SALVAR LOS FENÓMENOS: LA FILOSOFÍA DE LA PERSPECTIVA DE ORTEGA Y GASSET EN LA FENOMENOLOGÍA DE LOS DELIRIOS

SAVING THE PHENOMENA: ORTEGA Y GASSET'S PHILOSOPHY OF PERSPECTIVE IN THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF DELUSIONS

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Resumen: Este artículo revisita la relevancia de la filosofía de José Ortega y Gasset —en especial sus conceptos de creencia y perspectiva— para la psicopatología fenomenológica contemporánea. Gracias al trabajo pionero del psiquiatra español Luis Valenciano Gayá, las ideas de Ortega fueron aplicadas de manera sistemática a la comprensión de la psicosis y el delirio ya en la década de 1950, de forma independiente a los marcos husserlianos y heideggerianos dominantes. Sostenemos que la teoría orteguiana de la perspectividad —fundada en la relación situada del sujeto con su circunstancia— anticipa desarrollos clave de la psiquiatría fenomenológica posterior. En particular, exploramos la concepción de Valenciano del delirio como una rigidificación de la perspectiva, entendida como una respuesta al colapso de las estructuras de creencia que previamente sostenían el sentido de realidad del sujeto. A partir de la dialéctica orteguiana entre creencia e idea, sugerimos que las formaciones delirantes pueden desempeñar un papel compensatorio frente a una incertidumbre existencial radical. Desde un punto de vista clínico, este modelo ofrece una comprensión accesible e integradora del deterioro de la flexibilidad perspectival y de la apertura intersubjetiva. Al recuperar las contribuciones de Ortega y Valenciano, buscamos ampliar tanto los horizontes históricos como teóricos de los enfoques fenomenológicos de la psicosis.

Palabras clave: perspectividad, delirio, esquizofrenia, Ortega y Gasset, Luis Valenciano, intersubjetividad.

Abstract: This article revisits the relevance of José Ortega y Gasset's philosophy—especially his concepts of belief and perspective—for contemporary phenomenological

psychopathology. Through the pioneering work of Spanish psychiatrist Luis Valenciano Gayá, Ortega's ideas were systematically applied to the understanding of psychosis and delusion as early as the 1950s, independent of the dominant Husserlian and Heideggerian frameworks. We argue that Ortega's account of perspectivity—grounded in the subject's situated relation to their circumstance—anticipates key developments in later phenomenological psychiatry. In particular, we explore Valenciano's view of delusion as rigidification of perspective, understood as a response to the collapse of belief structures that previously sustained the subject's sense of reality. Drawing on Ortega's dialectic between belief and idea, we suggest that delusional formations may serve a compensatory role in the face of radical existential uncertainty. Clinically, this model provides accessible and conceptually integrated insights into the loss of perspectival flexibility and intersubjective openness. By recovering Ortega and Valenciano's contributions, we aim to broaden both the historical and theoretical horizons of phenomenological approaches to psychosis.

Keywords: Perspectivity, Delusion, Schizophrenia, Ortega y Gasset, Luis Valenciano, Intersubjectivity.

1. Introduction

The concept of delusion has been a central topic in theoretical discussions of the philosophy of psychiatry, even prior to the work of Karl Jaspers (Berrios, 1991). Among the various schools of thought, phenomenology—together with existentialism and Daseinsanalyse—has provided the main vocabulary and conceptual instruments for understanding this phenomenon. Husserl's philosophy, especially the kind of phenomenology developed in his *Nachlass*, has played a key role insofar as it extends phenomenological thought to encompass the cultural world and the realm of meaning—both essential elements for understanding delusions and psychosis.

Many authors, particularly following Wolfgang Blankenburg, have argued that psychotic disorders are generally underpinned by a disturbance in the constitution of intersubjectivity(Fuchs, 2020a; Stanghellini, 2000; Van Duppen, 2016) delusion is considered the result of faulty information processing or incorrect inference about external reality. In contrast, the article develops a concept of delusion as a disturbance of the enactive and intersubjective constitution of a shared reality. A foundation of this concept is provided by a theory of the objectivity of perception, which is achieved on two levels: 1. The concept of

intersubjectivity has become increasingly influential in philosophy following the discovery of the so-called "new Husserl": an interpretation of Husserl based on the *Husserliana* publications, which made clear that his project extended beyond a solipsistic and idealist conception of consciousness toward a philosophy of culture and human life (Szanto, 2014; Welton, 2003). The notion of the world as a horizon of intentions, central to intersubjectivity, refers to a shared reality of meaning, whose subjective constitution is revealed through transcendental reduction.

