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THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

# JULIÁN MARÍAS AS A LITERARY CRITIC

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SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

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# CHAPTER I

## Introduction

Julián Marías was born in Valladolid in 1914. He refers to himself as a Madrileño and has lived in Madrid most of his life. He studied for several years with a science and math career in mind before taking up philosophy as his life's vocation. Perhaps because he discovered his calling by a circuitous path, he lays great emphasis on the importance of choosing a career that leads to genuine personal expression.

In 1931 Marías went to the University of Madrid to study, and there he met Ortega the following year. He became a student and personal friend of Ortega until the latter's death in 1955. Marías received his Licentiate in philosophy in 1936. In 1948 he cooperated with Ortega in the founding of the Instituto de Humanidades in Madrid. His book, Miguel de Unamuno, won the Fastenrath prize of the Royal Spanish Academy, and since 1953, he has been a member of the International Institute of Philosophy.

On several occasions since 1951, Julián Marías has sojourned in the United States for extended periods, teaching and lecturing in various universities and colleges. He stresses the importance

of his visits in the United States on his life and writing and regrets that many European thinkers have a distorted view of this country. Of his own experience here, he writes: "Desde 1951, toda mi obra contiene un ingrediente más: los Estados Unidos. Quisiera que se me leyera teniéndolo presente."[1]

Julián Marías has been actively engaged in the pursuit of philosophy for most of his adult life. His total involvement with the philosophical dialectic must be taken into account in his writing as a literary critic.

It is, therefore, not possible to consider his philosophy separately, since the way Marías approaches literature, especially the novel, is greatly influenced by his philosophical stance. This does not mean, however, that he is a philosophical critic, at least not in the sense of the philosopher or student of philosophy who applies a metaphysical system as a touchstone to literature. This idea can perhaps best be explained by an analogy from one of Julián Marías' essays entitled "El sentido de la filosofía cristiana."[2] He distinguishes between what some call Christian philosophy and philosophy made by Christians. He says: "...únicamente podemos llamar filosofía cristiana a la <u>filosofía de los cristianos en cuanto tales</u>, es decir, la que está determinada por la situación cristiana de que el filósofo parte."[3] He thus insists that religion

[1] <u>Obras</u>, VII (Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1966), p. 438.

[2] <u>Obras</u>, II (1958), pp. 565-68.

[3] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 565.

is one thing and philosophy another.

To paraphrase the idea of Julián Marías' essay, this means that a man who makes philosophy in the occidental world since the time of Christ must take the crucial significance of his life and death into account as a starting point; otherwise, he is philosophizing in a vacuum. Thus, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, and the Ascension are spiritual and historical events that condition man's total outlook.

If one were to attempt an explanation of the hypothetical philosophy just suggested, he would of necessity have the events centering around the figure of Christ in mind as part of his cultural background, as would his audience. Generally speaking, it would be unnecessary to make a systematic exposition of these background events, since they are relatively familiar to everyone.

Turning to the exposition of Julián Marías' literary criticism, the analogy is appropriate as far as it goes, that is, the events of the life and death of Christ condition the thought of the Western philosopher in much the same way Marías' philosophical posture conditions the way he treats literature. Like all analogies, however, this one reaches the breaking point. Whereas most people are familiar enough with the meaning of Christ's life to dispense with a survey of it each time they consider a philosopher's doctrine, it is unlikely that many are familiar with the philosophy of vital reason as expounded by Julián Marías.

Despite the fact that Julián Marías is primarily a philosopher

his range as a literary critic is extensive. Moreover, many of his ideas as a literary theorist appear throughout the whole body of his writings, often in articles and essays not dealing with a literary topic. These comments must be taken out of their original context and combined with the ideas contained in the essays on literature to formulate a more complete and unified critical statement.

Marías' observations on the role of the critic are of value not only for the established or potential critic, but for the academician, the professor, and the writer as well. He relates the critical role to intellectual life in its particular historical circumstances. Much that he says about the confusion existing in the world of intellect today, if heeded, would surely help to clarify and elimate many of the worst abuses.

The immediate value of Julián Marías' commentary relates to two important areas of the critic's life: 1) he offers a thoughtful, original way of viewing literature, and 2) he challenges the critic to examine himself personally and professionally in his life's work.

More importantly, the reading of Julián Marías' essays is in itself a rewarding intellectual experience. In his book, An Experiment in Criticism, C.S. Lewis makes a telling remark about critics that applies well to Marías. Lewis says: "The truth is not that we need the critics in order to enjoy the authors, but that we need the authors to enjoy the critics."[4]

[4](Cambridge University Press, 1961), p. 123.

## CHAPTER II

### The Thinker

Julián Marías has written more than eight large volumes of essays and articles on an incredible variety of topics ranging from philosophy and literature to women's fashions and hippies. His grasp of the problems of human life in the social, intellectual, and spiritual realms is enormous and is reflected in the prolific outpouring of his writing. According to Pedro Laín Entralgo, in the high plane of the contemporary Spanish essay, Julián Marías is a worthy successor to writers like Maetzu, Ors, Ortega, Unamuno, Pérez de Ayala, and Marañón.[1]

Among the qualities that make Marías' essays so vital for our time are his penetrating experience of history and tradition combined with an urgent need to cope with today's problems. His style and thinking are contemporary, but at the same time, alive and vibrant with the past.

The concept of merging past and present, and by extension,

[1]Pedro Laín Entralgo, "Las 'Obras' de Julián Marías," Insula, XIV (noviembre, 1959), 3.

the future that confronts a man in his historical situation, is one of the cornerstones upon which Julián Marías bases his own philosophical approach. In Introducción a la filosofía he writes: "...la apelación a la historia de la filosofía es tan legítima, que es imprescindible, y sólo con ella alcanza plenitud el intento de acercarse a la filosofía en su viva y palpitante realidad."[2]

This appeal to historical knowledge can, furthermore, be applied to any field of intellectual endeavor, be it philosophy, sociology, or literature. It gives what Marías often refers to as a man's instalación in time, and this comprises past, present, and future in a total historical reality. Speaking of the importance of knowing a man's historical circumstances in order to understand him, Marías writes: "No entendemos lo que quiere decir lo que un hombre dice, mientras no sabemos en qué fecha lo dice y de qué fecha es ese hombre."[3]

To emphasize and explain the radical significance of the instalación, Julián Marías devotes a whole section of the Introducción a la filosofía to devolop a plan or scheme of our own epoch. We are forced to do this if we wish to understand ourselves and attain a degree of certainty about our situation. There are things in force, vigencias, that must be examined systematically in view of their vital or historical function. It should be noted that this need for radical certainty in the intellectual realm

[2]Obras, II, p. 7.

[3]Obras, VI (1960), p. 10.

has for Julián Marías the pressing urgency usually associated with a biological need. We cannot live an authentic life without it.

Marías brings to light the contemporary man, living in a special historical situation from which he must start if he intends to know where to turn to or what to hold by (saber a qué atenerse). Because he is immersed in the situation, he faces the danger of losing himself and a comprehensive view of his situation, by becoming enmeshed in a multiplicity of small details, unless he establishes an orderly historical perspective. That is why he must view with special care the vigencias and the effective idea of truth in his epoch. Perhaps a brief summary of Julián Marías' thought as a continuation of the philosophy of Ortega will help to make this clearer.

Basically, Julián Marías lives the thought of Ortega and makes a systematic exposition of this experience, that is, of the philosophy of vital reason. He unveils his method in a short introductory note to the Introducción a la filosofía:

> En 1914 escribía Ortega en la Meditación del Quijote: "Yo sólo ofrezco modi res considerandi, posibles maneras de mirar las cosas. Invito al lector a que experimente si, en efecto, proporcionan visiones fecundas; él, pues, en virtud de su íntima y leal experiencia, probará su verdad o su error."
> El lector de este libro tiene delante lo que he logrado ver mirando las cosas de esa manera nueva.[4]

In his exposition of the essential points of vital reason,

[4] 9a ed. (Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1967).

Marías, following the usage of Ortega, speaks of it as historical reason, and still a third term, living reason (razón viviente). An understanding of the meaning and use of these terms in the thought of Julián Marías is essential to comprehend the significance of much of his literary theory, especially that concerning the novel.

In the first place, the philosophy of vital reason proposes a concrete method of dealing with reality; it is neither an abstraction nor a fragmentation of reason as were, for example, the traditional concepts of reason carrying the epithets dialectical and mathematical. Ortega and Julián Marías apply the adjectives vital and historical expressly because the word reason itself is so colored by these fragmenting concepts of the past.

Vital reason, furthermore, totally rejects the irrational approach to reality of such thinkers as Kierkegaard and Unamuno. Any concrete human reality becomes intelligible only when considered in perspective from human life, and only when life itself functions as reason can a man understand something human.

Since a man can respond to reality, whether internal or external, only from his particular historical perspective, vital reason is necessarily historical. In order to live authentically and deal with problems on a concrete human level, man is forced to come to terms with both his present and past situations. The present is what it is precisely because of what preceded it, that

is, it is a historical situation in the strictest sense. More importantly, man's personality is historical, because his life is largely determined by his situation, and, therefore, he must try to resolve his problems with the historical possibilities open to him. This precludes any pure, pristine approach to reality, for as Julián Marías states: "...la situación no puede ser adánica....El adanismo sólo es verdadero para Adán; para nosotros significa una violenta deformación de la realidad, por sustracción--o abstracción si se quiere--de escenciales ingredientes suyos."[5]

Turning aside from the strictly philosophical, one can safely infer that Julián Marías is keenly aware of a continuity in intellectual life. He calls this continuity filiación intelectual,[6] and the idea of the son, or sonship (fr. L. filius), is intended in the fullest etymological meaning. Differing from biological filiation, however, in intellectual life the son must recognize the father, and not vice versa. Marías asserts that this is crucially important for thought, art, and life. He writes:

> Cuando se olvida[ the filial recognition of the intellectual] empiezan a intercalarse espejos inadvertidos en la convivencia y--lo que es más grave--en la propia función del pensamiento, la literatura, o el arte: primero el del narciso, luego los espejismos, cosa propia del desierto; y el caso es que la vida intelectual se hace, quiérse o no, en comunidad.[7]

[5] Obras, II, p. 3.

[6] Obras, IV, p. 553.

[7] Ibid., p. 552.

Thus, whether one is philosophizing or writing literature or criticism, he is compelled to look to the past in order to see the present, and, therefore, to make the future, at least to make it something other than chaos and anarchy. From history comes innovation, and, to paraphrase something Julián Marías states frequently in the course of his writing: history avenges itself on all who attempt to avoid it.

It must be noted, however, that Marías does not contend that the son ought to agree with his intellectual father. On the contrary, it is precisely from the tension and dissension of ideas that new ideas and forms are created. But if theoretical agreement is not desirable among thinkers, harmony of purpose is. According to Marías, lack of harmony above all impedes intellectual progress. He says: "Con los padres no hay que estar de acuerdo, no se está nunca de acuerdo. Lo que debe tener con ellos es concordia, y ésta sólo nace de la cordialidad."[8]

Paradoxically, then, through harmony with other thinkers and disagreement with their ideas, a man prepares himself to deal with the problems of his age. He confronts them, moreover, not necessarily to resolve them, because they are almost never resolved, but, in the thinking of Julián Marías, because he must live. Coping with the intellectual problems of his time is his vital necessity. If he is a genius and applies his whole effort to the task, he will produce a new way of considering reality.

[8] Al márgen de estos clásicos (Madrid: Afrodisio Agudo, S.A., 1967), p. 33.

Julián Marías is such a thinker. Not only in philosophy does he provide us with a new outlook, but in judging literature from the perspective of vital reason, he allows the reader to modify his own perspective.

## CHAPTER III

### The Literary Critic

Besides ranking among the elite of European philosophers, Julián Marías is an accomplished literary critic. The scope of his criticism is broad. It covers most of the known genres, many works and writers both inside and outside Spain, takes in several languages, and includes major and minor opera.

He is also an intensive critic; he is not solely Anatole France's great mind having adventures among masterpieces, the impressionist, although he is that at times. More often, his experience of literature is guided by a certain knowledge and principles that have to do with its nature, function, and purpose. Julián Marías' experience of literature, both theoretical and practical, is subtly influenced by the philosophy of vital reason. This is especially true regarding the novel, both as an artistic expression and as an instrument for metaphysical investigation.

Before going further, however, one should consider briefly what is meant by a certain knowledge and principles. In the first place, Julián Marías is no Horatian rule giver. His principles

of literary criticism are based on observations and insights he has acquired from a deep and broad reading experience. True to the spirit of historical reason, Marías insists on appraising each work as an expression of its own historical situation.

What this method of criticism comes to, ultimately, is a subtle interplay of systematic analysis and impressionistic insight. One might conclude, not without justification, that Marías' involvement with literature springs notably from two sources. First, he loves literature and simply likes to talk and write about it. This is most apparent when he speaks of lyric poetry and literary style. His comments are concise, intuitive, and provide a personal testimony of their effective communication.

The second motive for his interest in literature is related to his philosophical role of confronting problems. Especially when expounding on the novel, Marías emphasizes the necessity of understanding it, not only as an artistic form, but as a valid form for interpreting the reality of one's life. Through a close examination of a work of fiction, one endeavors to discover the vital philosophical possibilities for living offered by the work, and, just as importantly, to determine as precisely as possible its merits and shortcomings as a work of art and as a historical statement.

The act of reading fiction becomes a vital activity when the reader makes an effort based on sound principles to uncover the interpretation of reality offered by the writer. Julián Marías,

therefore, studies the narration in a spirit of total commitment to the task. What he maintains about the problem of the generations applies equally well to his ideas concerning the critical reading of novels, or for that matter, to any serious intellectual endeavor. He says: "Hay una esencial diferencia entre ir a los problemas por necesidades teóricas, o por encontrárselos al manejar la realidad, e ir a esos mismos problemas porque está de moda o porque se habla de ellos."[1]

Each work of literature is a personal one. Hence, Julián Marías distinguishes sharply between dealing with the interpretation of possibilities in literature and the interpretation of facts in the sciences. He writes: "Una obra literaria es siempre una obra personal. La ciencia en alguna medida es impersonal o transpersonal. La literatura no lo es nunca."[2]

The possibility of a literary work is a special kind of pattern for handling reality, offered to the reader in his own historical situation and by the writer from his unique situation. To get the fullest meaning from the work, therefore, the reader needs a firm grasp of the circumstances operating in his own life, those that immediately affect the author, his biography, and the structure of the fictional entities within the work itself.

The possibilities of literature, furthermore, are most im-

[1] *Obras*, VI, p. 55.

[2] *Al márgen de estos clásicos*, p. 21.

portant, even necassary, to man in his search for happiness in the temporal world. Since life extends beyond itself and includes what it has rejected, art and literature become a kind of salvation for man. Julián Marías explains this concept in detail in the following extended passage in La imagen de la vida humana:

> La vida va más allá de sí misma. Esta vida real que llevamos vivida hasta hoy es sólo una de nuestras vidas posibles; la vida efectiva está constituída por lo que se deja de hacer. No entendemos lo que significa estar aquí si no vemos a la vez los otros sitios en que podríamos estar, el no estar en los cuales es componente virtual del "estar aquí." Elegir es preferir, poner algo delante de las demás cosas; las posibilidades preferidas van más allá que las otras y se convierten en realidades, pero no sin las otras. La vida es renuncia, porque el hombre va poniendo detrás o postfiriendo otros muchos yos posibles. Y en el arte el hombre salva algunos posibles, parcelas de felicidad a las cuales no puede renunciar; porque a la felicidad el hombre no renuncia: se pasa sin ella, lo cual es cosa muy distinta. La felicidad es condición a la vez intrínseca e imposible de la vida terrana: el hombre necesita ser feliz y no puede serlo. Y en esa medida, como salvación de porciones irrenunciables de felicidad, el arte está inscrito en la constitución de la vida humana.[3]

Thus, man pursues happiness because he must, and happiness, in the temporal world, is forever beyond his reach. Moreover, as Marías notes on several occasions throughout his writings, in the twentieth century many men have lost control of even the pursuit of happiness, because they have identified it with the state, or society, or mass culture in general. The pressures of public life overwhelm the individual on the personal level, the only area of life where some happiness is possible. In his book, Miguel de

[3] Obras, V (1960), p. 538.

