

In 1921 he founded a magazine, *Revista de Occidente,* which became a meeting place for the eager young, and a channel through which the ideas of all the world were spread abroad through Spain. Youth adored him with a fervor that amounted almost to worship. All over Spain, and particularly in university towns, young men quoted and copied him. His fame spread to other countries of Spanish speech. He went to the Argentine to lecture, and became as famous in Buenos Aires as he had been in Madrid.

When the Republic came into being—that Republic which had so long been an ideal—José Ortega y Gasset took a step which few intellectuals in this country find possible. He proceeded to put his theories into action. He entered active political life, forming "for the service of the Republic" a political party whose motto was "Work and the Nation." He was elected deputy to the Cortes, and actually sat and spoke in that body while the constitution was being made. During the Republic's first two difficult years his great service lay in his steady insistence on the building of a fine state. However impatient he may have grown with the day-to-day bargainings of politicians, he never ceased to remind his readers of the ideal that beckoned. His clear, direct vision was a beacon that pointed a steady path through Church-State

controversy, quarrels over Catalan autonomy, agrarian tangles.

Then he withdrew to his books, his teaching, his lectures again, sure that he could be of more use as a critic and commentator on politics than as an active participant.

The outbreak of the military rebellion—which began with the phenomenon of "raising a shout" in the barracks, which ne describes in Chapter II, found him in Spain. So far, there is no record of what he has endured while the Republic, for which he had worked during the best part of his life, has been attacked from within and without. Along with other intellectuals, he signed a proclamation affirming his loyalty to the government. Later, a very sick man, he went away from the tragic Spanish turmoil to a French university town where he could have the medical care and the quiet he needed.

The analysis which this book contains is the fruit of long consideration, of study and pondering, of wandering at leisure about what George Borrow calls "this blessed land of Spain." Obviously no such careful probing into causes could have been done since July 1936 in the harried atmosphere of Madrid. In their combination of restrained passion and scholarly judgment, these essays are unique. Written by a Spaniard for Spaniards, they speak straight, and avoid the tangent either of jeremiad or of apology.

For a foreign audience, the accuracy of their diagnosis is best attested by the fame and authority of Señor Ortega himself. But their translator cannot forbear pointing also, in footnotes as well as in this Foreword, to one event after another in the past year which acted as illus-

tration for a phrase or a prophecy come true. When he says on page 66, "One institution breaks down today, another tomorrow, until complete historic collapse will overtake us," you can almost hear the guns of quarreling generals thunder against the government they had sworn to defend.

The first three essays herein presented were taken from the volume whose Spanish title, *España Invertebrada,* provided the subject as well as the title for this book. The others were chosen from other volumes of Señor Ortega's work because they shed added light on problems which he indicated in that famous analysis, or because they were pertinent to aspects of the present struggle. For their arrangement the translator is responsible.

In many cases the keen probing of Señor Ortega's mind here, as in *The Revolt of the Masses,* goes far beyond Spain. What he says about German as opposed to Roman ideas of right and law will light up whole sections of recent German history which have been very puzzling to non-Germans. His analysis of the basis of Fascism (p. 190 *et seq.*) is stimulating and provocative. His statement that (p. 198) "there are no important social forces today in which an enthusiasm for the law is a live issue" might have been written as a commentary on President Roosevelt's proposed changes in the United States Supreme Court.

Indeed not the least interesting aspect of the book is the applicability of its analysis to problems which confront the United States at the present time or which loom in the not too distant future. His comments on what happens to a nation which cuts itself off from the rest of

the world and shuts itself up within its own walls are truly portentous in view of recent neutrality legislation and the oratory of the isolationists.

In presenting a book of this type, a word about the translation is due both the author and the reader. The difficulties, which were considerable, stem from two factors. One of them is inherent in the relationship between Spanish and English; the other lies in the extraordinary quality of Señor Ortega's mind.

As a modern language, a dress for ideas, a coin to pass from hand to hand among people not native to it, Spanish is under a distinct handicap. It is a handicap that lies not so much in words as in phrases, not so much in phrases as in sentences, not so much in sentences as in paragraphs. That handicap is partly a matter of tempo, partly a matter of structure. The Spanish of Cervantes translated beautifully into the English of Shakespeare's day, and in fact it was so translated within a very short time after its appearance in Spain, and was tremendously successful in England. At that time both languages moved step by step, rolling and sonorous and beautiful. Of the two, Cervantes' Spanish was perhaps the more direct, the more compact, the less ornate. But it is clear to anyone who reads them both that the two tongues were then synchronized almost perfectly, so that thought passed very easily from one to the other.

Unfortunately, that is not the case today. Both languages have changed, but their rate and manner of change have not moved side by side, any more than have the rate and manner of development of the countries to which they are native. English has become short of sentence, staccato, simplified. Spanish has retained much

more of its ancient dignity, its manner of rolling phrases like a succession of beautifully bowled balls across a velvet lawn. The translator is faced with two alternative extremes: either he must, almost literally, transpose his material into equivalent English—which then will be so archaic as to run the risk of losing its potential readers by the unfamiliar way it falls on eye and ear—or else, in an effort to set it so that it will attract the minds of modern Anglo-Saxons, he must do violence to its form.

Unhappily, there is in the United States no long tradition to guide a translator safely past these two dangers. A recent list prepared by Mr. John Garrett Underhill, who introduced the playwright Benavente to American readers in many careful volumes, showed perhaps a hundred titles of modern Spanish books which have been published in English. Of them all, only one reached a really wide public, and that one was merely a good piece of popular journalistic prose, and translated as such. Its translation could not in any way be considered noteworthy.

In the main, we have left notable translations for the English to do, and they have been very much better at it than we have. The fault, I suspect, lies partly with the teaching of Spanish in our schools. It is taught as a language to be read, as a language to be used for commercial purposes. In a few places it is taught as a language to be spoken—though haltingly. Nowhere does it seem to be cultivated as a language whose complete appreciation demands, in addition to chanting of verb forms and memorizing of idioms, an ability to render it into English of equivalent value. Until that is understood and put into practice, until some coördination is set up be-

tween Spanish classes and the teaching of English composition, we will probably continue to see modern Spanish literature through the cloudy glass of mediocre translations.

The other factor which made this present translation difficult—the quality of Señor Ortega's mind—is beyond the reach of rules. Sometimes he writes straightforward and simple prose, sometimes it is tough, compact, subtle, and so carefully worded that it would take a page of footnotes to render each paragraph adequately. He has an extraordinary sense of the value, meaning, and implication of words, and if he cannot find one at hand which says what he wants, he will build it from roots which contain the material of his idea. Add that to the fact that his vocabulary ranges through philosophy and the sciences with equal ease, and you pose a problem which demands a mind of equal caliber to render his ideas into another tongue. Regrettably, such minds are seldom found among people who are willing to undertake the slow labor of translation.

Spaniards say that his prose is hard to read. For a foreigner, it is a mental adventure that is perpetually rewarding. He sets steep peaks to be climbed and thick jungles to be penetrated, but there is reward in the doing as well as in the goal.

Against the background of these observations, it is with some diffidence that I offer the present translation. These essays were chosen chiefly for what they have that sheds light on the underlying causes of the civil war now going on in Spain, and for their possible indications as to what the future may hold for that unhappy country. They are historical in approach, and mainly political

and economic (using those words in their broadest sense) in content. The chief reason for translating them at this time was to make available for Americans the broad understanding of Spain's sorry state which they contain. Therefore, English which was easily readable was the chosen goal, even though this might mean the sacrifice of subtleties in analysis, and nuances implicit in phrase form.

My thanks go to *The Forum* for their courtesy in allowing the reprinting in this foreword of material contained in an article I wrote for them, and to the German translator of Señor Ortega's works, Helene Weyl, for her good counsel.

Mildred Adams

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I

How to Make, and Break, a Nation

Rome's Way

IN Mommsen's *History of Rome* there is one instant, solemn above all others, in which, after certain preliminary chapters, the historian takes his pen in hand to begin the tale of Rome's destinies. The Romans are the only people whose entire scroll of life can be unrolled before our eyes. With others, the picture is fragmentary. Either we cannot see them born, or we have not yet seen them die. But Rome traces before us the whole trajectory of her national organism. We see the crude Roman *quadrata* in its glorious expansion throughout the whole known world, and then we see it contract and fall into ruins which are no less miserable for being so huge. Its history is, in the strict scientific meaning of the word, the only one we have.

Here, then, is this solemn moment in which Mommsen is about to begin the tale of the vicissitudes of this people—the only model of a complete national life

which is known to us. Pen in hand, facing blank paper, he seeks the phrase which is to set the beat for his Herculean symphony. No single Roman ever lived as he has, through the whole existence of the Roman Empire. As a drowning man sees his whole life pass before his eyes, so Mommsen watches the long drama stream past again. His entire store of knowledge is distilled in a single phrase. He writes, "The history of every nation, and especially of the Latin nation, is a vast system of amalgamations."

That phrase expresses a vital principle. It has the same importance for history as has, for physics, the theory that physical reality consists in equations of motion. We understand a physical phenomenon when we have discovered its formula of motion. If, then, we are to understand the phenomenon of nation-making in terms of amalgamation, we must first have a clear comprehension of what amalgamation is.

At this point, we come up against a widely held and completely erroneous theory that the formation of a people is simply the expansion of an initial nucleus. This idea arises out of another—quite as erroneous and even more fundamental—that the origin of the state lies in the family. The theory that the family is the social cell, and the state like a family which has grown huge, is a barrier in the path of the progress of historical science, sociology, political thinking, and many other things.

No—historical amalgamation is not the expansion of an initial nucleus. Think back to those decisive steps in Roman evolution. Rome was first a community on the Palatine Hill and the seven nearby hills—Palatinate

Rome, *Septimontium,* or Rome of the Mountain. Then this Rome joined with another frontier community on the Quirinal Hill, and then there were two Romes, that of the mountain and that of the hill. This first picture of Roman amalgamation gives the lie to the whole idea of mere expansion. Rome as a whole is not an enlargement of Palatine Rome, but the merging of two distinct groups into a single greater unit.

This Palatinate-Quirinal Rome lived in the midst of similar peoples of the same Latin race with which it had no political connection. Identity of race does not necessarily bring with it amalgamation into a national organism, though at times it may favor and facilitate that process. It is a mistake to suppose that national unity is founded on unity of blood, or that, on the other hand, it is impossible of achievement without unity of blood. Far from preventing amalgamation, racial differences serve to point up whatever specific characteristics there are in the genesis of every great state.

Rome had to conquer the Latin communities by the same process that she used, centuries later, to bring into the Empire peoples as ethnically different from herself as Celt-Iberians and Gauls, Germans and Greeks, Scythians and Syrians. She obliged her Latin sisters to form with her a social body, a single entity which was the *Foedus Latinum,* the Latin Federation, the second stage in the progress of amalgamation.

The next step was to conquer Etruscans and Samnites, the two groups of different race which were within Latin territory. This achieved, the Italianate world became an historically organic unit. Soon after, with a rapid and enormous crescendo, the rest of the

known world was joined to the Italian torso to form the gigantic corpus of the Empire. This final stage may be called colonization.

The steps in this process of amalgamation form an admirable ascending curve—initial Rome, double Rome, the Latin Federation, Italianate unity, the colonial empire—which demonstrates that historical amalgamation is not the expansion of an initial nucleus, but the organization of many pre-existent social units into a new structure. The initial nucleus neither devours the people it conquers, nor cancels their character as vital units in their own right. Rome conquered the Gauls—this does not mean that the Gauls melted into a gigantic homogeneous mass called the Roman Empire and thereby ceased to feel themselves a social entity. No, Gallic cohesion survived, but it became part of a greater whole. Rome herself, the initial nucleus in the amalgamating process, was just one part of the colossal organism, though enjoying privileged rank as the agent that had brought about totality.

To suppose that, as the smaller nuclei are absorbed into the larger national unit, they lose their individual character, is to misunderstand the processes of history. Such an error would lead us to believe, for example, that, when Castile took Aragon, Catalonia and the Basque country, and welded them into the unit that was Spain, they lost their character as peoples distinct from each other and from that whole of which they now formed a part. There was none of this. Submission, unification, amalgamation did not mean the death of these groups as groups. Their innate force of independence persisted even though they were conquered; that is,

their centrifugal force was held in check by the central energy which obliged them to live as parts of a whole and not as separate units. The moment that central energy weakened, whether it was of Rome in the Empire, Castile in Spain, the Ile de France in France, the secessionist force of the adhering groups automatically reappeared.

But Mommsen's phrase is incomplete. The history of a nation is not solely that of its formative and ascendant period. It is also the history of its decadence. If the former consists in amalgamation, the latter may be described as an inverse process. The history of the decadence of a nation is the history of a vast disintegration.

We must, then, accustom ourselves to understanding every example of national unity, not as an inert coexistence, but as a system which is essentially dynamic. The centrifugal force is just as necessary for its maintenance as is the centripetal. The weight of the ceiling working on the pilasters is no less essential to the building than is the upward push exercised by the pilasters in holding up the ceiling.

Fatigue may at first sight seem illness. We may think that in an ideal state of health weariness would not exist. Yet physiology has noted that without a minimum of fatigue an organ atrophies. Its functioning must be stimulated, it must work and become weary in order that it may be nourished. It is necessary that an organism frequently receive the small injuries which keep it alert. These small injuries have been called functional stimuli. Without them, the organism does not function and does not go on living.

In the same way the central unifying energy, the in-

tegrating force or whatever you wish to call it, must be opposed by a contrary force—that centrifugal, dispersive impulse which survives among its member groups. Without such stimulus, the force of cohesion will atrophy, national unity will dissolve, the parts will separate, and each will return to its previous state of living as an independent unit.

The power that creates nations is a *quid divinum*, a talent or a genius as definite as poetry, music, and the power to invent religion. Peoples otherwise exceedingly intelligent have lacked this gift, and, on the other hand, it has belonged in high measure to peoples slow in scientific or artistic achievement. Athens, in spite of its great wisdom, did not know how to weld the eastern Mediterranean into a nation. Rome and Castile, on the other hand, though not too greatly dowered with intellect, forged the two most wide-flung national structures the world has ever known.

It would be extremely interesting to analyze the ingredients of this talent for making a nation. In the present study, however, it is enough to note that it is not a matter of theoretic knowledge or rich imagination, nor is it a profound and contagious emotion of the religious type, but a talent whose character is imperative. It is knowing how to want and knowing how to command. To command is not simply to convince or to compel, but an exquisite mixture of both. Moral suasion and material compulsion are intimately linked in every act of command. I am sorry that I cannot agree with modern pacifism in its antipathy toward force. Without force there would have been nothing of that which is most important to us in the past, and if we exclude it

from the future we can only imagine a humanity in chaos. But it is equally certain that nothing has been done by force alone which is worth the pain of the doing.

Working by itself, violence merely fashions pseudo-amalgamations which are short-lived and which disappear without leaving any appreciable trace in history. The difference between these ephemeral conglomerations of people and the true amalgamation strikes us immediately. Compare, for instance, the formidable Mongol empires of Genghis Khan or Timur with ancient Rome, and with the modern nations of the Western world. In the hierarchy of violence, a figure like that of Genghis Khan is unsurpassed. What are Alexander, Cæsar or Napoleon compared with the terrible genius of Tartary—the super-human nomad, ruler of half the world, who carried his banner from the extreme Orient to the foothills of the Caucasus? Beside this world-shaking Khan, who neither knew how to write nor read, who ignored all religions and disavowed all ideas, Alexander, Cæsar and Napoleon are mere captains in the Salvation Army. But the Tartar Empire lasted only for the lifetime of the blacksmith who forged it with his sword. The work of Cæsar, on the other hand, endured for centuries and goes echoing on down the ages.

In every true amalgamation, force has the character of an adjective. The substantive, motivating power always consists in a national dogma, *an inspiring plan for a life in common*. Let us refuse any static interpretation of national living together and understand it dynamically. People do not live together without good and sufficient cause. Such cohesion, *a priori*, exists only in the

family. Groups which form a state come together and stay together for definite reasons. They have a community of intentions, of desires, of great common usefulness. They do not live together in order merely *to be* together. They live together in order *to do* something together. When the peoples around Rome were conquered, it was by more than the legions. They felt themselves grafted onto the Latin tree by a vision. The very name of Rome sounded to them like a great, vital undertaking in which they might all collaborate. Rome was a plan for universal organization, it meant a higher juridical tradition, an administration which could be admired, a treasury of ideas received from Greece which lent brilliance to all living, a repertory of new feasts and better pleasures. The day when Rome ceased to be this project for things to be done tomorrow, the Empire fell apart.

It is not yesterday, tradition, the past, which is the decisive, the determining force in a nation. This mistake is, as I have indicated, born of seeking the origin of the state in the family or in the native ancestral community. Nations are made and go on living by having a program for the future.

As for force, its mission is not difficult to determine. However deep may be the historic necessity for a union between two peoples, it will be opposed by special interests, whims, passions, infamies, and above all, by collective prejudices on the surface of the popular soul. None of these is very deep, either historically or humanly. They belong in the realm of human pathology, and are stumbling blocks for history. The only effec-

tive weapon against them is that form of political surgery, the power of force.

With these ideas as an observation platform, let us take a long look, an almost astronomical look, at present day Spain.

One of the most characteristic phenomena of Spanish political life in the last twenty years has been the rise of regionalism, sectionalism, separatism—movements of one kind or another toward ethnic and territorial secession. Have many Spaniards concerned themselves with the historical reality which lies at the root of such movements? I fear not.

For most people, Catalan or Basque "nationalism" * is an artificial movement which arose some years ago, spun out of nothing, having neither reason nor motive. They think that before this movement started Catalonia and the Basque provinces were not social entities differing from Castile or Andalusia. They believe that Spain was a homogeneous mass without qualitative breaks, without interior barriers that differentiated one part from another. To talk now of regions, of differing peoples, of Catalonia or the Basque country as provinces in their own right is to carve up this homogeneous mass and make separate pieces out of what was one compact body.

This theory implies that certain men, moved by economic jealousy, personal pride, more or less private interests, are deliberately carrying on a work of national

* *Ed. Note.* So called because the Basques and the Catalans each want to make a "nation" of their own province. To avoid confusion with nationalism in the larger sense, the word is elsewhere rendered sectionalism.

destruction which, without them and their efforts, would not exist. Those who hold this view think that the way to combat separatist movements is to smother them, their ideas, their organizations, and their supporters. As a concrete example, in Bilbao and in Barcelona where the separatists and centralists are continually at loggerheads, the centralists believe that the national government must lend aid to one or the other and that that one should be the centralists. It is not unusual to hear from their lips such phrases as these: "Separatists ought not to be treated like Spaniards" and "Everything would be all right if the national government would only send us a governor who would take orders from us."

My own opinion about the origin, character and treatment of the separatist movement is very different from this. I am under the impression that centralism, which is the opposite of Basque-ism and Catalanism, is the product of Basque and Catalan heads which have no native capacity for understanding Spanish history. Because—let us not beat about the bush—Spain is a thing made by Castile, and there are reasons for suspecting that, generally speaking, only Castilian heads contain organs capable of perceiving the great problem of Spain as a whole. More than once I have amused myself by imagining what would have happened a thousand years ago if the task of forging this great national organism which we call Spain had been entrusted, not to the men of Castile, but to the modern Basque and Catalan centralists. I suspect that, far from achieving a single Spain, they would have left the peninsula covered with a rash of a thousand cantons. Because, as we shall see, their way of understanding and overcoming

sectionalism is both sectionalist and particularist; it is Catalanism and Basque-ism rather than the opposite.

How Castile Made Spain

For anyone born on that rude upland which stretches from the Ebro to the Tagus, there is nothing more moving than to reconstruct the amalgamating process which Castile imposed on the peninsula about her. From the beginning it is plain that Castile knew how to command. One needs only to look at the energy with which she gained control of herself. Ruling oneself is a prime requisite for ruling others. Castile labored zealously to overcome in herself that tendency toward village isolation, that narrow vision of immediate interests, which was the habit among other Iberian peoples. Then she turned her mind toward great enterprises which required wide coöperation. She was the first to start large and complicated plans in the field of international affairs—another evidence of the genius that builds nations. The great nations have been made not from within but from without. A successful international policy, a policy of high emprise, is the only thing that creates a fruitful internal policy—which is always, in the last analysis, a rather shallow affair.

Outside of Castile, a sensitiveness to international affairs existed only in Aragon, but here it was counterbalanced by a defect which was the exact opposite of that virtue. A fierce rural distrust afflicted Aragon, an unconquerable devotion to its own ethnic and traditional peculiarities.

It was the continuous frontier struggle which Castile

carried on with the Moors, people of an entirely different civilization, that enabled her to find her historical affinity with the other Iberian monarchies despite all the obvious differences of visage, accent, humor, and landscape. The vision of a united Spain was born in the Castilian mind not as an intuitive grasping at something that existed—Spain was not yet one Spain—but as an abstract ideal which could be made to exist, as a plan which would fire men's minds, "an imaginary morrow able to discipline today" as the bull's-eye pulls the arrow and draws the bow. Thus, and not otherwise, did Cecil Rhodes, his elbows on his office desk, invent the idea of Rhodesia—an empire which could be created in the savage heart of Africa.

When Castile's traditional policy won the clear and penetrating mind of Ferdinand the Catholic to its own ends, anything became possible. That Aragonese fox, genius that he was, realized that Castile was right, that he must overrule the sullen suspicions of his countrymen and incorporate his kingdom into a greater Spain. His high ambitions could only be launched from Castile, for only there would he find the native elements which would afford him a proper sounding board.

Then Spanish unity was born—but to what end, under the stimulus of what ideas beckoning like banners on the breeze? In order to live together, to sit beside a central fire like old crones gossiping on a winter's night? By no means. The union was achieved in order to launch Spanish energy to the four winds, to flood the planet with it, to build an empire broader than the world. It was achieved for this, and by means of this. Far horizons beckoned, suggesting union and inciting

to it, compelling warring temperaments to fuse into a compact mass. For anyone who has a good historical ear, there is no doubt that "Spanish unity meant, first of all and above all, the unification of the two great international policies then existing in the peninsula"—that of Castile toward Africa and Central Europe, that of Aragon toward the Mediterranean. For the first time in history the idea of *welt politik* was conceived. Spanish unity was created in order to put it into action.

I have not invented this idea. None of it is the Mandarin's fringe which I, a lazy literary man, have hung, five hundred years later, on the hopes and fears of a remote age. Among a thousand other testimonials to its accuracy, I offer two exceptional ones which carry impeccable guaranties and which supplement each other.

The first is that of Francesco Guicciardini who came to this country as a very young ambassador from Florence. In his *Relazione di Espagna* he says that one day he asked King Ferdinand, "How is it that a people as warlike as the Spaniards have always been conquered, in whole or in part, by Gauls, Romans, Carthaginians, Vandals, and Moors?"

To this the King replied, "The nation is apt enough in arms, but unruly, so that the only man who can do great things with it is he who knows how to keep it united and in order." And this, Guicciardini adds, is what Ferdinand and Isabella did. Thanks to this, they were able to launch Spain on a career of great military enterprise.

Apparently unity is both a cause of and a condition for doing great deeds. Who can doubt it? But the reverse of that statement goes deeper, and is both more in-

teresting and more valuable—the spur of great deeds to be done engenders national unity.

Guicciardini was not very intelligent. The clearest mind of that time was Machiavelli's. No one thought more deeply on the subject of politics, or knew more intimately the catechisms of the chancelleries. Above all, no one was more preoccupied with the work of Ferdinand than the sagacious secretary of the Signory. His *Prince* is, in fact, a meditation on what Ferdinand the Catholic and Cæsar Borgia were doing. Machiavellianism is the mental commentary of an Italian on the deeds of two Spaniards.

There is extant a very curious letter which Machiavelli wrote to his friend Francesco Vettori, another Florentine ambassador, apropos of the unexpected truce which Ferdinand the Catholic granted the King of France in 1513. Vettori did not understand the policy of the "astute king," and Machiavelli gave him a most subtle explanation which turned out to be a prophecy. He sums up the tactics of King Ferdinand in these marvelously acute words:

"If you had noted the purposes and methods of this Catholic king, you would not have wondered at this truce. This king, as you know, from small and poor estate, has attained greatness, and he has had constantly to contend with new states and subjects of doubtful loyalty,[1] and one of the ways in which he has kept the new states and held the wavering minds in check has been by providing them with great expectations, by

1 *Author's Note.* That is to say, he undertook the unification of a state composed of peoples who were by tradition independent, of men who were not previously his vaſsals or his subjects.

focussing their attention on the ends to be attained by his plans and his new enterprises. The king has recognized this necessity and used it well; out of this was born the attack on Africa, the division of the kingdom of Naples, and all his varied projects; and he has paid little heed to the end of them, for he was interested less in this victory or that than in gaining a reputation with the people, and holding their wavering loyalties in line with the multiplicity of his undertakings. Therefore he was a great beginner of enterprise, the end whereof would be as luck allowed and necessity dictated."

One cannot ask greater clarity and precision of a contemporary. Later events made obvious to everyone what the Florentine wizard had discovered by himself. As long as Spain had great undertakings to accomplish, as long as a sense of life in common flowered above mere peninsular living together, there was no break in the national cohesion.

But in our day there is incessant talk of sectionalism, regionalism, separatism. . . . Let us go back to the theme of this book and ask, Why?

Particularism and Disintegration

Among the novel sensations aroused by the cinema there is one that would have delighted Goethe. I have in mind those films which compress within a few short minutes the whole generative process of a plant. In actual life, too much time passes between the germinating of the seed and the opening of the flower. We cannot see the one grow into the other. The cinema puts our vision on a par with the slow vegetable process and gives

this gradual development the pace of a gesture. Now we understand it as we understand a friend, and the closing of the flower seems the ending of an attitude.

I am going to pretend that the same cinematic process can be applied to history, and that the last four centuries of Spanish life can be run off before our eyes in a few brief moments. With its innumerable events crowded so close together that they form a curve without breathing spell or break, the history of Spain takes on the clear expressiveness of a gesture, and the modern incidents with which the vast attitude is ending are as self-explanatory as cheeks marked by anguish or a hand that falls exhausted.

Then we see that everything which has happened in Spain from the year 1580 up to the present time is disintegration and decay. The amalgamating process continued until Philip II came to the throne. The twentieth year of his reign may be considered as the Great Divide in peninsular destinies. Up to its peak the history of Spain is ascendant and accumulative. From then down to modern times the history of Spain is decadent and dispersive.

The process of disintegration moved in an orderly fashion from the periphery to the center. First we lost the Low Countries and Milan, then Naples. At the beginning of the 19th century the great overseas provinces broke away, and at the end we lost the smaller colonies in America and the Far East. In 1900 the Spanish corpus had returned to its native peninsular nakedness. Was disintegration to end here? It may have been chance, but the fact is that the loss of those last overseas possessions seemed the signal for the beginning of a peninsu-

lar break-up. In 1900, talk of regionalism, sectionalism, separatism, began. . . . All this is like the sad spectacle of an autumn centuries long, which is marked periodically by gusts of wind that tear whole armfuls of yellow leaves from the tired tree.

I have said that the amalgamating process which takes place in the formation of any great nation is a labor of totalization; in that process, social groups which have hitherto led independent lives become integrated as parts of a whole. Disintegration is an inverse process: parts of the whole begin to live as separate groups. I call this phenomenon particularism,* and if anyone should ask me what is the most widespread and dangerous characteristic of modern Spanish life I would answer with that word.

Believing as I do, it would clearly be absurd for me to judge Catalanism and Basque-ism as artificial movements born of the whim of certain individuals. On the contrary, they are outstanding manifestations of the state of decomposition into which our people have fallen; the dispersive movement which began three centuries ago is carried on in them.

Theories of sectionalism, the political programs of regionalism, the phrases of their supporters, all are lacking in real vitality and are, for the most part, purely artificial. It should be noted that whatever is said in movements like these, however elaborate it may look on the surface, is a mere pretext, transitory and ficti-

* *Ed. Note.* The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary defines particularism as "exclusive devotion to one's particular party, sect, nation, etc." It sounds awkward and alien to an English ear, but being equivalent in meaning as well as form to Señor Ortega's "particularismo" it was judged best to keep it.

tious, having only a symbolic value as a conventional, and almost always incongruous, expression of those profound, ineffable and obscure emotions which operate in the sub-soil of the collective soul. Anyone who quarrels over what is said in politics or history makes a lamentable error.

What people think and say—public opinion—is always to be respected, but it almost never expresses their true feelings with any precision. The moan of the sick man does not indicate the name of his disease. The cardiac patient complains of every part of his body except his heart. The head aches, and what needs to be treated is the liver.

"The essence of particularism is that each group ceases to feel itself part of a whole, and therefore ceases to share the feelings of the rest." The hopes and needs of the others mean nothing to it, and it does nothing to help them win their hearts' desires. Since the current of sympathy is cut, the woes that afflict a neighbor have no effect on the other groups, and he is left abandoned in weakness and misfortune. On the other hand, hypersensitiveness to one's own ailments is a characteristic of this social state. Disagreements or difficulties which are easily borne during periods of cohesion come to be intolerable when the spirit of a national life in common has disintegrated.[1]

1 *Author's Note.* There are few things so indicative of the present state of affairs as the contention of Basques and Catalans that they are peoples "oppressed" by the rest of Spain. The privileged place which they enjoy is so evident as to make this complaint seem grotesque. But anyone more interested in understanding men than in judging them will do well to note that this feeling is sincere. It is all a matter of relativity. A man condemned to live with a woman he does not love will

Particularism, in this sense, exists throughout Spain today, though somewhat modified by the conditions prevailing in each region. In Bilbao and Barcelona, which feel themselves to be the most important economic forces in the peninsula, it puts on a clear, aggressive face, well muscled with rhetoric. In Galicia, a poor land, inhabited by an exhausted, suspicious people who have no confidence in themselves, particularism is ingrowing, like a boil unable to come to the surface, and wears a look of stifled and humiliated resentment, of passive submission to an alien will in which the yielding up of the body without protest only emphasizes the spirit's refusal to coöperate.

