

THE SECRET OF JOSE ORTEGA Y GASSET:
AN ESSAY AND A PHILOSOPHY OF TRANSLATION

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Abstract

Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset (1883-1955) wrote an essay about his interest in North Africa and its relationship to Spain, titled *Abenjaldūn nos revela el secreto: pensamientos sobre África menor* [Ibn Khaldūn reveals the secret to us: thoughts on Africa minor]. In *The Secret* he introduced his readers to the thought of Islamic philosopher Ibn Khaldūn (1332-1406). Ortega believed that Ibn Khaldūn's philosophy of history explained how North African civilizations had changed over the centuries. It also held the key to understanding the situation of Melilla, a coastal Spanish enclave surrounded by Morocco.

In *The Secret*, Ortega undertook a sustained philosophical engagement with Arab/Islamic thought and themes, an interest that continued throughout his life. He found the answer to the puzzle of Melilla in a key philosophical concept that Ibn Khaldūn called *‘asabiyya*. Ortega also described Ibn Khaldūn's theory of generations, in which the prestige of a people is obtained, lost and then restored. Ortega's own theory of generations was detailed about that same time in public lectures. If not a direct inspiration, Ortega found in Ibn Khaldūn at least a compatible philosophical perspective.

Although it is dated December 1927 to March 1928, *The Secret* was not published until 1934 in *El Espectador* newspaper. It was re-published in the second volume of Ortega's *Obras completas* in 1946. This thesis is the first critical translation of the essay into English, with extensive annotations. The twin goals of this translation are to make Ortega's cultural references understandable to a reading audience nearly a century removed, and to present his thought clearly enough for philosophical consideration.

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Preface

This thesis grew out of research undertaken for my philosophy doctoral dissertation. While exploring Ibn Khaldūn's concept of *ʿasabiyya*, I encountered a passing reference to Ortega's essay. I had already identified Ortega as a primary philosopher in my dissertation, so the evidence of a direct connection between the two was very exciting. The subject-matter of the essay did not fit into my dissertation, so I did not make use of it then.

In order to translate key philosophical concepts in Ortega's thought, I had taken a graduate Spanish course early in my doctoral studies. As I completed the dissertation, I approached the Spanish department with the hope that I could translate Ortega's essay as a masters thesis project. The faculty agreed and have been supportive of this endeavor as a group, as well as individually. My fellow masters students have also warmly welcomed me and enthusiastically supported this project, for which I am appreciative.

This intersection of my interests in Spanish and philosophy comes as a culmination of earlier educational pursuits. I studied Spanish as an undergraduate, including time in Spain. I returned to it in later professional life as in television broadcasting and the practice of law. In addition to Spanish, I have studied Latin, French and Arabic at UHM, all of which is useful to understanding Ortega, who frequently includes phrases in other languages without translation. Before I began doctoral studies, I completed a masters degree in philosophy at the University of Colorado at Boulder with a focus on metaphysics and epistemology, which is key to my understanding of Ortega's overall philosophical project. My UHM doctoral dissertation combined interests in philosophy of law and philosophy of religion, both frequent topics of Ortega's essays.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset (1883-1955) was puzzled about how the community of Melilla remained a Spanish enclave on the coast of North Africa, isolated from the surrounding desert. He had become aware of the city's existence as a youth during the first war of Melilla. By 1927, Spain had solidified its hold on Northern Morocco and Ortega was a prominent philosopher in Spain in his mid-40s. Several books on the history and culture of North Africa had been published by this time; in one of them Ortega encountered the name of Ibn Khaldūn (1332-1406).¹ Ortega read Ibn Khaldūn's voluminous foreword (*muqaddima*)² to his major work in its French translation.³ He determined that Ibn Khaldūn not only could solve the puzzle of Melilla, but could also provide an alternative theory of history that explained all of North Africa from a different point of view, especially the relationship of geographic twins Spain and Morocco. His resulting essay was completed in March 1928, titled "Abenjaldūn nos revela el secreto: pensamientos sobre África menor" ["Ibn Khaldūn reveals the secret to us: thoughts on Africa minor," (shortened to *The Secret* for this work).⁴ Although this was their first formal encounter, the paths pursued by the two philosophers had crossed many times, centuries apart.

This thesis explores the impression Ortega formed of Ibn Khaldūn and of his philosophy, as revealed in the 1928 essay. That essay introduced Ibn Khaldūn to Ortega's readers in Spain three decades before an English translation of *The Muqaddima* extended the conversation to other parts of Europe, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Ortega often used his newspaper and magazine essays to introduce European themes to the Spanish public. In this case, his treatment of Ibn Khaldūn's philosophy brought African/Islamic thought into the conversation.

In *The Secret*, Ortega undertook a sustained philosophical engagement with Arab/Islamic thought and themes, an interest that continued throughout his life. Rather than treating them as outliers, or examples of exotica, Ortega applied their ways of thinking to contemporary problems. In this case, he found the answer to the puzzle of Melilla in a key philosophical concept that Ibn Khaldūn called *‘asabiyya*. For Ortega, this process is illustrated by an African proverb that he cited in *The Secret* and returned to in later works.⁵ Ortega also described Ibn Khaldūn’s theory of generations, in which the strength of a people is restored by the combination of a return to the purification of the desert and the passing of three generations. Ortega’s own theory of generations was detailed about that same time in public lectures.⁶ If not a direct inspiration, Ortega found in Ibn Khaldūn at least a compatible philosophical perspective.

Although written from December 1927 to March 1928, *The Secret* was not published until six years later in *El Espectador*, the newspaper to which Ortega was then contributing regularly, in 1934. It was then re-published in the second volume of his *Obras completas* (which consists of his articles for *El Espectador* from 1916-1934) in 1946. Thirty years later, the essay was published in Spanish, along with an introduction to the work by Mikel de Epalza in *Revista del Instituto Egipcio de Estudios Islámicos en Madrid* [Journal of the Egyptian Institute of Islamic Studies in Madrid] (1976-78). At that time, Epalza noted:

The fact that a European philosopher has found an affinity of thought—despite the obvious differences of epochs and philosophical systems—with an Arab philosopher of the Middle Ages, is unique enough to justify this study even if it is a bit brief . . . In fact, this aspect of Ortega y Gasset's thinking has never been the subject of a particular study, and [his] text about Ibn Khaldūn is one of those that has been less translated and studied. (72)⁷

The Secret is not listed among Ortega's works that have been published in English translation (Ferrater Mora 199-200). Current scholarly articles are primarily in Spanish or Portuguese, relying upon the publication of the essay in Ortega's *Obras completas*. This thesis is the first critical translation of the essay published in English.

The Secret was written at a pivotal time in the development of Ortega's philosophy of life. His early writings date from approximately 1902 to 1913. Ferrater Mora described this phase as objectivist, although Julián Marías disagreed with that characterization (Donoso *Julián Marías* 80). Both agreed that the second phase of his philosophical writings extended from 1914 to 1923. It is during these years that Ortega developed his theory of perspectivism. "A noteworthy difference between the objectivist and the perspectivist stages is that, while the former contains much that will never again recur, the latter is an essential ingredient of the third period" (Ferrater Mora 132). It is in his third phase (1924-1955) that Ortega articulated his main achievement in philosophy, ratio-vitalism as translated by José Ferrater Mora. This approach combined his doctrines of man, society, and their interaction.

This thesis will facilitate English-language discussion of *The Secret* and its impact on Ortega's philosophy, as well as document Ibn Khaldūn's reception in Europe and the Americas. Chapter two situates Ortega and Ibn Khaldūn in their historical places and times. It provides a brief description of their philosophical perspectives necessary to a full understanding of the essay. Chapter three discusses Ortega's theory of translation, and the approach to translation taken in this work. Chapter four is the translation of the essay into English, with extensive critical translator's notes. Chapter five considers the impact of the essay on Ortega and later philosophers.

Chapter 2

Philosophers and Their Times

Ortega was a prominent political commentator and public philosopher in Spain. His preferred method of communication was essays published in newspapers and literary magazines. Publishing essays, and even novels, in newspapers was common in Spain and Latin America at that time. Other Spanish intellectuals, such as Miguel de Unamuno, published much of their thought in newspapers. “But Ortega has tried to introduce through the medium of newspapers not only ideological issues or cultural information but also a certain amount of philosophical speculation and clarification” (Ferrater Mora 135). Ortega’s essays were always both political and philosophical, although not always read and analyzed on both levels.

Ferrater Mora suggested three reasons for Ortega’s consistent use of newspapers as a medium of communication. The first was Ortega’s preference for the brief essay format and his background in newspapers, both suited to “the attraction he felt for a new subject as soon as another had been broached” (136). The sheer range of topics that drew Ortega’s attention is impressive. The second reason Ferrater Mora paraphrased from Julián Marías, Ortega’s dedicated student and later colleague:

In an intellectually enlightened atmosphere, Ortega might have done what was being done at the same time by other European philosophers: Bergson, Husserl, or Russell. He might have limited himself to working out a core of philosophical intuitions and delivering them to a restricted public by the usual means: papers read before learned societies, contributions to scholarly journals, lectures in universities. But what if learned

societies are few, scholarly journals practically non-existent, universities dominated by routine? Was it not therefore much better to take a roundabout course? (136-137)

The third reason was that Ortega was not only a philosopher, he was a writer, a member of the group of authors who created a new Golden Age in literature in twentieth-century Spain.

Ortega's essays "bear the mark of his unusual combination of literary skill and philosophical sagacity" (Ferrater Mora 138).

In order to appreciate Ortega's essay on Ibn Khaldūn, it is necessary to situate each in his philosophical and political times. Ortega's introduction to the thought of Ibn Khaldūn came through a French translation of his work, so contextualizing that translation is also an important part of understanding *The Secret*. When Ortega wrote, the Iberian peninsula was divided into Spain and Portugal, and North Africa had been divided into nations by European colonial powers. But when Ibn Khaldūn traveled the same terrain, the lower Iberian peninsula and what is now Morocco were united under Muslim rule. This is where we begin.

Introducing Ibn Khaldūn

Ibn Khaldūn analyzed the history of North African civilizations in the fourteenth century. He lived in a time and place that encompassed varying religious beliefs and practices. "At the intersection of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim influences, heir to Greek science and Arabic poetry, and connected by trade and history to Asia, the Mediterranean Sea had become the nexus of Muslim cosmopolitanism by the fourteenth century" (Lawrence vii). Amid these influences, Ibn Khaldūn developed a philosophy of history that accounts for societal change.

Ibn Khaldūn was born in Tunis in 1332 (732 AH)⁸ to a family that was originally of the Kinda tribe of Ḥaḍramūt, Yemen (Alatas "Sociology" 783). During the Muslim conquest of the

Iberian Peninsula, his ancestors put down roots in Seville and became prominent in politics. One established a quasi-independent state near Seville.⁹ The family left al Andalus during the *Reconquista*, settling in what is now Tunis.¹⁰ Refugees from Spain who settled in northwestern Africa were an elite group, according to Frank Rosenthal, Ibn Khaldūn's translator. "*The Muqaddimah* frequently mentions the great contributions made by Spanish refugees to the cultural life of northwestern Africa and stresses the superiority of Spain and the originality of its civilization" (xxxvi). As a Muslim, Ibn Khaldūn felt at home in what was then the "vast realm of Islam" but he retained an affection for the *Maghreb* of his birth and youth. "His true spiritual home, however, was Spain" (xxxvi).

The battle between Christians and Muslims over control of the Iberian Peninsula continued throughout Ibn Khaldūn's lifetime. The Caliphate of Cordoba had collapsed in 1031, dividing into twenty-three *taifas* (from Arabic 'tā'ifa'). These principalities had battled each other as well as the combined Christian armies of the north. However, final Christian domination of the entire peninsula came in 1492.

Through his family history of political service, Ibn Khaldūn was acquainted with three dynasties that ruled over what is today's Morocco.¹¹ Each of the Arab dynasties was affiliated with an indigenous Amazigh tribe.¹² The Amazigh were the population of the *Maghreb*¹³ before the Arab migration to what is now North Africa in the eighth to eleventh centuries (Alatas *Ibn Khaldūn* 14). This intimate awareness of the cyclical changes in power doubtless contributed to his political thought. The pairing of official and unofficial power also resonates with Ortega's interpretation of Ibn Khaldūn.¹⁴

Ibn Khaldūn's early education included customary topics in jurisprudence, theology, and linguistics. He was later exposed to philosophers such as al-Kindī, Ibn Sīnā, and Ibn Rushd (also

known as Averroes).¹⁵ His familiarity with Muʿtazilite arguments was demonstrated in later writing.¹⁶ His political life was punctuated with terms in prison for backing the wrong side in court intrigues. Over the first twenty years of his professional life, he bounced back and forth between al Andalus and the *Maghreb*, serving a series of sultans. When hostilities between Fez and Granada broke out, Ibn Khaldūn went to Granada but the Fez court would not let his family join him. “Ibn Khaldūn had to return to North Africa where he was out of favour with practically all the rulers” (Alatas *Ibn Khaldūn* 8). He retreated to a fort to begin his history of the Arabs and Amazigh.¹⁷

While in seclusion, Ibn Khaldūn completed *The Muqaddimah*, the prologue to a voluminous historical survey, the *Kitāb al-ʿIbar*. In this introduction, he detailed his method, such as how to determine if stories are accurate, and factors that produce untruth. He described his overall approach as creating an original science, one concerned with human civilization and social organization (*The Muqaddimah* 1, 77). Rather than theorizing an ideal polis, Ibn Khaldūn’s new science tried to make sense of historical events as it recorded them. He sought the inner meaning of history, the causes and origins of things that exist and of events. “History, therefore, is firmly rooted in philosophy. It deserves to be accounted a branch of it” (*The Muqaddimah* 1, 6). Ibn Khaldūn also revealed the motivation for undertaking such a monumental project: a major catastrophe that afflicted his native lands and beyond.

The Great Plague in 1348 was a formative experience for Ibn Khaldūn.¹⁸ It took both of his parents and most of his circle of scholars (Alatas *Ibn Khaldūn* 4). It also transformed civilization:

[C]ivilization both in the East and the West was visited by a destructive plague which devastated nations and caused populations to vanish. It swallowed up many of the good

things of civilization and wiped them out. ... Civilization decreased with the decrease of mankind. Cities and buildings were laid waste, roads and way signs were obliterated, settlements and mansions became empty, dynasties and tribes grew weak. The entire inhabited world changed. ... It was as if the voice of existence in the world had called out for oblivion and restriction, and the world had responded to its call.

(The Muqaddimah, 1, 64)

This drastic change in conditions, as if the world were “brought into existence anew,” prompted Ibn Khaldūn to “systematically set down the situation of the world among all regions and races, as well as the customs and sectarian beliefs that have changed” (*Alatas Ibn Khaldūn* 65).

Ibn Khaldūn used the concept of *‘asabiyya* to describe a cyclical process through which civilizations become stronger or weaker. His observations focused on the interplay between Bedouins and sedentary people, both natural groups that exist “by necessity” (*The Muqaddimah* I, 250). In his view, Bedouins are prior to sedentary people, because they have only the bare necessities of life.¹⁹

Bare necessities, in a way, are basic, and luxuries secondary. Bedouins, thus, are the basis of, and prior to, cities and sedentary people. Man seeks first the bare necessities. Only after he has obtained the bare necessities does he get to comforts and luxuries. The toughness of desert life precedes the softness of sedentary life. (*The Muqaddimah* I, 252)

For Ibn Khaldūn, Bedouins are more courageous than sedentary people, because they must defend themselves. They have no walls or gates or militias, but must always carry weapons and pay attention to any noise. “Fortitude has become a character quality of theirs, and courage their nature” (*The Muqaddimah* I, 258).

Ibn Khaldūn's view is survival in the desert requires strong *ʿasabiyya*. The conditions are harsh, which requires mutual cooperation. Anyone without a group affiliation would perish from the elements, lack of food and other resources, or attack. Human beings have inclinations to both good and evil. Evil qualities are injustice and mutual aggression. In cities, mutual aggression is controlled by governmental authority. Aggression from outside is averted by walls and government troops. Within Bedouin tribes, mutual aggression is restrained by the tribal leaders, on the basis of the veneration of members. Aggression from outside is repelled by strong *ʿasabiyya*, which both “makes for mutual support and aid, and increases the fear felt by the enemy” (*The Muqaddimah* I, 263).

