

“The inhospitable city”: A Spanish view of Oxford in Javier Marías’s *All Souls*

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DOI: 10.31577/WLS.2025.17.1.8

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Javier Marías. *All Souls*. Spanish campus novel. Oxford in fiction. Literary translation.

Loosely inspired by the author’s stay at Oxford, Javier Marías’s *All Souls* (1989) seems a typical campus novel. Yet, narrated retrospectively by a Spanish visiting professor after the death of two other characters, *All Souls* defies the conventions of the comic and satirical campus novel while anticipating the later inclusion of more serious themes in the subgenre. This article also interprets *All Souls* in the frame of Marías’s later text *Dark Back of Time* (1998), a response to the widespread misreading of *All Souls* as a *roman à clef*, especially around the publication of its English translation.

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In the editors' introduction to the recent thematic issue of the *Polish Journal of English Studies* dedicated to the campus novel, Merritt Moseley and Bożena Kucała observe that the subgenre

has appealed to many major literary novelists, including such authors as Vladimir Nabokov, Javier Marías, Zadie Smith, Philip Roth, A. S. Byatt, Bernard Malamud, and Nobel laureates Saul Bellow and J. M. Coetzee. A majority of the best-known academic novels have been from the Anglo-American world but this is changing as new examples spring up outside the Anglosphere. (2019, 5)

On closer inspection, one recognizes that the given list features two British writers (Smith and Byatt), four American ones (Nabokov, Roth, Malamud, and Bellow), and one South African one (Coetzee), the only non-Anglophone writer being the Spaniard Marías (1951–2022). This is not a coincidence, as the campus novel has become a rather notable subgenre in Spain in the last decades, with Marías being its major representative.¹

In more general terms, Marías's work may also be seen as a bridge between Anglophone and Spanish literature, as he translated major British and American authors, including Laurence Sterne, William Faulkner, Vladimir Nabokov, and R. L. Stevenson (Herzberger 2011, 10). Moreover, the titles of Marías's later novels are often taken from Shakespeare's plays – *Corazón tan blanco* (1992; Eng. trans. *A Heart So White*, 1995) from *Macbeth*, *Mañana en la batalla piensa en mí* (1994; Eng. trans. *Tomorrow in the Battle Think on Me*, 1996) from *Richard III.*, and *Así empieza lo malo* (2014; Eng. trans. *Thus Bad Begins*, 2016) from *Hamlet*. Marías himself said: "For too long Spanish novelists have been obsessed with Spain. I'm much more concerned with returning the Spanish novel to literature itself" (Woodall 1992). Being well-read in Anglophone literatures, the author thus aims to contribute to "world literature" rather than limiting himself to a national (or Hispanophone) literary tradition.

SATIRICAL DEPICTION OF OXFORD

Michael Kerrigan's review of *Todas las almas* (1989; Eng. trans. *All Souls*, 1992), Marías's contribution to the campus novel subgenre named after All Souls College at Oxford, characterizes it as "a dazzling example of the Oxford novel with all the ingenuity and the humour and the nostalgia we could hope for" (1989, 19).² Indeed, *All Souls* seems a typical campus novel, loosely inspired by the author's two-year stay at Oxford (1983–1985) and introduced by a note about resemblances being "purely coincidental" (Marías [1992] 2012, xv).³ As Alexis Grohmann (2002, 147) points out, this note was only added to the English translation to prevent additional misinterpretations of the novel as a *roman à clef*. Marías was surprised by this misreading among academics to such a degree that he decided to address the issue extensively in *Negra espalda del tiempo* (1998; Eng. trans. *Dark Back of Time*, 2001),⁴ a reflection on the sources of and reactions to *All Souls*. In this text, he writes: "I imagined that having dedicated a good part of their lives to teaching literature [...] they would be able, without doubts or difficulties, to distinguish between a work of fiction and a memoir or an essay" ([2001] 2013, 37). Moreover, Marías notes that the labelling of the novel as a *roman à clef* slowed down the publication of the English transla-

tion; as the Harvill Press was afraid of risking some future lawsuit, the corporation's lawyers studied the text carefully to ensure it does not contain any "intentional or involuntary crime" (242).

