

# ? Todas las almas PDF / Epub ? Author Javier Marías – Soccerjerseys-wholesale.co

Posted on 26 February 2018 By Javier Marías

Periodically I am asked if I ve been to Oxford I glibly reply, yes, I ve been to both Perhaps my first sentence is an overstatement, but i have offered my response a few times in my life and mean it I don t consider Square Books and Rowan Oak to be tantamount to the learned city on the Isis, but the southern locale is a cultural hub My wife and i last went to Oxford, on the Thames, a few winters ago It was a delightful cold and wet day Our minds were occupied with Inspector Lewis and second hand books rather than discerning the vapor trails of Senor Marias I loved All Souls for its discretion It struggles to find a pragmatic middle path in life That said it didn t lose itself in serpentine digressions Perhaps here, I am looking at you Your Face Tomorrow Fever and Spear Dance and Dream Poison, Shadow, and FarewellIt was intriguing to note the number of observations in All Souls which resurface in YFT the thesis on cider tax and the booksellers distinction of Richard Francis Burton Captain Burton for those inclined were but a few Alas, contrary to the novel, we didn t discover any intrigue, only wonderful Lebanese food and a knapsack stuffed w books from the tented stalls. A Spaniard in the WorksI suppose you could say that not a lot happens in All Souls , but that would only be true if you don t count looking, thinking, loving, remembering, even beingOxford is a city in syrup, where simply being is far important than doing or even acting Marias uses first person narration to tell his story, and for 210 pages I was firmly ensconced in the mind of this ostensibly charming man and lover, referred to only once as the Spaniard.The closest analogies I can think of are Virginia

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Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* and Graham Greene's *The End of the Affair*, although at one point I wondered about parallels with the works of Italo Calvino. This novel deserves a place high in this class of literature. Stream of Consciencelessness. It has almost become a cliché to refer to stream of consciousness in literary criticism, as if it is one easily identifiable practice. However, there is not one stream, but many, and they can be of different shapes and sizes. If *Mrs Dalloway* was a river that flowed inexorably from planning to party over the course of 24 hours, *All Souls* moves with the same intent, but covers a longer timespan. It is a recollection of what happens at an emotional level during a two-year period while the narrator teaches translation in that inhospitable city, Oxford. The adulterous affair failed to eventuate during the interval of *Mrs Dalloway*. However, it supplies the framework for *All Souls*, although it is by no means the sole focus of the novel. Just as Woolf didn't seem to make any moral judgement of Clarissa, Marias doesn't condemn the Spaniard or the object of his illicit desire, Clare notes the likeness of the first names of the protagonists. His version of stream of consciousness is less a stream of conscience than a stream of consciencelessness. We are hot-wired into the narrator's libido via the thought processing of his ego, almost in circumvention of his superego. If you don't get caught, then steal it all. While the affair is adulterous, only Clare Bayes breaks her marriage vows. The Spaniard is single at the time Marias uses the word usufruct to describe the relationship. This is a term of Roman law that describes the distinction between ownership and use of or benefit from property. To the extent that a wife can be considered the property of a husband, which is an unfortunate condition of the metaphor, it suggests the possibility that the husband might own the tree that is the wife, but another man or woman might enjoy the fruit of the tree. The conjugal rights of the husband are compromised by the usufructual rights of the rival suitor. This metaphor describes the relationship between the Spaniard and Clare's husband. However, ultimately it is almost irrelevant to the principal concerns of the novel. What matters is the internal honesty and sincerity of the relationship between the two lovers. Somebody to Love. Clare needs the Spaniard as much as he needs her. The Spaniard is looking for someone to love while he's in Oxford. This is just a stopping-off point for me.

Galápagos

God Bless You, Mr.  
Rosewater

Bluebeard

Welcome to the Monkey  
House

Timequake

Slapstick, or Lonesome  
No More!