While sedentary people do not wish to live in the desert, Bedouins work to achieve the luxuries of urbanization. “When he has obtained enough to be ready for the conditions and customs of luxury, he enters upon a life of ease and submits himself to the yoke of the city” (*The Muqaddimah* I, 253). The goal of *ʿasabiyya* is to have power and authority, but once it is reached, the leader no longer relies upon members of the group. This inevitably causes a dissipation of *ʿasabiyya* and decline of civilization. To be restored, the Bedouins must return to the desert “the basis and reservoir of civilization and cities” (*The Muqaddimah* I, 252). The strength of the Bedouin *ʿasabiyya* as nourished by the desert is the animating force of civilization.

Ibn Khaldūn's cyclical theory of decline and renewal in civilizations was supported by his theory of generations. Upon a return to the desert, it takes time to shed the meekness acquired in urban living, and to allow a new *ʿasabiyya* to arise. He set forty years as the shortest period for generational change.

Translating Ibn Khaldūn

The entire text of the *The Muqaddima* was first translated into a Western language by William MacGuckin de Slane as *Prolégomènes d'Ebn-Khaldoun*, published in three volumes released in 1862, 1865, and 1868.²⁰ In producing a French translation of *The Muqaddimah*, de Slane relied upon a full Arabic edition by Étienne Marc Quatremère (1858), the Arabic manuscripts that Quatremère used, and a 1859 Turkish translation.²¹ In his “Translator’s Introduction” to his English translation of *The Muqaddimah*, Franz Rosenthal defended de Slane’s version from critiques that it was too “free” (cviii). He agreed there were occasional mistakes of translation, few explanatory footnotes, and rare attributions to sources. However, he believed the stylistic choice was intentional and “perfectly legitimate” for a work such as *The Muqaddimah*.

While the stylistic choice may have been legitimate to introduce Ibn Khaldūn to a European audience, it was insufficiently nuanced for philosophical analysis. As an example, de Slane generally used *esprit de corps* for *‘asabiyya*, although not consistently.²² The various synonyms used obscure the fact that Ibn Khaldūn used the term as a key philosophical concept with application across various circumstances. Further, *esprit de corps* “is in itself not a terrible translation, but when that translation was transplanted to [Toynbee’s] *A Study of History*, it acquired misleading Bergsonian overtones of *élan vital*.” (Irwin “Toynbee” 471). Arnold Toynbee’s 1934 depiction of *‘asabiyya* as “the basic protoplasm out of which all bodies politic and bodies social are built up” (474) was the only treatment of Ibn Khaldūn’s theories in English until Franz Rosenthal’s translation of *The Muqaddimah* in 1958 (466).

Rosenthal relied upon several Arabic versions of *The Muqaddimah* that he was able to view personally, including one in Ibn Khaldūn’s own hand. He listed 18 manuscripts held in nine

libraries in Turkey that he examined during the summer of 1952. He gave a detailed description of each manuscript in his Translator's Introduction (lxxxix – civ). There is no authoritative Arabic version of *The Muqaddimah*, so Rosenthal's English compilation is presently the best representation of the work available.²³

The greater issue in Ibn Khaldūn's reception was that scholars relied upon de Slane "almost to a man" for their understanding of *The Muqaddimah* until Rosenthal's edition (cviii). For almost a century, de Slane's gloss disproportionately influenced philosophical engagement with Ibn Khaldūn's theories. It is not uncommon for European and American philosophers to work with primary sources in other languages, such as Latin, Spanish, French, or German, but rarely Arabic.

De Slane read Ibn Khaldūn through a Western lens of social progress that was alien to his original work.²⁴ Further, the very act of translating into French introduced colonial concepts, according to Abdelmajid Hannoum.

It should be repeated that the translation of the Arabic text into French means not so much the transmission of a message from the first to the second language, but rather the conversion of local categories into colonial categories, a conversion that is the result of the passage from one culture to another, from one historical moment to another Therefore, one is in fact removed not only from one cultural space to another, from the *Maghreb* to France, but also from one cultural time to another, from fourteenth-century Islam to nineteenth-century Europe. (72)

Western sociologists, historians, and philosophers also presented Ibn Khaldūn as a sort of solitary genius, springing from the soil of Islamic North Africa, rather than linked to centuries of Islamic philosophy, theology, and legal theory.

These were the resources, and perspectives, available to Ortega when he became interested in Ibn Khaldūn.²⁵ He footnoted his references to de Slane's translation, so the connection is clear. His familiarity with Toynbee was encyclopedic. At the creation of the *Instituto de Humanidades* [Institute of the Humanities] in Madrid, Ortega presented a course of twelve lectures in 1948-49 on Toynbee's *A Study of History*.²⁶ It was presented as an exposition and examination, rather than a summary. Ortega critiqued the British historian and contrasted the work with his own view of historical development. The course resulted in a book, written in 1948 and published in 1960 as *Una interpretación de la historia universal. En torno a Toynbee*.²⁷

Introducing Ortega

More than half a millennium after Ibn Khaldūn, Ortega wrote during equally tumultuous times. Ortega was born in 1883 into a family of Spanish newspaper publishers.²⁸ His mother, Dolores Gasset Chinchilla, was the daughter of the founder of *El Imparcial*, an eminent liberal daily paper. His father, José Ortega Munilla, was born in Cuba, where his father held an important post with the colonial government. Soon after his birth, the family returned to Spain.

Ortega Munilla became a novelist and journalist, serving as director for *El Imparcial*, before marrying Dolores and becoming co-owner (PARES). At the newspaper, he edited an influential literary section called "Los Lunes." This section became known as the most important venue for writers to gain exposure. A favorable review on Monday meant sure success for the

author, and many wrote to request reviews. The only one with a standing invitation was Benito Pérez Galdós. The primary audience for Galdós during his lifetime were educated liberals, according to Eamonn Rodgers. While Ortega Munilla heaped praise on the novelist, “The real reason, however, for Ortega’s admiration of Galdós is that ... the novelist gave expression to the concerns and aspirations of the generation which had placed high hopes for change in the September Revolution of 1868” (12). Following the example of his father-in-law, Ortega Munilla was also involved in politics, serving as a deputy in the *Cortes* [Parliament] from 1899 to 1903.

Ortega’s father was also associated with *La Diana* (1882-1884), a literary magazine that published the best current works in translation, from Baudelaire to Goethe, Schiller or Heine. His literary work was recognized with admission to the Spanish Royal Academy in 1902 (*Ganso y Pulpo*). “Ortega Munilla’s journalistic and public relevance kept him in close contact with the Spanish political and intellectual scene during three decades” (Bodevin iv). Leon Bodevin believed the very variety of his work to be a significant representation of the multiple trends of Spain’s nineteenth-century literary developments. “This variety permits delving into how Spain’s people comprehended, modified and matured new ideas imported mainly from Germany, France and England” (iv).

When Ortega was young, his family spent each fall and winter in Córdoba or Málaga, the same parts of southern Spain that remained under Muslim rule during Ibn Khaldūn’s life. Ortega studied under the Jesuits in Málaga, receiving a *Bachillerato* [high school degree] at the Colegio de Jesuítas de Miralfores del Palo. He went on to pursue philosophy, letters and law at the University of Salamanca, where Unamuno was one of his examiners. He took a degree of *Licenciado en Filosofía y Letras* from the Central University of Madrid in 1902. Two years later,

he took a doctor's degree at the University of Madrid with a dissertation entitled *Los terrores del año mil* [*The Terrors of the Year One Thousand*].

As a young adult, Ortega studied philosophy in Germany on two occasions. The first trip in 1905 was to the University of Leipzig where he was introduced to the writings of prominent philologists and philosophers, including Arthur Schopenhauer and Friedrich Nietzsche. The following year, he went to the University of Berlin and then the University of Marburg, where he studied the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, phenomenology, and the history of philosophy.

Ortega returned to Spain in 1908, began writing for *El Imparcial*, and founded the weekly magazine *Faro*, a philosophical review with special attention to Spanish affairs. It was in the pages of *Faro* that Conservative historian and politician Gabriel Maura y Gamazo (1879-1963) first coined the designation "Generation of 1898" (Holmes "Ortega y Gasset"). In 1910, he was selected to a post as professor of Metaphysics at Central University of Madrid, which he held for 24 years (Ferrater Mora 191). In 1911, he founded another philosophical review, *Europa*, followed by *España* in 1915. Two years later, he co-founded *El Sol*, and gave up writing articles for *El Imparcial* (Downey 9).

Political Change

Spain was beset with political turmoil throughout Ortega's life. He was in his teens when the Spanish-American War led to the loss of Cuba, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines in 1898. "During the twenty-five years which followed the first World War, as monarchy, dictatorship, republic, anarchy, and an authoritarian regime followed one another in quick succession, Spain underwent more changes in its political structure than any other state in Western Europe" (Downey 2).

When military dictator Miguel Primo de Rivera closed Madrid's Central University for a time, Ortega delivered a series of lectures on "What is Philosophy" in student residence halls, the auditorium of a private school, and a theatre (beginning in 1928). He was re-appointed to his position as chair by King Alfonso XIII, who later fled the country when the Second Republic was proclaimed.

Ortega became one of the first members of the Constituent *Cortes* and played a major part in writing the new Constitution before the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936. Ortega left active politics in 1932 amid constant conflict with Manuel Azaña Díaz, Prime Minister of the Second Spanish Republic (1931-1933). He returned to the Central University of Madrid and to writing articles for *El Sol*. During the first part of the Spanish Civil War, Ortega left for France with his wife, three children and brother. From 1936-1945, Ortega lived in France, Holland, Argentina, and Portugal (Ferrater Mora 191).

In 1945, the Franco government consented to allow Ortega to return, but he was given no official honor. He was denied his Chair at Central University of Madrid and told to confine his essays to cultural subjects, no further social or political themes. However, he remained popular with the public. After his years of exile, Ortega began his first series of public lectures in Madrid:

Every seat in the columned auditorium at Madrid's Club Mercantil had been taken, but still the people came. Mink-coated ladies and threadbare scholars jostled for places behind the doors, crowded onto the balcony overlooking the hall. They waited patiently for the wiry little man with unruly white hair to step to the gold desk on the dias. When he did, they burst into cheers. They clapped and shouted so long that they seemed almost hysterical. The man smiled, slowly raised his arms for silence. Then he began to speak.

The speech José Ortega y Gasset made that night was on an academic subject – Arnold J. Toynbee’s *Study of History*. But all over Madrid, it was the talk of coffee-houses.”

(Sweetser 41)

Ortega died of cancer in 1955 in Madrid at the age of 72. His passing was noted by *Time* magazine with an article “Death of a Philosopher,” which quoted Ortega’s own words: “The supreme value of life—just as the value of money is in spending it—is to lose it on time and in good grace” (Sweetser 42).

Literary Change

Ortega was situated between the younger members of the Generation of 1927, and the older intellectuals of the Generation of 1898, which included Unamuno. Named for the year that the Spanish-American War ended, “[i]t was the historical lot of the Generation of 1927 to be on the scene during this period of oppression, humiliation, and bloodshed.” In addition to governmental turmoil, “Spain was in the throes of a social turmoil – a house divided against itself – resulting ultimately from the consciousness of her own humiliation”. This social turmoil included the introduction of industrialization, which changed the traditional order of Spanish society (Downey 2).

Ortega was a mentor to the generation that followed him. He was the founder and director of the monthly intellectual journal *Revista de Occidente*, first published July 1923. The journal was “directed toward an educated readership, quickly became one of Europe’s renowned intellectual journals. The organ became a veritable Review of the West as several of the articles, which were translations of works previously published abroad, were important philosophic and scientific trends” (Holmes “Ortega y Gasset”).

The journal also became the principal medium of the intelligentsia and, in conjunction with Ortega's *tertulias* in the offices on the Avenue Pi y Margall, assisted in fostering the poetic generation of young intellectuals, the "Generation of 1927." The Generation of 1927 originated as a term to characterize a certain similarity of poets and writers in 1920s Spain. The year signaled the moment when intellectuals and students began to resist the dictatorship of General Miguel Primo de Rivera as a prelude to the Second Republic. (Holmes "Ortega y Gasset")

Nearly all of the members of the Generation of 1927 published works in *Revista de Occidente*. Many also had the opportunity to speak directly with Ortega through the "Residencia de Estudiantes," founded in Madrid in 1910. Ortega was a member of the original board of directors and visited the house several times a week. Francie Cate-Arries traced elements of Ortega's philosophy in the works of these authors, concluding that they did not embrace every idea he put forth, but "a careful reading of the poets' prose writings does reveal that the philosopher's thought informs their attitudes toward artistic creation. Such a reading suggests a philosophical context in which to situate the shared poetic theories of the Generation of 1927" (510).

Spanish Perspectives on North Africa

Ortega was not the only Spaniard focused on North Africa in the early years of the 20th century. When King Alfonso XIII ascended to the throne in 1886, Spain had colonies in the Americas, Africa, Asia, and the Pacific. By 1899, when Spain had only a foothold in northern Morocco and Spanish Guinea, some hoped to build a new empire in Africa. Northern Morocco was designated as a Spanish protectorate in the Treaty of Fez in 1912. However, that area had

never been completely conquered by the Moroccan government and remained primarily under the control of Amazigh tribes. Spanish troops first intervened in 1909 when tribes of the Rif confronted Spanish workers in the iron mines near Melilla. The Rif War was fought from 1920 to 1927, when Spain obtained at least nominal military control over the entire protectorate (Chandler 301-322).

The futures of Spain and Morocco became even more directly linked than Ortega imagined at the time he wrote *The Secret*. When Francisco Franco launched the military assault in 1936 that became the Spanish Civil War, he did it with his rebel “Army of Africa,” a force that included 136,000 Moroccan fighters. Both Spain and Morocco are now re-examining their roles in that episode (Abdennebi).

Ortega's Philosophical Concepts

Ortega introduced the concept of a socially-situated self in his first book as a philosophy professor, *Meditaciones del Quijote*. A man, Ortega said, achieves the most of his capacity when he obtains the full awareness of his surroundings. Through them, he communicates with the universe (9). To describe what he means by surroundings, Ortega added the Latin phrase ¡*Circum-stantia!* (*circum*: around, near, among; *stantia*: stand, remain):

The silent things that surround us! Very close, so close to us they raise their unspoken expressions with a gesture of humility and yearning as though desirous that we accept their offer yet embarrassed at the obvious plainness of their contribution. And we walk among them, blind to them, focusing on remote ventures, planning the conquest of far-away theoretical cities. (9)

Ortega's famous formulation is *yo soy yo y mi circunstancia*, commonly translated as "I am myself and my circumstances." For Ortega, each self is this reciprocal relationship between the body and its surroundings. Ortega was never really happy with the term *cosas* ("things"), explaining later "my human life ... puts me in direct relation with everything about me – minerals, plants, animals, other men ..." (*Man and People* 59).

Ortega's perspective was developed in conversation with, and in contrast to, contemporary philosophical approaches such as phenomenology, existentialism, rationalism, and relativism. He challenged the idea that human "consciousness" was anything apart from lived human experience:

The reality is that I am reaching out and experiencing the reality of my surroundings, and that the presumed description of the phenomenon "consciousness" resolves itself into a

description of the phenomena “real human life,” which is the same thing as the coexistence of the I with the surrounding things or circumstances. (*The Idea of Principal in Leibnitz and the Evolution of Deductive Theory* 281)

There is no such experience as “consciousness of _____” [sic] but rather; we find the coexistence of I and the thing.

Similarly, “things” cannot be discussed apart from the subject for whom they exist. “An object fundamentally and radically is what it is when it is part of the executive act which Ortega considers to be the stuff of radical reality ... the to-ing and fro-ing between subject and object” (Dobson 163). Ortega uses the example of a lamp. If I say the lamp is a “thing,” I’ve added hypothetical attributes to its original being, which is nothing other than that which is now shedding light on me. At other times, the lamp will be other things: that which I turn on or off, that which costs the Faculty such and such amount of money, and so on. “‘Things’ in their radical reality are what they are in terms of their action on me and in this sense must be conceived of in a transitive rather than a static fashion” (Dobson 164).