To a certain degree, *All Souls* conforms to the conventions of the contemporaneous predominantly Anglo-American campus novel, which is considered a comic and satirical subgenre (see Showalter 2005, 2–3; Anténe 2015, 141–148). Some scenes of socializing at Oxford, described from the point of view of the narrator, an unnamed visiting professor of Spanish, memorably use humour with a satirical effect. For instance, at a weekly formal dinner organized by the college for its faculty and students, there is a high table where twenty selected dons and the Warden, the director or administrator of the college, are seated. As the Warden is, in the narrator's words, "often a bored member of the nobility" (Marías 2012, 37), the tradition dates to a time when there was a correlation between higher education and the upper class. Those by the high table, which is literally raised above all other tables, have to follow some elaborate rules, which seem rather strange to the Spanish narrator: "It is stipulated that each (elevated) college member should speak for seven minutes with the person to his right or left (this depends on the distribution of the couples at the head of the table), and then for five minutes to the person on his other side and so on alternately for the two hours that the first stage of high table lasts" (38). Besides, the wearing of gowns is obligatory, any direct contact with the other guests is forbidden until dessert is served, and one can only smoke after the Warden decides to toast the Queen. In turn, due to the high tables being so formally structured, at his first one, the narrator is so preoccupied with observing the rules that he can hardly enjoy the meals.

However, despite all the detailed organization, the narrator's first high table eventually turns into chaos, as the Warden, Lord Rymer, himself breaks the rules and tries to talk to people further away from him, as he is too irritated by both his immediate neighbours, "the warden of a women's college, a real harpy, [and] a supercilious, pontificating luminary of the social sciences called Atwater" (44). Moreover, the irritated Warden starts to strike the gavel, which is normally used to announce a new meal, leading to further confusion, as waiters immediately arrive to collect the guests' plates. While the scene is incredibly funny, it also implicitly raises the question to what degree the observance of all the traditional rituals is meaningful and necessary.

Overall, the Spanish narrator's view of Oxford rejects any idealization of the university, which at times appears to cling excessively to bygone traditions. The notion of Oxford being out of time is embodied in the character of the ancient porter of the Institutio Tayloriana, Will, who at the age of almost ninety "literally did not know what day it was and spent each morning in a different year, travelling backwards and forwards in time according to his desires or, more likely, quite independently of any conscious desire on his part" (4). Will's confusion may seem bizarre, but it may also reflect the lack of change at Oxford over the years. To the narrator, Will represents "the stasis and stability of the place"; at the same time, Will's raised hand when greeting the lecturers makes the Spaniard feel that "in the inhospitable city

of Oxford there was at least one person who was really pleased to see you, even if that person did not actually know who you were" (4). In the narrator's view, anyone other than an Oxbridge graduate must inevitably feel ostracized at Oxford. He finds the city and university inhospitable due to the Oxford dons' pomposity; their self-importance along with their being private and gossipy at the same time makes the narrator conclude that "anyone who's not a scandalmonger or, at the very least, malicious is doomed to live as marginal and discredited an existence as someone unfortunate enough to have graduated from a university other than Cambridge or Oxford itself" (26). The narrator's feeling of displacement at Oxford is perhaps less surprising in the context of an entire chapter on the negative portrayal of foreigners in the British campus novel in Ian Carter's monograph (1990, 177–196). In particular, Carter states that "an uninterrogated notion of Englishness makes foreigners at best comic, at worst dangerous" (177).

