

SAMUEL RAMOS ON THE  
PHILOSOPHY OF MEXICAN CULTURE:  
Ortega and Unamuno in Mexico\*

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RAMOS AND MEXICO'S QUEST FOR A NATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

In 1943 there appeared in Mexico City the first book in Spanish on the story of philosophy in Mexico written from a nonscholastic or lay standpoint. Its title is, simply, *Historia de la filosofía en México*, the author being Samuel Ramos (1897–1959) of Zitácuaro, Michoacán, a philosophy professor at the National University of Mexico. The pioneering work is tentative and modest in content but firm and ambitious in intent. It opens and closes with the same fixed idea in mind: To encourage Mexican thinkers to develop their own philosophy by integrating European philosophy with their national spirit; that is, by *nationalizing* philosophy itself. Put negatively and more effectively, the whole point of the author's endeavor is to get Mexican intellectuals out of the traditional habit of imitating the philosophies of others by inviting them to think henceforth on their own two feet about the fundamental problems of Mexico herself.

Although some allusions to the nationalization of Mexican philosophy appear here and there in Ramos's two immediate philosophical predecessors, Antonio Caso and José Vasconcelos,<sup>1</sup> there is no doubt that Samuel Ramos is the actual founder of the contemporary movement in Mexico for the Mexicanization of culture in general and philosophy in particular. This is clear, for one thing, from his historical survey of philosophy in Mexico, inasmuch as he is so frank about his own role in her intellectual story that he refers explicitly to himself and his particular contribution under the heading "la filosofía de la cultura mexicana"<sup>2</sup> (which heading is, incidentally, the reason for the title of the present work).

Ramos's interest in the philosophy of Mexican culture is tantamount, of course, to his ideological campaign for a genuine national philosophy expressive of the Mexican spirit. Moreover, whatever reser-

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vations we may have to his chosen project of nationalizing philosophy and culture in Mexico, Samuel Ramos was not a cheap propagandist but a patriotic critic who did not allow the love of his country to interfere with his love of truth.

Our Mexican author, to be sure, sees himself historically as an intellectual pioneer in the movement toward *la mexicanidad*, but he is no "Adam" in philosophy. On the contrary, he has a keen appreciation of the history of Western philosophy, and in his brief panorama of its Mexican periods he is quick to acknowledge the indebtedness of his own generation to the notable Spanish philosopher and social critic, José Ortega y Gasset (1883–1955) of Madrid. Ortega's pervasive influence on contemporary Mexican thought since 1925 is crucial for understanding the work of Ramos.

Ramos was the leading philosophical spokesman for his Mexican generation of *Contemporáneos*. He summarizes Ortega's philosophical and cultural influence in Mexico in the following neat fashion:<sup>3</sup>

An intellectual generation which began to act publicly between 1925 and 1930 felt dissatisfied with the philosophical romanticism of Caso and Vasconcelos. After a critical revision of their doctrines, they found anti-intellectualism groundless, but they did not wish to return to classical rationalism. In this perplexity, the books of José Ortega y Gasset began to arrive in Mexico, and in the first of them, *Meditaciones del Quijote*, they encountered the solution to the conflict in his doctrine of *vital reason*. In addition, as a result of the Revolution, a spiritual change had been going on, which, starting around 1915, was becoming clarified in the minds of people and could be defined in these terms: Mexico had been discovered. It was a nationalist movement which was being extended little by little to Mexican culture: in poetry with Ramón López Velarde, in painting with Diego Rivera, in the novel with Mariano Azuela. Vasconcelos himself, from the Ministry of Education, had been talking of forming a national culture and was promoting all efforts in that direction. Meanwhile philosophy did not appear to fit into this ideal picture of nationalism because she has always pretended to look at things from the standpoint of man in general, hence, opposed to the concrete determinations of space and time, that is to say, to history. Ortega y Gasset came also to solve this problem by showing the historicity of philosophy in his *El tema de nuestro tiempo*. Assembling these ideas with some others he had expounded in *Meditaciones del Quijote*, that Mexican generation found the epistemological justification of a national philosophy.

Before showing the significant bearing of this passage on the making of the mind of Ramos, it should be observed in passing that there is a noteworthy biographical parallel between Ortega's negative response to the Spanish generation of 1898 and his disciple's revolt against the Mexican generation of 1910 (the *Centenario* or the *Ateneo*). Just as Ortega had reacted as a youth against the ostensible anti-intellectualism of his Spanish surroundings, so did the young Ramos do likewise against the same phenomenon in his Mexican surroundings. Interestingly enough, the

Mexican counterpart of Ortega's 1924 polemical article in his own *Revista de Occidente*, "Neither Vitalism nor Rationalism,"<sup>4</sup> is the 1927 article in *Ulises*, "Neither Irrationalism nor Rationalism, but Critical Philosophy,"<sup>5</sup> written by José Romano Muñoz, the elder philosopher of contemporáneos who is credited by Ramos as the initiator in the dissemination of Orteguian ideas in Mexico.<sup>6</sup> It should be no surprise that where there are common "circumstances" (a pet Orteguian term), a common enemy is bound to crop up sooner or later under the same or different names in that ever unfinished battle of ideas called philosophy.

Returning to the quoted passage from Ramos, it is obvious that what he in particular found of value in Ortega is, above all, a way to arrive at "the epistemological justification of a national philosophy." This closing phrase is the key to Ramos's whole interest in the philosophy of Mexican culture; but in order to understand its full import we must go directly to its source of inspiration in Ortega himself. What is there in the Spanish master that inspires his Mexican disciple to try to nationalize philosophy and culture in Mexico?

#### ORTEGA, UNAMUNO, RAMOS COMPARED

In 1933, Ortega formally called the general theory of his philosophy *perspectivismo*, and the following year he gave it the awkward name of *racio-vitalismo*.<sup>7</sup> Strictly speaking, however, his perspectivism as an epistemological doctrine of "the point of view" refers to his theory of truth, while his rational vitalism as a methodological doctrine of "vital reason" refers to his polar solution to "the antinomy between life and culture."<sup>8</sup> Now, whatever be the exact label for Ortega's mature philosophy, his term "perspectivism" (derived from Latin) corresponds to the term "phenomenalism" (derived from Greek). As to his polar solution to the conflict involved in the modern dispute between rationalism and vitalism on the precise place of rationality (culture) and spontaneity in human life, "ratio-vitalism" is a new name for the old methodological attempt at coordinating reason and experience, respectively. Still, what characterizes the Orteguian doctrine of vital reason, utilized by Ramos as an excellent warning against the artificial separation of culture from life,<sup>9</sup> is its far-reaching contention that a vitalized reason (or a vitalized culture) is not only defensible as a superior way of knowing but, more importantly, as a superior way of living a full life. Even though terms, like customs, seem to come and go, the current term "situationism" *culturalized* best approximates the Orteguian standpoint in philosophy.