Language is also part of our interaction with our surroundings. The real meaning of a word is in the way that it functions in human relationships. “Hence, we must know who says it to whom, when and where. Which indicates that meaning, like all things human, depends on circumstance” (Ortega *Concord and Liberty* 12). Verbalization is only part of the meaning that is created in the living interaction. As an example, the word “black” can mean either a color or a mood. But when a customer says “black” to the waitress, they both know that it means “no cream in the coffee.” “What the word fails to say, circumstance mutely adds. ... The real meaning of a word is not in the dictionary, it is in the instant” (13).

Far from solipsistic, however, in Ortega's view our individual lives include, and are included in, the lives of others. "What we call 'other people's lives'—the life of one's friend, of one's sweetheart—is something that appears in the scenario that is my life, the life of each, and hence supposes that life" (*Man and People* 39). Unlike philosophers who have imagined man as essentially isolated, Ortega's philosophy accounts for the biological fact that humans are born into pre-existing relationships of family and community. "The part of my world that first appears to me is the group of men among whom I am born and begin to live, the family and the society to which my family belongs—that is, a human world through which and influenced by which the rest of the world appears to me" (*Obras completas* 7, 151-152). Society, then, is not an institution but a condition in which man finds himself "irremediably and without any hope of true escape" (*Concord and Liberty* 33).

Ortega changed the definition of "I" from static to relational, bringing concentric levels of experience into what it is to be "me." We relate to the world in a dynamic process of becoming, rather than being. This means that we have no fixed "nature" but rather a history: the set of circumstances into which we are born and within which we create ourselves. My situation includes the physical world: my body; the mental world: my mind/soul, my family; the social and cultural world: "opinions, beliefs, ideas, institutions, artifacts, instruments ... everything in which I am immersed" (Huéscar 126). We exist in the interaction, whether or not we realize it. If we become attuned to our surroundings, we become fully human.

Ortega's strong reading of this relationship was that there is no "I" to abstract away from my surroundings. No "self" exists outside this ongoing, enculturing relationship. Individuals who believe that they are adopting a neutral or objective stance are merely unaware of their influences and incorrectly perceive themselves as unaffected by them.

Ortega introduced his doctrine of the point of view in *El tema de nuestro tiempo*.

Building upon the idea that we are enculturating selves, he added the concept that we each see things from our own perspectives:

The body in which I live infused, shut up, inexorably makes me a spatial person. It puts me in a place and excludes me from other places. It does not permit me to be ubiquitous. At each moment, it fastens me to the one place like a nail and exiles me from everything else. Everything else, that is, the other things in the world, are in other places, and I can only see them, hear them, and sometimes touch them, from where I am. ... I can change my place, but whatever place it may be, it will be my "here." Apparently *here* and I, I and *here* are inseparable for life. And since the world, with all the things in it, must be for me from *here*, it automatically changes into a perspective." (Holmes *Human Reality* 85)

It does not make sense to say that one person's view of their surroundings is false. Ortega rejected the relativistic approach that would say difference is because we don't know which of two conflicting perspectives is really true. That assumes that there is some position that is more true than either of theirs: an absolute, or "God's eye view" to which they defer. "On the contrary, precisely because what they both see is real, each perspective produces an aspect of reality. The perspectives are not contradictory, but complimentary" (*El tema de nuestro tiempo* 150-151). Each life provides an irreplaceable perspective of the universe. Truth, or total reality, is the accumulation of all points of view from all humans who ever live.

The same is true of philosophy. The attempt to make sense of life is a pursuit of each epoch that builds upon previous times. Rather than relative, it is relational:

Philosophy today—any ‘today’ for that matter—is possible only because of philosophy yesterday, and so forth until we reach the very origins of philosophy. All this does not mean that the entire history of philosophy is the development of some kind of ‘internal necessity.’ Contrary to Hegel, who proclaimed that history is rational, Ortega asserts that reason is historical. Therefore, there is no need for philosophy to have developed the way it did. The philosophical past is a collection of errors as well as a collection of truths. ... the philosophical present need not be what it is, but it would not be a ‘present’ unless integrated with the entire past. (Ferrater Mora 181)

The past of any people includes their geographic location, societal development, governmental structure, cultural accomplishments, and religious commitments. These combine to produce the present, as it is but need not have been.

Ortega gave an example of how the enculturating and situated selves interact in the essay *La deshumanización del arte* [The dehumanization of art] (*Obras completas* 3, 361). He described a man on his deathbed, attended by his wife and a doctor, while a journalist reports on the scene and an artist paints them all. Each person relates to the event from a different point of view and each has a different story about reality. Certainly the scenario would not exist for discussion were there not a man on his deathbed, but the wife’s experience of torment or helplessness (or relief) is a perspective which alters the event itself with its presence. So, too, with the journalist and the painter. It may be that the journalist sees something that the wife overlooks in her grief: his perspective makes the reality of the event more complete.

The painter’s detachment may be what is needed for modern art, an approach that comes as a result of earlier ones (realism, surrealism) in the sort of historical grounding of surpassed

perspectives Ortega described for philosophy of history. In this sense, the painter is an intersection of the tools he chooses to use to record the event, his own personal history, the history of art, and the presence of an ill man on his deathbed. Each of those strands contains many contingencies—it is not necessary that he produce this particular painting. Each participant is living the event in Ortega's point of view of life. Without any one of them, it would be a different event; reality would be different.

Chapter 3

Translating Ortega

Translations of Ortega's work have been challenged by his writing style, in several ways. First, he published primarily in newspapers, but often re-worked the essays and themes as he delivered oral presentations in public talks or conferences. Final versions appeared in his *Obras completas*, but much of his most important work was done late in his life and published posthumously. In addition, several of the books included in the series "El arquero" included material not included in previously published books of the same names (Ferrater Mora 194).²⁹

Although roughly contemporary, translated works did not appear in the order that the originals were written. This makes it difficult to follow Ortega's development, and revision, of themes. The time-lag in publication and translation also meant that English-speaking audiences were learning of Ortega's positions as he was abandoning or modifying them. Further, the cultural differences between pre-World War II Spain and the United States are often not addressed in the conversion from one language to the other.

Frequently, translations into English have gathered somewhat related essays into a book, although the originals were not published in this manner. *The Revolt of the Masses*, which appeared in 1930, was the first wide-spread exposure to Ortega in the English-speaking world. It attracted immediate attention when translated in 1932. Ortega authorized this first publication and it noted that the translator wished to remain anonymous. A second version was re-edited and published in 1985, translated by Anthony Kerrigan.³⁰ The themes of the book are not original, according to Geoffrey Clive, but had been discussed by philosophers and political thinkers such as Marx and Engels, Mill, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Flaubert and Dostoevsky. Clive attributed the

popularity of the work to “its peculiar relevance at a critical juncture in European history” (77). Hitler, Mussolini and Franco were connecting to the common men in their respective countries in the early 1930s.

Clive described the perspective from which Ortega observed society: “his pride, his aristocratic bearing, and his reverence for preeminent personalities like Einstein are Nietzschean in their contempt for mediocrity and overspecialization. Furthermore, a powerful adversary of conventionality, Nietzsche reinforced Ortega’s predilection for exceptional acts and foresight (76). Clive noted that the book held up well (in 1973) as he applied Ortega’s categories of analysis to higher education in the United States. He concluded that Ortega’s analysis continued to apply vigorously not only to American higher education, but also American life as a whole:

When the *Revolt of the Masses* first appeared, Ortega was frequently taken to task for displaying pre-Fascist tendencies which the critics linked to his elitist biases. Rereading his book today, I feel that the substance of his argument completely supersedes whatever objectionable prejudices he may have held. In this connection, it should be reiterated that such Fascist leaders as Franco and Hitler, when they actually came to power in Europe, radically repudiated the core of Ortega's plea for the rehumanization of every area of man's endeavor. (81)

The *Revolt of the Masses* contained two references to the United States, neither of which is especially flattering. “As they say in the United States, ‘to be different is to be indecent.’ The mass crushes beneath it everything that is different, everything that is excellent, individual, qualified and select” (18). This came as Ortega drew a distinction between the mass-man (*hombre-masa*) and the masses. “When the mass man acts on its own, it does so only in one way,

for it has no other: it lynches. It is not altogether by chance that lynch law comes from America, for America is, in a fashion, the paradise of the masses” (116).³¹

The only prior access to Ortega’s thought in English was not its best presentation. *The Modern Theme*, published in 1931 (England) and 1933 (United States), was a collection of essays written a decade earlier (in 1923) and translated by James Cleugh. Ortega’s point in the essays was that philosophy in our time must transcend the “modern” themes of rationalism or relativism. Although the collection touches on recurring themes, such as the concept of generation and perspectivism as a theory of knowing, “[i]t is not one of Ortega’s most profound philosophical works,” according to biographer Ferrater Mora (Donoso 144). Other than these two books, two essays had been translated and published in journals by 1930. The earliest was titled “Spanish Letter” when translated in 1924. In Spanish, it is *Meditation on El Escorial*, written in 1915 and later included in the 1937 book *Invertebrate Spain* with 11 other essays. Still one of his best known and most influential essays, “*La deshumanización del arte*” was written in 1925 and translated into English as “The Dehumanization of Art” in 1930 by Pedro V. Fernández (Donoso 144).

A second challenge is, while Ortega published in newspapers and literary magazines, his intent was to engage with philosophical themes. Translators who are themselves journalists may aim at a mass audience, but miss the underling philosophical themes. After translating two books of philosophy, Gerald Parks concluded that, “[i]t goes without saying that the translator of such texts must not only have an excellent command of both languages involved, but also be well informed about the philosophers he or she is dealing with. It is to be expected that the reading and research will take up almost as much time as the actual translation work” (10).

Ortega had in mind two audiences for his work: Spanish upper-class readers and fellow philosophers, especially those in Germany where he had trained. “Ortega remained close to German thought all his life” (Kerrigan xv).³² One example is his dispute with Martin Heidegger about who first originated their (somewhat similar) metaphysics of human existence. The debate is continued by students of Ortega and later scholars:

Most students of Ortega’s thought agree with his claim to priority with regard to Heidegger. Strong proof appears in Julián Marías; interpretations of the “Ensayo de estética a manera de prólogo” and *Meditaciones del Quijote*, both published by Ortega in 1914. Other critics argue that Marías assumes Ortega’s clear possession of doctrines in 1914 which he could not have mastered until after 1927 and the publication of Heidegger’s *Sein und Zeit*. Yet our own findings support Marías. (1)

Nelson Orringer described Ortega’s presentation of his theory that concepts are like the space left when a piece is removed from a mosaic; they are the absence of the thing conceived. “However, because his reading public contains irrationalists like Unamuno, he also explains the usefulness of the concept” (20). Ortega explained that the concept determines where one thing leaves off and another begins (21).

Even though two dozen works are now available in English, a 1975 study by Oliver W. Holmes was the first treatment in English of Ortega’s engagement with philosophical themes of Neo-Kantism, Phenomenology, and Historicism (Donoso 148). Andrew Dobson’s introduction to Ortega’s philosophy came in 2009, with a fuller explication of philosophical themes. The majority of contemporary philosophical engagement with Ortega’s thought is done in the Spanish language, in academic journals of Spain and Central/South America. Many essays,

lecture notes, correspondence, and his completed works remain untranslated into English. The lack of philosophically-informed translations contributes to the lack of philosophical engagement with Ortega in English.

Translation of Ortega into English presents a special problem recognized in translation theory (discussed below). The terms Ortega used look and sound similar to English phrases that are too superficial, and yet have proven difficult to dislodge. Translator Helene Weyl used the English word “vital” for the Spanish *vital*, when Ortega’s meaning was “living” rather than “essential.” Andrew Dobson defended his translation of *razón vital* as “reason from life’s point of view” noting that the standard translation no longer makes sense in modern English. “Although the word for ‘vital’ in English can still mean ‘full of life and force’ or ‘necessary for life,’ its primary meaning is that of ‘very necessary’ or ‘of the greatest importance,’” which is inadequate to convey the “immediate sense” of the term as Ortega intends it (Dobson 171).

However, Dobson followed the translation of *realidad radical* as “radical reality” by Willard Trask in *Man and People*, even though Ortega took pains to explain: “We must go back to an order of ultimate reality, to an order or area of reality which because it is *radical* (that is, of the root) . . .” (Ortega *Man and People* 38). Not radical in the sense of extreme or exhaustive, this *root* is the reality of our individual lives.

Another key concept was translated by Phillip W. Silver as “historical reason” in a book by that title. In the essay that follows, however, Ortega used *razón histórica*, explaining in a footnote that he intended *razón* to be used in the sense that we mean the relationship between the diameter and circumference of a circle.³³ In English, this would be conveyed with “ratio” rather than “reason,” producing “historical ratio” in a sentence that also uses the term “historical coefficient.”

Translating Philosophy

An additional complexity in translating Ortega is the nature of translating philosophy as a discipline. It is especially important to translate philosophical texts, according to Francisco Chico Rico, because otherwise important works would be lost. It was the translation of Aristotle and other Greek thinkers into Arabic in the Middle Ages that preserved them for later translation into Latin. But now, few philosophers read any of those languages, so translations of the texts are actually more important than the works in their original languages (94). Nonetheless, translation of philosophy has not received the attention it deserves, in part because it is situated on the margins of literary and technical works.

Rico argued that philosophy is rightly considered a unique type of translation. He said it is similar to scientific and technical works in its use of specialized vocabulary and precision of language. However, it is also often a work of literature, such as the dialogues of Plato or *Utopia* by Thomas More or the writings of George Santyana (100). In Rico's view, philosophical translation requires "a *tertium quid*" that is inherently both "literary" and "scientific-technical" at the same time (101).

The terms used for concepts by philosophers are often not accessible in their full complexity, on first impression, not only for casual readers but also for specialized readers (101):

A philosophical text can be defined as the representation of a system of thought in a specific natural language with the determination of a scheme of terms/concepts originally coined or reformulated by the author in the context of tradition. From this point of view, the work of the translator of the philosophical text consists in accessing the subject of

these original terms/concepts, in one way or another, and turning them into meta terms/concepts in a different natural language. (95)³⁴

Rico observed that, unlike law or medicine, philosophy not only has its own technical language, but also philosophers often:

- a) invent their own terms, neologisms or neographisms, to elaborate philosophical concepts,
- b) assign new meanings to old terms, many from Greco-Roman culture, giving the meanings significance in their specific philosophical schools;
- c) give common words a specialized meaning in a philosophical context.

This produces the general tendency to leave intact key terms such *arkhé* and *physis* of the presocratics, the Platonic *doxa* and the *episteme* or Aristotelian *mimesis* and *ousía*, in the context of contemporary philosophical thought, the *Dasein* of Heidegger, the *Erfindung* of Nietzsche, the *néant* of Sartre or Derrida's *différance* (96). The concern is that changing these key terms into another language also changes the role they play in the original philosophical scheme. The most extreme example is the vocabulary used by Heidegger. Rico said this is actually a “*dialecto heideggeriano*” that is a distinctive part of the philosophical style (103).

The opposite approach presents problems of its own, as Trevor J. Saunders encountered when revising an earlier translation of Aristotle's *The Politics*:

Many of these terms demand, according to context and subject-matter, a range of English words to translate them. . . . As soon as the translator adopts several English words for one Greek word, he may indeed accurately render his author's meaning, but he will conceal the structure of his thought, as embedded in a particular culture; hence the reader needs to be told which single Greek term it is that lies behind the range of English terms.

On the other hand, always to use the same English word for the same Greek word denies the Greek author flexibility of usage, and in any case leads to distinctly weird English.

(quoted in Parks 3)

This is the situation described earlier with de Slane's translation of *ʿasabiyya*. The use of a number of French words or phrases according to context concealed from Ortega the intent of Ibn Khaldūn to use this as a technical term. Had it been more clear, Ortega may have seen a more universal application of Ibn Khaldūn thought beyond North Africa.

Another challenge is translating between a language with masculine and feminine cases and one without. In philosophy, especially, the masculine form for "man" is often used to human beings in general. The translation of "people" or "human beings" has often been used in Aristotle's text, rather than the traditional "man." However, Parks noted "The traditional term has been accepted as reflecting also Aristotle's views on the matter, since clearly his lectures and writings were intended for an exclusively male audience, though one could argue that today his doctrines are equally relevant to both sexes" (8).