Despite the narrator's sojourn at Oxford being a teaching stay at a prestigious educational institution, he reports that his "duties in the city of Oxford were practically nil", concluding that "Oxford is, without a doubt, one of the cities in the world where the least work gets done" (4). While the narrator may have a light teaching load due to being a visiting professor and even admits to having "no administrative duties, not even the invigilation of exams" (92), his observations reveal a lack of work ethic behind the facade of the prestigious university. However, regardless of how hardworking the professors are, they enjoy unlimited respect from the students. The narrator, who is in his early thirties during his stay, describes his communication with Oxford students in this way:

In age I was closer to them than I was to most of the members of the congregation (as the assembly of dons and teachers of the university is called, in keeping with the strongly clerical tradition of the place) but the mere fact that I spent our few hours of eye contact perched nervously above them on a dais was enough for the gap between the students and myself to verge on that between king and subjects. (9)

As there is a considerable distance between the instructors and students, the narrator only mentions the students briefly as a group, never referring to any of them as individuals throughout the text.

The distance only seems less striking in the translation courses the narrator teaches in tandem with several of his English colleagues who select the texts to be translated. Their choice of texts makes the Spaniard question the beneficial effect of the course, as the texts are full of vocabulary he finds extremely dated. It is the archaisms that make the narrator invent theories on the words' etymology in response to the students' questions. The episode thus provides one of the illustrations of academic study being disconnected from practical everyday life. To a degree, the narrator's view is confirmed by his colleague Cromer-Blake from the Spanish department, who once tells him about the students:

After enduring our teaching methods and our continual hounding of them, [...] they're fittid for any task, even if all they can do is scan sonnets and stammer out a few incoherent remarks about Calderón or Montaigne in an oral exam. Only the most ill-equipped for life in the world, like myself, come creeping back wearing these silly gowns. (65)

Being cynical and self-deprecating as well as critical of Oxford's teaching practices, Cromer-Blake significantly differs from the most of his pompous and self-important colleagues.

Another example of academia's impracticality is illustrated by a young Oxford economist's research topic of a "unique cider tax that existed in England between 1760 and 1767" (40). While the extremely narrow focus of research may bring to mind Jim Dixon's article on "The Economic Influence of the Developments in Shipbuilding Techniques, 1450 to 1485" in Kingsley Amis's seminal British campus novel *Lucky Jim* ([1954] 1992, 15), the difference lies in Marías's economist being honestly convinced about the significance of his academic study.

OXFORD AND THE "ENGLISH NATIONAL CHARACTER"

Besides commenting on the university life at Oxford, the narrator also makes some observations on the "English national character," so as a result his specific descriptions of Oxford blend in with his general view of the English. For instance, several comments concern the indirectness he finds typical of the English people: "The English never look openly at anything, or they look in such a veiled, indifferent way that one can never be sure that someone is actually looking at what they appear to be looking at" (Marías 2012, 41). In this respect, only the female character of Clare Bayes, an Oxford academic who later becomes the narrator's lover, is not typical; as David K. Herzberger notes, when the narrator looks at her directly at the high table, she "returns his gaze and thus converts him from observer to observed" (2011, 113). Accordingly, the narrator does not consider Clare a "typical Englishwoman", the more so because she spent her childhood in Delhi and Cairo, where her father was stationed as a diplomat.

Besides describing the English people as being reserved in general, the Spanish narrator also touches on their antipathy towards the Irish in particular, noting that Professor Kavanagh, despite being the head of the Spanish department, was "considered suspect by both colleagues and subordinates alike precisely because he was easy-going, Irish and wrote novels" (Marías 2012, 47). This observation also reveals that Oxford professors may consider writing novels too frivolous and therefore incompatible with an academic career; it should be noted that Kavanagh publishes his fiction under a pen name. Furthermore, the narrator once meets Kavanagh at a local disco, mostly frequented by working-class people from around Oxford, where Kavanagh excitedly introduces him to some young women as Antonio, whispering to him in Spanish shortly thereafter: "It's best they don't know our real names. [...] It's perfectly safe, they only come to Oxford at night" (118). It follows that Oxford professors strive to retain their respectable image at all costs, keeping a distance not only from their students, but also from the world outside the university.