Ramos is only indirectly interested in these technical matters in Orteguianism, because his own interests lie chiefly in Ortega the philoso-

pher of philosophy and life, rather than in Ortega the epistemologist as such. In this connection, it happens that the Spanish writer likens a knower to a "sensitive net,"<sup>10</sup> the function of which is purely selective; and an ironical confirmation of this ingenious image of the knower is Ramos himself, whose peculiar meshes are sensitive to some of his master's ideas but insensitive to others. In fact, what the Mexican disciple as a knower is ultimately interested in knowing is the *ideological* implications of Orteguianism as a philosophy, simply because these fit nicely into his own theme—the philosophy of Mexican culture. This takes us to the implications of the Orteguian way of thinking for the twin subjects of primary concern to Ramos as Mexican ideologist: The nature of philosophy itself and the essence of human life.

In Ortega's most systematic work in philosophy published during his lifetime (1923), *El tema de nuestro tiempo* (Eng. trans., *The Modern Theme*, 1931), he states explicitly that his perspectivist way of thinking leads to two vital reforms. One leads to "a radical reform of philosophy," the other to "the more important reform in our sense of reality."<sup>11</sup> The first calls for a complete repudiation of the traditional conception of philosophy, the second for a thorough revision of the nineteenth-century conception of life.

With respect to the first reform, Ortega's situational definition of truth as a perspective or point of view in time and place implies a total rejection of the classical notion that any known truth is timeless and placeless, that is, objectively or absolutely valid *per se*.<sup>12</sup> By way of illustration, he thinks that Spinoza is incurably abstract and naive in mentality, chiding that model critic of all Utopian illusions for harboring the grand illusion of believing that reality could ever be grasped once and for all by the human mind. Being a model journalist himself, Ortega anticipates a later idea of his, that a technique must be developed for detecting reality *sub specie instantis* instead of *sub specie aeternitatis*.<sup>13</sup>

If *all* truth, according to Orteguian perspectivism, is actually a valid but limited point of view that varies with each knower and his circumstances, so is *philosophic* truth. As philosophic truth so conceived signifies an absolute break with tradition's whole universalistic concept of philosophy taken for granted throughout the ages, Ortega may be regarded as the contemporary Martin Luther of Philosophy. To be more explicit, Ortega's way of thinking as a vitalistic perspectivist represents a basic reform in both the form and content of philosophy, as traditionally understood. In form, perspectivism changes philosophy from a search for universal truths whose validity is unrestricted to a search for partial truths whose validity is restricted to time and place. In content, it transforms philosophy from a concern with the problems of *all* reality

(metaphysics) into a concern with the problems of *human* reality (meta-culture).

Apropos of all this, Ortega's thought amounts essentially to a certain sort of situational philosophy of culture, and one clear piece of evidence of such comes from his Mexican disciple's philosophy of Mexican culture. Since the passage in Ortega's *Tema* containing the two reforms implied by his way of thinking is cited with full approval by Ramos,<sup>14</sup> let us see first how the Mexican author makes his own use of the Orteguian attack on the traditional cosmocentric conception of philosophy.

Ramos's stand thereto is quite evident from his militant defense of the Orteguian doctrine of the historicity of philosophy—a doctrine which, by the way, stems from Wilhelm Dilthey.<sup>15</sup> The twofold reason for our author's defense of the doctrine in question is: First, it opens a new horizon for him by making available more possibilities culturally; and, second, it makes him feel intellectually at home in his own country by legitimizing theoretically his desire to nationalize philosophy as the underpinning indispensable for building up a spirit of patriotism in Mexico.

Ramos in the *Historia* quotes some key passages in behalf of perspectivism from Ortega's *Meditaciones* and *Tema*, and at one point he interposes the all-telling remark that those passages of "unquestionable obviousness" illustrate how "Ortega defends his right to construct his own philosophy from his personal point of view and under the perspective of Spain."<sup>16</sup> The moral of the side remark is perfectly clear: If a Spaniard enjoys the right to do so from a Spanish point of view, then by the same token so does a Mexican from a *Mexican* point of view. The logic here is impeccable, given the initial premise, and Ramos exploits it fully by restating Orteguian perspectivism in *Hacia un nuevo humanismo* (1940) as follows:<sup>17</sup>

Each individual possesses as part of his existence a concrete world, which is the sole window available to him to look out into the world in general. That is to say, what each subject knows better than any other is the natural landscape in which he lives, the society and the country to which he belongs. These things he knows from within, so to speak, because they constitute half of himself, being as he is vitally fused with them. These concrete objects must perforce be the particular instances which lend life and color to his generic concepts of the Universe, humanity or society. Despite the objective value of ideas which is independent of space and time, upon entertaining them we must willy-nilly refer them to the circle of our immediate experiences. This is doubtless a limitation of our knowledge, but also on the other hand an advantage, that of discovering in the world something which the rest would never be in the position to see.

Actually, Ramos goes one better than Ortega by consistently pushing the

logic of perspectivism, whose genealogy may be traced all the way back to the Periclean Age's famous Protagorean fragment: "Man is a measure of all things."<sup>18</sup> Nationalize the *Homo mensura* of ancient Greek Sophist (Protagoras), and you logically get the Orteguian *Homo hispanus mensura* and the Ramosian *Homo mexicanus mensura*. In a word, the historicity of philosophy means to Ramos its possibility of being humanized in the concrete, that is, *nationalized*.

If, as Ortega holds,<sup>19</sup> the universe does not appear the same to a classical "Greek" in Athens or to a contemporary "Yankee" in New York, it follows necessarily that neither would it appear the same today to a Spaniard in Madrid nor to a Mexican in Mexico City. The conclusion is psychologically and culturally the case, obviously, but Ortega goes further and infers optimistically therefrom that "reality, like a landscape, has infinite perspectives, all of them equally veridical and authentic."<sup>20</sup>

If such egalitarianism in epistemology is assumed at the very outset, the first of the two announced Orteguian reforms to follow from perspectivism as a situational conception of truth, not only implies a situational conception of philosophy generally, but in addition it leads specifically to what is explicit in Ramos and only implicit in Ortega, to wit, a "patriocentric"<sup>21</sup> conception of philosophy for each nation in the modern world, including Mexico, of course. In other words, the stubborn quest in Ramos for a national philosophy as a body of Mexican doctrines implies a nationalistic interpretation of philosophy itself. Philosophy as thus interpreted changes masters, and her old role as *ancilla theologiae* in the medieval world gives way to the new role of *ancilla patriae* in the modern. It should be noted in passing that the difference just brought out between master and disciple is one of the reasons (among others) for calling Ramos a *Neo-Orteguian*. Philosophers worthy of the name are not parrots but rare birds!