Unamuno, among other works, Julián Marías recounts the idea that our acts, what we do and what is done to us, are not our real selves. In our epoch we have lost contact with the part of ourselves most important to us, our intimate, personal selves. Marías refers to this dilemma as the crisis of daily living (la crisis de la vida cotidiana). He writes:

> Se podría pensar...en la época en que a nosotros nos ha tocado vivir, en que el mundo parece haber vaciado su vida cotidiana y privada, para nutrirse exclusivamente, y en un modo rigurosamente inauténtico, de "vida pública," de rumor histórico, de actos impersonales. Y por esto nuestro tiempo aparece despersonalizado, desustanciado, rota la intimidad, pendiente del momento y de los "sucesos," de lo que pasa y no de lo que queda. Lo que se llama la crisis de nuestra época es, en una de sus dimensiones esenciales, la crisis de la vida cotidiana.[4]

It follows, therefore, that the serious study of art and literature can help the reader re-establish contact with his inner, personal life. In large measure, this is the vital importance of literature as a personal statement.

It would be a mistake, however, to infer that the interpretation the reader makes of the literary work is dependent solely upon the ideas contained in it. Julián Marías considers the way something is said, the style, as inseparable from what is said. In fact, he gives the lie to the popular slogan, "tell it like it is," when he writes: "El consejo de Ranke--contar 'tal como ha pasado,' wie es geschehen ist--es más fácil de dar que de se-

[4] Ibid., p. 193.

guir; y, sobre todo, su sentido es problemático; porque la cuestión es precisamente cómo han pasado las cosas."[5] In this same essay, relating this judgement to the style of Valle-Inclán, for example, Marías observes that Valle-Inclán's narrative style is precisely his interpretation of how it is.[6] To change his style would be equivalent to changing his entire fictional statement. The way something is, therefore, is precisely the way a writer sees and expresses it, his interpretation of it.

To realize this, and to capitalize on it, through the careful reading of literature, is the obligation of the literary critic. The American poet and critic, Allen Tate, has stated the case well:

> He [the critic] must distinguish the difference between mere communication...and the rediscovery of the human condition in the living arts. He must discriminate between mass communication, for the control of men, and the knowledge of man which literature offers us for human participation.[7]

The distinction of style and rhetoric, their sincerity and effectiveness, is a frequently recurring theme in Julián Marías' essays. In much the same vein as Allen Tate, he stresses the importance of discriminating rhetoric from propaganda: "La retórica...es el arte de manejar colectivamente a los hombres sin profanarlos,

[5]"Vuelta al Ruedo," Revista de Occidente, XV (noviembre-diciembre, 1966), 171-72.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Allen Tate, The Man of Letters in the Modern World: Selected Essays: 1928-1955 (New York: Meridian Books, Incorporated, 1955), p. 11.

así como la propaganda es la técnica de utilizarlos profanándolos."[8]

Now, if one takes the definition of rhetoric given by Allen Tate as "the study and use of the figurative language of experience,"[9] then the distinction made in the preceding citation from the essay of Julián Marías becomes a valuable tool for the critic. For Marías, it is precisely the figurative language of experience through which the writer or poet makes manifest his interpretation of the reality of life.

Thus, as a literary critic, Julián Marías combines the intuitive ability of the impressionist with the systematic method of the philosopher. He examines the possibilities offered by literature in their relationship to man's personal search for meaning and happiness in his private life. He regards serious literature as the attempt by some men to interpret a part of their reality to know better where to turn in their historical situation. In a very real sense, the ideas and metaphors created by the artists and writers are possibilities for enrichment and renewal for those who experience them. Without these creations the culture would stagnate and men would be more easily manipulated by propaganda.

[8] El tiempo que ni vuelve ni tropieza, 2a ed. (Barcelona: E.D.H.A.S.A., 1965), p. 51.

[9] Tate, p. 165.

## CHAPTER IV

### The Narration as Access to the Concrete Human Life

In his literary criticism of the various genres, Julián Marías devotes by far the most time and effort to the novel, especially the twentieth century novel. He considers it to be the major mode of literary expression of our epoch that speaks both to and of the reader. The novel, as written today, is often related to a philosophical idea about human life and the human personality, and, as such, has value for its historical as well as its metaphysical possibilities.

Marías writes about the personal, or existential, novel, considering it on several levels of human life: physical, biological, psychic. To emphasize the importance of the discovery of the human personality in the novel, he makes an instructive contrast between the interpretation of man in the narration of the twentieth century and that of the nineteenth century, especially stressing the naturalistic novel as conceived and written by Emile Zola.

The novel, if it interprets human life faithfully, must deal in some way with the problems of the historical period, physical,

intellectual, or spiritual. Each epoch has its own peculiar problems, and the men of a particualr period must face them actively in order to live. For Julián Marías these problems have their own history; they come and go, and thus he writes: "...casi nunca se van porque se hayan resuelto, sino porque se han disuelto, porque ya no hace falta resolverlos para vivir."[1] When the novelists of the epoch confront these problems in the narration, therefore, they speak directly to and of the reader.

Consequently, the temporality of human life is portrayed in the narration. In the very act of writing, the novelist must take into account the structure of human life itself. This concept, the structure of human life, is an important one in the thought of Julián Marías. Thus, he defines it and shows how it relates to the narration:

> Existe lo que pudiéramos llamar un alvéolo material, compuesto de diversos elementos o ingredientes, donde se aloja esa realidad dinámica que es el vivir, consistente no en cosa alguna, sino en hacer yo aquí y ahora algo con las cosas, por algo y para algo; porque mi vida me es dada, pero no me es dada hecha, y tengo que hacerla yo instante tras instante. Pero precisamente en ese instante hay una intrínseca complicación de presente, pasado y futuro, que constituye la trama estructural de nuestra vida. Esta estructura podría formularse diciendo que el pasado y el futuro están presentes en mi vida, en el "por qué" y el "para qué" de cada uno de mis haceres. En mi hacer instantáneo está presente el pasado, porque la razón de lo que hago solo se encuentra en lo que he hecho, y el futuro está presente en el proyecto, del que pende todo el sentido de mi vida. El instante vital no es un punto inextenso, sino que implica un entorno temporal. El ser de la vida

[1] Obras, V, p. 286.

> consiste en esa distensión temporal, y por eso el único modo de hablar realmente de ella es contarla. La forma de "enunciado" en que la vida concreta es accesible es la narración, el relato.[2]

Both human life and the narration are temporal; simply to call the narration temporal, however, is insufficient to comprehend the nature of temporality Julián Marías refers to when speaking of the novel. The type of duration of the novel determines the degree of reader involvement and his identification with the characters and thus with the fictional situation. Marías clarifies this point through a contrast between the temporality of the primitive tale and that of the modern narration. He writes:

> En el relato se trata de referir a otros algo que ha pasado y estos no han visto; es, pues, narración de lo ausente; de ahí la peculiar lejanía de la narración primitiva, el carácter remoto del relato tradicional. Pero la narración, a partir de la novela, se alía con la presencia; mientras antes se refería algo distante y no patente, ahora la novela, el teatro y el cine nos permiten algo bien distinto: asistir a la vida humana. Mediante un cambio de técnica, que requiere un estudio minucioso y muy preciso--mejor dicho, mediante una serie de nuevas técnicas diferentes--, se inicia una nueva forma de narración, que no es "relato" en el sentido literal de esta palabra, sino lo contrario: asistir a la constitución temporal de la personalidad humana.[3]

Thus, the contemporary novel is linked in a special way to its historical epoch and social environment. This link must receive full consideration in any critical reading of the novel. In an essay first published in 1958, Marías, in speaking of this bond between the narration and the real world, takes exception to the

[2]Ensayos de teoría, 3a ed., (Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1966), pp. 50-51.

[3]Obras, V, pp. 546-47.

exponents of the type of criticism that would view the literary work as an isolated, artistic event. He says:

> La novela, así ligada a ciertas formas de sociedad, adquiere una significación que no es visible cuando se la estudia como simple "creación artística" dotada de calidades estéticas independientes en principio de la situación histórica. Y claro está que lo mismo habría que decir de los demás géneros literarios....[4]

Furthermore, when the novel speaks authentically of life it must penetrate its surface. This means for Julián Marías that it has to speak of the private, intimate life of the person. For him, any novel that omitted this decisive aspect of life would be intolerable to read.[5]

The novelist has a certain idea about life, and upon this idea he bases his narration. The idea need not be altogether conscious, nor, even less does the novelist need to fabricate it from his imagination. In explaining this Julián Marías writes: "Una idea de la que el autor no tiene conciencia clara, que con seguridad no ha sido inventada por el novelista, sino que ha sido tomada del repertorio de las creencias e ideas dominantes de la época. Esto es lo más importante en una novela...."[6]

When the novelist selects from the dominant beliefs and ideas of his time, basing his narration upon this selection, he develops

[4]El oficio del pensamiento (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 1958), pp. 197-98.

[5]Ensayos de convivencia (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1955, pp. 113-14.

[6]Obras, V, p. 504.

this prime matter by expressing it in a series of images. In this way he gives an orderly structure to his intent to narrate human life; in the word of Julián Marías, he interprets it. Within the literary work he imposes order upon chaos and thus exercises reason upon the irrational. This is vitally important to Marías, for he indicates frequently in his writing that human life, if left uninterpreted by the artists and thinkers, is irrational and chaotic.

What the novelist's interpretation offers the reader, therefore, is a preparation for life itself. This is in large measure the value of the vicarious experience of fiction, which Julián Marías explains in this way:

> ...la ficción imaginativa significa ensayos de vida, en los cuales el hombre asume y vive imaginativamente vidas distintas de la suya real. La lectura de novelas y relatos, la contemplación de ficciones escénicas o cinematográficas son el medio de adquisición de situaciones vitales y reacciones a ellas; y así, una preparación para la vida real: el amor, el honor, los celos, la ambición, el heroísmo, el engaño, nos son accesibles sin haberlos vivido realmente, gracias a la fantasía; sabemos lo que son, los entendemos, nos movemos en su ámbito, sabemos reaccionar a ellos, porque hemos hecho el ensayo irreal de vivirlos. Nuestra vida es mucho más compleja y rica porque la duplicamos mediante la ficción; en rigor, la multiplicamos por un factor considerable. La narración en su sentido más lato es un instrumento que nos permite enriquecer fabulosamente la vida, que sin ella sería de increíble simplicidad y pobreza.[7]

In strictly utilitarian terms this means that people who view the

[7] Ibid., p. 550.

the reading of novels as a waste of time compound their error. According to Marías, not only does one not lose time he actually gains time: "...tiempo condensado y comprimido, centenares de años de posibles vidas, mágicamente resumidos y abreviados en las páginas o en la pantalla...en la novela que se lee en el metro y hasta el cine de sesión continua."[8]

The vicarious aspect of fiction reading is perhaps of greatest concern to the reader when dealing with the experience of death. Regarding this, Marías writes: "...ya que no es posible revivirla, cabe previvirla. Y para esto sirve la novela."[9] Recalling for a moment Julián Marías' description of the structure of human life, with its dynamic temporal extension and complication of past, present, and future in each human act, one can perceive the impossibility of ever gaining access to all of a human life, one's own or anyone else's, at one time in the real world. Thus, to construe a life systematically, without undue confusion, one is forced to turn to its portrayal in literature, especially the novel.

The novel offers the possibility of prefiguration, the condensing of the experience of life. As an example of the impact of this condensation upon society, Julián Marías holds that it has significantly influenced the esteem accorded the older members of society. In earlier cultures, before the advent of the novel as we know it today, only the ancients of a group were

[8]Ibid., p. 551.

[9]Ibid., p. 62.

capable of accumulating much of the experience of life, because only they had been able to contemplate other lives in their complete trajectory through the world. The novel has altered this situation radically. Marías states:

> Es la ficción la que suple a este privilegio de la vejez; imaginativamente, los hombres jóvenes pueden seguir la trayectoria de la vida humana, sin esperar a recorrerla efectivamente ellos mismos. Son las historias fingidas, las novelas, las que han destronado a los ancianos de su situación excepcional; de ellas procede la decadencia de todos los senados.[10]

But the question is, what is the experience of life that Julián Marías speaks of? The problem is so complex that it reaches beyond literary criticism and into the realm of Marías' philosophical ideas. The idea can be drastically condensed, however, and still stated with some precision. What Marías refers to as the experience of life denotes a superior wisdom about life that one possesses, and which gives the possessor the certainty to know where to turn in the vicissitudes and problems he faces from day to day.[11]

This special experience is distinguished from the mere accumulation of experience per se, whether actively pursued or passively received, since the accumulation of experience may or may not produce in a person this superior wisdom.

Regarding the acquiring of the experience of life through the novel, which Julián Marías insists that the novel can provide,

[10] Ibid., p. 548.

[11] See the essay, "La experiencia de la vida," in Obras, VII, pp. 636-53.

the novel or narration must consist of a singular type of interpretation of man, or of the human personality. When one says that the novel consists of, or gives, an interpretation of man, however, the very statement is laden with complexity and ambiguity. Marías explains: "...en la novela se da una interpretación del hombre, y muchas realidades se ocultan bajo esa palabra: una cosa, un animal, una conciencia, una psique, una vida, una persona."[12] For the novel to impart the experience of life, therefore, and to give access to the concrete human life, it must show an awareness of this multiplicity of realities which is man. It must distill a new type of wisdom, based on this multiple reality and with its focus on the unraveling of the human personality in time. For Julián Marías, this is precisely what the contemporary novel does, especially the existential or personal novel as originally conceived and written by Unamuno. Marías states:

> No se trata de mostrar una estructura estática, una figura o forma psíquica, ni siquiera las etapas de su evolución, sino de contemplar desde dentro la constitución de la personalidad, su hacerse temporal. Se puede, pues, revivir la vida humana, sin cosificarla, sin verla como algo ya hecho y concluso. La novela acontece en el tiempo, dura y además aprehende un tiempo vivo, un ritmo que no es el del reloj que está marchando en este momento. Ambas, novela y vida, consisten esencialmente en auténtica temporalidad.[13]

According to Marías, the personal novel of Unamuno touches the authentic reality of man by penetrating the surface of human

[12] Obras, V, p. 554.