I have never understood why we are distressed by the avowed sectionalism of Catalonia and the Basque provinces, and why, on the other hand, we are not terrified by the sectional nihilism of Galicia and Seville. It would indicate that the true seriousness of the ailment has not yet been plumbed, and that our blockhead patriots still think this formidable national problem can be solved by electing this man or defeating that.

The purpose of this study is to correct that error in political thinking which would seek the root of the evil of Catalanism and Basque-ism in Catalonia and the Basque provinces. Yet if it is not there, where is it?

For me, there is only one answer—when a society becomes the victim of particularism and begins to con-

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find her caresses as irritating as the rub of chains. However unjustified that sense of oppression may be from an objective point of view, it is a true symptom of the subjective state in which both Catalonia and the Basque provinces find themselves.

sume itself, you can be quite sure that the fault lies with the central power, and that the first sign of the disease appeared there. This is what happened in Spain.

• Castile made Spain, and Castile has unmade it.

I repeat that, as the initial nucleus in Iberian amalgamation, Castile managed to overcome its own particularism and invited the other peninsular peoples to collaborate in a tremendous plan for life in common. Castile invented great and inspiring enterprises, placed herself at the service of high moral, religious and judicial ideals, drew up a plan for the social order, set it forth as a norm that the better man would be preferred to the worse, the active to the lazy, the clever to the stupid, the noble to the vile. All these aspirations, norms, habits, ideals, were kept alive and active for a long time. Men drew inspiration from them, lived according to their light, believed in them, respected them and feared them.

But as soon as we come in sight of the Spain of Philip III we note a terrible transformation. At first glance nothing seems changed, but on closer inspection everything proves to have turned into papier mâché. Whatever we touch sounds hollow. The fiery words of former days go on being repeated, but they strike no echo in the heart; the inspiring ideals have become mere topics of conversation. No one starts anything new, either in politics, or science, or the realm of morals. All the activity that is left is spent "in *not* making anything new," in conserving the past—institution and dogma alike—in smothering all initiative, all ferment of innovation. Castile has become its own opposite—suspicious, narrow, sordid, bitter. It is no longer occupied in

giving force to the life of other regions. Jealous of them, it abandons them to their own resources and takes no further interest in anything that happens to them.

If Catalonia or the Basque provinces had been the formidable peoples they now imagine themselves, they would have pulled away from Castile the moment that, by not paying them a proper amount of attention, she first began to show herself particularist. Such activity on the outer edge might have awakened ancient virtues in the center, and Spain been spared the long coma of egotism and idiocy which has comprised our history for the last three hundred years.

Analyze the various forces which have been active in Spanish politics during these centuries and you will see their appalling particularism all too clearly. Beginning with the Monarchy and continuing with the Church, no national power in all that time has thought of anything outside itself. When did the heart—in the last analysis, a foreign heart—of Spanish monarch or Spanish church ever beat for ends that were profoundly Spanish? Never. They have done just the contrary, "they have persisted in having their own ends adopted as truly national ends." [1]

For generation after generation, they have fostered inverse selection in the Spanish race. It would be both interesting and scientifically fruitful to compile a history of the preferences manifested by the kings of Spain

[1] *Author's Note.* The case of Charles III seems, at first glance, one of those exceptions that confirms the rule. But there is a certain lack of understanding in the esteem in which progressives, for the last 30 years, have held Charles III. Part of his policies may be sympathetic from the standpoint of general human culture, but as a whole they were perhaps the most particularist and anti-Spanish in the whole history of the Monarchy.

in the selection of individuals. Such a study would show an incredible and continuous perversion of values which has led them almost unfailingly to prefer the stupid to the intelligent, the evil to those above reproach. This habitual and inveterate error in the selection of individuals, this reiterated preference for the bad rather than the good, is the clearest symptom of a lack of will to make anything, start anything, create anything which would then live on of itself.

Anyone whose heart is filled with high purpose seeks for the men best fitted to put that purpose into action. But instead of this, instead of renewing the nation's store of vital ideas, of ways of living together, instead of initiating new enterprises that would bring people closer, the central government has steadily sapped the strength from Spanish co-existence, and has made use of its national power almost exclusively for private ends.

Is it, then, so strange that the majority of Spaniards, and even of the best Spaniards, should finally begin to ask themselves, "What are we living together for?" Because living is something done with a forward motion, it is an activity which moves from the present toward the immediate future. For living, an echo of the past is not enough, and much less for living together. That is why Renan said that a nation is, by the very act of existing, a daily plebiscite. Every day, in the secrecy of every heart, there is a fateful balloting which decides whether or not the nation can, in truth, go on being a nation. In what activity is the government going to ask our enthusiastic collaboration tomorrow?

For a long, long time, indeed for centuries, the government has been pretending that we Spaniards existed

merely that it might give itself the pleasure of existing. As the pretext grew more and more meager, Spain went on wasting away. . . . [Today we are not so much a people as a cloud of dust that was left hovering in the air when a great people went galloping down the high road of history.]

. . . . . .

My interpretation of Basque-Catalan ambitions as merely one specific symptom of the particularism existing throughout the peninsula is perhaps better justified if we turn our attention to another characteristic and lamentable phenomenon which has nothing to do with provinces, regions, or races—particularism as between social classes.

The process of amalgamation by which a great people is created is chiefly a merging of racial groups or varying policies. But it is not only this. As the national body grows and its needs become complicated, its social functions are differentiated. Different organs take control of them. Within the social system, a series of small worlds appears, each with its own peculiar atmosphere, its principles, its sentimental and ideological interests and habits. There is the military world, the political world, the industrial world, the scientific and artistic world, the labor world, etc. In short, the unifying process by which a great society is organized carries with it as counterfoil a differentiating process which divides it into classes, professions, groups, trades, etc.

The racial nuclei which came together to form a nation had had a previous existence as independent units. The classes and professional groups, on the contrary,

were born after amalgamation, as parts of the newly created whole. The former, for better or for worse, could go back to living independently and by themselves. But the latter, if isolated and set each by itself, could not continue to exist. It is profoundly essential that they be parts, and only parts, of the structure which developed them and which includes them. The industrialist needs the producer of raw materials, he needs consumers who will buy his products, he needs the executive who puts order into distribution, the soldier who defends this order as part of the public peace. In its turn, the military world needs the industrial world, the agricultural world, the technical world.

National health will thrive in the degree in which each of these classes and orders is vividly conscious that it is merely an inseparable piece of the whole, a member, a part of the social body. Yet every trade and profession has inherent in it an inertia which persuades each of its members to shut himself up more and more within the confines of his own interests. Left to its own devices, the group will end by losing all sense of social interdependence, all notion of its own limitations and of that discipline which trades and professions mutually impose in the process of exercising pressure on each other, and of feeling that they live together in a society common to all of them.

It is therefore necessary to keep alive in each trade or profession a consciousness of the many other trades and professions whose coöperation it needs, which are as worthy of respect as it is, which have methods and madnesses that must in part be tolerated and at least be understood.

How can this deep current of solidarity be kept alive? I go back once more to the theme which is the *leit-motif* of this study—national living together is not the passive and inert co-existence of a pile of stones by the side of the road, but an active and dynamic reality. Nations are built around important and stimulating enterprises which demand a maximum of sacrifice, discipline and mutual consideration from everyone.

The first reaction which a difficult or dangerous moment produces in man is a concentrating of his entire organism, a tightening up of his cords of vital energy. Something similar happens in a people when it wants or needs to do something important. In time of war, for instance, each citizen seems to break through the walls which surround him in his daily preoccupations; his sensibilities sharpened to the social good, he spends no little mental energy in considering what may be expected from other classes and other trades. Then, vividly aware of the narrow limits of his own profession, the small number of possibilities it offers, and its basic dependence on other groups—details which he had never noted before—he seeks news of the moral and material state of other occupations, he asks about their leaders in whom he may trust. In times like those, each profession is acutely conscious of the whole life of every other profession. Nothing happens in one social group which is not known by the rest, and which does not leave its mark on them. Society becomes closely compact, and vibrates as a whole.

This quality, most manifest in war times but possessed in sufficient measure by every healthy people, is called social elasticity. It is a condition similar to that

which allows a billiard ball to transmit, almost without loss, the action exercised on one spot to every other spot in its sphere. Only a nation having such elasticity can be charged instantly with the energy which brings about great victories.

It is neither important nor necessary that the component parts of a society coincide in their ideas and their desires; the important, the essential thing is that each should know, and to a certain extent incorporate in his own life, the ideas and desires of the others. When this is lacking, the class or profession loses its sense of touch; it is not conscious of contact or pressure from other classes or professions; consequently it comes to believe that it exists by itself, that it is all there is, and is complete in itself. Such is class particularism, and it is a much more serious symptom of decomposition than are ethnic or territorial movements toward secession; because, as I have said, the classes and professions are parts of a whole in a much more fundamental sense than are the ethnic and political nuclei.

Spanish social life in our day offers an extreme example of this atrocious particularism. *Spain is today not so much a nation as a series of water-tight compartments.*

It is said that the politicians do not pay any attention to the rest of the country. This is unfair, because it seems to attribute to politicians alone a state of mind which is common. The truth is that if the rest of the country does not exist for the politicians, much less do the politicians exist for the rest of the country. And what is happening in this non-political remainder? Is the military paying any attention to the intellectual, the agricultural, the labor groups? And the same question

may be asked of the aristocratic, the industrial, or the labor group in respect to the others. Each group lives hermetically sealed within itself. It feels not the slightest curiosity about what happens to its fellow groups. They all revolve about each other like stellar worlds which mutually ignore each other's existence. Polarized around their own professional affairs, they know nothing of those that rule the lives of the neighboring groups. Ideas, emotions, values created within one professional nucleus or one class do not, in the least degree, transcend it and pass to the others. The gigantic force which is exercised against one point of the social sphere is never transmitted to another. It dies where it is born.

It is hard to imagine a society less elastic than ours; that is to say, hard to imagine a human agglomeration which is less a society. We can say of all Spain what Calderon in one of his comedies said of Madrid, "One wall here is farther from another than is Valladolid from Ghent."

II

The Case of the Military

LEST I be accused of too much wandering amid generalities and abstractions, let me describe a concrete example of one of these water-tight compartments—the military. Almost everything which can be said of them holds true, with very slight changes, for the other classes and professions.

After the wars with the colonies and the United States, our army was not only profoundly depressed but morally broken into bits. One might almost say that it was dissolved back into the great mass. No one paid any attention to it, not even to demand of it a due and proper accounting. At the same time, the collective will of Spain, with rare and almost inconceivable unanimity, resolved never again to enter on any more military enterprises. Even the soldiers themselves, in the depths of their hearts, found that they agreed with this decision, and Don Joaquín Costa, mistaking the leaves for the radish, ordered that the coffer of the Cid be sealed.

Here is a definite case which clearly shows the necessity for interpreting national living together as something dynamic, for understanding that only action, enterprise, plans for doing great things at some future day, are capable of giving order, structure and cohesion to the collective body. An army cannot go on existing when the possibility of war is eliminated from its horizon. The idea that it will be useful some day is essential in order that it may be kept up to pitch. Without the potentiality of war there is no way of preserving an army's morale, of maintaining discipline and having some guarantee of its efficiency.

I understand the ideas of the anti-militarists, though I do not share them. As enemies of war, they ask that armies be suppressed. Such an attitude, though mistaken in its point of departure, is logical in its conclusion. But to have an army, and then not to admit the possibility of its acting like an army, is a most serious contradiction, of which almost all Spaniards, despite official speeches, have been guilty ever since 1900. The only war which would have been conceivable, a war of independence, was so fantastic that it had no practical influence on the public consciousness.

Once having resolved that there should be no more wars, it was inevitable that the other classes should cease to pay attention to the army and should lose all feeling for the military world. It was isolated, cut off from the nation, out of touch with the rest of society and internally disorganized. Reciprocal action was inevitable;—a social group which feels itself disregarded will automatically react by seceding, even if such secession is merely one of sentiment. Among the personnel

of our army there arose a most unfortunate suspicion of all politicians, intellectuals, workers, etc. Resentment and antipathy toward other social classes went on festering, and the army became even more tightly sealed within itself, even less sensitive to the atmosphere of the rest of society about it. So far as ideals, plans, feelings were concerned, the army began to live within itself, neither receiving influences from nor exchanging them with its neighbors. It went on obliterating itself, shut up within its own heart where the seeds of particularism were sprouting only too well.

In 1909, colonial affairs took part of our army to Morocco. Moved by their new-found devotion to the pacifist ideal, people flocked to the stations to hinder their departure. The Moroccan affair was not big enough to temper the spirit of a militia like ours, but, small as it was, it was sufficient to re-awaken professional pride. The army's group consciousness was then re-formed, it concentrated on itself, it united within itself. But this by no means meant that it rejoined the other social classes. On the contrary, this act of cohesion within the army took place around the core of those same bitter feelings which I mentioned above. Morocco made the broken soul of our army into a clenched fist, morally prepared for attack.[1]

From that time on, the military group has been a loaded rifle with no mark to shoot at. Separated from other social classes—as they in turn are from each other —without respect for them, nor any sense of their re-

[1] *Author's Note.* That it was not then and is not even yet prepared from a material or technical point of view has nothing to do with this psychological history I am writing.

straining pressure, the army lives in perpetual turmoil, wanting to spend its accumulated spiritual powder, and finding no adequate enterprise in which to shoot it off. Was it not an inevitable consequence of such a state of affairs that the army should fall upon the nation itself and aspire to conquer it?

In the famous July days of 1917,* the army completely lost the consciousness that it was a part and only a part of the Spanish whole. The particularism from which it, along with other professions and classes, suffered, and for which it is no more responsible than are all the rest of us, gave it the illusion of being alone and being the only thing there was in all Spain.

This same tale, *mutatis mutandis,* can be told of almost all the organic parts of Spain. Each one of them has passed through a period when, having lost faith in the national organization, and having lost touch with its brother groups, it has believed that its mission lay in direct imposition of its will. In other words, particularism leads finally and inexorably to direct action.

Direct Action

The psychology of particularism may be summed up by saying that it always appears when, within a certain class or group, there arises the delusion that other classes have no existence as social entities, or, at least, that they ought not to have. Or, to put it in simpler terms, particularism is that state of mind in which we believe that we need pay no attention to others. Sometimes through over-rating ourselves, sometimes through under-valuing

* *Ed. Note.* Señor Ortega could now add "and 1936."

others, we lose the sense of our own limitations and begin to feel ourselves independent of the rest. Taking others into account implies at least an understanding of the state of mutual dependence and coöperation in which we all live. In the last analysis, a nation is a huge community of individuals and groups, each of which takes account of the other.

This taking account of your neighbor does not necessarily imply that you like him. Fighting with someone is a clear indication that he exists for you. Nothing is so close to an embrace as bodily combat.

Among normal nations, a class that desires something for itself tries to get it by agreement with the other classes. In place of moving direct to the satisfaction of its desire, it believes itself obliged to work through the common will. It forces its private will to follow a long path through the other wills that make up the nation, and receives from them the sanction of legality. This effort to persuade our neighbors to accept our particular aspirations is what is called legal action.

This function of taking others into account is performed through certain specific organs of its own—the public institutions which work back and forth between individuals and groups like the springs and shock absorbers of national solidarity. But a class attacked by particularism feels humiliated when it realizes that in order to achieve its desires it must resort to these organs of the common will. What do the others mean to a particularist? To put it quite bluntly, nothing at all!

This explains the repugnance and humiliation which the soldier, the aristocrat, the industrialist, or the laborer feels when he must ask Parliament to satisfy his

wishes or his needs. It is true that this repugnance frequently wears the mask of scorn for politicians, but no real psychologist is deceived by that.

It is truly curious to see how, all down through history, every class in Spain displays its hatred for politicians. It is almost as though the politicians were the only Spaniards who neither fulfilled their obligations nor were dowered with the qualities which are indispensable for the proper performance of their duties. One might think that our aristocracy, our university groups, our industrialists, our army, our engineers were all of them marvelously equipped people whose virtues and talents were being perpetually blocked by the fatal intervention of the politicians. If this is true, how does it happen that Spain, a country of such perfect electors, continues so obstinate in not substituting its electors for its elected?

There is insincerity and hypocrisy in this. By and large, no single group or class can throw stones at the others. In ineptitude, lack of generosity, lack of culture, and fantastic ambition, all of them are equal. Our present politicians mirror the racial vices of Spain faithfully, and, in the judgment of the most reflective and penetrating minds I know, are perhaps a shade less bad than the rest of our society. I do not deny that there may be other well-founded causes for the hatred which various classes feel toward politicians, but the *main one seems to me that politicians are symbols of the fact that every class must take every other class into account.*

This is why the politician is more hated as a member of Parliament than he is as an executive. Parliament is that organ of national co-existence which represents

mutual action and accord as between equals. But this having to pay any attention to others whom they hate or distrust is exactly what, in the secret hearts of the classes and the trades, produces irritation to the point of frenzy. *The only form of public activity which really satisfies every class is the immediate imposition of their sovereign will:* in short, direct action.

This phrase was coined to express certain tactics of the laboring class; but it must now be applied to whatever is done in the political field. The intensity and the lack of concealment with which direct action appears is dependent only on the amount of material force at the command of a group. The workers arrived at the idea of such tactics by logical development of their particularist attitude. Isolated as they are from the rest of society, they believe that other social classes have no right to exist because they are parasites; that is, antisocial. They, the workers, are, in their own estimation, not a part of society, but the true social whole, the only class which has a right to legitimate public existence. Masters of all that is real in public life, as they think themselves, nobody has a right to stop them from helping themselves directly to what is theirs. Indirect action, parliamentary methods, are equivalent to treating with usurpers who have no legitimate social existence.

Subtract from this theory [1] whatever it has of clarity of concept, translate it into the diffuse and illogical lan-

[1] *Author's Note.* Labor particularism proceeds from a theory, and is therefore very different from the spontaneous and emotional particularism which I attribute to the other social classes in Spain. Because it is theoretical, and as rational as geometry or Darwinism, it can exist among all peoples, no matter what their degree of cohesion. Labor particularism is not a phenomenon peculiar to Spain, as is the particularism of the industrialist, the soldier, the aristocrat, the clerk.

guage of the feelings behind it, and you will reach the state of mind which is working in the spiritual sub-soil of almost every Spanish class.

Manifestos

I have shown that direct action is a form of strategy inevitably derived from particularism, that is, from failing to take others into account. In turn, this taking no account of others arises from a lack of discernment and of intellectual alertness. The more stupid we are, the smaller our store of curiosity and intuition, the fewer people will there be in our immediate foreground and the easier it will be for us to forget that our neighbors exist.

Direct action, and the mental cloudiness in which it originates, were already incipient in our 19th century history. I can never think of our famous manifestos without suspecting that they were small editions of what is now being done in the large. Some day I will publish a series of notes on the curious psychology of the manifestos. Now I am concerned only with pointing out certain of their characteristics.

Those colonels and generals, so charming in their heroic bearing and their sublime ingenuousness, but with such closed minds, held to their ideas not in the fashion of a normal man but like imbeciles and madmen. When an imbecile or a madman is convinced of something, he is not only convinced himself, but he also believes that all the rest of the world is equally certain of the same thing. He does not think it necessary to make the effort to persuade others; he is content with proclaiming the opinion he holds; anyone not innately

perverse will thereupon echo the incontrovertible truth. In exactly the same way the colonels and the generals believed that they had only "to raise a shout" * in a garrison to have its echoes ring through all the length and breadth of Spain.

Believing thus, the conspirators were not in the habit of setting up auxiliary bodies or even of preparing adequate means of combat. Why should they? They did not believe that, in order to win, it was going to be necessary to fight. Sure that almost all the world was of their opinion, though perhaps in secret, they had a blind faith in the magic effect of "pronouncing" a phrase.† *They were not going to fight; they were going to take control of the government.*

I believe that almost all the political movements of recent years show these same two features.

The analysis I am making of the present state of Spain would be faulty, if not misleading, were the regime of particularism which I have described to be understood as involving violent struggles between the various classes. It is essential not to confuse particularist disassociation with a warlike temperament.

It is obvious that the first requisite for lighting a candle is that the candle be out. Likewise, in order to feel a desire for combat, the least one can expect is that the potential combatant be not convinced that the battle is already won. There are no two states of mind more widely divergent than those of the fighter and the victor.

* *Ed. Note.* This is a literal translation of the Spanish phrase for starting an uprising.

† *Ed. Note.* In 1936–37 foreign aid came to the support of the "pronouncing" generals and turned this relatively harmless exercise into deadly civil war.

The man who wants to fight for something begins by believing that the enemy exists and is powerful; therefore dangerous; therefore to be respected. He will thereupon make haste to secure all possible collaboration; he will employ every wile of persuasion, dialectic, cordiality and astuteness in order to enroll all possible forces under his banner.

He who thinks himself victorious does just the opposite—in his own mind he already has behind him the limp body of his enemy. He has no need to plan how to persuade anybody to help him, to pretend to hold broad and generous points of view which will attract all hearts. On the contrary, he will tend to reduce his ranks in order to have fewer people with whom to share the spoils of victory. Marching straight ahead, he will take possession of what he has already won. Direct action, in short, is the strategy not of the fighter but of the victor. Look at any one of the political movements which have kept our times in turmoil and you will see how clearly their tactics reveal the fact that they surged up, not with an intent to fight, but moved by a belief that the battle was already won.

In 1917, for instance, the workers and the men who then wanted a republic attempted a small revolution. The military impertinence of July had made them believe that this was the moment. The moment for what? For battle? No; on the contrary. The moment for taking possession of the government, which seemed to be lying upside down in a ditch like a *res nullius*. This looked easy, and the Socialists and Republicans did not want to bother about asking anyone to help them. There was no calling on the rest of the nation with fervent and deeply liberal

words. They took it for granted that almost the entire world wanted the same thing that they did, and they proceeded "to raise a shout" in only three or four neighborhoods of as many other towns.

A few years earlier we had Maurism. Having shown considerable political skill, Don Antonio Maura made the mistake of issuing a manifesto. It was, so to speak, a frock coat manifesto. He thought that there were a great many Spaniards—the most important group in quantity and quality alike—who had drawn away from public life out of loathing for the ways of politics. He assumed that this neutral group, burning with convictions identical with his own, enjoyed a most rigid authoritarian attitude, professed the most fervid and traditional Catholicism, and amused itself with the Churrigueresque prose of our 17th century. All that would be needed to waken them to the demands of public life would be to "raise a shout." Or at the most to prick their inveterate inertia with the spur of compulsory suffrage.

And the rest, those who did not agree with him? Ah, they did not exist, and if they did, they were just a few eccentrics. In place of attracting them, persuading them, or converting them, the important thing was to exclude them, eliminate them, stand apart from them, to draw a magic line between the good and the bad. Hence the famous phrase, "Somos Nosotros." ("We are ourselves.") At the peak of his career, Señor Maura made not the slightest effort to convince anyone who was not already convinced.

But years of solitude taught the egregious spirit of Señor Maura that in order to accomplish great things the worst possible tactics are those of exclusion. For the very

reason that certain eliminations may be desirable, it is necessary to compensate for them by magnificent calls to collaboration, by throwing out a generous invitation to the four points of the compass so that all citizens shall feel themselves included in it. All successful revolutions have been instigated on the broadest possible basis of ideas.

We Spaniards lack the cordial effusiveness of the combatant, and exhibit, instead, the somewhat churlish pride of the victor. We do not want to fight—we simply want to win. As this is not always possible, we prefer to live on illusions and to be content with proclaiming ourselves victors on the narrow battlefields of our cafés, our casinos, our messrooms, or merely our imaginations.

Whoever is desirous that Spain enter on a period of consolidation, whoever is really ambitious for victory, will have to take account of others, assemble his forces, and as Renan says, "exclude all excluding."

Our present lack of solidarity produces a phenomenon which is very characteristic of our public life—*anyone has strength enough to undo*—the soldier, the workman, this or that politician, this group or that of newspapers—*but no one has strength enough to do anything, not even to make sure of his own rights.*

There are very few energies in Spain; if we do not bind what we have together, we shall not assemble enough force to make a blind man sing. I said once that the best political strategy was suggested in Sancho's humble motto—"In leading a heifer, run with the rope."

But instead of running with the rope, we seem resolved to scatter all the heifers.

III

No Men, or No Masses?

I HAVE been discussing the state of profound atrophy into which those spiritual functions, whose mission it is to overcome the isolation and limitation of the individual, the group or the region, have fallen. I have in mind that many-sided energy which people in healthy states devote to the creation or re-creation of great collective plans, ideas and values.

As a curious example of this atrophy, I offer the phrase, innocent enough in all seeming, that "today there are no men in Spain." If a Cuvier of history could find the jawbone of that simple phrase, which we repeat so often, he could reconstruct the entire skeleton of Spanish public opinion.

When people say that "there are no men today" they imply that there were some yesterday. That phrase is not an absolute, but merely expresses a comparison as between yesterday and today. For its purpose, yesterday is the happy period of the Restoration and the Regency in which men were men indeed.

If we were heirs of an age which had produced a Spanish Bismarck or a Cavour, a Victor Hugo or a Dostoyevsky, a Faraday or a Pasteur, the recognition that we have no such men today would be the most natural in the world. But the Restoration and the Regency were not only devoid of outstanding characters; they represented the moment of sharpest decline in the ethnic destinies of Spain. There is no doubt that the vital content of our people today is much higher than it was then. In scientific achievement as in wealth, Spain has considerably improved.

Yet they say that yesterday there were "men" and today there are none. This ought to give us pause. What qualities of manliness did those "men" enjoy which the "pseudo men," alive today, lack? Were they more intelligent, more capable? Were they better doctors or engineers? Did Echegaray know mathematics better than Rey Pastor? Was there more of science in the work of Menéndez y Pelayo than in that of Menéndez Pidál? Did Valera write better Castilian than does Pérez de Ayala? To anyone competent to judge, it is evident there are Spaniards in almost all the professions today who are as good, if not better, than were those of yesterday—though it is equally true that there are no more of them today than there were then.

Nevertheless, there is some truth in the repeated charge, and this because the quality of being a man, which those older men possessed and to which the phrase refers, was not inherent in the individual, but was conferred upon him by the crowd. It was a mystic aureole, a pathetic nimbus. The masses believed in him, they exalted him, and this faith, multiplied by the mil-

lions that held it, formed a cloud of glory about his otherwise mediocre personality.

Perhaps there is nothing that so surely characterizes a people and an epoch as the relationship between the mass and the ruling minority. Public action, whether it be political, intellectual, or educational, is, as its name indicates, of such character that the individual by himself, no matter what his genius, cannot undertake it effectively. Public influence, or, if you prefer, social influence, is due to a very different type of energy from that which activates that private influence which each individual exerts on his neighbor. A man is effective in society as a whole not so much because of his individual qualities as because of the social energy which has been deposited in him by the mass. His personal talents are merely the motive, the occasion, or the pretext for entrusting to him that potentiality of social force.

Thus a politician will radiate only as much public influence as there is of influence and enthusiasm concentrated in him by his party. A writer will affect public consciousness in the degree in which the public is devoted to him.

It is a mistake to claim that an individual has an influence which is in direct proportion to his talent or his capacity for work. As a matter of fact, the more profound, learned and acute a writer is, the greater will be the distance between his ideas and those of the crowd, and the harder it will be for the public to assimilate them. Only when the average reader has faith in the writer and recognizes his vast superiority, will he make the necessary effort to comprehend what he is saying. In a land where the mass is incapable of humility toward,

enthusiasm for, or admiration of a superior mentality, the chances are that the only influential writers will be those who are most commonplace; therefore most easily assimilated; therefore, the incurable morons.

The same thing happens in the realm of public affairs. If the crowd does not warm toward a public man, if they are not enthusiastic about him, they will be critical of his every act and gesture; the higher the type of politician, the more intransigent will be his detractors, the less secure his position, and the smaller the group he represents. And how can a man in public life conquer his enemies when he finds himself obliged, in all humility, to win back his own party every day?

We come, then, to the conclusion that the "men" whose absence the aforesaid phrase so much deplores are pure creations of the enthusiastic mass, and, in the best sense of the phrase, collective myths.

When a nation is in the ascendant, the masses feel themselves a mass, an anonymous collectivity which, loving its own unity, finds its symbol in certain chosen people on whom it pours out the vast store of its vital enthusiasm. Then it is said that "there are men." When a nation is declining, breaking up, falling victim to particularism, the masses do not want to be masses. Every one of them fancies himself a personality fit to command, and, turning on his superior, pours out his hatred, his stupidity, and his envy. Then, to justify their blunders and quiet their deep remorse, the mass says, "There are no men."

It is a mistake to believe that the enthusiasm of the masses depends on the value of the men who lead them. The truth is just the opposite—the social value of the

men who lead depends on the capacity for enthusiasm which the mass possesses. In certain periods the soul of the people seems to shrink. It becomes sordid, envious, petulant, and its power of creating social myths is atrophied. In the time of Socrates, for instance, there were certainly men as strong as Hercules could possibly have been; but the Greek soul had cooled and was no longer capable of creating glowing myths that wove the twelve great labors into a golden belt and set it in the sky.

Translate this into the life of any modern political party in Spain. In all of them, including the conservatives, the spectacle is lamentable—instead of the party following its leader, it towers threateningly above him. The crowd resents excellence, and, having refused devotion and social consecration to its best men, it turns on them and says, "There are no men."

It is a curious example of the divergence between what public opinion says and what it feels. When you hear "There are no men today," you must realize that that means, "There are no masses."