Spanish academia is portrayed as more relaxed and less traditional than its English counterpart, as Kavanagh is at the disco with a distinguished Spanish professor who has come to Oxford to deliver an invited lecture. The narrator describes his well-known colleague in this way:

The celebrated Professor del Diestro, in his own opinion the greatest and youngest world expert on Cervantes, and known in Madrid (according to how much one disliked him) either as Dexterous Diestro or Dastardly Diestro. [...] A distinguished, opinionated man in his forties, wearing his designer shirt and his bald pate with equal panache. (118–119)

By portraying the Spanish professor with a modern designer shirt and self-confidence rather than the traditional British gown and indirectness, Marías reflects the stereotypical cultural differences between Spain and England. However, as del Diestro's stay only lasts a short time, there is no other description of any interaction between the distinguished Spanish professor and his younger colleague.

In *Dark Back of Time*, Marías writes that “none of the characters [in *All Souls*] had a counterpart in anyone who exists or once existed” (2013, 24). However, he explains that the Spanish visiting professor was loosely based on real-life scholar Francisco Rico, to the latter's knowledge and displeasure “by the character's behaviour and degree of resemblance to him and the amount of space he was allotted” (24). This incident adds another level of complexity to the issue of approaching the novel as a *roman à clef*. Given the relatively small world of academia, the British publishers of *All Souls* were afraid that some of the readers may have recognized themselves in the characters and filed a lawsuit, and Professor Rico was hoping to raise his international reputation by being a model for a character in the novel.

It should be noted that in *Dark Back of Time*, Marías also makes fun of Spanish academia, particularly by a critique of the system of graduate degrees. The narrator highlights the paradox that he was later assigned to teach Ph.D. students at the Universidad Complutense in Madrid without having a doctorate himself: “My courses were at the level of the doctorate that I didn't and still don't have. More than once I considered enrolling in my own courses and becoming my own student just to get the credits (I would have played it safe and given myself only B's)” (2013, 28).

Unlike Marías, the narrator of *All Souls* does not teach at any Spanish university after leaving Oxford. Rather, after his return to Madrid, the narrator gets a new job in finance; he also gets married and starts his own family. The novel thus illustrates Janice Rossen's point that “many of the best university novels are about someone leaving academe at the end of the book” (1993, 188). In *Dark Back of Time*, Marías further highlights the differences between the narrator of *All Souls* and himself as the author: “The nameless narrator [...] appears in the novel married to a woman named Luisa and father of her newborn child, which was demonstrably not my situation, my case or anything that has ever happened to me” (2013, 23). The ending of *All Souls* thus challenges the autobiographical interpretation of the novel.

BEYOND SATIRE

The narrator's numerous witty remarks throughout the text may almost make the reader forget the novel's opening sentence: “Of the three, two have died since I left Oxford” (Marías 2012, 3), the two characters who have died being Cromer-Blake and another literary scholar, Toby Rylands, and the third being Clare Bayes. The narrator retrospectively reveals that he had learned first about Cromer-Blake's

death from an express letter sent by Rylands and then about Rylands's death from a phone call by Kavanagh. As Robert C. Spire proposes, the two deaths and the birth of the narrator's son have inspired his writing project:

[The narrator] hopes that the act of narrating will help him reconcile the incongruity between the mortal essence of the individual and the immortal perseverance of the species – the contradiction experienced by all humans between their ego and communal instinct, between their need to feel unique from and yet identical to all souls, past, present, and future. (1997, 139)

In some passages of the novel, the word *souls* thus takes on an additional meaning, referring not only to All Souls College, but also to the souls of the characters.