In this context, the problem of the constitution of being is no longer a purely idealist dilemma but one that refers to the apperceptive horizon and shared meanings, thereby involving culture and history. To participate in this horizon of intentions—in this intersubjective reality—means to possess, or rather *be*, a particular perspective. However, one's constitutive perspective—that is, the perspectival way in which being is constituted through a subject—is not by itself sufficient to access this intersubjective horizon. What is essential is the recognition of one's own perspective as one among many. To achieve this, the perspective must be sufficiently flexible to be integrated into a multiplicity of perspectives. As Fuchs (2015) notes: "An essential presupposition for these processes is the capacity of shared intentionality or perspective-taking—that is, to transcend one's primary, egocentric perspective and to grasp others' intentions and points of view."

Some authors have argued that delusions may be rooted in a loss of this capacity, namely the inability to exit one's own perspective and adopt another. Drawing on Helmuth Plessner's concept of eccentricity, this phenomenon has been described as a loss of eccentric position (Fuchs, 2020b; Plessner, 1928). This notion derives not only from phenomenology, for example, Alfred Schütz's notion of the reciprocity of perspectives (Schütz, 1971). One of the earliest examples in the philosophy of psychopathology is Paul Matussek's concept of *Wahrnehmungsstarre* (rigidity of perception) (Matussek, 1952), although his concept is mainly confined to the sensory level. Later in that same decade, Klaus Conrad introduced the concept of a loss of translational capacity—i.e., the ability "to achieve an exchange of reference frames or perspectives, that is, to consider the situation—even if only temporarily—with the eyes of the other(s)" (Conrad, 1958). Wolfgang Blankenburg acknowledged that Conrad was one of the first to apply this concept to the psychopathology of schizophrenia, although he criticized the way in which Conrad oversimplified it (Blankenburg & von Baeyer, 1991). Shortly after Conrad's major work, Luis Valenciano extended

this notion by characterizing delusions as a rigidity or inflexibility of perspective (Valenciano Gayá, 1961).

This process of rigidification, however, does not directly equate to the delusion itself but rather to the underlying alteration that leads to it. In Conrad's model, this phenomenon occurs during the so-called *trema* phase of emerging psychosis. Thus, the alteration of intersubjective constitution—often assumed to be the foundational layer of psychosis—is reflected in the perspectival constitution of reality and the subject, progressing toward a moment of personal perspectival rigidity, that is, the abolition of perspectivism.

Breyer undertook one of the few attempts to offer a comprehensive overview of the use of the concept of perspective in psychopathology. He summarized the core elements of perspectivity in psychiatric phenomenology based on the work of Wolfgang Blankenburg, although its genealogy extends much further (Breyer, 2012; Micali & Fuchs, 2014). Breyer highlights the influence of Binswanger and Minkowski, yet we argue that the ideas of Luis Valenciano were no less significant. As Blankenburg himself noted: "The relationship between an onto-analytical and purely phenomenological research into delusion must be clarified, beyond Binswanger's last work on 'Delusion.' The ideas of intersubjective research suggested by the later Husserl are by no means exhausted. Without trying too hard, connections can be established with the thoughts of Valenciano, which are derived from those of Ortega y Gasset" (Blankenburg, 1980a). Nonetheless, the names of Luis Valenciano Gayá and José Ortega y Gasset are almost entirely absent from the phenomenological psychiatric literature.

Another limitation is that the concept of perspective in psychopathology has traditionally been restricted to its epistemological strand, which focuses on how reality is known and disclosed. The ontological strand—the constitution of reality—has largely been neglected in favor of the former.

From this conceptual background—reality as an intentional horizon and the subject as a constitutive perspective—we can ask about the meaning of delusions under the condition of altered perspectivity and how this affects the subject's experience of the world. If we accept a hermeneutic understanding of delusions, we must acknowledge their sense-making character (Ritunnano & Bortolotti, 2021). These authors contribute to the debate on the categorical status of delusions, specifically, whether they should be considered beliefs. Bortolotti's account aligns with other authors who, for decades, have defended the view that

delusions are (false) beliefs (Bayne & Pacherie, 2005; Bortolotti, 2012, 2022; Miyazono, 2015). The mannifold senses of belief have been discussed in detail elsewhere (Ruiz-Pérez, 2022). Her Anti-doxastic accounts, such as those of Eric Schwitzgebel, criticize the belief model for failing to clearly fit delusions into the concept of belief itself (Schwitzgebel, 2002, 2022). Schwitzgebel proposes that delusions are better understood as "in-between" cases (Schwitzgebel, 2001). Others, such as Jasper Feyaerts, call for a phenomenological approach to delusion that moves beyond belief altogether (Feyaerts et al., 2021).

Because these accounts focus directly on delusions rather than the underlying process, they often fail to grasp the broader context, what Blankenburg called the *Grundstörung* (basal disturbance). Delusions do not appear ex nihilo; they emerge within specific cultural, historical, and biographical horizons. Other authors have addressed delusion not only from a typological point of view but also from its existential implications. Thomas Fuchs has pursued this in recent years through his enactive approach, which has been robustly defended, although sometimes criticized (Fuchs, 2020a; Sass, 2020; Walter, 2020). In these texts, key concepts emerge: intersubjectivity, *Leib*, perspective, sense, common sense, and eccentric position—all of which demonstrate the interconnectedness of delusion, perspective, and belief.