Rule of the Masses

A nation is a human mass which is organized and given structure by a minority of chosen individuals. Whatever our political creed, we must recognize this truth. It belongs to a stratum of historical reality much deeper than that concerned merely with political problems. The legal form which a nation may adopt can be as democratic or even as communistic as you choose; but its living and extra-legal constitution will always consist in the dynamic influence of a minority acting on a mass.

This is a natural law, and as important in the biology of social bodies as is the law of densities in physics. When solid bodies of differing density are thrown into a liquid, they stay suspended at a height which corresponds to their densities. In the same way, the members of every human group act according to the differing vital densities they possess. You can see it in the simplest form of society—a conversation. When six men come together, they fall into two parts, one of which leads the conversation while the other follows. When this does not happen, it is because the second group resists being led by the first, and conversation is thereupon rendered impossible. In a nation, when the mass refuses to be a mass—that is to say, when it refuses to follow the directing minority—the nation goes to pieces, society is dismembered, and social chaos results. The people as a people are disarticulated and become invertebrate.

In Spain we are now living in the midst of an extreme case of this historical invertebration.

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Every page of this rapid survey is intended to correct that myopia which sees social and historical phenomena as political phenomena, and the ailments of a national body as political disorders. It is true that the political manifestations form the show window, the outside skin of the social organism, and as such are the first to meet the eye. And it is also true that there are certain national ailments which are mere political disturbances —eruptions or infections on the social skin. But when the only thing that is sick in a country is its political life, then

the illness is not really serious. The social body will sooner or later recover from such passing ailment.

In Spain, unfortunately, this situation is reversed. The illness is not confined to the country's political life. It is society itself which is sick. It is the head and the heart of almost every Spaniard which is ailing.

And what is this illness? There is much talk of "public immorality," of lack of justice in the courts, graft among officials, systematic stealing in businesses which have to do with the government. Press and Parliament call the attention of citizens to these crimes as the cause of our progressive decomposition. I do not doubt that we are suffering from a severe case of public immorality, but at the same time I think that a people which had nothing worse could survive and might even flourish.

To cite a shocking and not too distant example, look at the history of the United States over the last fifty years. A stream of public immorality as broad as the Mississippi itself has run through public life. Yet the nation has grown enormously, and the stars of the Union are become a major sign in the international zodiac. The scandalous fact that such immorality did not crush the people, or at least seem to weigh them down, may outrage our ethical sense, but even though it irritates us, the fact remains, not as it ought to be, but as it is.

Unfortunately, Spain's illness is a much graver thing than mere public immorality. It is worse to be an illness than merely to have one. That a society suffers from immorality is bad, but that a society is not a society is much worse. This is our condition. Our Spanish society

is disintegrating because the force that made it a society is infected at the root.

The first of all social acts is the organization of a human mass into those who lead and those who are led. This supposes in some a certain capacity to lead; in others, a certain ability to let themselves be led. Without a minority to act on a collective mass, and a mass which knows how to accept the influence of the minority, there is no society, or there will very shortly be none.

In Spain today we have given ourselves over to the rule of the masses. People who are politically nearsighted do not believe this, because they see no street riots and no assaults on the banks and ministries. But street revolutions of that kind are merely the political mask worn by the proletariat.

I am talking about a much more fundamental kind of rule than a mere disturbance in the public square. It is more profound, more widely diffused, more omnipresent; it belongs not to one class but to all of them, and especially to the masses in those groups which have the greatest potentiality of power—the middle and the upper class.

I referred above to the strange phenomenon that, even among the parties of the extreme Right, it is not the leaders who lead the masses, but the masses who force their leaders to adopt this attitude or that. During the Great War the young Maurists refused to accept the international policy that Maura proposed, and tried to force on their chief the kind that rattled around in their empty and inconsequential mass heads. The same thing happened with the Carlists, who put their leader out and forced him to seek refuge in a place of

safety. Defense Juntas are just another example of this state of moral perversion in which the masses turn against the select minority. In the mess halls and the guard rooms men believe, in good faith—and this good faith is the clearest evidence of the gravity of the disease—that they know more about politics than is known by men who have spent many years in the study and practice of public affairs.

This spiritual insubordination shows itself more clearly as we move away from the zone of politics. The public which goes to spectacles and to concerts thinks itself superior to dramatist, composer, and critic alike, and delights in upsetting them. Our public is moved by the suspicion that anyone who pretends to know about anything would best be removed. The same thing happens among the aristocracy. It is not the ladies best dowered with wit and elegance whose tastes and manners inspire the rest, but the most bourgeois, dull and dowdy who crush their betters under the weight of their stupidity. Wherever you choose to look, you see the depressing spectacle of the worst—who form the majority —rising feverishly against the best.

Spain drags itself along invertebrate, not only in its political life, but—and this goes deeper and is more fundamental—in its own social living together. None of the mechanisms which integrate the machinery of public life can function this way. One institution breaks down today, another tomorrow, until complete historic collapse will overtake us.

Then there will be no way out. As long as the mass denies its own biological mission—which is to follow the best of our people—it will neither listen to nor accept

their opinions, and only the opinions of the mass itself, which are inchoate, erroneous, and childish, will triumph.

When the mass of the nation degenerates to that point, reasoning and prediction are useless. It is sick, and its illness makes it impervious to all reason. It does not want to listen, it does not want to be influenced. The more you try to teach it, the more completely will its ears be sealed against you, and the greater will be the violence with which it will trample on those who try to preach to it. And it will not be cured until it suffers in its own flesh the results of its straying. This is what has always happened.

Periods of decadence are those in which the directing minority of a people—their aristocracy—have lost the very qualities of excellence which raised them to the rank of leaders. Against this corrupt and ineffective aristocracy the masses rebel, and justly. But then they begin to argue from the particular to the general, and try to make of their rebellion a rule of life. Instead of replacing the decadent aristocracy with another group of leaders who are more virtuous they try to do away with the whole aristocratic pattern. They come to believe that social existence is possible without a directing minority; even worse, they construct political and historical theories which offer as the ideal a society devoid of leaders. As such a thing is impossible, the nation goes faster and faster along its trajectory of decadence. Things get worse every day. The masses in the different social groups—the bourgeois one day, the military another, the proletariat a third—try one panacea and then another to bring about good government. Finally their own failure, brought

about by their own experiments, makes them suspect, with all the force of a discovery, that matters are more complicated than they seem, and consequently that they are not the ones who are called upon to handle them.

Along with political failure they suffer the results of disorganization in their own private lives. Public security is endangered; private economy is weakened; everything becomes anguished and desperate; there is nowhere to turn for aid.

When the collective feeling reaches this point, it usually marks the beginning of a new historic period. Suffering and failure induce a new humility in the masses; they turn their backs on anti-aristocratic theories and illusions. Rancor against the eminent minority ceases. The necessity for their intervention in the life of the whole society is recognized anew. So one cycle of history is closed and another begins. This is the period in which a new aristocracy will be formed.

I repeat that this whole process takes place not alone, and not even chiefly, in the realm of politics. These concepts of mass and aristocracy must be understood as referring to all forms of relationship between individuals, and as activating at all points of human co-existence. Wherever their action seems weakest is exactly the point at which it exercises the most decisive influence. When the moral subversion of the masses reaches the political realm, it has already run like a fever through the whole social body.

History shows a perpetual swinging back and forth between two kinds of epochs—periods in which aristocracies and therewith society are being formed, and periods in which those same aristocracies are decaying and

society is dissolving along with them. The Hindus call them *Kitra* periods and *Kali* periods, and say that they follow each other in an endless rhythm. In the *Kali* periods the castes degenerate and the lower classes rise up because Brahma has fallen into slumber. Then Vishnu takes the terrible form of Siva and destroys all existing forms; the twilight of the gods burns livid on the horizon. Finally Brahma awakes, and wearing the face of Vishnu the benignant, creates the Cosmos anew and the new *Kitra* period begins.

Men of a *Kali* period, like ours, find the idea of castes intolerably irritating. Yet there is a profound and acute idea here, which unites two very different elements of quite unequal value.

On the one hand, the idea of a society organized into castes carries with it the belief that society has a structure of its own; which consists, from an objective point of view, and whether we like it or not, in a hierarchy of functions. To ignore this fact would be as absurd as to wish to reform the solar system, or to refuse to recognize that a man has feet and a head, that the earth has a north and a south, that a pyramid has a base and an apex.

The other element in the concept of castes, which stems from the first, is the question of how we are going to recognize the individuals who ought to exercise those various functions. The Hindu, dominated by a magical interpretation of Nature, believes that the capacity for performing a certain function must be ascribed, like mystic grace, to the blood. Only the son of a warrior will be a good warrior, only the gardener's son will make a good gardener. Individuals, therefore, are di-

vided into various social ranks on a basis of genealogy, of blood inheritance.

Take away this magical basis of the caste system, and there still remains a concept of society much deeper and more transcendent than the famous ones of our modern age. After all, modern political ideology is directed by an inspiration which has about it no less of magic than has the Asiatic, though it is the exact reverse. We pretend that society is what we think it ought to be. As if it did not already have an immutable structure of its own! As if our desires could give it what it already has! All modern utopianism is a form of magic-making. It will not be long before Kant's gesture in decreeing how society *ought to be* will look to us exactly what it is—an attitude more akin to magic-making than to actuality.

Decay at the Root

The first thing that an historian should do in defining the character of a nation or an epoch is to fix the peculiar equation by which the relationship between the masses and the select minorities develops. The formula would be a secret key whereby he could uncover hidden palpitations in the social body.

There are races which have been characterized by an almost monstrous abundance of outstanding personalities, with a small and unruly mass behind them. That was the case with Greece, and that was the cause of her instability. A moment arrived when the Hellenic nation became like an industry which, instead of fixing a standard and turning out human merchandise to correspond, is entirely given over to the production of in-

dividual models. A genius as to culture, Greece was unstable both as a social body and as a state.

Russia and Spain, those two ends of the great European diagonal, offer examples of the opposite type. Very different in other qualities, Russia and Spain are alike in being the two *"pueblo"* races, races where the common people predominate—that is, races that suffer from an obvious and continuous lack of eminent individuals. The Slavic nation is an enormous mass of people on top of which trembles a minute head. There has always been a cultivated minority which moves at the top of Russian life, but it is so minute in comparison to the vastness of the race that it has never been able to saturate the gigantic popular plasma with its organizing influence. This is why Russia seems so amorphous and so persistently primitive.

As for Spain, it is strange that throughout our long history Spain has never shaken off its most characteristic feature, which is also its most obvious one—that is, the almost constant disproportion between the worth of our common people, and that of our select minorities. The self-determining personality which adopts a conscious and individual attitude toward life is very rare in our country. It is the common people who have done everything worth doing, and what they could not do has been left undone. But the common people can only perform the more elemental functions of life. They can neither create a science, or a higher art, or a civilization equipped with complicated techniques, nor can they organize a state with a long stability, nor distill from emotion and magic a great religion.

Spanish art is marvelous in just those forms which

are popular and anonymous—songs, dances, ceramics—and very poor in forms which are erudite and personal. Once in a while a genius appears, but his work, abrupt and isolated as it is, fails to raise the mediocre level of national production. Between him, a single individual, and the masses, there are no intermediaries and, by the same token, no communication. And this, in spite of the fact that even these rare Spanish geniuses have always half belonged to the people, and that their work has never completely freed itself from the plebeian and popular touch.

The thing which differentiates the work executed by the masses from that produced by an individual is anonymity. Compare the history of France or England with ours, and you will note the anonymous character of our past as contrasted with the crowding personalities that throng the stages of those other nations.

The history of France or of England is a history created chiefly by select minorities. Here in Spain it is the masses which have done everything, either directly, or by virtue of being condensed, like live particles of steam in a boiler, into Church and State. When we enter our thousands of small towns we instantly become aware of churches and public buildings. Individual creation is almost entirely absent. Did you never notice the architectural poverty of our private homes? The so-called "palaces" of our old cities are really nothing but modest houses which flaunt extravagant coats of arms on their façades. Even Toledo, imperial Toledo itself, deprived of its Alcazar and its Cathedral, would be nothing but a poor small town.

Look at Spain in whatever period you please—today,

yesterday, or the day before yesterday, and you will be surprised at the incongruous lack of a select minority. This phenomenon explains our whole history, even including those fleeting moments of plenty when we were at our best.

But to talk of the history of Spain is to talk of the unknown. Almost all the ideas about our national past which float in Spanish heads are inaccurate, if not grotesque. That repertory of concepts, not only false, but intellectually monstrous, is one of the great stumbling blocks in the way of any improvement of our national life.

I will not venture to sketch here the outline that, in my judgment, constitutes the essential profile of Spanish history. My ideas are so heretical that they would seem to picture it upside down.

But there is one point on which I must touch. We hear it constantly said that one of the great virtues of our national past is that there was no feudalism in Spain. This time the commonplace is partially correct—there was hardly any feudalism here. But, far from being a virtue, that was our first great misfortune, and the cause of all the rest.

Spain is a social organism, an historic animal so to speak, which belongs to a definite species, to a type of societies or nations which were germinated in the central and western part of Europe when the Roman Empire crashed to the ground. This means that Spain has a specific structure which is basically identical with that of France, England and Italy. These four nations were formed by the union of three elements, of which two are common to all of them and only one varies. These three

elements are (1) a more or less autochthonous race, (2) the Roman seed of civilization, and (3) Germanic immigration. The Roman factor, which is the same in all of them, represents a neutral element in the evolution of European nations.

At first it might seem logical to seek the determining principle which differentiates them one from another in the autochthonous base, and to say that France is different from Spain because the Gauls were different from the Iberians. But this is a mistake. Of course I do not mean to deny that the Gauls and Iberians respectively had a differentiating influence in the development of France and Spain. What I do deny is that this was the factor which was decisive. It was not, and for a very simple reason.

There have been nations which were formed by the fusion of their various elements on the same plane. Almost all Asiatic nations belong to this type. People A fuse with people B, and in the mechanics of the fusion there is no difference in rank.

But our European nations have an historic anatomy and an historic physiology very different from that of those Oriental bodies. As I said before, they belong to a distinct zoölogical species and they have their own peculiar biology. They are societies born of the conquest, not of a people by an army, as was the Roman Empire, but of one people by another. The Germanic conquerors did not fuse with the conquered natives on the same plane. The fusion was not horizontal but vertical. The Germanic tribes were influenced by the native population, as they had been by Roman discipline, but in everything essential it was they who imposed their pat-

tern on the conquered masses. They were the power that molded and organized. They were the form, while the natives were the clay. They were the decisive ingredient—those who decided. The vertical character of these European national structures, which, while they were in process of formation, kept them divided into two separate strata, seems to me the typical feature of their historic biology.

As the Germanic tribes were the decisive ingredient in differentiation, they also had a decisive influence on its effects. Here I come to an idea which may sound scandalous, but it is one which I am interested in setting forth for consideration; namely, that the difference between France and Spain is not so much a matter of the difference between Gauls and Iberians, as it is a result of the different quality of the tribes which invaded both territories. To go from France to Spain is to go from the Frank to the Visigoth.*

Unfortunately, from the Frank to the Visigoth is a long distance. If you could arrange the wandering German tribes in order of their historic vitality, the Frank would be at the top, the Visigoth at the bottom. Was this difference in power native and original? We cannot find out now, nor does it matter. The fact is that at the moment when the Franks entered Gaul and the Visigoths entered Spain they were already representing two different levels of human energy.

The Visigoths were the oldest of the Germanic peoples; they had formed a part of the Roman Empire in its most corrupt hour; they had received its envelop-

* *Ed. Note.* See p. 158 of this volume for further comment on the differences between France and Spain.

ing influence direct. By the same token they were the most "civilized"—that is, the most reformed, deformed, and atrophied.

Any "civilization" which is received from the outside may easily be fatal to the recipient. For "civilization," as distinguished from culture, is a blending of mechanized techniques, of artificial stimulants, of luxuries—all of which are, as it were, distilled from the life of a people. Injected into another social organism, this distillation is always poisonous, and in large doses is fatal. For example, alcohol is a luxury which appeared among civilizations of the white race; they suffer from its use but are able to stand it. But when it was taken to Africa and the South Seas it blotted out whole races.

The Roman influence was the alcohol of the German Visigoths, a decadent people who came stumbling down across space and time until they reached Spain, the farthest corner of Europe, where they found rest. The Franks, on the other hand, burst into the gentle land of the Gauls intact, and flooded it with the irresistible torrent of their vitality.

There are people who, when they hear of vitality, picture a human figure covered with enormous muscles, capable of eating a bear whole and washing it down with a keg of wine. To them, vitality is synonymous with brutality. I hope my readers understand that I mean by vitality simply that power of creation which is life itself. Vitality is the power which a healthy cell has of begetting another cell, and vitality is likewise the secret force which creates a great historic power. Vitality, or the power of organic creation, takes a different form in every species and kind of living thing.

Just as the Semite and the Roman had their own ways of expressing vitality, so did the Germanic tribes. They created art, science and society in a certain manner and in that manner only, according to a certain model and to that alone. A people cannot choose between various modes of life—either they live in their own fashion, or they do not live. It is useless to hope that an ostrich which is unable to run will fly like an eagle.

In the creation of social forms, the outstanding characteristic of the Germanic tribes was feudalism. The word is inexact and gives rise to confusion, but usage compels it. Strictly speaking, the term feudalism should be applied only to that group of legal formulæ used after the 11th century to define relations between the nobles. The important thing, however, is not the pattern of those formulæ, but the spirit which existed before they were achieved and which, after getting its bearings, continued to operate. This spirit I call feudalism.

The first thing that the Roman spirit did in organizing a people was to found a state. It could not conceive of the existence and functioning of individuals except as submissive members of the state, the "Civitas." The Germanic spirit worked in the opposite fashion. To its way of thinking, a people consisted of certain energetic men who, with strength of fist and breadth of mind, knew how to impose their wills on the rest, make them follow, conquer territory, and in turn make their leaders lords of the earth. The Roman was not "lord" of his glebe; he was, in a way, its servant. The Roman was an agriculturalist. The Germanic tribesman, on the other hand, was very late in learning and accepting the rôle

of cultivator. As long as he had great fields and wide forests in Germania, where he could hunt, he scorned the plow. As the population grew, and each tribe or nation began to feel hemmed in by its neighbors, it had to resign itself for a little while to making the sword hand serve the plow. This subjection to the tasks of peace did not last very long. As soon as the barrier set by the imperial legions weakened, the Germanic tribes resolved to capture the fertile fields to the south and west and make the conquered peoples cultivate them. This dominion over the land, founded specifically on not working it, is "lordship."

The "lords" were to be the organizing power in the new nation. Theirs was not, as with Rome, a city state, founded on a collective and impersonal idea, but a matter of flesh and blood. The Germanic state consisted in a series of personal and private relationships between the lords.

To the modern mind, rights exist over and above the individual; and on the assumption that rights imply the power to enforce compliance, the state also has an existence apart from the individual. Today, a person who is not a citizen of any state has no rights. For the German tribesman the just and proper theory was exactly the contrary. Right, to him, existed solely as an attribute of the individual. When, for instance, the Cid was thrown out of Castile, he was a citizen of no state, yet he had all his rights. The only one he lost was his private relationship with the King, and the advantages which he derived therefrom.

This sense of personal power and prerogative inherent in the Germanic lords was the chisel that carved the West-

ern nations. Each one who organized his seigniory flooded it with his own individual influence. Quarrels, friendships, treaties with neighboring lords, all helped to fashion territorial units that grew larger and larger until they formed great duchies. The king, who was originally only the first among equals, "primus inter pares," constantly sought to lessen the power of this select minority. For this purpose he invoked the aid of the people and of the Roman ideas, as opposed to the Germanic. At certain periods the lords seemed vanquished, and the monarch-people-priest coalition triumphed. But soon the vigor of the Frankish lords would take on fresh life and the feudal structure would reappear.

Anyone who thinks that a nation's strength consists solely in its unity will regard feudalism as a pernicious institution. But unity is good only when it implies the amalgamation of great forces which existed previous to this union. There is such a thing as dead unity, which comes about because of an essential weakness in the amalgamated elements.

Therefore, it is a great mistake to assume that the feebleness of its feudal system had a positive value for Spain. When I hear that, it is like hearing, "It is a good thing that present day Spain has few scholars, few artists, and, in general, few men of any real talent, because intellectual vigor makes for hot argument and leads to contention." Transport the intelligent minority in modern society back through the centuries to the moment when our nation was being born, and you will find that they there constitute the select minority of the feudal lords. In France, there were many of them, and they were powerful. Historically, they molded their mate-

rial to suit themselves, flooding the entire popular mass with the sense of being a nation. In the process, the French corpus had to live disjointed for centuries. Bit by bit cohesion took place; the lords built structures that were more and more complex, that consisted of duchies, counties, and provinces. At the same time the power of the lords defended that essential territorial pluralism against premature unification into a kingdom.

But there was no such select minority among the Visigoths. By the time they reached Spain, they were a weakened and degenerate people. A mere breath of African air sufficed to bar them from the peninsula, and when the Mussulman tide receded, they, who had no sufficient minority of recalcitrant nobles, were already forming themselves into kingdoms composed of a monarch and his people.

You will tell me that in spite of this we achieved our glorious eight centuries of the Reconquest.* To this I reply, though somewhat ingenuously, that I do not see how you can call a thing a Reconquest when it lasted eight centuries. If feudalism had existed, we probably would have had a true Reconquest, of the type that existed in other places, and that included those marvelous examples of vitality and superabundant energy, those sublime historical sporting events—the Crusades.

The abnormal character of Spanish history has lasted too long to be a mere matter of obedience to causes that are purely accidental. Fifty years ago we believed our

* *Ed Note.* Señor Ortega is referring to the winning of the peninsula back from the Moors to the bosom of the Catholic Church. Not the least of the ironies in the civil war of 1936–37 was the bringing back of the Moors under the banner of the Church to stage a new Reconquest on behalf of the generals.

national decadence to be a matter of a previous decade or so. Costa and his generation began to perceive that it was at least two centuries old. Twenty years ago, when I first began to think about things like this, I tried to show that this decadence had been apparent during the whole of our history's modern period. I limited the problem to that period, which is the best known in European history, so as to make a precise diagnosis of our national weakness. Then further study and reflection taught me that in the Middle Ages the fact of Spanish decadence was no less marked than in those called modern and contemporary. There was one magnificent moment when we had health enough for what we wanted to do; there were a few hours of splendor, even of universal glory; but the fact is obvious and persistent that throughout the long length of our past it is the abnormal which has been the normal. We are forced to the conclusion that except for a few fleeting moments, the whole of Spanish history has been the history of a long decay.

Pathologically, this is absurd. Decadence is a concept which is purely relative to a state of health; and as Spain has never enjoyed good health—we shall see that even in her best hour she was not healthy—it can hardly be said that she has decayed.

Is this not merely juggling words? I think not. If we think of decadence as an illness, we will tend to seek its causes in events, in the misfortunes which have overtaken those who suffer from it. We will search for the origin of the illness outside the patient.

But if we become convinced that the patient was never really well, we give up all talk of decadence and all in-

quiry into its causes; instead, we discuss constitutional defects, insufficiencies that are native and original, and this new diagnosis leads us to hunt for causes of a very different kind, not outside the patient, but in the intimacy of his own constitution.

This is why I find it valuable to transfer the whole question from our modern age to the Middle Ages in which Spain was born. And if I had any influence with the young who can dedicate themselves to historical research, I would recommend that they stop chasing butterflies and study the Middle Ages and the birth of Spain. None of the current explanations of its decadence can stand more than five minutes of the most elementary analysis. And with reason, for it is difficult to find the cause of a decadence when that decadence has no real existence.

The secret of Spanish misfortune lies in the Middle Ages. Let him who will, try parallel reading of our mediæval chronicles and those of the French. The result, in the evidence it gives and the light it sheds on this problem, will be appalling. The comparison shows that there was just about the same distance between French and Spanish life then as exists now.

But enough of this. I proposed merely to point out one of the most serious and lasting defects of our race—the absence of a select minority sufficient in number and quality. The enfeebled state of Spanish feudalism indicates that this absence existed at the beginning; that at the very moment of our conception we lacked the "best people"; in short, that our nation was defective in its very embryo.

The best proof of this theory is that it serves to explain

the exception as well as the rule. The fact that the lords were few and weak explains the lack of vigor which afflicted us in the Middle Ages. The same fact also explains our surplus of vigor from 1480 to 1600, Spain's great century.

It has always seemed astonishing that, in a short fifty years, our people could pass from the miserable state in which they found themselves around 1450 to an eminence unknown in the modern world, and comparable, in the ancient world, only to that of Rome. Was there a sudden flowering of culture in Spain? Was there some unsuspected and powerful technique by means of which a new civilization was improvised in so short a period? Not at all. Between 1450 and 1500 there was only one new thing of importance that happened—the unification of the peninsula.

Spain had the honor of being the first country to become a nation, to concentrate all its energies and capacities in the hands of a single king. This alone is enough to make comprehensible its immediate aggrandizement. Unity is a formidable apparatus which, by itself, and no matter how weak the person who handles it, makes great enterprises possible. While feudal pluralism kept the power of France, England and Germany divided, and while the power of Italy was split among municipalities, Spain became a body which was both compact and elastic.

But just as suddenly as we had risen to greatness in 1500 did we fall from greatness in 1600. Unity operated like an injection of artificial energy; it was not a symptom of vital power. On the contrary, the reason that unity was achieved with such speed was that Spain was weak, that she lacked a strong pluralism supported by great

personalities of the feudal type. France, on the other hand, shaken as late as the 17th century by the magnificent tremors of the Fronde, thereby gave proof of the stores of vitality which she had received from the Franks and kept intact.

Let us, then, agree to invert the usual appraisal. The lack of feudalism, usually considered a sign of health, was a misfortune for Spain; and her sudden national unity, which seemed a glorious omen, was actually the result of earlier deterioration.

The first century of peninsular unity coincides with the beginning of American colonization. We do not yet understand what was the character of that marvelous happening nor how it came about. I am not aware of a single attempt to reconstruct its essential characteristics. The small amount of attention given to it is absorbed by the conquest, which is merely its prelude. Without wishing to minimize in the least the dramatic charm of the conquest, I must insist that the important, the marvelous thing was colonization. In spite of our ignorance about it, no one can deny that it was an historic event of the first rank. To me, it is obviously the only truly great thing which Spain has done. And a fleeting thing!

If you stand off and look at this gigantic achievement, you realize *that Spanish colonization of America was the work of the common people*. With England, this was not true. English colonization was the work of select and powerful minorities. Great companies took a hand in the enterprise. The English lords had been the first to drop war as their only occupation and accept commerce and industry as noble undertakings. In England, the bold spirit of feudalism very quickly ventured into enterprises

outside the field of war, and, as Sombart shows, contributed greatly to the creation of modern capitalism. The warlike enterprise was transformed into the industrial enterprise, and the leader of troops into the entrepreneur.

This shift is easily understood. During the Middle Ages England was a very poor country. The feudal lord had periodically to fall upon the continent in search of booty. When this was eaten up, the lady of the castle had her lord served at table with a spur on a tray. He knew what it meant—an empty larder. He buckled on the spur and left for the abundant land of France.

English colonization was the planned and deliberate action of minorities, either in companies having a business basis, or banded together in a chosen group which sought for lands beyond the sea where they could worship God to their own liking. In Spanish colonization, however, it was the "pueblo," the common people themselves, who, without conscious design, without directors, without deliberated tactics, engendered other peoples. Both the greatness and the misery of our colonization stem from this. Our "pueblo," our common people, did all that had to be done—populated, cultivated, sang, wept and loved. But they could not give the new nations what they themselves did not have—discipline from above, a live culture, a progressive civilization.

I think that what I said above will be better understood now. Everything in Spain has been done by the people, and what they did not do has been left undone. But a nation cannot consist solely of the common people; it needs an eminent minority. It is like a live body which consists not only of muscle but also of nerve ganglia and a cerebral center.

The absence of the "best people," or at least their scarcity, runs through our whole history and has kept us from ever being like other nations under similar conditions, a completely normal people. And do not think it strange that I attribute a positive influence to a negative circumstance. Nietzsche insists, and with reason, that our lives are influenced not only by the things that pass by us, but also by the things that do not pass by us.

The absence of the "best people" has brought about in the masses a long inability to distinguish the best man from the worst; so that when able people do appear, the masses do not know how to take advantage of their excellence and, therefore, frequently destroy them.

We are a people "of the people," an agricultural race, with a temperament which is purely rural. What I call ruralism is the most characteristic sign of societies which are devoid of select minorities. Crossing the Pyrenees and arriving in Spain always gives me the impression that I am arriving in a country of farmers. The face, the figure, the repertory of ideas and sentiments, the virtues and the vices are typically rural. In Seville, a city three thousand years old, there are hardly any faces on the streets except those of country people. You can distinguish the rich countryman from the poor one; but you miss that refinement of features which urbanization and selection should have brought about in men who are the product of a city thirty centuries old.

There are peoples who stay forever in the village stage of evolution. They may occupy enormous areas, but their spirit is always that of the rustic. In the Sudan there are cities of a couple of hundred thousand people—Kano or

Bida, for instance—which lead a rural existence unchanged for hundreds and hundreds of years.

These are farm peoples, fellahs, mujiks . . . that is to say, peoples having no aristocratic class.

That our race has never been able to rise above its ruralism is the curse of Spain. But that, not having done so, we should, dazzled by the possession of a few pseudo-modern cities, pretend to be a normal nation, is much worse. Every profound reform of our collective organism must start with the realization that we are a "fellah" people, a mass of country humanity, and that, in attempting any reorganization, we must turn our attention to problems of the land.

The great misfortune of Spanish history has been the lack of eminent minorities and the undisturbed predominance of the masses. From now on a new imperative must govern our spirits and order our wills—the imperative of selection.