Player Piano

A Man Without a Country

Hocus Pocus

Deadeye Dick

Jailbird

God Bless You, Dr.  
Kevorkian

Armageddon in  
Retrospect: And Other  
New and Unpublished  
Writings on War and  
Peace

but I'll be stopping long enough to make it worth my while finding what people call someone to love Clare is looking for something than what she has already via her marriage There is never any suggestion that she will leave her husband or her son The Spaniard must take Clare as she comes. Thus, it is inevitable that their relationship will be defined by the period our European traveller is stationed at All Souls College In Clare's eyes, the Spaniard would be a fool, if he didn't accept his function and simply enjoy the relationship within its geographical and temporal constraints All Souls could almost be Mrs Dalloway, reconceived from a male point of view, but with Clarissa Clare in control. Doing a Post Modern Dance The novel uses a stream of consciousness technique to some extent However, in reality, every sentence is perfectly composed, which makes for a fast, enjoyable reading experience. Nevertheless, Marias does play with both time and space. There is no linear narrative It jumps all over the place Insofar as its focus is Clare, it follows the eye, as if Marias had taken a photograph or painted a picture of her, and his description was simply following his eye as it moved around the image. Furtive Eavesdropping by and on the Narrator In this respect, the mechanism of the novel depends on the narrator's look, his view, his gaze, and what this reveals about his desire. Marias doesn't shy away from the indiscreet, the secret, the furtive It is all revealed. Because the novel is a first person narrative, there is a lot of thinking albeit relatively little action Thus, one of its concerns is the relationship between thinking, looking and desire Apart from Clare herself, the I desire women the less prepared I am to think about them, I desire them without thinking about them at all and I don't know if that's indicative of anything apart from my general state of disequilibrium Dislocation Dance The novel is to some extent a fish out of water story The Spaniard is outside his comfort zone Having always been in the world having spent my life in the world, I suddenly found myself outside it, as if I'd been transplanted into another element Whereas at home he was a local, now he is a foreigner, an alien He is an unknown quantity He can't be trusted and he can't trust anybody else Without witnesses i.e., someone who has looked at him, observed, witnessed and authenticated him, he can have no provenance in a foreigner about whom no one knows or cares That's what

Harrison Bergeron

Wampeters, Foma and Granfaloon

Bagombo Snuff Box

Palm Sunday: An Autobiographical Collage

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Look at the Birdie:  
Unpublished Short  
Fiction

really troubles me, leaving the world behind and having no previous existence in this world, there being no witness here to my continuity, to the fact that I haven't always swum in this water. What is required to fit in, to be like everybody else. Marias draws an analogy with Marco Polo staying in China for long enough to effectively become a blue-eyed Chinaman. Paradoxically, it's this geographical dislocation that allows the Spaniard to be liberated from his past and from future expectations in a temporal and moral sense.

Temporal Vertigo

The Spaniard's time in Oxford is always defined. He has only two years before he has to leave. He knows this, as does Clare. Yet it is Clare who liberates him from the constraints of time, by virtue of her carefree approach to temporal demands. I love Marias description of her just lying around casually, languidly in bed. She would lie on my bed or her bed or on a hotel bed and smoke and talk for hours, always with her skirt still on, but pulled up to reveal her thighs, the dark upper part of her tights or just her bare skin. She was not circumspect in her gestures, often scorching them with the cigarette she waved around with an abandon uncommon in England and learned perhaps in the southern lands of her childhood, a gesture accompanied by the tinkling of various bracelets adorning her forearms, bracelets she sometimes neglected to take off. It was little wonder that sometimes real sparks flew from them.

Everything about her was expansive, excessive, excitable. She was one of those beings not made for time, for whom the very notion of time and its passing is a grievance, and one of those beings in need of a constant supply of fragments of eternity or, to put it another way, of a bottomless well of detail with which to fill time to the brim. What could compose and relax a man than to be propped up on a pillow next to this woman.