Ortega's first reform, which literally puts philosophy *in its place*, is really part and parcel of his second and more general reform to do likewise with human life and culture. That is to say, the first reform is a corollary of the second, because a demand for a new sense of reality entails a corresponding change in conception of philosophy. In Ortega's mental history, though, it happens that his interest in reforming human life, Spanish life especially, is prior to his interest in reforming philosophy, as is insinuated throughout his first and most revealing book, *Meditaciones del Quijote* (1914), to which we must now turn as a necessary preliminary to Ramos.

In the preface to the *Meditaciones* there is a sentence where Ortega, in search for self-identity, defines himself candidly as a man of Spain living under difficult circumstances. In retrospect, the sentence

may be said to constitute his philosophical point of departure: A first principle that condenses his whole thought. It appears almost casually right after a brief reference to what we today call ecology, the study of the mutual relations between organisms and their environment. The sentence consists of two parts, the first having to do with life on the biological plane, the second with life on the moral.

Usually, only the first half of the celebrated passage is cited, but fortunately Ramos quotes the entire sentence twice in the *Historia*:<sup>22</sup> "Yo soy yo y mi circunstancia, y si no la salvo a ella no me salvo yo."<sup>23</sup> Bearing in mind its actual context, the English version of it may be rendered faithfully as follows: "I am myself and my environment, but if I fail to account for it I fail to get over my difficulties." Stated in abbreviated form, Ortega's starting point or prime principle in philosophy is: *Ego circumstans* (in Latin), or *Mi situación* (in Spanish).<sup>24</sup>

Taken in its entirety, the basic proposition in the *Meditaciones* foreshortens Ortega's whole philosophy of life. It signifies that man is confronted daily with a great variety of circumstances (favorable and unfavorable), as a result of which he has no other effective alternative than to make them intelligible by distinguishing clearly those which hamper his life from those which facilitate it. This idea, that man's only intelligent recourse in coping with his daily difficulties resides in the proper use of his powers of understanding, identifies Ortega's first principle of philosophy with a secularized way of salvation, in other words, with a "moral integral."<sup>25</sup>

In the final analysis, Ortega's situational starting point in philosophy, culturally viewed, is another secular attempt of the modern mind to bring Christianity down to earth. Like Seneca of ancient Córdoba, Ortega of modern Castile is a moralist at heart, notwithstanding that he was academically professor of metaphysics at the University of Madrid for many, many years. So of course is Ramos, his major disciple in Mexico of Mexican birth.

In traditional Christianity salvation means deliverance from *sin*, but in Ortega it presupposes deliverance from *confusion*.<sup>26</sup> Hence the primacy of *claridad* and *comprensión* in his thought. For, in order to save ourselves from difficulties by surmounting them, we must first determine precisely what they are in any given situation, and in order to accomplish that we must delve deeply into the particular history responsible for them. Historical clarification is, accordingly, the prerequisite for overcoming obstacles in our surroundings and within ourselves. Furthermore, and this is only implicit in Ortega's initial vision of the human situation, the difficulties themselves encountered in daily life are not something to balk at or cry over childishly but represent a constant

challenge to us to create a better world here and now. Without such creative effort on our part no viable solution to life's problems is possible.

Consequently, Ortega's own perspective on human life is written essentially in *epic* terms, inasmuch as its focus is on the *surmountability* of obstacles and conflicts. An epic spirit, whose nature embodies the adventurous and successful side of life, belongs to the class of *conquistadores*, all of whom in their sundry exploits manage somehow, in the face of difficulty and against odds, to surmount obstacles and overcome evils of every sort until the very end. It is such epic spirit, subtly diffused throughout the *Meditaciones* of the early Ortega, that permeates not only the protest in the *Tema* against a humdrum existence but also the accompanying plea for a new sense of reality.<sup>27</sup>

The fact that the author of the *Tema*, in a playful journalistic mood, describes his scheme of reform in life style, picturesquely, as "the sportive and festive sense of life,"<sup>28</sup> only reflects his antipathy to the two complementary extremes characterizing the nineteenth-century way of life in his eyes: The "deification of work"<sup>29</sup> and the decided trend "toward pessimism."<sup>30</sup> This preference itself, however, of sport over the work ethic, of optimism over pessimism, does not affect at all the conclusion that the Castilian philosopher is an epic soul at bottom. As a matter of fact, it confirms the conclusion. For Ortega's vehement protest against the industrial spirit and defeatist attitude toward life, presumably prevailing during the past century—a protest which reappears, in the early Ramos, as "God deliver us from the 19th century!," and, in the mature Ramos,<sup>31</sup> as an attack on "*the instrumental conception of man*"—has potentially all the earmarks of an epic revival on a grand scale.

An indirect but telling confirmation that Ortega, in spite of his afterthought and dubious claim to have anticipated German existentialism,<sup>32</sup> looks at life epically or adventurously is his positive response to the Homeric epic and his negative reaction to ancient Greek tragedy.<sup>33</sup> He is sympathetic to the former but unsympathetic to the latter. His lack of sympathy for tragic drama mars his understanding of the literary genre. Like the bulk of writers since Aristotle, the original culprit in the story whose extremely influential definition of tragedy<sup>34</sup> suffers from ambiguity, Ortega assumes that the general theme of Greek tragedy has to do with "the problems of good and evil."<sup>35</sup>

Aristotle and Ortega notwithstanding, the quintessence of tragedy (Greek or otherwise) lies, thematically, not in problems of good-versus-evil (collectively, the Problem of Evil), as traditional aesthetics has assumed from time immemorial, but in problems of good-versus-good (collectively, the Problem of Good). *Materialiter*, whether depicted in



literature or manifested in life, the Problem of Evil and the Problem of Good differ substantially in possibilities of outcome. *Formaliter*, the two types of conflict-of-value problems differ radically in polarity. While the Problem of Evil stands for a resolvable conflict situation involving a clear choice between good and *evil*, the Problem of Good on the other hand stands for an irresolvable conflict situation involving a perplexing choice between good and *good*.<sup>36</sup> Once we take into account the formal difference in polarity between these two primary types of conflict in man's life, we can then see why epic situations, which personify ultimate victory due to the eventual triumph of good over evil, spell glorious success, and why tragic situations, which personify inevitable defeat due to the mutual incompatibility of equally worthy goods or duties at stake, spell noble failure.

