

cos, que las toman por realidades «territoriales» en las que están circunscritas o contenidas, en vez de tomarlas como libros en los que figuran determinados autores y poemas con un grado específico de representatividad. Es decir, a su juicio, la crítica no debería centrarse en los nombres de los poetas incluidos o excluidos, sino en el grado de representatividad de los poetas y poemas que figuran en el compendio.

El libro consta de tres partes. En la primera, se analizan algunos aspectos *externos* de gran relevancia y sumamente significativos: el papel del antólogo en su función y condición de seleccionador y de autor, y las etimologías y los orígenes del término. La segunda versa sobre aspectos de teoría literaria aplicados al estudio de las antologías poéticas (tipologías de las antologías, sus relaciones con el concepto de *canon literario*, la *poética de la antología* y la recepción crítica desde propuestas metodológicas y paradigmas críticos nuevos). La última parte estudia los modelos antológicos de la poesía española del siglo XX, comenta las antologías más significativas desde las coordenadas del canon y esboza un futuro trabajo sobre una Historia global de las antologías poéticas españolas desde el siglo XV hasta la actualidad.

Nos hallamos ante una de las monografías más agudas y exhaustivas sobre la poética de las antologías *sensu lato* y, también, aunque de rondón, sobre el canon literario.

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Marina, José Antonio. *¿Por qué soy cristiano?* Barcelona: Anagrama, 2006. 160 pp.

In this short, autobiographical treatise, José Antonio Marina explains why he is a «Christian.» His book is a personal journey and he reveals in his notes that Christ and faith have concerned him for some time. While he needs to deal with the essentialist questions of life, he distances himself from «institutionalized» Christian religions.

Marina admits the influence of Bertrand Russell's essay *Why I Am Not a Christian* (1957), but says that they speak of different things when speaking about Christianity. Marina describes Christianity as a «cultural creation». His work is fundamentally different from Russell's in profession, approach and conclusions. He opens a space for intelligence to create this experience of agape, the core of Christianity. He admits that *he* needs Christianity. In his notes, he states that he is more in agreement with George Steiner who sees a direct link between the trivialization of culture and the lack of a religious perspective of the universe.

Marina classifies the Gospels as unhistorical. He views Christ as the fulfilment of a prophecy whose words were symbolic. His reading of Edward Schillebeeckx on the historicity of Christ reveals that Christianity is not based on historical facts but rather on the experience of some men who shared their experience of Christ with others. Marina explains that only science and ethics can be considered universal. Religion claims absolute truth but philosophically speaking, it is private experience because it cannot satisfy a sufficient level of verification. A religious person, therefore, should not impose his truth on others.

Marina explains that the history of Christianity can be seen in two ways: the evolution of dogmas, institutions, ontology and theology and secondly, practical concepts, the practice of charity, of agape. In his opinion, Christianity put more emphasis on the concept of the Truth than on the concept of Good. For him, the Gnostic interpretation of Christianity only came to an end in the Catholic Church with Vatican II and in Protestantism with the theology of the death of God. In his earlier *Dictamen sobre Dios* (2004), Marina sees the decisive moment of the history of religion as when the concept of God became a moral one, not just one of power.

For Marina, there were two possible interpretations of Christ and His mission: revelation of truth and the ways of God, and the redemption of mankind. Christianity's choice of the second meant excluding or devaluing the salvific nature of non-Christian religions. Within Christianity itself, when Catholics sought to maintain a pure doctrine, infallibility and institutionalization, rifts were caused between them and Protestantism.

One of the contradictions of Christianity according to Marina is freedom versus obedience to the laws and the hierarchy of the institution. In the face of fragmentation, the Catholic Church decided to emphasize the horizontal, the soul's relation to God through dogma. Marina is skeptical about the historicity of the most important «experience» of Christianity: the Resurrection of Christ. He cites Rudolf Bultman that the resurrection merely expresses the reality of the cross but it is a personal, vertical experience and not a theoretical, horizontal one.

Another contradiction is the conflict between faith and reason. Christianity claims to be rational, but certain things must be accepted on faith and hinge on infallibility. Marina equates faith with trust in Jesus Christ, in one who deserves absolute confidence.

The Gnostic interpretation of Christianity tells us that God is Truth and that we must know Him. The moral interpretation says that He is Good and that we must fulfill Him. «God is love» is a call to action because God/love is an action. The «truths» that a Gnostic model provides are private evidence, but practical truths achieved from this private evidence can be universally true: actions based on love.