An Erotic Corollary to Parkinson's Law

Still, what Clare seems to do is to disregard time, so much so that she seems to expand to fill the time available. While she is alive, time is of no concern, there is only her and what she is doing in that time. Her response to the demands of time is to be careless and frivolous and smiling and forgetful. In her arms, time and pleasure perpetuates into infinity and eternity. That night we were free to eternalize the contents of our time, or enjoy the illusion that we did so, and that's why there was no hurry.

Verbal Invention

When we first meet the Spaniard, he is flirtatious and playful and inventive,

almost Nabokovian, in the way he fabricates meanings for words that don't exist or that deserve a better meaning. My crazy etymologies were no nonsensical, no less likely than the real ones. When true knowledge proves irrelevant, one is free to invent. So, his Spanish background having become irrelevant, he is free to improvise. This improvisation, of course, is in the nature of sexual flirtation as well. Glimpses and Snippets and Skirts. This is when Marias prose becomes most enjoyable and lyrical and assonant: note the tinkles and winkles and glimpses and snippets and skirts, and most of it is directed at what the Spaniard sees and hears. The consequent tinkle of fine crystal. The whole of Oxford is fully and continuously engaged in concealing and suppressing itself whilst at the same time trying to winkle out as much information as possible about other people. The tinkling of various bracelets. Just the glimpse of bracelet. Snippets of her comments. I was too intent on observing the wary flappings of her skirt. Then there's his overtly erotic observations. Clare's breasts combine their two colours very subtly, like the transition from apricot to hazel. The Spaniard's eyes and ears take it all in. He processes what he sees and eroticises the contents of our time together. He assembles fragments of eternity in his mind. Then, by virtue of turning them into literature, like Proust and Nabokov, Marias eternalises them for our consumption and enjoyment. The Tale of a Blind Man Without a Seeing Eye. Cock. Like most men, the Spaniard is driven by his libido, a joint venture between his eyes, his mind, his mouth, his ears and his penis. According to his own account, his eyes are vigilant and compassionate. What he sees, he thinks about. Some of what he thinks about, he talks about. Some of what he thinks and talks about, he desires. Unless he sees, unless he thinks, unless he talks, he cannot desire. I can't let myself have all this time at my disposal and not have someone to think about, because if I do that, if I think only about things rather than about another person, if I fail to live out my sojourn and my life here in conflict with another being or in expectation or anticipation of that, I'll end up thinking about nothing, as bored by my surroundings as by any thoughts that might arise in me. At the heart of his desire is his vision, his sight, looking, watching, observing, witnessing, gazing. You can see the influence of Continental Philosophy on Marias fiction. However, he also brings a vulgar male sense of

humor to the novel When I go to bed with Clare I miss that my cock has no eye, no vision, no gaze that can see as it approaches or enters her vagina

### High Table Fidelity and Thoughtless Infidelity

Two libidos are at work here, and in view of Clare's marital status, it involves an infidelity. Marias discusses infidelity in two contexts, one general and definitional, the other personal to the three people involved. Of fidelity and infidelity, Marias says Fidelity the name given to the constancy and exclusivity with which one particular sex organ penetrates or is penetrated by another particular sex organ, or abstains from being penetrated by or penetrating others is mainly the product of habit, as is its so called opposite, infidelity the name given to inconstancy and change, and the enjoyment of than one sex organ This discussion is almost wholly genital and masculine in orientation for all its attempt to be reciprocal in terms of penetrating or being penetrated, I wonder how women relate to this genital analysis. Only a Fool Would Say That On the other hand, Marias presents the relationship between the Spaniard and Clare from her point of view in terms of the relative ability of the two males in her life to deal with real physical and emotional demands, regardless of intellectual and moral considerations You're a fool Fortunately, though, you're not my husband You're a fool with the mind of a detective, and being married to that kind of fool would make life impossible That's why you will never get married A fool with the mind of a detective is an intelligent fool, a logical fool, the worst kind, because men's logic, far from compensating for their foolishness, only duplicates it, triplicates it, makes it dangerous Ted's brand of foolishness isn't dangerous and that's why I can live with him He just takes it for granted, you don't yet You're such a fool that you still believe in the possibility of not being one You still struggle He doesn't Perhaps our ability to think, to reason, to intellectualise, particularly in the academic context of Oxford, blinds us to the reality that, as Clare continues, we are all fools