Doubtless (with apologies to Aristotle again), it is the rare quality of nobleness or *strength* of character in a tragic person that distinguishes a tragic figure like the Sophoclean Antigone from a pathetic figure like the Shakespearean Othello, whose hopelessly deluded mind makes him a model case of a jealous man who is just absolutely pitiful.<sup>37</sup> After all, there is a world of difference between the pathetic failure of an Othello and the tragic failure of an Antigone, the female model of a genuine conscientious objector whose path in life forks at a crucial moment when she must of necessity choose between two *good* things—patriotism and piety—which, within the given plot of the Sophoclean play named after her, are equipollent but antinomic, at the same time. Thus, the Problem of Good is coextensive with the problem of tragedy, but the Problem of Evil manifests itself morally in two opposite forms: The epic and the pathetic. Whereas the epic defines a situation where good *overcomes* evil, the pathetic defines one where evil *overpowers* good.

In view of the fact that the literary categories of tragic, epic, pathetic, taken together, represent paradigmatically on the artistic plane the basic state of conflict in the life of man, and, taken separately, convey ideally the different kinds of moral conflicts in daily life, it behooves us therefore to keep in mind the proper meaning of such categories when we come to take up the various angles to Ramos's profile of Mexican life. Besides, there is more to the story as to why Ortega prefers the "epic perspective"<sup>38</sup> in Homer to the tragic perspective in Aeschylus, who is dubbed *teopoeta*.<sup>39</sup> The nimble Castilian journalist-philosopher from Madrid apparently had to contend all his life with "Spanish circumstances," and probably the most audible of these "silent things"<sup>40</sup> in his immediate environment was none other than the tragic voice of the inflexible Basque poet-philosopher and professor of Greek from nearby Salamanca, Miguel de Unamuno (1864–1936).<sup>41</sup> Ortega's first book *Medi-*

tations on *Quixote*, came out the year after Unamuno's *Tragic Sense of Life* (1913), also published in Madrid. The exact chronology of these two outstanding works in contemporary Spanish philosophy is important at this juncture.

However odious comparisons may be in matters personal, Ortega himself once said, felicitously, that comparison is the unavoidable instrument of understanding, the function of which is to serve as "a pair of tweezers"<sup>42</sup> for capturing a fine point. Applying this intellectual instrument here, we may succinctly put the difference of philosophical starting points in the two major thinkers of twentieth-century Spain in the following way.

Whereas Unamuno starts in fact from a *tragic* sense of life<sup>43</sup> centered on *insurmountable* conflicts between good and good (e.g., the conflict between intelligence and feeling), Ortega starts with what in effect is an *epic* sense of life centered on *surmountable* conflicts between good and evil (e.g., the corresponding conflict between intelligence and unintelligence). Like parallel lines in Euclidean geometry, Unamuno and Ortega can never meet at a common point, because they differ completely in their tacit presuppositions as to which type of conflict (tragic or epic) is central to life. This is ultimately the reason that a tragic mind and an epic mind have trouble understanding each other: They are not talking about the same thing in life. Period.

In any event, we can now see more clearly the second of the two interconnected reforms in Ortega, by setting his request for a complete change of attitude toward life against the background of Unamuno, his principal competitor in the field as well as his primary target in Spain. Viewed in this comparative light, the clear-cut divergency between Unamuno and Ortega in their overall evaluations of life involves a fundamental difference from the start in the conception and solvability of life's conflicts and difficulties. As soon as this initial difference of opinion on fundamentals is fully recognized, it can then be more easily understood why Ortega, the epic philosopher of Spain, firmly believes that life's problems *are* solvable in principle and why he is suspicious<sup>44</sup> of the tragic philosopher of Spain, Unamuno, who just as firmly believes otherwise insofar as he unashamedly tries and tries to defend the actual unavailability of the intrinsic opposition between the rational and the irrational claims of life, both of which are *equally* justifiable in themselves yet in perennial conflict with each other.<sup>45</sup>

This thumbnail comparison between Unamuno and Ortega is of special relevance to our study of Ramos. Although it is true from the record so far presented that the Mexican philosopher was influenced mostly by Ortega, an unacknowledged trace of Unamuno appears, at

least indirectly, in his (Ramos's) complex thought. But, in the meantime, let us proceed to show concretely how Ramos appropriates the Orteguian epic-oriented principle of *Ego circumstans* for his own purposes, reserving the next section of our essay for some details on how he is prompted by the Orteguian protest against European life in the nineteenth century to reform Mexican life since independence from Spain.

In an autobiographical statement in the *Historia*, the author emphasizes that Ortega's starting point (*Ego circumstans*) had served him as<sup>46</sup>

a norm applicable to Mexico, whose reality and whose problems were completely unknown to philosophy. Philosophical meditation could very well be of service in the definition of the Mexican environment and in the determination of what is or could be her culture, taking into account the distinctive features of our history and the form in which the latter have shaped the peculiar physiognomy of Mexican man. With these objectives in mind, the author published in 1934 a book entitled *El Perfil del Hombre y la Cultura en México*, in which an attempt was made for the first time to explore philosophically the historical past of Mexico for purposes of explaining and clarifying the specific traits of her present life that might constitute a sort of characterology of the Mexican and his culture. The author considered this prior investigation indispensable for basing the ideals of future Mexican life upon positive data.

The parallels between Ramos and Ortega are so striking in this passage that even the former's language smacks of the latter's, such as the Orteguian terms "environment" (*circunstancia*), "physiognomy," "profile," and "characterology."<sup>47</sup> And yet, what is even more revelatory than their common thought and language is their common spirit of reform. Here the melioristic attitude of the reformer and the self-confident attitude of the epic hero go hand in hand. A reformer is temperamentally an epic soul who confidently approaches obstacles to the good life as evils to be overcome through such and such method or course of action.

Ortega used to pride himself as *El Espectador* of Spain, but the designation is really appropriate to his venerable comic hero in *Meditations on Quixote*: Cervantes, Spain's greatest spectator and communicator of the human comedy. Basically, *malgré lui*, Ortega incarnates the epic or "warrior spirit"<sup>48</sup> of *El Reformador*. Warriors, whether they wield a sword or a pen, are too busy doing and undoing things to be disinterested spectators of the human scene. With the hope of saving his own native land from internal troubles and foreign oblivion, what Ortega wanted to reform, above all, is Spain. This is evident in his *España invertebrada* (1921), the prelude to *La rebelión de las masas* (1930).

Similarly, the central aim of his Mexican disciple, who had "faith in the salvation of Mexico,"<sup>49</sup> was, hopefully, to reform Mexico. This hope of saving Mexico from social evil is the prime motive behind Ramos's entire philosophy of Mexican culture. Needless to add, the Orteguian and

Ramosian proposals for national reform vary in actual content because the "circumstances" in each are quite different. After all, while Ortega wrote after the fall of Spain in 1898, Ramos did so after the rise of Mexico in 1910.