We believe that the Ortuegian framework introduced by Valenciano Gayá and referred to by Blankenburg deserves renewed examination for several interrelated reasons. First, there is historiographical interest. If Valenciano's psychiatric approach is genuinely phenomenological, his work may represent one of the earliest instances of a phenomenologically oriented psychopathology grounded not in Husserl or Heidegger but in Ortega y Gasset. This possibility opens up a new line of inquiry into the intellectual genealogy of phenomenological psychiatry. Valenciano's work suggests that Ortega's thought, despite never being systematized for clinical use, could have served as a legitimate phenomenological foundation for understanding psychosis and delusions as early as the 1950s. Second, a comparative philosophical rationale emerges, as recent scholarship has uncovered subtle parallels between Ortega's writings and Husserl's later works (San Martín, 2013). We propose that similar resonances may be identified between Valenciano's use of Ortega and the work of his phenomenological contemporaries in psychiatry. Third, Ortega's conceptual framework appears significantly more accessible than other phenomenological thinkers. His philosophical style allows for more accessible articulation in clinical practice. Unlike Husserl and Heidegger's intricate systems, Ortega's categories, particularly those of *perspective*

and *belief*, are more readily translatable into clinical vocabulary. Furthermore, Ortega offers a particularly clear articulation of the relationship between perspective and belief, which is essential for understanding delusional experiences. In contrast to models that emphasize either intentionality or the breakdown of natural self-evidence, Ortega enables us to trace how the disintegration of belief structures leads to a collapse of perspectivity and underlies such *a loss of self-evidence.*

Building on Valenciano Gayá's early insights, this paper aims to reassess Ortega's relevance to contemporary psychopathology. Finally, we argue that Ortega's framework permits a reinterpretation of phenomena such as the *rigidification of perspective* and invites us to broaden their implications toward a more comprehensive understanding of impairments in *freedom*, conceived as the subject's capacity to inhabit their circumstances and to project and choose among future possibilities. As Valenciano himself writes: "the rigidification of perspective, the impossibility of [translation], the loss of freedom amputates the human being from one of his most radical essences: the choice in time of his possibilities in the circumstance, the choice of himself, which is nothing less than gaining control of the truth" (Valenciano Gayá, 1961).

2. Ortega's overlooked role for philosophy of psychiatry: Ortega as phenomenologist?

Ortega y Gasset's philosophy has often been interpreted in varied and sometimes conflicting ways—ranging from *Lebensphilosophie* and perspectivism to existentialism—depending on the phase or theme under consideration. This multiplicity of labels, along with the conceptual dispersion across his writings and the absence of a single systematic treatise, contributed to his limited integration into the dominant philosophical movements of the twentieth century. While his notion of *ratiovitalism* was defended by his closest followers, particularly the so-called School of Madrid, as a wholly original system, this emphasis on originality may have blinded them to the deeper resonances and convergences between Ortega's thought and broader philosophical currents. More recent comparative scholarship has gradually begun to dismantle this isolationist reading, showing Ortega's proximity to phenomenology, hermeneutics, and even structuralism in certain respects. This re-evaluation opens the door to reconsidering Ortega's

philosophical legitimacy and relevance beyond the boundaries set by his own disciples.

Ortega's relation to phenomenology—particularly to Husserl—constitutes a key point of interest in this article. Although his philosophical position has traditionally been classified under labels such as *Lebensphilosophie*, perspectivism, or existentialism, his exact placement within 20th-century European philosophy remains ambiguous. His closest followers—especially the so-called "School of Madrid"—emphasized the originality of *ratiovitalism* and often portrayed Ortega as being outside phenomenology altogether. This effort to highlight his singularity may have obscured deeper philosophical affinities, especially with Husserl, which recent scholarship has sought to re-examine (Ropero, 2020; San Martín, 2012, 2015).

Ortega's engagement with German philosophy was broad: he studied in Marburg and Berlin, was familiar with neo-Kantianism, read Wilhelm Schapp's early works, and integrated ideas from Dilthey and Nietzsche. He also read Husserl's *Ideen* in 1914 but later claimed to have abandoned phenomenology "at the very moment he received it" (Ortega y Gasset, 1965, p. 273). This distancing was based on two key criticisms: first, that phenomenology retained a Cartesian reduction of reality to consciousness, failing to overcome the limitations of idealism; and second, that it lacked a systematic structure, which Ortega deemed essential for any philosophical project. He articulated these critiques both in his "Preface for Germans" and—according to some scholars—during a visit to Husserl and Fink in 1934 (Ortega y Gasset, 1965, pp. 13–60; San Martín, 2022). Later, Ortega added that phenomenology was unable to deal with history, a limitation he thought to have overcome through his notion of *historical reason*[1].