### Save What You Can

So it is that Clare, who has the greatest ability of the protagonists to deal with the relative vagaries of space and time, is able to dictate it must be wrong to say rationalise the basis upon which she deals with the men in her life. While the narrator is a male, this is very much a tale where the female is in control. However, given that the novel was written by a male, there must be a

lingering question as to whether Clare is just a figment of a libidinous male's imagination. I can only say that, as a male, I found the novel thoughtful, intelligent, insightful, eloquent, poignant, playful, erotic and funny.

**SOUNDTRACK** The Triffids Save What You Can Time is against us, even love conspires to disgrace us And with things being what they are Yes and things being what they are Oh my friend, we used to walk in the flames Now somebody's taken my arms The shadows are taller You're missing your halo With your face in the half light, you look like a stranger You made me catch my breath just then You made me catch my breath Is that you is that still you If you cannot run, then crawl If you can leave, then leave it all If you don't get caught, then steal it all If you don't get caught, then steal it all Steal it all The final time we touch I watch as you enter the church You turn and you wave, then you kneel and you pray And you save of yourself what you can save If you cannot run, then crawl If you can leave, then leave it all If you don't get caught, then steal it all If you don't get caught, then steal it all Steal it all And between ourselves, and the end at hand, Save what you can

David McComb I Want To Conquer You We have so little time And we have so many pains, These days it's frightening My dear how swiftly love wanes

Angie Hart I Want To Conquer You

Triffids A Trick Of The Light

McComb Setting You Free

Blackeyed Susans Ocean Of You

Blackeyed Susans Every Gentle Soul

from the album All Souls Alive

Every gentle soul that passes me by I have to close my eyes And hope their gentle smile survives Hope that their footsteps don't follow mine There ought to be a law There should be a place That they can send you to To take my mind off your face

The Triffids The Seabirds Mutton Birds Anchor Me Airplane Somebody to Love

Live 1969, with David Crosby Minds Theme For Great Cities

Javier Marías es un autor del que disfruto mucho desde hace poco tiempo, un autor que pas sin pena ni gloria por mis lecturas de juventud, un autor para el que he tardado tiempo mucho en estar preparado El valor de su literatura, ese que fui incapaz de apreciar en mis primeras lecturas, reside, al menos en lo que a mí respecta, en su métrica, en la cadencia con la que construye su inagotable cadena de asociaciones, en la armonía con la que hilvana el relato en torno a la confidencia, a la reflexión, al oficio de testigo de hechos y personas que merecen, por motivos personales, el homenaje de su

