

I have known Professor García-Barrío for some eleven years, and I have followed closely his development as a teacher and as a scholar.

I will concentrate on two points: (1) The quality of the applicant's work, and his ability to pursue the proposed study; (2) The significance of the project.

(1) Professor García-Barrío has a thorough training in the history of Spanish literature, and a superb training in the history of Spanish literature in the seventeenth and eighteenth Centuries. His knowledge is not confined to literary texts, but extends to the area labeled "history of civilization" -artistic tendencies, philosophical and theological debates, social structures. The wealth of allusions to Greek and Latin classics in seventeenth and eighteenth Centuries Spanish literary texts is certainly not lost to a person who, like Professor García-Barrío, received a solid classical training.

Professor García-Barrío has worked extensively on Spanish seventeenth and eighteenth Centuries literature particularly in so far as it is related to the question of "human models." Paul Hazard had called attention to the importance of such models as outlined in the writings of moralists and essayists, in France and Spain. Professor García-Barrío has been working in depth on the Spanish side of this issue. Indeed, he has been able to correct the eminent French scholar's perspective by suggesting that Gutiérrez de los Ríos rather than Gracián worked out fully the model of human conduct which was favored by most of the liberal-minded Spanish essayists at the end of the seventeenth Century. This is a crucial point, since it permeates the ideals of the Spanish Enlightenment and makes it possible to explain the nature and influence of the eighteenth Century "Academies." In so far as the Spanish Enlightenment had a decisive influence on later developments, a thorough study of the "human models" preferred should cast a great deal of light on modern Spanish culture.

I cannot think of any other person at present who is better prepared than Professor García-Barrío to conduct the research indicated. His study will certainly see completion as soon as he will be able to study the rich materials contained in the Spanish National Library.

(2) Professor García-Barrío's project is a model of scholarship. It takes a probe in depth on a much neglected segment of Spanish literature and culture. It is a most unusual combination of detailed scrutiny and wide historical perspective. The study of the nature, structure, sources, and influence of "El hombre práctico" promises the opening of a field of inquiry which may change deeply rooted preconceptions concerning the ideals of the Enlightenment. Any future history of the Spanish Enlightenment, as a part of the European Enlightenment is likely to profit greatly from Professor García-Barrío's completion of his project.