Finally, Rico observed, it is important to remember that translating philosophy is not done alone. It is generally impossible for a single individual to translate all of the works of a philosopher. It is necessary, then, not only to find the term that accurately translates a specific concept, but also to insert that term into the philosophical translation tradition. In this sense, the translator is an agent of philosophical intertextuality (Rico 106).

Beyond the search for specific terms, there is the problem of making sense of the text, that is, avoiding an incomprehensible result. Philosophical discourse, like much theoretical discourse, often consists of long and complex sentences. The translator must then make decisions

about how much of the grammatical style must be conserved. Some translators feel that the length and complexity of sentences constitute a secondary characteristic of philosophical discourse and must be maintained. In this sense, it is not possible to arbitrarily modify the syntax of the philosophical text (Rico 106).

It may be that form and substance are so interconnected in philosophical discourse that form constitutes a part of the text's function. That was the argument of Klaudia Bednárová-Gibová and Sandra Zákutná. They addressed one type of equivalence between the source text (ST) and target text (TT) in philosophical translation. One of their motivations was to address "philosophy experts who tend to criticize translators for either misinterpreting the originals or for making translations almost unintelligible" (424). The former may come from a translation that is too free, whereas the latter results from adhering too closely to the source text. One reason for staying close to the source text is the complexity of the philosophical argument's construction. Bednárová-Gibová and Zákutná also argued that "philosophical discourse requires a thorough knowledge of the concepts, ideas and purposes of the ST, which determines linguistic choices when translating subtle nuances of meaning which are of high importance to the whole when 'energizing' a text in translation" (424).

Bednárová-Gibová and Zákutná recommended "a thorough translation-oriented analysis prior to the actual process of translation" (424). Even though philosophers aim for universal values, "it seems critical to identify the historical and cultural context of the period in which a certain text originated. This is also relevant for the identification of concepts because a new philosophical concept is rarely created without being grounded on some preceding concept" (424). This analysis should also identify the audience for the text. Who did the author have in mind when composing the text? The translator must decide whether to translate the text for the

person the author had in mind, or for the general public. In their view, the general public will usually be a 'semantic reader' who focuses on the meaning of the text. The philosopher is expected to be a 'semiotic reader' who will seek to understand not only what is said, but also how it is said. In philosophy, the audiences of the source and target texts may be several centuries apart. "That is why they must be able to predict how much of the information connected to the time of the text's origin is still likely to be understood by the TT audience and how much information needs up-dating" (Bednárová-Gibová and Zákutná 425).

Approaches to equivalence in translation studies consider formal (word-for-word) and dynamic (sense-for-sense) equivalence. Formal correspondence is concerned that the message in the receptor language match as closely as possible the source language, while dynamic or functional equivalence aims at equivalent effect. Dynamic equivalence is recommended when the readability of the translation matters more than the original wording. Bednárová-Gibová and Zákutná recommend a formal approach to philosophy because form and function are so intertwined:

[A]s dynamic equivalence could preclude the translator from encoding the implied pragmatic meaning of terms in translation. This would then lead to terminological mismatches between a source language term and a target language term, where the ideational component of a source term's function would not be captured properly. (428)

They note there is no agreement in contemporary translation studies about which sort of equivalence is to be used. They suggested "a plausible translation is one which preserves the author's intention, upholds the text's purpose, allows the recipient to access the same information and provides them with the same experience" (428).

In considering the correct translation of “affection” as used by David Hume, they cautioned against *afekt* in Slovak, which is a *faux amis*.³⁵ “The formal similarity to the English term would, however, lead to an unfitting TL [target language] term and .. and ‘overtly erroneous error’” (432). This is the problem identified above with regard to the translation of Ortega’s philosophical terms into English. The word “circumstance” in English has a much more superficial and circumscribed meaning than *circunstancia* in Spanish.

Bednárová-Gibová and Zákutná concluded that philosophical discourse would lend itself to dynamic equivalence if it were rendered in a more straightforward manner. “This would, however, run against the nature of philosophy” (433).

Ortega on Translation

Ortega wrote an essay on translation in which he discussed difficulties in approach and execution. “The Misery and the Splendor of Translation” was first published in *La Nación* of Argentina in a series of five weekly essays from June 13-July 11, 1937 (Ordonez López 42). It purports to be a dialogue held by academics and students of the College de France in Paris. One mentions that it was impossible to translate certain German philosophers, suggesting a study to identify the philosophers who could and those who could not be translated. Ortega’s character says that idea supposes that anyone can be translated, which is an illusion. “Isn’t the act of translating essentially a utopian task?” (Ortega “Misery” 6). He suggests that translation may be among those things that are impossible to perform because:

To write well is to make constant incursions into grammar, into established usage, and into accepted linguistic norms. It is an act of permanent rebellion against the social environs, a subversion. To write well is to employ a certain radical courage. Fine, but the

translator is usually a shy character. ... What will he do with the rebellious text? Isn't it too much to ask that he also be rebellious, particularly since the text is someone else's? He will be ruled by cowardice, so instead of resisting grammatical restraints he will place the translated author in the prison of normal expression, that is, he will betray him.

Traduttore, traditore. (Ortega "Misery" 8)

One of the fictional participants in the dialogue suggests that it is simpler to translate mathematics and science. Ortega's character responds that is because the author has already translated it from his natural language into a technical terminology: a "pseudolanguage formed by technical terms, linguistically artificial words which he must himself define in his book. In short, he translates himself from a language into a terminology" (9). The same technical language is used in nearly every country, Ortega says, while men who speak the natural language of the country find the technical books to be "hermetic, unintelligible, or at least very difficult to understand" (Ortega "Misery" 10).

Ortega next says an author's personal style includes a slight deviation from habitual meanings of words. "The author forces it to an extraordinary usage so that the circle of objects it designates will not coincide exactly with the circle of objects which that same word customarily means" (12). He then observes that languages, themselves, have customary styles. Languages are formed in different landscapes and through different experiences. Ortega wonders if the collection of trees that a Spaniard calls a *bosque* means the same thing as a German *Wald*. The dictionary says they both mean *forest*, but there is an enormous difference between the two geographic realities. Like a double-exposed photograph, Ortega says translation is permanent literary haziness (blur). (Ortega "Misery" 13)

Ortega then turns his thoughts to conversation. He says the personality divides itself in two, one part that listens to what is being said, the other withdraws to think about the subject being addressed. Such conversations reach a point where both people are silent because they are thinking so much they cannot talk. He observes that different languages have different conversation styles, and deal differently with silences. With regard to translating between them, Ortega posits that a bad utopian believes that, because it is desirable, it is possible, and begins to translate without giving much thought to how one must translate. “This is the reason why almost all translations done until now are bad ones” (17). In contrast, according to Ortega, the good utopian believes there is little probability that men can be freed from the divisions imposed by language. Progress can only be greater or lesser toward the goal, as it is with most of man’s endeavors.

In the dialogue, a master of linguistics is reported to have claimed that every language expresses what is necessary in its own society. Ortega wonders how he can know this, “As a linguist, he only knows the languages of peoples, not their thoughts ...” but Ortega says he does not believe that the two are the same. He uses the Basque language as an example. It had no word for God, so translators used a phrase that meant ‘lord over the heights’ (Ortega “Misery” 26). Over time, lordly authority has disappeared, so the term now means God directly. But for that to make sense, we have to remember the time that the phrase made God equivalent to a political, worldly authority. The Basques were slow to convert to Christianity, in part Ortega suggested, because “police intervention was necessary in order to put the mere idea of the divinity in their heads.” (27)

In addition, we constantly limit ourselves when speaking or writing because language does not allow us to fully express our thoughts. For Ortega, this is especially true when

communicating in other languages. “It is what I am feeling now when I speak in French: the distress of having to quiet four-fifths of what occurs to me, because those four-fifths of my Spanish thoughts can’t be said well in French” (Ortega “Misery” 28).

Ortega then links his theory of language with that of the self. The world is not composed of “things” (*cosas*) that are distinctly different from one another. “Reality is a limitless continuum of diversity” (Ortega “Misery” 35). Humans impose difference upon this continuum so that we do not get lost in it, but the distinctions we draw are relative only, not absolute. Ortega quotes Goethe as saying that man establishes differences. “But the world offers us innumerable classifications, and does not impose any on us” (35). Each people carves up the world in a different way, which is reflected in their language: the grammar, vocabulary, and semantics. The first classifications made indicated the importance attached, and was therefore the first knowledge. He compares European languages that ascribe male, female, or neuter classifications to those of Africa that include many more variations. He contends that Arabic has 5,714 names for the camel, saying that makes it difficult for a nomad of the African desert and a manufacturer from Glasgow to come to agreement on the humpbacked animal (37).

Languages separate us and discommunicate, not simply because they are different languages, but because they proceed from different mental pictures, from disparate intellectual systems, in the last instance, from divergent philosophies. Not only do we speak, Ortega says, but we also think in a specific language, and intellectually slide along preestablished rails prescribed by our verbal destiny (Ortega “Misery” 37).

From these miseries of translation, in the final installment, Ortega moves to the splendor. He cites Friedrich Schleiermacher for the idea that translations can move either of two directions (alienation or naturalization). The reader is brought closer to the writer, or vice versa. In the first

case, we do an imitation of the text, rather than a proper translation. This would be similar to a dynamic, sense-for-sense translation. “It is only when we force the reader from his linguistic habits and oblige him to move within those of the author that there is actually translation” (Ortega “Misery” 39).

Ortega defines what a translation can be. It is not a magical transformation of one language into another, because “transubstantiation is impossible” (Ortega “Misery” 40). Rather, he argues, translation is a literary genre apart, different from the text, with its own rules; it is a path toward the work (40). For this reason, different translations are appropriate for the same text. “It is impossible to approximate all the dimensions of the original text at the same time. It will be necessary to make divergent translations of the same work according to the facets of it that we may wish to translate with precision” (Ortega “Misery” 44).

One of the approaches may be aesthetic, attempting to capture the beauty of the work. However, Ortega offers an alternate vision as well: “I imagine then a form of translation that is ugly, as science has always been; that does not intend to wear literary garb, that is not easy to read but is very clear indeed (although this clarity may demand copious footnotes)” (Ortega “Misery” 45).

Ortega says this approach values ancient Greek and Roman culture, for example, for all the ways it is *not* similar to ours. Translation should include all the exotic, distant culture, while making it intelligible to us. “What is important is that, in translating, we try to leave our language and go to the other—and not the reverse, which is what is usually done” (Ortega “Misery” 47). A country’s reading public does not value a translation done in their local style because they have local authors who do that:

What is appreciated is ... carrying the possibilities of their language to the extreme of the intelligible so that the ways of speaking appropriate to the translated author seem to cross into theirs. The German versions of my books are a good example of this. In just a few years, there have been more than fifteen editions. This would be inconceivable if one did not attribute four-fifths of the credit to the success of the translation. And it is successful because my translator has forced the grammatical tolerance of the German language to its limits in order to carry over precisely what is not German in my way of speaking. In this way, the reader effortlessly makes mental turns that are Spanish (48).

What Ortega did not mention in this example is that his philosophical training was in Germany. While his expression is thoroughly Spanish, it is likely more amenable to translation into a language with the same cultural concepts.

This Translation

The twin goals of my translation are to make Ortega's cultural references understandable to a reading audience nearly a century removed, and to present his thought clearly enough for philosophical consideration. This will be the sort of translation that Ortega imagined when he said there may be various versions of a work. The first translations of Ortega into English were to engage with his political thought as a newspaper essayist. My approach is to present Ortega so that he can be discussed in a philosophy classroom.

One example is a word Ortega uses to say the past and future are exactly alike. In *The Secret*, he uses it to say that the past and future look "like two drops of water." In English, an equivalent phrase would be "like two peas in a pod." However, Ortega uses *gotas* "drops" in at least one other philosophical context. One section of his famous essay *The dishumanization of*

art is entitled “Unas gotas de fenomenología” [“A few drops of phenomenology”]. It is the section described above with a man on his death bed, written in 1934. I do not know that Ortega intends any sort of link between the two essays, but I do not want to remove the possible signifier.

Another example is the detailed description of the thought processes of curiosity and puzzle on the first page of *The Secret*. It does not provide a general introduction to its topic – that comes later. But Ortega’s description of how experiences become internalized should be described clearly enough that it can be compared with the concepts of perception, cross-modally integrated selves, and metaphysics of the self in various philosophical schools.

Therefore, I have chosen to remain close to the text, in a formal, quasi word-for-word translation. In Ortega’s presentation of *The Secret*, he occasionally included quotes with no attribution, which I have retained. He also footnoted some sources, which are shown as footnotes in this section. Annotations are included as end notes. I also reproduced the essay divisions that Ortega used: roman numerals without titles accompanying them, and sections marked with ***. Similarly, I left long quotations as Ortega presented them in paragraph form, rather than following now-standard citation practices. This will certainly produce an ugly translation, in Ortega’s sense, with copious footnotes. It is my intention to position it in English-language philosophical discourse.

Chapter 4

Ibn Khaldūn Reveals the Secret to Us

(thoughts on Africa Minor)³⁶

José Ortega y Gasset

I.

If we see that someone is not the least bit curious, we will think, necessarily, that he is not intelligent, and even less, that he lacks vitality. To live is a very strange verb. On the one hand, it means the mode of existence peculiar to the individual organism. This is a fragment of reality and aside from the rest. Life is always my own reality, and exclusive to a person, it is my life or yours or his. It is what happens inside me, within the limits of my body and my consciousness. But if we observe what is happening inside us, what is our “to live,” we will notice that it always consists of interacting with things around us, with the surrounding world: to live is to see, to hear, to think about one thing or the other, to love and hate others, to desire one or another object. What results is that living is being inside of oneself and at the same time going out of oneself. It is precisely a constant movement from within—the intimate recesses of the organism—towards an outside, the World. But when we arrive at that “outside,” for example, at a scenario as we encounter it, what we have done is to enclose it inside us, we have consumed it. Therefore, from the outside we have gone back inside, arms loaded with cosmic riches. Consequently, living is a circular movement that goes from inside to outside and from outside to inside again. To live is a verb that is both transitive and reflective: to live as oneself as we live things.

For vitality to be complete and healthy, it is necessary for the movement to be energetically fulfilled in both directions. Not only to go out to things, but later to bring them back, to seize them, internalize and engage with them. He who is merely curious does not do more than the first: everything catches his attention. That is already something. He is starting to live. He goes out of himself. But if everything catches his attention, he will not be able to pay attention to anything. Scarcely does his attention arrive at one thing when already another will be claiming it. Curiosity about the curious thing is simply due to its novelty, and since it is lost in the first contact with the object, curiosity does nothing but slide over things without possessing them, without returning to the person with the new riches. The curious one does not return to himself, he has no strength to resist the call of surroundings, he loses himself in them, he alienates and annuls himself. In order to seize things, it is necessary to engage with them, and for this it is necessary to pay attention to them, and to notice something, it is necessary to be puzzled. The curious cannot be puzzled by anything, because he is attracted to the novelty of the thing and nothing else. He is not attracted to the thing itself. Curiosity is the minimum vitality, it is its frivolous form. Soul without depth, that of the curious gravitates at the mercy of the panorama that surrounds it. In contrast, the fully vigorous spirit is not curious. It does not leave itself with no reason: it does not live, so to speak, on the street. There must be some serious reason to leave its intimate seclusion, that the thing presents a puzzle in itself, that compels one to pay attention to it. But we can only pay attention to what is strange to us. And seeing something strange simply means that we discover a problem. The essential difference between a “curiosity” and a “puzzle” is that the former has novelty and the latter contains a problem. The problem presents to the mind a task, a job, and in this exertion with the object we affirm ourselves before it. We become owners of it, we engage with it.

The full vitality of the spirit consists, therefore, in being curious about problems.

This happened to me when I asked myself if my interest in African themes, which had continued for many years, was simply curiosity, rapture of the exotic, etc. Later I will describe how that interest was born in me: Melilla, conquered by the Spaniards at the end of the fifteenth century, still remained in the twentieth century enclosed within its walls, without engaging with the desert. It had not been able to touch even a league of surrounding desert in four hundred years. City and desert lived perpetually hostile and incommunicado. Strange thing! A problem.