#### RAMOS ON THE MEXICAN AND HIS CULTURE

The book in which our Mexican author spells out the reform for his own country is, of course, *El perfil del hombre y la cultura en México*, his most publicized work. Although he makes no specific mention of Ortega in the first two editions (1934, 1938), the influence of his Spanish mentor's *España invertebrada* on the *Perfil* is so obvious that perhaps he felt no need of referring specifically to it. At any rate, what the two works share, besides their general epic spirit, is a common purpose and method of approach. Corresponding to Ortega's objective to "create a new type of Spaniard" with an epic "sense of confidence" is Ramos's desire to create a new type of Mexican; and, corresponding to the former's "psychological history"<sup>50</sup> of Spanish culture as the proper way to Spain's problems is the latter's psychoanalytic history of Mexican culture as the proper way, in turn, to Mexico's. Technically speaking, Ramos took much more seriously than Ortega the then-popular movement of psychoanalysis, and, of the "Big Three" (Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Alfred Adler), Freud, the founder of the movement, had the least and Adler the greatest impact on his thought.<sup>51</sup>

In the Prologue to the third edition (1951) of the *Perfil*, Ramos conveniently tells the reader what his task is all about in a single paragraph:<sup>52</sup> "The basic idea of this book grew out of its author's ambition to establish a theory which would explain the real character of Mexican man and his culture. This task called for an interpretation of our history and led to the discovery of certain national vices, the knowledge of which seems to me indispensable as a point of departure for a serious undertaking of the spiritual reform of Mexico."

We may infer from this brief statement that the starting point of Ramos's philosophy of Mexican culture is the Mexican counterpart of Ortega's situational point of departure. Mexicanize the latter's *Ego circumstances* and the logical result is the former's *Mexicanus circumstances*. Restated in classical terms, the Orteguian and Ramosian philosophical starting points really boil down to: "*Spaniard*, know thy circumstances," and, "*Mexican*, know thine," respectively. As the Mexican writer paraphrases Alexander Pope, "the proper study of the Mexican is the Mexican."<sup>53</sup> Thus, in Ramos, the theme of Mexico and her destiny is raised in principle to a philosophical level of utmost importance: The subject is no longer a mere national pastime or tourist attraction.

Ramos insists that "any real reform in Mexican life depends first on a profound reform in the character of our people."<sup>54</sup> This is why he submits an historical "Psychoanalysis of the Mexican"<sup>55</sup> as the precondition for improving the national character of the Mexican people and facilitating the nationalization of philosophy and culture in Mexico. I have already examined the psychoanalytic part of his work elsewhere.<sup>56</sup> Suffice it to say that Ramos's psychohistory of Mexico leans heavily on concepts borrowed from Jung and from Adler, who once characterized himself as "the legitimate father of the inferiority complex."<sup>57</sup> Maintaining that the personality type apt to acquire an inferiority complex is a Jungian "introvert,"<sup>58</sup> the author of the *Perfil* states that in his "essay a methodical application of Adler's psychological theories to the Mexican is attempted for the first time."<sup>59</sup>

Ramos's thesis is that certain expressions of Mexican life, "imitation" of European and Anglo-American culture in particular, "are ways of compensating for an unconscious sense of inferiority."<sup>60</sup> He recognizes that germs of the Mexican syndrome were latent during the Spanish Conquest and Colonization of Mexico, but stresses that they did not really surface until the struggle for political independence at the beginning of the last century, when the disparity between ambitions and capabilities became painfully evident.<sup>61</sup> Therefore, it is not at all surprising that Ramos no more likes the nineteenth century in Mexico particularly than Ortega does generally, although their reasons for disliking it differ somewhat.

All reformers, by calling, are specialists as to which vices to remove and which virtues to improve. In the specific case of our author, his whole earnest effort at reform can be put quite simply. As both faithful son of the Mexican Revolution and faithful disciple of Ortega, the Spanish castigator of the Spaniards *par excellence*, Ramos is telling and urging his own countrymen to replace their negative "sense of inferiority" as a people with a positive "sense of reality"<sup>62</sup> about their actual circumstances and future possibilities. Ramos had studied medicine for a number of years before going into philosophy and, like an overeager psychiatrist, he ambitiously undertakes the immense job of diagnosing the spiritual ills of his country by resorting to Adlerian psychoanalysis as the master key to the Mexican malady caused, reportedly, by a collective feeling of inferiority. Whether he diagnoses them well or, for that matter, whether they are diagnosable at all on a national scale, is beside the point here.

The profile Ramos draws of the typical post-Independence Mexican is not flattering at all, and he deserves considerable credit for at least the courage of attempting to "tell it like it is." As a matter of fact, his Adlerian image of the Mexican people is not only far from pretty, it is so

absolutely pathetic that no wonder he pleads for a complete reform in Mexican life, especially in the crucial area of Mexican education, whose guiding principle should be, according to him, to make all future teaching *relevant* to the Mexican spirit, so that "its faults may be corrected and its virtues developed, the goal being the creation of a human type superior to the existing."<sup>63</sup>

Fortunately, however, apart from their heterogeneity, there are really not one but *two* images of the Mexican in the *Perfil*. One is the obvious *pathetic* image developed at length by Ramos himself (as social reformer) and discussed by his critics; the other is the subtle *tragic* image, left undeveloped by Ramos (as cultural historian) and ignored by his commentators. If the first image corresponds to Ramos's "patho-analysis" of the Mexican, the second corresponds to his "tragi-analysis," to coin the proper words for the difference. As anticipated already, this leads to the indirect but deep-rooted influence of Unamuno on our author.

Unamuno is mentioned only once in the *Perfil*, in connection with the acute observation that he is an exemplary case of Spanish individualism: "The curious thing about Spain is that there one can become an individualist to virtually any extreme and still be a Spaniard."<sup>64</sup> But, the influence of Unamuno on Ramos appears indirectly and profoundly in a reference to an admirer of the Basque poet: Rubén Darío, the Poet of Nicaragua.<sup>65</sup>

In my judgment, the profoundest thing in the *Perfil* is the following statement connecting the lyric cry of the Nicaraguan poet with the tragic history of Hispanic America:<sup>66</sup> "Rubén Darío once cried that his soul was the object of contention 'between the Cathedral and pagan ruins.' Isn't this, perhaps, a valid image of the drama of America? Today very serious problems persist because of the schism between the culture inspired in our cathedrals, and the other, which emanates from *our* ruins. When the two heritages met they could not be combined in the creation of a new synthesis."