escritura Todas las almas es un paseo sin rumbo determinado por la ciudad de Oxford en el que Mar as dirige nuestra mirada hacia sus gentes, hacia aquellas que conoci un profesor espa ol que pas dos a os de su vida en esta peculiar poblaci n brit nica Todo importa en su discurso repleto de digresiones, da igual que el recuerdo del que parta sean bolsas de basura, librer os de viejo, o el encuentro no concluido con una desconocida en una estaci n de tren, el relato tiene el magnetismo de la confesi n, el regusto de aquello que en realidad no es pero que se nos antoja como lo que en los propios t rminos del autor se recoge en el verbo ingl sto eavesdrop escuchar indiscretamente, secretamente, furtivamente, con una escucha deliberada y no casual ni indeseada No es, pues, la historia de unos hechos sino las confianzas sobre un pasado que vuelve revestido por el ahora que actualmente somos Es el testimonio de la huella que pervive de aquello que nos ocurri , de aquello de lo que fuimos testigo o de aquello que nos contaron otros Se recuerda desde un presente no diferente en esencia al pasado ni al futuro pues los tiempos nunca son muy distintos, aunque lo parezca , en el que, o bien se han materializado, o bien hemos conseguido escapar de los fantasmas juveniles que poblaron nuestro por venir, pero en el que con total seguridad se han instalado otros que ni siquiera hab amos llegado a imaginarnos un presente m s cercano a ese momento insoportable en el que habr que renunciar a todo , en el que dejaremos de fantasear con lo que ha de venir, en el que las personas en las que podemos pensar han ido desapareciendo No puedo permitirme disponer de todo mi tiempo y no tener en qui n pensar, porque si lo hago, sino pienso en alguien sino s lo en las cosas, si no vivo mi estancia y mi vida en el conflicto con alguien o en su previsi n o anticipaci n, acabar no pensando en nada, desinteresado de cuanto me rodea y tambi n de cuanto pueda provenir de mun presente en el que se piensa y se recuerda con una sospechosa densidad de detalles en nuestros hombres y en nuestras mujeres, en los que ya han sido nuestros o lo podr an ser, en los que ya conocemos y en los que nunca conoceremos, en los que fueron j venes y en los que lo ser n, en los que han estado ya en nuestras camas y en los que nunca pasar n por ellas un presente construido desde el

pasado pero también desde la negra espalda del tiempo, lo no ocurrido, lo que nos aguarda, lo que ni siquiera llegar a acontecer, el pasado como futuro y el futuro como pasado mir abiertamente al rostro de Clare Bayes y, sin conocerla, la vi como alguien que pertenecía ya a mi pasado. Quiero decir como alguien que ya no era de mi presente, como alguien que nos interesaba enormemente y dejé de interesarnos o que ya había muerto, como alguien que fue o a quien un día ya antiguo condenamos a haber sido, tal vez porque ese alguien nos había condenado a nosotros a dejar de ser mucho antes. Así es el paseo al que nos invita Marías, y si todo lo dicho puede dar una impresión de pesadez, de gris y sobada trascendencia, nada más lejos de la realidad. El tono es de una elegante ligereza, de una engañosa frivolidad. El relato, repleto de ironía y humor, es una sabia mezcla de reflexión y anecdota, y en él pueden encontrarse momentos de gran comicidad como aquel en el que se describe minuciosamente y con grandes dosis de mala leche el transcurso de un high tableo cena de gala que periódicamente organizan los colleges de Oxford. Javier Marías se ha convertido ya en uno de esos autores que consiguen que la literatura siga siendo para mí, al igual que la vida continúa siendo para uno de sus ancianos personajes, un mundo en el que sigo queriendo más lo que quiero todo y lo que me hace levantarme por las mañanas sigue siendo la espera de lo que está por llegar y no se anuncia. Strangely, I'm not exactly sure what I thought of this one. I mean, I liked it. I didn't love it though, except in places. The opening the ancient porter who, memory ravaged, imagines himself in a different decade every morning. The hilarious High Table dinner scene in which I could almost imagine a half a boiled egg shooting from the throats of one of the Dons and lodging itself in the prominent cleavage of Claire Bayes which I couldn't help reading as Claire Danes even, perhaps, the ending kind of satisfying, kind of magical, kind of circular, feeding back into the body of the book and casting much of it in a new light. And Marías's use of language is, at times, flat out brilliant. But at times, and despite that he didn't come across like so many virtuosic writers as a megalomaniac, I got the feeling he was skating on thin ice a little too close to the precipice of self caricature or just plain lack of inspiration, playing for time too transparently as he tried to conjure the next of his clause and parenthesis. Glutted