However, many of these criticisms reflect partial interpretations or misunderstandings. Ortega confused eidetic and transcendental reduction, and dismissed key developments in Husserl's later work—particularly his turn toward culture and history in the Freiburg years and *Die Krisis*, a text that Ortega wrongly attributed to Fink (Ortega y Gasset, 1964, p. 547). As San Martín (2012) and others have shown, Husserl had already begun elaborating on the philosophy of history and *Lebenswelt* in the 1920s. Thus, Ortega's rejection of phenomenology

[1] In a footnote he says "for me, this leap from the phenomenological doctrine has been extremely satisfactory because it consists, no less, in resorting to… 'historical reason'" (Ortega y Gasset, 1964, p. 547), that is to say, to his own philosophy.

may have functioned more as a rhetorical gesture than as a definitive philosophical break. As Silver (1978) argues, Ortega's claim to have "abandoned" phenomenology likely meant that he rejected a specific form of it, rather than the entire phenomenological approach.

It is important to consider what influences Ortega's relationship with phenomenology may have had on his relevance to psychopathology. We argue that reclaiming Ortega for the philosophy of psychiatry requires understanding him—though not exclusively yet primarily—as a phenomenological thinker. This point warrants further clarification. Owing to his historical exclusion from both phenomenology and existentialism, Ortega has long been regarded as peripheral to the two main philosophical traditions that have shaped the philosophy of psychiatry. Consequently, for many scholars in the field, Ortega has not appeared as a philosopher worth engaging with directly. On the contrary, incorporating Ortega into the discussion would have required the adoption of a fundamentally different philosophical point of departure —one that lies outside the dominant frameworks.

3. Tracing Ortega y Gasset's Path into the Philosophy of Psychiatry

Ortega's contribution to the philosophy of psychiatry was first introduced by Luis Valenciano Gayá in 1932, but his approach did not gain international attention until his theory of schizophrenia—what he called the 'paranoid syndrome'—and of delusion, presented at a 1957 conference in Zürich and later expanded in a 1960 publication (Valenciano Gayá, 1958; Zutt & Kulenkampff, 1958). In Spain, Luis Martín-Santos and Manuel Cabaleiro Goás were the first to underscore the significance of Valenciano's ideas, followed by Carlos Castilla del Pino (Cabaleiro Goás, 1959, 1966; Castilla del Pino, 1988). Internationally, his theory received the most attention from Paul Matussek and, especially, Wolfgang Blankenburg, who engaged more directly with his conceptual proposals (Bally et al., 1963; Blankenburg, 1971, 1980b).

No further developments have been made. It would be helpful to explore whether Ortega's inherited conception exposed in the first section may have influenced his reception and development in the philosophy of psychiatry. The psychiatrist Manuel Cabaleiro Goás saw very early the correspondences between

phenomenology of schizophrenia and Ortega's anthropology in its applied form in Valenciano's works: "We have seen how the aforementioned Spanish psychiatrist [Valenciano] interprets paranoid delusion through Orteguian concepts, *without moving away from those characteristics that phenomenological psychopathology pointed out to this type of delusion"* (Cabaleiro Goás, 1966, p. 204). But neither Cabaleiro Goás nor Valenciano formulated directly that at this point they —as well as Ortega— were *doing* phenomenology, still believing they were starting from an original standpoint[2].

Valenciano—primarily—and Cabaleiro Goás—secondarily—were not in a position to propose that Ortega could be understood as a phenomenologist due to a twofold limitation. The first is Ortega's self-exclusion, as discussed previously. Second, Valenciano's theory of delusion fundamentally rests on the concept of belief, and only secondarily on that of perspective. While the latter can already be found relatively early in Husserl's work, especially in its epistemological dimension, the notion of belief (*Glaube, doxa*) remains largely unexplored within Husserl's phenomenology (Belussi, 1990; NI, 1999; Rang, 1973; San Martín, 2022). Not even Blankenburg, despite his pioneering insights into the loss of natural self-evidence, was able to connect this disturbance explicitly with Husserl's concept of *doxa*[3]—simply because the depth of *doxa* in Husserl's thought was not yet known at the time. Although Blankenburg clearly recognized the relevance of *Lebenswelt* in the constitution of experience and its disturbance in schizophrenia, he did not discuss this in a detailed reading of Husserl's analyses of *doxa*.

Due to this historical gap in the reception of Husserl's work, combined with Ortega's own explicit distancing from phenomenology, authors like Valenciano

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[2] Luis Valenciano refers to his work as phenomenological analysis in only one passage: "[Castilla del Pino] considers my thesis extraordinarily rich in possibilities, especially because the phenomenological analyses do not lead me away from the concrete realities that are social structures" (Valenciano Gayá, 1978, p. 61). In that passage, we see that, despite everything, Valenciano still holds an idealist conception of phenomenology.