In view of this penetrating analysis in Ramos of his own America, what exactly is the underlying reason for the drama or tragic story of Hispanic America in general and Mexico in particular? The concise answer may be put in the fitting phrase of Carlos Vaz Ferreira, another admirer of Unamuno and the *fundador* of Uruguayan philosophy: No synthesis of the two cultures involved was possible because of "*the clash of ideals*."<sup>67</sup> Reflecting possibly on Justo Sierra,<sup>68</sup> the Porfirist historian and statesman who is articulate about the unique *dual* ancestry of the Mexican people,<sup>69</sup> Ramos not only generalizes him but senses that the schism between the two heritages of Hispanic America (Pagan and Catholic)

signifies a tragic conflict of cultures arising out of their inherent incompatibility as ways of life, originally.

And, lest this particular reference to the tragic Problem of Good in the life of a people be considered an isolated phenomenon in our Mexican author, it should be added that the early Ramos was quite aware of the Unamunian "tragic sense of life." This is evident, for one thing, from his sympathetic sketch of the contemporary writer Giovanni Papini, "*the tragic philosopher*"<sup>70</sup> of Italy, prior to his conversion to Catholicism. Listen to the unusual insight of the young Ramos into the tragic life of Papini as a conscientious agnostic:<sup>71</sup> "Papini was religious from the beginning of his spiritual adventures. He was a man athirst for faith, but who could not believe. His tragedy consisted in the clash between a great need for faith and an enormous critical power which made him sink constantly into doubt."

Had the mature Ramos taken seriously his own early insight into Papini's life and developed it, he would have become the tragic philosopher of Mexico. But, as one swallow does not make a summer, the historical fact is that the epic element wins out over the tragic element in Ramos. His *Perfil* bears authentic witness to this turn of events, and historiography must respect the actual facts, irrespective of personal wishes or cultural biases. Ramos, in a word, ends up epically as a reformer, bent as he understandably is on improving the lot of his fellow-Mexicans.

Nevertheless, to repeat, as a true Mexican with a *mestizo* cultural background, our author still retains a tragic strain in his complex life and thought.<sup>72</sup> On analogy with Papini, it could be said that his tragedy consists in the clash between a great moral need to reform Mexico, on the one hand, and an equally great intellectual need to acknowledge the hard facts of her complicated history, on the other. This tragic conflict of interests is reflected subtly but unmistakably in the subdued tone of Ramos as disinterested observer of Mexican life.

For, even with all his vigorous campaign against the alleged fictitious way of life in Mexico and his epic call for a Mexican Reformation, Ramos was partially aware of the unavoidable difficulties inherent in his whole enterprise of national reform, especially since he could not completely eradicate from his mind the tragic ramifications of the dual ancestry of his own country, born from the highly delicate marriage of two alternative but heterogeneous types of culture: Spanish and Amerindian. If the author had pondered further the ever fascinating subject of the *mestizo* birth of the Mexican people, he would have come to the sobering conclusion that they have not suffered so much from a purely hypothetical

complex of inferiority as from the very real *complexity* of their peculiar and precarious origins as newborn children of Indo-Spain.

True, though Ramos sensed that the tragic story of Mexico is marked throughout with a dramatic quality of conflicting forces representing clashing ideals of life and culture, as a good reformer he had to disregard, for political and moral reasons, what he realized as a good historian. Even so, that a comparison of the early Ramos of the *Hipótesis* (1928), his first book, with the later Ramos of the *Perfil* (1934) reveals a definite shift of philosophic interest from Unamuno to Ortega, does in nowise mean that he lost his tragic sense of history altogether. A sensitive Mexican like Ramos, whose hybrid soul is tragically torn between her Catholic and Aztec heritages, can hardly ignore the complexity and tragedy of life, no matter how energetically he tries to do so in the interest of reform. To the extent that this is true our Mexican moralist is definitely a *neo-Orteguian*.

#### SOME CRITICAL COMMENTS ON RAMOS

I would like to sum up by stating briefly my own reservations to Ramos's bold attempt to nationalize philosophy in general and philosophy of culture in particular, to which reference was made at the outset. To put my reservations in the form of an embarrassing question: Is "the philosophy of Mexican culture," our author's professed area of interest inspired by Ortega's situational views (including those on Spanish and European culture), an intellectual project possible of realization, philosophically? The author of the *Perfil* thinks so, to be sure, but he is not too convincing, however.

In the first place, there is an ambiguity as to what Ramos's *Perfil* is all about. It is not clear from the internal evidence of the book itself, whether it is "a serious essay on social psychology," on "characterology" and "philosophy of culture," or a series of "notes on Mexican psychology" or on "a Philosophy of Mexican History."<sup>73</sup> In other words, is it a contribution to the *psychology* or to the *philosophy* of Mexican culture?

Judged from its actual contents, the work is in the main a well-intentioned but amateurish diagnosis of the Mexican psychology; that is, of the abnormal behavior imputed throughout their postcolonial history to the Mexican people as a whole, the common denominator of whose character traits is, allegedly, "their antisocial nature."<sup>74</sup> But, there is something wrong somewhere, especially since we expected from Ramos not merely a psychology or a sociology of Mexican culture but a *philosophy* of it.

The reason that the Mexican author hardly goes beyond his programmatic intentions of making a positive case for a national philosophy



of Mexico, is that he really cannot, strictly speaking. As the early Ramos initially realized only too well, philosophy as such belongs to "the sphere of the universal"<sup>75</sup> and, if so, philosophy of *Mexican* culture (or history) cannot be *philosophy* except by fiat, *ex hypothesi*. A brand of tequila, for example, can be marked "Made in Mexico," but a brand of philosophy cannot (at least, not in the same sense). Fortunately, as was pointed out at the very beginning, Ramos is no Mexican chauvinist because, for one thing, he is prudent enough (in principle) to steer a middle course (*criollismo*) between an extreme indigenism and an extreme Europeanism in his approach to Mexico's national culture, of which his search for a national philosophy forms an integral part.<sup>76</sup>

Yet, this is all the more reason for the necessity of differentiating clearly and distinctly between philosophy as a country's cultural activity and a national philosophy as a propaganda piece. Furthermore, despite his theoretical strictures on cultural extremism in Mexico, Ramos in fact unfortunately wavers between a universalist and a nationalist approach to Mexican culture.<sup>77</sup> Apparently, he wants to have his two cakes and eat them! This wavering on his part is another sign of ambiguity. Such ambiguity is fatal particularly in philosophy, where clarity is of the essence. Ironically, to Orteguians especially, as clarity is the cardinal virtue of man, so ambiguity is his cardinal vice.