sentences An example I saw the child Eric, Claire's son, only once and that was when the days of his unexpected stay in Oxford were coming to an end and my emotional instability was at its height for if you have already been deprived of something for some time or its real duration being of little importance have experienced it as having gone on for a long time, as perhaps being endless, the fact that an end to it is now in sight pales into insignificance beside the continuing fact of your deprivation I mean that the mere juxtaposition of these two things is not in itself enough for you to perceive as being at an end something which, though about to end, is still not over, and what prevails is the fear that by some ill luck by some misfortune, the opposite of what you have foreseen that long accumulated, patient present might yet go on forever you experience not relief but anxiety and feel only distrust for the future Now I don't know about you, but I feel as if I'd pretty much grasped what he was saying by halfway through that sentence, and that everything after I mean that the mere juxtaposition was just flash and fizzle, about maintaining the elaborate rhythm than transmitting any meaning or illumination To me that sentence sums up the best and worst of Javier Marias Perhaps because I haven't read a bunch of other sentences like it recently, looking at it now I have to admit it frustrates me less than when I originally read it and I let the book sit before writing this review for just that reason, to see if it would settle and become satisfying, less frustrating, in retrospect And of course there's the chance that Margaret Jull Costa's otherwise excellent translation has struggled here that phrase the juxtaposition of these two things is not in itself enough for you to perceive as being at an end is almost like some tongue twister out of a scientific journal or owner's manual, and may well have been hell to transpose But still, by halfway through *All Souls* I did start to wonder how much of this was just playing for time By comparison, fellow Spaniard Javier Cercas uses a similar prose style in *The Soldiers of Salamis*, but his serpentine sentences, though at times seeming less proficiently rendered than Marias's, often left me with with a feeling I'd been kicked or struck with a whip or bitten, to continue the serpent analogy I winced I gasped He seemed to really be saying something Now maybe it's just that my and Marias's temperaments don't knit so well, or maybe it's that I need to read of him to put into

a broader context this thin slice of his oeuvre, but for now the jury's out I can't in all conscience say I love him like Cercas or Bolano, even though Marias may well have pioneered the style that the other two use so successfully To be fair, I've had this sense that Marias might not be my people from the first time I noticed him back in the nineties when *A Heart So White* propelled him to fame Why not Try this I have my cock in her mouth, I thought at a certain point I have my cock in her mouth or rather she has her mouth round my cock, since it is her mouth that sought it out I have my cock in her mouth, I thought, and it isn't like other times, all those other times in recent months As I noticed the first time I kissed her, Muriel's mouth is absorbent but not as spacious or liquid as Claire's mouth It lacks saliva and space She has nice lips but they're a bit thin and immobile or, rather, not immobile exactly for they're not, I'm aware of them moving but lacking in flexibility, rigid While I have my cock in her mouth I can see her breasts, they are large and white with very dark nipples her breasts are soft, like new Plasticine I used to play with Plasticine a lot It's incomprehensible to me that I should have my cock in her mouth And so on and so forth It's a one night stand he's describing, granted Probably it was never going to be scintillating But why linger on it for so long To me, it's just playing for time Add that to the long essayistic paragraph which accompanies it When, over a period of time, one has become used to one mouth, other mouths seem incongruous, and present one with all kinds of difficulties, etc, etc and I guess I have to wonder if Marias is just some kind of a boffin Zero punk rock in that passage, that's for damn sure, which I'm aware must sound like a pretty unintelligent criticism But maybe it goes some way to explaining why he and I may never quite gel

A high three. Sometimes you know from the very first words in a novel I'm gonna like where this takes me Now, as I start *All Souls* and this review, I've read over 1600 pages penned by Marías, and he never fails to catch me up immediately and run with me In this novel's case, by the narrator's distancing of himself from the character he was at the time of the events he's yet to reveal An unnamed Spanish professor at Oxford teaching contemporary Spanish literature and translation during the classes for which he lies outrageously to his students about the meanings and etymologies of obscure

