

Sooner

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THE COVER: It hasn't come to this yet, but critics of the way we educate the students (and they are among the most vocal, as you are inescapably aware) in our colleges and universities are making higher education a rather warm topic. We hope to add some light along with the heat. The photograph is by Dave Bakker, and the cover design is by Mike Dirham.

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Sooner Scene

Julián Mariás, an outstanding scholar and intellectual of Spain, a prolific writer and renowned professor who lives and teaches in Madrid, was a visiting professor at OU this fall (see "Outside Agitators" on page 29). Described by his host, Dr. Lowell Dunham, chairman of the modern languages department, as a "warm, open, indefatigable man who loves people, enjoys life, and is a brilliant teacher and scholar," Mariás wrote these first impressions of his visit for a Barcelona newspaper:

"When you are in Oklahoma, you feel as if you are two thousand miles from anywhere; but when you think about it, you find you are five thousand miles from Madrid. Oklahoma is in the south central part of the United States, the very navel of the country, we might say. If you look for the state of Oklahoma on a map printed seventy years ago, you will not find it, only a notation reading 'Indian Territory.' Seventy or eighty years ago, there were only buffaloes and Indians—Comanches, Kiowas, Cherokees, Seminoles. . . . Today there are still Indians, but instead of buffalo, there are other things: two great universities with approximately 17,000 students in each and several smaller colleges; a University Press at the University of Oklahoma where excellent books are beautifully printed, books ranging from studies on Indian culture to a long series on centers of world civilization, from a fine bilingual edition of the poetry of Jorje Guillén to studies on Ortega. And there is the literary review, Books Abroad, probably the only one of its kind in the world, the least provincial of all reviews, devoted exclusively to foreign books, a review which keeps the world informed carefully and accurately on the intellectual activity of Europe, Hispanic America, Asia, Africa, and remote languages and cultures.

"Oklahoma reminds you of Castille—flat, rolling, with greens that turn yellow when the rain forgets to come, with herds of cattle that graze on the prairies. And underneath, there is oil. An enormous network of high-

ways, turnpikes, and cloverleaves shorten the distances in a territory somewhat larger than a third of Spain. Jets leave their trails against a sky that is almost always blue, a sky that buffalo would have seen if they had lifted their eyes.

"The University of Oklahoma is in Norman, a small city of some 50,000 inhabitants. My hotel, the Coronado, has a Spanish name and pictures of matadors on the walls. It is located on Main street, a thoroughfare of low houses, small stores, banks, drug-stores, a movie. In the display windows of the stores are clothing, furniture of unexpected luxury, old swords from the last century, perhaps from the Civil war, gleaming in an antique store.

"Several times a day traffic on Main Street stops, railroad warning gates descend, and you can hear the whistle of a train in the distance—a whistle I often hear in the silence of my room. The Santa Fe railroad, which runs between Chicago, Ill. and Houston, Tex. crosses Main like those in western movies, the huge, powerful, proud engine with its Spanish name in black on a yellow background. Behind the diesel come passenger coaches or, more frequently, endless freight cars, traveling at high speeds through the plains with their cargo of wheat, oil, corn, meat, machinery, automobiles—eighty, a hundred, a hundred and twenty cars that disappear into the distance. And this takes place two thousand miles from anywhere, in the middle of the state of Oklahoma."



Visiting Professor Mariás