

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
URBANA, ILLINOIS

DEPARTMENT OF FRENCH

July 3, 1963

Professor José Ferrater Mora
Department of Philosophy
Bryn Mawr College
Bryn Mawr, Pa.

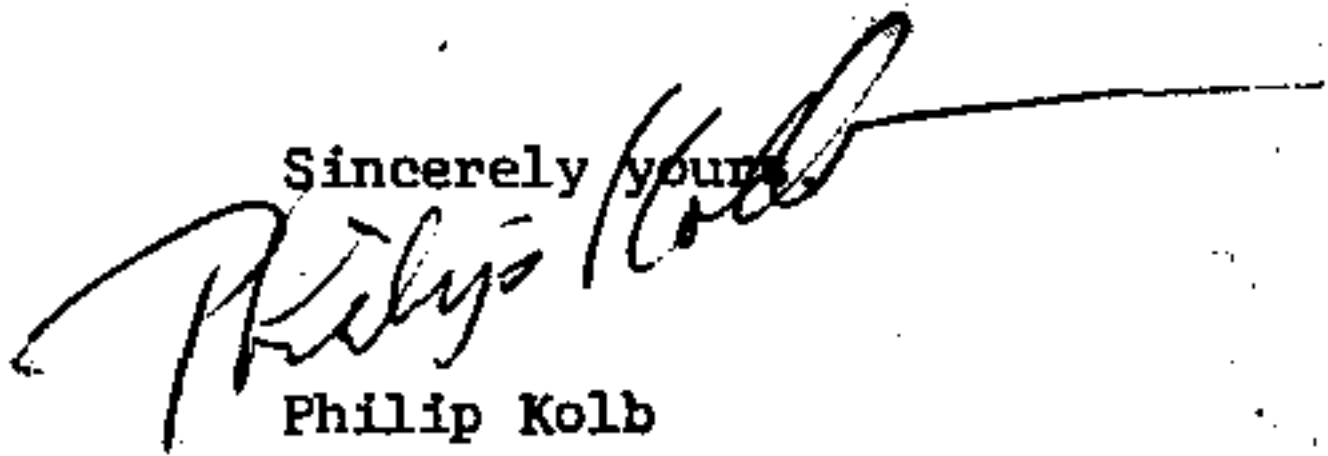
Dear Professor Ferrater Mora:

Thank you very much for your letter of July 1 enclosing your report on the Unamuno typescript.

With your helpful suggestions, so clearly stated, I feel confident that Professor Valdés will do a satisfactory job of revision.

I have asked the University Press to have a check sent to you for the reading fee.

Sincerely yours



Philip Kolb

PAW/mf

1

READER'S REPORT ON THE MANUSCRIPT "DEATH IN THE
LITERATURE OF UNAMUNO"

Abbreviations: 'manuscript' = 'M'
'author' = 'A'
'Unamuno' = 'U'

1. Contribution to the field

The M is undoubtedly a contribution to the field despite the fact that it is already a slightly overcultivated field. The A puts together different aspects of U's work in a way that is rather uncommon, and at times highly original. It does not always appear very clearly how one aspect of U's work or thought --say, U's philosophical perspectives-- is related to another aspect --say, what the A calls "levels of personality"--. Chapter One --which is crucial-- is somewhat hazy. The ideas put forth by the A are, I think, sound; in any case they are extremely interesting. Yet, I think it would do no harm to the M to express the very same ideas outlined in Chapter One with some more vigor; the reader should be able to grasp immediately what the A wants to say instead of struggling in order to find out what exactly each one of the "perspectives" is about, and what it implies.

2. Scholarship.

The A seems to have read everything that U wrote and everything that has been written on him. The range of erudition in this respect of the A, is truly astonishing. As a matter of fact, it is even too "obvious." I do not know whether the M is a doctoral dissertation or not, but it seems to be one. Now, whereas in doctoral dissertations the A must show that he knows everything on the topic, it is not so necessary in a book, including a product of scholarly research. I find that there are too many quotations --particularly too many quotations from U's writings-- in the M. These quotations help to prove the point, but they also interrupt too often the A's exposition of his own ideas and interpretations. Furthermore, I wonder whether it is wise to introduce so many quotations in Spanish ~~per~~ a book in English. Only a reader well acquainted with Spanish, and even with U's writings, may be interested in all the quotations introduced.

3. Readability.

The M is certainly readable, but it would be more so if the A went over it again carefully. I feel that the A should throw into relief some of his ideas. A scholarly work needs not

more

show literary skill, but some of the latter is always welcome.

4. Other remarks.

Whereas the M could be somewhat shortened by streamlining some of the paragraphs and by eliminating some of the quotations, I believe that Chapter Five ("Conclusion") could be expanded. I would suggest writing a longer Chapter Five; section 1 of the Chapter says practically nothing on the subject.

Note: I am thankful to the A for his frequent references to my own book on U. Nevertheless, I would prefer him using the second revised edition of the book (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1957), and possibly the English translation of this revised edition (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1962).