Besides his memories, another source of the narrator's account of his stay at Oxford is Cromer-Blake's diary, which the narrator acquired after Rylands's death, more than two years after his return to Madrid. As the narrator's companionship with Cromer-Blake and Rylands as well as his love affair with Clare transcend his view of Oxford as an inhospitable place, this section of the article will survey the narrator's descriptions of these three characters. As Patricia Moore-Martinez observes, the novel

has a snapshot or episodic video quality of moments and incidences punctuated by tangential musings and reflections on the narrator's own feelings. [...] These visuals and musings are subtly perceptive, comic portraits of individualistic, unique literary personages, yet these portraits could also be classified as affectionate caricatures. (2009, 76)

The narrator thus describes Cromer-Blake, Rylands, and Clare in an affectionate way, while also occasionally revealing their faults.

The narrator refers to Cromer-Blake as "his guide and mentor" and even "the only real friend he made at Oxford" (Marías 2012, 36, 127); accordingly, Cromer-Blake repeatedly refers to him in the diary as "our dear Spaniard" (34, 205). While Cromer-Blake teaches Spanish literature, he is not particularly passionate about his field; in particular, he is "cruel to hagiographers of García Lorca, a writer he classified as a nincumpoop [sic]" (66). Cromer-Blake's own sense of isolation as a gay man is alluded to by the fact that his partner, Bruce, never directly appears in the novel, as he is a mechanic from Vauxhall and not a member of academia; in the narrator's words, Bruce is Cromer-Blake's "other world" (130). Cromer-Blake is seriously ill for most of the narrator's stay at Oxford, despite trying to deny it; eventually, some colleagues have to take over some of his classes. As John Banville describes Cromer-Blake as "lethargically dying" (2012, ix), his premature death at the age of thirty-eight may have been expected.

Toby Rylands is first described by the narrator as someone of whom he "was very fond" (Marías 2012, 42). Rylands becomes Professor Emeritus after the first year of the narrator's stay and explains to him why he has lost contact with his former student Cromer-Blake: "I'm the mirror in which he's afraid he'll see himself reflected. His end is near and so is mine" (135). While Rylands mentions writing a book on Laurence Sterne, no draft of this manuscript is found after his death, suggesting that his plan was more of an unfulfilled dream.

Clare Bayes and the narrator start a love affair after having been introduced to each other by Cromer-Blake at one of the high tables, despite Clare being married to another Oxford professor and having a young son with him. The narrator and Clare try hard to keep the affair secret, meeting in hotels in London or Reading, as the narrator believes that the people at Oxford are always spying on each other: "In Oxford, the only thing anyone is truly interested in is money, followed some way behind by information, which can always be useful as a means of acquiring money. [...] Giving information about something is, moreover, the only way of not having to give out information about oneself" (26). To the narrator's knowledge, no other character found out about the affair; only some passages in Cromer-Blake's diary reveal he had been aware of it.

During his time at Oxford, the narrator clings to Clare; as Robert C. Spires notes, only the love affair "alleviates [the narrator's] anguish" (1997, 139). Clare is the only female faculty member described in detail in the text; at the high table, "she was one of only five women at the supper, and one of only two aged under fifty" (Marías 2012, 41). The narrator suffers from Clare refusing to meet him for a month during her son's illness, and even begs her to leave Oxford with him at the end of his stay. Clare, however, makes clear she refuses to leave her husband.

Overall, the narrator's friendship with Cromer-Blake and Rylands as well as his love affair with Clare provide instances of the text moving beyond the comic and satirical elements of the campus novel. Despite his criticism of Oxford, the narrator thus found genuine connection with some colleagues. In particular, the touching portrayal of Cromer-Blake's and Rylands's demise transcends the typical features of the contemporaneous Anglo-American campus novel. It is not until considerably later that major Anglophone campus novels introduce the theme of death, more extensively in the US than in the UK. Philip Roth's *The Human Stain* (2000) deals with the resignation and death of its protagonist Coleman Silk, a classics professor at a small American college, as described by Silk's friend Nathan Zuckerman. In contrast, Zadie Smith's *On Beauty* (2005), a British novel set mostly in the US, features the death of Carlene, a professor's wife who is a rather minor character.