[13] Ibid., pp. 509-10.

life and uncovering its drama. It uncovers the internal history of man and thus manifests the truth about human life.[14]

The truth about human life as presented in the novel, however, must not be confused with a philosophical doctrine of truth. The novelist selects his basic idea about life from the dominant beliefs and convictions drawn from the personal conscience of the epoch. Whereas the ideas of philosophers are fully conscious in the minds of a very small minority, those that the novelist treats exist in the awareness of most persons, however vaguely. From this vantage point of his reasoning, Julián Marías asserts that the novel is valuable as a tool for both historical and metaphysical investigation. He writes:

> Un estudio de estos supuestos de la novela iluminaría los estratos más profundos de la historia humana. La novela tiene, por tanto, una doble significación: si se la considera como producto de la cultura de una cierta sociedad, descubre su trasfondo y se convierte en un instrumento de investigación histórica; y, a la inversa, si se considera la novela como posibilidad, es un estadio previo de la investigación metafísica de la vida humana, una etapa provisional de pensamiento filosófico, que hace posible un primer contacto eficaz con el objeto en su auténtica temporalidad y vitalidad.[15]

This leads directly to a consideration of the relationship between philosophy and the personal novel. In its presentation of the temporal human life, this type of novel often represents the nucleus of a philosophical theory. Marías stresses the fact that the personal novel does not simply state a philosophical

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid., p. 513.

doctrine in literary form, but that it authentically dramatizes the core of that doctrine. He says:

> ...la novela puede servir, como la propia experiencia de la vida humana, de la cual, en definitiva, deriva, para llegar a conocer las esencias de los modos de ser que constituyen al hombre. Su sentido excede, pues, del plano de una mera antropología, se entiende, en cuanto a sus posibilidades, y es capaz de llevarnos a una consideración ontológica.[16]

Philosophy is intent upon discovering the truth, whereas the novel is based always on an interpretation of life that is justifiable and responsible philosophically, but which, according to Marías: "...no es capaz de dar razón de sí misma."[17] As a means of acquiring knowledge about human life, however, the novel is needed by the lay reader as well as the philosopher, since it constitutes part of the raw material the latter utilizes in his attempt to discover truth.

Thus, Julián Marías contends that the novel, especially the personal novel, is a valid means of expressing the vital truth of temporal human life in dramatic form. Furthermore, he asserts that the novel may serve as a tool for historical and metaphysical investigation and also provide an insight into the concrete human life.

A reasonable question, then, might be, what is the basis for judging the success or failure of the contemporary narration to do this? In giving form to chaos in the narration, the novelist

[16] Ibid., p. 77.

[17] Ibid., p. 517.

alters the conditions and circumstances of life within the work, something normally impossible in real life. If he is experimenting with life, how is one to prove or disprove his experiment?

Julián Marías maintains that the intelligent reader can apply such a test to the novel, and, moreover, when the novelist fails the test it is precisely because he has distorted the human situation, or because his basic reasoning is erroneous. The test Marías proposes is that of verisimilitude. He explains:

> Se dirá ciertamente que el "experimento" ficticio...carece de valor cognoscitivo, ya que le falta la posibilidad de comprobación....la reacción del lector es certera: la "inverosimilitud" descubre un error en la interpretatión de la realidad humana; cuando la narración no "fluye," cuando tropezamos en ella y nos parece inverosímil, es que el autor ha ejercido violencia sobre la condición de la vida humana. Casi siempre, a lo literariamente inverosímil corresponde algo que es filosóficamente falso. En las novelas de los filósofos existencialistas contemporáneos resulta esto especialmente claro: casi siempre que algo nos repugna novelescamente, nos choca como incoherente, injustificado e inverosímil, corresponde con todo rigor a un error filosófico formulado en la página seiscientas y pico del gran tratado en que el mismo autor de la novela ha expuesto sus ideas metafísicas.[18]

Certainly the test of verisimilitude for the novel must be applied by the alert, trained reader. In addition, Julián Marías points out another aspect of the reality of human life that is essential for an intelligent reading of the contemporary novel. This aspect he refers to as the opacity of human life. In Chapter XI of Introducción a la filosofía he explains this idea in detail.[19]

[18] Ibid., pp. 549-50.

[19] Obras, II, pp. 347-51.

A short summary of the concept shows its importance to the reading of narration. Marías insists that any interpretation of human reality in our epoch is colored by the inherent opacity of human life. He explains this through the comparison of three entities, for example, an abstraction, such as a triangle, a concrete object such as a stone, and a living being.

The triangle, an ideal thing, can be penetrated completely by thought and thus surrenders all its being without resistance. It has no opacity, therefore, since it is totally transparent. Of course, if one were to make a triangle of wood, metal, or stone, that is another matter entirely, for then one is dealing with a concrete object. This leads, then, to the example of the stone. The stone is opaque; it will never surrender all its being to thought. One may break it open piece by piece ad infinitum, but there will still be portions hidden at any one time. Thus, the stone always contains its mysteries.

The consequences of this concept for investigating the reality of living things are vital. It is evident that the experiment performed on the stone is impossible to perform on a living being, for once you violate its interior, it dies and ceases to be what it was. Marías calls this phenomenon la interioridad insustituíble of all living beings.

When one arrives at the personal reality of the human being, he finds the opacity compounded. The person is a psyche and a conscience as well as a biological species, and some, often much,

of the psychic reality of one's own mind is a mystery even to oneself. How much more, then, are the dreams, desires, and fears of others a mystery for us. Human reality is thus opaque.

What does this mean for the novelist and his reader? Marías explains that, since the total individual life is forever unknowable, always containing its mysteries, the novelist cannot be expected to know what will happen in his narration before it is written. Narrative invention itself is a form of discovery.[20]

Julián Marías illustrates this assertion through a contrast between the fictional experiment in the contemporary novel and Emile Zola's naturalistic experiment. He considers Determinism patently false, because it assumes prescience of human reality. Because Zola starts from this false premise concerning human life, furthermore, his novels are themselves marred by error.[21] The reader, moreover, should expect the sincere novelist to reveal only a small portion of life authentically, precisely the person in a unique situation. Marías declares:

> La distensión temporal de la vida excluye la aprehensión de su totalidad, que sólo pertenece a Dios. Pero en un instante hay ciertos entrelazamientos sistemáticos de las diversas dimensiones de la persons, porque la vida es sistemática. En el momento o instante no se conoce a la persona <u>entera</u>, pero sí a la persona <u>misma</u>.[22]

[20] <u>Obras</u>, V, p. 505.

[21] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 505ff.

[22] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 510.

The novelist never presents the whole person to us; he does give us, however, the person himself, which is the person with his present circumstances and in his vital situation with its complexity of past, present, and future.

From the historical perspective of our epoch, then, which includes the opacity of human life and the vital situation, Julián Marías considers the nineteenth century novel dated in its interpretation of human reality. The existential, or personal, novel has invalidated the naturalistic, realistic, and even the psychological narration, in keeping with the philosophical concepts of the age.

Julián Marías goes beyond even this in his search for a narrative vehicle that will fully express the vital situation of man. He points the way to a future possibility of the novel by declaring the existential novel itself inadequate as a tool for metaphysical investigation in the mid-twentieth century because of its irrational basis. He writes:

> Esta novela ha nacido del irracionalismo. Unamuno es el heredero de una tradición filosófica que va de Kierkegaard, a través de Nietzsche, William James y Bergson, hasta Spengler, Klages y él mismo. Para todos ellos, la razón es incapaz de conocer y comprender la vida y la historia; el concepto mata lo que toca, lo solidifica, suplanta la vida por un esquema rígido e inerte. Estos pensadores, hay que decirlo, tenían razón al ser irracionalistas, porque la idea entonces vigente de la razón era totalmente insuficiente, a saber, la razón pura, físico-matemática, abstracta, que es incapaz de aprehender la realidad concreta y móvil de la vida humana y de la historia.[23]

[23] Ibid., p. 515.

Unamuno turned to the novel as a fruitful path to the knowledge of life and death and as an evasion of cold reason that paralyzed everything with which it came into contact. Marías affirms that irrationality is now an anachronism; to be irrational today is to live inauthentically. To have access to the concrete human life, therefore, the narration must be developed within the context of vital reason.

It is apparent, then, that Julián Marías challenges the understanding of the reader of the contemporary novel. The reader is reminded that, not only is the serious novelist writing about characters in a fictional situation, but he writes about the reader himself in his own real situation with his problems to resolve and decisions to make. Thus, if he reads carefully and critically, the reader is gaining experience of human life and preparing to live his own life more richly and fully.

Marías shows, moreover, how the contemporary narration provides raw material for the philosopher or the philosophically minded, and how often one can look for the nucleus of a philosophical theory within the novel itself. By becoming familiar with the concepts of opacity in human life and the test of verisimilitude in fiction, one arms himself with the tools to seek out the best and most rational narrative approach to the concrete human life.

## CHAPTER V

### The Novel: Theory and Practice

Julián Marías underscores the function and value of the novel as a tool for historical and metaphysical investigation. The observations he makes in this regard aid one not only in a better understanding of the contemporary narration, but also in an appreciation of the nature of fiction writing itself. This is also true of Marías' theoretical assertions about the narration; as practical guides his comments are valuable to both the critic and the writer.

There is no strict dividing line, however, between what is here referred to as theory of the novel and its practice. The theory is the expression of principles and relationships of novelistic elements that Julián Marías presents based on his vast reading experience of novels from many ages and places. It is the application of his interpretation of reality to his experience of reading.

Marías' commentary on the novel furnishes perhaps the basis for a sound analysis of the novel of our time. His method may, moreover, be applied to individual works or to a series of novels

if one cares to investigate certain fictional tendencies.

Marías discusses the relationship of the novelist to his work; he elaborates on what he calls the world of the novel and how the writer presents the things of this world in accordance with their vital function. Beyond this, he demonstrates the strong reciprocal effect of the novelistic world and the characters, shows the importance of a consistent point-of-view, and reveals how the tempo or rhythm of the narration governs the sense of reality it imparts. Finally, Marías compares the elements of description and narrative and warns of the danger the novelist must guard against of letting his narrative degenerate into essay.

In the first place, Julián Marías observes that an author can present human life in the novel only by starting with his own. If he does not, he cannot write a novel. Accordingly, he writes: "...así lo hace todo novelista, quiera or no, a menos que renuncie a hacer novela para hacer otra cosa: la propia vida es la base de la intuición originaria desde la cual se puede recrear o imaginar toda vida."[1] Surprisingly perhaps, Julián Marías remarks that the neglect of this elementary fact on the part of many contemporary novelists has led them to all kinds of strange and sterile experiments in an effort to compensate for this one deficiency.

Furthermore, because the novelist must accumulate a large amount of the experience of life, the novel is, generally speaking, the product of somewhat older men.[2] For this reason, Marías

[1] Obras, VII, p. 153.

[2] Al márgen de estos clásicos, p. 353.

notes that the serious fiction writer usually tries first the shorter forms of fiction like the novella or short story before attempting to write the novel.

More than an accumulation of experience, however, is needed to write the novel. For Julián Marías the most essential faculty for the fiction writer is imagination, and, regarding this, he observes that imagination is precisely the quality lacking in many contemporary novels.[3] This is attributed in part to the reliance by some writers on the advice of Emile Zola and Auguste Comte who insisted on supplanting imagination in fiction with observation.

It is obvious that the faculty of imagination is critically important to today's novelist if he hopes to present a convincing world for his characters to inhabit. Julián Marías explains that the world of the novel, which, as in real life, includes more than its physical aspect, must be in direct vital relationship with the characters. He states:

> El hombre vive en un mundo, que su vida incluye el mundo, pues, es esencial en la biografía como en la novela. Lo que pasa es que tiene que ser el mundo del hombre, no un mundo físico, un mundo de cosas, simplemente. El mundo se ha de incorporar al relato: si es independiente y subsistente por sí, no nos sirve ni nos importa; tiene que ser el mundo en el cual se hace el personaje.[4]

Consistently, Julián Marías' commentary on the world of the novel reveals the influence of Ortega and the philosophy of vital

[3] Obras, VII, p. 154.

[4] Obras, V, pp. 55-56.

reason. What Marías says about man in the real world holds true for the characters in the novel. He stresses the fact that man lives in time and space, in circumstances that include the environment, the historical epoch into which he is born, the society, and his physical and psychic attributes. Marías continues:

> El hombre no es esas cosas...pero tampoco es sin ellas ni aparte de ellas, y condicionan su ser. El sueño de la vida se sueña aquí y ahora, referido al contorno cósmico y humano y nada en él tiene sentido sin esa concreta referencia. La realidad humana--y por tanto de ella se diga--es circunstancial, y si omite la circunstancia se queda en la abstracción.[5]

Thus, the novel that fails to give the reader a convincing world, also fails to convince him of its authenticity. As a concrete example of this failure, Julián Marías points out that Miguel de Unamuno, in his attempt to present pure personality in some of his stories, often neglected this essential facet of his art.[6] Perhaps the most striking example of this trait in Unamuno's fiction is the novelette, Nada menos que todo un hombre, in which the characters exist almost exclusively in the inner world of their own personalities.

The novelistic world that Marías describes is one of actuality, or presence. It must be experienced as a whole, and the reader enters it as he reacts or identifies with the characters. To clarify what is meant by wholeness, or oneness, and the world

[5]Ibid., p. 83.

[6]Ibid., p. 48.

in its presence, Julián Marías contrasts it with the world of the epic poem. He writes:

> ...la novela, si lo es, da siempre al lector un mundo. no así la épica, a pesar de ciertas semejanzas superficiales; el "mundo" de ésta es un mundo puramente esquemático, sin conexiones efectivas, es decir, no es un mundo; y la razón principal de ello es que la épica acontece en un pasado absoluto, mientras que la relación de la novela con el tiempo es bien distinta: por lo general se trata de un tiempo presente, por tanto el mismo del lector, en principio al menos, vivificado por él y en esa medida "mundificado"; y si no, es un pasado histórico, es decir, "presentado," en el cual se instala el lector también; la épica, en cambio, acontece siempre "fuera."[7]

The idea of the world in its presence, moreover, coincides with the concept of temporality in the novel. Again, Julián Marías emphasizes the sharp contrast between the temporal absence and remoteness of the primitive tale and the historical presence of the modern novel.

In addition, the characteristic wholeness of the fictional world has very important consequences for the reader, the teacher, and, more especially perhaps, for the anthologist. Unlike the epics and cantares de gesta, which may be fragmented naturally into ballads, romances, or isolated episodes, each fragment retaining a certain unity and completeness, the novel must be taken as a whole, its world undisturbed. Julián Marías says: "...justamente porque ésta [the novel] está definida por un 'mundo' conexo, que no tolera escisión, las novelas hay que leerlas enteras."[8] [Underlining mine]

[7] Ibid., p. 552.

[8] Ibid.

It should be noted that when speaking of the world of the novel, Julián Marías never suggests that it must mirror the real world in order to be either historically or philosophically authentic. On the contrary, reality is often transformed in the novel while conforming to historical reality. In the fiction of Valle-Inclán, for example, the novelistic world is deformed, as in the esperpento, and yet it still presents a convincing narrative ambient. This technique Marías calls desrealización.[9]

Whether the novelist presents a world desrealizado or one more nearly in conformity with the real world, he must describe the things of that world in their vital reality. Julián Marías frequently emphasizes this point throughout his discussions of the novel. Quite clearly, the vital act of using things, in the real world or in fiction, is a concept closely related to the philosophy of vital reason. Marías explains the relationship of man with things in the world and how the vital function of things is of utmost importance. He says:

> En rigor, la relación del hombre con las cosas es siempre exagerada; cuando hablamos, ponemos de relieve un aspecto de algo que nunca se da así, solitario y único, sino mezclado a los demás; cuando usamos vitalmente una cosa cualquiera, aislamos una de sus posibilidades: cuando me como una manzana, tomo aislada y artitrariamente su cualidad sabrosa y comestible, prescindiendo de sus caracteres geométricos, de sus propiedades físicas generales, de su facultad reproductora, de su índole susceptible de funcionar como un proyectil disparado por mi mano. Y así en todo; cualquier acto vital

[9] Los españoles, 2a ed. (Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1966), p. 141.

es una interpretación, y ésta una exageración.[10]

Stated rather simply, in each act or thought we interpret our reality and exaggerate accordingly.

