

BROWN UNIVERSITY

PROVIDENCE 12, RHODE ISLAND

May 25, 1948

Mr. Jose Ferrater Mora
549 West 113th Street
New York 25, New York

Dear Mr. Ferrater:

I have delayed acknowledging receipt of and thanking you for the copy of your book, El Sentido de la Muerte, which you were kind enough to send me, because I wanted to have first a chance at least of dipping into it. What I have read of it so far makes evident that it is a systematic, solid, and interesting work, covering a ground not similarly dealt with by any other book I know.

I was especially interested in and also somewhat puzzled by your contention that man's dying and the fact of being able to say that the dying is his own constitutes the reality of man, (p. 285, and similar statements on preceding pages.) It is true, of course, that man is the only being capable of awareness of his own eventual death and also in many cases of the fact that he is at the time of dying. But this seems to me only a corollary of the more general fact that he alone is capable of self-consciousness, as distinguished from simply consciousness; alone capable of being conscious of the fact that he is feeling, acting, thinking, that he is living, was born, and also, of course, that he will die. But capacity to contemplate the course of his own fate seems to me the distinctive thing about him, rather than specifically the capacity (which it implies) to contemplate the chapter of his fate which death constitutes.

If I have some time the pleasure of meeting you personally, perhaps you will tell me why you make more of man's knowledge of his own eventual death than of, for instance, his knowledge of his own birth, or of his own being presently alive; or perhaps whether I have failed to grasp your meaning correctly.

Thanking you again for the gift of your fine (and handsomely printed) book, I remain,

Yours very sincerely,

C. J. Ducasse

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CJD: NW

cont. 12/vi/48.