[3] "The term 'glorification', which is rarely used today, was apparently familiar to the patient through the Bible translation. The Greek word 'δοξάζω' (to glorify), which appears frequently in the original text, derives from 'δόξα' (doxa), a term that spans a wide spectrum of meanings — from deceptive appearance, illusion, mere opinion, and expectation, to revelation, honor, fame, and glory. This range of antithetical meanings is certainly not a random linguistic peculiarity; rather, it points to the dual nature of appearance itself — as something that simultaneously reveals and conceals. It is precisely for this reason that this seemingly marginal remark deserves attention." (Blankenburg, 1965, p. 34)

and Cabaleiro interpreted Ortega's reflections on belief and perspective as original philosophical resources for psychiatry.

We argue that, in light of current advances in both Husserlian and Orteguian scholarship, Valenciano's proposal should be regarded as a thorough phenomenological contribution and that his application of the concepts of belief and perspective ought to be recognized as such within the framework of phenomenological psychopathology. Having clarified the historical and philosophical background that we consider essential for understanding the theoretical and historical crossroads at stake, we will now briefly present both concepts. This will allow us, first, to appreciate the remarkable foresight in Valenciano's application of Ortega's concepts to the study of psychosis and delusions, and second, to assess the potential horizons this perspective opens up for contemporary clinical practice.

Two Orteguian concepts are central to Valenciano's theory of the paranoid syndrome: perspective and belief, which are deeply interconnected. In this study, we focused primarily on the concept of perspective. Valenciano's reflections on belief—and their later resonance in Blankenburg's work—have been addressed in detail elsewhere (Ruiz-Pérez, 2024a). First, what follows is a brief account of how perspective and belief are intrinsically linked in Valenciano's framework. We will then outline his understanding of psychosis as grounded in a disruption of the structure of belief, and show how this leads to his central claim that delusions are ultimately rooted in a rigidification of perspective.

4. Ortega's phenomenology of perspective

Ortega begins his conceptualization of perspective in his *Meditations on Quixote*. He intends to stress individuality–the individual being embedded in life. It consists of the particular individuality of the objects and the subjects. Ortega's purpose is to overcome idealism and materialism in the construction of his ontology. "Only parts do exist in fact; the whole is an abstraction of the parts and it depends on them" (Ortega y Gasset, 1961, p. 44). It is important to remark on Ortega's attempts to avoid falling into materialism, sensation, and idealism, in particular Kant's constructivism. For him, reality is not a dichotomy between a subject as an idealist ego and external material things that can be perceived. Reality is only determined from the perspective of the correlate of

a positioned subject. Ortega reveals this overcoming in a well-known quote: "When shall we open our minds to the conviction that the ultimate reality of the world is neither matter nor spirit, is no definite thing, but a perspective" (Ortega y Gasset, 1961, pp. 44–45).

With this statement, Ortega seeks to open a path beyond both realism and idealism—phenomenology included—by introducing the ontological foundation of his philosophy, perspective as the subjective correlate through which reality is constituted. Therefore, at this point, Ortega's concept of perspective carries genuine metaphysical weight. That is, it is not merely an epistemological consideration. For Ortega, reality is perspective. Perspective does not simply refer to the fact that reality is perceived or known from a particular vantage point determined by an observer. Nor does this merely indicate that our access to the world is conditioned by a subjective standpoint. Rather, perspective itself is constitutive of reality. We cannot speak of being apart from perspective, since any statement about reality necessarily involves perspective. This strong ontological claim is most explicitly defended in *Meditations on Quixote*. However, in Ortega's later writings—particularly in *The Modern Theme*, and specifically in the chapter *Doctrine of the Point of View*— his perspectivism appears to shift toward a more gnoseological interpretation (see Milagro Pinto, 2015, pp. 56–59).

For Ortega y Gasset, reality does not present itself as a neutral or an unordered collection of objects. Rather, it is always already structured through a hierarchy of appearances—a configuration of importances (*Bedeutungen*) in which certain elements emerge in the foreground, while others remain latent in the background. This ontological organization implies that being is always a being-in-a-perspective. The subject is not a passive spectator, but a constitutive center from which reality acquires meaning. As Ortega famously asserts, "the sound is not distant; I make it distant" (Ortega y Gasset, 1961, p. 65). Distance, depth, and spatial relations are thus not purely objective properties but accomplishments of the subject's situatedness. From one perspective, the subject actively organizes the world into a structure of relevance, bringing some aspects to presence while relegating others to absence.

Perspective inherently entails an order: a dynamic play between surfaces and depths, presence, and latency. The visible always implies the invisible. Ortega illustrates this with his well-known image of the forest: "The trees do not allow the forest to be seen… and it is due to this fact that the forest exists" (Ortega y

Gasset, 1961, p. 65). The visible trees conceal the rest, and it is only by intuiting this hidden structure that totality—the forest—emerges as meaningful.