INTERTEXTUAL ELEMENTS

As has been already shown, some intertextual elements of *All Souls* do not go beyond brief allusions to Anglophone or Spanish authors, referring to the professors' teaching or research interests. Additional examples besides those already mentioned include Rook, a famous member of the Russian department, who claims to have been engaged on a new translation of *Anna Karenina* for the past twelve years and who had met Nabokov during an academic year spent in America. Rook's working on the translation for such a long time may relate to the narrator's early observation about how little work is being done at Oxford. Also, the narrator once recalls Nabokov's pondering on the device of eavesdropping in the 19th-century novel, more specifically in *A Hero of our Time*, concluding that: "In Oxford (and in Cambridge too, I imagine), eavesdropping becomes exactly what Nabokov describes in the Ler-

montov novel mentioned above: ‘the barely noticeable routine of fate’” (Marías 2012, 172). The passage illustrates the narrator’s tendency to compare literature and life as well as his concern with lack of privacy at Oxford.

Other intertextual elements relate to one of the narrator’s ways of passing his time at Oxford and even develop the story, such as his pastime of searching for rare books. Once, the narrator happens to see the Spanish and Portuguese specialist Alec Dewar at a second-hand bookshop, secretly reading Pushkin in the original. Eventually Dewar is revealed to be a Russian linguist for the Secret Service, interrogating Russian émigrés, such as dancers and athletes, but, even this discovery does not significantly change the narrator’s view of Dewar. He is amused to imagine the professor tormenting the émigrés with his questions, just to have something interesting to talk about at high tables in Oxford. But while initially mocking Dewar, the narrator eventually begins to sympathize with him: “[Dewar] knew no other life than the university. He was just one more bachelor in the city of Oxford, another upholder of the old clerical tradition of that immutable, inhospitable place [...] (Another troubled spirit, like myself.) Dewar was a dead soul” (154).

As the narrator sees the profusion of second-hand bookshops in Oxford, he decides to limit his book search to only five authors, including “the Welshman Arthur Machen, that fine stylist and strange narrator of subtle horrors” (74). The narrator even accepts the invitation to join the Arthur Machen Society from another browser in the bookshop, who is pleased to recruit the first member from the Spanish-speaking world. While this detail may be seen as reflecting an earlier time with fewer global connections, for the narrator, there is something typically English in joining various organizations:

I, who had never been a member of anything in Madrid, had in a few months become a member of the Oxonian congregation by virtue of my job, a member of St Antony’s College, to which, as a foreigner, I’d been assigned from the Taylorian Institute, a member of Wadham College, to which I’d been assigned according to the caprice of my head of department, Aidan Kavanagh, and now I was a member of the Machen Company. (87)

The narrator’s amazement at having become a member of so many organizations in such a short time highlights his feeling of foreignness toward the English mores.

Through reading Machen, the narrator eventually discovers another author, Machen’s acquaintance John Gawsworth, a pseudonym for the poet and short story writer Terence Ian Fytton Armstrong (1912–1970), for whom Machen had written a foreword. The narrator explains that his interest in Gawsworth “grew not so much because of his rather indifferent literary output but because of the strange man behind it” (103), as Gawsworth had his texts published in exotic locations such as Cairo and India. In 1947, on the death of his mentor, the writer M. P. Shiel, Gawsworth was named heir to the kingdom of Redonda, a small island in the Antilles. In *Dark Back of Time*, Marías writes that the true-life story of John Gawsworth was ironically “the aspect of the novel that struck many readers as the most novelistic and fictitious, pure Kiplingesque invention, pure make-believe on my part” (2013, 18). Marías thus highlights the complex interplay between facts and fiction in *All Souls* as well as its misinterpretation by the readers.