In using things, we assign them a function in our life, and for Julián Marías, this in itself is the essence of understanding. He states:

> Se entiende, por ejemplo, lo que es un objeto, una pluma, un vaso, un cuchillo, anticipando en la imaginación la función vital que es escribir, o beber, o cortar, viendo el objeto en cuestión ejecutando virtualmente esa función; si yo muestro una pluma a alguien que no sepa qué es escribir, que no conozca esa posibilidad humana, jamás verá una pluma. Y si se piensa en una realidad que no sea artificial e instrumental, el caso es semejante: sólo se la entiende cuando asume una función--sea la que se quiera--dentro de mi vida. Y esto es la razón vital: la vida en su función de dar razón, es decir, de aprehender la realidad en su conexión.[11]

In fiction writing the novelist is obligated to show us how his characters use things and through this to indicate motivation and purpose. For example, Marías asserts that whether it is a rainstorm or a state of jealousy that provokes a character to commit a crime, the novelist's duty is the same in either case: to indicate as precisely as possible the causes, the resulting deeds, and the consequences.[12] Thus when a thing is described for use in the novel, it is not for its descriptive or pictorial qualities, as was often the case with the nineteenth century realists, for ex-

[10] Obras, V, p. 39.

[11] Ibid., pp. 535-36.

[12] Ibid., p. 48.

ample, but for its vital use in the situation at hand, as in the novels of Unamuno, Gómez de la Serna, Azorín, and other modern writers.[13]

Pursuing this idea still further, Julián Marías explains what he calls the error of the realists. The realists were philosophically in error in believing that the world consists of an aggregate of things (conjunto de cosas).[14] This led them into the esthetic fallacy of the inventory which destroys the possibility of invention and discovery in the novel. Thus, the realists converted the world into a museum. Regarding this, Marías writes: "El museo está definido por los dos principios más opuestos a la mundanidad: el primero, el católogo, por el cual sabe lo que hay en el museo y se nota si falta algo; el segundo, ese cartel de 'se prohibe tocar'."[15]

When the novelist looks at things in the novel, then, it is with a view to their vital function in a given situation. Thus, they offer unlimited possibilities, because the situation, with its totality of past-present-future, is dynamic and changing. Two Spanish novelists who succeed remarkably well in the description of things according to the tenet of Julián Marías are Gómez de la Serna and Azorín. The following quotation, in which Marías com-

[13] Ibid., p. 89.

[14] Al márgen de estos clásicos, p. 131.

[15] Ibid., p. 302.

ments on Gómez de la Serna's artistic method, illustrates his concept of the vital function and possibilities of things in fiction. He says:

> Cuando Ramón "enumera" en el Rastro, cuando va sacando cosas, una tras otra, del montón, lo decisivo es que siempre quedan más cosas en el montón--mientras se acaba la vitrina del museo, cada pieza con su número colgando. Y esas cosas no salen solas, sino que llevan pegados, adheridos, enormes trozos de vida, pretéritos como colas de cometa, recuerdos confusos, asociaciones engranajes de la máquina de la vida, descompuesta y que por eso ha ido a parar al Rastro, promesas de un destino futuro, porque las cosas salen del montón para ser compradas, como esclavas en el mercado de esclavas, que van a volver a vivir y por eso no se sabe todavía lo que son, justamente porque todavía no lo son.[16]

The things of the novel, therefore, like things in the real world, have vital possibilities that are yet to be realized, except perhaps in the museum. When they come into contact with man they are immediately involved in the vital situation, which is what it may become, the vital project. Julián Marías states: "Nada humano se entiende si se tiene en cuenta sólo la realidad. Porque lo humano es siempre y principalmente lo que todavía no se."[17]

Doubtlessly, if this is true of things, in the sense of objects in the world, it is even more true of characters in the novelistic world. Characters retain not only the possibility of becoming passively like the object, but they are active forces. It has been sometimes noted by certain critics that novelistic characters are as real as human beings in the real world. Julián

[16] Ibid., p. 305.

[17] Obras, V, p. 40.

Marías considers this true to the extent that they represent lives and have histories, legends. Using the vital possibilities offered by the character, therefore, the novelist imaginatively creates hypothetical, but authentic, biographies.

Marías makes a most significant distinction between types of novelistic characters, however, especially when comparing them with men in the real world. He says, for example, that the character is defined by his situation, and this determines his very essence. He continues:

> Lo que define a los personajes es precisamente la situación; en rigor cada uno de ellos es un "papel," un "caso," con valor genérico, universal, por tanto. Es el pícaro, mozo de muchos amos, definido por una situación de hambre y bellaquería; o el marido celoso, que se las tiene haber con la situación planteada por la presencia de la infidelidad; o el soñador, que vive en un mundo irreal y choca con el mundo concreto....
> Estos personajes novelescos no lo son propiamente: no tienen personalidad; si los encontráramos en el mundo real, no los conoceríamos, a menos que se hallasen en el "caso" en que nos los ha presentado la novela.[18]

Most novelistic characters, moreover, fall into the category of the caso.

On the other hand, Marías points out that there is a figurative handful of characters who go beyond the realm of the caso to become persons, and who would be recognized in any context.[19] Examples of the complete character, personaje verdadero, are Don Quijote, Sancho Panza, Julien Sorel, Hamlet in the drama, and many

[18] Ibid., p. 50.

[19] Ibid., p. 51.

of the characters of Unamuno.[20]

An instructive comparison may be made between the *caso* and the *personaje verdadero* of Julián Marías and the flat and round characters as defined by E. M. Forster in his book, *Aspects of the Novel*.[21] Marías' *caso*, defined by its situation, closely resembles Forster's flat character, built around a single idea. The *personaje verdadero* and the round character also have much in common: each develops almost a life of its own outside the literary work.

Julián Marías goes on to explain the nature of the character of the novel through the idea of opacity. Briefly restated, the idea is this: all material objects are opaque in the sense that a part of their reality is forever concealed. Living things are opaque in a double sense, because to violate their inner reality would destroy them. Man, moreover, possesses a unique type of opacity, which is his psychic activity: his emotions, desires, thoughts. To understand one's neighbor, therefore, one must intervene somehow in his imagination. One creates for himself a fantasized representation of the lives of others. This enables one to understand and make predictions concerning others' behavior. Marías asserts that we all indulge in this activity which he calls making *novelas de urgencia*. He says:

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 53.

[21] (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1927), pp. 103-118.

> El trato es posible mediante una reconstitución aproximada y provisional de las novelas de las vidas de mis prójimos, y esto es lo que se suele designar con la palabra hermenéutica. Pero conste que no se trata sólo de los prójimos: sólo puedo entenderme a mí mismo, y por tanto vivir, gracias a la novela que de mí mismo imagino o invento, la cual es un constitutivo esencial de mi vida efectiva: lo que se llama técnicamente pretensión o proyecto vital. Cuando Ortega repite hace treinta años que la vida es faena poética, tiene presente esta función irrenunciable de la ficción. Y la novela o la ficción escénica o fílmica--tanto da--nos presentan un personaje que no es, ciertamente, una persona concreta y real, pero que es un término medio entre ésta y el puro esquema abstracto de lo que es un hombre: entre el "animal racional" de Aristóteles y el concretísimo y efectivo Winston Churchill están Hamlet, Sancho Panza o Julien Sorel.[22]

The fiftional character, therefore, is neither completely transparent, like an abstraction, nor opaque, like a real person. He has what Julián Marías describes as transparencia relativa.[23] The character in fiction, moreover, confined to his temporal circumstances, represents the novelist's attempt to penetrate the secret of life and of the human personality. This is the novelist's interpretation of human reality, which has definite limits, but, at the same time, a universal application. Marías explains:

> Cada novela...significa un punto de vista, y nos hace adquirir una faceta del ser humano. Conviene, sin embargo, no pensar excesivamente en la parcialidad de ese conocimiento; sin duda es por esencia fragmentario y "relativo," como corresponde a la íntima estructura de su objeto; pero ésta es, a su vez, sistemática...y cada dimensión envuelve y complica en cierto sentido a todas

[22] Obras, V, p. 549.

[23] Ibid., p. 548.

las demás en la unidad del ente aprehendido.[24]

The dimension of life brought forth here represents what the character is in essence rather than what he merely feels. This becomes clear through a comparison between the idea of character in the nineteenth century psychological novel and that of the contemporary novel. In the first instance, Marías remarks that the psychological novel placed too much emphasis on the psychic life as being the only, or at least, the principle reality. But reality is multifaceted, the psyche being merely one facet and not necessarily the prime reality.

The error is compounded, furthermore, by the predilection of the psychological novel for the abnormal state of mind. Marías comments:

> La novela psicológica pretende hacer un menudo análisis de la vida psíquica o anímica de sus personajes. Se trata en ella de contemplar, con alguna morosa delectación, estados de ánimo. El amor de cualquier tipo, la tristeza, las dudas, el fanatismo, la ambición, el tedio de la vida, entendidos principalmente--no se olvide--como sentimientos. Y repárese en que la novela psicológica, siguiendo, una vez más, la tendencia de la época, insiste con especial predilección en lo anormal y propende a interpretar patológicamente la vida humana.[25]

In this type of novel, the state of mind itself becomes the character's reason for being. The character tends to react to the obsession in a psychologically predictable way like an animal in the laboratory. Julián Marías holds that this taste for elemental

[24] Ibid., p. 87.

[25] Ibid., p. 57.

characters, of minimum complexity, and wholly given to simple, easily explained reactions, was constant in the nineteenth century Spanish novel and even today exerts strong influence. In characteristic fashion regarding this phenomenon he states: "Esto ha llevado a una especie de behaviorismo novelesco que se deja fuera precisamente la novela.[26]

In direct contrast to this tendency stands the personal novel. Whereas in the psychological novel the characters become little more than supports for their respective state of mind, in the personal novel, especially in Unamuno's, the characters represent a true way of being of concrete men and women. The personal novel, therefore, is not descriptive but narrative and temporal, and instead of the conflict of sentiments and feelings the author gives us a real problem of the human personality. Marías says of this:

> Si hay amor, odio, tristeza, envidia en estas novelas, no son nunca estados de conciencia, sino modos de ser. Una pasión no es un sentimiento para Unamuno, una mera afección psíquica, sino que la entiende e interpreta como un modo de ser, ese concreto ser apasionado; es decir, de una manera ontológica; no es algo que le pase a uno, lo que en cierto momento se siente, sino lo que se es.[27]

It follows, therefore, that the kind of novel Marías describes here is one in which the author expresses, in terms of character, an ontological way of being.

This temporal portrayal of character, the working out of the

[26] Al márgen de estos clásicos, p. 348.

[27] Obras, V, p. 58.

human personality, as much as any other aspect of the personal novel, gives it a special significance in dealing with the problem of death. Unamuno is without doubt the novelist *par excellence* who has struggled with this problem in the contemporary novel. In Unamuno's concrete man in his vital situation, *el hombre de carne y hueso*, Julián Marías sees a pattern that gives his novel a special meaning and makes it a model of character for other novelists to study.[28]

The problem is how to give the character and the novelistic world a convincing illusion of reality. For Marías this is a problem of presentation, what he terms *perspectiva*, or point-of-view. He accordingly establishes two prime requisites for a successful point-of-view: first, it must not be selected arbitrarily or capriciously, and second, it must be consistent unto itself.

To illustrate what he means by avoiding caprice in determining the point-of-view the novelist employs, Julián Marías makes a felicitous analogy between this problem and the problem children face when they are at play. Both the play of children and the writing of novels have certain rules and limits without which neither could be properly carried on. In this vein Marías writes:

> ... Imagínese que ante una mesa vacía adopto un punto de vista determinado y ejecuto pertinazmente los actos adecuados. Es decir, me comporto como si estuviese comiendo, leyendo o escribiendo; hago los gestos correspondientes al manejo de los platos y el tenedor, el libro o la pluma y el papel, o la máquina de escribir;

[28] *Ibid.*, pp. 61-62.

> es evidente que con ello suscitaré la presencia imaginativa e ilusoria de los objetos que no están encima de la mesa, que aparecerán conjurados por mis gestos, mágicamente evocados por la imposición de una perspectiva. No es otra la técnica del juego infantil. Cuando el niño juega a conducir un automóvil empuña un inexistente volante y lo hace girar, tira del freno, pisa un imaginario acelerador; sus actos coherentes, es decir, fieles al punto de vista elegido, crean las realidades. Cuando elige otro, y se comporta con arreglo a él, acorde con las estrictas exigencias que impone, surgen otras realidades distintas. Por eso el juego requiere reglas, es lo contrario de la arbitrariedad y el capricho--parece mentira que la libertad creadora con la que el juego se elige, es decir, con la cual se "crea" el ámbito lúdico, sea entendida muchas veces como arbitrariedad--; prueba de ello es que cuando un niño falta a las reglas, cuando se comporta arbitrariamente, es decir, cuando es infiel a la perspectiva estatuída, el otro responde: "No juego"; esto es, no es posible ya la realidad así creada, que se desvanece. Esto es la novela: el libre juego imaginativo de una perspectiva siempre fiel a sí misma. Puede ser estática o móvil; puede ser única o plural; pero sus movimientos o la articulación de ellos han de ser "reales," quiero decir, condicionados por sus propias estructuras.[29]

If, then, one selects this concrete point-of-view and adheres to it strictly, he may expect a vision that is, at the least, real.[30]

It must be borne in mind, however, that, although the perspective be carefully selected and rigidly adhered to, it still offers great possibilities for variety. That is to say, it may be either single or multiple.

This is perhaps best clarified by starting from the premise that there are two basic perspectives for the novel, viz, the third person, in which the author or his persona tells what happens to

[29]Ensayos de convivencia (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1955), pp. 163-64.

[30]"Hispanoamérica desde el escritor," Revista de Occidente, XIII (mayo, 1966), 179.

the characters, or the first person, in which one of the characters, as actor or observer, narrates the events. Julián Marías remarks that the two methods may be combined to produce a multiple point-of-view, as in the case of Unamuno's novels, for example. The multiple perspective is similar to that of the motion picture: the shifting of perspective from one character to another through movement and temporal sequence. There is also a very critical difference, however, as Marías explains: "La novela es un arte de la imaginación, el cine es el arte de las presencias; todo tuvo que ser antes realidad actual, perceptible, fotografiable."[31]

The requirement that the novelist imposes upon himself is that, whatever his point-of-view, it must be consistent. Marías first defines the novel according to its point-of-view as: "...el libre juego imaginativo de una perspectiva siempre fiel a si misma."[32] He then adda the qualifying concept of the nature of the perspective: "La perspectiva de la novela no es arbitraria, sino que se estatuye; si son varias, como es frecuente, se constituyen; y esta constitución es intangible, porque en ella estriba la consistencia del mundo novelesco, su realidad como tal."[33]

In order to better understand what Julián Marías means by consistency in the perspective, it is helpful to return once more

[31] Obras, V, p. 511.

[32] Ibid., p. 554.

[33] Ibid.

to the idea of the opacity of human life, or relative opacity in the case of novelistic character. Marías writes:

> La libertad imaginativa del novelista está...sometida a reglas del juego; y una de ellas, quizá la más importante, es la opacidad relativa de los personajes. Porque hay que verlos desde cierta perspectiva, a la que hay que permanecer fiel; si el novelista elige verlos desde fuera, como se ve a los prójimos, no puede permitirse al irrumpir de repente en sus adentros y mostrarnos que está "en el secreto"; y a la inversa.[34]

Marías adds that from the point-of-view novelistic dialogue acquires its meaning. Through dialogue the writer is able to bring his characters into the first plane, letting them speak for themselves without the intervention of narrative or description. Thus, dialogue is a form of direct presence, or being present (una forma de presencia).[35]

With reference to dialogue within the novel, moreover, Julián Marías is concerned with another important narrative aspect, viz, rhythm or tempo. According to Marías, this aspect of fiction writing was discovered by Cervantes and handed down to novelist following him. Marías describes it as: "Tiempo que mana a diversos ritmos, que se hincha de concentración humana en ocasiones, que a veces se remansa como un río."[36]

The movement of the novel is highly variable; it has unlim-

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid., p. 555.