Each of the advanced peoples who have passed through North Africa has seen it in a different way.³⁷ Rome sees Numidians and Gaetuli. Rome passes, and with it, those two images disappear. The Arabs speak of Botr and Beranes. We Europeans have arrived, and what we find is Arabs and Berbers.¹ It is surprising that when each great colonizing nation withdraws it takes the country with it—I mean its appearance: it is removed as a rug is collected after a party.

And it is even more surprising that these successive aspects of North Africa or *Africa Minor* coincide in the dual form. The pair of designations continues through the various terms. We suspect at once that the African scene is represented immemorially as a drama between two characters. These very diverse terms are, seemingly, names of actors who participate in the performance of the two great roles.

¹ E. F. Gautier: *Les siècles obscurs du Maghreb*. 1927, p. 216.

This drama must be very original, specifically African because the external races that have observed it have not understood it well. The Roman and the European of three centuries ago came with their ideas of historical reality already formed. Formed as all our fundamental ideas are forged: in view of certain constant and very simple facts that we have always observed. Once we have formed a certain idea of what reality is, if it changes, it will be hard for us to see it with its new form. The old idea gets in between the retina and the objects. Thus, Romans and Europeans, blinded by the historical conception that their experience had imposed on them, have only observed that two different and antagonistic historical forces acted in Africa, from whose conflict and linkage arose the peculiar African life. But they failed to discover the distinguishing characteristic of each power.

This is precisely why we seek an indigenous person, an intact man for our ideas, for whom reality is primarily the African reality. The trouble is that the indigenous people of Africa are not usually thinkers, even when they study and write historical books. That prodigious act—the great feat of the mind—in which the individual rises up before and, in a certain way, in contrast with surrounding reality, constructing a conceptual diagram of it—the web in which it moves—has been very rarely accomplished in Africa.

Fortunately, there is an illustrious exception. A great African, with a mind as clear and ideas as polished as those of a Greek, is going to introduce us into that historical world where our spirit is not able to set foot. He is Ibn Khaldūn, the philosopher of African history.

The Prolegomena to History, by Ibn Khaldūn, is a classic book that after almost a century has entered into the common conversation, thanks to the translation of the Baron de Slane.² Ibn Khaldūn, not content with narrating the facts of the African past—he writes around 1373—wants to understand them. Understanding is, for the moment, simplifying, replacing the infinity of phenomena with a finite repertoire of ideas. The smaller the repertoire, the more vigorous the comprehension. The ideal of science would be to explain all the facts of the Universe with a single idea. What is that magic power of an idea in virtue of which, put on one side, weighs as much as all the facts of reality put on the other? It simply means that this idea isolates and defines a root fact of which all others are pure modifications and combinations. Thus physics has aspired to demonstrate that the infinite kinds of movements observed in the cosmos are particular cases of a single type of displacement: the fall of one body over another. Where this operation of simplification is attempted, there is science in the most rigorous sense of the word, in the Greek and European sense.

And so, the work of Ibn Khaldūn teaches us that the apparent turmoil of events in Africa is reduced to only one: the coexistence of two ways of life—the nomadic life and the sedentary life. This is the fundamental, basic, inexhaustible fact from which all of African history sprouts. It is not strange that other advanced peoples have never understood well the intricacies of that long past. It is a situation that occurs only in North Africa, if one understands as such the

² *Les prolégomènes d'Ibn Khaldoun, traduits et commentés par M. de Slane*. Three volumes. Paris, 1858.

enormous strip that goes from the Atlantic to the Persian Gulf and from the Mediterranean to the South edge of the Sudan, and to the end of Arabia. In the other regions of the planet, either there are nomads or there are sedentary peoples; but in none are there inseparably both. At most, a sedentary people moves: then we talk about emigration. But this emigration, which at certain times all cultures have undertaken, is for them a transitory manifestation, it is not nomadism. Emigration is the displacement of the sedentary.

For Ibn Khaldūn, the historical world is reduced to that African world. Of the rest, he has only indirect information. With his eyes, with his soul, he has seen only North Africa. The consequence is that for him all human history originates in this great dual fact: nomadism-sedentarism. We do not lightly disparage this limitation. We also suffer our own limits. Strictly speaking, the European does not fully understand history except as motivated by the idea of progress, which consists in the growth of a developing culture. The same history taught to us by our masters—the Greeks and Romans—enters our minds with difficulty because, for them, the cradle of civilization is the State-City, the *civitas*, the *polis*, an idea that we have a hard time actualizing. This is why attempts to describe a truly universal history have failed.

II.

The two great realities of history are, in the eyes of Ibn Khaldūn, the State and civilization; i.e. government and culture. In our lands, both entities have always been very mixed. The African situation presents them to us radically separated. Two completely different types of man create one and the other. The government, according to Ibn Khaldūn, is a thing of the nomads, because they are the warriors who impose power on wide territorial areas, to multiple nuclei of peoples. Civilization, on the other hand, is a matter of the sedentary; ultimately, of the cities. However, here is the secret of all historical movements. The city, where

knowledge, work, wealth, and pleasure reside, has no nerve for dominion. The nomad, on the other hand, strengthened in a poor and harsh life, possesses high moral discipline and courage. Necessity united with capacity leads them to descend on the sedentary peoples and take over the cities. They create States. But these are irretrievably transitory, because the city conceals the fatal virus of softness. The triumphant nomad is weakened, that is, civilized and gentrified or urbanized. He, then, succumbs to new invaders, to other nomads still free from luxury and lust. Due to this perpetually repeated process, history is essentially, and not by chance, subject to a rhythm. Periods of invasion and creation of States, periods of civilization of the invaders, periods of new invasion. There is nothing more. So it is, one century and the next. Ibn Khaldūn, aligning with some very recent theories, establishes the temporal duration of this rhythm: three generations, one hundred and twenty years. That is the duration of a State. “Shortly before, shortly after, the decrepitude ensues. States, like individuals, have a lifetime: they grow, they reach maturity, then they begin to decline.”

That is because this magnificent idea, as clear and simple as Newton's law, represents with great accuracy what we have observed in twenty-six centuries of African history. It will be said that this cyclical rhythm, always repeated, runs counter to the idea of evolution, of progress. But this objection emanates from our European way of thinking, precisely that of understanding all personal and collective life as progress. It is probable that, in reference to all humanity, our idea is the most accurate, although the issue involves larger and more difficult problems than is usually believed. But with respect to Africa, Ibn Khaldūn is not wrong. Because for twenty-six centuries nothing substantial seems to have changed in that enormous area. African history does not have, like ours, the aspect of progress, but rather presents an eternal repetition, like the history of a vegetable. Certainly today Europeans have become established in North Africa and a

State has been created that is also a civilization. But a revived Ibn Khaldūn could say to us: “Yes, I know: I understand that issue. When I lived, it was well remembered that in Africa, Carthage had lived and then Rome. After my death came the Portuguese and the Spaniards. But the Spaniards and the Portuguese left, as had the Romans and the Carthaginians. Those civilizations superimposed on the Africa that you, Europeans, consider an act in defiance to my theory, views that do not offer anything in particular. Those great people were nomads, with more complexity and slightly less transient than those of the rest of Africa. The difference was that none of them penetrated as deeply into the African essence as we Muslims, we Bedouins, we arch-nomads.”

It is appropriate that we pursue more closely the work of the Moroccan. Chronologically his is the first philosophy of history to be composed. The only other who could aspire to this position also came from an African mind—Saint Augustine—but it was more properly a theology of history.

Ibn Khaldūn is a clear mind, all light. His luminous power is revealed all the more because he believes, as a good Moroccan, not only in the Koran, but also in magic and dreams, in the oracles and signs, in fortune-tellers, astrologers and geomatics.³⁸ However, his mental light pierces all that fog and arrives pure to things and distills from them a book that seems written by a geometer of the Hellas. His philosophy of history is at the same time the first sociology.

He wants to understand, to know clearly, like Ranke, “what really happens” in history. But what do histories tell us? Nothing. Only . . . stories! Bad historians “draw from the history of dynasties and past centuries a series of narratives that can be considered vain simulants devoid of substance, like sword sheaths from which the blade has been removed” (page 7).³⁹

History must begin by being critical. When it is not, it tends to “constantly move away from the truth and go astray in the field of error and imagination.” For example: the continuous exaggeration of the amount of money and soldiers. Ibn Khaldūn's observations on the latter are identical to those that, with great success, Delbrück has recently used to construct his great *History of War* and to rectify with it the texts of classical history. There cannot be armies of six hundred thousand men—Ibn Khaldūn says—because the presumed region would be too narrow for the battle, the line of combat would be lost from view, and the right wing would not know what was happening in the left wing.³

It is necessary to have good sense and think that in certain points “the past and the future look as similar as two drops of water.” The historian must avoid other errors that arise from ignoring how, together with these invariable elements, one must take into account “the changes that the difference of time and times brings to the state of nations and peoples.” There is never uniformity, but “a continuous transition from one state to another.”

Ibn Khaldūn reviews the great changes that he knew, which for him was the great avenue of history. Persians of the first race, Assyrians, Nabateans, Tobba, Israel, Copts, Persians of the second race, Romans, Greeks (Byzantines), Arabs, Franks. The reason he gives for this continuous change—that is, partial uniformity and partial difference—is that every new people,

³ See what Delbrück says about the supposed contingent of the Persians in Thermopylae. *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, I, pages. 53-106.

in triumph, adapt to the vanquished, while preserving their customs. That is why there are never two consecutive epochs that are completely equal, or completely unequal (pp. 58-59).

And it is curious how from his African corner—in Tunis, Tlemcen, Biskra, Fez—he perceives that during his life a great crisis ferments in the world—the roses of the Renaissance anticipate their next spring for this exquisite Bedouin pituitary. “When, as now, the universe experiences a complete disorder, one could say that it will change its nature, in order to go through a new creation and organize itself again. Therefore, it is necessary that a historian can attest to the state of the world, of countries, of peoples” (67).

But all these norms of “historical criticism” cannot take us very far - they have not taken us very far. In these times, the European intelligence is realizing the mistake made during the last century of confusing history with historical criticism and philology. It is a mistake of one who mistook the scaffolding for the building. The philological scaffolding has suffocated the building for a hundred years, prevailing, like so many other blunders committed in the past century, as though it was obviously necessary. As if one thing being necessary for another permits confusing it with this other.

Historical thought is not philological thought, nor its methods, nor anything that is worth it. With all this we do not obtain the fundamental rule of historical criteria, which determines “what is possible and impossible and allows us to distinguish truth and error by a demonstrative method” (p. 77). That rule and that demonstrative method “consists in examining the essence and nature of human society.” Thus, with this rigorous precision, Ibn Khaldūn sees from 1373 the technical problem of history, which today begins anew to conquer our concern.

There is no history, speaking seriously, if there is no general doctrine of human society, a sociology. And as this last term has narrowed with insufficient use, we will say that there is no history without *meta-history*. We need to know the essential structure of historical reality in order to make stories about it. And as long as that knowledge is lacking, along with the type of man capable of possessing it and exercising it, it will be futile to speak of “historical science,” no matter how much philological sausage is manufactured or how many hidden compartments are concealed in a Chinese chest. Ibn Khaldūn spells it out: it is a new science: “an instrument that allows us to appreciate the facts with accuracy and that will serve historians determined to move in their writings along the path of truth” (p. 77). The reasoning, the concept and even the vocabulary coincides with Vico’s *New Science*.⁴

Society is originally cooperation between men, who need each other. But it is at the same time a struggle between men, an essential struggle that perpetuates itself on earth, spherical matter “semi-sunk in the Ocean, on which it seems to float like an grape in the pool” (p. 91).

From these two primary dimensions of social life emerge the two great historical functions: cooperation creates civilization, struggle generates for itself a moderating power of antagonisms—sovereignty (p. 86-89).

Human society begins in the open desert, as nomadism, and there is a minimum of cooperation and a maximum of struggle. Human society “ends by the foundation of cities and

⁴ “A new scientific discipline, which could be called metahistory, which would be to concrete stories what physiology is to the clinic.” (*El tema de nuestra tiempo*, 1923, p. 25. See volume III of these *Obras completas*).

tends necessarily to this.” On the other hand, the opposite is not true: citizens do not go back to nomadic life, to the open desert (p. 258). “Sedentary life is the period in which civilization comes to stop and become corrupted; in it evil reaches its maximum strength and cannot find good” (p. 260). The cycle of a society has been consumed; born in the open desert, it bears fruit in the conquest of other groups, which gathers under a ruler, and dies in the city, founded as the seat of that political power.

The vision is simple and profound. Who does not tremble a little before that cyclical image, before that very brief metahistorical film and judges it trivial, is childish.

According to this, for Ibn Khaldūn, who was a very cultured man, civilization, an inexorable consequence of cooperation, constitutes an evil in itself and is, in the process of all social evolution, the principle that kills it. The end of civilization is historically one and the same thing with consummation. Why?

Civilization is the city, and the city is wealth, abundance, *the superfluous life*, luxury and lust. “The family that comes to reign suffers the impact of time, loses its vigor and falls into corruption. The care it is forced to give to the empire undermines its strength; the ruling family comes to be a toy of fortune, because it has been enervated in pleasures and has exhausted its power in the enjoyment of luxury. This is how its political domination ends and its progress in the civilization or urbanization of sedentary life, a mode of natural existence to the human species, just as it is natural for the worm to spin its cocoon in order to die within it” (p. 304).

Harsh nomadism under the stars, against the winds, under the sun, is the perennial source of historical life, because it is life reduced to what is necessary. The civilization of the city is historical death; death always among delights. The city is euthanasia.

“The semi-savages—the nomadic barbarians—are the only men endowed with conditions to conquer and dominate” (p. 303). They are the biological matter that constitutes an organ of sovereignty, that founds States. “Such are the Arabs, the Zenata and the people who have a similar kind of life, namely the Kurds, the Turkmens and the veiled tribes (the Almoravids) of the great Sanhajah family.” Nomads are more virtuous, braver than the sedentary peoples. In the city, in the existing state, courage is lost because one lives with an excess of security. In addition, “under a government that is sustained harshly, the subjects lose all courage: punished without being able to resist, they fall into a state of humiliation that breaks their spirits.” The education of those born under that regime serves to tame and weaken them. Instead, “the inhabitants of the desert remain outside the authority of the sovereign and do not concern themselves with studies” (p. 267). The desert without water is a perennial font of human energy. “Sovereignty is used in luxury, and in luxury it is overthrown” (p. 306).

This accords with the moving and magnificent tribute that Ibn Khaldūn makes to hunger. Hunger is the state of spirit of the desert. It models the lean and elastic muscle, the determined and ready soul: it is the principal enemy of inertia, an inciter of pure activity, of pure agility. The nomad digests everything because his intestines are used to starvation (p. 183). This is a curious coincidence with the recent opinion of Dr. Gavart, according to whom the intestine of the Berber is, by its strength and immunity, the intestine of a dog.⁵

For Ibn Khaldūn, hunger is the discipline of what he calls “nobility;” that is to say, lordship, ability to dominate, while luxury occurs in sedentary servitude, enduring cause of

⁵ Gautier: loc. cit., 19.

degeneration and debasement, destroyer of the strong regime, and dignity, pride and even *the will to live*. “Therefore, beasts do not mate in captivity—as the Persians, who, subdued, have ceased to exist by consumption”—from biological sterility (page 308).

This man was such a genius of history, that he discerns this fact, barely perceived today: the dreadful and enigmatic fact (677) of the sudden bodily infertility that appears in races when they reach their abundance.

The historical life is, therefore, a cycle in which hunger launches man towards luxury and in luxury annuls him. The creative vigor of societies is exhausted in three generations, with the new invader shaping the zodiac of history: “the founder, the preserver, the imitator and the destroyer” (p. 288).

And so, eternally, imprisoned in this inexorable circle, the African existence, for which there is no progress, goes on and repeats without variation.

After all, Ibn Khaldūn does nothing more than project in exemplary theorems, worthy, I repeat, of a Greek, what in its own way the Bedouin proverb declares, in a phrase that smells of camel and desert: “Drink from the well and leave your place to another.”⁶

⁶ I have read this formidable adage in the book of A.M. Hassanein Bey: *Lost Oase*, 1923.