There is no other means of racial purification and improvement than this eternal instrument—a will which operates selectively. With it as a chisel, we must create a new type of Spaniard.

IV

A Theory About Andalusia

DURING the entire 19th century, Spain lived under the dominating influence of Andalusia. That century began with the Cortes * at Cadiz; it ended with the assassination of Cánovas del Castillo, a man from Malaga, and the exaltation of Silvela, no less a Malagueño. The dominating ideas of the period had an Andalusian accent. Andalusia was pictured—a tiled roof, some flower pots, a blue sky. Andalusian writers were read. There was talk at all hours of the land of "María Santíssima." The smuggler of the Sierra Morena and the bandit were national heroes. The whole of Spain felt its existence justified by having within its borders the only Andalusian strain in the world.

Along about 1900, this, like so many other things, changed. The North took shape. The predominance of

* *Ed. Note.* This Cortes, summoned by popular vote and held while a Frenchman, Napoleon's brother, sat on the throne in Madrid, was Spain's attempt to get out from under the heel of an absolute monarch and formulate for the first time a constitutional government for herself.

Catalans, Basques, and Asturians began. The letters and the arts of the South died away. The political power of Andalusian personages declined. The broad-brimmed hat with the sugar-loaf crown gave way to the Basque beret. Basque houses sprang up everywhere. Spaniards grew proud of Barcelona, of Bilbao and San Sebastian. One heard talk of Biscay iron, of the Ramblas in Barcelona, of Asturian coal.

These swings of the pendulum from the center of Spanish gravity toward the upper and then the lower half are curious, and it would be interesting to go back through history and see if there was any regularity in the rhythm which would make it possible to divide our history into Northern and Andalusian periods.

At the present time, the perspicacious can discern the beginning of a depression in the North. Is it less energetic, has it less faith in itself, its own peculiar virtues, its style of life, its capacity? Or is it simply that Spain as a whole has reached the point of saturation with Northern influence? Probably both are true. Some powerful experience, which I cannot put a finger on, makes me suspect that the force of each individual and each group is not an absolute quantity which depends on themselves alone, but is a resultant of the forces existing in the others. If this be true, a people may fall not through its own defects or insufficiencies, but because of the ascendancy of neighboring peoples. And vice versa, a people gains strength as its neighbors go down. Certainly it is now apparent that in economic affairs the relative decline of Catalonia, the Basque provinces, and the Asturias coincided with the growth of Andalusian wealth. So far, there are no perceptible symptoms that this is being ac-

companied by an intellectual or moral resurgence, and at the present moment perhaps the most exact statement of the situation is that Spain finds herself indifferent toward both North and South. But this indecision cannot last. It is undoubtedly a transitory phase which will shortly end either in a new swing to the North or a new enthusiasm for the South.

This return to the Andalusian—if it happens—will imply a very different vision of Andalusia than that which our fathers and grandfathers had. There is no probability that *cante hondo,* or the dancer, or the smuggler, or the much advertised gayety of the Andalusian will move us. All this is Southern merchandise made for the tourist trade, which bores and annoys us.

The admirable, the mysterious and the profound in Andalusia are over and above that multi-colored pageant which its inhabitants set for the tourists' eyes. For it must be noted that the Andaluz, in contradistinction to the Castilian and the Basque, is so fond of presenting himself as a spectacle for strangers, that even in a town as important as Seville a traveler is likely to suspect that the inhabitants have accepted the rôle of actors and are collaborating in a magnificent ballet to be called "Sevilla."

This propensity of Andalusians to play themselves and to imitate themselves reveals a surprising state of collective narcissism. The only man who can imitate himself is he who can act as spectator of his own person, and the only one capable of that is he who has the habit of looking at himself, of contemplating and delighting in his own figure and being. This, which frequently has the painful effect of making the Andaluz full of manner-

isms, by dint of deliberately emphasizing his own physiognomy and being, so to speak, twice what he really is, also indicates that his is one of the races which is best acquainted with itself. Perhaps there is no other in the world which has so clear a consciousness of its own style and character. This is why it is so easy for the Andaluz to maintain himself unchanged within his ancient profile, faithful to his destiny, absorbed in cultivating his own exclusive culture.

One of the essentials in any attempt to understand the soul of the Andaluz is his extreme age. It must never be forgotten. This is, perhaps, the oldest people on the Mediterranean shore—older even than the Greeks or the Romans. Ancient records show us dimly that long before the winds of historic influence blew from Egypt and the eastern Mediterranean toward the West, there was a season when the prevailing winds moved in the opposite direction. A current of the oldest culture of which there is any note flowed from our shores, and slipping smoothly across Libya, touched the bosom of the Orient.

When you see the frivolous and almost feminine bearing of the Andaluz, keep in mind the fact that this has been repeated, almost unchanged throughout many thousands of years; this fragile grace has proved itself invulnerable to the terrific attack of the centuries and to the convulsive force of catastrophes. Seen in this light, the characteristic gestures of the Sevillians become a mysterious and tremendous sign which sends shivers up the back—an impression like that produced by the enigmatic smile of a Chinese. And by extraordinary coincidence that people, seated forever at the opposite end of the Eurasian land mass, is the other which is most ancient.

This sudden appearance of China as prelude to a study of Andalusia should not unduly disturb the reader. If he is Andaluz, let him keep a check on his indignation and give me a chance to justify the parallel. Comparison is the unavoidable instrument of comprehension. It is a pair of tweezers for the capturing of a fine truth. Have no fear that this bold parallel will simmer down to the statement that both the Chinaman and the Andaluz wear pigtails.* The pigtail of the Mandarin is not Chinese, nor is that of the bullfighter Andalusian, but French.

Andalusia, which has never shown the poutings and petulances of particularism, which has never pretended to be a state by itself, is, of all Spanish regions, the possessor of a culture most completely its own. I mean by culture a system of attitudes toward life which has feeling, coherence and effectiveness. Life is primarily a group of fundamental problems to which man responds with a group of solutions—these constitute his particular culture. Since many groups of solutions are possible, that is merely another way of saying that there are, and have been, many cultures. What has never existed is an absolute culture; a culture which solves every possible problem successfully. Those of the past and the present are all more or less imperfect—they can be ranged according to order of merit, but no one of them is free from inconveniences, defects and partialities. The one supreme and absolute culture, which exists in its own right, is an ideal and can only be defined as Aristotle defined metaphysics, as "that which we seek."

And it is a curious thing that each positive culture

* *Ed. Note.* The bullfighter wears a long strand of hair braided and wound at the back of his head to cushion his skull against accident.

manages to solve a certain number of vital problems which the previous one left unanswered, and gives up all attempt to solve the rest. So that out of a defect is made a virtue, and whether much or little is achieved, it is by joyfully accepting its fragmentary character. We will see how the Andalusian character lives on an heroic amputation—the cutting of everything heroic out of life. This is another essential feature in which it coincides with the Chinese.

China and Andalusia both have a common root—and the word is less metaphorical here than usual, for each is planted deep in the country. Theirs are both rural cultures.

If we journey through Castile, we meet only farmers working in the fields, bent over a furrow and following a team which, silhouetted against the horizon line, takes on a kind of monstrous grandeur. Yet modern Castilian culture is not a rural culture—what we see is merely agriculture, which always stays behind when the real culture disappears. The culture of Castile was a military culture.

The warrior lived in the fields, but he did not live on them, either materially or spiritually. A field, to him, meant a field of battle. The crop of the peaceful farmer he set on fire, or requisitioned for the benefit of his soldiers and his war horses. The castle spiked on its hilltop was not, like the Andalusian farmhouse, a place to stay in, but like the eagle's nest, it was a place of departure for the chase or of shelter from fatigue. The warrior's life was not stationary, but mobile, restless, unquiet in essence. He despised the farmer, considered him an inferior being because he did not move about, because

he lived tied to his farmhouse or his cottage. There is eternal antagonism between these two cultures, the military and the agricultural, both of which may arise in country areas but with contradictory intentions. When the warrior left Castile, there remained only the lower orders on which he lived—the eternal rustic, formless, without style, alike wherever you find him.

This contrast shows the positive, and even creative, sense which I give the term when I say that the Andalusian culture is a rural, agrarian culture. The peculiar thing about it is not that man culivates the fields, but that agriculture should be the basis of an inspiration for the cultivation of man.

In Andalusia, contrary to the custom in Castile, it is the warrior who has always been despised, and the countryman, the rustic, the master of the farmhouse who has been esteemed above all others. Exactly as in China where for thousands of years the soldier, by the mere fact of being a soldier, was considered a second-class man. In the West, the Emperor's sword was the supreme symbol of the state; in China, the whole nation felt itself united in the Emperor's peaceful fan.

As a consequence of this disdain for war, Andalusia has played little part in the bloody history of the world. This fact is so basic and so constant that just because it is taken for granted it has never been pointed out. What has Andalusia's rôle been in the military phases of history? The same as China's. Every three or four hundred years China was invaded by warlike hordes from the rough Asiatic steppes. They fell furiously on the People of a Hundred Names, who offered little or no resistance. The Chinese let themselves be conquered

by anyone who wanted to conquer them. They met brutal attack with blandness. Their tactics were those of a feather-bed—they yielded. As the ferocious invader met no opposition, he fell, by his own impetus, into the feather-bed. The result was that after two or three generations the violent Manchu or Mongol was absorbed into the old and refined and most suave Chinese way of life; he sheathed the sword and took up the fan.

In a similar fashion, Andalusia has fallen into the hands of all the violent peoples of the Mediterranean, and always in twenty-four hours, so to speak, without even offering resistance.* Its tactics are to yield and be bland. In this way it always ends by intoxicating the invader with its delights and thus robbing him of his impetus. The Andalusian olive tree is the symbol of peace as norm and principle of the local culture.[1]

The Vegetative Ideal

The Andaluz lives in a fat land, a land which will produce splendid crops with a minimum of effort. Moreover, the climate is so soft that man need very little of these crops to keep him alive. Like a plant, he is nourished in part by the land, and in part by the warm air and the beneficent sun. If an Andaluz wants more than just to stay alive, if he aspires to struggle and achieve, even though living in Andalusia, he will eat more, and by the same token spend more energy. But this would be

* *Ed. Note.* Compare the recent action of Seville in surrendering to the Moors and the Foreign Legion of General Franco without firing a shot.

[1] *Author's Note.* The other great agrarian culture, that of Egypt, showed the same phenomenon. The conquests of the Thutmosids and Ramesids were made with foreign soldiers.

to solve the problem in a manner opposed to that which is truly Andalusian.

If we rest content with accusing the Andaluz of indolence, we prove ourselves unfit to penetrate the subtle mystery of his soul and his culture. The Andaluz has worn his indolence for four thousand years, and it seems to do him no harm. Instead of putting on a schoolmaster's frown and accusing this very ancient people of laziness, as though we were giving them a black mark on a report card, let us open our eyes and sharpen our minds in an effort to understand them. Otherwise, we are likely to find ourselves in the position of glorifying indolence as the thing which has made the delightful and enduring life of Andalusia possible.

That famous Andalusian indolence is the formula for its culture. As I have indicated, culture consists in finding an equation with which we can solve the problems of life. But the problem of life may be posed in two different ways. If by life we mean an existence of maximum intensity, then the equation obliges us to summon maximum force. But should we see the problem in lesser terms, should we aspire merely to a *vita minima,* then, with an equivalent force, we will obtain an equation as perfect as that of the most heroic people in the world. This is what the Andaluz does. His solution is ingenious and profound. In place of increasing the emphasis on "to be," he lessens the emphasis on "ought"; in place of exerting himself to live, he lives so as not to exert himself, he makes avoidance of effort the principle of his existence.

It would, therefore, be a mistake to suppose that the Sevillian refuses to live like an Englishman of the "City"

because he is incapable of working so hard. Even if such a life were offered him as a magic gift, and without the need for working, he would refuse it with horror. Laziness in the Andaluz can be both a defect and a vice; but before it becomes a defect and a vice it is his ideal of existence.

This is the paradox which everyone who pretends to understand Andalusia must think about—laziness as an ideal and a mode of culture. If we replace laziness by its equivalent phrase "minimum effort" the idea remains the same, but becomes more respectable.

We live in a period which, more than any other in history, makes maximum effort its ideal of life, and it is, therefore, difficult for us to understand an attitude which is so contrary to our own. We are inclined to interpret laziness as a mere negation, as a pure absence of doing. But let us not exaggerate the indolence of the Andalusians. In the last analysis they must manage to do all that is necessary, for Andalusia continues to exist. Their laziness does not completely exclude work. Rather, it becomes the meaning of that work, and the air which work takes on. Theirs is work inspired by laziness and aimed at achieving more laziness; in every field it tends to be as small in amount as possible, as if it were ashamed of itself. This point of view becomes more understandable if we remember its converse—the ostentatious, petulant and impertinent air which work assumes among people who make it their ideal.

After all, as Frederick Schlegel said, laziness is the last trace of Paradise left to us, and Andalusians are the only people of the Western world who remain faithful to a Paradisaic ideal of life. Such fidelity would have been

impossible if the landscape allotted to Andalusia had not made this mode of existence easy. But do not make the mistake of believing that a culture is the mechanical effect of surroundings.

For a man who comes from the North, the luminous quality and the colorful grace of the Andalusian countryside is a terrific excitant which spurs him to feverish activity.[1] This leads him to suppose that Andalusian life would also be feverish if it were not kept down by indolence. But this is a mistake. He does not realize that the Andaluz takes inverse advantage of his surroundings. Andalusians have a minimum of vitality which comes to them easily from the soft air and the fruitful earth. This reduces their reaction to their surroundings to a minimum; they are not ambitious, and they live immersed, like vegetables, in the delicious atmosphere.

The Paradisaic life is, above all, a vegetable life. Paradise means garden. And the existence of a plant is differentiated from that of an animal by the very fact that it does not react to its surroundings. It is passive toward its medium. It receives nourishment through its roots, it drinks in sun and air through its leaves. It does not do anything. To a plant, the act of living consists both in receiving sustenance from without, and enjoying the act of receiving it. The sun is food; it is also a caress in the leaf's little green hand.

In an animal, sustenance and delight are more sharply separated. It must make an effort in order to get food,

[1] *Author's Note.* Chateaubriand says that when the hundred thousand sons of St. Louis arrived at the top of the Sierra Morena and suddenly saw the Andalusian landscape stretched before them, the spectacle produced such a tremendous effect that the battalions spontaneously presented arms to the marvelous land.

and then, with another set of functions, seek pleasure. The further North we go, the further apart are these two facets of life. To an Andaluz, the way an Englishman or a German works and the way he amuses himself—both of which are without moderation and quite separate—seem equally absurd. For his part, he prefers to work little and to amuse himself moderately, doing both at the same time, infusing both operations with an attitude toward life which flows soft and uninterrupted as an *adagio cantabile*.

One might almost say that Sundays and feast days in Andalusia seep through the rest of the week and imbue work days with gayety and gilded repose. But by the same token, the Andalusians give themselves up less to fiestas than do Northerners, and their feast days are less like orgies; also, their Sundays are more like Mondays or Wednesdays. At fiesta time, Sevilla seems orgiastic only to the Northern tourists; to the natives, the city always has about it a bit of the fiesta, and is never wholly given up to it.

The first sight of Andalusia dazzles the eye, and arouses an anticipation of exaltation. But wait until this superficial impression wears off. Then we will discover that Andalusian life excludes all exaltation, and is characterized by a careful toning down of everything, pain as well as pleasure.

The remarkable and the fundamental in Andalusia is this low-keyed life, this repertory of small and elemental delights which can be stretched out, on the same plane, to last throughout one's whole existence. Intense pleasures, feverishly concentrated in short periods and followed by hours of emptiness or bitterness, are not un-

derstood in Paradise. A vegetal Paradise takes its enjoyments on a small scale, but without a break; enjoys having its foliage take a sun bath, enjoys waving its branches up and down in a mild breeze, enjoys cooling its tongue with a passing shower. Strange as it may seem to a Northerner, this Andalusian corner of the planet supports millions of human beings whose chief and deepest pleasure in life is to enjoy its delightful weather. The satisfaction an Andaluz derives from his climate, his sky, his blue mornings and his golden twilights is unutterable. His pleasures are not internal, nor spiritual, nor founded on historic hypotheses. Of all this he has accepted the least that the pressure of the age will permit. But the true root of his being is submerged in that elemental delight—cosmic, sure and enduring.

The Andaluz has a vegetal sense of existence, and by preference he lives wholly within his own skin. Good and evil have a cutaneous value; good is what is smooth; bad is what feels harsh. His real and lasting fiesta lies in the atmosphere which penetrates his whole being, gives the blessing of light and warmth to all his acts, and is, in short, the model for his conduct. The Andaluz wants his culture to be like his atmosphere.

This people lives close to the land, belongs to it, in the essential sense of that phrase. To them, the true Andaluz is primarily the country and the air of Andalusia. The race, the people, come afterward. They feel themselves a secondary factor, mere beneficiaries of this terrestrial delight, and in this sense, rather than because of any special human qualities they may possess, they believe themselves to be a privileged people. Every Andaluz has the marvelous idea that to be an Andaluz is a

piece of crazy good fortune with which Heaven has favored him. Just as the Hebrew must be judged apart from other peoples because God promised him a land flowing with milk and honey, so the Andaluz knows himself to be privileged because, without any previous promise, God has assigned him to the best corner of the world. Compared to a man of the promised land, he is a man of the land favored by Heaven, the son of Adam to whom Paradise has been restored.

This peculiar enthusiasm for his particular section of the world is the fundamental basis of the Andalusian soul. The union of man and earth here is not a simple fact, but is raised to a spiritual relationship, is idealized, is almost a religion. He lives on his land, not merely in a natural sense, as other peoples do, but in concept and even in ideal. The Galician away from his land is somber; the Asturian and the Basque are sorrowful if they must live anywhere but in their narrow, misty valleys. Yet their link with the maternal landscape is blind and almost physical, completely lacking in any sense of spirit. The Andaluz, on the other hand, feels none of these mechanical repercussions of sentiment when he is away, yet he holds living in Andalusia as a conscious ideal. A Galician outside of Galicia can go on being a Galician, but a transplanted Andaluz is no longer an Andaluz. The peculiarity that makes him himself evaporates. To be an Andaluz is to live with the Andalusian soil, to respond to its cosmic graces, to be always open to the inspirations of its atmosphere.

This holding to the land of Andalusia as an ideal seems to us Northerners too simple, primitive, vegetative, poor. Perhaps it is. But it is, at the same time, so

basic and elemental, so antecedent to everything else, that the rest of life is soaked in it from birth. This is why the whole of Andalusian existence, especially the humble daily deeds which, among other peoples, are so ugly and so devoid of spiritual content, has this divine air of ideality which gives it style and embroiders it with grace. While other peoples are valuable because of the upper stories of their lives, the Andaluz is important on the ground floor; it is what he says and does every moment that counts, the unpremeditated gesture, the trivial custom.

But the opposite of this is also true—this people whose vegetative basis of life has about it more of the ideal than that of any other, holds scarcely any other ideal in life. Outside of his daily existence, the Andaluz is the least idealistic man I know.

V

Castile and the Asturias—Two Civilizations

ONE summer I lived for a month and a half in the Asturias. Twice that amount of time would not be enough to know any district body and soul, even though you spent all your days in studying it. In the Asturias, where landscape and hearts alike are interwoven with rare tints and subtle hues, you are much more aware of this insufficiency of time. Therefore I spent my month and a half not so much studying Asturian life, as resting from my Castilian life.

The dry upland air of Castile touches the worn fibers of our nerves with fingers that are subtly hypnotic, and that make them vibrate like harp strings. Anything, though it be light as a breath, will make us tremble from head to foot. Under this treatment, a Castilian becomes a dangerous instrument. For him, to live is to spend oneself. Perhaps it is unjust to ask of us anything but sudden outbursts and acts of exaltation for the greater glory of God, that is to say, the terrible God of Castile, who comes in August astride the sun to survey his domain. Under

his dreadful and despotic gaze the roads are pulverized, the leaves of the forest wither, the rivers dry up, and souls are consumed in burning ardor. Some say that this is why we Castilians have a certain glorious propensity for heroism. Others attribute our crimes of passion to the high atmosphere. However this may be, there is no doubt that heroism and criminal tendencies, however they may differ in other aspects, are both equally unhygienic.

This is why the upland, taut as a drumhead under the summer sun, sends us down to the coast every two or three years. Down there, the sea makes the air soft and gentle. We come back with healthy nerves. Perhaps it is not our nerves alone that are cured. Perhaps it is also our hopes, which are gashed with wounds like the skin of a Nazarene. We come back with renewed strength, and the first fine breath of upland air draws an arpeggio of gratitude from our nerves.

To enter the heart of the Asturias, one must go through the ports of the Cantabrian mountain range—Leitariegos, Pájares, Pedrafita, El Pontón, Pan de Ruedas. Those are true ports, sublime and majestic places where solitude reigns supreme. They are not Leon and Castile, they are not the Asturias. They are places from which to elect one or the other. On either side two landscapes stretch away which are totally different from each other, which hold within themselves, as the scabbard holds the sword, two different modes of living, two different and antagonistic ways of saying "yes" to life.

Toward the South, you need hardly descend the slope to find yourself in the plateau region of Leon, wide, solitary, so dark a green that it is almost black, crossed by an occasional fairy-tale fox with his rusty red back, his

pointed ears and his busy nose. Farther on, that land begins which is land and nothing else—land without verdure, yellow earth, red earth, silver earth—a naked landscape emphasized now and then by rows of tall black poplars. The plain rolls as if in torment, and at times it turns on itself to form gorges and ravines, sudden headlands and steep slopes. The towns are in unexpected, but always strategic, places; one of them gazes out over two valleys, another clings to the cleft of a hill. Always inhospitable, always in ruins, always with the church in the center, its brave tower looking a bit tired, but resting as a good warrior rests, on foot, the point of his broadsword thrust into the ground, his elbow on its hilt.

The atmosphere is completely diaphanous, and the light, meeting no obstacle, floods it in torrents. Each color reaches its maximum strength.

There are prejudiced folk who consider only those landscapes beautiful where verdure prevails. I think that there is, in this opinion, a certain confused remnant of utilitarianism, which is alien and even inimical to æsthetic contemplation. A green landscape promises an abundant and comfortable life. The petty and imperishable bourgeois who is always working in a corner of our souls has an interested hand in our otherwise disinterested enthusiasm for splendid vegetation. The æsthetic value of emerald verdure means nothing to him, but—hypocrite that he is—he praises it while he is secretly thinking of the harvest it betokens and the good food it will bring him.

On the other hand, Don Francisco Giner,* to whom

* *Ed. Note.* Don Francisco Giner was one of the leaders of the movement for modern education in Spain.

only the useless was the necessary, used to insist on the superior beauty of the Castilian landscape.

Undoubtedly it is not green; on the other hand, it presents a panorama of coral and gold, of violet and burnished silver. Physiologists know that red and yellow automatically increase our pulse beats, and that the number increases in direct ratio to the size of the hot-toned surface stretched before our eyes. But these investigators lament the fact that they could not carry on their experiments with great flaming planes; they are men of the Middle and North of Europe, where green fields hold the horizon close. They should have come to Spain. Here in Castile they would find that incendiary landscape which does not exist in Europe.* Here the fields of gold and scarlet set one's pulses at a gallop.

The strength with which each color comes converts everything—land, buildings, people—into vibrating images devoid of weight or thickness. It is a world for the eye, an airy and unreal world which, like the cities that pile up in sunset clouds, seems always on the point of vanishing. Castile, as a bit of visual unreality, is one of the most beautiful things in the world.

But there are ruins everywhere. . . .

From Pájares or Leitariegos let us turn our backs on Castile, and look toward the Asturias. What do we see? The first thing we Castilians see is that we cannot see. Used to our upland atmosphere, we launch a glance on the wind, without a care or a suspicion. In Castile the act of looking is like shooting an arrow at the infinite; neither on leaving the eye nor in the rest of its flight does

* *Ed. Note.* The implication contained in this phrase that Spain is a thing apart from Europe is characteristically Spanish.

it meet with any obstacle. When tired of flying through space, the arrow falls of its own weight and pierces a point in the earth which is almost a point in the sky. In Castile, the glance creates and fixes the horizon just as, according to Darwin, on the broad Pampas the foot chooses and at the same moment creates the road.

The first careless glance launched from Pájares toward the Asturias is always a visual failure. Scarcely does it leave the eye when it collides with a cottony substance in which it loses its way a hundred times; this is the fog, the everlasting fog which rises in billows like a deep breath from the valley. Across it, rising and falling, goes the Castilian glance, and only when it is completely enveloped in the fog does it remember its vows, pull itself together, and move ahead in a straight line. Bang! Halfway through it collides with something impenetrable. It is the valley's vertical frontier, the slope of the neighboring hill. The poor glance falls bruised and wounded. We have to pick it up tenderly and say to it, "Come, come! Do you not know that the whole world is not like Castile, that the world is rich, varied and many-sided? Castile is broad and flat like a young man's chest; other lands are made with narrow valleys and rounded hills, like the breast of a woman. The world has many ways. In Castile one sees better than anywhere else—but—one eats so badly! And this would matter very little if one thought well in Castile. But one does not think well, and more than that, one does not feel well. Even though the heat of the sun is father to the flowers, it is also the power that parches them; in the torrid zone there is no earth that is not baked. By the same token, lyricism is difficult for people whose hearts hold nothing but passion. In our almost

torrid land psychologies also are almost torrid. There is no sweet love in them, nor white friendship, nor green hope, nor reverence blue as myrtle flowers. Yet there are great virtues in Castile; for centuries the poets have been busy singing them.

"It is time you turned, glance, to those other peoples in Spain who have virtues and vices which are complementary to ours. If, for nine centuries, the mission of Castile has been to reduce peninsular variety to unity, perhaps its present duty is to see that Spanish life turns this unity back into a variety which shall be stronger and more fruitful than it was in early days."

With some such discourse we persuade our eyes to survey the Asturian landscape which is so strange to them. It means a process of transmigration. From being Castilian eyes they must convert themselves into Asturian eyes. This ability to look at many things and to be each one of them for a little while is one of man's most delicate gifts. When it is strong, there is no fear that a man will lose his own personality. Certain of not dissolving into the man next door, he can wander on from heart to heart, and bring back to himself the prizes he has found. But in our country it is not customary to live thus, open to all the winds that blow. Almost everyone seems tormented by the suspicion that someone is going to rob him of his being—his small ability to reason, his tiny fortune, his place in the political or academic hierarchy. His whole life is converted into a series of defense tactics compounded of hatred, bitterness, malediction, intrigue and fraud.

How few are those who give themselves to the luxury of paying no heed to their own defense! The longer I

live, the more am I convinced that most of the evil deeds committed in our society—and we do little else but commit them—are due to weakness. What are people who feel themselves weak when faced with existence going to do? They have not strength enough for themselves. How, then, shall they lend strength to others? How are they going to be just, to be enthusiastic?

But Pájares and Leitariegos are not good places for sermons. A cold north wind blows across the divide, and the mist drifting up from the valley is frigid when it reaches the heights. This question of ethics may cost us a good cold, and, moreover, no one is listening. Deep green mountain meadows surrounded by vertical rocks lie all about us—a solemn and solitary cow grazes nearby. Clouds hang on the rocks.

What does the word "Asturias" mean? Perhaps every school child knows. But I am completely ignorant; in the Castilian corner where I am writing there are no books to rescue me from this ignorance; and there is, in the very air, a propensity to enjoy not knowing things well. Whatever it may mean, I find a suggestion for travelers in the fact that the word is plural. There are many Asturias besides those of Oviedo and Santillana—there are so very many that it would be hard to count them all.

A narrow valley, green and damp, good soil, round hills pressed close against one another, shutting out the four winds. Here and there, houses with their walls painted the color of a bull's blood and their galleries indigo; at one side, the granary on its pillars, a rough and archaic little temple dedicated to an ancient religion in which God was the only force that could assure a harvest. Some red cows. Chestnut trees everywhere, cover-

ing all the hillsides with their thick foliage. Live oaks, willows, laurels, pine groves, orchards, beech forests—an endless covering of trees through which narrow paths open to disclose a girl on foot who turns around to look at you. And the soft blue mist turns over and over in the valley as in a cup, filling it to the brim. There is no emptiness in this landscape; from one end to the other it forms a compact and tangible unit. On the solid earth is the magnificent vegetation; above it, the clouds; and in the clouds the stars that tremble like tear drops. Everything is at hand, everything is close together. It is a small world in itself, which listens and trembles as the creaking wheels of a far-away cart go by.

This tiny hidden valley is the Asturias—there are many more of them, and the Asturias is the sum of them all. La Mancha is a single enormous space, but the Asturias is a series of small homogeneous and independent spaces.

Day by day, modern geography gives more and more importance to the idea of the "natural region." It may be said that this has come to be the chief phenomenon for geographic investigation. An archangel flying through sidereal space sees the earth as a heavenly body; but to man, the thought of the earth as a heavenly body is a piece of physical abstraction. We have no adequate impression of it; in order to picture it to ourselves we must beg the help of symbolism or allegory, both of which are made by the mind. And consequently, granted that Spain is a mental creation of our own, we have more influence on it than it has on us. Compared with all these abstract entities, the natural region affirms its quality of reality in a very simple way—by setting it before our eyes. We

are able to get an adequate visual image of a region; and by the same token, only such part of the planet whose typical characteristics can be seen at a glance should be accepted as a region—a geographic unit.

I wish the geographers would try my way of defining a region. Confused by complicated formulæ, they would find that the most exact concept lies in the picture that the emigrant carries in his mind, and which, in hours of solitude or sorrow, he revives in his own imagination.