[36] Ibid., p. 546.

ited elasticity that permits extreme condensing and distending. Relating this concept to novelistic dialogue again, Julián Marías writes: "...el diálogo novelesco...representa una sorpredente condensación. Con una duración muy breve--con muy pocas palabras--produce la ilusión de largas duraciones."[37]

Another technique that provides the illusion of duration, and, at the same time, quickens the pace of the novel is static movement. This is accomplished through a succession of images that are taken away almost as soon as they are presented. In describing this technique, Marías again uses the comparison with motion pictures. He says: "No es otro el procedimiento cinematográfico, en que unas cuantas imágenes nos anticipan lo que va a pasar, nos predisponen el ánimo, crean un clima preciso, resumen en pocos encuadres un largo tiempo alusivamente vivido."[38]

Azorín is the master of this procedure, and his novel Doña Inés the best example of its use. In his commentary on this novel, Julián Marías reveals precisely what he means by static movement as a novelistic device. He writes:

> El secreto está en la presencia súbita, brusca, de una imagen. El cuadro en el museo nos parece inmóvil, porque está ahí, dura y podemos contemplarlo a nuestro sabor; estaba ya, permanece durante nuestra contemplación y sigue perdurando. Pero la imagen que surge de repente y desaparece nos da la movilidad interrumpido, rezumante todavía de dinamismo. En otros términos, aunque no haya movimiento en la imagen inerte, se lo presta el movimiento real de la cámara, que lo pone delante y lo hurta

[37] Ibid., p. 555.

[38] Al margen de estos clásicos, p. 134.

> en seguida. Y esto es lo que hace, con técnica sabia, refinadísima, Azorín en los cincuenta y dos capítulos--nada menos-- de tan breve libro como es Doña Inés....[39]

The length of the novel itself is significant in determining its tempo. There are at least two distinct types of novels with differing rhythms and different perspectives of human reality. Marías describes them in this way:

> La novela morosa, de ritmo lento, que concede largo espacio a la mostración de vivencias y a la presentación de un "mundo"--así Dostoyevski, Zola, Thomas Mann, Proust, y buena parte de la novela anglosajona actual--, y la novela nerviosa y rápida, dramática, en que lo que importa es la personalidad de los agonistas--a veces Stendhal, a veces Galdós, Chesterton Mauriac, Baroja, Unamuno--. Deliberadamente, he recogido en estos ejemplos diferencias inmensas, para subrayar la afinidad en dimensión de cada uno de ambos grupos.[40]

It should not be assumed from the preceding statement, however, that the second of the two types mentioned lacks this slowness (morosidad). Julián Marías, constantly seeking to clarify his ideas, explains that this quality is necessary to all novels, whether long or short. He says:

> Como que la novela no es otra cosa que ese descubrimiento, el del mundo constituído en y por la narración. La novela se podría definir como narración circunstanciada, dando toda su significación a este adjetivo. De ahí la prolijidad de la novela, su propensión a la morosidad, la multiplicidad de puntos de vista. Hasta tal punto es así, que la novela de ritmo más rápido, si es efectiva novela, tiene que incluir al menos una parcial morosidad, tiene que remansarse en algunos puntos, que son justamente los que dan consistencia a su "mundo."

[39] Ensayos de convivencia, p. 176.

[40] Obras, V, p. 272.

> Si no, habrá cuento, relato, nouvelle, short story--que puede ser bastante larga--, pero novela, no.[41]

Thus, according to Julián Marías, the element of slow tempo, the alternating of condensation and distension, becomes a way of distinguishing the novel from other types of fiction.

Within the context of his ideas on the novel, especially those concerning the novelistic world and the characters in their vital relationship with the things of their world, Julián Marías sets forth a remarkable observation on the procedures of description and narration. He says that they are essentially the same thing:

> En la novela intervienen dos operaciones o procedimientos principales: descripción y narración. Se suele entender que la primera se refiere al ambiente o mundo, la segunda a la "acción" novelesca en sentido estricto. Pero si se mira bien, se advierte que ambos términos, descripción y narración, son equívocos. Porque la descripción se puede entender como descripción de cosas--así en manos de los realistas--o de realidades vitales, es decir, de mundo en el sentido riguroso de mundo de alguien. Y en cuanto a la narración, se la puede entender como "referencia" o relato de algo ausente, o bien como presencia narrativa, personal y no cosificada, como asistencia activa a una vida humana y a la constitución de una personalidad. Y con esto vemos que, en la novela efectiva, ambas cosas coinciden, descripción y narración son lo mismo, la presentación de los personajes en su mundo; y estos, los personajes, son los nexos efectivos del mundo novelesco, no una mera localización topográfica o geográfica, o bien social.[42]

For Marías, then, the novel is essentially a narration about characters in vital relationship with each other and with things. It is essential to note the importance the Spanish philosopher

[41] Ibid., p. 553.

[42] Ibid.

gives to the word narration, for without it the novel simply does not exist as novel.

It is not surprising to learn, therefore, that Julián Marías finds serious fault with much modern fiction because it is not good narration, or because it contains too many elements other than narration. For Marías, the gravest error of the novelist is to abandon his narration in favor of essay.[43] This, of course, has to do with the difference between showing and telling in the novel. When the novelist stops telling, that is, narrating, and begins to explain, reason, theorize, to show, he is writing essay and not novel. Marías considers the mixture distasteful.[44]

Although much modern fiction is beset by this failure, Marías does not totally reject a novel simply because it contains some essay. He points out, for example, that Albert Camus's La peste, in which much is essay, is still superior as a novel to L'étranger. The latter, however, is more preferred by many readers because it resorts almost exclusively to narration.[45]

Julián Marías lays much of the blame for the essaying in the modern novel on the urge to experiment, to branch out from the traditional forms. But since the essay is already an established literary form, the novelist should try to find some other way of

[43] Ibid., p. 555.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ensayos de convivencia, p. 159.

being original.[46] For this reason, Marías finds certain modest novels (novelas modestas), like the detective story and its related forms, often more accomplished as narration than much serious fiction. Some of the good story tellers he offers for consideration in this respect are Graham Greene, Simenon, Hemingway, Steinbeck, James M. Cain, Faulkner, and Rosa Chacel.[47]

Thus, for the reader who seeks to improve his skills of analysis and comprehension of the novel, and perhaps even for the novelist wishing to sharpen his own writing techniques, Julián Marías offers a valuable lesson in the art of novel reading. Especially regarding the decisive elements of novelistic characters and their world does his method provide fresh insight. Beyond this, however, or corresponding to it, whatever aspect of fiction one man care to ponder, point-of-view, tempo, narration, or description, he may understand it better, even when disagreeing with Marías' ideas or methods, from having viewed it within the context of vital reason.

And therein lies the ultimate value of Julián Marías as a critic. As a philosopher he is involved in a constant dialectic with the great ideas and great minds of history seeking new answers to human problems. His criticism of the novel is conceived within the context of his philosophy. Anyone who questions Marías' methods,

[46] Ibid., p. 158.

[47] Ibid.

therefore, in a spirit of harmony and quest for better methods and critical insight, joins him in the dialectic. That is the common denominator of all his essays: to push the human understanding as far as it can go.

As a critic of the novel, then, Julián Marías does not provide the ultimate in the critical word. He merely offers a method as sound as any known, one which will aid one in thinking and speaking of the novel in more concrete, precise terms.

## CHAPTER VI

### Lyric Poetry: the Language of Love

Compared to the quantity of commentary on the novel, Julián Marías devotes little time and space in his essays to lyric poetry. What he says, however, is well worth considering by anyone seriously interested in verse. His ideas on poetry reveal a perspicacious, sensitive mind, very finely tuned to its sound, rhythm, and subtle meanings.

Marías compares the poet's relationship to his poem with the novelist and the novel; also, he expounds on the different kinds of experience provided the reader by the two genres and explains the special effect of poetic language. Most significantly perhaps, he discovers an intrinsic bond between the lyric poetry of an age and the status of love, that is, the concrete, temporal intimacy between a man and a woman.

Julián Marías considers the accumulation of the experience of life to be a prime requisite for the novelist. The situation of the poet, however, is almost diametrically opposed. The poet's gift is more innate, more a matter of feeling and inspiration than

experience. Regarding this, Marías makes a rather startling observation:

> Los poetas son muy precoces; tanto, que casi todos han llegado a ser quienes son antes de cumplir los treinta años; y si--lo que Dios no permita--los poetas muriesen a los cuarenta años, la historia de la poesía universal no sería esencialmente distinta de la que conocemos. Nada de esto ocurre con otros géneros literarios; imagínese lo que hubieran sido el drama, la novela o la filosofía de Occidente si sus cultivadores no hubiesen pasado de los cuarenta.[1]

Through his poems the poet exerts an influence on others, a special kind of influence which is actually the poet's survival, or the survival of his personality. Julián Marías writes: "...la acción sobre los prójimos, el hacer que todos vivan 'inquietos y anhelantes' encuentra un instrumento esencial en el verso."[2] This influence is brought about through a unique communication (contagio) that causes the reader of the poem to experience analogously the poet's original emotion.[3]

Of course, it is impossible to express in words the original emotion exactly as the poet felt it; still, through the crystallization of language in the poem, this particualr emotion is fixed forever as a part of the poet's personality. Marías explains:

> La vivencia plasmada en verso se conserva intacta, con la totalidad de sus elementos expresivos y significativos. Cada vez que el verso es leído, su temblor reproduce el del hombre que primero lo compuso, como la vi-

[1] Al margen de estos clásicos, p. 143.

[2] Obras, V, p. 277.

[3] Ibid.

> bración del auricular telefónico repite la de la voz que se estremece y suena al otro lado del hilo o del espacio. La figura del poeta queda salvada--transfigurada--en esa forma, a la vez perdurable en su fijeza y llena de vida, que es el verso.[4]

This idea seems in direct contrast to the tenets of some of the new critics who insist that the poet's personality is all but completely divorced from the poem. T. S. Eliot has expressed the latter idea quite forcibly in his essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent."[5] One must bear in mind, however, that in the passage cited above, Julián Marías is discussing the writer who most fervently expressed his hope, or better said, his passion, to survive in his work, Miguel de Unamuno. As anyone even slightly familiar with Unamuno knows, he voiced this desire often throughout his writing. In a few lines of a poem from Unamuno's Cancionero, Marías finds perhaps the most convincing expression in verse of the poet's will and belief in his own survival in the poem. Unamuno adresses the reader thus:

> Cuando me creáis más muerto
> retemblaré en vuestras manos...
> Cuando vibres todo entero,
> soy yo, lector, que en ti vibro.[6]

It is beneficial to follow Julián Marías' commentary on

[4] Ibid.

[5] Charles Kaplan, ed., Criticism: Twenty Major Statements (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Co., n.d.), p. 456.

[6] Angel del Río y Amelia A. de del Río, Antología general de la literatura española, Edición corregida y aumentada. Vol. II (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1960), p. 464.

Unamuno's poetry a little further, since he has written more on him than on any other poet. In the case of Unamuno, moreover, Marías' criticism often has a universal application.

For example, in speaking of Unamuno's rejection of reason and his elevation of the irrational aspect in man's nature as a guide to life, Marías asserts that Unamuno turned naturally to lyric poetry as the culminating expression of irrationality. Thus, lyric poetry becomes the ideal vehicle for putting into words those ideas, feelings, and emotions that are beyond the pale of the narrative, rational faculty of man. In this spirit Julián Marías says:

> En la poesía, la expresión se desnuda, se hace alusiva, rehuye la referencia directa a las cosas, para mejor apuntar a su sentido. En el relato Unamuno describe y muestra figurativamente la realidad que intuye, lo que él vive de un modo inmediato. En la poesía va aún más allá: en los momentos supremos, cuando aprehende una verdad que se le presenta como inefable y aun indescriptible en el relato--que, al fin, conserva una estructura lógica, pues es un lógos, un decir--recurre al poema, a la pura metáfora, que sólo roza la realidad, que no se enfrenta con la vivencia para mostrarla, sino que intenta provocarla alusivamente mediante un efectivo contagio.[7]

To avoid confusing his idea as an equation of poetry and irrationality, one must go a step further. It is not just that Unamuno is irrational, it is that the reality he deals with in the poem is a poetic reality. For this reason, Julián Marías indicates that Unamuno's poetry should never be considered merely an addendum to his other work, but that it is an irreplaceable

[7] Obras, V, pp. 125-26.

part of his inspiration and thought.[8]

For Marías, then, poetry often has a value beyond its purely literary or esthetic qualities. He says, for example, in the case of Unamuno's poetry:

> Es el intento de comunicar mediante contagio espiritual la sustancia más honda e enefable de su saber o de su afán de saber. Recuérdese la función de los poemas en la obra mística de San Juan de la Cruz, que resumen apretadamente el contenido de sus libros en prosa; y a esa condensación le es esencial el verso, porque sin él no se logra esa transferencia del lector a la situación que no se puede o no se sabe decir.[9]

The poetic reality, which can be expressed in no other way, exists as part of, and inseparable from, the poem as poem, that is, it is a reality dependent upon the rhythm and sound of poetry. Julián Marías is emphatic on this point: poetry is to be heard, and in order to capture its full meaning and possibility one must hear it.[10] Reality is thus experienced as rhythm. This leads Marías to write: "...el modo de existir de ciertas realidades poéticas es el ritmo; el poeta es el que consigue arrancar de esta forma rítmica su 'sentido' conceptualmente expresable: y esto sólo se puede hacer mediante el libre juego de la imaginación."[11]

Returning for a moment to the quotation from Unamuno's poem, the aptness of the verb vibrar becomes clearly evident. It is the

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid., pp. 132-33.

[10] Ibid., p. 126.

[11] Ibid., p. 276.

vibration of the poem, plus the sense, that produces the special *contagio* and thus saves the poet's personality for all time. Julián Marías has gone so far as to compare the recitation of a poem to the liturgy, during which one remembers and relives the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. It is perfectly logical, then, to say that poetry serves a purpose and function similar to prayer.[12]

In addition, poetry is like prayer in its stress on the intimate desires and emotions nearest the heart of man. This is in its emphasis on *la vida cotidiana* that Julián Marías speaks of frequently and that he considers of vital importance in real life as well as in literature. The poet transfigures the mundane into a poetic reality verbalizing it for the hearer or reader of the poem. Marías expresses this idea graphically in a comment on emotion in the poetry of Jorge Guillén. He says:

> He dicho alguna vez que Guillén se complace en lo cotidiano y recrea un mundo nuevo, correlato poético, irreal, de aquél en que vivimos: de los mundos que va viviendo. Y por eso transfigura el paisaje, nunca lo describe ni lo presenta, y sólo podemos reconocerlo y descubrirlo cuando conseguimos identificar la emoción, cuando hallamos en la del poema la nuestra, vivida o soñada.[13]

The emotion, the *contagio*, that one experiences in reading lyric poetry is a highly intense one. It is impossible, doubtlessly, to sustain such a highly wrought emotion for a very long

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 133.