Spanish words recounts his experiences at the university, the true natures of the faculty, and his affair with the wife of another faculty member His account of high tables, the dinner where he meets his future lover, is Mar as operating at the most comic level I ve yet seen in his work Amid the formality of high tables etiquette, which in this case degenerates rather quickly due, in part to the drunken lechery of the Warden he who officiates at said dinner , Mar as glides effortlessly from the rendering of the evening s havoc to a characteristic passage of great beauty It s getting close to the girl s bedtime, but before she goes one train must pass, just one , because the fresh image of the passing train and of the river illuminated by its windows the men on the barge look up at it and grow dizzy helps her to go to sleep and come to terms with the idea of spending another day in a city to which she does not belong and which she will only perceive as hers once she has left it and when her only chance to recall it out loud will be with her son or her lover. The description is that of the narrator considering, not only the childhood of his soon to be lover and her earliest years spent in India or Egypt, but also the evaluative looks the two share over the course of the dinner one of those passages which seems to say everything, and then ultimately says even. The high tables debacle briefly mentions the attendance of one Toby Rylands, a character who plays a significant role in the Your Face Tomorrow sequence and leads me to assume the narrator of that sequence is the narrator of this book I could verify that, I suppose, but I m too lazy, think it doesn t really matter, and would rather readers of this review read those novels as well having read further now, it seems apparent the narrator of this and YFT are in fact the same man, he goes unnamed in this novel. At turns reflective, comic, then poignant, this is the one I wish I d started my Mar as odyssey with characters pop in and out of subsequent novels, playing large roles in one and minor roles in the next weaving stories back on themselves and other stories for fans of The Sea Came in at Midnight, the works of Mar as operate on a larger, if not epic scale This one leaves me psyched for Dark Back of Time, a novel in which the Real members of the Oxford community during the narrator s Mar as stay there react to their portrayal in this novel Called a false novel by its creator odd itself, in that, the characters of that

novel are supposed to be the real Oxfordians, promises to be equally compelling. Beautifully written The plot is thin but Marias prose managed to make this very engaging I particularly liked the way he interjected the thoughts going on inside his characters minds I ve seen this technique in many other great works the last being Hilary Mantel s Bring Up the Bodies 5 stars However, that book has a thick and historical plot so that is its advantage This book, All Souls has only an illicit affair on Oxford yes, that famous school for the rich and brainy kids hallowed ground and rooms and anywhere the lovers the narrator and Clare find themselves alone. This also has a fresh approach to adultery The doomed relationship is not dramatic as Romeo Juliet or Anna Karenina Alexie Vronsky In fact, most of the time, Clare is cold and stiff in dealing with her lover and it looks like, particularly at the beginning, that she is just after sex The setting of the story being the Oxford brought back the memories of watching Ryan O Neal and Ali McGraw in the 1970 hit movie, Love Story 3 stars However, the setting being that of another prestigious school, is the only similarity between the two This book is neither mushy nor tearjerker It is also not a soft porn or a romance. I know that I am not making a lot of sense by describing a book by saying what it is not rather than what it is Just take this from me this is my first Marias book and I was in awe reading how great he intricately puts his words together There are many good reviews already written here on Goodreads like those of my brother s and my friend Mike s This is my first time to ride on other people s reviews but I think they both expressed perfectly what I wanted to say. Thank you, Javier Marias, for your very nice book Makes me want to ask myself why I am not having an extra marital affair when it could be this beautiful LOL.

Narrative voice and structure for the win Loved the opening with the Oxford doorman suggestive of the transmigration of souls it introduces an almost magical hefty levity and looseness to the proceedings, which move along unexpectedly, smoothly, Sebaldianly, sort of, with language infused by Nabokov and even a sniff of the Shakespearean stylings of some Philip Roth in exile from the infinite etc Margaret Jull Costa s translation conveys all this wonderfully and I m sure matches or maybe even improves the original Spanish Sly, sophisticated, informed, observant, associative, digressive, yet