III.⁷

It is inordinate, it is irritating the influence on my generation that the word Melilla has had. When I was eight or nine years old and I was studying in a Jesuit school on the beaches of Málaga, I saw one afternoon soldiers going to Africa. It was the first war of Melilla, which began with the death of General Margallo. A short time later I was called to the school's reception room for visitors—a long room, where a plaque hung with the list of distinguished students. There, next to an open window that let in whiffs of sweet air with a rhythm of breathing, the drunkenness of southern scents, was a relative of mine. With a friendly arm gesture, a giant banana leaf entered the room. My relative withdrew an object. It was Margallo's ros.⁴⁰ The gold insignia was pierced by a bullet and blood stained its splendor. That is when I found out that blood, divine liquor while circulating, is horrible when it is still and outside the veins.

For a boy in 1890, a ros was the ideal toy. Seeing it in that manner, turned into a bloody and funeral matter, filled me with horror, and tied to that horror forever in the cellars of memory remained the word Melilla.

⁷ These notes present the opportunity to mention the coincidental recent publication of volume V of the great *Historie ancienne de l'Afrique du Nord*, by Stephane Gsell (Hachette) and the book *Les siècles obscurs du Maghreb (Payot)*, by Gautier.

In 1909, when one carried youth better, again Melilla, Ravine of the Wolf, bloody week.⁴¹ Since then, the entire history of Spain revolves around an axis of which one of the poles is Melilla.

It is not strange that, as soon as my mind awakens, this idea was an obsession for me: Melilla has been in the control of the Spaniards since the end of the fifteenth century. How could it be that, after four centuries, it was still impossible to go for a walk outside the city without danger of death? What kind of sterility did that population endure, by virtue of which it has not been possible for so many centuries to taint not even a hundred rods of surrounding land?⁴² Apart from all patriotic motivation, the problem itself is very suggestive and inciting to any alert spirit.

Unbelievable: that for over four centuries the walls of a city and the neighboring desert face each other, showing fists without rest, hostile! It is incomprehensible. The solution to the problem can only in part come from the history of Spain. The other part, the decisive one, is in the land itself where the strange situation exists. It was necessary, to understand it, to study North Africa. That is why, almost twenty years ago, I searched for primary sources: books, atlases, photoetches referring to what is now called *Africa Minor*.⁸ It is likely that books on Africa will be of great interest within a few years. Some of the reasons for this are listed below. But it is certain that at that time, someone will surely state humbly the nonsense that is always said in cases such as this: fashion.

⁸ In 1911 I published in *La Prensa*, in Buenos Aires, and in *El Imparcial*, in Madrid, articles using what was then available: Moulieras, Segonzac, Masqueray, Artbauer, etc. (See volume I of these *Obras completas*.)

When our eyes open, they see only a slice of the planet, and put in it the unity of a horizon. Everything that fits within a visual field is condemned to the coexistence of one order or another—friendship, repulsion, osmosis. From Algeciras or from Málaga, the visible landscape is both Spanish and African. Both coasts live perpetually as twins and have been linked since there have been men. They will probably not truly separate as long as men inhabit them. They have always acted upon each other. The forms of this interaction vary greatly. Sometimes they take on negative aspects. It seems that they turn their backs on each other. They avoid one another. This does not matter: it is a way of dealing with your neighbor.

But to this very effective, concrete and constant intervention of the African coast on Spanish destinies, we must add another, ideal one. It will not be possible to understand what has been, and is, and will be our peninsular life if it is not compared with what has been, is and will be the North portion of the other continent. Note: the land there is identical to that of half of Spain. The same influences of culture have passed through there and here: Carthage, Rome, Germanic people, Jews, Islam, Europe. It is also probable that the same primitive race populated the two lands. However, the history of Spain and that of Africa Minor are very different. Is this not an advantage to facilitate the historical understanding of our past, of our future? In laboratories, knowledge is prepared by studying the same phenomenon, the same system of forces, in two or more situations, which differ only in some new factor. For me there is no doubt: one of the great keys of the Spanish mystery is buried in Africa and we must exhume it there.

Some time ago, I visited a Castilian village in the company of an ethnologist who has specialized in the study of Kabylia. When we left one of those typical shacks, made of mud, with a roof and an inner courtyard, I noticed in my companion a serious emotion. It was raining a little, and a farmhand passed near us wearing the customary outer clothing to protect him from the cold or rain. Then, that foreigner of so few words shuddered and, mute with emotion, pointed his finger at the clothes I had seen so many times on the Castilian roads. He did not want to explain the stirring cause of his astonishment. He only told me: "When we are alone, I have to ask you something about the sexual customs of Castile." There was no occasion, because a series of events came to separate us without that moment of solitude.

At a later time, I understood the emotion of the traveler. In the middle of Castilla he found two rooted and specific elements of the oldest Berber culture: the house of our laborer is the Kabylia house. The overcoat is perhaps the *paenula* that the Romans attribute to the Mauritians and from which the *djellaba* developed.⁴³ The sexual X is still an X for me.

The planet has a historical anatomy and physiology. It is not proper to section it wherever you please if you do not want to tear into living organs, interrupting essential functions. Whoever studies Africa Minor and takes only the portion of the continent that goes from the coast to the Atlas Mountains in Morocco, to the Tellin Algiers, to the Aures Mountains on the Tunisian border, will find that, although he has extracted what is called *Africa Minor*, he has in hand only a fragment.⁴⁴ Just as towards the North, the coast brings to the dredge the sea with all its influences, Africa Minor is inseparable from the South by a desert rim. The edge of the Sahara is a character inseparable from the mountain and the coast. There is no scene in the history of North African where it does not have a great role.

Let us add, then, the edge of the Sahara. But it is the case that the Sahara, less than any other land, has parts. It is, like the sea, an indivisible unit. It seems empty and yet it is of a wonderful elasticity. A historic shore that receives from its northern edge a continuous wave to its southern limit and like a wave goes to break in the Niger. The desert physiology is prodigious, clear and protozoan. Like the sea, the Sahara divides and unites at the same time. Given its immense, vacuous area, historical currents come and go without ceasing. Geographers say that if a bottle is thrown in the Gulf Stream it can be picked up after a few years near the North Pole. Similarly, the beads of fine stone that were carved in Tripoli ten or twelve centuries before Jesus Christ are conserved today at the bottom of the Sudan. Vice versa, in the oases of North Africa there are some zebu raised below Lake Chad.⁴⁵

Over Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Tripoli, the desert blows with such force, that sometimes it pushes from its deep lungs entire villages that cover the coast, and even save it, passing to the other side. As with the Almoravids, the “veiled” nomads, who fell on Spain as in flight, like the Saharan lobster.

It is not possible to take only the edge of the desert. It is necessary to add it undivided to the African coast, and since it has the other coast that lives on the Sudan sucking the juice of this latter one and transmitting it to the North, it is necessary to also take the Sudan. Such is the physiological anatomy of Africa. Anyone who wants to be interested in it—as it well deserves—has to respect its articulations and examine all that assemblage that extends from the Mediterranean to below Timbuktu, forming a body of perfect organization. It is a great historical animal, articulated and complete, which has the good fortune of not looking like Europe or Asia. It is a new example of historical coexistence; therefore, a tremendous fact to which the pupil of the Humanities must open wide.

Ibn Khaldūn has revealed to us the secret of this portion of the planet. It is very probable that over there, ultimately, every piece of the Earth possesses a certain historical coefficient, what I call its “historical ratio.”⁹ This would mean that in each geographical place only a certain type of historical life is possible and that others can only lead in it an existence that is insufficient, weak, and more or less monstrous. This does not imply any excessive geophysical fatalism, and it is reduced to transcribing into a formula what the past presents us with insistent normality. There may exist progress in universal history. It would seem, in effect, to free itself from the limitation that each landscape imposes by not fully allowing more than just one type of life. But how is that liberation verified, how does the universal history of that kind of life pass to a better one? We find an answer in the most mysterious, and at the same time, most evident fact that the human past demonstrates: the fact that the axis of universal history—the superior type of life in each time—moves from one planetary region to another. Ordinarily, we see history only as a movement in time. Is this other movement in space not mysterious? Why does superiority or “progress” move from the East to Greece, from Greece to Rome, from Rome to Western Europe? This mobilization or itinerary of human perfection and political predominance is so evident that the common belief installed today in the soul, according to which tomorrow will belong to America, comes only from the unconscious transfer that this fact has left in the spirit. The Magi teach us that history moves from East to West—like the stars. However, this would be

⁹ Understand here “ratio” in the sense that this word has when we say that a diameter has a certain “ratio” to the circumference.

incomprehensible if all types of human life were equally possible in one place, and attached to that land, history could realize all progress. But appearances are rather as if that geophysical limitation existed and an imaginary power, a conductor of universal history, said: “In this land we can do no more; let us go with our music to another land. The next piece, which is very difficult, we must play in another place, through another door.”

After all, it makes no sense to speak of freedom without speaking of the inevitable. In a world where there was no necessity, the *fatum*, there would be no need to liberate oneself.⁴⁶ Freedom is always the evasion of a necessity, the abandonment of a chain. In a flabby world, without firm consistency, there is no freedom. Whoever sees in history, like Hegel, the dramatic progress in the consciousness of liberty, will not be surprised that this liberation is verified by loosening the geographical shackle that detains history at each stage. When God wants a better future, he promises man another land. The story would be, in effect, a flight, an escape from land to land, an emigration to the promised land. And the ideal life, the ultimate, the one we dream of as the most perfect, resides in a land so distinct from other lands, which is “no land”—*utopia*.

The problem was, how is it possible that Melilla has remained for almost five hundred years without peaceful communication with the surrounding desert? Ibn Khaldūn has given us the explanation. This situation, from the European point of view, is an abnormality, but it is the norm in North Africa, a common pattern in its history. With greater or lesser intensity, the city and desert detest each other, and, at the same time, desire one another. No other civilization has ever lived through such a deep rooted and, therefore, so permanent and irreducible dualism. Therefore, Ibn Khaldūn, meticulously fulfilling his intellectual role—which is to accept reality, to say what it is—considers human history a perennial dynamic polarization between the city

dwellers and the Bedouins. They have always faced each other, without either of them achieving any definitive absorption of their antagonist. In Arabia today both types of humanity subsist, true categories of North African history, with the same character as in the time of Muhammad.

The last great movement of the Arabian peninsula has been the formation, some twenty years ago, of the kingdom of Najd, by Ibn Saud, an all but brilliant man. The Najd region, the center of Arabia, is purely Bedouin. Ibn Saud has organized it, and with its rough and rude camel drivers it has then fallen on Mecca. If it were not for the interests of the European powers, Arabia would be closer today than ever to carry out its political and religious unity under the rule of this magnificent Bedouin.⁴⁷

This entire movement has been produced closely following the historical laws of Ibn Khaldūn. First Ibn Saud has received support from his family and tribe. With their help he took the citadel of Nedjd. Then he has made use of a religious idea—wahhabism.⁴⁸

Do not ask what type of doctrine is wahhabism.¹⁰ Whatever the religious idea may be that spills on a Bedouin soul, it is known *a priori* what its essential result will be. This is none other than puritanism. Puritanism is never a religion, but rather the fanatic exaggeration of any religion, no matter which. Mohammedanism was already a puritanism. From the Judeo-Christian doctrinal background, he skimmed off the exaggerated and aggressive. That is why it is the only religion whose creed is negatively formulated: “There is no God but God.” The tautology of the

¹⁰ Our Ali-Bey describes the first outbreak of this religious movement and its first domination of Mecca. See *Voyages d’Ali-Bey*. Volume II. There is a Spanish edition that I do not have on hand at this time.

expression only acquires meaning when it is understood as a piece of a dialogue and a dispute; in sum: when its polemic nature or substance is noticed. It is the only religion whose creed begins with a *no*. The capacity for war that Mohammedanism had was not, then, an accident and random. Mohammedan faith is constitutionally polemic, war. It consists, above all, in believing that others have no right to believe what we do not believe. Rather than monotheism, the *psychologically* accurate name of this religion would be “non-polytheism.” But there is always someone who goes farther, within the Mohammedan, periodically, new forms of archi-puritanism are produced. One of them is this wahhabism, which leads to hitting children if they laugh, to forbid toys, etc.

This is how Renan's famous phrase must be understood: “The desert is monotheistic.” The desert as it is, as a type of human life, is aggressive and arrogant. The Bedouin will only get excited about an idea that invites him to devastate cities. Originally Mecca meant for Arabs the place of polytheism, of *schirk*.⁴⁹

And since then, every city, as such, represents to the nomadic Muslim a den of many gods and innumerable sins. The Bedouins of Ibn Saud are identical to the Almoravids, those who followed the Hermit.⁵⁰ And these Almoravids were nothing more than recent nomads; the Lamtuna, veiled Tuaregs of the Western Sahara, who fell on the Moroccan cities first and the Andalusians later.⁵¹ Four or five years ago Ibn Saud managed to launch his men against Mecca, making them believe that in this city the five sins are committed conscientiously: *Jaznun*,

Yakhunun, Yashritun, Yatalawatun, Yaschrikum—these are: sensuality, lies, smoking and drinking, sodomy, and polytheism.^{11 52}

Ibn Khaldūn underlines this hatred and this contempt of the Bedouin for the city and construction: “If the Arabs—he says—have need of stones to support their kettles, they ruin the nearby buildings in order to procure them. If wood is necessary to make stakes with which to support their tents, they will destroy the roofs of houses to obtain it. By the very nature of their life they are hostile to everything that an edifice represents.” This incompatibility with the city is observed by contemporary travelers. Their camel drivers have remained cheerful and conversational in the midst of the desert adversity; but after a few days of being detained in the city, they feel a fundamental anguish: they miss the great distances, the air scented with wormwood that wafts through the desert, and they have no need of all the urban comforts. “A true Bedouin, when he is in a city, can be recognized by the cotton he stuffs in his nose, or because he covers it tightly with his scarf.”¹² The city smells bad to them.

¹¹ Harry Philby: *The Heart of Arabia*, I, Chapter VII, 2-1922. He is the only European who has lived some time in the Nedjd and in the private quarters of Ibn Saud. About the history of this and the organization of his kingdom, I think it is the most thorough. However, Philby left the country before Ibn Saud launched his great campaigns.

¹² Burton: *Personal narrative of a Pilgrimage to El Medinah and Meccah*, II, 201 (1857). A wonderful book, which should have been translated into Spanish when it was written. However, the classic of travelers in Arabia is Doughty, whose *Travels in Arabia Deserta I* recommend strongly to the reader. Likewise, the letters of Gertrudis Bell, which have become

Remember this incompatibility is similar to the Germanic peoples who conquered the opulent Gallo-Roman cities, but remained living outside them, in the open countryside.⁵³

During the twenty centuries of North African history that we are allowed to examine, we find life made up of the same essential structure: the dual dynamic and the perennial antagonism of the nomad and the city. From that fleeting States are born, which pretend for a few hours to be more complicated arrangements, but quickly dissolve themselves into those eternal elements. And it should be stressed that these creations, although fleeting, need some foreign collaboration in order to take shape. One time it is Carthage; another, Rome; another, Byzantium; another, the Jewish Kahena, or Idris the Arabian, or Abd-el-Munem, or the Persian of Tiaret, or General Lyautey, or Spain.⁵⁴ From here, a curious innate illusion of the sort of history that this piece of land produces: Africa Minor, perpetually submissive, has seemed perpetually dominated by foreigners. And the phenomenon is understandable: the land of North Africa does not really produce by itself true States. Those that suddenly appear, and no less suddenly disappear, are, in effect, mere appearance imported from outside.

With this we reach the most surprising point of North African destiny: the *camouflage*, as a historical destiny. Whatever slice of the past we cut, we find two superimposed layers on this land: one, apparent, obvious to the eyes; another, latent, hidden, crouching beneath it. And it is the case that the apparent is only apparent, a historical mask – Carthaginian or Roman or Muslim. The real is what is not seen, the indigenous, enduringly identical to itself, barbarically

the female counterpart to Lawrence's book *The Revolt in the Desert*. The most recent is W.B. Seabrook: *Adventures in Arabia*, 1927, New York.

irreducible: the nomad who mistreats the city without finishing it off completely, and the city that weakens the nomad, without absorbing him definitively. (There is only one exception, in which the sedentary man, the oasis, has resisted the nomad, the desert: the huge Nile Valley).