[13] *Obras*, III, p. 376.

period of time. Julián Marías, therefore, like Edgar Allen Poe,[14] finds a long poem a contradiction in terms. Marías, however, proceeds to find a certain validity even in the long poem. He maintains that it is capable of providing a series of acute lyric moments alternated with more relaxed passages. Thus, the long poem is part prose, part poetry, the looser passages being prosaic intervals.[15]

Perhaps Julián Marías' most significant critical statement regarding the lyric, however, is that its ultimate vital function is as an expression of the language of love. One must understand that what is intended here by the language of love goes beyond the popular concept of the torch singer and the popular song, although it does include this also.

First, of course, one must accept the premise that the love relationship, the concrete, temporal intimacy between a man and a woman that we call love is the most important association possible between human beings.

Love, according to Julián Marías, is inseparable from its rhetoric. He writes:

> ...el amor es inseparable de un "lenguaje," de una retórica y una poética, de un modo de decir a la amada o al amado, y de decirse en la relación amorosa; y es menester entender que todo ello le pertenece intrínse-

[14] Edgar Allen Poe, "The Poetic Principle," in Kaplan, op. cit., pp. 375-77.

[15] Obras, V, p. 134.

camente, que forma parte de su contenido.[16]

Quite obviously, lyric poetry is that rhetoric. In the following passage, Marías explains this in more detail.

> La poesía lírica no es "representación de la vida humana en el que lo son la novela, el teatro o el cine. Pero tiene una función sutil y delicada, que aparece aquí. La poesía lírica ha sido siempre un esquema imaginativo de la vida amorosa real. En cada momento, la lírica vigente ha dado el lenguaje del amor; pensemos en Petrarca, maestro de amor durante doscientos años, por sí mismo y por sus imitadores y discípulos en todas las lenguas; Garcilaso en España, y luego Bécquer, y--para una minoría--Salinas. De la poesía recibe la vida--y muy particularmente la vivencia recíproca de hombres y mujeres, y sobre todo el amor--una coloración emocional. Podríamos decir que, si bien no representa las <u>formas</u> de la vida, como la novela o el drama, da a esa representación una tonalidad determinada y un latido íntimo.[17]

The tone of the amorous life of an epoch, then, is influenced, or even established, by the lyric poetry of that epoch. There is a dynamic reciprocal situation in which love in the real world and the poetic reality that poets discover writing about it interact. The word situation as used in this context takes the full meaning Marías gives it in the philosophy of vital reason: it is a vital situation that is what it is because of a former situation and also because of what it will become, its vital project.

As the historical situation changes, therefore, so must the rhetoric of love. The love lyric of an age, then, has vital meaning not only for the persons living in the age, but it has a special

[16] <u>Obras</u>, VI, p. 369.

[17] <u>Obras</u>, V, p. 591.

significance for the scholar, artist, or critic who studies, re-creates, or analyzes it. Julián Marías writes of this:

> Casi todas las épocas han tenido que realizar una recreación literaria del amor. El resultado ha sido un género literario nuevo, o al menos un estilo distinto en alguno de los existentes. Algunas veces ha faltado esa recreación; pero se ha tratado probablemente de épocas en que el amor no tenía estilo. Pero se pueden ver las cosas desde una perspectiva inversa: esa estilización literaria del amor, ¿no ha reobrado sobre el amor mismo? Mejor dicho, ¿no se trata de un esfuerzo del amor por constituirse y descubrir su forma auténtica, por hallar su lenguaje y su propio contenido, más que nada su acento? Si es así, la lírica amorosa representativa de cada momento revela el secreto de una parcela del alma del tiempo.[18]

Thus, one can say that lyric poetry, as interpreted by Julián Marías, offers us the opportunity of probing into areas of human life impossible to reach through any other means. The reality that is unattainable by the narrative, the quest for the eternal in rhythm and tempo, the enrichment of love in the real world, these are the most worthy uses of the lyric. As in his commentary on the other literary genres, Marías provides a unique interpretation, a new perspective that broadens one's grasp and sharpens his critical faculties.

[18] Al margen de estos clásicos, p. 315.

## CHAPTER VII

### Drama: a Manner of Viewing

Julián Marías' criticism of the drama is directed primarily at the viewer; he presents a series of comments which, considered in their totality, will affect the experience one derives from a play. Again, as with lyric poetry and the novel, Marías remarks on the relationship of the writer to his work. He notes the vast difference between description, action, dialogue, and tempo in the drama and the novel. He offers some healthy ideas on decorum and good taste. Finally, he discusses in some detail the difficulties involved in staging or reading the classic work.

Julián Marías has pointed out that the novel requires a long amassing of the experience of life for the writer. On the other hand, the poet's craft is more dependent upon innate gift and inspiration. Aside from these specifics, however, the important thing is that both the poet and the novelist are significant factors even after their works have left their hands and are in the hands of the reader, for the images and phrases come directly from the writer's mind to the eye of the reader with no intermediary. Thus,

both the poet and the novelist are integral parts of their own works.

For Marías this condition is far from true for the dramatist. In fact, the reverse is true. This prompts him to write:

> ...en el teatro...el autor no es más que un ingrediente; el teatro es un espectáculo, montado con pretexto de algo que ha escrito un señor; la importancia de este señor es tan grande como se quiera, pero es parcial; el escenario, las decoraciones, los actores y el público son ingredientes esenciales de la obra teatral, y lo que solemos entender bajo este nombre, el escrito del autor, no es más que un extracto o abstracto de la realidad teatral entera.[1]

Following the same train of thought, Julián Marías indicates that a few exceptional libretos geni signed by Sophocles, Racine, Lope, or Shakespeare do nothing to alter this fact. Even the great literary qualities of these works add only to their possibilities on the stage. To become complete experiences they need carnal resuscitation. This leads Marías to assert: "...el escrito teatral tiene que ser una realidad mutilada y deficiente, que pida encarnarse en el escenario. Toda obra teatral 'suficiente' es, por eso mismo, deficiente."[2]

If one takes Julián Marías' critical judgement as an indication of how he should deal with drama as an object of literary study, he is forced to draw some sobering conclusions. In the first

[1] Obras, V, pp. 274-75.

[2] Ibid., p. 275.

place, writers like Charles Lamb[3] and Samuel Johnson,[4] who insist that plays can be read with as much if not more benefit than seeing them acted out on stage, are speaking of exceptional literary plays, especially those of Shakespeare. Since these are exceptions, Marías dismisses them summarily as such and deals with the greater body of dramatic writing that remains.

The problem is that often the exceptions have been taken for the rule, and, thus, the drama is usually taught, studied, and criticized as if it were no different from the novel and poetry as a literary object. On the contrary, if what Julián Marías says is true, and if the teacher or critic is truly prepared for his work, then it is imperative that he place a constant emphasis on the drama as spectacle, perhaps even to the point of a presentation in the classroom or lecture hall. It is obvious that something more than a mere reading is needed. According to Marías, action is the sine qua non. He writes:

> Lo central en el teatro es la acción, el drama; y por tanto los actores; pero si vemos una obra teatral escrita, encontramos que está llena de palabras, se entiende, de palabras dichas. Acción y palabra son, pues, los dos elementos componentes del teatro.[5]

[3] Charles Lamb, "On the tragedies of Shakespeare," in Kaplan, pp. 328ff.

[4] Samuel Johnson, "Preface to Shakespeare," in Gay Wilson Allen and Harry Hayden Clark, eds., Literary Criticism from Pope to Croce (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1962), p. 83.

[5] Obras, V, p. 556.

The objection that more than a critical reading is a waste of time or that there is simply too much to cover in a brief period is invalidated by the fact that probably little or nothing beyond statistics and facts easily obtained from a literary history have been covered anyway from a mere reading.

That a reading is an inadequate method for judging a play is reinforced by other critical statements of the drama made by Julián Marías. He states, for example, that the audience itself is an integral part of the dramatic spectacle. The audience and the spectacle on stage complement each other and form what he calls a double spectacle: "...la transición de un espectáculo a otro."[6] The play is something like a book recited by the players to an audience,[7] and without the audience there is no recitation.

Julián Marías explains, moreover, that the intermission itself is intrinsic to the dramatic experience. He writes:

> El entreacto no es sólo una interrupción, una pausa, o un descanso; en él madura la acción dramática. Al levantarse el telón, volvemos a ver qué ha pasado "mientras" fumábamos un cigarillo en el foyer o saludábamos a nuestros amigos; vamos a ver los cambios que se han producido a nuestras espaldas en un tiempo que no es exactamente el nuestro, los diez minutos de nuestro reloj--por eso escribía "mientras" entre comillas--, pero que "corresponde" a él.[8]

And the maturation, that is, the change that has taken place must

[6] Ibid., p. 559.

[7] Samuel Johnson, in Kaplan, p. 82.

[8] Obras, V, p. 559.

be shown and not simply told about to the audience. This is similar to the difference between showing and telling in the novel, but it has a special significance in the drama because of the spectator's different point-of-view and because of the uniqueness of dramatic language.

In the first place, the spectator's point-of-view is fixed. His seat confines him to immobility in a double sense: 1) in the obvious physical sense, and 2) from his perspective he is at the mercy of what happens on stage, in contrast to the novel, for example, where the reader's imagination is free to create its own images. Therefore, the dramatist must show through the actor's appearance and behavior, as well as his speech, any changes or developments in the action. This situation imposes grave limitations on both the writer's and the spectator's imagination, but, at the same time, it gives the theatre a certain freedom lacking in the novel. Marías explains:

> La novela permite peregrinar, desplazarse con la imaginación de un punto a otro; pero como toda libertad se paga con alguna otra servidumbre, la novela está sujeta a una muy grave: la de la palabra. El teatro, en cambio, tiene un margen de libertad respecto a ésta: en la escena no hay que decirlo todo; hay cosas que pasan y se ven. Hay, pues, una relativa independencia del teatro frente al lenguaje y a los problemas de la conceptuación; y esto significa nada menos que lo indecible como posibilidad esencial de la escena. Sólo se puede <u>decir</u> que alguien se marcha, pero el actor, al marcharse, puede hacerlo de muy distintos modos; los mejores actores han solido recibir los más grandes aplausos en sus <u>mutis</u>, al salir--de cierto modo indicible--de la escena.[9]

[9] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 557.

Showing in the dramatic sense, then, means a combination of movement, expression, and language, and thus makes description redundant to dramatic dialogue.

Turning more properly to dramatic language itself, the dialogue, as contrasted with the novel is insufficient, needing all the accoutrements of the stage and audience to gain its full meaning. The dialogue of a play is like the parlance of everyday speech and, at the same time, radically different from it. Julián Marías unravels this seeming paradox in stating:

> El dialógo real...es siempre insuficiente, porque consiste en palabras que funcionan dentro de una situación; esto es, con gesto y escenario; el diálogo efectivo es circunstancial, ocasional; cuando se dice en el tranvía simplemente "Dos," se quiere decir: "Señor cobrador, haga el favor de venderme a cambio de este dinero que le alargo con la mano dos billetes que pagan mi transporte y el de esta dama que me acompaña en el presente recorrido." Naturalmente, nadie se atrevía a decir esto en un tranvía, porque no hace falta y sería literalmente redundante: eso lo dice el tranvía mismo, que se convierte en una realidad elocuente tan pronto como yo desencadeno su silenciosa locuacidad con la palabra "Dos." El dialógo de la vida efectiva es siempre insuficiente y así--casi exactamente así--tiene que ser el del teatro.[10]

Now, if circumstances and setting make the dialogue of real life and the theatre almost identical, the dramatic context, the theatre, imposes conditions that make them distinct. In the same vein, Marías continues:

> El teatro, en efecto, es algo que acontece y se ve, y

[10] Ibid., p. 560.

> sin embargo, todo en el es diálogo; en la vida hay mucha soledad, mucho silencio, palabras que alternan con horas taciturnas. La explicación es que en el teatro el diálogo es excipiente de la acción, en el sentido en que emplean la palabra los farmacéuticos; el teatro está lleno de diálogo (no es diálogo, aunque lo parezca), y la acción fluye por su cauce.[11]

To further explain the nature and limits of dramatic dialogue, Julián Marías compares it with the wedding vows, the word in its vital presence (palabra de presente), spoken by someone to someone else who is not the spectator, and spoken in concrete form.[12] Thus, considering the situational aspect of the theatre, wherein objects speak for themselves, when dramatic dialogue lapses into description or narration, Marías insists that the drama threatens to break the bonds of the genre and become something other than drama.[13]

Julián Marías continues his comparison of drama with real life, and with the novel, when he considers its tempo or movement. Dramatic time is real, in the full sense of the word, because the action is represented live before the spectator's very eyes.[14] Therefore, it should take as long to eat a sandwich on the stage as it does in real life, otherwise, the illusion of reality is destroyed. For Marías, real time is truly the unity

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid., p. 558.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid., p. 559.

of time to which drama must adhere rather than the concept of twenty-four hours or thereabouts of the classical theorists. He adds, however: "...los preceptistas no eran tan estúpidos. El teatro supone una peculiar unidad temporal en cada secuencia escénica."[15]

The phrase, secuencia escénica, is significant, because something is required in the drama to indicate the passage of time. Obviously, it is impossible to show this on stage, since what happens on stage is governed by the same clock that governs real life. Returning to the novel for a moment, one recalls that it possesses a special type of tempo in which a few pages of dialogue can represent hours of real time. Its movement permists extreme temporal condensations and distentions. Although the drama cannot possibly do this on stage, it does have the means to create temporal condensations off stage. This is implied in the use of the intermission. Marías says: "Las obras teatrales están divididas en jornadas o actos, y estos en situaciones como tales o escenas. Hay pues lo que podríamos llamar condensaciones temporales. El tiempo dramático no es continuo, sino sutilmente articulado...."[16]

That sweeping temporal changes cannot be shown on the stage is a sure governing factor of the genre. There are other aspects of the visual and audial presentation, concerning what may or

[15] Ibid., p. 560.

[16] Ibid., p. 559.

may not be shown or spoken, that are matters of taste and historical preference. For example, the distance of the spectator from the stage is a controlling factor of decorum in some degree. Julián Marías writes: "Las fronteras de lo escénico están definidas por lo que se puede ver; y esto depende de la distancia: desde muy lejos se pueden ver muchas cosas que desde muy cerca son--por una u otra razón--insoportables."[17]

Besides distance, factors which regulate the scenic and linguistic tolerance of the spectacle are the differing types of the genre itself, the social and linguistic group to which the audience belongs, and the historical circumstances. Melodrama, vaudeville, the burlesque, and grand-guignol are types that attempt to amplify the possibilities of what may be seen and heard, arriving at what Marías calls: "...lo sangriento, lo sexual, lo simplemente demasiado íntimo."[18]

Similarly, the different language groups have completely distinct standards of tolerance, which in turn vary greatly in the changing historical situation. The Spanish language, for example, has always tolerated colloquial speech in literature whereas the French have insisted upon a rigid literary and academic standard. As a result of this imposition, Julián Marías observes:

> ...de pronto se ha roto el muro de contención impermeable--a diferencia de la membrana hispánica que permite

[17] Ibid., p. 561

[18] Ibid.

> la ósmosis--y el habla de los bajos fondos ha irrumpido torrencialmente en la literatura; recuérdese la novela o el teatro de los últimos veinte o veinticinco años.... El margen de tolerancia lingüística del escenario oscila, pues, enormemente de una lengua a otra, de una época a la siguiente.[19]

Finally, Marías describes what he refers to as the central nucleus of the theatre, the manner of representation (carácter de representación). In this context, to represent means to create a vicarious or substitute experience.[20] Whereas in fiction there is representation of character, in the drama there is an added representation which is the staged sequence. Marías says concerning this:

> ...el actor "está por" el personaje, lo sustituye o representa. Pero, en segundo lugar, lo que se presenta es representativo; el señor Gonzáles "está por" o representa a Segismundo, pero además toma de él unos cuantos gestos que son "representativos"; esto es, el teatro es representación en el doble sentido de ficción y selección escénica. Por eso el teatro es escenificación en cuanto tal; es precisamente la escenificación de momentos representativos de la vida.[21]

According to Marías, the contemporary theatre has initiated new forms of representation such as multiplying scenes and simultaneous scenes.[22] Whatever the accoutrements used, however, the representation of action and character is the incarnate, concrete form of the drama without which it cannot be fully realized

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid., pp. 561-62.

