

March 20, 1974

Professor Jose Ferrater Mora
Bryn Mawr College
Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania 19010

Dear Professor Ferrater;

I am moved to write you in the hope that you can answer a question about Don José Ortega y Gasset which has been raised by his American publisher, George Brockway of W.W.Norton and Co.

Mr. Norton is about to put into a paper-back edition my translation of En Torno de Galileo, which bears the English title Man and Crisis. It was published in hard cover in 1958.

On re-reading the translation, Mr. Brockway's attention has been caught by a paragraph, or part of one, which sounds, he says, like an English translation of a Spanish translation of William James. He wants to know if this might be possible.

The phrase occurs in chapter VII of En-Torno de Galileo, page 119-120 in the first edition published in Madrid in 1956, or page 86 of Volume V of the Obras Completas. It reads as follows:—"Al vivir he sido lanzado a la circunstancia, al enjambre caótico y punzante de las cosas: en ellas me pierdo, pero ~~me~~ pierdo no porque sean muchas y difíciles e ingratas, sino porque me alteran y me confunden y me pierdo de vista a mi mismo. Ya no sé que es lo que de verdad quiero o no quiero, siento o no siento, creo o no creo. Me pierdo en las cosas porque me pierdo a mi."

Mr. Brockway ^{who was trained in philosophy} says this sounds very much like "a passage in William James (that I cannot now locate) that describes a baby's world as a "blooming buzzing confusion." He wonders if this might have been, consciously or not, the source of Ortega's description.

We appeal to you in the hope that you may be able to shed light on the matter. Did Ortega read William James, might he have adapted this description and made it his own? No one else is as well versed in the matter as you. If you can shed any light on this question of source, both Mr. Brockway and I will be most grateful.

May I, at the same time, send my personal gratitude to you for writing your book on Ortega in 1955. It is most valuable, and has become my personal Bible when seeking to understand more about the philosopher and his work.

Most sincerely yours,

Walter Dill Scott III, '14.
Essay Radical Empiricist.