This double ray, this constitutive irony of African history, is, at the same time, its highest grace. If we look naively at the surface, the landscape deceives us: we have to educate ourselves for a vertical and piercing ultravision that looks below what is seen.

Does the reader want the best example of fundamental camouflage? If there is anything characteristic in the African scene, it is the agave, the aloe, and the camel. Well then; none of these three elements is indigenous: all three are relatively recent imports. The camel arrived in approximately the third century after Christ; the agave and aloe came from America with the Spaniards.¹³

December 1927 - March 1928.

¹³ See Gautier: loc cit.

Chapter 5

The Impact of the Essay

Ortega's reading of *The Muquaddimah* influenced his philosophy. His resulting essay introduced readers to Ibn Khaldūn as an individual, as well as to his philosophical theories. Contemporary references indicate that many authors still encounter Ibn Khaldūn primarily through *The Secret*, although Ortega's student Marías studied him more extensively. *The Secret* remains an important engagement between philosophical thinkers.

Influence on Ortega

In the Arabic world, Ortega's best-known reference to Arabic thought is his 1952 prologue to the translation of the book *El collar de la paloma* by Abu Muhammad Ali Ibn Hazm, (Pino Campos 613). Ortega referred to the work as written in Spanish lands by an Arabic Spaniard. He discussed at some length the Arabic, Christian and Jewish nations that formed the society of al Andalus. Written near the end of his life, this prologue tied together many earlier themes.

Luis Miguel Pino Campos traced the many references to the Arab world and culture in Ortega's works. He divided them by topic, rather than chronologically, beginning with the prologue to Ibn Hazm, then references to Muhammad, the relationship with Morocco, and references to various Arabic thinkers. The city of Melilla was discussed more than once, as was Averroes (Ibn Rushd), who Ortega considered to be a precursor to St. Thomas Aquinas. The impact of the Crusades on both Islamic and Christian civilization was discussed, and Islam was included when Ortega wrote of the religious feelings, habits, and beliefs of mankind:

The conclusion is that not only was he interested in the Arab world at the end of his days, when he wrote the prologue to Ibn Hazm's book translated by his friend Emilio Garcia Gomez, but from the perspectives of philosophy, of religion, of literature, history and art, this world and culture had frequent echoes in his writings. (624)⁵⁵

One such echo is the Arabic expression that he attributed in *The Secret* to the book *Lost Oase* by A.M. Hassanein Bey: "Drink from the well and leave your place to another." This phrase also appeared in lesson two of "What is Philosophy?" presented originally as a series of lectures in Spain in February of 1929, then printed in *La Nación* newspaper in Argentina, and later reproduced at several conferences. The reference came as Ortega was explaining his theory that in all ages, the span of three generations produces a change in the times. The version in *Obras completas* VII reads: "In the Sahara, there is an adage that draws, in its spareness, a complete desert scene, where men, herds and pack animals must water themselves from a puddle. It simply says, 'drink from the well and leave your place to another.' It is a motto of generation, of the caravan" (Ortega "Bréhier" 293).

The expression also appears in Ortega's "A 'Historia de la filosofía' de Émile Bréhier: ideas para una historia de la filosofía," written in Buenos Aires in 1942. It is the final sentence of that essay, following a discussion of the transitory nature of philosophical thought. "In the parched deserts of Libya, a proverb of the caravan is often heard, which says: 'Drink from the well and leave your place to another'" (Ortega "Bréhier" 418). In *Concord and Liberty*, which includes that essay and several others in English, translator Helene Weyl translated this as: "Drink from the well and make room for the next" (128). In his 1952 journal article, A. MacC. Armstrong reviewed *Concord and Liberty*, "[h]is own philosophy he sets up to be shot down like

any other philosophy, in accordance with the Libyan proverb quoted at the end of his Prologue to a History of Philosophy: ‘Drink of the well, and make way for another’” (139).

The phrase became a short-hand for the cycle of communal life Ortega encountered in Ibn Khaldūn. Once he engaged with it in *The Secret*, he made brief references to it in other contexts. Interestingly, *The Secret* is the only place that includes the reference to *Lost Oase* as the source. It is as if Ortega footnoted the first reference but it was unnecessary in subsequent uses.

According to Julián Marías, Ortega would have been developing his theory of generations before he wrote *The Secret*, but his separate essays on generations and on Ibn Khaldūn were published the same year.⁵⁶ “The Idea of Generations” was published 1923 in *El tema de nuestro tiempo*, which was the first formal presentation of Ortega’s philosophy as a whole. Marías identified mentions of generations in Ortega’s works dating back to 1914 and continuing through 1941 (85-86).

Ortega had a life-long interest in Arabic culture, especially as it was lived in the Iberian peninsula and North Africa. In addition to *The Secret*, Ortega again referenced Ibn Khaldūn’s theory in 1947 in *La idea de principio en Leibniz y la evolución de la teoría deductiva* [The Idea of principle in Leibniz and the evolution of deductive theory]. Ortega certainly found a kindred spirit in Ibn Khaldūn.

Ortega on Ibn Khaldūn

Ortega’s presentation of Ibn Khaldūn as an intellectual figure is shown by the passages in the essay that refer to him. In *The Secret*, Ortega said that to understand Africa, we need to consult with the local peoples for whom Africa is their primary reality. However, the sort of

engagement in which the individual positions himself apart from, and in some sense against, the surrounding reality to create a conceptual scheme is very rarely met in Africa: “Fortunately, there is an illustrious exception. A great African, with a mind as clear and ideas as polished as those of a Greek, is going to introduce us into that historical world where our spirit is not able to set foot. He is Ibn Khaldūn, the philosopher of African history.” (*The Secret* 669).

The comparison to Greek thinkers established Ibn Khaldūn as a philosopher in his own right, a peer. Ortega further compared Ibn Khaldūn to 18th century Italian philosopher Giambattista Vico, saying that Ibn Khaldūn created a science of history. “The reasoning, the concept and even the vocabulary coincides with Vico’s *New Science*” (*The Secret* 675).⁵⁷ He noted Ibn Khaldūn's intent was to describe the method of his new science, which was to fashion an instrument to assess events with exactitude, so that future historians could use the same approach.⁵⁸

Ortega incorrectly wrote that Ibn Khaldūn knew directly only the history of North Africa, as that is all that Ortega believed Ibn Khaldūn had seen with his eyes or his soul.⁵⁹ Consequently, Ortega said that Ibn Khaldūn believed that all of human history was also made up of the nomadic-sedentary life cycle. In any case, Ortega did not consider this a failing, as we all see history through our own cultures. Europeans have the idea of progress, but they have difficulty understanding Greek and Roman concepts of the city-state or polis, because that is a concept that no longer exists. This is why attempts to create a universal history have failed (*The Secret* 671).

Ibn Khaldūn’s “magnificent idea, as clear and simple as Newton’s law” (672) accurately represents what has been observed in twenty-six centuries of African history. This cyclical rhythm runs counter to the idea of evolution, of progress, but that is a European way of

understanding individual and collective life. The reference to Newton's Law aligned Ibn Khaldūn with scientific theory, something Ortega also did with his own work.⁶⁰

Ortega noted that, by the time of *The Secret*, Europe had installed in North Africa political states that are also civilizations. But he imagined a revived Ibn Khaldūn telling us: "Yes, I know: I understand that issue. When I lived, it was well remembered that in Africa, Carthage had lived and then Rome. After my death came the Portuguese and the Spaniards. But the Spaniards and the Portuguese left, as did the Romans and the Carthaginians." (672)

From the Spanish coastal cities of Algeciras or Málaga, Ortega said, the landscape is both Spanish and African. However, the histories of Spain and Morocco are very different. Ortega suggested this could be an advantage to facilitate the historical understanding of the past and future. It could be compared to how scientists study the same phenomenon or system of forces in two situations by varying only one factor.

Ortega wrote emphatically:

For me there is no doubt: one of the great keys of the Spanish mystery is buried in Africa and we must exhume it there. (679)

And:

Ibn Khaldūn has revealed to us the secret of this portion of the planet. It is very probable that there, ultimately, every piece of the Earth possesses a certain historical coefficient, what I call its "historical ratio." This would mean in that geographical place only a certain type of historical life is possible. (681)

Returning to the question that prompted his inquiry, Ortega asked again how it is possible that Melilla had been permanently, for almost five hundred years, without peaceful relations with the surrounding land and peoples. “Ibn Khaldūn has given us the explanation. This situation, from the European point of view is an abnormality, but it is the norm in North Africa, a common pattern in its history. With greater or lesser intensity, the city and desert detest each other and at the same time desire one another” (682).

Ortega presented Ibn Khaldūn as an accomplished thinker who drew general philosophical theory from specific observations of historical events. He granted to Ibn Khaldūn a superior knowledge of his own area of the world, although he did not believe it universalized to impact cultures more broadly. As mentioned above, this impression is likely due to the French translation that Ortega relied upon.⁶¹ However, even this is far more generous than European-American philosophy has generally been with local thought. The acceptance of indigenous epistemologies and metaphysics has only very recently made a move into philosophy from being considered mythology and legend.⁶²

Readers of Ortega’s essay would encounter an astute observer of ancient times with something significant to say about contemporary issues. Specifically, Ortega suggested that an intellectual who lived in North Africa had an insight germane to Spanish civilization. It is also significant that Ibn Khaldūn is presented in his Islamic context but not bound by a specifically religious point of view.

Essay Reception

The Secret was first published in *El Espectador* in 1934 and included in the second volume of *Obras completas* in 1946. There is no evidence that it had an impact on the Spanish

public upon either publication. When Mikel de Epalza wrote in 1976, the text was not one that had been translated and studied (Epalza 72). Indeed, a current book on Ibn Khaldūn's intellectual history lists the reception of his thought in the west, with references to France, England, and Germany, but there is no mention of Ortega or Spain (Irwin 2018).

The article by de Epalza was published in a Spanish-language journal dedicated to Islamic studies. Similarly, several of the references to the essay in contemporary academic articles, predominantly in Spanish and Portuguese, are by authors who are studying Ibn Khaldūn rather than Ortega. For example, Seyd Farid Alatas mentioned the essay in his book on Ibn Khaldūn (2012), as well as several earlier academic articles. He demonstrated that Ibn Khaldūn was recognized as a sociologist before the contemporary development of the field of sociology. Ortega's essay placed Ibn Khaldūn as a founder, or historical precedent, that is earlier than European theorists traditionally given credit for developing the field of study.

One of the most direct uses of both *The Secret* and the insights of Ibn Khaldūn is in Portuguese, *Ortega y Gasset nos revela o segredo: em torno da mudança em Liberdade* ["Ortega y Gasset reveals the secret to us: About the change within freedom"]. Sociologist Raúl Enrique Rojo looked to the 1789 speech by Mirabeau before the National Assembly saying it was necessary to set aside the suddenness of transition in times of change (Rojo 189). He referred first to Ortega's 1927 essay "Tribute of the People" which addressed Mirabeau's politics directly. Rojo then mentioned another of Ortega's works. "And he refers to fourteenth-century author Ibn Khaldūn to remind us of the *tabula rasa* illusion, in order for us to be aware that still in the present day any sustainable change must always resort to a long-standing tradition against a short-lived one and that it is through recurrence that novelty is born" (190).

Rojo's 2012 article considered four of Ortega's essays developing his own political theories in addition to the essay describing Ibn Khaldūn's original contribution, applying them to revolution and reform in social change. In a footnote, the author thanked a colleague who gave him a copy of the Ibn Khaldūn essay at a conference and credited as an influence the following article by Jorge Acevedo Guerra.

Acevedo Guerra's 2007 article *Ibn Jaldún ante la mirada de Ortega y Gasset y Julián Marías (Metahistoria y generaciones)* was presented as a paper at a conference organized by the Director of the Center for Arabic Studies and the General Coordinator of Arabic Culture Days at the University of Chile where Guerra is a professor of philosophy. Acevedo Guerra considered Ibn Khaldūn to be Spanish, saying in his abstract, "Ortega y Gasset says the Arabic thinker is the foundation inherited by the generations that both Spanish philosophers belong to" (260).

Acevedo Guerra summarized the essay, including Ortega's consideration of Ibn Khaldūn as an original thinker and a scientist. He observed that Ortega did not consider Ibn Khaldūn to be an exotic oriental, but rather he took him completely seriously, as one would any other philosopher in the western tradition (261). Acevedo Guerra saw Ibn Khaldūn as currently relevant in a double sense: as part of a historiology or metahistory, developed by thinkers like Ortega y Gasset, and also within the metahistory, contributing in an important way to the historical theory of generations (263).

Further Impact

Reading *The Secret* prompted Marías to consult Ibn Khaldūn's original work, *The Muqaddimah*, and develop his own theory of generations based upon both Ortega and Ibn Khaldūn. His book also considered the development of a theory of generations in other countries

by other philosophers. It includes two appendices, one on Friedrich von Schlegel and the other on Ibn Khaldūn.

Marías traced the discussion of generations in Ibn Khaldūn, calling him a genius. “Arabists have long been intrigued by this provocative figure, of course, but even their interest has been less than it should have been. Besides them, the attention paid Ibn Khaldūn has been on every hand insufficient” (198). Marías noted that Ibn Khaldūn came to the attention of Western thought through de Slane’s translation, which was used by most writers during the following century, including Ortega. Marías also had the benefit of Rosenthal’s translation of *The Muqaddimah*, which had been published in English a decade earlier. He believed this translation would revive interest in Ibn Khaldūn among others besides Arabists (Marías 198).

Marías questioned whether the description of generations by Ibn Khaldūn generalized to become a theory. For Marías, Ibn Khaldūn included the idea of generations in his history of the Arabic peoples, but that was only the spark of “what was on the verge of being the first theory of generations six centuries ago” (200). However, for Marías the *context* of Ibn Khaldūn’s discussion is significant and had not been previously discussed.

Ibn Khaldūn described generations in relation to noble families and dynasties, noting that their prestige follows the pattern of origin and decline. Marías believed this context extended the idea of generations from biology and genealogy to a historical and social function (200-201). In his discussion of dynasties, Ibn Khaldūn moved from describing the personal relationship of individuals with forefathers to the way in which a social group confronts the generational outlook and force of their ancestors, according to Marías. This context changed a simple genealogical idea of predecessors to an elementary theory of generations as functional units:

This early forerunner of the generations theory holds an interest that is readily apparent without need of exaggeration. It forms an intermediate step between the ancient notion derived from life experience and the scientific theorizing of the nineteenth century and since. Between the Bible, Homer, and Herodotus on the one hand, and Comte and his followers on the other, we find this extraordinary Arab who, by himself alone, represents a significant stage of the theory: the historiographical use of generations. (205)

Marías was surprised that Ortega had focused more on what Ibn Khaldūn thought of history than on what he did with the context of generations. His engagement with Ibn Khaldūn was prompted by Ortega's essay, but not limited to it. He extended the philosophical engagement and found something of significance to his own work in reading *The Muqaddimah* for himself.

The Secret, then, led both Ortega and Marías to a continued engagement with Ibn Khaldūn and Arabic thought. Although it did not receive critical acclaim or public success, it continues to serve as a window for philosophers who look through from both the Spanish and Islamic points of view.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

Ortega introduced Ibn Khaldūn to Spanish-speaking intellectuals through his 1928 essay. His portrayal was influenced by recently published books on North African history and the translation of *Muqaddima* in French. Although Ortega viewed North Africa through the same Orientalist and colonial perspective as other French and other Spanish writers of the time, he engaged with Ibn Khaldūn as a peer, an esteemed philosopher. He thus agreed with Ibn Khaldūn that his approach created a new science of history, something Ortega had described as a meta-history.

Ortega applied Ibn Khaldūn's theories to the history of Spain and especially its relationship with Morocco. In doing so, he did not attempt to align Ibn Khaldūn's thought with European philosophical concepts. Rather, he accepted Ibn Khaldūn as an expert in how he analyzed what he had lived and observed. However, Ortega challenged the idea that the cycle of urbanization and nomadic life holds for all geographic areas. In *The Secret*, Ortega suggested instead that each geographic location has a unique relationship with the peoples who inhabit it. Ibn Khaldūn was able to describe the invisible forces that motivated the life of North Africa throughout the various surface civilizations that have attempted to occupy the space. Because Spain and North Africa have been so closely linked, that insight also revealed a new perspective for Spanish philosophy.