[22] Ibid., p. 562.

and comprehended. And this leads to a pressing problem with which Julián Marías deals in several of his essays: how to present the classic work.

When speaking of the classic work, Marías has in mind the true classics such as Hamlet, Edipus Rex, Phaedra, Fuenteovejuna.[23] The classics have become so much a part of daily life, even for those who have not read them, that the director of one of these plays has to take into account the preconceived illusions of the audience. How strongly Marías considers this an influence on the presentation of the classic is evident when he writes:

> El intento de comprender una obra literaria clásica obliga a ejecutar una operación difícil y en algún sentido paradójica: el observador tiene que verla desde su propio punto de vista personal, único, insustituible, irreemplazable; pero a la vez encuentra que ese punto de vista suyo es un "resultado"; es decir, que no se ha encontrado sin más en él, sino que ha "llegado" a través de un largo camino que es simplemente el de la historia; en ese caso concreto, la historia de las interpretaciones de la obra en cuestión. El "adanismo" no es posible, no es más que una ilusión engañosa, mediante la cual el que quiere tener un punto de vista soío suyo se queda sin él y recae en el de un ficticio antepasado.[24]

The representation of the classic work, therefore, is severly restricted and, at the same time, almost beyond the control of those who seek to perform it.

Thus, for Julián Marías, the problem of the drama is mainly

[23] El oficio del pensamiento (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 1958), p. 202.

[24] El tiempo que ni vuelve ni tropieza, pp. 188-89.

one of presentation and the spectator's manner of viewing. To attempt to study it seriously or criticize it, one must in some way include the role of the audience, the meaning of the intermission, and the dialogue as deficient and mutilated reality. If one does not do it through actual presentation, he must do it through incessant invoking of the imagination. These concepts of drama, in combination with Marías' analysis of character, decorum, and tempo, should prove of value for the student and critic involved in interpretation and for the playgoer as well.

## CHAPTER VIII

### On Literary Style

As a stylist, and as a prescriber of literary style, Julián Marías values clarity and precision above all else. He is insistent upon the importance of creating one's own personal style through self-discipline, the writing of literature, and mastery of language. He stresses the influence of the historical circumstances on a writer's style and finds it necessary, therefore, to know these circumstances in order to comprehend a particular style. In an impressionistic touch, Marías introduces the phrase, calidad de página, which provides the reader who is acute and experienced enough to apply it a unique way so as to test an author's style.

Marías strongly disapproves of the cryptic and obscure in writing. His own style is a paragon of the qualities he considers most important. Francisco Ruiz Ramón has said of him that his style represents a conscious exposure to thought coming alive through words, and that it is a natural, spontaneous effort. Writing of his precision, Ruiz Ramón says: "...Marías no busca ser

preciso, sino que encuentra con que es preciso."[1]

On various occasions in his essays, Julián Marías expresses his concern over the growing tendency toward a return to obscurity on the part of many contemporary Spanish writers. This leads him to remark with his characteristic accuracy and a touch of wit: "Cuando yo escribo o hablo y pienso que puedan no entenderme los que me leen o me oyen siento una especie de repugnancia interna, casi, casi la náusea de los existencialistas."[2] The clarity and precision Marías prizes so highly in writing can be attained only through literature, and he who would be precise, therefore, must practice it.[3]

Writing, however, requires more than just the urge. It requires talent, discipline, and mastery of the language. Given the talent, and assuming the discipline, the language with which a man lives and grows is the single most important influence on his style. The way a man writes is a very personal affair; both physical and mental traits affect mannerisms, melody of sentences, selection of phrase, and use of grammar. Marías states:

> La importancia del estilo literario viene de que es una manifestación...del estilo vital. Tiene un valor "fisiognómico," como la expresión de un rostro. El punto de

[1]"Dos notas sobre el estilo de Julián Marías," Insula, XX (septiembre, 1965), 12.

[2]Al margen de estos clásicos, p. 78.

[3]Ortega I: Circunstancia y vocación (Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1960), p. 264.

> partida de un estilo literario es, ante todo, la lengua--como el de un rostro humano la herencia biológica.[4]

The language, Marías says at another point, is the way of instalación for the writer and gives him his vital disposition (temple vital) from which he interprets reality.[5] To write literature, or to study a writer's style, one must know his language and the other generic forms of instalación: race, social class, and historical situation.[6] These outside forces become internalized and combine with the unique traits of the writer's own personality to give him his vital style.

Occasionally, however, a style is lacking, that is, there exists no adequate way of dealing with the reality of the historical situation in which one finds himself. In this case, Julián Marías asserts that the writer must invent a style:

> Cuando no hay estilo hay que inventarlo; pero inventar un estilo no es forjar cualquier cosa, la primera arbitrariedad, escape de la impotencia creadora, sino lo que, dadas las nuevas circunstancias--dado el desamparo y soledad del hombre sin estilo--hay que hacer. Y lo que hay que hacer es otro estilo, otra forma justificada, imperativa, rigurosa, dentro de la cual florezcan de nuevo, implacables y dulces, el bien y el mal.[7]

Thus the writer who has natural talent, strong emotions and a grasp of grand ideas, must discipline himself to the language,

[4] Ibid., p. 264.

[5] Al margen de estos clásicos, p. 13.

[6] Ortega I: Circunstancia y vocación, p. 265.

[7] Ensayos de convivencia, p. 273.

mastering diction, metaphor, and systematic thought. He must comprehend his historical situation. Only then is he prepared to deal with historical reality.

If it seems that these requisites apply only to the philosopher, a little consideration of the matter will prove otherwise. The great writers of all ages, whether philosophers, poets, novelists, or dramatists, were the writers who spoke for and about their own epoch and were the creators of style for the epoch, for example, Góngora, Lope, and Cervantes in the Golden Age.

Some periods and social groups lack an adequate style because the gifted men of the age failed to create one, or perhaps there were few or none who had the talent or motivation for the task. Marías states firmly that the creation of a vital style for an era is always the work of a few. He enumerates, moreover, three basic ways for attaining style (los tres caminos del estilo):

> El primero es ése, la tradición, la fidelidad a una forma que no para ni se detiene, pero en que cada paso se da con su cuenta y razón. Esta es, en general, la solución europea y la de los pueblos antiguos....
> El segundo camino es el más ingenuo: la docilidad a las cosas. Quiero decir, la proscripción inexorable de la arbitrariedad y el capricho, de "porque sí" y el "porque me da la gana," de la petulancia y la chabacanería, del resentimiento y el espíritu--quiero decir la falta de espíritu--de parvenu....
> El tercer camino es el más difícil, el más problemático e inseguro: la creación personal. El esfuerzo de alguien que, desde la forma íntima de su vida lograda y rebosante, hecha de autenticidad y disciplina...hace a sus prójimos el supremo don del estilo. Hay unos pocos hombres y mujeres que asumen en cada sociedad la función penosa y

y deliciosa a un tiempo de dar formas a los demás.[8]

When a writer has labored long and hard to attain his style, it becomes as much a part of his personality as his own character. "Le style c'est l'homme même," said Buffon,[9] and Julián Marías says implicitly much the same thing. This is most evident perhaps in what he observes about the older writer who tries to change his style to fit the times. After adolescence, a man's personality is about what it will be for the rest of his life. Behavior patterns can be modified to accommodate certain vicissitudes, but the core of personality remains unaltered, or perhaps altered so little that any change is all but imperceptible. To try to affect a modification of personality by artificial means late in life leads to vanity and affectation. In essence, this is what Marías says about the effort to change one's style to be in fashion. He writes:

> El escritor maduro o que se acerca a la vejez siente a veces una zozobra: si se estará quedando anticuado; si lo que hace no será lo que "se hace"; cuando esto ocurre, trata de renovarse, de cambiar su actitud, sus temas, sus géneros o su estilo. Esto suele ser un grave error, un error esterilizador.[10]

An author's vital style is of such literary importance that

[8] Ibid., pp. 274-75.

[9] Georges-Louis Leclerc de Buffon, "Discours sur le style," in André Lagard and Laurent Michard, eds., Collection littéraire XVIII^e Siècle, Vol. IV (Londres: George G. Harrap and Co. LTD, 1966), p. 258.

[10] "Vuelta al Ruedo," Revista de Occidente, p. 178.

even in the case of the novel, where he places such great value on the point-of-view, the world, and the characters, Marías regards the novelist's style as the final test of his merit. He points out that often a good style will redeem a novel that is inadequate in other respects and make it worthy of consideration.[11] Thus, he states with complete candor: "Escribir novelas es, no lo olvidemos, escribir, y no puede pasarse por alto este detalle."[12]

Despite this, Julián Marías counsels restraint in the use of style, he would apply the bit as well as the spur,[13] for an over-written novel is too much as an under-written one is too little. He says:

> ...la prosa de una novela debe ser como un hilo de cobre: brillante acaso, pero que se deje pasar la corriente sin apenas resistencias. El novelista que nos obliga a detenernos en su primor, en su orfebrería o en su acrobacia, en esa medida no es un buen novelista. La novela no puede estar escrita "en cursiva."[14]

Among contemporary novelists of Spain, Julián Marías considers Camilo José Cela[15] and Rosa Chacel[16] as the best writers in the

[11] El tiempo que ni vuelve ni tropieza, p. 185.

[12] Obras, VII, p. 152.

[13] Longinus, "On the Sublime," in Kaplan, p. 65.

[14] Obras, VII, pp. 152-53.

[15] El tiempo que ni vuelve ni tropieza, p. 185.

[16] Obras, III, p. 251.

sense implied here.

These two novelists have a very special quality about their writing which for Marías represents the ultimate compliment he can pay to a writer's style, viz, calidad de página. There is undoubtedly something of the impressionist in this phrase, for it is based on a very personal reaction to the writer's style. It is well to keep in mind, however, whose reaction it is.

Too often, perhaps, what is referred to as impressionistic criticism is regarded as of whole cloth: one man's mind adventures may be a little more refined than another's, but they are basically of the same kind. From experience with life and art, one comes to realize that the reverse is frequently true: the personal reaction of a man of gifted mind, disciplined to literature, often has more method to it than the lesser, inexperienced mind applying the most exact, organized set of critical rules. The judgement of the gifted man is more valuable because his nervous system has not only more capacity to handle the task, but he has method through experience and broad humanity. In literary judgement, however efficient and neat the machine, the human is always preferable.

This is Julián Marías' calidad de página, that is, Julián Marías responding to literary style in a personal way that involves all his years of intellectual discipline and his system of human values. He describes the experience of calidad de pá-

gina thus:

> Abrimos al azar un libro, leemos una sola página y lo cerramos luego. ¿Qué ha pasado en nosotros? No importa si el libro es novela, poema, ensayo, filosofía. (Si es teatro, sí importa, porque el teatro, en principio, no se puede leer.) Tal vez esa página suelta y aislada nos dice muy poco, nos deja tranquilos, sin ganancia ni pérdida. Otras veces, en cambio, esas cuantas líneas solitarias, inconexas, que no empiezan ni terminan, nos inquietan y no nos dejan ya como nos encontraron: nos han provocado un estremecimiento de placer, nos han interesado por una figura vaga que cruza por ellas, nos han avivado el seso con un súbito fulgor de intelección. A esta diversa condición de los escritos es a lo que llamo su "calidad de página."[17]

This quality of style is not related to the distinction between good books and bad books. It goes beyond the evaluation of the book as a whole and has a value of its own. According to Marías:

> Hay dos modos de escribir y de pensar, dos maneras, en suma, de entender la función intelectual y literaria. Hay obras espléndidas y super ilustres compuestas de páginas de escasa calidad, incluso a veces mediocres; hay épocas enteras sin "calidad de página." A la inversa, libros deficientes, frustrados, mancos, tienen una singular irradiación en cada página que no permite asegurar el valor del conjunto.[18]

More significantly, Marías describes calidad de página as the author speaking in his own voice rather than in the current vogue, or in the voice of the people. This is treading very close to the distinction between rhetoric and propaganda; however, all writers who lack calidad de página cannot be accused of writing propaganda. In his commentary on the styles of Galdós and Pereda,

[17] Ensayos de convivencia, p. 155.

[18] Ibid., pp. 155-56.

Marías clarifies this difference:

> Sólo puede haber calidad de página cuando el autor está presente en cada línea escrita. Quiero decir cuando la ha escrito él, no otras potencias ajenas o impersonales. Estas potencias pueden ser tan diversas, que no se descubre su raíz común, siempre la misma. Tanto da el descuido de Galdós, en quien el autor está sustituído casi siempre por "lo que se dice," como el preciosismo según receta de los barrocos no creadores. Nadie dude de que con ladrillos se pueden hacer edificios espléndidos--y así lo es la obra de Galdós, pero no es fácil olvidar lo que tiene de casa burguesa. Más aun acontece esto con Pereda, que maneja un repertorio de ornamentos prefabricados....[19]

As concrete examples, Julián Marías offers a list of writers whose style has calidad de página. He deliberately mentions names of vastly different conditions, epochs, and cultures to emphasize the strictly personal nature of this quality. Besides Cela and Chacel, he names Dante, Juan Ruiz, Shakespeare, Aristotle, Hegel, Cervantes, Baudelaire, Stefan George, Unamuno, Ortega, Azorín, Antonio Machado, Faulkner, Heidegger, Villon, St. Augustine, and Jorge Manrique. Of these writers he says:

> ...todos estos autores han estado allí, en ella, instante tras instante, pensando, inventando, cantando, contando, sin dejar que nunca hable por ellos "la gente." Y por eso, al leer esa página suelta, nos parece haber sentido un momento el calor de su mano entre las nuestras.[20]

Thus, a writer's style becomes for Julián Marías the single most important aspect of his creation. It is vital style, determined by social, cultural, and linguistic factors combined with

[19] Ibid., pp. 156-57.

[20] Ibid., p. 156.

the inner dynamics of the writer's personality. The best style is that of the writer of genius speaking in his own voice. As long as the language of the writer exists, so long will his personality remain as an inheritance of his culture.

## CHAPTER IX

### The Responsibility of the Intellectual and Critic

According to Julián Marías, the effective critic is an intellectual. The intellectual is the man constantly engaged in an effort to understand himself and his tradition, and from this position of understanding to set the tone and standards for others to follow. For Marías, the authentic intellectuals are those who exercise authority in the intellectual life of the epoch, and who, therefore, are literally necessary for the intellectual health of the epoch.

Julián Marías states that intellectual life and literary criticism as effective forces in our own age are confronted by almost insurmountable problems that must be dealt with immediately if these forces are to survive. The problems he sets forth in candid detail touch on the great quantity of mediocrity that gluts the intellectual marketplace today. This condition is prompted by a number of unhealthy motives: the desire for an undeserved notoriety, the advent of hordes of unqualified people on the intellectual scene, writers who neither know how to write nor what they are writing about, and undue pressures in the universities.

The criticism engendered by this intellectual chaos is marred by dullness, sameness, and confusion.