Towards the end of the novel, the narrator's stay at Oxford strangely interconnects with Gawsworth's life. When Clare explains to him she does not want to continue the affair, she confides in him that her mother did not manage to cover up an affair with "a lover who stayed too long" (Marías 2012, 186), a man she met in Delhi named Terry Armstrong, whom the narrator identifies as the writer John Gawsworth. While the entire plot of the novel is situated in Oxford, it thus portrays the characters as linked to each other by unexpected coincidences and distant places, which is another innovative aspect of Marías's text. No major Anglophone campus novel until that point provided such parallel stories between the protagonists and the biographies of authors they study, the first similar case being A. S. Byatt's *Possession: A Romance*, published in 1990, a year after *All Souls* came out in the Spanish original. In *Possession*, however, the pair of researchers study the fictional Victorian poets Randolph Henry Ash and Christabel LaMotte rather than real historical figures.

CONCLUSIONS

All Souls presents a brilliant example of the campus novel as a comic and satirical genre, highlighting various follies of Oxford academics, such as pomposity and adherence to rituals, from the point of view of an outsider and foreigner. The text also touches on the widely-held national images of England and Spain by comparing social conventions in general as well as in the academic setting; because of the distance Oxford dons keep from both their students and people outside their social circle, the Spanish narrator finds the city rather unhospitable. Another important element that develops the international theme of the text is the love affair between the narrator and his English colleague. At the same time, by means of its serious themes of illness and death of two of the narrator's friends, the text transcends the generic boundaries of the contemporaneous campus novel. *All Souls* is also innovative by means of its use of intertextuality, as it implies the narrator's experience may be similar to the biography of an author he studies. Both the treatment of serious themes and elaborate employment of intertextuality become more common in later Anglophone campus novels.

The widespread tendency among academics to interpret *All Souls* as a *roman à clef*, as discussed in detail in Marías's *Dark Back of Time*, suggests the inability or perhaps rather unwillingness to distinguish fiction from facts. While some readers may be worried about being identified with a not particularly positive character, others may hope to become more reputable if a character in a novel is based on them. As autofiction as a form of fictionalized autobiography continues to be a popular novelistic subgenre, both interpretative approaches mentioned above reveal the academia as an insular social world whose members expect to be remembered by their colleagues.

Published more than three decades ago in both the Spanish original and the English translation, at a time when the only means of communication were letters and phone calls, *All Souls* provides contemporary readers with much food for thought. Academic institutions nowadays are hopefully more appreciative of international co-operation and hardly isolated from the rest of society to such an extent as Marías's

fictionalized Oxford, in part due to the recent technological developments. Still, the novel may serve as a reminder of the necessity for the university not to close its gates.

NOTES

- ¹ A dissertation on the Spanish campus novel (Moore-Martinez 2009) lists nine novels by six authors. Those available in English are Rafael Chirbes' *Mimoun* (1988; Eng. trans. 1992), Javier Marías's *Todas las almas* (1989; Eng. trans. *All Souls*, 1992) and *Negra espalda del tiempo* (1998; Eng. trans. *Dark Back of Time*, 2001), and Javier Cercas' *El inquilino* (1989; Eng. trans. *The Tenant and the Motive*, 2005) and *La velocidad de la luz* (2005; Eng. trans. *The Speed of Light*, 2006). In contrast, none of the three English-language monographs on Marías's work (Grohmann 2002; Herzberger 2011; Pérez-Carbonell 2016) consider Marías as an author of the campus novel.
- ² According to Ian Carter, Oxford and Cambridge figure in over 70 percent of British academic fiction published between 1945 and 1988 (1990, 5).
- ³ Grohmann also provides a detailed comparison of the narrator and other characters with Marías and faculty members employed at Oxford during Marías's stay, finding only minor similarities (2002, 127–134).
- ⁴ As Herzberger explains, the title of the novel comes from Prospero's speech in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*: "What seest though in the dark backward and abysm of time?" (2011, 121). In *Dark Back of Time*, Marías explains the title in this way: "The kind of time that has not existed, the time that awaits us and also the time that does not await us and therefore does not happen, or happens only in a sphere that isn't precisely temporal, a sphere in which writing, or perhaps only fiction, may – who knows – be found" (2013, 301).

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