The Secret demonstrates a direct connection between Ortega and Ibn Khaldūn that may have influenced Ortega's philosophical thought, especially his theory of generations. This translation of the essay permits further research into aspects of Ortega's thought in English. It

also brings Ortega into current conversations in Islamic philosophy, especially those centered on Ibn Khaldūn. The brief descriptions of their respective philosophical perspectives in this thesis provide context to better understand *The Secret*, as few contemporary philosophers writing in English are versed in either Ortega or Ibn Khaldūn, much less both. The historical context of *The Secret* is backgrounded in the opening chapters of this thesis, as well as annotated in endnotes, to explain Ortega's many references to individuals, events, and locations. This translation is designed to be accessible to a lay audience but relevant to philosophical analysis, in order to bring Ortega into classroom discussions.

Notes

¹ Full name: Walī al-Dīn °Abd al-Raḥmān Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Khaldūn al-Tūnisī al-Ḥaḍramī. Ortega mentioned volume V of the *Histoire ancienne de l’Afrique du Nord* by Stephanie Gsell (1927) and *Les siècles obscurs du Maghreb* by E. F. Gautier (1927) (Ortega *The Secret* 677 n. 2).

² *muqaddimah* means introduction or prolegomenon. When capitalized, the word refers to the work by Ibn Khaldūn entitled *The Muqaddimah* which is read and translated as a stand-alone work. In English, it is published in three volumes (1958) and as an abridged version (1969). It served as an introduction to Ibn Khaldūn’s seven-volume history of the Arab and Berber people, *Kitāb al-‘ibar* or *Book of Examples*.

³ Ortega listed as his source *Les prolégomènes d’Ibn Khaldūn*, traduits et commentés par M. de Slane, published in 1858 (Ortega *The Secret* 670)

⁴ At the time Ortega wrote *The Secret*, “Africa Minor” referred to the area of Northern Africa between the Mediterranean and the Sahara Desert.

⁵ “Drink from the well and leave your place to another.” See pp. 55 and 69 within.

⁶ *What is Philosophy*, 1928. See p. 15 within.

⁷ Article is in Spanish, my translation.

⁸ The Islamic calendar dates from the *Hijra*, the term used for the migration of Muḥammad from Mecca to Medina in September 622 C.E. It is composed of twelve lunar months, which begin with the sighting of the crescent moon. Dates are commonly abbreviated A.H. for *Anno Hegirae* (Muhanna).

⁹King Peter of Castille and Leon (1334-1369), Known as Pedro el Cruel, offered to return the ancestral property of the Banū Khaldūn in Seville to entice him to stay in 1363 (Rosenthal xxvii-xxxv.)

¹⁰ Muslims first took control of the Iberian Peninsula from the Visigoths in 711-718. At its peak, the area under Muslim control (called al Andalus) reached into southern France. The Christian *Reconquista* proceeded by region, turning what had been Muslim jurisdictional areas into individual kingdoms, which were not united into the nation of Spain until after Ibn Khaldūn's death. Spanish history is drawn from O'Callaghan, unless otherwise noted.

¹¹ The Almoravids (1040-1147), Almohads (1147-1248), and Marinids (1248-1465) dynasties were each associated with an indigenous tribe: Ṣanhaja for the Almoravids, Masmuda for Almohads and Zanata for Marinids.

¹² The Amazigh are descendants of the pre-Arab inhabitants of North Africa. Arabs used the term "Berber," derived from *barbarian* (originally, speaker of a language other than Latin or Greek) to combine the many indigenous tribes into a single group. Ibn Khaldūn adopted this term and worldview.

¹³ *Maghrib* is "west" in Arabic. It refers generally to North Africa, the area that is now Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia. During Ibn Khaldūn's life, the Marinids controlled this area from a capital in Fez (although the rule was split in 1374 to add a capital in Marrakesh). Morocco is referred to as *Maghrib al-Aqṣā* (farthest west).

¹⁴ See his discussion of "ultravision" in the penultimate paragraph of *The Secret*.

¹⁵ Quoted in a discussion on racial characteristics (*The Muqaddimah* I, 175). Ibn Khaldūn critiqued historian al-Masʿūdī (893?-956) for relying upon the authority of Galen and al-Kindī without adding an original contribution.

¹⁶ Ibn Khaldūn quoted a passage from Ibn Sīnā when discussing skin color (*The Muqaddimah*, 1, 171). He made several references to the Muʿtazila and “speculative theologians” (*The Muqaddimah*, 1, 189).

¹⁷ After this four-year interlude, Ibn Khaldūn returned to Tunis for access to libraries and historical sources for his history. The sultan pressed him into service in battle, which he avoided by seeking permission to perform the *ḥajj*. Instead, he went to Cairo where he was appointed a Maliki judge (one of the four major schools of Sunni Islamic jurisprudence, still common in Morocco). His wife and children were detained in Tunis. When they were allowed to join him, their ship sank on the way to Egypt. His wife and daughters died, while two sons may have survived. Ibn Khaldūn accompanied the sultan to Damascus in response to an invasion by Mongol conqueror Timur (Tamerlane). After the sultan returned to Cairo due to a plot to overthrow him, Ibn Khaldūn met with Timur in an unsuccessful effort to save Damascus. Back in Cairo, Ibn Khaldūn was again appointed judge, relieved of his post, and reappointed (six times in all). He died on March 16, 1406. See Alatas *Ibn Khaldūn* 11-13.

¹⁸ Plague in early Islamic history followed commercial routes, attesting to the importance of trade throughout the Mediterranean. Michael Dols also credits plague with prompting interest in pre-Islamic medical works, such as the writings of Hippocrates and Galen. “In this manner, the massive translation of classical medical works into Arabic in early Islam should be

considered as part of the endeavor to understand the nature of recurrent disease and not as a purely academic exercise” (Dols 381-2).

¹⁹ He listed as Bedouins: “In the West, the nomadic Berbers and the Zanatah ... in the East, the Kurds, the Turkomans, and the Turks” (*The Muqaddima* I, 252).

²⁰ A 1636 Latin translation of Ibn ‘Arabshāh’s book on Timur included a mention of the historic meeting between Ibn Khaldūn and the Mongol warrior. A biography of Ibn Khaldūn was included in d’Herbelot’s *Bibliothèque Orientale* in the latter part of the seventeenth century. But it took more than 100 years before translations of his work appeared in Europe. Extracts of Ibn Khaldūn’s work were published in French by Silvestre de Sacy in 1810 and in German by Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall in 1818, 1822. (See Alatas *Ibn Khaldūn* 106).

²¹ Ottoman Turks began a sustained study of Ibn Khaldūn as early as 1550 and “scholars and statesmen vied with each other in their interest in Ibn Khaldūn’s work and ideas” (Rosenthal lxvii). The first complete translation of *The Muqaddima* was into Turkish in 1730 and published in 1859. (See Rosenthal cvii).

²² Other words substituted for *‘aṣabiyya* include: family, kinsmen, group of friends, devoted group, community, a people animated by a sense of its own dignity, sympathy, fellow feeling, zeal and ardour, feeling and interest, patriotism, tribal spirit, national spirit, national feeling, party, strength, power, support, army (Lacoste 103).

²³ “There was (and is) no properly established critical edition of *The Muqaddimah* in Arabic and so Rosenthal’s translation is the best substitute for the Arabic edition we do not have. It is based on a range of manuscripts, including one in Istanbul, which is in Ibn Khaldūn’s own hand. In cases where there are important variants in the manuscripts, these are either translated or

signaled in the footnotes. The annotation, which registers possible sources or parallels for what Ibn Khaldūn had written, is of enormous value (Irwin 179).

²⁴ Lacoste rendered *‘aṣabiyya* as a sort of Hegelian dialectic of state formation, when the contemporary concept of nation-state was far from Ibn Khaldūn’s imagination, not to mention observation.

²⁵ A Spanish translation of *The Muquaddimah* was made in 1997: *Introducción a la historia universal (Al-Muqaddimah)*, Editorial Fondo de Cultura Económica, México, 1977, 2^a reimpresión, 1997. Traducción de Juan Feres. Estudio preliminar, revisión y apéndices de Elías Trabulse [Introduction to Universal History (*The Muqaddimah*), Editorial Fondo de Cultura Económica, Mexico, 1997, second edition, 1997. Translation by Juan Feres. Appendix, revised, and edited by Elías Trabulse].

²⁶ Ortega founded the Institute with the assistance of his former student Julián Marías upon his return to Spain after nine years of exile during the Spanish Civil War. Ortega’s lectures attracted many students and intellectuals. However, continued governmental interference caused it to close in 1950 (Holmes “Ortega y Gasset”).

²⁷ It was translated into English by Mildred Adams and published in 1973 as *An Interpretation of Universal History*.

²⁸ A detailed biography with discussion of Ortega’s many lectures, publications, and travels is in Holmes 3-21. A chronology and comprehensive list of publications is in Ferrater Mora 191-207.

²⁹ *En torno a Galileo* (1956), *Historia como sistema* (1958), *Ideas y creencias* (1959), *Apuntes sobre el pensamiento* (1959), *Estudios sobre el amor* (1959).

³⁰ Ortega visited the United States only once, in August of 1949 when he was invited to speak on Goethe at a large international conference in Aspen, Colorado. He is reported to have tempered his views of the United States after this visit (Donoso “Ortega”149).

³¹ Antón Donoso noted that “America” primarily referred to Latin and South America for Spaniards (“Ortega” 145).

³² The American scholar Nelson Orringer traced Ortega’s German sources in *Ortega y sus fuentes germánicas*, Madrid, 1979.

³³ “Entiéndase aquí «razón» en el sentido que esta palabra tiene cuando decimos que el diámetro tiene determinada «razón» a la circunferencia” (Ortega *Hombre* 64).

³⁴ Original in Spanish, my translation.

³⁵ Words in two languages that look or sound similar, but have a significantly different meaning which foreign language learners may easily misrecognize (Bednárová-Gibová and Zákutná 432).

³⁶ The name of the Arabic author is given as “Ibn Khaldoun” in the French translation by de Slane. Ortega refers to him as Abenjaldun throughout. I use Ibn Khaldūn as the author’s name is now commonly transliterated in academic discourse.

³⁷ Footnotes in this chapter are in the original text of *The Secret*.

³⁸ Geomatics refers to methods of divination by geographic features or by figures or lines, such as feng shui.

³⁹ Ortega is citing to pages in de Slane’s French translation of Ibn Khaldūn’s *The Muquaddimah*.

⁴⁰ A *ros* is a type of military helmet, named after Spanish General Ros de Olano (1808-1886) (RAE).

⁴¹ *The Barranco del Lobo* [Ravine of the Wolf] was July 27, 1909. Spanish troops in the Rif war were ambushed by Moroccan forces. They retreated in disorder, abandoning the dead and wounded, along with ammunition mules. About 180 Spanish troops were killed, with over 1,000 casualties.

⁴² A *vara* (rod) is an old Spanish unit of length, set to about 8.36 mm or 33 inches in 1801.

⁴³ Djelaba, djellabah, or jellaba are various spellings for a loose-fitting hooded gown or robe worn by men in North Africa.

⁴⁴ The northernmost geographic region of Algeria is known as the Tell and consists largely of the Atlas Mountains.

⁴⁵ Zebu is a species of humped cattle originating in South Asia.

⁴⁶ Latin: fate, destiny natural term of life, doom, death.

⁴⁷ Between 1902 and 1927, al Saud leader Abdulaziz carried out a series of wars that resulted in establishing the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1930. From 1930 until his death in 1953, Abdulaziz ruled as an absolute monarch.

⁴⁸ Muhammad ibn ‘Abdul al Wahhab (1703-1791) founded the sect which came to be called Wahhabism in Najd. He returned to the Quran and hadith as religious sources, allowing independent reasoning (*ijtihad*) but not adherence to tradition (*taqlid*) or other innovations, such as shrines, saints, or earthly authorities. His reforms centered on the key doctrine of oneness of God (*tawhid*). He formed an alliance with Ibn al Saud in 1744 giving al Saud control over

military, political, and economic matters while al Wahhab retained responsibility for religious concerns (“Ibn Abd al-Wahhab”).

⁴⁹ This term is primarily used to refer to polytheism as practiced by Arabic tribes before Muhammad, although it includes Christians and Jews. Al Saud also applied it to other Muslim sects. (“Shirk,” “Polytheism”).

⁵⁰ The Almoravid dynasty was centered in what is now Morocco and Southern Spain in the eleventh century. It traces its origin to a spiritual leader who was sent from an island *ribat* (monastery-fortress) called *Dar al-Murabitin* (House of the Almoravids) (Bennison).

⁵¹ The Latuma is one of several indigenous nomadic tribes in North Africa. They are ethnically of the Tuareg people, who inhabit several countries across Africa. Although nominally Islamic, in their tradition men are veiled but women are not.

⁵² Direct quote from Philby: “The people of Mecca are singled out as an epitome of the orthodox Sunnis and their crimes are these: *yaznun*, *yakhunun*, *yashribun*, *yatalawatun*, *yashrikun* – fornication, fraud, smoking and drinking, sodomy and polytheism, the whole gamut of crimes against God and Man. *Shirk* or polytheism is the great unforgivable offense, the rest are minor though serious misdemeanors, which it rests with the Almighty to chastise or condone at his discretion” (p. 302).

Ortega’s rendition of the Arabic is: *Jaznun*, *Yakhunun*, *Yashritun*, *Yatalawatun*, *Yaschrikum*. While the Spanish translation he gives is essentially correct, the proper Arabic and English rendition is: *yaznoun* يزنون they commit adultery, *yakhunun* يخونون they betray, *yaskroon* يسكرون they get drunk, *yatalwatun* يتلوطون they commit sodomy, *yaschrikun* يشركون they believe in polytheism.

⁵³ Ortega uses “campo libre,” which I have translated as “desert” in his other uses.

⁵⁴ According to legend, Dahia Al-Kahenda was a Jewish queen of a Berber tribe in what is now Algeria. She defeated an Egyptian prince in battle in Tunisia, but died in a later battle with him. Idris is an Islamic prophet who led followers from Babylon to Egypt. He is often associated with the Biblical Enoch. In 777 ‘Abd ar-Rahman ibn Rustamn was elected Imam of a Caliphate in Tahert, Algeria that became a seat of learning. Louis Herbert Gonzalve Lyautey (1854-1934) established the French protectorate in Morocco.

⁵⁵ Original in Spanish, my translation.

⁵⁶ Mariás was a student of Ortega who later became a colleague, and has written extensively on Ortega’s philosophy.

⁵⁷ *Scienza Nuova* by Italian philosopher Giambattista Vico was published in 1725.

⁵⁸ In contrast with Ortega’s reading, Franz Rosenthal said it was Ibn Khaldūn’s identification as a Spaniard that gave him the ability to set himself apart as an observer.

No matter how high his own position or that of his ancestors before him at one or another northwest African court, no matter how close he was to a ruler, he did not feel bound by “group feeling,” as he might have called it, or by the ties of a common cultural heritage. ... [H]is basic loyalty to Spain and its civilization ... gave him a remarkable detachment with respect to the historical events that took place before his eyes. ... This peculiar division in Ibn Khaldūn’s physical and spiritual ties seems to have been the decisive factor in his ability to abstract general reflections about history from observed facts, in this ability, that is, to write *The Muqaddimah* (xxxvi).

⁵⁹ This characterization overlooks Ibn Khaldūn's travels in Spain and Syria, his extended conversation with Timur, and detailed study of the history of China.

⁶⁰ Ortega believed that Einstein's Theory of Relativity validated his own metaphysical commitments.

⁶¹ In my dissertation, I have used Ibn Khaldūn's theory of *ʿasabiyya* to analyze contemporary legal and religious conflict in the United States (Scheopner "Toleration").

⁶² Although Ortega referred to him as "indigenous," Ibn Khaldūn identified as Spanish and Arabic, rather than Amazigh.

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