"Perspective is one of the constitutive components of reality. Far from being a distortion, it is the very principle by which reality is organized" (Ortega y Gasset, 1966, p. 199). Only the claim to an absolute, singular perspective—or even to a hypothetical 'perspectiveless view,' a total kaleidoscopic sum of all possible perspectives—would constitute a distortion. This is what Ortega, drawing on Nietzsche, refers to as the view from nowhere (Ortega y Gasset, 1966, p. 237). Instead, each generation and individual filters reality through their own grid of interpretation. This interpretation does not focus on what perspective is disclosed but on what it leaves in the background. It is through the interplay between what is manifested and what remains in latency that perspective enables a fuller experience of reality. That which does not appear directly remains co-present[4] with what does, and is shaped by what Ortega calls a 'vital sensibility' or system of beliefs— a framework through which reality acquires unity, completeness, and thus being.

This is precisely where the continuity between the concepts of perspective and belief becomes evident in Ortega's thought. The fact that reality is perspectival underlies the essential function of a belief system. Perspective is not merely a structural feature of experience; it is shaped and sustained by a system of underlying beliefs that orient the subject's relation to reality. In this sense, belief is not something superadded to perception but rather the very condition that configures how things appear and acquire meaning within a perspective. A parallel can be drawn with Husserl's notion of *Weltglaube*—the implicit, pre-reflective trust in the existence and coherence of the world that underlies our everyday experience (Rang, 1973, pp. 50–65). As in Ortega, this background layer of belief is not merely epistemological, but also existential and ontological: it enables the constitution of a stable and coherent world. Both thinkers thus point to a phenomenological understanding of perspective as always already embedded within a structure of belief—a structure that not only orients experience, but also grants reality its unity and ontological status.

We will now examine how Valenciano applies the concept of perspective to his understanding of psychosis and delusion, and how it becomes inseparable

[4] "Co-presence" should be understood as the concept homologous to "apperception" in Husserl.

from the structure of belief that underpins both the constitution of experience and its pathological disruption

5. Valenciano's Account of Altered Perspectivity in Psychosis

5.1. Perspectivity and the Tension Between Authenticity and Openness

Ortega continues his *Meditations* by stating: "A perspective is perfected through the multiplication of its viewpoints and the precision with which we respond to each of its planes" (Ortega y Gasset, 1961, p. 45). As we mentioned earlier, it is not perspectivism that distorts reality, but rather its opposite: the absolutization of a single point of view, or what Nietzsche—and Ortega after him—called the "view from nowhere." True perspective requires recognizing itself as one among many. The latent face of reality, then, is not something hidden per se but something posited by us within our own perspective. This positing generally relies on two factors: first, our own past experience of having perceived reality from other positions; and second, our engagement with the perspectives of others—both contemporary and historical (culture, tradition, inherited worldviews, etc.). The concealment of latent meaning is thus a composite effect of both personal and shared experiences crystallized over time into what Ortega calls the system of belief.

However, this dynamic only functions properly under one essential condition: that we recognize our own perspective as just one among many, and that we remain open to shifting our point of view. Only then can we approach an objective experience of the world—an objectivity grounded not in the negation of perspective but in its dialogical expansion. This is precisely where Luis Valenciano's proposal for a psychopathology of delusion becomes relevant: "A perspective, in order to be true to its essence"—that is, to be authentic—"must know that it is only one among many existing and possible perspectives" (Valenciano Gayá, 1978, p. 41). We transcend our standpoint by co-presenting or apperceiving unities—just as we physically move around an object in order to grasp how it appears from all sides. Not to overcome perspectivism—since, as we have argued, perspective is constitutive of reality—but to assume it consciously and actively as such in our experience of the world.

But as Wolfgang Blankenburg and Valenciano himself caution, this transcendental capacity for perspective-taking—the ability to virtually "see" from other points of view—also requires limits in order for the subject to remain anchored in their own perspective and identity (Blankenburg & von Baeyer, 1991). Thus, a belief system should not exhaust the entire spectrum that sustains its existence. Inevitably, gaps emerge where failed or collapsing beliefs once stood, and these voids are filled with what Ortega calls "ideas."

At this point, the dialectic between belief and idea becomes essential. Ideas are intellectual constructions developed by the subject who, confronted with the breakdown of belief, begin to think to reconstitute a world that has become hollow. These ideas serve an orthopedic function—they act as supports or substitutes that attempt to restore coherence to a fractured experiential field (Ortega y Gasset, 1964, p. 398). They are subjective, private creations, and through them the subject articulates their personal project. This is where Ortega's concept of authenticity is central. A healthy, non-pathological perspective must be understood as a dynamic tension between two poles: the possibility of taking other perspectives and the capacity to maintain one's own situated point of view. One must not allow either their own perspective—or ideas alone—to monopolize the horizon of experience.

Rigidly clinging to one's own perspective without the ability to transcend it leads to exclusion from the intersubjective world. Conversely, fully relinquishing one's perspective entails the dissolution of self-agency, and the integrity and unity of the self. For Ortega, authenticity is not merely a psychological trait but a moral imperative—and only within this tension between belief and personal project can it be fully realized.