So why is José Antonio Marina a Christian? Because Christ provides for him an interpretation of God, who speaks of the divine dimension of reality. For him, the basic experience of Jesus is God as participatory creative energy. He is attracted to the promise that agape will triumph over evil and death, that Good, as it is divine, is all-powerful. Christ proposes a method: to seek justice is to seek God. This search for God is a religious precept and this becomes the search for justice which is an ethical precept. Marina says that he will trust in Jesus and see what happens. His treatise then is a «confession of trust» rather than faith for it is Jesus who must be faithful to his word. Marina only needs to trust in the promise Jesus has made.

In the title chapter, Marina departs from the pretensions of objective arguments to engage in «intellectual biography». The culmination of man's constant creating is the intellect's creation of goodness, which is the Kingdom of God. Man created God in response to his fear of death and lack of understanding of the mysteries of existence. Marina rejects a purely scientific approach that makes man an 'insignificant' creature. *He* chooses religion because it gives him significance. He affirms that it is *his* decision not to cast religion from *his* world. He believes that religion is the experience that has accompanied creativity from the very beginning. This creation of the finite being experiencing the infinite is the essence of poetic existence.

¿Por qué soy cristiano? is an insightful look into the faith of one man, who as a philosopher is attracted to the message of love and justice that Jesus preached. Yet while he denounces as personal experience not to be imposed on others what many claim as historical and theologically proven, he makes his own sweeping statements on these issues. Marina divides his arguments into an attempt to disprove the objectivity of the bases of Christianity: Jesus' historicity and his Resurrection; and makes Christianity into a private, sentimental journey. At the same time, he seeks to dispel any intelligent rebuttal by calling *his* brand of Christianity private experience and an ethical project. The first six chapters seek to justify the seventh which could stand as the whole text.

While Marina's arguments are clever, unlike Russell he never really defines what 'Christianity' is but rather only why *he* personally is a Christian. This renders his «treatise» yet another personal testimony under the cloak of intellectualism. If he sees a religious perspective as necessary for the preservation of culture, will this perspective be the sum of different personal experiences of the same or of different beliefs? Will this still not cause the division he laments?

Furthermore, he seldom makes distinctions within Christianity. Christianity as mere private experience does not take into account the complexity and heterogeneous nature of Christian religions. Marina's citing of Aquinas, dogmas and infallibility and may have held for early

Christendom but not for the plethora of Christian religions now in existence. Not defining his paradigms of Christianity even as an institutionalized phenomenon to be rejected leaves his arguments wanting. While *his* personal version of Christianity is attractive, it certainly does question the intelligence and honor of many who could also claim to have had the *experience* of Christianity in a different way.

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CREACIÓN

Ricardo Menéndez Salmón. *La ofensa*. Barcelona: Seix Barral, 2007.

It is difficult to classify Menéndez Salmón's fifth novel, *La ofensa*, a work that takes place during World War II and its immediate aftermath, in Germany, France, and finally Great Britain. Structurally one might consider it a fairy tale gone awry, given its Kafkaesque plot and tragic ending. One might also think of it as a morality play, a denunciation of the evil visited upon Europe by Nazi Germany, with all the horror that Menéndez Salmón portrays, mostly in one terrifyingly graphic scene, although in terms of succinctness, one finds an even more riveting passage in Eugenio Suárez Galbán's *Balada de la guerra hermosa* (Premio Sésamo 1982), whose protagonist states so matter of factly, «Y yo, que sí lo viví, me lo sigo preguntando: ¿cómo es posible que se reunieran tantos cabrones en un solo país y tiempo?»

The novel might best be described as a long prose poem, a quasi-symphonic series of movements in which the protagonist unknowingly travels toward his tragic fate. Although it deals with the war and makes mention of certain historical figures and actions that are necessary for its minimum plot development, the text does not fit the traditional definition of a historical novel. Rather, it is an extended fictional essay that offers the reader one more literary denunciation of the horrors of Nazism, with the additional suggestion that part of the problem is the German's inability to fully separate him/herself from his identification with the German State, even when that State has carried out one of the most horrid crimes in modern history. To be sure, the fantastic nature of much of the plot, and definitely the ending, undercuts that historical statement, thus reducing the extension of the denunciation, and the existence of a love theme within the plot also helps to maintain the extremely human and humane nature of the tragic protagonist; the nature of the evil that determines the plot, however, is much more powerful than any of the plot's positive aspects and statements.