Only in the form of one's own region does the earth have a vital influence on man. The configuration of the land, covered with familiar plants, bathed in air which may be damp or dry, diaphanous or pellucid—this is the great sculptor of mankind. As water, drop by drop, wears away the stone, so the landscape models its men, custom by custom. A people is, in the last analysis, a repertory of customs. Momentary bursts of genius serve to mark only its profile.

There are districts which dismiss man from the land and shut him up in cities. This happens in Castile; man lives in a town and goes to the country to work under the sun and under the hail in order to wring a bit of bread from the bitter soil. When the hard task is ended, man flees from the land and rests in the town. This is how those great Castilian solitudes were formed, where the land is empty, without habitation or human being, for league on league. In the Asturias, on the other hand, the whole countryside is a habitation, a domestic place of rest and of pleasure. The land is a lap where man works and rests, dreams and sings. Those Cantabrian valleys have gone on echoing songs for a thousand years, songs

that fly up like birds through the branches. In Castile, the countryside is mute.

And I think that each landscape reproaches the other. "Land without fragrance or solitude," says the Castilian, drunk on thyme and marjoram, to the Asturian. And the Asturian valley retorts disdainfully, "Land without songs!"

This power of the Asturias to keep man on the land has had a deep influence on the people who live there. Economic prosperity has brought about the building of delightful towns all over the province; there are old and noble cities like Gijon and Oviedo which carry on a brilliant tradition of fine culture. And yet I find in all Asturians a more or less hidden rural background which persists. Under city clothes and city manners the country hearts go right on beating.

I would be very much interested to know whether an Asturian, on reading this, would frown. Because that would show the enormous diversity in ways of thinking which God has put on the earth. There may be Asturians who would like to see the Asturias converted, bit by bit, into a Cantabrian Paris; while I, an inveterate Madrileño in my hopes for Spain, cling to the thought of Asturian ruralism.

It is not easy to put what I mean into a few words. Not for a long time have I had a chance to put it down on paper, and therefore I have preferred to develop the idea in conversation. In brief, I think that the only way to prosperity for Spain is the country way. The modern city is an economic and ideological form created by capitalism during the last few centuries. The races which succeeded in producing this type of city when the time was

ripe were the ones which acquired supremacy. No one can doubt that, had we had the ability to do it, it would have been the best thing for us. But the best is the enemy of the good. We have not known how, we could not organize Spain according to the modern city system. By violating all our inmost beliefs, our ways of thinking, and our economy, we have created certain cities which pretend to be self-centered. They are, so to speak, islands of modernity, surrounded on all sides by deserts. These cities are the exception, yet we have entrusted to them the moral and material government of Spain. On the one hand, a certain number of streets with electric street cars, and a few millions of citizens who come and go in them. On the other, league upon league of countryside and millions upon millions of Spaniards who plow the *vega,* weed the garden, and turn their flocks out to pasture. The instruments of socialization—codes, Parliament, press, schools—are little enough prepared for the first group. For the second—the Spanish population as a whole, the country, the country men, country thoughts, country nerves—they are not prepared at all. This lack of a proper balance and proportion is fatal.

And this does not mean that I am going to add my voice to those that sing the sad dirge of the poor, deserted farmer. I am not talking about pitying the farmer. On the contrary, I am talking about exploiting him for his own good and that of the nation, as a human being and as a citizen. A people is a sum total of desires, interests, passions and intelligences. The larger the throng of live consciences which act interchangeably on each other in a social unit, whether they agree or disagree, the stronger will its power be. At the present time, four-fifths of the

people in Spain make no contribution to the national synthesis. I am not very much interested in whether or not their votes affect Parliament; but it seems to me enormously important that their feeling and their thinking evaporate and leave no trace, that they never become part of the national feeling and thinking. I, a professor in the University, need the collaboration of country thinking much more than the countryman needs mine; thanks to the spiritual absence of those four-fifths of Spain, our life is a clumsy fiction, and however great my efforts may be, I know very well that four-fifths of my ideas are condemned to be pure artifice.

Our first problem in order of urgency should be entitled "To make Spanish life real." I much prefer a real 18th century to a fictitious 20th century. To bring this about, I see no other remedy than to turn present-day influences upside down—have the capitals of provinces take Madrid to task, and the villages correct the capitals of provinces.

The theme is inexhaustible. In developing it, one must also point out the perils which ruralism carries with it. At the present moment, I touch on it merely to justify my sincere enthusiasm when I found in the Asturias a race of men who were able to take part in contemporary life without losing their sense of solidarity with their native countryside.

"He comes back as much of a cowboy as he was when he went away," I heard said in a grocery store in Pravia of a lean lad who had apparently just returned from America. Those men, who come back just as good cowboys as they were the day they left, are the ones who—

without rhetoric, speeches, gestures or vanities—are making of the Asturians a people able to realize in Spain's village atmosphere that minimum of modernity which is essential for floating on the current of the times.

VI

The Meaning of Castles in Spain

IT is a great delight to roll along the little roads of Spain. The land is so empty that one can see just how they cling to the planet's naked curves. They knot the landscape together to form the great tapestry which is Spain, and if they were to disappear, if someone should, on a night, walk off with them, the country would be left confused and inchoate, each clod turning against every other, barbarous and intractable. The network of roads is the arterial system of the nation, at once unifying it and keeping the blood circulating through the whole body. Treatises on political economy have said this any number of times, and the most surprising thing about it is that it seems to be true.

The car comes to a sudden stop in the high land near Avila. The yellow wheat fields are interrupted by piles of livid rock. The contrast between the golden beauty of the fields and the harsh faces of these stones, so sudden, abrupt, and unjustified, affronts the eye. Either they must

have been vomited forth by the earth, or cast down as curses from on high.

While the mechanic labors, and I rail against destiny, and the sun beats cruelly down, the two boys who are with me disappear. Where can they have gone in this immense solitude? I remember the lament for the little dead boy—

> "Donde habrá ido hoy a cazar
> el pequeño cazador de libélulas?"

And the grim landscape sends shivers up my back.

But the children reappear on top of one of those rock castles, shouting gayly, whirling their thin arms like windmills in the wind. They climb up and down the rough surface of the rocks, they hide and find each other, they shoot imaginary arrows and play Indian under the brazen sky. The world is soft and plastic clay for a child's enormous vitality—out of these savage rocks he makes a magnificent plaything.

The purpose of this excursion is to collect castles and cathedrals. It is true that there are many sights which are more delicate both in form and color. But the monstrous bulk of castle or cathedral against the sky is a challenge both to mind and emotion. There is undoubtedly a trace of the novel-reader in us, a love of intrigue and melodrama which surges to the surface when these enormous masses of stone loom on the horizon.

At the left, far away, the Cathedral of Segovia sails amid yellow wheat fields like a great ship dwarfing the small town at her feet. At this hour she is the color of olives, and she cleaves the wheat with her *abside* as with a prow.

Then come the castles—Fuentes de Valdepero, Monzón, Aguilar de Campóo; to tell the truth, the route I have chosen this time is not very rich in castles. But it does not matter. Every time one of them appears it acts on the memory like an incantation, filling it with towers and battlemented walls. Castle after castle seen in other wanderings, they come forth from recollection's hidden depths like a flock when the shepherd whistles. Each one strikes its own peculiar attitude and brings its landscape with it. Here is the castle of Atienza; it flowers high above another natural castle which the rocks made in a sudden fervor of exaltation over the poor earth. "Atienza, una peña muy fuert!" says the singer of *Myo Cid,* and then, with vague melancholy, "Atienza, las torres que moros las han!" The high rock foundation is shaped like a ship, with a caravel's prow holding the remains of a tower. You can see it from a great distance, drifting idly between sea and sky.

This next is the castle of Berlanga, silver colored, rampant upon living rock, an immense upthrust of limestone which also shines from afar like silver, so that the whole thing seems armored in gleaming plate. At its feet are the walls of a Renaissance palace which belonged, if I am not mistaken, to the Lord High Constable of Castile, and still farther down is a convent of nuns. From the tower I have many times watched the nuns at play in the safety of their flower garden.

And this is the castle of Mombeltrán, in a glen below Gredos, all beautifully ordered, full of roundnesses, guarding the valley where the five towns of Mombeltrán stand grazing. . . . This next is the castle of Leire, near

the Pyrenees, the cradle of the kingdom of Navarre—rude, primitive, with a low, heavy ceiling, the earliest of the Romanic type. Its arcades are so narrow that we speculate as to whether they might not be exactly the width of a Visigoth skull. In the background, pine groves, conifers, all the Alpine flora. Spain touching edges with humid Europe. . . . The castle of Jadraque. Arid once more, the earth bruised and red. An abrupt cone, sides almost vertical, and, balanced on its apex, the great bulk defying all the countryside. Gigantic attitudes rising out of the underworld of memory! Almost always broken, holding high a jagged head, they give the naked countryside about them the feeling of a bleached jawbone with only one tooth left.

The melodramatic effect which the castles have on us is understandable. In the realm of visual fauna sought by a traveler, the castles and cathedrals represent a species halfway between pure nature and pure humanity. A solitary landscape without any buildings is mere geology. The huddle of buildings in a town or a village is too human, too civilian and too artificial. The cathedral and the castle, on the other hand, are at once nature and history. They seem to be natural excrescences, born of the rocky depths below the soil, which, on a day, took on human meaning. The stone, without ceasing to be stone, was suddenly charged with spiritual force. This combination always appeals to souls which are not locked tight in rationalism. In his secret heart man has little use for his reason when he sees it close at hand and in daily use. Yet, he is definitely moved when he sees it from the outside, as a cosmic phenomenon, a

force in nature. Then he perceives that reason—that is to say, the ability to reflect—is, in the last analysis, as unstudied and elemental a power as instinct or the force of gravity.

There are periods in which humanity manages to forget this, and lives solely on an intrahuman level, blind and deaf toward the rest of the cosmos. These are the periods of the agora, the town square, the academy and the parliament, in which the world is vaguely imagined as something obeying municipal laws, in which man's small intelligence decides everything, with no fogginess and no mystery. These periods are undoubtedly clear and well-defined, but there is little juice in them. They are the periods called "classic," in which the mind is reduced to a limited, provincial existence and takes itself much too seriously.

After rousing our sense of melodrama, and the tinge of romanticism which all peoples with a long history carry in their souls, the castles give us ideas. The extravagant forms, which moved us emotionally, now invite us to meditation. Like a giraffe or an okapi, they owe their shapes to their extreme egotism. After all, these are houses which men built to live in. What kind of a life must a man lead for his house to become a castle? Obviously it would be a life as different from ours as the mind of a modern can imagine. This stone monster with towers like biceps and battlements like tufts of hair, with gargoyles and corbels, pushes us to the opposite extreme of human ways.

A Greek or Roman portico, a Circus, an Odeon, seem nearer to the ways of our own life than these mansions of defense and offense, frowning and aggressive, lords

of their hilltops, forever gnawing with broken teeth at the blue sky above them.

As a matter of fact, with the castle as a *tertium comparationis,* the ancient seems very like the modern. The castle is the extreme form of the non-modern. The ancient is much more to our taste than is this magnificent remnant of barbarism. Therefore it is not strange that modernism should have been nourished on classicism, and that modern sciences and modern revolutions should bear Greco-Latin names. Our public life, both intellectual and political, is much more at home in the agora and the forum than on the parade ground.

Why is this? For a reason which is very simple, and profound. The Middle Ages was a highly personal period. Antiquity was impersonal. So is our modern age, on the surface and in public life, impersonal.

A modern man is nothing he has no rights and no qualities—unless he is a citizen of some state.* But the state is a collective entity which exists over and above any single individual. That "the others" take precedence over any one of us is a condition of our legal, moral and social existence. The essence of our being is, therefore, woven into the collective entity. The same thing was true in the ancient world. The individual began by being a member of a city, and only as such had he any human existence.

The mediæval lord, on the other hand, had no acquaintance with the state as such. Either he possessed rights from birth, or else he gained them with his mailed fist. These rights belonged to him because he was who he was, and quite apart from any recognition on the part

* *Ed. Note.* Compare Señor Ortega's discussion of the roots of this on p. 77.

of any authority. Rights were the prerogative of the individual. Public life was, strictly speaking, private life. The state was secondary, being merely a sort of crossroads for personal relations. This method of establishing legality implies an essential instability in a man's rights. Today the man who believes himself to have certain rights feels himself secure. In those days he was insecure because of his very excellence, which no one could give him, nor could anyone confirm his right to it. To have it and to keep it meant that he must go on winning it afresh every day. The idea of right which went with lordship holds war as an integral and essential part of itself; this is the reverse of the ancient and the modern idea, which comes to be synonymous with peace.

Let there be no misunderstanding here, and no assumption that the mediæval lord believed right to be synonymous with might. I am trying to explain something much more subtle than that.

The ideal was that the perfect "worthy man" must be extremely sensitive and fastidious in everything that affected his rights. Had Spain not been so slow—before Menéndez Pidál and the young law historians—in exploring mediæval themes, someone would have pointed out that the Cid, who is the perfect prototype of the noble, was actually a very clever jurist. This is what his name "Campeador" means. He was not so much a warrior as a fighter in the field of the law, and this is why he is always seen moving amid law suits from the time of the Oath at Santa Gadea, which was actually a speech in dynastic opposition on a constitutional theme.

For these men, might is not right, but it is justice. The Germanic tribes were very late in accepting the interven-

tion of a Tribunal that had the power to sanction or annul. A public judge de-personalizes litigation. As a consequence of their tendency to exalt the personal, these Northern peoples thought that anyone who believed he had a right should himself defend it. To a certain extent, having a right and being able to defend it were one and the same to them. And this was true from the very earliest days.

Seek, in his *History of the Fall of the Ancient World,* says, "Nothing so enraged the Germanic tribes against their conquerors as seeing justice rendered in the Roman fashion. For this reason, the jurists were picked from among the prisoners of the Teutonburg forest to be executed after the most refined torturing. And it was not so much the content of the law that provoked that torturing—the *ius gentium* of the Romans was so malleable that it could be adapted to the customs of all the conquered peoples—as it was the fact of public justice as such, the necessity of submitting to an authority, and the intrusion of that authority into questions which were private matters between individuals. This was what, to a 'free' German, seemed insupportable."

I believe that if we delve beneath appearances, which are always confusing and contradictory, and search for the spirit that inspired the great tendencies of Germanic law, we will find that same definite resistance to dissolving the personal in the public. For Cicero, "liberty" meant the rule of established law. To be free meant to make use of laws and to live by them. For the German, law is always secondary. It arises after personal liberty has been recognized; then personal liberty freely creates the law.

But is this not the principle of modern liberalism? Under the guise of an apparent resemblance to ancient democracies, are not the modern ones inspired by an antagonistic idea which the Greek or the Roman would never have envisaged—that liberty is over and above the law and the state? Democracy, liberalism are such confused concepts in modern heads that this bit of pure truth —liberalism is the fruit of the castles on their hills—sounds like a paradox. We will see why.

Liberalism and Democracy

This experiment of submitting the chemistry of our souls to the castles as a reagent is a fruitful one. Quite without premeditation, it gives us a precipitate which is the law of the European spirit.

At first sight the castles seemed the symbol of a life completely contrary to our own. We fled from them, and took refuge in the ancient democracies as having more in common with our regular forms of public existence—law and the state. But as soon as we try to feel ourselves citizens in the manner of an Athenian or a Roman, we find within ourselves a strange resistance. The fact is that the ancient state took possession of the whole man, without leaving him anything for his own private use. In some subterranean depth of our being, this complete absorption into the collective body of the *Polis,* or *Civitas,* repels us. Apparently we are not so purely, so solely citizens as the fire of oratory would make us proclaim in meetings and editorials.

Then the castles, under their somewhat theatrical attitudes, yield up a mine of inspirations which are very

close to those that mean the most to us nowadays. Their towers were built in order to defend the individual against the state. Señores, long live liberty!

But as a moment ago we were shouting "Long live democracy!" we have to scheme a bit in order to tie these two bits of enthusiasm together. The history of Europe for the last two centuries lies in that link between two ideas which are essentially unrelated. Liberalism and democracy are confused in our heads, and frequently, when we want the one, we shout for the other. It is therefore a good thing, every once in a while, to polish up the two ideas and examine into their actual meaning.

Liberalism and democracy happen to be two things which begin by having nothing to do with each other, and end by having, so far as tendencies are concerned, meanings that are mutually antagonistic. Democracy and liberalism are two answers to two completely different questions.

Democracy answers this question—"who ought to exercise the public power?" The answer it gives is—the exercise of public power belongs to the citizens as a body.

But this question does not touch on what should be the realm of the public power. It is solely concerned with determining to whom such power belongs. Democracy proposes that we all rule; that is, that we are sovereign in all social acts.

Liberalism, on the other hand, answers this other question—"regardless of who exercises the public power, what should its limits be?" The answer it gives is—"whether the public power is exercised by an autocrat or by the people, it cannot be absolute; the individual has rights which are over and above any interference by the state."

This, then, tends to limit the intervention of the public power.

The foregoing analysis shows the unrelated character of the two principles. It is possible to be very liberal, and not at all democratic, or very democratic and not at all liberal.

The ancient democracies were absolute powers, more absolute than those of any European monarch of the period called absolutist. Greeks and Romans did not recognize the inspiration of liberalism. More than that, the idea that the individual might limit the power of the state, that there could be any part of the person which is outside public jurisdiction, had no place in classic mentalities. It is a Germanic idea, it is the genius that put one stone on top of another and built castles. Where Germanic culture has not penetrated, liberalism has no hold. When Russia, for instance, wanted a substitute for Czarist absolutism, she imposed a democracy no less absolute. The Bolshevik is anti-liberal.

Always and everywhere, public power tends to recognize no limits whatsoever. It does not care whether it rests in a single hand or in the hands of all of us. It would therefore be the most ingenuous of errors to believe that by means of democracy we can avoid absolutism. On the contrary, there is no fiercer autocracy than that diffuse and irresponsible kind exercised by the *demos*. For this reason the truly liberal man will regard his own democratic fervor with reserve, if not distrust, and will, so to speak, limit it to himself.

In contrast to the public power and the law of the state, liberalism means private right and privilege. The individual is more or less exempt from the interventions

toward which sovereignty always tends. But the basic principle of privilege, as attached to the individual, did not exist until certain French, Gothic, and Burgundian nobles claimed it for themselves. That the subject matter of certain of these privileges is inacceptable today, is a secondary consideration. The important, the decisive thing was the fact of having brought into the world the principle of liberty—or as they themselves said more precisely, "la franquía." Later progress has been limited to discussing, on the one hand, what should be the realms of subject and action in which the individual must remain "franca"; on the other, which individuals had a right to such freedom. In this, as in so many other things, the Western bourgeoisie did nothing more than imitate the ways invented by the old feudal aristocracies. The "rights of man" are "franquías" and nothing more. In them, the juridical sense of the Middle Ages, which our modern myopia considers as being contrary to our own, takes its most abstract and general form. The lords of these castles educated the Gallo-Romans, the Celt-Iberians and the Tuscans toward liberalism.

It is curious to note that anyone of the ecclesiastical and anti-liberal party who makes history in France insists on the Gallo-Roman influence, which is the absolutist factor in the French nation. On the other hand the liberal spirit, confused by modern prejudices concerning the Middle Ages, does not dare to affirm the Frankish influence, although secretly attracted by it. Yet the tradition of liberty in France is nowhere better put than in a series of works written by nobles who, when faced with encroaching royalty, proclaimed their ancient privileges. Read Boulainvilliers, for instance, or Montlosier. (As a

résumé, I recommend the reading of the *Lettres sur l'histoire de France* with which Thierry prefaces his *Merovingian Tales*. The author shows no suspicion of the question we are discussing. Nevertheless he clearly outlines the liberal meaning of feudalism, understanding by feudalism the whole process from the invasion up to the 14th century.)

It is my impression that our ideas about the Middle Ages are about to undergo a change. No one seems to have been able to look at events simply and clearly. German historians, ashamed that their German ancestors were so little democratic,* have persisted in forcing reality to prove that they were acquainted with the public right. Of course they were. It is too basic a factor in human living together to be overlooked. The problem lies in the predominance of private right over public right, or vice versa. The German was more liberal than he was democratic. The Mediterranean was more democratic than he was liberal. The English Revolution is a clear example of liberalism. The French, of democracy. Cromwell wanted to limit the power of Parliament and the King. Robespierre wanted the Clubs to govern. So the *droits de l'homme* reached the English Parliament by means of the United States. The French—being Mediterranean peoples—were more interested in *égalité*.

As I said earlier, the castle is nothing but a house put up by certain men so that they might live their lives in it. What kind of a life must one lead in order that his house shall be a castle? The form and uses of domesticity

* *Ed. Note.* This was written before Hitler ordered the re-making of German history.

are the expression of the everyday. The castle presupposes daily warfare—life as a series of battles.

It is very difficult for us to picture a soul to whom living is synonymous with waging war. Our lives are the exact contrary of this. We see war as an incident, an accident which befalls life and suspends it. It seems to us so completely a negation of what we think life is that we see in it hardly anything but death.

Ever since Spencer's time, the spirit of industry has customarily been opposed to the spirit of war, and has unhesitatingly been preferred to it. Men of the 19th century were glad to be considered industrialists rather than warriors. War seemed to them a barbarous thing—which is strictly true—and barbarism seemed to be utterly bad —which is not so evident.

The word barbarous has, in common usage, been stripped of its own meaning and left only with a certain sense of the derogatory. The same thing happened to the word savage. One forgets that they signify two types of spirit which constitute two inescapable stages in the historical development of mankind, as inescapable as childhood and youth in an individual life. And it would be just as grave an error to consider maturity the normal and estimable stage—as if infancy and youth were illnesses—as it is to scorn savagery and barbarism. It is much wiser to give heed to this platitude:—civilization is the daughter of barbarism and the granddaughter of savagery.

It would be truly deplorable for a cultivated man to abandon his culture and turn barbarous again. But perhaps one may say that, just as an adult keeps a certain well-spring of youthfulness and even of childishness, so a

cultivated man would do well to keep alive a certain background of barbarism. Everyone who has known a great man well has been surprised to find that his soul preserved a certain youthful halo. Progress consists, not in the annihilation of yesterday by today, but in keeping that essence of yesterday which had the strength to create this better today.

This moderate defense of barbarism may be thought to be a paradox, or an attempt at being subtle; as a matter of fact it is a most simple truth, as humble as it is clear. It merely insists on noting that culture springs not from a previous culture, but from those pre-cultural powers and virtues of which it is the fruit. Every culture has its root in barbarism, and every renewal of culture is engendered in that fountain head; when that is exhausted, culture dries up and disappears. It is therefore a mistake to want the one without being willing to accept the other. Anyone who desires a new culture in Europe tomorrow must make sure that there is today a certain minimum of barbarous virtues. As our truthful Campoamor sang, "Diocletian, cultivating lettuce in Salerno, said, 'You cannot have butterflies in the summertime unless you are willing to feed worms in the winter.' "

The most acute minds in Europe today are wondering if those vital resources, upon which culture flourishes, are exhausted. Especially the warrior spirit.

I mean by the warrior spirit an habitual state of mind which does not find in the risk implied in an enterprise a sufficient reason for avoiding it. The industrial spirit, on the contrary, considers danger to be the deciding factor, and lives its life in a perpetual state of caution. War is merely one of the many forms which the warrior spirit

may take. Its essential is that the danger of death exists. Its name is synonymous with risk, for war is the deliberate organization and preparation of danger for the enemy.

In the warrior spirit, the appetite for action prevails over the fear of danger because of a basic confidence in itself. The industrial spirit, on the other hand, feels a fundamental lack of confidence in itself.

The stage of barbarism is the period of faith in oneself. This is the great virtue which should be injected into our own cautious and careful age. It was barbarism's great gift—neither the savage who lives in perpetual terror, nor the modern who is suspicious and uncertain, possesses it.

But it must be emphasized that the warrior spirit is one thing, and the military spirit quite another. Militarism was unknown in the Middle Ages. The soldier signifies the degeneration of the warrior, corrupted by the industrialist. The soldier is an armed industrialist, a bourgeois who has invented gun powder. He was organized by the state to make war on the castles. With his coming, long distance warfare appeared, the abstract war waged by cannon and machine gun.

Death as Creation

It is worth while to revive discussion of the theoretical difference between the warrior spirit and the industrial spirit. Since Spencer's time the world has undergone great changes, and in no part of the world are those changes greater than in our own hearts. Let there be ever so slight a shift in that mechanism, and the changes in the universal point of view are tremendous.

To Spencer, industry seemed much too good and war

much too bad. Today, we begin to see that even though they represent two opposite ways of thinking, each has an influence over the other, each fertilizes the other and limits it, so that we are faced not so much with a choice between them as by a fruitful combination of the two. In this, as in everything else, the typical desire of our age is for the integration of opposites rather than for exclusion. In place of "one or the other" we feel it would be much better to embrace "them both."

The warrior spirit springs from a vital emotion exactly contrary to that which pulses under the industrial spirit. As I have said, this is a sense of confidence in oneself and in the world about us. It is not strange that this should lead to an optimistic conception of the universe. Because here is the paradox—in the Middle Ages, which have been painted as being dark and full of anguish, all sorts of optimistic philosophies arose, while our modern epoch is chiefly aware of the voices of pessimism.

Was the warrior spirit sure of itself only because it ignored the ills of the world? Not at all. It knew cosmic sorrow as well as Schopenhauer did, it foresaw the risk and emphasized the anguish of living. But here is the difference—faced with the same facts, the same reality of sorrow and danger, the spontaneous reactions of the two periods are exactly contrary. The warrior mind, full of a magnificent appetite for life, would bear it without blinking, keeping its sorrow and its danger to itself. They are recognized as being essentials of life, and in no way opposed to it. Therefore, instead of organizing life in the hope of avoiding danger and sorrow, they are accepted. This acceptance of danger, not as a thing to be avoided

but as a risk to be run, is the warrior frame of mind—the house become a castle.

We are now beginning to feel an unexpected affinity with that temperament as we see it reappear in the far from archaic form of sport. In my judgment, the difference between sport and play is that the former includes risk, though it be only the risk of excessive effort. The sportsman, far from fleeing danger, seeks it, and in that is a "good sport."

It is curious that anyone who lacks vitality and sees the world as a load of anguish—as happens so often with the modern man—should subordinate everything else to not losing his life. Modern morality has cultivated a sentimental standard by which anything is preferable to dying. But why, if life is so bad? Just as the value of money lies in spending it well, so the supreme value of life lies in losing it gracefully and at the proper time. Otherwise, if life merely drags on in emptiness, what value has it? Would we really like to organize the planet into an immense hospital and a gigantic clinic?

This is the way the industrial spirit, the bourgeois mind, feels. It wants to live at all costs, and it will not resign itself to recognizing in death the most essential attribute of life. Therefore it employs the only known procedure for lengthening life, which is to reduce it to a minimum of expression, as certain kinds of animals do when they hibernate for the winter. The biologists call this *vita minima.* Life is thus prolonged in proportion as it is not used. It gains extension at the cost of intensity.

Neither in ethics nor biology has enough attention been paid to the primary and all-important fact of the

inevitability of death. A little while ago a great physiologist (Ehrenberg) showed that it is impossible to define life without including death in the definition. It is a chain of chemical processes, each of whose reactions leads inevitably into the next until it reaches the predetermined and fatal climax. From the moment of its inception, life moves along its destined trajectory toward its consummation; it is no more important to say that one lives than to say that one has ceased to live.

From the instant of conception, the phenomenon of dying is on its way. There is no possibility of varying it—all one can do is to provide it with an artificial brake, to delay each reaction as it comes along. A life lived at a slow tempo will be longer than a life lived *prestissimo,* but there is actually no greater amount of life—speaking quantitatively—in the one than in the other. The repertory of reactions is identical, as are the individual pictures on a film no matter whether it is run fast or slow.

The strongest accelerators of our vital chemistry are thought and emotion. They are what lash it to a gallop; they are, as Gracian would say, "life's postillions, who add their genial pressure to time's ordinary pace."

But if life is the same in quantity, whether its biologic *tempo* be fast or slow, there may be very definite differences in its quality as between velocities. A life which is condensed takes on very different forms from that which is thinned out over a long period of time. Those forms are all the various heroisms—a name which we give to any voluntary anticipation of death.

It is hard to understand why the imperative that orders us to take life and use it toward high ends should not be extended to include death. If death is an ingredient, a fac-

tor in life, then, just as we must employ life with care and thought, so also should we use death to the full advantage.

A moral code whose values were greater than those that now prevail would not accept the principle that we should do everything possible to avoid danger so that we may stave off death and feel superior to it. Death is a chemical change, essential, indispensable, involuntary, like the death of beast or plant, or perhaps of the world. It would seem more in keeping with human dignity to take advantage of the fact and the force which is death, to subject it to the rule of will and make use of it. This higher morality would advise man that he possesses life in order that he may risk it with meaning and for a purpose.

The industrial spirit is, quite unsuspectingly, beginning to coöperate in the realization of this norm of the warrior spirit. Inspired by a horror of death, it has invented marvelous techniques for dominating nature; machinery which does away with unnecessary expenditures of energy; medicine, which lessens the number of unnecessary deaths through illness; coöperative economy, which makes material existence easier and assures life to those of us who have no right to it—having to guard it, we are vilely tied to a long existence. All these admirable inventions which stave off natural death leave us free to choose voluntary death, and by eliminating a large part of the natural dangers, allow us more freedom to seek others of our own invention. In this way, the two antagonistic impulses converge toward a new morality. But after two centuries of fleeing from death, the art of dying needs encouragement. We have innumerable hospitals, savings banks, and insurance companies—along with them it would be splendid to build up companies for increasing

risks. Sport has begun to do this spontaneously, and it is sport which is now occupied in organizing danger.

Honor or Contract?