Marías does not content himself with merely stating the problem, however, but offers positive, if painful, remedies for much of the intellectual malady. He lists, for example, what he calls the rules of the intellectual game which all intellectuals must follow if there is to be a sane intellectual life. He recommends a firm, unyielding criticism and the criteria for applying it, and indicates what the writer's responsibility is to his public.

The overriding situation that has led to the contemporary confusion in intellectual life is of long duration. It began decades ago and men of intellect have long been aware of it, discussing it in books, essays, and forums of various sorts. The existing conditions have caused loss of faith in intellectual authority, often followed by the intellectuals themselves abrogating their position through despair and hopelessness. Julián Marías is acutely aware of this when he writes: "Se ha perdido la fe en que los hombres de ideas tengan la clave de los problemas que agobian al hombre de Occidente, y ha dejado de atenderse a su voz."[1]

To overcome this problem, the intellectuals and critics must reassert themselves and regain their role as leaders in social and cultural affairs. It is precisely here, however, that the in-

[1] Obras, III, p. 17.

tellectual comes face to face with staggering obstacles.

In the first place, the intellectual cannot do his work in isolation. Living and working together (convivencia) is a major theme running through many of Julián Marías' essays. Like it or not, the work of the mind either occurs in community with other minds or it does not occur at all, at least not in the normal sense. Marías finds that the attempt by many to pursue intellectual work in isolation has given it an unreal and pathological character.[2] An example of this is the attempt to specialize, which is impossible in all but a few of the scientific disciplines.

The greatest single threat to genuine intellectual activity, however, is sheer quantity of production. In the contemporary situation intellectual production in the quantitative aspect has a completely different meaning from what it had fifty or a hundred years ago. Marías explains:

> No se desdeñe la cantidad. El más y el menos, cuando pasan de cierto límite, significan, ni más ni menos, otra cosa. Y lo más grave es que la continuidad de las variaciones cuantitativas las hace difícilmente perceptibles; sólo al cabo de mucho tiempo, cuando el cambio es muy grande, se cae en la cuenta de qué se ha producido y de qué es esencial. Así ocurre con las actividades que se llaman, un poco vagamente, intelectuales: la alteración de las condiciones materiales en que funcionan ha hecho que en el plazo de medio siglo se haya vuelto cuestionable su técnica, su sentido y hasta su simple posibilidad.[3]

[2] El intelectual y su mundo (Buenos Aires: Editorial Atlántida, S. A., 1956), p. 103.

[3] Ibid., p. 98.

If all, or even most work of an intellectual or critical nature, that were written were of acceptable quality, of course, it would be a boon for scholars, intellectuals, and critics. According to Marías, however, the reverse is true. A considerable portion of what is being written today reaches not even the bare minimum of an acceptable level. That bad writing and thinking have always existed is a truism, but today the quantity of it creates a grave situation. Julián Marías elaborates on this:

> ...cuando se publicaba menos, los escritos malos no eran muchos; hoy son copiosísimos, y como ya la abundancia por sí sola es un problema, la abundancia de la mediocridad se convierte en enfermedad de la vida intelectual.[4]

The major part of this superabundance of mediocrity falls into the category of useless writing. Besides plain dull books, which are not books at all in the normal sense, and whose primary function is to bore the reader and waste his time,[5] Marías offers a few examples of what he terms useless writing:

> Esas revistas que vemos en todas las bibliotecas, con sus pliegos sin cortar, eternamente vírgenes, llenas de artículos escritos sólo para ser impresos y, en su día, contados en una estadística; esas tesis que tantos profesores proponen o exigen, a sabiendas de que sus autores no sienten ninguna necesidad de componerlas ni nadie de leerlas; esos libros en cuarto que pudieron muy bien ser artículos interesantes, cancerosamente hipertrofiados, olvidados luego en las bibliotecas; todo eso constituye la mitad del problema que hoy nos agobia.[6]

[4] Ibid., p. 112.

[5] El tiempo que ni vuelve ni tropieza, p. 153.

[6] El intelectual y su mundo, p. 111.

The consequences of this cornucopia of publishing become evident when the scholar or writer sets out to do his work. He finds that the materials he is expected to investigate are prohibitive in mere volume. He encounters even his own discipline unencompassable, and this leads Julián Marías to question the very possibility of erudition as we traditionally know it:

> Hoy la erudición, si la tomamos al pie de la letra, es imposible. El gesto de "conocer lo que hay sobre un asunto," de "estar al día," es mero ademán que no se cumple ni se puede cumplir.[7]

To evince knowledge of a subject is too easy and too dificult at the same time: too dificult because of the impossibility of investigating all the material, and too easy due to the neglect of large portions of it. Often the only detail left out is the one necessary to understand the theme. The present situation being what it is, Marías states that we may have to declare erudition obsolete much in the same way we renounce the use of certain military weapons.[8]

In large measure, the perversion of the contemporary situation in intellectual life is due to the unhealthy motives that stimulate it. In many cases, for example, the best reasons that can be given for writing an article are simply to say that one has written, to satisfy the demands of scholarship, to get a

[7] Ensayos de convivencia, p. 184.

[8] Ibid., p. 183.

position or an award, or just to get ahead.[9] This includes so called topics, which are not topics at all, and which are of no interest to anyone at all, much less the writer.[10]

These writers who are not writers have created a condition Julián Marías describes as the leveling of external appearance. He writes:

> ...hasta hace pocos decenios, el libro científico valioso se movía en un plano que no alcanzaba sino por excepción el insolvente; pero hoy se ha generalizado el acceso a los recursos superiores del trabajo intelectual; por ejemplo, a la más encopetada bibliografía. El primer recién llegado maneja y cita los libros de mayor porte, y da así a sus escritos un aire falsamente riguroso y profundo, que a menudo encubre una total vaciedad. La consecuencia es que todos los libros, a primera vista, se parecen; lo cual significa que es difícil orientarse, a menos que se sea competente y se examinen con algún cuidado.[11]

The great irony here is that the good writers who write on serious themes and ideas for a special public are often not read by the very people who need to read them, and this gives intellectual work an aura of unreality and fiction.[12]

Given the intellectual climate, it is not surprising to learn that much of what passes for criticism today is dull and confusing. Marías writes of this in candid detail:

...

[9] *El intelectual y su mundo*, p. 104.

[10] *Ibid.*

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 112.

[12] *Ibid.*

> Hoy...la crítica suele ser convencional y dulzarrona, casi siempre a base de prólogos, índices y lugares comunes sin compromiso; se advierte en casi todas partes una extraña ausencia de la jovialidad y del ingenio, de lo brillante y cáustico. Y cuando, de tiempo en tiempo, hay algo más real y más áspero, cuando aparece algo un poco más violento, se tiene la impresión desazonante de haber topado con violencia efectiva, no ya la inofensiva agresividad literaria, y todo ello provoca la evidencia de su anormalidad.[13]

Although in the reasons he states for these appalling conditions, Julián Marías refers primarily to Spain, they are in all likelihood universal in the Occidental World, and almost surely more acute today than when he exposed them in the 1950's. What he says about criticism or analysis of the essay, for example, is probably pertinent to most western cultures, especially in academic circles. To criticize the essay one must first have read it, something that takes a considerable amount of time; more to the point, the essay, if well conceived and organized, makes clear, definite statements forcing the critic to take a specific stance toward it. This, as Marías indicates, carries the risk of making a mistake and exposing one's reputation to ridicule.[14]

These, then, are the major problems facing the intellectual community today: a general disesteem for intellectual authority, a cornucopia of mediocre and useless publishing, often caused by needless pressure in the universities, the resulting impossibility

[13] Obras, IV, p. 523.

[14] Obras, VII, p. 167.

of erudition, and, for the most part, a dull confused criticism. Julián Marías does not merely state the problem and leave it at that, but offers several remedies, some drastic, some moderate, and all requiring intellectual grit and discipline.

To begin with, he suggests that intellectual and literary life presuppose a set of rules (reglas de juego) that are binding on all who care to participate in the intellectual game. He says:

> No se entienda por esas reglas nada misterioso. Por lo pronto, se refieren a la calidad de lo producido. Se supone la existencia de un equipo de connaisseurs que distinguen entre dos sonetos, dos cuadros, dos sonidos de violín o dos teorías filosóficas....Son justamente las reglas--de creación y de conducta--las que permiten el despliegue de la invención y de todas las capacidades creadoras. Los movimientos individuales son posibles dentro de ellas y, regulados por esa presión social, no son peligrosos; cualquiera que sea su aparente desenfado no rompen ni perturban la convivencia.[15]

These rules suggested by Marías are similar to those of sporting games and the bullfight, and unless they are complied with, the game ceases to exist.

More specifically, Marías gives a list of principles for the intellectual to follow:

> Al intelectual no le es lícito mentir, y si miente debe perder el derecho a ser tratado como tal. El que no quiere enterarse, el que prefiere suponer que las cosas son de cierta manera, mejor que comprobar que son de otro modo, no es un intelectual. El fanático, que maneja una idea--en general, una pseudo-idea--como una maza o como un puñal, nada tiene que ver con el gremio de los que pretenden entender las cosas y decir lo que son. El que utiliza un

[15] Obras, IV, p. 524.

> prestigio ganado escribiendo novelas, componiendo versos, haciendo música, investigando el átomo o filosofando, para apoyar--no con razones, sino con esa autoridad--una causa política, para denunciar a sus enemigos políticos o personales, para orientar tendenciosamente las instituciones de cultura, invierte estrictamente su papel y es exactamente lo contrario de un intelectual.[16]

Subsequently, he recommends that all intellectuals worthy of the name should take as their motto: if one truly has nothing worthwhile to say on a subject, let him keep quiet about it.

As a curb to overproduction of writing, and to lessen the confusion in the field of criticism, Marías suggests some changes in the universities. First, he asserts that the standards for esteem should be altered. For example, a professor should be judged on his teaching ability rather than on his list of publications. This could be accomplished by giving professors enough recognition and money for their teaching so that they would not be encouraged to publish inferior articles and books.[17] Speaking very frankly, Marías states that all involved in the university should: "...aprender a preferir al profesor que enseña admirablemente y no escribe nada, mejor que al que nos llena de páginas mediocres."[18]

To restrain the superabundance of mediocrity in the field of criticism, Julián Marías advises an adamant, yet generous, critical stance. Commenting on the duty of the critic faced with bad writing

[16] *El intelectual y su mundo*, p. 31.

[17] *Ibid.*, pp. 108-109.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 110.

and poor quality, he says:

> Es menester desenmascar el libro "falso," que no es lo que aparenta, que no existe. Hay que poner de manifiesto la insuficiencia, el error grave, la ignorancia inexcusable, más que nada la falsedad deliberada. El autor que ignora lo que tiene que saber--por ejemplo, aquello de que está hablando--, el que no entiende de lo que dice, el que miente y falsifica los textos que cita, deberían quedar automáticamente eliminados de la estimación y, por tanto, de la circulación intelectual. Y, a la inversa, cuando algo es auténticamente valioso y de calidad, debería señalarse de un modo suficientemente enérgico, para que constara....[19]

On occasion, the exposure of useless writing would require a shift of critical focus from the content of the work to the writer himself. The worst that could happen to the person criticized in such a fashion is that he might have to change his vocation and life style.[20] In a scathing statement, Julián Marías indicates how it may be necessary to deal with the mediocre work or writer. He says:

> La crítica debería decir en ocasiones: "Fíjense Ustedes: este señor ha escrito cuarenta páginas--o seiscientas--sobre este tema que no es tema más que porque él lo ha decidido así; ha estudiado minuciosamente esto que a nadie importa, ni a él mismo, por supuesto; ha invertido algunas semanas o algunos años en ello, con manifiesto desprecio de su propia vida, y además pretende que lo leamos, es decir, que perdamos una considerable porción de la nuestra; este señor es, pues, incapaz de sacramento, no tiene sentido de lo que es la vida intelectual, no tiene tampoco caridad para con sus prójimos, y lo que hay que hacer con él es acordarse de su nombre para no leerlo." En algunos casos la crítica debería añadir: "Hay que hacer constar que este señor tiene talento; lo ha demostrado en tal o cual ocasión; sabe,

[19] Ibid., pp. 112-13.

[20] Ibid., pp. 25-26.

> pues, qué importa y qué no importa, y si se dedica su tiempo y echa a perder el nuestro es por las razones A, B y C; por ejemplo, porque teme comprometerse si se enfrenta con un tema real; porque quiere conseguir una estimación fácil, que la erudición provoca sin dificultad y que la calidad intelectual no siempre suscita; porque tiene miedo a la verdad, y prefiere, como Unamuno decía, contar las cerdas al rabo de la esfinge, por no mirarla a los ojos. Etcétera, etcétera."[21]

It is obvious that the type of critic Julián Marías has in mind is of a special breed. Besides superior mental equipment, he must possess extensive and intensive experience in intellectual life and the personal security and courage to apply his experience to the critical task. That is why Marías suggests that the leading minds of all fields of intellectual work should take their turn as critics, at least until the pervading confusion is cleared.[22]

Following the example of Ortega, Julián Marías strongly supports the establishment of an intellectual minority of superior minds to exercise authority and give direction to literature and the literary critic. This minority would regulate the acceptable level of intellectual production; they would restrict the unbridled activity of mediocre talents. Marías states that this is absolutely necessary: "Sólo así desaparecería ese antipático y deprimente zumbido de colmena que ahora se escucha, y se recobraría algo que merezca llamarse, sin abusar del sustantivo ni del adjetivo, vida

[21] Ibid., pp. 110-11.

[22] Ibid., p. 114.

intelectual."[23]

Thus Julián Marías challenges the thinkers, writers, and teachers of the contemporary era to completely reexamine their personal values and the guiding principles of their own disciplines. Again, he stresses the obligation of the critic to work at comprehending his historical situation so that he may indicate to others where to turn in the confusion of intellectual life. By effecting severe, sweeping changes in the prevailing ideas concerning publication, esteem, and literary standards, the leading minds of this generation can best offer a clear perspective.

23 Ibid., p. 188.

# CHAPTER X

## Conclusion

The study of Julián Marías as a literary critic offers the student or reader a unique experience in considering new critical approaches. After an appraisal of his essays on literature and his theoretical statements concerning literature made throughout his work, one finds it difficult to fit his ideas neatly into any of the traditional types of criticism.

Marías is a theorist, but his criticism, especially of the novel, is extremely practical and applies to many works of fiction. He is a formalist in the sense that he finds the value of a literary work in its technique, especially in its style, but he is a moral critic too in his condemnation of drama or fiction that offends the standards of decency by probing too deeply into the private and intimate.

The philosophy of vital reason, moreover, conditions his basic outlook on literature. The philosophy, however, serves him not as a criterion of literary judgement, but as a context from which to attain historical perspective. Thus he cannot properly be tagged

as a philosophical critic. Much the same can be said of the epithet historical. Is he an historical critic? Yes, but only if that means that every book and poem must be considered within its own historical context.

One might accurately call Julián Marías an impressionistic critic, if one refers chiefly to his commentary on poetry and style. The standards of critical judgement he often applies afford him a solid, objective stance that others may apply also.

Much more important than the type of critic Marías is, or than the type of criticism he writes, is the critical perspective he provides those who read his books and essays. The reader is constantly challenged to modify his viewpoint by looking again at what he reads with fresh ideas in mind, for example, the opacity of life, the experience of life, the vital situation. Seen through these concepts, the critical view changes.

In the final analysis, Julián Marías is a writer and thinker who gives the reader pleasure and intellectual stimulation. As a critic he is incomplete because his work is unfinished. As this is being written he is almost surely laboring on some new project, applying his creative genius to fresh problems or providing an original insight on the old ones. Whatever he may write together with what he has already written will make better critics and thinkers of those who read and study him.

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