Here, Blankenburg's still-unanswered question re-emerges: how does the mentally healthy individual navigate the transition—or balance—between a belief system, largely inherited and passively assumed, that grounds the experience of reality, and a personal project that is self-constructed and unique? How can one relativize their own perspective without losing themselves? (Blankenburg & von Baeyer, 1991). This is precisely the anthropological question that emerges from the study of delusion, where this equilibrium collapses—as we shall now explore.

5.2. Pathological Rigidity in Perspective-Taking as an answer to belief-crisis: to save the phenomena

Luis Valenciano's fundamental proposal regarding psychosis is that the underlying pathological process consists of a collapse or breakdown of belief: that is, the belief system that sustains the experience of both the world and the self begins to crack (Ruiz-Pérez, 2024a). Once this collapse occurs, the subject falls into radical doubt, into complete uncertainty. What had previously been taken for granted—as the background or horizon of experience, the correlative of belief— has now become problematic. Up to that point, it has been silently accepted and experienced as self-evident. However, the subject now finds themselves in a state of total problematicity: reality, which is constitutionally skewed and perspectival, can no longer be trusted. It loses its coherence, unity, and reliability.

Faced with this crisis, the subject attempted to restore the stability. As Ortega suggests, when a belief fails, one attempts to exit doubt through an idea—an idea that bears the distinctive characteristics Ortega attributes to it (Expósito Ropero, 2020, p. 142; Ruiz-Pérez, 2024b, p. 62). The subject clings to such an idea, which is then transformed into a belief-like certainty, a newly 'believed' idea turned absolute. This is the basis of the delusion, according to Valenciano. And it is precisely at this point that the alteration of perspectivity comes into play:

> For me, the unshakable conviction of the delusional patient, grounded in the new belief, is a problem of perspective rigidification. (…) Reality—the field of importances—only exists as such in relation to a self. Yet a mentally healthy person never loses sight of the fact that every circumstance is embedded in a broader one. What is clumsy or pathological is to grasp only a few circumstances, when in fact we are surrounded by the whole. (…) Falsity consists in not being fully faithful to perspectivism, in forgetting the multiple, perspectival nature of truth, in failing to recognize the need to integrate one's own perspective with those of others—that is, with other people—and in absolutizing a single point of view (Valenciano Gayá, 1978, pp. 41–42).

In the introduction, we referred to authors who discussed the alteration of perspective in delusional experience. Valenciano stresses that what he calls 'rigidity of perspective' is something similar to what Conrad defined as 'loss of *Überstieg*': the incapacity of changing the coordinate system or point of view. Conrad

referred to it as the impossibility of a 'copernican revolution', as Blankenburg years later also remarks in his studies on perspectivism (Blankenburg, 2007, p. 56). What is important to highlight at this point is that we find in Valenciano Gaya an early understanding of this concept of rigidity of perspective in a delusional experience outside the existentialist philosophical context. We have already pointed out how Blankenburg concluded in one of his texts that it is necessary to go beyond the late Husserl, whose possibilities in psychopathology were "by no means exhausted", and he referred to Ortega as a plausible way (Blankenburg, 1980b, p. 106).

This remark should be understood within the framework of the limitations in the understanding of Husserl that we previously noted, such that the Orteguian path appeared, from a certain point onward, as a seemingly divergent possibility from Husserl's proposal.

This path is the only one left in order to meet life's hermeneutic demand: to save[5] the phenomena. To recover the meaning of the circumstance and escape the "sea of doubt," to reach some form of certainty—something that cannot be achieved without paying a high price.

> Now, their perspective — their apprehension of truth — must become absolute, exclusive, and admit no concessions to other possible perspectives. Under normal conditions, such perspectives are given to us in synthetic, and often systematic, bundles through our belief system. The subject now needs to find a footing — and does so — in a new certainty, which becomes a belief. From this basis, life begins to function again, but within a new totality of perspective that is narrow and exclusivist. And such a "totality," as Jaspers puts it, "is not granted to any man at a low price." In my view, this is the very foundation of the incorrigibility of delusions and of their apodictic certainty (Valenciano Gayá, 1978, p. 42).

A particularly significant aspect of Valenciano's approach is the connection between freedom and perspective. As Valenciano Gaya stresses, freedom consists in the fact that the subject dispose of a range of possibilities, which my circumstance offers me within my perspective: "the rigidification of perspective,

[5] "*Benefac loco illi quo natus es*, as we read in the Bible. And in the Platonic school the task of all culture is given as 'to save the appearances', the phenomena; that is to say, to look for the meaning of what surrounds us" (Ortega y Gasset, 1961, p. 46).

the impossibility of transition, the loss of freedom amputates the human being from one of his most radical essences: the choice in time of his possibilities in the circumstance, the choice of himself" (Valenciano Gayá, 1978, p. 43). The condition for an authentic and free unfolding of the self lies precisely in the presence of possibilities—possibilities that emerge only through fidelity to perspectivism: that is, through the capacity to step outside one's own particular point of view, to decenter oneself. Just as an image loses its sense of hierarchy when the background is rendered with the same sharpness as the foreground, as discussed earlier, possibilities vanish when it no longer contrasts with alternatives. Everything collapses into a single plane: no depth, no horizon. To choose among the possibilities offered by our circumstances, one must be able to relativize one's perspective.