During the Middles Ages, the relations between men rested on the principle of fidelity, which in turn was based on that of honor. Modern society, on the contrary, is based on contract. There is nothing that shows so clearly the difference between the two fundamental emotions which have inspired these two different ages. Fidelity is, as its name shows, confidence built on a norm. One man is bound to another by a tie which goes to the heart of both of them. Contract, on the other hand, is a cynical declaration that we distrust the neighbor we are dealing with, and bind ourselves to him by means of a material object—the contract, which is outside both of the contracting parties and which may—vile thing that it is—rise up against them. A grave confession for modernity to make! It trusts more in the material than in the human, for the very reason that the material is not a person, that it has no soul. It is this same age that has tried to raise physics to the rank of theology.

He who leaves a contract unfulfilled is called a criminal, and subjected automatically to a pre-arranged punishment—a money fine or a bodily imprisonment. But he who has committed an act of infidelity or dishonor is merely called a felon, and the punishment is reduced, in principle, to that rank.

And it is no argument to say that while, in the Middle Ages, there was much talk of honor between the lords of

the castles, in reality those lords were, as a rule, the most bare-faced villains, shameless and predatory. Of course they were. In our own age, too, contracts are so frequently violated or evaded that we have to maintain an enormous machinery of justice to look after them. When you compare two epochs you must use a system of double entry. Compare the deeds of one age with those of another, and then, and separately, compare the prevailing ideals. On the one hand set the "is," on the other the "ought to be." Anything else gives a picture that is entirely out of proportion. It is a condition of every ideal that it cannot possibly be realized. Its rôle consists rather in standing behind reality, influencing it symbolically as the star influences the ship. North and South are not ports at which one arrives; they are remote and super-real gestures which define routes and create directions.

The projection of ideals is a function of human physiology. Just as we have a certain number of arms and legs and eyes, so are we dowered with a set of ideals, and just as the former make us look as we do to the rest of the world, so the latter have a definite profile of their own.

These ideals, always unfulfilled, are, in the last analysis, one of the characteristic realities of each period, one of the shoots which the human plant is giving forth. And sometimes, in studying an earlier century, when we note the regularity with which it fails to live up to those norms which it proclaims at all hours, we wonder if all this talk of ideals has any other end than to permit a fictitious and rhetorical double life, which will allow us the heady intoxication of making great gestures. We have seen so many men who actually needed to give their lives a sort

of second story, where they could strut about in great attitudes, and play a game of living statues that represented virtue, asceticism, and sacrifice!

All those who believe themselves to have a "mission" belong to this family—whether that mission be to serve politics, reform society, or maintain the purity of art. These are almost always individuals who are dimly conscious of their lack of aptitude for the destiny ordained for them, and who need this other occupation as a pretense of compensation. Thus the writer of little talent will try to convince himself, and others, that to write is not to have ideas, images, grace, amenity, the gift of word music, etc, . . . but is for the purpose of defending socialism or battling for liberty. What would become of the poor man if he did not believe in some such thing! Because defending socialism or fighting for liberty are easy —having ideas, on the other hand, is a thing so difficult that he has never done it.

Ideals exercise this compensatory function more often than one would think. It is by means of ideals that man tries to balance the deficit in his actual destiny, and it is for the very reason that he is neither strong nor wise that he makes gestures of athletic virtue in front of the mirror.

The sublimated sporting character which ideals possess becomes more and more evident as this age of ours moves toward its climax. The same thing happened with the ideal of chivalry. The lack of balance, the rhetoric and the fustian of chivalry were never so obvious as in the last half of the 14th and the 15th centuries, when social reality had begun to take on forms which were incompatible with such posturings. Even among authors most given to praise of chivalrous ideals, authors who yearn,

melting, over tourneys and serving one's lady, over courts of honor and crusades against the infidel, we sometimes surprise a sly hint of mockery.

"The last part of the Middle Ages is one of those final periods in which the life of the upper classes has become almost entirely a matter of playing at society. Reality is harsh, hard and cruel; for that very reason men spread over it the shimmering dream stuff of chivalry, and above it construct a vast phantasmagoria. Life is represented as wearing the stately mask and mein of Lancelot. It is a monstrous and deliberate illusion, whose obvious falsity is endured only because man's inertia counterbalances its lying. Throughout the whole chivalresque culture of the 15th century there reigned an unstable balance between the serious sentiment that served the ideal and a light mockery." [1]

But this very doubt and suspicion of the ideal itself made for exaggeration, and was the reason for its most baroque manifestations. Men liked to read about William of Orange who, if my memory is not mistaken, gave and received so many blows in a tourney that he could not get his helmet off, and had to go running to a blacksmith shop, put his head on the anvil, and endure as many blows all over again until the helmet was beaten back into such shape that it could be removed. Or the stories which a Belgian troubador tells about a lady who sent her shift to three suitors, one after another, on condition that they wear it in the tourney in place of a coat of mail. Only the third suitor accepted the test—he was wounded, and the shift stained with blood. Such heroism

[1] *Author's Note. The Autumn of the Middle Ages,* by J. Huizinga, 1924.

was, of course, paid for by the lady's love, but the lover demanded reciprocity in sacrifice, and asked the lady to wear the shift, bloody as it was, to the feast that followed the tourney.

. . . . . .

No less interesting a contrast than that between the warrior spirit and the industrial spirit is the contrast between the position of a servant in a castle and a servant in a modern apartment house. There are few examples which show so clearly how impossible it is to isolate one human fact from all the others with which we live and give it its own particular value. Those mediæval servants served their lords as ours do us, yet identical acts of service had, in the two ages, entirely different meanings.

In our age, serving has about it something inferior, if not degrading. Naturally this would be so, for our age is ruled by the commonly accepted fiction that we are all equal. As serving implies subjection, and is an activity exercised from beneath, it is equivalent to breaking down the level of equality, and degrading oneself by going below it. But imagine the opposite supposition—that men are constitutionally unequal, that some are more valuable than others. Then every approach of him who is less worthy to him who is more worthy is a favor to the former; strictly speaking, it is a way of coming up in the world.

Serving is that form of living together in which the inferior participates in the excellencies belonging to the superior. This is the profound reason why service in the Middle Ages ennobled, rather than degraded, and was a means of rising from rank to rank.

In the castles, service was not understood in the sense of labor, and therefore was not paid. Our economic ideas have been seriously impoverished and over-simplified; we know hardly any other form of recompense than money payment. One pays for human labor in exactly the same sense as one pays for merchandise. Each has its market price. In the Middle Ages service was recompensed, but not with any intention of paying for it. How can one pay for a man's strength given in support of another! Such an idea would take all the virtue out of a man.

I think that the modern concept which is closest to that of recompense for service in the Middle Ages is the idea of the cost of being represented by someone. This is what Cervantes hoped when he dedicated his book to the Count of Lemos. Every man in the Middle Ages who did not belong to the artisan class had a well-defined social rôle, with which there went a certain decorum and a certain way of life. It was considered that society owed each one the means of keeping up his position and of giving the necessary social functions. Not for the benefit of the individual, but for the benefit of society itself, high and low. This is the beautiful doctrine of the division of wealth which St. Thomas suggested. The correct principle of distribution was not, as it is with us, according to the amount of work the individual accomplishes, but according to the amount of liberality and luxury which his rank imposed. Wealth, and the measure of it, were not founded on the right to possess, were not properly a matter of profit, but were regulated according to the obligation to spend which pertained to every social position.

And this idea arose in turn out of the general form

adopted by the economy of the times. It was expenses that were estimated, not, as under modern capitalism, income. Consumption was regulated by production, and not, as now, production by consumption, which is, according to those who know, the essential mark of capitalism. This, may I say in passing, is a perversion of the natural and correct order of things. For wealth is nothing but the means for acquiring what one needs or wants. It would, therefore, seem a better arrangement to begin by feeling the need or the desire for an object, and then to plan how to get the amount needed for its acquisition. But modern man begins by wanting riches—*the acquisitive medium*. To this end, he increases production indefinitely, not because he needs the product, but with the intention of getting more wealth. Hence the product, the merchandise becomes the medium, and wealth, money, becomes the ultimate end.

VII

A Topography of Spanish Pride

THE castles with their eloquent ruins have detained us too long. We must go on. Dry Spain is behind, and now we enter humid Spain through the mountains. The land which was naked, livid, red, is now covered with opulent green; the horizon comes closer, the land breaks into narrow valleys. There are no more belligerent castles biting with broken teeth at the blue above them. In their place are big houses—*casones*—built of blackened stone blocks. The castles of Castile looked like hungry warriors. These lordly mansions speak of peace and modest well being. Never of wealth. Not in all Spain do I know a landscape that suggests the sumptuous. A corner here, perhaps, a single building there—for instance, the Escorial—but that is all.

With certain slight variations, the *casón* type of house—a somber, frowning and bad-tempered edifice—is repeated from the Asturias to the end of Navarre, and is therefore the architectural growth that characterizes all Cantabria.

The *casón* is not, strictly speaking, a very large house, yet it leaves an enormous impression. Its size is not so much a matter of its dimensions as of its pretension and proportion, the idea, so to speak, which these houses have of themselves. (Remember that Villiers de l'Isle Adam defined glory as the idea of himself which each man holds in his heart.) As a matter of fact, these buildings have such an air, a sense of being self-contained and sufficient unto themselves, that we tend to accept them as palaces. Compared to them, the castles in their broad Castilian panoramas seem almost humble, nervous, restless, not quite sure of their rôle in the world.

What is it that happens to these grave and serious walls to make them break out all of a sudden into the frilled fantasy of heraldic markings? In the dry lands of Castile the castles wear no shields, or very small ones, while these houses of the Cantabrian upper class carry colossal coats of arms. On these naked walls there are fabulous flowerings, strange plastic eruptions, like vainglorious tumors breaking out of the virtuous and ascetic stone. Pleased by the type of existence they have achieved, they have retired from bold enterprise and are content with dreaming of ancient dangers. The heroic dreams of those who are not heroes seep through the walls in the form of phantasmagoria and come out as unforgettable heraldic fauna—Biscayan wolves, Basque whales, Asturian bears, long-plumed crests, fists clutching broadswords, armored prows. We cannot move half a dozen steps without being stopped by a wall that wants to show us blazoned biceps.

And there is an important coincidence in this. The line where this rash of coats of arms breaks out marks the end of the cities. In the Basque country they do not exist.

A Southerner, seeing these disconnected walls which seem so bent on escaping from each other, can scarcely realize that they represent the cities of the North. The Andalusian or Castilian city is a compact piece of sculpture; the Cantabrian city is a landscape, a town moved by a centrifugal force which hurls each separate house toward the country.

This fact moves us to somewhat complicated reflections on Cantabrian ruralism. As all Spain is rural, it may seem a bit over-subtle to define the form of ruralism prevailing in each separate region. But to me it is indubitable that this instinct for urban dispersion does exist in the North. There is no regional group which seems more called upon to construct a solid, compact city than is Bilbao. Yet, when Bilbao wanted to broaden out, it refused the official plan which the municipal council proposed for it. The true "Greater Bilbao" is not that which is so called, but the outlying suburbs of Neguri, Algorta, Las Arenas—a centrifugal population with a country heart.

A real town should be dominated by a plaza, an agora, or a forum. Just as a cannon is described as a hole surrounded by steel, so one might say that a city is an empty space—i. e., a plaza—surrounded by the façades of the buildings. The rest of the house behind the façade is not essential to the city (let the reader refresh his memory of Rome and Athens). That is to say, the city exists only where the public predominates over the private, the state over the family.

All through Cantabria the opposite is true; the family instinct triumphs over the political instinct, and this explains both the scattering of houses and the elephantiasis

which prevails among coats of arms. Both Cantabrians and Basques feel a pride of family tradition and live animated by genealogical illusion. The family plant is set in a bit of land because it needs deep roots with which to nourish its long vegetal destiny. I remember having read in a book of P. Guevarás—his letters, or his *Menosprecio de corte y elegio de aldea*—that, in his day, everybody who wanted to be considered rich called himself a Castilian, and everyone who wished to be thought noble said he was a Biscayan. Today, wealth—and this is very relative for there are no really rich men in Spain—has emigrated to Cantabria; but genealogical pride stays where it is, and perpetuates that internal fever which works its way out in the form of delirious emblazonings on the walls of big houses.

. . . . . .

Every time I go to the Basque country, I am conscious of the same desire—namely, to write something about Spanish pride. Along the road that leads from Castile to the Basque provinces, you meet the first Basque house at Castil de Peones, just before you come to Briviesca. It is a stone cube with no other decoration than a gable end and a coat of arms. The gable end seems planned to shelter the coat of arms.

Pride is our national passion, our greatest sin. The Spaniard is not avaricious like the French, nor drunk and stupid like the Englishman, nor sensual and histrionic like the Italian. He is proud, endlessly proud. In certain regions of the peninsula, and above all in the Basque country, this pride takes extreme forms which are not lacking in a certain transcendent grandeur. It is a racial

vice extending throughout the entire country, taking curious turns, sometimes appearing only on the surface, sometimes staying wholly underground. I think it can be found in its purest, most classic form among the Basques. Anyone who has had a real insight into Basque pride has a key with which he can penetrate other types of peninsular pride. It may even unlock the doors that guard the hidden storerooms of Spanish history.

The easiest way to see pride at work is to watch a phenomenon which happens now and then to everyone. An artist finds that another artist considers himself, or is considered, better than he. In some cases, this discovery arouses no passionate response. The superiority which another feels, or which others recognize, was foreseen by his own soul; for a long time he has felt more or less clearly that he was inferior to the other man. His spirit is content with taking conscious note of the hierarchy thus established, and accepting the subordinate place which he believes is his.

But in other cases, the effect of such a discovery is very different. The fact that the other artist holds himself, or is held, above the first one makes the first one's spiritual entrails turn over. The pretended superiority of his confrère was something his inner consciousness had not expected. On the contrary, it was he who had considered himself the superior one. He may never have clearly formulated the relationship between them. But the shock of the new discovery makes him aware that such was his inmost conviction. Therefore he suddenly experiences an enormous surprise, as if the real world had suddenly turned upside down. The contradiction between what he believes to be their true position in regard to each other,

and what he sees other people believe, is so great that in order to take the latter seriously he would have to accept his own extinction. He is used to giving his own artistic gifts a certain value in comparison to those of the other man. To find the other man's of more importance is to feel himself made smaller in his own mind.

The very root of his being suffers a blow which shakes his whole person. His spiritual energy is drawn up like an army, and in protest against this new pseudo-reality, executes an intimate affirmation of itself and of its right to the rank which is in dispute. And as all the gestures which express emotion are symbolic, and form a sort of lyric pantomime, the man stands a little straighter for a moment while he reaffirms his own internal faith in the thing he values above all others. His feeling of superiority to the other is accompanied by a raising of neck and head —or at least the muscular beginning of this—which tends to make him taller than the other man. The emotion expressed in this gesture is fittingly called in our tongue "altanería" (becoming tall, i. e., loftiness, i. e., haughtiness).

It is easy to recognize in this description what is usually called a movement of pride. In making it, the mind rebels against a reality which cancels the esteem in which we hold ourselves. Such a reality seems fraudulent and absurd to us, and by that interior movement we tend to correct it—at least so far as our own consciousness is concerned.

Nevertheless, the movement which I have described is not really pride. Suppose that protest of the individual against the supremacy awarded to another is just, and founded on reason. No one would claim then that it was pride. It would be natural indignation provoked by the

blindness of another, or of others, who persisted in upsetting a proper relationship. One sees these movements frequently in a proud man, but in themselves they are not pride.

Describing these movements gives us the advantage of stepping into the psychic zone where pride arises. These intimate uprisings of the *amour propre* show us that in the ultimate depths of our being we carry, all unsuspecting, a most complicated balance of values. There is no one in our social circle whose name is not inscribed there, together with the formula which expresses his relationship to us. We have only to meet a new neighbor to have the internal set of scales begin to function; it weighs his value, and decides whether it is worth more or less than ours.

As I said earlier, when we throw objects having various densities into a liquid, they very soon find their different levels. This sense of place comes from the force which each exercises on the other. Suppose, then, that these objects were conscious. They would feel their own force, which keeps them at a higher or lower level; they would have what we might call a "sense of level."

Among the elements which make up our beings, this sense of level is one of the decisive ones. Our way of comporting ourselves, either alone or among men, depends on the human level on which, in all sincerity, we place ourselves. The character of a society depends especially on the way in which the men who make it up value themselves. One might well choose this, above all others, for the point of departure in a study of the character of peoples and races.

There are two radically different ways in which men

assess their own values. Nietzsche, with his intuitive understanding of all the phenomena of appraisal, saw this. There are men who attribute a definite value to themselves—higher or lower—simply by looking at themselves and judging by their own feeling about themselves. Let us call this spontaneous valuation. There are others who assess their own value by looking first at others and seeing what they are worth in others' eyes. Let us call this assessment by reflection. There is hardly anything in the psychology of the individual more fundamental than this. It is a primary and elemental idiosyncrasy which serves as a root for the rest of the character. A man belongs to one type or the other from birth.

For the first group, the decisive thing is the esteem in which they hold themselves. For the second, it is the esteem in which they are held. Pride occurs only in individuals of the first type. In the others, it is vanity.

Both tendencies carry with them two opposing sentiments whose gravitation is psychic. The soul which assesses itself by reflection leans toward the rest of society and lives on its social periphery. The soul which assesses itself spontaneously has its own center of gravity within itself, and the opinions of others have no decisive influence on it. For this reason, it is hard to imagine two passions more antagonistic than pride and vanity. Vanity is a passion which is acquired from without, whereas pride lies within one's deepest self.

We must, however, avoid careless thinking in this. The man who spontaneously places his own value on himself will pay no attention to the opinion others have of him, but that does not mean that he disregards the worth of others. Spontaneous estimation of one's own value

may very well be humble, and therefore delicate, just and sure. The individual places himself in relation to what he judges to be his neighbor's position.

At this point in our analysis, we can see clearly just what pride is—an error of magnification in the sense of level. When this error is merely a matter of one's rank in relation to one or two other people, it does not reach the point where it affects character. It gives a man certain points of pride, but does not make him a proud person. When, on the other hand, the error is general and continuous, the individual lives in a perpetual state of disequilibrium. The corrective movements described above are incessant, and as the forces of expressed emotions play their part in molding the body, that gesture of self-assertion, self-conceit, becomes part of the person and gives him an appearance of haughtiness.

Pride is, therefore, a disease of the functions of appraisal. That persistent mistake in assessing our own value implies an innate blindness toward the value of others. The estimating eye, whose task it is to perceive what values exist in the world, is turned inwards, and unable to turn out, fails to see its neighbor's qualities. This does not mean that the proud man builds up illusions about his own excellencies. What happens is that his own values are at all times visible to his eyes, but those of his neighbors, never. Therefore if you treat pride as an illusion, an hallucination, there is no chance of curing it. Whatever you say to the proud man will make less impression than what he sees within himself. The only possible methods are indirect. You must treat him as you would treat a blind man.

The opposite of pride is not so much humility as ab-

jectness. The abject man is he who does not esteem himself to be worth anything; his estimating eye does not perceive even the smallest of the values inherent in every human being. It is therefore useless to demand dignity of conduct from him. A dignified act would seem to him a bit of vanity because it would imply that he esteems himself—whereas by instinct he despises himself.

This inborn pride, this psychic blindness toward human values other than those possessed by the proud individual himself, is a symptom of a general spiritual confusion. It implies a psychology in which the tendency of the soul to gravitate toward itself is exaggerated. There is reason in the common description of pride as self-sufficiency. The proud man is sufficient unto himself because he does not know his neighbors exist. This is why proud souls are usually hermetically sealed against the whole outside world, and completely lacking in that curiosity which is a sort of mental porosity. They lack any grace of abandon, and they have a morbid fear of ridicule. They live in a perpetually frozen attitude of the "gran señor"—that nobility of manner in the Castilian and the Arab at which strangers marvel.

Proud races are dignified, but narrow in acumen and incapable of enjoying life. On the other hand, their composure is always elegant. The "gran señor" attitude consists simply in never showing need or haste for anything. The plebeian, the bourgeois is full of needs; the noble is self-sufficient.

The infantile abandon with which an old Englishman sits down to play, the sensual delight with which an adult Frenchman gives himself up to love or to the table, always seem to a Spaniard undignified and unworthy. The

perfect Spaniard needs nothing; more than that, he needs nobody.

This is why our race are such haters of novelty and innovation. To accept anything new from the outside would humiliate us, because it would be equivalent to recognizing that we were not previously perfect, that something good could be discovered outside ourselves. To the true Spaniard, all innovation seems frankly a personal offense. All of us who try to freshen up the repertory of ideas in Spanish heads have noted this. The Einstein theory, for instance, was judged by many of our scientific men to be not so much an error—they had not had time to study it—as a piece of insolence. When I contend that the 20th century already has a store of new ideas and new sentiments, I know that there is almost no one in Spain who will stop to consider my affirmations with any degree of precision; instead, an outburst of irritated pride, which amuses me very much, will swirl about my words.

But all this does not define the specific form of Spanish pride. The proud man is continuously guilty of a solipsism—he knows only how to find values, precious qualities, superb characteristics within himself. He never sees them in his neighbor. But this egotism in appreciation may wear many faces, depending on the kinds of values which, without going outside himself, he tends to prefer. For example, there is a kind of pride which is founded on believing oneself the most intelligent of men, or the most just, or the most brave, or the most sensitive to art. Talent, justice, valor, exquisite taste are undoubtedly values of the first category in man's cultural endeavors. They are not elemental and generic gifts

which all men possess by the mere fact of being born, but rare qualities which cultivation, will and work can help to purify and perfect.

Now imagine a man who is not only afflicted with total blindness toward the virtues of his neighbor, but who does not even render homage to these great qualities when he finds them in himself. On the contrary, he esteems them to be elemental qualities assigned to every man at birth. Do you note the curious inversion of moral and social perspective which this implies? Well, this is Basque pride.

The Basque believes that by the mere fact of having been born and being a human being, he is worth all that it is possible to be worth in the world. Whether you are clever or foolish, learned or ignorant, beautiful or ugly, an artist or a dullard, are matters of exceedingly small importance, scarcely worthy of attention if compared with what it means to be an individual, a living man. I suppose that sea level must feel a like disdain for the mountains. What do eight or nine thousand meters of height above sea level matter, compared to the distance between the surface of the sea and the center of the earth? All the excellences and perfections of men which are raised above the surface of the elemental human, of the mere fact of existing and breathing, are negligible excrescences and nothing more. The great and the valuable in man is the basic, the generic, the aboriginal, that which first brought him upright on the earth.

As history is principally a matter of the gathering of people, of dispute and emulation in an effort to achieve those superfluous and "superficial" perfections—learn-

ing, art, political power, etc.—it is not strange that the Basque race has been so little interested in history.

It is curious to note that a similar feeling has always existed in Russia. The religion of Tolstoy is this and nothing else. The best man is the lowest. Therefore the most perfect, most "apostle-like" of the social classes is that of the mujik. The only thing worth knowing is what the mujik is capable of knowing. In one of Andreyev's novels, the virtuous youth feels ashamed of being virtuous before a prostitute, and believes himself obliged to descend to her level so that he may raise himself in his own esteem.

Nevertheless, it was not through pride that the Russian soul reached this inversion of perspective in the appreciation of values. Rather, it was thanks to a peculiar cosmic and religious sensitiveness, which shows the Asiatic background of the Slavic world.

Among the Basques, the affirmation, based on the lowest of human values, which each individual makes about himself, lacks either religious or ideological foundation and atmosphere. It is an affirmation which feeds entirely on individual energy, which lives high and dry within itself. It amounts to a bold declaration of metaphysical democracy, of transcendent equalitarianism. Who can doubt that this attitude toward life gives off a harsh odor of grandeur, though the grandeur be somewhat Satanic! There is nothing of loving equality about it—I doubt very much that there is any such thing in the world as equalitarianism born of love. Love is essentially the great architect of hierarchies, the great organizer of the near and the far, of proximities and distances. As each indi-

vidual enjoys the elemental human qualities, above all the quality of simply existing, which is supreme in this system of estimations, no one of them can admit that there is any other who is his superior. Within his hermetically sealed and solipsist world, each Basque lives shut up within himself like a spiritual crustacean—he is superior and unique. But this makes any hierarchy as between individuals impossible, so therefore, as the lesser of evils in social relations—which are at a minimum among the Basques—there arises that rancorous "all are equal," that terrible, negative, destructive "all are equal" which anyone with a fine sociological ear can hear from time to time down through Spanish history. This negative democracy is a natural result of pride founded on the lowest of human values.

I have confined my discussion to pride as it appears among the Basques, for that is where it occurs in its clearest and most complete form. At the same time it must be said that of all the racial groups in the peninsula, the Basque alone, in my judgment, holds within himself the still vigorous discipline of a race which is not exhausted. His is the only section of the peninsula where one still finds a wholesome and spontaneous sense of ethics. Basque souls are still beautiful and strong. In the rest of Spain we find the same pride, but it is blurred and broken.

This kind of pride is an anti-social force. A great people cannot be made with it, and it leads inevitably to degeneration of the human type, which is what has happened in the Spanish race. Incapable of perceiving the excellence of his neighbor, the proud man impedes the perfecting of the individual and the refining of his class. In order to improve, it is necessary first to admire the per-

fection of others. Vain peoples, like the French, have the enormous advantage of being always ready to admire excellence, which carries with it the desire to acquire the new virtue for oneself and to be in turn admired. It is for this reason that France has suffered fewer hours of decadence than any other people.

Basque pride, and in general, Spanish pride, will not, ordinarily, engender anything better than little hidalgos who nest alone in their cubes of stone, like the one who made that house in Castil de Peones, neither cottage nor castle, the first in the Basque style which one meets on the way from Castile to the Bay of Biscay.

VIII

Arid Plains, and Arid Men

WHEN you travel from Madrid to Hendaye by the Burgos road you note with some astonishment that not until you reach Miranda de Ebro, almost three hundred and fifty kilometers away, is there one single bit of placid countryside. For league after league, the land keeps its air of tragic and unwearying drama. Naked, convulsive, you can see the way its muscles contracted in some past age to heave the earth up into mounds which the rains have cruelly furrowed. From time to time, this almost architectural war which the exasperated earth waged against an unknown enemy, rises to frenzied climax in the jagged edge of a hill against blue sky. Thin wheat fields cling perilously to its sides, nervous saplings tremble in the wind, a clump of black poplars stands guard in the valley while the silent shadow of a motor car slips hungrily along the white road.

From Madrid to Miranda de Ebro everything is dramatic, nothing is peaceful. From Hendaye to Paris, on

the other hand, everything is peaceful and nothing is dramatic.

France is, above all, France the well-groomed. Green everywhere, smooth fields that never break into anything more violent than a kind of voluptuous undulation. Not a hand's-breadth of land without a smile of satisfaction and the signs of exquisite care. At intervals, a clump of misty trees sighing in the wind, and a hood of polished slate covering a chateau. Everywhere the burnished roadways come and go, those perfect little roads that trace their way like lingering caresses over the body of France, that well-dressed, green-clad body without a single rip or tear where the skin could show through.

Every time we make a quick trip through France and Spain the eye takes in both landscapes, and then the eternal geographic conflict begins in us. How can two peoples who live on land so diametrically opposite in appearance pretend to enjoy the same rank in history? To a Spanish mind, the comparison is disastrous. The contrast between the qualities of this land and ours is such as to leave no chink for hope to enter. What can the cis-Pyrenean men do to fill the abyss which that geographic difference opens, and to render the fortunes of both lands a little nearer equal? Has not the piece of planet on which we live imposed on us a destiny which is irresistible?

The depressing effect is even greater when, as the landscape moves across our eyes, we turn the pages of Dantin's book on the *Natural Regions of Spain*. The major part of our peninsula is given the terrible name, "arid Spain." The name is dreadful, but perhaps the reality is even worse. "There is not in all Europe," he writes, "a country which offers such enormous stretches

of arid and semi-desert land, occupied by dry salt plains of the African and Asiatic type that prevail in the arid sub-tropical belt." Ours is the only country in Europe where arid regions represent more than 80 per cent of the whole territory.

It is well known that a region's humidity is determined not by the absolute quantity of water it receives, but by the proportion between what it receives and what it gives back by way of humidity. In Castile there is four times as much evaporation as there is rain. If we translate this figure into terms of the imagination, we get the grotesque picture of a country where more water goes from the earth to the clouds than comes from the clouds to the earth. In Castile it must rain upwards.

Why, then, should the dryness, the aridity, the saltiness of Spanish souls surprise us? "Animals and plants," says Dantin, "seem to reflect the physiognomy of the region, being entirely in accord with its landscape even to the point of appearance. Each element of the region seems to have left its mark on the species, marking it with a special seal as the master used to brand his slave."

Our geography produces so sharp a sense of depression that our very muscles tend to go slack. The climatic dryness of the peninsula, which sometimes gives its landscape such rare and exasperated beauty, is, at first glance, an inexorable fatality imposed on our history.

For a century, men have embraced and emphasized the obvious and comforting idea that man's surroundings had an overpowering influence on his destiny. Successive generations, trying persistently to make history into physics, have sought for causes of human facts and have thought they found them outside of man himself, in his

surroundings, in the geology and the climatic conditions about him. Taine, a man without genius, but sensitive to the ideas of his generation, popularized the idea of *milieu,* which had already served Buckle, who explained the metaphysical inspiration of the Hindus by citing their enormous consumption of rice.

But in my judgment the geographic interpretation of history lacks scientific value. It is one of those ideas put forth by the 18th century (do not forget that it comes from Montesquieu) which, though they did not fulfill the intellectual promise they made us, have become part of our dogma. At first sight nothing is more plausible than to admit a sad correlation of cause and effect between climates and the forms of human life. Such neat comparisons are always attractive. But the fact is, that up to the present time no one has formulated a law by which a political institution, an artistic style, or an ideology can be predicted from a known climate. The most diverse cultures have flowered in the same climate, and, vice versa, the same culture has moved across different climates without suffering any essential variation in style.

