



The Imperative of Modernity: An Intellectual Biography of José Ortega y Gasset

Rockwell Gray

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In this biography, Rockwell Gray offers a compelling portrait of one of the greatest Spanish writers and philosophers of the twentieth century. José Ortega y Gasset was a driving force at the center of an extraordinary flowering of literary and artistic talent in Madrid during the 1920s and 1930s. Author of *The Revolt of the Masses*, *The Dehumanization of Art*, *Man and Crisis*, *The Origin of Philosophy*, and numerous other well-known books, Ortega articulated more clearly than any other Spanish writer what Gray has called "the imperative of modernity," the need to open the doors of his native culture to currents of thought, art, and scholarship from abroad.

That Ortega should still stand as the preeminent intellectual leader of modern Spain even after his exile from the country following the Spanish Civil War testifies to the importance and continuing influence of his writings. Incisive, witty, and often lyrical in tone, they constitute a unique contribution to modern philosophy and a complex reflection on a crucial half century in Spanish and European history. This comprehensive intellectual biography, the first in English, brings us a new understanding of one of the most celebrated figures in Spanish cultural life, a thinker whose work is inseparable from the main currents of modern European intellectual and cultural history.

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