



Review

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and should trigger renewed interest in these neglected figures.

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Mariás, Julián. *Razón de la filosofía*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1993. 294 pp.

Written in 1992, this book on the meaning or role of philosophy is actually a synthesis of Mariás's own philosophy, a synthesis that could not be given in his recent three-volume autobiography, *Una vida presente. Memorias* (reviewed in *Hispania*, 74.2 [May 1991], 317–19). Each of its compact twenty-three chapters have subheadings that contribute to the well-known lucid style of the author, enabling the non-professional in philosophy, whom Mariás has had in mind since his first book was completed in 1940, to follow the ideas presented with relative ease.

The major thesis of Mariás is that the meaning of philosophy, its reason for being, was rediscovered in Western civilization at the beginning of the twentieth century, although we barely have begun to develop it in an authentic manner even as the century draws to a close. Or, to use his own analogy, at almost the moment philosophers discovered the new continent (of human life in the non-biological sense) they turned their backs on it rather than explore it.

If philosophy is "*la visión responsable*"—as Mariás has long maintained—, then philosophers through the ages have been largely irresponsible by refusing to face the very questions that constitute philosophy: "Who am I?" and "What is to become of me?" Emphasis must be placed on the word "face" because the important human action for philosophers is not necessarily to answer these questions but, rather, to ask them in an effort to assist each of us in living responsibly or authentically. For centuries philosophers have considered the human person as a variety of things, as one kind of being among other beings. Now we can recognize human life as another form, a distinct form, of reality, irreducible to other forms because of its freedom. It is only in this manner that we can face what death "means" to life and confront the constituent insecurity of life, to which God is a "response."

As a synthesis of Mariás's own philosophical thinking for over half a century, this book is a rarity. Seldomly do philosophers pause to recapitulate or integrate their previous books. As a student of Mariás's thought for over thirty years I continue to appreciate the internal logic and

conceptual clarity of the interrelated ideas that constitute his philosophy. This book reconfirms my conviction that his key works are *Antropología metafísica* (1970) and *España inteligible* (1985). The first is his theory of human life on earth, *any and each* human person, while the second is his theory of a *particular* form of social life. Each synthesizes his previous works on its theme and acts as a source for elaboration in further studies.

Razón de la filosofía illustrates not only Mariás as an original philosopher but also the creative manner in which he elaborated the theories of his mentor, José Ortega y Gasset. Particularly interesting (to me at this point in my own teaching and research) is Mariás's use of Ortega's distinction between *ideas* and *creencias*, for the distinction throws more light on many misunderstandings in history and on the origin and continuation of various social conflicts than does any other theory of which I am aware.

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Sánchez Trigueros, Antonio y Antonio Chicharro Chamorro, editores. *Francisco Ayala: Teórico y crítico literario*. Granada: Diputación Provincial de Granada, 1992. 408 pp.

Este tomo reúne treinta y cuatro ponencias de un simposio celebrado en Granada en 1991 que en conjunto asientan, ratifican y confirman la estatura de Francisco Ayala como teórico literario. Frente a la consagración actual de la crítica no hispánica aplicada a los textos españoles, este tomo demuestra que España tiene en Ayala a un teórico que se adelantó a sus contemporáneos en "terrenos hoy cultivados por innumerables críticos" (Raúl Urbina Fonturbel, 375).

Con una sola excepción, los ponentes son de universidades españolas, cumpliendo así las aspiraciones que expresó el autor en 1948, exiliado de su patria, por "el elemento estabilizador, conservador y orgánico de la actividad intelectual socializada" en "el ambiente que le sirviera de supuesto y punto de partida" ("¿Para quién escribimos nosotros?" [*Ensayos*, Madrid: Aguilar, 146]).

En general las ponencias emulan el modelo expositivo ayalano de las "reflexiones" (*Reflexiones sobre la estructura narrativa*) o "divagaciones," que recuerdan las "meditaciones" orteguianas. Carlos Mainer titula su ponencia "Una reflexión sobre los poderes del intelectual." Pese a la enorme erudición de su autor, el ensayo