One forgets that ideas have two different faces, and two different values and efficiencies. According to one face, the idea pretends to be the mirror of reality. When this pretension is confirmed, we say that it is true. Truth is the objective value, the measure of the objective efficiency of an idea. But on its other face, the idea takes hold of the man who conceives it; when it coincides with his temperament, his character, his desires—whether it be true or not, even though it lacks objective value—it has a subjective efficiency and gives an intellectual satisfaction to the spirit. In contradistinction to the truth,

i. e., the objective value of an idea, I would offer its vitality, i. e., its subjective value.

To the majority of men, that most delicate and, as it were, superfluous function of ideas—their objective truth—is unknown, ignored or disregarded. Within their own vital economy, ideas exercise an organic mission no less marvelous than that other. They are organs of life which the organism—the individual, the people, the period—knows how to mold into a shield against existence. They do not fit reality, perhaps, but they are grooved into the subjective, and in it they produce certain automatic effects. Thus, in rolling through Castile and France, the ideas of climate, surroundings, geographic situation have an immediate effect on our intellectual calm. We think we have *explained* Spanish misfortunes to ourselves; we think we have *understood* them. It is an effect analogous to that which, in primitive ages, was attributed to certain magic words. No one understood the mechanism by which the conjurer wrought his miracles, but on hearing him speak these words all souls were quieted—they had a living faith in him. Our century, which aspires to be scientific, is no less given to magic; but our modern magic produces not so much cosmic effects as intimate ones. Scientific ideas work on our spirits, not scientifically, but magically.

And it will always be like this. At the end of the 18th century the great Count Cagliostro conquered all Europe by unsheathing his dagger, tracing a magic circle with its ingenious point, and uttering these magnificent syllables—"Helion, Melion, Tetragrammaton!"

"Surroundings," "climate," "geographic factors" are very like the omnipotent vocabulary of the astute Nea-

politan. No, the climatic aridity of the peninsula is not enough to justify the history of Spain. Geographic conditions are a fatality only in the classic sense of *fata ducunt, non trabunt;* fate points the course, it does not drive the vessel. Perhaps there is no better way of expressing the influence which physical surroundings, the *milieu,* have on an animal, and especially on man. The land influences the individual, but how? Man, like every vital organism, is a reactive being. That is to say, the modification produced in him by an external fact is never an effect which follows a cause. The milieu is never the cause of our acts, but merely an excitant; our acts are not the effect of the milieu, but a free answer to it, an autonomous reaction.

Fortunately, biologists are convincing themselves that the idea of cause and effect is inapplicable to vital phenomena, and that in its place it is necessary to use another pair of concepts—excitement and reaction. The difference between the two categories is clear. One cannot speak of effect except when a phenomenon reproduces in a new form what is already existent in the old, which is the cause—*Causa aequat effectum.* The impulse which puts a billiard ball in motion affects, after collision, the movement of another ball to which the first impulse passes. No one has ever seen the second ball move with more energy than the first. On the contrary, the wave of a hand in the air is enough to set an entire squadron of cavalry to a hard gallop. Vital reaction is an effect entirely out of proportion to its cause; therefore it is not a true effect.

It is, therefore, a mistake to hunt for "causes" of historic facts which are, when properly defined, biological

facts. Strictly speaking, the only cause which actuates in the life of a man, a people, a period, is that man himself, that people, that period. Or to put it another way, historic reality is autonomous, self-governing, it is caused by itself. Compared with the influence which we Spaniards have had on ourselves, the influence of the climate is beneath contempt.

Fata ducunt, non trabunt. The land influences the man, but the man is a creature that reacts, and his reaction is capable of transforming the land about him. The dryness of the land acts on him chiefly by making him thirsty and sullen. If he is strong he will know how to react; he will bring water into the desert, and to overcome the slackness of his muscles he will impose on himself a vigorous physical regime. Therefore the best way to see the influence of land on man is to look at the influence of man on the land.

Of course there are places on the earth which are far from being Paradise. Life in them is impossible—but, by the same token, they have no influence on life. Wherever a minimum of life is possible, the organic being reacts on the milieu and transforms it into a measure of vital power.

This is why, when the train had left Bordeaux behind and was slipping along through smiling vineyards, the depression which geographic materialism had produced in me was lifted.

Landscape does not determine, casually and inexorably, the destinies of history. Geography does not drag history along behind it; it merely incites history. The arid land which surrounds us is not a fate imposed on us, but a problem set for us. Each people finds its problem

set by the land before it, and solves it in its own way, sometimes well and sometimes badly. Modern landscapes are the results of that solution.

It is therefore necessary to turn our phrases upside down. Geographic facts are very important to history, but in a sense exactly opposite to Taine's. They cannot be used as a cause to explain the character of a people, but must be considered as symptom and symbol of that character. Each race carries within its own primitive soul an ideal of landscape which it tries to realize within its own borders. Castile is terribly arid because the Castilian is arid. Our race has accepted the dryness about it because it was akin to the inner wastes of its own soul.

Just as one knows the inner depths of a man by observing the woman he chooses, so there are few things which reveal a people so subtly as the landscapes they accept.

I will admit that at times the geographic face of a land is so contrary to the desires of a race that any amount of effort is vain. Certainly; but then that curious phenomenon of emigration appears; it signifies the refusal to accept one landscape, and the pilgrimage toward another —toward a "promised land" which every strong race promises itself.

The arid dramatics of the Castilian earth, the insistent serenity of French fields are a complete psychological commentary, the plastic projection of two racial souls which feel life in diametrically opposite ways.

IX

The Increasing Menace of Society

EVER since the middle of the last century, life in Europe has become more and more public, and in these last few years that tendency has increased at a rate that is positively dizzy. A life which is private, hidden, solitary, closed to public view, becomes more difficult every day.

The situation has certain characteristics which are obvious to the senses. Noise in the street, for instance—the street has become stentorian. One of the privileges which man used to take for granted was silence. Now his right to a certain amount of silence is recognized no more. The street penetrates into our own private corners and fills them with public clamor. He who wishes to meditate must get used to doing it submerged in the midst of a public racket, a diver in an ocean of collective noise. Man is never left alone by himself. Whether he likes it or not, he must be with others. The public square and the avenue force their anonymous clamor in through the very walls of his home.

Confronted with the unlimited public invasion, everything that used to signify reverence has become less and

less important. Especially the theory that a man's house is his castle. Family life, that society in miniature erected outside of and opposed to society in the large, is reduced to a minimum. The more advanced a country is, the less important the family.

The immediate cause of its disappearance is curious. It has always been recognized that the heart of the family was the hearth. But then, as usual, man began surrounding it with an aura of romance. The hearth was altar as well as cooking place; the haven of the family, of fatherhood, of the lares. But the fact is that just as soon as it began to be difficult to get domestic servants, the lares, fatherhood, and the family altar commenced to disappear. One began to realize that in the last analysis the cornerstone of the family was not the household gods, nor the paterfamilias, but the hired girl. It became possible to reduce the fact to a formula almost as exact as a functional law—in every country, family life today is important in direct ratio to the available amount of domestic service. In the United States, where it is harder to keep a good maid than to keep a giraffe, family life has contracted to a minimum. And so has the size of the house. Why have a large house if you cannot stay in it? Without servants, some simplification of domestic existence is essential, and when you simplify it you make it uncomfortable. The complicated, semi-religious rite of seasoning food—the rite of the kitchen-altar—was reduced to a minimum. Man was thrust out of domestic seclusion into public life. The real god Lar was the soup kettle.[1]

[1] *Author's Note.* This is not merely a figure of speech. Among the places which, throughout European history, have nourished family life

The modern family tends to fly apart. There is a vast difference between the hours that used to be passed at home and those that are passed there now. In those long, slow hours of another day, man used to assist in the crystallization of a part of himself which was private, non-public and which easily became anti-public.

The physical change in the thickness of walls since the Middle Ages could be shown by a diagram. In the 14th century each house was a fortress. Today, each many-storied house is a beehive. It is a city in itself, and its walls are thin partitions which barely shut us off from the street. Even as late as the 18th century, houses were still spacious and deep. Man spent the major portion of his day in them, in secret and well-defended solitude. That solitude, working on the soul hour after hour, forged it, like a transcendent blacksmith, into a compact and forceful character. Under its treatment, man consolidated his individual destiny and sallied forth with impunity, never yielding to contamination from the public. It is only in isolation that we gain, almost automatically, a certain discrimination in ideas, desires, longings, that we learn which are ours, and which are anonymous, floating in the air, falling on us like dust in the street.

No one knows what the end of this process will be.

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most intensely, were the Low Countries. They had a superstitious faith in the *crémaillère,* the great caldron that hung above the hearth and was one of the characteristic products of Belgian metallurgic art. Michelet says that "the sanctity of the hearth in the Middle Ages rested not so much in the hearth itself as in the *crémaillère* that hung above it. When soldiers were given leave to rob and loot they spared neither age nor sex, so that women and children seized hold of the caldron, hoping thus to evade their fury." *Histoire de la France,* Vol. III, pp. 4 and 5.

Until very recently the whole of European development was focussed on the education and encouragement of the individual. With increasing intensity it insisted that life should take individual form. That is to say, that by the very act of living each one should feel himself unique. Unique in joy, as in duty and in sorrow. And is this not the truth, the pure transcendental truth about human life? Whether humble or magnificent, to live is to be alone—to have this consciousness of the singleness, the exclusiveness of man's own individual destiny, a destiny which he alone possesses. Life is not lived in company. Each must live his own life by himself, taste it with his own lips, whether the cup be full of bitter or of sweet. Some of us find ourselves with partners, but this does not mean that we allow another to participate in the secret life which is ours and only ours.

Yet, today, there is no doubt that the direction of social evolution has changed. For the last two generations, life in Europe has tended to be less and less individual. Everything forces man to lose that sense of being unique and to make himself less compact. Just as the house has been opened up, made more porous and better ventilated, so people and ideas, tastes, opinions blow back and forth across us until each one of us begins to think that perhaps he is someone else.

Is this just a phase, a passing change, a step backwards in order to make a still higher leap toward greater intensifying of the individual? No one knows; but it is a fact that right now a great number of Europeans are feeling a sense of luxurious fruition in ceasing to be individuals and dissolving themselves into the mass. There

is a delicious epidemic of feeling oneself part of the mass, of ceasing to have any individual destiny. Man is becoming part of society.

Throughout the long course of human history there is no novelty in this. It has been the thing that has happened with greatest frequency. The unusual was the opposite—the desire to be individual, non-transferable, unique. What is happening now, clarifies the situation of man in the good old days of Greece and Rome. Liberty to live by and for oneself was not conceded then. The State had a right to the whole of one's existence. When Cicero wanted to retire to his Tuscan villa and devote himself to the reading of Greek books, he had to justify himself publicly, and to obtain pardon for momentarily seceding from the collective body. The great crime which cost Socrates his life was the pretention that he possessed a particular and private dæmon; that is, an inspiration which was individual.

The process of making man a social animal is terrifying. It is not content with demanding of me that what is mine be given to others—an excellent idea which causes me no annoyance whatever—but it also insists that what is theirs be mine. For example, that I adopt their tastes and their ideas. Everything private and apart is forbidden, including the right of having convictions for one's own exclusive use.

The abstract divinity of "the collective" is coming back to exercise its tyranny; indeed it is already creating havoc in Europe. The press believes it has the right to publicize our private lives, to judge them, to condemn them. Day by day the government forces us to give a larger part of our existence to society. Man is left no corner to retire

to, no solitude for himself. The masses protest angrily against any reserve which we hold back for ourselves.

Probably the origin of this anti-individual fury lies in the fact that in their inmost hearts the masses feel themselves weak and defenseless in the face of their destiny. On a bitter and terrible page Nietzsche notes how, in primitive societies which were weak when confronted with the difficulties of existence, every individual and original act was a crime, and the man who tried to lead a solitary life was a malefactor. He must in everything comport himself according to the fashion of the tribe.

Now, apparently, many men are again feeling homesick for the herd. They devote themselves passionately to whatever there is left in them of the sheep. They want to march through life together, along the collective path, shoulder to shoulder, wool rubbing wool, and the head down. This is the reason why so many European peoples are looking for a shepherd and a sheep dog.

Hatred of liberalism comes from this and nothing else. For liberalism, before it becomes a question of this or that in politics, is a fundamental idea about life. It is believing that every human being ought to be free to fulfill his individual and non-transferable destiny.

X

Against the Economic Interpretation of History

THE economic interpretation of history is one of the great ideas of the 19th century. I have combatted it ardently, as I have that other great idea of which it is a mere corollary—the utilitarian interpretation of all life, both physical and spiritual. But the very fact that I have fought against it is proof that I esteem it highly. I cannot understand how one can fight with anything which one does not esteem. It is only great errors which incite to combat. And an idea achieves the status of a great error only when it carries with it a truth of high import. Otherwise it cannot get up on its feet, win adherents and propagate. A great error is always a great truth which has been exaggerated and misconstrued.

The appearance of this economic interpretation of history had enormous importance. From then on, it may be said that something had come into existence which could be called an historical science. It suddenly re-

vealed the fact that the great procession of human deeds down through the ages was not made up of a mere coming and going of events that happened by chance. Seeming, on the surface, as haphazard as the ripples set in motion by a drop of water, historical life has a structure of its own, and a profound law which rules it inexorably. Under the complex and varied appearance of events the economic organization of each epoch governs rigorously. This is the substance of the historic process.

I repeat, that since this economic interpretation was developed, history has not been content with telling merely what happened, but has tried to tell why it happened, has aspired to create the mechanism which generated events.

But the rôle thus given to the economic ingredient was excessive. It was considered the only authentic historical reality, and the rest—law, art, science, religion—were demoted to the rank of mere "superstructures," simple reflections and projections of the internal economic mechanism. Here is exaggeration magnified a hundred times. However, it must be admitted that, thanks to such exaggeration, attention was called for all time to the economic data of periods. Hitherto such data had been completely disregarded by historiography.

What magnificent illumination lit up the shadows of the past when Marx and his men threw into its great echoing cavern the torch of this bold idea! It seemed an obvious truth, which the very facts themselves cried out. And—most curious coincidence—while it seemed to arise out of the external facts themselves, it also appeared to emerge like a bit of lyric divination from the depths of hearts. The same thing almost always happens with great

ideas; we see them within and without, as truths and as desires, as laws of the cosmos and confessions of the spirit. Perhaps it is impossible to discover from the outside a truth which has not had a prior existence, which has not lain, like a magnificent and delirious dream, in the depths of our hearts.

In the case of the economic interpretation of history there is no doubt that this was true. All social existence in the 19th century depended primarily on the economic factor. The idea of Marx was, at least in the large, true for his century and for part of the earlier ones. Modern man was being converted bit by bit into *homo æconomicus*. He was concerned most of all with procuring "means," "tools." He felt life in the form of utilitarian desire. He gave divinity to the instrument, the tool. Franklin had already defined man as *animal instrumentificium* (today, after Köhler's detailed studies of anthropoid apes, it is impossible to consider such a definition quietly). Marx would make the whole panorama of history turn on the "instruments of production." He who owns them is its master. History is a struggle to get possession of them. When the form of the instrument varies, the entire human scene changes.

So latent and characteristic a part of that period was this faith in the instruments of production that thinkers who were entire strangers to each other found it in the most widely separated fields. The Viennese architect Gottfried Samper tried a *Tectónica de las artes plásticas,* in which he reconstructed the entire history of art from the very first piece of ceramic, on the theory that æsthetic forms proceed from the instruments and the technique with which the useful object is produced. The evolution

of styles would therefore consist essentially in the evolution of the technique of production. Darwin, himself, did nothing more than give back to the term "organ" its etymological meaning of an "instrument." The organic form is a storehouse of tools for life. Ideas themselves—"truths"—are considered from the point of view of instruments and are called "working hypotheses," an apparatus for mental labor.

Is this, by chance, all pure and unadulterated error? I do not think so. This picture of life which belongs to the 19th century, or, more accurately, to the whole modern age, is a true one, but it is not the only true one. Utility, especially economic utility—"the means of production and distribution" as Marx says—is one of the great wheels in the mechanism of history, but it travels in gear with many other wheels. The whole machine is much more complex than this, so much more complex that we have not yet caught a glimpse of its entire plan. And probably the remaining pieces will also be discovered by force of successive exaggerations. Each revelation will be accompanied by another moment of madness, and then we will have to come back to sanity again.

The economic interpretation of history lights up the reality of our period well enough, but when you apply it to other ages you realize how badly out of proportion it is. No—history has not always been ruled by the means of production and distribution, nor has it always been a monotonous series of economic struggles between classes. The social classes themselves have not always been economic classes. Perhaps they have not been exclusively economic at any other time than during the last two centuries, which would mean that these two centuries have

been exceptions. Classes in India, for instance, are not divided on an economic basis; the highest class, the Brahmin, is poor, it possesses nothing. The true Brahmin is "he who has understood," he who by race and by divine prescription is a wise man. In his admirable studies on religious sociology Weber has shown how the creeds, far from being mere consequences of the prevailing economic form, have a profound influence on it, and are in their turn influenced by it.

In the cycle of European history, the Marxian theory loses force in proportion as we move backwards from 1900. Other factors, which today seem secondary, move into first place and exert a powerful influence in molding the body of history. This makes one think that perhaps it is not only the outside skin of historical reality which varies, but that the underlying and fundamental structure of society itself changes from age to age. If this is true, it would be sheer stubbornness to insist that anyone had discovered a single invariable principle which would always govern all human changes. It is more likely that there are various ultimate powers which, constantly shifting in position and combination, bring about great historic changes. Recently Scheler has noticed that in certain epochs it is the biological forces of blood and race which seem to predominate—it is this way among very young peoples; in other periods, such political factors as dynastic interests, governmental expediency, etc., tyrannized over all collective life; whereas it is only in ages so mature that they are close to the edge of decay that the economic principle takes sole command of history.

The fact is that we will not gain sufficient understanding of the historic process until we investigate and meas-

ure the influence of every human activity on all the rest of life.

One of these investigations would follow along the lines of what I call the military interpretation of history. I do not mean by this a return to the type of historiography which is content with recounting battles; but I would like to show the plastic power which the prevailing way of making war has had on life in every epoch. I am surprised that more has not been made of a suggestion thrown out by Aristotle when he says in his *Politics* that "in every state it is the Sovereign who is the combatant, and all those who bear arms participate in the power."

That idea is capable of supplying us with a military interpretation of history which would form a perfect counterbalance for the economic interpretation of history. According to such a theory, life in each epoch would be determined not by what the instruments of production were, but by what the instruments of destruction were. A modification in arms would bring about a new and different configuration of society. The political form would be modeled on the form that war took, and the public power would always rest in the hands that bear arms.

In common with the Marxian idea, the martial interpretation of history is convinced that the true basis of history is a struggle not so much between men as between tools. In each period the social power seems to be divided according to the quantity and quality of the means of destruction which each man possesses. As a matter of fact, this idea of struggle as the sub-strata on which cosmic reality—historical as well as physical—is

based is latent in the very well-spring of the modern spirit. All modern physics is built around the laws of shock which Wren formulated. On the other hand, no one has known what to do with the idea of "universal attraction" which, installed on the peak of Newtonian mechanics, always had the air of a magical notion rather out of keeping with other scientific ideas, as if it had fallen from a world whose spirit was very different from that of our modern world. And it is no less suggestive that Einstein has begun all over again to emphasize this idea of attraction and, so to speak, to absorb mechanics into it.

It was not Marx who invented the mechanism of struggle as an explanation of historic changes. Guizot was already interpreting the history of France as a continuous state of collision between two classes—the nobility and the bourgeoisie. According to Guizot this incessant conflict was waged in the field of law. Marx merely transferred the scheme of classification, which is what establishes and defines antagonistic social groups, from the realm of law to that of economics. In this he followed Saint-Simon, who was the authentic father of the young idea.

I suspect that the kind of history for which struggle is the only reality is a false history which focusses only on the *pathos* and not at all on the *ethos* of human living together; it is a history of a people's hours of drama, and not of its daily life; a history of its frenzies and not of its normal pulse; in short, it is not a history at all, but a headline. But it does reveal the fact that all during the past century there was no audience for anything but the

discords of history. To tell the truth, that century—which was as great as it was exaggerated and extreme—was the cesspool into which was poured the whole torrent of pessimism which had been flowing without a break since the end of the Renaissance. From the time of Don Quixote the European balance swung decidedly toward pessimism. (Remember that Byron, Schopenhauer, Flaubert and Dostoyevsky all wrote in the 19th century.)

In order to indicate what I mean by a military interpretation of history, let me point out certain facts. Europe would have been impossible without Rome, which drew the blueprints of its organization and furnished the cement. But Rome, in its turn, could not have existed without Greece. And for a very simple reason. There was a moment in which the whole Occident seemed doomed to fall victim to the Orient. It was the period in which the formidable Persian nation descended on our continent. Greece broke the backbone of that power with Miltiades and Themistocles at Marathon and Platæa. How? Why? What magic potion enabled this Athenian people, so small in numbers and so young, to destroy the Persian forces, then the most powerful and mature in existence? Magic? There was none. On the contrary. It was an invention of the alert Hellenic mind that turned the tide. Greece, Rome and Europe itself were made possible by the phalanx.

The Persians had an enormous and enthusiastic army, but they fought in a confused and unorganized mass. The Greeks fought in phalanx. That seems to have been a Doric invention, and, like so many other things, im-

ported from Sparta to Athens. Let us consider the matter as the best historian of the military art, Hans Delbrück, sets it forth. It is worth the trouble. He says:

"The Homeric heroes were individual combatants. If Hector had been able to get his Trojans into line and keep them disciplined, the whole force and skill of Achilles would have smashed itself to pieces against those unyielding ranks. Achilles put hundreds of Trojans to flight because he was superior to each one of them singly, and there was no force yet in existence which could unite them against him. Even though some of them had wanted to join together to try it, they would probably have been unsuccessful, because there was no certainty that the first man he charged with his infallible lance would not flee in terror—his neighbor would follow, and the whole line disappear.

"Only a large and well trained group, which by long training and habit has been taught to fight together and obey commands, can be depended on to hold together in a body and face danger even to the point of death. This feeling of each individual that the others will not fail him makes endurance easier in proportion as the danger to each is lessened. The man who is hemmed in by other men beside him and behind him finds himself physically hampered in any wish to flee. Thus cohesion itself, over and above the fighting ability of any one man, produces a military force. We call such a solid group a tactical body.

"A tactical body is a group of fighters with a single will. The tactical body may be of such solidity that elements which are not military and which may even be hostile

can be included in it for military ends. Frederick the Great sprinkled enemy prisoners among his trained battalions.

"The entire potentiality of military force moves between the two poles of individual bravery and skill on the one hand, and the solid power of the tactical body on the other, or, to put it another way, between *chevalerie* and discipline. The ideal is to combine the two, as the Spartan phalanx did—a line of soldiers eight men deep, with each man educated from infancy for heroism, and living under the exclusive inspiration of the concept of a soldier's honor. There is a legend about the origin of this phalanx. A certain god promised the Lacedæmonians that they would always win if, instead of fighting the flautists, they went into battle accompanied by the sound of flutes. To fight with flutes means to march in rhythm, in order, in rank—in short, in a tactical body. And it is interesting to note that flutes and drums, as a rhythmic medium, came back into history when the *lansquenetes* put an end to mediæval warfare, which was also a matter of individual combat."

This phalanx, then, was the great instrument of destruction which the Athenians used against the gigantic mass of Persian power at Marathon.

The second war was won at sea. Themistocles, with the foresight of genius, had conceived the idea of creating a great fleet wherein the discipline should be comparable to that on land. But this brought about another great transformation in the internal politics of Athens, and is another splendid example of how much influence war has on legal history; of how, in the words of Aris-

totle, "those who fight should rule, and those who bear arms should take part in government," thus creating the forms of government and the shape of the state.

Each ship—each trireme—needed 150 to 180 rowers; three banks of about sixty men plus soldiers, pilots, and a captain. The Athenians prepared 127 ships. This meant a contingent of some 25,000 men. Up to that time it was only free and noble men—the *eupatrides*—who had fought, and the Athenian constitution in this essential had been kept strictly within aristocratic principles. When it was found that all the able-bodied men of Athens had to be mobilized for the fleet, arms were by necessity entrusted to the *thetes*—a lower class which did not serve in the phalanx.

Thus the great policy of imperialism with which Themistocles inspired Athens brought in its train—thanks to a necessity of military technique—complete establishment of the policy of democracy. An increase in military forces was automatically followed by the extension of sovereignty to the lower classes, which were not even free men. This fact is a body blow to the economic interpretation of history, for the *thetes* did not come into power as a consequence of having gained control of the instruments of production and distribution; they continued to be poor, and they received the means of political influence as a gift from the rich, who needed them for a new type of war organization.

We see, then, that broad military service and democracy were both born together of the imperialist appetite —exactly the same thing that happened in the 19th century. It would be well for "radicals" to consider the frequency with which, all through history, imperialism has

been a democratic fruit, and democracy has been the prize offered by imperialism.

About the same period there was in Greece one state which was strictly aristocratic—Sparta. It was made up of 12,000 Spartans on the one hand, and on the other, 180,000 Helots and 50,000 Periœci. How could the Spartans have kept in check a mass so much larger than they? The mystery clears when we note that the Spartans did not let the Helots take any part in war, or be at best more than footmen, and always without arms. They only allowed a certain number of Periœci, about equal to the number of Spartans.

Just as democracy presupposes general military service, so aristocracy must make it a privilege to go to war. As Aristotle indicated, οἱ κεκτημενοι τα ὁπλα—those who bear arms are always the ones who rule. The Middle Ages kept its aristocratic form as long as it restricted the privileges of offense and defense to a very few. Hence the cult of war, the military bearing of the mediæval lord. Just as the mystic, whose desire is to triumph in the next world, begs to die on his knees, so Sigurd the Strong, Anglo-Dane, sings with his last breath, "Lift me up! I want to die on my feet like a soldier, not on the ground like a cow. Put on my armor, my helmet on my head, my shield on my left arm and my broadsword in my right hand, that I may die in harness."

This love for those instruments of destruction that carry with them the delights of ruling, sounds again and again in feverish hymns that ring down the length of history, and it is not surprising that at the height of their power the Arabs had five hundred names for the sword.

At times the influence of war technique on the destinies of history is focussed so closely on detail that it takes on a slightly comic air.

There wanders through the history of Greece a tradition, more than a bit grotesque, which says that in a period of decadence the Spartans begged the then powerful Athenians to send them a general. As a joke the Athenians sent them Tyrteus, an old poet, deformed and ridiculous. He taught the boys of Lacedæmonia to sing his poems, and led them to victory in every battle. Sparta began to organize as a state, and its power grew until it reached the final triumph over the Hellenes.

This somewhat obscure legend now appears to have been cleared up. Tyrteus was, as a matter of fact, a laughable creature, an old general and an antiquated poet. The newer generations of soldiers and of poets made fun of his archaic style in both strategy and lyrics. His poems, composed in the ancient rigid measures, were in quaint contrast to the light and subtle forms of the new poetry. But these ancient rhythms, created in a period of severe military discipline, were the symbol of that period and that training, and they had the virtue of making a phalanx march in close and solid order. The simple rhythm hypnotized the individual and made him part of the tactical body. It was to this that the Spartans owed their victories. Tyrteus had restored the ancient, rigorous ways. His rôle was somewhat akin to that of Hindenburg in the last great war.

Military discipline has been one of the great forces of history. Every other kind of discipline, especially that presupposed in any complicated industry, arises out of the discipline which man invented in order to fight.

When a Spanish genius* set out to check the confused mysticism which was Protestantism, he found the remedy in the warrior's ways, and he founded a "company" whose education and regime were derived from moral "ordinances" which he called, in a captain's language, *Spiritual Exercises.* Hence the famous meditation on *The Two Flags,* which appears to have been composed in a tent on the battlefield in the crimson dawning of a bloody day. (The *Spiritual Exercises* have been followed by another tremendous little book of "ordinances" in which new historical forces are organized into formidable squadrons: the *Communist Manifesto.* No one can read its pages without seeming to hear the rhythmic march of an interminable advancing multitude.)

The surprising efficiency ascribed to the Roman army from the moment it appeared in the historical arena is due more than anything else to an intensification of discipline. The Athenian army had only the discipline that came from the tactical body and its training. The coercive factor was lacking. Any soldier could, at the height of a campaign, complain to the Areopagus about its strategy, and the Areopagus had no jurisdiction over him. This was the cause of the frequent changes of generals during campaigns. Rome, on the contrary, entrusted complete power to the consul, who was chief of state.

As an example of the rigorous discipline then in force, one of the few authentic bits of data about Rome previous to the Punic Wars tells how the consul Aulus Pes-

* *Ed. Note.* Señor Ortega is, of course, referring to Ignatius Loyola and his Company of Jesus, founded in 1534 and now, as it has been for centuries, one of the most powerful of the Catholic orders.

tummius, in the year 425, had his son beheaded for having stepped out of line and engaged the enemy in single combat, at which he was victorious.

The truth is that Rome's political body was molded much more closely on the anatomy of its army than was that of Greece. The electors were divided into classes, and the principle of classification is the very structure of an armed force. This was a definite mark of progress over the phalanx. The long, thin phalanx undulated perilously on the battlefield. It had little depth, and it was not hard to make a breach where the enemy could pour through. There was always the possibility of an enveloping movement, there was constant danger on the flanks. Hence an excessively long line was more powerful in appearance than in actuality.