also a little bawdy Loved how Banville's introduction read it after finishing the novel didn't mention the sexy time section with the fat tart The sort of open structure that lets its associations breathe Loved the rare book hunting, the murderous booksellers the very lightly foreboding threatening sense throughout, the high table talk with the boring economist, all the not really all that many episodes, concluding with Clare's tragic story that may or may not relate to a forgotten writer once friends with Dylan Thomas and Lawrence Durrell Docked a star in part because the ending seemed too set on summary It could've done anything but just sort of seemed to return to various themes and phrases Just started the sequel Dark Back of Time and will most likely read the other two novels of his I own A Heart So White and Tomorrow in the Battle before the fall For ten or 12 years I've been storing up Javier Marias books for some later date that seems like it's finally arrived. The Uses of Absurdity All Souls College is a real place At least I think it's a real place It might be a film set Like most Oxford people I have never been inside it I know it has no students, only fellows And I know that Hillaire Belloc was refused such a fellowship, probably because of his fetishistic Catholicism Oh, and it has a library, The Codrington, which is particularly known for its history collection And that's it. In fact, Marias's All Souls has relatively little to do with All Souls College, but with an issue contained in many of its ancient volumes The problem of other minds is a perennial flower in the philosophical garden, one of particular importance ever since that awkward Frenchman Rene Descartes threw his tuppence of fertiliser into it in the 17th century His I think therefore I am notably lacks a way to get to You think too, and therefore are as well Philosophy has moved on from Descartes's solipsistic world, but not very far As one of Marias's characters confides to his diary, Life is still so medieval We may be fairly certain that other people do think But finding out what they think is something else This sort of functional solipsism, virtually total uncertainty about what's actually going on in other people's heads, is what All Souls is about It's not unlike Oxford and All Souls College really we know it's there but what goes on is a mystery better left alone. This condition is fundamental to the structure of our world From international politics to sexual politics, it dominates our lives As Marias's

unnamed protagonist sums it up Family resemblances notwithstanding, no man has ever known for certain that he was the father of his children Between married couples, neither partner answers questions they don't want to answer, and so they ask each other very few The porter at the Taylorian who lives in a different year every day, of which year no one else is entirely certain, serves as a theme for the entire book. Other minds are mysterious, but the behaviour of others is obvious and often just comical Anyone who has read C P Snow's *The Masters*, or Tom Sharpe's *Porterhouse Blue* or even Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* knows that the manners and rituals of Oxbridge life are not just quaint remnants of outmoded tradition but also serious rules for distinguishing members from others and for keeping these others permanently off balance Marias's wonderful vignettes of college servants, donnish types, classes, tutorials, and dinners at high table shows another reason for the persistence of Oxford rituals they compensate for the impenetrability of other minds by providing a definiteness to social interaction This is why they are often so hilarious Otherwise detestable people can be accommodated with a fluidity and ease that is probably rare even in the best of foreign embassies Raised voices, much less fist fights rarely break out even among sworn adversaries. There is a one word description that I think captures Marias's brilliance in coupling a philosophical problem with an essentially comedic situation absurd One example The fellows of All Souls College, atheists though they may largely be, are required to attend periodic services for the repose of the eternal souls of their benefactors Wonderfully, divinely absurd one might say All Souls is a fiction of the absurd told with a straight face Not a small achievement. *Todas Las Almas Cuenta La Historia De Los Dos Brumosos Y Singulares A Os Que El Narrador Pas En La Universidad De Oxford, Una Ciudad Fuera Del Mundo Y Del Tiempo Y Fuera De Ambos Viven Los Cautivadores Personajes De Esta Novela La Amante Casada Del Narrador, Clare Bayes, Una Mujer Condicionada Por Algo A Lo Que Asisti Pero Que No Recuerda El Amigo Cromer Blake, Homosexual Ir Nico Que Vive Fabricando Experiencias Intensas Para Una Vejez Que Prev Solitaria El Ya Retirado Y Sagaz Profesor Toby Rylands El Merodeador Alan Marriott, Con Su Perro De Tres Patas Y*

Su Conocimiento Sobre La Pareja Espantosa Que Todos Tenemos Y Muchos Otros, Algunos Extraordinariamente Divertidos, Hasta Llegar Al Personaje Que Viene De Otro Tiempo, El Enigmático Escritor John Gawsorth