Finally, these possibilities within one's circumstances are also a reflection of our temporal openness to the future. The possibilities are always related to future events. "In the temporal dimension, what is exclusive to man is his ability to live towards and from the future, to open himself up to it; only the future rejects us towards the past and installs us in the present" (Valenciano Gayá, 1978, p. 43). It is our openness to the future that becomes problematic, and it is precisely the function of the belief system to alleviate that burden. This is why we need some certainty about it:

> For me to be calm now with respect to the minute that is to come, I need to be sure, for example, that the earth that supports me now will not fail me later. This earth of that my feet now tread on is a thing that is there, but the earth later, the earth of the immediate future is not there, it is not a thing, but I have now to invent it, to imagine it, to construct it for myself in an intellectual scheme, in short, in a belief about it (Ortega y Gasset, 1964, p. 85).

Here we find the necessary connection between our openness to the future and our beliefs. Only inasmuch we can anticipate what our circumstance and its possibilities are about to mean for me I can exercise my freedom. By choosing within my possibilities, I become myself authentically, developing the project I am, and that is always a creative task: "The imperative of authenticity is an imperative of invention (Ortega y Gasset, 1965, p. 29).

Conclusion

This article explores the relevance of Ortega y Gasset's philosophical framework, as interpreted and applied by Luis Valenciano, for phenomenological psychopathology. By recovering Ortega's concepts of belief and perspective and examining their integration into Valenciano's account of delusion and psychosis, we have highlighted a theoretical approach that anticipates later developments in phenomenological psychiatry and offers conceptual tools for clinical understanding.

Ortega's concept of perspective, as we have argued, is not merely epistemological but ontological. Being is always perspectival; reality is constituted through the subject's situated relation to the world, structured by a dynamic hierarchy of importances. This structure is inseparable from the subject's system of beliefs, which provide coherence to experience. Convergence of perspective and belief allows reality to appear stable and unitary.

Valenciano's originality lies in his early systematic application of Ortega's ideas to psychiatry. Already in the 1950s, he conceptualized psychosis as a breakdown in the system of beliefs that underpins the coherence of the world. In response, the subject may substitute their beliefs with rigid ideas, leading to a loss of perspectival flexibility and intersubjective openness. Delusions, in this view, arise from absolutizing one's own position and failing to acknowledge the perspectival nature of experience.

Valenciano offers a phenomenological model grounded in a coherent philosophical system. He was able to do so because his reading of Ortega was remarkably ahead of its time—so much so that it enabled developments which only became available to phenomenology after the posthumous publication of Husserl's works. Ortega's philosophy provided Valenciano with a highly systematic foundation for his model, as seen in the interconnection between perspective and belief. Internal coherence enables a structured and integrated approach to psychopathology. Particularly important is the ethical implication of Ortega's perspectivism: the link between freedom and the ability to decenter from one's viewpoint.

Clinically, this framework invites attention not only to the content of delusions but also to the structural transformation of the patient's experiential world.

Delusions reshape the structure of experience—flattening depth, eliminating possibilities, and severing intersubjective connection. Clinical work should aim to restore perspectival flexibility and rebuild trust in a shared world, supporting patients' capacity to open themselves to alternative perspectives. Furthermore, Ortega's dialectic between belief and idea helps clinicians understand how delusional systems temporarily function adaptively. Ideas fill the gaps left by failed beliefs. Recognizing this dynamic can guide therapeutic strategies that gently soften rigidity and support the development of new shared beliefs.

Although this study does not claim that Ortega and Valenciano's model is superior to other frameworks, we argue that its originality and coherence warrant greater attention. Its accessibility and pragmatism, in contrast to more demanding transcendental approaches, make it especially suitable for clinicians seeking theoretical grounding. As Cabaleiro Goás noted in 1966[6], Ortega's clarity can lead to conclusions comparable to, or even exceeding, those of more complex systems.

Recovering Ortega's contributions, and especially their application in Valenciano's psychiatric work, enriches the historical landscape of phenomenological psychopathology and opens promising directions for further exploration. Valenciano and Ortega deserve recognition not merely as parallels, but as important contributors to the development of a phenomenological paradigm in psychiatry.

[6] "Advantage over Daseinsanalyse and other similar orientations (...) of being simpler and clearer for the psychiatrist and with which one reaches similar and sometimes even superior conclusions than those reached with those other directions" (Cabaleiro Goás, 1966, p. 194)

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