The Romans had an idea akin to that of the architects who pulled the airy Gothic structures up from the solid Roman base. Realizing that the bulk of a continuous massive wall was unnecessary, and that buttresses would do the work as well, the architects lightened walls and pierced them, leaving only the dynamic lines of Roman architecture. By mere subtraction they solved the problem of creating a building which was at once bigger, more solid, and better lighted.

In like manner the Romans cut the phalanx into smaller sections, and what they took off the front they put on the back. The result was the maniple, a tactical body of a hundred and twenty men, almost square, as strong on the flank as on the front, less easy to envelop and appallingly mobile. When the front line yielded a point, the rear maniple came in to fill it. The maniple was composed of two centuria of some sixty men each.

The centuria and the centurion forged Rome's history. The centuria was the cell of the fighting corps; it was also, and at the same time, the electoral unit into which voters were organized.

With these two innovations—consular jurisdiction and the maniple—went two others which were no less important—the pilum and the encampment. The Greek hoplite fought with a lance; the Roman fought with a dart or a javelin which he threw, thus dividing the encounter into two parts—the first of which, war at a distance, was in preparation for the second, hand-to-hand fighting with a short sword. At night the army did not sleep until they had dug a ditch behind them and erected a palisade behind that; this fortified encampment constituted one of the great forces of the Roman people.

The Roman people! It is interesting to explore the exact meaning of the phrase. Whenever men spoke of the government it was in the name of the Senate and of the people—Senatus Populusque—the S. P. Q. R. which appeared at the top of staves of office. (They are still carried in Seville's processions, and an ingenuous athlete, marveling, read them in terms of his own enthusiasm—S P O R T.) The duality of the phrase is surprising—Rome is apparently not one thing but two—a Senate and a people. When Rome ceased to be these two things and was made one, in the fashion of modern nations, she ceased to exist. That duality had a force which can scarcely be calculated, and which might well be presented to contemporary politicians for their consideration. The secret of Roman greatness is hidden in it—and I say secret, because it was a mystery, a constitution, the most irrational which has ever existed, and in spite of

that, or because of it, the most effective in all history.

If we translate *Senatus Populusque* as "the Senate and the people" we will be literal, but mistaken. By *people* we now mean the civil body. But the true meaning of *populus* was originally an armed body. Anyone who wanted to translate the phrase according to its true meaning and in the Roman spirit would have to invert the words and say paradoxically the *people and the army*. In the Roman mind it was the Senate which represented the civil force; the landed proprietors, the old families, or *gens* which enjoyed sacred rights, were married and left heirs. These heirs, who inherited everything—both land and rights—were the only sons of a *pater*, the patricians. The rest had no *pater* in the true legal sense of Roman law, but only a progenitor; they were the *proles*—the progeny—from whence the word proletariat.

These old agriculturalists, the civil population, fought with arms, but they needed help in their campaigns, so an auxiliary group of warriors was formed about them—the *populus*—composed of the small landowners of the nearby countryside.

The pure-blooded Roman of the good days of the Republic could not conceive of a citizen who was not an agriculturalist. And for the simple reason that he could not conceive of anyone being a citizen unless he was a warrior. The warrior had to furnish his own equipment —which was impossible unless he had a farm of his own. But it was not the land that gave him the right to command, but the arms which the land enabled him to get. For this reason he acquired no political rights until he had fought, though he might have been a landowner for a long time. At the time of the war against the Samnites,

this rural population took arms against the Senate and became truly the *populus Romanus.*

No one can understand Roman history who does not comprehend this duality between the great landowners who lived in the city and the small farmers who lived outside. Great political battles went on between them up to the time of Cæsar. The Senators were the officials; the farmers round about were the soldiers. Each needed the other, and this was the origin of the admirable, organic cohesion of Roman deeds up to the second century before Christ.

Thus the most peaceful and civilian word of all, people, to which pacifists keep coming back, has an origin which is warlike and far from peaceful.

XI

On Fascism

FASCISM wears an enigmatic face because its content is so contradictory. It affirms authority, and at the same time it organizes revolt. It combats contemporary democracy, and on the other hand it does not believe in the restoration of anything which has gone before. It seems to propose the forging of a strong state, yet it employs means which tend toward dissolution, as if it were a faction of destruction or a secret society. Whichever part of fascism you take hold of, you find that it is a thing and also that it is its opposite—it is A, and at the same time it is non-A.

This is not a condition confined solely to fascism. All real things are contradictory if you analyze them a little. As Ulric of Hutten says in the play which bears his name,

> "I am no book made after long reflections,
> I am a man, and I have my contradictions."

The schoolboy experiment of the stick submerged in water tells the story. To the touch it is straight and

strong, to the eye it is broken. As both attributes are diametrically opposed to each other, they cancel each other, which is to say, the real truth about the stick is over and above its conflicting manifestations.

The same thing is true of fascism. Among the definitions of it one hears is that fascism is an "historic phenomenon." But why not? One can hardly say less of fascism, but at least that little is indubitable. Fascism is an historic phenomenon, just as the apparently broken stick in the pail of water is an optical phenomenon. The true nature of every phenomenon is outside itself. Phenomena, appearances, are merely the vocabulary which the real adopts in order to introduce itself. The light we see is a biological language which electro-magnetic forces have learned in order to make themselves comprehensible to us. It is the same with fascism—what fascists do and say, what they think they are, does not make up fascism's true reality. In each of its phenomena all the others collaborate. It is therefore useless to hunt for fascism's real meaning in itself alone. A political group is merely one bold word, and it has meaning only when it joins with the words represented by other groups to form a complete historic phrase.

One of the unavoidable paradoxes is that in every battle the victor needs the vanquished in order to win. To speak of an army's strength is to talk about an abstraction. The strength of one army depends on the strength of the other, and one of the ingredients of that strength is the enemy's weakness. That is to say, half of our being has its root in what others are, and it ought not to be forgotten that our profile depends, in a large part, on the space that others leave us. An historic phenomenon

cannot be clearly defined unless, after describing it, we add a description of the surroundings, both of space and time, in which it takes place.

There are cases in which it is enough to describe a political movement from the inside. In periods which are normal and orderly, the historical reality creates a vocabulary of appearances which expresses its hidden depths with an accuracy which is quite sufficient. For instance, fifty years ago the so-called liberals were actually liberal, and the conservatives were conservative. But in other periods—and the present belongs to this second group—the historical reality has changed without having yet managed to create its new language. At such a time, appearances are, by force of circumstance, equivocal, and in place of constituting an idiom which directly expresses reality, they make up a series of hieroglyphics which hide it.

Fascism, and like products of other factories, seem to be combating the forces which used to call themselves liberal and democratic. But this is not surprising. Those forces are always under attack. Think back to the time when fascism and its like first appeared, and you will note that the element of surprise was all directed toward the conduct of those other forces. On being asked what fascism was, the first answer that all of us gave took the form of another question—"What are the liberals and the democrats doing?" As if a certain intellectual instinct made us suspect that the key to the situation, the essence of the phenomenon, lay not in the action of fascism but in the inaction of liberalism. Our attention moved instinctively from the political movement itself to the atmosphere about it.

There is nothing unusual about this particular case. This need for defining a political movement more by its surroundings than by its own inner self did not emerge for the first time with fascism. Read any book on Roman history. You will note that you understand more or less thoroughly the development of affairs up to the year 70 B. C., which is roughly the period in which Julius Cæsar appears. At that moment, matters begin to grow cloudy and obscure. Yet this is the period on which we have the most information. We can reconstruct events almost day by day, from the words of the actors themselves. Yet we do not understand why the movement which Cæsar represented went on from victory to victory.

The difficulty there is identical with our difficulty in facing fascism. It looks as though it were not so much Cæsar who won over the others, as the others who let Cæsar win. As we watch him do away with one established institution after another, we ask ourselves what the men who believed in the Republic were doing, or worse yet, why the Republic's supporters were not doing anything? Cæsar's position, by itself, never seems sufficiently solid. On the contrary, it seems to be constantly in danger, almost hanging in mid-air. When we try to weigh the positive forces on which he counted, they do not seem enough to explain his victory.

I do not mean to say that Cæsar's age was like ours. I do not think that one period in history can ever be identified with another. But I do think that Cæsar's time and ours have certain specific factors in common, along with others which are completely contrary. It may therefore be useful to compare, not the two periods but that group of factors which are common to both. To be more

concrete, one may say this—that fascism and cæsarism have, as an assumption common to both, the lack of prestige into which established institutions had apparently fallen prior to their coming.

Much has been written about this lack of prestige, which is not confined to Italy, but its true importance has not been recognized. It is supposed to be a superficial and transitory fact, originating in particular abuses imposed by certain men who were charged with exercising certain powers; of such a nature that correcting the abuses would bring new authority and, as it were, restore to the institutions concerned their lost virginity.

I think that, on the contrary, this lack of prestige is one of the most serious symptoms of contemporary public life. It arises out of radical changes in the ideas and the sentiments of Europe, and it is going to be the motivating factor in the whole long process on which the continental nations, and perhaps even England, are entering.

At all events, it is not possible to clarify a large-scale political movement unless one finds a fact which is sufficiently basic and fundamental so that the physiognomy of that movement and its opposite can be derived from it at one and the same time. Though they be sworn enemies, all the phenomena of a period are blood brothers. And it is necessary to explore until we find their common mother.

I do not, then, think that the most interesting thing about fascism is the movement as it sees itself. In its own mind, fascism is an authoritarian party, like many others; confusedly anti-democratic, as both right and left extremists are coming to be; nationalist, like a dozen

other groups; and revolutionary, like the communists, socialists, royalists, Carlists, etc. It is more interesting when one stands off and looks at it from a distance, regarding the phenomenon as it is, rather than in terms of the song it sings to itself. Then two characteristics stand out, of which the most important has not, so far as I have seen, been sufficiently emphasized. These characteristics are violence and illegitimacy. The first is a consequence of the second, and is peculiarly significant only when joined with it; by itself, violence is preached by other parties and is more or less used at times by all of them.

Fascism is illegitimate, one might almost say illegitimatist, in a most peculiar and almost paradoxical sense. Every revolutionary movement seizes power illegitimately, but the curious thing about it is that not only did fascism seize power illegitimately, but that, once established, it also exercised it illegitimately. This differentiates it radically from the other revolutionary movements. Anyone who fails to note the importance of this symptom will not, in my judgment, be able to weigh the real meaning of fascism, and will tend to couple it with other contemporaneous phenomena which are completely different. Señor Cambó, in his recent book *En Torno del Fascismo* begins by comparing fascism and bolshevism. This is a failing which he later corrects by renouncing all attempt to draw any useful conclusion from the parallel.

For my part, ever since bolshevism first appeared, I have insisted that it be treated as a movement which is specifically Russian and entirely unconnected with European politics, in that Russia is not Europe, and the

only European thing about her is a certain repertory of theories, or, perhaps better, of terminologies.

Bolshevism, like all movements properly described as revolutionary, illegally smashed one legal state for the purpose of setting up another. Its supporters believe that today they exercise power in the name of legitimacy, founded on juridical reasoning as sound as any, which, in turn, is backed by a complete system of ethics and even by a conception of the universe. The Soviet government uses violence to enforce its law, but it does not make violence its law.

Fascism, on the contrary, does not pretend to set up a new kind of law, it does not bother about giving its power a juridical basis, it does not consecrate its action with any title or with any political theory.* Fascism governs by means of the force of its black shirts, and when asked on what principle of law it bases its action, points to its shock troops. The black shirt is like horse power, a measure of force, the dynamic unit of Italian policy; but it is not a principle of political law. Fascism does not pretend to govern according to law, nor does it even aspire to being legitimate. This is, in my judgment, its great originality, or at least its peculiarity; I might also add, its profundity and its virtue.

This analysis makes clear what a singular rôle fascist violence plays, and what differentiates it from other violence. With fascism, violence is not used to affirm and impose a law; it fills the void where law was, it is a substitute in the absence of legitimacy. It is the successor of a le-

* *Ed. Note.* This was written before Mussolini invented the corporative state. Señor Ortega's argument is still valid insofar as the beginning of fascism is concerned, and in that the corporative state is an effect and not a first intent.

gality that no longer exists. And this means exactly what it says. Fascism does not fall into the trivial theory that violence, force is law. That is, as everyone knows, one of many juridical theories, one of many principles for securing legitimacy. What makes the Italian experiment a symptom of great historic importance is that it presents a government whose power is illegitimate "as such." Any interest in sanctifying the exercise of power by law is replaced by the mere declaration of motive—"Italy must be saved." * And this idea that a motive is enough, that not even the pretense of law is necessary for a party to win and to be accepted by a modern nation is the surprising, the symptomatic, the essential thing about fascism as an historic phenomenon. It is the more remarkable because we are emerging from a period of two centuries which was characterized by the exact opposite; an age dowered with an almost morbid sensitiveness toward law —a period of legalistic fervor, which amounted almost to mysticism; that stage of human development which lived most intensely according to "constitutionalism," that is to say, legitimatism.

In these two centuries, all the other characteristics of fascism have occurred repeatedly; only that one is completely new. Even 19th century anarchism itself, which denies the law and the very principle of a constitution, denies it for definite reasons and on a basis of moral and political principles; that is to say, it gives its very illegality a legal base.

For the very reason that the fascist triumph is of so extraordinary and unprecedented a kind—consisting as

* *Ed. Note.* This same phrase and concept operated among Franco's followers in Spain during the civil war of 1936–37.

it does of constituted and established illegality—we ask ourselves, "How is it that other social forces, hitherto enthusiastic supporters of the law, allowed this triumph of juridical chaos?" The answer is immediate—"For the simple reason that there are no important social forces today in which an enthusiasm for the law is a live issue." Or, what amounts to the same thing, because legality takes no form among modern continental nations which at once satisfies and inspires their people. The moment there arises a new principle of political law which can win the unstinted enthusiasm of a social group, fascism will vanish into thin air.

This resolves the paradox. If no one believes firmly in any political form, if there is no single institution which warms all hearts, it is natural that the victory should go to one which despises all existing forms and institutions and occupies itself with other things. Then the strength of the black shirts would consist of the skepticism of liberals and democrats, of their lack of faith in the old ideals, of their political weariness. And the strange illegitimacy which fascism practices would be simply a sign that the whole of society found itself outside all legal norms. Its triumph would then be due to the fact that it represents, sincerely and energetically, the actual condition of the public spirit. Fichte said that politics in the large consists of "expressing what is," of giving external form to the profound reality hidden in all hearts. With certain exceptions, the whole modern world has a feeling of foreboding that the established forms of democracy and liberalism have degenerated until there is nothing left of them but the words. Fascism had the strength of mind to say this openly and to comport it-

self accordingly. This is why it won. And if you look at continental Europe you will see that legitimate power is everywhere propped up with cobwebs and completely at the mercy of the first illegitimate fist that chooses to crash through them.

Faced with a situation like this, I suspect that it is just as stupid to intone pathetic elegies in honor of a defunct legality as it is, in the name of a false political realism, to glorify force and call it the truly legal. Honest realism disdains mystic formalisms, but at the same time it also abstains from conferring divinity on facts. The cult of the *fait accompli* is just as much idolatry and formalism as any other. The only thing important to the realist is to look with wide open eyes at the marvelous enigma which is reality, and to extract from it today whatever fruitful suggestions it may hold for tomorrow.

Such a realist would discover, under the affirmative mask that fascism wears, its predominantly negative character. Its apparent force consists actually in the weakness of others.

This explains why fascism, although master of the present, must go on living merely from day to day. No one thinks of it as a thing which must be reckoned with in the future. Not even in theory can we imagine a future scheme of political organization arising out of it. It is a result and not a beginning, a form of strategy, and not a solution.

Fascism and its kind administer a negative force—the weakness of others—which is not its own. For this reason they are essentially transitory—which does not necessarily mean that their stay will be short.

This way of interpreting the Italian affair keeps us

from falling into a very common error. The fact that a small group of citizens in Russia and Italy have taken possession of the government, leads many people to say that political history is always made by small and compact minorities. This implies that a handful of determined men can always gain control of the public power. That is not true. Particularly in public life, minorities can never win a normal victory. In order to conquer, they must somehow or other convert themselves into majorities. In politics, it is always the social body itself that decides, and only he who manages to represent it can exercise its power.

There is, of course, such a thing as a sudden overturn by which the government falls temporarily into the hands of adventurers who end on the gallows. But bolshevists and fascists—who are alike only in this—are not adventurers.

The rôle of coherent minorities in politics is more complicated than this. Without them, a vigorous state cannot exist; but they are not, in themselves, sufficient to create or to maintain one. There is only one situation in which a handful of men can easily make themselves masters of the public power—when that is a *res nullius,* when the rest of the social group feels no sense of solidarity with it, when no one holds existing institutions in high esteem. Under such circumstances anyone who has a certain amount of resolution and not too much caution can overthrow a government which everyone has abandoned.* But this brings us to a rule which is directly

* *Ed. Note.* This is in fact what happened in April, 1931, when a small group of determined men proclaimed a Republic in Spain and the King fled.

contradictory to the above commonplace:—when a resolute minority makes itself master of the public power it is a sure sign that political life in the country concerned is moving through a period of the gravest abnormality. The more indomitable is fascism in its exercise of the public power, the worse I shall think Italy's political health. There is no political health when the government functions without the active coöperation of majorities. Perhaps this is why politics seems to me a second-class occupation.

XII

Meditation in the Escorial

IN the landscape that surrounds the Escorial, the Monastery itself, by virtue of the clean-cut lines and great solidity of its rock mass, stands out as the largest of the cliffs in the encircling walls. On spring days there is one moment in which the setting sun breaks like a golden bubble against the Sierra's peak and spills a miraculous light—all blue and carmine and violet—down the mountainside and into the valley, fusing all sharp edges into one unearthly glow. Then the Monastery itself forswears the prominence given it by its builders and steps back into the untouched stone of its mother Guadarrama.

Francisco Alcántara, who knows so much about the things of Spain, claims that, just as the Castilian tongue is the one in which all the various dialects of the peninsula are integrated, so the light of central Castile is the quintessence of all the lovely lights of the provinces. It is this Castilian light which, just before night comes

pacing slowly down the sky, transforms the Escorial into a flint that awaits the steel which shall strike it into fire.

The Monastery is an enormous profession of faith, a Credo made visible, and—after St. Peter's in Rome—it weighs more heavily on European earth than any other. To whom was it dedicated? Let Philip II speak—"Which monastery, we found and dedicate in the name of the blessed San Lorenzo because of the peculiar devotion in which we hold this glorious saint and in memory of the blessing and the victory which was vouchsafed to us on his holy feast day." This blessing was the victory of San Quentin.

Here we have a carefully documented legend which, in spite of the document, we must rectify. San Lorenzo, like all the saints, is a saint to be respected, but to tell the truth, he has not customarily intervened in the affairs of our people. Is it possible that one of the most tremendous events in our entire history, the erection of the Escorial, had no other meaning than that of thanks to a transient saint who meant very little to Spain? San Lorenzo by himself is not enough. I am the first to admire that plucky one who, finding himself well toasted on one side, asked that he be turned over on the other; if it were not for that gesture, there would be no humor among the martyrs. But to be quite frank, the patience of San Lorenzo, however admirable, is not enough to account for these vast spaces.

It seems to me a much better explanation, and one much nearer the fact, that when Philip II chose this plan from among those laid before him by the architects, it was because he found expressed in it his own interpretation of the divine.

All temples are erected to the greater glory of God; but God is a general idea, and no true temple was ever erected to a general idea. The apostle wandering through Athens, who thought he read on an altar, "To the unknown God," made a grave mistake; the unknown God never existed. Religion is not content with an abstract God, a mere idea; it needs a concrete God, whom we can really feel and experience. This is why there are so many different images of God in the form of people; each man, out of the depths of his own fervor, makes one of his own with whatever materials come to hand. Strict Catholic dogma limits itself to demanding that the faithful admit the canonical definition of God, and leaves each one's fancy free to imagine Him and to feel Him in its own peculiar way. Taine speaks of a child who was told that God was in the sky. "In the sky, like the birds?" she exclaimed. "Then he must have a beak." That child could be a Catholic; there is nothing in the catechism's definition which prevents God from having a beak.

We search inside ourselves for whatever seems best to us, and then make our God of that. The divine is the idealization of the best in man, and religion consists in the worship which one-half of each individual renders to the other—the humble and earthy to the sensitive and heroic.

The God of Philip II, or, what is the same thing, his ideal, has voluminous commentary in the Monastery. What does the enormous mass of the edifice express? If every monument is an act of will, a tremendous effort consecrated to the expression of an ideal, what ideal is

it that the enormous effort which went into setting up this sacrificial offering asserts?

In the course of the evolution of the human spirit, there is one moment which, so far, has had little attention paid to it; yet it is a moment of enormous interest. It is that period when the continental soul went through one of those terrible, internal dramas which, in spite of their gravity and the sharp suffering they entail, manifest themselves only indirectly. It coincides with the building of the Escorial.

The Renaissance came to full glory in the middle of the 16th century. Everyone knows what the Renaissance meant—tremendous joy of living, a life full and running over. The world seemed like Paradise anew. Aspirations and realities coincided perfectly.

It should be noted in passing that bitterness always arises out of a lack of proportion between what we covet and what we achieve.

"Chi non puo quel che vuol, quel che puo voglia,"

said Leonardo da Vinci.*

The men of the Renaissance wanted no more than they could have, and they were capable of everything they wanted. If restlessness or discontent appears in their works, it is with such good countenance that it nowise resembles what we call *tristeza* (sadness)—that half lame, half crippled feeling which has us all by the throat. The happy state of the Renaissance spirit naturally resulted in serene and ordered works of art, made with rhythm

* Let him who cannot have what he wants, want what he can have.

and balance—in short, what is called the *maniera gentile.*

But about 1560 the European spirit began to be conscious of an unease, a dissatisfaction, a doubt as to whether life really was as perfect and as complete as the previous age had thought. It began to notice that the existence we want is better than the one we have. Our aspirations are both wider and higher than our achievements. Our desires are energies imprisoned in matter, and we spend the greater part of them in resisting the burden with which it weighs us down.

Do you want a phrase that symbolizes this new state of mind? Compare that line of Leonardo's with these of Michelangelo's—the man of the moment.

> "O Dio, o Dio, o Dio,
> Chi m'a tolto a me stesso
> Ch'a me fusse piu presso
> O piu di me potessi, che poss' io?
> O Dio, o Dio, o Dio." *

The quiet and lovely forms of Renaissance art were no longer of use to men who felt themselves imprisoned, chained like Prometheus, raging at life. In those very years there began a modification in the norms of the classic style. And the first of those modifications consisted in smothering the pleasant forms of Renaissance art under a sharp increase in size. In contrast to the *maniera gentile,* Michelangelo established the *maniera grande.* The colossal, the superlative, the enormous ruled the day. Interest moved from Apollo to Hercules.

* Who has snatched from me that self which could do more than I can?

All of a sudden, the beautiful had become the Herculean.

The subject is too important to be treated hurriedly. Why, why did men delight in the excessive, the superlative of everything, even for a little while? * What does this love of the Herculean mean? But we must go on. I only want to point out that when the constellation of Hercules rose above the European horizon, Spain was celebrating her high noon, governing the world, and King Philip was erecting in the heart of the Guadarramas this monument to his ideal, made in the best tradition of the *maniera grande*.

To whom, we were asking, is this proud sacrificial offering, this enormous expenditure of energy, dedicated?

If we wander back and forth along the long façades of the Monastery of San Lorenzo, we will have a healthy walk and raise a good appetite, but, alas, the architecture will yield us no formula that transcends the stone. The Escorial is an expenditure of energy that has no name, no inscription, no sense of transcendence. It is an enormous effort which reflects on itself, disdaining whatever may be outside itself. Satan-like, it adores itself and it sings to itself. It is effort consecrated to effort.

In looking at the Parthenon it never occurs to anyone to think of the effort put forth by its builders. The candid ruins under the limpid blue of the sky are haloed with æsthetic, political and metaphysical ideals, whose strength is forever a living thing. Preoccupied with them, we are not in the least interested in the amount

* *Ed. Note.* Compare the kind of modern Italian art which delights Mussolini.

of work that went into cutting and polishing those stones.

This monument of our ancestors, on the contrary, is the sign of a petrified soul, all effort and energy, but empty of ideas or feeling. This architecture is entirely a thing of desire, of anxiety, of impetus. Here, better than anywhere else, we learn what the true Spanish substance really is, what is the subterranean source from which the history of the most abnormal people in all Europe came bubbling out. Charles V, Philip II heard their people at confession, and in a delirium of frankness their people said to them, "We do not clearly understand the preoccupations to whose service and culture other races dedicate themselves; we do not wish to be sages, or to be deeply and intimately religious; we do not want to be just, and as for prudence, of that, our hearts desire less than nothing. We only want to be great."

A friend of mine who visited Nietzsche's sister in Weimar asked her what the great thinker thought of Spaniards. Madame Nietzsche Forster, who had lived in Paraguay and therefore spoke Spanish, remembered that her brother had said once, "Those Spaniards, those Spaniards! Those are men who wanted to be too much."

We had no desire to make virtue or truth imposing. We set up as an ideal the mere act of wanting. We never gave any particular form to that greatness for which we had such high ambitions; like our own Don Juan who loved love, we loved the sheer process of wanting, without ever wanting any one thing. In the long pageant of history we represent an explosion of will—blind, diffuse, and brutal. The gloomy walls of the Escorial express the

poverty of ideas from which we suffer, and the exuberance of our impetus. It may be defined as a treatise on pure effort.

As everyone knows, Plato was the first man who tried to find the component factors of the human heart, which were then called "powers." Knowing that an individual spirit was too fugitive and elusive a thing to be analyzed, Plato sought for motivating factors in the race. "In a race," he said, "the individual is written high in capital letters." In the Greek race he noted an unwearying curiosity and a native skill in the handling of ideas; the Greeks were intelligent; the power of intellect predominated. But in the barbarous peoples of the Caucasus he noted a certain characteristic which he missed in the Greeks, and which seemed to him as important as intellect. "The Scythians," observes Socrates in the *Republic*, "are not as intelligent as we are, but they have θυμος," which is called in Latin *furor*, in Castilian, effort, energy, courage, impetus. With this word as a base, Plato constructed the idea which we now call will power.

This is the true power of the Spaniard. In the long spectacle of history we Spaniards appear as a courageous attitude. This is the whole of our greatness, this is the whole of our misery. Energy, effort, by itself and without the guidance of an idea, is an untamed force, a blind anxiety which hits out endlessly in all directions. By itself it lacks purpose, for purpose is always a product of intelligence, of the calculating and ordering function. This is why a definite action holds no interest for the merely energetic. An action is movement directed toward an end, and valued according to what it is worth at the end. But for the man possessed by energy, the

value of a deed is measured not by its end or its usefulness, but by the difficulty of doing it, the quantity of courage it consumes. A definite action does not interest him; he is only interested in the exploit as such.

At this point, I hope you will allow me to interpose a personal memory. For reasons of my own, I never can look at the Escorial without seeing it through a veil that carries the picture of another town, as different as it is possible to imagine. A little Gothic town beside a dark and quiet river, shut in by round hills that are covered with deep forests of hemlock and pine, beech and splendid box.

In this city I passed the brightest hours of my youth; to it I owe at least half my hopes and all my discipline. This is Marburg, on the river Lahn.

Not long ago I passed a summer there. Hermann Cohen, one of the greatest of modern philosophers, was writing his *Æsthetics*. Like all great creative geniuses, Cohen was an unassuming person, and he enjoyed discussing questions of beauty and art with me. The problem of what the novel might be was a subject of much discussion. I talked to him of Cervantes. And Cohen thereupon stopped work to read *Don Quixote* all over again.

I shall not forget those nights when the high black sky above the forests was filled with restless stars. I went again and again to the master's house and found him bent over our book, translated into German by the romantic Tieck. Almost always, when he raised his noble head, the revered philosopher greeted me with these words—"But man! This Sancho is continually using the word which Fichte made the basis of his philosophy." It is

true; Sancho often uses—and on using it he fills his mouth with it—the word *hazaña,* which Tieck translated *tathandlung,* an act of will, of decision.

For centuries the Germans were an intellectual people of poets and thinkers. Along with thought, Kant affirms the rights of will—along with logic, ethics. But in Fichte the balance swings to the side of desire, and he puts *tathandlung, hazaña,* an act of will, an exploit, ahead of logic. Before reflection, an act of courage—this is the principle of his philosophy. See how the nations change! Germany has learned all too well the lesson Fichte taught her, the lesson whose nucleus Cohen found in Sancho.

But where does pure effort, pure energy by itself, lead? Nowhere. Or rather, to a single end—melancholy.

In his Quixote, Cervantes composed the critique of pure energy. Like Don Juan, Don Quixote is a hero who is not very intelligent; he has ideas which are simple, and rhetorical, which are not so much ideas as they are paragraphs. His mind holds a heap of thoughts which come out as simply as the songs of a fisherman.

But Don Quixote was a man possessed by this need for expending effort; out of the wash of humor which he made of his life, we can filter an energy which has about it nothing of jest. "The enchanters can take the venture away from me; but they cannot touch my energy or my strength of mind." He was a man of heart; this was for him the only reality, and round about it he stirred up a whole world of unhandy phantoms. Everything about him he turned into a pretext for the exercise of will, the warming of the heart, and the spending of enthusiasm.

But a moment arrived in which grave doubts arose within that incandescent soul as to the meaning of his enterprises. And then Cervantes began to pile up words of sorrow. From Chapter LVIII to the end of the novel all is bitterness. "Melancholy overcame his heart," says the poet. "Out of pure sadness he stopped eating; he went full of heaviness and melancholy." And Sancho says, "Let me die at the hands of my thoughts, by force of my misfortunes." For the first time he admits that a roadside inn is a roadside inn. And, finally, listen to this anguished confession of a man possessed by energy—the truth is that, "I do not know what I am winning by the force of my labors," I do not know what I am achieving with the effort I am putting forth.