

The Achievement of Ortega y Gasset

The Revolt of the Masses, together with his other books, made José Ortega y Gasset, who died only some months ago, one of the most influential serious writers of the past century. We print in the following pages some remarks on Ortega by one of his principal disciples, Señor Julián Marías, written just after Ortega's death. And we print also two short essays of Ortega's not previously published in America: "Morbid Democracy," written in 1917, and "Pedagogy and Anachronism," written in 1922. These have been translated by Mr. Anthony Kerrigan.

Neither of these essays has lost by the passage of time. Of "Morbid Democracy," Mr. Kerrigan writes, "The very qualities which make some of these sentences sound old-fashioned are the ones which best demonstrate Ortega's political and social clairvoyance." As for "Pedagogy and Anachronism," this is, as Mr. Kerrigan says, "a minor classic on the absurdity of modern captive education and its hollow claim to modernity. Names and dates substituted, Ortega's argument is as telling now as then; for instance, the German Imperial State might be made to read the German Totalitarian State. As for Herr Kerschensteiner, his name has become legion, and any one of a great number of teachers'-college deans might be substituted to stand in Kerschensteiner's place." We Americans made some endeavor, indeed, to force Kerschensteiner-type educational fancies upon conquered Germany and conquered Japan.