In the second place, the name "philosophy of Mexican culture" in Ramos is really a misnomer because, to avert the risk of being misunderstood, he, as an Orteguian perspectivist, should have called it properly, say, philosophy of culture *from a Mexican point of view*. This correction of nomenclature fits in with his own definition of Mexican culture, by which he means "universal culture made over into *our own*, the kind that can coexist with us and appropriately express our spirit."<sup>78</sup> Such definition is not only of interest to social philosophy but pregnant with cultural significance for all of us, be we Mexican or not. For it invites us to reassess the distinctive service that Mexico's own contributions to culture could render in this compact world of ours, which is beginning to learn at long last from daily events that there are no chosen people of culture except for those who still continue to be naively or complacently blind to social reality.

Finally, to end on a more positive note, Ramos in the last analysis thinks, despite his occasionally strong nationalistic bias to the contrary, that the ideal of Mexican culture should aspire to the goal of Ortega's "general human culture,"<sup>79</sup> to wit, "the achievement of a new humanism."<sup>80</sup> Rightly or wrongly, this is why our author contends that his two books, *Profile of Man and Culture in Mexico* (1934) and *Toward a New Humanism* (1940), are logically "interrelated, one being the consequence of

the other.”<sup>81</sup> In any case, if it is not too late or too early, his neo-humanistic perspective on life, designed to check the dehumanization of man by focusing on our need of acquiring a higher sense of values, may alert us to the current dangers of a computerized world.

Like many a vigilant humanist and scientist everywhere today, Ramos is deeply troubled over the untold harm that the Colossus of modern technology may be doing to the human spirit. His sober reflections on the thorny subject from a Mexican standpoint should elicit a timely response from all of us presently concerned over the looming shadow of modern civilization and the Orwellian predicament of contemporary man, who seems to be frantically stockpiling manifold sorts of information at the expense of the vital search for wisdom, which, after all, is philosophy at its best regardless of when and where. In sum, the ancient but tried precept of the Platonic Socrates on the primacy of self-examination, “Know thyself,” to which Ramos himself ultimately turns as the proper antidote for Mexico to the pathetic “self-denigration”<sup>82</sup> ascribed by him to his own Mexican people with remedial purposes in mind, still holds independently as the perfect guide to life for all eventualities facing persons and peoples, under whatever culture.

#### NOTES

1. For such passing allusions in their ideological writings on Mexico and kindred matters as speculative antecedents of the methodical and sober work of Ramos in the field, *vide* especially Antonio Caso, *Discursos a la nación mexicana* (Mexico City: Librería Porrúa, 1922), and *El problema de México y la ideología nacional* (Mexico City: Cultura, 1924); also, José Vasconcelos and Manuel Gamio, *Aspects of Mexican Civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1926), pp. 3–102, and José Vasconcelos, *La raza cósmica* (Paris: Agencia Mundial de Librería, 1925), and *Indología* (Barcelona: Agencia Mundial de Librería, 1927).
2. Samuel Ramos, *Historia de la filosofía en México* (Mexico City: Imprenta Universitaria, 1943), p. 153.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 149. The name “Contemporáneos” for Ramos’s generation derives from a literary society and journal founded in 1928 by a Mexican group of young writers. For more details on the general dissatisfaction of Ramos and his generation with the Bergsonian romanticism in Caso and Vasconcelos, the two leading philosophers of the previous generation (1910) in Mexico, see my essay on “Don Antonio Caso y las ideas contemporáneas en México” in the joint memorial volume, *Centro de Estudios Filosóficos, Homenaje a Antonio Caso* (Mexico City: Editorial Stylo, 1947), pp. 77–91.
4. José Ortega y Gasset, “Ni Vitalismo ni Racionalismo,” reprinted in *Obras completas*, 5th ed., vol. 3 (Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1962), pp. 270–80.
5. José Romano Muñoz, “Ni irracionalismo ni racionalismo, sino filosofía crítica,” *Ulises*, 1 (1927):4–10.
6. Ramos, *Historia*, p. 151.
7. Ortega, *Goethe desde dentro* (Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1933), p. xxiv; Ortega, *Concord and Liberty*, trans. H. Weyl (New York: Norton, 1946), p. 184.
8. Ortega, *El tema de nuestro tiempo*, 8th ed. (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1955), p. 96.
9. Ramos, *Profile of Man and Culture in Mexico*, trans. Peter G. Earle (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1962), p. 108. There are four editions of *El perfil del hombre y la cultura en*

- México (1934, 1938, 1951, 1963); the English translation of Ramos's major work is based on the third edition (1951).
10. Ortega, *Tema*, p. 97.
  11. *Ibid.*, p. 99.
  12. *Ibid.*
  13. Ortega, *Concord*, p. 13.
  14. Ramos, *Historia*, p. 150.
  15. Ramos is the translator of Wilhelm Dilthey, *La esencia de la filosofía* (Mexico City: Filosofía y Letras, 1944).
  16. Ramos, *Historia*, p. 150.
  17. Ramos, *Hacia un nuevo humanismo* (Mexico City: La Casa de España en México, 1940), p. 40.
  18. Charles M. Bakewell, ed., *Source Book in Ancient Philosophy*, rev. ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1939), p. 67.
  19. Ortega, *Tema*, p. 100.
  20. *Ibid.*, p. 101.
  21. B. A. G. Fuller, *A History of Philosophy*, 3rd ed., pt. 2 (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), p. 499, coins the word "patriocentrism."
  22. Ramos, *Historia*, pp. 150, 153.
  23. Ortega, *Meditaciones del Quijote*, 5th ed. (Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1958), p. 18.
  24. *Ibid.*, p. 38. *Mi vida* in the later Ortega is equivalent, of course, to *mi situación* in the earlier.
  25. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
  26. *Ibid.*, p. 47.
  27. Ortega, *Tema*, pp. 91–94.
  28. *Ibid.*, p. 91.
  29. *Ibid.*, p. 92.
  30. Ortega, *Invertebrate Spain*, trans. Mildred Adams (New York: Norton, 1937), p. 179.
  31. Cf. Ramos, *Hipótesis (1924–1927)* (Mexico City: Ediciones de "Ulises," 1928), pp. 5–8; and Ramos, *Profile*, p. 98.
  32. Ortega, *Triptico* (Buenos Aires: Espasa-Calpe Argentina, 1941), pp. 130–32.
  33. Ortega, *Meditaciones*, pp. 90–101, 124–27.
  34. Aristotle, *Poetics*, 6, 1449b 23.
  35. Ortega, *Meditaciones*, p. 125.
  36. Patrick Romanell, *Making of the Mexican Mind* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1952), p. 22. The present writer has since developed the formal typology of life's conflicts in several publications on medical ethics, but the distinction between the Problem of Evil and the Problem of Good is as applicable to the intellectual as to the moral side of life.
  37. Tragedy and tragic are two of the most grossly misunderstood words in our vocabulary. In popular diction, tragedy is always confused with an unforeseen and terrible mishap, and in the aesthetic field the tragic is ordinarily confused with the pathetic. (Otherwise, why would we persist in the error of calling Shakespeare's *Othello* a tragedy?) In either case, whether tragedy is made descriptive of some disaster or pathos, the tragic quality of experience gets associated by mistake with the common Problem of Evil in the world of fact and fiction, thereby losing its proper identity with the rarer but more poignant Problem of Good in life.
  38. Ortega, *Meditaciones*, p. 100.
  39. *Ibid.*, p. 125.
  40. *Ibid.*, pp. 1, 13.
  41. Is Aeschylus the *teopoeita* Ortega's blind for Unamuno, the theological poet of contemporary Spain?
  42. Ortega, *Invertebrate Spain*, p. 92.
  43. Miguel de Unamuno, *Tragic Sense of Life*, trans. J. E. Crawford Fitch (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1954), p. 37.
  44. Ortega, *Meditaciones*, pp. 73, 65.

45. Unamuno, *Tragic Sense*, p. 124.
46. Ramos, *Historia*, p. 153.
47. Cf. Ortega, *Goethe*, p. 133, for the general reference to "a characterology of peoples and races."
48. Ortega, *Invertebrate Spain*, pp. 130–36.
49. Ramos, *Profile*, p. 11.
50. Ortega, *Invertebrate Spain*, pp. 87, 132, 48.
51. For Ortega's critical stand on Freudian psychoanalysis, see his 1911 article, "Psicoanálisis, ciencia problemática," reprinted in *Obras Completas*, vol. 1, pp. 216–37.
52. Ramos, *Profile*, p. 4.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 168.
54. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
55. *Ibid.*, pp. 15–72. The Orteguian counterpart of the Ramosian characterology of the Mexican is "Toward a Topography of Spanish Arrogance," published originally (1923) in *Revista de Occidente* and reprinted in *Goethe desde dentro* (1933). As is well known, Ortega thinks that the cardinal sin of the Spaniard is *soberbia*, whose opposite is *abyección* (*Goethe*, pp. 128, 136). Curiously enough the latter, in the form of "inferiority complex" (Alfred Adler) or *autodenigración* (Carlos Pereyra), is the cardinal sin of the Mexican for Ramos (*Profile*, p. 17).
56. Romanell, *Making of the Mexican Mind*, pp. 163–66; "Ortega in Mexico: A Tribute to Samuel Ramos," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 21 (1960): 600–608; book review of the *Profile*, in *Inter-American Review of Bibliography* 13 (1963): 344–46; *Mexican Education in Cultural Perspective*, ed., Stanley D. Ivie (University of Arizona: College of Education, Monograph Series, no. 5, 1971), pp. 32–49.
57. *Time*, 30 June 1958, p. 62.
58. Ramos, *Profile*, pp. 7–8, 70, 128, 138, 143.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 56.
60. *Ibid.*, pp. 18, 9.
61. *Ibid.*, pp. 9–10.
62. *Ibid.*, pp. 56, 11.
63. Ramos, *Veinte años de educación en México* (Mexico City: Imprenta Universitaria, 1941), p. 80.
64. Ramos, *Profile*, p. 29.
65. Rubén Darío, "Unamuno poeta," *La Nación* (Buenos Aires: March 1909).
66. Ramos, *Profile*, p. 85.
67. Carols Vaz Ferreira, *Estudios filosóficos* (Buenos Aires: Aguilar, 1961), p. 273. For his intellectual relations with Unamuno, *vide Vaz's Tres filósofos de la vida: Nietzsche, James, Unamuno* (Buenos Aires: Losada, 1965), pp. 199–241.
68. *Vide Ramos, Profile*, pp. 23–24, 131, 161–66, for references to Sierra.
69. Justo Sierra, *The Political Evolution of the Mexican People*, trans. Charles Ramsdell (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1969), p. 62.
70. Ramos, *Hipótesis*, pp. 39, 56.
71. *Ibid.*, p. 59.
72. Ramos, *Profile*, pp. 26, 31, 32, 35, 36, 63, 169. To complicate matters, Ramos is annoyingly inconsistent in his treatment of Mexico's cultural *mestizaje*, but this very inconsistency only points to the tragic clash within the Mexican author himself as a mestizo mentality.
73. *Ibid.*, pp. 4, 72, 22.
74. *Ibid.*, p. 174.
75. Ramos, *Hipótesis*, p. 109.
76. Ramos, *Profile*, pp. 73–76, 97–98, 102, 106–8, 110–25. The earlier Spanish analogue of Ramos's problem of cultural assimilation in Mexico is the *hispanizante-versus-europeizante* grand debate in Spain. Just as Ortega had built up a case against slavish imitation of Europe in Spain, so Ramos does likewise against "Mexican mimesis" (*ibid.*, p. 19).
77. *Ibid.*, pp. 108, 131.

78. *Ibid.*, p. 108.
79. Ortega, *Invertebrate Spain*, p. 39.
80. Ramos, *Profile*, p. 12.
81. *Ibid.*, p. 12. Despite this explicit contention of his in the Prologue to the third edition of the *Profile* (1951), Ramos does not seem to realize that his very acknowledgment, that "the problem of the essence of man is a question of general nature which should be treated *in abstracto*, without reference to any case in particular" (*ibid.*, p. 12), flatly contradicts his original Orteguian revolt against the universalistic claim and aim of traditional philosophy—which (to recall his own words) "has always pretended to look at things from the standpoint of man in general" (*Historia*, p. 149). For, if it is pretentious to philosophize about the universe *in abstracto*, similarly it is pretentious to philosophize about man likewise. Besides, ironically enough, the prefatory acknowledgment itself of 1951 also destroys Ramos's own original neo-Orteguian basis for "the epistemological justification of a national philosophy" (*ibid.*, p. 149). Even so, witness once more (in new form) the tragic dilemma of Ramos the neo-Orteguian (1943) and Ramos the neo-humanist (1951), as reflected subtly in his unconscious shift from one idea of philosophy (the antitraditional) to another (the traditional). This dilemma in Ramos the neo-humanistic nationalist of Mexico originates from his whole effort to do equal justice to two ideals of man which, as postulated in the author's particular scheme of thought, are individually attractive but mutually exclusive: The neo-Orteguian localized ideal of *Mexican man* in the concrete (*Profile*, pp. 97–98, 154–56), on the one hand, and the neo-humanist universalized ideal of *the complete man* as such (*Hacia*, pp. 72, 154), on the other. Either ideal of man may be defended separately (in theory at least) without clashing with the other, but not both at the same time, except by compromising the theoretical issue eclectically, as Ramos tried desperately in the end to avoid an unavoidable choice confronting him squarely as pioneer defender of the nationalization of the Mexican mind.
82. Ramos, *Profile*, pp. 72, 17.